

Ethiopia, Russia strengthen strategic ties ahead of Russia-Africa Forum

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gedion Timothewos (PhD), held productive talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on 8 November 2024, focusing on expanding bilateral cooperation and addressing key regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The discussions, held ahead of the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum in Sochi (9-10 November 2024), highlighted both countries' commitment to deepening their longstanding relationship. The ministers agreed to explore untapped potential in their economic ties and enhance collaboration in trade, energy, agriculture, and security.

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.

Wegagen Bank reports 2.2 bln Birr profit for 2023/2024

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Wegagen Bank announced a remarkable performance for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, posting a record profit before tax of 2.2 billion Birr, a significant 86% increase compared to the previous year's 1.2 billion Birr.

The bank's CEO, Aklilu Wubet (PhD), shared the impressive results during the 31st ordinary and 15th extraordinary shareholders' general assembly held in Hilton Addis Hotel yesterday. The after-tax profit for the fiscal year reached 1.6 billion Birr.

The bank also reported a total revenue of 9.8 billion Birr for 2023/2024, marking a 40% growth from the previous year's 7 billion Birr. This growth amounted to an increase of 2.8 billion Birr. Wegagen Bank's total deposits reached 52 billion Birr as of June 30, 2024, and its total assets grew to 65.7 billion Birr.

In terms of capital, the bank's total capital increased by 33% to reach 9.2 billion Birr, up from 6.9 billion Birr the previous year. Its paid-up capital grew by 27%, reaching 5.1 billion Birr.

Wegagen Bank also expanded its physical presence with the opening of 26 new branches across Ethiopia, bringing the total number of branches to 436 by June 30, 2024. The bank emphasized the integration of digital banking to complement its growth.

Looking ahead, Aklilu outlined plans to increase the bank's paid-up capital to 20 billion Birr over the next five years. Furthermore, the bank continued to fulfill its corporate social responsibility by contributing 75 million Birr to various community development initiatives.

Ethiopia boosts coffee quality, productivity with modern technologies

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Government officials have announced significant strides in modernizing Ethiopia's coffee production to enhance quality, traceability, and efficiency.

In collaboration with partners, the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has provided four coffee-growing states and 19 districts with essential modern tools, including electronic drilling equipment, pruning tools, and smartphones for geo-spatial data collection.

Takele Hailmariam, Coffee Development and Quality Director at the Oromia Agriculture Bureau, emphasized that the introduction of modern coffee cultivation equipment is crucial for improving production while addressing ongoing quality challenges. For years, Ethiopian coffee farmers have relied on traditional methods, which limited the sector's potential to deliver maximum benefits. The new technologies will help solve these issues while saving time, labor, and money for farmers.

Takele noted that Oromia, responsible for producing 70% of Ethiopia's coffee, remains in need of more modern tools to



Takele Hailmariam

boost both productivity and output. Recent advancements have already shown results, with coffee yields increasing to nine quintals per hectare, up from 6.5 quintals in previous years.

Asrat Gebremariam, Head of South Ethiopia State Forest Environmental Protection and Climate Change Bureau, noted that coffee is a major contributor to the state's GDP. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has also been supporting six coffee-growing districts in the state. The new tools provided by the ECTA are seen as vital for improving post-harvest management and



Asrat Gebremariam

minimizing wastage, while ensuring quality and traceability.

South Ethiopia, which produces high-quality coffee, covers 50% of the state's forest area and complies with deforestation-free coffee standards of the European Union. With over 41 coffee-growing districts, the state is an essential part of Ethiopia's coffee industry.

Last fiscal year, Ethiopia earned approximately 1.43 billion USD from coffee exports, and efforts are underway to further increase both production and revenue from this vital cash crop.



Airbus keen to strengthen partnership with *Ethiopian*

ADDIS ABABA - Airbus Company has expressed its determination to boost its partnerships with the Ethiopian Airlines Group.

President of Airbus International Wouter van Wersch reaffirmed the company's commitment to long-standing partnership with Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's leading airline.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, the president said that Ethiopian Airlines recently made history by becoming the first African carrier to receive the advanced A350-1000 aircraft from Airbus. "This latest addition to the airline's fleet underscores its

dedication to providing cutting-edge travel experiences," he added.

The president highlighted the significance of this delivery, stating, "The A350-1000 is Airbus' flagship aircraft, and we are proud to partner with Ethiopian Airlines to bring this state-of-the-art technology to Africa, which will enable the airline to further enhance its operations, expand its network, and solidify its position as a global aviation leader."

Beyond the A350-1000, Ethiopian Airlines has an additional 11 A350-900 aircraft on order, demonstrating its continued trust in Airbus products. The airline's ambitious

fleet expansion plan, which includes aircraft from both Airbus and Boeing, positions it for sustained growth and market dominance.

Airbus, a global aviation giant, is set to deliver 770 aircraft to airlines worldwide in 2024 alone. This significant milestone underscores the company's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the aviation industry.

Ethiopian Airlines CEO Mesfin Tasew has announced that the airline has 123 aircraft on order from both Airbus and Boeing. These aircraft are scheduled to be delivered within the next six years.

Editorial

Opinion

Ethiopian—rising high in the aviation sky

Ethiopian Airlines, or Ethiopian, is soaring high above the aviation industry and crisscrossing the global horizon. It is a source of pride to citizens and the country, not to mention the prestige it lends to the continent and colored people. Ethiopian, which was there before the continent rid itself of colonization, ranks first in Africa and 36th among the 100 shortlisted Airlines worldwide.

Since its inception 78 years ago, it has been a bearer of the tricolor on the global horizon. It is an airline that emerged with flying colors in the red-hot aviation industry, surmounting roadblocks of every kind.

The pioneer airline seen as the epitome of Ethiopians' all-rounded caliber in the global backdrop is composed of a world-famous flying school, a standard aircraft technicians training center, a gigantic hotel, and a catering center that accommodates delicacies and beverages needed for flight services. Transporting passengers and ferrying goods to a multitude of destinations in the world, continent and inland, it has won worldwide acclaim. Marked with Ethiopians' inherent cordiality it is a sought-after airline in the world. On grounds of these virtues, it has been bagging numerous accolades across the globe.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all Airlines were crippled. In this period of trial, exercising all the necessary care and turning a calamity into an opportunity, Ethiopian was delivering all necessary medicinal and pharmaceutical packages to victims and hospitals rendering a timely transportation service. As the saying goes "A friend in need is a friend indeed," in so doing, it has further worked its way into the hearts of its clients adding allurements and privilege-reflecting feathers to its cap.

Keeping abreast with modern aviation technology and scaling up its competency from time to time, it has maintained its doable tempo in the aviation industry for a long time. It is also at the forefront when it comes to ordering cutting-edge planes and conversing well with them fast. Even before rivals with big names take the initiative it embraces the latest technologies. What other example could be cited than the Airbus A 350-1000 *Ethiopian* purchased recently? The Airbus is believed to bolster Ethiopian's leading role in the aviation industry.

The ultra-modern technologies the Airbus is equipped with to cater to all the demands of clients, its added comfort, and its environment-friendliness on top of its fuel-saving nature are factors that buttress Ethiopian's role of a victor. The introduction of the plane is also a warrant to the furtherance of Africa's aviation industry. It reinforces Ethiopian Airlines' effort of hitting all targets it aimed at attaining by 2035. It also showcases the airline's conviction to step up the level of services it gives to its clients. Given its current posture, it is not hard to prognosis that it will double the gap between itself and the one tagging it in the continental rank list.

When the construction of the international airport that could accommodate from 100 to 130 million passengers annually sees the day's light *Ethiopian* will not only be the biggest airline in Africa but also one with a mammoth airport in the continent.

The new facet of Ethiopian is a harbinger to the burgeoning of Ethiopia's economy. Furthermore, it paves the strategic path the country mounted to crystalize prosperity. It is another milestone in the history of the towering airlines.

True to *Ethiopian*, Ethiopians with a spirit of ones and love, must work better than their best to allow the country surge ahead in the avenue of affluence getting debilitating poverty behind their back. The success story must be repeated in all spheres of endeavors.

Collaboration can end hunger

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

At the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), global leaders endorsed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) in July 2015 during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This agenda serves as a vital framework for the execution of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2015 to 2030.

The SDGs encompass 17 global objectives that must be fulfilled by 2030 to address various global challenges and foster sustainable development. Specifically, SDG Goal 2, titled "Zero Hunger," aims to eliminate hunger, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agricultural practices by 2030. The realization of Zero Hunger is essential not only for enhancing human health and well-being but also for achieving broader objectives such as poverty alleviation, economic advancement, and environmental sustainability.

In a similar vein, the World Without Hunger Conference is an annual gathering that champions the cause of food security. This year's conference took place in Addis Ababa and concentrated on addressing the issues of food security and global hunger. The event aims to unite stakeholders from various sectors, including government entities, non-governmental organizations, international bodies, and others, to explore strategies for eradicating hunger and ensuring food security for all. Key discussions include making agricultural practices resilient to climate change and environmentally sustainable, as well as enhancing productivity.

Despite ongoing efforts to eradicate hunger and secure food availability through initiatives like the World Without Hunger Conference and SDG Goal 2, it is imperative to evaluate additional measures necessary to achieve the SDG vision and eliminate hunger worldwide, particularly in the IGAD region. What insights or effective practices can countries adopt from one another to combat hunger in their respective areas? To realize the SDGs and uphold food security, collaboration among nations, governments, NGOs, international organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders is essential. Such cooperation enables the pooling of resources and expertise.

Coordinating initiatives and developmental projects is essential for maximizing funding from various sources, enabling the execution of larger-scale projects that individual nations might find challenging to undertake. Additionally, fostering collaborative efforts is vital for the creation of integrated policies that consider the multifaceted aspects of food systems, ensuring that activities are synergistic rather than fragmented.

A significant aspect of achieving regional food security involves the sharing and effective utilization of human and natural resources among nations. The region is rich in water resources, arable land, and labor. Consequently, the collaborative use of these natural resources can significantly contribute to alleviating hunger and enhancing food security.

