



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Reform ameliorates democratic institutions' effectiveness

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's ruling party has registered significant improvements in the number and performance of civil society organizations (CSOs) and democratic institutions over the past five years, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) disclosed.

In his statement released with respect to the fifth year anniversary of Prosperity Party (PP), the Prime

See Reform ameliorates ... Page 3

## UN honors Ethiopian peacekeepers in South Sudan

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian peacekeepers serving in Jonglei State and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area have been awarded United Nations (UN) medals for their exceptional efforts in promoting and sustaining peace in South Sudan.

The recognition underscores

See UN honors ... Page 3

# Ethiopia's role in African unity garners praise

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

ADDIS ABABA – The Continental Peace Conference organized by Ethiopia has been praised by African ministers as a critical step toward creating the peaceful and developed continent that Africans aspire to achieve.

Ministers from South Africa, Liberia, and Tanzania applauded Ethiopia's initiative in

hosting the conference and its advancements in law enforcement technologies, which were showcased during visits to the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission (EFPC) Headquarters and the Ethiopian Police University.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, South Africa's Minister of Defense and Military Veterans, Angelina Motshekga, highlighted the importance of the conference in fostering

dialogue on peace and addressing Africa's challenges. The Minister also noted that Africa is facing numerous conflicts, making it essential for the continent to unite and find solutions. According to her, the conference offered a platform to discuss these issues and identify practical approaches to overcome them.

See Ethiopia's role ... Page 3

# IACO envisions upturn in standard coffee export

• Ethiopia secures 674.5 mln USD exporting coffee in 4-month

BY MESERET BEHAILU

As one of the largest coffee producing countries in the world, Ethiopia is striving to improve the quality and volume of the cash crop. As part of this effort, Ethiopia and other African countries should work in unison to comply with various international rules and standards, including the EU's regulation on deforestation-free coffee production (EUDR).

Officials and Members of Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO) stated that Africa should value the EU deforestation free coffee production standards to supply processed coffee to the European market and the rest of the world thereby obtaining adequate benefit from the sector.

Ethiopia wrapped up a two-day IACO



High-Level Policy Forum and the 64th Annual General Assembly themed, "Building Resilience and Competitiveness in African Coffee: From Farm to Market."

During the closing event, Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA's) Director General

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## Addis progressing in tackling climate change: C40 Cities

- Targets 41% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** – The metropolis has been making significant strides in addressing climate change and air quality challenges, the C40 Cities in East Africa said.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* Regional Air Quality Advisor for C40 Cities in East Africa, Tibebe Assefa said that the capital is making significant strides in tackling the twin challenges of climate change and air quality. “We gain insight into the city’s efforts and progress.”

The city has drafted a Climate Action Plan and an Air Quality Management Plan, targeting a 41% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and compliance with national PM2.5 standards by 2025, he said.

It is expanding mass transit systems, creating dedicated bus lanes, promoting cycling and walking corridors. These initiatives aim to cut transport-related emissions significantly. We are in the final stages of drafting an Energy Efficiency Regulation. It would promote renewable energy and setting minimum energy performance standards to limit emissions from biomass and fossil fuel use, he added.

According to the Advisor, the city’s zero-waste policy focuses on reducing landfill contributions through recycling and composting. The waste-to-energy facility, equipped with emission controls, is a significant step toward lowering methane emissions. However, changing community practices, such as waste burning during Hidar Sitaten, is crucial.

He further said that urban and river development projects aim to create green buffer zones, improve waste management, and reduce flooding and landslide risks, contributing to climate resilience and urban sustainability.

The current measurements show that PM2.5 levels are three to six times higher than the limits set by both the Ethiopian Air Quality Standard and the World Health Organization. These high pollution levels have significant health consequences, particularly for children and the elderly, causing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and contributing to thousands of premature deaths and hospitalizations annually, he stressed.

Despite the above mentioned achievements, financial constraints, capacity limitations, and enforcement gaps are challenging. Strengthening governance, fostering partnerships, and mobilizing resources will be essential to meet our ambitious targets, he emphasized.

The Advisor noted that Addis Ababa is one of 11 African cities that have voluntarily committed to addressing air quality through the C40 Clean Air Accelerator. “Our work in public transit, clean energy, and urban planning is positioning Addis Ababa as a model for other cities in the region.”

Addis Ababa’s progress demonstrates the power of leadership, collaboration, and innovative planning. However, sustained effort and commitment are needed to overcome obstacles and secure a sustainable future for our city, he underscored.



## Ethiopia, South Africa forge collaboration in science, indigenous knowledge

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopia has shared its indigenous knowledge and the extensive scientific research being conducted in the country with South Africa, aiming to locally implement these initiatives to benefit society at large.

The two nations are set to collaborate in science and technology, with plans to visit each other’s ongoing projects.

South Africa’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Minister, Prof. Blade Nzimande, and his delegation met with Ethiopia’s Bio and Emerging Technology Institute (BETin) to discuss various research projects being carried out in Ethiopia, particularly those focused on indigenous knowledge and scientific advancements. The delegation also visited Ethiopian research projects that emphasize local innovation and knowledge-sharing.

Prof. Blade Nzimande underscored the importance of the visit, noting that it would benefit both nations through collaborative projects in science and technology. He

stressed the need for developing concrete projects to advance Africa’s research agenda, particularly in bio-economy, a sector he identified as crucial for addressing economic challenges across the continent. As members of BRICS, both nations have the potential to leverage their resources and partnerships with the African Union to turn such initiatives into practical outcomes.

The Minister appreciated Ethiopia’s successful research and development initiatives and noted the importance of exploring strategies to attract investors and enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest, particularly in economic and technological fields. He highlighted that the partnership with Ethiopia could serve as a model for addressing broader challenges facing the continent.

BETin’s Director General, Prof. Kassahun Tesfaye, shared details about the country’s research projects, which include efforts in producing natural fertilizers, insecticides, and soaps locally. He noted the need for collaboration to address pressing issues such as land degradation, soil acidity, and toxicities that harm agriculture, as well as

emerging infectious diseases that threaten global food security and healthcare systems.

Prof. Kassahun stressed that these challenges cannot be addressed effectively through independent actions, which often lead to fragmented solutions. Instead, he advocated for partnerships that enable resource sharing and holistic problem-solving. The Ethiopian delegation also highlighted joint efforts with South Africa in areas such as mango production, health biotech, herbal medicine, and indigenous knowledge sharing. Research and capacity building, including short-term training and infrastructure development for Ethiopian researchers, remain core priorities.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Innovation and Technology and South Africa’s Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation signed a bilateral agreement on September 10, 2021, to enhance cooperation in science and technology. This partnership underscores the commitment of both nations to advance scientific research and innovation for mutual benefit, displaying the potential of African-led solutions to tackle global challenges.

## Gov’t spares no effort to return migrants to normalcy

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** – The government is reintegrating vulnerable returnees through providing essential facilities, psychosocial support and job creations to enable migrants get back to normal life, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs said.

State Minister Huria Ali recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that her organization is facilitating the reintegration of returnees into the community to help them actively participate in economic activities and rebuild their life.

“We are working inclusively to benefit the vulnerable group of the society in social and economic aspects and create them a conducive environment to get social and health services.”

In the rehabilitation process, the ministry first provides the returnees with a psychosocial support to mitigate the



Huria Ali

trauma they encountered overseas, and help them feel safe and secure, she said.

Additionally, the ministry facilitates shelter and training, reuniting migrants with their families to help them get back to normal

life through exploiting job opportunities and other economic activities to improve their life, according to Huria.

She said the ministry is controlling irregular migration to safeguard citizens from making unsafe journey abroad.

Ethiopia is a country of origin, transit, and destination of migrants but some of them left the nation in an irregular manner thereby facing security problems including sexual assaults and the danger of sinking at the sea, according to the State Minister.

“We are bringing back migrants through a diplomatic approach communicating with other nations to return our citizens safe home,” Huria stated.

IOM, Embassies and other partners are working with the ministry to reduce irregular migration and facilitate safe return, the State Minister added.

## Ethiopia's role in African unity ...

Similarly, Liberia's Minister of Internal Affairs, Francis Sakila Nyumalin, commended Ethiopia's leadership and efforts to see a peaceful and developed Africa. He expressed appreciation for Ethiopia's role as the headquarters of the African Union, which he said aligns with its dedication to promoting unity and peace across the continent.

Participants also expressed admiration for Ethiopia's integration of advanced technologies in policing and crime prevention. Motshekga commended the EFPC for its use of ICT in law enforcement, stating, "You have done a remarkable job integrating ICT into policing, especially by training young people and utilizing modern

infrastructure. This is truly impressive."

Francis noted that Ethiopia's achievements in technological advancements are a testament to Africa's potential to match global standards, adding, "Ethiopia is proving that what is done in the West is also possible in Africa. This provides hope for the entire continent."

