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Czech hopes for direct flights to boost ties with Ethiopia



BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – The Czech Republic’s Ambassador to Ethiopia, Miroslav Kosek, has called for commercial airlines, including Ethiopian Airlines, to establish direct flights between Ethiopia and the Czech Republic, citing the growing significance of diplomatic and economic exchanges between the two nations.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ambassador Kosek emphasized that Ethiopia and the Czech Republic, as longstanding partners with strong economic and political ties, would benefit greatly from direct flights. “The economic and diplomatic relations between the Czech Republic and Ethiopia are solid. However, the absence of direct flights limits the potential for economic and investment cooperation,” he stated.

Highlighting the Czech Republic’s interest in Ethiopia as a burgeoning market, the ambassador noted that several Czech businesses are keen on engaging in business-to-business (B2B) collaborations. He pointed out Ethiopia’s attractiveness as a large and promising market, particularly for Czech companies in technology, science, education, and other sectors

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Ethiopia sees promising entrepreneurship boom

• Launches 2024 Global Entrepreneurship Week

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) revealed that Ethiopia has achieved remarkable progress in entrepreneurship over the past three years, playing a pivotal role in driving the country’s economy while fostering innovation and creativity.

Speaking at the 2024 Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) yesterday, MoLS Minister Muferihat Kamil highlighted the critical role of entrepreneurship as an engine of economic growth and development. She noted that, in addition to creating ample jobs, entrepreneurship has become a cornerstone of Ethiopia’s economic reform agenda.

“Over the past three years, we have placed significant emphasis on creating a conducive ecosystem to enable entrepreneurs and innovators to unlock their potential. Through recent reforms, the sector has achieved remarkable milestones, though much remains to be done to fully harness the potential of entrepreneurship,” Muferihat said.



The minister also underscored the importance of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI), describing its establishment as a testament to the government’s commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and accelerating economic growth. “We are working tirelessly to alleviate poverty by fostering innovation and supporting Ethiopian entrepreneurs,” she added.

Echoing her sentiments, EDI Chief Executive

Officer Hassen Hussein (PhD) stated that entrepreneurship has greatly transformed livelihoods, creating numerous jobs. “Unemployment remains a significant challenge, and the government views entrepreneurship as a key solution to addressing this issue,” he remarked. Innovation and Technology Minister Belete Molla (PhD) also emphasized the transformative power of entrepreneurship.

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Professor Belay Kassa

U.S. continues supporting public universities' transition to autonomy

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Academy of Science (EAS) and the U.S. Embassy have signed a cooperative agreement to assist in the transition of public universities to autonomous governance.

The agreement will support the country’s 10 leading public universities as they move toward greater independence, with a focus on providing technical assistance in developing policy documents, including strategic plans, and conducting capacity-building activities.

The Ethiopian Academy of Science

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Inspiring vision: Blind artisans shine with handcrafted masterpieces

News



Dress code to improve tourism in metropolitan

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA:- The proper implementation of the new dress code would help to preserving the hospitable culture of Ethiopians and reviving tourism industry, Addis Ababa Culture, Art and Tourism Bureau said.

The Bureau has organized a discussion forum yesterday with hotel owners, experts, media partners, and other relevant bodies on the recently ratified dress code that demands service providers to serve customers hospitality and maintain the standard appearance.

On the forum, Bureau Head, Hirut Kassaw (PhD) said that protecting country's cultures and values is among the priority areas of the city administration to promote tourism.

"As Addis Ababa is becoming an international tourist destination, it needs to establish a dress code for service providers in the hospitality industry."

Therefore, modernizing the tourism sector requires improving service delivery in line with the hospitable culture of the people, she added.

Although many of Ethiopia's service providers including hotels, cafeterias, restaurants, and the likes are compliant with the country's culture, Hirut mentioned that some irresponsible institutes are not preserving those hospitable values.

Therefore, she said the new code, which ratified recently in collaboration with Addis Ababa Justice Bureau and Addis Ababa Hotel Management Association, would force those irresponsible bodies to be abide by the law.

According to Addis Ababa Hotel Management Association Secretariat, Besufikad Debay, the metropolitan requires a dress code identical to the country's culture, since it is crucial to promote the good image of the country and to attract visitors.

In addition to the new dress code, he stated that the city administration is undertaking various activities including the corridor development project so that tourist inflow is increasing.

The Secretariat elaborated that over 20 continental and global conferences have held in Addis this October showcasing the growing suitability of the city for conference tourism.

To keep the momentum, Besufikad expressed that service providers should preserve the country's identity and its hospitable culture.

In this regard, he said, a combined effort is indispensable for the proper implementation of the dress.

The Association has promised to provide the necessary support to service providers in the metropolitan to achieve excellence in the hospitality sector, according to Besufikad.

Foreign participants celebrate hospitality at Great Ethiopian Run

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA:- Foreign participants in the 24th Great Ethiopian Run have praised Ethiopia's exceptional hospitality, highlighting the warmth and friendliness of the Ethiopian people as a key factor in their positive experience at the event.

Conor Twomey from the U.S., participating in the race for the first time, shared that he not only visited Addis Ababa but also explored other states of Ethiopia before the race. He described the country and its people as "special," encouraging others to join the 25th Great Ethiopian Run next year. "It's a great time to bring everyone together, run together, and encourage each other," he said. "The spirit of brotherhood here is incredible."

Twomey also noted the city's ongoing infrastructure development, which reflects the positive changes taking place in Ethiopia. His comments echoed those of other international participants who were drawn to the event not only for its athletic challenges but for the opportunity to experience Ethiopia's rich culture and hospitality.

Kenyan athlete Ruth Chepngetich, who has competed in many international races, also spoke highly of Ethiopia's hospitality, calling it "amazing." She was particularly impressed by the scale of the event, with



more than 50,000 participants taking part in the 10-kilometer race. "Running with over 50,000 people is a great adventure," she said. Chepngetich, who plans to return for the 25th edition next year, emphasized how the Great Ethiopian Run brings together athletes from around the world, making global races more competitive and enjoyable.

Haile Gebrselassie, founder of the Great Ethiopian Run, reiterated that the event has been a significant force in promoting Ethiopia as a destination for tourism and international

sporting events. "The Great Ethiopian Run is not just about athletics; it is about showing the world what Ethiopia has to offer," he said. "The race attracts athletes, tourists, and diplomats, all of whom experience Ethiopia's unique culture and hospitality."

With its growing international appeal, the Great Ethiopian Run continues to serve as a platform for both athletic excellence and tourism promotion, making it one of the most anticipated events on the global racing calendar.

Bureau featuring Ethiopian old films in digital version

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia has made a significant cultural landmark with the digital release of "Aster" film after 34 years, reflecting values and addressing various social issues, Addis Ababa Tourism Bureau said.

According to the Addis Ababa Tourism, Art and Culture and Bureau, the recently released digital films after three decades, show the value of art pieces in addressing various social, political, and economic issues beyond reflecting societal values and promoting unity.

Inaugurating the digital version of "Aster" film, Addis Ababa City Mayor Adanech Abebe emphasized the crucial role of art in Ethiopia's historical victories and development.

"Art has a profound ability to unite us and drive progress," she stated.

Underscoring the need for careful consideration in filmmaking, the mayor noted that while art can inspire growth, it also possesses the power to hinder advancement if not approached thoughtfully.

Addis Ababa Tourism, Art and Culture Bureau Head Hirut Kassaw (PhD) expressed that art serves as a mirror to a society, revealing both strengths and weaknesses.

She remarked that reviewing earlier art pieces, such as "Aster," allows contemporary audiences to address historical gaps and learn valuable lessons from the past.

