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ENDC engages Diaspora in sustainable peace initiatives

- **Receives Diaspora agendas**

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDISABABA - The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has unveiled plans to engage Diaspora communities worldwide in discussions concerning the activities undertaken during the agenda-setting and gathering processes for National Dialogue.

In a media briefing held yesterday, ENDC Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya emphasized the commission's commitment to collaborating with the Diaspora, recognizing their crucial role in promoting and sustaining durable peace in Ethiopia. He noted that the Diaspora is one of five key actors significantly contributing to peace and development efforts, and they possess a deep understanding of the importance of dialogue and negotiation.

See ENDC engages ... page 3

Regional concerns rise as AUSSOM set to replace ATMIS in 2025

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The transition from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) requires careful management to avoid creating a security vacuum, experts warn.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) has approved the Concept of Operations (CONOPs) for AUSSOM, which is set to take over from ATMIS on January 1, 2025, marking a critical shift in the peacekeeping landscape of the war-torn nation.

Concerns have emerged among regional

countries and various Somalis themselves, especially following Egypt's proposal to participate in the new mission alongside Djibouti. Many Ethiopian politicians and scholars believe that Egypt's involvement may be driven by hidden agendas;

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Ministry working on exploring space science benefits

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Oromia Tourism Week opens to public

- **Ethiopia's tourism satellite account revs up industry**

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) officially launched the fourth annual Oromia Tourism Week (OTW), emphasizing the introduction of Ethiopia's first-ever Tourism Satellite Account to modernize the tourism sector and foster its growth.

In his opening remarks yesterday, MoT State Minister Sileshi Girma reiterated the ministry's commitment to realizing the nation's vision for a digital Ethiopia by 2025.

The Tourism Satellite Account is expected to provide comprehensive data on the economic impact of tourism, allowing for improved service standards and better visitor experiences. As part of these modernization



Sileshi Girma

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News

Experts advocate for urgent psychological support in Tigray

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Rehabilitation efforts are reviving war-affected communities, emphasizing the urgent need for collaboration to foster sustainable peace and peaceful conflict resolution, according to psychologists.

Tigest Waltaniguse, a psychologist who has provided psychosocial support in conflict-affected areas over the past five years, shared with *The Ethiopian Herald* that significant rehabilitation activities have been initiated following the severe repercussions of the Tigray War. She highlighted that psychological support is crucial for restoring the community's former status.

“Psychological damage is internal, and communities affected by conflict have been significantly exposed to such trauma. While they have received various forms of support—food, clothing, and medicine—the level of psychological assistance remains low due to a lack of attention and a shortage of experts,” Tigest pointed out that communities in Tigray are exhibiting various symptoms, including revenge,



Tigist Waltaniguse

hopelessness, depression, and insomnia.

“These issues must be addressed promptly to mitigate future risks to the nation,” she emphasized.

The expert also mentioned that Trauma-Informed Care has been implemented in post-war areas of Tigray, helping communities regain productivity and stability. Similar initiatives are underway in Amhara and Afar states. Traditional institutions, such as edir



Fasika Amdslasie (MD)

and religious organizations, have played a supportive role in the rehabilitation process, fostering connections among community members post-conflict.

“Assessment shows that psychological treatment has led to notable improvements in conflict-affected communities in northern Ethiopia. Groups of 20 individuals have been organized to provide psychosocial support. However, ongoing constructive

activities are essential in conflict-ridden areas to ensure sustainable peace, security, and increased productivity,” she stated.

Tigest called on domestic and global development partners, stakeholders, and the government to collaborate toward achieving sustainable peace, paralleling efforts to combat the HIV and COVID-19 pandemics in Ethiopia.

Fasika Amdslasie (MD), a surgeon at Mekele University in Tigray, remarked that the conflict has been doubly devastating, particularly in an economically disadvantaged nation. While some communities have benefited from rehabilitation efforts, many continue to live in trauma due to the war.

He underscored that psychological damage is pervasive among conflict-affected communities. “Psychological experts are few in both Tigray and Ethiopia as a whole. Innovative solutions, such as the short call service 8566 in Tigray, are vital for addressing the needs of affected communities through mobile outreach,” he advised.



Yango joins forces to digital payment, healthcare access

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Yango, a global ride-hailing service, has announced two landmark partnerships aimed at enhancing both digital payment solutions and healthcare access in Ethiopia.

Collaborating with Awash Bank and Amakari Doctors, Yango seeks to improve the commuter experience while prioritizing the well-being of its drivers.

Through its partnership with Awash Bank, Yango will promote the use of digital payment methods, advancing Ethiopia's financial inclusion efforts. Awash Bank customers and employees will enjoy a 15% discount on their first three Yango rides, while the integration of the bank's payment platforms will offer secure, efficient payment solutions. This initiative aligns with the country's goals of expanding access to banking services and promoting digital payments among underserved populations.

Yango's Country Manager Yekenalem Abebe (PhD) highlighted the significance of the partnership, stating, “We are simplifying the payment process and offering exclusive value to our users, while setting the foundation for digital payments to become the standard in Ethiopia's transportation sector.”

Similarly, Awash Bank Chief Digital Banking Officer Kefyalew Shiferaw reaffirmed the bank's commitment to Ethiopia's digital transformation, describing the partnership as a “reflection of innovation and support for a more inclusive financial landscape.”

On the healthcare front, Yango has also joined forces with Amakari Doctors to enhance access to medical services for its drivers. Under this agreement, Yango drivers will receive discounted medical services and free 30-minute telemedicine consultations, enabling them to access healthcare more conveniently while on the road.

Amakari Doctors CEO Tewodros Worku expressed excitement over the collaboration, noting that it addresses the unique healthcare needs of drivers, whose jobs often limit their access to traditional medical services.

These initiatives represent a major step forward for Ethiopia, as Yango continues to drive progress in both digital payment integration and healthcare accessibility for its drivers and customers alike.

Yango's partnerships in Ethiopia come at a time of rapid growth in the country's digital economy and healthcare sectors. As one of Africa's fastest-growing economies, Ethiopia is placing significant emphasis on improving financial inclusion and healthcare access for its citizens.

Ministry working on exploring space science benefits

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Various activities are being carried to explore the benefits of space science in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) disclosed.

MinT State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) told the local media that no one owns space in this world but those who actively explore space are the ones that benefit a lot in every aspect of life.

The above remarks were made when the Space Science and Geo spatial Institute in collaboration with AfricanSpace Leadership and Nigeria embassy in Ethiopia organized training focused on “Enhancing International Space Cooperation” in Addis Ababa recently.

The state minister also said that: “In the efforts of exploring the space, cooperation is the crux of the matter.” He, therefore, said his ministry in collaboration with AfricanSpace Leadership and Nigeria embassy in Ethiopia launched training on space science in order to learn more about this part of the universe thereby making strides in such field of study.

“It is obvious that countries that have invested heavily in space science have created a sphere of influence in the world.”

Talking about the training, Yeshurun said that it mainly focuses on space science, space diplomacy and space management in a bid to create the needed awareness on this kind of discipline.



Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD)



Abdurazk Umar

Space Science and Geo Spatial Institute Deputy Director General Abdurazk Umar on his part said that Ethiopia's involvement in various activities of space science has been so far seen as a stepping stone for future development.

He noted that despite challenges, space science presents vast opportunities in the 21st century to develop communication, agriculture, medicine, education and other fields.

With a view of benefiting from space science exploration, countries should work together to invest in technology and science, he said.

News

Oromia ...

efforts, the ministry has accredited 159 hotels and reclassified 96 others to ensure consistent, high-quality service across the sector.

Ethiopia is rich in tourism potential, boasting numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites that highlight its cultural and natural treasures. Sileshi noted that the country has achieved remarkable progress in its tourism sector over the years, capitalizing on this unique heritage to attract visitors from around the globe. The minister stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment for both local and international tourists to explore the diverse offerings of the nation.

Oromia Tourism Commission (OTC) Commissioner Lelise Dhugaa echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the significant revival of the tourism industry in Oromia. The state is home to a wealth of tourism destinations and is undertaking numerous initiatives aimed at further boosting the sector. Lelise mentioned the commission's plan to integrate tourism with other service sectors, aiming for a holistic approach to development that will enhance the overall visitor experience.

