



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Abbay dam increases Nile waters flow in dry season: Ministry

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** –The flow of the waters of the Nile to Sudan and Egypt during the dry season has increased significantly since the initial filling of Abay Dam, the Ministry of Water and Energy announced.

During the course of recent Systematic Observation Financing Facility (SOFF) project inception workshop, Minister Eng. Habtamu Itefa (PhD) expressed that Ethiopia considers the condition of downstream countries, affirming that the current status of the grand dam does not negatively affect Sudan or Egypt.

“We take into account our brothers and sisters on the other side. The condition of the dam has not caused any harm to downstream countries. Ethiopia strongly believes in the shared nature of the Nile River,” Eng. Habtamu said.

Despite consecutive dam fillings over the past few years, the amount of water reaching downstream countries has not decreased, he added, in fact, Khartoum, which used to suffer from floods in rainy season, is now safer because of the dam. In dry seasons, Sudan and Egypt are receiving four times greater volume than the

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## Visionary leadership critical for hunger-free world: President

• Premier requests global fund for food security

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** Strong political will, sufficient financial and technological

support, and visionary leadership are essential to transforming efforts to end hunger into meaningful action, President Taye Atske-Selassie said.

Speaking at the closing session of the World

Without Hunger Conference yesterday, President Taye emphasized that effective mobilization, societal engagement, and robust resources are foundational elements for a zero-hunger

See Visionary ... page 3



Ambassador Designate Christine Pirene

## Netherlands to ramp up support towards Ethiopia's livestock dev't

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## Int'l collaboration enhances Ethiopia's coffee quality: ECTA

• Midroc, NKG partner to elevate global reach

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) announced that collaboration with internationally experienced companies will bring a significant boost to Ethiopia's coffee production and quality.

ECTA's Director General, Adugna Debela (PhD), made this statement following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Midroc Investment Group (MIG) and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG). The partnership aims to foster trust, increase productivity, and raise the profile of Ethiopian coffee on the global stage.



Adugna emphasized that the agreement is a promising step for both coffee producers and buyers, reinforcing Ethiopia's commitment to quality and traceability. He

noted that partnerships like this will help showcase Ethiopian coffee as a high-value product in international markets. According

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## FHC contributing to construction industry dev't

• To construct 20,000 houses in five- year

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – Empowered by government reforms that increased its revenue, the Federal Housing Corporation (FHC) announced its significant contributions to the development of the construction industry while striving to build 20,000 houses.

Improving profits by implementing large scale housing construction projects and highly contributing to the development of the construction industry in introducing a new technology in the country, FHC CEO Reshad Kemal told journalists recently the enterprise has shown remarkable achievements in implementing projects and housing administration through meticulous planning and a holistic organizational reform.

He noted that the high demand of housing is among the pressing challenges in capital, in which, the corporation is making preparation to construct over 20,000 modern housing complexes in the coming five years for the communities of different economic level.

Currently the Corporation is undertaking the construction of multipurpose apartment buildings at 8 different sites located at prime areas in the Addis Ababa and beyond, he stated.

“Our modern village project, a residential complex constructed using advanced building technology, has contributed to the construction industry by introducing a new technology that significantly improves the safety, efficiency, and productivity of large-scale construction projects,” he said.

He said one of the great achievements of the corporation is the inauguration of its Construction Materials Manufacturing Center that produces concrete blocks, road tiles and terrazzo in quantity and quality aimed at feeding the local market and ensuring construction materials import



substitution.

The factory can operate a cooling system saw 24/7, producing 9,072 blocks daily, or over 2.6 million annually, even with an 8-hour shift. By running a single 8-hour shift weekly, the factory can generate over a million Birr in annual revenue while doubling the shift could potentially yield 2.3 billion Birr, he added.

By doing so, the CEO believed that the corporation will increase its annual revenue by seven-fold, which is crucial to generate finance for housing development projects.

The recently inaugurated manufacturing center has the potential to supply

construction materials to the domestic demand and it would generate 4 billion Birr annual revenue before tax when it gets fully operational, Reshad said.

The factory is getting a reliable supply of raw materials like pebbles and black stone cloak from Aleltu and pumice cloak from Ada'a areas, he indicated.

FHC is a state-owned enterprise administering many government houses by renting multistorey residential and commercial properties, warehouses, partitioned dwellings and more, he said, adding that the corporation is engaged in maintenance, city redevelopment, and green development activities.

## Over 100 local CSOs ink financial, capacity dev't program

BY EYUEL KIFLU

**ADDIS ABABA** - In a significant step toward strengthening domestic civil societies, over 100 civil society organizations have signed a financial and capacity development program with international donors yesterday.

The initiative, aimed at enhancing the capabilities of 101 local and grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), associations, and networks in Ethiopia, boasts a total budget of more than 6.5 million euros and will run from 2023 to 2025 and will span five years, from 2023 to 2025.

During the signing ceremony, Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Country Representative, Sara Worku announced that the initiative is funded by the EU Delegation to Ethiopia, co-financed by WHH Headquarters, and implemented in collaboration with the Development Expertise Centre Ethiopia (DEC) and the Consortium of Self-Help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP).

“Out of the total funding, 3.75 million euros will be allocated directly to 75 local organizations,” Sara explained. The first phase of grants will provide 50,000 euros each to 36 of these organizations, while the remaining 25 out of 101 will receive capacity-building and sectoral support.

She highlighted WHH's long-standing presence in Ethiopia since 1972, previously known as German Agro Action (GAA).

As one of the largest international NGOs in Germany, Sara said that WHH operates independently of political and religious affiliations, focusing on combating hunger and promoting sustainable food and nutrition security through integrated, multi-sectoral programs.

Program Manager Mesfin Degaga on his part emphasized that the initiative aims to bolster the internal capacity of these organizations, enabling them to participate actively in democratic processes and conflict resolution.

He stressed the importance of strengthening indigenous civil society to enhance the country's overall development and governance.

## HFHE to construct shelters for landslide-affected households

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**SAWLA** - Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia has unveiled a plan to construct transitional shelters worth over 46 million Birr for 88 households affected by landslides in southern Ethiopia.

The agency has launched the “Building Resilience of Landslide Affected Families (BRLAF)” project yesterday.

Speaking at the launching event, Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia (HFHE) National Director and Representative to the AU, Yitna Tekalign said that his agency has planned to construct transitional shelters at a cost of 46, 292, 000 Birr for 88 households recently affected by landslide in Gofa zone



of southern Ethiopia.

According to him, the 88 beneficiary households are selected out of 626 affected families for being extremely deprived of relief by the landslide.

So far, HFHE has reached out over 170, 000 households through the provision of shelter

and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities across the country, the Director said, while announcing plans to expand development activities to South Ethiopia and other States.

For his part, Gofa Zone Deputy Chief Administrator Ermias Wosene said that the support of partners like HFHE is essential to overcome shortage of shelter for those who

are affected by the recent landslide.

Accordingly, he expressed that the construction of the 88 shelters for households will help to minimize burdens.

He also called on partners to strengthen support for victims' families.

Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia Project Manager Kassahun Solomon stated that the agency has reached out almost one million people through water, housing, sanitation and hygiene services.

He indicated that efforts are underway to bring a significant impact at community and national level.

Furthermore, HFHE is working to launch housing projects in Tigray state and Dire Dawa City Administration, he noted.

# News

## Netherlands to ramp up support towards Ethiopia's livestock dev't

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Kingdom of Netherlands Ambassador to Ethiopia expressed commitments to further deepen collaborations for sustainable practices in the Ethiopian livestock sector and empowering the farming livelihoods across the country.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Designate of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Ethiopia Christine Pirenne stated that her country, very known for its livestock productivity, remains committed to provide support which includes knowledge transformation, latest technologies, inputs, products, and solutions to develop the animal husbandry.

She also highlighted that the Dutch investors are keen to invest in Ethiopia's tremendous

potential in the livestock sector to fetch inclusive and sustainable growth through enhanced innovation and sustainability in developing the livestock sector across the value chain.

Hailing the just concluded livestock exhibition and congress, organized by Prana Events from 31st October – 2nd November, 2024, the designate ambassador emphasized that this event is an ideal platform to reinforce livestock exhibition and congress to share authentic experiences like the Netherlands pavilion which have been taking part in Ethiopia's livestock premier livestock undertakings for the last three consecutive years.

So far, the country has been undertaking projects to improve the dairy and poultry sector thereby driving measurable outcomes in Ethiopia's efforts to ensure food security, she noted.

