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## African youth commit to driving food security

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA**-African youth have pledged to work tirelessly towards achieving food security across the continent by promoting effective resource utilization.

During the “1st Thousand African Youth Summit on Food Systems and Agroecology 2024” in Addis Ababa, youth participants shared their vision with *The Ethiopian Herald* on advancing food sufficiency in Africa through sustainable resource management.

Famara Conteh, the Coordinator of the Local Rights Program for Action Aid International in The Gambia, emphasized the critical

*See African youth ...page 3*



Photo: Hadush Abreha

## Ethiopia stresses solidifying military cooperation for Africa peace

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - Enhancing stronger partnerships, advanced military capabilities and renewed determination critical to nurture a peaceful, secure and thriving Africa, the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister said.

The DPM Temesgen Tirunch made the above remark yesterday while opening the three- day African Defense Ministers’ conference held under the theme: “Africa: United in Peace , Strong in Security!” at the historical Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, Addis Ababa.

He noted that the continent is facing profound security challenges such as intra-state conflicts, cross border tensions and terrorism and the extremist groups are taking root not only just in governed spaces but also

*See Ethiopia stresses solidifying ...page 3*



## Ethio-telecom’s 10% stake sale marks privatization milestone: ESX

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) has praised Ethio-telecom’s decision to sell 10 percent of its shares as a significant step towards Ethiopia’s broader privatization efforts.

Ethio-telecom, the country’s largest telecom operator, will soon begin selling its shares ahead of listing on the new Ethiopian Stock Exchange. This move is part of the government’s privatization strategy aimed at driving economic growth and transformation. The public will be able to purchase shares through Ethio-telecom’s mobile money platform, Telebirr.

ESX Chief Executive Officer, Tilahun Ismael (PhD), hailed the sale as a milestone in the nation’s privatization process, launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). “As Ethiopia embraces digital transformation and economic growth, this bold move is crucial for the country’s progress,” he stated.

The government’s “Digital Ethiopia 2025” strategy includes stimulating the economy

*See Ethio-telecom’s 10% stake ...page 3*

## From historical water rights to water-sharing accord

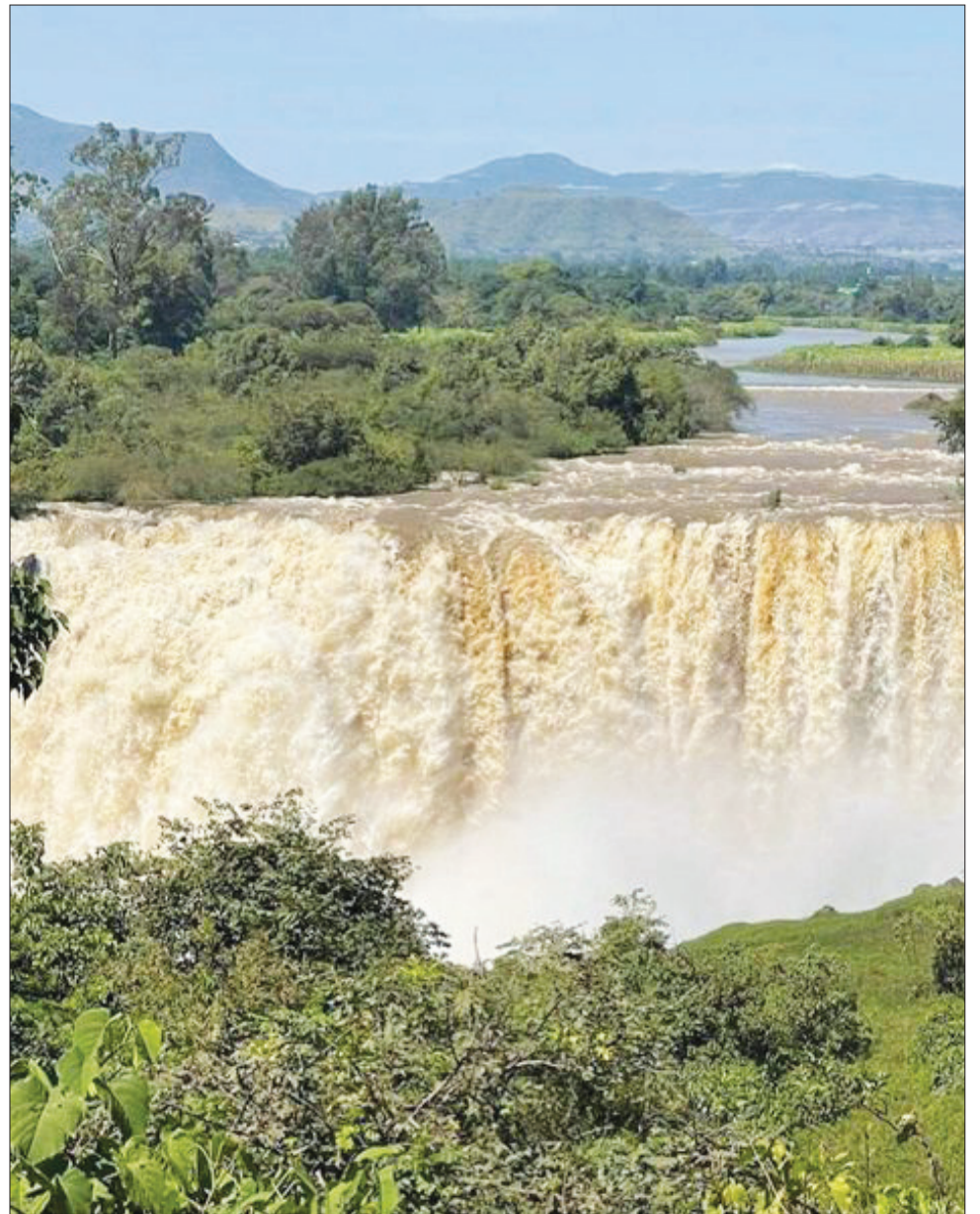
BY YESUF ENDRIS

The Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) has officially come into force, confirmed by the African Union, marking a crucial step toward equitable and sustainable use of the Nile River. Despite this, Egypt and Sudan have rejected the agreement, drawing criticism from Ethiopia, which called their stance a missed opportunity for mutual benefit.

The main issue stems from Egypt’s reluctance to acknowledge the Nile as a shared resource among all riparian nations. Egypt argues that the CFA does not acknowledge its historical water rights and continues to cite colonial-era agreements that heavily favor its water usage, which upstream countries, including Ethiopia, reject.

During Cairo Water Week, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi called for water to be recognized as a basic human right and urged the global community to prioritize it. This stance has faced criticism, especially since the CFA has been ratified by most Nile Basin countries, promoting equitable water use for all.

For years, Egypt has sought to maintain its preferential access to the Nile’s waters, while Ethiopia and other upstream nations encourage Egypt to join the CFA, emphasizing the potential for dialogue to address concerns. Ethiopia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the forthcoming



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# News



Desalegn Teshome

## Ministry boosts school hygiene with water, sanitation initiatives

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ministry of Education has announced its ongoing efforts to ensure all schools in Ethiopia have access to water, latrines, and hygiene materials, with support from aid organizations and stakeholders.

This initiative primarily targets primary school students, encouraging them to maintain hygiene, particularly hand washing, to prevent diseases and support their education.

The Ministry is collaborating with the One Wash National Program and the Ministry of Water and Energy to achieve these goals. The aim is to provide sanitation materials to schools, helping students maintain their health and well-being while attending classes.

This was disclosed during the Global Hand washing Day celebrations in Ethiopia, held at Atse Neakutoleab Primary School, which included various awareness campaigns and messages. Desalegn Teshome, Senior Expert at the Ministry of Education, emphasized the importance of hand washing for students and teachers, particularly before and after meals, as part of everyday school and home routines.

Global Hand washing Day, observed annually on October 15, raises awareness about the critical role of hand washing in preventing diseases and saving lives. This year's theme is "To maintain my health and save my life, I will wash my hands with soap and water."

Lifebuoy hosted the event at Atse Neakutoleab Primary School, featuring AI-driven personalized hand washing messages for children through interactive games and songs. Unilever Ethiopia's Managing Director, George Owusu Ansah, highlighted the company's commitment to promoting hygiene education through innovative tools like AI-Teacher Hippo, which aims to revolutionize hygiene practices in schools.

The hygiene education initiative will continue throughout October, reaching thousands of students across Ethiopia.

Unilever is a global consumer goods company with a presence in more than 190 countries. Established in Ethiopia in 1960, Unilever Ethiopia produces a variety of products ranging from food and beverages to personal care and home care items.

## IIRR, PCPM debut project for emergency, disaster response services

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM) launched support to development of emergency and disaster response services project in Ethiopia.

The IIRR in collaboration with the PCPM launched the two year and seven months 1.6 million USD project in Ethiopia yesterday. It will be implemented in Addis Ababa City Administration, Sidama and South Ethiopia states. The project is Polish government providing humanitarian and development assistance.

