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President champions unity, harmony at Interfaith Conference

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – President TayeAtseke-Selassie has called on Ethiopia’s diverse religious communities to embrace interfaith values to bridge social divides and tackle global challenges.

He made this statement here yesterday at the International Inter-Religious Conference, organized by the Ministry of Peace (MoP) in collaboration with Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities, held under the theme: “Addis Ababa Declaration on Tolerance, Citizenship, and Peace.”

In his keynote address, President Taye emphasized that in an era marked by extremism and hatred, religious leaders play a vital role in nation-building. He highlighted Ethiopia’s legacy of religious tolerance and stressed the importance of fully embracing the unifying potential of religion to foster social harmony.

Peace Minister Binalf Andualem echoed these sentiments, noting that narratives of tolerance and interfaith understanding are essential for creating a cohesive society. “Ethiopia, a tapestry of religious diversity, exemplifies the rich cultural heritage and spiritual significance of each tradition,” he stated. Binalf emphasized that religion plays a crucial role in shaping the values, identities, and behaviors of all societal segments, serving as a source of unity, strength, and resilience in the face of social divides.

Binalf added that by fostering a



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Ethiopia’s economic reforms boost SME growth, innovation

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –Ethiopia’s home-grown economic and macroeconomic reforms have fostered a supportive environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), according to the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA).

EIPA, in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

See *Ethiopia’s economic ... page 3*



Ethiopia’s chemical industry future prospects

BY MESERET BEHAILU

The demand for quality chemical products is integral to Ethiopia’s growth and daily life, pushing the nation to harness modern technology and machinery. The Chemical Industry Corporation Awash Melkassa

Chemical Factory (CICAMCF) aims to elevate Ethiopia’s chemical and construction industries to a competitive global standard by 2025. Officials emphasize that stakeholder integration is key to advancing CICAMCF’s ambitions.

See *Ethiopia’s chemical ... page 3*

Ethiopia, WMO call for global action against climate change

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) President Abdulla Ahmed Al Mandous called on countries worldwide to take immediate action against climate change during the launch of Ethiopia’s first Hydromel Conference yesterday.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen highlighted that the world is currently facing severe droughts, devastating floods, and various extreme weather events. “These disasters disrupt not only economies but also families, livelihoods, and the future of humanity. We must be honest: Africa, particularly Eastern Africa, bears a heavy burden that our region has endured for far too long,” he stated.

See *Ethiopia, WMO ... page 3*



News

Flag carrier to receive Africa's first A350-1000 aircraft

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopian Airlines Group has now possessed the largest variant of Airbus's A350 planes, the A350-1000, and became Africa's first airliner to own the aircraft.

The largest Airbus passenger aircraft believed to put the Ethiopian Airlines ahead of the curve in technology. The A350-1000 is the best fit for the Ethiopian's dense routes, and the upsizing will be instrumental in satisfying the increasing demand of its customers in the global network across five continents.

Ethiopian Airlines is the first airline in Africa to order and operate the A350-900 Airbus planes. And it is now the leading airliner for introducing the A350-1000, the largest version of the world's most efficient and

technologically advanced passenger aircraft, according to Airbus.

The aircraft manufacturer believed that the A350-1000 plane will increase the East African carrier's capacity and it will be an addition to its modern wide-body fleet. The airline will benefit from a flexible, high-value family leveraging Airbus' unprecedented level of commonality and same type rating.

The Airbus A350's clean-sheet design features state-of-the-art aerodynamics, a carbon-fibre fuselage and wings, plus the most fuel-efficient Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines. Together, these latest technologies translate into unrivalled levels of operational efficiency and sustainability for Ethiopian Airlines, with a 25% reduction in fuel-burn and CO2 emissions compared to previous generation twin-aisle aircraft, according to Airbus.



Photo: Gebabo Gebre

ECTA striving to boost coffee production, revenues

• UNDP aids 9 mln USD for Ethiopian coffee producers

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) disclosed that it is maximizing efforts to boost coffee production and revenues with a nine million USD fund from UNDP.

Briefing journalists yesterday, ECTA's Director General, Adugna Debela (PhD) said that the Authority is endeavoring to improve the volume and quality of Ethiopian coffee production through implementing modern mechanisms leveraging the 9 million USD support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Of the total allocation of 9 million USD for maximizing coffee production, 3 million USD was budgeted on buying materials used to significantly boost the production process, he said.

"Oromia, South Western Ethiopia, Sidama, and South Ethiopia states are directly benefited by the UNDP project addressing a total of 22 districts in the first phase. The materials would help to address coffee cherry challenges, affected by age and pruning process," he added.

Although coffee pruning is helpful to maximize productivity, Adugna underlined that the farmers applying traditional clipping tools are experiencing the transmission of disease from one plant to the other. To end this, the ECTA has handed over motorized handsaw machines crucial to undertake the task efficiently while preventing coffee disease side by side.

Likewise, new varieties of seedlings and motorized drilling machines are being

distributed to farmers in order to boosting the production and productivity of coffee and ensure the sustainable benefits of the producers, he mentioned.

"For instance, 325,000 kilograms of poly bags, 225 motorized handsaws, 220 drilling machines, and other materials are bought and distributed to the aforementioned states," Adugna said.

He further stated that some 1,300 smart phones, worth about 80 million Birr were bought in collaboration with UNDP for geospatial data collection.

The UNDP project assists Ethiopia in providing inputs for coffee farmers, expanding extensions, and facilitating training to experts so as to improve productivity. This complies with the European Union regulations on deforestation free coffee production, according to the Director General.

So far, some 36 coffee producing districts are receiving support from the European Union, while the UNDP project is covering the rest, he indicated.

Ministry of Planning and Development, Folur Project Food System and Land Use Restoration Project Manager Mulugeta Worku on his part said that the Global Environmental Facility under UNDP has allocated 20.8 million USD and is working with ECTA, Ethiopian Forest Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Finance, and Environmental Protection Authority. He added that the UNDP project will address 440,000 smallholder coffee producers in the above listed four states.

Ethiopia, Israel set to strengthen ties at Innovation Week

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) has announced Ethiopia's full readiness to host the second Ethio-Israel Innovation Week, scheduled to take place on November 11, 2024, in Addis Ababa.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) yesterday, Minister of Innovation and Technology, Belete Mola (PhD), emphasized that this event will be a significant milestone in the collaborative journey between Ethiopia and Israel towards fostering innovation and economic growth.

Minister Belete highlighted that the upcoming innovation week aims to create lasting impacts on creativity, collaboration, and technology, setting the stage for a robust partnership that benefits both nations. "The collaboration presents a valuable opportunity to leverage our strengths, share knowledge, and create strategies that will have far-reaching benefits for our countries and beyond," he remarked. The minister further stressed the importance of both local and international partnerships in unlocking Ethiopia's full potential in the innovation ecosystem.