Moreover, she insisted that her country is committed to bring its renowned expertise, high quality inputs and innovative equipment to support the growing sector in Ethiopia.

SNV Ethiopia Country Director Julie Graham for her part stated that as part of the Netherlands development partner, SNV Ethiopia has long been providing dedicated service and it remains committed to further strengthening sustainable development sectors such as agri-food, energy, and water that help revive the livestock sector to help enhance productivity and resilience in the livestock sector.

"It is implementing Building Rural Income through Dairy Business Growth in Ethiopia (BRIDGE+) project to transform the dairy sector to benefit 350,000 smallholder dairy farmers, 400 commercial dairy farms, 150 dairy cooperatives, 1 million school children

through school feeding programs and over 3.5 million consumers of dairy products," she emphasized.

Realizing Aspiration of Youth in Ethiopia through employment, the country director revealed that it has set a project to create 240,000 jobs for young men and women in the poultry, dairy, and vegetable value chains.

Furthermore, SNV also planned to implement a sustainable energy project in the dairy and poultry value chains which enhances dairy and poultry productivity by introducing innovative solutions like solar-powered butter churners and chick brooders and aligning energy efficiency with agricultural growth.

She said, "These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to improving agricultural productivity and outreaching many livelihoods."

## Visionary leadership...

commitment.

He underscored that visionary leadership is crucial to achieving these goals. "Only then can we transform the outcomes of this three-day conference, mobilize partnerships, showcase best practices, and identify investment needs to eradicate hunger," he stated. President Taye praised the commitment displayed at the conference, highlighting it as key to building a world free from hunger. He noted that the conference illuminated the challenges of achieving zero hunger and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating the complexity of these efforts.

President Taye also stressed the importance of sustainable agricultural practices, agro-industrialization, and climate resilience as comprehensive solutions. He indicated empowering smallholder farmers, strengthening communities, and investing in both physical and digital infrastructure to transform agriculture and manufacturing. He reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to the Green Legacy Initiative, which has increased forest coverage by 23.6%, with a substantial focus on agroforestry.

Ethiopia is also actively developing integrated agro-industrial parks and investing in drought-resistant crops like wheat and sorghum to boost food security. "I urge a firm commitment to prioritize zero hunger in our national development agendas, as outlined in the SDGs," he added.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) stated that integrating technology, promoting innovation, and building climate resilience must be central to collective efforts. Addressing the final day of the summit, PM Abiy outlined the urgent need to enhance resilience in agriculture. "Our shared discussions highlighted critical deliverables to guide our collective actions, including a global fund for food security."

He emphasized that countries have committed to establishing these financial resources to drive targeted investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, advanced

agricultural technology, and disaster-resistant food systems. He noted that the fund would be a lifeline, particularly for regions most vulnerable to food insecurity. Advancing technological innovation and prioritizing knowledge-sharing to build resilient food systems are also crucial. "We have agreed to create a platform for cross-border knowledge exchange, focusing on climate-smart agriculture and post-harvest management."

PM Abiy further stressed the importance of strengthening policy and governance frameworks, aligning policies across nations to foster fair market access and equitable food distribution systems essential for global food security. Supporting smallholder farmers, especially women in agriculture, is part of the global commitment. "By expanding market access, providing inclusive financial options, and building capacity, we can empower farmers to feed their communities worldwide," he added.

He indicated that these deliverables represent a roadmap and a call to action for governments, development banks, and the private sector to mobilize, invest, and collaborate.

UNIDO Director-General Gerd Muller underscored that peace and good governance are vital to achieving a hunger-free world. With effective investment and a strong market chain, he believes a world without hunger is achievable. He highlighted Africa's rich potential and called for fair partnerships, urging G7 countries to fulfill their commitments to support this vision.

AUC Deputy Chair Monique Nsanzabaganwa stressed the need for coordinated investment, agro-industrialization, and climate-smart agriculture to effectively fight hunger.

Kenyan President William Ruto called for bold, collaborative action, commending Ethiopia's advances in irrigation and infrastructure development. Leaders agreed that achieving a hunger-free world requires both political will and partnership.

## Abbay dam...

previous water volume.

The Minister underscored Ethiopia's commitment to continue negotiations under the Nile Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement, calling it a crucial legal foundation for all riparian countries.

He also noted Ethiopia's environmental efforts, including planting over 40 billion trees during the last six years, which has positively impacted water resources.

"Our research in three basins, including the Nile, shows that the Green Legacy Initiative is contributing up to a nine percent increase in water flow," the minister said. The initiative has also improved rainfall and groundwater in areas like the Rift Valley and Awash Basin.



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Ethiopia's environmental improvement efforts benefit not only the country but also downstream nations by enhancing water resources in both quantity and quality, he added.

## Int'l collaboration...

to Adugna, the MoU reflects ECTA's dedication to building trust in the industry, enhancing production practices, and setting an example for coffee trade relationships worldwide.

MIG's CEO, Jemal Ahmed, highlighted that NKG's established expertise in global coffee quality standards will play a vital role in advancing Ethiopia's coffee sector. NKG has provided valuable support to Ethiopian coffee associations and invested in local initiatives, leveraging its experience in countries like Brazil, where it manages over 25 quintals per hectare. With a presence in 30 countries, NKG brings a wealth of knowledge in producing and marketing coffee internationally.

NKG's CEO, David M. Neumann,

expressed his enthusiasm for the agreement, describing it as a critical step in strengthening Ethiopia's role in the global coffee market. He emphasized that Ethiopian coffee is evolving, with the sector witnessing substantial growth and development. The three-to-five-year partnership will build trust and cooperation, with possibilities for future extensions to promote Ethiopian coffee even further.

The partnership draws on NKG's German-based expertise in technology, marketing, and productivity, complementing Midroc's longstanding agricultural ventures across Ethiopia. The collaboration is expected to set new standards for Ethiopian coffee, reinforcing its reputation and expanding its reach in the global market.

# Editorial

## Ethiopia offers valuable lessons to eradicate hunger

Despite ongoing global initiatives and efforts, hunger remains to be at the helm of the world crisis. With plenty of manmade and natural disasters continuing to pose unprecedented threats to the well-being of mankind and the world food system, the number of hungry people is still high in the world requiring special intervention and approach.

The problem appears to be more dire and serious in some parts of the globe where agriculture remains largely subsistence and prone to natural disasters. There has been only limited headway in terms of expanding effective technologies and innovative ways to modernize the agriculture sector, particularly in some parts of the global south.

The worsening climate change crisis also hampers efforts to ensure food security and eradicate hunger. The dwindling global aid and mismanagement of resources also put the global target of eradicating hunger in precarious conditions.

To hit global targets and improve the food system, countries have been urged to double down work on promoting productivity, providing an agrarian population with improved technology and innovative ideas to enhance productivity. Redressing climate change, and placing the right policies have also been identified as one of the crucial focus areas that would help curtail global hunger.

Scaling up on best practices and creating a platform to exchange lessons among nations of the world can also help smooth the skids towards food sufficiency. This is being repeatedly echoed in the Hunger-Free World Conference which concluded in Addis Ababa yesterday.

The three-day World Without Hunger Conference, organized by the UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Government of Ethiopia, and the African Union (AU) with the technical assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has also stressed the need to invest in global cooperation, investment in the agriculture sector.

The international conference reaffirmed that eradicating hunger requires a collective global effort while the experiences of countries like Ethiopia provide valuable lessons.

Ethiopia has found itself on the right path to making a big difference in food security. The last couple of years have seen a mammoth step forward in terms of laying the foundation for food sovereignty although much remains to be done.

From the introduction of irrigated wheat to food bounty (Yelemat Tirufat) the government has embarked on a wide range of activities that would grease the wheels of food security. These efforts have already yielded tangible fruits and received global recognition.

Speaking at the World without Hunger Conference in Addis Ababa, President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio, lauded Ethiopia's achievement of wheat self-sufficiency calling it a "beacon of hope and optimism" for Africa.

President Bio emphasized that Ethiopia's success demonstrates the transformative potential of targeted technological interventions, institutional strengthening, and supportive policies in achieving food security.

"Ethiopia's accomplishment is a remarkable example of what can be achieved when strategic actions are aligned," President Bio stated. "With visionary leadership and strong political will, Africa can harness its vast arable land and growing population to secure food for all and ensure that no child goes to bed hungry."