According to Hirut, the digitization of films like, "who is Hirut's father" and "Aster" is vital for the growth of Ethiopia's film industry, providing new opportunities for filmmakers.



Highlighting the theme of Aster film on the program, Alatinos Ethiopian Film Makers Association President Menelik Merid said that the film explores the stark contrasts between the Bourgeois class and worker classes during the Monarchy era.

He noted that film "Aster" tells the story of the struggles of a young girl, delivering a poignant message against violence toward women and advocating for their protection and empowerment.

He remarked that films serve as historical records, reflecting the societal dynamics of their time.

By addressing issues like violence against women, he believed that a society can enable women to contribute meaningfully to a national development.

Addis Ababa City Cinema House Administration Enterprise, Director General

Brihanu Minito emphasized that the digital release of "Aster" marks not just a revival of a classic but a call to action for the future of Ethiopian cinema one that reflects the country's rich heritage while addressing contemporary challenges.

Despite the progress made in Ethiopian cinema, the Mayor acknowledged that there is still much work to be done. She urged filmmakers to continue showcasing Ethiopia's rich history and culture on international platforms, emphasizing the importance of bridging existing gaps in representation.

Senior experts in the field agree that it is crucial for the next generation of filmmakers to learn from the past and make informed contributions to the industry. By drawing on the lessons of films like "Aster," they can create impactful narratives that resonate with audiences and inspire positive change.

News

Inspiring vision: Blind artisans shine with handcrafted masterpieces

BY YESUF ENDRIS

At the bustling Addis Ababa Exhibition Center, where local manufacturers showcase their products, the Hulegeb Blind and Physical Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Association presented an inspiring glimpse into the vision of blind artisans. The association displayed artistically handcrafted carpets and brooms, captivating visitors with their vibrant designs.

“With over 100 members, our association manufactures and supplies not only carpets and brooms but also furniture products, including beds and shelves,” said Yidebalik Tadesse, a blind artisan working with the association, in an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA).

In a city where local manufacturers face tough competition from imported products, Hulegeb stands out by drawing attention to its handmade goods. Fully woven and crafted by physically disabled members, the association’s products are not only

functional but also artistically inspiring.

“We have never lacked customers, but we do struggle with finding enough shops to distribute our products,” Yidebalik explained. Despite strong demand, the production process is challenging. For instance, the association once used sheep fur to make outdoor carpets, but sourcing raw materials has become increasingly difficult. Yidebalik called for government support to overcome such hurdles.

Hulegeb has also played a pivotal role in empowering the disabled community by training blind and physically disabled individuals to become skilled artisans. Many disabled youths remain on the streets, resorting to begging for their daily needs.

“The association has a rich history dating back to the 1960s. With adequate support from the government or other agencies, we could train more disabled persons and help them join artistic entrepreneurship,” Yidebalik emphasized.

However, government support for the association has been minimal, with most of its income generated by its members. “It would be great if the government could provide more support to disabled individuals striving to be self-reliant. It is about more than just supporting businesses; it is about empowering people,” he stressed.

During the opening of the exhibition, organized as part of the preparations for the 19th Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Day, Addis Ababa City Administration Council Speaker Buzena Al Kedir acknowledged the growing number of blind and physically disabled individuals manufacturing and supplying products. She reaffirmed the government’s commitment to enhancing support for local entrepreneurs, especially those living with disabilities.

Hulegeb’s journey is a testament to the potential of inclusive entrepreneurship, proving that physical disabilities are no barrier to creativity and economic contribution.

Policy shift curbs forex shortages: Businessperson

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia’s recent economic reforms including the forex retention policy amendment that increased exporters’ forex retention from 40 to 50% would boost export and stabilize the economy, a businessperson said.

Fairfax Africa Fund, Global Chairman, Zemedeneh Negatu stated that the recent policy change by the National Bank of Ethiopia allowing exporters to retain 50 percent of their forex earnings is timely and vital to increase export and stabilize the economy.

In an interview with CGTN, Zemedeneh described the new policy as positive and encouraging to exporters and manufacturers.

“It is very significant for exporters like us and others who need to retain the hard currency to purchase raw materials, spare parts and things like that,” he expressed.

Exporters can now retain the 50 percent retention indefinitely, the Chairman noted, recalling that it had to be converted immediately within a month which doesn’t give the exporters flexibility in planning purchases or for any purpose they want to use the forex in the past.

“This is a very big positive step by the central bank.” It will encourage exporters to export more and helps them to be able to plan smartly so that their businesses will operate in a sustainable basis without having shortages of foreign exchanges, Zemedeneh indicated.

Regarding the country’s floating exchange rate, the Businessman underlined that for the first time in 50 years, the central bank adapted a policy which allows the market to determine the exchange rate. Since then, the huge gap that had been between the parallel market and the official rate, which was distorting the economy, is now being reduced very significantly.

Operating through the formal market is the prime objective of the policy shift, he mentioned.

According to Zemedeneh, the indicators are showing that currently more of the foreign exchange is coming through the formal channel that means more forex is available to exporters and manufacturers – those who are actually adding value to the economy.

Therefore, he said the shift helps to stabilize the foreign exchange market and the economy in general.

One of the benefits of the reform is that the IMF and the World Bank provided a 20 billion USD loan to Ethiopia as part of the reform last July, which was the largest disbursement by these two institutions to any African country except for Egypt, according to the Chairman.

Czech hopes for direct flights...

where the two countries have traditionally cooperated.

He further stressed the importance of strengthening people-to-people relationships, emphasizing that direct flights are essential for fostering closer ties. “Investors also need direct flights to facilitate their engagements,” he added.

The ambassador highlighted the enhanced diplomatic relations between the two nations, which have gained momentum following reciprocal visits by their prime ministers. “The Czech Prime Minister visited Ethiopia last November, just three

months after the Ethiopian Prime Minister’s visit to Prague. These visits have paved the way for continued dialogue on potential areas of cooperation,” he remarked.

Ambassador Kosek reiterated the Czech Republic’s commitment to sharing knowledge and technology to bolster collaboration. He also lauded Ethiopia’s macroeconomic reform efforts, noting that these reforms are easing business challenges and encouraging more investors to enter the Ethiopian market. “The Ethiopian government is taking commendable measures to attract investors. Previous

challenges, such as the forex system, are being addressed,” he said.

He also announced the upcoming Ethio-Czech Business Forum, which is aimed at fostering B2B and business-to-government (B2G) partnerships. The forum will be held in Addis Ababa and is expected to enhance cooperation between the two countries’ business communities.

The ambassador expressed optimism about the future of Ethio-Czech relations, envisioning closer economic ties facilitated by improved connectivity and mutual commitment to shared goals.

U.S. continues supporting public...

President Prof. Belay Kassa expressed gratitude for the U.S. Embassy’s continued support, noting that the academy has received nearly half a million USD for this important project. “The support from the U.S. Embassy has been instrumental in helping Addis Ababa University transition to an autonomous status, and we will now apply a similar approach to support nine other universities in developing the necessary policies for autonomy,” he said.

The agreement builds on previous efforts that saw the U.S. Embassy fund the development of key policy documents for Addis Ababa University, including a strategic plan, student admission policy, internationalization strategy, and resource mobilization framework. The same model will now be used to help other universities



Ambassador Ervin Massinga

in Ethiopia achieve autonomous status.

Ambassador Ervin Massinga emphasized that this initiative is part of the broader U.S. commitment to supporting higher education in Ethiopia, marking 120 years of U.S.-Ethiopia diplomatic relations. “This new

phase of U.S. government support, with an allocation of 522,000 USD, is an extension of our longstanding partnership and reflects our commitment to improving the quality of Ethiopian higher education,” Ambassador Massinga said.

