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Center promulgating kaizen philosophy in Africa

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE
ADDIS ABABA – Apart from enhancing the productivity of domestic companies, Ethiopia's Kaizen Excellence Center said it is providing training and consultancy services to Djibouti and Ghana.
See Center promulgating... Page 3



Premier hails ETNO mining investment

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDISABABA- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has congratulated ETNO Mining, a Scandinavian-based gold exploration and mining company on its significant investment in Dima Woreda, Gambela State of Ethiopia.

ETNO Mining, a subsidiary of Akobo Minerals, is a Scandinavian-based gold exploration and mining company operating in

partnership with the Ethiopian Government through Ethiopian Investment Holdings.

The Premier extended his congratulations on this significant investment in Dima Woreda, Gambela State.

For the past three decades, the town of Dima in Akobo has primarily engaged in small-scale, traditional gold mining, often resulting in considerable wastage, PM Abiy shared on social media yesterday.

He further added that this new investment marks a transformative step towards ensuring efficient and high-quality gold extraction in a shorter time-frame while addressing the challenges posed by illegal mining.

It also signifies a commitment to the sustainable development of Gambela's abundant resources for the benefit of the region and its people, Prime Minister Abiy noted.



Temesgen Tilahun

Commission to commence DDR for ex-combatants this week

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Ethiopia's neutrality in changing world order

BY HAILE DEMEKE

International Relations Expert asserted that Ethiopia's neutral diplomacy and pragmatic approach in the current changing world order has helped the nation uphold its impartial position without compromising national interests.

As a founding member of continental and international organizations, including the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), Ethiopia's international relations have long been characterized by a neutral diplomatic stance. An international

relations expert expressed that the country has played key roles in representing Africa and championing continental interests on the global stage. Ethiopia has cultivated strong and sound diplomatic relationships with countries worldwide, particularly neighboring nations, to ensure its national interests are protected through neutrality.

Diplomacy and International Relations Expert Bayisa Tesfaye (PhD) stated that



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New skyscraper cinema nears to completion here

• Boosting arts, economy
BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Addis Ababa Cinema Houses Administration Enterprise has announced that the construction of a new skyscraper cinema building will be completed by the end of this Ethiopian fiscal year.

According to the Enterprise's Marketing Sector Chief Executive Officer, Abraham Tamir, the project has been funded with an investment of over 930 million Birr, and the civil works are nearing completion.

As a diplomatic city, Addis Ababa required a standard cinema or theater house to serve both its local population and international visitors. The new skyscraper cinema will feature a variety of facilities, including studios, galleries, a children's cinema house, and more. The project is designed not only to expand the city's recreational spaces but also to enhance the economic capacity of cinema houses, promote the arts, and raise public awareness about their cultural value.

The building will house restaurants, shops, cosmetics centers, galleries, two large theaters with 800 and 1,200 seats, additional theater houses, cinema rooms, offices, and cafes, all equipped with the latest technologies. Once completed, it will offer Addis residents a wide and modern recreational alternative.

The new cinema complex will also create over 300 jobs upon its completion, contributing to local employment. Although the construction was delayed due to issues with the importation of soundproofing, lighting, elevators, and other essential equipment, the necessary materials have now arrived at Djibouti Port and will soon be installed.

One of the most significant features of the new building is the 800-seat children's theater, a first for the city. This dedicated space aims to inspire creativity in young audiences from an early age, filling a gap in the city's cultural infrastructure.

Additionally, the Enterprise is renovating three other cinema houses, including the first cinema hall in East Africa, further boosting the city's cinematic offerings and cultural vitality.

Ministry renews commitment to safeguard children's rights

• Nation celebrates Int'l Children's Day

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia is keen to take necessary measures to ensure the rights and interests of children to foster productive citizens having patriotic sentiments, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) announced.

The ministry has celebrated the International Children's Day yesterday with a theme of "Children have something to say, let's listen to them."

At the event, Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) emphasized that the country would take the necessary measures to ensure the rights, interests and safety of children.

She expressed that her ministry is promoting children's freedom of expression and ensuring their rights to social security, freedom of speech, and protection are upheld, as they are the nation's future stewards.

The Minister urged stakeholders and communities to support vulnerable children affected by natural and man-made disasters by listening to their needs and implementing promises.

MoWSA, Women and Social Affairs State



Photo: Gebabro Gebrie

Minister Hikma Keyredin said that Children should be given comprehensive support and care to nurture them with knowledge and good manners, with complete health and personality.

Violations of children's rights at the international and national level, impact their health, safety, and hope, necessitating citizens to protect them from both any kind of harm, she stated.

Hikma mentioned that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is one of the key international covenant documents that Ethiopians are accepting and

implementing regarding children.

She pointed out that celebrating the International Children's Day helps to promote children's participation and rights, as per Article 12 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It strengthens stakeholder partnerships and responsiveness to building a comfortable country for children. In addition to listening and responding appropriately to the voices of children, the national movement that has been started in all directions will continue to be strengthened in the future, Hikma said.



Scholar weighs in on BRICS proposed single currency

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The 2024 BRICS summit proposed new paper money for member countries, benefiting Ethiopia and other nations by promoting an alternative hard currency, national interests, and increasing Ethiopia's international economic relationships.

Foreign Affairs Institute Training Director General Melaku Mulualem said that this currency has a lot of advantages for Ethiopia and other member countries. It will be a good alternative hard currency to USD, EURO, and others. This currency will increase Ethiopia's international economic relationships with

other countries.

This impact will be seen after the implementation of the proposed currency of BRICS. It also minimizes the black market for hard currencies and minimizes injustices in global economic globalization.

The proposal shows the member countries' commitment to having their own prominent currency for trading among themselves. This is a good initiative to apply the group's decision to have a common currency. In the proposed paper money we also see the flag of Ethiopia and other member countries, he stated.

Ethiopia can import and export products from member countries using the new currency by

minimizing transaction costs. It is also a good opportunity to pay back loans using the new BRICS currency. This helps the economy of Ethiopia which suffered from the scarcity of dollars in the national bank, he noted.

The use of BRICS currency will also help to counter inflation in the country. This is to mean that the exchange rate between Birr and USD will be stable. Thus devaluation of the Ethiopian currency will be checked sometime in the future.

According to him, the people of Ethiopia will not suffer from the economic inflations caused by the USD. Investors from member countries can also get an advantage of alternative currency to invest in Ethiopia.

Commission to commence DDR for ex-combatants this week

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The National Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia announced that the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-militants and relocating them to rehabilitation centers in the country will commence this week.

The move aims to reintegrate 371,971 ex-combatants identified across various regions of Ethiopia, facilitating their return to normal life within society.

Speaking to the media, National Rehabilitation Commission Commissioner Temesgen Tilahun highlighted the commission's mission and activities.

The aim is to disarm former militants and integrate them into the country's peace, democracy, and development efforts.

Established by the Council of Ministers Regulation and subsequent amendments, the commission is tasked with the comprehensive reintegration of ex-militants.

The aim is to disarm the ex-militants and make them part of the country's peace, democracy and development by reintegrating them into society, it was indicated.

Temesgen emphasized that the disarmament and rehabilitation process need great attention and stakeholder participation.

He stated that 371, 971 ex-militants have been identified nationwide for this.

Accordingly, with the government's allocation of 1 billion Birr and additional 60 million USD from international partners, the disarming of 75,000 ex-militants will begin in the Tigray state in the first phase



Temesgen Tilahun

to ensure their sustainable reintegration.

Three rehabilitation centers have been identified in Mekelle, Edaghamus, and Adwa in the Tigray state, the commissioner

pointed out.

The ex-militants will begin handing over their weapons as of yesterday to the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) under the supervision of the Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Mission of the African Union, he stated.

Temesgen confirmed that over the next four months, 75,000 former militants from Tigray will be disarmed and integrated into society.

Over a two-year period, the commission plans to reintegrate the 371,971 ex-militants identified nationwide ensuring their permanent settlement within the community.

The Commissioner said that the government is working with commitment on disarming and rehabilitating ex-militants in various states, undergoing rehabilitation training and support necessary to rejoin society.

Center promulgating...

The Center announced that Ethiopia is providing training, consultancy services in kaizen philosophy to third countries to enhance industrial efficiency and improve working conditions.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Kaizen Excellence Center, Institutional Networking and Quality Assurance Sector Lead Executive Selamawit Solomon stated that the center is providing training and consultancy services to third countries such as Djibouti and Ghana.

"Apart from enhancing domestic industries productivity, changing and improving their working environment, we are promoting the kaizen philosophy that we have learned from Japan, to third nations," she said.

