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Ambassador Dina Mufti

Ethiopia's seaport access envisions growth, regional peace: Diplomat

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's pursuit of seaport access is deeply intertwined with the nation's national interest and is grounded in a win-win approach, according to a seasoned diplomat.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Dina Mufti, who is a member of the House of People's Representatives Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee, highlighted Ethiopia's longstanding commitment to regional peace and stability. He also indicated that Ethiopia's foreign policy prioritizes neighboring countries and reflects its role as an anchor of peace in the Horn of Africa (HoA).

Ethiopia's quest for an alternative seaport access stems from its growing economy and increased trade demands. For years, Ethiopia has relied heavily on Djibouti

See Ethiopia's seaport ... page 3



Photo: Dange Abera

President stresses mapping out strategic actions for Africa's peace

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA--Africa has wielded pivotal role in navigating global shifts toward peace and prosperity, President Taye Atske-Selassie said, calling on the continent to prepare for challenges and seize opportunities presented by these changes.

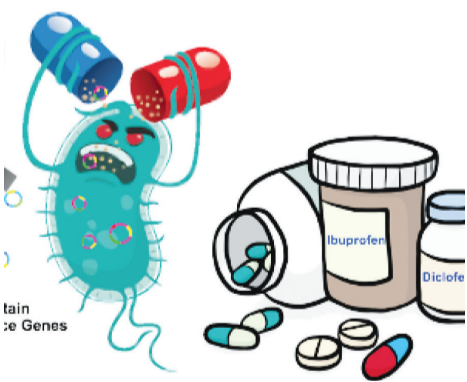
In his opening remarks at the Continental Peace Conference yesterday, President Taye also emphasized the need for robust strategies grounded in commerce and technology to establish a foundation for lasting peace.

While acknowledging Africa's positive developments, he pointed to ongoing crises

that hinder peace-building efforts, making the conference a crucial platform for generating and institutionalizing ideas that promote peace and development.

The President highlighted the inseparable link between development and peace, advocating

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Authority implementing joint strategy to combat antimicrobial resistance

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'Quality Village' moves export competitiveness into high gear

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDISABABA--The government reiterated its commitment on penetrating the global market with high-quality export products as it inaugurated a quality infrastructure dubbed "Quality Village" in the capital.

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) inaugurated the infrastructure, built at a cost of over 5.3 billion Birr, aimed at maximizing the quality and volume of products.

Inaugurating the "Quality Village,"

See 'Quality Village' ... page 3



News

Commission empowering communities towards sustainable dev't

- Launches coalition of self-help groups to maximize support

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

When Nigatua Mekonnen, a resident in Adama city of Oromia state, found herself in harsh economic conditions 20 years ago, she and her family endured an indescribable hardship. This challenging period continued until she joined a local self-help group initiated by the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church Development Commission (EKHCDC) to support people in despair like her.

The self-help group had enabled her to bring about behavioral change towards winning life through minimum savings and small businesses. Then, she began saving with an initial 0.50 cent, took a financial loan from the group and started an animal fattening business which totally changed her life and empowered her to educate and graduate her children, who are currently working in various organizations. Nigatua is now a member of the leadership of the self-help groups in which she is actively engaged in training programs sharing her life experience to trainees across the country.

The self-help group concept that was introduced with 100 Birr credit two decades ago has now reached a financial capability to provide a 600,000 Birr credit to members. EKHCDC's Livelihood, Development and Disaster Response Programs Director Dinku Shumi expressed that his commission promotes community-led sustainable development with the active participation of self-help local groups, which is why it introduced the concept in 2002 by drawing



Nigatua Mekonnen

lesson from India. "It is all about bringing communities together to form their own institution that help them to collaborate with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to protect their rights and benefits," he said.

A coalition of three self-help groups under the umbrella of Yenege Tesfa Self Help Collaboratives was launched last Saturday in Adama by EKHCDC. During the event, Nigatua elaborated on the invaluable role of self-help groups in achieving sustainable development. She also presented this year's plan of the coalition designed to support thousands citizens in education, health and livelihood improvement.

The establishment of the coalition is a significant step in the development of the local groups, enabling them to administer



Tefera Talore

their activities independently, support their members, and cooperate with partners, said EKHCDC Commissioner Tefera Talore (PhD). The coalition now has 10,800 individual members, 46.3 million Birr in savings and a total capital of over 83 million Birr. It envisions the realization of an economically developed, technologically advanced, self-empowered and committed community for sustainable development. The coalition spent a total budget of 26 million Birr in the first year to work on sustainable livelihood development, health and education, in addition to other capacity building activities.

According to Shumi, EKHCDC's is working with international partners including Warande Advisory Center and Sharetrust. These organizations promote the concerted efforts among self-help local groups established to

achieve community driven development.

During Saturday's event, Warande Advisory Centre LCA Co-Founder and Partner Chilande Kuloba-Warria expressed her optimism towards the success of the coalition, saying, "I see a community where every voice is heard, every leader is empowered, and every child has a chance to dream. It is a vision today, because we are making it happen."

She believed that the establishment of the coalition is a showcase of the success of individuals who came together and took charge of their future. The self-help groups incorporated under this coalition are the quintessence of success achieved through a collaborative effort of contributions from every member, including solutions towards overcoming challenges.

"I myself, and I think, my colleagues, are products of self-help groups." Growing up through such groups in Kenya, she was able to move to Nairobi for a better life from her rural village, located near the border between Kenya and Uganda.

Sustainable development must be rooted in local context, as any other plan imposed on the people will not succeed. The self-help group model is truly where everything should start, as they represent trust, accountability and shared responsibility, which are the values of a thriving community. These groups are models of inclusion, innovation and impact. Mentioning the local groups' role in supporting people to make money, get an education, Chilande suggested that their impact will go beyond Ethiopia.

Ethiopian products to shine globally through GI

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADAMA-The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA) emphasized that applying geographical indications (GI) to Ethiopian agricultural products can enhance their global market penetration, safeguard their reputation, and foster recognition among local and international consumers.

Geographical indications involve identifying products with specific origins and unique characteristics tied to a region, nation, or locality. At a workshop held in Adama yesterday, EIPA Director General Woldu Yemessel highlighted the importance of registering products such as coffee, honey, cattle, sesame, fruits, and flowers as geographically indicated items to protect their unique qualities and establish a distinct reputation globally.

The workshop, organized to validate Ethiopia's draft law on geographical indications for origin-linked products, brought together stakeholders to discuss implementing the GI system. The initiative aims to create awareness among communities, promote Ethiopian products domestically and internationally, and reap significant economic benefits.



Woldu stated that geographically designed products help gain international recognition, protect their identity, and increase their appeal for both export and local consumption. "Identifying and registering these products as geographical indications guarantees their authenticity, protects creativity, and ensures credibility in national and international markets," he said.

The Director General also noted that EIPA is actively working to safeguard and

register agricultural products and other properties as geographical indications. This effort, he added, will benefit producers by guaranteeing product quality, curbing unfair competition, and encouraging creative use of local resources.

The draft GI law, once validated, will be implemented after awareness campaigns targeting local communities. These campaigns will highlight the advantages and impacts of the GI system, which aims to elevate Ethiopian products' visibility and

competitiveness.