Beyond resource sharing, countries can also develop joint infrastructure projects, such as dams or irrigation systems, to improve water accessibility for agriculture, especially in areas prone to drought. Addressing the impacts of climate change through collective action is another vital measure for countries in the IGAD region. Food scarcity is a prevalent issue, exacerbated by frequent droughts. To mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, it is imperative to unite and collaborate.

Reducing environmental risks is essential to prevent long-term damage and to adapt to climate change. Tackling climate change is crucial for addressing the underlying causes of drought and fostering sustainable development that benefits individuals, the environment, and economic prosperity.

Moreover, countries must collaborate to conserve biodiversity, as establishing cross-border conservation initiatives is critical for preserving shared habitats and biodiversity, which are essential for agricultural productivity. Joint efforts can facilitate the sustainable harvesting of wild resources while promoting agro-biodiversity. Sharing best practices and valuable lessons are an important part of reaching zero hunger goals. Ethiopia, for example, can share its initiatives and successes.

The nation has showcased its dedication to addressing hunger and ensuring food security through the Green Legacy Initiative. Its national economic reforms are aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity, cultivating drought-resistant crops, and annually planting trees. Since 2019, the country has successfully planted over 40 billion trees.

Additionally, the government launched the "Ye Yelemat Tirufat" development campaign, which advocates for nutritional abundance. This initiative commenced with the production of milk, eggs, chicken, and honey, later expanding to include a wider range of products based on initial outcomes.

Moreover, the "Made in Ethiopia" strategy integrates agro-industrial park services as centers for job creation, income generation for farmers, and academic advancement, thereby bolstering Ethiopia's presence in the global agricultural market. Hunger remains a pervasive issue.

Achieving Zero Hunger is vital not only for individual health and well-being but also for broader goals related to poverty reduction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. Consequently, various sectors, including agriculture, health, education, and social protection, must collaborate effectively to realize this objective.

Furthermore, a coordinated and persistent global response is essential. Collective initiatives, such as the establishment of global funds for food security, reliable financial resources, climate-resilient infrastructure, advanced agricultural technologies, and robust food systems capable of withstanding disasters, are critical. This funding will be particularly important for regions most vulnerable to food insecurity.

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News

Unified African passport: A bold call for continental integration

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Amid the growing demand for continental integration, several African scholars have urged governments to take decisive steps toward allowing African citizens to use a single passport. This proposal was reignited during the seventh edition of The Africa We Want Parliament 2024, held this week at the African Union (AU) headquarters.

Decades after calls for unified economic and trade platforms, the African Union is now advancing the implementation of intra-continental free trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement. While the AfCFTA forms a foundation for economic integration, scholars advocating for a single passport argue that greater political commitment is essential to fully realize ambitious initiatives such as AfCFTA and other mutual development plans.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ambassador Young Piero, Africa Coordinator and Director of Parliament Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Joint Session at the AU, emphasized that economic freedom cannot be achieved without a shared agenda and integrated policies that enable the free movement of African citizens across the continent.

“We talk about economic freedom, but nations still uphold laws and policies that hinder Africa’s development. Import duties for Africans should be abolished, and the free movement of goods, commodities, and people must be prioritized,” he said.

According to Ambassador Piero, Africa needs a comprehensive blueprint for integrated policies that favor individuals, companies, investors, and industrialization while promoting the free movement of people. Speaking on the need for a single passport, he stated: “We can create an integrated Africa. The AfCFTA, for example, is an ambitious agenda, but the free movement of people within Africa remains restricted.”

He stressed that regardless of the political systems in individual countries, collective efforts are essential to build a better future for the continent. “A ‘mine-first’ mentality only benefits one country, not the entire continent. Africa must prioritize unity and shared

progress.”

Ambassador Piero pointed out that while the ideal time to implement such policies was 50 years ago, the present is the next best opportunity. “Africans, particularly the youth, cannot wait any longer. The continent’s current state is unacceptable because we are not acting or taking responsibility,” he said.

He called on African youth to take responsibility for shaping the continent’s destiny. “Africans must work together with respect and unity. The AU’s Agenda 2063 will remain unrealized unless citizens actively contribute to this vision. Citizens must commit to building functional systems, governments, policies, and a unified continent.”

He also emphasized that without free human mobility, the vision of Agenda 2063 cannot progress. “Ten years of Agenda 2063 have already passed. It’s time to stand on our feet and harness the power of collaboration. A single passport is critical, even if it starts regionally with Eastern, Western, and Southern African passports as intermediate steps.”

Bernard Kasekete (PhD), CEO of GOHORI Resort in Zimbabwe and recipient of the African Union’s Young Ambassador of Africa award, echoed similar sentiments. He highlighted the critical role of youth in shaping Africa’s future and urged them to embrace entrepreneurship and resource utilization.

“Africa is endowed with abundant natural resources. The younger generation must seize these opportunities. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the government is empowering youth in agriculture and encouraging them to contribute to nation-building. Young people are beginning to take control of resources,” he noted.

Kasekete also stressed the importance of changing young Africans’ perceptions, urging them to leverage their capacity and build their own legacies. “The youth must take ownership of Africa’s resources. We cannot wait for others to act for us. It is time to step forward and lead.”

While key sectors such as mining, farming, and entrepreneurship remain underdeveloped, Kasekete concluded that the youth bear the greatest responsibility for addressing these gaps and forging a prosperous future for the continent.

Ethiopia to deploy hundreds...

Ethiopian Labor Market Information System (LMIS), a platform designed to facilitate employment placements abroad.

Captain Abera Lemi, the Owner and CEO of NAC, praised the institution for its role in producing qualified, market-oriented professionals. “NAC has been committed to providing education that meets the growing demand for skilled human resources in critical sectors such as aviation, hospitality, tourism, and business,” he said. “The college continues to produce experts who are contributing significantly to the country’s development.”

Captain Abera emphasized that NAC’s educational programs are designed to address both the domestic and global demand for skilled professionals. The college has made considerable strides in

improving the quality of its education, with an eye on enhancing training fields and educational offerings.

NAC is also working towards becoming a national university, as stated by the college’s president, Prof. Derbew Belew. “We are focused on providing high-quality education that directly meets market demands, and our expansion into new training areas reflects our commitment to fulfilling the country’s growing need for skilled labor force,” he added.

The partnership between NAC and the government reflects a shared vision to enhance Ethiopia’s workforce, improve education quality, and tap into international job markets, which is expected to play a crucial role in the country’s economic development.

Trump’s second term...

implications for the direction of U.S. relations with the continent, particularly with countries like Ethiopia, and has analysts searching for historical precedents.

Zemedeneh Negatu, Ethiopian-American Global Chairman of the Fairfax Africa Fund, commented on Trump’s second term, noting that it could be a continuation of his first-term policies, with some changes expected due to his expanded mandate. He pointed out that, regardless of whether the U.S. is under a Democratic or Republican administration, Africa has traditionally been a low priority in U.S. foreign policy, largely due to the economic focus of U.S. national interests. The bilateral trade between the U.S. and Africa constitutes only about 1% of U.S. global trade, which has led to Africa being overlooked in favor of more economically strategic regions.

Despite this, Zemedeneh suggested that Trump may shift focus in his second term, moving from aid to investment. He noted that while the U.S. has historically been generous with aid, it has had limited impact on Africa’s overall development. Instead, Trump could prioritize engaging Africa in a more meaningful way by fostering economic partnerships through investment.

When discussing the future of the U.S.-Africa summit, Zemedeneh expressed doubt that the U.S. would engage with all African nations on an equal level. Instead, he predicted that the U.S. would likely focus its attention on select countries that hold greater geopolitical or economic significance. He also emphasized the growing importance of Africa in global geopolitics, as the continent increasingly becomes a battleground for influence between the West and emerging



Zemedeneh Negatu

powers like China and Russia.

The recent BRICS summit in Russia, where South Africa, Ethiopia, and Egypt were involved, highlighted the rising influence of non-Western powers in Africa. The discussions around South-South cooperation and de-dollarization, along with the potential to bypass systems like SWIFT, indicate a shift in Africa’s geopolitical alliances. For the U.S., this means that engagement with Africa may no longer be a blanket approach but rather a selective one, focusing on key nations with strategic roles in the global economy.

He also anticipated that Trump’s administration would likely move away from promoting certain controversial issues in Africa, such as cultural and ideological matters. Instead, he expected the U.S. to focus more on pragmatic and mutually beneficial economic engagements, addressing the continent’s growth potential and strategic importance.

In summary, Trump’s second term could herald a shift in U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, with a greater emphasis on investment over aid, and a more selective approach to engagement based on geopolitical considerations.

AfCFTA to unite Africa’s...

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

Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, Kassahun Gofe (PhD), emphasized that the AfCFTA is a vital tool for boosting investment, creating jobs, fostering economic growth, and expanding value chains across Africa.

Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, noted that the acceleration of AfCFTA implementation at the national level remains a key focus. He pointed to the inclusion of the private sector, youth, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as the promotion of industrial development as central goals for the future.

The AfCFTA has made significant progress, especially with the adoption of two key protocols: one focused on women and youth in trade, and the other on digital trade. Mene stressed the need for intensified efforts to accelerate industrial development

and improve Africa’s productive capacity to foster value-added trade.

Infrastructure development and the expansion of intra-Africa trade remain critical areas of focus. To this end, AfCFTA is collaborating with the African Bank and the African Development Bank, with the Pan African Payment and Settlement System now fully operational, reducing currency conversion costs and simplifying cross-border trade.

Looking ahead, Mene announced that the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund, designed to assist member states in adapting to the agreement and mitigating potential revenue losses from reduced customs duties, is set to begin disbursements in early 2025. The council has already mobilized over 1 billion USD and is working towards a target of 10 billion USD to capitalize the fund and support Africa’s industrial development.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the AfCFTA Council and the African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) institution to further strengthen the continent’s trade infrastructure.

Opinion

The domino effects of Egypt's disastrous moves in the Horn of Africa

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Apart from delving the Horn of Africa into the unexplored realms, Egypt's backseat driving and deeds against the law that have been going behind closed doors and behind the scenes in Somalia are a hazard to regional stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Taking seriously the domino effects of Egypt's blunderous moves into account, the wider international community should play their part without batting an eye before the entire situation in the Horn of Africa ends up going from the frying pan into the fire.

