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## Africa must unite to unlock coffee sector's potential: ECTA

• Ethiopia hosts IACO high-level policy forum

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has emphasized the importance of combined efforts to transform the African coffee sector, underscoring the need for collective action across the continent.

ECTA's Director General, Adugna Debela (PhD) made the above yesterday while addressing the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO) High-Level Policy Forum and 64th Annual General Assembly, sponsored by the United Nations Development Organization (UNIDO).

Adugna also stressed the urgency of improving coffee quality and production volume. He mentioned the need to export value-added

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See Africa must : ... page 3



Photo: Berihun Tadele

## Addis convenes meritorious Continental Peace Conference: MoP

• Nation deploys 142,000 peacekeepers since Korea War

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's exceptional and unwavering commitment to maintain regional, continental and international peace and security was demonstrated at the Continental Peace Conference, the Ministry of Peace

(MoP) announced.

Following the conclusion of the Continental Peace Conference organized in Addis Ababa, State Minister of Peace, Keyredin Tezera (PhD) said that Ethiopia's firm stance to regional, continental and global peace is steadfast.

"Ethiopia has deployed more than 142,000 peacekeeping troops to eleven countries since the Korea War," Keyredin said adding the country's consistency to contribute its role towards international peace.

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Firehiwot Abebe

## Reform attracting potential investors in pharmaceuticals industry: MoH

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The recent macroeconomic reform measures are attracting potential investors in the pharmaceuticals sector, the Ministry of Health (MoH) said.

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## Ethiopia's road to improve tax-to-GDP ratio

BY YESUF ENDRIS

For years, the Ethiopian government has relied heavily on external funding and printing substantial amounts of money to fill the financial gap between its revenue and expenditures. To address this persistent issue, the government has been introducing new economic policies and legal frameworks and the latest initiative become the proposed asset tax policy, which, according to the Ministry of Finance, is nearing public introduction.

Recently, the Ministry presented the draft policy to the Plan, Budget, and Finance Standing Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives. During the discussion, the taxation system was criticized for failing to address revenue expectations. More efficient tax collection could stabilize the economy and reduce the need for unsustainable measures.



Similarly, Revenue Minister Aynalem Nigusie, during her discussion with various state government representatives for revenue affairs, emphasized the importance

of fostering a culture of fair tax payment. "The government's revenue collection system is becoming more efficient. The

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# News

## Academics rally behind Nat'l Dialogue for lasting peace

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

National Dialogue has proven to be an effective tool for facilitating political transitions and resolving longstanding conflicts worldwide. Ethiopia is no exception, as the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), established in 2022, continues its efforts to lay the groundwork for a peaceful and inclusive National Dialogue.

The commission has been actively conducting agenda-gathering sessions and identifying participants across various states and city administrations. Its efforts include engaging with key stakeholders such as political parties, religious institutions, artists, media professionals, and the Diaspora.

In discussions with intellectuals from 56 universities, scholars emphasized the critical role of higher education institutions in ensuring the success of the National Dialogue.

Wolkite University's President Office Head Melese Tefu highlighted the dialogue's potential to address age-old challenges, foster national consensus, and resolve differences peacefully. He praised the ENDC's grassroots initiatives to identify and address the country's pressing issues, noting that engaging diverse societal groups—scholars, teachers, youth, and political parties—is crucial to countering harmful narratives and fostering unity.



Melese Tefu



Melese Amshago



Feriya Hassan

"Intellectuals have a significant responsibility to bridge societal and historical gaps through research and education," Melese stated. He stressed the need for scholars to shape youth perspectives and actively contribute to the dialogue's success.

Similarly, Wachemo University's Health Science College Director-General Office Head Melese Amshago expressed optimism about the ENDC's activities, describing them as a beacon of hope for Ethiopia's unity. He noted that the dialogue could reinforce cultural and religious values, strengthen people-to-people ties, and pave the way for sustainable peace.

"The National Dialogue presents an opportunity to create patriotic, critical-thinking, and solution-oriented youth, which is essential for the nation's progress," he added.

For Jigjiga University Lecturer Feriya Hassan (PhD), the dialogue is a foundation

for lasting peace and national consensus. She underscored the importance of addressing societal gaps caused by misinformation and emphasized the need for inclusivity in the agenda-gathering process.

"The commission must involve all states to ensure a truly inclusive dialogue," she stated. "The more inclusive the dialogue, the better the outcomes will be."

Feriya also pointed out that beyond intellectuals, religious leaders, public figures, and political parties have a critical role in raising awareness and guiding communities toward peaceful resolutions.

The National Dialogue offers Ethiopia an opportunity to strengthen societal ties, create a conducive environment for development, and resolve differences peacefully. Intellectuals, alongside other key stakeholders, must rise to the occasion to ensure its success and contribute to the country's lasting stability and unity.

## EthSwitch advances to basic level in service inclusivity

• Eyes Progressed Stage in 6 months

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

**ADDIS ABABA** - EthSwitch, Ethiopia's sole Instant Payment System (IPS), has achieved a Basic Level ranking in service inclusivity, according to the 2024 report by the AfricaNenda Foundation.

This marks a significant milestone for EthSwitch, which began efforts to launch an inclusive IPS in 2022 and was previously classified as a non-ranking provider.

EthSwitch's Chief Portfolio Officer, Abenezer Wondossen, attributed the promotion to the company's success in facilitating person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-business (P2B) instant payment services over the past two years.

The announcement, made in the AfricaNenda Foundation's annual report, highlights the potential of inclusive and instant payment systems to drive financial inclusion and economic equity across the continent. "Currently, over 400 million Africans remain financially excluded," the report states. The report also notes that 26 countries in Africa operate live IPS services, with an additional 27 countries expected to launch theirs within the next 18 months.

Operational IPS in Africa processed over 49 billion transactions in the past year, surpassing the 1 trillion USD mark for the first time. However, the foundation emphasized the need for greater inclusivity to better reach financially excluded populations. IPS systems are categorized into three levels of inclusiveness: Basic, Progressed, and Mature. While no African service provider has reached the Mature Level, nine systems are in the Progressed Stage, and 12, including EthSwitch, are at the Basic Level.

Abenezer told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that EthSwitch is actively working on several projects to enhance its services and anticipates reaching the Progressed Stage within the next six months. "Achieving this level will provide significant benefits, enabling citizens in unbanked areas to access secure and affordable financial services, free from risks and hassles," he said.

A key factor in building an inclusive payment system is Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). According to Girum Fekadu, a digital finance expert and AfricaNenda Ambassador, the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy and the rollout of digital identity cards (*Fayda*) are instrumental in expanding fast and inclusive financial systems.

Additionally, Ethiopia's Data Privacy Act will bolster data protection and financial security, laying a strong foundation for the country's digital finance transformation, Girum remarked.

EthSwitch's progress is a step toward greater financial inclusion in Ethiopia, with broader implications for improving access to digital finance across Africa.

## Panel urges strengthening entrepreneurship to expedite dev't

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

**ADDIS ABABA** - Panelists participated in the Global Entrepreneurship Week organized by the Ethiopian Entrepreneurship Development Institute emphasized the urgent need to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among the younger generation to drive development.

Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies Country Lead in Kenya Roselyn Marandu-Kareithi (PhD), highlighted the importance of listening to and giving space and empowering youth to cultivate their entrepreneurial skills.

She noted that Africa has significant potentials in both services and production, given its growing population and expanding market opportunities.

According to Roselyn, creating a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem requires addressing several key factors, with access to funding being paramount. Entrepreneurs need capital to launch and grow their ventures, which can be sourced from investors, venture capitalists, or government grants.

She believed that a favorable policy environment is essential so that governments should implement policies that support entrepreneurship and small businesses, including tax incentives, simplified business registration processes, and investment in infrastructure.



Access to markets is also crucial for startups, enabling them to sell their products and services, Roselyn said, noting that building networks with larger businesses and establishing new marketplaces can facilitate this access. Furthermore, education and training programs are vital to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge for success.

Ethiopia is on the right track, with reports indicating a 20 percent growth in startups and strong leadership support for entrepreneurship. The potential to industrialize Africa through enhanced entrepreneurship in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is promising.

Burayu Polytechnic Dean Amsalu Merga stressed the importance of moving away from traditional approaches. He mentioned that the public has provided training to TVETs and stakeholders to promote entrepreneurship

among the youth.

Currently, the environment is favorable for entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners, thanks to leadership recognition of entrepreneurship's importance. To achieve the goals of the Institute, Amsalu said that collaboration is essential to advance the entrepreneurial mindset. The leadership must intensify efforts to nurture the growth of entrepreneurship.

Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) is celebrated annually in Ethiopia, marking its 10th year and 16th year internationally. The event promotes entrepreneurship globally, with this year's theme being "Entrepreneurship is for everyone." The Ethiopian Entrepreneurship Development Institute plays a crucial role in organizing activities that encourage innovation, support startups, and foster an entrepreneurial culture throughout the week.

# News

## Ethiopia calls for global action to empower women in diplomacy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** – Foreign Affairs State Minister Birtukan Ayano (Amb.) has urged the international community to prioritize empowering women in diplomacy, highlighting persistent gender disparities in global diplomatic representation.

Speaking at a dialogue on Women in Diplomacy with diplomats and international organization representatives in Addis Ababa, Birtukan acknowledged the progress women have made but stressed the need for equal representation and more robust global efforts to achieve gender equity in diplomacy.

“Women have traveled a long way to reach where they are today, but the journey is far from over,” she said. “The world must strengthen its commitment to ensuring equal engagement and representation for women.”

The State Minister also underscored Ethiopia’s initiatives to enhance gender



representation in its diplomatic institutions, noting that women are increasingly assuming leadership roles and participating in decision-making processes. However, she admitted that more work remains to bridge historical gaps in representation.

Birtukan further emphasized preparing future generations of women for diplomatic roles. “Diplomacy is not just about resolving past issues but also shaping the future. Today’s diplomats must pave the way for young women aspiring to join the field,” she said. “The voices of young women must

be heard. Their perspectives can shape the future of diplomacy, and we must mentor them effectively.”

South Sudanese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Natalina Edward Mou, echoed the sentiment, urging African nations to take the lead in empowering women to assume diplomatic roles.

The dialogue concluded with a call for collaborative global initiatives to enhance women’s representation in diplomacy and international affairs.

### Africa must...

products to gain maximum benefit from Africa’s untapped coffee potential.

In his opening remarks, Adugna noted that the forum provides an opportunity to address challenges in the coffee sector through collaboration. He also emphasized the importance of meeting the European Union’s deforestation-free regulation, which is vital for securing better returns from the coffee trade.

Agriculture Minister Girma Amentie (PhD) echoed these sentiments, stating that coffee plays a critical role in Africa’s socioeconomic development and has immense potential to

foster regional integration. He described the forum as a historic milestone in overcoming sectoral constraints and improving the competitiveness of African coffee in the global market.

Italy’s Ambassador to Ethiopia, Agostino Palese, pointed out that coffee is a source of livelihood for millions but is vulnerable to challenges such as climate change. He revealed that over 5.5 million coffee farmers still live below the poverty line, reaffirming Italy’s commitment to providing financial and technical support to uplift the sector.

IACO’s Secretary General, Solomon

Sabiti, recognized Ethiopia’s significant contributions to promoting coffee quality and productivity. He advocated for a multisectoral approach to enhance coffee standards across Africa.

Founded by 11 African nations, IACO now boasts 25 member countries, working together to advance the continent’s coffee industry.

The forum’s discussions centered on leveraging African collaboration to address constraints, increase coffee production, and enhance its international competitiveness.

### Reform attracting...

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, MoH State Minister Firehiwot Abebe said that the recent macroeconomic reform measures implemented by the government have been attracting investors in the pharmaceuticals industry.

“Every day, we are discussing with potential investors who have an interest in investing in the pharmaceutical sector, where the country has untapped potential in this regard,” she said.

Attracting more foreign and local investors in the sector would contribute to boost pharmaceuticals productivity as well as to substitute imports locally. As a result, such moves would enhance the country’s economic development, Firehiwot indicated.

According to the State Minister, a quality healthcare system is critical to build

human capital and address health crises. To have a healthy community, it requires improving health facilities, facilitating timely procurements of standard quality products through a strong inventory and procurement system.

Hence, taking further reform measures is critical to foster health facilities’ access to overcome communal impacts. In this regard, the commitment of leadership is vital to sustain the recent developments, she stressed.

Ministry has prioritized ensuring quality and equity of health services, the State Minister stressed, noting that the approval of proclamations such as procurement proclamations and legal frameworks would support this effort.

According to the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service’s (EPSS) Director General

Abdulkadir Galgalo (PhD), the country has been working on improving the pharmaceutical supply chain process.

Pharmaceutical supply chain process needs a disciplined workforce and quality assurance. Future approval of draft procurement proclamations and others would contribute to improving the country’s supply chain through avoiding procurement delays, he stated.

Abdulkadir believed that the approval of these proclamations by the House of Peoples’ Representatives would greatly empower capacity and facilitate the processes.

Although the pharmaceutical supply chain process has complex challenges including delays of procurements, shortage of quality warehouse and others, EPSS has been exerting efforts to ensure end to end responsibility, he stated.

### Addis convenes...

In addition to deploying peacekeeping troops to different countries, Ethiopia organized a continental peace conference aimed at finding solutions for existing problems and to share experiences, according to the State Minister.

The continental conference which aims to building Peaceful and Prosperous Africa was attended by participants gathered

from 22 different African countries, he mentioned.

He stressed that Ethiopia’s new initiative shows the country’s commitment to continue its contributions towards regional, continental and international peace.

Keyredin expressed that the conference was successful and countries like Rwanda, South Africa and Ethiopia presented their

experiences of solving internal problems. Especially, the Rwanda’s post-genocide peace-building efforts and the South African post-apartheid initiatives to bring peace and order were among the best examples.

He added that Ethiopia’s initiative to host this continental event, dedicated to discussing Africa’s peace and security, is an exemplary platform organized by a single state.

## Ethiopia’s...

amount of revenue collected in recent months is significantly higher than in the same period last year,” she noted while recognizing the tax collection performance is still below the target.

Earlier this year, while presenting the government’s 2024/25 fiscal plan to the House of Peoples’ Representatives, President Taye Atske-selassie projected Ethiopia’s economy to grow by 8.4%. Revenue from both tax and non-tax sources is expected to reach 1.5 trillion Birr.

Within the past four months, the total amount of the government revenue has recorded 312 billion Birr, 61 percent greater than the past years’ same months’ performance, according to Ministry of Revenue.

Despite the fact that this low tax-to-GDP ratio is not unique to Ethiopia, it currently stands at 7%, among the lowest in Africa. Acknowledging this deficit, the government is implementing mechanisms to ensure fair taxation and increase revenue, according to reports released last May by the Ministry.

At the 2024 UNECA Conference held in Botswana, UNECA Secretary General Claver Gatete remarked that Africa’s tax-to-GDP ratio, averaging 15.6%, is far below the global standard. He urged African nations to modernize their tax systems, expand tax bases to include the informal sector, and leverage digital technologies to seal loopholes and prevent illicit financial flows.

A marketing officer at Belayab Motors PLC, speaking anonymously, pointed out inefficiencies in Ethiopia’s Value-Added Tax (VAT) system. “In Kenya, the tax-to-GDP ratio is nearly double of ours. Employed citizens pay fair taxes, and the private sector complies better. Here, many wholesalers and retailers evade VAT, treating receipts as negotiable services. Such practices undermine revenue collection,” he said.

Ethiopia had aimed at increasing its tax-to-GDP ratio to 12.7% by 2022 but failed due to insecurity and tax mismanagement. Executive Director and board member of East African Holding, Bizuayehu Tadele, highlighted a lack of awareness among citizens. “A person earning one million Birr annually should pay an income tax of 350,000 Birr. This concept is unfamiliar to many Ethiopians. The government must take proactive and reactive measures to raise awareness about taxation,” he stated.

He also shared his personal observation, saying, “I was a public servant and understood the tax system. Surprisingly, my parents paid significantly less tax than I did, even though their income was higher. This disparity highlights the systemic faults in our tax system.” Improving Ethiopia’s tax collection and tax-to-GDP ratio is essential for building a resilient economy, he added.

# Opinion

## Why does distasteful news on floriculture remains as swarm like a plague of locusts?

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON

The floriculture industry in Ethiopia began in the early 1980s when state-owned farms started producing and exporting flower to Europe. The sector flourished in the early 2000s with large-scale export of cut-flowers. The post- 2003 period is characterized by high entry of foreign firms and spectacular growth in exports.

Currently, the flower sector has been demonstrating steady advancement over years in its contribution to the national economy and has become the second largest exportable item next only to coffee In Ethiopia. The sector creates job opportunity for more than 60,000 people and generates 467 million USD foreign currency annually.