Peace and stability were identified as fundamental components for the growth of tourism, with officials underscoring that without a secure environment, the sector cannot thrive. In line with the government's ten-year strategic plan, significant emphasis is being placed on strengthening the tourism sector as a driver of economic development.

The Oromia Prosperity Party Head Kefyalew Tefera, reaffirmed the government's commitment to advancing tourism through a range of initiatives designed to modernize the industry and create a supportive framework for growth.

This year's OTW has attracted an impressive array of visitors, including representatives from Nepal, Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, showcasing Ethiopia's growing international appeal as a vibrant tourist destination. The influx of international participants affirms the potential for Ethiopia to become a key player in the global tourism market, making this initiative all the more timely and essential, it was stated.

Regional concerns rise ...

particularly regarding its roughening relation with Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) emphasizes that both the AU and the UN must ensure a careful deployment of post-ATMIS forces in Somalia to prevent unnecessary regional tensions, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. As a neighbouring country and a key contributor to regional security, Ethiopia is closely monitoring the situation.

The Foreign Affairs Institute (IFA) senior researcher Gizachew Asrat stressed the importance of managing this transition to prevent a security vacuum that could be exploited by terrorist groups like al-Shabaab.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, he highlighted that the transition must consider the current political context in the region.

Another IFA's scholar Anteneh Getachew also argued that the AU should intensify diplomatic efforts to engage Ethiopia, Egypt, and other key regional players to build consensus and cooperation around the security transition in Somalia.

In a recent article published on the IFA website, he warned that heightened tensions between Somalia's federal government and local clans could allow Egypt to support autonomous local forces or militant groups, further weakening the Federal Government's authority and exacerbating clan-based antagonisms.

Moreover, he quoted unquote critics who argue that incorporating Egyptian forces into AUSSOM undermines the regional ownership and leadership that characterized the ATMIS mission, which was mainly led by East African troop contributors. This shift towards unilateral decision-making could complicate the already fragile political and security

situation in Somalia and the broader region.

Antenehsaid that the success of ATMIS was largely due to the dominant role of East African contributors, which reinforced Somalia's ownership of the security transition. Excluding key forces like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda while promoting Egyptian leadership in AUSSOM may dilute regional ownership, undermine the mission's legitimacy, and erode international confidence in the transitional process.

Ethiopia's role in stabilizing Somalia is crucial, as highlighted by Field Marshal Birhanu, Chief of General Staff of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF), who recently welcomed a battalion back from a successful peacekeeping mission under ATMIS. He noted that the ENDF has made significant sacrifices for peace in Somalia.

Gizachew further emphasized Ethiopia's long-standing commitment to peacekeeping, pointing out that Ethiopian troops have historically made substantial sacrifices to combat terrorism and support stability in Somalia. He stressed that Ethiopia's contributions to regional peace are widely recognized.

Regarding the new mission, Anteneh noted that a Strategic Concept of Operations has been adopted, with Egypt and Djibouti offering to contribute to AUSSOM. This development raises concerns about Egypt's strategic intentions, as it seeks to establish military presence in the Horn of Africa (HoA), potentially exerting pressure on Ethiopia over Nile water disputes.

The precarious security architecture in the region could deteriorate further if Egypt's involvement reverses the achievements made under ATMIS, exacerbating tensions and instability in Somalia and affecting the broader HoA region. This

could disrupt trade routes, migration patterns, and economic activity, ultimately hindering regional development.

Public sentiment in Somalia also reflects concerns over Egypt's involvement, with several regional administrations calling for an extension of ATMIS. The suspicion that Egypt's participation is driven by its own interests may weaken public confidence in the Somali government and the overall political process, he elucidated.

Both scholars advocated for dialogue and diplomatic negotiations to ease tensions. Gizachew emphasizes the need to understand and separate Ethiopia's economic interests from its peacekeeping role, advocating for regional cooperation to address historical challenges in the HoA.

Anteneh suggested that Ethiopia could adopt a multi-faceted approach to mitigate potential backlash from Egypt's involvement in AUSSOM. This includes maintaining active diplomatic engagement with the AU, the Somali government, and other regional stakeholders, while preparing defensive measures to address any potential retaliatory actions from Egypt.

During a recent meeting in New York on the margins of the 79th session of the UNGA with Rosemary DeCarlo, Under Secretary-General for Peace building and Political Affairs at the UN, Ethiopian Foreign Minister TayeAtske-Selassie reiterated the importance of deliberating on all aspects of the post-ATMIS arrangement, including its mandate and financing. He expressed concerns that supplying ammunition to external forces could exacerbate the fragile security situation.

DeCarlo reaffirmed the UN's commitment to working with Ethiopia on regional peace building issues.

ENDC engages Diaspora ...

To date, ENDC has conducted approximately ten successful webinars and other official gatherings with Diaspora members from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Australia, the Americas, and beyond. The chief commissioner highlighted the commission's inclusive approach, which involves working with displaced individuals, persons with disabilities, youth, women, and various other segments of society, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, or social status.

"Calls are still flooding to militants and other external agents to be part of the dialogue and to make wise use of this noble opportunity. It is critically important to facilitate inclusive national dialogues and homegrown peace-building mechanisms to ensure sustainable peace," he stated.

The commission has already reached over 1,000 districts across all states and city administrations and plans to transition to the National Dialogue convention stage

within three months. Previously, the ENDC collected agendas in various states, including Addis Ababa, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harar, Sidama, Dire Dawa, and Central Ethiopia, with the agenda-gathering process currently underway in Afar State.

During the agenda collection process, ENDC has registered over 50 political parties for involvement in the National Dialogue, with six parties signing agreements to collaborate. Prof. Mesfin expressed readiness to address Diaspora concerns in an organized manner, explaining that National Dialogue can occur in three scenarios: during conflict, post-conflict, and as a proactive measure to address potential conflicts.

At the event, Artist ZelekeGesse, President of the Addis Ababa Diaspora Association, launched a video clip titled "Enmekaker." He remarked that art serves as a valuable tool for reflecting community values and advocating for peace. Zeleke



noted the Diaspora's active participation in national socioeconomic development, underscoring the potential impact of cultural expressions on the peace-building process.

The video, showcasing the diverse cultures and peace-making mechanisms of various communities, is expected to significantly contribute to fostering lasting peace in Ethiopia.

Opinion

Legitimate quest for access to sea

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia has been claiming for its historic and universal rights to have access to the sea, particularly the Red Sea. Ethiopia used to own the ports of Massawa and Asseb before Eritrea won its independence. After that Ethiopia had to look for alternative ports for its exports and imports. It has been questing for its geopolitical rights to access sea outlets. This quest, however, fell on deaf ears both at global and regional levels.

Consequently, Ethiopia has confronted a series of challenges from alien powers. These global powers have the goal of destabilizing the country using local bandas and bandits. These criminal groups have been financed by external agents that are assigned by superpowers to detract the government from achieving its goal of economic development. Economic success is tantamount to meeting the objective of enhancing the living standards of Ethiopians. Achieving the objective of economic development of the country and its quest for access to the sea is seen by these alien forces as an obstacle to their interference in Ethiopia.

The history of Ethiopia is filled with foreign incursion in its domestic affairs. These interferences have occurred mainly on its borders along the Red Sea. Thus, a major part of its history would not be written without reference to the sea. Italy, as a colonialist power, had been able to occupy the above referred country along the sea using local saboteurs mentioned above. Immediately after the colonial power was forced out of the occupied territory of Eritrea, it had reintegrated to its motherland, Ethiopia.

History has revealed that after Eritrean independence in 1993, Ethiopia has lost control of its ports in the Red Sea. This has a damaging effect on its economy in which it is forced to pay for port services at exorbitant rate. This affected the values of imports and exports by including service charges in the product price. Ethiopian exporters and importers have to pay extra charges at sea ports.

Ethiopia had been dependent on the port services of neighboring countries in the north. The country is currently using the seaports of Djibouti and Berbera. These ports provide Ethiopia with access to international shipping routes. Services from both ports have come to costing millions of dollars a day for transit only. Experts estimated that this expense amounts to almost a fifth of the value of Ethiopian foreign trade. This causes imported inflation within the country, in particular import prices of machineries, fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural inputs.