It is widely acknowledged that since the dawn of history, Egypt has not ever contributed to ensure stability and peace in conflict affected and war torn areas. In actual fact, Egypt's history in black and white demonstrates this circumstance on the ground and concert reality.

Under the pretense of a broad range of barefaced lies, Egypt has been directly or indirectly bending over backwards to interfere in the internal affairs of Ethiopia though all their efforts turned out to be a wild goose chase.

Since the laying of the corner for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Egypt has been making every possible effort to drag the promising moves of the country in a diverse range of ways and in a number of respects.

Although the country encountered challenges following the construction of the flagship dam, all their endeavors went for nothing due to the federal government and the people of Ethiopia's commitment and determination.

In favor of Egypt's illegal move, the Arab League has been over and over again releasing a broad range of biased statements that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground on the topic of the dam.

In a thought-provoking interview with the Ethiopian News Agency, a prominent scholar, Yakob Arsano, who also represented Ethiopia on several international negotiations, emphasized the importance of strengthening border security and fostering regional partnerships to safeguard against potential threats, according to ENA.

The scholar highlighted Egypt's involvement in Somalia as a potentially destabilizing force in Northeast Africa, urging those nations there to critically examine it.

According to Yakob, Egypt's presence is possibly motivated by self-interest, particularly its desire to control the Nile River, rather than any genuine intent to support peace in Somalia.

"Egypt has not shown a reliable record in combating terrorism, even within its own borders," Yakob observed. He argued that

Egypt's influence in Somalia is possibly part of a broader strategy to weaken Ethiopia, with the Nile River at the center of its agenda.

Following the current escalation in the region, Ethiopia warned that such maneuvers of actors from outside the Horn of Africa region undermine efforts in eliminating terrorist groups that are causing chaos and mayhem on the people of the region.

Particularly, Ethiopia urged Egypt as a downstream country to choose the path of negotiation and international law as well as reorient its colonial-based policy on the Abbay (Nile River).

Egypt's presence in Somalia could create lasting repercussions for the region. And he warned that this irresponsible act might be unfolding in Somalia.

If Egypt fails to establish control, he cautioned, abandoned weapons could fall into the hands of terrorist groups, posing immediate threats to both Somalia and Ethiopia.

In a similar way, on the heels of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland, the Arab League and Egypt expressed their commitment to supporting Somalia and back the region into a corner.

It is true that for years Somalia has been battling with terrorist networks housing themselves in the Horn of Africa for the most part in Somalia. To everyone's dismay, Egypt has not ever made an effort to fight the radical factions that has been working around the clock to put between the devil and the deep sea and between a rock and a hard place.

Regarding the evil deeds of the Arab League and Egypt wicked deeds, various scholars have been expressing their feelings in a number of respects and in a variety of ways.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Trans-boundary River Senior Advisor and Trilateral Negotiation Technical Committee Chair Gedion Asfaw (Eng.) recently stated that Egypt's approach in the Abbay Dam contradicts the continental motto of seeking African solutions to African predicaments.

"The construction of the dam is complying with the 2015 Declaration of Principles (DoP) signed among the three countries namely Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt in Khartoum. Nile is found in Africa and the dam is an African project but Egypt keeps politicizing the issue and attempted to internationalize the matter by dragging the Arab League, which has no mandate to convey in the subject."

Attempting to take the matter out of Africa hampers the AU's aspiration of settling contentious issue amicably. Such kind of move is not constructive for Egypt and negotiation is the only way to reach a lasting solution.

Asking support from third parties, which they don't contribute share for the water is



Egypt's sending arms to Somalia has an adverse impact on region's peace and security

not justifiable measure and Egypt's usual allegation of the Abay Dam brings harm to it is proven unscientific and incorrect in the past three successful fillings.

There is no gainsaying the fact that since time immemorial Ethiopia has been moving heaven and earth with the object of ensuring peace and tranquility in the length and breadth of the Horn of Africa fighting with terrorist networks.

There is broad agreement that Ethiopia has been working around the clock to make the region a safe haven for the inhabitants of the region and bolster regional integration.

It is common knowledge that Ethiopia has made sacrifices for restoring peace and tranquility in Somalia. The country has been fighting against terrorists housing themselves in the length and breadth of the Horn of Africa region in the shortest possible time.

It is believed that Egypt's unholy marriage does not enable the Horn of Africa region to get back on the right track except taking the region from a lesser evil to a greater one and from one disaster one another. As long as the interest of Egypt in Somalia is not to maintain peace in Somalia but to throw the region in at the deep end, the wider international community should stand against this evil deed.

Fundamentally, the placement of Egyptian soldiers as peacekeepers is not a direct threat to Ethiopia, but it requires special attention and preparedness. The country has to concentrate on augmenting its growth while hunting a careful tactic towards its security in the volatile region.

Professor Yacob Arsano in the recent past told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the League has not registered a single success in protecting member states' stability in its over 78 years of existence.

"Having 22 member states, including Sudan, Somalia, and Djibouti, the League has been dominated by Egypt, and the others have no place beyond participating in the annual meeting. "As a manifestation

of the League's inability, it could be nothing important when Iraq and Libya entered into state collapse."

The Arab League is an organization that turned a blind eye and deaf ear to the crisis in its member states and it would make nothing impactful other than recapping the crisis. Surprisingly, the League holds meetings and releases statements on every issue that Egypt considers would harm its greedy interests.

Making use of the League as a tool, Egypt is trying to compensate for its failure in the Abbay Dam negotiation and to revenge Ethiopia which succeeded in establishing the Nile Basin Initiative, the scholar emphasized.

Ethiopia expressed its concern over the expanding militarization of Egypt into the Horn of Africa (HoA) could help terrorist Al-Shabaab to recuperate from armament shortage.

No matter how hard they work to destabilize the Horn of Africa, making use of a diverse set of treacheries, they have been time and again failing to make their dreams become a reality.

As a matter of fact, Egypt has been working around the clock to utilize the colonial era pact with a view to dominating the water of the Nile River. It is certain that Ethiopia is widely known for respecting worldwide guidelines, attaching due emphasis to equitable and reasonable use of its own natural resources.

Peoples of the Horn of Africa should work in close collaboration with the intention of ensuring lasting peace in every nook and cranny of the region. In this way, achieving the desired goal will be as easy as falling off a log.

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

Business & Economy

Macroeconomic reform premium

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that Ethiopia has embarked on full implementation of macroeconomic reform policy, and in this recently commenced game-changing policy, the government has been implementing numerous economic reforms to address longstanding structural problems, including debt burden, inflation, unemployment, and low productivity following the political change that ushered in 2018.

Of late, *The Ethiopian Herald* approached Taddese Gobena, an economist graduated from Civil Service University, to have a professional opinion about the recent reform, centering the achievements, limitations, the procedural undertakings, and the way forward to make the economic progress sustainable.

He said, “The first phase of the Home-Grown Economic Reform Program, which was introduced in 2019, included policy ideas from macro-financial to structural and sectoral facets and has come up with meaningful changes. Through this initiative, Ethiopia has achieved epoch-making economic objectives, correcting imbalances, alleviating debt, and expanding growth sources, although there are areas that need further reform undertakings.”

As to him, the rapid growth will be sustained through stepping up efforts to finalize ongoing public investment projects; increasing private sector investment facilitated by the reform agenda are balancing and diversifying the sources of growth. The prudent monetary policy will help the nation help control inflation, ensure debt sustainability thereby supporting the dependable growth.

According to Taddese, the key pillars of the Homegrown Economic Reform Program, the second phase of the country’s economic transformation efforts including establishing a modern macroeconomic policy framework to ensure stability and resilience as well as boosting competitiveness by improving the investment and trade environment, expanding productive capacity and productivity across sectors, enhancing public sector capabilities for efficient service delivery.

He further stated that the comprehensive reform agenda will enable the country to achieve high and stable economic growth, maintain single-digit inflation, and build a globally competitive economic system, and the reform measures also target a range of issues, including foreign exchange distortions, financial sector strengthening, inflation control, tax revenue mobilization, and improving the business climate.

The government has secured significant development financing to support the implementation of the reform by laying the foundation for strong, private sector-led, inclusive growth and job creation, he added.

“It is also obvious that there are some negative impacts in relation to the macroeconomic reform, but to mitigate any short-term negative impacts, the government has pledged to enhance social safety nets and provide subsidies for low-income workers and fuel prices. Though the macroeconomic reform program will be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation, there is the government’s readiness to make timely policy adjustments, and transparency and stakeholder engagement will be key priorities throughout the process. The bold move is a critical moment for Ethiopia’s economic transformation with decisive leadership and effective implementation, in-deed,” Taddese underlined.



The government has to be committed enough to sustain rapid economic growth, building a resilient and diversified middle-income-level economy achieved through raising agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers, diversifying technological upgrading and innovation expansion, booming inclusive and sustainable industrialization, as well as bolstering a comprehensive digital economy, he added.

Besides, he said, building an emerging market economy-level modern policy and institutional framework and coming up with an efficient, resilient, and well-functioning financial market system that provides affordable access to finance to investors and consumers is another viable means to make a difference.

High public investments in infrastructure and human capital development fueled the country’s growth indeed; he said these investments narrowed fundamental gaps in transport and energy infrastructure and human capital developments, thereby laying the foundation for a sustained growth. However, the public investment led growth model had its shortcomings. While significant strides have been made, both GTP I and GTP II have not entirely been successful in achieving structural transformation and stimulating exports.

As to him, as the serious macro-economic imbalances— foreign exchange shortages, increased risk of external debt distress, growing financial sector vulnerabilities, limited access to finance for the private sector, high inflation, and potential misallocation of resources are regarded as potential challenges, the country is doing all its best to address these macro-economic imbalances in collaboration with development partners.

Targeting at addressing such trying challenges, the government has launched a comprehensive and well-coordinated homegrown economic reform agenda with the goal to safeguard macro-financial stability and rebalanced and sustain economic growth. The reform agenda builds on the achievements of the past decade in infrastructure and human capital developments. The primary objective of the agenda is to sustain the economic growth through creating an economic environment supportive of higher private investment and structural transformation, he stated.