As Ethiopia continues to strengthen its higher education sector, this partnership aims to foster a more sustainable, independent, and globally competitive university system, setting a strong foundation for future growth and collaboration.

Ethiopia’s public university privatization goal aims to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of higher education by gradually transitioning select institutions toward more autonomous and market-driven governance models.

Ethiopia sees promising...

“This sector is about turning ideas into actionable activities, and it has become a major economic contributor. The GEW serves as a reminder that there are a million opportunities for a million problems, requiring concerted efforts to fully exploit this potential,” he noted.

This year marks the 10th time Ethiopia has

celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week, which offers a platform for the private sector, university students, policymakers, and other stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing entrepreneurs. Globally celebrated for the 16th time, the event in Ethiopia is themed “Entrepreneurship is for Everyone,” aiming to boost awareness and

inspire hundreds of thousands across the country.

Through initiatives like the GEW and the government’s continued focus on entrepreneurship, Ethiopia is paving the way for a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem that fosters innovation, job creation, and sustainable economic development.

Opinion

International conferences for tourism development, image building

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Conferences, summits and/or conventions, among others, have contributed a lot to the effort geared towards introducing a certain country or region to the rest of the world. Yes, they can be used to build host country's image and attract tourism, too.

The significance of event tourism is, for example, of paramount importance in attracting visitors, investors, celebrities who do have great potential to invest in Ethiopia and help advance the socio-economic aspect in return. Since the number of tourists continues to grow and their inflow has demanded a lot of infrastructure, making all the necessary requirements needs to be made prioritized and tourism industry in the country should receive due emphasis.

In so doing, high-grade visitors and tourists can be attracted to help the capital, Addis Ababa, have optimum benefit with minimal demerits. This is where meetings, conventions and exhibitions, collectively known as the meetings industry, may offer the best option for the capital looking to optimize the revenue while at the same time looking to its broader economic and social policy aspirations for the betterment of inhabitants. What is practically being done in Ethiopia, especially in the capital, is a case in point in this regard as the capital has been a hub of influential and meaningful conferences.

It is well recognized that tourism has emerged as a dynamic sector in the global economy. Numerous countries of the world have thus used tourism to promote their positive image as well as socio-economic development. It can bring dividends to a given nation's economy and generate employment opportunities. Tourism industry propels the associated economic activity related to transportation, hotels, entertainment, shopping, and food industries. That is why Ethiopia has now well embarked on it.

Undeniably, international conferences and tourism are significantly useful in building national image. As the conferences and summits being held in the capital have demanded high standard of venues, Addis Ababa is expected to construct and promote the existing ones to make it a conference city, because whenever the city fulfills all the requirements, being a conference city for it would be tantamount to take something ready to hit a target using predetermined socio-economic weapon.

Since the strategic planning and organizing of events is used to widen tourist attractions that can help build a given country's image and create awareness, Ethiopia has to improve its image via attracting visitors, investors, guests and others thereby reinvigorating tourism industry.

Ethiopia's image is the overall perception people have of a place, which is shaped by factors like expanded tourism, achievable conferences, and summits, among others. Conferences and events can influence a

nation's image, which can then impact tourists' decision-making and behaviors has been well risen.

Conventions are a large and growing sector of the tourism industry, and can provide the country with a lot of exposure and tourists. Besides, managing and properly handling the essence of conventions, summits and conference destinations can help identify strengths and weaknesses, and improve nation's competitive position.

Conference tourism can also benefit Ethiopia's image and be a form, as well as weapon, of sustainable tourism development. A conference with a variety of events can be more effective than a destination with many occasion centers.

Cities and towns are continuously branding and rebranding as a result of achieving a competitive position in the region to stimulate visits, investments and economic advantages. These days, using conferences and summits, the environment is actively in move and competition is becoming constantly more powerful.

Thus, in order for cities like Addis Ababa, to distinct from each other, hosting conference tourism is of great importance to create a good image of them.

There are various products and strategies for building a destination image. However, cities are intensively adopting events and festivals as an approach of enhancing their image, encouraging city development and attracting investments and tourists. What the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Abba, is doing right this time is an exemplary move in this regard.

The purpose of holding wider conferences and grand summits in cities is to establish a unique image and identification, which has been gaining a critical attention off late, has been attained almost all the time from beautiful attractions, unique traditions and cultures, friendly people, as well as from breathtaking landscapes. These all are with which Ethiopia is endowed.

Building a destination image rely upon a range of determinants, such the general population, the businesses, financial agents, prime economic drivers, which have a critical impact on developing tourism luring tourism centers.

Nowadays, visitors, which are encouraged by the growth of leisure time, as well as the increased levels of available incomes and more organized and productive systems of transportation, have the opportunity to choose and select between the greater diversity of destinations. Thus, conferences and events are considered to have a critical role in the decision of a tourist regarding their visits, and the satisfaction of visitors depends greatly on the comparisons between the expectations regarding host places with the actual given experience of the visited panorama.

The most important determinant on establishing a positive brand image is the involvement on continues promotion

activities. Therefore, destinations seek to spotlight and place cities as brands, by advertising them to various groups of visitors. Conferences, events and festivals have long been considered as to be as one of the quickest developing tourism adventures and experiences, and one of the most successful catalyst for mounting tourism, in fact.

Hence, conference centers or destinations in short, are intensively adopting events as an approach of enhancing their image, of encouraging municipal development and attracting investments and tourists.

As tourism nowadays, is considered to be one of the biggest and quickest growing industries, identified with immanent requirement for continued variety of products as well as one of the quickest sector for economic development, conferences and events have to be well expanded!

Conference tourism attains a huge role for providing benefits in cultural, social and environmental areas, and the position and capacity of tourism in the modern community led to the growth of a large number of touristic products and to excessive networks, techniques and connections.

Cities such as Addis are intensively approved events as a move toward of enhancing their image, and not long ago, events and festivals have been measured as to be as one of the most prompt developing tourism adventures and incidents, that have made places to instantaneously incorporate all their strategies and objectives to touristic present needs. No doubt, conferences are crucial stimulators of the tourism, which figure positively in the progress of a destination and advertising goals for the majority of destinations are organized for image establishment, brand improvement and for market positioning. Furthermore, events are the ideal opportunity when a country attempts to capture the attention of tourists.

Cities are being considered as compound products that are in need to be traded and publicized among advanced strategies of commercializing.

However, the most important attributes for a successful brand are proper advertisement, natural resources, political and economic structures; infrastructure and last but not least the general public's hospitable spirit. Thus, it is fundamental for the host city and/or organizers of conferences to consider all the possible aspects that events could affect the host society's social, economic, environmental, socio cultural and political impacts. The most common impacts of a conference can be social impacts on locals, income production, infrastructure inheritance, publicity and visit returns.

Moreover, conferences and summits add value to the quality of life by empowering interactions among various cities even distinct countries, improving recognition of miscellaneous societies and cultures, as well as behaving as a source of local pride. Apart from economic effects that summits and

events bring on cities, recently for countries or regions, cultural and social effects have taken a great attention as well.

Events can generate more connection between the societies, build national pride, exchange traditions and culture of a community, open new business possibilities, as well as make the residents feel more relaxed and appreciate more their culture and each other/one another. Promotion of events is of crucial importance in buttressing tourists' inflow and offering interesting and low package prices for tourists, and for making this a success, organizers of events should cooperate with active drivers of the wheel and the concerned body of the nation running such lucrative initiatives.