Likewise, Tanzania Police Commissioner Renata Mzinga applauded the EFPC's progress since her last visit in 2022, emphasizing the remarkable developments made within just two years. She also mentioned the capabilities of the Ethiopian Police University and Forensic Center, expressing interest in sending Tanzanian

officers to learn from Ethiopia's experience.

The conference participants stressed the importance of enhancing police institutions across Africa and fostering collaboration to tackle cross-border crimes such as human trafficking and drug trafficking. They also emphasized that improved policing practices and cooperative strategies are essential for maintaining peace and security on the continent.

Moreover, Ethiopia's initiative to host the conference and its commitment to modernizing law enforcement technologies were acknowledged as significant contributions to achieving Africa's collective goals of peace, unity, and development.

## Reform ameliorates...

Minister and PP President Abiy announced that the number of CSOs has grown from 1,900 to 3,300 since the party took power.

The statement noted that the pre-reform government implemented restrictive laws toward CSOs, which hindered their development. In response, the current administration introduced legal reforms that allow the CSOs to operate independently without government interference.

As partners in democratizing public services, CSOs and democratic institutions have been empowered, leading to prominent improvements in their performances, premier said in the release.

"Democratic institutions are fundamentally expected to be free, independent, and trusted. Before the reforms, these pillars were compromised. The revised laws and regulations have enhanced their independence and freedom, empowering them to act without government interference," the statement read.

The media landscape has also witnessed substantial growth and transformation, in which, the number of mainstream media outlets has doubled, rising from 122 to 272 in the past five years, according to the party.

"The reforms have paved the way for media actors and owners to provide their services to the public without interference. Legal reforms in media regulation have significantly changed the system, empowering media outlets to self-regulate. Since the reforms, approximately 123 new media outlets have begun operations," PM Abiy added.

The number of television channels has increased from 25 to 78, while radio stations have grown from 52 to 73. Language diversity in media has also expanded, reaching around 60 languages, the release indicated.

Religious institutions have also similarly benefited from these changes, he said in the statement, highlighting that several religious institutions, which previously faced government interference, are now operating freely and independently.

## IACO envisions upturn ...

Adugna Debela (PhD) recently said that Ethiopia is committed to deforestation-free supply chains and sustainable forest management, which help to increase export and business opportunities.

He mentioned that the country secured over 674.55 million USD from exporting more than 150,000 tons of coffee in the past four months of the current fiscal year.

According to Adugna, implementing new regulations such as EUDR and the corporate sustainability due diligence directive (CS3D) set by the European Union also requires concerted effort among stakeholders engaged in exporting coffee to the international market, including private sectors and international development partners.

"African coffee production remains a significant source of export income, accounting for approximately 12% of the world's coffee bean production. It is important for us to work together to maximize the benefits of this untapped resource and invest in the African coffee industry to support local farmers' livelihoods," Adugna noted.

Ethiopia, as the birthplace of coffee, takes immense pride in its enduring legacy as a leader in the global coffee sector, said Agriculture Minister, Girma Amente (PhD) noting that coffee in Ethiopia is far more than an economic crop, since it is also a cultural symbol.

Therefore, he said, IACO collective commitment is a crucial step to bring the growth and transformation of Africa's coffee

sector.

Girma further stated that the improvement of coffee production would play a significant role in Africa's socio-economic development with its immense potential to drive regional integration, generate employment, and improve livelihoods across the continent.

"Over the years, Ethiopia has consistently championed efforts to improve the productivity, quality, and market access of African coffee. However, we also recognize the challenges that lie ahead such as climate change, price volatility and evolving regulatory frameworks like the European Union Deforestation Regulation and Ethiopia is steadfast in working collaboratively with fellow African countries to forge sustainable solutions," he added.

The Minister called up on IACO, UNIDO, ECTA and the partners strengthen the relationship and realize Africa's coffee quality product to sustain livelihoods, shared heritage, and aspiration in this regard.

"Though coffee is a strategic commodity in Africa, the production and productivity is gone down. It means that the sector requires reclaiming the right place of coffee potential in the world," Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE-Lesotho) Commissioner's Special Advisor Prof. Afeikhen Theo said.

Afeikhen told *The Ethiopian Herald* that alongside with emphasis on environmentally-friendly farms in Africa, coffee needs more

value and process that to set the EU quality requirements by fighting against degradation of land. Ethiopia is one of the largest coffee producers in African continent even with 50 % of the product consumed by the local community.

He added that the inconsistency of value chain is a serious factor among Africa's coffee producers that hinder the continent from generating adequate benefit from the sector. Therefore, the member countries of IACO, UNDP, private sectors, civil society organizations and related institutions should work jointly to address bottlenecks in quality coffee production across African countries.

UNIDO's Coffee Value Chain Expert, Chiara Scaraggi expressed that coffee is a major contributor of Africa's economy and one of the most widely consumed product by the international community. However, some 5.5 million coffee farmers are still living under poverty due to lack of infrastructure, promotion, quality, economic volatility, and the likes.

In response to this challenge, she indicated that UNIDO is working on technical facility, financial support, and public-private partnerships to improve quality of coffee in the world in a sustainable manner.

Scaraggi also expressed UNIDO's dedication to provide consistent technical and financial support to coffee growers in Africa to ensure the sustainable benefit of coffee farmers and their countries by improving the quality of the product.

## UN honors Ethiopian peacekeepers ...

Ethiopia's long-standing contributions to global peacekeeping missions, dating back to 1951.

From its early involvement in the Korean War to participating in operations in the Congo and other global hotspots, Ethiopia has consistently played a pivotal role in advancing peace and stability. At the recent medal pinning events held in Bor, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Force Commander Lieutenant-General Mohan Subramanian commended the Ethiopian peacekeepers, known as Blue Helmets, for their selflessness, commitment, and sacrifice under challenging circumstances.

"While it means hard work and sometimes daunting tasks, I feel privileged to contribute to the pursuit of peace. After 14 years in the military, the experience of helping create a better world is both rewarding and unforgettable," said Bezawit Girum, an Ethiopian army medical doctor. Bezawit was among the 68 women peacekeepers from Ethiopia and South Korea whose contributions were recognized during the ceremonies.

A total of over 1,700 military personnel, including 643 from Ethiopia, 268 from South Korea, and 850 from India, were honored for their outstanding service since their deployment in April. The 18th Ethiopian

contingent was specifically acknowledged for safeguarding humanitarian aid convoys delivering life-saving supplies to vulnerable communities. Their efforts have included conducting 124 short- and long-duration patrols-some by air-to deter violence against civilians, as well as completing around 1,000 foot patrols and providing security for numerous UNMISS and humanitarian partner missions.

"Ethiopia is one of UN peacekeeping's strongest partners and is currently our largest contributor of uniformed personnel," said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Ethiopia's unwavering dedication to peacekeeping, along with its distinguished record of success, attests the nation's role as a global leader in promoting stability and security.

The visiting Force Commander also praised the Ethiopian contingent's critical role in maintaining peace, showcasing their resilience and commitment to protecting civilians in one of the most challenging regions. Ethiopia's participation in these missions reflects its deep-rooted commitment to fostering peace and stability, not only in South Sudan but across the globe, LTG Subramanian remarked.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's national dialogue journey paving the way for sustainable solutions to longstanding conflicts

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

As things stand, Ethiopia has embarked on the consultation process for gathering agenda items in various districts of the country with flying colors. Since the establishment of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), a wide spectrum of positive moves have been taking place in every corner of the country.

On the heels of the commitment and hard work of the federal government of Ethiopia, ENDC has been moving forward in the right direction. In the face of some challenges, the commission time and again has passed through different phases and ranges of approaches.

As national dialogue ensures the smooth progress of restoring peace and tranquility in every corner of the country, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should do everything they can to bring about the desired goal. If all and sundry join hands and form an alliance, the whole thing will return to the right track at the earliest possible juncture.

It becomes obvious that since its establishment, the commission has registered a considerable amount of fruitful undertakings that can take the country to new perspectives and new heights at the earliest possible juncture.

The commission has, at various points, brought pertinent bodies into light with the nitty-gritty of its undertakings. It is anticipated that the national dialogue will, over time, bring about sustainable solutions to enduring challenges.