The reform centers strengthening public finances through improving privatization intensity, gradually moving towards a flexible exchange rate regime towards addressing external imbalances, strengthening the monetary policy framework with the objective to stabilize prices and support economic growth and enhancing financial sector development and developing capital markets, he added.

As to Taddese, implementing the proposed reform agenda requires mobilization of financial and non-financial resources. Enhancing domestic revenue mobilization, particularly significant improvement in tax collection, coupled with external resource mobilization will be at the core of the reform agenda’s financing strategy.

The concerted engagement of all segments of society— private sector, academia, and civil society— is quite important; thus, broad consultations needs to be undertaken throughout the reform period to enhance ownership of the agenda by all stakeholders. Yes, he said, exploiting Ethiopia’s untapped tourism potential also entails both the development of new and diverse tourism products, as well as the improvement of infrastructure and support

services in existing sites.

Much of Ethiopia’s tourist-related infrastructure is in poor condition and lacks investment. Investing in the upkeep of attraction sites and the infrastructure around these sites, and encouraging federal and regional incentive packages to promote private investment in tourism will be key measures to unlock the potential of the tourism sector. Private investors have to be encouraged to engage in the management of key national tourism sites such as national parks, he added.

Unequivocally, Ethiopia’s recent macroeconomic reforms, supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank could have profound implications for the country and the region at large. The financial package aims to tackle pressing issues such as inflation, foreign exchange shortages and debt sustainability.

“As far as my understanding is concerned, Ethiopia’s macroeconomic reforms represent a bold attempt to head towards economic stability and growth, and it has attached due emphasis to using interest rate policies effectively, keeping the central bank independent, and managing the transition to a floating exchange rate,” he said.

According to Taddese, the National Bank of Ethiopia has been given a more active role: managing the economy by setting short-term interest rates, in addition to its regulatory oversight of the banking system. For this policy to achieve its desired effects, several conditions must be met: the central bank must be independent and its decisions could be influenced by the government’s priorities; the formal financial sector has to be well developed.

In economies, where the financial sector is well developed, changes in interest rates can influence borrowing, spending and investment decisions and the bank must be able to collect, analyze and communicate economic data as reliable data is crucial for setting optimal rates and monitoring economic conditions.

As to him, the country faced a serious macroeconomic imbalance caused by debt, foreign exchange shortages, exchange rate fluctuations, export difficulties, and inflation. After recognizing this macroeconomic imbalance, the government designed a new three-year project for 2019, which was the Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda (HGER) to correct the macroeconomic imbalance.

He further stated that the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda consisted of three pillars. These are macro-financial reforms, structural reforms, and sectoral reforms with the aim of achieving macroeconomic stabilization and returning to a path of high growth. These reform measures should be comprehensive and well-coordinated in order to create a positive feedback loop.

In sum, the country has to primarily focus on bolstering the reform agenda to make it reliably fruitful by developing legal frameworks to enhance implementation capacity, enhance productivity of farmers and pastoralist through provision of modern inputs and service; modernizing live-stock production through improving veterinary infrastructure and establishing linkages with other industries; establishing effective linkage between agriculture producers and commodity markets as well as the commercial value chain; accelerating growth in agricultural production with a focus on strategic crops for import substitution and exports; developing a legal framework for agriculture focused financial services. In so doing, the desired change would be secured, and the reform is confidently pushed into fruition.

Planet Earth

The battle against devastation of hunger

BY FIKADU BELAY

Hunger continues to be one of the most urgent global challenges, impacting millions of individuals across the globe. As reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), approximately 828 million people were undernourished worldwide as of 2021, with a significant number located in Africa.

This continent experiences the highest levels of food insecurity, with over 300 million individuals—approximately one in five—suffering from chronic hunger, which accounts for about 20% of Africa's population. The causes of hunger are intricate and varied, often arising from a blend of socio-economic issues, political instability, and environmental obstacles.

In the IGAD region, countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan are particularly vulnerable to hunger, as ongoing conflicts have intensified the crisis. Prolonged wars and civil unrest disrupt agricultural production, displace populations, and obstruct humanitarian assistance, leaving millions at risk of starvation.

Climate change exacerbates food insecurity by causing extreme weather events that negatively impact crop yields and livestock health. Furthermore, economic challenges, including poverty and unemployment, hinder many individuals from obtaining adequate and nutritious food.

Erratic weather patterns and severe events, such as droughts and floods, have become increasingly common and intense. For example, the El Niño phenomenon has resulted in devastating drought conditions in the Horn of Africa, reducing crop yields and causing livestock fatalities. In many parts of the world, agriculture serves as the primary means of livelihood; thus, such climatic shocks can have catastrophic effects, driving communities further into poverty and hunger.

The interaction between conflict and climate change creates a relentless cycle that is difficult to escape. In East Africa, the combination of armed conflict and environmental degradation has heightened competition for limited resources, further escalating tensions and violence. Communities that depend on farming and pastoralism are particularly affected.

Climate change not only affects food security but also presents challenges related to food handling and the insufficient technology for storing food without causing pollution. For example, nearly one-third of global food production is lost or wasted each year, leading to economic losses estimated at one trillion USD. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this loss is approximately 37%, translating to 120–170 kg per person annually.

A significant factor contributing to this crisis is the inadequacies in infrastructure and logistics. The Food and Agriculture Organization has reported that a troubling 30–40% of food produced in Africa is lost before it reaches consumers. To effectively combat hunger, a multifaceted strategy is necessary, which includes



improving agricultural methods, enhancing food distribution networks, and creating economic opportunities for at-risk populations.

As global citizens, it is crucial to support policies and initiatives aimed at eliminating hunger and ensuring that all individuals have access to the nutrition required for their well-being. Recently, Ethiopia has hosted conferences focused on a world without hunger, which have contributed to reducing poverty and hunger across the continent.

The 2025 African Agricultural Development Program has set an ambitious target of eradicating hunger throughout Africa. However, research indicates that the continent still faces considerable obstacles in achieving food security. Musa Faki Mahamat, the Chairman of the African Union, pointed out that Africa possesses 60 percent of the world's arable land, yet paradoxically, around 230 million Africans suffer from food insecurity.

This stark disparity raises critical questions regarding agricultural practices and policies throughout the continent. He noted that the integrated agricultural development program led by the African Union has not yet produced the expected results. To address this issue and ensure food sovereignty in Africa, the chairman called for the expansion of efforts in this area.

In the 2016 E.C. fiscal year alone, Ethiopia produced over 230 million quintals of wheat, showcasing its capabilities in agricultural self-sufficiency.

Abiy acknowledged the numerous challenges that have historically hindered food security in Ethiopia, including a lack of high-quality seeds, insufficient agricultural inputs, and adverse environmental factors such as droughts and floods.

The Chairman highlighted Ethiopia as a beacon of hope and a model for agricultural development that can inspire both African nations and the global community.

He emphasized that Ethiopia's successes in food production over recent years provide a valuable lesson not just for African countries but for the world at large. By leveraging knowledge transfer and technology, nations

this as a strategic priority for the continent. The involvement of development partners and other stakeholders is also crucial in addressing the challenges that hinder food security.

The Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Gerd Muller, echoed these sentiments, stating that hunger is a global issue requiring concerted efforts and shared knowledge.

He underscored the need for technical and financial resources to bring about meaningful change in Africa's food systems. It requires a strategic action plan that encourages entrepreneurship, establishes business value chains, and attracts investment to boost sustainable productivity.

By strengthening food system management and fostering collaboration among various actors, Africa can pave the way for a hunger-free future.

Africa possesses vast natural resources that, if utilized effectively, can ensure food security for its population. The chairman noted that adopting modern agricultural practices, mitigating the effects of climate change, and focusing on the cultivation of drought-resistant crops should be central to Africa's agricultural agenda. The lessons learned from Ethiopia's transition from food importer to exporter should inspire other African nations to embrace similar paths.

He further stated that development strategies must prioritize conflict resolution and fundamental development to create a conducive environment for agricultural advancement. Ethiopia's experience demonstrates that with the right policies and commitment, it is indeed possible for African nations to rise from poverty to prosperity through agriculture.

Looking ahead, the director estimated that an additional 50 billion USD in financial support will be necessary over the next decade to achieve a hunger-free world. This funding will be critical for implementing the transformative changes needed in the agricultural sector.

By prioritizing investment in agriculture and leveraging Africa's rich resources, the continent can take significant strides towards eradicating hunger.

Efforts to combat hunger must address these underlying causes, focusing not only on immediate food aid but also on building resilience among vulnerable populations. This includes investing in sustainable agricultural practices, improving infrastructure, and fostering peace and stability in conflict-affected areas.

Moreover, international collaboration is crucial in addressing these challenges. Global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals aim to eradicate hunger by 2030. However, achieving this goal requires a concerted effort from governments, NGOs, and local communities to create sustainable solutions that consider the unique socio-economic and environmental contexts of each region.

By prioritizing investment in agriculture and leveraging Africa's rich resources, the continent can take significant strides towards eradicating hunger

can work towards eradicating hunger.

Abiy mentioned that natural disasters have posed significant threats to agricultural stability. However, he highlighted the Green Legacy Program, under which Ethiopia has planted 40 billion saplings, as a critical initiative that not only boosts agricultural productivity but also combats climate change.

He noted that Ethiopia has implemented strategic changes that have significantly enhanced agricultural productivity. This transformation includes the effective use of arable land, which has led to substantial increases in the yields of staple crops like wheat, teff, corn, and barley.

These achievements underline the significance of strategic planning and investment in agriculture as essential components of food security.