Similarly, other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing, services and related sectors are negatively affected by rising imported input prices. These prices, in turn, raise the cost of production of goods



Photo google
Ethiopia demands access to the sea

and services needed for consumption. The consumer price index has been on the rise since Ethiopia lost ownership of ports on the Red Sea upon independence of Eritrea. The newly independent country began to earn revenues that accrued from port services provided to Ethiopia. This service continued until the Ethiopia-Eritrea political relation turned sour leading to war between the two countries.

Experts and political analysts confidently assert that lack of access to seaports heavily constrains the ability of a country to promote its economic development. There is, therefore, a danger to the livelihood of the Ethiopian people when the country is deprived of direct access to the sea. The ability of economic sectors to cater for the large population of the country is extremely constrained.

Consequently, the capacity of Ethiopia to provide output, employment and income to its people is heavily impeded. In other words, the effort of the people and government of Ethiopia to promote economic growth and development is heavily affected. Adding fuel to the fire, the lack of ownership of seaports has seriously affected the economic development effort of Ethiopia. This affects the earnings of productive workers as product prices rise due to costs of port services. Ethiopia, like any landlocked country, is bound to incur heavy costs in the production of goods and services for both the local and global markets.

The cost of port services will have to be added to the commodity prices to cover expenses. These charges make it difficult for enterprises to compete at global markets. Import and export enterprises operating in landlocked countries such as Ethiopia face serious challenges from global competitors. Their competitiveness is also impeded by poor logistics. The efficiency of domestic transportation facilities, including railways, roads, storage facilities and checking points all contribute to the country's benefit.

It is pointed out that shipping costs negatively affect the competition of Ethiopian exports at global markets. This depresses the capacity of the country to earn foreign exchange. Similarly, the high

prices of imports, especially those required for domestic manufacturing of goods, may contribute to rising prices or inflation. Also, rising costs of goods in transit from port to mainland have negative effects on the economy. It is pointed out that high costs of port and transit services have negative impacts on the economic development of landlocked countries. They depress competitiveness in the domestic and global markets.

It is well known that the economic and political impacts of being a landlocked country are numerous. Economically speaking, it impedes equitable access to global markets as a result of which the welfare of people is eroded. With lack of access to the sea, the Ethiopians are bound to face "worsening" standard of living, poverty, unemployment and hunger.

Access to the sea is, therefore, not only an issue of trading with the rest of the world, but it is also one of the means of improving the welfare of the people. The political effects of being landlocked are also many, including the loss a historically dominant position in the Red Sea region. This has limited the geopolitical position of Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa.

These days, having an alternative sea outlet is critical for any developing country. Political scientists and legal experts have explained that Ethiopia has the legitimate right to reconnect with the rest of the world. This is a political measure to terminate its isolation from the Red Sea applying international principles, laws and rules through positive and peaceful approaches.

For concerned Ethiopians, having a sea outlet that provides their country direct access to the Red Sea and the rest of the world has become a serious political and economic issue. The PM of Ethiopia has recently noted that the Nile River and the Red Sea will determine the future of the country. These waters will definitely contribute either to its "development or demise." There is no need to insist on the sea ports specifically, but only on an accessible gateway.

The PM also indicated that the Nile River and the Red Sea are intimately linked to Ethiopia either propelling it to its progress

or to its demise. In a progressive outlook, there are many positive factors that may contribute to peaceful access to a sea outlet. These factors will contribute to economic development not only in Ethiopia but also to the countries in the region. The joint and cooperative engagement of all the countries of the Horn is beneficial and advantageous to all.

Lawyers suggest that taking advantage of some international laws and rules related to accessing the sea is useful for landlocked countries. These laws and rules are binding upon all states in the international community. In addition, they advise to refer to rules of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and others that are favorable to Ethiopia.

The ICJ, for example, determines that general or customary laws and rules are obligatory by their very goal. They have, therefore, equal force for all members of the international community, including Ethiopia and the Horn countries.

Also, the UN Convention on Access to and from the sea and Freedom of Transit Rights of Landlocked States under UN would favor Ethiopia to quest for access to the sea. The author of this article borrowed these ideas from authorities in the field, particularly the freedom of transit rights of landlocked countries. There is, therefore, bright hope for the impoverished people of Ethiopia to benefit from the endeavors of the government to have the legitimate quest for access to the Red Sea.

Ethiopia should be free to have access to the sea without any impediments. The gap between the living standards of people having sea outlets and those who do not have it is not based on productive work, but only on natural endowments of the sea. These people who enjoy having sea shores also have other benefits. One of these benefits is fishing at or near coastal areas. They also have the opportunity of being employed by enterprises engaged in the manufacturing of canned fish and other byproducts. These residents also benefit from tour operating enterprises that use big boats for enjoyment. As swimmers, they may have the chance of being employed as naval defense officers.

The shipping enterprises may engage some people residing by the ports for various operations. Due to several employment opportunities on the sea shores, residents of the Red Sea area may gain exposure to the rest of the world. Because of the various benefits of operating along the sea Ethiopia, as a landlocked country, has a legitimate quest for access to the seashores.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Steadfastness for peace in Somalia and the Horn of Africa

As the African Union Transition Mission (ATMIS) draws down and is expected to exit from Somalia by the end of this year, entrusting its security mission to the Somalia Security Force (SSF), the al-Shabaab insurgent group has proven its presence by disrupting the peace and security of Somalia and the Somali people.

The recent attacks the terrorist group committed in Mogadishu, Somalia, signals an important message to the Horn countries and beyond. Al-Shabaab's presence in the region has been causing significant peace, security and stability threats not only to Somalia but also to the Horn of Africa. As usual, the global community ought to act to invalidate the evil schemes of the terrorist.

The terrorist group, in its two horrific bomb blasts, carried out in the capital Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle region, a town located in the south-east of Somalia, claimed the lives of at least six people and wounded ten more persons. Following this, various actors condemn the heinous acts perpetrated by the insurgent group. Ethiopia, through its Foreign Affairs Ministry, also issued a statement denouncing the heinous attack of the al-Shabaab militants in the capital Mogadishu.

In fact, over the past several years, several activities have been carried out by regional and international actors such as the AU and the UN peacekeeping missions to counterattack terrorism. Ranging from drying up the financial sources of the terrorist group and freezing its assets to undertaking rigorous military operations, concerted efforts have been exerted to dismantle the militant group. As a result, it was possible to weaken the militant group and to pull out of its strongholds in Somalia.

Ethiopia's role in this regard was immense. Standing by the side of the AU and UN peacekeeping operations, deploying peacekeeping troops, and countering the insurgents in Somalia, Ethiopia contributed meaningfully to the peace and security of Somalia. Not only that, it has also helped Somalia to move out of the quagmire of conflicts and reconstruct its government.

It is common knowledge that undertaking an effective fight against terrorism calls for a holistic approach. According to various sources, over the last two years al-Shabaab has regained territories that it had once pulled out by the united efforts of the Somali National Army and the AU and UN peacekeeping forces; and is now working with other militants to expand its occupations.

The recurrent and renewed attacks of the militants are telling what the future may bring to countries of the Horn, the region, and beyond if the militants are not dismantled and wiped out. It has also indicated how important is coordination and collaboration in the fight against al-Shabaab.

Ethiopia's commitment to its neighboring countries is unwavering as maintaining peace, security and stability that are essential ingredients to ensure collective prosperity and safety for all citizens of the Horn of Africa. The case of Somalia will not be different while the al-Shabaab group remains a significant threat and endangers the peace and security of Somalia and the socio-economic aspirations of the Somali people.

In summary, as reiterated in its statement, Ethiopia remains steadfast in its solidarity with the people of Somalia in their struggle against terrorism. Historically, Ethiopia has effectively fulfilled its responsibilities throughout the Horn of Africa and will continue to uphold its commitment to mitigating the impacts of terrorism. It is important to recognize that the effects of terrorism extend beyond regional borders, influencing countries worldwide.

The critical role of maritime access to Ethiopia's sovereignty, security, economic development and regional peace

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

When the colonial powers invaded Ethiopia during the 19th century Scramble for Africa when the European powers left only few countries not included in their colonial ambitions, the survival of Ethiopia's independence largely depended upon the unity and patriotic readiness of the people of Ethiopia to defend their territory and insure the statehood of the country. In those days, all the countries of the Horn were under colonial bondage.