Amidst the success stories, there is much yet to be done in some areas to expand best practices and enhance productivity. Ethiopia's experience in addressing hunger offers both valuable lessons and stark reminders of the challenges in the fight against food insecurity. For decades, the country has struggled with hunger and food shortages, driven by factors such as droughts, political instability, and inadequate infrastructure. However, as described in the conference, the country has already begun the journey towards food sufficiency with the last years registering solid achievements. Although the country's experience offers a special lesson, the fight against hunger cannot be won by individual nations alone.



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# Opinion

## Macroeconomic reform heading in right direction

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Responding to questions raised by MPs at HPR based on President Taye Atskeselassie's recent speech at the joint session of the two Houses, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reported that the national economy is expected to grow by 8.4% GDP.

He added that this year, the nation has completed multi-sectoral reform programs conducted over several years and has started the first chapter of the national resurgence program in the first quarter of this year.

The author believes that the quarter that has just ended clearly indicates that the pathway of national development strategy charted out in the macroeconomic reform program is bearing desired fruit. The positive results registered in the quarter were marred with challenges ranging from deeper internal conspiracy and a triangle of alliances to discourage Ethiopia from having access to Red Sea ports by using all kinds of propaganda and misinformation over official mainstream media outlets and social media.

As stated above, the nation has registered 8.1% economic growth over the previous fiscal year. This is one of the highest achievements by global standards. The country is expected to register 8.4% economic growth over the current fiscal year, with agriculture comprising 6.1% by cultivating 30 million hectares of land with a total yield of 1.4 billion quintals.

This indicates that measures taken in agricultural modernization, mechanization, cluster farming, and utilizing expanded irrigation potentials for bumper harvests in wheat and other crops have proved to be successful in contributing to faster growth in GDP. The achievements registered in Yelemat Trufat (Basket Bounty Campaign) indicate that the country can achieve mass participation in food security initiatives and provide raw materials for nascent agro-industrial development in the country.

The Prime Minister reported that the sector has produced promising results in a relatively short period of time with 5.4% growth over the current fiscal year. For instance, a production capacity has been achieved in the current fiscal year to produce 12 billion liters of milk, 8 billion eggs, 218 thousand tons of meat, and 297 tons of honey. The author is of the opinion that these promising achievements can be scaled up to increase export revenue over the current fiscal year.

Compared to previous years, the nation has managed to produce 1 million quintals of coffee beans. Efforts are underway to make Ethiopia the second global producer of coffee next to Brazil by conducting

expansive pruning and utilization of modern packing and logistics services.

Over the last several years, a lot has been achieved in reinvigorating the industrial sector through the Made in Ethiopia Campaign. Improvements have been made to reduce the power outage encountered in the sector, which helped to upscale the output of the industrial sector to 67%. The industrial sector is expected to register 12.8% growth in the current fiscal year.

This optimism in the development of the manufacturing and other industrial sectors is based on ensuring efficient industrial management, safety, and planning. It is reported that 72 new factories will start operation during the current fiscal year. In terms of social services, 249,000 houses were renovated over the previous fiscal year to provide needy citizens with better living quarters. The number of citizens using smartphones has now reportedly reached 80 million.

Efforts are in progress to construct the biggest airport and air terminal in Africa with the capacity to transport from 100 million to 130 million passengers every year. Purchase orders have been placed to buy an additional 124 passenger planes. This will make Ethiopia not only the owner of a large fleet of carriers but also a custodian of the biggest airport in Africa. Recently, the Group has managed to secure the first ultramodern Airbus that will further boost the aviation sector with a huge contribution to the national economy.

The PM disclosed that our economic system was far more closed and congested. This has prevented Ethiopia from benefiting from foreign trade, import substitution, FDI, and other economic benefits. The introduction of the macroeconomic reform programs has helped catalyze the resurgence of Ethiopia's national economy.

Moreover, the startup of the national macroeconomic reform program has contributed to a marked surge in the growth of public revenue. The government has managed to collect 180 billion in public revenue over the last quarter of the fiscal year, showing a marked increase over the same period of the previous fiscal year. In the first quarter of the previous fiscal year, only 109 billion birr in public revenue was collected. This indicates that the original plan to increase the financial bases of the macroeconomic reform is on the right track.

In the advent of the first quarter of the macroeconomic reform period, the country was able to siphon in 1.5 billion USD in export earnings. If further efforts are made in the fiscal year, the nation can earn up to 5 billion USD over the current fiscal year. This will be an increase of 1 billion USD compared to the earnings from the previous fiscal year.

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

# Opinion

## Greasing the wheels of comprehensive regional integration: COMESA's impetus

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is clearly visible that Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has been attaching due importance to regional energy development infrastructure with a view to ensuring reliable and reasonably priced provision of energy at the earliest possible time.

As long as the participation of all stakeholders plays a paramount role in taking the country and the continent of Africa to the next level of accomplishment, relevant interested parties should stand in alliance with the purpose of charting the course for the future and leading the world into the future.

It appears clear that COMESA has been assisting the progress of economic integration and development in Africa in various undertakings.

Although Africa is inundated with excessive energy in various parts of the continent, it has been time after time stumbling upon energy crunch in view of the fact that it has been failing to meet its energy demand. For the sake of truth, unless all pertinent bodies stand shoulder to shoulder with a view to accomplishing the desired goal, taking the region to the expected level will be easier said than done.

It should be remembered that Ethiopia and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the recent past signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in the horticulture sector. The signing ceremony which was held in the presence of key stakeholders marks a significant step towards collaboration in the production of avocados, onions, vegetables, and fruits.

The MoU signing was part of a forum organized by COMESA in partnership with Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture and the Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association. The forum aimed to recommend and approve a roadmap to address value chain challenges in Ethiopia's horticulture products, particularly avocados, red onions, and potatoes.

Professor Ali Mohamed, Adviser to the State Minister of Agriculture, highlighted Ethiopia's potential in horticulture production and expressed gratitude for COMESA's commitment to collaborate in improving the sector's value chain.

Abdela Negash, CEO of Horticulture Development, emphasized that the MoU will enable Ethiopia to work closely with COMESA, strengthening relationships among sector stakeholders. The collaboration is expected to enhance production and marketing, fostering regional cooperation, boosting foreign market linkages, and creating new opportunities for farmers and exporters.

He further noted that the agreement aims to overcome obstacles in the value chain of horticulture products, from nursery to export, by adding the necessary value to increase foreign currency earnings. In the face of important step forward and tremendous progress, the rhythm of electrification is poles apart from being sufficient to meet the ever increasing demand of the populations.

Devoid of noteworthy involvement, the Horn of Africa's region energy provision will



not progress at the same rate with the rising demand driven by development, economic development, natural population growth and other related aspects.

With a view to taking the continent to the next level of growth, all actors concerned should join hands with the objective of taking the region to new frontiers down the road.

The restricted power supply enormously impacts economic and industrial development in the Horn of Africa region and beyond. If the situation keeps going in such a manner, accomplishing the intended target will be easier said than done. It will not be as easy as falling off a log.

Taking the previously mentioned grounds into account, stakeholders without batting an eye for a fraction of a second should join hands more than ever before to make Ethiopia an energy hub of the country and enable the region to attract investors.

Ethiopia, a vital member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), has hesitated to join the COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA) since its inception in 1994. This caution stemmed from concerns about potential dominance by more economically advanced member states such as Egypt and Zimbabwe, particularly when Ethiopia was recovering from civil conflict and had limited industrial capacity.

However, Ethiopia's economic landscape has undergone significant transformation in recent years, marked by remarkable progress in industrial development, liberalization of the financial sector, and the implementation of regional economic integration policies, according to a source.

This analysis contends that the present juncture presents an ideal opportunity for Ethiopia to become a part of the COMESA FTA, particularly given its alignment with broader regional and continental trade initiatives, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Minimum Integration Plan, and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Ethiopia's recent economic reforms and burgeoning industrial prowess underscore the benefits and necessity of participating in the FTA.

It went on to say, Ethiopia's textile and apparel sector has seen remarkable growth, with an average annual export increase of over 50%

in the last decade, positioning it as one of the country's leading sectors (EIC, 2020). This growth has been driven by establishing industrial parks such as the Hawassa Industrial Park, attracting substantial foreign direct investment and contributing to thousands of jobs. Ethiopia's textile industry is now well-placed to compete regionally and globally, benefiting from labor and manufacturing efficiency cost advantages.

COMESA, a regional economic organization in Africa urged African nations to implement targeted policies to improve access to information and communications technology (ICT) services on the continent, according to domestic media.