Israel, known for its dynamic startup scene and technological advancements, will share insights and strategies through a framework that encompasses various dimensions, including knowledge exchange, capacity building, investment opportunities, and joint ventures. "We are united by a common vision to establish a collaborative framework that brings together key stakeholders to engage with Ethiopia's innovation ecosystem," Belete said. He envisions a partnership where Ethiopian entrepreneurs can learn from their Israeli counterparts, strengthening Ethiopia's infrastructure and startup ecosystem.

Highlighting the significance of joint efforts in addressing pressing global challenges, the minister noted that groundbreaking projects between researchers from both



nations would lead to innovative solutions.

Israeli Ambassador to Ethiopia, Abraham Nigussie, added that a team of Israeli experts, each bringing diverse experience in innovation, will be arriving in Addis Ababa. Over the coming days, the delegation will meet with Ethiopian government officials, international organizations, academia, and private sector representatives to share experiences and discuss advancing collaboration in innovation and entrepreneurship through 2025 and beyond.

In recent years, Israel has been involved in various cooperative initiatives with Ethiopia, including efforts led by government, development partners and the private sector. "Our involvement over the past five years has included professional surveys of Ethiopia's innovation ecosystem conducted by Israeli experts and trilateral collaborations through the UNDP's Innovation for Development program," Ambassador Abraham shared. He expressed confidence that the upcoming innovation week will reinforce the bond between the two nations, laying a strong foundation for future cooperation that yields tangible results.

News

President champions unity, harmony...

culture of tolerance, Ethiopia can build a resilient society where people of all faiths coexist and work together harmoniously, thereby supporting sustainable peace and prosperity. "Religious institutions hold a unique position as pillars of moral guidance, spiritual support, and community solidarity," he stated, emphasizing the essential contributions of these organizations to Ethiopia's social fabric.

Minister Binalf praised the support and expertise provided by Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in promoting shared values of tolerance and compassion. He emphasized the importance of leveraging strengths and resources to address complex societal challenges and build resilient communities. During the conference, the MoP and Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration and foster peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia.

Chancellor Khalifa Mubarak Al Dhaferi of Mohamed Bin Zayed University



emphasized that the initiative comes at a crucial time to promote religious engagement, respect for places of worship, and cross-cultural understanding to address pressing global challenges. "There is no peace without religion," he said, calling for reinforced unity among religious leaders

and a commitment to interfaith diversity.

He added that the Addis Ababa Declaration marks a new era for peace, tolerance, and cultural harmony, urging participants to champion diversity and cultivate wisdom that fosters sustainable global peace.

Ethiopia, WMO...

For him, droughts and floods have become part of daily life. "We should not focus solely on challenges; we are here to take action. As the climate changes, our responsibilities must also evolve. Since 2019, Ethiopia has taken bold steps forward with the launch of the Green Legacy Initiative," he noted.

The launch of the Green Legacy Initiative sent a powerful message to the world, signaling Ethiopia's determination to confront this crisis actively. "This initiative is not merely a symbolic gesture; it aims to change our trajectory and do so collectively," he remarked.

"Over the past six years, we have planted more than 40 billion trees-figures that represent much more than mere statistics. As a result, floods have decreased, forests have been restored, and soil has been safeguarded."

Ethiopia's forest coverage has now risen to 23.6 percent, a significant improvement that indicates a slowdown in deforestation and soil erosion. Additionally, the volume of water in rivers, including transboundary rivers, is on the rise.

Abdulla Ahmed Al Mandous, also the Director General of the UAE National Center for Meteorology, highlighted that climate change disrupts the hydrological cycle and stressed the necessity for early warning systems to combat water shortages. He called for improved data sharing and monitoring, stating, "Africa is the fastest-warming continent, and in 2023, several African countries, including Ethiopia, are experiencing severe droughts and climate crises." He added, "The crisis demands immediate action. Let us unite to safeguard our world. The WMO is working with countries to enhance water resource management and has launched online platforms to facilitate knowledge sharing and information exchange."

He commended Ethiopia for its significant efforts to improve climate conditions, emphasizing the Green Legacy Initiative's crucial role in addressing the crisis.

Water and Energy Minister Habtamu Itefa (PhD-Eng.) noted that the most degraded areas of the country, particularly in river gorges, are being reforested under the Green Legacy Initiative. He highlighted a reforestation rate of four to five percent in the Abbay (Nile) Valley's gorges.

Additionally, he mentioned that the volumes of rivers, including the Awash and Abbay, have increased since the initiative's launch.

Ethiopia's chemical industry...

Ethiopian Investment Holding (EIH) Chemical's Cluster Portfolio Director, Asema Redi, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that support from relevant bodies is crucial to fulfill the industry's strategic goals and meet client demands. EIH oversees 31 public development institutions, including CICAMCF, and is responsible for ensuring that the domestic market is supplied with high-quality chemical products.

Under EIH's management are several key projects, including Muger Cement, Adami Tulu Tser-Tebay (anti-insect solutions), caustic soda production, and tire tree initiatives, which support essential sectors like manufacturing, water, and medicine. Additionally, domestically available inputs such as kaolin help mitigate foreign currency challenges.

CICAMCF currently produces sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4), aluminum sulfate ($Al_2(SO_4)_3$), and hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), but it operates at only 45% of its potential capacity. Asema noted that the factory has significant untapped capacity to meet local

demand if adequately supported by strategic partnerships.

"Providing quality chemical products at reasonable prices is essential to meeting the needs of this sector," Asema stated, adding that the EIH is committed to providing financial and technical assistance to modernize CICAMCF's technology and machinery.

EIH's Subsidiary Transformation Plan aims to support the chemical industry through new investments, supervisory roles, and attracting foreign investors. CICAMCF's Manager, Ahmed Motuma, noted that despite being the only chemical producer in East Africa, challenges such as COVID-19, conflicts, and currency shortages caused production interruptions in 2019, leading some clients to seek alternatives abroad. However, CICAMCF has regained some of its clients through determined efforts.

Ahmed highlighted the importance of foreign currency allocations to the factory, enabling imports of sulfur and kaolin to scale up production. The factory plans to

utilize 4,000 tons of locally sourced kaolin and import 800 tons of aluminum hydroxide to produce 1,600 tons of aluminum sulfate.

Last year, CICAMCF produced 1,120 tons of hydrogen peroxide, exceeding the national demand of 861 tons. Currently, CICAMCF is exploring export opportunities in neighboring markets to generate foreign currency revenue.

Bahir Dar Textile Manager, MengestuArega, stated that collaboration is essential to meet both domestic and international demand for quality chemicals. Mengestu urged the government to invite private sector investments to foster a world-class chemical industry in Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa Water and Sewerage Authority's Water Quality Inspection Coordinator ZelekeTeferi echoed the call for cooperative efforts to bridge industry gaps. "We have sourced aluminum sulfate from CICAMCF since 1998, and though quality has improved, further collaboration is needed to close remaining gaps," he advised.

Ethiopia's economic reforms...

and the Japan Patent Office (JPO), held a national intellectual property workshop yesterday to increase SMEs' awareness of innovation management and the importance of intellectual property (IP).

