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Nation to host Int'l conference on pulses, oil seeds

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia has set to host an international conference on pulses and oilseeds on November 19-20, designed to strengthen trade ties and boost exports, Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration announced.

In a presser, Trade and Regional Integration State Minister, Yasmin Wohabrebbi said yesterday that Ethiopia's export of pulses and oilseeds is growing each year, and the conference is expected to promote cooperation between Ethiopian exporters and their

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Photo : Gebabo Gebrie

Ethiopia sees big trade, investment upticks with China

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA—Finance Minister Ahmed Shide has projected a stronger and more resilient Ethio-China economic partnership, fueled by recent macroeconomic policy reforms designed to attract greater foreign direct investment.

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

Speaking at the Jiangsu-Ethiopia Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference, 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 ongoing economic reforms, which are

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Ethiopia congratulates Somaliland on peaceful, democratic election

ADDIS ABABA— The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia congratulated the People of Somaliland on the conduct of a peaceful and democratic election.

The Ministry also commended the National Electoral Commission of Somaliland for conducting a free and fair election.

The ministry added that this process reflects the maturity of Somaliland's governance and democratic system.

Commission values academia's key role in Nat'l Dialogue

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA — Higher education institutions hold immense potential to address Ethiopia's major national challenges, said the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC).

During a consultation forum with higher education institutions yesterday, Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya noted that intellectuals have a crucial role in resolving the country's challenges. He noted that Ethiopia has faced a difficult journey of both natural and manmade crises, with the latter requiring urgent resolution through peaceful National Dialogue.

"Holding peaceful National Dialogue is essential, and higher education institutions



Prof. Mesfin Araya

are vital in fostering a culture of resolving differences through dialogue," Prof. Mesfin said. He commended universities for their support in providing logistics, moderators, and intellectual input for ENDC's activities.

The agenda gathering for the dialogue has already been conducted in nine states and two city administrations. The Chief Commissioner underlined that ongoing discussions with higher education institutions are critical for identifying their role in the upcoming main National Dialogue Council.

For his part, Commissioner Ambaye Ogatu (PhD) highlighted the importance of intellectual communities in countering misinformation, shaping public opinion, and creating frameworks for resolving challenges. He urged intellectuals to take ownership of the National Dialogue, engage actively in expert panels, and help translate the dialogue outcomes into actionable

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News



Embassy to organize culture day

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The Embassy of Japan, the Japan Foundation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to organize Japan Culture Day on 23 November 2024.

In its statement sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Embassy of Japan to Ethiopia announced it has finalized to organize Japanese culture day to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the commencement of Official Development Assistance by the Japanese Government, that coincide with the 93rd Anniversary of the Commencement of Diplomatic ties between Japan and Ethiopia as well as to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the full scale operations of the JICA Ethiopia Office and the 50th Anniversary of the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV).

The festival will offer an opportunity to the residents of Addis Ababa to come in touch with Japanese culture, including martial arts, music, dance, calligraphy and Manga drawing as well as to exploring scholarship opportunities in Japan.

The opening ceremony will present a mesmerizing blend of Japanese music with Ethiopian music by the Moseb Cultural Music Group. A troop of Japanese residents will perform a traditional Japanese dance, to which anyone can join. While Ethiopian martial art masters would present Judo and Karate performances.

Hence, Students and parents of Japanese supplementary school demonstrate Japanese traditional games. MEXT alumni and JETA provide information about studying in Japan and scholarship opportunities. Furthermore, two popular Japanese films will be screened at Ras Mekonnen Hall in the afternoon. Japan Culture Day and film screenings will be open to the public, and all the events are free of charge.

Ethiopian wins Business Traveller Best African Airline Award 2024

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA -Ethiopian Airlines Group announced that it has been crowned as the ‘Best African Airline’ at Business Traveler Awards 2024 for the 5th consecutive year at an event held in London.

Extending his congratulatory message, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO, Mesfin Tasew said: “We are pleased to have received the Business Traveller Award 2024 for five consecutive years.”

“This award is a testament to our commitment, dedication, and hard work of our team members, and the stakeholders who worked tirelessly with us to keep our operations running smoothly,” he elaborated.

It is very special as it comes at a perfect time when *Ethiopian* receives Africa’s first Airbus A350-1000 Mesfin noted, adding that “I would like to sincerely express my gratitude to the hardworking *Ethiopian* workforce whose commitment to excellence has brought us thus far.”

Throughout its 78-year journey, Ethiopian Airlines has cultivated remarkable adaptability, agility, and resilience.



Amidst adversity, the airline has preserved its legacy as the African continent’s leading carriers, renowned for operational excellence and efficiency.

Ethiopian success has been demonstrated in both passenger and cargo and logistics services in its vast network across the globe.

Ethiopian Airlines Group has become one of the fastest-growing carriers globally since it

started operations in 1946.

Business Traveller is the leading magazine for frequent business travellers worldwide, it was learned.

The Business Traveller Awards are voted for by readers of the magazine, with the results authenticated by an independent auditing company, and are widely recognized as the market’s benchmark for excellence.



Netherlands continues supporting Ethiopia via COMPASS project

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The government of Netherlands continues to support Ethiopia in the areas of migrant protection, reintegration of migrant returnees via COMPASS project, the Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia said.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia yesterday launched the second phase of the COMPASS project, which spans from 2024 to 2027 and will be implemented in Ethiopia.

At the launching program, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ethiopia, Christine Pirenne stated that the government of the Netherlands would continue to strengthen migration governance by enhancing Ethiopian government framework and building capacities at local and national levels.

This initiative emphasizes the shared commitment of the two nations in order to protecting migrants, enhancing migration governance, supporting the reintegration of returnees, reducing irregular migration, and strengthening capacity at both local and national levels to safeguard the people on the move, she noted.

The Dutch government promotes a

comprehensive 360-degree approach to migration that emphasizes the importance of protection, the safeguarding of human rights, and effective border and migration management, the ambassador added.

Pirenne noted that many of these priorities are evident in the COMPASS project, which focuses on providing reintegration support, enhancing migration governance, and increasing awareness about the dangers of irregular migration.

State Minister of Women and Social Affairs, Huria Ali said at the event that the launching of the COMPASS project is a significant milestone in Ethiopia’s journey towards ensuring the well-being of migrants and enhancing migration governance systems, and improving services for migrants.

The Ethiopian government is committed to tackling migration challenges by combating irregular migration, promoting safe and dignified migration, and providing support for returnees, including reintegration and capacity development in migration governance and protection issues, according to the State Minister.

Chief of Mission to IOM Ethiopia, Abibatou Wane-Fall said that the mission is to support vulnerable migrants by providing the tools

and resources they need to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into their communities, enabling both returning migrants and host communities to thrive and evolve.

“In the first phase of the COMPASS project, we supported the safe, voluntary return of hundreds of migrants, focusing on their specific needs and providing socioeconomic reintegration support for the most vulnerable. Our goal is to empower community members to shape their own futures.”

Successful community-based reintegration projects include Jimma Zone, Oromia state IOM supported 350 returnees and community members through vegetable grafting, poultry farming, and animal feed production, enhancing food security and south Wello, Amhara state over 200 returnees and host community members are involved in an irrigation initiative, improving water security and agricultural opportunities, she said.

In phase two, she indicated that efforts will be intensified to expand vocational training and educational opportunities, support local enterprises, foster community cohesion, strengthen migration governance systems, and protect the rights of migrants while facilitating safe and regular migration.