Selamawit added that her center has planned to expand experiences to Rwanda and other African nations in the near future.

So far, the center has provided training for 1,500 service providers and industries, empowered about 200,000 employees and management thereby boost their problem solving skills and improving the companies' quality by 15 percent, she expressed.

Since its inception, the Lead Executive disclosed that the kaizen center has saved about 5 billion Birr and applied wise management of expenses.

"We also provide consultancy services, research works to promulgate kaizen philosophy amongst domestic companies across the nation to enhance productivity, quality and delivery of the industries and service providing institutes," Selamawit noted.

Accordingly, the Center trained companies' senior management and employees to make them productive towards managing workers and running factory machines during production time, she mentioned.

Selamawit said the kaizen center provides support, monitors and builds the capacity of textile companies, chemical industries, and construction, health and education institutions in a sustainable manner.

In addition to the aforementioned establishments, the Center gives training to several public and private manufacturing companies and enterprises supported by its 69 competent and qualified trainers, according to the Lead Executive.

Ethiopia's neutrality in changing...

over the past years, the nation has continued to pursue a neutral and mutually beneficial foreign policy. Ethiopia's neutral diplomatic approach is pragmatic in safeguarding both national and communal interests, which is crucial for realizing the country's vision.

Such a diplomatic approach requires a meticulous strategy to avoid negatively impacting the interests of other countries. In today's dynamic world, the Expert stressed the necessity to build strong economic and diplomatic relations to secure both individual and collective interests.

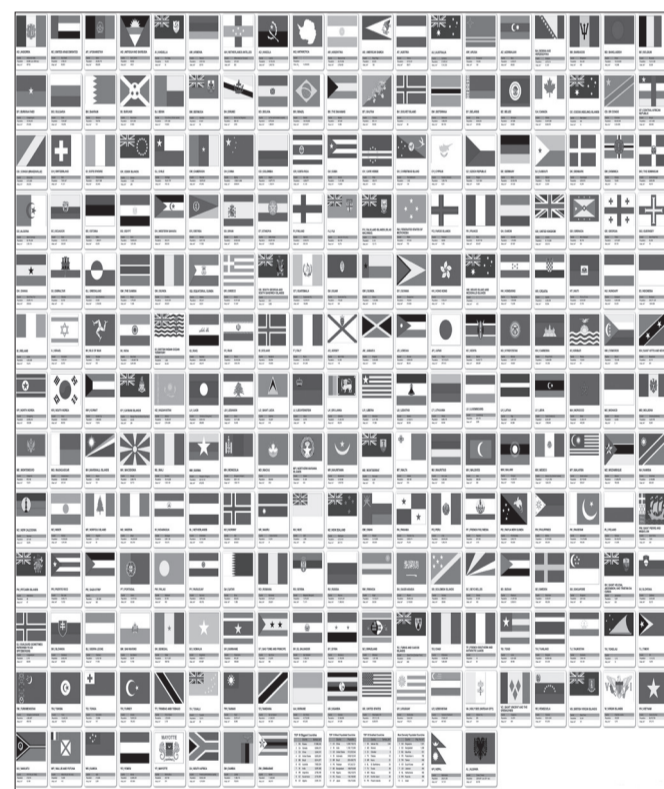
Citing China and India as examples of neutrality, having founded the BRICS bloc while maintaining strong economic cooperation with the Western world, Bayisa indicated that Ethiopia's recent joining of the BRICS alliance further demonstrates its commitment to neutral diplomacy and its refusal to align with any particular group.

Adhering to its neutral diplomacy, Ethiopia's membership in BRICS is a significant diplomatic achievement that enhances the nation's credibility and role in regional and international politics. According to Bayisa, the admission showcases the country's earned trust and acceptance due to its unbiased stance.

By aligning with its neutral diplomacy and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, which fosters coexistence, the nation continues to pursue neutrality, he believed.

The Expert further stated that Ethiopia has elevated its diplomatic influence in the region and beyond, focusing on regional peace, stability, and economic development. Its contributions to conflict resolution in the region and globally demonstrate Ethiopia's commitment to peacebuilding and sustainable development.

The nation has actively engaged with regional and multilateral organizations like the AU, UN, IGAD, and others, advocating for its interests and continental advantages on a wide range of issues, further exemplifying its commitment to neutrality. Moreover, the changing global order presents



significant opportunities for developing countries like Ethiopia, he indicated.

Foreign Affairs Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) stated that Ethiopia's membership in the BRICS bloc would serve the country in ensuring its national interests and benefiting Africa as a whole.

As a country with a long history of strong diplomatic engagement and a founding member of various international organizations, Ethiopia's membership enhances its pan-African role in shaping the new world order. As the country embarks on rapid economic growth, joining the bloc would support the nation in securing financial resources and facilitating ease of doing business and cooperation.

Beyond amplifying Africa's voice, Ethiopia's neutral position in global diplomacy, as part of its non-alignment strategy, would contribute to promoting peace and security among nations. Additionally, it would help attract new investments and facilitate various areas of cooperation.

Opinion

Green legacy beyond going places emerald

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Some are heard of saying that they have understood the concept of green legacy merely in relation to making areas green and nurturing forests. However, it is pretty beyond what they have said so. The Ethiopian government has consistently made global headlines with ambitious tree planting targets since it launched the Green Legacy Initiative. The government has targeted planting trees during the rainy season—mid-June to mid-September.

A green legacy initiative plays a crucial role in promoting a healthy environment in Ethiopia by restoring ecosystems, mitigating climate change, and fostering environmental awareness and stewardship. Through its tree planting efforts, the initiative aims at creating a sustainable and resilient environment that benefits both nature and the people of Ethiopia. The positive contribution of the Green Legacy initiative to promoting a healthy environment in Ethiopia is untold; in fact, its impact on biodiversity conservation, soil conservation, and the social and health outcomes of local communities is vividly witnessed. Yes, tree planting and growing trees for carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, soil conservation, community engagement, and climate education have positive significance on a healthy environment.

Unequivocally, making green legacy proliferated will provide a more holistic understanding of the initiative's effectiveness and contribute to the all-rounder sustainable environmental management in Ethiopia, the Horn region, and even in the continent of Africa and beyond.

No doubt, in Ethiopia, the Green Legacy Initiative is a program aiming at planting billions of saplings across the country, thereby improving the national social and ecological goals. Such a bold move has been helping build capacity to resist the impacts of climate change by mitigating the country's vulnerability to its effects. Environmental protection, greening barren land, beautifying towns and cities, and expanding forestry coverage are some of the fundamental benefits of expanding green legacy. That is why it is recurrently stated that the initiative is not only serving as a means to help areas go green but is also instrumental in beautifying cities, towns, sector offices, vicinities, squares, and boulevards, which potentially attract tourists and provide residents a pride upon their dwelling areas.

The Green Legacy Initiative also helps protect water resources, biodiversity, and wildlife as well as reduce environmental damage and air pollution. Of the myriads of benefits the initiative has come up with, its significance in reviving forest coverage in the county has been given due emphasis as it has come up with cardinal national bounty. Yes, it aims to re-establish and protect Ethiopia's forest ecosystems. In addition to this, soil and water resources are well protected and nurtured in an integrated way, and degraded lands are revitalizing, which has the long-term benefit of ensuring food security.

These days, urban areas in Ethiopia have been given special attention to make them

The Green Legacy

is very important for business, too, as it increased demand, and has created better marketing opportunities for youth and women producing seedlings

green and renew ones. Unequivocally, green legacy has been praised for its efforts to create awareness and change behaviors. It has also been recognized as a model of action in the global effort to mitigate climate change. If truth be told, the Green Legacy does not only benefit Ethiopia but also the broader global community, and participating in the Green legacy Initiative is tantamount to working hard towards mitigating the impacts of climate change and challenges of food insecurity. Undoubtedly, the initiative is of paramount importance in assisting the world recover greenery scene. In Ethiopia, all segments of the society are engaged in planting seedlings of the Green Legacy Initiative, the Prime Minister took the lead, indeed!

Moreover, the initiative is of crucial importance in maintaining healthy environment, apt agro-ecology and tourism development. Principally, it further promotes the good image of Ethiopia in the global showground. No one can argue against that the Green Legacy Initiative is a great move towards creating an enabling environment to mitigate climate change, air pollution, foster conducive agro-ecology, tourism development and the other economy of the country. That is why Ethiopia has made remarkable strides in that regard.