COMESA Director for Infrastructure and Logistics Bernard Dzawanda made this remark at the start of a meeting on enhancement of governance and enabling environment in ICT program in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, according to Xinhua.

While acknowledging that access to and use of affordable ICT services was important to ensure economic development, Dzawanda said only 37% of Africa's population uses the internet compared to the global average of 67%. Furthermore, only 25% were connected to the internet compared to the global average of 57%.

"The issue of affordability is very critical in achieving universal and inclusive access to ICT services. Even where service is available, internet use is constrained by low affordability of both the data a digital device," he said.

He reiterated the importance of ICT in driving development and regional integration within the COMESA bloc, noting that the organization has a strategic plan to foster digital transformation through appropriate policies and legislation.

Dzawanda emphasized the potential of ICT in addressing various challenges, including climate vulnerability, gender inequality, and health emergencies.

COMESA's initiatives in enhancing governance and creating an enabling environment for ICT have led to significant progress, including the completion of studies related to roaming, interconnection, and optic fiber policies.

Ethiopia will be one of the beneficiaries of the project on the grounds that it will open

prospects to become involved in power export and able to put on sale power to the Southern part of Africa.

It is certain that in the present circumstances, COMESA runs a broad range of tangible regional programs with the purpose of fostering coordinated efforts towards affluence and smoothing the path of African integration.

In addition to COMESA and other regional organizations, nations should play fundamental role for the effectuation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

It is learnt that the time has come for Ethiopia to integrate fully into the COMESA Free Trade Area. The country's economic transformation, the liberalization of its financial sector, and its alignment with broader regional and continental trade initiatives make participation in the FTA advantageous and necessary.

By joining the COMESA FTA, Ethiopia would reduce export costs, gain access to a vast regional market, foster economic growth and diversification, and contribute to achieving continental trade and development goals under AfCFTA, IGAD, and Agenda 2063.

The potential benefits for Ethiopia's industries, private sector, and broader economy far outweigh the challenges, making it imperative for the country to embrace regional economic integration through the COMESA FTA.

Since its inception, Ethiopia has been pulling out all the stops with the purpose of standing by the side of local and foreign business in oiling the wheels of joining export market through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the global trading. It is certain that the government is committed to paving the way for the private sectors export supply capabilities.

In actual fact, the current improvement is geared towards bolstering private sector engagement, which is vital for higher the international market.

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

# Art & Culture

## The reflection of low self-esteem, and unstable sense of self in the novel 'Altezaworechim' (Part 3)

BY MEKDES TAYE (PHD)

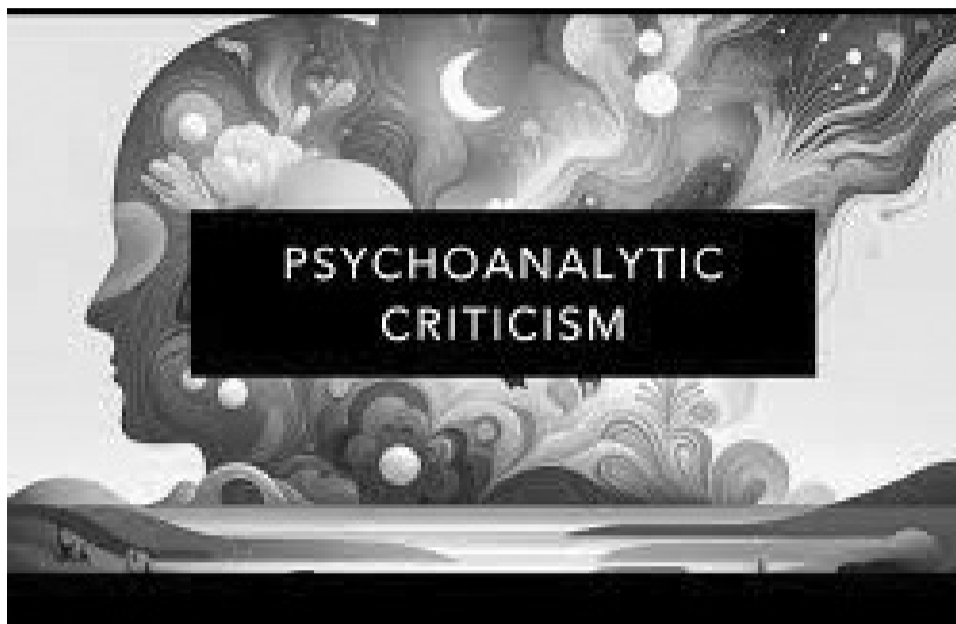
In the theory of Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis, there are psychological concepts that are posited from the perspective like low self-esteem and insecure or unstable sense of self. Low self-esteem according to Sigmund Freud is the belief that oneself is less worth than other people. Therefore this self doesn't deserve attention, love or any other life rewards. Unstable sense of self on the other hand in this theory is understood as the inability to sustain a feeling of personal identity, to sustain a sense of knowing oneself. In the novel called *Altezaworechim* which did mean she didn't pass, the character that exhibited these concepts mainly is Haymanot, the best friend of the major character Mahdereslam.

Haymanot hailed from a poor family. So she did not appear clean every time in class. Since Mahdederslam's mother was very active and stylish, she beautified her baby girl when the latter went to school. But Haymanot's mother was a poor woman who led the family engaging in menial work and she didn't have an inkling pertaining to beautifying her baby girl. Hence, Haymanot was seen as untidy, unkempt, and less attractive whenever she walked beside Mahdereslam. Many including her mother used to see her lousy, unfit, ugly, and weak. This forced her to sow a seed of inferiority and hatred of Mahdereslam since that early age.

ተስፋ አስቆራጭ መልክ ነው ያለኝ። በዚያ ብኩለው በዚህ አስቆራጭ እየባሰበት የሚሄድ ምንሽ ነው የሚያስጠላው? ቢሉኝ አላውቅም ግን እንዲሁ መልኩ ቆሜ እያዩኝ እዚያው በቆምኩበት የሚረሳ ዓይነት ነው። ሰው ካልታወሰ ምኑ ይፈቀራል? የማፍቀር ተቃራኒው መጥላት አይደለም መረሳት ነው። ማንም የሚያፈቅረውን አይረሳም እኔ ግን ሰዎች እእምሮ ውስጥ በትዝታ መዝገብ እንዳልገፍ የተረገመምኩ ይመስለኛል። በዚህ እና በሌላ ሌላ ብዙ ምክንያቶች ስለራሴ ከማሰብ ይልቅ ስለሌሎች ጉዳይ መፈትፈት አወዳለሁ። ሌሎች ላይ ለመድረስ ሳይሆን ከራሴ ለመሸሸ። (135-136)

*I have a desperate look. On the other hand, what is so disgusting about this ugliness that keeps getting worse? I do not know if they will look at me, my look is almost forgotten where I'm still standing. If a person is not remembered, what will be loved? The opposite of loving is not hating but forgetting. No one forgets the one they love, but I think I am cursed not to be recalled in people's minds. For this and many other reasons, I like to open up about others rather than thinking about myself. It is not to reach others, but to run away from myself.*

As it is seen in the above extract, Haymanot was deprived the right from believing in herself. The negative attitudes that she mentioned are simply made based on false hypothesis. She did not want to



know about her real personality because she was afraid to know the reality about herself. Thus, in order to evade this reality she preferred to dig more about others just for knowing, analyzing and deciding about them but not for drawing lessons to turn herself round. This is one instance that showed low self-esteem.

Since Haymanot was developing a wrong lower self-esteem, she was not attaching any credit for her personality and life. The symptoms began to surface while she was a 10th grader.

There was a married man who had children. Since driving a vehicle he shuttles between his home and office on the same path with Haymanot and Mahdereslam, after work, he was talking them into taking a lift. One day Haymanot was alone. He invited her to hop on the front seat of the car. Then he started advancing seeking sexual intimacy. He was touching her private part. But since she had a lower self-realization, she was not taking any care oblivious of her dignity. Rather she was worrying for him. She showed super willingness though she was a virgin at that time. Here is the instance; "በዝምታ አድርገ የሚሰኝን ሁሉ አደርጋለሁ። ጓጉቻለሁ አውቃለሁ ምን እንደሚሆን ጣቴን የምጠባ ህፃን አደለሁም። ከሆነም ከዚህ ሰው ጋር መሆኑ የተለዩ ተዓምር ነበር-ለእኔ። እንዲያውም በመካከል ይቅርብን ብሎ ተነስቶ እንዳይሄድ እየፈራራ ነበር።" (144). "I was doing whatever he ordered me to do silently. I was eager, I knew what is going to happen, and I am not a finger-sucking baby. If it should happen, a record moment of physical intimacy with this man is nothing short of a miracle for me. In fact, I was a bit afraid that in the middle of the act disrupting things he could say sorry and leave."