News

Great Ethiopian Run 2024 catalyst for tourism: Minister

• Event marks 50th anniversary of Lucy's discovery

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – The Great Ethiopian Run 2024 presents a unique opportunity to promote Ethiopian tourism and drive economic growth, according to Tourism Minister Selamawit Kassa.

In a press briefing yesterday, Selamawit highlighted the significance of the event, scheduled for Sunday, November 17, as a platform to showcase Ethiopia's potential in athletic tourism. She noted that the high-altitude run exemplifies Ethiopia's favorable weather, which can be leveraged to attract global tourists while linking athletics with tourism.

Beyond its tourism appeal, Selamawit emphasized the event's economic impact, stating, "The economic activities during this major event bring transformative changes to both the city and the country. From small businesses to large-scale enterprises,



Haile Gebrselassie

the Great Run leaves a lasting mark on our economy, creating immense opportunities for growth and social interaction."

She further elaborated that Ethiopia's athletics heritage is a valuable asset for tourism, adding that the country should



Selamawit Kassa

be recognized not only as the birthplace of legendary athletes but also as a prime tourism destination for global sports enthusiasts. Highlighting the government's efforts to support the sector, she mentioned that the training grounds and hometowns of

renowned athletes could be developed into major tourist attractions.

This year's Great Run celebrates the 50th anniversary of Lucy's discovery, with her wax figure featured on the event's medal, symbolizing Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage and tourism potential.

Legendary athlete Haile Gebrselassie remarked that the 2024 Great Ethiopian Run will host 50,000 participants from over 20 countries. Emphasizing harmony and respect, he reiterated that the event remains free of political and religious affiliations.

The 2024 Sophie Malt Great Run will also feature celebrated athletes, including Ruth Chepng'etich and former Irish record-holder Eamonn Coghlan, as special guests, alongside Haile Gebrselassie. This milestone event underscores Ethiopia's position as a hub for athletics, tourism, and cultural celebration.

Ethiopia sees ...

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 Misganu Arega (Amb.) 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.

Commission values...

policies and regulations.

Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) added that the National Dialogue is pivotal for shifting Ethiopia's political trajectory. The ENDC has been working with over 50 political parties and international stakeholders while conducting agenda gathering and awareness creation. To date, 105,370 participants from 932 districts across nine states and two city administrations have engaged in the dialogue process.

Despite significant grassroots participation, the ENDC acknowledged challenges such as unrealistic expectations, lack of trust, political will, and the spread of misinformation. Commissioner Tegegnework Getementioned these obstacles while reaffirming the commission's

commitment to inclusivity and dialogue.

The ENDC plans to continue training, expand agenda gathering in areas like Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia, and finalize preparations for the main National Dialogue. Representatives from 56 universities, intellectuals, and officials participated in the forum to discuss their contribution to the national effort.

It is believed that academia plays a pivotal role in Ethiopia's National Dialogue by providing research-based insights, fostering inclusive discourse, and offering intellectual leadership. In a diverse country like Ethiopia, academia helps bridge divides through deep analysis, long-term vision, and conflict resolution.



Yasmin Wohabrebbi



Edao Abdi

Nation to host Int'l ...

international counterparts from more than 22 countries.

Ethiopia is one of the top pulse and oilseed producing countries in the world although the export revenue from these agricultural products is not adequate despite recent developments, she highlighted.

Almost 6.3 million quintals have been exported within last three months and the amount of revenue is also substantial compared to the performance recorded last year in the same period, Yasmin said, adding that the government is strengthening quality controls to ensure global market competitiveness and generate more revenue from the sector.

Ethiopia produces a huge volume of beans and lentils, but, it is not the number one exporter of these crops because of quality issues and trade challenges. However, Yasmin mentioned that some countries are exporting Ethiopia's products so that the country should facilitate direct exporting mechanisms for those recipients.

In this regard, she believed that the upcoming international conference

would be an important platform to meet local companies with representatives from importer countries since hundreds of Ethiopian enterprises and businesses are expected to take part.

Ethiopian Pulses and Oilseeds Exporters Association President, Edao Abdi expressed that exporters have been struggling with trade challenges over the past times and they are now building better export capabilities facilitated by the macro-economic reform.

"This conference is set to be held amid the macroeconomic reform implementation allowing both local and foreigners to act with the better foreign exchange system. The private sector should utilize the opportunity provided by the government," he suggested.

Edao also invited agricultural enterprises and foreign businesses in need of importing Ethiopian pulses and oilseeds to take part in the conference.

Sideline events including exhibitions and panel discussions will be held at the iconic Adwa Museum during the conference days, it was indicated.

Opinion

Is suspension of UK-tariff for flower paved with good intention?

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON (MoA)

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When the United Kingdom exited the European Union, it introduced tariffs on imported goods, including flowers. In practice, most countries were exempt from these tariffs due to existing trade deals of UK to other members of European Union. But that wasn't the case for flowers from Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda that were bought through third countries like Netherlands. When the flower of East African Nations supplied through third countries the product is subject to 8% tariffs due to specific rules of origin that was agreed between the EU and the UK at the time the UK's exit from the EU (Brexit).

It is in April 2024, however, that the United Kingdom Government suspended import duties on fresh flowers of non-EU origin, which are traded directly and through the European Union. The suspensions will remain in place until June 2026, with a possible extension to be considered. Right after the elimination of eight percent duty for flowers and ornamental plants, there was a strong conviction that unlimited quantities of flowers will be exported to the UK with zero tariffs from Ethiopia.

At the commencement of this measure, the proponent of free trade advocate that zero tariffs would greatly lead to strengthen competition, improved resource allocation, boosting output, stimulate investment expansion, increase employments and market share. Previously flower that came from countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda that were sold through the flower auctions in Holland had an 8% tariff added. This has already gone.

The suspension of 8% duty for cut flowers will be a big win for major flower growing regions in East Africa. Many stakeholders, who facilitate and promote the floriculture investment and export, were excited with the initiatives and sought it as a significant stimulant and a positive progress for the floriculture export industry.

Despite this opportunity, some critics argue that discontents about seizing this opportunity spread among an optimistic group of societies who are waiting to see changes. According to information obtained from the Ethiopian Customs Authority, before the suspension of the 8% tariff, like between July 8, 2023, and June 8, 2024, the total volume of flowers supplied to the UK market accounted for 7.88%, which is estimated to be 41,109,374.94 USD in value terms.

However, after the introduction of the zero tariffs, no apparent change has been recorded; rather, it shows a remarkable reduction of market share. The most recent



information obtained from ECA reveals that the market share of flowers in the UK flower market shows 6% and 5%, respectively, in the months of September and October 2024.

The discontent with the situation has also another dimension. There are very few flowers' producing and exporting companies who are motivated to maximize their benefit from UK Zero Tariff initiatives. Before introduction of zero tariffs, 2023, out of the total number flower producing and exporting companies, the number of companies who participate in UK flower market ranges from 6-10% or from 4 to 6 in number. Surprisingly, the number of companies who participated in UK flower market dramatically reduced overtime. According to ECA (2024), for the last four consecutive months, the number of companies who participated in UK flower market reduced up to 3% or 2 to 3 in number.

The question is what does it mean? Why we can't seize the opportunities given to us and on the contrary even push the opportunity away unconsciously? Why does it happen?

Unlike Ethiopia, different report reveals that Kenya's floriculture sector has scored success following the temporal removal of the Tariff for flowers by the United Kingdom. Related report also confirms that the floriculture sector in Uganda and Tanzania benefit immensely from this tariff suspension, as it allows for greater market access and competitiveness in the UK.