The initiative is of significantly useful in booming socioeconomic value. From mitigating droughts and flood control to the preservation of soil fertility to limiting CO₂ emissions, improving forest coverage across Ethiopia is crucial. It is instrumental in avoiding generational environmental problems that are bound to worsen as populations increase and the demand for energy resources rise. The good thing is green legacy focuses on re-establishing and protecting Ethiopia's forest ecosystems

with the plan of addressing environmental degradation through carbon sequestration, preservation of wildlife and biodiversity and mitigation of soil infertility.

The use of planting trees to combat climate change cannot be adequate on its own. The burning of fossil fuels is still the most fundamental challenge that is causing environmental problems. It would indeed require a more wide-ranging approach than the Green Economy initiative had called for.

Yes, ensuring that the right type of tree seedlings are planted in the soil composition, altitude and weather conditions suitable for them is near impossible when it is done at large scales. People cut down trees, because they either need the land for farming or the wood for fuel and construction. The more rural the area and the likelier that the people find themselves in the lower-income group, the higher the probability that they cut down trees for it is a matter of survival.

There are initiatives across the world to involve communities in the management and governance of forests in their area to counteract these problems. It is also essential to allow local communities to develop a sense of agency and ownership of the forests in their vicinity. The idea of involving communities in forest management is not unheard of in Ethiopia. The initiative has also provided a critical chance for the government and its partners to use the media to raise public awareness about the importance of planting trees and protecting existing forests. The Green Legacy is very important for business, too, as it increased demand, and has created better marketing opportunities for youth and women producing seedlings.

Beyond simply getting trees in the ground, the green legacy has achieved several notable successes in building capacity, systems, and culture around restoration. It has also contributed to much more widespread awareness of the importance of reforestation. While much still remains, there is no shred of doubt that the Green Legacy has delivered results, the most important of which is 'green culture'.

Without a shadow of doubt, the new culture will be a legacy preserved for Ethiopia's future generations. Many cities throughout the country are now being conscious of the need to nurture green spaces and enhance forest cover in suitable areas as well as on the banks of rivers. As making the green legacy outcomes compatible with the fast-paced urbanization requires the combined effort of all, the commitment of millions of citizens is badly needed.

Since several direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation have been identified as severe environmental degradation problems in Ethiopia, mass tree planting program was launched in Ethiopia in 2019 with the objective of reducing the impact of climate change and to improve contribution of forests to the green growth path of the country. The mass tree planting campaign should continue in the future by involving local communities. Interestingly, the local communities expressed their interest to participate in the future tree planting programs. The most important part of the initiative is not only to plant as many seedlings as possible as it is necessary to consider the technical or bio-physical

factors such as selection of appropriate planting sites.

It is clear that the tree planting program offers low cost carbon removal opportunities for the country. The government, concerned bodies working on environmental preservation, companies, and the community at large should look for ways to further buttress efforts towards going places green, and there should be a clear rule and guideline on the benefit sharing mechanisms. This amalgamated stride could definitely play a greater role in the efforts exerted towards mitigating climate change and enhance other roles of forests and trees. All these activities should be properly planned and implemented by the relevant government organization starting from the federal to the kebele level down the road.

In order to enhance the involvement of various stakeholders including the local community and ensure the sustainability of the initiative, Ethiopia should set up a number of formalized institutional arrangements, which has a clear roles, rights and responsibilities.

Most importantly, ensuring the development of the country through implementing efficient rural as well as urban green initiatives based on public consent and development via coordinating human power and institutional and technical capacities at all levels has to come to the forefront.

Planting seedlings in cities and rural areas would surely help improve the benefit of forests for the region's social and ecological goals and realize regional prosperity. Since green areas and recreational sites play a significant role in serving as a buffer in providing people with environmental services such as carbon sequestration and social or cultural benefits to the local people, going areas green has to be well capitalized.

In general, the green legacy initiative, which has been widely run by Ethiopia, shows that there is a big room for forests to contribute to the country's economy apart from making places luring and apt to be visited by visitors and tourists. To make this all real, forest degradation and deforestation have to be well tackled. Most definitely, green legacy has gone beyond going areas, places, and panoramic views; it has helped the nation bring about numerous social, cultural, economic, and even political standards. Greening areas, whether in rural or urban localities, is significantly useful in intensifying forest products like firewood, fodder, honey, wild coffee, mushrooms, spices, medicinal plants, etc. Therefore, it has to be made modern via raising public awareness about the significance of green legacy, for it is beyond what people have thought of it. Following the green legacy initiative, tree planting efforts have had a positive impact on paving the boulevard towards meeting the environmental and the socio-ecological goals. Since trees help, through the green legacy initiative, peculiarly curb soil erosion and buttress fertility, the initiative has to be well reinvigorated at the national level.

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

Editorial

A selflessness commitment that redefined Int'l peace

From the Korean peninsula to Somalia, the Ethiopian men and women in uniform placed their lasting footprints by delivering lasting tranquility and stability. In all areas that the Ethiopian troops were deployed, hosting people felt utmost safety.

Today, the Ethiopian troops are seen as a symbol of discipline, a source of peace, and a beacon of hope and optimism for those affected by violence.

The UN on several occasions recognized the Ethiopian contingent's contribution. To cite but a few, last September Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations while he met then minister of foreign affairs Amb. Taye Atske Selassie (now President of the FDRE) in New York on the margins of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA79) commended the contributions of the Ethiopian peacekeeping force.

In 2012, the UN posted this on its website: "From the early days of UN peacekeeping to some of today's most vital operations, Ethiopian men and women have played an important role in the Organization's efforts to advance peace in the world's hot spots. The country's participation in UN-authorized operations dates back to 1951, as part of the UN multinational force in the Korean War."

Another unique episode in Ethiopia's peacekeeping operation surfaced in 2011. The catastrophic flare-up between the South Sudanese and Sudanese forces was brought to an end following the Addis Ababa agreement on Abyei. The crux of the accord was to demilitarize the region until the two sides resolved their differences.

On the heels of the agreement came the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)—one of the largest contingents of the UN Mission. The warring parties put trust on Ethiopia and its troops to be deployed in the area. The excellent commitment, professionalism and courage were among the reasons that the two countries relied on Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian troops are selfless and they shed their blood for the interest of the innocent people in the areas of their deployment. For instance, members of the Kagnew Battalion that were deployed in Korea alongside other forces neither surrendered nor left their comrades who were fallen while in duty. No member was reported missing as well.

What is more, the Ethiopian forces engage in infrastructural development works in their places of deployment. They build roads, bridges ...to the community of their deployment. Hence, people feel safe and do their day-to-day activities to subsist their lives and get out of trauma.

Ethiopia, as a founding member of the UN, continues contributing its share to the maintenance of international peace and security. The gallant Ethiopian Defense Force have built its capacity than ever before in all respects. Ethiopia and the ENDF are anchor of peace and security in the Horn region and beyond. The contribution will continue unabated so that our region in particular and Africa at large could transform into a place that is safe haven to their people.

This is not to deny that there are some peace spoilers that hide in the mask of peacekeeping. These forces have no iota of interest to advance peace and security. Nor they have the courage, capacity and experience to bring durable peace. A sane mind can see what is happening to their neighbors. When their neighbors are troubled in a vicious cycle of war and terrorism, the spoilers send their messy hands and add fuel to the fire. Alas! They attempt to trade in the guise of peacekeeping in far wary areas.

In sum, the unwavering commitment of Ethiopian troops to peacekeeping efforts across the globe has not only fostered stability but has also instilled hope in communities ravaged by conflict. Their dedication to protecting the innocent, coupled with their initiatives in infrastructural development, underscores their integral role in rebuilding war-torn societies. As recognized by the United Nations and other international bodies, Ethiopia's contributions are vital for maintaining peace in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Despite challenges posed by peace spoilers, Ethiopia remains steadfast in its mission, determined to create a safer and more secure environment for all.

Opinion

Climate Action: Collaborating to secure World's future

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

It is widely known that Africa is heavily impacted by carbon emissions from Western countries, leading to increased exposure to natural disasters such as droughts, famines, floods, earthquakes, landslides, El Nino, and more.

Despite recognizing this reality and having an obligation to fund green projects on the continent, developing countries that continue to emit significant carbon from their industries have not committed enough to support green development projects in African nations. As a result, African countries still require climate financing and support, even as COP29 approaches.

During a high-level side event at COP29, there was a strong emphasis on the urgent need for increased climate financing and global cooperation to address Africa's escalating climate challenges.

African countries have consistently called on global partners to match Africa's commitment to combating climate change with substantial, actionable support. They have highlighted the devastating impact of climate change on the continent, where nations lose up to 5 percent of GDP annually due to climate-related disruptions. Despite Africa's minimal contribution to global emissions, the continent faces disproportionate challenges and risks, exacerbated by existing inequities in climate finance.