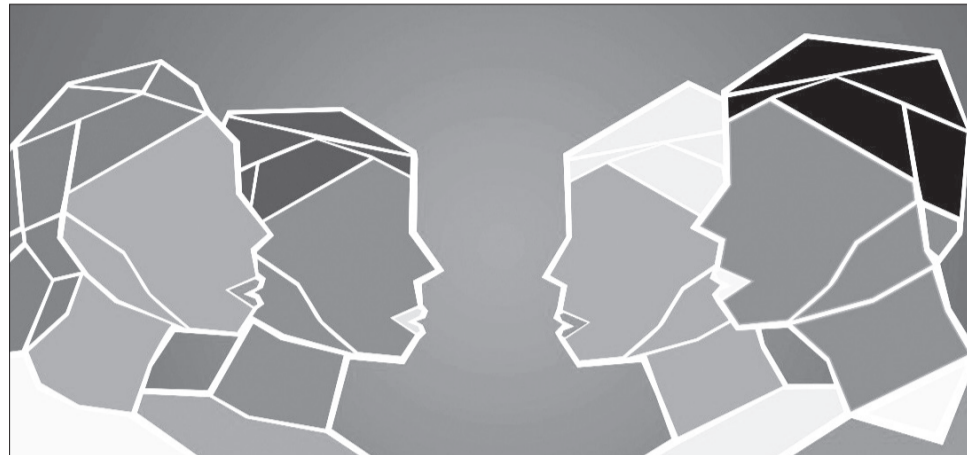
It goes without saying national dialogue get involved in tackling the foundations of encounters, disagreements, misconceptions, and other things of a similar kind.

It is true that National dialogue plays a paramount role in resolving logjams of quandaries surfacing among the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia. Since the dawn of time, whenever friction takes place among Ethiopians, they get to the bottom of their divergences making use of their unique conflict resolution mechanisms without the meddling of third parties.

Despite anything that may happen, the Commission has been moving heaven and earth to bring about peace utilizing most of their own valuable methods without the meddling of third parties through round table discussions.

It is evident that conducting national dialogue becomes involved in paving the way for peace, stability, prosperity, and other things of a similar kind. Up to this point in time, various nations conducted national dialogue employing multifarious procedures with the objective of laying the first stone for peace in every crack of the country and beyond.

Besides the fact that national dialogue is a



magic bullet, it sets the stage for building common ground and accommodating countless variations of polarized views.

It should be underscored that following backlogs of troubles surfacing in some parts of the country, Ethiopia has been passing through many tosses and turns. To resolve the issue, the federal government has been getting itself involved in various fruitful activities.

In a similar way, the Commission has been getting itself involved in a diverse range of fruitful undertakings that can simmer down accumulated skirmishes down the road. It seems obvious that most of the conflicts that spark in various parts of the country have been as a result of socio-economic problems.

The Chief Commissioner of Ethiopia's National Dialogue Commission, Prof. Mesfin Araya, announced that the consultation process for gathering of agenda items has been completed in 615 districts, according to information obtained from ENA.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission presented its three-month performance report to the House of Peoples Representatives during its 5th regular session recently, highlighting the completion of agenda gathering consultations in 615 districts across nine regional states and two city administrations.

The report, delivered by Chief Commissioner Professor Mesfin Araya, detailed significant activities achieved during the past three months, including the comprehensive collection of discussion agendas in preparation for the upcoming National Dialogue Conference.

Agenda collection was completed across 615 districts, and the selection of representatives to participate in the national dialogue conference is underway.

The Chief Commissioner said that in Tigray, consultations with regional leaders and academic institutions have begun to initiate the dialogue process.

Agenda gathering from federal political parties, federal institutions including religious institutions and the diaspora as well as areas where agenda gathering consultation has not yet been held, will be the next focus, according to Professor

Mesfin.

Members of Parliament praised the commission's progress in conducting the dialogue process in a participatory and inclusive manner.

The federal government has certainly been accomplishing delightful and massive success stories in economic, political, and social matters. Countless bogus conspiracies orchestrated by some groups have led the country in an unwanted direction.

Ethiopia's adversaries who hate to death the peaceful coexistence of the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of the country have been disseminating the seeds of hatred utilizing a diverse range of social media platforms that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

Though Ethiopia has been pulling out all the stops to make peace happen, worrywarts have been going to the ends of the earth to tarnish its encouraging maneuvers and favorable actions.

In the present climate, following the positive achievements of ENDC, the wider international community has been speaking highly of the federal government. In more specific terms, various bodies have been standing by the side of the government.

Since the beginning of time, Ethiopians have been living with love, harmony, respect, and other related aspects. Some groups have been working at all hours of the day and night to break down the social fabric of the general public.

It is widely acknowledged that Ethiopia over several decades has been coming across a diverse range of must-solve divisive rivalries streamlined by uncompromising views and controversial standpoints.

As one would expect, national dialogue is extraordinarily influential in obstructing and fixing skirmishes of more than one kind. Apart from getting back the whole thing on the right track, it will make peace happen in the length and breadth of the country.

There is no one blueprint for the success or failure of all national dialogues as every conflict context and demand are unique and dynamic. However, there are two central categories of factors that significantly affect the success or failure of the national dialogue; namely the political context

factors and the design or process factors.

First, the political context in which a national dialogue takes place can affect the likelihood of success or failure. For example, political will significantly matters. The greater the level of political will and elite agreement on the way forward, the greater the likelihood of successful outcomes and implementation, according to an article.

It went on to say, added to this the links associated with other transitional processes also impact the outcome. National dialogue needs to be embedded in larger change processes in order to promote real structural change. If disconnected from other political processes, such as constitution-making. It is likely to be counter-productive. Also, there should be common ground among parties.

It is worth recalling that Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has started collecting agenda in Wolita Soddo, South Ethiopia State.

Officially launching the consultation phase, ENDC Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD), recently mentioned that despite its long-cherished culture and values, the nation is facing challenge in settling ideological differences peacefully.

Thus, National Dialogue consultation phase is being held to identify the major differences so as to reach to national consensus, he stressed.

The commission has so far undertaken agenda gathering consultation and participant identification in seven states and two city administrations. He noted that the agenda gathering consultation in South Ethiopia is expected to last for six consecutive days while selecting participants that would take part in the main National Dialogue council.

Political parties, religious institutions, CSOs, public figures, influencers, representatives of the community that assigned from 96 districts of 12 zones are expected to take part in the agenda gathering consultation phase in the state.

As the upcoming national dialogue is an important milestone in the country's history, each and every one should combine efforts for the implementation of the objectives.

In fact, for the fulfillment of the targets and for the actualization of the goals, the print and electronic media outlets of the country should bend over backward to unite efforts. In doing so, they can grease the wheels of the national dialogue which is going to take place in the country just around the corner.

In the same manner, if people from all walks of life stand together and work hand in glove with the commission, turning dreams into reality will not be difficult to achieve.

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

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's selfless service and collaborative efforts for lasting peace

Ethiopia's peacekeeping contingents deployed under the UN Mission in South Sudan have been given recognition along with comrades from other peace loving countries for their underserved determined selfless service.

It is pleasing to know that their deployment far away from home, staying there for months to safeguard the lives of innocent people, mothers, children, elders ...etc has been fruitful and has elicited the gratitude of the mission which is also reflection of the people who were the vanguards that faced the brunt of the conflict and unrest.

It takes a good heart to feel the pain and deprivation of these people to pay the necessary sacrifice and enable them enjoy the light of the day and peace.

As a country, Ethiopia in all times has shown its clear understanding of the need to shoulder responsibility and commitment to bring about lasting peace and stability. As it has been practicing for decades its active and strong participation stems from firm belief that lasting peace doesn't emanate from a single country working alone. Wholehearted collaboration of countries is mandatory.

As such Ethiopia has been deploying its army as peacekeepers under the UN and AU missions since the 1950s during the civil war in Congo. Since then it has been actively participating in missions in Liberia, Burundi, Sudan and Somalia.

Furthermore, it has been actively participating in peace brokering dialogue in the continent. In addition to such peace dialogues Ethiopia has also been hosting various forums and events that aim to cultivate and promote initiatives of peace.

Among such initiatives is the Tana High Level forum on Security in Africa. This forum brings together authorities and resources that have stakes in ensuring peace and security in the continent. Over the week, the Ministry of Peace has also successfully launched and carried out the International Conference on Peace here in Addis Ababa.

Alongside the practical involvement of countries in restoring peace where it has been lost, such high level dialogues and consultation both during and before the outbreak of conflict and unrest play meaningful role in ensuring lasting peace.

Governments and relevant institutions should not be complacent due to the presence of temporary peaceful situation. With the world that continuous encounters changes that could lead to conflicts of interest and fragility of situations, it is wise to be always awake, prepared and committed to preempt any factor that could deteriorate volatile situations. Therefore, peace loving countries, governments, institutions other concerned institutions need to contribute their share for ensuring lasting peace taking advantage of such opportunities or venues.

Ethiopia, along with all other countries contributing to peacekeeping missions, must receive robust support and recognition both prior to and during their engagement in conflict-affected regions. It is essential to provide these nations with the necessary resources, training, and diplomatic backing to enhance the effectiveness of their missions. Additionally, initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable peace—such as those that Ethiopia has been actively hosting—should be encouraged and adequately supported. By investing in these proactive measures, we can help to prevent the deterioration of peace and stability before it becomes irretrievably compromised.



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# Opinion

## Inclusive entrepreneurship: Bridging ideas, opportunities

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important as a driving force of economic development, especially in nations that have significantly reduced poverty. It can contribute to national development in many ways, including economic growth, job creation, raising the standard of living, reducing regional disparities, and human development.