So far, effort has been made to explore the casual factors that limit Ethiopian growers to maximize the benefit of UK tariff suspension. One exporter from Oromia Region, Beshoftu cluster, who used to supply flower to UK market for many years expressed that the problem is not overlooking of the advantage of tariff suspension but it is the long-term sales

contract agreement that had been made with UK retail and super market before the suspension of tariff. According to the exporter, for the last seven months, his company is trying to negotiate with buyers to make the contract agreement more flexible both to benefit from tariff change and enhance volume of supply.

Indeed, this reason makes sense. Long-term contract arrangements often led to greater volatility and clearing prices that don't reflect the actual supply and demand. This is because contracts reflect the market conditions at the time they are signed, but conditions can change significantly during the contract's duration. A long-term contract that was initially advantageous may become unfitting or costly as time progresses; long-term contracts also give rise to cost risks. For instance, they can limit the company's ability to deal with better pricing from buyers with changes in situations.

Other exporter who operates in central Ethiopia and used to supply flower to England for many years also stated that selling price negotiations in UK retail shop, super market found to be costly. According to this exporter negotiation with buyers in different market segments was time-consuming and resource-intensive, and they may not always lead to a favorable outcome.

A number of other flower farms who operate in different horticulture clusters have other viewpoint on the issues. These farms believe that the suspension of 8% tariff by United Kingdom favored not Ethiopian growers; rather the 19 members of common wealth African counties.

The majority of their members are former British colonies who have common value, a mutual technical and development assistance scheme, preferential treatment in visa arrangements, market access

possibility, and direct contact with the British government. These countries include major flower-producing East African nations like Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Mozambique. Since Ethiopia is not a member of this block, exporters consider these as casual factors that limit Ethiopian exporters to maximize the benefit of UK tariff suspension like other neighboring east African nations.

Many other flower farms express that the UK flower market is already saturated by Kenyan growers before suspension of the Tariff. One of the basic requirements to inter into retail, whole sale and super market of UK is Fair Trade Certification (FTC), which entails farms to comply with business transparency and accountability, product traceability, sustainable business practice, safe working condition, fair compensation and environmental protection.

In this regard more than 51% of the Kenyan flower farms are now fair trade certified while in Ethiopia not more than 12% flower farms have fair trade certifications. Despite good volume of Ethiopia flower exported to UK market destination, strict Fair Trade Certification requirements was viewed one barrier to maximize tariff advantage in UK.

On the other side, there is an intuitive argument among people that the significant volume Ethiopian flower is re-exported by crossing the border of imported countries to UK. This re-exporting enables importing countries to reach UK markets that might be inaccessible for flower producing due to certification requirements, trade restriction or other barriers. The implication is quite clear, imported country that has illegible to enter into UK market would eventually benefit from 8% of UK tariff suspension without fair shared benefit prearranged to Ethiopia.

Unless these issues are addressed in time, Ethiopia's floriculture sector may continue to miss out on the opportunities presented by the UK's tariff suspension. Coordinated efforts among exporters, producer and exporter association, buyers and stakeholder, and the industry are needed to renegotiate contracts, obtain necessary Fair Trade Certifications, and explore new market access strategies. Without such initiatives, growers may continue to watch from the sidelines as their neighbors reap the benefits of expanded market access and increased competitiveness in the UK.

(The contributor is the horticultural export coordinator at Ministry of Agriculture)

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

Editorial

Addis proved high status of conference and tourism capital

Addis Ababa, a city that has been on the list of cities lasting over a century across the globe, has proven itself to be a capital of conferences and tourism, hosting more than 30 international conferences in the first quarter of this fiscal year alone. It is a diverse and dynamic city that offers a wide range of opportunities for conferences, events, seminars, webinars, and workshops, both those that have taken place so far and those that are upcoming.

Heads of state and government from Kenya, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the UAE visited Ethiopia alongside the UN World without Hunger summit. Moreover, major conferences such as the Confederation of African Football summit, the African Religious Institutions meeting, the Hydromet Conference, and the Africa Trade Ministers' summit have been held in Addis, according to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A list of upcoming conferences to be held in Addis Ababa includes topics related to education, medical research, psychology and allied sciences, political science and international relations, as well as environmental and food monitoring, among others.

There are myriad convincing reasons for choosing this city as a conference and tourism hub. Among them are its lovely weather, which is convenient for any visitor, diplomat, or conference attendee; its peaceful atmosphere while accommodating various types of conferences despite having millions of residents; its attractive features, especially following the recent construction of public corridors; its star-level hotels suited to personal comfort; and delicious and healthy dishes served by enthusiastic attendants with inviting smiles. All these elements make the city stand out as if seen from the ends of the earth.

Additionally, Addis Ababa is the capital of a people who have lived in freedom, resisting all forms of colonial rule with their blood and lives. As an independent nation, Ethiopia has acted as an agent for people across Africa and beyond during their struggles against colonialism, serving as their voice on global stages like the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. Beyond merely representing oppressed peoples, Ethiopia provided direct assistance to freedom fighters through training and materials. These contributions enhance Addis Ababa's status as a principal city for hosting regional, continental, and international conferences.

The successful execution of these conferences demonstrates Ethiopia's universal capacity and role. The successes achieved in this regard have not come without effort; rather, they are the result of the committed leadership demonstrated by the country's leaders at all level.

Similarly, the hospitality of the peace-loving residents of the city has made guests feel at home while enjoying leisure time here, alongside the city's tourist attractions, including parks built both within and on its outskirts.

Despite challenges arising from the country's relentless enemies—who leave no stone unturned to undermine these conferences by raising security issues—all events have been conducted peacefully thanks to the tireless efforts of strong and disciplined security forces. Above all, the country's smooth diplomatic relations with almost all nations across the globe have played a crucial role.

On the other hand, the successful conferences held in Addis have been rewarding for Ethiopia in general and for the city in particular by generating income in the economic sector. This success is encouraging for both the city and the country as they leverage the expansion of tourist destinations.

In summary, the peaceful execution of conferences and festivals undertaken so far will likely guarantee the successful hosting of future events and serve as a testament to Addis Ababa being a city that deserves admiration and trust.

Opinion

Ethiopia's initiative to build cross-border road with South Sudan: Advancing Regional Integration, stability

BY AMBASSADOR MARKOS TEKLE (PhD)

The relationship between Ethiopia and South Sudan is rooted in shared history, culture, and longstanding diplomatic relations. The Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, brokered by Emperor Haile Selassie, marked Ethiopia's initial support for the Southern Sudanese cause, setting the stage for current political ties.

Ethiopia's support continued through South Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement and its independence in 2011, making Ethiopia one of the first nations to recognize South Sudan as a sovereign state. Since then, both countries have formalized their cooperation through trade, education, capacity building, security, and infrastructure agreements.

Ethiopia is committed to enhancing economic relations, recognizing that infrastructure connectivity is vital for mutual prosperity. However, the two sisterly countries face critical challenges due to underdeveloped infrastructure. Despite strong political and diplomatic ties, the economic and infrastructural links between the two countries require urgent expansion and development.

Infrastructure and Energy Connectivity

Ethiopia and South Sudan have established multiple border outlets, but road infrastructure on the South Sudanese side still needs to be developed, limiting cross-border trade. The Pagak-Faluj-Malakal Road Project, long-discussed and recently ratified by both countries' legislatures, aims to connect key areas in Northeast South Sudan and Western Ethiopia. When completed, this road will enhance economic integration, reduce inflation in the Greater Upper Nile region, and contribute to peace by fostering economic stability in conflict-prone areas.