Under the current situation in which the myth and phantasy of containing and destroying Ethiopia is being fanned by a triple alliance of neighboring countries, Ethiopia has told the world that the whole situation is in favor of terrorist organizations that are trying to destroy the very survival of the states from which they are operating. These countries are busy covering up their internal challenges by transposing their own problems on other countries as a political and propaganda tactics.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is legitimately and peacefully working towards securing ports that are of critical importance for the economic development of the country. African economic integration and sustainable security for peaceful economic transaction on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean is the most urgent task to be accomplished by countries in the region.

The above mentioned triangulated countries seem to neglect the dire economic situations in which their citizens are engulfed but are busy with weaving a conspiracy the result of which they cannot predict. They try to deny Ethiopia of her right to use her own water and other natural resources and put the nation into a political imbroglio by fermenting and supporting local ethnic based conflicts.

Ethiopia's sovereignty was usurped and denied by political machinations that seriously affected the economy of the country but also the security of the waterways on the Red Sea. For more than 30 decades Ethiopia was forced to pay close to 2 billion USD for using the Port of Djibouti, the amount of money that the country cannot afford. Although Ethiopia was politically sovereign, the nation was prevented to exercise her economic sovereignty as the nation was robbed of her ports that she was using for thousands of years. Her territorial sovereignty which should have included her ports was shamelessly tampered with.

The raison d'être which is currently fanned by those who wish to see weak and feeble Ethiopia is based on their deep seated historical enmity for the country and envy on the economic and infrastructural development of the country.

As the author has indicated in his previous contributions, no country in the world can claim to develop on its own unless it maintains economic linkage and trade with

countries near and afar. Access to [port is therefore a major prerequisite for such global economic relations. Ethiopia is no exception.

Ports play a crucial role in the economic integration of countries in the Horn of Africa. The region's coastal countries, such as Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea, along with landlocked nations like Ethiopia, depend on port infrastructure to facilitate trade, enhance economic cooperation, and promote regional stability. Key factors that underline the importance of ports in fostering economic integration include:

In poverty ridden and debt burdened HoA, Ports act as critical gateways for the import and export of goods, reducing transportation costs and promoting the movement of commodities. In particular, Djibouti's ports serve as a lifeline for Ethiopia, which relies heavily on them for its international trade. Efficient port operations increase trade efficiency, making the region more attractive for investments, improving the ease of doing business, and boosting GDP growth.

The development of port infrastructure by Ethiopia on Berbera Port contributes to regional integration by improving connectivity between countries. Major projects such as the Berbera Port in Somaliland, supported by foreign investments, aim to provide alternatives to Djibouti and promote competition, which benefits landlocked countries like Ethiopia. The modernization of ports and associated transport corridors encourages infrastructure development across borders, facilitating easier access to international markets.

Ports on the Horn of Africa are instrumental in implementing regional trade agreements. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which many Horn of Africa countries are part of, aims to reduce tariffs and barriers, with ports acting as the nodes for enabling the flow of goods across borders. Trade integration and port connectivity help reduce the cost of goods, promote industrialization, and enhance economic collaboration in the region.

Access to ports allows countries like Ethiopia to develop industrial zones and export processing zones (EPZs). For instance, Djibouti and Somaliland are establishing free trade zones to attract foreign direct investment, leading to job creation and the development of industries. Ethiopia's reliance on Djibouti's port for its industrial exports further highlights the integration between port accessibility and industrialization.

Ports also contribute to geopolitical stability, which is essential for economic integration. Secure ports can reduce piracy and illegal trade in the Horn, contributing to the overall stability of the region. Economic integration through shared port infrastructure can also lessen tensions between countries, fostering cooperation and reducing conflict over resources.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Exploiting mineral development marketing for economic boom

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Promoting the economic progress of Ethiopia thereby meeting the challenges from which citizens are suffering has become a matter of great concern to all interested in coming up with real change. It is clear that the industrial specialization has narrowed the minerals sector down to major companies for primary fabrication and subsequent metal purification stages.

Taking this into account, *The Ethiopian Herald* conducted an interview with Daniel Demena, an economist graduated from Addis Ababa University, to have a piece of information about minerals and their contribution to the economic aspect.

He said, “The key non-fuel minerals in terms of value of total production include gold, opal, gem and the likes in Ethiopia. These commodities account for a big share of the value of mineral output in the country. They play vital role in making the nation industrialized.”

To meet this enormous demand for mineral resources is the business of a vast regional, continental and even international mineral industry. The primary mineral industry is concerned with the search for and mining of various minerals, their recovery from the ore by means of a wide range of concentrating and purifying processes that develop a product suitable for secondary fabricating processes, he said.

Embarking on certain regional states with good mineral potential and geological inference, the country has focused on some of the minerals which have contained good mineral value, depending on the mineral and the area in which they are found, he added.

The Ministry of Mines (MoM) recently announced that the construction of three gold mining factories is progressing swiftly, with the goal of generating approximately 800 million USD from the sector this fiscal year.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), MoM State Minister Million Mathewos stated that Ethiopia is intensifying efforts to explore and harness its vast mineral and construction resources. He indicated that the three gold mining factories are expected to become operational within the next 18 months.

Once completed, these projects will boost the country’s gold production by an additional 10 tons annually, significantly contributing to mineral exports and increasing foreign currency earnings. The factories are located in Benishangul Gumuz, Gambela, and Tigray states, with the largest facility in Kurmuk Distrcit, Benishangul-Gumuz State, projected to produce about nine tons of gold per year.

Given the sector’s critical role as one of Ethiopia’s top economic pillars, the government is prioritizing its development. The nation earned 420 million USD from mineral exports in the previous fiscal year, and the ministry is working tirelessly to surpass this target in the current year.

As to Daniel, the mining and purification stages

are characterized by large capital investments and an increasing trend to minimizing the labor input. Most new production is being generated from projects demanding high cost and immense capital investment.

“The oligopolistic nature of the industry is also evident in the large degree of foreign control, particularly of the extractive and purification stages. This stems from two basic reasons. The first, and now less important, is the traditional development of mining ventures and undeveloped territories where some operational control has been retained to the present day,” he added.

Daniel further stated that it is clear then that the mineral industry is profitable, although not excessively so, and that it is essentially international. Many places in Ethiopia have a high mineral endowment but assessment of potential is, in general, patchy and superficial. Hence, it has to seek to develop its mineral resources and has to well know what should the objectives of such development be?

Undoubtedly, the minerals sector could fit into the economic development pattern of the country and contribute significantly to economic growth. Most commonly the initial objectives of the sector have to be quite modest: the generation of foreign exchange through exports, and the provision of opportunities for acquiring technical and managerial skills through rather limited employment.

Yes, he said the minerals sector should provide inputs into the economy, thereby stimulating forward integration into the fabricating process and backward integration into service and manufacturing industries. The ability to provide such linkages is determined in large measure by domestic demand, the availability of domestic capital and know-how, and corporate policies.

If capitalizes well on its mineral resources, Ethiopia can be cited as examples of economies with major mineral export sectors but has so far gained negligible benefits out of the development of its minerals, he opined.

Domestic policies that encourage mineral resource development are also attacked for leading to a premature depletion of potential resources and for creating an imbalance in the economy.

He further stated that development of the minerals sector demands the input of capital and technical and managerial expertise, and the exploitation of markets. In Ethiopia, state and private enterprises have attempted to operate without the help of companies specializing in these areas; unfortunately, their performance record has in general ranged from highly unsuccessful to moderately successful, and has been characterized by low expenditures on exploration and low rates of growth.

He said, “Ethiopia’s efforts have been stepped up in seeking substitute commodities and in developing new recovery technologies to treat low-grade materials and to increase recycling. Furthermore, new approaches to securing sources of supply are being developed which depart radically from the traditional pattern



Photo google

Ethiopia is endowed with various minerals including gold

of total corporate control of the exploration, investment, and marketing functions.”

Inefficient exploitation, failure to process minerals in the country, inadequate opportunities for nationals to acquire managerial skills, insufficient job creation owing to unduly advanced technology, insufficient reinvestment of profits into exploration and expansion of minerals, and overly conservative disclosure of ore reserves and resource potential are also the core challenges giving the sector hard time, he underscored.