ICIPE Ethiopia Apiculture Lead, Freweini Asefa (PhD), echoed the benefits of geographical indications. She explained that geographic names—whether of countries, regions, or specific villages—are powerful tools for enhancing product reputation and marketability. She emphasized that GIs could stimulate economic growth, command premium prices in global markets, prevent counterfeiting, and establish production standards.

The workshop, organized by EIPA in collaboration with the International Centre of Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) Ethiopia, focused on refining the draft law and preparing it for implementation. By promoting the GI system, Ethiopia aims to bolster its export market, enhance its national development, and provide consumers with authentic products tied to their origins.

The initiative underscores the potential of Ethiopian products to thrive in international markets by leveraging their unique characteristics and origins. As the GI system is adopted, Ethiopian agricultural products stand to gain recognition, trust, and value worldwide.

News

Authority implementing joint strategy to combat antimicrobial resistance

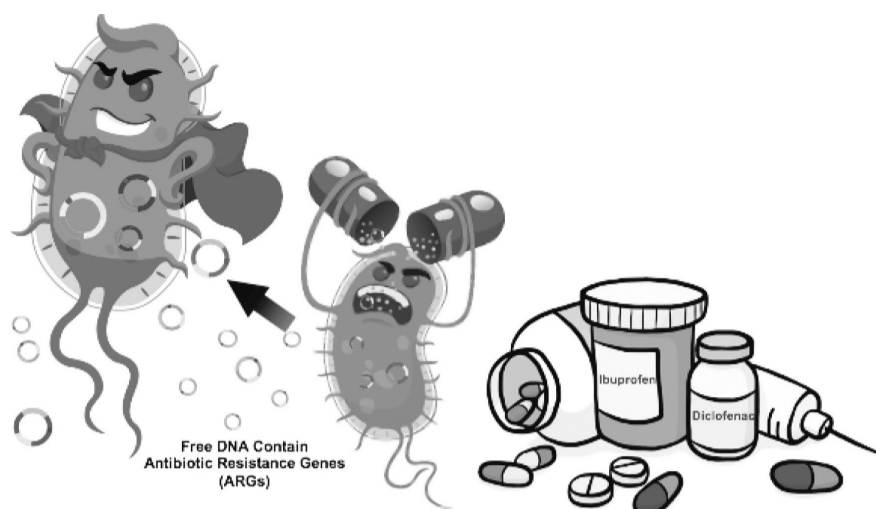
BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority disclosed that a joint strategy is being implemented with active participation of stakeholders to control antimicrobial resistance.

Authority's Drug Safety Monitoring and Clinical Trials Director, Asnakech Alemu, told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) that the issue of antimicrobial resistance is being addressed through a joint strategy involving stakeholders engaged in health, agriculture, environment, and other sectors due to the seriousness of the case.

The authority is working to raise awareness about the problem and its impact on health, economic and social affairs.

To prevent the problem at the national level, it is necessary to implement strict regulations on the use of antimicrobial drugs, especially in healthcare and agriculture, Asnakech stated, adding that raising public awareness on the responsible use of antimicrobial drugs is also crucial to maintain health through creating a personal



and environmental hygiene routines.

According to her, antimicrobial drugs play a crucial role in ensuring safe medical procedures. However, the inappropriate use of the drugs in humans, animals, and plants also leads to drug resistance and loss of efficacy.

"International cooperation is essential to prevent the problem, and governments must invest in research and share information and strategies," she said.

Ethiopia had celebrated the International Antimicrobial Resistance Week from November 9 to 15 under the theme "Educate, Inform, Act Now," which served as a platform to call on stakeholders across various sectors to come together and confront the growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance that poses a serious threat to global health.

According to the World Health Organization, antimicrobial resistance caused more than 1.2 million deaths worldwide in 2019.

'Quality Village' moves export competitiveness...

Abiy said that the new facility would help the nation maintain the quality of domestic products and increase international competitiveness.

The Premier added that the "Quality Village" is designed to enhance the competitiveness of the local products in global markets and improve country's participation in global value chains.

"As one of our leading national institutions, it will play a vital role in strengthening our export capabilities and ensuring we remain competitive in the international arena," he noted.

Similarly, Deputy Prime Minister, Temesgen Tiruneh said that the establishment of the "Quality Village" is of great importance to upgrade the quality of Ethiopia's export products.

According to Temesgen, a strong quality control system should be developed as it helps ensure the standard of production, productivity and procurement process.

"Particularly, in agriculture, manufacturing industry, medical sector, technology and other fields, the "Quality Village" is of great importance to maintain quality and avoid waste. It helps to ensure international competitiveness," he said.

He further stated that the "Quality Village" infrastructure assists in laying the foundation for sustainable development through exporting quality products and realizing global competitiveness.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Trade and Regional Integration Minister, Kassahun Gofe (PhD) said that Ethiopia

built Africa's leading "Quality Village" allocating a huge amount of money aimed at realizing quality products.

As a country amongst the major producers of cereals, pulses, and oilseeds, he stated Ethiopia is striving to take a unique position in the global markets with processed export products.

The newly inaugurated "Quality Village" incorporates laboratories that test ceramic, battery and solar energy equipment, which are not widely available in many African countries. According to the Prime Minister's office, the infrastructure houses institutions such as the Ethiopian Standards Institute, Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise, Ethiopian Metrology Institute, Ethiopian Accreditation Service, and Ethiopian Technology Authority.

Ethiopia's seaport access envisions growth, regional ...

for its maritime trade, but the nation's steady economic growth has prompted a need for diversified trade routes. Dina noted that Ethiopia and other HoA nations are deeply interconnected in their economies, cultures, and politics, and their destinies are similarly intertwined. He stressed that the pursuit of additional seaports aligns with Ethiopia's national interest and its vision for mutual benefits with neighboring nations.

The veteran diplomat further elaborated on Ethiopia's contributions to regional stability, citing its significant role in peace-building and its leadership in the establishment of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Ethiopia has consistently played a critical role in fostering regional harmony, and its efforts to secure seaport access are integral to its broader strategy for economic growth

and stability.

Ethiopia's foreign policy prioritizes peace and collaboration with neighboring countries, a principle reflected in its continued support for Somalia's stability. Dina emphasized that Ethiopia views Somalia's peace as essential to its own, stating, "Somalia's peace is Ethiopia's peace too. Peace is a collective endeavor." He also mentioned Ethiopia's ongoing involvement in peacekeeping missions across Africa, including in Congo, Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia, reaffirming the nation's commitment to global and continental stability.

In addressing recent comments about Ethiopia's exclusion from certain peacekeeping missions, Ambassador Dina reiterated Ethiopia's enduring contributions to international peace efforts. He stated that

the country continues to play a vital role in peacekeeping, particularly in Somalia, where its involvement remains strong. Ethiopia's commitment to maintaining regional peace underscores its broader goal of fostering stability and economic cooperation in the HoA.

Ethiopia's strategic quest for seaport access reflects its vision for growth and its dedication to strengthening regional ties. By prioritizing peace, stability, and economic integration, Ethiopia continues to position itself as a key player in promoting prosperity for the HoA and beyond. The seasoned diplomat concluded by affirming Ethiopia's unwavering focus on collective progress, emphasizing that the nation's foreign policy remains centered on building unity and shared success with its neighbors.

