



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXXI No 090 24 DECEMBER 2024 - Tahisas 15, 2017

Tuesday

Price Birr 34.50

Ethiopia, France ushering new era in ties

BY YESUF ENDRIS

For the second time in six years, French President Emmanuel Macron visited Addis Ababa, signaling a new chapter in the over 126-year diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and France. The visit highlighted not only the enduring ties between the two nations but also a shared commitment to enhancing collaboration in culture, education, and investment.

A statement released on social media by President Macron and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) underscored the strengthened partnership, which aims to address both nations' strategic and developmental goals. Macron's pledge to support Ethiopia's heritage preservation, including a donation for the restoration of the Lalibela Rock-Hewn Churches, has been widely hailed as a significant diplomatic gesture.

The timing of Macron's visit is particularly notable, as Ethiopia seeks broader international support for its national interests, including gaining access to the sea. This diplomatic engagement underscores France's commitment to Ethiopia's historical and geopolitical significance.

Political and International Relations Analyst Professor Brook Hailu commented on the visit, stating that Macron's trip is symbolic of the growing strategic relationship between the two countries. "France's presence in Djibouti is already significant, but Ethiopia's strategic importance in the region makes this

See Ethiopia, France ... page 3



AGI CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars.
Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

Contact & Address
Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/25
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868
+251 911 45 9790
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Slingee

DOWNLOAD SIIINOOE BANK MOBILE BANKING APP
from play store & start your transaction now

www.siiinooebank.com

Researchers insist better conditions for industry women

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Lack of effective labor standards and a supportive working environment in industrial parks hinders the active participation of female workers, international research professors revealed, urging policymakers to address these pressing issues.

Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Norwegian Principal Investigator and Research Professor at the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI), Lovise Aalen,

See Researchers insist ... page 3

Polluting with impunity

- Climate finance gaps leave Africa, Global South in crisis

BY FIKADU BELAY

With affluent yet major carbon-emitting nations hesitating to provide the required climate finance, Africa and the Global South continue to bear the brunt of the crisis. Experts fear this sluggish response could derail global agreements on climate action.

This sentiment dominated the COP29 conference, where participants delivered a stark warning: the world is running out of time to address the grave ramifications of climate change. Despite rising urgency, the conference fell short of expectations, especially regarding financial commitments.

Although parties agreed to mobilize 300 billion USD annually by 2035, this figure is far below the 1.3 trillion USD needed each year, leaving a 1 trillion USD gap. The



disparity in financial pledges continues to marginalize vulnerable nations, with some island nations escalating their grievances to international courts.

Countries like Ethiopia, renowned for championing African interests and green initiatives, criticized the inadequate global response. Ethiopian President Taye Atske-

Selassie expressed deep disappointment over affluent nations' lack of action upon returning from the summit, urging African nations to take the lead in implementing effective climate solutions.

At the International Court of Justice (ICJ), nations like the Solomon Islands, India, and Iran presented cases emphasizing the intrinsic link between climate justice and human rights. The Solomon Islands called for urgent global action to protect vulnerable populations, stressing the disproportionate burden carried by the Global South.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, climate advocate Nuhamin Tibebu criticized developed nations for prioritizing their economic

See Polluting ... page 3

News



Mesenbet Shenkute

AACCSA to remediate audit issues

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Preparations are underway to implement swift corrective actions based on the findings of recent audit investigations, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (AACCSA) announced.

Briefing the media on the issue, AACCSA President Mesenbet Shenkute said that the Chamber's Board of Directors observed misuse of public resources.

According to the President, the organization's auditing committee discovered that unauthorized overseas travels, foreign currency expenditures, huge procurement deals, new employment contracts and promotions were not carried out in an accountable and transparent manner.

These practices were against the organization's establishment proclamation and its human resource policy and other legal frameworks, she said.

So far, the Association has taken legal actions on responsible individuals and is implementing reform measures within the new organizational structure in compliance with the audit investigation outcome, she stated.

Mesenbet also noted that the organization has corrected gaps in its establishment proclamation and other laws.

To overcome these and other problems, the AACCSA board has completed the preliminary phase of the institutional reform and began the implementation process, she stated.

According to Mesenbet, the Association currently has only 4000 members that pay membership fees every year despite the effort to increase their number.

The President further said that the AACCSA's swift reform measures would encourage all chamber associations across the country to evaluate their status and take necessary measures within their organizations.

The Board of Directors recently held an emergency meeting to vote on audit investigation after learning misconduct and misuse of resources.

WB approves 700 mln.USD credit for Ethiopia's financial sector

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA--The World Bank (WB) has approved a substantial 700 million USD credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to bolster Ethiopia's financial sector.