Clearly, he stated mineral output cannot keep on doubling indefinitely, at an ever accelerating rate, but this is scarcely necessary with the increasing emphasis on greater husbanding of the minerals in circulation, and the balance between a push toward substitution and a push toward more sophisticated recovery processes for extracting minerals from low-grade concentrations or from hither to inaccessible areas on the ocean floor or under ice caps.

The minerals’ sector poses some unique obstacles and challenges. But it may offer significant economic development impetus to Ethiopia. The challenge is not only to encourage the growth of the mineral sector in the country but to assess the potential for mineral production.

“We find the mining boom exerts a significant effect on the manufacturing employment in mineral-resource owning nation, but benefits the employment in services. Because the increase in mining employment is sizable in a mining boom, the overall employment in the country has shown a small growth,” he added.

True, he said a comprehensive understanding of the role of mineral resources needs an insight into labor market. This is particularly important for a transition economy where the mineral resources are quickly depleting and the employment problems are increasingly prominent.

The resources of our interest are the non-renewable resources in general, such as minerals and fuels, since they have been regarded as the point source of the resource curse, he said.

Realizing the potential for mining to contribute to development in Ethiopia where it takes place is arguably one of the greatest priorities facing the mining and minerals sector. Mining should bring extensive economic benefits. This is particularly important for poor countries

like Ethiopia that lack alternative sources of development and are otherwise unattractive to foreign investors.

The opportunities include hard-currency earnings in the nation where they are scarce, increased government revenues, jobs, improved education and skills development, and the development of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and telecommunications. Although the nation would benefit greatly from minerals extraction, for a number of reasons it has not yet garnered bounties as it deserves so far.

The ability to manage mineral wealth effectively has lagged behind the ability to attract mineral investment, too. A key challenge now to develop policy frameworks to ensure that mineral wealth is captured and creates lasting benefits for local communities and the broader population. This framework must recognize that production from a specific mineral deposit has a finite life span and it is vital that there is something to show for it in the form of improved stocks of other forms of capital.

If managed effectively, however, the minerals’ sector has the potential to play an important role in national and local economic development. At the local level, it should contribute to the development of skills and local businesses. Meanwhile, the economy as a whole can be stimulated as minerals’ companies forge multiple outward linkages – backwards to industries that supply goods and services, or forwards to industries that process mineral outputs, he elaborated.

As to Daniel, mining is one of the key sectors that drive the Ethiopian economy. For mining companies to stay on top of the business, it is important that it continuously meet the customer needs and wants through strategic marketing.

“The sector is one of the major key contributors to foreign currency in Ethiopia and it ascertains that it satisfies and meets the customer demands profitably. The producers and service providers in the mining sector can stay in business on condition that there is exchange occurring between the customer and the supplier.”

Generally, the government and investors must feel there is something that might be of value to citizens. The mining sector has various aspects which include mining, means for preventing illegally traded minerals and take appropriate measures to cure the wound. To this effect, the combined effort of all is worth considering.

Art & Culture

Season of holidays, season of tourism



BY MULUGETA GUDETA

We are now at the beginning of the dry season in Ethiopia. Have you noticed the sharp rise in temperature even before the month of September expires? The unexpected heat is creating the strange impression that we are in the middle of the Ethiopian summer. It is unusually getting hotter during the day and warmer during the night. The transition is somehow abrupt and this may be an indication of the climatic change that is taking place in many countries around the world. In the older days, the rainy season was replaced by the sunny days quite slowly and the rains usually lasted until October.

Now, things are changing. The global climatic upheavals of the last few decades are making their impacts felt with the sharp rise in daytime as well as nightly temperatures. Human nature tends to be shifty as the climate. During the rainy season, people complain about too much rain and in the dry season they complain about an unusually hot temperature. However, nature tends to compensate us or to keep the balance by giving us happier days. Although cold and warm weathers change place there are also good times that come every year at the same time as if they have an appointment with destiny. The New Year Holiday, which comes at the end of the rainy season, is followed by Meskel, or the founding of the True cross, Irreechaa, or the Ethiopian Thanksgiving, and other holidays.

Thanksgiving Day has a long history and is celebrated differently in different cultures. Thanksgiving in many cultures, for instance in American culture, “evolved during the early decades of the 20th century. As football became increasingly popular in the 1920s and 1930s, many people began to enjoy the holiday at a football stadium. Teams in the National Football League eventually established the tradition of playing nationally televised games on Thanksgiving afternoon.” In Oromo culture, Irreechaa is a traditional holiday considered the equivalent of Thanksgiving.

In America and Canada, thanksgiving is part and parcel of the urban culture. It is celebrated with American football games, shopping and other activities. Irreechaa is rather a holiday celebrated in rural Oromia and is based on a traditional belief or practice to pay tribute to Waqaa or God, for bringing about the rainy season and the harvest that follows. Irreechaa is therefore a day that is observed to ‘give thanks’ to Waqaa. In other words, it is a celebration

of water, that is to say, abundant rainfall and plenty of harvest. Thanksgiving is also celebrated in Canada in a way remotely resembling the one observed in Oromo culture.

“Thanksgiving is also a national holiday in Canada. Because Canada is north of the United States, its harvest comes earlier in the year. Accordingly, the Thanksgiving holiday falls earlier in Canada than in the United States. The Canadian Parliament set aside November 6 for annual Thanksgiving observances in 1879. In 1957 the date was shifted to an even earlier day, the second Monday in October.”

Irreechaa celebrations in big and small towns across Oromia usually look like huge wedding ceremonies that take place in public spaces. Residential houses, public places, businesses as well as government premises are usually decorated with slogans and banners praising Irreechaa as a big moment of peace, unity and love. The three magical words were also inscribed on many banners and stickers. They reflect the present political and social situation in the country where the calls for peace, love and unity have gained unprecedented attention.

Some of the business outlets start preparing for the big holiday weeks before the actual day. Owners of those outlets paint their premises and do some face-lifting work on their facades. They hang banners and flags along the streets and avenues. Although the slogans are written in many languages including Amharic, Afan Oromo and English. Their messages remain the same. They are peace, love and unity in whatever orders you put these three magical words. Peace is not more important than love or vice versa. Unity is not less important than peace. The three are mutually complimentary and equally important.

Nowadays, Irreechaa is first celebrated in the capital Addis Ababa as millions of people come from different small towns and villages around the capital. In the following day the same traditional holiday is observed in towns and villages located farther from the capital. In the old days, Irreechaa rituals used to take place at Lake Hora Arseddi some 50 km south of Addis Ababa.

Even though Irreechaa was celebrated in the town of Bishoftu, the heat is felt as far as Dukem and even in the small town of Gelan right on the outskirts of the capital. People travel to Bishoftu and then to Lake Hora a week or so before the actual day of celebrations. Some of them arrive either on the eve or on the very morning of the actual

festivities. Millions of them converge on Bishoftu as they come from almost all parts of Oromia.

More than an estimated 80 per cent of residents of Sunshine Village in Bishoftu are young people. Irreechaa celebrations have a huge appeal to the youths of the village and settlements around it. The village is also famous for its bars restaurants and mini-markets, new hotel buildings and recreational facilities. On the eve of the festival of what we have called the ‘Ethiopian Thanksgiving’, almost all the young and older residents are dressed in special clothes that reflect the importance of the festival as well as the respect they have for their age-old traditions.

Almost all people in the main street are dressed in white, black and red clothes that represent the official colors of Oromia. Girls looked gorgeous in their fancy dresses and multicolored necklaces and beads that add esthetic dimension to their dresses. Young people in their twenties and even younger hold long sticks as they sang and danced to the tunes of Irreechaa traditional hymns or songs. Some of them are leaping into the air, performing difficult dance movements only young people can perform. Music is everywhere blasting from huge loudspeakers especially prepared for the occasion.

In hotels, restaurants and business outlets around Sunshine Village, hosts and waiters are usually busying themselves with the difficult tasks of serving numerous customers at the a given time. Irreechaa is always a good opportunity for the hotel business everywhere the festivals take place. Marry makers are drinking inside and outside the premises, savoring fresh draft beer as well as wines with which they wash down the foods they are eating.