Another strategic project, the Akobo-Pibor-Bor Road, will connect Ethiopia with central South Sudan, improving access to Juba. This road will also support the construction of a power transmission line from Ethiopia, attracting investment and boosting industrial productivity in South Sudan. The Boma-Raad-Kapoeta Road, part of the LAPSSET (Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport) Corridor, aims to link Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Kenya, promoting broader regional integration. Extending this route into South Western Ethiopia would fully realize the LAPSSET initiative, enhancing cross-border trade and connectivity.

Complementing road networks, Ethiopia plans to extend electric transmission lines into South Sudan, enabling it to import power from the Grand Renaissance Dam. Reliable electricity will reduce costs, especially in South Sudan's oil fields, and support industrial expansion, creating jobs and economic growth. This infrastructure could further facilitate a refinery at the border, where South Sudanese oil can be processed for Ethiopian use, meeting Ethiopia's high demand for fuel. This will solidify the groundwork for the development of petrochemical and fertilizer industries.

The current initiative

The road construction agreement signed in

May 2023 represents a significant step toward strengthening commercial ties and advancing economic integration between Ethiopia and South Sudan. This integration is pertinent, as it must reflect the staunch political relations between the two countries. Infrastructure projects, such as road networks and energy links, are crucial for deepening economic ties, improving the quality of life for citizens in both nations and serving as catalysts for regional peace and prosperity. By completing these initiatives, both countries can enhance economic cooperation, benefiting the entire region.

Ethiopia has a long history of investing in physical and energy infrastructure to improve connectivity with its neighbors. In pursuit of a closer relationship with South Sudan, Ethiopia has constructed three road outlets and opened one river route. However, achieving comprehensive infrastructure connectivity has faced challenges, including financial constraints, political instability, and ongoing conflicts in South Sudan since 2013.

Over a decade ago, Ethiopia built a vital highway from Addis Ababa to Pagak, an Ethiopian border town adjacent to South Sudan. However, extending this road into South Sudan's interior has encountered delays and hindered cross-border integration. Under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Ethiopian government has taken historic steps to bridge this gap, recognizing the critical importance of regional connectivity.

Ethiopia is committed to constructing a network of roads within South Sudan that will link key cities in the Upper Nile region, including major oil-producing areas, to Ethiopia.

This ambitious endeavor is formalized through a financing agreement between the two countries. Notably, this agreement is not merely a loan; instead, it reflects a cooperative commitment from Ethiopia to its neighbor to foster regional economic integration and enhance cross-border connectivity. Ethiopia will fund and construct the road within South Sudan, thereby creating vital links that connect communities and economies on either side of the border. In return, the South Sudanese government has agreed to repay the project costs, with the agreement ratified by the South Sudanese parliament in July and the Ethiopian parliament just this week.

This project is unprecedented in African history, marking the first time an African nation has undertaken to build significant infrastructure within a neighboring country to promote broader regional connectivity. It is a landmark initiative in Africa's journey toward economic integration and mutual development. The financing agreement between Ethiopia and South Sudan aims to improve road connectivity, thereby enhancing trade, tourism, and cultural exchange, aligning with the AU Agenda 2063, the IGAD Minimum Integration Plan, and the broader regional economic integration initiatives.

Editor's Note: Ambassador Markos Tekle is a trainer and foreign policy consultant at Institute of Foreign Affairs.

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



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Ethiopia, Russia: Solidifying strategic alliance in diverse fields

- Senator Igor Morozov

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Diplomatic relations between Russia and Ethiopia were established in 1898, interrupted in 1917, and resumed in 1943.

The regime change in Ethiopia in 1991, as well as the breakup of the Soviet Union, resulted in scaled-down bilateral cooperation. The revival of the political dialogue between the two countries started in the mid-1990s.

Ethiopia and Russia have enjoyed strong bilateral relations for years, with growing cooperation in infrastructure development, military collaboration, and energy projects. Russia has also expressed interest in supporting Ethiopia's energy sector and investing in the country's natural resources.

The recent elevation of Ethiopia's status as a BRICS member, effective January 2024, has further solidified the partnership between the two nations. As a member of the BRICS group, Ethiopia is positioned to play a more influential role in strengthening Russia-Ethiopia relations, fostering greater alignment in regional and global economic and geopolitical affairs.

Trade and economic relations between the two countries are based on the Agreement on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation and the Trade Agreement of November 26, 1999. The foreign trade turnover of Russia and Ethiopia in 2021 amounted to \$225.2 million and increased by 359.2% compared to 2020.

This week, for instance, the Russia-Ethiopia business forum, titled "RUSSIA - ETHIOPIA: TIME DOESN'T WAIT!" took place in Addis Ababa with the goal of expanding economic cooperation and strengthening bilateral relations between the two nations. The Forum had been focused on crafting a roadmap for collaboration, emphasizing sectors that are mutually beneficial to both nations.

Today's guest, Igor Morozov, is the President of the Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation with African Countries (AFRICOM) and a Senator of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation.

In a brief interview with The Ethiopian Herald newspaper, Morozov discussed a range of issues related to strengthening business partnerships by creating favorable conditions for Russian investors and elevating the trade relations between the two countries.



What is the purpose of this forum?

Africa is a continent with a productive population and immense resources, reiterating the commitment of Russia to deepen cooperation with the country in a wide range of areas including trade, economy, science, education, digital technology, health and agriculture.

The Ethio-Russia business forum is a promising landmark to foster and bolster bilateral economic cooperation in trade and investment sectors between Ethiopia and Russia. The forum would further ignite the untapped economic opportunities and doing businesses between the two brotherly nations.

The forum will pave the way for increased economic engagement, underlining the potential benefits of the forum for both countries. Russian businessmen have come to Ethiopia to establish direct contacts with their partners in various sectors of the economy, focusing on IT technology, digitalization, and electric car manufacturing. They are all prominent leaders in the Russian economy.

We represent different sectors of the

economy, such as IT technologies, digitalization of the economy, machinery specifically in the production and assembly of electric vehicles.

How many companies are represented here?

On this forum, we represent 34 Russian companies from different regions of the Russian Federation. They are eager to invest in Ethiopia in areas such as energy, agriculture, construction, communication, information technology, and other sectors.

The forum is expected to serve as a crucial platform for fostering stronger economic ties, with discussions focused on investment opportunities and trade partnerships between the two nations.

Moreover, the forum will provide an opportunity to strengthen Ethiopia-Russia relations, reflect a shared vision for future growth and collaboration, explore various avenues for partnership, and further solidify the strategic alliance between Ethiopia and Russia.

These companies are leaders in the Russian Federation, specializing in electric buses, lithium accumulators, solar panels, and

other technological advancements.

Why did Russia choose to do business with Ethiopia now?

After the first Russia-Africa summit in Sochi five years ago, we turned to Ethiopia as the first country to consider for business. A year later, we opened AFRICOM's continental office here, making Ethiopia our starting point for expanding into other African countries. We have witnessed the rapid development of Ethiopia, with a favorable investment climate, free trade zones, and industrial parks being established.

Impressed by Ethiopia's progress, we decided to initiate a series of forums and business conferences in the country. Following the summit in Sochi, Ethiopia was our first destination, and we had no doubt in choosing it as our business platform. With the opening of our continental office in Ethiopia, we set our sights on entering other African markets from here.