President stresses...

for practical security applications and greater integration within Africa's free trade areas. He stressed the importance of leveraging institutions to address complex peace-building challenges and promoting collective, holistic governance approaches. Raising concerns about climate change, he criticized the inadequate global response and urged sustainable solutions to mitigate its impacts on the continent.

Peace Minister Binalif Andualem detailed Ethiopia's ongoing peace-building initiatives, including the National Dialogue, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), and Transitional Justice (TJ) programs, describing these as vital for achieving sustainable peace. Reflecting Ethiopia's legacy as a founding member of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, he urged African nations to embrace "African solutions to African problems." He emphasized the importance of unity and diversity in shaping national and continental narratives, linking environmental initiatives like Ethiopia's Green Legacy program to broader peace-building efforts. "Peace building requires unity, inclusivity, and diversity," he stated.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Ramiz Alkabroz, (PhD), also addressed the conference, stressing that peace is essential not only for Ethiopia and Africa but for the global community. "Silencing the gun is important; there is no development without peace," he noted, urging a peaceful resolution to the root causes of conflicts.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security at the African Union, highlighted Ethiopia's significant contributions to regional peace and stability, noting the government's commitment to resolving conflicts and achieving justice through transitional justice initiatives. He also revealed that the African Union has allocated one million USD to support Ethiopia's DDR process.

The Continental Peace Conference, organized by the Ministry of Peace, brought together an array of influential participants, including President Taye Atske-Selassie, ministers, state chiefs, representatives from the United Nations and African Union, religious leaders, youth representatives, and delegates from African nations. The event serves as a platform for fostering unity, collaboration, and actionable strategies to address Africa's peace-building challenges and promote sustainable prosperity across the continent.

Opinion

Ethiopia's commitment in implementing Pretoria Peace Accord

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It should not be forgotten that following the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country, the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) reached a cessation of hostility agreement. In the aftermath of the Pretoria peace agreement, the two parties reached a suspension of hostilities under the African Union-brokered peace deal.

Ethiopia left no stone unturned to resolve the conflict through a round-table discussion, emphasizing peace. However, the anticipated target has been accomplished over time. After the peace accord, the federal government set in motion paving the way for the distribution of humanitarian assistance and restoration of social infrastructure at the earliest possible juncture.

It should be borne in mind that the inhabitants of the northern part of the country had been suffering from a broad range of encounters. In more concrete terms, their lives were unwaveringly turning into a living hell and going from the frying pan into the fire. However, over time, the peace accord at the earliest possible moment ended up making the whole thing history and turning the tide.

Owing to the positive achievements of the peace accord, the war-affected areas have started seeing light at the end of the tunnel and breathing a sigh of relief. It is worth recalling that some groups have been going to the ends of the earth to pour cold water on the positive developments. Had not been for the commitment of the federal government, the inhabitants of the northern part of the country would not have started living in peacemaking the past conflict history. The good thing is that all stakeholders did not hesitate to put the Pretoria peace accord into effect.

As wet blankets dissatisfaction has no limit, they have sustained mystifying the wider international community with more than a few misleading pieces of information that do not reflect the existing reality. It should be remembered that the government has been working around the clock to put the peace accord into effect attaching great importance to the Pretoria agreement.

In the reality of today's world, the positive strides of the federal government to reverse the course of events and return the whole kit and caboodle in the war-stricken areas to normalcy have won the hearts and minds of the global community.

Though some groups played a key role in belittling the role of the peace deal to be brokered by the African Union, Ethiopia has expressed its strong stance to the continental bloc to broker the peace deal. In the present climate, stakeholders have set



in motion effectuating the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration process.

It should be underscored that the government in a number of instances has made known its stance to go along with the rules and regulations of the African Union (AU) led peace accord. Ethiopia's stance proves its confidence in Africa's capability to resolve its predicaments on its own without third-party intervention.

There is no doubt that the federal government is fully dedicated to the Pretoria peace accord and putting the agreement into practice. This massive move being taken by the federal government unaccompanied by the participation of any third party demonstrates the firm commitment of the government to bury the hatchet.

Underscoring the determination of the government to put the Pretoria peace accord into practice, Ethiopia has been playing a significant role over and over again.

It appears clear that the Pretoria Peace Accord has hugely helped the Tigray people allowing them to pursue their daily lives deprived of fear and restoring the damaged social services. In the same manner, the agreement has helped them obtain electricity, health, education, telecommunication, air transport bank services, and other things of a similar kind.

After the signing of the peace accord, the government has been putting in place successful measures with the intention of bringing about peace and tranquility. Though quite a lot of efforts have been made by some groups to attach little importance to the African Union-led peace deal, Ethiopia through the passage of time turned out to be triumphant over the peace deal.

It is not secret that despite Ethiopia's attempt jumpstarted producing results and coming to fruition, some wet blankets that have an aversion to Ethiopia's positive achievements have been preoccupied with negative campaigning.

In actual fact, AU's endeavor to oil the wheels of mediating the cessation of hostilities agreement has played a paramount role in reinstating peace and stability in the Tigray region. As a matter of fact, AU's role deserves massive respect and appreciation. Its success story serves as a remarkable example to other African nations working on resolving disputes and resolution of conflict.

Though a lot has been said in connection with AU's capability in brokering the peace accord, the continental bloc proved worrywarts wrong making peace happen successfully. The breakthrough step proves Africa's capability to get to the bottom of predicaments and reinforce peace and stability. The AU-led peace deal has played a dominant role in promoting sustainable peace and stability.

Efforts to ensure the sustainable reintegration of former combatants from the Tigray region have begun recently by enrolling them into rehabilitation training centers, according to information obtained from ENA. These centers aim to provide the necessary support to transition former fighters into civilian life. The initiative requires former combatants to hand over their arms, including heavy and medium weaponry, as part of their entry into the rehabilitation process.

In the first phase, the ex-combatants at the Mekelle Rehabilitation Training Center have handed over their individual and group weapons to the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, signifying a commitment to the disarmament and reintegration process.

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.

The launch event was attended by Brigadier General Derby Mekuria, Deputy Commissioner of the National

Rehabilitation Commission and representative of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, alongside military officials, representatives of the Tigray interim administration, and partners from the African Union, European Union, United Nations, and other stakeholders.

The program envisions former combatants completing their training and reintegrating into their communities with the necessary financial and material support to lead stable civilian lives. This includes access to livelihood programs and social services.

National Rehabilitation Commissioner, Temesgen Tilahun noted that the centers in Mekelle, Edaghamus and Adwa will collectively accommodate 75,000 former combatants over the next four months.

The program will focus on disarmament, providing skills training, and fostering sustainable reintegration into society. This initiative underscores Ethiopia's commitment to lasting peace and stability by transforming former combatants into productive members of society and strengthening national cohesion.

Over a two-year period, the commission plans to reintegrate the 371,971 ex-militants identified nationwide ensuring their permanent settlement within the community. The National Rehabilitation Commission announced that the government is working with commitment on disarming and rehabilitating ex-militants in various regions, undergoing rehabilitation training and support necessary to rejoin society.

Apart from giving birth to the envisioned target, the peace accord has been paving the way for making peace and stability happen. It is worth pointing out that right from the beginning of the conflict, civilians in the Northern part of the country passed through many ups and downs to reach where they are nowadays. As things stand at present, Ethiopia has been accomplishing substantial accomplishments in ensuring peace and tranquility. This is a great move.