Despite the progress made, the chairman pointed out a significant gap in the commitment to implementing resolutions aimed at ensuring food security in Africa. He urged African nations to adhere to the decisions made to eradicate hunger, framing

Art & Culture

Beauty, fashion and the making of the modern African woman

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

No doubt that almost all African women are naturally beautiful. For that matter, all women anywhere in the world are beautiful, however beauty is defined. Every woman is beautiful indeed. According to a recent blog post on women's beauty, "Recent studies have shown that nearly symmetrical faces are considered highly attractive; we rate faces that are symmetrical as more attractive." The idea of symmetry as a manifestation of beauty is also evident in Aristotle's definition. For Aristotle, beauty is symmetry. According to Aristotle in his work entitled *Metaphysics*, "Beauty could be measured. Literally, the chief forms of beauty are order, symmetry, and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences all demonstrate in a special degree."

There is no uniform consensus as to what a woman's beauty is. According to some observers, "true beauty comes from a woman acknowledging her own needs, setting healthy boundaries, and going after her life's ambitions with boldness and enthusiasm. Her beauty lies in acknowledging her uniqueness and shining her light while empowering others to shine as well."

Our modern conception of a woman's beauty differs from traditional views in the sense that these days, the criteria for knowing how a woman is beautiful take others parameters into consideration. According to one view on the subject, the following points should be taken into consideration when we are evaluating the beauty of the modern woman in Africa or elsewhere in the world. A modern woman should be physically fit, keeps clean and well kept, has nice hair styles, big smile, bright eyes, happy disposition, and should be somewhat reserved but a little crazy at times. According to the same opinion, a beautiful woman should wear no or little makeup and should be open-minded and ready to accept her flaws, among other things.

There is also a divine or godly dimension that makes a woman beautiful. "Her godly attitudes, words and behavior make her beautiful. Godliness is not as noticeable as our clothing or jewelry. But is it "very precious" to God. He notices and cares! And godliness is beautiful because of its influence on others."

For African women and women elsewhere in the world, the pursuit of fashion, designs and styles has become an integral part of their search for beauty or for caring about their beauty. For many women in Africa, the present motto seems to be, "You are what you wear!" or "You look what you wear". A woman's beauty is magnified when she wears goods and looks good in her chosen outfits. As the way a woman dresses defines the contours of her beauty, so fashion defines her choices and her searches for beauty or acceptance.

By the way, African women started to be concerned with their dressings, fashion or design relatively lately after some of the more beautiful girls among them were featured on the front pages of prominent fashion and design magazines in Europe or America. This has obviously inspired the rest of them to



seek fame and fortune by joining fashion and design houses and acting as models for glossy publications. Naomi Campbell and others were among the most prominent ones.

However, African women have been always caring about their looks, their dresses, and their cosmetic choices, even long before modernity dawned on them. So, fashion is not a new phenomenon among African women who have always been keen to look beautiful beyond what nature has bestowed them with.

According to available information, traditional African clothing consisted of natural materials. "The first forms of clothing were bark cloth, furs, skins, and hides, and the rest of the body adorned with beautification marks and color pigments. Males simply wrap the bark cloth that passed between the legs over a belt. Similarly, women draped the cloth over the belt to hide the front of their bodies."

For many modern African women, fashion has become one of the most creative and fascinating fields of art and expression. It is a form of art and skill where one can use their own unique imagination and skills to create new styles, trends, and outfits. Fashion is best described as the style or styles of pairing clothes in a classy and unique way.

In Africa, fashion and designing may look like writing the African novel or painting the African portrait, which can be global in form but African in content. Content precedes form. There is some philosophical element in all this. What comes first, matter or spirit? form or content? Or is it the other way around? It sounds like "the egg or hen first?" dilemma. Who comes first? How do clothes look, or how are they conceived, and with what materials they are produced?

In the modern world, what we wear reflects not only how women look but also defines their identities. You can toss and turn jeans one hundred times as a possible fashion material or fabric, but it will never turn out to be African because jeans are American or Western. You can produce an African fashion with African

material and give it an African expression. Africa has its own ideas of what clothes should look like or what should go into creating their identity.

In Africa as elsewhere in the world, the clothing industry and fashion industry are not one and the same. It is important to make a distinction between the two. "Fashion design deals more with the generation of ideas whereas the clothing industry produces the garments that are generated from the design ideas." Designing in the fashion industry consists of creating, fashioning, executing or producing according to plan. What they call "the seven elements of design are, form, shape, line, color, texture, typography and space."

Fashion or designer clothing are not the exclusive domain of wealthy, educated and pretty African women, although, "A growing middle class in Africa has money to spend on clothes and are taking an increasing interest in what they were. Africa's wealthy elite is also growing, and the continent is one of the fastest growing market for luxury goods. That's particularly the case in Nigeria, where a fashion-conscious population is enjoying a high economic growth rate, but many other countries in Africa are experiencing a rise in both wealth and interest in fashion."

Maybe a reorientation in African and Ethiopian fashion design and production could be as another catalyst for expansion could be a timely move. Instead of focusing on the wealthy elites in Africa and across the world, the industry could cater to members of the lower classes with lower incomes so that they could enjoy the beauty and bounty inherent in African culture and arts.

The fashion industry can also take a cue from its Chinese counterparts where different standards are designed and implemented so that consumers in different income brackets can benefit from the varieties of apparels brought to the market. In this way most people would be turned into consumers rather than being simple observers without the means of buying what their hearts are desiring.

Focusing only on elite consumers not only narrows down the potentials of the market but also marginalizes potentially the most critical consumers, i.e., the hundreds of millions of potentially young consumers living in the countryside who massively migrate to the cities and towns in search of better opportunities. New and popular fashion brands should also be encouraged to flourish, which has so far been languishing in the margins for lack of investment as well as fresh ideas.

The main issue in Ethiopian fashion or design nowadays mainly boils down to the question of how to transform traditional apparels into modern ones without losing their original appeal or by adding new features that emphasize their uniqueness or particularity. How to modernize Ethiopian clothing, which is "typically made of bright and colorful fabrics, and many Ethiopian dresses are adorned with intricate beadworks."

In Ethiopia, a new generation of fashion-savvy young fashion inventors is feeding the fashion industry, and parallel to this, a new, young, and beautiful group of Ethiopian designers have emerged at the height of the economic boom that allowed consumers to enjoy their own traditional clothing presented in new and fashionable forms that reflect the ever-changing global fashion world.

Parallel to this process, growing populations of beautiful, shapely African young women are increasingly keen to dress their natural beauties with the products of modern industry. One of the challenges might be to provide these naturally tanned, and with ivory complexions in the low income bracket, get access to products that would magnify their natural looks so that they would enjoy and look for global success in the film, fashion, and beauty products industries. Maybe the Chinese model of low-cost, low-quality beauty products might provide young African beauties the opportunities to shine or catch up with their luckier counterparts in the increasingly competitive world of beautiful African women.

Society

Hurdles, opportunities of African women leaders

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Africa had been carrying the negative narratives that did mean to amplify its degradation in all aspects. All predicaments, such as hunger, migration, poverty, exploitation, and the like had been the identity markings of the continent for centuries. However, these days the trend seems to be a past; recorded as history. Years are disguising the changes and commitments of the people on various issues. Agendas are being proposed to get their target on themes like gender.

Though the continent is still characterized by the domination of male sections over women, the region is under a progressive move in many ways. Since the agenda of 2015, the attention given to the equality and empowerment of women remains the most important issue to be achieved by the countries of the continent. Countries take that agenda into their policy and have been moving forward to succeed it. Accordingly, in recent years, women have taken political seats and are exhibiting their skills and efficacy at various levels as per the agenda.

Women are coming to the frontline as leaders in those competent places of their male counterparts. However, as patriarchy needs time to pull out its roots, barriers related to this ideology are still challenges that women are obliged to face in various leadership positions and even in their social interactions.

While asked what leadership means to her, Everjoice J. Win an Executive Director of The Shine Campaign in Kenya said: "As a woman leadership means to me is about working collectively with others around shared values and visions. More importantly, it is about challenging and uprooting the systems that have not only generated gender inequality but also racial inequality and many of the other inequalities that we know exist in many of our society." As the concept of leadership posited, it is about identifying the relevant system and career to be achieved from the wrong one. Thus the director understood her role in parallel with the theory.

The next question raised by the moderator was about the barriers that African women face when they get leadership positions.

The executive director's response was the following: "The written and unwritten rules, the written laws, and the policies are sometimes the sources of challenges. So, those kinds of systems and norms that are written down and that are formal and well-known tend to keep women out. Then, we have the visible sort of barrier that is violence or the threat of violence. Again, there is a hidden kind of barrier that you sense while you are entering decision-making spaces—no sooner have you learned that decisions are not being made in the place that you have been made to sit.



So, you can sit on all you like in parliament and get elected. If decisions are going to be made on that part of headquarters or in military barracks, why are you wasting your time? So, the hidden barriers of decisions you are trying to influence are just getting in the way. Then finally we have visible barriers, which many of us talk about in terms of norms, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and attitudes both within ourselves as women."

In the words of this woman, more than the visible challenges, the hidden ones have an immense power to affect the psychological and moral readiness of female leaders in certain ways. Though they are in the seat for passing a decision, taking that mandate from them and letting them be symbols is the barrier that challenges the confidence and commitment of women in the position. Thus, the mental consciousness, patience, passion, and strength of the women themselves are quite necessary to cope with the situation in Africa.

In this regard, in Ethiopia there have been very strong, elegant, committed, and goal-oriented women leaders who influence male leaders to compromise on debatable issues. As history documented, for instance, Empress Taytu Betul was the one who portrayed effective governing quality and guidance in the imperial period of the country. As stated in different historical chronicles, when the deceiving treaty 'Friendship and Commerce Treaty' between Italy and Ethiopia was first introduced, which comprised Article 17, a hidden intention of Italy to make Ethiopia a colony, Taytu got angry since she identified their concealed goal immediately.

Following the article, tension mounted up. Then Taytu persuaded her husband Emperor Minilik to declare war to safeguard the sovereignty of the country.

She was very tactical and smart in leading the war equally with her husband. As history acquainted it, she was guiding her husband and leading the troops smartly and strategically.