Africa is committed to doing its part in combating climate change, but it calls upon global partners to match this commitment with actionable support to avoid increased risks for all.

There are five critical policy priorities that could guide Africa towards a climate-resilient future, including leveraging Africa's vast mineral resources for a green economic transformation, enhancing the continent's carbon capture potential, and committing to the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for Africa's climate financing needs, estimated at USD 1.3 trillion.

The transition to renewable energy is crucial to safeguard Africa's long-term economic resilience. As the world moves towards a green economy, Africa has an opportunity to position itself at the forefront. Coordinated policies and investments could make Africa a global hub for clean energy.

The international community must take urgent, decisive action to limit greenhouse gas emissions, recognizing

that the cost of inaction far outweighs the investment needed to build a resilient and prosperous future for Africa and the world.

While much is expected in terms of climate financing from developing countries through carbon trading, African nations should also initiate green development projects with multiple benefits for their people impacted by climate change.

Ethiopia's ongoing climate mitigation efforts, particularly the Green Legacy Initiative, serve as a best practice that should be replicated across Africa and globally. The initiative has significantly improved food security and environmental protection in Ethiopia, with over 566 million saplings planted in a single day last year.

As the nation prepares for a massive tree-planting campaign, expectations are high that the Green Legacy Initiative will continue to yield positive results for the environment and its people. Ethiopia has planted a remarkable number of seedlings over the past five years, actively engaging citizens in the planting event.

In pursuit of its ambitious goal of planting 50 billion trees, Ethiopia planted 7.5 billion trees last year and aims to reach 40 billion seedlings from the overall target of 50 billion. Ethiopia has already planted over 32.5 billion tree seedlings.

While countries responsible for significant climate change have a mandatory obligation to finance green projects in Africa, African nations should also invest in mitigating climate challenges.

Developing countries should support African nations as climate change impacts livelihoods. Green development assistance for African countries should be separate from other forms of aid to avoid confusion and ensure transparency.

Climate change is a global challenge that requires collective action. Each of us is responsible for addressing climate change impacts through green development projects, regardless of our varying contributions.

Climate action and collaboration are essential to secure Africa's future amidst climate change. Africa and its institutions are committed to working with partners to establish an equitable approach to scaling climate finance for the continent. Together, we can ensure a sustainable future for Africa and the world.

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



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Business & Economy

Ethiopia's commitment to implement, catalyze AfCFTA

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is interesting to note that laying the groundwork for the operation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a decisive step, as it plays a paramount role in enhancing economic integration and establishing sustainable peace in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063, Africa's development framework. The AfCFTA was approved by the 18th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012, which adopted the decision to establish an African Continental Free Trade Area and the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade as a key initiative whose implementation would promote socio-economic growth and comprehensive development. The AfCFTA aims at accelerating intra-African trade and boosting Africa's trading position in the global market by strengthening Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations.

As Ethiopia possesses tremendous responsibility to ensure long lasting peace and stability as well as deepening economic integration in the Horn of Africa region, the full implementation of AfCFTA would accelerate efforts that endeavor to fast-track economic interconnectedness in the near future.

In point of fact, Ethiopia has been undertaking a wide spectrum of measures with a focus on speeding up the effectuation of AfCFTA on the grounds that its involvement to the overall economic growth of the country brings about the intended target at the earliest time possible.

Apart from playing such a cardinal role, AfCFTA would widen market destinations and related market possibilities and prospects for trade at some time in the future.

It is widely known that Ethiopia's strong political drive to the implementation of AfCFTA paves the way for the growth of the country's economy and the region. It has been acknowledged that Ethiopia has been carrying out prominent economic policy measures in various points in time.

It is clear that AfCFTA opens the way for transforming the trade landscape in Africa and makes a unified market in the African continent to exist in the shortest possible time. Similarly, the agreement is a significant column for the economic, social and political growth of the continent.

The pact will metamorphose Africa's small and fragmented markets into a single economic powerhouse of over 1.4 billion people, according to Ethiopia's President Taye Atske Selassie.

Speaking at the 15th Meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers held at the African



The African continental free trade area: Creating one African market

Union, President Taye emphasized that the agreement serves as a force multiplier, driving economic integration and enhancing connectivity across the continent for accelerated growth.

He highlighted that the AfCFTA aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing a framework to enhance food security, promote gender equality, and reduce poverty. Ethiopia's recent economic reforms, including a shift to a market-based exchange rate, the removal of import restrictions, and new directives allowing foreign investors in key sectors, are in line with the broader goals of the AfCFTA.

The president also mentioned Ethiopia's submission of its tariff offer in trade goods to the AfCFTA Secretariat for verification, as the country works towards finalizing the remaining implementation processes. A national committee has been established to coordinate the domestication of the agreement, and existing laws and regulations are being revised to create an environment conducive for its full implementation.

Furthermore, President Taye stressed the importance of cooperation to harness Africa's critical minerals and strategic resources, calling for a focus on value-added, green, smart, and digitized economic growth to propel the continent forward.

It is true that AfCFTA is an important instrument for fostering investment, creating more jobs, stimulating economic growth, and expanding value added chains in the length and breadth of the continent of Africa. In actual fact, implementing the pact is a fundamental reference point toward economic engagements.

In the present circumstances, with a view to taking the agreement to the next level of accomplishment and new frontiers, the government has been leaving no stone unturned to effectively implement AfCFTA. In a related move, the government, in close collaboration with stakeholders, has been working with the intention of executing the pact and advancing Africa's economic integration.

As far as this, Ethiopia has been providing a solid foundation for the actual implementation of the pact and augmenting sustainable economic growth.

As the future is rosy for the continent of Africa and beyond, all nations of the continent should work around the clock with the purpose of putting in place the agreement just around the corner.

Unless all pertinent bodies stand in unison to smooth the path of the attainment of the AfCFTA, bringing about the desired goal will be tantamount to chasing a wild goose.

It is undeniable that the African continent should stand shoulder to shoulder for the full realization of the agreement. As it is time for Africa to stand in unison with the purpose of taking the continent to new heights, every Tom, Dick, and Harry devoid of batting an eye should lean over backwards to give rise to the AfCFTA.

There is no doubt that as quite a lot of nations in the continent have been showing interest in the agreement with the intention of forging alliances that leverage the AfCFTA agenda and accelerate the effectuation, everyone should go to stand by the side of all pertinent bodies.

Ethiopia is well positioned to fully benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, the participants of the 19th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Trade Officials (STOs) revealed.

The participants of the 19th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Trade Officials of the AfCFTA which was held in Addis Ababa recently visited the Ethiopian Export Trade Permanent Exhibition Center.

Following the visit, Onesime Niyukuri Chief Negotiator for the AfCFTA from Burundi told ENA that the center demonstrates how Ethiopia started the process a long time ago.

"We have been introduced to different sectors including agriculture, processing, industrial development and we have tested the coffee that is produced, processed, and manufactured in Ethiopia."

Noting that he enjoyed the tour and learned

a lot about Ethiopia's potential, the chief negotiator said having a center like this is very important that would attract investors.

Everyone can see how Ethiopia is progressing and trade service is evolving, he said, adding Ethiopia is well positioned to benefit from AfCFTA.

"If you look at it in terms of air transport, I think Ethiopia is the gateway for all the African countries and also for other countries across the world," Niyukuri affirmed.

Similarly, the AfCFTA negotiator from Liberia, Richard Prait, noted that the export exhibition center shows the huge potential of Ethiopia. "I think Ethiopia has huge potential to utilize the African Continental Free Trade Area framework and to export its products to other markets," he stated.

Stressing the need to nurture the culture of integration as a continent, he added it is important that we utilize the market by showing that we get ourselves integrated.

The federal government of Ethiopia is devoted to boosting both local and foreign businesses in joining overseas markets making use of AfCFTA.

The AfCFTA outline would make available significant profits for Ethiopia Africa paving the way for extending their businesses beyond the Horn of Africa region.

It is obvious that Ethiopia's participation in the global economic exchange is anticipated to create opportunities worth billions of dollars.

The encyclopedic implementation of the AfCFTA agreement is a landmark milestone toward economic integration and shaping a thought-provoking possibility for restructuring the continent's trade.

Ethiopia is finalizing its national strategy to begin commodity trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreements, announced the State Minister of Trade and Regional Integration.

In her opening remarks at AfCFTA's 15th Senior Trade Officials meeting recently, Trade and Regional Integration State Minister Yasmin Wohabrebi highlighted Ethiopia's completion of a strategy to maximize AfCFTA benefits within the African market. "The strategy will guide Ethiopia's efforts to effectively leverage the opportunities," she noted.