In connection with Global Entrepreneurship Week, the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), an international organization working to foster the development of market-oriented economies and the growth of independent business membership organizations worldwide, together with the ASPEN Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship, recently organized a roundtable panel discussion with this year's theme: 'Entrepreneurship is for everyone.'

The central point of focus for entrepreneurship specialists was raising a range of interesting ideas focused on inclusive entrepreneurship and the ways and means of bridging gaps. Here are some of the views entertained in the panel.

Inclusive entrepreneurship aims to offer all people an equal opportunity to create a successful business, regardless of their gender, age, place of birth, or other personal characteristics. It involves providing resources to ensure that people have access to the support, resources, and opportunities they need to start or grow a business. It is also imperative to eliminate barriers and remove social obstacles that prevent people from participating in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs are innovators. Making improvements in a certain type of business or adding value to it to win the interest of customers is an innovation in itself. At some point, innovators stop moving forward as they are lacking business leadership skills. Thus, providing practical training is imperative to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs as it helps people use their creative potential to start a business.

Creating inclusive businesses is also part and parcel of inclusive entrepreneurship. This also has its importance in supporting the creation of businesses that are not just for profit but also help improve the living conditions of underrepresented groups. Though there are a number of innovators that can contribute to addressing social bottlenecks through their innovation.

These people want to see improvements in people's livelihoods. In this regard, the concerned stakeholders need to assist them. In this regard, inclusive entrepreneurship can contribute to sustainable growth, social and financial inclusion, and labor market attachment. Some examples of how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship include: digitalizing procedures, making it easier for people to start a business by digitizing procedures and offering e-payments.

Thus, consulting with local communities and involving them in the design and implementation of technological solutions, entrepreneurs can contribute to the socioeconomic development of a given country.

Most of the entrepreneurs are becoming hopeless while they are facing severe challenges that are related to resources such as financial, land, and so on. In this regard, it is quite imperative to provide practical training for SMEs. In this regard, training incubators and business support organizations are also areas of focus, as they have the experience to help entrepreneurs and innovators. Ensuring that these organizations are mindful of the needs of specific groups, such as women, youth, and people

with disabilities, is crucial.

Customizing programs to meet the needs of different types of startups is essential. For example, early-stage startups might benefit from ideation workshops, while more established startups might need funding opportunities and showcase events.

In-person events can help entrepreneurs feel a sense of belonging and appreciate the impact of their work. Many countries have strategies to support entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups, such as women, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Entrepreneurship can drive economic growth by creating jobs, fostering innovation, and reducing a country's dependency on imported goods and services. It is a major source of job creation, which can help reduce unemployment rates and improve the overall economic well-being of the community.

Innovators can improve the quality of life for individuals and communities by creating new businesses and jobs. It can help reduce regional disparities by creating new businesses and job opportunities in areas that were previously underdeveloped. Entrepreneurship can enhance human capabilities, such as the ability to work, earn income, and accumulate wealth.

The substantial efforts being carried out by the government to promote entrepreneurship aim to exploit the potential of entrepreneurs and foster knowledge-based economic transformation in the country. The significance of entrepreneurship in optimizing resources and driving economic transformation is crucial to fostering a knowledge-based economy in Ethiopia. Substantial efforts have been made over recent years to promote entrepreneurship across the country, leading to a growing number of successful business ventures.

Many positive outcomes have been registered, and the country will continue to expand these efforts this year. Entrepreneurship can play a vital role in building a knowledge-based economy by turning immense potentials into action. The importance of creating enabling environments for entrepreneurs and fostering global connections through various events is crucial.

The concerned stakeholders should provide technology, finance, and capacity building in the manufacturing sector, and further work is needed to bring new ideas of entrepreneurs to the market. Stakeholders should work hand in hand in creating favorable policy frameworks and laws that support technology-driven entrepreneurship.

This will assist Ethiopia's entrepreneurial community to be creative and resilient.

Apart from celebrating Entrepreneur Week every year, we need to fill observed gaps and enable entrepreneurs to be resilient. If we are really committed to bringing change, entrepreneurs of today will be investors of tomorrow.

For this to happen, apart from encouraging them through organizing exhibitions and bazaars showcasing the achievements of numerous entrepreneurs and offering a vibrant platform for showcasing their work and connecting with potential customers and partners, every citizen should encourage them by buying their products and providing substantial comments that help them improve their product quality.

Ethiopians do not want to see their country remain in poverty. This is also the feeling of partners and supporters. We are living below the poverty line, which should upset everyone. The only way forward is to show prosperity in any available way with the dedication and interest of citizens. This is the age of entrepreneurs. This is the time to show our heroic action.

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

# Business & Economy

## Securing youths' business ideas without collaterals

Photo: Gebabo Gebrie



BY NAOL GIRMA

Cooperatives and unions are expected to play pivotal roles for rapid economic growth and societal developments with the necessary policies, strategies and modern operational systems provided by themselves and governments. In addition to the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, cooperatives are taking significant steps towards gearing up the financial sector. The number of saving and credit cooperatives is growing from time to time. Taking the above realities into account, it was recently highlighted by the Addis Ababa Cooperatives Commission that Cooperatives must provide quality services for the public by implementing modern operational systems.

It was indicated that a great deal of experience was taken from the cooperatives' recent official visit to Netherland. The cooperatives were engaged in manufacturing, service delivery and supply of products for years. Thus, the commission stressed in order to play crucial role both in the economy and market, the cooperatives must develop a modern operating system and financial administration systems. It was also indicated that the City administration is implementing improved and enabling systems for cooperatives to realize the aforementioned issues of concern.

Molla Bazezew is a founding member and General Manager of Global Saving and Credit Cooperative. According to him, older financial trends in Ethiopia were conservative and discouraging to youths who come up with business ideas and no collaterals. Collateral issues and other bureaucracies in relation with loan access were major causes that several problem solving and lucrative business ideas of many youths were left on shelves, Molla noted.

In this case, the Global saving and Credit Cooperative was established to solve the above mentioned problems of the youths with business ideas without putting collateral issues on the table, according to the General Manager. "Our focus groups of people are youths who graduated from universities and colleges and those who are trying to find the values of their skills. Currently, we are financing for youths who are interested in transportation service particularly, with electric vehicles."

Molla stressed that the idea behind financing electric vehicles was a global initiative against carbon emission. "Climate change is still a global issue and helping good causes of society with financial access for profitable but healthy ways of lives is everyone's responsibility. Studies indicate that one individual spends 36,000 Birr per month for gas. Electric vehicles are expected to minimize this expenditure to a greater level. They are also solutions to reduce the time that people waste cued-up at gas stations."

Even though global economic and political as well as internal affairs have been affecting activities of cooperatives some few years before, there are several improvements on their current strides, according to him. Mentioning Global Saving and Credit Cooperative as an example, he said the Cooperative has improved its service in the past couple of years. More than fifty per cent of its 3000+ members received loans.

In this case, Molla also indicated that since there are some rules and agreements or procedural circumstances, it doesn't mean all members will get loans randomly. That is the reason why the number of loan receivers seems to be small. "However, our financial access is easier and convincing for we don't intend to ask for collaterals, when we provide loans. What they need to show up with is renewed identification cards, marriage status certificates and bank statements. As long as they are able to achieve a saving of thirty per cent, the Global Saving and Credit Cooperative will cover the remaining seventy per cent cost for their electric vehicles," Molla added.

The General Manager also hinted that even if the financing of electric vehicles came as major topic, for it's a global responsibility, the Cooperative is also financing different start-up projects and business ideas. "We finance educational, health and housing payments. The corridor development may have its own compensations, but if all members of our cooperative need financial access we will facilitate it for them. When it comes to education, let's say one of our members gained scholarship. Based on the scholarship letter he/she obtained, we will cover the necessary cost by providing a loan. Since education, health and housing issues are considered socially sensitive, we do not even focus on procedural things such as a member must save for three months

before asking for loan."

When, loans are provided with lesser requirements, recollecting the money is challenging for financial institutions. However, Molla said that his cooperative was established not to achieve maximized profit every year like other financial institutions. "Our goal is not to collect some amount of profit but to deliver some amount of service. When, I'm saying this, I'm not referring that we work with losses. I am trying to stress where our focus lies. For instance our interest rate is lower than other financial institutions with prolonged loan returning period of time."