EIPA Director-General WolduYimsel highlighted that these economic reforms are paving the way for SMEs to play a more active role in Ethiopia's economic growth, although their current contribution to the GDP remains modest. "SMEs need to focus on building intangible assets, especially intellectual property, which is essential for enhancing competitiveness, increasing product

value, creating jobs, and addressing financial hurdles," he said. The reforms, Woldu added, present SMEs with new opportunities to contribute to Ethiopia's development.

The workshop aimed to boost awareness and create a forum for discussing SME-related agendas and sharing experiences. Woldu pointed out that many developed countries, such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, have grown their economies through strong SME sectors, with SMEs making substantial contributions to GDP and job creation.

WIPO's Division for AfricaActing

Director Loretta Aseidustressed that SMEs are crucial for driving Ethiopia's economic growth through innovation and creativity. She cited ILO data indicating that SMEs employ over two-thirds of the global workforce and play a major role in GDP contributions, poverty reduction, and promoting equality by creating productive, decent employment.

Despite their potential, many SMEs face significant challenges. Aseidu underscored the importance of intellectual property in fostering growth and providing a competitive edge for SMEs. "Intellectual property rights-such

as patents, trademarks, and copyrights-offer a means of protecting innovations, attracting investment, and expanding market access both locally and globally," she said. "Through IP, SMEs can turn knowledge and creativity into tangible economic assets that support business transformation."

The workshop also served as an avenue to learn from international best practices, with Aseidu pointing out that countries like Japan have strengthened their innovation ecosystems by focusing on IP development for SMEs.

Opinion

China's path to green modernization: Lessons in resilience, innovation

BY ANTENEH GETACHEW (PhD)

An old Chinese story tells of Lu Ban, a revered carpenter often considered the “patron saint” of builders in China. One day, he created an intricately beautiful boat, designed to sail effortlessly through any water. As onlookers praised his talent, Lu Ban attributed his skill not to natural talent but to years of hard work and persistent practice. This tale embodies a philosophy central to China's journey to modernization: mastery comes not from innate ability but through patience and continuous effort. This dedication is a cornerstone of Chinese craftsmanship and highlights the country's commitment to self-improvement and resilience—a mindset that has guided China in its rapid leap toward a greener, more sustainable economy.

First impressions: A nation in motion

Visiting China for the first time was nothing short of transformative. As I stepped off the Ethiopian Airlines flight to Shanghai, I was immediately swathed by a vibrant atmosphere that reflected the country's energy and innovation. The bustling streets of Shanghai echo both the modern and traditional architecture, with multi-layered expressways, skyscrapers and historical buildings coexisting side by side.

Standing amidst this dynamic landscape, one can't help but feel that China is in constant, determined motion toward progress. In places like the Lujiazui financial district, towering modern architecture, such as the Oriental Pearl Tower, showcases Shanghai as a global economic powerhouse. This cityscape tells a powerful story: a nation that has propelled itself to the forefront of technological and economic development through diligent, continuous work; much like Lu Ban.

The pulse of Shanghai

Strolling through the bustling streets, the energy of Shanghai was evident. As the most populous city of China, Shanghai is thrived with activities, from the busy shops on Nanjing Road to the tranquil charm of the Bund, where historical colonial architecture starkly contrasts with the contemporary skyline across the Huangpu River. This juxtaposition beautifully illustrates China's remarkable progress.

What struck me most was the palpable spirit of innovation throughout the city. I explored numerous tech hubs and collaborative workspaces filled with young entrepreneurs passionately sharing their ideas. The atmosphere was charged with creativity and determination, showcasing Shanghai as a dynamic center for technological advancement.

Embracing technology

The other aspect that particularly caught my attention was the widespread use of digital payments. I watched as people seamlessly



Shanghai – urban, financial hub, China /Britannica

used their smartphones for everything from street food purchases to metro fares. This cashless convenience highlighted China's rapid technological evolution and its commitment to simplifying daily life through innovation.

Shanghai's modernity is complemented by a strong focus on sustainability. I admired numerous green spaces and eco-friendly projects scattered throughout the city. Parks brimming with lush vegetation and urban farms demonstrated a commitment to creating livable environments amid urban expansion. A visit to Zhujiajiao, an ancient town on Shanghai's outskirts, further solidified my impression of China's innovative approach to harmonizing development with environmental stewardship.

Cultural heritage amidst modernization

Despite its modern vibe, Shanghai has effectively preserved its rich cultural heritage. Wandering through its vibrant lanes, I was captivated by the delightful shops and cafes that beautifully blend historical and contemporary elements of the wider domain of Chinese cuisine. The presence of traditional tea houses, traditional and modern cosmetics shops and street vendors offering dumplings highlighted the city's deep historical roots amidst rapid economic progress.

The experience of wandering through local markets filled with artisanal crafts, savoring authentic regional dishes, and connecting with hospitable locals emphasized the significance of Chinese culture and the warmth that fosters cultural exchange.

China's dedication to sustainable development was evident in the cities and companies I visited, such as Fuzhou city and the CHINT Group of electrical engineering Green energy, where green areas abound and electric public transport thrives alongside efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The government's emphasis on renewable energy and environmental

practices reflected a progressive stance on economic growth. The case analysis presented in one of the classroom lectures allowed me to learn about China's efforts of creating eco-friendly initiatives highlighted projects like Tianjin Eco-City, which aim to align urban living with ecological sustainability.

A vision for sustainable growth

As daylight breaks over China's vibrant cities, it reveals not only impressive infrastructure but also significant changes reflecting the nation's insatiable desire for innovation. From its historical roots to its current status as a global economic leader, China's journey toward modernization is remarkable—especially its commitment to fostering a sustainable economy.

China's modernization accelerated in the late 20th century under Deng Xiaoping's reforms during the 1980s. These changes introduced market economy principles that led to extraordinary economic growth and transformed China into a global manufacturing powerhouse, producing a wide range of goods. However, this rapid industrialization came at a cost—pollution and resource depletion became pressing issues.

Recognizing these unsustainable practices has prompted China to pivot toward sustainable development by harnessing its vast potential for green energy. Recent years have seen significant strides in adopting a green economy model, with ambitious goals set by the government to reduce carbon emissions while enhancing energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy use.

Leading in renewable energy

China has pledged carbon neutrality by 2060; a commitment that has catalyzed substantial investments in renewable technologies like solar and wind power. As the world's leading manufacturer of solar panels, China plays a crucial role in clean energy production while expanding its

influence in both domestic and international markets through investments in offshore and onshore wind farms.

The rise of environmentally friendly companies reflects China's modernization progress across various sectors. Industries are increasingly adopting sustainable practices driven by government policies and consumer demand. The automotive sector is notably transitioning towards electric vehicles (EVs), supported by government initiatives aimed at reducing reliance on fossil fuels and improving urban air quality. This effort supports the national objective of decreasing dependence on fossil fuels and enhancing urban air quality. Besides, the growing trend of green finance is transforming the investment environment. Green bonds and sustainable investment funds are becoming more popular, channeling funds into eco-friendly initiatives. For instance, the Shenzhen Stock Exchange has introduced a specific platform for green businesses, emphasizing how the financial industry can support sustainability.