Speaking at the launching conference, the PCPM CEO Wojtek Wilk (PhD) stated that the project is aimed at building the capacity of firefighters and ambulance crews of the fire units and the Addis Ababa City Administration Fire and Disaster Risk Management Commission (FDRMC) staff through providing firefighting training and equipment to fire units as well.

During the first four years working in Ethiopia, the PCPM in together with IIRR implemented a project on equaling education opportunities. It focused on providing School libraries and equipment about 500 to 600 schools in Borena and



Guji zones. As a result, the project has improved hundreds of thousands of children's education options, he said.

Since 2015, the PCPM launched training and equipping fire brigades in Ethiopia. It trained fire brigades in Bahir Dar, Gondar, Dessie, Kombolcha, Woliata Sodo, Dila, Hossana, Hawassa and others. Now, the launched project is mainly aimed to support the training of professionals and equipping of the facilities, he added.

For his part, the IIRR Ethiopia Country Director Zerihun Lemma stressed that it has

been working on economic empowerment, job creation for youth and women, to improve inclusive and sustainable economic growth and others. At the moment, it is working to reach out one million youths in the country; of them 85% of are women.

The AAFDRMC has been undertaking major reform activities to modernize service delivery. The recent training that that given by the project is encouraging and would contribute scaling up the skills of professionals and filling sector gaps, AAFDRMC representative Omer Abdurezak said.



## Dashen Bank reports 6.4 bln Birr profit

- Expands digital, int'l partnerships

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Dashen Bank, one of Ethiopia's leading private banks, concluded the 2023/24 fiscal year with a profit before tax of 6.4 billion Birr, marking a 26.8% increase compared to the previous year. The achievement highlights the bank's strong financial performance despite external economic challenges.

During the bank's 31st ordinary and 26th extraordinary annual meeting held at Millennium Hall yesterday, shareholders discussed the bank's impressive performance, future plans, and key initiatives.

Dashen Bank's Board Chairperson, Dula Mekonnen, credited the bank's strategic management and resilience for its success in a tough global environment. Inflationary pressures and geopolitical tensions, including the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, contributed to global supply chain disruptions. However, Dashen Bank managed to increase total deposits by 30.9 billion Birr, bringing the total to 145.9 billion Birr-a 26.9% year-on-year growth.

The bank's Islamic Financial Banking (IFB) division also saw significant growth, contributing 11.1 billion Birr in deposits, a 37.2% increase from the previous year. Overall, the bank's assets surged to 183.7 billion Birr, a 27% rise.

Dula highlighted the growing competition from mobile money platforms, particularly the state-owned Ethio telecom's Telebirr and Safaricom's M-PESA, which have reshaped customer expectations. Dashen Bank has responded by increasing innovation and expanding its digital banking offerings.

Dashen Bank's proactive approach also resulted in the opening of over 1.44 million new accounts during the year, bringing the total to 6.7 million.

CEO Asfaw Alemu emphasized the importance of digital banking and partnerships with global financial institutions as key drivers of the bank's growth strategy.

Notably, the bank secured 40 million USD in funding from British International Investment (BII) and the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO). It also obtained a 40 million USD trade finance transaction guarantee facility

from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in import-export activities.

Dashen Bank has further committed to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives by establishing an ESG policy and department. The bank aims to strengthen its engagement with international partners to promote sustainable practices.

During the fiscal year, Dashen Bank earned recognition for its achievements, receiving prestigious awards such as "Bank of the Year 2023" for Ethiopia from The Banker magazine and "Outstanding Global Trade Finance Program Issuing Bank" from the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Looking ahead, Dashen Bank remains focused on fostering innovation, enhancing digital services, and driving Ethiopia's financial sector towards sustainable development, it was stated.

Established in 1996, Dashen Bank is playing a significant role in Ethiopia's banking and financial sector.

# News

## African youth...

role young people must play in ensuring food sufficiency across Africa. He highlighted the importance of technology adaptation and expansion in addressing Africa's nutritional challenges.

"Africa may be rich in resources, but its people are still suffering from drought, famine, conflict, and more. To tackle these issues, the younger generation must assume a significant responsibility and foster cooperation on all fronts," he said.

Conteh further advised that for Africa to guarantee food security, more youth should engage in agriculture, particularly in increasing production, improving productivity, and minimizing post-harvest losses. Additionally, youth must take



Juliet Katusiime (PhD)

proactive measures in combating climate change, which presents a growing global risk.

"Agroecology is vital in protecting soil, ecosystems, and indigenous seeds, all while being environmentally friendly and cost-effective. The youth must champion this cause, working with governments and finding relevant solutions to push forward Africa's



Famara Conteh

ambition for sustainable food security," he added.

Supporting these views, Juliet Katusiime (PhD), Senior Program Officer at Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) from Uganda, stressed the need for African youth to focus on agroecology. She pointed out that agroecology is not only about

modernizing agriculture but also about protecting the environment, understanding natural systems, and ensuring sustainability.

Katusiime also criticized the influence of foreign powers on the continent under the guise of humanitarian aid, such as food support. "Africa possesses its own resources, but it is not utilizing them effectively. We need a cultural shift and a focus on balanced nutrition led by the youth. Effective agricultural policies that cover the entire process, from seedling to market, are crucial to ensuring nutritional balance," she noted.

The expert also stressed the need to bridge gaps between resource-rich and resource-poor areas in Africa to create smoother relationships in addressing nutrition.

## Ethio-telecom's 10% stake...

and privatizing state-owned enterprises. Ethio-telecom will be the first company to sell its shares on the Ethiopian Stock Exchange, setting a precedent for other companies to follow.

Tilahun emphasized that Ethio-telecom's dominance of the telecommunications sector over the past 130 years makes this step even more impactful, as millions of Ethiopians are expected to participate in the share purchase via the company's digital platform.

This milestone marks a turning point in Ethiopia's economic liberalization, with the government opening up the telecom and financial sectors to private and international investors. Ethio-telecom, which has played a key role in the nation's socio-economic development, is accelerating its digital transformation with the launch of its three-year LEAD growth strategy.

The privatization drive in Ethiopia is part of a broader economic reform initiative spearheaded by Premier Abiy, aimed at liberalizing state-owned enterprises to boost investment and economic growth. The government has recognized that attracting private investment is essential for fostering innovation and efficiency in various sectors.



## From historical water...

Nile River Basin Commission would manage the river's resources for the benefit of all Nile Basin states.

Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Irrigation, Habtamu Itefa (Ph-Eng.), emphasized the importance of the CFA, calling it a "rule and regulation" for all member states. He invited Egypt and Sudan to engage in dialogue, stating, "If you have concerns regarding the CFA, it is inclusive. Let us address them through discussions and make use of the framework." The Minister further highlighted that the CFA is designed to ensure that all Nile Basin countries benefit equitably from the river's resources.

Habtamu described the CFA as a "backbone"

for equitable water resource use, noting that it represents a significant shift from past agreements that favored downstream nations. "We believe there was injustice in how the Nile was previously utilized, primarily by our brothers and sisters downstream. The Cooperative Framework Agreement causes no harm to anyone because it is inclusive," he stated.

The Minister also highlighted Ethiopia's significant contribution to the Nile, providing over 85 percent of the river's water, but previously having no role in its management. With the CFA in place, Ethiopia and other upstream countries can now participate in collaborative water utilization and development plans. The establishment of

the Nile Basin Commission, an independent body supporting development in the Nile Basin, will be a crucial next step based on the CFA, he remarked.

The Nile River Basin Initiative (NBI) recently detailed the objectives of the soon-to-be-established Nile River Basin Commission which will oversee the river's resources, promote cooperation, and resolve disputes, with the unresolved issue between Egypt and Sudan expected to be addressed within six months. The CFA consists of key principles for water management, development, and information sharing, all aimed at fostering collaboration among riparian states.

## Ethiopia stresses...

in areas where they see as their safe heavens.

"This gathering would serve as a launching pad to reaffirm the existing principle "African solutions to African problems" which is not a mere slogan, it is an imperative help to address common problems."

According to him, foreign interventions under the guise of humanitarian aid, human right advocacy and others have been complicating the common efforts to attain lasting peace. Therefore, it is critical to forge our responsibility to reshape security and collective future.

Temesgen has also stated that the AU continues a beacon in these areas of peace, security and democratic governance to nurture the peaceful, prosperous and united continent in line with the agenda 2063.

Further, he said, "Africa's strength lies in our

unity and solidarity, sharing knowledge, and leveraging resources are secrets to overcome challenges. So, it is a timely and critical gathering to better protect citizen's rights, continental resilience and address the ever escalating instabilities and insecurities from Shale to HoA."

Moreover, global powers are intervening in internal affairs to quench their vested interest thereby impacting economies, politics and security, he said.