This funding will support the Financial Sector Strengthening Project (FSSP), aimed at enhancing the stability and resilience of the nation's financial institutions.

Ethiopia's financial sector faces a range of significant challenges, including outdated regulatory frameworks and underperforming public financial institutions. According to information obtained from the World Bank's official website, the FSSP will focus on modernizing the regulatory and supervisory structures of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE).

The project will also support governance reforms, balance sheet restructuring, and the recapitalization of the Commercial



THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), as well as the transformation of the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) into a more sustainable development finance institution.

In addition to these vital reforms, the initiative will provide crucial implementation support and capacity-building efforts to NBE, CBE, and DBE, ensuring their long-term viability and resilience in an evolving global financial landscape.

World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, and Sudan, Maryam Salim, emphasized the institution's unwavering commitment to Ethiopia's economic development. "This project

underscores our dedication to strengthening Ethiopia's financial sector, with the overarching goal of creating a more resilient and accessible system that effectively meets the diverse needs of all Ethiopians," Salim stated.

The approval of the Financial Sector Strengthening Project represents a significant milestone in Ethiopia's efforts to modernize its financial infrastructure. By addressing the sector's current challenges and focusing on critical reforms, this initiative is poised to unlock new avenues for economic growth and foster a more inclusive financial system that will benefit the entire country, it was stated.



Ethiopia revives heritage sites to boost tourism, economy

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia is making significant efforts in preserving and reopening its heritage sites that would bring notable outcomes in boosting its tourism and economy and generating jobs, sources closer to the issue said.

Leaders in heritage preservation emphasize that restoring and opening previously inaccessible sites will increase tourist inflow and improve Ethiopia's global image.

Heritage Research Lead Executive at the Ethiopian Heritage Authority (EHA) Yonas Yilema told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the restoration of heritage sites plays a key role in cultural preservation, economic growth, and tourism. He indicated

many heritage sites in Ethiopia have been hidden from visitors for centuries but are now being opened to attract economic benefits.

"Heritage sites hold immense cultural, historical, and educational value. Some require restoration to ensure their longevity and to pass them on to future generations," he said.

Notable ongoing restoration projects include the Gondar Castle and the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, along with the upcoming opening of the Jubilee Palace Museum. Additionally, the Jima Aba Jifar Palace has been fully renovated and is now open to the public.

Yonas also noted that Ethiopia is benefiting from international partnerships, with the

government of France providing financial support and expertise in heritage restoration.

Head of the Heritage and Library Tourism Department of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Melakselam Kesin Dawit Yared, emphasized the importance of maintaining UNESCO-registered heritage sites to showcase the nation's rich civilization. He called for increased cooperation in the restoration efforts, both financially and intellectually.

EHA's Heritage Conservation and Development Lead Executive Habtamu Abriha said that the reopening of the Jubilee Palace Museum is essential for attracting tourists, boosting the economy, and creating jobs. He stressed that all heritage sites must be restored while respecting their historical significance.

News

Combined effort requires to provide education to disabled children

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The joint efforts of all stakeholders desperately needed to ensure that disabled children have access to education and become productive citizens, the Addis Ababa Persons with Disabled Association urged.

Association's President Woynshet Girma (PhD) told the Ethiopia Press Agency (EPA) all concerned bodies should collaborate to ensure access to education for disabled children.

Studies suggested that 85 percent of school-age children with disabilities are not in school. Therefore, all relevant bodies must work together to enable children with disability to go to school and nurtured



Woynshet Girma

to be productive citizens that assist the development of the nation, she noted.

According to her, the community's awareness of disabled individuals' potential for work and learning is poor, and

parents often doubt their children's future productivity upon sending them to school.

Despite legal provisions that guarantee education for all children, Woynshet noted that some schools lack the necessary resources and trained professionals to accommodate disabled students.

Even in a private school, parents want to pay and teach their children, but private schools are not willing to accept and teach. "Whether in Ethiopia's or international laws, schools are obligated to receive and educate any child and we have to work together on this issue," she said.

The President stressed that government schools accept as much as possible and teach by hiring professionals, but some private schools lack the commitment.

The association has designed strategy and plan, and is working to benefit the disabled persons not only in education, but also in health, social, economic, political and general participation, according to Woynshet.

"If people with disabilities don't stand for themselves, no one will hear them, they should not give up despite the challenges, if they remain at home when someone claims they are unable to, then they are staying back, this shouldn't happen. They have rights given by the government and international laws so that they should stand up for their rights," Woynshet said.

She pointed out that the disabled must not give up and work hard so that they can succeed and serve the country.