Overcoming challenges

However, transitioning to a green economy is not without challenges—outdated industrial practices and inconsistent enforcement of environmental regulations present hurdles. Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability requires coordinated efforts across multiple sectors. Public awareness and education are essential in this shift; as people become more conscious of environmental issues, their demand for sustainable practices grows, prompting businesses and governments alike to adapt.

In conclusion, China's impressive strides toward modernization coupled with its commitment to a green economy stand as an inspiring example for other nations. As China continues innovating while addressing environmental challenges, it offers valuable insights into resilience and adaptability for countries worldwide. Likewise, Ethiopia, a country with an All-Weather Strategic Partnership with China, could similarly benefit from enhancing global partnerships to share knowledge and resources that support its green initiatives and strive to achieve a sustainable development.

About the author

Anteneh Getachew (PhD) is currently Director General for the Asia & Pacific Affairs research and a senior researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. He has more than a decade of academic and research experience at Mekelle University. His research engagements include international relations, diplomacy and conflict studies.

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

Editorial

Religious harmony archetype: Ethiopia

A one-day conference the international inter-religious conference on tolerance, citizenship, and peace commenced yesterday here in Addis Ababa.

The conference brought together religious leaders, officials, dignitaries, and academicians and other invited guests from over 16 countries.

It is known that nowadays, our world is increasingly challenged with a number of crises such as hatred, polarized ideologies, and conflicts among others. Today, peace and stability are threatened more than ever before. In our day-to-day activities, it is common to learn about communities troubled by extremism, geopolitical divisions, discrimination, inequalities, and human rights abuses among others. Leave alone at the global level; even at the community level ensuring peace is challenged hugely.

Unequivocally, religion has traditionally been among the most powerful agents for altering human attitudes and behavior. For the reason that the core value of each religious doctrine focuses on peace, love, togetherness, and respect; religious institutions have been considered effective agents in resolving conflicts and creating a more harmonious, peaceful world.

Through their teachings, they can rebuild the eroded culture of tolerance and respect, avert any disagreements that lead to conflicts, and preserving peace and order across the globe.

Noticeably, housing over 80 nations and nationalities, Ethiopia is a secular state with a constitution that separates religion and the state and protects the freedom of religious practice. The golden rule 'treat others as you would want them to treat you,' has attracted religions with varied approaches to the center in Ethiopia, and citizens entertain concord and co-existence as the country has long been the hallmark of religious harmony.

The country is also known for its religious tolerance and coexistence between and among its many religious groups, including Christianity, Islam, and Protestantism, among others. This has made Ethiopia a unique place for all types of encounters, including peaceful relations, respect, and tolerance, in the exchange of thoughts and performances.

These are instances portraying the uniqueness of Ethiopia, too. That is why it is recurrently said that Ethiopia has been known since ancient times as a land of peace and religious tolerance. Coming to the present era, plus the long-standing legacy of peaceful coexistence, the question of religious freedom and equality has been further assured by the Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia Constitution. The existence of this constitutional guarantee has created even greater openings for religious institutions in Ethiopia to work together. The principle of equality fully acknowledges the differences between various religious tenets and accords legal protection. This religious tolerance has helped different religions live in harmony with each other, accepting and permitting religious diversity, to the extent of working together for a common goal—creating a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Ethiopia.

Taking all this into account, it is sounding for Ethiopia to organize this international inter-religious conference on tolerance, citizenship, and peace.

The conference is of paramount importance to promote peace, security, unity, and solidarity among the people of the world. Thus, participants should discharge their responsibility and work on ways to reinforce love, peace, security, unity and solidarity across the globe and create a harmonious world.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

“To whom much is given, much is expected”

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Our beautiful Addis Ababa was bustling yesterday as it welcomed guests from all corners of the world. The reason for their arrival was an international inter-religious conference organized by Ethiopia's Ministry of Peace in collaboration with the Mohammed Bin Zayed University for Humanity, based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The conference is being attended by Ethiopian religious leaders, the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, heads of regional peace and security bureaus, Ethiopian universities, as well as religious institutions from East Africa, Russia, Morocco, and South Africa, along with international organizations and other invited stakeholders.

The conference aims to promote peace and interfaith dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among different religious communities. It will feature various discussions, panel debates, and cultural performances, providing a platform for religious leaders and scholars to share their experiences and perspectives on peace-building and conflict resolution.

Such meetings are expected to strengthen interfaith dialogue and cooperation, promote peace, and foster mutual understanding among different religious communities worldwide. Exchanging ideas, views, and good practices is beneficial for all.

Religious institutions stand at a crossroads. The winds of change are upon them, marked by a climate in crisis and a yearning for societies where human dignity and rights is the cornerstone of policy and action.

For generations, faith leaders have served as anchors of peace and dialogue. Today, this role is more urgent than ever. The globe faces mammoth challenges such as climate crisis, displacement, conflict, and drought.

Yet, amidst these challenges, there is reason for hope. Religious peace-building offers a powerful path forward. It has the moral authority to bridge differences, promote empathy, inspire collective action, and secure sustainable peace.

Faith communities have a unique capacity to speak to the hearts and minds of people, fostering understanding and cooperation regardless of ethnic and cultural identities.

The primary purpose of establishing religious institutions is to prepare their followers for heaven. To achieve this goal, the leaders of these institutions, along with their followers, strive to practice respect for the dogma and canon of a given religion while on earth.

One of the practices every member of a religion expected to do is to live in peace and harmony with others. However, due to various internal or external challenges, or the preaching methods of religious institutions, individuals may find themselves in conflict with themselves, the community, and/or a social group.

Due to the lack of a practical approach, it is difficult to create a peaceful world environment. War, disagreement, isolation,

death, fatalities, or injuries are everyday occurrences in our world. This indicates that religious institutions are now more theoretical than practical.

Whether a follower of a given religion or not, individuals lack patience, love, hope, and belief. If religious institutions do not fulfill their duties properly, the world will be filled with hatred, war, and disagreements. Apart from conducting prayers, religious institutions need to pray for world peace and emphasize the importance of peace and stability.

Therefore, religious institutions should create a platform for leaders to share best practices, extensive knowledge, and develop initiatives for peace-building and environmental stewardship. They have witnessed the transformative power of religion in peace-building. The interfaith council brings together religious leaders from diverse traditions to address human challenges, including the critical issue of the environment.

Faith leaders have been instrumental in mobilizing communities, emphasizing the connection between a healthy environment and a peaceful society.

This initiative not only combats deforestation but also fosters a sense of shared purpose and collective responsibility for the future.

The conference will provide opportunities for discussions on key issues in which religious communities have a deep interest and come up with recommendations to advance interfaith harmony, human dignity, and environmental preservation.