Full implementation of the AfCFTA agreement is a key milestone toward economic integration and presents a transformative opportunity for reshaping African trade, she emphasized.

Recent reforms in Ethiopia, including liberalization of the telecom, financial, and foreign exchange sectors, now permit foreign investors in previously restricted import and export services. These reforms represent concrete steps toward strengthening our economy and enhancing trade integration.

Art & Culture

African musicians in 2024-amazing facts, who is who in the industry

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

It may look like a coincidence but it is not. The richest musicians in Africa and in the world are both black artistes. In Africa, Davido from Nigeria is leading the pack of richest African musicians with total revenue of 2.3 billion dollars followed by Wizkid worth 125 million dollars and Black Coffee with 16 million dollars. Fortunately popularity and wealth are two different things.

American rapper Jay Z is the wealthiest music artist in the world with Forbes magazine estimating his net worth at 2.5 billion dollars in 2024. According to the figures, Davido is the second richest musician in the world.

Unfortunately, the most popular musician in Africa is not the richest one. Burma Boy from South Africa is topping the list of most popular African musicians in 2024 while the crown of best artist went to South African singer Tyla who shined at the Grammy Awards this year. He won the title of Best African Music Performance Awards. T22 year-old outshone notable Nigerian contenders, including Davido, Asake, and Burma Boy.

According the latest information on the subject, in 2024, the African music scene continued to thrive with a diverse array of talented artists making waves not only on the continent but also on the global stage. The 10 top African nations that produce the best music are ranked as, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Congo Democratic, Benin, and Senegal.

The history of African music is both complex and enthralling. Its modern version is particularly fascinating judging by the global acceptance it is currently enjoying and the commercial success that has benefitted both the musicians and the music industry in the country in particular.

African music is as diverse and as huge as the continent itself. As a continent, Africa is home to the largest collection of arts and culture. Its music, both traditional and modern has been the joy of the international music for a long time now. By African music we mean, "The musical sounds and practices of all indigenous peoples of Africa, including the Berber in the Sahara and the San (Bushmen) and Khoikhoi (Hottentot) in Southern Africa. The music of European settler communities and that of Arab North Africa are not included in the present discussion."

African music has a long and vibrant history. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "It is widely acknowledged that African music has undergone frequent and decisive changes throughout the centuries. What is termed traditional music today is probably very different from African music in former times. Nor has African music in the past been rigidly linked to specific ethnic groups. The individual musician, his style and creativity, have always played an important role."

According to another source, African popular music is a hybrid of the music of Africa's towns and cities. It has most often maintained the core principles of African music while incorporating diverse stylistic influences, including European, African American, Latin American, and Middle Eastern traditions. The pioneers of African popular music were often migrant workers such as sailors, clerks, miners, and railway men drawn into the expanding colonial economies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

European record companies made commercial recordings of African popular music as early as the 1920s, and the subsequent development of popular music styles has been strongly influenced by the electronic mass media. The international popularity of African music increased in the 1980s, in part because of the participation of African musicians on albums by popular Western music stars such as Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel, and David Byrne."

Contemporary African music is a blend of both traditional, modern as well as a combination of Western music. Modern African music, known as popular music is also heavily influenced by foreign genres and styles. "In common with the rest of the world, Africa was strongly affected by the instrumentation, rhythms, and repertoire from the Americas during the 1920s and '30s, as radio and records brought new messages and ideas across the Atlantic Ocean. By the early 1960s, in parallel with each nation's political independence from European colonialists, bandleaders across Africa modified their repertoire to accommodate adaptations of local folk tunes.

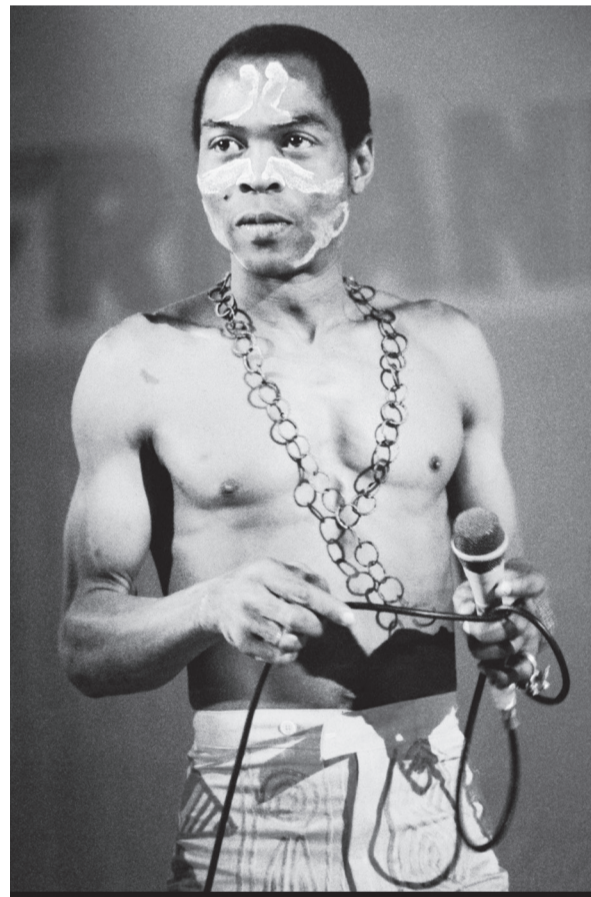
In many cases, the bands' electric guitars, amplifiers, saxophones, and drum kits were the property of hotel and club owners, who employed musicians in much the same way they did waiters and cooks, hiring them to play danceable music for up to eight hours every night."

Whenever we speak of modern African music, we think of Nigeria and Nigerian modern music and a musician called Kuti Fela, the precursor of a new genre known as Afrobeat. "Nigerian musician and activist who launched a modern style of music called Afro-beat, which fused American blues, jazz, and funk with traditional Yoruba music."

The rise of contemporary Nigerian music is considered a very recent phenomenon that coincided with the rise of young musicians who adopted the latest Western musical genres and blended it with Nigerian traditional vibrations that have made it globally influential and commercially successful. This has led to the emergence of a vibrant music industry in the country. "Nigeria's music industry is one of the largest and most vibrant in the world, generating over 2 billion dollars annually. It's known for its unique sound that blends traditional



Tyla Laura



Kuti Fela

rhythms with modern influences. Some of the world's most successful artists come from Nigeria."

According to sources, the Nigerian music industry started to grow very recently. In 2014, its annual revenue was only 26 million dollars and grew to reach 34 million dollars 2018. In the last six years it grew to reach 2 billion dollars in annual revenue. This is indeed a phenomenal growth by any standards. The second biggest music industry in Africa is the South African one whose revenue is far behind that of Nigeria. Even at the global level, the Nigerian music industry is enjoying an enviable place. What is the rank of Nigeria's music industry in the world?

"Launched in 2021, Nigeria already ranks 25th globally, with a daily stream contribution of approximately 5.8 million dollars. This rapid

growth highlights Nigerians' love for music and their growing adoption of streaming services." for now, Nigeria is leading the pack in modern African music ranking, both within Africa and globally. It has become a pacesetter within a relatively short time and this should serve as an inspiration to other African countries that have rich music tradition but lag behind in their contemporary performances.

Ethiopia is one example of the countries that is lagging behind in its global ranking with its underdeveloped music industry. What can it learn from successful countries like Nigeria to play catch up? Nigeria's success in the industry is largely based on language and history.

Most of the modern singers use English and local languages to produce a hybrid language used in the lyrics. English has a long history in Nigeria related to colonialism. This has allowed the music industry to penetrate the global market quite easily. But language by itself is not sufficient unless it is supported by a beautiful music tradition. And Nigeria has plenty of variety and quality as well as talented musicians.

The good news is that there are countries in Africa that have developed their music without using a foreign language and Ethiopia is one of them. The problem is that Ethiopian musicians are either too shy or less ambitious in their quest for global fame and fortune. This is one of the constraints the Ethiopian music industry is

facing at present. What the industry needs at present is young, dynamic, ambitious, courageous and inventive musicians who are not afraid to access the international music world and are ready to learn from other experiences.

Ethiopian musicians who have a good to moderate command of English or any international language should be able to sing in that language and win foreign fans and foreign markets. The road to success might be long and arduous in this highly competitive industry but success can be achieved with commitment, hard work and dedication to music. A number of young Ethiopian musicians have already showed the way to global success, others will and must follow the lead to put Ethiopia on the African and global music map while earning fame and fortune in the process.