Despite the contribution of the floriculture sector is immense, quite a number of people do not feel good about the role of flower to Ethiopian Economy and society since 2005. The claim had begun in 2005 where Ethiopia undertook its general election. During the election campaign, some of the opposition parties alleged the ruling party with disgusting arguments and claim that flower investments is something that harm our country's land and environment. These opposition parties viewed the entrance of many foreign flower producing and exporting companies from neighbouring African countries was due to their negative role played and contributed by farms to respective country settings. Some argued that flower is not our national priorities.

Nonetheless, floriculture sector is still at infant level in Ethiopia. People who feel not good about the role of flower were basically influenced not by their experience or practical contact with observed reality and events but rather by 2005 Ethiopian election campaign which was actually a manipulative propaganda tactic used in politics. Many professionals argued that doubt, fear and uncertainty is a strategy to influence people's perception by spreading negative, dubious, or false information for their political ends.

Today, not only the ordinary people, in every corner of the country, but also Authorities, Academicians, reputed professionals in development and service sectors are all influenced by the spread of rumour during the 2005 election campaign propaganda and not confident to tell and speak loud about the positive side of flower business and its contribution for the country.

To date, the total command area under flower production is only about 1600 hectare which is insignificant in size that constitutes roughly 0.0002% of the total area of the country. The most unnoticed wonder is that some of the land and soil bed that had been used for flower production so far has now been used for production and export of strawberry to Europe and the Middle East. With stringent environmental regulation and



close monitoring, many flower farms are now returned to sustainable close system.

The current pressing question seems why is unpleasant news on floriculture remains swarm like a plague of locusts? The answer is crystal clear: everywhere bad news spread faster than wild fire. Many critics in social field argue that this is typically related to people's negative bias. According to this argument, one plausible reason why bad news spread faster than wild fire is that people have a natural tendency to pay more attention to negative information. This bias means that people often remember and react more strongly to bad news, which can lead to increased sharing.

Negativity can trigger a strong emotional response, which can make it an effective way for news outlets to engage their audiences.

Other authors argue that sharing bad news can serve as a form of social gesturing, where individuals communicate their awareness of important issues or dangers. This can create a sense of urgency or concern within social networks. Other writers relate the issue with the role of mass media. Media outlets often prioritize negative stories because they attract more viewers and engagement. This can lead to a cycle where bad news is more prominently featured, further encouraging its spread.

Social media is highly accessible and loosely monitored, which can contribute to the spread of misinformation. Others more explain it as ppeople are often more motivated to discuss and analyse challenges or threats than positive developments. This tendency can lead to more conversations and, consequently, more sharing of bad news. Similar critics often describe it as Viral Nature of Content: means Content that evokes strong emotional reactions is

more likely to go viral. Since bad news often triggers such reactions, it can spread through social media and other platforms more rapidly than positive news.

In many places, we have all heard this unpleasant news. While most consider them harmless, they can affect the well-being of the sector. Learning to tell the difference between fact and fallacy can be a real boost both mentally and physically. What happens when rumours are harmful? What if they damage company's reputation, survival or normal operation? If you're on the receiving end of untrue gossip, what do you do?

When it comes to unrealistic news, the effects can be both immediate and long-lasting. In most cases, unrealistic story can rile up your sentiments and change once temperament. Depending on the strength of one's feelings, the story, and the reaction it gives, can stick in one's head, even after one finds out it false. It may even remember those feelings if you see another story about the same subject.

But we should not forget that unfounded allegations are not new in every business venture. It is not infrequent where people believed rumour for a long time, and they feel more real as they are more repetitive.

Nonetheless, both existing and new flower producing and exporting companies ought to know that rumours are just rumours, and feeling discouraged doesn't make the rumour true. As one demonstrates his commitments and do ethical business, all will begin to find freedom from the lies.

On the other hand, the government, as the sector supporting entity, has demonstrated its commitment to intensify horticulture in the country. Most recently, the Oromia Regional State introduced a land lease directive for flower farm investors, featuring

new lease rates based on proximity to city centres i.e. lease rates ranging from 1.84 Birr for a square meter to 4.04 Birr. For the period of 15 years and possible extension

This has been seen by many farms located in Bishofetu and Adami Tulu horticulture cluster as a major breakthrough to address longstanding title deed problems and to boost horticulture including flower business

But this does not mean that all the issues of floriculture are rosy, there is still unfavorable situation to deal with in the flower sector. We are now living in the internet dominating era. The internet platform enables professionals and environmental activists to share information of bad and new things with others across the globe. This means, anyone can highlight injustices, spread anxiety, better understand useful and bad practices, and connect with other expertise we may have never otherwise met or exposed to similar event.

Finally, no matter what the sectors are, participatory study, empirical and operational research will give us balanced view as the more we know, the more we can effect positive change and manage externality both at sectoral and societal level. Getting a fresh perspective can do wonders for identifying an implication you may not have thought of on your own.

*Editor's Note: Mekonnen Solomon is a horticultural export coordinator at MOA. He can be reached at [ehdaplan@gmail.com](mailto:ehdaplan@gmail.com).*

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

# Editorial

# Opinion

## NQV: A game changer for economic growth and global competitiveness

Last week, Ethiopia inaugurated the National Quality Village (NQV), a groundbreaking initiative designed to strengthen the country's quality infrastructure and provide it with a competitive edge in global markets.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and modern facilities, the NQV addresses key challenges related to product quality, consistency, and adherence to international standards. This development positions Ethiopia higher on the global trade ladder, enabling it to better navigate international markets and enhance its foreign exchange earnings.

As an agrarian country, agriculture is central to Ethiopia's economy and social structure. With its diverse climate and topography, Ethiopia produces a wide variety of agricultural products, making it a key player in global agricultural markets while also contributing significantly to the livelihoods of millions.

Aside from its organic coffee, which is renowned for its distinct flavor worldwide, Ethiopia is a major exporter of tea, oilseeds, spices, and sesame seeds, all of which are highly valued in international markets for their quality.

The export of pulses, including lentils and chickpeas, has become increasingly important to Ethiopia's economy. Additionally, live animals and meat products—particularly those sent to the Middle East and neighboring African countries—along with cut flowers and gold, contribute significantly to the nation's foreign currency earnings.

As a result, Ethiopia is steadily increasing its hard currency earnings. For instance, during the 2023/24 fiscal year, the country earned a record-breaking 1.43 billion USD from coffee exports. Additionally, foreign exchange earnings from cereal and oilseed exports witnessed a significant increase, with over 156 million USD generated in just the first four months of the current fiscal year.

While the outcomes are encouraging, they still fall short of the country's export potential. Challenges such as climate change, drought, limited infrastructure, dependence on a single product, and issues related to product quality continue to hinder Ethiopia from fully realizing its economic potential.

However, over the years, significant measures have been taken to improve the situation. Through ambitious economic reforms, the government has implemented wide-ranging activities aimed at increasing the volume and variety of export items by diversifying products, adding value to exports, and expanding market destinations.

These steps though have been instrumental to seize the growing global demand and generating substantial revenue from the sector, meeting international quality standards remains an unsolved challenge.

At the heart of this problem, the establishment of the National Quality Village (NQV) represents a major advancement in alleviating quality-related challenges, enhancing Ethiopia's competitiveness on the global stage, and driving economic growth.

Inaugurating the village, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed also emphasized the vital role the NQV will play in strengthening Ethiopia's capabilities to ensure quality and improve its competitiveness in the international market.

"This critical institution is designed to catalyze the competitiveness of our local products in global markets and enhance our 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 our competitiveness in the international arena," he said.

Unquestionably, in today's increasingly interconnected and competitive global trade environment, where supply chain dynamics are more complex than ever, having a modern facility is not merely a physical and technical hub. Rather, it is a transformative institution that elevates Ethiopia's export capabilities and strengthens its position in the global markets by improving the quality of its exports. In respect to this, Ethiopia's investment in quality will undoubtedly yield long-term benefits, positioning the country for success on the global stage.

## A quality product can sell itself and never needs an advertiser

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

This adage has been circulating around the market for decades, either formal or informal. It speaks to the value of working for quality so that a product can sell itself without any or much advertisement. We can see our mainstream media, social media, notice boards, and billboards ... filled with advertisements for a range of commercial items, for which millions have been paid, only to win the hearts of consumers and sell in the market.

At times, experts in the field also claim that in some items, more than half of the money that consumers pay goes to cover the advice cost. But a normal person can inquire why companies and marketers struggle so hard to sell their products when they can add the quality and reliability of their products and sell the item without all these.