For her part, Ethiopian Defense Minister Ayisha Mohammed (Eng.) stated that this gathering not only addresses shared challenges but also to chart a course to a more secure and stable African shared future.

"It also fosters collaboration and new paths to stand firm in the face of adversity and threats destabilizing the continent."

Apart from addressing continental pressing challenges such as the terrorism, insurgencies, organized crimes and human trafficking, cyber-attacks, political instability and economic hardship, she said that it helps to share knowledge and resilience of nations and shaping of Africa's defense strategy.

She said: "The strength of Africa lies in its unity and in our collective ability to harmonize efforts, exchange knowledge and unity to raise the continent in the face of adversity."

Commending Ethiopia for its strong commitment towards peace and security in Africa and globally, Head of Political Affairs and Counter Terrorism Focal Point in the AU Babatunde Abayomi highlighted that it remains the top contributor to the AU and United Nations.

He noted that the continent is currently

experiencing insecurities causing displacement, human rights violations, and political instability among many others needs continental collective efforts and strengthened defense strategies, technological advancement and artificial defense ecosystem.

This cooperation should be infused with the spread of national cooperation forging new alliances within and beyond Africa, he added.

To achieve peace and security and vision of AU's agenda 2063, he said, adding that "We must silence guns across Africa, respect shared identities, values and collective experiences."

This gathering, which embraces African defense ministers, higher military officials, defense attaches, military research experts, AU representatives among others, sought to advance military cooperation.

# Opinion

## Abbay Dam: A gift of the riparian countries

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Ethiopia has been facing various challenges that are related to its resources and geopolitical aspects. The threats that the country has been encountering particularly are associated with Trans Boundary Rivers for instance Abbay River. It is the most controversial issue which dated back for centuries and has remained hot until these days. Though the country is the land where the Abbay water originates, there have been outsiders who had been poking nose and echoing a lot about the river because of certain frustrations related with internal and external factors and lower emphasis to this precious natural gift from the Ethiopian side in the past times.

As sources well documented the historical happenings about Abbay, unlike Ethiopia there are lower basin countries that have been conspiring and politicizing the issues that aimed at irritating psychologically and attacking physically to thwart the country from utilizing the river for its national economic development especially for hydropower generation, the most crucial energy for more than half of its people living in darkness. Egypt appeared to be the leading country that has been digging every hole for preventing Ethiopia from using its sovereign right over own natural resources in different ways.

As Hailu W/Giorgis showed in his book; *International Rivers: The legal and Political Challenges of the Nile water*, Egypt has been strategically working on the psychology of its people through various forms regarding the ownership of the Abbay River. The people of this country from the childhood have been dictated to blame Ethiopia and Ethiopian government for any assumed loss of the Abbay water.

The author of the book said based on various sources that though Egypt knows that Ethiopia didn't do anything harmful on the river, and the quantity of the River's water can be affected only by the amount of the natural rainfall volume; but it has continued persuading its people to simply question and hate Ethiopia. The GEO Magazine on its November 2004 publication said that, "Egyptians believed that the amount change in the Abbay River is caused by the collusion of Ethiopian government."

Egypt sultans were sending orthodox Christian Bishops with dowry to be served for the patriarch of Ethiopia to beg the country stop constructing any dam on Abbay River. As studies vividly showed, Ethiopia was accepting their frustrations and stopped its construction just it feels sympathy for the people of Egypt.

The third mechanism that Egypt employed was conquering strategic areas around Abbay River. For this, since at that time it was technologically advanced, it controlled Sudan to show its superiority over the



Abbay Dam near completion

tributaries of Abbay River. Kedivu Esmael had tried to subjugate the country for 16 times. Finally, in 1884 he lost his control and left the area by the troops of Emperor Yohannes.

With the above historical facts and because of the frequent tensions that Ethiopia had been through, the river remained to be only the gift of others. The country was simply walking it out with its precious resources. Basin countries, especially Egypt, had been dominating the river and making its economy to boost over the motherland of the river. This was detected by the previous regimes of Ethiopia though practical change was not registered.

The first commitment on the river was taken by Emperor Haile Selassie. He put the foundation stone for the edifice of the dam. But the construction was not easy to be made as planned. Then, the prosecuted regime took-over the initiation. The first visibility study on the dam was made in 1964. Then with lots of ups and downs, the coming government took the perceptible move on the river. On April 02, 2011 Prime Minister Meles Zenawi put the official working foundation stone.

The Dam is the most crucial issue of the people of Ethiopia. It has been the identity markings of Ethiopians, so that everybody's heart bits on the Dam. The citizens showed their commitment and inscribed their finger prints as much as they can.

Meanwhile, the new reformist government that is led by prosperity party took the power. This government had raised the issue of the Dam in a very energetic and dedicated way that the initiation had revived in the minds of the people.

The current system has prioritized the construction of the Dam recognizing it as the driving force for the nation's economic transformation. After identifying the causes of the challenges that were facing the process, the government has made necessary reforms and showed the commitment it had for its completion.

Though the international laws and

regulations regarding the share of the river between the source and tributary countries is still controversial, Ethiopia is heading the construction of the Dam which is nearing its completion with respect to the allotted principles even though the lower riparian countries that had been taking this share are not participating in those decisions.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that 13 October 2024, marks the culmination of a long journey toward the equitable and reasonable utilization of the waters of the Nile, with the entry into force of the Agreement on the Nile River Basin Framework (CFA).

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all state parties to the CFA for their unwavering commitment to advancing cooperation in our region. I also call upon the non-signatory states to join the Nile family, so that together we may achieve our shared goals of development and regional integration."

According to ministry of water and energy, the Nile Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA) officially came into effect since October 13, 2024. Water and Energy Minister Habtamu Itefa (PhD-Eng.) described this development as a historic milestone in Nile cooperation, congratulating Ethiopians and the governments of all riparian countries for their collective efforts in reaching this significant agreement.

The Minister emphasized that the CFA establishes a solid foundation for the equitable and sustainable use of the Nile waters, promoting long-term cooperation among the riparian nations. He noted that this agreement demonstrates a commitment to addressing past inequities related to water distribution.

The CFA also establishes the Nile River Basin Commission, which will oversee the management, conservation, and fair distribution of the Nile water resources.

These days, the Dam is almost at its completion. The Dam is the largest one in Africa and is 7th in the world. This Dam

does mean a lot for Ethiopians who had been salivating by their own natural gift. The river had been left out by the country of its origin and used to flow freely leaving its people behind with severe poverty and darkness. Now is the time to serve its people as some other rivers do.

The Dam is believed and expected to have the following impactful changes on the people's life. The first thing is since the people who got electricity are only 44%, the completion of the Dam can transform this number. The demand of electric power is going to be solved in time. This phenomenon will have a greater impact on the living standard of the people.

Starting from using the electric power for lamp consumption, the citizens can stick on electric power for food preparation, and for various house hold chores. This can facilitate the saving of labor power or effort of especially females since they are socially assigned to take care of such jobs. Furthermore, this move highly contributes for the effort to minimize the degree of deforestation. Plants could not be cut for the purpose of fuel consumption. Moreover, this fact can diminish the tendency of females' exposure to sexual violence which is most of the time done while they run for fire wood collection. Thus, the Dam can become the real gift for the country of its origin.

Secondly, the completion of the Dam means empowerment of the people economically. As a result of various lodges, business centers and others facilities can be built at the shores of the Dam, the people who run those economic activities can earn better life and bring good opportunity for many citizens to get job. In addition, jobs related to fishing, tour guidance and the like can enable the people begin new way of life style. This is among the most important opportunities for minimizing the level of unemployment in the country. This again can be taken as an input for the economic transformation of the country.

Thirdly, it can pave the way for the construction of additional dams for more economic purposes. Since the water is left to go downstream after moving the turbines, it does not cause any significant harm against the lower riparian countries. Besides, for the fact that the Dam is constructed in the Abbay valley, relatively the highland areas; water evaporation is very low when compared with the lower dams which are constructed in desert areas. And this in turn, makes the Dam a project environmentally friendly.

**Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald**

# Editorial

## Unwavering commitment to peace, stability!

Ethiopia's relentless commitment to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa is increasingly evident through its proactive leadership in regional security. The recent African Defense Ministers Conference in Addis Ababa serves as a prime example of this commitment, highlighting Ethiopia's central role in addressing pressing security challenges across the continent. Under the theme "Africa: United in Peace, Strong in Security," the conference not only showcases Ethiopia's initiative but also reinforces its longstanding engagement in peacekeeping missions.

Since 1951, Ethiopia has made significant contributions to global peace efforts. Ethiopian personnel have participated in numerous peacekeeping operations, with notable deployments in conflict zones such as Somalia, as well as even extending to the Korean War. The sacrifices made by Ethiopian peacekeepers reflect a deep-rooted commitment to peace that transcends national borders.