She did not mention anything about her. Rather she was keen to sleep with this person whose personality she believed is much better than hers. Her only fear was what if he changed his mind, not the consequence fate of her life. Here under the paragraph showed the said point.

አጠቃላይ ለነገሩ አዲስ መሆኑ ከፈጠረብኝ መደነባበር እና ጭንቀት ውጪ ይህ ሰው ምንም ቢያደርገኝ ቅሬታ አልነበረኝም። ይህ ቆንጆ ሰው ሁብታም ሰው ሳይሆን ሳይታ ሰው ይቆይኝ ማለት ያለኛው ሰው የሰፈሩ ሰው ሁሉ የሚያከብረው እና የሚወደው ሰው ምንድን ነው ከኔ ጋር የሚሰራው...? (144).

*Apart from the confusion and anxiety caused by the fact that this experience is foreign to me, I had no complaints whatever about what this person do to me. This handsome, wealthy and funny man, a man with a beautiful wife, respected and loved by everyone in the village, what is this man doing with me...?*

Since she counted herself as a useless one, the man that she believed gorgeous, rich, respected and above all the one who had a beautiful wife is worth more than her own life. Thus, she saw physical intimacy with such a man is more valuable than her pride. That is why she willingly allowed herself to be sexually abused. Worsen than that, she got pregnant for him. Then he persuaded her to abort the baby. She went through a painful abortion that exposed her for further infection.

This man was approaching Mahdereslam with the mentality that she could also be an easy prey as her friend. He ordered Haymanot to leave Mahdereslam alone so as to execute the same strategy. Then she did as he needed. But Mahdereslam proved very resistant. While he was attempting to touch her private part, she nervously beat him back and shouted at him to stop the car. This evidence is seen when Mahdereslam narrated the happening to Haymanot in the paragraph below.

...ሰው ላይ አግኝቶ ልሸኝኝ አለኝ እንዲያውም ሀይማኖት የለኝም ብቻዬን ከምሄድ ገላገለኝ ብዬ ደስ አለኝ። ከኋላ ልገባ ስል ጋቢና ግቢ አለኝ አገር ሰላም ብዬ ዘወ ትንሽ እንደሄድን ዛሬ ብቻችንን ተገናኝተን የኔ ቆንጆ ብሎ በዛ ሰፊድ እጁ ጡቴን አላፈሰኝም መሰለሽ...አወርደኝ ብዬ ስጭህ ለሚዘዝ ብጭህበት ብወራጭ ሊሰማኝ ነው?!...ጭራሽ ከመውረጃዬ ሊያሳልፈኝ ... መኪናው ሳይቆም በሩን ልከፍት ስታገል እጄን ያዘኝ በጥፍራ ያንን ቀይ ጣሳ ፊቱን ተለተልኩለታ! ሳይወድ በግዳ ወደ ዳር ሲወጣ በሥርአት እንኳን አላቆመም ወርጄ

መሮጥ በዩው። (148)...When I left school, he hunted me down and asked me to hop on his car. I was glad that he spared me the discomfort of going alone since you were not there. When I was about to go for the back seat, he talked me into sitting next to the driver seat saying 'My beautiful,' then he grabbed my breast with his wider hand... I screamed, 'Get off me ', I shouted at the top of my voice. When I struggled to open the door before the car stopped, he grabbed my hand. I dug deep my sharp nails into his hand. Then I slapped that tomato face of his! He was forced to go to the edge, he didn't even stop; I took to my heels.

From these paragraphs it is evident that the two characters (girls) have different credits to what they attached to their identity or self-perception. Haymanot was tolerant of the advances of the man, but Mahdereslam mentioned how revolting and disgusting the experience was while she narrated the story to Haymanot. While she was experiencing that first touch Mahdereslam was aggressive. This means that she had a greater personal dignity that she attached with herself. Thus she managed to avoid the sexual abuse. From this it can be concluded that sexual harassment could also happen do to the wrong social programming of the female herself.

Even after hearing this story, Haymanot was not drawing any lesson. Rather she was happy that Mahdereslam didn't have sexual affair with that man. Though she felt entrenched inferiority complex because she is no more a decent and reserved girl as Mahdereslam, she became ecstatic that Mahdereslam did not become intimate with him. "ውስጡ በደስታ አብዶ ነበር ... የማህደረ ጋሽ አላምነህ ጋር አለመተኛት ግን ልደታን አደራ እንዳላልኩ ሁሉ ውስጡ የማህሰ ስሜት ፈጥሮብኛል በጨዋነት የመለጠጥ።" (148). "I became crazy with happiness... Mahdereslam did not sleep with Gash Alamneh. But I felt inferiority inside that I am no more decent girl."

The psychological makeup of a given female does have a greater impact on the effectiveness and identity of her as such if there is mal programing or upbringing it wreaks havoc in the family and in the society too. Haymanot could not be a good model for the coming younger generation. At the same time, she is no longer seeks her own life satisfaction. She neither knows and nor respect herself. The writer finally showed the irrelevance of this poor self-perception by making her life miserable at the end. She ended up suffering losses. That is dangerous in the process of nation building and societal transformation that is why the writer anchored this gist artistically.

To be continued.

# Science & Technology

## Tech Diplomacy: Enhancing innovation through cooperation frameworks

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Ethiopia is due to embrace a new era of innovation. As a country with a youth-dominated population, Ethiopia focuses especially on technological developments and innovations and developing the startup sector. The government of Ethiopia is working to foster an environment conducive to innovation, technology, startups, and entrepreneurship, aiming to transform the sectors.

Following the 2018 reform, Ethiopia has zeroed in on transforming the country's technology and local innovations. To this end, Ethiopia invests in policy reforms and strategies to create a conducive ecosystem and promote innovators to stimulate activities in the sector. These measures have significantly changed the sector, especially local innovation, during the past six years.

The Ethiopian government is eyeing international collaborations to unlock the country's full potential of the innovation and technology ecosystem and the local measures. In this regard, Ethiopia is working with renowned international tech organizations and with countries having advanced technologies and vibrant startup innovations. The collaboration in the aims is to share experience, technology and knowledge transfer, and human resource development to support the local efforts in realizing technological developments and local innovations.

Among the exemplary collaborations with technology-developed countries is Ethiopia's collaboration with Israel, which has shown meaningful developments in recent years. The collaboration in the innovation and startup ecosystem between the two historically ally countries, Ethiopia and Israel, is thriving. The two countries have strong relations in agriculture, irrigation, and other economic developments thanks to the strong and historic diplomatic relations of the two nations.

Aiming to boost their collaboration in the innovation ecosystem, the two countries launched an innovation week, The Ethio-Israel Innovation Week in 2022. The Innovation Week aims at enhancing innovation strategic frameworks and strengthening the infrastructure and startup ecosystem between the two countries. As successor of the first innovation week, the Second Ethio-Israel Innovation Week was also held this week in Addis Ababa, from Monday to Thursday, by different activities.

In his opening remarks during the innovation week, Belete Molla (PhD), Minister of Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MINT) of Ethiopia said that the innovation week is a significant milestone in fostering innovation and economic growth in both Ethiopia and Israel. The innovation week, as to him, can serve as an architect of future collaborations, creativity and technology convergence to create lasting impact.

The goal of the innovation week is to forge partnerships that will enhance the innovation strategic framework and strengthen the



*The Second Ethio-Israel Innovation Week opening ceremony here in Addis Ababa on Monday, this week*

infrastructure and startup ecosystem. The partnership in the innovation sector "is an opportunity to leverage our respective strength, to share knowledge and to create strategies that will benefit our nations and beyond," Belete said. In this regard, to exploit and unlock the full potential of the country's innovation and startup ecosystem, Ethiopia is eyeing at further strengthening collaborations locally and internationally.

As a result, Israel with its vibrant startup ecosystem and technological advancements is an ideal country to strengthen collaborations in the sector. "The Israel model of innovation marked by agility, creativity, and resilience offers invaluable lessons for us in Ethiopia and beyond. As we embark on this journey of collaboration, we must establish a clear strategic framework. This framework should encompass various dimensions such as knowledge exchange, capacity building, investment opportunities, and joint ventures," Belete. By strengthening partnerships in the innovation ecosystem, Ethiopia envisions its entrepreneurs to learn from their Israeli counterparts, researchers to collaborate on groundbreaking projects and both nations strengthen cooperation on solutions to address pressing challenges and problems.