Ethiopia, France ushering ...

relationship crucial. The bond between the two leaders now extends beyond diplomatic protocols, evolving into a partnership grounded in shared interests," Brook said.

Prof. Brook also emphasized that Ethiopia's alliance with France could enhance its multilateral diplomacy efforts. As a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, France's influence can help Ethiopia gain a stronger voice in international and regional affairs. He added, "Diplomatic success cannot be achieved in isolation. Ethiopia's growing partnership with France provides a valuable ally in navigating complex global challenges."

The collaboration also holds implications for Ethiopia's relationship with Djibouti. The scholar suggested that France's involvement could pave the way for Ethiopia to secure better terms for access to the sea, an issue of vital importance for the country. France's recent support for Ethiopia's naval ambitions could serve as a critical step forward in

achieving this goal.

A regional political analyst Ustaz Jemal Beshir also praised France's early backing of Ethiopia's reestablishment of a naval force, including technical assistance and training programs. He noted that this engagement goes beyond routine diplomatic exchanges, indicating a deeper commitment to Ethiopia's security and regional influence.

"Ethiopia has faced diplomatic challenges in recent years, but its relationship with France has remained a pillar of stability. This stability is crucial for Ethiopia's long-term development and geopolitical interests," remarked Ustaz Jemal.

Veteran diplomat Dina Mufti (Amb.) underscored France's important role in Ethiopia's peace-building efforts, particularly its support for the Pretoria Agreement between the Federal Government and the TPLF.

Amb. Dina described Macron's visit as a testament to France's ongoing commitment

to advancing cooperation across multiple sectors, including infrastructure, education, and cultural preservation. He highlighted France's provision of PhD programs for Ethiopian students as a symbol of the growing educational exchanges between the two nations.

Macron's visit also reflects France's broader commitment to Ethiopia's development trajectory. By investing in Ethiopia's cultural heritage and supporting critical infrastructure projects, France is positioning itself as a key ally in Ethiopia's pursuit of stability and prosperity.

The visit thus represents a milestone in Ethiopia-France diplomacy, marking a convergence of cultural preservation, educational collaboration, and strategic partnerships. It offers a template for how bilateral relations can be leveraged to address both immediate needs and long-term objectives, strengthening the ties between these two nations for years to come.

Polluting ...

and political interests over accountability for the environmental damage caused by their policies. This neglect, she argued, exacerbates the harm inflicted on Africa and other developing regions.

Yonas Gebre, Director at the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia, added that developed nations' failure to fulfill their responsibilities has caused extensive damage. He stressed that financial support for affected nations should not be viewed as aid or loans but as compensation for the harm caused by industrialized countries' actions.

A recent global study revealed that 80% of the world's landmass has been affected by climate change, impacting the majority of the global population. In Africa alone, over 110 million people were affected by weather-related disasters in 2022, causing economic damages exceeding 8.5 billion USD and approximately 5,000 fatalities due to droughts and floods.

Nuhamin described international climate meetings like COP as "paper tigers," often failing to translate discussions into actionable results. She called for moving beyond rhetoric to ensure that global commitments lead to real-world impacts.

Yonas further emphasized that Africa and the Global South must unite in demanding climate finance and holding developed nations accountable. He insisted the need for these nations to view financial support as an obligation rather than charity. Ethiopia's Green Legacy program and renewable energy projects were cited as exemplary initiatives that should be expanded across the continent.

Both experts underscored the importance of regional collaboration, particularly during African Union meetings, to share successful strategies and develop practical climate policies. They also urged intensified lobbying efforts targeting the Global North to secure actionable commitments.

By fostering global cooperation and prioritizing the needs of vulnerable nations, experts believe the world can work towards a more sustainable and equitable future. However, without immediate action, the financial and human costs of climate change will continue to escalate, further deepening the divide between the Global North and South.

Researchers insist better conditions ...

emphasized the need for the government and policymakers to enforce labor standards and create conducive working conditions. These measures, she noted, would enhance women's efficiency and productivity in industrial parks.

Drawing on experiences from other countries, Aalen underlined that empowering the female workforce can profoundly impact not only their well-being but also the country's economic growth and sustainability.

"Beyond ensuring better livelihoods and socioeconomic benefits, women's participation in the manufacturing sector is critical for inclusive and accelerated industrial development," she explained.

Reflecting on research conducted over nine years on the impacts of industrial park employment on women across Ethiopia, Aalen noted that women working in factories exhibit lower levels of social and political engagement compared to other sectors.