Faith leaders should commit themselves to enhance their partnership with different national, regional, and international partner organizations to advance a culture of peace, interfaith dialogue, and environmental protection.

This time can be a time of building and strengthening relationships while they work together to identify initiatives that can have significant practical effects. It seeks not only ideas but ideas with impact.

Interfaith leaders are conscious of a number of priority areas that are already emerging, noting broader engagement with emerging food prices, pursuing successful programs on climate, and other environmental concerns.

Religious institutions need not only to identify specific policy priorities but also to help global leaders understand that engagement with faith communities is an essential priority that holds the key to furthering countless other objectives.

Religious leaders have been playing a crucial role in peace-building and achieving the Agenda 2063 of Africa and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this divided and conflict-torn world, they need to move forward in a new direction to live in peace without marginalizing anyone and destroying the environment.

In conclusion, faith leaders need to be responsible global citizens and play their part, to the best of their ability, in building the peace we want to realize in the world.

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

Business & Economy

Macroeconomic reform policy seizing apt boulevard

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Following the effectuation of macroeconomic reform policy, Ethiopia has embarked on attaining the desired goal and moving forward in the right direction. In the present circumstances, the reform has already set in motion getting to the bottom of predicaments revolving around foreign currency shortage.

In a similar vein, Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform policy has been getting involved in uncovering new business opportunities for the nation by alluring both domestic and overseas investors.

It is worth recalling that the federal government of Ethiopia, in the recent past, has jumpstarted implementing macroeconomic reform policy in the length and breadth of the country in the middle of a diverse range of negative and positive speculations. It is anticipated that the reform lays the foundation of guaranteeing national development by fashioning unchanging, all-embracing and natural capital economy down the road.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the macroeconomic reform policy for sure will smooth the path of competitiveness, bring to an end impediments revolving around trade and what have you. In so doing it is possible to fashion emerging market prospects, overseas direct investments and creating favorable opportunities for investors in the shortest possible time.

Apart from improving economic conditions and fostering a more robust and favorable business environment, the reform signifies great strides forward and advantageous circumstance in attracting a vast range of investors from every nook and cranny of the world.

As a matter of fact, the fundamentals building blocks of the reform policy get an eyeeful of economic resilience and persistence providing enabling and economic competition enhancing productivity as well as offering quality of services.

Finance Minister Ahmed Shide said that, Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform efforts have achieved greater success than that of many other nations, according to information obtained from local media. A macroeconomic team chaired by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) assessed in detail the performance of the reform over the past two months.

In his presser, the Finance Minister emphasized that the reform has been highly successful when compared to similar efforts in other countries. He noted that, one of the primary objectives of the reform was to ensure overall economic stability.

Ethiopia's economy, despite significant social challenges, has continued to progress steadily. The minister further highlighted that inflationary pressures have not escalated and there are in fact signs of decreasing inflation.

According to him, macro economic reform in general and free-floating currency exchange in particular and the implementation of a new monetary policy in many countries



have been creating problems.

In Ethiopia, the reform has been executed smoothly, contributing to stable conditions both within the economy and in the society. The other major goal of the macroeconomic reform is to boost revenue, Ahmed noted.

The Minister revealed that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had initiated the formation of a new task force and it has been striving over the past two months to enhance revenue. Ministries of Finance and Revenues, alongside the Customs Commission and other key government bodies, including the premier, have been working collaboratively to execute the plan. This joint effort has already shown positive results, with higher revenue performance compared to last Ethiopian fiscal year.

It is envisaged that the implementation of the economic reform policy without doubt will oil the wheels of Ethiopia's economic growth and fashion a favorable environment for business and investment in the timeliest manner possible.

In actual fact, the encyclopedic implementation of the macroeconomic policy plays a prominent role in alleviating fritter away resources, augmenting productivity and investment in every corner of the country.

As the successful implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy is instrumental in modernizing foreign exchange management system and enhancing performance, pertinent bodies should make an all-out effort devoid of batting an eye.

It is quite clear that the implementation of Ethiopia's reform as time goes on will reinforce the country's exchange rate and macroeconomic stabilization policy.

In deed, the macroeconomic reform policy plays a huge role in inspiring the country's economy by resolving difficulties surrounding foreign currency exchange and economic imbalances. In light of the current situation, the positive move of the macroeconomic reform policy has jumpstarted continuing to make progress and turning over a new leaf all over the country.

At the time when the reform was put in place, some groups were persistently making an effort to throw cold water on the positive move of the country utilizing their usual cock and bull stories, all their efforts have

been going for nothing. Though they move heaven and earth to tarnish the promising move, the reform has been heading in the right direction.

Ethiopia's recent macroeconomic reforms, implemented since last July, are beginning to yield positive outcomes for the nation's economic landscape, particularly in the realm of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) reports a notable 12% increase in FDI flows over the past three months compared to the same period last year, signaling a robust recovery in investment activities.

A key reform allowing foreign wholesalers and retailers to operate within the local market has particularly drawn interest from new investors. EIC Commissioner, Zeleke Temesgen (PhD) noted, "About 72 investors have expressed interest in the newly opened sectors; 42 aim to engage in importing commodities, while 31 seek to invest in the export sector." So far, 22 proposals have been submitted, with 18 investors already licensed to commence operations.

During a recent address to the joint session of the House of People's Representatives and the House of Federation, President Taye Atsekeselassie outlined ambitious economic goals for the fiscal year, projecting an 8.4% growth rate, with value-added exports anticipated to reach five billion USD and total export revenues hitting 10 billion USD.

Zeleke highlighted an influx of Chinese investors following the reforms, which have significantly bolstered Ethiopia's economy through capital flow, job creation, and technological advancements. Currently, there are about 3,303 Chinese projects in Ethiopia, with a combined portfolio valued at 8.5 billion USD. Since 2022, 322 new Chinese investors have been licensed, demonstrating a significant increase in their activity.

As the reform plays a huge role in taking Ethiopia's economy to the next level of accomplishment at the earliest possible juncture, stakeholders should do everything they can for the attainment of the objectives and attaining the goals.

For the sake of truth, if the positive journey keeps moving in the right direction, achieving the desired goal will be as easy as falling off a log and easy as shooting fish in a barrel.

It is certain that Ethiopia has carried out noteworthy economic policy reform with a focus on blossoming the country's economy embracing the liberalization of a wide spectrum of sectors all over the country which scratch together a competitive, market-oriented foreign currency exchange rate and more of the same.

Leaders of Political parties in Ethiopia have pledged their support for the government's ongoing macroeconomic reforms, aimed at stabilizing the economy and promoting sustainable development, according to information obtained from ENA.

The leaders of the parties met with the Minister of Planning and Development, Fitsm Asefa and discussed the progress and objectives of the macroeconomic reforms. On the occasion, Fitsum highlighted the positive results achieved so far, including increased foreign exchange reserves, higher export earnings, and improved sector productivity.

The government has allocated significant resources to mitigate the impact of reforms on citizens, particularly through subsidies for essential goods like fuel, fertilizer, and medicines.