According to Belete, the integration of Israeli experts into the Ethiopian startup landscape "is vital for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the country. By enabling partnerships with key partners in the Ethiopian burgeoning ecosystem, Israeli stakeholders can share valuable insights and best practices that will enhance local capacities." In addition to strengthening existing frameworks, this kind of collaboration can lay the groundwork for sustained Israeli investment in Ethiopia's startup initiative, according to MINT.

Belete said that Ethiopia needs the usual commitment to continue Israeli involvement for fostering innovation within Ethiopian academia by actively exploring and establishing institutional relationships with Israeli universities and technical colleges as well. Boosting this collaboration will focus on creating academic partnerships

that facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and innovative curricular developments tailored to local contexts.

As to him, by leveraging Israeli's expertise in technology and entrepreneurship, Ethiopia aims to enhance the educational landscape and equipping students with a skill and knowledge necessary to flourish in the rapidly evolving global economy. Through this partnership, Ethiopia envisioned a vibrant academic ecosystem; a research and innovation ecosystem that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and practical solutions to local challenges ultimately contributing to the country's sustainable development-led technological advancements.

In this regard, Belete reaffirms Ethiopia's commitment to strengthen its collaboration with Israel and proposes the establishment of Ethiopia and Israel Innovation Council. As to him, the council will serve as a platform for a dialogue among government agencies, private sector players, academic institutions, and civil societies. "It will facilitate the sharing of best practices, the identification of future interests, and alignment of efforts towards common goals," Belete noted. Belete is hopeful to ensure the collaboration of the two countries yielding tangible results by working together in a structured manner.

Belete underlines Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to enhance the innovation ecosystem between Ethiopia and Israel and to further solidify the partnership. "Together we will focus on technology, knowledge transfer, capacity building and talent development with an eye towards advancing additional collaborative initiatives in 2025 and beyond."

For his part, Ambassador-Designate of Israel to Ethiopia, Avraham Neguise, stated that the innovation week would share his country's experience in establishing a successful and leading innovation and startup ecosystem with Ethiopia's experts in the field. He said that Ethiopia is blessed with natural resources and human resources, adding adopting technological developments would help to utilize these resources for economic development. He stated that his country

is committed to supporting the efforts of utilizing these resources for economic development by supporting the country's technology and innovation sector.

"The second Ethio-Israel innovation week opens with the arrival of a special team from Israel," Ambassador Avraham said adding each one of the delegation team is equipped with diverse experience and knowledge related to the development of the innovation ecosystem in Israel. The delegation, will meet and discuss with Ethiopian government officials, technical teams, international organizations, and academia and private sector representatives. The discussions aim at experience sharing as well as advancing collaborations in the fields of innovation, and entrepreneurship during 2025 and beyond.

"Israel is the startup nation. Our experience in establishing a leading innovation and startup ecosystem among the world's most successful cans serves as a model for our friends around the world working on building their innovation ecosystems, including here in Ethiopia," Ambassador Avraham reiterated. As to him, in recent years Israel is working on strengthening cooperation with Ethiopia in initiatives involving government and private sector initiatives in the innovation and startup ecosystem.

According to Avraham Israel's involvement has increased over the past five years in Ethiopia's innovation ecosystem including professional surveys of the innovation ecosystems in Ethiopia by Israeli experts, trilateral cooperation through UNDP Innovation for Development program, and providing innovation courses for Ethiopian officials and experts. He stated that Israel is in a complicated time "as we fight terrorism in the aftermath of the October 7 terrorist attack" and the arrival of Israel's delegation at the second Ethio-Israel Innovation week implies Israel's commitment to strengthen its bond with Ethiopia even during difficult times.

The two countries see the opportunity to learn from one another, to innovate together, and to pave the way for a brighter future.

# Society

## Ethiopia's journey to digital revolution

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia has been making significant strides towards embracing a digital revolution in recent years. The country's leadership, recognizing the irreplaceable importance of technology in driving economic growth and improving the lives of its citizens, is working persistently to equip citizens with the essential tech knowledge and skills.

With a population of over 120 million, the potential for growth and development in the tech sector is immense. As a result, the government has been actively promoting digital transformation by implementing various initiatives and enhancing infrastructure, aiming to expand access to the internet, and fostering innovation thereby positioning the country as a significant player in the digital economy.

Providing affordable and reliable internet connectivity to all citizens, particularly those in rural areas can drive Ethiopia's digital revolution. By improving access to the internet, the government hopes to spur innovation, create new business opportunities, and improve access to essential services such as healthcare and education.

It is recalled that four months ago, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) launched the 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative at the Science Museum as part of the National Digital Ethiopia 2025 strategy aimed at bridging the digital skills gap.

According to the Office of the Prime Minister, this project is designed to benefit five million citizens with digital technology training. By 2026, the program aims to equip five million Ethiopian youth with foundational digital skills in Web Programming, Android Development, Data Science, and Artificial Intelligence...

In his remark while launching the program, the Premier emphasized that Ethiopia has hope through a forward-thinking youth population.

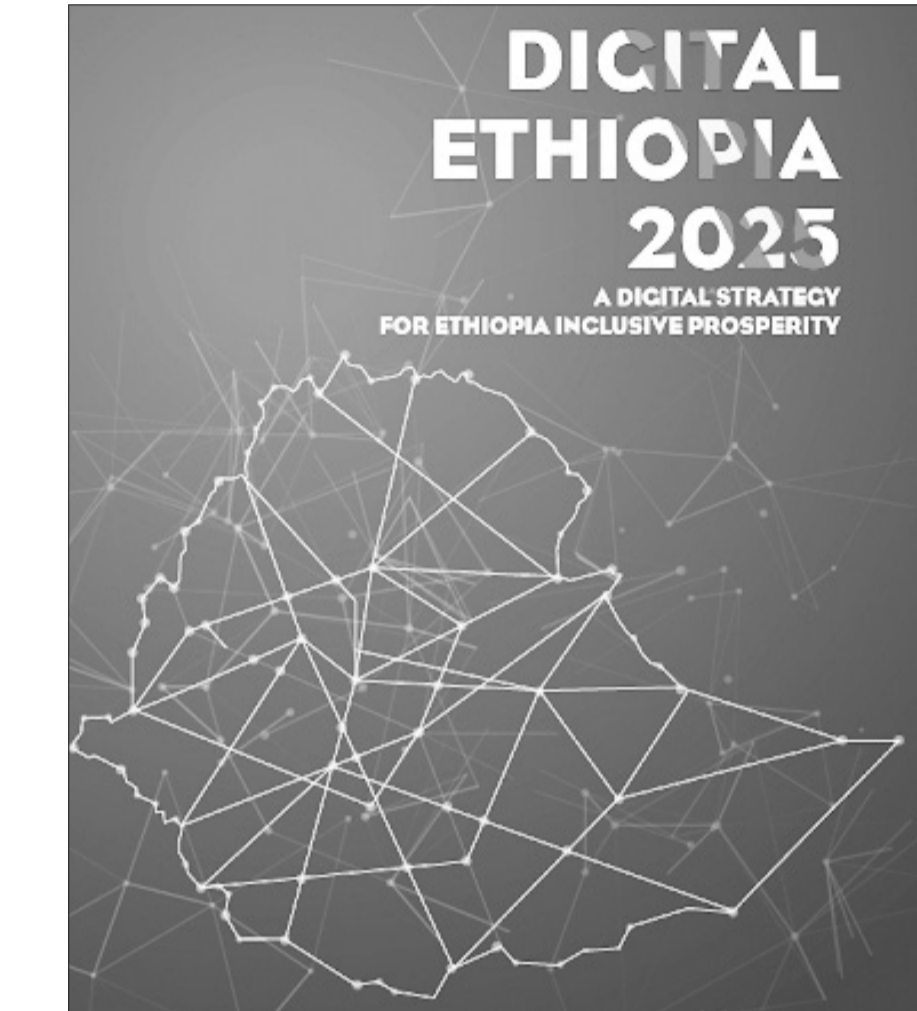
"The 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative we launch today is a great opportunity," he stressed.

The Premier called upon everyone to encourage the youth to register for the program, gain skills, and acquire international certification. He entrusted them to use this opportunity to create a movement aimed at producing 5 million Ethiopian coders within the next 3 years.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the government of the United Arab Emirates for their partnership in this project. "My greatest gratitude goes to the government of the United Arab Emirates for the partnership in this large scale capacity-building project," PM Abiy remarked.