If the entire situation in the region keeps going in such a manner, accomplishing the desired goal in the length and breadth of Tigray will be as easy as falling off a log. In addition, all pertinent bodies should work hand in glove to take the region to the next level of accomplishment making the impossible possible and the unthinkable thinkable in the shortest possible time.

As people in the absence of peace feel like a fish out of water and a chicken with its head cut off, they should make everything they should to make peace happen no matter what the cost may be.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's exemplary stride for peace, tranquility

On account of the priceless nature of peace and security, African states, through their ministerial officials, of course, have been discussing peace at a conference organized under the theme "Building a Prosperous and Peaceful Africa," in Addis Ababa.

In due course of ensuring peace and security in the Horn in particular and in the entire continent and beyond in general, Ethiopia has been playing a pivotal role in paving peaceful avenues and fostering tranquil processes. Yes, whenever Africa is committed to move in unison regarding all aspects centering peace and tranquility, making a difference can absolutely be at its door. Hence, all the countries have to be united in peace, be strong in security and develop firm dedication with a view to coming up with a stable continent luring other as it has what is needed like natural resources, untapped tourism potential, mesmerizing landscape, among others.

The Continental Peace Conference, in which over 400 participants drawn from some 22 countries across the continent are participating, has been underway, and will absolutely be paramount importance in creating unwavering and prosperous Africa. Thanks to these African countries representatives for their diligence to add value to the effort geared toward peace and tranquility as they participated in the grand continental peace conference, so did diplomats stationed in Addis Ababa and non-governmental organizations working in the peace sector.

Unequivocally, Ethiopia's extensive experience in peacekeeping missions and its determination to ensure peace in itself and across the continent can be cited as an important milestone for making Africa secure. As the conference has served as a platform to showcase Ethiopia's contribution to regional, continental and global peace, it has to be given due recognition and other African states should follow suit.

The commitment of Ethiopia for its positive contribution to peace and security in Africa and globally is being well accredited, in actual fact.

It is well recognized that Ethiopia's significant contributions to the AU and the United Nations since 1951, particularly its leadership in peacekeeping missions in Somalia and other regions, has well been imprinted in bold manuscripts, and has become a good lesson for any country of the planet.

In fact, the urgent need for collaborative efforts among African nations so as to tackle escalating conflicts, the rise of armed groups and the alarming levels of food insecurity exacerbated by climate-related crises, has to be well intensified. Without a shadow of doubt, the growing geopolitical tensions could threaten Africa's sovereignty and stability unless the continent is systematic and inquisitive in strengthening unity and fraternity against peace-loathing elements. The conference is seen as a pivotal moment for African nations to reaffirm their dedication to peace and security, with hopes for actionable outcomes that will help silence the guns and foster stability throughout Africa.

The conference should delve into topics that aim at bolstering continental security and enhancing tranquility among African nations by highlighting the importance of strengthening existing partnerships to combat regional as well as global security threats of all sorts.

The Continental peace conference being held in Addis Ababa has been showcasing Ethiopia's commitment for making peaceful Africa via reinvigorating potential devices against Africa's peace and security challenges. Therefore, conferences like this are instrumental in intensifying peace efforts and their proper implementation towards having a nonviolent continent.

The lessons drawn from each endeavor to ensure peace and security should be well exhibited so as not to repeat similar mistakes. Such an audacious approach is of significantly useful in saving the continent from the vicious circle of conflict and instability. The peace effort thus let fellow Africans to engage in productive development activities. In so doing, Ethiopia will remain pioneer and active game changer in due course of ensuring peace in Africa working along with other African nations.

Opinion

Conference signifies Ethiopia's efforts to ensure peace

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Ethiopia never tries to attack or invade another state because it values peace. Additionally, the country contributes significantly to global peace in several ways, such as its diplomatic endeavors, involvement in peacekeeping operations, and function as a center for international organizations.

Ethiopia is working to promote world peace and stability through diplomacy. In the past, it has mediated disputes both inside and outside of the Horn of Africa. Its administration frequently takes a neutral stance in talks, using its connections with nearby nations to promote communication and peacemaking.

In terms of peacekeeping, Ethiopia contributes significantly to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Ethiopian forces have served in many missions throughout Africa, assisting in the stabilization of a violent and conflict-affected continent. Ethiopia has established itself as one of the top countries contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations, making major contributions to regional and global peacekeeping efforts. Moreover, the country is one of the world's top five contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. Its soldiers have served in South Sudan, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other locations in Africa. Ethiopia has been taking part in the UN peacekeeping effort in Korea on a global scale.

In addition to UN operations, Ethiopia is a key player in regional peacekeeping efforts, particularly through the African Union. The AU has deployed missions to war zones such as Somalia and South Sudan, with strong Ethiopian involvement. Ethiopian forces have been heavily deployed to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where they have played an important role in battling terrorism and restoring regional stability.

The country also engages in mediation and conflict resolution efforts. Ethiopia has been engaged in mediating disputes in the Horn of Africa, using its military presence and diplomatic channels to encourage peace talks between warring groups. In addition, Ethiopia has trained peacekeepers from other African countries, helping to improve regional capabilities for peacekeeping missions. This involves instruction in military tactics, logistics, and peacekeeping strategies.

Given these facts, the most crucial question in this situation is whether Ethiopia is still committed to maintaining peace and stability in Africa and whether it is fulfilling its historical role in doing so.

The answer is that Ethiopia is dedicated to maintaining peace and stability in Africa regardless of its political and ideological inclinations and regime.

African Union Political, Peace, and Security Commission Commissioner Ambassador Bankole Adoye also added that in order for Africa to accomplish sustainable development goals, the continent must first secure long-term peace and security. In this regard, he emphasized that Ethiopia makes major contributions to ensuring regional and continental peace.

In addition to the Ethiopian government's commitment to peacefully resolving the war in northern Ethiopia, it is working tirelessly to secure long-term justice and peace through transitional justice. He also applauded the Ethiopian government for disarming ex-militants and investing billions of dollars to assist them reintegrate into society and live normal lives, he explained.

It is true that Ethiopia is devoted to resolving not just the country's internal peace concerns, but also the continent's conflict. The Addis Ababa peace conference could serve as a practical example. The conference was conducted under the topic "Continental Conference on Peace, Prosperity, and Development," with a focus on "Building Peaceful and Prosperous Africa."

The conference is critical for Africa because it demonstrates how and by what procedures Africa can maintain peace and security on the continent. Additionally, Africa and its people must prepare for and deal with geopolitical forces. Because Africa must embrace its leaders' potential while remaining cautious to properly manage the ever-changing geopolitical landscape. Global rivalry is rising, and geopolitical competition has reached a high degree. As a result, Africa must be adequately prepared and equipped to promote peace and prosperity.

There have been attempts to resolve conflict and instability in Africa, but failure to manage the situation correctly and quickly could result in irreversible disasters, particularly for Africa. To face the evolving geopolitical problems, and the peace problems, the continent must seek to utilize its leaders' ability and vision. This is why the conference is so crucial.