Indeed, this phenomenon has been witnessed in the export products of some countries that have paid a lot of price to ensure quality so that they can outshine the export market. Some companies from other countries have gone to the extent of borrowing the names of these countries (illegally, of course) as they know that their products can win a good market.

This shows that product quality can become a national system that can support the overall performance of the economy in general and the export market in particular. The country's competitiveness in the global market comes through, among other things, working out a sustainable, traceable and reliable regime of quality.

Recently Ethiopia has also inaugurated a center, Village of Quality, which is dedicated to ensuring quality of products. It is a smart move by the government to boost the country's overall gain from its agricultural and industrial products through the export market.

Ethiopia is undergoing a challenging terrain of economic development as it has to contend with the impacts of decades of crisis. In this regard, the government has been taking various interventions to address the wallowing economy and build a strong, prosperous one. The government can bail out the country from the pressure of the economy by raising the country's gain from its export items.

To ensure a long-term successful economy the country needs to duly increase its production and productivity in all sectors like

agriculture, manufacturing services ... etc. The country has a good potential to succeed in the export market as it has many agricultural product items like coffee, oilseeds, grains, pulses, tea, spices ... etc. It also enjoys an abundant wealth of livestock, that are in good demand both locally and in the export market.

As compared to the potential of the country for export as well as compared with other countries of equal stature, Ethiopia is not earning the due amount of benefit from the export market. The reasons for this could be both the short supply of its items to the export market as well as the poor quality of its products which compromise the revenue that it could have garnered.

In addition to raising the volume of the export items, it is also important to make sure that the country's exported items receive the price that they deserve. To make this true it is mandatory to produce the export items with the best possible quality that can compete in the market.

Recently too the country has been working towards exporting and modernizing its manufacturing industries that mainly specialize in the textile, garment chemical, and agro-processing industries among others. Yet a bottom line issue in revamping all the economy sectors and specially harnessing the export market is ensuring quality and standards.

The experiences of all the countries that have made it in the export sector show their past hard work in ensuring quality.

Maintaining quality does more than half of the job required to succeed in export. Without too much effort to advertise or do other promotions, the products would manage to sell in any market.

Those in need of the items would sniff these items and come in search of marketable products. Effective work in ensuring quality can also change the image of the country and put in place a system of quality that can be trusted by all who have come across any one of the quality items in the country.

Indeed paying sacrifice for quality is worth all the investment on it as it pays back in many folds. Therefore the government of Ethiopia should uphold the ongoing efforts of installing a strong system of ensuring quality and standards for the agricultural, and industrial products and services of the country.

**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

## A new chapter in escalating Ethiopian coffee production, productivity

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Ethiopia is not only the home of the world's most popular Arabica coffee, but also the country that introduced coffee to the world. Coffee is the backbone of the country's economy and is a major source of foreign exchange earnings. Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that the country has 5.47 million hectares of land suitable for coffee, a favorable environment, sufficient manpower, and the most popular coffee varieties in the world with their unique nutritional content and taste. He also stated that Ethiopia will raise its status by supplying coffee to the world market in quantity and quality.

The Prime Minister said; "In the past six years, our coffee production has increased by 100,000 tons annually by inter-connecting coffee with green legacy. Our country earned 1.43 billion US Dollar in coffee export trade in the last fiscal year."

According to data from the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, the authority is undertaking several activities to increase its foreign exchange earnings by exporting high-quality and high-volume coffee to the foreign market in the 2024/25 fiscal year. It is planned to export more than 400,000 tons of coffee to the foreign market in the current fiscal year and earn two billion Dollar. In the first quarter of the fiscal year alone, 115,000 tons of coffee was exported, earning 520 million Dollars. It was pointed out that the foreign exchange earned in these three months is an indication that the two billion Dollar revenue target for the fiscal year can be achieved.

The authority stated that it is focusing on increasing coffee production and productivity and providing quality coffee to the market in order to achieve the plan set for the fiscal year. It was also noted that the extensive work of promoting the brand that will increase the demand for Ethiopian coffee in the international market has enabled Ethiopian coffee to become competitive and preferred in the world market.

Ethiopia's foreign coffee market destination countries are Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Belgium and the United States. Recently, the authority's information indicates that China, South Korea and Jordan have become countries that buy Ethiopian coffee extensively.

The country is producing coffee and making it accessible to the world market, mostly by coffee cultivating farmers. Recently, however, many investors have been involved in the development.

One of these is MIDROC Investment Group. The Group is engaged in various investment sectors in the country, including agro-processing, coffee, and fruit and vegetable development. It owns several



*Ethiopian Coffee – The origin of coffee in the world*

coffee farms, and is known for cultivating coffee from planting to exporting. The company's information also indicates that it has been carrying out various activities to increase coffee production and productivity.

The agreement signed recently with the internationally renowned Newman Café Group is a part of this effort to increase coffee productivity. The agreement is significant because it focuses on technical support and market access. Newman Café Group is a German-based organization with 60 organizations and is known in the coffee market in 30 countries.

According to the CEO of MIDROC Investment Group, Jamal Ahmed, the agreement will create a great opportunity for MIDROC Investment Group. He stated that the agreement has been awaited for a long time; especially, the agreement with the international institution Newman Café Group, which is doing major work in the coffee sector, is crucial to increasing Ethiopian coffee productivity.

The agreement will allow the company for increasing coffee productivity and gaining more experience. Newman Café Group aims to bring about a change in the coffee market by sharing its experience in the coffee market with MIDROC Investment Group and providing technical support, he said.

According to the CEO, the agreement was made with Newman Café Group, an organization that loves Ethiopia from the heart. Not only does it have an office in Ethiopia, but it also has a Coffee Foundation (which supports farmers' associations), and the organization owns a large coffee plantation in Brazil, which produces 25 quintals of coffee per hectare.

Newman Coffee Group is one of the leading coffee companies in Africa. It is also providing technical assistance to African countries in increasing coffee production and productivity. This has made African coffee production very knowledgeable

about the science.

According to information, the Company has extensive coffee plantations in Uganda and Kenya in Africa, and outside Africa in Vietnam and supplies to the foreign market. Its market reach is also wide and has large companies in more than 30 countries in the United States, Europe, and Southern Asia. It also has market connections with countries with large companies around the world. It also focuses on famous stock markets globally.

One of the main things that makes this company different and connects it to MIDROC is the existence of a family company, just like the owner of MIDROC, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali Al-Amoudi. "The agreement strengthens the family ties; we have been trying for a long time to have them cover what we lack, after we have agreed with each other and confirmed that our goals are common," the CEO said. He stated that MIDROC Investment Group manages 45 companies. Among these is coffee, one of the sectors under agro-processing, which, however, has many challenges that have been tiresome to overtake.

He pointed out that it requires a special effort to provide coffee at a better price in a sustainable manner, and since this work cannot be done on its own, it is necessary to look for a strong partner. For this, MIDROC has signed an agreement with Newman Café Group to increase coffee productivity. He also mentioned that this organization knows Africa and Ethiopia well, and he is confident that this will help achieve the desired goal.

The CEO also noted that the main issue related to coffee is the price issue. Although selling coffee is not difficult, it is important to pay attention to how and at what price it is sold.

He noted that the income generated by exporting coffee to the foreign market has increased significantly in the past three years, but MIDROC Investment Group

has not grown at that level. Therefore, MIDROC is expected to work on increasing coffee productivity, and that although many technologies have been tried to do this, it has not been possible to achieve the desired results. The agreement with Newman Café Group, which provides technical support and focuses on market access, is significant.

MIDROC will share this experience with research institutions and associations in the future, "It will be useful to put our own fingerprint on Ethiopian coffee production," the CEO said.

The CEO further stated that MIDROC Investment Group will focus on increasing coffee production, quality and accessibility. Newman Café Group is a company with 60 organizations under its umbrella and is known in the coffee market in 30 countries, so the agreement will help promote Ethiopian coffee beyond MIDROC. The agreement also focuses on mutual benefits, which will allow the sector to grow in a short time.

NewmanCafeGroupCEO, DavidNewman, for his part, expressed his happiness with the agreement and confirmed that they will work with MIDROC in promoting Ethiopian coffee and creating a favorable market.

According to him; Ethiopia is the owner of a unique coffee flavor. His company is also well known in Ethiopia. Using its experience in coffee, it will work better with MIDROC. It will work to increase coffee production and productivity by providing scientific technical support. It will strive to increase MIDROC's coffee production capacity to a better level. Their organization also uses its long-standing experience to further promote Ethiopian coffee in the global market.