Everjoice J. Win was also asked about the solution to the mentioned barriers to women leaders. She said, "Mentoring, advocacy, and training are the underlined tools to build up the skills and knowledge of leaders. Since leaders are possibly from various specializations, in a given leadership they cannot be perfect in leading the position. Thus, as the Director said when women took leadership too much expectation is not good. Instead stretching training and mentors are very relevant for the efficacy of the women. That is why when leaders retired from their leadership roles, they ran to establish organizations that aimed at mentoring prospective leaders since they practically experienced the challenges very well."

The other speaker on the issue was Shamillah Wilson. She is a coach, activist, and social entrepreneur. She said, "We need multiple strategies at multiple levels. We need to nurture those kinds of spaces so that at multiple levels there is this proliferation of leadership in so many multiple forms. Thus, I think we need to continuously understand that in women's leadership, things are shifting so fast and also we need to acknowledge the ways women are leading." When women get into a certain political leadership, barriers are obvious as the above women confess from their experience. Thus crediting the efforts of these leaders is very important to increase their effectiveness and to exhibit their potential.

Shamillah Wilson believed that in spaces where all those invisible values, norms, and attitudes play out in reality that

give rise to the visible kinds of laws or rules, should be challenged. "We need to have a kind of pushback, challenge and organize against that in our different configurations." In a given leadership position, those realities that are driven by the social norms and values will influence the acknowledgment of rules and laws on gender-related issues. When a woman stays on that seat, these things are going to be challenged. Therefore having that chance in that space is an opportunity to reshape the rules and laws on gender.

The woman also added the importance of continuing to create opportunities to increase the visibility and voice of particular groups of people that may not be visible in the leadership. She believed that women in a given position needed to echo the voices of the marginalized sections of society since they better know and understand their environment. Thus, the position is an opportunity for representing these people.

Shamillah Wilson added that women need to be very strategic regarding the resources they need to make. "The resources available for this, I think, are one of the reasons why there are a lot of great success stories across the organizations of the African continent. "Initiatives are not able to become sustainable and entrenched. Thus, women need to be cautious about such realities and plan effectively."

In general, as per the agenda, the continent is progressively considering gender issues seriously. Women are increasingly taking positions and exhibiting their potential equally. The possible barriers they face need to be curtailed by mentors and training. Their commitment and strength are quite relevant for using their seat as an opportunity for a better leadership atmosphere for females.

Law & Politics

A geopolitical development worth noticing

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea have got extreme attention in recent times as tensions brew among nations and face disruption due to flaring attacks. Besides, numerous nations want to secure a place in the most volatile geographic area to ensure their national interest.

The biggest and most populated nation in the Horn, Ethiopia has been one of the major actors that have played key roles in the region. The nation has even gotten numerous appreciations from around the world for its bold participation in terms of ensuring peace and security in the region.

Unfortunately, even though the region is crying for Ethiopia's help in different aspects, the dynamic region still refuses when it comes to benefits and national interest. In recent times, Ethiopia has boldly started to ask for a genuine partnership in the region and let the former access the sea.

Having more than hundred million populations and a land locked, Ethiopia needs to have a way to connect itself to the sea so that it will ease the nation's burden in its import and export activities and defend its political interest in the volatile geographic region.

When Ethiopia and Somaliland reached an accord regarding accessing to the sea, and Ethiopia, in return, accepts Somaliland's appeal to become a sovereign country. Ethiopia is committed to regional peace and dismissed allegations of territorial violation, underscoring the nation's legitimate pursuit of access to the sea reaffirmed Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) during the 6th round of the 4th term and the 3rd ordinary session of the House of People's Representatives earlier this month. The Premier clarified that the MoU between Ethiopia and Somalia which grants Ethiopia limited coastal access for 50 years, has been misinterpreted as a territorial threat.

As soon as the two parts reached to the agreement, various actors from around the world started to act based on their interest. Besides, the Government of Somalia has also started to contact Ethiopia's history long enemies to work with them by deliberately ignoring Ethiopia's favor.

It is important to remember what Ethiopia did to the people and government of Somalia for the past decades. The former has sacrificed the lives of its sons and daughters

for the well-being of the latter.

After the accord to access the sea, Somalia has directly contacted Egypt who has no historic share in the region. The North African state has little or no contribution in fighting the region's core challenges as Ethiopia and some of the Horn Africa nation did.

It is true that when an entity get some gap between brothers, it will be easy to infiltrate their bond and start to use it for one's interest. When Ethiopia and Somalia could not come to the table to discuss their difference, there are so many actors who want to get involved. In addition, the world knows the rivalry between Ethiopia and Egypt in the Nile River case. To this point, when Egypt finds a way to put its boot in the Horn of Africa, the country will use it without any hesitation.

In recent reports, Egypt has started to deploy its military in the Somalia soil as the Horn nation ordered Ethiopian soldiers to leave its territory in order to replace them with the Egypt army. The military agreement between Egypt and Somalia and their each and every move must be critically assessed by the government of Ethiopia.

Putting its arch enemy in its backyard, Ethiopia must work hard to defend its national interest and territorial integrity. It is the fact that the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia has multiplied Ethiopian sacrificed and effort by zero and started to work with other actors.

Accordingly, having stayed with ENA, Yakob Arsano, a prominent Scholar, stressed the need for critically examining Egypt's role in Somalia and its presence that could escalate instability across the region emphasizing the importance of strengthening border security and fostering regional partnerships to safeguard against potential threats.

The scholar highlighted Egypt's involvement in Somalia as a potentially destabilizing force in Northeast Africa, urging those nations there to critically examine it. Egypt's presence is possibly motivated by self-interest, particularly its desire to control the Nile River, rather than any genuine intent to support peace in Somalia.

"Egypt has not shown a reliable record in combating terrorism, even within its own borders," Yakob observed. He argued that Egypt's influence in Somalia is possibly part of a broader strategy to weaken Ethiopia, with the Nile River at the center of its agenda.

Following the current escalation in the region, Ethiopia warned that such maneuvers of actors from outside the Horn of Africa region undermine efforts in eliminating terrorist groups that are causing chaos and mayhem on the people of the region.

Particularly, Ethiopia urged Egypt as a downstream country to choose the path of negotiation and international law as well as reorient its colonial-based policy on the Abbay (Nile River).

In this regard, Yakob expressed concern that Egypt's presence in Somalia could create lasting repercussions for the region. And he warned that this irresponsible act might be unfolding in Somalia.

If Egypt fails to establish control, he cautioned, abandoned weapons could fall into the hands of terrorist groups, posing immediate threats to both Somalia and Ethiopia.

The scholar also urged Somalia's leaders to carefully evaluate the implications of allowing Egypt, a historical rival of Ethiopia, into their territory. Allowing Egypt to gain influence could strain Ethiopian and Somalia's ties; he said it will be undermining Somalia's own security and stability, in particular.

Reflecting on Ethiopia's contributions to Somali peace efforts, Yakob reminded the sacrifices made by Ethiopian soldiers in Somalia.

Thousands of Ethiopian troops have fought alongside Somali forces to strengthen the country's sovereignty, he noted, reinforcing Ethiopia's commitment to regional stability. He further stressed that a secure Somalia, free from disruptive external influence, is in the best interest of both countries.

Turning to Ethiopia's need for sea access, Yakob highlighted the strategic importance of fostering positive relationships with neighboring nations. As the "Water Tower of Africa," Ethiopia possesses abundant water resources that it could share to promote economic and security alliances in exchange for sea access.

"A reliable path to the sea is essential not only for Ethiopia's trade and development but also for the region's security," he stated, calling upon the UN Security Council, the African Union, and regional leaders to closely monitor Egypt's presence in Somalia. For Ethiopia, he emphasized, peaceful and cooperative engagement with neighbors remains the ideal approach for both regional development and security.

It is important to remember what Ethiopia did to the people and government of Somalia for the past decades. The former has sacrificed the lives of its sons and daughters for the well-being of the latter

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

“Let’s Wait and See”

Several days back as November 5 approached I was talking with a friend of mine over there about the whole issue of the presidential elections as despite attempts to read between the lines, because this, so I think, was a campaign which I has much more between the lines, than what is actually said and written. It was one revealing discussion as he allowed me get clearer pictures of many things which were difficult to understand from this part of the world. As we were about to say our goodbyes and hang up I asked him, “Who’ll you vote for?”

I expected a quick, straight answer which never came. After several seconds he said “I’m not sure. Things are so confused that I couldn’t make up my mind. So I’ll wait until Election Day and make up my mind.” Indeed, he did make up his mind and voted for Trump. “Really!” Now, having been there for almost two decades I knew he always voted democrat. He assured me he would give me detailed reasons for his change of heart one of these days. “It was not easy, but I had to do it.”

Speaking to multiple Ethiopian Americans over there you understand this one was a very crucial election too. Look ours is knowledge that has many bumps and gaping holes when it comes to that country’s politics. But the conventional wisdom was that most Ethiopians voted for democratic nominees only they know why. I remember when Obama was elected there were all night parries in Addis. I have to ask what they think about him now following his very

shocking (even for us too!) statements about black men! This friends tell me especially in places where the gender affirming thing has made its way into primary schools Ethiopians overwhelmingly vote Donald Trump because they believe he would do away with such legislations and save them their children.

But the other side of the coin is as, this friend who was highly critical of the while republican establishment many don’t see the dangers lying ahead. And what are this dangers?

Well for one despite having been living there even for decades there he says there are probably thousands and thousands of Ethiopians without valid resident permits; meaning they are considered to be there illegally. And if Mr. trump puts his action where his words are many could be in danger of being deported! That’s scary, isn’t it? According to my friend, who I consider to be very well versed not only American politics but in far larger world affairs too, if things go as the winners would like them too, as many as twelve million people could be sent packing to their home countries or wherever, except America.

“Can you tell me some of you worries?”

“For one there is the danger of losing your job if you’re a government worker as republicans would replace existing staffs with thousands of their own followers. This is how things are done many times. The victors usually fill in as many spots as they can with their supporters.” And he says

many Ethiopians could find themselves in the firing line. With things being as we are being told they are in America with life becoming harder and harder and many finding it very difficult even to buy their daily needs and necessities loss of one’s job could be nothing less than capital punishment. As an example he tells me those country folks who are truck drivers are in great trouble as more regulations and the hike in gas prices and other factors weigh heavily on the truck driving business.