As the influence of multidimensional conferences and summits, structural elements and place brand on destinations' overall image, based on an appraisal of capacity and environmental-friendly components of destination image, the conferences offer people a great platform to share thoughts and to gain insights from tourism industry experts. Unequivocally, no matter in which part of the world people are living, they can attend these conferences in Africa and Ethiopia. Yes, international conference on socio-cultural, and socio-economic and cooperation trajectory is a gluing event dedicated to set up firm foundation for people-to-people and country-to-country ties.

This brings together tourists, visitors, investors, scholars, researchers, practitioners, entrepreneurs and educators to share the benefits of making the tourism industry wide thereby economic and social advancement swells via entertaining tourism industry-driven endeavors.

Conference tourism strategically integrates natural, architectural, and cultural elements, such as the contours of mountains, traditional sloped roofs, and the pattern of unfolded Ethiopian cultures and comprehensively interprets their values and essence.

In sum, developing countries like ours can earn substantial foreign exchange from tourism that could boost their sustainable development. Yes, Ethiopia has all the elements that can make it an attractive tourist destination. It is home to mighty mountains, revered religious shrines, rich archaeological heritage, mesmerizing scenes and remarkable highlands.

However, its tourism potential remains grossly under-realized. Given the multitude of impediments to developing tourism as an industry, including connectivity issues, lack of hospitality infrastructure, and inadequate visitor services, there is a need to clearly identify the obstruction to promoting tourism, and make tangible proposal to transform tourism into an image-building and revenue-generating industry that can bring socio-economic bonus for the people of the nation.

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

Editorial

Apposite step for operating forensic-related matters locally

Of late, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) inaugurated the Federal Police Forensic Investigation and Research Center of Excellence. Not only does the facility enhance Ethiopia's forensic capability but it also serves neighboring countries.

During the event to inaugurate the center the Premier underscored that the milestone has portrayed Ethiopia's transition from reliance on external resources for critical forensic services to establishing a self-sufficient institution. Such a positive move would be of paramount importance in declaring independence regarding decisive steps of the advancement of forensic technology. It would add value to the efforts geared towards pushing Ethiopia to the next era. For instance, so far when DNA testing was needed, Ethiopia had sought external resources to verify those things that can only be corroborated. However, today, following the capacity of the nation and the advent of technology, Ethiopia has had an institution that helps address DNA-related challenges domestically and even supporting neighboring countries.

This positive initiation and bold move needs to be prettily lauded as the center can be a clear testament to the extensive reforms implemented in the security and safety sector. As stated on the spot, the government is highly committed to well boost institutional capacity and ensuring regional cooperation. Yes, the center would be significantly useful in supporting the countries of the African continent apart from quenching the forensic-related matters locally.

The center would also be of overriding importance in highly contributing to nation's border security reform agenda. Undeniably, such a remarkable facility denotes a noteworthy step forward in Ethiopia's efforts to modernize its forensic capability thereby reducing dependency on external support.

It is widely recognized across the globe that forensic science is a vital part of the criminal justice system because it provides people with objective findings that can meaningfully help come up with reliable truth finding.

True, the center is quite significant in fostering the process of collecting, preserving, and analyzing evidence, scrutinizing DNA, fingerprints, bloodstain patterns, firearms, microscopy, uncovering digital traces, decoding firearm evidence, reconstructing crimes as well as testifying as expert witnesses. Entertaining such a contemporary weapon to detect all needed for Ethiopia is a real blessing to be part of the modern realm. Simply, having a technology doing all these can by any means overlooked and the nation itself has to attach due emphasis to it, and countries of the African continent should also draw important lessons from the former as the technology and the center of excellence it has appreciated is an exemplary one.

Lucidly speaking, the development of the center would help Ethiopia curtail the problems in relation to overlooking the significance of forensic science by administrative section, lack of awareness among forensic officers, absence of independent national forensic institute and shortage of expertise. It is thus exceedingly recommended that the Ethiopian had better strengthen the center, design a national policy of forensic science and independent national forensic laboratory thereby helping the nation confidently declare forensic independence whenever need arises. In so doing it would be quite possible to make the national investigation and training in the arena of forensic science prettily dependable. Hence, a policy strategy is expected to frame a clear trajectory for the development of forensic science across the nation through governing service provision, quality assurance, and accreditation, among others.

In sum, securing forensic center that is operating with appropriate standards and reaching out to the continent through networks will have a far reaching effect, indeed! This could be achieved by solving existing gaps in the skills and expertise of forensic specialists through providing continuous and updated training. Apart from the government, various sectors, companies, organizations and associations should be involved to overcome the pitfalls of the forensic science service and uplift the role of the center. It would be an African center, even. Thus international cooperation in the field of conducting forensic examinations, accreditation of professionals, associations and maintaining standards that reproduce competency, accountability, and spirit of competition for the advancement of the sector has to be taken as compulsory.

Opinion

The Great Ethiopian Run goes beyond sporting event

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

The Great Ethiopian Run (GER) features a 10-kilometer road race and has established itself as one of the most remarkable and prominent events in Ethiopia. The event offers multifaceted benefits and is a popular gathering for people of all walks of life.

GER is a significant annual sporting event that welcomes individuals from various backgrounds, including diplomats, local and international athletes, foreigners, and citizens alike.

Founded by the renowned Ethiopian runner Haile Gebrselassie, the GER serves as a sports festival that captivates a diverse audience. It invites participation from all individuals, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, gender, or political beliefs, fostering an inclusive atmosphere.

Now, the event transforms into a vibrant street celebration, where tens of thousands of people engage in running, walking, and dancing along the course. The vision of the GER is to promote running as a lifestyle choice for everyone.

In light of the alarming rates of mortality associated with non-communicable diseases, initiatives like the Great Ethiopian Run are essential for encouraging healthy living and an active lifestyle.

The GER advocates for participants to walk to and from the race venue rather than using vehicles. Additionally, it encourages walking three kilometers daily as a substitute for short car journeys, aiming to instill healthy habits within the community.

The event also takes proactive measures to reduce carbon emissions, promote recycling, and ensure proper waste disposal, while minimizing the use of plastic and paper. Moreover, this grand event, which attracts over 50,000 participants, holds significant value in disseminating social messages.

Various individuals and groups utilize this extensive platform to raise awareness about pressing social issues. Consequently, activists concerned with matters such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, child abuse, any form of stigma, and child labor exploitation prepare to share their messages with the community during this prominent occasion.

In addition to providing entertainment through a range of sporting activities, the GER is dedicated to raising funds for charitable causes. These funds are generated through contributions from individuals, organizations, and participants involved in the GER.

Following the race, individuals and organizations have the opportunity to purchase charity t-shirts. As a result, over the past seventeen years, the campaign has successfully raised more than 20 million birr, which has been allocated to over 30 charitable organizations that support women, children, and the elderly.

This road race occurs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and plays a significant role in enhancing the country's image and boosting tourism. The event draws international participants who invest in airfare, accommodations, and various other expenses.

This prestigious occasion demonstrates Ethiopia's capability to host world-class events and highlights its ability to collaborate with global initiatives. The Great Ethiopian Run (GER) is recognized as one of the premier road races worldwide, attracting competitors from diverse backgrounds, including some of the most celebrated athletes.

Globally, the GER is renowned for being one of the most vibrant and dynamic races on the international athletics calendar. Currently, Addis Ababa is undergoing a transformation into a cleaner and more organized city, thanks to an extensive corridor development project aimed at improving the appearance of the capital city.

Major events like the Great Ethiopian Run provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the country's positive image and increase revenue from the tourism sector.