The Director General of the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, Adugna Debela (PhD), said that the signing of an agreement between MIDROC Investment Group and the international Newman Café Group to increase coffee productivity has many benefits and opens a new chapter in increasing coffee productivity.

According to him, Ethiopia is a country with a favorable environment for coffee cultivation. However, Ethiopian coffee productivity is at a lower level compared to other countries. In order to increase global accessibility, coffee production and productivity should be increased.

The Director General further said that the agreement will promote coffee to the international market through technical support, which will increase production and productivity. The benefits farmers and consumers gain from the sector are high; and the work to ensure that the country receives the benefits it deserves from the coffee sector will continue to be intensified.

# Art & Culture

## Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism in the novel 'Altezaworechim' (Part 4)

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Sigmund Freud is the most influential theoretician in the study of human behavior. He critically examines human behavior and interaction. After an exhaustive examination of individuals' character, thoughts, perceptions, dreams, and ways of interacting with themselves and the environment, he found that human beings are the result of their psychological experience. He argued that human beings are not free from their formative-years practices. Freud said, "None of us are completely free of psychological problems."

Among the basic psychological pillars, defense mechanisms stand out in the theory. According to the theory, defense is understood as follows. Our unconscious mind desires not to recognize or change our negative or wrong behavior. Freud said "because we have formed our identities around them and because we are afraid of what we will find if we examine them too closely. Our defenses serve them." Instead of recognizing and admitting their destructive behaviors people prefer to defend them since they are that behavior's result.

Lois Tyson in her Critical Theory book wrote the following. "Defenses are the processes by which the contents of our unconscious are kept in the unconscious. In other words, they are the processes by which we keep the repressed expressed to avoid knowing what we feel we can't handle knowing." Sigmund Freud divides defense into six elements. The first one is selective perception (hearing and seeing only what we feel we can handle). The second is selective memory (modifying our memories so that we don't feel overwhelmed by them or forgetting painful events entirely). The third one is denial (believing that the problem doesn't exist, or the unpleasant incident never happened). The fifth one is avoidance (staying away from people or situations that are liable to make us anxious by stirring up some unconscious. The last one is displacement ("taking it out" on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger), and projection (ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it, to deny that we have it ourselves). This psychological trait is reflected in the novel Altezaworechim. Extracts are posited as instances in the following paragraphs. A good read.

In this novel, the protagonist Mahdreselam and her best friend Haymanot exhibit defense in various degrees. The ex-boyfriend of Mahdreselam, Abreham is also portraying defense. Extracts as instances are presented below.

"ምንድን ነህ ብባል መልሴ ጅል ነኝ የሚል ነው። ጅል ብቻ፤ ማንም በእኔ ምክንያት በጥቂትም ይሁን በብዙ

ተንድቶ ከሆነ የጎዳሁት በከፋቴ ሳይሆን በጅልነቴ ነው። " This is to mean that "if someone asked to define myself, I will say I am simply foolish. I am not only silly but if there is someone who might have been disappointed by me, it is not because of my evilness rather it is because of my foolishness. (p: 01).

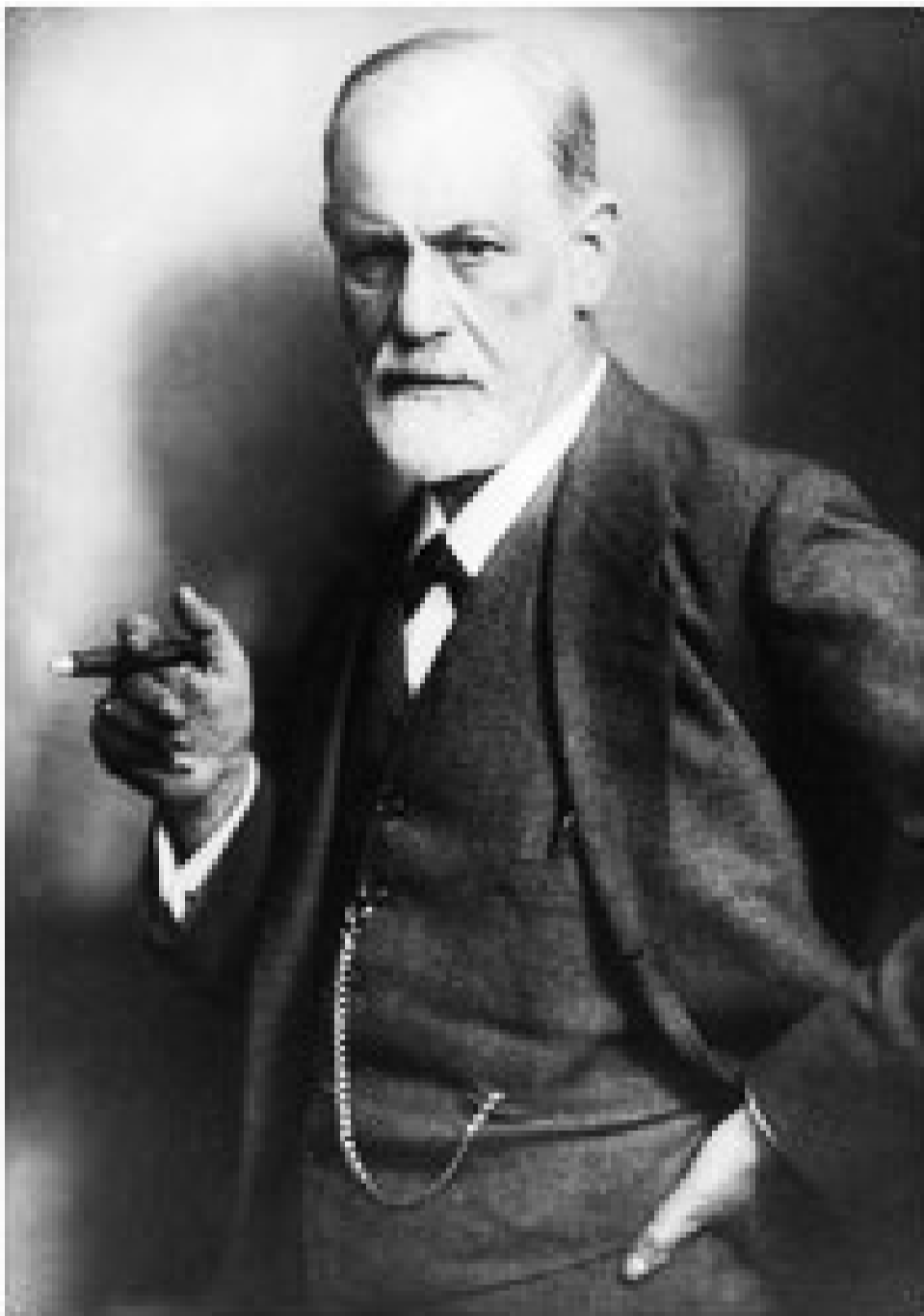
In this extract it is seen that Abraham does not want to admit his evilness since that could be part of his personality, thus he displaces the actual personality and expression with another better expression to make it normal. Foolishness is a better term than evilness. This is said because there are instances that showed his wrongness on some issues. But he never wanted to accept that as a problem; rather he mentioned it with another light expression.

The other incident that showed his defense is seen in the following extract, "እኔ እና አሳ በፍቅር ቆየን ማለት አሻሚ ነገር ነው። ፍቅር በሙሉ ልብ ሁለንተናን የመውደድ እና የመቀበል የነፍስ ስሜት ከሆነ፤ በአራት አመት ቆይታችን ለአንዲት ደቂቃ እንኳን እንደዚያ አይነት ስሜት የተሰማብኝን ጊዜ አላስታውስም፡ ፡ አፈቅርሻለሁ ያልኩበት ጊዜም ትዝ አይለኝም። " She and I were in love is an ambiguous issue. Love is about accepting and adoring everything of the lover. It emanates from the soul. But I didn't feel such things in those four years. I don't remember whether I said to her 'I love you' (P: 06).

Though he said that the time that he was with Mahdreselam was feeling as four months, he never wanted to accept this fact himself. He denied his feelings because he wanted to keep holding the personality he had rather than another revisited personality it logically is.