It is only evident that many regulations the democrats have brought into practice the past four years would be thrown out of the window. “For example take President Biden’s plan to forgive student loans.” I remember reading about the issue and the heated tug-of-war between the country’s two political entities. Of course my friend says Biden’s plan didn’t find it through as the administration would have wanted. “So what they did was we started paying about one fifth or somewhere around that monthly. For example if you used to pay twelve or thirteen hundred dollars a month it would be scaled down to about two hundred dollars.” he tells me since the republicans oppose the idea of forgiving student loans what they would do first would be to reinstate the former payment method where people would be obliged to pay twelve or thirteen hundred dollars a month as they used to. “Imagine the financial burden that would result in times when the economy’s so weak and it’s not easy to find second and third employments!”

“Do you think Mr. Trump would actually do all that he has promised?” (Should I have replaced ‘promised’ with ‘threatened’ on some of the issues?) You know I think some of it might be just political rhetoric to attract certain sections of the society.” Now what the hell do I know about the politics of that place which even most Americans themselves find difficult to decipher? My friend was very careful in choosing words; “Let’s wait and see.”

Look, it is not that things will be any easier for our compatriots over there. The sad part is that many back home fail to realize that fact. Already life in America isn’t what it was supposed to be and many of our compatriots are in dire strait trying to make ends meet and ensure they stayed above the waters until things start getting better. And now with a new admiration at the doors of the White House. It might not be a weekend-picnic transition. From what we’re hearing things will surely get tougher. The only thing here is that we back home should understand that skies aren’t quite clear over there when it comes to the situation of many of our compatriots. As no more like yesterday when we said, “Send me two dollars,” and no sooner have we hung up the money’s on its way. I have heard a couple of stories where very shallow minded members of the societies try to equate the drying up of the dollar pipe to greed on the part of those who have been propping us up all these years. Sad!

Maybe my friend said it more rationally; “Let’s wait and see.”

What Is Going On!

Still with the American election;

The American elections have taken aback not only the hundreds of millions of Americans but much of the world too. The so-called polls that were coming out giving Mrs. Harris double digit leads over former president in much of the country, floods of mainstream media one-sided narratives and the whole noise seem to have many of for the ride. Thanks to the first African American woman Kamala Harris the republicans and their supporters would be beaten black and blue! It was a done deal! Well, predictions and poll numbers were thrown far and away when the Republican nominee came out on top with the most convincing numbers.

Donald Trump for the people to rally behind him and forget all that happened the last for years. It was very presidential of him to hit the highly conciliatory tone because the nation needed nothing more than that.

Kamala Harris, in her speech said, “We must accept the result of the election. Earlier today I spoke with president elect trump and congratulated him on his victory. I also told him, we will help him and his team in the transition and that we will engage in a peaceful transfer of power.”

That’s, so we think, what real democracy is made of.

It’s astounding to hear the media people on the various sides of the aisle trying to splash cold water on everything; In fact many believe the media with its false narratives and highly exaggerated polls in favor of Mrs. Harris were a major part of the problem as they tried to

install a very twisted and unrealistic sense of overconfidence which led tens of millions of supporters to believe that victory for Kamala was a forgone conclusion. As tens of millions were voting all over the country supporters of Kamal Harris were already singing and making merry in that University stadium. It was heartbreaking to see them so sad, some openly weeping, and broken after hearing that things didn’t go their way.

These were the words of President Joe Biden, “On January 20, we will have a peaceful transfer of power. We have 74 days to go. Let’s make every day count. Setbacks are unavoidable. But giving up is unforgivable. In a democracy, the will of the people always prevails... We accept the choice the country made. I’ve said many times - you can’t love your country only when you win. You can’t love your neighbor only when you agree.

Now those probably are the very words Americans who are in all kinds of problems wanted to hear. But quite significant portions of the media, unfortunately, don’t seem to making things any easier. The fact is Americans have given Mr. Trump a resounding, “OK!” and that should have been it! NO! In fact some are beating the racial and sexism drums and trying to blame entire sections of society for Kamala’s defeat.

One host of The View says, “While 91 percent of Black women voted for Kamala Harris, 53 percent of white women overall voted for Trump, despite the open disrespect and demonization hurled by JD Vance and the Supreme Court stripping women’s bodily

autonomy, courtesy of Donald Trump.” She goes on; “Latino men, who, despite the utter disrespect shown by Trump and his promise to deport some of your mixed-status families, most of them voted in a 55% majority to make the deportations happen. You all voted against your own sisters, who chose Kamala Harris with 60% of their votes. So, you own everything that happens to your mixed-status families and to your wives, sisters.”

That didn’t go well with Latinos and as between the lines they were being accused of racism. One commentator reminded people that Latinos overwhelmingly voted for Obama. How about that!

Former vice president Mike Pence who endorsed Kamal and was subject to some hail of Republican rage wrote; “The American people have spoken and Karen and I send our sincere congratulations to President-Elect Donald Trump and his family on his election as 47th President of the United States... We will continue to pray for all those in authority and urge every American to join us in praying for our incoming President, Vice President and elected officials at every level.”

He simply and clearly puts it when says, “The American people have spoken.” But then the blame game against entire sections of the society seem to continue.

One host of The View says, “Black women tried to save this country again, last night ... what we do not have is white women, who voted about 52% for Donald Trump — uneducated white women, is my understanding. You have

Latino men actually voting more for him,” Another one adds, “I don’t think white women like being called uneducated white women.” I mean maybe someone should have asked her on what research she based such a claim which concerns millions. But it’s politics and they’re not talking in conciliatory tones while the main actors the politicians were doing so.

And here are some comments from supporters of president-elect Donald Trump;

“This election season showed just how much we all care about where this country’s headed.”

“Feels like Christmas Morning.”

“Christ is king. Trump is president. Goodnight.”

“A testament to your resilience, mental strength & never-give-up mentality as your enemies tried to kill you, jail you & brand you the new Hitler.”

Truly present day USA is a country which greatly needs to work on unity as the present campaign has laid bare the fact that is becoming a highly polarized society, politically, racially, gender-wise other issues. The media and the so-called celebrities seem to be upping their friend/enemy narratives and this might contaminate the conciliatory spirit among the politicians. Of course, nice words don’t mean nice intentions. But after months and perhaps years of the most furious, many times than not mean-spirited political wrangling I think Americans need to time to unwind.

One fact is that in many ways there can’t be a peaceful world without a peaceful America. (Look who’s speaking!)

In Pictures

Warm welcome for Abu Dhabi Cron Prince in Addis Ababa

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) welcomed His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to Ethiopia



Ethiopian Airlines receives Africa's first Airbus A350-1000

Ethiopian Airlines has received its first Airbus A350-1000, becoming the first in Africa to operate the largest model in the A350 family. The passenger plane, named "Ethiopia: Land of Origins," arrived Tuesday in Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

The A350-1000 plane has 395 passenger seats across business and economy classes, making it the largest aircraft in Ethiopian Airlines' fleet. The new Ethiopian Airlines plane held its first flight from Addis Ababa to Lagos, Nigeria this week.



Sierra Leone's President stresses Africa can rely on Ethiopian Air Force for peace, security

Addis Ababa- Ethiopian Air Force, is a very good example for other countries not only to emulate, but also to piggyback on, Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio said.

President Julius Maada Bio and Prime Minister Mamadou Oury Bah of the Republic of Guinea visited the Ethiopian Air Force on Thursday.

With its massive capability and over 80 years of rich experience, the pioneer Ethiopian Air Force can shoulder the continent and play an important role in maintaining peace and security, President Maada Bio added

He commended the various efforts the government of Ethiopia has been undertaking to transform the country

while maintaining its center of gravity for African positions.

"It tells us that there is somewhere where we can always come here to learn, and that being self-sufficient to a very large extent, is important, because when the situation arises, you're not going to depend on another person; you have to be as self-sufficient as possible, and this is the beginning of that. So this is a very good example for other countries to not only emulate, but also to pick, to piggyback on. We can come and learn. We can train our pilots, we can train our technicians. Actually, this is very impressive, because I never thought we were doing this sort of level of maintenance on the continent. I thought we would need to take it out of

the continent. So I'm very impressed," he commended.

The capabilities that the Ethiopian Air Force possesses are impressive and beyond imagination, the president said, and added that the Air Force not only flies but also does the maintenance.

"And the extent of the maintenance is quite impressive. They overhaul the complete aircraft to bring it back to life, which is quite impressive," Maada Bio noted. Furthermore, the president underscored that having been the founder of the African Union and the seat of its headquarter, Ethiopia has always been at the helm of things.

"The fact that we have the African Union

headquartered here means that Ethiopia is the center of the continent and would expect it to lead on quite a lot of fronts. And when it comes to peace and security, we would expect that with all of these capabilities, I think, and the capacity that they have, they definitely have to lead the continent on a lot of issues," he emphasized.