Prime Minister further stated that these 5 million coders will not only create innovative local solutions but also become a beacon of hope for our continent.

The 5 Million Ethiopian Coders Initiative is a collaborative effort between Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates, aimed at training



5 million citizens in digital technology, artificial intelligence, and related digitization skills.

As part of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 plan, the number of startups in Ethiopia has surged from 50 to 950, benefiting entrepreneurs while generating jobs and expanding market access across the country, according to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MoIT).

MoIT State Minister Bayssa Bedada (PhD) emphasized the need for expanding critical infrastructure like energy to ensure broader access. "Energy expansion is underway in cities, and the telecommunications sector has also opened up with the entry of new operators," he said.

The introduction of additional telecom operators fosters competition, improves service quality, and enhances access to digital markets. "This development is also connecting online financial services and increasing mobile user engagement," he added.

The State Minister highlighted the significant role of startups in driving innovation. "The MoIT separated science, innovation, and technology sectors to provide targeted policy support, resulting in a dramatic increase in startups from 50 to 950," he said. Bayssa credited the government's commitment and policy reforms for this progress.

To further boost startups, the Ministry offers incentives and training to enhance their revenue potential. He encouraged more youth to engage with the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Initiative by developing new applications and digital solutions.

"Startups are not only solving problems but also generating income, providing fast and accessible services, and creating jobs simultaneously," the State Minister noted.

Amir Redwan, Co-Founder of the successful startup Chip, shared his achievements in the agricultural sector. "We connect farmers directly with consumers, eliminating middlemen to offer affordable prices. So far, we have reached 70,000 customers and serve 3,000 orders daily with smooth transactions," Amir explained.

The Digital Ethiopia 2025 Initiative continues to drive innovation, with startups playing a pivotal role in transforming the economy and offering sustainable employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia has made significant strides toward creating a thriving digital business environment through infrastructure development and policy reforms.

In a major milestone, the Alibaba Global Initiative (AGI), in partnership with the Digital Transformation Ethiopia Association (DTEA), inaugurated a global training center recently to equip Ethiopian entrepreneurs and business leaders with essential digital skills.

At the inauguration summit, Innovation and Technology State Minister Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) stated that the launch of the AGI training center represents a new era for Africa's digital innovation, entrepreneurial growth, and technological progress.

"The country is laying the groundwork for digital transformation, aligned with national goals and the aspirations of the people. Through partnerships like the AGI program, we are empowering entrepreneurs with the necessary tools, skills, and resources to bring this vision to life," Yeshurun said.

Minister-Counselor for Economic and Commercial Affairs at the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia Yang Yihang emphasized that the collaboration between the two countries in

the digital economy will unlock significant opportunities in the near future.

Senior Advisor at Alibaba and Co-Founder of Alibaba Global Initiatives, Dan Liu, highlighted the challenges Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) face in global trade. These include complex trade routes, high logistics costs, and cross-border payment issues. "Through the Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP), we are collaborating with various countries to empower SMEs via e-commerce, technology, logistics, and training initiatives," Liu noted.

DTEA President FikirAndargachew stressed that the summit signifies a powerful commitment to digitalizing not only Ethiopia but also Africa. "This agreement offers a remarkable opportunity for 60 Ethiopian entrepreneurs who have undergone training with Alibaba's team. They return with enhanced skills and renewed inspiration to play a leading role in shaping Ethiopia's digital landscape," she said.

The new training center is expected to serve as a hub for digital transformation, benefiting not just Ethiopia but the entire African continent.

According to experts, another important initiative is the creation of tech hubs and incubators to support the growth of the country's tech ecosystem. These hubs provide a space for entrepreneurs, developers, and technologists to collaborate, innovate, and bring their ideas to market. By fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, the government hopes to attract foreign investment, create numerous jobs, and position Ethiopia as a hub for tech innovation in Africa.

Despite the progress made in recent years, Ethiopia still faces significant challenges on its journey to digital revolution. One of the biggest obstacles is the lack of infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where access to electricity and reliable internet connectivity is limited. Addressing these infrastructure gaps will be crucial in ensuring that all Ethiopians can benefit from the opportunities offered by the digital economy.

Another challenge is the need to build a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and growth in the tech sector. While Ethiopia boasts a young and tech-savvy population, there is a shortage of individuals with the skills needed to develop and implement digital solutions.

Therefore, investing hugely in infrastructure development, education, and training programs will be essential in bridging this skills gap and equipping Ethiopians with the knowledge and expertise needed to succeed in the digital economy.

In sum, Ethiopia's journey to digital revolution is well underway, with the government implementing key initiatives to expand internet access, support tech innovation, and create a thriving digital ecosystem. While there are challenges to overcome, such as infrastructure gaps and skills shortages, the future looks bright for Ethiopia as it leverages technology to drive economic growth and improve the lives of its citizens.



# Business & Economy



## Apt environment for attracting numerous investors

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The increase of the inflow of businesses and companies signifies that Ethiopia has been committed to attract as many investors as possible following its appealing atmosphere, reasonable human labor and alluring working conditions in different sectors.

The country has been undertaking significant steps to create thriving digital business environment from strengthening infrastructure to implementing policies stated Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) while speaking at the event organized to inaugurate Alibaba Global Initiative (AGI) in collaboration with Digital Transformation Ethiopia Association (DTEA).

Alibaba Global Initiative (AGI) in collaboration with Digital Transformation Ethiopia Association (DTEA) did recently inaugurate the global training center in Ethiopia to equip Ethiopian entrepreneurs and business leaders in the contemporary digitalized world.

Speaking at the inauguration summit, State Minister of Innovation and Technology, Yeshurun Alemayehu (PhD) said that the opening of AGI training center marks a new chapter in Africa's journey to digital innovation, entrepreneurs' resilience and unprecedented technological advancement. Such a remarkable step opens doors wide for a number of investors, indeed!

Recently, the country has witnessed digital economic transformation fueled by the vision and relentless dedication of entrepreneurs. It has undertaken significant steps to create an environment where digital businesses can thrive from strengthening infrastructure to implementing growth policies, he added.

"We are creating a foundation for digital transformation that aligned with country's goals and the aspiration of our people. In partnership with initiatives like AGI program, we are equipping entrepreneurs with necessary skills, tools and resources to make this vision reality."

Minister-Counselor for Economic and Commercial Affairs at the Economic and Commercial Office of the Chinese Embassy in Ethiopia, Yang Yihang, on his part said that the cooperation between the two countries in the field of digital economy will be huge near future. It opens doors for further cooperation between the two countries.

"The digital technology has brought the

transformation and revolutionary change to the global trading as well as the change of the trading routes. Currently, more and more SMEs are participating in the global trade. Still, they are facing critical challenges such as complexity of trading routes, high cost of logistics, cross-border payments, low efficiency in customs and clearance and others," Senior Advisor, Alibaba International Co-founder of Alibaba Global Initiatives, eWTP Dan Liu said.

"We have been contemplating e-commerce, technology, logistics, infrastructure and others to empower the SMEs around the world. As part of the Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) initiative, Alibaba started the training programs in collaboration with different countries, training institutes and universities," he opined.

DTEA President, Fikir Andargachew stressed that the summit marks an extraordinary commitment to put in place the foundation for the digitalizing not only Ethiopia, but Africa as a whole.

Basically, Ethiopia has to capitalize on creating much more conducive environment for the purpose of further attracting investors via providing all sorts of these individuals or entities with doable scenario, fostering network and building relationships, developing a solid business plan, creating a persuasive pitch deck, building a strong management team, showcasing a unique value proposition, demonstrating market potentials as well as developing financial projections and a clear path to profitability.

Here, Ethiopia should work hard to widely attract foreign direct investment (FDI) as such a fundamental step helps the nation have a number of benefits. For instance, economic growth—FDI can contribute to economic growth in the short and long term. It can also generate export revenue, increase corporate tax revenues, and connect the domestic economy to the global market. The second is job creation—FDI can create new jobs and absorb large amounts of labor. Third, technology transfer—FDI can transfer knowledge, skills, and technology to Ethiopia.

Yes, an apt environment can attract investors to a country or business by making it easier for them to invest. Making the economy attractive is also another lucrative way as investors can build trust and operate, and being realistic for interested investors is really crucial to do so.

One of the most critical steps Ethiopia must take is to enhance the ease of doing business.

More can be done to simplify regulations, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and improve government services. A more business-friendly environment will encourage existing multinationals to stay and attract new ones. By adopting attainable reforms, Ethiopia can create a more conducive environment for business growth.