Oromia towns are famous for their meat and beer joints. The number one choice among food lovers is of course raw meat, followed by roasted one and finely minced meat dishes mixed with butter, garlic and peppered with spices. They are mouthwatering even when their aromatic smells filled your nostrils.

While speaking of a big town like Bishoftu during Irreechaa celebrations, one cannot overlook the economic development and more particularly the expansion of hotel business in the town. Many high-class or luxurious hotels are built to accommodate not only local residents but also tourists and people who come on weekends for rest around the lakeside resorts and recreation centers.

Holidays like Irreechaa or the New Year are special occasions for the hotel that accommodates hundreds of guests in its rather larger premise where a water pool gives magnificent look to the whole place and add another dimension to its imposing structures.

During Irreechaa, all the hotels and restaurants are filled with guests and music is blaring from the loudspeakers. Small groups of youngsters travelled from one place to the other, performing the traditional Oromo dances and singing traditional songs in celebration of Irreechaa and the ideals for which it stands. These were the ideals of love, peace and unity, the three magic words that were on everyone’s lips.

Although there is usually plenty of foods and beverages during Irreechaa celebration, the occasion should also give food for some thoughts or reflections about the relation between national holidays and the potentials for promoting tourism in general. The Irreechaa festivals in Addis Ababa are so huge and so interesting that with proper media promotion and the participation by the relevant government agencies, they could be turned into rare opportunities for tourism activities.

Foreign tourists as well as Oromo nationals in the Diaspora could be invited to come to Addis for the Irreechaa celebrations so that the new generations would be acquainted with age of traditions of their ancestors. This could of course generate huge incomes for the hotel and tourism-related businesses. Addis Ababa in itself can be turned into a once-in-a-year tourist destination as it is one of the ten biggest cities of Africa selected for its historical and cultural importance.

This moment is particularly suitable for promoting the tourism industry in the Ethiopian capital that is now growing in all directions and offering traditional as well as modern serving both local and foreign tourists. The weather in Addis at this time of the year is ideal for tourists who are now stepping out of their summer. Good accommodations, good foods and good recreational opportunities are all available in Addis at this particular time of the year. The pertinent authorities and private sector tourism promoters could come together to work around a tourism promotion program related to the Irreechaa celebrations in Addis. This kind of regional or local tourism promotion can also be promoted in other regions such as in the south of the country where annual festivals are regular events.

Global Affairs

It's time for rich polluters to pay for the climate crisis they created

The world is standing at a critical juncture. Climate change is not just a future threat—it's here, and it's already devastating lives. From record-breaking heat waves to floods and landslides, the planet is sending us clear signals that we cannot afford to ignore.

But for many of us in the Global South, this crisis is not new. It is a daily reality that we have been living with for years, despite contributing almost nothing to the problem.

I am from Uganda, a country that contributes less than 0.02% of global CO2 emissions and ranks as the 36th most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change. I grew up on a farm, and I saw firsthand how changing weather patterns—flooded roads and mudslides—kept me from attending school.

What was once a reliable planting season turned into a guessing game of whether the rains would come at all or whether they'd wash away everything in their path?

Our plantation didn't survive. Neither did many others in my region. And in the end, it wasn't just our farm that was lost—it was our livelihood, our food security, and for me, an entire year of education.

Nakabuye marches with fellow Make Rich Polluters Pay activist Marinel Ubaldo across the Brooklyn Bridge during the Youth Climate Strike in New York City on September 20, 2024.

What frustrates me most is that Africa, a continent rich in resources and biodiversity, continues to bear the brunt of a crisis we did not create. Our people are paying with their lives and futures for the emissions and actions of the world's wealthiest.

According to Oxfam, the richest 1% emit as much planet-heating pollution as the poorest two-thirds of humanity and their carbon emissions are enough to cause 1.3 million excess deaths due to heat. The richest continue to be indifferent to the fact that it is the poorest and frontline communities who pay the price.

According to UNICEF, girls worldwide spend 200 million hours every single day collecting water. Think about that for a moment—200 million hours. The climate crisis is making this burden even heavier.

As water sources dry up, girls are forced to walk further and further, giving up education and opportunities to secure the most basic human need. By 2030, water insecurity is expected to displace 700 million people globally—most of them girls and women. This is not just a climate crisis; it's a social justice crisis.

Africa, despite its negligible carbon footprint, is on the frontlines of environmental disasters, while the fossil fuel



Nakabuye speaks to a crowd of over one thousand at the Youth Climate Strike rally in New York City

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We cannot wait any longer. The climate crisis is here. The people who have contributed the least to this crisis are the ones suffering the most. We need to hold those responsible to account and demand that they pay for the loss and damage we are experiencing

industry continues to rake in record profits. This system is built on injustice. A system where the few benefit while the rest of us suffer. It's a system where the powerful can pollute, and the poor pay the price.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

In Uganda, we're organizing. I founded Fridays for Future Uganda to demand climate justice and to fight for a sustainable future where communities can thrive, not

just survive. And we're not alone. Across the world, movements like Make Rich Polluters Pay are calling for those responsible for the climate crisis—the fossil fuel giants and the ultra-wealthy—to be held accountable.

The solutions are within reach, but it requires the political will to act. Right now, in New York, there's a bill sitting on Governor Kathy Hochul's desk that could set a powerful precedent. The Climate Change Superfund Act would force major

fossil fuel companies to pay their fair share for climate damages in the state.

Governor Hochul has the power to sign this into law and ensure that everyday people aren't left footing the bill for the climate crisis. We need similar actions across the globe.

This November, at COP29 in Baku, leaders from the Global North, including the United States, must agree on a new goal for climate finance that includes taxing the ultra-wealthy and fossil fuel companies. Rich countries, whose emissions have fueled the climate crisis, must step up and take the lead. It's time for rich polluters to pay for the destruction they've caused.

We cannot wait any longer. The climate crisis is here. The people who have contributed the least to this crisis are the ones suffering the most. We need to hold those responsible to account and demand that they pay for the loss and damage we are experiencing.

The future we want is equal—one where renewable energy powers our economies, where girls are in classrooms instead of walking miles for water, and where communities in Uganda, New York, and beyond can thrive.

I urge you to take action. There are many ways you can do that. One is to support the Make Rich Polluters Pay campaign by signing the petition and raising your voice. Climate justice isn't just a demand—it's our right. Together, we can build a better, fairer future for everyone.

(SOURCE: INTER PRESS SERVICE)

Law & Politics

Revitalizing the obsolete international system

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In the present climate, the world is trying to establish a more inclusive and fairer environment for its people. Unfortunately, major global threats are testing the existing international order with nations pushing for new orders. This gained traction and top global blocs have come into scrutiny internationally.

One of the gigantic global organizations, the United Nations (UN) has been considered as the place where every nation is represented and participates in global activities. Adversely, the organization has never gone through any major reforms or introduced any new ways of doing its business that meet the notion of fair representation.

As the organ is orchestrating various global issues and rules different global missions, there are still some bold criticisms of its system. It is the fact that the UN's highest organ, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), consists of 15 member nations, five with VETO power, and another 10 non-permanent members, five of which are elected each year by the General Assembly for a two-year term, has ultimate power in the UN decision process.

However, those five nations with VETO power and some other non-permanent countries do not have the potential to represent all the countries in the world. The system neglects not only nations around the world, but even continents like Africa, with more than 1.4 billion people, do not have a permanent place in the power party.

In recent times, some members of the UN and the UNSC have slept on the issue and come up with the supportive idea that the UN must be reformed and there must also be room for the unrepresented. Such positive feedback is crucial especially for nations of Africa as they had previously been blocked to be represented.

Being known for the organization of the world, the UN should have some appealing grounds to establish a way for every nation to represent itself and its interests permanently. If that is hard to achieve, the UN should still put some nations from every continent to represent permanently and reflect the interest of that particular landmass.

On one of the most unfavored continents, African leaders have started to express their desire to see their continent permanently represented in that high table of the world. For a number of reasons, leaving more than a billion people unrepresented makes an organ unfair. A system like the current one also lowers its credibility whenever it talks about equality and inclusion.

In addition to the African continent, other continents and numerous nations that are usually known as the Global South have also raised the same question of fair representation in the UNSC. Ruling and deciding the fate of more than 190 countries with a handful of powerful nations, the issue



of reforming the UN is timely.