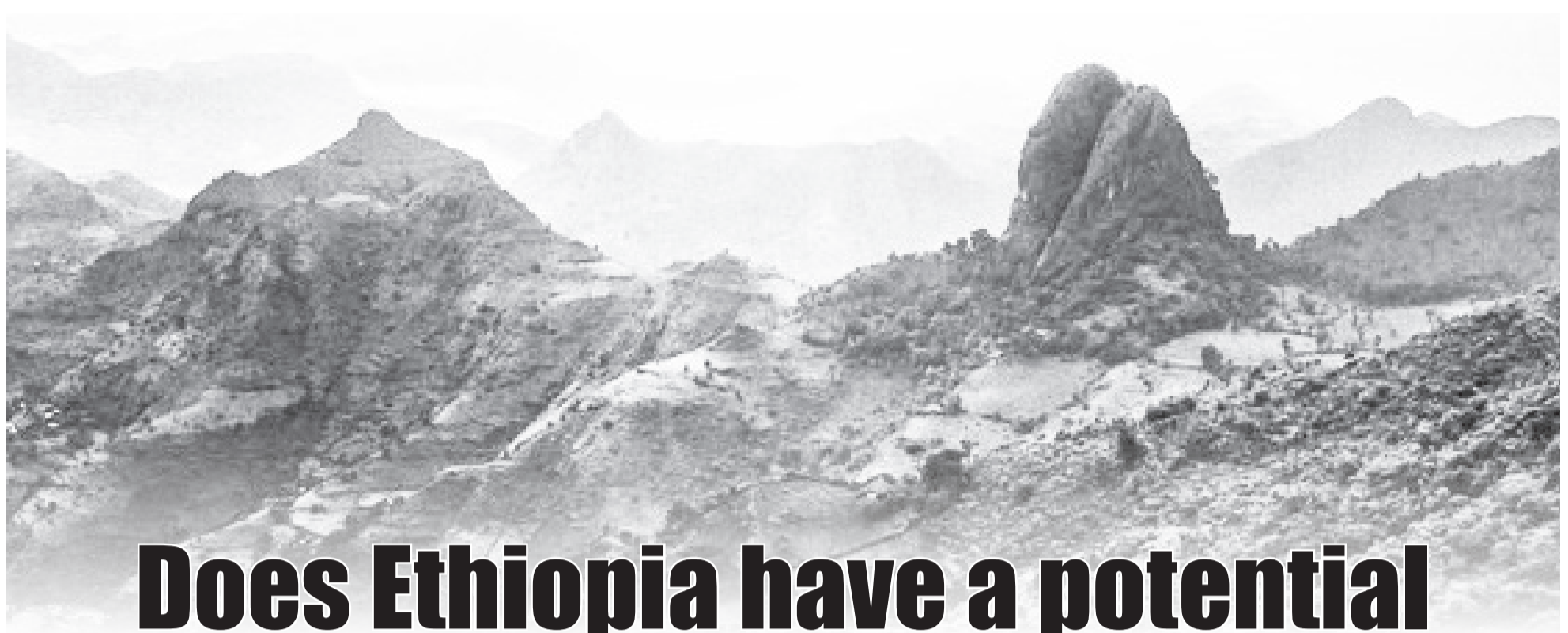
The Global Saving and Credit Cooperative says its doors are wide open for all members who believe in the cooperative's rules and regulations and gain financial access. The cooperative, which was established eight years before, started operating with 36 members and 36,000 Birr in stock capital. Currently, with 3000 active members, it has accommodated over 78 million Birr from shared stock.

There are several financial institutions operating in different parts of the Country. However, it has been repeatedly indicated that most of them have lack of modern financial, systems and knowledge. The barriers in financial knowledge and modern systems are expected to be resolved with maximum efforts from both government and the financial sectors themselves. Ethiopia is one of the fastest developing Countries with large number of youth population. This population is expected to uplift the country from poverty to prosperity with the financial, good governance, and geopolitical and political incentives from government and private institutions.

There are so many youths who are misguided by social platform actors, who always degrade the positive developmental actions of the government and some positively established private institutions and cooperatives. However, there are cooperatives such as the Global Saving and Credit Cooperative who are still striving for the multifaceted developments of society. Achieving economic growth relies on society, particularly on the youth, and they always need committed institutions that would deliver service, counting on the future prosperity of their country.

**Achieving economic growth relies on society, particularly on the youth, and they always need committed institutions that would deliver service, counting on the future prosperity of their country**

# Art & Culture



## Does Ethiopia have a potential for the MICE industry?

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Ethiopia is located in the northeastern part of Africa commonly called the Horn of Africa. The country is located just nearer to the equator. The document found by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission shows the country is characterized by stunning natural beauty and mountains. Out of over a thousand mountains that are 300 meters above sea level, 25 are above 4000 meters high and 60 are over 3000 meters high. This as geographers believe has huge potential for controlling the seasons and rainfall circulations. Since the number is highest in Africa, tourism has a greater impact on attracting visitors and scientists to the country. Getnet Yigzaw, Ethiopian Convention Bureau Head CEO, had an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald. He said that in Ethiopia there are over 1945 mountains. In addition to the geographical benefits, these natural resources are the most important assets of the nation. Though there is no mountain-based tourism in the country, this is a remarkable latent to be considered in the sector.

Ethiopia is also the richest country in water resources. There are longest and year-to-year flowing rivers in the region. Wabi Shebele, Genale, Awash, Omo, Tekeze, Mereb, Baro, and Angereb are among the dominant and longest rivers that render various services to the citizens. There are also seven natural lakes and one influential manmade reservoir that are below 1600 meters in the rift valley called Koka. These lakes and rivers are impressive stretches of fishing, boating, and birds watching beyond their vast potential for hydroelectric power.

The country is also gifted with unique plants species, birds, and animals. Getnet said that in Ethiopia there are over 6500 trees and plant species. Out of these 1845 are indigenous to Ethiopia. Again 760 are endemic species that are found only in Ethiopia. Thus, the country had a colossal potential in this area

both for further scientific examination and for attracting tourism. He also added that some indigenous animals and birds had a giant potential for balancing the ecosystem, for preparing medicine, consumption and recreation purpose.

These species had a greater impact on the climate of the country. As sources evidenced Ethiopia's weather conditions are warm and pleasant in lowland areas and cool and embracing in the central highlands of the country. Though the region is characterized by the two dominant seasons, the four seasons are regularly taking place in the region. The weather conditions of the country are generally pleasant and conducive for human beings and people are usually heard admiring people's hospitality.

When we consider history, Ethiopia is the unique country that witnesses human beings transition from Homo sapiens to Homo erectus. This transformation is practiced in the land of Ethiopia for the first time according to anthropology. As sources showed, it was the transition of human beings from four legs to two legs, but at that period the human walking erect was with his shrine. That is why Ethiopia is the land of human origin.

Culturally speaking, Ethiopia is the land of over 80 different languages and identities that each of them is with its unique cultural orchestrations and implications. These people had their way of living, eating style, dressing, dancing, marriage ceremonies, mourning styles, and many more different social interactions. Since each culture had its unique performance which carries the Indigenous knowledge and backgrounds of the people themselves, it stays the most adorable and impressive potential for Ethiopians to be admired and slobbered by people that know its real background.

Ethiopia has contributed two important natural gifts to be registered as an international heritage. These are Semen Mountain in 1978 and Bale Mountains

National Park in 2024. As Getnet said Ethiopia ranks first in Africa when it comes to contributing and sharing its heritage to the planet. He also said that Ethiopia had registered around 34 places like Gonder, Harrar, and the like in the international heritage list. The country has also registered 12 books including the book of Enoch. Thus, as he said Ethiopia is the first from Africa followed by Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt regarding its contribution and heritage. This means that Ethiopia is the leading African country that added its many heritages to the world's civilization.

Historically speaking, the country had a golden history in the continent. As sources showed, in 1960 the nations of the continent had decided to discuss and solve their own issues by themselves as one continent in the form of an organization called African Union. It was the Emperor of Ethiopia who took the initiative and played the leading role in its success. Since the non-colonized nation at that time was Ethiopia and its ruler was actively coordinating the case, the member countries had decided to base the headquarters of the meeting to be built in Addis Ababa. Thus, since 1963 May, the country has been conducting the meeting of OAU in Addis Ababa.

Beyond the regular meetings held in the city, Ethiopia has also been organizing lots of meetings, occasions, events, exhibitions and conferences that aim at various goals. The country had been undergoing through different political perspectives and commitments that had tried to affect the nation as per the priorities and intentions of the political parties that took the seat.

Now the question is what should Ethiopia do with these magnificent cultures, histories, natural blessings, heritages, and potentials to reap economic, social, and political benefits out of these possessions? The simplest response as Getnet said is to sell out the potential strategically and logically. Marketing them through tourism business

and tourism development is mandatory if change is really required in the sector and in the country too.

Addis Ababa is the fourth diplomatic city in the world. As Getnet said there are around 134 diplomatic consuls in the city. We could enumerate African Union, ECA, UNWGO, WTO, UNHCR, IOM, and many more international organizations and associations' branch offices in the city. He said this is an opportunity to develop leisure or business tourism. He underlined that from business tourism the bigger and more inclusive one is MICE.