By and large, the Great Ethiopian Run is poised to make a substantial impact on tourism and development initiatives in Addis Ababa. This year marked the 50th anniversary of the discovery of Lucy, with the participation of 50,000 runners.

This significant event will enhance Ethiopia's tourism profile on the global stage, as it is one of the most recognized races worldwide. The Great Ethiopian Run International offers a distinctive experience for runners of all abilities.

While it attracts elite competitors, its primary aim is to promote widespread participation among local residents. The event is also ranked among the best 10km road races for international entrants. This year, the Great Ethiopian Run International 10km had been held for the 24th time, uniting runners from around the globe and celebrating the theme called: For Every Child Nutrition.

In conclusion, this sports festival should be further developed to attract an even greater number of tourists.



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Business & Economy



Ethiopia's fruits and vegetables



Ethiopia's fruits and vegetables export in promising progress

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Ethiopia has a wide range of fruit and vegetables, such as avocados, green beans and mangoes. These have great potential in the European market. Still, some steps are necessary for Ethiopia to develop the export market. These include lowering costs, increasing market opportunities, and improving land and sea logistics. Sea freight export offers the capacity to export larger volumes. This export method also has a lower environmental impact.

Total fruits production of Ethiopia which was around 410,000 metric tons in 2015 doubled reaching 800,000 in 2023 according to data of the Central Statistics. The Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) started the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Ethiopia project. This project focuses on transitioning Ethiopia's horticulture to a sustainable export alternative. In this project, CBI helps Ethiopian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) gain experience in exporting to the European Union (EU), Gulf Cooperation Council countries and other countries in the Middle East via sea freight and currently much progress has been witnessed.

To boost the practices, recently, Ethiopia has launched the remarkable shipment of refrigerated fruits and vegetables to the European market, the Ministry of Agriculture disclosed.

EthioVegfru, a private limited exporter and importer company, has officially launched shipments Sugar Snap and Mange-tout vegetable products to the Netherlands last week at the presence of Agriculture State Minister, Sofia Kasa.

Ethiopia is known for offering ideal climate conditions for the year-round cultivation of vegetables and fruit like mangos, grapes and oranges.

Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director and Founder of EthioVegfru, Tsegaye Abebe indicated that 12 tons of Sugar Snap and Mange tout vegetable products will be delivered to the port of Djibouti, using a container equipped with modern refrigerators and new technology. The fresh produce was loaded at Koka and will be transported to Netherlands via the Ethio-Djibouti transport corridor within 23 days.

This shipment is a milestone in the development of a cool logistics corridor for the export of fruits, vegetables and other

perishables by sea freight via the Port of Djibouti.

Noting that Ethiopia has not yet exploited its full potential in the sphere of fruits and vegetables production, Tsegaye said, "We should continue to produce vegetables and fruits on a large scale and increase the export destination markets."

He also stressed the need for maximizing the utilization of the sector and further investments in fruits and vegetables production. According to the managing director, starting the transportation of vegetable products by ship is a great move for Ethiopia in order to penetrate the global market.

He also urged for redoubling the ongoing efforts and expanding the product as well as presenting it to the markets following the market destinations in European countries have reduced due to environmental protection factors, Tesgaye noted.

The exporter, who has been engaged in horticulture for the past 28 years, noted that the sector has huge potential in job creation and foreign exchange earnings.

Among the bottlenecks of the sector has been foreign exchange, he said, adding that the recently announced macroeconomic reform policy is instrumental in enhancing the earnings from the sector and elevate competitiveness.

At present, there are 31 vegetable exporting farms throughout the country. These farms produce a wide variety of vegetables including green beans, snow peas, tomato, paprika, eggplant, baby corn, onions, and Physalis, type of strawberry. The availability of fertile land, labor, and readily available water together with cold chain facilities at three airports and a rapidly improving road and rail transport network all make Ethiopia the right place to invest in vegetables.

Eshetu Abraham, a horticultural expert at the Ministry of Agriculture said that, Ethiopia has already embarked on a big task by starting the shipments of various vegetable products through using modern refrigeration containers. The European fruit and vegetable market is very competitive. One should need to meet multiple of requirements if he wants to export to this market.

These requirements are either mandatory, set by European regulations, or private, requested by buyers. Private requirements are referred to as certifications. Almost all

the certifications on the European market are social and environmental in nature. Their main goal is to protect European consumers. Some certifications are more specific to the prioritized markets.

He further said that, Europe is a large and stable market for most fresh fruits and vegetables. The demand for year-round availability and a wide choice of produce maintains Europe's dependence on suppliers from outside Europe. The consumption of healthy, mostly conventional products like sweet potatoes and avocados will continue to increase.

The European blueberries market will also remain interesting, especially giving chances for organic-certified product. Some products will continue to benefit from potentially reduced local availability in Europe, such as watermelons, pumpkins, and sweet peppers.

As to Eshetu, currently, Djibouti is a major export transit for Ethiopia's fruits and vegetables, accounting for over 70% shipments. The horticultural products sold last year, generating handsome amount of dollars. Tomato, strawberry, and cabbage are the top commodities.

Although revenues from the export of fruits and vegetables jumped by 43% compared to the previous year, officials say the market is plagued with illicit practices such as over-invoicing.

Anticipating an increase in earnings, the authorities raised the minimum price threshold last January. The decision came a month after a delegation comprising dozens of exporters led by Tewodros Zewdie, head of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA), visited Djibouti to forge deals and boost export volumes.

Tewodros also said that, properly managing the market-based foreign exchange will be a great opportunity for the export trade.

The macroeconomic reform will bring Ethiopia into a market-based foreign exchange system, which is believed to benefit citizens engaged in foreign exchange earning sectors, including vegetables and fruits. Recall that Ethiopia has been undertaking significant economic reforms to open up the economy.

There are over 200 registered fruit and vegetable exporters, a quarter of which operate their own farms. These farms produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, including

bananas, mangos, onions and tomatoes.

Currently, the flower, fruit, vegetable, and herb farms occupy 10,897.21 hectares of land. The horticulture sector employs 199,640 citizens. In hard currency generation, the horticulture sector has stood at the fourth largest in export earnings.

Demis Chanyalew (PhD) is an agriculture expert specialized in fruits production. He said that Ethiopia has vast agro-ecology suitable for fruit and vegetable production but still produced by small scale farm level. As the result, the supply of the production is insignificant both to the domestic and foreign markets. Hence, to tap the potential market engaging aggressively on the sector through investing knowledge, capital and skills is essential.

Expanding the irrigation system and boosting the production creates job opportunities to thousands, enhance supply to the market and supports the endeavor for ensuring nutrition security. Vegetables are nutritionally rich crops. In addition, unlike animal products such as met and milk they are cheaply obtained. According to studies, the demand for vegetables in the urban centers is growing.

Currently, in the urban centers such as Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Hawassa, Adama and Bahir Dar, the demand for fruits and vegetable is growing and this clearly shows how market opportunities are flourishing. Therefore, if the sector is boosted to the higher commercial level, in addition to meeting the demand, it enables to create job opportunities to thousands and enhances the nation's competitiveness in the world markets.

The government realized that export trade can play crucial role in enhancing the nation's foreign currency earning capacity and reserve and to that end, agriculture plays a dominant role in export earnings.