The government has collected 180.3 billion Birr in tax revenue over the past three months, exceeding the same period of the previous fiscal year by 71 billion birr. This achievement is attributed to comprehensive macroeconomic reforms aimed at establishing a stable economic environment, she said.

The minister emphasized the importance of political-economic cooperation for the success of the reforms. "By working together, we can build a stable macroeconomic foundation and ensure a prosperous future for Ethiopia," she stated.

The leaders of the political parties expressed their commitment to supporting the government's efforts.

"Economic development is a long-term endeavor that requires sustained growth," head of the Democratic Culture at the Prosperity Party and Vice President of the Joint Council of Ethiopian Political Parties, Melese Alemu said, adding "We are united in our goal of building a stronger and more resilient nation."

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Global collaboration to eradicate hunger

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Recently, world leaders have been grappling with a multitude of pressing issues, including conflict, war, and climate change. These challenges command significant attention from various stakeholders worldwide. However, amidst the clamour of these urgent matters, a silent and universal crisis continues to unfold: hunger. This serious issue, often overshadowed by more visible global concerns, remains a critical threat to millions of lives, particularly in underdeveloped and developing nations.

The growing global population exacerbates the problem of food insecurity. If left unaddressed, the disparity between food supply and demand is likely to broaden, leaving countless individuals vulnerable to hunger. Climate change compounds this threat, disrupting agricultural productivity and affecting the livelihoods of farmers around the globe. As weather patterns shift and extreme weather events become more frequent, the ability to grow food sustainably is jeopardized, further endangering food security.

To combat hunger effectively, it is imperative that all stakeholders' governments, international organizations, non-profits, and the private sectors prioritize this issue. A concerted effort is essential not only to provide immediate relief but also to implement long-term strategies that ensure access to nutritious food for all.

Ethiopia serves as a moving example of a nation striving to tackle food insecurity head-on. With over 80% of its population engaged in agriculture, the country is actively working to enhance its food security. Recent reforms across various sectors have begun to yield positive results. In agriculture, initiatives aimed at improving crop yields and fostering sustainable practices are gaining traction. Notably, Ethiopia has not only focused on local consumption but has also begun exporting its wheat, demonstrating a commitment to increasing food availability both domestically and internationally. These initiatives are a testament to what can be achieved with dedicated effort and reform. By sharing successful strategies and innovations, countries can collectively work towards eradicating hunger once and for all.

In a significant step towards addressing this critical issue, Addis Ababa will host a high-level international conference from November 5 to 7, 2024. This gathering aims to tackle the challenge of a world without hunger, bringing together over 1,500 participants from various sectors. As the deadline for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030 approaches, this conference represents a crucial opportunity for dialogue and action. It will serve as a platform for stakeholders to share insights, explore solutions, and



galvanize commitment towards achieving the ambitious goal of zero hunger by 2030.

The upcoming conference not only symbolizes hope for millions affected by hunger but also underscores the urgent need for global cooperation. As we move closer to the SDG target, it is essential that the world recognizes hunger as a priority issue, deserving of focused attention alongside other global challenges. By fostering collaboration and implementing effective strategies, we can pave the way for a future where hunger is no longer a silent killer, but a historical footnote.

During the press briefing about the conference, Industry Minister Melaku Alebel stated that it will provide an opportunity to explore technological solutions for tackling hunger and discuss how the government and private sectors can collaborate to eradicate it. He also mentioned that the conference will focus on increasing production and yield. Additionally, he expects the event to generate ideas for ensuring food security and addressing hunger-related issues.

“Sustainable investment in agribusiness and food systems must be at the heart of government actions if we are to achieve the SDG goal of a world without hunger,” Melaku noted

Dejene Tezera, UNIDO's Director of Agribusiness and Infrastructure, on his part, said that UNIDO aims to drive the structural transformation of economies in developing countries to address pressing global issues, including hunger.

As of today, the world population stands at approximately 8.2 billion, expected to reach 10 billion by 2050. This demographic shift necessitates a staggering 70% increase in food production, utilizing existing land and water resources. Currently, one in eleven people about 735 million globally suffers from undernourishment, with 250 million of these individuals residing in the least developed countries. Alarming, 30% of the global population cannot afford healthy food, he said.

In Africa, one in five people faces hunger, underscoring the urgency of the situation. With only six years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of zero

hunger by 2030, the challenge appears daunting. Projections suggest that over 580 million people may still experience hunger by that year.

He added that the agriculture sector contributes to 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, highlighting the interconnectedness of food security and climate challenges. To address these issues, a collaborative global effort is essential. Initiatives such as the United Nations Food Systems Summit, G20, and G7 are mobilizing partnerships and resources to combat hunger.

Compounding these challenges are the lingering effects of climate change floods, heat waves, and droughts as well as a global economic slowdown that has driven up prices for nutritious food, making it increasingly inaccessible for low-income populations. Income inequality further exacerbates the issue, with around 10% of people living below the poverty line, Dejene added.

In response to these pressing challenges, UNIDO, in partnership with the Ethiopian government and the African Union Commission, has organized this conference. This event will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including scientists, heads of state, private sector representatives, and policymakers, to discuss food security and hunger-related challenges and solutions.

According to Dejene the first day of the conference will focus on solutions, addressing technical challenges, and exploring conservation technologies, policy measures, financial strategies, and skill development. The second day will be dedicated to investment needs, facilitating discussions among the private sector, government, and international financial institutions. A thorough study of global investment requirements to end hunger will be presented.

On the third day, high-level officials and philanthropic leaders will outline the necessary global actions and partnerships to eradicate hunger. A financial mechanism will be established to support integrated actions against hunger, culminating in the Addis Ababa Declaration.

Also, Dejene highlighted the long-standing partnership between UNIDO and the Ethiopian government across various sectors, including agri-food, textiles, and skills development. Notably, pilot agro-food parks are being developed in three regions of Ethiopia through public-private partnerships, creating 17,000 jobs with a goal of reaching 400,000. Additionally, 140,000 smallholder farmers have been integrated into the value chain, facilitating market access and generating \$40 million in exports last year.

As the conference approaches, Tezera expressed optimism about the potential outcomes and collaborative efforts to combat hunger globally.

By fostering collaboration and implementing effective strategies, we can pave the way for a future where hunger is no longer a silent killer, but a historical footnote

Law & Politics

BRICS:

Where Ethiopia shows its bold stands

BY STAFF REPORTER

It has been a year since Ethiopia got the privilege to join the BRICS along with other countries like Iran and the United Arab Emirates. A bloc covering the vast portion of the world's population and nations with stronger and promised economic development is expected to bring a new way of doing business in the vast western dominated world. BRICS will promise to bring a competitive system that the world is crying for these days. Ethiopia's involvement in this bloc could be considered as one of the diplomatic successes of the country.

Working and partnering with major economic giants of the world under one big umbrella, Ethiopia can be much benefited through defending its national interests and increasing its chance to create strong economic and political partnership with the member states. Ethiopia's diplomatic success throughout history remains the same as the country managed to be entitled as BRICS member.