Ethiopia's dynamic development and creation of favorable investment opportunities, including free trade zones and industrial parks, further solidified our

Continued to page 7

Ethiopia's dynamic development and creation of favorable investment opportunities, including free trade zones and industrial parks, further solidified our decision to focus our business activities in Addis Ababa



Ethiopia, Russia: ...

Continued from page 6

decision to focus our business activities in Addis Ababa.

Both Ethiopia and Russia are members of BRICS. How do you explain the cooperation between the two countries in terms of business?

Yes, both Ethiopia and Russia are BRICS members. I believe that Ethiopia joining BRICS will greatly boost the development of bilateral relations.

In general, to foster relations between Ethiopia and BRICS countries, particularly with the Russian Federation, simplifying the payment system is crucial. The current payment system is a major obstacle to trade between Russia and Ethiopia. Ethiopia's membership in BRICS is expected to streamline the payment process and facilitate economic cooperation between the two countries.

Working within the BRICS framework will also provide an opportunity to establish a new unified system of legislation and payment methods. Additionally, for Russian businesses in Africa, it is essential to have a system that encourages investment and protects capital investments. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement, as Russia possesses abundant natural resources.

Ethiopia has a plan to industrialize by 2030, and Russia has all the raw materials to supply. However, the current payment mechanism is not in place. Do you think BRICS will address this issue and boost business between the two countries?

Yes, definitely. We have a program to industrialize by 2030 and recognize that Russia can supply a significant amount of raw materials. As you mentioned, there are obstacles in the payment systems.

Do you think BRICS can help remove these barriers?

I believe that within 1-2 years, we will establish a common platform for economic activity through BRICS. The new development bank will offer various credit programs, cryptocurrency options, and new economic instruments. This will be crucial for external economic contracts and the repatriation of investment capital.

Overall, this development will be essential for business operations and provide opportunities for investment capital repatriation.

How does the Russian government support Ethiopia, particularly in trade?

AFRICOM is a business platform for entrepreneurs looking to work in Africa, inviting those willing to invest in technology and new knowledge, which is crucial. The existence of state-level relationships is also significant. With BRICS now involved in Ethiopia, it is likely that not only interstate relations will develop, but also business connections across various sectors of the economy,



where private ownership, technologies, knowledge, and ideas from the Russian Federation will play a major role. How can businessmen establish business ties in Ethiopia? Russian businessmen are prepared to invest in technology and new knowledge in Ethiopia.

Regarding government support, I believe it operates at a different level. However, with Ethiopia's acceptance into BRICS, I am confident that we will soon establish intergovernmental and business connections across different sectors of the economy. In Russia, the economy is primarily driven by the private sector, private knowledge, and private ideas.

The declared theme of the Forum reflects the trend of activating business partnership between Russia and Ethiopia. This event will become an important platform for exchanging opinions and forming "road maps" for interaction in priority areas of bilateral cooperation, primarily in the fields of transport and construction, IT technologies and cyber-security, agro-industry and tourism.

How do you evaluate the interest of Russian companies and individuals in investing in Ethiopia?

I see how appealing Ethiopia is to Russian entrepreneurs and businessmen, and this is due to several reasons. Firstly, the ancient history of your country, the Orthodox religion that unites us all, and the long-

standing friendship established during the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

Another point to consider is the significant number of Ethiopian students studying in the Russian Federation, which we welcome. We hope that the universities present today will work to enhance the potential of our university education, enabling young people who study in Russia to bring back new knowledge to Ethiopia's evolving economic landscape.

This exchange will lead to a synergistic effect on the development of both the Russian and Ethiopian economies. Additionally, we are pleased with the increasing number of Ethiopian students pursuing higher education in the Russian Federation.

We hope that our universities participating in this forum will continue to expand and maximize the potential of our scientific advancements for these students who choose to study in Russia. These highly qualified specialists will return to Ethiopia, contributing to a new economic environment and fostering real synergy between the Ethiopian and Russian markets.

How do you assess the investment attractiveness of Ethiopia?

Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa, with a population of over 120 million people, demonstrating impressive economic growth and providing extensive opportunities for investment.

The Ethiopian government has approved the program "Economic Reforms for Internal Development," which offers broad investment opportunities in priority business areas. Additionally, various benefits and preferences are provided in terms of taxation, customs duties, investment protection and return, as well as the opportunity to operate in a free trade zone.

The country places significant emphasis on training engineering and technical personnel, boasting a well-trained labor force. These factors, among others, make Ethiopia an appealing destination for investors from various countries, including Russia, with which Ethiopia has established long-term and close relations. Chinese, Indian, and Turkish companies are actively involved in business activities in Ethiopia.

Forum participants from Ethiopia have had the chance of deliberating with Russian partners, showcasing the investment attractiveness of Ethiopia. Russian businesses have also explored the promising market of this East African country, which has been a member of BRICS since January 2024.

Thank you for your willingness.

It is my pleasure.

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We hope that the universities present today will work to enhance the potential of our university education, enabling young people who study in Russia to bring back new knowledge to Ethiopia's evolving economic landscape

Art & Culture

Ethiopia's potentially exportable cultures and traditions

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular, have so many cultural and traditional practices that are not only ancient but also amazingly diverse and imaginative. They continue to attract the attention of scholars, historians, and academic gurus who specialize in anthropology, linguistics, and other areas of study. With the advance of globalization, African culture has started to attract the attention of commercial or business enterprises.

Like language, cultures anywhere in the world may display different levels of growth and development, but they share one common factor, which is their inherent 'functional equality' in the sense that the culture of the Zulus in South Africa is equal to the culture of the most developed country in the world. This is also considered an indication of the common origin and destiny of humanity in general.

Generally speaking, culture is defined as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group or as the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time that is known as popular culture." Of course, culture is such a broad subject or notion that it is defined in many ways by many scholars. Culture is also defined as "the set of patterns of human activity within a society or social group.

Almost all scholars and researchers do not agree on a single definition of culture. A number of researchers or students maintain that "Culture is how we act, think and behave based on the shared values of our society. It is how we understand symbols from language to hand gestures. It is everywhere and we continually develop and define culture on a daily basis." For some experts, the best definition of culture is "The beliefs, behaviors, values, and forms shared by a particular group of people."

Cultures have their own dynamics and they change through time in accordance with the changing realities of human communities. Cultures change with changes in the economic, social, political, and psychological conditions of human societies. The above definition explains that culture refers to the set of shared beliefs, values, behaviors, and customs that define a group of people. It is also an essential part of human society.

In the modern world, cultures are not confined to national borders. When cultures grow in influence, they tend to spill over to other national territories and people beyond their national borders. And when cultures become too influential and capture the imagination of many people around the borders, they become global cultures. This process usually takes place either naturally and without the influence of internal or external actors or consciously as commercial

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Every country has something to offer the world because cultures and traditions do not exist in isolation from one another

items for export to other countries.

The global commoditization of cultures must be the highest stage of cultural growth and development. As we know, there are many countries around the world that are exporting their cultures and traditions to the rest of the world both as commercial items or as simply as sources of enjoyment. American culture in the 20th century is a good example of such a process.

The American way of life, dressings, and speaking, as expressed in American movies and music have been spreading throughout the world not as a temporary fad but as an object of choice. When we say that the 20th century was the American century we speak not only in terms of military or economic influence but primarily as cultural influence. In other words, this is what we call these days "American soft power".