The research findings highlighted several

issues undermining women's performance, including inadequate labor conditions, poor health and safety standards, weak government oversight, violations of labor laws, and the overall quality of jobs in these parks.

While praising the establishment of industrial parks and labor unions supported by a large workforce, Aalen called for restructuring low wages, strengthening the enforcement of labor laws, and building the capacities of managers to address these challenges.

For his part, CMI Research Professor and Director Espen Villanger shared insights from a project launched in 2016, which analyzed conditions in 27 factories across Ethiopia.

Villanger remarked, "The project provides crucial insights for labor unions and policymakers to better manage the growing influx of young people into the workforce."

He further explained that the research uncovered harmful management practices, suppression of labor unions, and restrictions on labor mobility, all of which negatively

affect women workers' political engagement and overall efficacy.

Villanger added that the lack of active labor laws and regulations creates opportunities for interventions to improve factory conditions. Addressing these gaps could increase employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and boost productivity.

The findings also stressed the importance of implementing streamlined job training, ensuring workplace safety, and protecting workers' basic rights as essential steps to promote industrial growth, productivity, and attract foreign direct investment.

When formulating policies, Villanger recommended prioritizing women's engagement to maximize their benefits. He also advised locating industrial parks in areas with limited employment opportunities and implementing support programs to improve the physical and psychological working environment, ultimately ensuring decent wages for female workers.

French President Emmanuel Macron visiting Addis Ababa: *Pictorial*



Photo: Prime Minister office



Opinion

“Generation Medemer” ...

“Blend modernity with Ethiopian values and cultures... in a manner that preserved the culture, ethos, spirit of patriotism and pride of Ethiopians” (pg. 38)

“However, the impact of these developments was manifested not on the elites of the time but on the elite of future generations. Therefore, an additional reason for characterizing the least of that era as conservative is the fact that in their effort to modernize Ethiopia, they have not shown that much of a desire to consider the critical demands of the popular masses.” (pg. 40)

Overall, the conservative generation was grounded in firm traditional values but they were still looking to improve their country by modernizing it.

The second generation of modern Ethiopia is called the Dreamer (ህልሙኛ) Generation. This is the generation that was in the middle of the 20th century and the reign of Haile Selassie. The author is a firm believer that the past affects the present and the present affects the future (generational cycle), and this can be seen in many ways throughout this generation. First seen through the many efforts of the Conservative Generation in its attempts to modernize Ethiopia’s education. This is what shaped the Dreamer Generation as well as media and foreign ideas. The Dreamer Generation experienced many significant historical events that shaped Ethiopia then and still affect Ethiopia to this day. These generations lived through the Red and White terrors national campaign of the Derg regime. But this generation also had a very strong and bold youth that gathered in secret study clubs and started the student movement which was all educated about socialism. Some people think this generation is the odd one out and stands apart from the other generations. The Dreamer Generation is very unique and is often referred to as “that generation” because its qualities don’t fit into one specific category.

“Dreamer Generation...found it difficult to harmonize the foreign thoughts and identities that attract it with indigenous values and a tradition... isolated from ordinary people and is perceived as living in its dream rather than in reality. It is often criticized for exhibiting self-contempt and exaggerated regard for foreigners while defending from proud and indomitable forefathers. It is chided for seeking the blessing of the colonialists the nation defeated in its attempts to modernize and explore its own country.” (pg. 41-42)

This generation did have some new ideas that were put in place and are still being used to this day. Some of these include land tenure which molded Ethiopia’s agriculture, and a democratic government in Ethiopia which is still being used today even though this generation can be seen as the bad one of the batch. Or the one plant that spoiled all of the crops, the Dreamer Generation still deeply cared for Ethiopia and wanted to see it at its best just like the Conservative Generation, the only difference was its approach. The Conservative Generation

modernized Ethiopia but still maintained Ethiopia’s traditional values. The Dreamer Generation pretty much discarded all of Ethiopia’s traditional values that were working for the nation and replaced them with socialist values. During this period, Ethiopia was heavily influenced by Marxism. But the main difference between these two generations was that the Dreamer Generation attempted to solve the nation’s problem with European thinking and traditions. And while doing so they utterly neglected Ethiopia’s own experiences with solving their issues.