As a founding member, Ethiopia has taken the front runner to advocate true reform in the UN. Ethiopia, like any other unrepresented nation in the UNSC, has been affected by the decisions made by some. If the UNSC has representatives from every corner of the world, maybe, Ethiopia might have the chance to represent itself and defend its interests. Ethiopia's story is shared by many other countries around the globe.

Accordingly, on the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79) held recently, a delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister Taye Atske Selassie reflected that Ethiopia's intention regarding the urgency to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and its working methods.

In his keynote speech at the event, Foreign Affairs Minister Taye Atske Selassie said the reform of the Security Council is not only about rectifying the injustice done to Africa but also about the credibility of the Council itself.

"The impacts of Africa's exclusion on the Security Council's inability to discharge its cardinal responsibilities manifest in its disproportionate focus on internal affairs of African Affairs," Taye underlined.

According to him, the council's lukewarm attitude toward regional solutions and the implementation of measures detached from reality on the ground are the results of Africa's nonrepresentation.

Thus, the Foreign Minister urged the United Nations to prioritize Africa's representation, adding: "We, therefore, call on members to commit to prioritizing Africa's representation in both categories of membership of the UN Security Council with all rights and prerogatives as articulated under Africa's common position."

He also stressed that there is no shortcut or half solution to this long-standing quest for equality. Explaining Ethiopia's role as one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations, Taye noted that his country is a strong proponent of effective

multilateralism, centered on the United Nations.

Ethiopia also views with grave concern the challenges the United Nations faces in discharging its role in peace and security and social-economic development.

Nevertheless, ensuring the readiness and capability of the United Nations to resolve global challenges has been a generational quest, he revealed. For him, the globe is faced with persistent peace and security challenges across the globe.

"There is a devastating existential threat emanating from the arms race, extreme poverty, inequality, and climate change at the same time global commitment to the sustainable development goals is receding, and the debt crisis in developing countries is worsening."

Furthermore, the Minister stated that our constrained ability to manage the emerging multipolar world carries the risk of undermining multilateralism.

"It is our view that collective security will be realized if states are able to exercise their authority and carry out their responsibilities to safeguard their national security," he noted. The United Nations should be at the center of efforts to resolve global peace and security challenges, Taye urged.

He also called for greater economic and security cooperation among member States, which is pivotal to empowering national institutions. The United Nations should play its role by demonstrating impartiality, independence, competence, and credibility among all its members, FM Taye stated.

To wrap up, in order to survive the upcoming challenges of the world, such international organizations must think of reforming their systems. A structure that was operational 70-plus years ago must need grease on its wheels to function more and build its trust. Reforming the UNSC and other international organs is a matter that does not need any further delay. Every member must stand by the unrepresented ones and support them to be presented permanently and fairly with some power.

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**Ensuring the
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INTERNATIONAL News

Morocco's Atlantic Initiative paves the way for regional leadership, global connectivity

Natural resources, abundant assets, arable lands, and untapped opportunities – this is how analysts characterize Africa, a continent frequently described as a virgin and fertile ground.

With the immense potential that remains largely unlocked, Africa also suffers threats like irregular migration, brain drain, and food insecurity that prompted various actors across the continent to seek ways to support its development.

Morocco is one of the key actors working toward this vision. In 2023, the North African country launched the Atlantic Initiative for the Sahel, an initiative that aims to empower African countries to take control of their development trajectories.

The initiative announced by King Mohammed VI aims to foster regional cooperation and promote a unified approach to security, economic growth, and sustainability.

The action also capitalizes on its potential to enable Africa to turn itself into a continent that not only addresses its challenges but also acts as an influential player on the global stage.

“My goal is to transform the Atlantic region into a space for human interaction and economic integration, and to make sure it plays a key role at continental and international levels,” King Mohammed VI said in his Green March speech in November 2023.

The monarch's goal is to also facilitate connectivity between different countries bordering the Atlantic, providing means of transportation to keep pace with the economic progress and urban expansion.

King Mohammed VI also emphasized the urgency of solving challenges facing African countries in the Sahel, not only through security and military approach but through measures based on cooperation and shared development.

The royal speech highlighted how the Atlantic region became a focal point for African states, requiring collective work to overcome shared challenges and harness untapped opportunities for growth and stability.

Throughout the past decade, Morocco has been conveying its determination to advocate for a unified approach to address the myriad challenges facing the African Atlantic space.

And as King Mohammed VI sees it, only the unification of efforts could serve the African and international communities and guide

them toward unlocking the region's vast cooperation potential.

“Since the launch of the initiative, it has enjoyed a consensus and praise from the international community since the royal speech announced it,” Hassan Belouan, a political analyst and expert in international relations, told Morocco World News today.

The analyst stressed the increasing relevance and success of Morocco's multifront continental diplomacy, noting how the North African kingdom has effectively invested in a wide range of African solidarity- and pan-Africanism-driven projects over the past decade.

Beyond Africa, he argued, the effectiveness of Morocco's newfound diplomatic assertiveness has been its ability to engage, and sign strategic deals with, major actors on the international stage. Morocco “also invests in its strategic relations with major powers in the East and West through a balanced policy that is open to everyone and seeks to have multiple regional and international partners,” he said, noting that the Atlantic initiative has received a nod from the US and several EU countries.

The initiative's goal is to ensure stability in a region marked by several challenges, including human trafficking and other organized crimes such as terrorism, Belouan added.

For the analyst, the initiative is unlike other proposals suggested by other regional and international actors as it does not only count or bid for stability but also seeks to contribute to continental and regional socio-economic growth and infrastructure development while boosting bilateral ties.

Belouan argued that a key ingredient in the challenges facing the continent is its failure to fully and intelligently exploit its assets, namely human and natural resources, to reach self-sufficiency and the development needed.

“This initiative shows how cooperation is strategic, reflecting Morocco's diplomatic commitment towards a win-win policy despite the skepticism adopted by parties hostile to Moroccan territorial integrity,” the analyst stressed.

Launched as part of the Rabat Process, the African Atlantic States initiative has been making progress, including the establishment of its secretariat, the creation of three thematic groups as well as the adoption of an action program.

The mechanisms seek to tackle key issues, including political and security

dialogue, blue economy, and environmental sustainability.

This week in New York-based UN headquarters, Morocco reiterated the importance of the initiative – emphasizing its goal to empower African countries to take control of their own development paths.

Speaking in New York on Tuesday, Foreign Affairs Minister Nasser Bourita said the Atlantic initiative aims to promote peace, stability, and shared prosperity across the African Atlantic region.

It does not only target the region's potential in areas such as tourism and mineral resources but also addresses significant challenges, including terrorism, climate change, the overexploitation of marine resources as well as others, he stressed.

For Bourita, the region's alarming security situation requires coordinated efforts from both African and global partners.

“By coordinating our complementary initiatives, we will better serve the interests of the Atlantic community, advancing shared prosperity and stability,” he noted, reinforcing Morocco's commitment to building a strong, mutually beneficial partnership to achieve these common objectives.

Zaher Badr Alazrak, a political analyst and professor at the Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences in Mohammedia, stressed that Afro-African cooperation is no longer a “luxury, but a necessity for African countries.

There were attempts at such a comprehensive and genuine front of regional and continental solidarity during the creation of ECOWAS, Arab Maghreb Union, the African Union, all of which did not lead to the realization of sustainable goals and economic integration due to political reasons.

In particular, he mentioned tensions between Morocco and Algeria, arguing that such conflicts have continued to hamper the emergence of a genuine spirit of solidarity and fraternity among African countries. The failure of the Arab Maghreb Union project is an eloquent illustration of the political instability and other challenges that the lack of real regional and continental cooperation can create across Africa, Alazrak suggested.

As countries all over Africa face similar development challenges while grappling with a “great deal of risk-associated amplification and global powers' competition towards the African continent,” the analyst said, there is an urgent need for thinking collectively about solutions to take

the continent out of the current cycle of political and institutional failures.

Alazrak further mentioned challenges hampering unification attempts, including brain drain, which he says has perpetuated the continent's centuries-long cycle of attrition through the exploitation of its riches.

Morocco's Atlantic Initiative has several dimensions, including strengthening security and the stability of the area amid threats that the region faces, including terrorism and separatism.