Indepth

Ethiopia's unwavering resolve global climate pacts

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia, a nation with a rapidly growing population and significant economic challenges, has emerged as an unlikely leader in the fight against climate change. By embracing bold climate strategies and committing to sustainable development, the country has positioned itself as a green champion on the global stage. Ethiopia's proactive engagement with the Paris Agreement and its active participation in the Conference of the Parties (COP) underline its determination to combat climate change and ensure a sustainable future.

The country's approach to climate action is deeply rooted in its Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy. The CRGE strategy is a comprehensive framework designed to achieve two primary objectives: transitioning to a middle-income economy by 2030 and maintaining net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This dual goal reflects Ethiopia's recognition that economic development and environmental sustainability must go hand in hand.

With its expanding renewable energy, the country aims to exploit its vast renewable energy potential, including hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal resources, to power economic growth and provide energy access. The strategy emphasizes sustainable land management practices to boost agricultural productivity while reducing emissions. The country is focused on designing infrastructure that can withstand the impacts of climate change. These measures align with global climate goals and highlight Ethiopia's leadership as a green economy champion in Africa and beyond.

The country was among the first nations to ratify the Paris Agreement, a landmark global pact adopted in 2015 to limit global warming to below 2°C while striving for a 1.5°C target. Recognizing the urgency of climate action, Ethiopia submitted ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to guide its efforts under the agreement.

The country's initial NDC set a target to reduce GHG emissions by 64% from business-as-usual levels by 2030, one of the most ambitious goals submitted by any developing country. This commitment encompasses the following key sectors:

Through its green initiative policies and strategies, the country has prioritized expanding its renewable energy infrastructure. Flagship projects like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and wind farms across the country aim to not only meet domestic energy needs but also export electricity to neighboring nations.

Reforestation and afforestation initiatives are at the core of Ethiopia's strategy. The country plans to restore millions of hectares of degraded land, creating critical carbon



Taye Atske Selassie

sinks. Sustainable agricultural practices, including soil conservation, water-efficient irrigation, and agroforestry, are being scaled up to enhance food security and reduce emissions. Investments in clean transportation, urban green spaces, and energy-efficient housing are part of Ethiopia's broader strategy to mitigate climate impacts. The government revised NDCs, submitted in 2021, and further emphasized the importance of adaptation measures, given the country's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters such as droughts, floods, and desertification.

The country has earned global recognition for its innovative and large-scale environmental initiatives. These programs not only support its national goals but also contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change.

In 2019, Ethiopia launched the Green Legacy Initiative, a national reforestation campaign aimed at combating deforestation and restoring ecosystems. The initiative set an ambitious target to plant 20 billion trees by 2030. By 2024, the program had already achieved remarkable milestones, with over 25 billion seedlings planted across the country. The Green Legacy Initiative is not just a tree-planting campaign—it also emphasizes biodiversity conservation, soil rehabilitation, and community engagement. Millions of Ethiopians have participated in the program, highlighting the role of grassroots efforts in driving climate action.

The country's focus on renewable energy has made it a leader in clean energy generation in Africa. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), set to be Africa's largest hydroelectric dam, will significantly boost Ethiopia's renewable energy capacity while reducing reliance on fossil fuels. In addition to hydroelectric power, Ethiopia has invested in wind and geothermal energy projects, contributing to its ambition to become a regional energy hub.

In terms of agricultural sector, which employs over 70% of its population, is highly vulnerable to climate change. To address this challenge, the government has introduced climate-smart agriculture techniques, including conservation tillage,

agroforestry, and drought-resistant crops. These measures not only enhance productivity but also reduce emissions and improve resilience to climate shocks.

Ethiopia has been an active participant in the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The government has emphasized the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, calling on developed nations to take greater responsibility for their historical emissions and provide financial and technological support to developing countries.

In his remarks at the 29th edition of Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 29) Summit in Azerbaijan, the FDRE President Taye Atske Selassie outlined Ethiopia's major initiatives towards a journey to the green future

Extending his sincere gratitude to the COP29 host country Azerbaijan, the President said: "We aspire and hope to translate our Paris Agreement commitment in to tangible actions. We must collectively reverse humanity's trajectory of destruction and do justice the victims of climate change, particularly vulnerable nations in Africa and small island states."

Highlighting the success story of the Green Legacy initiative to date, President Taye said Ethiopia was able to plant 40 billion tree seedlings, expanding the country's forest coverage to 23.6 percent with a potential to sink ten billion tons of carbon. The government earmarked 1 percent of the country's annual budget for the Green Legacy and Land Restoration Fund.

The President noted that this initiative can be scaled up further, appealing for global support to scale up such endeavors.

On the wheat production, the President asserted that Ethiopia's heat-resistant wheat project yielded 107 million quintals of wheat in three years, making the country's food system carbon-negative and the crops climate resilient. With adequate financial support, Ethiopia's model can be replicated globally.

Meanwhile, as part of its national determined contributions, Ethiopia has demonstrated measurable and implementable renewable energy by heavily investing in hydro-based and diversified clean energy generation. The nation has accomplished this by leveraging its own domestic resources. In this regard, the country is successful in integrating energy grids in the region as well, Taye stated.

On reversing the declining urban space, Taye mentioned; "Cognizant of the fact that urban green space has declined, Ethiopia, through its corridor development program, prioritizes people-centered and climate smart approach

to reverse this alarming trend. In this context, Addis Ababa is testament to this success."

In addition, Ethiopia has now become among the few countries in the world to pass a law banning fuel automobiles as part of reducing the impact of greenhouse gas emission, he added.

Furthermore, the debate on climate finance has become overly complex and painstakingly slow-paced, the Ethiopian president noted, underscoring the imperative to simplify the process and focus on practical solutions.

President Taye also emphasized the need to finalize the new collective quantified goal on climate finance and make it operational. "While we demand increased financial support, we express deep concern over the inadequate, delayed and complex disbursement of existing funds."

Many African nations are leading by example to the best of their abilities. In light of this, Ethiopia has adopted its subsequent Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), long-term low-emission government, and national adaptation plan that guide the collective commitment to significantly lessen the impacts of climate change, he mentioned.

Given its vulnerability to climate impacts, Ethiopia has urged the global community to increase funding for adaptation projects. At COP28, Ethiopia called for the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund to support countries facing irreversible climate impacts. It has highlighted the need for accessible, affordable technologies to implement renewable energy projects, improve agricultural resilience, and enhance disaster preparedness.

Having actively engaged in COP discussions, Ethiopia has positioned itself as a voice for vulnerable nations, ensuring that the interests of the Global South are represented in international climate negotiations. Despite its ambitious commitments, Ethiopia faces significant challenges in implementing its climate goals. As a developing country, Ethiopia relies heavily on international financing to support its climate initiatives. Delays in funding commitments from developed nations hinder progress.

Despite these challenges, the country has significant opportunities to enhance its contributions to global climate action. Its leadership in climate action underscores the crucial role that developing nations can play in addressing the global climate crisis. Through its ambitious CRGE strategy, commitment to the Paris Agreement, and active engagement in COP processes, Ethiopia has demonstrated that sustainable development and climate resilience are achievable, even in resource-constrained settings.

While challenges remain, Ethiopia's progress serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action for the international community. By continuing to support Ethiopia's efforts and honoring global commitments, the world can move closer to achieving a sustainable, equitable future for all.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia: Champion of regional, continental integration

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia has long stood as a beacon of African unity, progress, and diplomacy. From its pivotal role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) to its contemporary influence in global and regional affairs, the nation's unwavering dedication to Africa's cause has shaped its identity on the world stage. Ethiopia's resilience, visionary leadership, and commitment to peace and cooperation underscore its enduring legacy as a champion of continental development and integration.

The country's diplomatic clout and steadfast leadership in continental and global frontiers have recently gained new momentum, exemplified by the country joining the BRICS alliance and other prestigious international associations. Ethiopia has also spearheaded critical regional initiatives, such as ratifying the Nile Cooperative Framework Agreement, and continues to lead in addressing regional, continental, and global challenges.

Despite facing numerous trials and tribulations throughout its history, Ethiopia has consistently carried the torch for Africa, promoting peace both globally and within the continent. Ethiopian servicemen and peacekeeping forces, operating under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, have successfully executed missions in Korea, Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, and other countries. This commitment to peacekeeping and international cooperation is deeply rooted in Ethiopia's history and identity.