Is this phenomenon exclusively confined to America? No, Europe is also another global cultural influence. Europe as a continent has its own cultural identities that are the common features of culture shared by individual European nations. We often speak of the popularity of German beer, British sports, and more particularly British football or British education, Italian pasta, or French couture or clothing. These

cultural items are not only confined to local consumption. They are shared by other people outside the European national and cultural borders. They have indeed become important items for export to the world, as people anywhere in the world have become fond of consuming these items.

Every country has something to offer the world because cultures and traditions do not exist in isolation from one another. People who live in a given geographical area are bound to share cultures that are common to a given region. What is geographically referred to as East Africa is a geographical reality stretching from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, with Djibouti in the north and Somalia in the southern tip. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda are also part of this region. More than geography, the people living in this region share cultures, traditions, languages, lifestyles, and history.

The Somalis living in Ethiopia and Djibouti may occupy different national territories, but they share the same cultural and traditional lives as reflected in their foods, beverages, clothing, way of speaking, and language in general. These countries are not culturally homogeneous but diverse. Historically, this process of cultural interpenetration or symbiosis is promoted or encouraged by commerce, warfare, or occupation, or by peaceful means such as voluntary cultural exchanges.

What is African culture? Does Africa have a common culture? The answer to this question is yes. "African culture refers to the life world of African communities encompassing their social structure, ideas, and creative expressions." When we talk about African music, African dressing, African art, or African cinema, we refer to cultural traits specific to the continent and its people in general. Africans have a common culture because they are a people united by their traditions, norms, values and cultures that emphasize, among other things, common day-to-day practice as manifested in their belief systems, ritual practices and preferences.

Over 3000 different ethnic groups are speaking more than 2100 different languages in all of Africa. The people therefore practice a variety religion, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and other traditional belief system following their ethnic or tribal origins. Scholars identify at least six important areas of African cultural manifestation such as language, social practices, moral and ethical principles, forms of expression, capabilities, and habits that are common to Africans everywhere across the continent.

Although most of Africa's cultures are traditional and confined to local consumption, some of them have managed to develop rapidly due to contact with relatively more advanced cultures. The 21st century being a century of accelerated

globalization, African culture, particularly in music and cinema, has spilled over the national borders to reach the global marketplace.

Africa has become an exporter of its music whether this music is produced in Ethiopia, Nigeria or Morocco. Although African music originated from within the continent, it grew and developed following its contacts with other music genres mainly from America. The same can be said about African cinema and African literature which are enjoying global audiences.

It is a well-established fact that Nigerian cinema or the film industry "is the largest in Africa in terms of volume, number of annual films, revenues and popularity." Another feature of Nigerian cinema is that "it is the second largest industry in the world". This makes us proud rather than envious because Nigerian cinema is also African cinema, and we have to learn for it to develop another African cinema in the continent.

On the other hand, Ethiopian cinema, which started a long time ago but stagnated for long decades before it recently gained momentum, is relatively less developed than Nigerian, South African, Egyptian, or Cameroonian cinema if we look at the metrics used for comparison. Ethiopia is, like many African countries, rich not only in its oral traditions but also in its written storytelling because the country developed its own script many centuries ago. Unfortunately, Ethiopian filmmakers have not yet turned to these vast sources of inspiration to produce films based on Ethiopian folk tales or written traditional stories that reflect the wisdom, resilience, struggles, and hopes of its people.

The subject matter of this article is the potential for the commoditization, export, or commercialization of African cultures in the global marketplace. As an example of this process, Ethiopia can be cited as a country that has started to enter the cultural export market with its traditional music and dances, with its rites and rituals, namely its coffee rituals or ceremonies, as well as its food culture, resulting in the spread of its famous injera, which is defined as "a circular, thin, and spongy bread made of teff, the staple grain in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has also started to export its traditional dresses that enjoy high demand among tourists and Ethiopians in the Diaspora. This is an encouraging beginning and a commendable attempt to bring Ethiopian cultural and traditional products to the world. A long journey starts with a single step. With proper attention from all those involved in exploring the possibilities of exporting Ethiopian cultural and traditional practices, there is no reason why Ethiopia will not offer to the world not only coffee but its coffee ceremony that should be registered in UNESCO's list of tangible cultural items worth of a place worthy of global consumption.

Law & Politics

The glamor of Addis

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital has become more than just the political heart of one of Africa's most historically significant countries. Over the past few decades, it has evolved into a major global hub for diplomacy, trade, and development. Home to the African Union's (AU) headquarters and numerous international organizations, Addis Ababa is central to Ethiopia's growing role in global affairs. Simultaneously, the city has undergone a rapid transformation, with new infrastructure projects and urban developments that are reshaping its landscape and boosting its regional and global influence.

In recent years, Ethiopia's increasing participation in major international conferences, combined with its ambitious corridor development projects, has further solidified its place as a pivotal player in the African continent and beyond. The ongoing urban growth of Addis Ababa, alongside its role as a key diplomatic and economic hub, reflects the country's broader vision of modernization, integration, and regional leadership.

Addis Ababa's status as the "diplomatic capital of Africa" is a direct result of its central role in the African Union. The city regularly hosts high-level summits and diplomatic meetings that attract political leaders from across the continent.

The most notable of these is the AU Summit, which brings together African heads of state and government to discuss critical issues like security, economic development and continental integration. The AU's headquarters, housed in a modern complex in the city, symbolizes Africa's aspirations for unity, peace, and sustainable development.

Accordingly, Ethiopia's influence goes beyond the African Union. Over the years, Addis Ababa has been chosen as the venue for major international conferences on climate change, peacekeeping, and trade, drawing attention to Ethiopia's strategic importance in global policymaking. The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), for example, convened in Addis Ababa in 2019, where world leaders, environmentalists, and policy experts gathered to discuss global environmental issues. Such events not only elevate Ethiopia's international profile but also underscore its growing role in global governance.

Furthermore, Addis Ababa is the seat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), an important institution that works on economic policy and development issues across the continent. Hosting these high-profile international events provides Ethiopia with a platform to advocate for African priorities, including the need for greater investment in infrastructure, climate resilience, and conflict resolution.



Lately, the city Successfully Hosts over 30 Int'l Conferences in First Quarter of Fiscal Year

Spokesperson of the Ministry, Ambassador Nebiat Getachew briefed journalists on the latest diplomatic developments, including updates on conference tourism, economic and citizen diplomacy.

Addis Ababa, the vibrant capital of Ethiopia, continues to solidify its position as a prominent hub for conference tourism, Nebiat underscored.

Ethiopia has successfully hosted more than 30 international conferences and meetings in Addis Ababa during the first quarter of this fiscal year, the Spokesperson revealed.

Among the notable events held in the city were the World Without Hunger Conference, the 46th CAF Ordinary General Assembly, and the International Inter-Religious Conference, among others, he elaborated.

Ambassador Nebiat highlighted that these conferences provide a platform for Ethiopia to showcase its potential, with Addis Ababa demonstrating its role as Africa's diplomatic capital by hosting such high-profile international events.

ENA reported that as one of the largest contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping missions, Ethiopia's military and political involvement in peace efforts are a testament to its dedication to regional and global peace. Addis Ababa's role as a base for peace talks between conflicting nations has reinforced its position as a mediator and peacemaker, further elevating the city's diplomatic importance.

This strategic role extends to Ethiopia's involvement aiming to address conflicts on the continent, and its participation in other multilateral initiatives that seek to address the roots of conflict and build long-term peace in East Africa.

While Addis Ababa's diplomatic and

political influence is growing, the city itself is also undergoing a dramatic transformation. The city's rapid urbanization is being driven by a young, growing population.