Another dimension is the establishment of an economic partnership between countries on the Atlantic coast, the analyst said, citing good bilateral ties Morocco enjoys with continental partners like Nigeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Gabon, and others.

One of the critical principles of Morocco's initiative is the pursuit of international partnerships, whether with countries in the Global South or North, or with multilateral organizations.

Notably, the initiative capitalized on its cooperation with the Atlantic Center of Portugal, an initiative that brings together over 20 countries to address pressing issues like maritime piracy, transnational crime, and climate change, in addition to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The partnership shows the growing recognition that global challenges require global solutions and Africa could play a crucial role in tackling these issues. One key point that observers see as necessary for the success of the initiative is the involvement of various ministerial departments.

Notably, the process saw the engagement of ministerial activities including the recent meeting of Ministers of Justice held this year in April in Rabat. The meeting saw the launch of the Forum of Ministers of Justice, a key platform seeking to strengthen legal and judicial cooperation among African Atlantic States.

The forum emphasized the need for coordinated legal frameworks to ensure security and development in the region, further cementing the African Atlantic space as a one of opportunity and cooperation.

Through cooperation, the region has the potential to position itself as a powerful hub of global interconnection, breaking free from isolation and emerging as a key player in the world's economic and security landscape.

Source: Morocco World News

African nations plot \$2B debt-for-nature swap

Five African countries are reportedly in talks to raise \$2 billion from a novel financing arrangement that restructures debt to invest in ecological conservation programs.

A debt-for-nature swap, as the financing is known, raises money that is used to set up a long-term investment fund. The fund's

managers and board determine what it invests in, while proceeds are then used to carry out conservation efforts.

The five unnamed African countries are said to be considering a \$2 billion raise to protect a part of the Indian Ocean rich in coral reefs, Reuters reports. African

countries nearest to the ocean include South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius and Somalia. The joint plan is reportedly supported by the US and British governments.

Gabon closed the first debt-for-nature swap by an African country last year, selling a

\$500 million bond. The project is expected to generate \$163 million in new funding for ocean conservation, according to The Nature Conservancy, a Virginia-based organization that partnered with the government to broker the raise.

Source: Semafor Africa

Planet Earth



Ethiopia's endeavor towards clean energy transition

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia stands at the forefront of a transformative clean energy transition, driven by its ambitious vision for sustainable development and environmental resilience. With abundant renewable resources, including hydroelectric power, wind, and solar energy, the country aims to harness these assets to meet its growing energy demands while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The transition does not only seek to bolster energy security and economic growth but also to enhance the livelihoods of millions. As Ethiopia embarks on this journey, it faces both challenges and opportunities, navigating the complexities of infrastructure development, investment, and policy alignment. The commitment to a green economy reflects Ethiopia's dedication to combating climate change and promoting equitable access to energy for all its citizens.

According to the Ministry of Water and Energy data efforts to enhance the health of rural communities in Ethiopia are gaining momentum through the promotion of energy-saving and clean cooking technologies. With the distribution of 20.5 million clean cooking technologies, stakeholders are working diligently to address energy equity and health concerns. This initiative encompasses a range of strategies, including solar energy development, biomass energy utilization, and the introduction of modern cooking stoves.

The reliance on traditional stoves, which often utilize biomass like firewood and animal dung, poses significant health risks. Smoke inhalation from these stoves can lead to respiratory diseases and other health complications. In response, the local authorities are actively replacing these outdated cooking methods with cleaner alternatives. By doing so, they aim to not only improve public health but also promote a sustainable lifestyle among rural populations.

Amhara State Water and Energy Bureau Vice Head, Tilahun Shimeles, emphasized the multifaceted benefits of these efforts. "Making clean cooking energy technologies accessible will improve citizens' health

and provide economic benefits, while also contributing to climate change mitigation," he stated. As to him, insights reflect a broader understanding of the interconnectedness between health, energy consumption, and environmental sustainability.

Looking ahead, the Ethiopian government has ambitious plans to enhance access to clean cooking technologies further. The ministry of water and energy try to achieving to the goal is to distribute 31.5 million modern cooking technologies and construct 150 small rivers for power generation up to 2030. These initiatives are designed to address the energy needs of the rural community while ensuring environmental protection.

Birhanu Woldu, Executive Director of Rural Energy Technology Development and Transition at the Ministry of Water and Energy, explains the past inefficiencies associated with traditional cooking methods as follows: "The cooking energy technologies previously used wasted a significant amount of energy. Our current efforts aim to provide modern stoves that not only protect health but drastically reduce energy waste"

He stated that an essential component of the initiative is awareness-raising. Local communities are being educated on the benefits of clean cooking technologies and energy conservation practices. The transition to cleaner energy sources is not just about providing new technologies; it also involves fostering a culture of sustainability and responsibility toward natural resources, he added.

The Director of Alternative Energy Development and Transition at the Mining and Energy Bureau in the Central Ethiopia region, Teketel Mathewos, highlighted the significance of community engagement. "Our work is focused on making clean cooking stove technologies available, which will not only save forests but also empower rural communities," he stated. This grassroots approach ensures that the benefits of these technologies reach those who need them most.

The impact of clean cooking technologies extends beyond health benefits; it also encompasses economic advantages. By

reducing the reliance on traditional biomass, families can save money and time previously spent on fuel collection. Moreover, the health improvements resulting from cleaner air quality can lead to reduced healthcare costs and increased productivity.

Birhanu further stated, the construction of small river power plants is a significant step toward sustainable energy generation. These projects, funded by both federal and regional budgets, aim to harness local water resources for electricity production. Currently, three small river power plants are underway, with one nearing completion. The initiative will not only provide clean energy but also create job opportunities in rural areas, he said.

In addition to biomass and river based energy solutions, he emphasized solar energy is also being harnessed to enhance energy access in rural communities. Since 2023, 14 solar mini-grids have been established to ensure equitable energy distribution, he mentioned. The ongoing efforts include the development of a digital application designed to facilitate solar energy distribution, thereby increasing energy consumption in remote areas.

Through fostering an environment that encourages investment and innovation, Ethiopia aims to create a robust framework for sustainable energy development. Irrigation One of the most significant aspects is the transition of solar energy to enhance energy access for Ethiopia's rural population. Approximately 80% of the Ethiopian population resides in rural areas, where access to electricity remains a challenge.

Project Manager at Ethiopian Solar Energy Association Development, Yemisirach Sisay, emphasized the association is actively working to create a conducive environment for solar energy investment. Policy frameworks, regulatory reforms, and incentives are being introduced to attract solar private companies in the renewable energy sector.

She said Public-private partnerships are also becoming increasingly important, as they can leverage resources and expertise to accelerate the deployment of solar technologies. Through providing reliable and sustainable energy solutions, solar power can enhance productivity and improve living

standards in these communities.

Birhanu stated that the rural community is currently relying on diesel-powered irrigation for their farms. To address the challenges of power interruptions, efforts are underway to encourage private investors to expand the use of solar energy. The country aims to ensure that farmers can produce consistently without the disruptions caused by traditional energy sources, he noted.

She said that the Solar Association is actively collaborating with various stakeholders to enhance public access to solar energy. Their efforts include advocating for the exemption of imported solar materials from taxes, as well as offering tax grace periods and other incentives to promote investment in solar infrastructure.

"We are working to enhance the availability of the solar companies under the solar energy association development for achieving sustainable energy development among the country through resolving the challenges" she noted.

Birhanu further stated that private investors are forming joint ventures with foreign partners to develop mini-grid systems. These partnerships are expected to significantly improve energy access in rural areas, fostering sustainable growth and enhancing agricultural productivity while reducing reliance on fossil fuels

Through leveraging solar energy, rural communities can achieve greater energy independence and reliability, especially in areas far from traditional power generation lines. This diversification of energy sources is crucial for building resilient communities that can withstand economic or environmental challenges.

The initiatives underway in Ethiopia to promote clean cooking energy technologies and sustainable practices represent a critical step toward improving public health, protecting the environment, and fostering economic growth in rural communities. With ambitious plans for the future, including extensive distribution of modern cooking technologies and the construction of renewable energy sources, Ethiopia is on a path toward a healthier, more sustainable future.