The unwavering resolve to support Africa's cause has remained steadfast across changing governments. The country's instrumental role in the formation of African unity is a powerful reminder of its unflinching commitment to noble causes and its dedication to advancing the collective interests of the continent. Its leadership in African diplomacy and cooperation is evident in its strategic approach to fostering peace, development, and unity across the continent. Leveraging its historical legacy and strategic positioning, Ethiopia's influence extends beyond bilateral engagements to multilateral initiatives aimed at addressing Africa's most pressing challenges.

As the host nation for the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has facilitated high-level dialogues on critical issues, including conflict resolution, climate change, trade, and economic integration. The country has also actively pursued bilateral agreements with numerous African nations to advance mutual interests in trade, security, and development.

Some notable partnerships include strengthening economic ties with neighboring countries, such as Kenya, Djibouti, and Sudan, through shared infrastructure projects like the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway and cross-border electricity exports. These initiatives promote regional economic integration

and highlight Ethiopia's commitment to fostering collaboration.

The country has also engaged in security partnerships to combat terrorism, human trafficking, and cross-border conflicts, entering military pacts and intelligence-sharing agreements with countries such as Kenya.

In a recent example of Ethiopia's diplomatic engagement, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gideon Timothewos, held productive bilateral talks with counterparts during the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum in Sochi, Russia. Discussions with leaders from Namibia, Guinea, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Rwanda centered on strengthening cooperation in bilateral and continental matters, highlighting Ethiopia's proactive approach to advancing mutual interests.

Ethiopia's enduring dedication to dialogue, peacekeeping, and development positions it as a pivotal actor in shaping Africa's future. As the nation continues to emphasize inclusive economic growth, sustainable practices, and collaborative security frameworks, its role in fostering unity and resilience across the continent remains indispensable. Ethiopia's legacy as a trailblazer in African diplomacy and its unwavering commitment to Africa's cause solidify its status as a cornerstone of progress and a symbol of hope for the continent's aspirations.

The country's strategic location, rich history, and unwavering commitment to Pan-Africanism have enabled the country to significantly influence the continent's political, economic, and social unity. As one of the few African countries to resist colonization, Ethiopia has long symbolized African sovereignty and solidarity, making its role in integration efforts both symbolic and practical.

Today, Addis Ababa continues to be recognized as the "political capital of Africa" due to its role as the headquarters of the AU and various regional organizations. The country has been a linchpin in regional peace and security efforts, a critical component of integration. The country is one of the largest contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa, particularly in conflict-ridden areas such as Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia. Ethiopia has also mediated disputes within the region, including the Sudan-South Sudan peace process and efforts to stabilize Somalia under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Ethiopia has also contributed to regional economic integration by investing in infrastructure projects that link neighboring countries. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a prime example. While controversial, the GERD has the potential to transform the energy landscape in East Africa by providing affordable electricity to Ethiopia and its neighbors, including Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya. This project reflects Ethiopia's vision of shared regional

prosperity through interconnected energy networks.

Ethiopia has also prioritized regional trade and transport connectivity. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, a modern electrified railway, serves as a crucial trade route for landlocked Ethiopia, linking it to Djibouti's port. Such projects are vital for enhancing intra-African trade and aligning with the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which Ethiopia ratified in 2019.

Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage has also served as a unifying force. As the home of the African Orthodox Church and a symbol of anti-colonial resistance, Ethiopia has inspired Pan-African movements globally. The annual Timket festival, showcasing Ethiopia's unique religious and cultural traditions, attracts visitors from across the continent, fostering cultural exchange and unity.

Moreover, Ethiopia's universities and institutions, such as Addis Ababa University, have hosted thousands of students from other African countries, contributing to knowledge sharing and the cultivation of a Pan-African identity.

Despite its significant contributions, the country faces challenges that could impact its role in African integration. Domestic conflicts, such as those in Tigray and other regions, have strained the country's resources and diverted attention from regional initiatives. Additionally, disputes over the GERD have highlighted the complexities of balancing national interests with regional cooperation.

Nonetheless, Ethiopia's long-standing commitment to Pan-Africanism and its strategic investments in peace, infrastructure, and diplomacy suggest it will continue to play a vital role in Africa's integration. By addressing internal challenges and strengthening partnerships, Ethiopia can further its vision of a united and prosperous continent.

To sum up, the country's contributions to regional and African integration are profound and multifaceted. Ethiopia's experience and commitment will be invaluable in shaping a more connected and cooperative Africa.

Ethiopia has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to Africa's unity and integration, playing a pivotal role in fostering peace, development, and cooperation across the continent. As a founding member of the African Union and a key advocate for collective African interests, Ethiopia has championed initiatives that promote regional economic integration, conflict resolution, and sustainable development. The country's leadership in peacekeeping missions, strategic infrastructure projects, and multilateral diplomacy underscores its dedication to advancing Africa's cause. Ethiopia's resolve remains steadfast, ensuring its legacy as a pillar of unity and progress for the continent.

Ethiopia's enduring dedication to dialogue, peacekeeping, and development positions it as a pivotal actor in shaping Africa's future. As the nation continues to emphasize inclusive economic growth, sustainable practices, and collaborative security frameworks, its role in fostering unity and resilience across the continent remains indispensable

Women in Focus

Empowering rural women, tapping the untapped potential

BY STAFF REPORTER

It is an agreed fact that the role of rural women in national development is huge and unparalleled. Rural women play an irreplaceable role in increasing agricultural productivity and food production, reducing the level of rural poverty, and shaping families.

In many parts of the world, rural women have manifold roles and they are the backbone of their families and communities. Ranging from providing care and support to their respective families to food production engaging in agricultural works, at household and family management, the role of women in bringing social changes and rural development is beyond words.

However, even if their role in the overall development of any society is enormous and inimitable, rural women always face a number of challenges, including access to education, finance, healthcare services, and technology, that hinder them from realizing their full potential.

However, recognizing the irreplaceable role of rural women in development, various measures have been taken to address the challenges they face, unlock their potential, empower them, and enhance their presence and participation in each and every activity of their respective countries.

To this effect, and to give recognition for the critical role and contribution of rural women, and their endeavors for national development, the global community commemorates the 'International Day' of Rural Women (IDRW) every year on October 15.

This year's 'International Day' of Rural Women was also observed on October 15 across the world under the theme "Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building Climate Resilience, Conserving Biodiversity, and Caring for land towards gender equality and Empowerment of women and girls."

The day was also marked here in Addis Ababa at the African Union Hall under the theme 'Empowering rural women through accessing education and technology.'

Speaking on the occasion, Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that empowering rural women in education technology is of critical importance to unleash the potential of women.

According to the Minister, among the many challenges that test rural women, the provision of land and finance, and access to education and technology are the major ones.

Rural women, though encountering several challenges, are playing a decisive role in the effort exerted to ensure food security at the household level.

Several activities are being done to improve the lives of rural women by expanding access to education and technology so that women can be successful in the area they are engaged in.

Legal and operational systems that enable rural women to have access to land ownership and finance and benefit them are



being developed and implemented.

What is more, women who are vulnerable to man-made and natural disasters are being supported in various ways to enable them to lead a better life, the Minister added.

According to her, addressing the challenges of rural women and empowering rural women through education and technology can unlock their full potential, improve their livelihoods, and create lasting positive impacts not only at the household but also at national and continental levels.

Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union Amb. Josefa Sacko, on his part, said that women are the backbone of African agriculture. Thus, empowering rural women is a shared responsibility.

According to the Commissioner, accessing quality education and expanding technology for rural women is not something that we can postpone for tomorrow. It is an urgent matter that we have to work committedly to improve the lives of African rural women.

"Rural women should be supported in the area of agriculture in a manner they can produce products that will benefit them economically, beyond family level," the Commissioner added. The Commissioner also urged the member countries of the Union to work together to ensure the sustainable food security of the continent.

According to a statement issued by the World Health Organization in relation to the International Day for Rural Women, rural women account for about 22 percent of the global population. Women play an important role in the health and well-being of their communities.

However, rural women can face challenges like higher rates of poverty (as both extreme and multidimensional poverty are higher in rural areas globally), as well as unequal access to education, health and other social services, and employment opportunities. They can also experience gender inequality resulting from discriminatory social institutions, formal and informal laws, social

norms, and practices. Challenges can be even greater for rural Indigenous women and girls.

Despite these challenges, rural women are a driving force in improving the health and well-being of their communities. They have key roles in ensuring food production, security, and nutrition for communities in both rural and urban areas.

They also play a crucial role in conserving and cultivating biodiversity, being custodians of natural resources and traditional knowledge.

Rural women are central actors in rural health and care systems. Women globally make up 67 percent of the healthcare workforce and an estimated 70 percent of community healthcare workers. Community healthcare workers are often the only healthcare workers that rural people can access. Many community healthcare workers are not paid a fair wage. Rural women provide unpaid care work, taking care of children and the elderly.