To encourage local and foreign investors engaged in fruit and vegetable production, it introduced new laws by repelling outdated laws which had been instrumental for bureaucratic havoc. Provided tax holidays for five years when their firms start business, created enabling environment to get access loan and the recently introduced market driven exchange rate further strengthen their export capacity. Hence, by exploiting the created opportunities more investors can tap both local and foreign markets by supplying their horticulture products.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

The Great Ethiopian Run 2024: A landmark event

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The Great Ethiopian Run now, the largest road race in Africa, has reached its 24th chapter this year. It was conceived and founded by the renowned athlete Haile Gebre Selassie himself a great champion and arguably the greatest runner of his period of active life in competitions. Certainly, he has been a great example of patriotism and endurance in becoming and transforming himself from modest beginnings to a very successful sports personality representing his country in major international competitions such as the Olympics and the World Championships. He has also become a great entrepreneur employing thousands of citizens. The Great Ethiopian Run was initiated with him even running in the first contest way back in 1993 Ethiopian Calendar and has been held every year uninterruptedly twenty-four times including this year's event held on Sunday, November 17, 2017 Eth Cal.

This year it has been awarded worldwide recognition as one of the international road races, if not among the best and most fascinating. In a way, it is a demonstration of how successful Ethiopian athletics is and the event has always attracted internationally renowned athletes who have come to compete here and have given some international flair and taste to the festival. This has meant that the event is not only a purely local affair. This year the event has attracted athletes from 24 countries and the race mainly sponsored by Sofi Malt, a brand of soft drink, has raised the award for the winners to 250 thousand birr in both categories, female and male.

The Great Ethiopian Run began the first event with ten thousand participants and has been increasing the number of participants continuously as it became more and more popular and more known in the country the demand continued to increase every year up to now reaching the landmark of fifty thousand participants. It has become an event to get together with a kind of yearly festival for everybody creating the conditions also for potential runners that could take part in international contests. Many of our glorious athletes have gone through this competition with significant records that served them as a launching pad for their future careers.

Many beginners have shown their potential and secured the attention of the various clubs that operate in the country. It is known that there are several athletics-focused clubs in many government establishments such as the defense forces, the law enforcement establishments, and companies such as Ethiopian Insurance Company, and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to cite the major institutions that have produced so many athletes in many disciplines and fields bringing glory and fame to their establishments and the country as a whole.

The Great Ethiopian Run has also served as a kind of charitable organization because people who take part in this contest have begun organizing fundraising situations to be handed to the organizers of the event and



It has become an event to get together with a kind of yearly festival for everybody creating the conditions also for potential runners that could take part in international contests

there have been sponsors who contributed lots of money that were handed over to charities. Every contest every year has a slogan and this year's slogan is "Enough food for children" as it is known that there are millions of children who are underfed or not sufficiently fed with all the basic ingredients that are crucial for their proper growth. In this respect, there is a lot to do in Ethiopia and there are several charitable organizations that try to change this grim situation.

The Great Ethiopian Run also raises huge amounts of money from the sales of the colorful sweaters that runners use during the race. This fund is always handed over to charities and in this sense; it encourages solidarity between people and volunteerism. It encourages compassion for those who may be in dire conditions or are less privileged than others.

The race of ten kilometers is carried out in the principal roads near the center of Addis Ababa and it is broadcast 'live' on Ethiopian Television which has contributed to the expansion and popularity of the event. Many have begun running or doing other amateur contests and training for their health and many others have been motivated to try to run for a good position among the thousands of runners and aspire to reach higher places in the echelon of athletics. The inspiration of this grand road race has been instrumental in producing new talents that otherwise might never have been discovered.

Asked on the eve of this year's event the founder of the Great Ethiopian Run Major Athlete Haile Gebre Selassie has said that, this race has become so popular that it has been replicated in other Ethiopian cities as well and it has gained the attention of the international media. He said this year it has obtained recognition as one of the biggest and most impressive road races in the world. He added that he was sure that it was the most significant in Africa. Every year there are distinguished guests from the athletics world to be present on the podium prepared to handle the ceremony and have space to give awards to the winners. The event is so important that high-ranking officials of the government are present at the launching of the beginning of the race in the early morning hours of the day.

This year at the 24th Great Ethiopian Run there was President Taye Atske Selassie, the Mayor of Addis Ababa Adanech Abiebie, the Minister of Health Dr. Mekdes Daba, the Minister of Tourism Selamawit Kassa, and several ambassadors resident in Ethiopia. One other attraction of this race is that it is composed of various categories of runners.

There are the 'elite athletes' who are fast and begin the race earlier and then there are those in the mass who have registered among the category of faster ones and those who relax and take it easy during the race. At times they pause or take a rest in the middle of the race and enjoy singing and dancing as if it were a cultural festival or a carnival. There is also a race between children in the teenage group held on the eve of the adults' race. These children begin to have an early awareness of their health condition because they take part in such events.

This is one of the peculiar beauties that you

don't find in other similar races. But another interesting aspect of the race is the special contest between diplomats and foreign mission leaders such as ambassadors which renders the competition even more colorful and exciting.

The Great Ethiopian Run has also become a tourist attraction because many foreigners come on purpose to attend not only the festival but also to take part in the competition and have fun with the other runners. Many of them have expressed their admiration for not only the race but also for the country they find themselves in. They said they were fascinated by the beauty of Addis and the wonderful weather conditions also because those who come from the northern hemisphere have left home the chill and snow of the winter season. They expressed their joy for having taken part in the race.

They were fascinated by people they saw singing and dancing to the various cultural musical beats of Ethiopia's 'land of origin', a mosaic of peoples and cultures. What a better occasion to introduce Ethiopia to the world which very often has mistaken or misinformed ideas that create negative impressions. Such events definitely contribute to changing the image of the country and stimulate the flow of tourists to the country. What better occasion to show to the world not only the beauty of the city which is the capital of Africa and the seat of various international missions and organizations, but also the wonderful weather conditions that contribute to the enthusiasm of the participants of the race! What better occasion to show to the world that Addis Ababa is a peaceful place to live in with its wonderful avenues sidelined by trees, parks, and fountains as a result of the recent Corridor Development Project continuing. More is being undertaken by the City Council and make Addis Ababa not only a more beautiful place but also one that is cleaner and healthier with a lot more green areas and playgrounds for people to exercise and children to play.

The greening of Addis is added to the five-year-old Green Legacy Initiative that up to now has resulted in the planting of forty billion tree seedlings in the whole of the country raising the forest coverage by 6% according to the latest official figures released by the government. It is an achievement that has been praised and lauded by environmental activists and institutions.

The Great Ethiopian Run is covered by several international media and the presence of tourists from many countries gives it worldwide extra publicity which contributes to the image building of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has not yet exploited its tourism potential and such events will serve as a brick to build on along with other activities that the Ministry of Tourism will be engaged in. Tourism is one of the pillars of the country's economy and is part of the long-term plan to make it reach significant heights.

Law & Politics

A glowing cooperation between ancient nations

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia and China have a strong working relationship that is becoming even stronger as the two countries increase cooperation in the economic and trade sectors. The former has become one of the major and most important partners of the latter's all-weather strategy in Africa, and as a result, the country has attracted a great deal of Chinese investment and business involvement in Africa.

In the last few months though, Ethiopia has embarked on comprehensive macro adjustments for liberalization of its economy for FDI and others. These reforms are well aimed at the domestic economy but also offer incentives to foreign investors in search of better investment opportunities in emergent economies. Therefore, Ethiopia has the potential to become a more attractive country in which Chinese companies can establish their operations.

Due to Chinese FDI, the various sectors within Ethiopia are anticipated to gain a boost such as almost existing infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, etc. This matches China's more extensive Belt and Road Initiative that is aimed at increasing connection and commerce across Africa and Asia. Chinese firms have already invested in other infrastructure sectors such as roads, railways, and energy sectors that remain crucial to Ethiopia's economy.