In general, Ethiopia's dedication to peace, as well as the contributions made to the peace conference, are critical not only for maintaining stability inside its boundaries but also for fostering peace across Africa and beyond. Hence, the conference is imperative to signify and show Ethiopia's role and commitment to resolving conflicts and maintaining security.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Instant payment systems in Africa embracing inclusivity despite multiple challenges

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

More than 400 million people in Africa are financially excluded which makes them to be left behind from benefitting the finance and economic activities of their respective countries, according to the State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems (SIIPS 2024) annual report.

The annual report released by AfricaNenda, a foundation which works on promoting inclusive instant payment systems in the continent further indicates that only 45 % of the continent's adult population are able to access instant payment systems and even these members of the population have to grapple with challenges like energy, internet connectivity, and a lack of cross-border trade facilitation in the continent.

Hence despite some levels improvements observed in the existing systems, inclusivity remains a formidable challenge that needs more intervention in terms of connectivity, energy supply and legal frameworks that enable data privacy and security, among others, the report indicated.

The foundation launched its third annual State of Inclusive Instant Payment Systems in Africa (SIIPS 2024) report in Accra, Ghana, on November 20, 2024, in collaboration with the Bank of Ghana and Ghana Interbank Payment and Settlement Systems (GhIPS).

In his opening remark Foundation Chief Executive Officer Robert Ochola (PhD) said "One of the foundational pillars for Africa's structural transformation is financial inclusion. To uplift millions of our brothers and sisters from poverty, we must provide them with the tools and infrastructure necessary to empower them financially. This includes enabling every African to own and access a form of financial wallet"

Instant Payment Systems (IPS) are retail payment systems that are open loop and that enable irrevocable, low value, digital credit push transactions in near real-time for use 24 hours a day, 365 days a year unless there is planned maintenance or system downtime, AfricaNenda, SIIPS 2024 Report explains.

In addition to this, Inclusivity is mentioned as the bottom-line factor that determines whether IPS can help address the gaps in financial service delivery and the resulting economic outcome for cross-sections of society.

Ochola elaborated "At AfricaNenda Foundation, we recognized the importance of understanding and addressing the barriers to financial inclusion. Over the past three years, we have worked to document the challenges and quantify the opportunities through our flagship SIIPS reports."

Representing the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) a key partner in the preparation of the report, Stephen Karingi noted that ensuring an inclusive and instant payment system in Africa plays a decisive role in realizing one of the continent's flagship projects of Agenda 2063, which is putting in place the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"Today, we celebrate not only the findings of



Robert Ochola (PhD)

the third edition of the SIIPS report but also the crucial discussions on interoperability and governance frameworks -essential components for Africa's digital future. As we strive to advance regional integration, instant payment systems are essential in providing secure, real-time, and inclusive financial services across borders. At ECA, we acknowledge the pivotal role that these instant payment systems play in supporting regional integration in Africa, particularly in promoting digital financial inclusion in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) implementation."

Over the years a few number of IPS have passed through the gradual levels of inclusivity and attained the progressing levels. Based on the improvements observed so far, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation Sabine Mensah expresses hope to see more inclusive IPS in the continent in the coming 3 to 5 years.

"This year, we have 26 countries that have access to instant payment systems, and they are live. 27 countries are about to launch the instant Payment Systems. Out of these, 7 of them will be live in the next 18 months. So if you put 26 country lives and then the 27 that are coming eventually, all African countries will have a live instant payment system in the next 3 to 5 years. And for us, this is great momentum and instant payment system"

With their current level of inclusivity, the IPS in the continent are able to process some 49 billion transactions which, in terms of value have surpassed the 1 trillion USD mark.

However, without dwelling much on the successes achieved so far, it is compelling to focus on further reaching out to the large number of the continent's population that remain unreached due to various constraints.

"While we celebrate record highs in transaction volumes and values through Instant Payment Systems (IPS), we must also confront a sobering reality: 45% of adults in Africa remain financially excluded as well as Over 400 million adults lack access to the financial tools they need to save, manage finances, and build resilience against life's uncertainties," said Ochola in his remarks.

This situation calls for revamping the activities that boost the inclusivity of the IPS. The IPS have to expand their accessibility to the large number of unreached people by taking various measures. Indeed, regardless of the extent to which they are moving forward,



Sabine Mensah

there are some steps in enhancing inclusivity scored by the existing IPS in the continent.

"The other thing we have noticed is that inclusivity is improving. Last year, we had 5 countries that were at a progressed inclusivity level. Today, we have 9 systems. Last year's 5 systems and this year's 9 systems actually cover 13 countries because 1 system is regional, i.e. the GMAC. This is good news for the ecosystem. Systems are becoming more and more inclusive. Those for me are critical differences that we need to take into consideration" according to Mensah.

Realizing a smooth inclusive IPS is primarily a matter of duly advanced fintech in a country. However, fintechs cannot shoulder the entire task of ensuring any level of IPS. For instance, the IPS need mobile phones, basic or smart, reliable network connectivity as well as an adequate source of energy, among others. The continent is in dire need of all these and it makes the journey to mature inclusivity of IPS an uphill battle.

Commitment of governments and service providers is mentioned as a game changer in putting in place an inclusive payment system starting from low level. For instance Ethiopia's national payment system, EthSwitch, has jumped one step this year to Basic level of inclusivity after embarking on P2P and P2B in its services.

This is part of the aggressive intervention of the government in promoting digital finance and payment, according to Girum Fekadu, a Digital Financial Services Risk Manager at Ethipost, with expertise that includes auditing at EthSwitch S.C. financial inclusion, digital transformation and providing subject matter expertise at the Digital Frontiers Institute, where he focuses on financial inclusion and digital transformation currently, AfricanNenda Community of Practice Ambassador.

"The government of Ethiopia is working aggressively to promote the country's Digital Public Infrastructure, which is called Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), which is fundamental in implementing inclusive IPS, as IPS also the cornerstone for DPI. As a result currently the penetration of internet service, number of smart phones, digital wallet service provides, point of sales as well as ATMs is increasing throughout the country"

Girum further expressed hope that the recent reform that liberalizes the country's Macro Economic will attract more vibrant players



Girum Fekadu

in the country's instant payment ecosystem. Currently mobile money like Telebirr and Mpesa are operating in the country while many more, including fintechs are expected to join the ecosystem, he noted.

Among the major challenges in digital IPS is the vulnerability to fraud, cyber-attack and breaching of customer's privacy rights. Such threats to both the privacy rights of the subscribers or consumers as well as the security and safety of their finance pose threat on the trust further aggravating the exclusion of many people in the finance sector.

Countries need strong legal protection system to preempt the violation of the privacy rights as well as cyber related crimes that hinder IPS. While there are a lot of measures that the country should take to enhance the smooth operation of inclusive IPS, the country can be said somehow in good shape given some of the legal and policy measures.

"The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) has promulgated various laws and guidelines that are based on risk management approach. For instance there is clear guideline of data privacy law as well as standards that regulate cyber security.

In addition to this, the Ethiopian government has issued the new Personal Data Protection Proclamation No. 1321/2024, which provides a detailed legal framework for data protection across all sectors." Girum elaborated.

He further stipulated that the country's Consumer protection law can step in to assist in the protection of customers against fraud and other problems that could happen in payment systems.

Given the current level of commitment the country is likely to attain the progressed level of inclusivity in the coming few years, added Girum.

Mensah also insists on bringing together all these to see the final outcome being fruitful.