After accepted as an official member of the bloc, Ethiopia coupled with the recently joined states held their first meeting: the 16th BRICS Summit or the Kazan Summit, in Kazan, Russia a few days ago. Ethiopian delegation has also been participated in the meeting. The meeting has been a better platform for Ethiopia to express its interest in various international matters. The country has advocated the importance of the emergence of the bloc coupled with expressing its concerns regarding the long awaited reform in various international and financial organizations.

Delivering a speech at the summit, Abiy Ahmed (PhD), Ethiopian Prime Minister explained the importance of BRICS membership stating that the bloc covers nearly half of the world's population and over a third of global GDP. Abiy emphasized that BRICS is well-positioned to drive sustainable global development and promote economic growth.

"To unlock this potential, global governance structures must become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of developing and emerging economies," Abiy stated. He criticized the current international financial system, calling for comprehensive reform to create a more equitable framework. He also urged BRICS to lead by example, fostering mutually beneficial cooperation that supports not only its members but also the development goals of other emerging economies.

Abiy pointed to Ethiopia's fast-growing economy as a valuable opportunity for BRICS nations to invest and collaborate in areas like trade and agriculture. Ethiopia's



vast natural resources and strategic access to African markets position it as a key partner in the bloc's economic strategy, he added.

Echoing the Prime Minister's message, National Bank of Ethiopia Governor Mamo Mihretu stressed the need for an effective multilateral system. "The current system doesn't reflect today's reality. For instance, no African country holds a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, which has real-world consequences," he noted. The IMF's voting structure, pointing out that small Western nations have more influence than large developing countries like China and India, distorting financial governance, Mamo criticized.

"We need better representation in global financial institutions," Mamo stressed, adding that Ethiopia's IMF quota is inadequate and does not reflect its economic progress. He called for reforms that would enhance access to international financing for developing nations.

Similarly, it was reported that Gedion Timotheos, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, has underscored that diplomatic and political efforts aimed at protecting Ethiopia's national interests and global clout were successfully carried out during the BRICS Leaders' Summit.

Providing an overview of Ethiopia's participation in the Kazan Summit, Foreign Minister Gedion Timotheos highlighted Ethiopia's delegation has actively engaged in extensive discussions on a variety of crucial agendas. Ethiopia's presence at the summit facilitated significant diplomatic efforts, ensuring the nation's interests were safeguarded and its voice was amplified on the global stage.

The Minister also pointed out that the summit led to important decisions on matters such as economic cooperation, regional security, and the reform of the United Nations Security Council.

According to Gedion, Ethiopia not only defended its national interests during the summit but also aligned itself with the collective positions of the African continent in these key discussions.

He further mentioned that numerous countries seeking partnerships with BRICS nations attended the summit, where Ethiopia held productive bilateral talks with representatives from various countries.

In particular, he noted that some BRICS partner countries approached Ethiopia for support in their bid to gain full membership in the organization.

Gedion also touched upon the discussions between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Russian President Vladimir Putin, emphasizing Ethiopia's long-standing historical ties with Russia. Numerous bilateral agreements have been signed with Russia in various sectors over the years, and their discussions at the summit focused on deepening cooperation between the two nations.

On top of that, BRICS member and partner countries have expressed their interest in working together with Ethiopia in the areas of peace and security, according to Ambassador Redwan Hussein, Director-General of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

Ambassador Redwan Hussein, who provided a briefing regarding Ethiopia's participation in the summit, highlighted that peace and security were key topics of

discussion during the summit.

In his remarks, Ambassador Redwan emphasized that various global conflicts and tensions are having a negative impact on peace and security and are causing harm to civilians.

He pointed out that the growing threat posed by cyber-attacks, misinformation, and hate speech, which are increasingly affecting global peace in the current digital era. The Summit has reflected on the need for countries to work together to strengthen institutions in this sector to maintain global peace and stability.

BRICS member countries have reaffirmed their commitment to reforming their security institutions and enhancing their collective contribution to global peace and security, ambassador Redwan explained. Ethiopia is emerging as a growing and transforming nation and several countries have highlighted the importance of Ethiopia playing a key role in peace and security, especially in light of current global challenges. In light of considering this, the countries participating in the summit, he added, have shown their willingness to cooperate with Ethiopia on these matters.

Furthermore, Ambassador Redwan mentioned that Ethiopia's contributions during the BRICS Summit have been well-received, and that the discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation have been fruitful.

Ambassador Redwan also indicated that Ethiopia's participation and productive discussions with various countries during the summit demonstrated the potential for expanding Ethiopia's bilateral cooperation with a range of nations, particularly in the areas of peace and security.

Society

Brightening the future of persons with intellectual disabilities

BY TEWODROS KASSA

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), intellectual disability refers to neurodevelopmental conditions that affect functioning in two areas: cognitive functioning, such as learning, problem-solving, and judgment, and adaptive functioning, activities of daily life such as communication skills and social participation.

Additionally, intellectual and adaptive deficits begin early in the developmental period, typically before the age of 18 for a diagnosis.

Intellectual (ID) Disability affects about 1 % of the population, and of those about 85 % have mild intellectual disability. In high-income countries, 2–3 % of children have an intellectual disability.

Accordingly, intellectual disability is identified by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.

The clinical symptoms and signs of intellectual disability are first recognized during infancy and childhood. Intellectual disability is identified as mild, moderate, severe, or profound.

Even though intellectual disability is a life-long condition, there are several early and ongoing interventions that may improve functioning and enable the person to thrive throughout their lifetime. Underlying medical or genetic conditions and co-occurring conditions frequently add to the complex lives of people with intellectual disability.

Once a diagnosis of intellectual disability is made, help for individuals with intellectual disability is focused on looking at the individual's strengths and needs, and the support he or she needs to function at home, in school/work, and in the community.

More importantly, sustainable psychosocial support is important to create a better future for persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

In Ethiopia, there are numerous activities being undertaken to create a better future for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Fikir Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities (FENAID) has been among the leading organizations working in this area for the past three decades.

Association, President, Mihret Nigussie said that the Association, for the past three decades has been undertaking various activities to support and empower children and young people



with intellectual disabilities, thereby making tangible differences in their lives.

The Association, established in 1994, will mark its 30th anniversary through various events at the national level aiming to create more awareness regarding the issue.

“The past 30 years were fruitful in the efforts made to address the challenges that persons with intellectual disabilities face. Thus, marking the 30th anniversary of the Association would have significant contributions to empowering persons with intellectual disabilities and advocating for their rights. The past 30 years' journey of the Association beamed a ray of hope among children with intellectual disabilities and their parents,” she said.

According to her, preparations have been finalized to mark the 30th anniversary of the Associations at the Ethio-Cuba Fraternity Park through organizing photo exhibition and staging various entertainment programs that display its 30th year's progress.

The Association still faces challenges in the efforts to create a better future for persons with intellectual disabilities due to the lack of suitable buildings inside its compound to embrace more children, she noted.