Rural women also have roles in other domains essential for health, such as water and sanitation services, zoonosis control, and occupational health, among others.

This year's theme, "Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building Climate Resilience, conserving biodiversity, and Caring for land towards gender equality and Empowerment," highlights the pivotal role rural women play. "On International Day of Rural Women (15 October 2024), we honor their contributions as agents of health and empowerment in their communities, working towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all," the statement added.

Empowering rural women through education and technology is critical to the economic and social development of families, communities, and countries. To this effect, enhancing access to quality education and modern technologies; and ensuring that rural women are benefiting from the opportunities are central.

The first International Day of Rural Women was celebrated on 15 October 1995, to honor rural women's critical role in feeding the world."

Despite these challenges, rural women are a driving force in improving the health and well-being of their communities. They have key roles in ensuring food production, security, and nutrition for communities in both rural and urban areas

Society

Restoring vision through cornea donations

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

It has been 80 years since the world's first eye bank service was established. However, according to documents, a century has already elapsed since the corneal transplantation started to be performed in ophthalmology institutions. Following the first corneal transplantation service, the provision of eye bank service spread from America to Europe and Asia.

Unfortunately, though the service started 100 years ago, it is still in its infancy on the African continent. There is no eye bank that has uninterruptedly provided services for more than twenty-one years in Africa, except the eye banks of Ethiopia and South Africa.

When the eye bank was first introduced in Ethiopia, experts and the general public were highly skeptical. There was also doubt about harvesting corneas, thinking corneal donation could become a demanding task.

However, following the improvements witnessed over the course of time, many people have been able to regain their sight through corneal transplantation donated by individual donors.

Wogayehu Fetene was born and raised in Harar Town. It was in his early years that he lost his sight. As Wogayehu stated to the Ethiopian daily newspaper Addis Zemen, the reason that led him to lose his vision was a corneal scar resulting from a contagious disease known as measles he contracted in his childhood. As a result, he failed to move from place to place by himself, play with his peers, and attend to his education.

However, as soon as the Eye Bank started its operation, he received a corneal transplantation treatment to one of his eyes and regained his eyesight. Then, he started his education again. Six years later, he received another corneal transplant to his other eye, and he restored both of his eyes' sight. Scoring high marks in his studies and completing his high school education, currently, Wogayehu is pursuing his degree in Marketing and Management.

Wogayehu's eyesight was restored with corneal tissues donated by volunteers after their death. He never sat simply after receiving cornea tissues and restoring his sight. Rather, by establishing an association called "The Ethiopian Cornea Recipients Association", he is undertaking various activities aiming to sensitize people to corneal transplantation; encourage them to donate their corneas after death, and give light to others as well as to further strengthen.

According to the Director General of the Ethiopian Blood and Tissue Bank Service, Ashenafi Tazebe (MD), when the Eye Bank of Ethiopia was first established, its main objective was to harvest effective and quality corneas from donors after death; and distribute it in a manner keeping quality and safety to cornea transplantation for citizens who lost their vision due to corneal scar to enable them regain their sight.

From its establishment to September 2024, more than 3 thousand people restored their



eyesight by conducting corneal transplants at various medical centers. More than 5,000 people have also signed a pledge document to donate their corneas after his death.

The Eye Bank of Ethiopia, though it has been providing cornea transplant services for the past twenty-one years and has been growing, still has several challenges that it has not overcome yet.

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Health, there are more than 300,000 people who lost their vision due to cornea scars. Thus, to help those people regain their vision by conducting cornea transplantation, all stakeholders, the community, and non-governmental organizations should support the eye bank in different ways.

As the Director General stated, designating November as a month dedicated to cornea donation, extensive activities are being carried out at the national level. At this specific month, a variety of activities will be done. However, the main task will be to inform society about cornea donation, cornea scars, and the social problems it causes, as well as the process of cornea donation, and to encourage people to pledge cornea donation while they are alive and donate upon their death.

In addition to this, in November, activities such as advocacy, mobilization, and awareness-raising work about the Eye Bank will be carried out in the presence of senior government officials. Simultaneously, on the actual day, mobile text messages will be sent to the general community; awareness-raising campaign will also be conducted through social and mainstream media about cornea donation. What is more, advocacy events will be organized with religious fathers, Abbaa Gadas, and the House of Representatives.

Concurrent with this, awareness-raising



activities and pledging programs will be carried out in various schools, universities, and public spaces.

According to a study, out of the total citizens who are residing in Ethiopia and lost their visions, close to 20 percent have cornea scars. And the Eye Bank in its twenty-one-year journey, more than 3,500 citizens can receive cornea transplantation services. About 15,000 citizens have also pledged to donate their cornea upon their death.

People who underwent the corneal transplantation services are mostly from urban areas. The reason that the service is confined in Addis Ababa, aside from Mekele, Gondar, Hawassa, and Jimma, it is not possible to say that the service is accessible for all and the number of citizens who have received the medical service is at the desired level. Even the corneal tissues harvested by the Bank are low. This shows the need to work a lot in terms of raising

the awareness of the people about corneal donation and expanding the services across the country.

The Eye Bank also revealed its plan to open eye banks in all states and at least one eye bank in this fiscal year.

This year, for the first time in Ethiopia, "Cornea Donation Month" is being marked under the theme, "Don't bury the light; be the reason for those people who lost their vision due to cornea scars to regain sight."

At the same time, the Ethiopian Ophthalmology Professionals Association held its 24th Annual General Meeting on November 8 and 9, 2024. At the meeting, more than 250 ophthalmologists, senior government officials, and representatives of health associations participated. At the conference, new studies and pieces of research work in the field of eye treatment were presented and discussed thoroughly.



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University



Participants from Ethiopia, Kenya, Italy, Sweden and Palestine

HU hosts BREEDTECH-International project-meeting

Haramaya University is hosting the 2nd Project Management Meeting of BREEDTECH, initiative aimed at bolstering plant breeding and biotechnology education and research in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

The two-day event, which was commenced on November 17th, brought together a diverse group of national and international experts from Italy, Sweden, Palestine,

Kenya, and Ethiopia.

The BREEDTECH project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, is a collaborative effort between Egerton University (Kenya) and Pixel, with the goal of strengthening agricultural education and research capabilities in the region. Haramaya University, along with Oda Bultum University, is a key national partner in this initiative.

According to Dr Abdi Mohammed Co-PI of the project and HU's Vice President for Administration and Development, the primary objective of the meeting was to evaluate the progress made thus far and to outline the future direction of the BREEDTECH project. Participants will discuss strategies to enhance capacity building, foster international collaborations, and promote innovative research in plant breeding and biotechnology.

By hosting this important event, Haramaya University solidifies its position as a leading institution in agricultural education and research. The university's active involvement in the BREEDTECH project underscores its commitment to addressing global challenges in food security and sustainable agriculture, Haramaya University Public and International Relations Directorate reported.



Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

DaDU's community service initiative

One of the key initiatives at Dambi Dollo University (DaDU) is its commitment to community service. The university's efforts in this area not only enhance educational opportunities for students but also contribute significantly to the empowerment of the local community through diverse support initiatives.

Notably, DaDU offers free legal services across various districts, addressing the legal needs of the community. The university is dedicated to tackling community challenges by providing assistance in every feasible manner.

Dambi Dollo University Law School offers free legal services as part of its community outreach initiatives. In addition to delivering legal education, the university addresses numerous challenges faced by the local community, particularly those who unable to advocate for their rights in legal settings due to financial constraints.



The university has provided two generators to two district courts to improve the accessibility of its free legal services, ensuring that the community can benefit from these vital services. The university transferred the generator, which was donated

by UNHCR, to two district courts to address the challenges encountered by these courts.

Dambi Dollo University President, Leta Tesfaye (PhD), underscored the university's active involvement in education, research, and community service during his address.

He reaffirmed his university's dedication to delivering community services and expressed optimism about its ongoing commitment to these initiatives moving forward. "Unprecedented efforts will be undertaken to provide the community with free and prompt legal services. As a result, we have contributed two generators to the courts in the Sayyoo and Haawwaa Galan districts."

Similarly, DaDU Vice President for Academic, Research, Technology Transfer and Community Services, Gemechu Fufa (PhD), stated that the institution is diligently striving to meet its responsibilities and commitments to guarantee extensive access to this service.

To end with, DaDU is committed to enhancing its efforts to offer free legal services to the community by broadening its reach to neighboring districts, DaDU Public and International Relations Directorate reported.



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