"It takes a village, we need to make sure that digital public infrastructure is a priority to our country, we need to make sure that the infrastructure level connectivity access to a phone. Then at the regulatory level, how do we enable more digital payment system operators to come into the ecosystem? So licensing of fintech is an area where Regulators can help by bringing more visibility more streamlining, the licensing process communicating and how, fintech can have a license so they can participate in the digital payment ecosystem"

In the Sphere of Diplomacy



Ethiopia, Israel's enduring ties through healthcare

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The relationship between Ethiopia and Israel is steeped in history, tracing back to Biblical times. One of the most famous stories involves the legendary Queen of Sheba, who is said to have visited King Solomon in Jerusalem. This ancient connection sets the stage for a complex and enduring partnership that has evolved significantly over the centuries.

In the modern era, the diplomatic journey between these two nations began when they established consular ties in 1956. This marked a significant step towards formal relations, which were fully realized in 1961. However, the relationship faced challenges, particularly following the Yom Kippur War, which led to a 16-year break in diplomatic engagement. It wasn't until 1989 that relations were fully restored, and in 1992, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to partnership. Today, Ethiopia maintains an embassy in Tel Aviv, while Israel has its embassy in Addis Ababa, a testament to the ongoing diplomatic efforts.

The bond between Ethiopia and Israel is particularly strong in the realm of faith. As a nation with a significant Christian population, Ethiopia has deep religious ties to Israel, which is considered a holy land for Christians. Many Ethiopian Orthodox Christians make pilgrimages to Israel, especially during significant religious events such as the celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ and during the fasting period of Easter. These spiritual connections have fostered a sense of kinship that transcends borders.

Beyond religious ties, the two countries are also collaborating in various sectors, particularly agriculture. Israel is renowned for its advancements in agricultural technology,

enabling high yields in small areas of land a critical asset for Ethiopia, which boasts vast arable land. This partnership not only enhances food security in Ethiopia but also promotes sustainable farming practices that can benefit both nations.

Healthcare is another vital area of collaboration. Israeli health delegations frequently provide medical services in Ethiopia, offering essential support and supplies, including medical equipment. Recently, during discussions with senior officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, Dr. Avraham Niguse, Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, emphasized the importance of the health sector in their bilateral relations. He noted that ongoing cooperation in healthcare is crucial for both countries, highlighting mutual benefits and shared goals.

The current eye health care delegation of Operation Ethiopia is a testament for this. The Operation Ethiopia which is has dedicated the past decade to providing essential eye care services to underserved communities across the country gave its usual support in Addis Ababa and Tigray region.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Prof. Morris E. Hartstein (MD) director of Operation Ethiopia says that accompanied by a team of 15 from Israel including four ophthalmologists and three medics aims to provide vital eye care to individuals lacking access or resources.

"Our goal is to deliver care to those who need it most," Hartstein explained. "We set up mobile clinics wherever possible, treating hundreds of patients. We bring medications and glasses from Israel, addressing about 90% of the cases we encounter. For more complicated issues, we refer patients to local hospitals."

During their recent two-day stay in Addis Ababa, the team treated approximately 500 patients, providing glasses and medications. They also travelled to Mekelle, Tigray, where they treated nearly 500 people at the Seba Kare internally displaced persons (IDP) camp. Many patients suffering from cataracts were referred to a concurrent outreach program at Quiha Hospital. Additionally, the medics taught basic first aid to 40 youths aged 15-18, providing each with a certificate and a first aid kit.

The team also visited a school for the blind in Mekelle, distributing 18 canes donated by visually impaired individuals in Israel, and conducted eye screenings, referring several individuals for further treatment.

Hartstein emphasized Operation Ethiopia expressed commitment to train Ethiopian doctors in Israel, enhance local expertise in managing complex eye conditions. Despite recent challenges, including the impact of conflict in both Israel and Ethiopia, Hartstein confirmed that outreach efforts have resumed. "We come to Ethiopia four times a year on average, but we missed a year due to the war," he explained. "Now, we are eager to do more and help as many people as possible."

Reflecting on the historical ties between Ethiopia and Israel, Hartstein noted, "The excitement we see from people when they learn we are from Israel is heart-warming. We strive to enhance this cooperation and support the Ethiopian people as much as possible. While eye care is improving, many still lack access, which is why we are here."

He expressed gratitude for the support from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, which has facilitated the import of supplies and equipment. Hartstein plans to return to Israel after this outreach, but he and his team are committed to making regular visits,

averaging four times a year.

Tomer Bar-Lavi, Deputy Ambassador of Israel to Ethiopia, remarked on the significance of the bilateral relationship. "Israel and Ethiopia share a unique bond that is expressed through initiatives like Operation Ethiopia. Despite facing challenges, we remain dedicated to supporting the Ethiopian people, particularly in specialized eye care."

St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College, assistant professor of ophthalmology, Aserat Sime (MD) highlighted the on-going need for specific medications and operational equipment. "We discussed with Dr. Hartstein the necessity of bringing these essential supplies for our patients," he said.

As Operation Ethiopia continues its mission, Hartstein remains hopeful for the future, stating, "It's a tremendous honour to help the people of Ethiopia, and we look forward to doing even more."

As Ethiopia and Israel navigate the complexities of modern geopolitics, their historical ties continue to flourish, rooted deeply in shared faith and mutual support. The ongoing collaboration through initiatives like Operation Ethiopia exemplifies a commitment to improving the lives of those in need, particularly in healthcare and agriculture. By bridging centuries-old connections with contemporary cooperation, both nations are not only enriching their bilateral relationship but also fostering hope and resilience among underserved communities. As they look to the future, the promise of enhanced partnership and shared prosperity remains bright, reminding us that even in challenging times, solidarity and compassion can prevail.

Law & Politics

Curbing financial sovereignty threats

BY FIKADU BELAY

In today's interconnected global economy, financial threats pose significant risks to both individual entities and entire nations. The threats can take various forms, including fraud, cyberattacks, economic downturns, and systemic risks stemming from poorly regulated financial institutions. Moreover, a weak financial system can exacerbate these threats, leading to instability, reduced economic growth, and increased vulnerability to crises.

A robust financial system is essential for fostering trust, facilitating investment, and supporting sustainable economic development. However, when a financial system is weak categorized by inadequate regulations, lack of transparency, and poor risk management it becomes susceptible to shocks that can ripple through the economy. Such vulnerabilities not only hinder financial stability but also limit access to credit and resources for individuals and businesses, ultimately close innovation and economic progress of the country.

Over the years, Ethiopia has liberalized its key sectors including telecommunication and is poised to allow foreign entities to engage in the financial sector of the country. Safaricom, a Kenyan telecom service provider was given some percent of stakes in the telecom industry.

In the past years, the country had a closed economy and set aside a certain industries for domestic investments, which the former regime government said was essential to safeguarding both natural security and local companies. Under the previous regime, the finance and telecom sectors were restricted for foreign investment in which the government argued market liberalization will weaken domestic business and put national security in danger.

In what could be a new breakthrough, Ethiopian cabinet on 14 June 2024 approved a bill that allows foreign lenders to establish local subsidiaries and acquire shares in local banks. The new law is waiting lawmakers' approval.