Babatunde Abayomi Taiwo, the African Union's Head of Political Affairs and Counter Terrorism, has recognized Ethiopia's contributions while addressing the conference. He emphasized the urgent need for African nations to collaborate in the face of escalating conflicts and threats posed by armed groups. His call for unity resonates deeply amid the geopolitical tensions that often undermine African sovereignty and stability. Ethiopia's leadership is crucial in this context; it actively seeks to strengthen defenses and enhance collective security strategies across the continent.

The conference can serve as a pivotal moment for African defense ministers and military leaders, providing a platform to explore actionable outcomes that could lead to "silencing the guns." The discussions centered on the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF), a critical mechanism for responding to crises. However, significant barriers, such as funding and political will, remain challenges to its effectiveness.

Indeed, Ethiopia's commitment to peace extends beyond its borders; it emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and shared responsibility among nations. As the country continues to champion peace initiatives, its role in enhancing military cooperation and combating terrorism becomes ever more significant. This commitment sets a precedent for collective action in a continent beset by various challenges, including armed conflict, political instability, and humanitarian crises.

In an era where regional stability is paramount, Ethiopia stands as a beacon of resilience and commitment. The implications of its efforts extend far beyond the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia's proactive stance positions it as a key player on the global stage, advocating for a unified approach to security that could redefine the continent's geopolitical landscape. This role is particularly important as African nations navigate complex security dynamics influenced by both internal and external factors.

The necessity for collaborative frameworks among African nations cannot be overstated. The increasing interconnectedness of global security means that crises in one nation can quickly affect others. Ethiopia's initiatives, particularly in fostering dialogue and cooperation, are essential in establishing a robust defense against transnational threats. By promoting solidarity among African nations, Ethiopia is not only addressing immediate security concerns but also laying the groundwork for long-term stability and development.

Additionally, Ethiopia's initiatives in peacekeeping and security collaboration demonstrate a practical awareness of the region's interdependencies. A stable Horn of Africa is vital not only for Ethiopia's national interests but also for the continent's overall development goals. As the nation addresses its own issues, including internal conflicts, it understands that maintaining peace in its surroundings is crucial for achieving sustainable growth and prosperity.

In sum, Ethiopia's unwavering dedication to peace and stability, highlighted by its leadership at the recent African Defense Ministers Conference, illustrates its important role in shaping Africa's security landscape. As the continent faces numerous challenges, Ethiopia's proactive stance and historical commitment to peacekeeping are key to promoting unity and resilience. By supporting collective action and international collaboration, Ethiopia is not only striving for a peaceful future for itself but also playing a significant part in the broader aim of a secure and stable Africa.

# Opinion

## International Alliance Discussing Africa's Renewable Energy Priorities, Investment Needs

BY MEKONNEN TESHOME

The Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA), an African country-led international alliance of governments and stakeholders, that has convened its first forum in Nairobi, Kenya, set to discuss Africa's renewable energy priorities and investment needs.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which is spearheading APRA's initiative as a secretariat, the forum that brought together APRA's member countries and partners would play a key role in holding multi-stakeholder discussions and project matchmaking.

IRENA Director General Mr. Francesco La Camera indicated today, in Nairobi that official data from his agency shows that 473 GW and 87% of newly installed capacity of renewable was added in 2023 globally of which Africa contributes only 1.6%.

Therefore, Mr. Francesco said, the high level and expert discussions would focus in enabling frameworks, innovative financing instruments, and the development of supply chains in APRA countries.

IRENA's Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform is an inclusive, multi-stakeholder climate finance mechanism, aims at advancing the global energy transition in developing economies. Platform, 55% of the projects received are from the sub-Saharan Africa. However, most of the projects face challenges in business development stages, never reaching the stage when financiers can look at them, he added.

Cabinet Secretary of the Kenyan Ministry of Petroleum and Energy J. Opiyo Wandayi, in his opening remark at the occasion highlights the crucial role of Renewables investment in Africa as the continent has received only about 3% of global energy investments. "Despite the fact that our continent is home to 17% of the world's population, a population that is projected to double in the next 30 years."

Mr. Francesco pointed out that In 2023 Sub-Saharan Africa energy-transition-related investment was 40 times less than the world average per capita. "This mismatch between investment and need is a clear indicator that we must take bold and deliberate steps to bridge the gap"

He emphasized that climate change and environmental degradation are among the most urgent and formidable global challenges confronting humanity today, and they are progressing at a pace faster than we had anticipated.

"With less than seven years remaining to adjust our course, we are rapidly running out of time to stay within the 1.5-degree pathway and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Tripling the deployment of renewable energy is a crucial part of the strategy to

reach these global targets."

As to him, many countries have embraced renewable energy to accelerate their energy transition efforts. Kenya itself stands as a leader, with over 90% of our electricity coming from renewable sources—primarily geothermal, wind, and solar.

The continent should also implement risk mitigation instruments that will attract private investors, including partial risk guarantees, concessional financing, and innovative financial mechanisms such as blended debt and grant instruments.

According to the General Director, the global investment in energy transition technologies, including energy efficiency, reached a record high of USD 1.3 trillion in 2022. However, annual investments need to at least quadruple to remain on track to achieve the 1.5°C Scenario in IRENA's World Energy Transitions Outlook 2023.

Investments in Renewables are also not flowing at the pace or scale needed to accelerate progress towards universal energy access; investments in off-grid renewable energy solutions in 2021 – at USD 0.5 billion – fell far short of the USD 2.3 billion needed annually in off-grid solar products alone (not including mini-grids).

Despite the investment challenges Africa is facing, the continent has a great potential for energy transition from fossil fuel to renewable ones. Africa is home to abundant renewable energy potential—solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower—which, if properly harnessed, can fuel significant gains in GDP, employment, and human welfare.

The Nairobi Declaration, adopted by Heads of State at the African Climate Summit, has reimagined Africa's future as a thriving, resilient continent that embraces Climate-Positive Growth. It has positioned the transition to renewable energy as a catalyst for energy access, security, and green growth.

Founded at the African Climate Summit in September 2023, by Kenya, Ethiopia, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, with support from Denmark, Germany, the UAE and IRENA, the APRA aims to accelerate energy transitions in respective countries.

African APRA member countries include Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe, with Denmark, Germany, the UAE, and the US as partner countries; the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund as supporting partners; and the IRENA serving as the secretariat.

IRENA's membership comprises 169 countries and the EU. Together, they decide on the Agency's strategic direction and programmatic activities, in line with the global energy discourse and priorities to accelerate the deployment of renewables-based energy transitions worldwide.

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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Renewable energy crucial for economic augmentation

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is now well recognized that energy is a cornerstone of the modern industrial economy as it is demanded in almost all human activities, not limited to heating, lighting, health, food production and storage, education, mineral extraction, industrial production transportation, with essential ingredients.

Modern energy services are a powerful engine of economic and social development, and no country has managed to develop much beyond a subsistence economy without ensuring at least minimum access to energy services for a broad section of its population.

*The Ethiopian Herald* approached with Dejene Adugna, an agro-economist graduated from Haramaya University, to have a piece of information about the association between energy supply and economic progress.

As to Dejenie, electricity represents an essential factor in both consumption and production of goods and services in the economy as a major contributor to improve the standard of living and enhance economic growth. Yes, increased consumption of electricity signifies high economic status of a country as electricity promotes the productivity of labor, capital, and other factors of production.

He said, “A positive correlation between energy and GDP could be due to either a causal link from energy to growth, or from growth to energy, or both. This possibility means that it is necessary to use a means than can separate the two directions of causation and evaluate their relative importance. Many factors play a role in influencing energy supply, not least of which are its availability, price and accessibility.”

The increased cost of accessing energy and the effects on economic growth across the nation is one of the grave concerns. Energy generation was found to have some implications for economic growth across Ethiopia, indeed! It was found that hydro electric and other renewable energy generation sources have been significantly driving growth across the nation, he added.

He further elucidated that given the growing concerns about the consequences of climate change; however, the economic welfare is threatened with increased electricity demand, which associated with increased consumption of fossil fuels. Therefore, increasing the share of renewable energy is the main requirement for sustainable development by reducing damages from non-renewable resources.

As to Dejenie, increasing trends in renewable electricity production is consistent with the fact that policymakers encourage development of renewable energy. The positive relationship between energy and economic growth is clear: income and energy consumption are tightly correlated on every continent and across every time period for which data exists.

Nowhere in the world is there a wealthy country that consumes only a little energy, nor a poor country that consumes a lot. While rural residential electrification does not appear to have meaningful impacts on household incomes among the extreme poor, growing researches link reliable, low-cost energy for firms with. Energy is a fundamental



*Renewable energy sources solar panels and wind turbines for the energy system of the future*

input to economic activity, and African firms identify poor infrastructure, especially power, as a leading constraint to productivity and expansion. This is most often established by examining the relationship of firm productivity to electrical outages.