MICE stands for meeting, incentive, convention or conference, and event or exhibition. The convention office that is organized for taking care of the mentioned tasks is one stream in the minister of tourism. As Getnet mentioned the office is said convention rather than a conference since it is a higher-level status. The meetings are made in the state level and are handled by the convention office. Again, the country had signed international conventions like UN convention, UNESCO convention, and WHO convention, the convention is the highest level to accommodate all issues.

Kaelleab Belachew, is an education and tourism expert and historian who has done his MA degree in MICE. He had an interview with Herald. He said that Addis Ababa had the greatest potential to exercise MICE industry. Currently, there are conducive situations. Like the extension of railways, corridors, ICT facilities, lodges, modern hotels, and big conference halls.

Thus, it is clear that Ethiopia has resources, skilled manpower, experiences, facilities, and working environments that best suit the MICE industry. As MICE is a way of tapping the country's potential of the country to economic benefits in the tourism sector, the country has marvelous resources and experiences in the sector, so with a simple rectifying measures this industry can bring an incredible change shortly.

# Indepth

## Food security in Africa: Managing water will be vital in a rapidly growing region

Sub-Saharan Africa's population is growing at 2.7% per year and is expected to reach two billion by the year 2050. The region's urban population is growing even faster: it was at 533 million in 2023, a 3.85% increase from 2022.

The need to feed this population will put pressure on land and water resources.

I'm part of a group of researchers who have looked at whether regional food production would be sufficient to supply growing urban populations. By and large, we have found high levels of food self-sufficiency. But climate change could put a spanner in the works.

We have also looked at the potential of local water conservation measures to help achieve food self-sufficiency in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our study shows that measures such as better irrigation or water harvesting could boost food production while buffering the vagaries of weather.

We found that ambitious – yet realistic – adoption of such measures increases food supply to cities and make the region as a whole self-sufficient.

### A new model

In large parts of eastern Africa, rainfall is relatively abundant and well distributed over the growing season, resulting in good yields. In future, however, the gap between water availability and crop water demand is expected to increase.

We wanted to know whether sub-Saharan Africa would be able to increase its food production to meet future demand, in a changing climate. To do so, we built a novel foodshed model which simulates crop production using climate data and links urban demand to nearby food supply. Foodsheds have been defined as areas where supply matches demand. We assessed various water management measures that could buffer weather variability or increase production (or both). Understanding the potential of such measures can help mobilise and target much needed investments in Africa's food system.

### Conserving water and growing more food

First, we looked at whether regional food production was sufficient to supply growing urban populations.

Combining large databases and crop simulations, we outlined the regions that food might come from for urban areas. Sub-Saharan Africa produces 85% of its overall crop food demand at present, according to our calculations, much of it in eastern Africa. Tanzania, Kenya, and even Uganda – if it were to use its food exports for domestic consumption – come close to being self-sufficient.

Local exceptions are the large cities of Mombasa, the largest port city in Kenya,



and Arusha, an important tourism and diplomatic and conference hub in Tanzania, and their immediate surroundings.

In future, a larger population will demand more food. At the same time, the gap between how much water is available and how much crops need is expected to increase. Higher water losses due to higher temperatures will not be fully compensated for by changes in rainfall, according to climate model projections. And even where rainfall is projected to increase, more extreme events are likely to affect crop production. It might rain either too much or too little, which will lead to higher year-to-year variability.

Our study shows that local water conservation measures could buffer some of the projected negative impacts of climate change in eastern Africa. It could also boost food production.

Water harvesting, soil conservation and making sure water infiltrates in the soil would slow runoff and store more water in the soil.

Irrigation systems should be gradually upgraded to drip irrigation or sprinklers. This will improve irrigation efficiency and water consumption. On rainfed areas, rainwater harvesting reservoirs should be installed. The water stored could be used for supplemental irrigation during dry periods. Soil moisture conservation measures will also be applied. These measures will prevent water from evaporating from the bare soil. Irrigation could offset occasional drought risk and so provide better financial stability or create possibilities for planting a different or a second or third crop, further increasing production and income.

Even the foodsheds of rapidly growing cities such as Dar es Salaam in Tanzania will be able to supply enough to meet demand from relatively short distances.

Large scale expansion of irrigation onto new lands should, however, be considered carefully. Potential trade-offs with energy and tourism incomes must equally be considered.

In an earlier study, assessing Tanzania's ambitious formal irrigation expansion

plans, we found that expansion without water conservation measures would pose considerable risk to hydropower production in the new Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project. It would also be a risk to river-dependent ecosystems and national parks and the substantial tourism income that they generate.

### Why our findings matter

Producing more food in Africa is essential to keep pace with population growth and changing diets. The alternative is an increasing dependence on imports from outside the continent. In 2021, the total value of Africa's food imports was roughly US\$100 billion. Imports can be a useful supplement to local production, but major food exporters in Europe and America are already producing at peak productivity. They have limited scope to increase area and production.

Security concerns around global supply chains in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and broader geo-political realignment have also made countries wary of relying too much on others.

Our study confirms the potential of Africa to supply much of the increased demand for food within the continent. We looked at all food crops, including regionally important ones such as cassava, beans and millet. Countries in eastern Africa play a pivotal role.

Improved productivity due to measures proposed would reduce the need for more land elsewhere to grow crops, and limit conflicts related to land use. This is equally important for biodiversity and tourism.

### Looking forward

What we propose requires large investments. Exploring these costs against benefits in a case study in the Rufiji basin in Tanzania we found that most water management measures would be cost effective, but only when considering the overall impact of water conservation on agriculture, hydropower production, and the riverine ecosystem.

Not all farmers will be able to finance these measures themselves. The government and private sector have to provide incentives, reduce risks and increase access to affordable loans.

Nor should these measures be taken in isolation. Other buffer mechanisms to support a stable food supply are increased storage facilities for food, diversified production, and stable and diversified trade relationships. With farmers innovating, the region's infrastructure rapidly developing, and expanding urban areas becoming catalysts for growth, there is both the need and the scope to further invest in and improve the region's food system.

(SOURCE: THE CONVERSATION)

**Improved productivity due to measures proposed would reduce the need for more land elsewhere to grow crops, and limit conflicts related to land use. This is equally important for biodiversity and tourism.**



# Law & Politics

## Continued resolve to effectuate Pretoria peace deal

BY FIKADU BELAY

The nature of global conflicts is evolving, which necessitates the development of new strategies and frameworks for conflict management, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction. This shift impacts not only Africa but also the broader international community. Unlike past wars where armies clashed on conventional battlefields, modern conflicts often involve asymmetric warfare, which cannot be addressed with traditional military tactics.

In recent years, alongside ongoing internal conflicts within states, the world has experienced a notable increase in violent extremism and terrorism. These developments highlight the complexity of contemporary conflict scenarios and the urgent need for innovative approaches that consider the unique characteristics of modern warfare and the ideological motivations driving these new forms of violence.

In this regard, peace building is essential for creating an environment conducive to development. At the same time, it has been shown that sustainable and fair development is crucial for achieving lasting peace in a nation. Both peace and development are interdependent; fostering one can significantly enhance the prospects for the other, leading to a stable society.

“African solutions for African problems” has lately been the boast of the continent since it found its voice and some muscle to attempt to confront its problems. However, implicit in this slogan is the notion that some problems are African problems that must be left to Africans to solve. Whatever the reality of the situation, solutions must be generated on the continent.

In this sense, one notable example of successful conflict resolution in Africa is the Pretoria Agreement, reached two years ago to address the conflict in northern Ethiopia. The conflict, which erupted in November 2020, was primarily between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). It resulted in significant humanitarian crises, displacing millions and leading to widespread suffering.

During the time, the chairman of the African Union and other prominent leaders facilitated the Pretoria Agreement marked a crucial turning point in the peace process. The negotiations aimed to establish a comprehensive ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian access, and create a framework for political dialogue.

Since the Ethiopian government and TPLF signing of the Pretoria Agreement, there have been notable developments, including the restoration of services in Tigray and the gradual resumption of routine in the region. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the reintegration of Tigrayan

forces and ensuring lasting peace.

According to the agreement, the TPLF armed forces are undertaking the significant task of surrendering their weapons to the government. This process is not merely a disarmament effort; it represents a crucial step toward fostering peace and stability in the region. By relinquishing their arms, the TPLF is signaling a commitment to resolving conflicts through dialogue rather than violence, a vital move for building trust among all parties involved.

Recently, it is to be recalled that following the Pretoria Peace Agreement, former militants handed over their heavy and medium weapons to the National Defense Forces in the presence of observers from continental and international institutions a year ago.

President Getachew Reda of the Interim Regional Administration stated that the ongoing efforts to rehabilitate 75,000 former militants in the Tigray Region represent a significant milestone. The first phase of these initiatives started on Thursday, with former combatants being enrolled in rehabilitation training centers.

Getachew noted that the rehabilitation efforts, led by the National Rehabilitation Commission in collaboration with the Interim Administration, prioritize the peace and security of the Tigray Region. He stated that these initiatives extend beyond mere disarmament; they aim to foster lasting peace.