According to the bill, reputable, financially sound and well-established foreign banks would be allowed to set up a partially or fully owned subsidiaries; open a foreign bank branch or representative office; or purchase shares in an existing bank. They will also be permitted to employ foreign nationals as senior executives, although foreign banks operating in the country will be required to include resident Ethiopians on their boards.

The arrival of foreign companies in to the country however according to will pose threats to national security unless strong regulatory and security measures are placed. In fact there have been solid instances of the grave danger facing nations that went through economic liberalization.

The experiences of nations like Sri Lanka in 2022 demonstration this: while foreign investments initially boosted the economy, a subsequent financial crisis triggered rapid capital flight, leading to severe currency devaluation and widespread economic



hardship.

Weak financial security systems often lack the regulatory frameworks necessary to manage foreign investments effectively. This was evident during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, where inadequate oversight resulted in reckless lending practices and sudden capital outflows. Similar issues have occurred in countries like India, Greece, and Argentina.

Recently, Ethiopia made a pivotal decision to rejuvenate its economy by opening its doors to foreign financial investment. The government assumed that to liberalize the economy sector for the process of reducing the government restrictions and allowing for a more open free market environment. This approach is often indicated for promoting competition, innovation, and enhancing economic growth. However, argues that stated that it can also lead to excessive risk-taking by financial institutions and inadequate oversight, ultimately causing crises that impact economies in a country.

Weak financial security could allow foreign investors to take advantage of weaknesses in the financial system, causing capital flight, according to an economic analyst who told exclusively to *The Ethiopian Herald* a few weeks ago.

As a result, many struggle that before accepting foreign investment, nations should focus on strengthening their financial institutions. Ethiopia's economic sovereignty may be in danger if local financial institutions become unduly reliant on foreign investors, According to economist Atlaw Alemu (PhD).

He stated that, a major economic collapse could result from the withdrawal of foreign investors, threatening the country's financial independence and raising the possibility of foreign meddling in internal matters.

In recent years, countries are increasingly adopting digital payment systems, driven by the need for efficiency, security, and convenience. However, this rapid technological advancement has introduced new vulnerabilities. Studies indicate that cyber-attacks and digital espionage now pose a greater threat to national security.

Countries are increasingly adopting digital payment systems, driven by the need for efficiency, security, and convenience. However, this rapid technological advancement has introduced new vulnerabilities

According to a Forbes report, over 340 million individuals fail victim to cyber-attacks in the last fiscal year, with projections suggesting that the costs associated with these attacks could exceed eight trillion USD by the end of 2023. This underscores the urgent need for robust cyber security measures.

The country has foiled over 4,550 cyber-attacks in the first six months of the concluding fiscal year. The attack increased by 115% compared to last year. According to INSA, the country could have lost 186 million USD has the attacked succeeded. Forbes ranks Ethiopia as the 8th most vulnerable nation to cyber threats, emphasizing the critical need for enhanced protective strategies and public awareness.

In his parts, Scholar of Economy Costantinos Berhetesfa (PhD) stated that, the National Bank of Ethiopia needs to focus

on developing new interest rate policies, expanding the money flow, and managing and strengthening financial security measures. Establishing a stable economic environment that can encourage investment and boost economic activity requires these adjustments, he said.

Concerns have been raised about the National Bank's ability to effectively lead a market economy. Critics argue that the institution lacks the necessary experience and expertise to navigate the complexities of modern financial systems. To address this gap, there are calls to bring in experts from other countries that have good ability with successful economic transitions, Costantinos noted.

He mentioned by leveraging international knowledge and best practices, the National Bank could implement reforms that align with the demands of a dynamic market economy. This approach could ultimately strengthen investor confidence and promote sustainable growth in Ethiopia's economic landscape.

Atlaw urged measures to strengthen the local financial system and guarantee its resistance to outside forces, underscoring the dangers of financial subservience and possible loss of economic autonomy.

"As we navigate this digital landscape, it is imperative to prioritize cyber security to safeguard our personal information and national security against rapidly evolving threats," Costantinos stated.

He highlighted recent microeconomic reforms designed to attract foreign investors, aiming to create a more favorable business environment that encourages international capital inflow and fosters economic growth. This strategy seeks to generate job opportunities for citizens by introducing modern technological systems, addressing issues related to foreign currency shortages and the prevalence of black money.

In addition to pointing out that the inflow of global financial institutions might foster competition, Atlaw underlined the transformative potential of foreign investment. Both experts advise the government to take proactive steps to safeguard national sovereignty.

Society



Innovative works exhibited at the 9th National Students and Teachers Creative Works Competition and Exhibition

Promoting creativity mindset through competition, exhibition

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The emergence of new technology has considerably changed the world, transforming the way people live, work, and carry out their daily activities. These innovations, for example internet, have shaped and altered the day-to-day activities of global communities and transformed the world into a global village by enhancing interconnectedness at the speed of light.

With the view to promote the importance of science in the daily lives of global people, create a shared understanding and appreciation of its significance and to actively engage the public in conversations on new scientific issues, every year on November 10, the world observes World Science Day for Peace and Development.

This year's World Science Day was marked under the theme "Global Science for Global Wellbeing".

In connection with this, Ethiopia also marked the Day with various events. The Ministry of Education, joining hands with numerous stakeholders, staged an exhibition and a competition.

The 9th National Students and Teachers Creative Works Competition and Exhibition that was carried out from November 12-15, 2024 at the premises of the Addis Ababa Science and Technology was a platform where various innovative works were exhibited and competition for students and teachers on innovative works carried out.

Speaking on the occasion Chief Executive Officer of Teacher and Educational Leaders Development at the Ministry of Education Muluken Nigatu (PhD) stated that the teachers' and students' creative works exhibition and competition is a platform that enables students and teachers with exceptional creative skills to share their creative ideas with others and gather support and resources.

Muluken further noted that, students and

By embracing various platforms including organizing students' creative work exhibitions and contests, it is possible to generate well-equipped, self-assurance, competitive productive human development

teachers who participated and competed in this fair should realize that the platform is not their final goal; but consider it as an opportunity to exchange experiences, build capacity where they can benefit themselves and the country with their creative work in the future.

Innovative works should focus on building the capacity in a way that takes into account the future of the country through addressing the current problems of the country, he remarked

STEM Power Country Director Simenew Keskes (PhD), on his part said that providing science education with practical activities and supporting creative activities from schools to universities should be further reinforced through various ways. Mentioning that the activities carried so far are encouraging, he said, it is possible to generate internationally competitive students.

According to him, the main reason that those countries we categorized among the developed nations and able to reach the level they are now is because they have given a lot of attention to science and technology and work on it committedly. In

view of this and to further promote creative works, strengthening such platforms at all levels and expanding from schools to the national level is vital. Concurrently, facilitating similar stages at the continental and international level is crucial, he added.

On the other hand, Ezedin Kamil, an Entrepreneur, who attended the forum and shared his experience, also said that students should not only compete to win at the fair, but they should also think about how they can transform their creative ideas into business, services and products that can change the society.

Ezedin mentioned that he was awarded consecutively in the science and environmental innovation competition held in 2017, 2018, and 2019. He stated that, he is currently a 3rd-year software engineering student at a university in Turkey. He also said that besides his studies, he has established his own company through his creative work and is undertaking various jobs, creating job opportunities for others aside from himself.

Ezedin also added that he was surprised by the creative works presented in this fair and expressed his belief that many entrepreneurial young people will be created in the future.