The good thing is, he said, Ethiopia does have a range of energy sources and apt ground to utilize them accordingly. Hence, the energy generation has to receive due attention thereby coming up with sustainable energy supply and recurrent electricity generation process.

In spite of its being endowed with enormous natural resources and energy spots/means, Ethiopia has remained plagued with poor governance and weak institutions making many policies not to have any effect on growth and economic development across the nation. However, there is a growing concern to make the energy sector to grow, Dejenie said.

“Energy use in general across the nation is on the increase making since population growth and industrial development in Ethiopia continues to exert strain on current generation infrastructure making the nation to be constantly engaged in development of more plants and use of cheaper and alternative methods in the generation process.”

True, the world is heading towards another challenging era since global energy demands are on the increase, and threats have been found to matter in the energy production and access process. Some threats identified, negatively affect energy security in general including the cost of accessing energy, environmental issues associated with the generation process, growing domestic consumption demands and industrial demands for energy, he opined.

It was found that energy generating sources have been improving energy security in regional states with renewable and gas energy sources that had positive significant effects on mitigating energy generation disruptions across the nation.

Most renewable energy sources have low environmental impacts at both local and global levels compared with conventional fossil

fuel energy technologies; they are available in a wide range of capacities; they offer fuel diversity and can make use of local resources to deliver energy to local users without extensive infrastructure investments.

A prime reason is their lack of cost-effectiveness, availability and reliability of the current renewable energy technologies. Furthermore, certain renewable systems are able to provide power only intermittently, and may need storage via batteries to give greater availability. It is worth noting that biomass technologies are an exception to this rule, as they utilize a resource that can be stored for use on demand when required, and which is not directly subject to short-term variations.

Bringing renewable energy systems to technical maturity will require substantial cost reductions, and continued efforts will be needed in demonstrating their contribution in competition with conventional fuels. A transition to a renewable based system will depend on political willingness to internalize the environmental and social costs of fossil fuel use, and on the successful development and deployment of technologies in appropriate commercially viable applications. Financial, administrative and institutional entities will also have to adapt their policies to take account of renewable energy systems so that barriers to market entry can be minimized.

The current patterns of energy production and use, which have shaped the development process in the past, are unsustainable. The energy challenge now faced by the nation is to provide energy services that allow all citizens to achieve a decent standard of living, consistent with sustainable human development. This link between energy and development remains a key factor in development policy. It will be shaped by current trends of globalization, markets and popular participation in decision-making processes, the changing roles of government and energy utilities, and the mix of sources of external funding.

As to Dejenie, agriculture is an important, but not dominant, user of energy in developing countries like Ethiopia. Nevertheless, improving energy services for rural people

should include increasing the energy input to agriculture so that gains in productivity, enhanced food security and rural economic development can be made.

He said, “Providing access to energy services involves the conversion of primary energy resources as well as the manufacturing, construction of required technologies and distribution networks. These activities take material from the environment and inevitably split them into desirable products and wastes of various forms. The latter are returned to the environment, increasingly at levels beyond the carrying capacities of ecosystems, and threatens to have environmental damages undermining economic gains.”

Achieving even cost effective improvements in energy efficiency is commonly hindered by a range of market and non-market barriers and failures and many of them can be described as principal-agent problems. The extraordinary large number of actors involved, fragmented institutional framework and often comparatively small size of individual investment needs for energy efficiency improvements and long payback time make this market little attractive for individual investors.

Energy is not an end in itself but a prerequisite for economic development including for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and for the achievement of growth. It is crucial for the necessary transition to a more equitable and sustainable world and one where all have access to the energy services required for comfort and for a secure and healthy livelihood.

In general, electricity provides the essential key to energy access, and is the energy prime mover enabling technical innovation and productivity growth. A healthy economy is needed to ensure that the energy demands are met and investments and infrastructure work is carried out and that resources for Research and Development flow to meet the needs and requirements for a sustainable future. Most clean technologies are capital-intensive, but make energy demand and fuel consumption lower.

# Art & Culture

## The impact of African scripts on the evolution of writing

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

What is the place of writing in human civilization? The beginning, origin, or discovery of writing represents a critical phase in human civilization. "Writing has been part of human culture and history for thousands of years. It was originally developed as a way for people to keep records of economic transactions, but it soon diversified and was used for other purposes. The first writing system was developed in ancient Mesopotamia and was cuneiform."

The cuneiform system of writing was used in the ancient Middle East. The name was coined from Latin and French roots and means "wedge-shaped". It has been the modern designation from the early 18th century onward. Cuneiform was the most widespread and historically significant writing system in the ancient Middle East. Cuneiform writing is therefore one of the oldest forms of writing known because people write it using a reed stylus cut to make a wedge-shaped mark on a clay table.

According to available information, "The world's very first invention of writing took place over 5000 years ago in the Middle East before it was reinvented in China and Central America. Today, almost all human activities education political systems and computer code rely on this technology."

Although writing was started elsewhere in the world, Africa has also a share of its contribution to the development of the first written communication known in history. In a study just published in Current Anthropology, a team of researchers at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, Germany, showed that writing very quickly becomes 'compressed' for efficient reading and writing.

To arrive at this insight they turned to a rare African writing system that has fascinated outsiders since the early 19th century.

"The Vai script of Liberia was created from scratch in about 1834 by eight completely illiterate men who wrote in ink made from crushed berries," says lead author Dr. Piers Kelly, now at the University of New England, Australia. The Vai language had never before been written down.

According to Vai teacher Bai Leesor Sherman, the script was always taught informally from a literate teacher to a single apprentice student. It remains so successful that today it is even used to communicate pandemic health messages.

"There's a famous hypothesis that letters evolve from pictures to abstract signs. But there are also plenty of abstract letter shapes in early writing. We predicted, instead, that signs will start as relatively complex and then become simpler across new generations of writers and readers."



From the above quotation we learn that the Vai script of Liberia was created in the early 19th century. At this point, it would be legitimate to ask what the place of Ethiopian ancient Ge'ez script which is thousands of years old and why the people who conducted the above research have overlooked or did not mention the contribution of Ethiopian ancient wisdom to the development of African script. According to sources, Ge'ez is "a script used as an abugida for several Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea." "Furthermore, Ge'ez was derived from the Ancient South Arabian script from the region." Ge'ez dates back at least from the second century and belongs to the only part of Africa that was never colonized by a European power."

Another source indicates that "The Ge'ez language is believed by scholars to be 5000 years old making it the oldest of all languages. It is also considered, "the father of languages". According to this information, Ge'ez is older than the first written script in the world. Ge'ez it at least as old as the first script that was invented in the Middle East. It is only 5000 years old. Why did the researchers of the above-quoted article have overlooked the place Ge'ez occupies in the history of the development of the written scrip in Africa? It is unfair to overlook Ethiopia's contribution to the rise and evolution of African written languages.

"The Ge'ez language is considered even older than the Hebrew language and other such Northern Semitic languages like Arabic. Scholars believe the language to be around 5000 years old. It is the father of all languages, and it is still spoken in Ethiopia, used as the liturgical language by Orthodox Christianity in the region."

According to the above quotations, Ge'ez, which is the forbearer Amharic, which is the national language of Ethiopia, one of Africa's oldest civilizations.

Research into the origin of African scripts as well as in African languages in general should be conducted fairly, accurately and objectively. Failure to conduct linguistic development without accuracy or objectivity tends to undermine the status of original written languages like Ge'ez we saw in the above example while it unnecessarily elevates other minor languages or scripts thereby creating an unbalanced or a subjective approach that would undermine the plausibility of the research results. Such research biases can result either from the research methodology or the lack of adequate information in the research process itself.

Let us take another example closely related to the above issue. How many national languages are there in Africa? According to available data, "There are 36 different official languages across Africa and it was identified that the major and dominant official languages in Africa are English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili." There are at least two inaccuracies in the above quotation. The first is that English, French and Portuguese are not African languages.

These languages were only chosen as mediums of official communications. As such they do not represent languages spoken in Africa by Africans. In Ethiopia for instance, English is widely spoken but it is not a national language simply because the country has never been colonized by a European power. That is why Amharic has become the official language of the country.

The second inaccuracy in the above quotation is that only Swahili is considered one of the dominant official languages in Africa. Although it is true that Swahili is an official language, it is not however an official language spoken by the majority of the people of a country. Swahili is spoken in East African countries and that is true. By the same token, Amharic and Afan Oromo or Oromiffa should be considered two of the most dominant national languages in Ethiopia and should be indicated in the research results. Amharic and Oromiffa both can become the official languages of the country. There are 180 countries in the world that have official languages while out of these countries 80 of them have designated more than one language as official. A country can even have more than two languages as official languages.