After the departure of the couple, Abreham was not willing to accept the memory of their first meeting. Since he wanted or adored his carelessness, he said contradicting things. Here is the sample. "እንዴት እንደተዋወቅን አሁን ላይ ትዝ አይለኝም ብል ማን ያምነኛል?" (p: 07). "Who could believe me, If I said I can't remember how we first met ?" following this expression, he mentioned lots of memories that are related to their first meeting. He had many more to be recalled as he said, "...ሌላም ነገር አስታውሳለሁ" (p: 09). "I remember many more incidents." Thus, he is defending his memory or his personality by denying facts.

After a four-year relationship, Mahdreselam had decided to depart from Abreham and marry another man since she confirmed that Abreham could not marry her. She told him that she was going to marry after two weeks. He never says something except to ask about the exact date of her wedding. Though he was too disappointed and worried by her decision, he doesn't want to admit that. Here is the extract. "ሐዘን አይደለም፤ ምንም አይደለም... ሰው አያምንም እንጂ የዚያን ቀን ለሦስት ወይም ለአራት ሰዓታት ሞቼ - ከሞት ተነስቻለሁ።" (p: 31). "I didn't worry, nothing has happened. No one might believe that



I died and resurrected for three or four hours." He is still denying the truth.

As the story of the two couples showed, Abreham was not the committed person that planned their destiny. He simply wanted her body. Mahdreselam loved him so much, but his carelessness forced her to marry another man.

On the eve of her wedding, she ran to Abreham and slept with him. After some days, Abreham called her and asked her to see him. But she relied on "ላገኝህ አልፈልግም፡ ፡" "I don't want to see you again" (37). This answer made him perceive himself as a good person. That is, he misread her response that she was the one who spoilt their relationship. Though she was telling him all these things, he never said anything in front of her. Even he never showed any reaction. Thus, he believed that he was a good man. He didn't want to look out for the root cause of her decision. Thus, he is protecting himself from accepting his failure. He is free from such bad responses. So, he is a rational man. That is how he pictured himself.

After she tied the knot, he became disturbed. He recalled her beauty, character, and how

she was good at love. He was burning inside as he on page 41. But he never admitted his love to her. "እንደዚህ የሚያነግሩኝ ሐዘን ነው ቅናት? አሁንም እራሴን አላምነውምና አጠይቃለሁ ቅናት ነው? መሆን አለበት። የቀናው ግን ልቤ አይለም ነፍሴ አይደለችም...ሰውነቴ ነው። (p: 41). "What makes me depressed this much? Is that jealousy? I don't trust myself, thus I ask. Is that jealousy? It should be. But it is not my heart or my soul, it is my body." This is the protection of himself from accepting his falling in love. This is said because he was regretting the situation. He showed all the signs of love. But he didn't want to confess it since that may be a sign of weakness. Thus, he had a problem of admitting the truth. This made him miss his soul mate. His life did not end up with meaningful association. Owing to this, he proved a loser. The enclosure is people are not evil on some issues by nature. The mystery resides in their psychological background which is shaped by their childhood experiences (formative years). Thus, the aim of Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis is to identify the problem and treat the issue psychologically.

Other characters' defense mechanisms will be examined in the coming articles.

# Global Affairs

## Can pay, won't pay-COP29 outcome far from promised historic deal of a lifetime

They say it is taboo to talk about money. But this is exactly what developing countries came for: to haggle and push for the climate finance deal of a lifetime, as the climate crisis is, for them, a matter of life and death. Wealthy nations also came for their own deal of a lifetime—to hoist the climate finance burden on the private sector as they take the bare minimum financial responsibility.

A finance COP was always going to be difficult as, although they can pay, they simply will not pay. Mere hours before the expected final text of the “Host Country” Agreement to be signed between the Government of Azerbaijan and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the COP29 presidency released a draft text proposing that the new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on climate finance would be USD 250 billion.

Developing world wanted USD 1.3 trillion. The offer sparked outrage from the Global South, silent Baku protests, and threats of boycott as “no deal was better than a bad deal.”

In the pandemonium, Brazil too warned there would be no deal unless COP29 raised the climate finance target. What followed were accusations and counter-accusations as negotiations overran into the wee hours of Sunday morning when the COP29 Presidency finally announced a deal of USD 300 billion.

“This new finance goal is an insurance policy for humanity, amid worsening climate impacts hitting every country,” said Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change. “But like any insurance policy, it only works if premiums are paid in full and on time. Promises must be kept to protect billions of lives.”

The new deal triples public finance to developing countries, from the previous goal of USD 100 billion annually to USD 300 billion annually by 2035, and secures efforts of all actors to work together to scale up finance to developing countries, from public and private sources, to the amount of USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035.

Responding to the outcome of the COP29 climate summit, Mohamed Adow, director of climate and energy think tank Power Shift Africa, said COP29 has been “a disaster for the developing world. It is a betrayal of both people and planet by wealthy countries that claim to take climate change seriously. Rich countries have promised to “mobilise” some funds in the future, rather than provide them now.”

“The cheque is in the mail. But lives and livelihoods in vulnerable countries are



A delegate reacts during the final negotiations that led to a much-criticized climate finance deal



***The new deal triples public finance to developing countries, from the previous goal of USD 100 billion annually to USD 300 billion annually by 2035, and secures efforts of all actors to work together to scale up finance to developing countries, from public and private sources, to the amount of USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035***

being lost now. At this ‘Finance COP’ not a single dollar of real climate finance has been provided right now. Not only did the global north impose a low-ball finance figure, it comes into force 11 years from now. This deal is too little, too late.”

Adow said the rich world staged “a great escape in Baku. With no real money on the table and vague and unaccountable promises of funds to be mobilised, they are trying to shirk their climate finance obligations. Leaving the world without the resources needed to avert climate catastrophe. Poor countries needed to see clear, grant-based climate finance that would boost their ability to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis and accelerate their decarbonisation efforts. But that was sorely lacking.”

Fadhel Kaboub, a member of the Independent Expert Group on Just Transition and Development, says the USD 1.3 trillion per year that the Global South asked for is meant to be a modest and reasonable good faith down payment towards real climate action by the Global North. He said, “In the Global South, climate finance needs to come in the form

of grants, not loans and further economic entrapment, cancellation of all climate-related debts, and transfer and sharing of life-saving technologies to manufacture and deploy renewables, clean cooking, clean transportation, and the climate resilience and adaptation infrastructure that we need.”

Energies were low on the final official day of negotiations; the vibrant conversations that filled the air and purposeful walks from plenary to pavilions and back were long gone. The wait did not pay off. Fred Njehu, Pan-African Political Strategist, Greenpeace Africa, said that while developed nations continue to “dodge their responsibilities, our communities are drowning, starving, and losing their homes to a crisis they didn’t create.”

COP29 brought together nearly 200 countries. The most debated issues in Baku were around the NCQG, the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the Just Transition Work Programme. In the end, other highlights included the agreement on how carbon markets will operate under the Paris Agreement, making country-to-country trading and a carbon crediting mechanism fully operational.

On transparent climate reporting, Parties agreed to build a stronger evidence base to strengthen climate policies over time, helping to identify financing needs and opportunities. The COP decision on matters relating to the least developed countries (LDCs) contains a provision for the establishment of a support program for the implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) for the LDCs.

COP29 took a decisive step forward to elevate the voices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in climate action, adopting the Baku Work plan and renewing the mandate of the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP).

Countries agreed a decision on gender and climate change, extending the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and Climate Change for another 10 years, reaffirming the importance of gender equality and advancing gender mainstreaming throughout the convention. They also agreed to develop a new gender action plan for adoption at COP30, which will set the direction for concrete implementation.

“No country got everything they wanted, and we leave Baku with a mountain of work to do,” said Stiell. “The many other issues we need to progress may not be headlines, but they are lifelines for billions of people. So, this is no time for victory laps; we need to set our sights and redouble our efforts on the road to Belem.

(SOURCE: IPS)



# Law & Politics

## Beat the drums of peace

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

Silencing the gun although far from realization has become the catchphrase echoed in Africa for quite a while now. This landmark motto has also been among the leading projects of the African Union. But in many ways, the continent needs to maximize its efforts in beating the drums of peace in addition to silencing the gun. The big noises of conflict should everyone agree at least be replaced with the rhetoric of peace. The solid truth is besides taking real concrete steps, the narrative of peace should overtake the narrative of wars.

True that conflict remains a pressing issue worldwide, with Africa facing a disproportionate share of political instability, violence, and tensions. From wars in Sudan and Congo to extremist insurgencies in the Sahel, these crises hinder development, displace millions, and exacerbate poverty. Globally, geopolitical tensions in regions like the Middle East and Eastern Europe further demonstrate the urgent need for peace-focused solutions.