He highlighted the encouraging progress made on the ground in rehabilitating former combatants and pointed out that coordinated efforts have produced tangible results.

Interim administration officials are collaborating closely with the federal government to promote peace and security in the region. Getachew explained that rehabilitating former combatants is essential for achieving broader development and peace goals.

These efforts encompass access to livelihood programs, educational opportunities, and essential social services, all aimed at helping former combatants lead stable and productive civilian lives. By investing in their rehabilitation, the initiative seeks to promote peace and stability in the region, fostering an environment where former fighters can contribute positively to their communities.

Getachew further hailed the National Rehabilitation Commission for its proactive approach and urged it to continue working diligently with the United Nations and other partners to effectively lead this process.

The government is actively involved in establishing recovery centers and enhancing infrastructure, which are crucial steps toward meeting the humanitarian

needs that have emerged from the ongoing conflict.

These rehabilitation efforts aim to support individuals and families affected by the disorder, particularly those who have been displaced. The rehabilitation will provide essential services, including medical care, psychological support, and vocational training, all designed to help communities heal and rebuild their lives.

The National Rehabilitation Commission data indicated that the government is dedicated to disarming and rehabilitating ex-militants across various regions. This edge includes providing necessary training and support to facilitate their reintegration into society.

Alongside the establishment of recovery centers, the government is prioritizing the restoration of critical infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and healthcare facilities. These improvements are vital for revitalizing the local economy and ensuring access to essential services that were disrupted during the conflict.

National Rehabilitation Commissioner Temesgen Tilahun highlighted that the centers in Mekelle, Edaghamus, and Adwa are set to accommodate 75,000 former combatants over the next four months.

The focus of these centers will be on disarmament, skills training, and promoting sustainable reintegration into society. This initiative reflects Ethiopia’s commitment to achieving lasting peace and stability by transforming former combatants into productive members of the community and enhancing national cohesion, he said.

Over two years, the commission aims to reintegrate 371,971 ex-militants identified nationwide, ensuring their permanent settlement within their communities, he noted.

These combined actions illustrate a comprehensive strategy for peace building. The disarmament of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the government’s recovery initiatives are closely linked efforts designed not only to cease hostilities but also to establish a foundation for sustainable development.

The agreement underscores the potential for African-led solutions to tackle conflicts within the continent. It emphasizes the significance of dialogue, compromise, and the involvement of regional organizations in promoting stability and peace in areas plagued by violence and unrest.

Consequently, the Pretoria Agreement serves as an inspiring model for conflict resolution in other troubled regions of Africa, such as Sudan and similar situations. By showcasing the effectiveness of collaborative approaches, it encourages a hopeful outlook for achieving lasting peace across the continent.

**By showcasing the effectiveness of collaborative approaches, it encourages a hopeful outlook for achieving lasting peace across the continent**

# Women in Focus

## Unreserved commitment to achieving dream

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Jitu Ewnetu, a fifth-year Software Engineering student at Addis Ababa University, was born in a small town called Mendida, in the West Showa Zone of Oromia State.

However, at an early age, when she was only two, she came to Jimma Town following her parent's move for work. It was there that she followed and completed her primary and secondary education.

Jitu is a bright student. This coupled with the encouragement of her parents; she was always successful in her learning and stood first in her studies, being an award winner. Even her university entrance grade was the highest second in the school.

As she told the Addis Zemen Amharic daily newspaper at the time that the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs organized the "International Day of the Girl" under the theme "Investing in Girls is building a better tomorrow for a country," and Jitu came to share her university experiences for juniors.

While talking about how she joined the software engineering field, Jitu said "I had a great passion for science and technology." "I have always had a great love for science and technology. My passion for this field has only grown as I've gotten older. I became curious about technology when I first heard the word 'astronomy,'" she added.

According to her, Jitu's interest in technology grew up by chance. "My father had an IBM computer. Even though I didn't have any know-how about computers, I used to touch them eagerly and unconsciously. When I became older, I started touching television and phones."

"When you are a woman, society tries to limit your interests. Some people will tell you boldly that you can't do it. More voices said "This is not your taste; however, this made me more eager to join this sector. Why they are telling me you cannot do this? I was asking myself. Then, with curiosity I started trying the "impossible ones"," she explained.

This challenge was testing her at the time she scored the highest grade at the university entrance exam. However, she never kneeled down for the encouragement. People that she approached were attempting to impose their interests on her, either directly or indirectly, and to follow their way thinking that their own needs would be for her.

When she asserted her ambition for the future, many around her were suspicious and had reservations thinking that it was beyond her capacity and a dream that cannot fulfilled no matter what. That was a thing that upset her a lot. "Everyone should follow his heart" she advised.



Jitu Ewnetu

**Y**oung girls should not let anyone abort their dreams and stop them from their way... However, the most important thing is that believing in their capability and allowing girls to decide by their own thereby become role models for their successors

The other challenge for Jitu was they were telling her that there was no woman who has achieved success in this sector before who can be a role model; she remembers that they used to tell her that she would not succeed because they did not succeed.

Of all the challenges, because the engineering course more years compared to the other fields, they were advising her to quit her studies, get married, and give birth

as the time did not wait for her but passed so swiftly.

Until she joined the university, she did not incline and decided to dream of becoming a software engineer; but a desire to become an engineer. Her inclination is her love for computers. When she reached high school, she only had basic computer knowledge; and she joined the university merely with that basic knowledge.

"I learned more about software when I took the first course in the engineering department. I was able to learn about software well there. Even taking my own limited knowhow about it, some people were discouraging me saying coding is more challenging for me. But the reality on the ground was not like that; after joining the field, everything can be learned from the beginning. I learned everything related to software and coding," she said.

According to her, anyone who is interested to learn and has a passion can learn it within a certain period of time. Such discouragement can kill anyone's interest, motivation and future hope.

While talking about the advantage and disadvantage of technology, Jitu said technology, depending on individual users' can be beneficial or harming. However, for her it is a remedy. It helps her to grasp new knowledge and skills.

"When I was a student, I had my way of reading. I didn't read a lot at once. If I get bored reading or writing; I watch physics, chemistry, and mathematics lessons on YouTube. I will practice exam questions that were prepared in earlier years. This, aside from banishing my boredom, it would build my capacity"

Jitu's life at the university was not easy, rather it was very demanding and even more difficult than she expected it. It is believed that when a student enters the university, he is separated from his family and learns a new way of life. It cannot be denied that this test is tough on women. "While I was at home, whenever something has happened, I would run to my mother and talk about the situation. However, in campus, I live with students coming from different areas. There are matters that my brothers and sisters tolerate them. Here, because the situations are not the same, I have to assimilate myself with others' behaviors and trend."

According to her, when some overcome the challenges they face and build themselves up, they cross over to a new phase of thinking and life; it is true that when others leave their homes, even their humanity is damaged and they end up in trouble.

Remembering that such things were a challenge in her first three or four years at university; she recalls this kind of reality is common at the university. But she advises young students to be focused, wise committed to their studies.

"Young girls should not let anyone abort their dreams and stop them from their way. Anyone intentionally or unintentionally may try to instill their idea, thinking it will be helpful. However, the most important thing is that believing in their capability and allowing girls to decide by their own thereby become role models for their successors," Jitu emphasized.

# Society

## Addressing spinal bifida, hydrocephalus health problems



BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

According to documents, spina bifida and hydrocephalus are two congenital conditions that can cause severe neurological issues. Spina bifida is a neural tube defect in which the spinal cord fails to form correctly, leaving an opening in the spine. Depending on the defect's severity and location, this can result in a range of disabilities.

Individuals may experience difficulties in walking, muscle weakness, incontinence, and coordination problems. The condition is usually detected during pregnancy or shortly after birth through physical exams or imaging tests.

Hydrocephalus, on the other hand, involves the abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain, leading to increased pressure within the skull. This can lead to brain damage, developmental delays, and intellectual impairment, depending on the severity and location of the defect.

In infants, hydrocephalus is often linked to spina bifida, but it can also occur independently due to other causes such as infections or complications during birth.

However, even if both of the cases are severe and serious health conditions that can affect the lives of individuals, the cases have not gotten the required attention across the world for various reasons.

Luckily, these days, several activities are underway to raise the awareness of the global community about Spina bifida and hydrocephalus and to let them better understand the causes, the early diagnosis and treatment options, and the care it should be given to affected individuals as well.