Speaking at the Jiangsu-Ethiopia Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference, Finance Minister Ahmed Shide emphasized Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to further strengthening its cooperation with China.

He said that, Ethiopia has projected a stronger and more resilient Ethio-China economic partnership, fuelled by recent macroeconomic policy reforms designed to attract greater foreign direct investment.

The minister reaffirmed Ethiopia's strong commitment to deepening its cooperation with China. He also highlighted that China has become Ethiopia's largest investment partner. In his remarks, Ahmed outlined the country's on-going economic reforms, which are designed to provide greater incentives for foreign investors, including enabling them to own permanent assets.

"Our reforms include investment incentives and enhanced legislative frameworks that make Ethiopia a more attractive destination for foreign investors," the minister said. He added that these changes, coupled with the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), will position

Ethiopia as a central player in Africa's economic future.

Foreign Affairs State Minister Amb. Misganu Arega noted that, Ethiopia is actively implementing the agreements made during Prime Minister Abiy's visit to China. He encouraged more enterprises from Jiangsu province to invest in Ethiopia, noting that several companies from the region are already making significant contributions. Misganu also stressed that, Ethiopia is keen to expand its economic ties and partnerships.

Jiangsu Province Governor XuKunlin also reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening economic ties, particularly in the manufacturing sector. He mentioned Ethiopia's growing demand for high-quality industrial products, positioning the country as an increasingly attractive destination for investment.

LailaLokosang, Senior Technical Advisor at the African Union Commission emphasized the need for stronger trade relations between China and Africa, particularly in the agricultural sector. "China is poised to become a major recipient of African exports, especially agricultural products," Lokosang said, urging China to further open its markets to African producers.

The Ethiopia-China partnership is viewed as a model for broader China-Africa economic integration, with both sides seeking to expand cooperation in key sectors such as agro-industry, coffee, oilseeds, and other essential commodities.

In the arena of construction, the China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) positioned itself as the top contractor in Ethiopia as far as infrastructural development was concerned. Additionally, the company's track in Ethiopia is not just in construction it is in capacity and experiential knowledge empowered its employees.

The recent graduation of Seagull Talent's month-long training initiative, conducted by China First Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. (CFHEC), aims to deepen the collaboration between Ethiopian employees and Chinese management, aligning with the broader strategic partnership between the two nations.

In an interview with local media Wei Qiangyu, General Manager of CCCC Ethiopia, emphasized the importance of such training programs in fostering a cooperative spirit that transcends governmental engagements, stating, "We need specific cooperation not only at the government level but also company to company and people



Ethiopia has projected a stronger and more resilient Ethio-China economic partnership, fuelled by recent macroeconomic policy reforms designed to attract greater foreign direct investment.

to people." With nearly three decades of operations in Ethiopia, CCCC has committed to technology transfer and capacity building as part of its corporate ethos.

Wei expressed confidence that this initiative would not only enhance employees' skills but also promote a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and language, crucial for future collaboration.

With over 8,000 Ethiopian employees, CCCC recognizes the need to expand its training efforts beyond the initial 102 participants in this program. Wei revealed plans for subsequent training batches, which will incorporate lessons learned to better serve the workforce and bolster the company's local management capabilities.

The initiative has garnered attention from both the Ethiopian and Chinese governments, with discussions underway to potentially extend the training model to a national level. This aligns with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology's recognition of the program's significance, highlighting its potential impact on broader China-African cooperation.

As Ethiopia continues to attract Chinese investment, programs like CCCC's training initiative are seen as vital for cultivating a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of an evolving economic landscape.

Moreover, the growing trade relationship between the two countries is reflected in the increasing volume of goods exchanged. Ethiopia exports agricultural products like coffee and textiles to China while importing machinery and technology, which are crucial for its industrial development.

As both nations navigate the complexities of the global economy, their partnership continues to evolve. The Ethiopian government has expressed a commitment to fostering a favourable business environment to attract more foreign investment. This commitment, coupled with China's willingness to invest in Ethiopia's development, suggests that their relationship will only deepen in the years to come.

It is also well known that Ethiopia has started an aggressive process of modernizing its infrastructure base that includes massive investment in telecommunication, transport, and a host of other sectors. In this transformative effort, the Export-Import Bank of China (EXIM Bank) stood out as one of the key sources of financial and has been crucial.

Society

Advancing social protection to ensure fair, inclusive growth

BY STAFF REPORTER

Over the past decades, the concept of social protection has gained recognition at the global level as it yields positive impacts on tackling poverty and ensuring growth at local and national levels.

Owing to its considerable role in ensuring inclusive and balanced growth, countries invest hugely and work decisively, encompassing social protection policy frameworks and strategies in their development program.

Ethiopia has also been working determinedly to reduce poverty, and lessen the social and economic vulnerability of citizens through formal and informal ways; making social protection part of its social policy framework. By devising social policy frameworks and strategies as well as developing working procedures, the country is endeavoring to ensure social growth and social well-being sustainably. As a result, the programs have produced positive income, and many people, the poor and vulnerable sections of society, have been able to benefit and improve their livelihood.

Initiatives such as urban and rural development safety net programs, school feeding, community-based health insurance plus legal counseling, and other programs are some areas that brought about encouraging outcomes.

Recently, at the experience-sharing program held between Ethiopia and South Sudan on social protection. Ethiopia shared its best experience in the implementation of social protection.

Speaking on the occasion, Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie Tesfaye said that social protection is a critical pillar of social policy designed to address the driver of risks and also vulnerabilities that individuals, families, and communities encounter in their lives.

In this regard, Ethiopia considers social protection as a core component of its national development, remaining at the center of public policy.

By mitigating risks at the different life stages, social protection programs contribute not only to individual securities but also to social cohesion acting as a bridge between citizens and government, she reflected.

“In Ethiopia, social protection is a priority for our government reflecting our dedication to safeguarding citizens during and beyond their working years. We also see social protection as an essential tool for sustaining peace and security at the local level by reinforcing social bonds and social contracts between people and government.”

The Ethiopian government has recognized and invested in social protection as a core component of national development in partnership with key stakeholders like the World Bank and others, she added.

Among the many initiatives designed and implemented by the government to promote inclusive growth, and reduce the level of poverty, the rural and urban safety net programs, community-based health



Among the many initiatives designed and implemented by the government to promote inclusive growth, and reduce the level of poverty, the rural and urban safety net programs, community-based health insurance, school feeding programs, and active labor market interventions, were mentioned as productive interventions

insurance, school feeding programs, and active labor market interventions, were mentioned as productive interventions.

South Sudan Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare Aya Warile also said that safety net programs in the two countries are becoming increasingly important to address emerging vulnerabilities such as economic shocks, and climate variability.

Stating that safety net flagship program in South Sudan is in its third phase, she indicated that this phase is the productive safety net for the socio-economic opportunities project.

Praising Ethiopia for its effective safety net program, Warile stressed that at the end of the visit, they will draw important lessons to improve their programs across the countries.

This visit is the start of many cross-learning opportunities for both countries, the Minister emphasized.

World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Practice Manager for East Africa Region Robert Chase said that over the past years, the World Bank has deepened its commitment to supporting social protection around the world and in this region.

Mentioning that over the years Ethiopia has seen encouraging outcomes in its social protection programs and can be a model country, in this regard, the Manager said that Ethiopia has significant lessons for other countries; particularly for South Sudan.

Similarly, South Sudan has a vital experience to share with other countries including Ethiopia in using biometric means to identify beneficiaries, he added.