Thus far, the ongoing wars in Europe, conflicts in the Middle East, and turmoil in dozens of African nations have already claimed millions of precious lives. Trillions of dollars in property have been destroyed, leading to widespread migration, hunger, and disease affecting millions. And, yet the crisis is moving the world into uncharted waters.

While the root cause of conflicts in Africa traces back to colonial histories, emerging causes fuel unrest in the continent. The grave ramifications of war can be felt by the huge human casualties and property damage caused thus far. And, the cost of wars lingers lost even when conflicts are resolved and wars are halted. The aftermath of the crisis leaves scars and traumas making the path to healing and the path towards post-war reconstruction bumpy.

Rampant crises, violent coups, unrest, and terrorism across the resource-rich continent have overshadowed Africa's positive developments. Conflict entrepreneurs and external actors partly fuel these ongoing conflicts. Conflicts often leave nations with weakened institutions, frayed social fabrics, and shattered economies. To address these issues, Africa requires innovative, sustainable conflict resolution approaches and policies designed for its unique contexts.

In a recent presser, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security also cautioned against the resurgence of military rule in some regions, stressing the need for vigilance and action. Decades of conflict across Africa—from Sudan to the Democratic Republic of Congo—show that sustainable reconstruction requires more than external aid or military victories. Instead, it demands inclusive, locally-owned, and regionally-coordinated solutions.

The African Union (AU) is intensifying efforts to silence the guns and resolve conflicts highlighting the need for innovative, sustainable conflict management solutions. Addressing journalists in conflict zones like Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Mozambique, and the Sahel, he stated, "We must address crises and conflicts more sustainably and innovatively."

He emphasized building strong institutions for durable democracy and effective governance, adding that the AU is implementing its revised post-conflict reconstruction and development policy. This policy now includes three new pillars: youth inclusion, environmental sustainability, and child protection.

Earlier this week, Ethiopia hosted the Grand Continental Conference on Peace and Security and Prosperity where representatives of African nations took part and discussed the issue of peace, conflicts, and possible remedies.

A continental conference on peace, prosperity, and development, themed "Building a Peaceful and Prosperous Africa" saw Ethiopia hailed as a model in conflict resolution alluding to the Pretoria peace deal.

During the occasion, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye commended Ethiopia's significant role in fostering peace and stability, emphasizing the African Union's allocation of one million USD for Ethiopia's disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs.

Ethiopia's peace-building efforts have been hailed as exemplary, he said, citing the strides the country has made following the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on November 2, 2022. Ethiopia's contributions in the peace domain exemplify the model for peace," Adeoye remarked.

The conference, initiated by Ethiopia's Ministry of Peace, brought together African Union officials, international bodies, and peace experts to come up with sustainable strategies for conflict resolution and development across Africa.

The commissioner highlighted the necessity of integrating peace, security, and development efforts, calling for robust collaboration among member states, regional economic communities, and global partners.

Referring to the African Union's Agenda 2063, he underscored the importance of unity and democracy, stating, "We must strengthen our policy and pragmatic interventions by integrating peace, security, and sustainable development in all our endeavors."

Speaking at the occasion also is FDRE President Taye Atseke-Selassie. He emphasized that the agreement is a powerful example of Africa's capacity to address its own challenges through homegrown

upon to liberate Indigenous peoples."

Minister of Peace Binalf Andualem on his part said that Peace, by its very essence, transcends physical borders and cannot be confined by artificial divisions. It is incumbent upon us, as Africans, to join hands in the spirit of Pan-Africanism, recognizing that our challenges are shared, our aspirations are interconnected, and our solutions must be African-led. Let us embrace the morality of African solutions to African problems, drawing strength from our diversity and resilience as we navigate the complexities of our collective journey toward lasting peace.

In a continent where one's instability poses a threat to the peace and security of all, we are compelled to confront our challenges collectively, with a sense of urgency and purpose. The path to continental peace and prosperity lies in our ability to stand together, listen to one another, and forge partnerships that transcend borders and ideologies. Only through a united front, we can pave the way for a brighter future for generations to come, he added.

Ethiopia, as a historical founding member and the gracious host of the Organization of African Unity - now the African Union - remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing the cause of peace and brotherhood on our continent. We approach the task of resolving African challenges with a deep sense of responsibility; strengthened by our unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of unity, solidarity, and mutual respect.

The conference could serve as a unifying platform for African and global leaders, civil society, and international stakeholders. Such a forum would aim to foster dialogue, resolve disputes, and develop sustainable frameworks for conflict prevention. Emphasizing economic collaboration, education, and equitable resource-sharing, this conference could pave the way for a future of stability, development, and prosperity for all.

True progress requires unity, bold leadership, and a collective commitment to a peaceful world. The devastating consequences of war are evident in the immense human casualties and widespread destruction. Even after conflicts end, the scars both physical and psychological linger, complicating recovery and reconstruction.

Post-war rehabilitation demands substantial resources, effective strategies, and tailored policies. However, African nations, already grappling with limited resources, face immense challenges in rebuilding economies, healing fractured communities, and ensuring sustainable peace. Recovery is not just about rebuilding infrastructure but also restoring social cohesion and institutional integrity. And as the saying goes prevention than cure, Africa needs to throw its full weight behind managing its peace.

**True progress requires unity, bold leadership, and a collective commitment to a peaceful world. The devastating consequences of war are evident in the immense human casualties and widespread destruction. Even after conflicts end, the scars both physical and psychological linger, complicating recovery and reconstruction**

initiatives and collaboration.

Through the African Union (AU)-led process, a two-year northern conflict ended and the Pretoria Peace accord was signed in 2022.

"The Pretoria Peace Agreement, which has been mentioned time and again, is indeed a testament to the principles of African solutions to African problems," President Taye stated.

He also underscored Ethiopia's commitment to prioritizing peace and unity over discord, citing the ongoing national dialogue process as a cornerstone of the country's peace-building efforts.

"We decided to prioritize peace over discord. Once and for all, alongside our conflict, I want to open a new chapter of the national dialogue process that we have embarked

# International News

## Kenya's Biosafety Agency to enforce GMO regulations after court ruling

Kenya's National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has pledged to uphold strict oversight of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) after a High Court ruling reaffirmed the legality of the country's regulatory framework for these biotech crops.

The court ruling upheld a Cabinet decision from October 2022, which declared that Kenya has sufficient legal, regulatory, and institutional safeguards to manage GMOs.

The court's decision clears the path for regulated GMO activities in the country, including importation and commercial use.

The NBA, established under the Biosafety Act of 2009, stated that individuals and entities dealing in GMOs must adhere to the Act's provisions.

These include securing prior written approval from the authority, as stipulated in Sections 18 to 23 and Section 50 of the legislation. Violating these rules could lead to penalties under Section 52, which criminalizes unauthorized GMO activities.

The authority urged stakeholders to access application procedures and forms through its website or the government's E-citizen platform to ensure compliance.

"We remain committed to ensuring the safety of human and animal health while protecting the environment in accordance



with the Biosafety Act," the NBA said in response to the court's decision.

Kenya lifted its decade-long ban on GMOs in 2022 to address food security challenges exacerbated by drought and low agricultural

yields.

While the move has faced opposition from some quarters, proponents argue it will boost productivity and reduce dependency on food imports.

The NBA serves as the national focal point for implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, an international agreement promoting safe GMO practices.

*Source: Business Day Africa.*

## Empowering Africa's Future: Youth Dialogue Explores Tech Innovation for Economic Growth

**Gaborone, Botswana, 24 November 2024 (ECA)** - During a youth dialogue, a special event at the AEC 2024, experts explored how technological innovation could promote economic stability and growth in Africa.

Moderating the discussion, Adetola Akinola said the objective of the session was to examine how technological innovation, particularly at universities, could drive sustainable development in African economies. The aim would be to balance economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion, while utilising Africa's most valuable asset, the youth, to address the present challenges to Africa's transformation and economic development.

Opening the conversation, Moumouni Dialla, President of the PAN African Youth Union, emphasized the need for regional and international cooperation in developing the continent's technological resilience. "Africa has to welcome alliances that guarantee long-term development goals and are not overwhelmed by transient benefits," he said. He underlined the necessity of integrating skill development into education, encouraging international specialization to support friendly rivalry,

and attract key technological investments. From his vantage point, continental cooperation and sustainable innovation must start with partnerships.