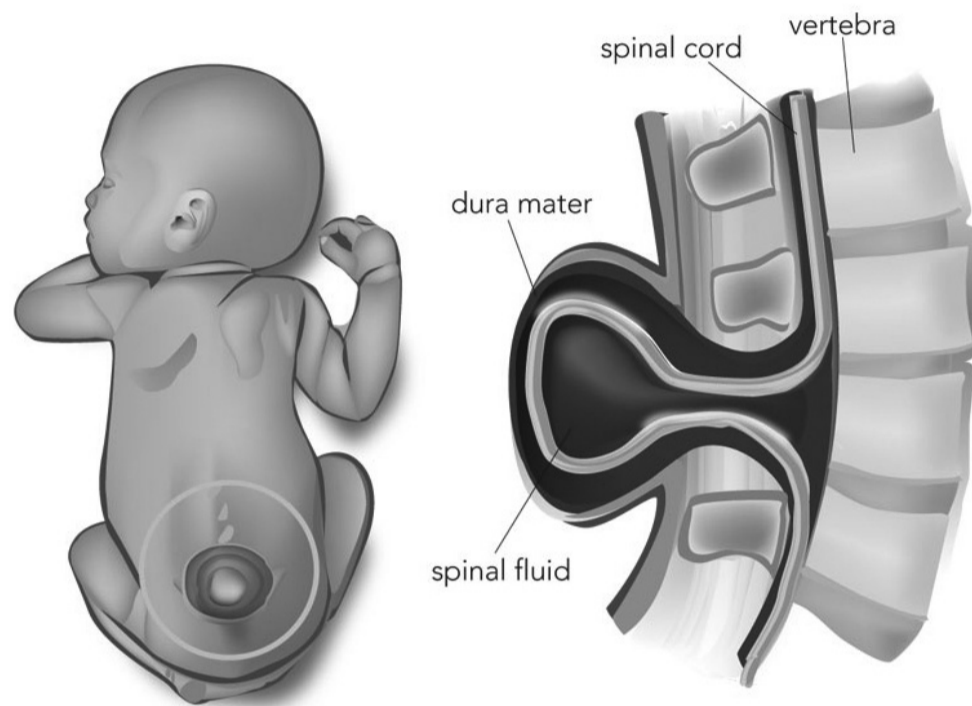
In view of this, the global community marks the World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day every year on October 25.

This year's World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day (WSBHD) was celebrated under the theme 'Bridging Gaps Together' with the aim to raise awareness and understanding about Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Aside from raising awareness about the cases, the day also serves as a platform to advocate and promote the rights of persons with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), this year's theme, 'Bridging Gaps Together', was chosen to fight stigma, discrimination, inequalities, and other barriers that people with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus face.

Here, in Ethiopia, this year World Spinal Bifida and Hydrocephalus Awareness Day



was observed at the HOPE-Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (HOPE-SBH) Center for the Care and Treatment of Affected Children with various events.

The event was marked under the theme "Let us lessen the burden of Spinal Bifida and Hydrocephalus Disease together."

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson of the Health, Social Development, Culture and Sport Affairs Standing Committee of the House of People Representatives, Werksemu Mamo said that deficiency of folic acid in mothers causes problems in the children they are born. Mothers should take folic iron during their pregnancy to prevent the case and alleviate the problem. However, if the case occurs, it is the responsibility of the society to take care and treat the children who are diagnosed with hydrocephalus disease; so that they become a productive generation for the country.

The President also explained that the Council of the House of Peoples' Representatives is closely monitoring the issue to restrain the spread of the case and prevent it and to ensure that it is supported by a legal framework.

Werksemu also appreciated and encouraged health professionals and staff of the Center who are providing treatment, care, and support services at the Center.

Lead Executive Officer of Nutrition Coordination at the Ministry of Health Hiwot Darsene, on her part said that pregnant mothers should appropriately take folic acid tablets before the first three months of their pregnancy to not develop to the occurrence of spinal bifida and hydrocephalus. Folic acid tablets can prevent 70-75 percent of the disease.

Mentioning that eating foods enriched in nutrition is the most effective way to be protected from the disease and its severe effects, Hiwot said that mothers should do proper pregnancy monitoring tests, get good care before, during, and after pregnancy, and take medicines prescribed only by health practitioners to give birth to children free from spinal bifida and hydrocephalus diseases and secure them from the permanent problems caused by the diseases. They should also improve their diet and give adequate care to their children.

At the conclusion of the event, recognition certificates were given to volunteers who are providing support and care for affected individuals at the Center.

The event was marked in the presence of stakeholders and pertinent bodies including members of the House of Representatives, leaders and health professionals from the Ministry of Health, leaders and professionals of the Center as well as pertinent organizations, volunteers, students, and invited guests.

International Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Awareness Day is observed annually to raise awareness about spina bifida and hydrocephalus, two serious neural tube defects that can affect individuals from birth. This day aims to promote education, advocate for better healthcare, and support research initiatives related to these conditions

Through fostering a better understanding of these conditions, communities can work towards reducing stigma and enhancing the quality of life for those impacted.

The World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day, established by the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IFSBH) in 2011, is a day to raise awareness, promote understanding, and advocate for the rights of individuals with these conditions. The theme for 2024, "Bridging Gaps Together", calls on all of us to join in creating a more inclusive world for everyone affected by Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

According to a report released by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Ethiopia has a very high prevalence of spina bifida, affecting about 40 cases per 10,000 births. At the current prevalence, each year, about 10,500 babies are born with spina bifida in Ethiopia.

HOPE-SBH is a non-governmental organization founded to contribute to a better quality of life for Ethiopian children with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus; and be a voice for their concerns.

**Through fostering a better understanding of these conditions, communities can work towards reducing stigma and enhancing the quality of life for those impacted**



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### HU's training to freshman students

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

New students' orientation programs are designed to ease the transition of new students into their academic environments. As diverse enrollments have increased throughout higher learning institutions, new student orientation programs have been identified as a key tool for establishing levels of expectation and performance, including the promotion of diversity issues.

Integrating rather than isolating diversity issues as well as using institutional leaders to stress the importance of tolerance and diversity is essential topic in new university students' orientations.

And higher education institutions have assumed some responsibility for assuring a level of social justice. It can take the form of an equality of access and affordability, but is also a manifest in breaking down stereotypes and bias, by allowing for the teaching, tolerance, and advocacy of diversity of thinking, ethnicity, and cultures. Often, the task has become reduced to general terms about teaching students to live a civic



Emana Beyene (PhD)

life in a democratic society.

Considering this as an obligation, Haramaya University's (HU) Freshman Program Directorate provided a three day long training to its new entrants, whom it endorsed last week, on time management, mental health, drug abstinence, and university life before starting classes in collaboration with the university's Student Services and Deliverology Directorate.

HU Career Development Directorate Director, Emana Beyene (PhD), said



Partial view of the 2024/25 entry students

that the training was designed to help new incoming students cope up with the pressures they face and achieve their goals, in his opening remarks.

Likewise, coordinator of the training, Paulos Wasihun (PhD), the training will help students to avoid getting into different addictions, to get rid of if involved in addictions so far, and to easily get introduced and communicate with students from different areas with varying cultures in their campus life.

By the same token, Student Counselor and Psychologist at HU Student Service Directorate, Dagim Adnew, said that new students from all over the country should use the knowledge they have gained from the training as it will determine their future.

At last, the partakers noted that the training has enabled them to overcome their fears and the pressures they may face noting that it has also shown them the direction to work with a plan from now on to achieve their esteemed goals.



## Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

### DaDU's child care facilities: UN rights of the child

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Ethiopian Laws recognizing that in all countries in the world there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration.

Specifically, UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child Preamble recalls that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare childcare institutions, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration.

As well, its Article 3 (1) obliges: "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

Similarly, its Article 12 (1) insists: "States

Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent/s, legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child."

Too Article 19 (1) notes that "child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State."

Equally, Article 20 (1) of the Convention requires that States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for a child besides recognizing the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development as indicated in Article 20 (2).

Understanding these, Dambi Dollo University

(DaDU) is actively engaged in promoting gender equality and addressing the social challenges faced by mothers with children. It is bridging the gap between men and women within any society or organization to address social issues in the workplace.

To foster gender equality at the university, efforts are being made to encourage diverse perspectives among students from various regions, cultivate a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, address gender-specific challenges encountered by female students, and enhance awareness of the rights and responsibilities of public servants.

In response to the challenges faced by employee mothers, the organization is facilitating childcare facilities to alleviate work-related stress associated with parenting during public service.

On the status of the child care facilities at DaDU, the Executive of Women's and Social Affairs, Tarikuwa Mekonnen stated that the child care facility was established to support mothers employed at the institution, allowing

them to focus on their work while ensuring their children are in a nurturing environment.

This initiative aims to facilitate a setting that enables mothers to engage in public service with peace of mind. The facility ensures that government resources are utilized efficiently while simultaneously addressing the social issues faced by mothers with children, she told DaDU Public and International Relations Directorate.

The caregivers are responsible for the daily care of over 20 children, both under and over the age of one, at the daycare center. This facility offers a welcoming and comfortable environment for the children, featuring playgrounds, bedrooms, bathrooms, toilets, and additional amenities that are being prepared and made available, as she stated.

In the future, there are intentions to enhance the child care area and develop more accommodating facilities. Several mothers utilizing the care services expressed their satisfaction with the support offered by the university, she concluded.



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