Besides, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are another crucial component in addressing the challenges that multinationals face in the nation. These partnerships can be effective in bridging infrastructure gaps, which are often cited as a significant barrier to business operations. True, expanding PPPs across various sectors, including transport, energy, and technology, could provide the necessary infrastructure support that multinationals need to operate efficiently across Ethiopia.

Thus Ethiopia must address its tax and fiscal policies to create a more predictable and stable environment for businesses and investors. Offering targeted tax incentives for companies that invest in strategic sectors across the nation could further encourage multinationals to maintain and expand their operations.

He said, "Developing strong local industries can reduce the country's dependence on imports and make the economy more resilient to external shocks. For instance, the agriculture sector, which remains a cornerstone of country's economy, could benefit greatly from value-addition initiatives. By processing raw agricultural products locally, this great east African state, Ethiopia, can increase its export value and create more jobs."

Since the country, Ethiopia is a springboard to Europe, Asia, and other African countries as it is found at a strategic location, it can easily attract investors and investment. The economic performance of the country has also shown a remarkable step to well transform. Yes, Ethiopia has doubled its GDP and per capita income over the last five years.

As far as energy is concerned, the country has the Grand Abbay Dam, which is Africa's largest hydroelectric generation dam. It also has low utility rates for electricity. If the issue of land is raised for instance, Ethiopia offers land for investment on a lease-hold or rental basis. The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) is an autonomous government institution that helps attract foreign and domestic investments to Ethiopia. The EIC offers promotional, facilitation, and aftercare services to all interested investor coming to Ethiopia and doing business following a win-win fashion.

Fundamentally, he said, political stability and sound economic policies have to be put into practice as they are fundamental to maintaining investor confidence; the country has to capitalize on such a decisive issue, too. The government must also work towards ensuring a stable and predictable political climate. Addressing corruption is critical to improving the business environment. Equally, investing in education and training to build a skilled workforce is crucial for Ethiopia's economic future.

"Some countries have attracted more investments and installed more power plant generating capacity which will require less use of traditional power generating sets. If the Ethiopian government makes the economy attractive for investors to invest and build power plants, there is the likelihood that investments in the power sector would increase," he added.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia should create apt environment to attract more infrastructure investment. Development finance institutions, banks and private investors are collectively pushing the economic growth forward. International investors are people or companies based outside of a country that invests in a business. Since before a country seeks international investors, it should prepare as much research, data, analytics, and information as possible, Ethiopia has to understand the way how to confidently attract investors.

The nation should come up with improved infrastructure since it helps improve the domestic road network as well as enables the country have a well defined and improved balance of payments. Undeniably, Ethiopia has several factors that can attract investors. In the first place, incentives—Ethiopia offers incentives such as income tax exemptions, customs and duty exemptions, and guaranteed repatriation of funds. Second, labor force—the country has a large, young, and trainable workforce. The issue of infrastructure can come next as it is quite decisive.

True, Ethiopia has a well-connected transportation system, including a railway, dry ports, and highways though a lot remains to be done and a range of aspects have to be well bridged to make the nation an investment hub. It also has 13 industrial parks with infrastructure and services to help investors start operations quickly. Investment policies are also important. Ethiopia has a legal framework that governs investments, including the Investment Proclamation No. 1180/2020.



# This is Ethiopia

## New destinations' dev't transforming Ethiopia's tourism

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In recent years, Ethiopia has seen a surge in tourism following the government's grand new and exciting tourist destination developments. From luxury resorts to eco-friendly lodges, new corridor developments are attracting travelers from around the world and keeping Ethiopia on the map as a must-visit destination. No doubt, the innovative tourism projects in different parts of the country are expected to drive a tangible transformation and put Ethiopia at the forefront of the global tourism industry.

Currently, numerous luxurious and grand hotels, resorts, and lodges have been opening across the country. Thus, the country's tourism sector is transforming with a growing number of high-end resorts opening their doors to visitors.

These lodges and resorts offer a range of amenities, from spa treatments to gourmet dining, providing travelers with a truly luxurious experience of more than 80 Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and People's hospitable cultural miracles.

The country's major and popular tourist destinations, such as Axum, Lalibela, and Gondar, among others, are also undertaking huge restorations aimed at improving their standards and conserving their heritage.

Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed highlighted the remarkable growth of the tourism sector which is attributed to the conducive environment fostered by various government initiatives.

Addressing members of the parliament during the recent session of the House of People's Representatives, Premier Abiy said that key projects such as Dine for Ethiopia, corridor development projects, and other government initiatives are transforming the country's tourism ecosystem.

These enabling environments have created a thriving atmosphere for tourism sector development, the Prime Minister elaborated.

Moreover, he emphasized the significance of cultivating those ongoing initiatives of the nation to promote the tourism industry.

"It is time that we reap the benefits of activities previously undertaken," he stated, underscoring the government's commitment to sustaining this momentum.

Notably, over the past three months, the country has hosted 20 international conferences—an impressive increase compared to the previous year.

This surge in conference tourism is seen as a vital component of the overall tourism strategy, with plans to continue this trend moving forward, he pointed out.

For PM, this demonstrated that tourism development activities including corridor developments and similar initiatives have been bearing fruits by attracting continental and international events.



View of the new Addis Ababa



Partial view of Gorgora Eco Resort

In addition to promoting tourism, the Prime Minister announced ambitious plans to expand Ethiopian Airlines' services.

A mega airport is set to be constructed, which will enhance the airline's capacity and connectivity.

Furthermore, the government has ordered 124 new airplanes for Ethiopian Airlines, positioning it for greater operational efficiency and service expansion.

With these initiatives in place, the Prime Minister expressed confidence in achieving a projected 7.1 percent growth in the service sector.

The strategic focus on tourism and aviation is expected to play a pivotal role in reaching this target, reinforcing the government's dedication to economic development and international engagement, the Prime Minister underscored.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Abiy highlighted Addis Ababa's immense potential as a premier destination is being steadily realized where the city continues to host a wide array of national and international activities.

"As Addis Ababa continues to host a wide array of national and international activities, its immense potential as a premier destination is being steadily realized—not only in its journey toward becoming a

livable city for residents but also as a city that excels in hospitality," the Premier posted on X.

Concerted efforts among all relevant stakeholders remain essential to ensure high-quality service delivery, security, and the development of tourism offerings that honor the rich history of our capital, he noted.

Moreover, the new destinations such as the Gorgora Eko Resort, Wonchi, and Halala-projects offer stunning views of the surrounding landscape, as well as guided tours of the area's spectacular nature and man-made attractions, giving guests a unique insight into Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage.

Therefore, Ethiopia is embarking upon mega tourism investments aimed at embracing eco-friendly tourism, with a number of new lodges and camps that are committed to sustainability and responsible travel. These lodges are often located in remote and pristine natural settings, allowing guests to immerse themselves in Ethiopia's stunning landscapes while minimizing their impact on the environment.

Many of these eco-friendly lodges offer guided nature walks, bird-watching tours, and other activities that showcase Ethiopia's incredible biodiversity. By promoting sustainable tourism practices, these lodges

are helping to protect Ethiopia's natural heritage for future generations to enjoy.

The newly developed destinations also witness the rise of community-based tourism initiatives where the communities directly participate in service provisions for tourists including horse riding, and supply cultural attires as well as cultural food and beverages.

In doing so, these projects aim to empower local communities by providing them with the tools and resources they need to benefit from tourism in a sustainable way. From homestays with local families to guided tours led by community members, these initiatives offer travelers a unique opportunity to engage with Ethiopia's diverse cultures and traditions.

What is more, one of the biggest challenges facing Ethiopia's tourism industry in the past has been a lack of infrastructure and accessibility. However, the government has been investing heavily in improving roads, airports, and other essential services to make it easier for travelers to explore the country. New international airports are being built, major highways are being upgraded, and public transportation services are being expanded to connect popular tourist destinations. These infrastructure developments are not only making it more convenient for visitors to travel around Ethiopia, but they are also creating new economic opportunities for local communities and the country as well.

In sum, nowadays, Ethiopia's tourism industry is undergoing a period of rapid transformation. Having standardized and luxurious resorts and lodges are ranking Ethiopia as one of the top travel destinations. Ethiopia is setting a new standard for tourism development in Africa by giving more priority to the sector. As more travelers discover the incredible beauty and cultural richness of Ethiopia, the country's tourism industry is poised for even greater growth in the years to come.