This does not however mean that many Africa countries have their own alphabets or scripts. For that matter and according to official sources, "Ethiopia is the only African country with its own alphabet. It's also the world's oldest living alphabet, which is called Ethiopic. This is also one of the longest scripts with 345 letters." There are 293 known writing systems in the world. The Ge'ez script which is the oldest in Africa was born around 8-9 century for writing the Ge'ez language. The script is used today in Ethiopia and Eritrea, for the Amharic, Tigrigna and several other languages.

The impact of written scripts on the development of literature in Africa is quite obvious. It is estimated that African literature has origins dating back to thousands of years. It was started in ancient Egypt with hieroglyphs or writing which uses pictures to represent words. The oldest literary works in Africa date from about the 4th century. However African literature as such dates from the 20th century or later. According to available data, there are three distinct periods in African literature. They are, the colonial, the post-colonial and contemporary periods.

Many countries in Africa do not have literature produced by their national languages. Most of the written literature of sub-Saharan Africa has been produced by two major colonizing movements; that of Islamic Arabs in the 7th century and that of Christian Europeans in the 19th century. "African literature then expanded to include hymns, romance, epic, poetry fictional narratives, epistles, diaries, philosophy, biography and autobiography. It should be noted here that written African literature is a relatively latecomer and has caught up with European literature in what be considered a relatively short time. While oral literature across Africa dates back to earlier periods, modern literature in Ethiopia is also a relatively recent phenomenon although the country can legitimately boast as being the "cradle" of written script in Africa.

# Global Affairs

## Climate change: Care for humans, other species, the natural environment is the key to a just transition

Communities across the world are facing two worsening crises: a climate crisis and a care crisis.

The evidence and urgency on the climate crisis has been expertly illustrated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The root cause of this crisis is the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This is due to excessive exploitation of fossil fuels, deforestation and industrial processes. In short, it is a result of development processes that have not been based on caring for the environment.

Less discussed is the care crisis. This refers to a society's capacity to maintain livelihoods in households raise children and sustain communities. In short, the care crisis is a result of not investing enough in caring for each other.

Addressing these crises requires acknowledgement of the interdependency of people, other species and the physical environment. Our failure to invest sufficiently in caring for each other, other species and our environment is a root cause of climate change. We refer to this as the "care-climate nexus". As the effects of climate change intensify, we will need to care for each other more than ever before, and we need systems to enable better care of our environment.

There is a growing discussion linking gender and climate change. However, the links between climate change and care have been largely under-researched.

The climate crisis stems, similarly to the care crisis, from an economic paradigm that undervalues care – both for each other and for our physical environment. The concept of care therefore can serve as a powerful focal point for understanding the climate challenge and for policies towards a sustainable and equitable future.

This is the gap that the "care-climate nexus" project led by the Southern Centre for Inequality studies, in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre and a group of feminist economists and climate scientists from across the world, plans to fill.

The research project has two main objectives. First is to map the conceptual links between climate change and care, second is to inform and support policymakers to include care in climate policy. For example, significant investments in quality care that supports climate adaptation are as important as building resilient infrastructure and can reduce the burden on those who carry out care work. Climate policy that does not center care risks replicating or even exacerbating structural inequalities.



### Undervaluing care and nature

The climate and care crises have resulted from the undervaluing of two things – nature and care work.

Indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) place value on – and reward – unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Too little – or no – value is placed on the natural environment. The consequences are proving dire. Continued exploitation of raw materials and natural resources has come at the expense of the environment. The undervaluing of nature has caused pollution, loss of habitats, extinction of species and declining biodiversity.

Similarly, no value is placed on unpaid care work. What is measured and "valuable" in the calculations of GDP in an economy excludes unpaid care work, even though it is essential for sustaining livelihoods and therefore economic activity.

Care work has been cast as "women's work", although men do it too. On average, women and girls in the global south undertake over three times more unpaid care work than men.

The disproportionate responsibility for this work restricts women and girls' opportunities to pursue education or employment. The undervaluation of care work reflects gender norms that regard women's work as inherently less valuable and as something that is endless and free.

Climate change poses threats to food

security, water accessibility, health and livelihoods, among many other impacts. Unpaid or under-paid tasks like providing food, collecting water and caring for the young, ill and elderly will be made more difficult by the impacts of climate change.

As we have shown above, these tasks are often, but not exclusively, carried out by women. There is also a growing trend in the global North for this work to be outsourced to women immigrants and the working class.

### Anchoring care in climate policy

It is possible for humans to contribute to the regeneration of the environment instead of its depletion. But this calls for a rethink: what we value and whether this is represented in our current economic systems and policies.

The care-climate nexus conceptual framework makes two key arguments: One is for an expansive view of care that goes beyond person-to-person care to include caring for the environment. Centering care in responding to the climate crisis requires understanding diverse meanings and articulations of care that include understandings of care in different contexts from the global South. Second, care is not only a practical concern but also an ethical and political one. It involves recognizing that everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world is significant and crucial for life on Earth.

A focus on care and climate change means understanding and addressing

interconnected socio-economic challenges. These include the impact of climate change on the provision of care. Climate change adds to the unequal burden of unpaid caregiving and care work, which carries substantial economic and social repercussions. The labour that goes into maintaining households, rising and birthing children and sustaining communities more broadly is being undermined by an economic and social system that systematically undervalues care.

Many in rural communities in the global South work on farms, where their agricultural labour is seen as an extension of their domestic care duties and is often precarious. Yet rural communities often do more than their share of environmental care. These forms of work should be protected and valued.

The growing privatization of care services globally, like healthcare, and cuts in public expenditure on these vital services, has made it difficult for the majority to obtain proper care. Quality healthcare, for example, is out of reach for many.

The central theme of the upcoming annual Conference of the Parties (COP) in November is climate finance. COP is a multilateral forum that deliberates on global climate policy: this is a crucial space to emphasize and put forward proposals for better resourced caring economies as a way to build climate resilience.

**SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION**



# Law & Politics



## A millstone in the Nile basin

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The Nile Basin, one of the world's most critical water systems, has long been a focal point for geopolitical tension and cooperation among the countries that share its waters. The CFA, which was initiated in 2010, aims to foster collaboration among these nations, with Ethiopia playing a central role in its development and implementation.

The CFA was established to promote equitable and sustainable management of the Nile's resources, emphasising the importance of cooperation over unilateral actions. It seeks to replace colonial-era agreements that allocated the river's waters primarily to Egypt and Sudan, often at the expense of upstream nations like Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. The framework is designed to enhance transparency, build trust, and facilitate joint projects that benefit all Nile Basin countries.

Another milestone in the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) is approaching. The agreement intended to be enforced on October 13 formally came into effect. Thus, the commission is about to be established, and the framework will be ratified. It is well known that numerous upstream nations have ratified the CFA, which benefits every basin nation. The downstream nations, which do not contribute any water for the river, have not yet approved it, nevertheless.

However, Egypt is still trying to take the hegemony and wants the colonial-era agreements, which are unacceptable to the countries that have the highest water share on the river. Even most of the upstream countries, by understanding the equitable utilization of the river, have entered the framework and ratified it. In the path of the recent stand of the CFA, Ethiopia's role in it is indispensable. As the country follows the principle of mutual benefit with its neighbouring countries, the country tirelessly works for CFA ratification with

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all countries that are part of the Nile River.

As the source of the Blue Nile, which contributes about 85 per cent of the river's flow, Ethiopia's role in the CFA is crucial. The country has positioned itself as a leader in advocating for the rights of upstream nations. Ethiopia's commitment to the CFA is evident in its on-going efforts to engage with its neighbours and others to resolve disputes amicably.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which aims to generate electricity for millions and drive economic growth, has raised concerns among downstream countries. Despite these tensions, Ethiopia has maintained that the GERD is essential for its development and is committed to adhering to the principles outlined in the CFA.

While the CFA represents a significant step toward cooperative water management, challenges remain. The differing priorities and concerns of the Nile Basin countries have led to disagreements over water allocation and usage.

Ethiopia has sought to address these

concerns through dialogue and negotiation. The country has participated in various rounds of talks facilitated by international organizations, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that respects the rights of all nations involved. The country's willingness to engage with its neighbours reflects its commitment to the principles of the CFA.

The success of the CFA after more than ten years of labour necessitates that all nations in the Nile Basin unite and seek common ground. For the Nile's resources to be managed sustainably and fairly, Ethiopia must take the initiative to promote communication and cooperation.

Ethiopia's Foreign Affairs Ministry said that the CFA's tenets correct historical wrongs, create equitable use, and promote shared responsibility and understanding after it came into effect on October 13, 2024.

The Ministry congratulated the People of the Nile Basin States on the official entry into force of CFA, noting that it is a remarkable achievement that has been in the making for over a decade.

The dedication, perseverance, and collaborative spirit displayed by state parties throughout this process would, no doubt, enhance cooperation and provide the impetus to realize the equitable and reasonable management and utilization of the shared water resource, the ministry stated in a statement that was posted on its social media.