Accordingly, having well-organized facilities inside the Association's headquarter is fundamental to bringing a tangible change in the efforts to create a better Ethiopia that creates an inclusive opportunity for every citizen.

Therefore, the Association will continue its noble activities through generations.

Currently, the Association has 17 branches in nine states and embraces more than 15,000 members throughout the country.

As to the President, the main objective of the Association is to support the efforts made at the national level to improve the social and economic conditions of people with intellectual disabilities.

Promoting inclusive education, economic empowerment, human rights, and advocacy, and ensuring inclusive health for persons with intellectual disabilities are among the Association's four thematic areas of inclusion.

On his part, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Representative Alemayehu Mamo said that physical and mental disabilities are a common national agenda that everyone should actively participate in.

“Disability can happen to anyone at any time and in every situation. Thus, the issue should get due attention to creating an inclusive opportunity and ensuring the inclusive participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in the country's political, social, economic, and other opportunities. Easing the hurdles of persons with intellectual disabilities should not be an assignment left for tomorrow,” he added.

According to him, pursuant to its role and responsibilities, the Ministry has been providing continuous support, including capacity building and backing financially to associations working on

persons with intellectual disabilities including Fikir Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities.

Concurrent to this, the Ministry has been working effectively through materializing policies and laws that ensure the inclusive participation of persons with disabilities to ease access to essential services from governmental and other service providers, he said.

Fikir Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities announced that it will celebrate its 30th anniversary for ten consecutive days, from November 04-08, 2024.

The closing ceremony of the Association will be marked on November 14 at Skylight Hotel in the presence of high-ranking officials, pertinent stakeholders, individuals, and other concerned bodies, it was learnt.

Fikir Ethiopian National Association on Intellectual Disabilities is an indigenous non-profit making, non-political and non-religious associations, and was formed in 1994 by 89 parents of children with intellectual disability.

In sum, there are many different causes of intellectual disability. It can be associated with a genetic syndrome, such as Down syndrome or Fragile X syndrome. It may develop following an illness such as meningitis, whooping cough or measles; may result from head trauma during childhood; or may result from exposure to toxins such as lead or mercury. Other factors that may contribute to intellectual disability include brain malformation, maternal disease, and environmental influences (alcohol, drugs, or other toxins). A variety of labor and delivery-related events, infection during pregnancy, and problems at birth, such as not getting enough oxygen, can also contribute.

Intellectual functioning is measured with individually administered and psychometrically valid, comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and psychometrically sounding intelligence tests. While a specific full-scale IQ test score is no longer required for diagnosis, standardized testing is used as part of diagnosing the condition. A full-scale IQ score of around 70 to 75 indicates a significant limitation in intellectual functioning. However, the IQ score must be interpreted in the context of the person's difficulties in general mental abilities. Moreover, scores on subtests can vary considerably so the full-scale IQ score may not accurately reflect overall intellectual functioning. Therefore, clinical judgment is needed in interpreting the results of IQ tests.

Planet Earth



COP-29 : Another opportunity to showcase Ethiopia's green practices

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Since the weather is unpredictable and natural events like floods, droughts, storms, ice melting, extreme heat, and so on happen in parallel with global expectations and imaginations, the climate change conundrum is one of the largest issues facing our planet today.

Numerous studies have shown that the main cause of the constantly shifting climate issue is the carbon gas released by the massive industries in western nations. As none escape from such a daunting climate crisis, the world's nations have committed to discussing the topic in order to halt the ongoing climate crisis, which affects both developed and developing nations alike.

The world continue to struggle with this new phenomenon as they are unable to translate their words into action. However, it has a significant negative impact on agricultural production, making it difficult for developing nations to guarantee food security. Despite the fact that nations have been gathered for the previous 28 years, they have not been able to come to a consensus on the effects of climate change.

Ethiopia has changed its role in the world by taking a variety of initiatives meant to lessen the effects of the climate issue. The nation has set up a green pavilion at COP 28 where attendees may learn about its best practices.

Ethiopia has spent the past year preparing to participate in the COP-29 summits, which are anticipated to pass significant resolutions that are feasible to stop and reverse the ever-increasing impacts of climate change, as was done at the Conference of Parties, or COP 28.

The capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, is anticipated to host the annual COP 29 meeting in November. The main focus of the conference is the biggest global climate change challenges. World leaders and other interested parties get together to participate in the summit and make important decisions.

Clean Ethiopia, Yelemat Tirufat, and Green Legacy Ethiopia were used by the initiative as an example of how it is performing symbolic acts by launching the programs it has created on its initiative to address the issue.

The State Minister for Plan and Development Seyoum Kebede claims that Ethiopia will make good use of the platform to share its expertise with the globe and exchange experiences with others by actively attending the main conference and ancillary sessions. He stated that Ethiopia will put a lot of effort into creating a nation and a society that can endure the consequences of climate change, namely by increasing the cash flow ability to meet the objectives of the projects it has launched.

Indigenous civil society organizations have expressed that the decisions made at the International Climate Change Conference are not being implemented, reminding us that the cooperation and

partnership works established at Dubai COP-28 last year are currently being implemented. PHEC, a coalition of 99 civil society organizations addressing population, health, and environmental issues, has extensive experience attending climate change summits.

According to Endashaw Mogese, the coalition's General Director, the coalition has been conducting coordinated and sustainable work in the fields of population, health, and the environment for the past 17 years since its inception. He claims that the implementation of the COP's decisions has been limited in its 30-year existence.

He noted that the climate change challenges are becoming worse and their repercussions are growing as a result of the signatory nations' improper implementation of the agreements. He stated, for instance, that the Paris Agreement, which was negotiated to provide the developed nations—the primary source of the issue—with \$100 million a year, has not been completely implemented. Nonetheless, the meeting will be an excellent means of leveraging, forming alliances, and raising funds.

Eskedar Awgechew, the founder and Executive Director of the indigenous civil society organization named EcoJustice Ethiopia, stated that justice is necessary for climate change and environmental protection, pointing out that developing nations, including Ethiopia, have been negatively impacted by greenhouse gas emissions. He brings

up the necessity of taking resilience and compensation into account at the meeting.

He asserts that although civil unions do not represent nations in COP discussions, they do contribute by promoting and elucidating negotiating concepts so that, in concert with peer unions, choices that benefit all people can be established. According to him, in order to make choices and take actions that will actually affect change after the annual summit, the negotiating nations need also carry out their commitments.

The draft agreement materials have been in limbo until now, and the civil society organization's executives expect that they will be ratified at this year's climate change conference in Azerbaijan. Noting in particular that financial concerns are the main topic of this year's conference, it is expected that additional financial support agreements will be made.

He said that we hope that the effects of climate change will spread, especially in Africa, and that the agreements on loss and damage will be passed. Actions and frameworks for vulnerable communities, gender, and inclusive climate change should also be developed.

The officials stated that they will actively participate in the preliminary events and events of this year's COP meeting by creating connections and partnerships with international organizations to make decisions that are suitable for the world.