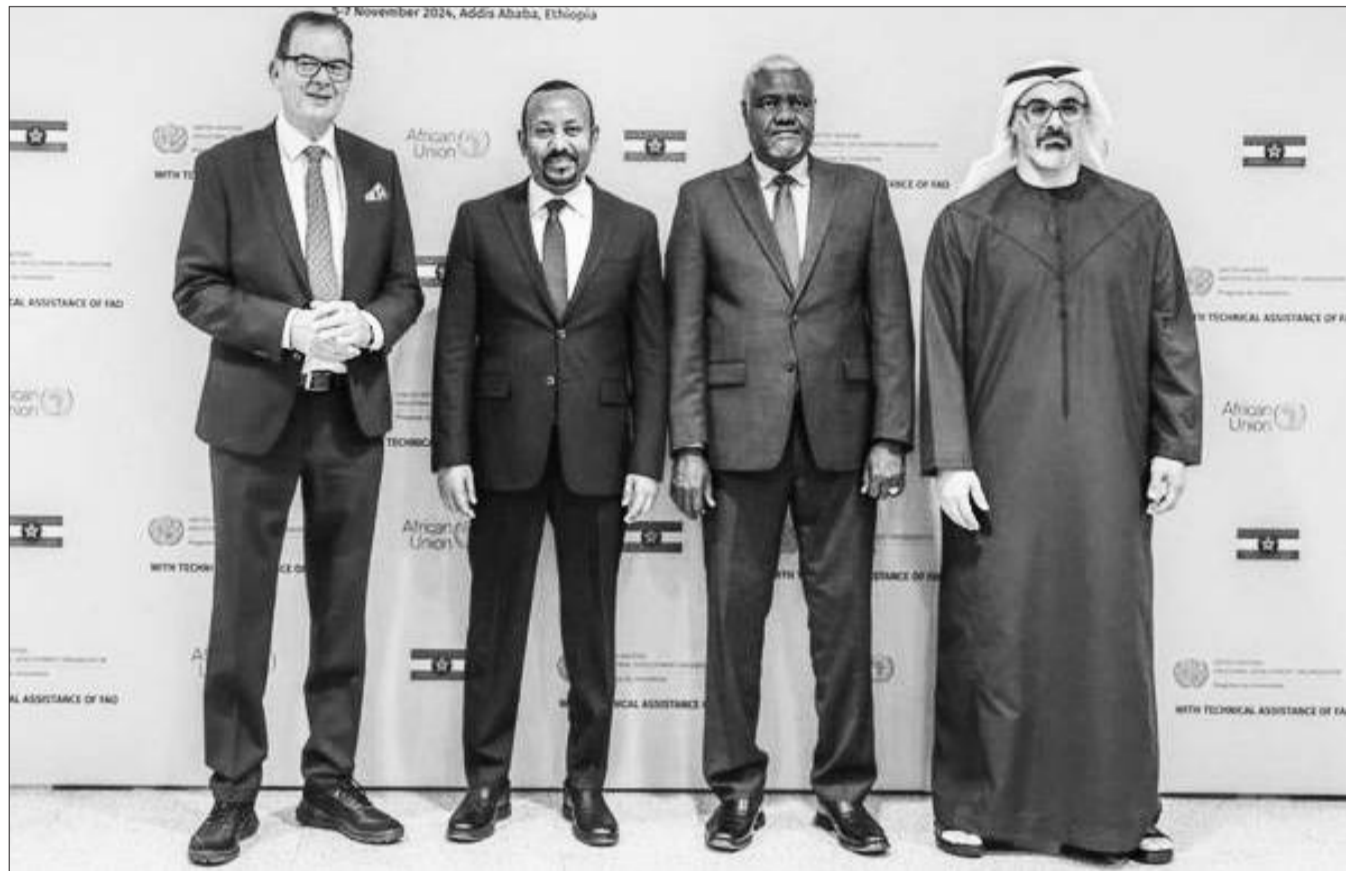
All African countries are trying to develop and the only ecosystem that allows development is peace and stability, the president stated, and hastened to say "So to play that role, the center of Africa or the home of Africa is very important, and Ethiopia should take on that challenge," ENA reported.

In Pictures

Addis Ababa organizes World Without Hunger Conference

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The reviving Addis Ababa becomes center of conference tourism. Addis Ababa has hosted over 20 international and continental conferences. Only during the past two months, Addis successfully organized some 13 international conferences involving heads of states and governments and international organizations. Among these high profile conferences is the World Without Hunger Conference attended by more than 1,500 participants including leaders of different countries and heads of international organizations like United Nations Industrial Development Organizations (UNIDO).



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with UNIDO Director General Gerd Muller, African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi at the World Without Hunger Conference in Addis Ababa, Adwa Victory Memorial hall.

PM Abiy at World Without Hunger Conference

While arriving at the Adwa Victory Memorial to attend the World Without Hunger Conference, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was welcomed by participants of the conference.



PM Abiy welcomed President Ruto

President of the Republic of Kenya, William Ruto arrived in Addis Ababa this week for official visit and to attend the World Without Hunger Conference. Upon his arrival at Bole International Airport, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) welcomed him.



Bringing Evidence to Decision Makers


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Turning data into action: Enhancing nutrition policies in Ethiopia

BY TEKLE TESFALIDET

NIPN-Ethiopia's initiative is making a significant contribution by providing critical data and insights for decision-making, thereby attracting additional budget allocation for nutrition projects. A case in point is the Ethiopian government's recent decision to allocate substantial funding to expand Seqota Declaration activities into new areas. NIPN-Ethiopia's initiative and contributions are gaining momentum and recognition among high-level government officials and partners at various forums.

It is clear that the NIPN-Ethiopia initiative has played a key role in changing nutrition policies through evidence-based decision-making. By offering essential data-based evidence briefs, it has enabled policymakers to develop strategies that effectively tackle the country's nutritional challenges.

As the objective of this article is to showcase the contributions of NIPN-Ethiopia, let's present testimonials that recognize NIPN's significant achievements.

At the recent the 6th Global Gathering in Addis Ababa, the Minister of Health commended the NIPN-Ethiopia initiative for its vital role in shaping nutrition policies through informed decision-making. Dr. Mekdes Daba made these remarks when opening the event, which brought together representatives from nine NIPN member countries—Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Kenya, Laos, Niger, Uganda, Zambia, and the host country Ethiopia—along with implementing partners, donors, and key nutrition stakeholders.

In her opening remarks, the Minister highlighted the strong connection between the discussions at the NIPN Global Gathering and the work of the Ministry of Health. She emphasized that Ethiopia has developed a comprehensive food and nutrition governance system that spans from the federal level down to local communities. This system ensures effective implementation of the country's food and nutrition policies, guided by the Seqota Declaration and the Food System Transformation Roadmap.

She further highlighted the establishment of a multi-sectoral advisory committee to guide NIPN and praised its significant impact on community health and well-being.

It wasn't just the Minister of Health who recognized NIPN's initiative; other prominent speakers at the opening session of the Global Gathering also offered similar praise.

Similarly, Director General of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), Dr. Mesay Hailu, affirmed that EPHI will increase its support for the success of NIPN's

initiatives. He emphasized that since its launch in 2018, NIPN-Ethiopia has been key in shaping nutrition policies and strengthening evidence-based decision-making within the National Food and Nutrition Policy.

Another speaker, Carlotta Preiss, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy in Addis Ababa, emphasized her government's dedication to supporting NIPN initiatives in Ethiopia. She noted that this support aims to strengthen evidence-based nutrition programming through better data and multi-sectoral collaboration, while also celebrating the long-standing partnership between Germany and Ethiopia in addressing hunger and malnutrition, particularly for women and children.

Another guest speaker at the meeting, Ms. H el ene Berton, Policy Officer for Nutrition at the European Commission, expressed the EU's commitment to the program's implementation and praised the remarkable progress of the NIPN initiative across all member countries.

The numerous praises for NIPN-Ethiopia are well-deserved. The initiative is connected to various government projects that rely on the information provided by NIPN, especially its strong association with the Seqota Declaration (SD). In 2015, Ethiopia began a crucial initiative aimed at improving children's health and nutrition, with the goal of eliminating malnutrition and preventing stunted growth by 2030. This program, led by health officials, prioritizes the well-being of young citizens.

The SD initiative is rolled out across the country, focusing on regions with the highest rates of malnutrition and working closely with local governments. It employs a phased strategy: the innovation phase (2015-2020), the expansion phase (2021-2025), and the scale-up phase (2026-2030).

Its main objectives are to eradicate child malnutrition, ensure food security, enhance nutrition, and support sustainable agriculture for comprehensive development. To implement the SD, the government allocates funds from its budget, with additional support from nutrition partners. The Ministry of Health oversees the initiative, aided by a Federal Program Delivery Unit that fosters collaboration among various sectors and stakeholders involved in nutrition.

The SD document states that the program initially targeted the Tekeze basin in the Amhara and Tigray regions, encompassing 40 Woredas. It is named after Seqota, the capital of the Wag Hemra Zone in Amhara, which experienced severe famine during the 1980s.

To evaluate the effects of the initial expansion phase of the SD and support evidence-based decision-making, researchers from EPHI/NIPN and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) conducted an impact assessment. This thorough evaluation, which used the Lives Saved Tool (LiST) modeling, took place from

May to October 2023. It offered crucial insights into the progress made in reducing childhood stunting and mortality through the SD.

The assessment found that within just one year of expanding the SD into 240 Woredas, the program prevented approximately 60,000 cases of stunting and 2,900 cases of mortality. Looking ahead, projections were made to estimate the potential impact of further expanding the SD program, indicating that such expansion could significantly lower rates of stunting and mortality.

The noteworthy findings received widespread acclaim during a recent high-level government meeting. This gathering included high-level government officials, various ministers from multiple sectors, regional presidents, and bureau heads. The meeting aimed to assess performance for 2022-2023 (2015 E.C.), approve the budget for 2023-2024 (2016 E.C.), and introduce a new roadmap for nutrition. The participation of key stakeholders, such as the Federal Ministry of Health's Nutrition Coordination Office, regional and urban administrators, mayors, and sector leaders, demonstrated the government's comprehensive strategy for tackling nutrition issues.

While acknowledging the results of the impact assessment, the former Minister of Health praised the progress achieved and emphasized the necessity of expanding the SD from its current coverage of 240 Woredas to 700 in the coming years. She pointed out that increasing the reach of the Seqota Declaration to cover 10% of the country's total area, based on additional research, and could potentially prevent stunting in 80,340 children within a year.

There is no gain in saying that the results achieved to date have significantly influenced government decisions and policies. Ethiopia has demonstrated its commitment to addressing nutrition challenges and enhancing public health by allocating 696 million Birr (ETB) budget for the expansion of the Seqota Declaration in 2023-2024 (2016 E.C.). Additionally, several regional states have provided funds to support this initiative, highlighting its recognized importance. The expansion program is making significant contributions in various areas, including improving household food security, fostering local development, creating job opportunities for youth, and promoting women's participation and benefits.

Moreover, in addition to providing timely information, EPHI and NIPN Ethiopia are actively engaged in advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of nutrition and the Seqota Declaration. They are using various platforms, including media outreach, to spread their message.

In conclusion, NIPN Ethiopia is poised to meet expectations as long as it receives ongoing support from its partners to sustain its efforts and fulfill its mission.