During the experience-sharing program, the officials from the two countries have exchanged ideas and experiences, on the spheres of shock-response, economic inclusion, and social inclusion.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that the activity of developing a digital system that enables accurately registering beneficiaries of social services in one database has been completed and it is being implemented at the pilot program level.

According to Women and Social Affairs State Minister Huria Ali, the digital system helps to record beneficiaries' accurate information and ensures their fair benefits.

She also extended her gratitude to the World Bank for its budget support for urban and rural development safety net activities and other projects on behalf of the Ethiopian

government and the beneficiaries.

She added that an effective and strong national social protection council will be established to manage, coordinate, and control the activities undertaken by each sector. Further, a plan is set to align the policy and strategy with the ever-increasing needs of citizens and expand access to social protection services.

Concurrent with the efforts exerted to build a reliable financial capacity for the successful implementation of the program, due emphasis will be given to job creation opportunities for low-income citizens.

“Information is wisdom, and having organized and real-time information plays an important role in ensuring fair use and crafting information-based policies.

Mentioning that the pilot program has already started with the registration of people residing on the street, she said the national ID has been able to provide support by giving a unique identification number to the registrants to avoid duplication of users.

The State Minister also thanked the governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the development of the digital system.

Gender, Children, and Social Security Minister of South Sudan Aya Benjamin also stated regarding the visit that the delegation paid at the activities carried out under the urban development safety net programs in Harar, Hawassa, and Dire Dawa towns.

The delegation also reflected their opinion saying the government's effort is an exemplary move. The establishment of a strong structural organization, community-based support alliance, and health insurance program, and the measures taken in lifting up, rehabilitating, and benefiting citizens, who were once left on the streets by allocating a large amount of budget to the sector, were mentioned as a good experience that they can draw lesson.

State Minister Huria Ali also explained Ethiopia's social protection system in detail.

Social service beneficiaries' registration system enables to have uniform and accurate information as a country to avoid duplication and ensure equal distribution of resources. It also helps to evaluate the performance and impact of social protection programs, identify areas for improvement, ensure the continuity of services established, and hold accountability, it was learned.

Planet Earth

The world must walk the talk in climate financing

BY FIKADU BELAY

Countries worldwide struggle to generate wealth due to climate change, leading to decreased GDP and impacting national security and human rights. Climate change is already harming the environment, exacerbating desertification, biodiversity loss, and threatening global food and economic security, weakening economies.

The negative effects of climate change pose significant challenges, particularly for underdeveloped countries and the economic growth, natural resources, and human livelihoods of the African continent.

According to the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report, Ethiopia has faced severe droughts in recent years, resulting in widespread crop losses and a significant humanitarian crisis. These climate-related challenges are worsened by population growth, limited access to irrigation, and insufficient water management infrastructure.

Ethiopia, alongside other Eastern African countries, is feeling the impact of climate change. The increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events like droughts, floods, and heat waves are disrupting agriculture, water availability, and energy production.

In recent years, methane levels in the atmosphere have risen by roughly 2.5 times compared to pre-industrial times, with emissions continuing to increase according to some studies.

The UN World Meteorological Organization reports that coal mining contributes 12% of emissions in the fossil fuel industry, while oil and gas extraction, processing, and distribution account for 23%. Approximately 20% of methane emissions in the waste sector come from wastewater and landfills, with 32% of emissions in the agricultural sector from grazing livestock and manure, and 8% from rice farming.

Agriculture is a cornerstone of the global economy, employing a large portion of the population and significantly contributing to the world's GDP. However, changing weather patterns and prolonged droughts have led to crop failures, reduced agricultural productivity, and increased food insecurity.

Reducing emissions is the quickest and most cost-effective way to slow global warming in the short term and is crucial to preventing severe climate damage.

To tackle these challenges, world leaders, decision-makers, researchers, and stakeholders convened in Baku, Azerbaijan. Ethiopia has participated in all COP conferences, including the recently held COP 29 in Baku.

The world needs concrete solutions from global actors and decision-makers in the climate sector, not just empty promises. The effects of climate change worsen



yearly, claiming human lives and affecting the global economy. Urgent action is imperative.

The COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action acknowledges the role of digital technologies in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Digital innovations can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide tools to inform and alert communities.

Africa raised concerns about the increasing impact of climate change at COP29, stressing the need for action over mere words. Claver Gatete of the UNECA emphasized the urgent requirement for increased climate financing and global cooperation to address Africa's climate challenges.

Africa's climate financing needs are estimated at \$1.3 trillion, necessitating more climate investment and international cooperation to support the continent's commitment to combating climate change.

As part of Africa, Ethiopia's efforts in climate action are commendable, focusing on creating a green economy and investing in renewable energy sources. Developing countries investing beyond their economic capacity to combat climate change should receive support to promote and sustain their efforts.

The urgency of climate action and collaboration to secure Africa's future in the face of climate change as it was highlighted at the COP-29.

Ethiopia's ambitious development plans aim to become a middle-income economy while prioritizing investments in environmental protection and green economic development. The country's industrial parks serve as examples of building a climate-resilient green economy.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed revealed that Ethiopia has planted 40 billion seedlings in the National Green Legacy Initiative to

mitigate the global and national impacts of climate change. He emphasized Ethiopia's accomplishments in achieving self-sufficiency in wheat and its efforts to develop renewable energy resources.

Finance is a key point of discussion at COP29, with developing nations needing support to combat climate change and transition to sustainable energy. The cost of inaction is high, underscoring the importance of fulfilling financial promises to secure a prosperous future for all countries.

The outcome of the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai in December 2023 was hailed as historic by many. Almost 200 nations agreed on a roadmap for "transitioning away from fossil fuels." UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell urged governments and businesses to translate these pledges into tangible outcomes without delay.

The NCQG, introduced in 2009, aims to collectively mobilize USD100 billion annually by 2020 for climate action in developing countries. The goal was met in 2022 when USD115.9 billion was raised. Negotiators at COP29 must increase the total amount of climate finance significantly, specify the timeframe and terms of its provision, outline the supported initiatives, ensure equitable distribution, and establish measurement criteria.

Initial negotiations have shown parties to be far apart. The Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance estimates that emerging markets and developing countries and need to invest up to USD2.4 trillion annually by 2030 to meet climate and nature goals. However, estimates vary widely, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggesting a range from USD5-9 trillion.

While it is recognized that the USD100 billion floors is inadequate, there is no consensus on the appropriate funding

amount or contributors. Currently, only countries classified as developed in 1992 under the UNFCCC are obligated to provide climate finance to developing nations. However, the global landscape has evolved significantly since then; with countries are now being major emitters and economies.

The G7, comprising the world's leading economies, is urging some countries to contribute to climate financing. Yet, differing perspectives persist, with recent talks failing to reach agreement. The UN has proposed seven options to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations.

Linked closely to climate finance negotiations is the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund from COP28. This fund supports vulnerable nations facing climate challenges, a topic expected to progress at COP29.

Another critical issue at COP29 is finalizing efforts to operationalize Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, enabling countries to transfer carbon credits to help meet climate targets. However, implementing this mechanism remains unresolved.

The Baku conference will lay the groundwork for updating National Determined Contributions (NDCs) by February 10, 2025, aligning with the Global Stocktake's call for substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, countries must accelerate climate adaptation efforts, with National Adaptation Plans due by 2025 and implementation progress by 2030.

The COP29 presidency urges developed nations to double adaptation finance by 2025 and increase contributions to funds like the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund. The focus at COP29 is primarily on finance, recognizing it as a pivotal element in addressing climate challenges and ensuring a sustainable future for all countries.