The Ministry also underlined that Ethiopia is confident that the entry into force of this agreement will yield significant benefits for the basin states and contribute to a more prosperous and sustainable future. CFA stipulates that each Nile Basin State has the right to use, within its territory, the waters of the Nile River System in a manner that is consistent with the other basic principles.

In a media statement yesterday, Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Energy, Dr. Ing.

Habtamu Itefa, emphasized that the Nile Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement guarantees equitable benefits for all countries within the basin and does not adversely affect any party.

Regarding the implementation of the CFA, the Minister announced that the agreement has entered into force as a legal framework for the African Union.

He said that this has changed the situation that made the downstream countries use the Nile River as a leader and allows for fair use.

He mentioned that Ethiopia has been making a lot of efforts to prepare the cooperation framework of the Nile Basin and to have it signed by the countries in the basin.

The minister said that the purpose of the framework agreement is not to harm anyone and that it is legally enforceable and ensures the cooperation and common development and equal benefits of the countries in the basin.

Urging all basin countries to join the agreement and faithfully implement its principles, Ethiopia's Minister said, "Let's work together to build a future where the Nile will be a source of hope, where we can alleviate challenges together and create a better world for ourselves and future generations."

Finally, he extended gratitude to the international community for their cooperation in this journey and requested to further strengthen their partnership in the journey to a new phase of cooperation.

Overall, Ethiopia's leadership in the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework highlights its commitment to regional cooperation and sustainable development. As the stakes continue to rise, the future of the Nile will depend on the ability of its basin countries to work together, ensuring that the river remains a source of life and prosperity for generations to come.

# INTERNATIONAL News

## SAHTAC CALLS FOR INCREASED FUNDING FOR AFRICA'S HEALTH RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

The Strengthening African Health Technologies Advocacy Coalition (SAHTAC) together with its regional partners are mobilising resources to address Africa's health challenges effectively. Through advocacy for the strengthening of the continent's health systems by increasing funding for health research, development and innovation, SAHTAC aims to come up with urgent targeted solutions to address the gaps that persist in research capacities, funding, and talent retention in Africa's health research ecosystem.

Africa represents 15% (1.5 billion) of the population which is expected to increase to almost 2.5 billion by 2050. The continent faces a 25% burden of disease which results in over \$2.4 trillion losses in the continent's gross domestic production (GDP). On the other hand, Africa is responsible for only 2% of the world's research output and only 3%

of the global drug manufacturing takes place locally while countries import 70 to 90% of pharmaceuticals.

The groundbreaking findings of the Purpose 1 and Purpose 2 clinical trials of the twice-yearly Lenacapavir injection for HIV prevention in South Africa and Ghana calls for equitable access to the life-saving health technology for African adolescent girls and women. The Lecapavir injection was found to provide 100% protection from HIV infection as compared to the daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

SAHTAC together with its collaboration partners are also leading a campaign calling for Lenacapavir and other health innovations to be accessible to key populations as the world chases the goal to end new HIV infections by 2030.

The campaign kicked off with a webinar which was held on 30th of September and

moderated by Neetha Morah, a Senior Research Manager, HIV and other Infectious Diseases Research Unit (HIDRU). Featured in the panel was Professor Linda Gail Bekker, Chief Executive Officer at Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, Yvette Raphael, an HIV Advocate and Executive Director for Advocate for Prevention of HIV in Africa (APHA) and Makaita Gombe, Market Access Director. The panel shared valuable insights into the efficacy and safety of Lenacapavir and explored its role in HIV prevention specifically within key vulnerable populations, such as adolescents and young women, who are disproportionately affected by HIV. The discussion also highlighted the importance of accessibility, affordability, and community engagement in the successful implementation of this new preventive approach.

*Source: SAHTAC*

## Africa's Great Green Wall will only combat desertification and poverty by harnessing local solutions

In the rural village of Tésékéré, the increasing number and intensity of droughts linked to climate change is making the lives and livelihoods of the local Fulani communities increasingly vulnerable. Here, in the northern Sahel desert region of Senegal (known as the Ferlo), the pastoral population walks over dry, dusty ground with their livestock in search of grazing areas and working borehole water pumps. In favourable years, these farmers can stay in the fields around their local borehole, but climate change is forcing them to move further afield to find pasture to feed their cattle. In the small Ivory Coast town of Kani, a farmer is concerned about the increase in plantation areas to the detriment of forests, which no longer provide shade. The scarcity and fluctuation of rainfall is altering the sowing periods for rice, maize and yams, and the intermittent nature of the rains is leading to a drop in production quality.

These issues of gradual desertification – where more of the land slowly becomes desert – affects both nature and people. As soil degrades, people migrate to different areas and it can be harder for them to access health services and education while undermining subsistence and production economies, therefore increasing poverty. As a response, the African Union set up an ambitious continent-wide megaproject in 2007 to address these social-ecological issues and combat poverty. The Great Green Wall initiative is a tree planting restoration project that stretches from Senegal to Djibouti, 5,000 miles (8,000km) across Africa's Sahel region.

In Tésékéré, bare, scattered plots of fenced-off land covered in cracked soil is now being used to test out techniques for growing seedlings and protect it

from further damage by grazing cattle. Winter crops such as peanuts or black-eyed peas are being grown based on an agroecological model, a sustainable farming strategy considering ecological processes.

But large-scale projects like this often don't consider the needs of local people or places. Our new research shows that the Great Green Wall won't work effectively unless it considers more localised contexts.

At the other end of the continent, the Green Legacy Initiative, a project launched by the Ethiopian government, claims to have planted 566 million trees in one day. In Ivory Coast, which lies outside the original route, local and state authorities see the project as a means of stabilising the ecosystem. However, local populations are concerned that it will be implemented in an ad hoc, unstable and unsustainable manner. In short, the project gives rise to a diversity of opinions and, above all, a multitude of implementation strategies.

Two decades after its launch, the Great Green Wall project is not meeting the expectations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other independent experts, especially regarding forest cover increase in the area and global implementation of the project.

In 2021, the French president Emmanuel Macron launched the Great Green Wall accelerator to bring the project into line with a new political timeframe to speed it up.

With investment of US\$19 billion (£14.82 billion), more action, such as land restoration and investment in farming, can be rolled out across Africa, so the focus is now on large-scale change rather than localised projects. The Great Green Wall

has become an umbrella term, a brand encompassing many development projects managed by different international and intergovernmental organisations. This is at odds with our research findings confirming that the ambitious aims of the project aren't being implemented locally in an effective manner.

This "takeover" of the project by developed countries prompts us to question what the project has now become and its ability to meet its original purpose.

Set to fail?

The Great Green Wall will fail unless it returns to its original aim of being a pan-African project made up of a multitude of aspirations, imaginations and local social-ecological contexts. Project funding alone is not enough to ensure the success of the project – it needs local appropriation. Success should not be measured solely in terms of how many trees are being planted, but on whether local people see a positive difference from the project in their areas and on their lives.

From Senegal to Ethiopia, our research shows that the Great Green Wall implies a diversity of world views. The project is therefore implemented specifically in each region, in each country, to form a project mosaic. The initiative loses its substance and its capacity for local appropriation when homogenised and globalised to fit into external political agendas.

An agroecological initiative like this one only works when it involves the people living on the ground. More than simply an eco-project, it is a diverse, pan-African and locally embedded social-ecological initiative with scope to make substantial change at scale if executed well.

*Source: The Conversation*

## SoPharma announces the launch of the renowned Korean beauty line Erborian in Morocco

SoPharma has launched production of the Erborian beauty product range in Morocco, a line that blends Korea's ancient beauty heritage with the demands of the most modern consumers. Known for its hybrid formulas combining makeup and skincare, Erborian stands out for its commitment to quality, innovation, and ingredient safety.

With a strong commitment to "Safe & Conscious" formulations, Erborian strives to offer the best skincare, while adhering to the strictest European regulatory standards.

Commenting on the launch, Ismail Cheikh Lahlou, General Manager of SoPharma, said: "We are proud to launch the renowned Erborian product line in Morocco. Erborian is distinguished by a unique approach to cosmetics: each ingredient, whether natural or synthetic, is carefully selected for its effectiveness and safety. By becoming the exclusive distributor of the Erborian brand in Morocco, SoPharma brings the art of Korean beauty fusion through innovative dermo-cosmetic products."

Erborian products draw their strength from iconic ingredients in Korean tradition, such as Centella Asiatica, Ginseng, Bamboo, and Yuza, known for their benefits in brightening and regenerating the skin. Erborian is committed to continuously improving its formulas. The brand's Quality Lab constantly tests and integrates next-generation ingredients to enhance the user experience while reducing environmental impact.