To accommodate this growth and provide opportunities for economic development, Ethiopia has embarked on an ambitious program of infrastructure improvement and urban development that is reshaping Addis Ababa into a modern, interconnected metropolis.

A key element of Addis Ababa's urban development is its infrastructure expansion, particularly the construction of new corridors designed to improve connectivity. Addis Ababa is seeing significant internal infrastructure upgrades. The expansion of road networks, new gardens, renovated roads and recreational areas, new bridges, and public transport systems are designed to make Addis Ababa a more livable, sustainable city that can support its growing population and economy.

Perhaps one of the most transformative infrastructure projects currently underway in Addis Ababa is the development of its urban corridors, which are designed to integrate various sectors of the economy while enhancing the city's connectivity. These corridors are key to unlocking new economic opportunities in the city.

For example, the Bole-Gelan corridor, Piassa- Arat kilo, and the Lideta-Kirkos corridor are being developed to improve transportation links, reduce traffic congestion, and offer space for new businesses and industries to thrive. Furthermore, the development of these corridors is critical for addressing Ethiopia's long-term urban challenges.

As the city continues to grow, providing affordable housing and job opportunities becomes a priority. The corridor projects include provisions for residential areas, schools, hospitals, and shopping centers,

helping to ensure that the benefits of urban growth are equitably distributed. The ongoing development of Addis Ababa reflects Ethiopia's broader vision of building a more sustainable, resilient urban future that can serve as a model for other African cities.

Ethiopia's efforts to modernize its capital city and enhance its infrastructure are not just about improving the quality of life for its citizens. They are also about positioning Addis Ababa as a bridge between Africa and the rest of the world. As the country continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Africa, Addis Ababa's transformation into a modern, interconnected city underscores Ethiopia's ambitions to become a regional leader in trade, technology, and diplomacy.

The city's growing role as a center for international business and trade is complemented by its status as a key site for global diplomacy. Addis Ababa is not only a hub for African affairs but increasingly a point of convergence for global organizations, multinational corporations, and civil society groups. As more international organizations and businesses look to engage with Africa, Addis Ababa stands ready to serve as the gateway to the continent.

As Ethiopia continues its journey toward modernization, Addis Ababa remains at the forefront of the country's ambitious plans for economic growth and regional integration. The city's evolution into a global diplomatic and economic center, coupled with the ongoing infrastructure and corridor developments, is a testament to Ethiopia's determination to play a leading role in the 21st century. With its expanding role in global diplomacy, peace keeping, and international trade, Addis Ababa is not just the capital of Ethiopia—it is emerging as a key city on the global stage, connecting Africa to the world and driving Ethiopia's future success.

Society



Digital identification card towards revolutionizing service facilitation

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In today's digital world, the need for efficient and secure identification systems is more crucial than ever. With the rapid advancement of technology, traditional paper-based identification cards are becoming obsolete. In Ethiopia, the introduction of digital identification cards sought to revolutionize the way services are facilitated for citizens across the country.

In the past years, the traditional paper-based identification systems were prone to several errors, including fraud activities and mismanagement regarding ownership. However, with the introduction of new digital identification cards, citizens can easily access a wide range of services through online platforms, from applying for government benefits to opening bank accounts, renewing the existing ones and requesting new business licenses, among others.

Owing to this and other similar benefits, the efficiency and convenience offered by digital IDs make it an essential tool for modernizing service delivery.

Moreover, digital IDs are the more secure mechanisms, reducing the risk of identity theft and fraud. They can also store a vast amount of information, making it easier for government agencies and service providers to verify a person's identity quickly. Additionally, digital IDs can be used for various purposes, such as voting, accessing healthcare services, and traveling, streamlining the process for citizens.

Currently, the Ethiopian government is undertaking massive digitalization efforts by prioritizing the sector's contributions to the overall national socio-economic development. Among these, introducing and promoting digital services has given more attention to improving services and creating numerous job opportunities for women and youths.

Regarding this, the National Identification Project and the Addis Ababa Civil Registration and Residency Services Agency (CRRSA) have recently launched a campaign for digital ID registration. The registration drive will be conducted in all

districts and sub-cities of Addis Ababa.

During a joint press statement, the Executive Director of the National Identification Program, Yodahe Zemichael and the Director General of the Addis Ababa Civil Registration and Residency Services Agency, Yonas Alemayehu outlined the goals and scope of the digital ID registration drive.

The initiative is expected to modernize legal identity management through digital identification, Yodahe told local media.

The month-long campaign will take place across all 11 sub-cities and 119 districts of the capital, ensuring comprehensive registration for both residents and non-residents of the capital, he added.

The initiative, he said, is part of Ethiopia's broader digital transformation strategy and aims to streamline identity management across the country.

"Fayda Digital ID system is a key pillar of Ethiopia's Digital Strategy 2025," said Yodahe. "This campaign will enable all residents of Addis Ababa to obtain a secure and verified digital ID, which will enable accessing government services in more efficiently and reliably."

He further emphasized the system's role in

creating a unified identification framework that will enhance interactions between federal and local agencies.

The Fayda Digital ID system will collect biometric data to provide each individual with a unique and verified identification, he said, adding the new system aims to reduce administrative inefficiencies, improve service delivery, and facilitate access to modern, identity-based solutions.

By integrating the digital ID with Addis Ababa's civil registration system, the campaign seeks to digitize life events—from birth to death—ensuring accurate records for legal, administrative, and policy decisions.

Director General of the Addis Ababa Civil Registration and Residency Services Agency, Yonas Alemayehu highlighted the collaboration between the two institutions as essential to reforming Addis Ababa's civil registration processes.

"Through this partnership, we are not only improving the speed and efficiency of our services but also contributing to the city's smart city vision by digitizing identity management," Yonas said.

He added that all necessary preparations have been made to ensure the smooth launch of the campaign at the main office

and its two branches, as well as across all sub-cities and districts.

Residents and non-residents are encouraged to visit the designated registration centers to complete their digital ID registration.

This initiative is expected to significantly enhance Addis Ababa's governance and improve access to essential services for all citizens, marking a new chapter in Ethiopia's digital transformation.

Despite the numerous benefits of digital identification cards, there are also challenges to implementing them in Ethiopia. One of the main issues is ensuring widespread access to digital IDs, especially in rural areas where internet connectivity may be limited. To address this, the government is expected to explore other mechanisms to reach remote locations and educate citizens regarding the benefits of digital IDs.

So far, as technology continues to advance, it is possible to see more innovative uses for digital IDs, such as biometric authentication technology. The adoption of digital IDs will also pave the way for a more connected and efficient society, benefiting both citizens and the government. It is important for Ethiopia to continue investing in digital infrastructure and cyber-security to ensure the widespread adoption of digital identification cards.

What is more, digital IDs will immensely contribute to citizens to access government services online, eliminating the need for in-person visits to government offices. This not only averts bureaucratic processes and the possibility of corruption in service delivery; but also saves time and resources. Furthermore, digital IDs can improve transparency and accountability in government processes, leading to better outcomes for citizens.

In sum, digital identification cards are on the way to improving service facilitation in Ethiopia by providing a secure, efficient and convenient way for citizens to access a wide range of services. With the right infrastructure and policies in place, digital IDs have the potential to transform the way government services are delivered and improve the lives of Ethiopians across the country. It is time for Ethiopia to embrace the digital revolution and reap the benefits of modern identification systems.