Wedu Somolekae, Founder of Mesu-Glow Aesthetics in Botswana, highlighted accessibility and inclusion in exploiting industry technology. She pointed out that profit-driven strategies that businesses use often ignore underprivileged areas. "Business models must align with sustainable development goals. Rural areas should not be left behind in this technological transformation", she said. Emphasizing social impact in determining a fairer technological future, Somolekae encouraged governments and businesses to prioritize policies that support inclusiveness.

Emphasizing the unrealized potential of Africa's young people, Grant Davis, Chair and Global Programme Advisor for the AfCFTA Campaign, underlined that the continent's youthful population could be a creative catalyst. "African young people are today's innovators, not only tomorrow's leaders," he said. Grant advocated specific measures, including providing young people with AI, robotics and coding skills, decreasing obstacles to online access, and boosting entrepreneurship via trade

possibilities inside the AfCFTA framework. He regards these activities as crucial to encouraging young entrepreneurs to use technology for dramatic economic change.

Lalima Mukherjee, a Professor of Economics at the University of Engineering and Management in Kolkata, India, steered the conversation towards the environmental ramifications of technology growth. She highlighted the problems linked with growing energy use and technological waste, advocating renewable energy sources like solar and hydro as alternatives. "A sustainable future demands that we educate our youth to adopt environmentally conscious behaviours early on," she stated. Professor Mukherjee called for policies to support sustainable practices and awareness efforts to encourage responsible technology usage and waste management.

Mary Donkor, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Finance and Economics at Jiangsu University, China, says African governments must prioritize sustainable national policies over political party-driven initiatives to ensure long-term development.

According to Donkor, Africa's education system is overly theoretical, creating a disconnect between classroom learning

and industry needs. To bridge this gap, she advocates for a more practical and industry-aligned education structure while urging governments to align financial and industrial investments with technological innovation to advance innovative projects.

"It is imperative to integrate education and industrial reforms to prepare African nations for global competition and foster sustainable development. Prioritizing national interests over political agendas is crucial for long-term growth."

The panel concluded with a united vision for Africa's future, a continent that embraces industrial technology while tackling obstacles of inclusion, skills development and sustainability. Participants agreed that Africa's future is bright because of its youth, which needs to be equipped to become the architects of a sustainable and inclusive tomorrow.

AEC2024 is jointly organized by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the United Nations Development Programme, in collaboration with the government of Botswana.

*Source: ECA*

# Planet Earth

## Ethiopia unleashing its untapped mineral wealth to support development

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia is gradually turning its face towards harnessing its mining resources as a pivotal driver of economic growth and development. The country is estimated to be unaware of approximately 70% of its mineral wealth, primarily due to inadequate exploration and research methodologies, as well as a lack of technological support.

As a result, Ethiopia has only managed to identify between 30% and 40% of its total mineral resources. This underutilization of mineral assets not only hinders economic growth but also prevents the country from fully leveraging its resources for sustainable development.

The mining sector has a potential to become a backbone of Ethiopia's economy, yet several factors hinder its full potential. Key challenges include insufficient infrastructure, outdated technology and equipment, the absence of well-trained personnel, and a lack of comprehensive studies on mineral deposits. These issues severely impede the ability to locate and exploit mineral resources effectively.

On the other hand, some experts argue that there are no comprehensive studies examining how mining resource exploration impacts not only the mining sector itself but also other critical pillars of the country's economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services, thereby limiting our understanding of its broader economic effects.

Despite these challenges, the Ethiopian government has been striving to address these issues and enhance the development of the mining sector over the past five years. The Geological Institute of Ethiopia is taking significant strides to bolster investment in the nation's mineral sector by collecting, organizing, and disseminating comprehensive data on various minerals. This initiative aims to attract both local and foreign investors interested in tapping into Ethiopia's rich geological resources.

Recently, Ijara Tesfaye, the Director General of the Geological Institute, emphasized the importance of accessible and well-organized information, stating, "It is crucial to not only generate information but to present it in a timely manner that meets the needs of current investors." The institute has undertaken extensive research across the country, leveraging geological maps to ensure comprehensive coverage of all regions, he said.

He mentioned that since its establishment, the data center has accumulated a wealth of information over 56 years, with substantial contributions made up to the 2022/23 fiscal year. This year alone, the institute plans to expand its outreach, offering thousands of data sets to stakeholders eager to explore investment opportunities in Ethiopia's mining sector.

According to Ijara, the data center houses approximately 18,000 entries, covering a



variety of information related to hydrology, engineering, physics, and other aspects of geology. This collection consists of both soft and hard copies, ensuring that data is preserved and accessible in multiple formats.

Notably, the center has compiled specific datasets on key minerals, including 267 entries related to gold and around 100 focused on iron. "Our efforts have led to a well-organized repository of information on all significant minerals, including chromite, copper, coal, nickel, and lithium," Ijara highlighted. Additionally, the institute has conducted extensive research on geothermal energy and other geological studies, further enriching the data available for potential investors.

The institute serves a broader audience beyond just investors. Information is made available to various stakeholders, including research institutions, geology students from universities, and international researchers looking to study Ethiopia's geology. "We aim to support any type of investor engaged in the mining sector, as well as academic and research bodies in the field," he noted.

To facilitate access to this valuable information, the Geological Institute has implemented a dual-access system. Interested parties can either purchase data or access specific information for free, ensuring that a wide range of users can benefit from the institute's extensive research. This move aligns with Ethiopia's broader economic strategy to enhance the mining sector, which has the potential to significantly contribute to the country's GDP. With increased interest from investors and a wealth of geological data at their fingertips, the future of Ethiopia's mineral industry looks promising.

However, challenges remain on the sector. A week ago, Elias Kasahun, a mining lecturer at Addis Ababa University of Science and Technology, pointed out that Ethiopia's mineral resources are scattered across the country. This geographical dispersion

complicates further investigations and limits the effectiveness of exploration efforts.

He noted that ongoing conflicts in regions rich in minerals, such as Tigray, Wellega, and Guji, exacerbate these challenges. These areas could potentially yield substantial mineral resources, but prevailing unrest disrupts mining activities and deters investment.

Elias also highlighted the issue of illegal mining practices, which pose a serious threat to the sector's overall health. In regions like Benishangul and Gambella, where numerous gold deposits exist, illegal operations bypass regulatory frameworks, harming legitimate miners and resulting in subpar mineral products. The lack of regulation and oversight diminishes the quality of resources extracted and poses environmental risks, he said.

Ethiopia's special licensing of artisanal miners, while culturally significant, impedes the sustainable and efficient use of its mineral resources. Elias argues that this approach needs reassessment to enhance resource management and maximize potential economic benefits.

He further stated that Ethiopia has yet to utilize even 3% of its mineral wealth, emphasizing that identifying locations with mineral deposits is a monumental task, complicating efforts for full utilization.

In recent years, the Ethiopian government has made concerted efforts to harness these resources, aiming to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on agriculture. This strategic shift promises to bolster national revenue, create jobs, and enhance infrastructure. As Ethiopia seeks to position itself as a key player in the global mining landscape, the full utilization of its mineral wealth becomes essential for sustainable development and the improvement of living standards for its population.

Ethiopia's mining sector has undertaken a major reform program in recent years. The reforms are designed to make investing

in Ethiopia easier than ever, encourage exploration and mining, and unlock the sector's full potential and value.

The months before last, Ethiopia has implemented macroeconomic policy reforms aimed at addressing these challenges and ensuring sustainable development. Some scholars suggest that the newly implemented monetary policy is designed to facilitate better utilization of mineral resources and combat illegality in the sector. Some experts recommend increased government attention and detailed studies to revitalize the mining industry.

According to the Minister of Mining, data shows that the Ethiopian government has prioritized the mining sector over the past five years, recognizing it as one of the five pillars of the economy and aiming to harness its full potential.

The minister's office has indicated that a series of expos designed to facilitate connections among mineral producers, exporters, users, and technology suppliers. These events provide a platform for participants to showcase their products and services, fostering valuable market linkages. Through encouraging collaboration and innovation, the expos aim to enhance the industry's growth and competitiveness in the global market.

Furthermore, while Ethiopia faces significant challenges in fully utilizing its mineral wealth, there are promising initiatives underway. The government's efforts to improve the accessibility and organization of geological data, combined with a commitment to sustainable practices, could pave the way for a more robust mining sector.

By addressing infrastructure deficits, enhancing technological capabilities, and promoting responsible mining practices, Ethiopia has the opportunity to transform its mining industry into a key driver of economic growth and sustainable development.