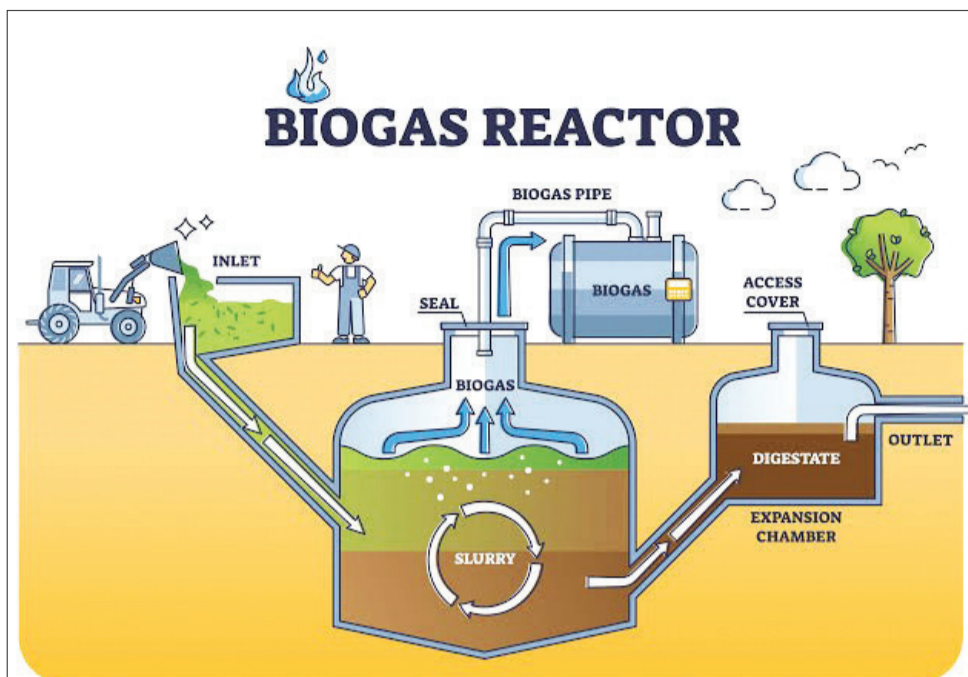
With the launch of Erborian, SoPharma reaffirms its role as a pioneer in the health and wellness sector in Morocco, bringing beauty solutions inspired by Korean rituals to Moroccan consumers concerned about their skin and well-being.

Erborian products are now available for purchase in pharmacies, parapharmacies, and through all SoPharma-approved skincare retail partners.

SoPharma is a Moroccan company operating in the health and wellness sector, founded in 2022. Since its creation in 2007, Erborian ("Herbs of the Orient") has aimed to take care of consumers' skin by helping them rediscover their skin! Perhaps bringing a smile to their face in front of the mirror and positively impacting their self-esteem. Erborian is distributed in more than 80 countries around the world.

*Source: SoPharma*

# Planet Earth



## Ethiopia harnessing biogas technology as alternative source of clean energy

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia stands at a pivotal point in its energy transition and environmental concerns. Biogas presents a sustainable solution that not only addresses energy needs but also enhances waste management and agricultural productivity.

Biogas technology also provides a clean energy source for cooking, lighting and electricity. In this way it promotes rural development and poverty alleviation. Ethiopia is now striving to meet its ambitious climate goals and improve energy security. Hence leveraging biogas presents a dual opportunity through reducing reliance on fuel wood and fossil fuel while promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

During his brief stay with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Environmentalist and lecture of Addis Ababa University, Tadesse Alemu (PhD), stated that a critical issue facing the country that handling of waste. According to him, a staggering 60-70% of the waste collected across various regions consists of dry waste. This neglected resource, he argues, should be recycled to combat air pollution and mitigate health problems associated with waste mismanagement.

He pointed out that dry waste can be transformed into valuable resources like biogas and compost. Biogas, primarily composed of 50-60% methane and carbon dioxide, is a clean and renewable energy source. When burned, it emits no smoke, making it a safer alternative for cooking and heating.

Biogas is produced through the anaerobic digestion of organic materials such as animal manure, agricultural residues, and food waste. The country's energy sector is heavily reliant on biomass, particularly for cooking and heating. This reliance leads to deforestation, air pollution, and health issues associated with indoor smoke. Biogas can provide a cleaner alternative, significantly reducing reliance on traditional biomass fuels.

With its agricultural economy and a significant livestock population, Ethiopia has the raw materials necessary to harness biogas for energy production. The expert emphasized that this eco-friendly energy source could significantly benefit rural areas where access to electricity

remains limited.

Despite the significant potential of biogas, several challenges hinder its widespread adoption in the country. To this, many rural communities lack awareness of biogas technology and its benefits. Educational programs are essential to inform farmers and local populations about how biogas systems can improve their livelihoods by providing a reliable energy source and reducing waste.

The scholars mentioned currently, there is a shortage of trained technicians who can install and maintain biogas digesters. Developing vocational training programs in biogas technology could build local expertise, creating jobs while ensuring that the systems are effectively managed.

He also noted a significant challenge in expanding biogas production is water scarcity. The production of biogas requires a consistent supply of water, which can be a limiting factor in many regions of the country.

Additionally, the initial investment for biogas systems can be high, deterring many farmers from making the switch. Although some government initiatives and NGOs provide subsidies and micro-financing options, these are often not enough to cover the costs. A more robust financial framework, including loans with favorable terms and incentives for biogas adoption, is necessary to encourage investment.

A supportive policy environment is critical for the growth of the biogas sector. While Ethiopia has made strides in developing renewable energy policies, there is a need for more specific regulations governing biogas production and use. Clear guidelines regarding land use, waste management, and energy tariffs can create a stable environment that encourages investment.

Biogas production relies on a consistent supply of organic waste. In rural areas, agricultural residues, livestock manure, and food waste are abundant, yet their collection and transportation can be logistically challenging. Implementing community-based waste collection systems could enhance feedstock availability and promote a circular economy.

Despite this challenge, the expert cited impressive statistics from biogas initiatives across the

country. Between 2014 and 2017, approximately 20,000 biogas systems were installed in various regions, including 4,500 in Amhara, 5,500 in Oromia, 3,500 in the Southern Region, 4,500 in Tigray, and more. These installations have directly benefited around 120,000 people, providing them with cleaner energy and reducing reliance on harmful fuels like coal, he added.

Hussein Ali, a PhD candidate in Environmental Science at Addis Ababa University, echoed Tadesse's opinions, adding that biogas can enhance soil fertility. The leftover digested sludge from biogas production can be utilized as a nutrient rich liquid fertilizer or compost, thereby boosting agricultural productivity.

He stressed that compost derived from waste is often superior to imported fertilizers, as it reduces foreign exchange expenditure and more encouraging the productivity of Agriculture output when compare to foreign fertilizer. So, the government should promote local agricultural practices.

However, he pointed out that the government's inadequate focus on waste management has hindered farmers from fully utilizing this valuable fertilizer. Without comprehensive policies and support the recycling technology, many farmers remain unaware of the potential benefits of biogas and compost, which could significantly enhance their yields and reduce costs.

The environmental and economic implications of effective waste management are profound. By converting dry waste into biogas and compost, Ethiopia could not only address pressing environmental concerns but also stimulate local economies and improve the livelihoods of farmers.

To address these challenges and fully utilize the potential of the biogas industry, the country must be Launching nationwide awareness campaigns can help educate communities about the significance of biogas. Moreover, Collaborating with local NGOs and community leaders can facilitate outreach and foster trust. Demonstration projects showcasing successful biogas systems can serve as practical examples, inspiring others to adopt similar technologies.

Furthermore, the government not only collaborating NGO organization but also to alli-

ance with educational institutions, can develop training programs for technicians, farmers, and entrepreneurs. These programs should cover installation, operation, and maintenance of biogas systems, ensuring that knowledge is disseminated throughout the community.

The scholars stressed that the government can establish targeted financial support mechanisms to reduce the burden of initial costs. This could include low-interest loans, grants, and tax incentives for both individual farmers and companies investing in biogas technology. Creating partnerships with financial institutions can also help develop tailored financing options.

The experts underlined that the country should develop a comprehensive policy framework that explicitly addresses the biogas sector. This framework should include subsidies for biogas technology, incentives for research and development, and regulations that facilitate the integration of biogas into the national energy grid. Engaging stakeholders in policy formulation can ensure that the needs and challenges of various communities are considered.

Investing in research and development can lead to innovative solutions that enhance biogas production and efficiency. So the government should be alliance with universities and research institutions can foster technological advancements, such as improved digesters and more efficient feedstock processing techniques.

Furthermore, the government should by addressing the various barriers to biogas development, the country can harness this resource to improve energy access, enhance rural livelihoods, and contribute to environmental conservation. The Ethiopian government recognizes this potential and has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix. Biogas can play a crucial role in achieving these targets, contributing to energy security, rural development, and environmental sustainability.

Besides, the country can turn its waste into wealth, paving the way for a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future. The call to action is clear: it is time for Ethiopia to embrace the recycling revolution and harness the power of biogas for the benefit of its people and the environment.