While speaking about the contest, the Mathematics, Science and Arts Desk Head at the Ministry of Education, Tadesse Teresa, said that the students and teachers who participated in the exhibition and the competition were students and teachers with special talents in science subjects.

Students and teachers who took part in the competition were selected by their respective states and city administrations.

According to him, the exhibition and the competition were held in eight areas and a total of 124 students and 20 teachers participated.

The Ministry is working persistently focusing on building the capacity of

teachers as building teachers' competence is of critical importance to achieve the set goal.

Community Engagement and Indigenous Knowledge Desk Head in the Higher Education Development Sector of the Ministry Selamawit Alemu said that, the platform will enhance students' creativity and interest in science and engineering careers. It will also help the society to benefit from the contribution of the science and technology sector.

Senait said that, the platform allows students to develop the ability to solve the challenges they may face supported by scientific methods, to learn from each other, to further develop their creative works. Equally important, it enables participants to meet with new partners and stakeholders thereby creating market linkages.

Different prizes were given to the teachers and students who contested in the competition and stood from 1st to 3rd rank in the eight categories of the competition.

By embracing various platforms including organizing students' creative work exhibitions and contests, it is possible to generate well-equipped, self-assurance, competitive productive human development. Equipping this generation with the needed skills, knowledge, confidence, and creativity mindset, in my view is a milestone move to effectively thrive and navigate in the ever-changing world.

The 9th Science and Environment Teachers and Students Innovation Fair was organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with STEAM Power, STEAM Synergy, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Education for Ethiopia and Addis Ababa University of Science and Technology, it was learnt.

Over one million primary and secondary students in Ethiopia have benefited from Engineering, Science, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) centers.

Planet Earth

Addressing climate-induced food insecurity, nutrition

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

The complex interconnections between food systems, climate change, and nutrition have become increasingly apparent. These intertwined challenges pose significant difficulties but also present a unique opportunity for collective action. Despite the obstacles, there remain avenues to explore.

Addressing the escalating impacts of climate change is not solely the responsibility of a specific organization or entity; rather, it is a critical priority on the global agenda. This issue is now capturing the attention of stakeholders in developing nations, who frequently highlight their economic advancements. For many developing countries struggling to achieve food security, climate change has become a matter of survival.

In the direst situations, the prospect of securing not just food security but also access to nutritious meals can seem unattainable. However, while we may possess potential solutions, determining their effectiveness and the best approach to implement them can be daunting. It is essential to recognize the importance of collaboration in addressing malnutrition and food insecurity.

Numerous organizations concerned with these issues have established a network known as the Ethiopian Nutrition Leaders Network (ENLN). During its sixth annual forum held last Saturday, themed “Nutrition Leadership towards Resilience and Climate Change Actions for Nutrition in Ethiopia,” the discussion centered on the significant role of leadership in mitigating climate change impacts on food systems.

The meeting was attended by high-ranking government officials from the health sector, scholars, researchers, nutritionists from various regions, and representatives from international organizations.

Associate Professor of Nutrition at Jimma University, Tefera Belachew, who serves as Training and Capacity Building Section head at ENLN, was one of the participants. According to him, climate change has extremely influenced life on Earth apart from the other challenges it faces. Thus, the sector requires a special type of leadership with a high level of capability in collaborating with the resources at hand and solving the big problems that we are now encountering.

The planet is currently facing a critical crisis; the climate has undergone significant alterations. As the global population continues to rise, the Earth’s ability to support its inhabitants is diminishing. There are seven essential planetary boundaries that must not be compromised by human activity. Out of these, six have already been breached.

The Associate professor pointed out that excessive groundwater extraction, deforestation, carbon emissions, and other detrimental practices have hindered the Earth’s capacity to provide essential resources for humanity.



Ethiopia is actively executing its Food and Nutrition Strategy nationwide. Furthermore, the country is advancing the Seqota Declaration, a 15-year governmental pledge aimed at eradicating stunting in children under the age of two by the year 2030, she said

“When we return to our situation, climate change impacts all aspects of our lives. For example, we rely heavily on rain-fed agricultural systems, although we have initiated irrigated wheat cultivation projects.

Consequently, if we experience drastic climate changes, food scarcity will become a reality. Our reliance on large hydroelectric dams for energy is also at risk; without stable climate conditions, we face threats to both energy and water security.”

He commended the government’s ongoing initiatives, such as the Green Legacy Initiative and the Urban Agriculture program, which serve as vital components in enhancing the food system’s resilience. The Green Legacy initiative in Ethiopia represents a comprehensive strategy. When discussing leadership, it is essential to address the significant challenges at hand.

By tackling these pressing issues, we can facilitate the resolution of other related problems. Thus, climate change holds profound implications for us. Beyond the challenges of food security, the ongoing climate crisis is leading to diminishing productivity, an increasing population, and a reduced carrying capacity of the Earth. For instance, Ethiopia’s population is projected to double by 2046.

In light of the population growth, we must double our efforts in all areas. This necessitates the adoption of technology and the cultivation of climate-smart crops, alongside implementing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, including the planting of climate-resilient crops and livestock. To ensure food security in Ethiopia, it is imperative to implement effective policies and strategies.

Hiwot Darsene, Lead Executive Officer at the Nutrition Coordination Office at the Ministry of Health through her representative stated that Ethiopia is one of the most vulnerable countries negatively affected by the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods, which have a direct relationship with the food system.

The need to work together to advance the responsibilities of all stakeholders to accelerate climate action in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts to ensure sustainable development, thereby scaling up nutrition.

Ethiopia is actively executing its Food and Nutrition Strategy nationwide. Furthermore, the country is advancing the Seqota Declaration, a 15-year governmental pledge aimed at eradicating stunting in children under the age of two by the year 2030, she said.

This initiative is structured to unfold in three distinct phases: Innovative, Expansion, and Scale-up. He emphasized the necessity for the active involvement of all stakeholders to achieve these objectives. The government is taking the lead in coordinating efforts across various sectors to enhance the health and nutritional well-being of adolescents, women, and children.

She noted that current leadership initiatives encompass efforts to improve the income and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, minimize postharvest food loss, and elevate the health and nutrition status of school-aged children, among other priorities.

Dragana Strinic, the Country Director for Save the Children in Ethiopia and Chair of the Ethiopian Civil Society Coalition for Scaling Up Nutrition (ECSC-SUN), remarked that the coalition comprises over 63 members from national and international civil society organizations dedicated to advancing nutrition and supporting Ethiopia’s efforts to eliminate malnutrition in all its forms.

“Effective leadership at all level is crucial in addressing the challenges posed by climate-induced food systems and nutrition. Our collaboration presents a valuable opportunity to connect visionary nutrition leadership and exchange knowledge.

The ECSC-SUN is committed to enhancing leadership while ensuring accountability in partnership with government sectors, stakeholders, and donors,” she stated. She further asserted that dedicated leadership plays a vital role in steering the implementation of national initiatives such as the Food and Nutrition Strategy, the Seqota Declaration, and the comprehensive transformation of Ethiopia’s food systems, reiterating ongoing support for these efforts.

Highlighting the impact of climate change on food system challenges, Associate Professor Tefera called for closer cooperation among academia, research institutions, and policymakers to support the government’s ongoing initiatives to improve nutrition nationwide.