International News

East Africa: Rwanda discharges last Marburg patient

Rwanda has discharged its final patient from the Marburg virus treatment unit, marking a critical milestone in the country's fight against the deadly virus.

In a social media update, the World Health Organization (WHO) African Region announced that with no new confirmed cases reported since October 30, Rwanda has now initiated the mandatory 42-day countdown required to officially declare the end of the outbreak.

Marburg virus disease, a highly infectious illness similar to Ebola, presents significant public health challenges due to its high fatality rate and ease of transmission through bodily fluids.

Rwanda's response to the outbreak has been swift and comprehensive, including isolation and treatment measures, community awareness campaigns, and rigorous contact tracing efforts to contain the spread.

Health authorities in Rwanda remain vigilant and continue monitoring for any potential cases to ensure the outbreak is fully contained.

During the 42-day period, health teams will maintain strict surveillance, and community health workers will continue engaging with local populations to detect and report any signs of the virus.

WHO commended Rwanda's health response and collaboration with regional



and international partners, a coordinated effort that has played a key role in managing the outbreak.

If no new cases arise during this period, Rwanda is set to officially declare an end to the Marburg outbreak, reinforcing

the country's preparedness in managing infectious disease threats.

Source: Nile Post

Africa: Measles cases surge worldwide, infecting 10.3 million people in 2023

Atlanta / Geneva — Worldwide, there were an estimated 10.3 million cases of measles in 2023, a 20% increase from 2022, according to new estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Inadequate immunization coverage globally is driving the surge in cases.

Measles is preventable with two doses of measles vaccine; yet more than 22 million children missed their first dose of measles vaccine in 2023. Globally, an estimated 83% of children received their first dose of measles vaccine last year, while only 74% received the recommended second dose.

Coverage of 95% or greater of two doses of measles vaccine is needed in each country and community to prevent outbreaks and protect populations from one of the world's most contagious human viruses.

"Measles vaccine has saved more lives than any other vaccine in the past 50 years," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "To save even more lives and stop this deadly virus from harming

the most vulnerable, we must invest in immunization for every person, no matter where they live."

"The number of measles infections is rising around the globe, endangering lives and health," CDC Director Mandy Cohen said. "The measles vaccine is our best protection against the virus, and we must continue to invest in efforts to increase access."

As a result of global gaps in vaccination coverage, 57 countries experienced large or disruptive measles outbreaks in 2023, affecting all regions except the Americas, and representing a nearly 60% increase from 36 countries in the previous year. The WHO African, Eastern Mediterranean, European, South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions experienced a substantial upsurge in cases. Nearly half of all large and disruptive outbreaks occurred in the African region.

An unacceptable death toll due to rising measles cases

The new data show that an estimated 107,500 people, mostly children younger than 5 years of age, died due to measles in

2023. Although this is an 8% decrease from the previous year, far too many children are still dying from this preventable disease. This slight reduction in deaths was mainly because the surge in cases occurred in countries and regions where children with measles are less likely to die, due to better nutritional status and access to health services.

Even when people survive measles, serious health effects can occur, some of which are lifelong. Infants and young children are at greatest risk of serious complications from the disease, which include blindness, pneumonia, and encephalitis (an infection causing brain swelling and potentially brain damage).

As measles cases surge and outbreaks increase, the world's elimination goal, as laid out in Immunization Agenda 2030, is under threat. Worldwide, 82 countries had achieved or maintained measles elimination at end of 2023. Just this week, Brazil was reverified as having eliminated measles, making the WHO Americas Region once

again free of endemic measles. With the exception of the African Region, at least 1 country in all WHO regions has eliminated the disease.

Urgent and targeted efforts by countries and partners, particularly in the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions, and in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings, are needed to vaccinate all children fully with two doses of measles vaccine. This requires achieving and maintaining high-performing routine immunization programmes and delivering high-quality, high-coverage campaigns when those programmes are not yet sufficient to protect every child.

Countries and global immunization partners must also strengthen disease surveillance, including the Global Measles Rubella Laboratory Network (GMRLN). Strong disease surveillance is critical to optimizing immunization programmes and detecting and responding rapidly to measles outbreaks in order to mitigate their size and impact.

Source: WHO

Verbatim and Caption

The call to increase climate funding continues!

This week, world leaders, policy makers and environment activists were gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan to attend the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The theme for COP29 was “In Solidarity for a Green World” and the call to increase climate financing remains top agenda of the summit.

Global support essential to increase climate resilient projects: *President Taye*

Ethiopia is implementing meaningful environmental conservation and sustainable development projects to combat climate change. Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative is among these national measures in addressing impacts of climate change.

Ethiopia's proactive measures are bringing meaningful outcomes in protecting and nurturing natural resources. International collaboration and support for such national environmental conservation efforts is essential to ensure the success and sustainability of climate resilient projects.

Global action urgent to limit warming to 1.5°C: *President Taye*

The world has to keep its promise of the Paris Agreement, agreed to limit global warming to less than 1.5°C. Global action is crucial to cap warming at 1.5°C. Ethiopia is committed to the Paris Agreement and is taking proactive disaster preparedness.

President Taye Atske Selassie, FDRE President said at COP29 in Baku



Climate Finance is not charity: UN Chief



António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General at the COP29

We are in the final countdown to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. And time is not on our side. Due to climate change, natural disasters are worsening and no country is spared. Climate emergency is a story of avoidable injustice. The rich cause the problem and the poor pay the highest price.

Now more than ever finance promises must be kept. Developed countries must race the clock to double adaptation finance to at least \$40 billion a year by 2025. Climate finance is not charity. It's an investment. Climate action is not optional. It's an imperative. Both are indispensable for a prosperous future for every nation on Earth.

Addressing climate crisis requires equity, historical responsibility: *PM Abiy*

Addressing the climate crisis requires more than just financial targets; it demands equity, common but differentiated responsibility and historical accountability. Clear climate finance definitions are essential to track progress, with new goals prioritizing vulnerable regions, especially least developed countries like those in Africa. Ethiopia is advancing its Paris Agreement and COP28 commitments through three initiatives, the Green Legacy initiative, which has increased forest coverage by 6% with 40 billion seedlings in six years, an irrigated wheat program that transformed a grain deficit into surplus by 2025 and climate-smart



urban projects creating sustainable, greener cities with renewable energy, including electric vehicles.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (PhD) message in connection with COP29

Now is the time in tackling climate crisis: UN Climate Change Executive Secretary

If at least two thirds of the world's nations cannot afford to cut emissions quickly, then every nation pays a brutal price. If nations can't build resilience into supply chains, the entire global economy will be brought to its knees. No country is immune.

We must agree a new global climate finance goal. An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every single nation, including the largest and wealthiest.

But it's not enough to just agree on a goal. We must work harder to reform the global financial system. We mustn't let 1.5 slip out of reach. And even as temperatures rise, the implementation of our agreements must claw them back.

Simon Stiell, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary at COP29 Opening



Boosting climate financing key to address Africa's escalating climate challenges: UNECA

Increasing climate financing and global cooperation is an urgent need to address Africa's escalating climate challenges. Global partnership should match Africa's commitment to combating climate change with actionable support.

In Africa, nations are losing up to 5% of their GDP annually due to climate related disruptions. Africa, despite its minimal contribution to global emissions, is committed to doing its

part. However, we call upon global partners to match this commitment with actionable support, because delaying increases risks for us all. Africa's climate financing needs, estimated at USD 1.3 trillion.

Claver Gatete, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Executive Secretary