“The shortcoming of the elites of the Dreamer Generation was their failure to realize that they forgot the wealth of indigenous experiences that could help in understanding and resolving the various problems we face as a country be it regarding ethnicity, land, politics, or the economy... We came to believe that the suit is tailored for their use by those who do not know what will fit us all. While we should have refined and improved upon our indigenous solutions we discarded them as backward and we became alienated from our own true self and identity.” (pg. 44-45)

The third generation in modern Ethiopia is called the Disillusioned (ውል አልባ) Generation. This generation was in the last three decades of the 20th century. It was the end of an era, the Derg regime, and the start of a new one EPRDF rule. This generation was greatly affected by the Dreamer Generation that introduced socialist ideology in Ethiopia. This generation suffered through a prolonged war when the EPRDF came to power. The government system in Ethiopia at the time was very confused and disoriented which led to a very politically confused nation. There was a rise in arguing for class struggle and ethnic politics. At this time society was still recovering from the entire trauma the Red and White terrors campaign from the Derg regime caused. This in turn discouraged many Ethiopians from this generation from engaging in politics. This completely discards the purpose of a democratic government that the previous generation built. This generation was also affected by religious and ethnic disputes. All in all, this generation didn’t have a good relationship with politics and their voices were silenced while being led by a toxic government.

The fourth generation in modern Ethiopia was called the Alienated (ባይተዋር) Generation. This generation grew up “in the politics of division.” It was a generation victim to “intra-generational estrangement,” isolated from a country that is so rich in its history and society. This generation is full of frustration and confusion. One of the two reasons that led to this is institutionalized politics, and there is also a rise in the influence of globalization, which influenced foreign media.

“As a result of this influence, the generation makes demands of what its country cannot provide, and therefore rather opts for emigration when the nation fails to meet these demands... insists on its right without properly

understanding its duty.” (pg. 49)

The alienated generation is a generation that runs away from its problems. This generation asks for so much and does so little to see the change they wish to happen. The Alienated Generation grew up being surrounded by ethnic division and political turmoil. This generation doesn’t know who they are and lives their day-to-day lives with an identity crisis. They have been built with a victim mentality, where they believe that the world is against them and their life has been set out that way. They don’t believe in change and they don’t do anything to cause change.

“Alienated generation wallows in a feeling of self-pity, hopelessness and victimhood. Therefore, conflict, recrimination, lack of positive initiatives and unrelenting demands are often exhibited.” (pg. 50)

This generation has allowed extremist politics to reach its peak and negatively affected Ethiopia.

“Although the prevailing international situation and the evolution of Ethiopia’s politics often lead this generation to advocate for democracy, the generation expects to be handed down a democratic system and has not properly understood the sense of responsibility and discipline that is required to build a democracy. Even though it often voices its rights, it finds it difficult to respect obligations and discharge its responsibilities.” (pg. 50)

All of these generations share their similarities and differences. But one similarity that they all share wants the best for Ethiopia and wanting Ethiopia to be democratic, progressive and influential nation in Africa!

The first thing that intrigued me about this book was the concept of Medemer, and the philosophy behind it. I wondered why the author chose to name this Generation Medemer. First, it was Conservative after Conservatives came to Dreamer, then Disillusioned, and then lastly Alienated. But he calls the future generation Medemer. Medemer’s dictionary definition means addition, but in this context, it means adding another one, another person with a new skill, new talent, or new capabilities. Then bringing that back to the idea of unity and how when everyone comes together you have unification. And with this newly found unity you foster and nurture it, you add love and fraternity. And that is what forms Generation Medemer. This is the Ethiopian future the author hopes will turn out like. A future filled with success, upgrades, advancements, knowledge, and a love for one another. A generation with no division, a generation that creates solutions to recurring issues that the nation has faced in the past. A generation that believes Ethiopia can be at the top. A generation that believes they are well prepared to compute and contribute. A generation that breaks the recurring generational cycle of problems the nation is facing. Generation Medemer doesn’t hold the victim mentality, but instead, they believe in unity and the spirit of “Ethiopianess”.

“The generation that will emerge along with the new Ethiopia will be one that will realize the country’s dream and fulfill its long-sought wishes. Some of the key characteristics of the Medemer generation include a genuine desire to learn and know new things to learn and know new things: a culture of deep discussion that is based on rationality and superiority of ideas; lifestyle of respecting human dignity; and where a feeling of love for the country will be manifested through holistic patriotism.” (pg. 168)

Generation Medemer is focused on making Ethiopia a unified country that other Africans and African Americans can look to and have pride in. Generation Medemer illuminates Ethiopia’s rich history and displays its beautiful landscape for the world to see. Generation Medemer values the gift of knowledge and wisdom. This generation uses their skills and gifts to serve their own country. The author emphasizes the fact that the past affects the present, the present affects the future, and the generational cycle goes on. The current issues of Ethiopia today are going to affect the children of this new generation, and sadly it’s not in a positive light. Today’s children are growing up witnessing political warfare, famine, and ethnic division. They are growing up not knowing their history, but instead seeing the scarcity of what the country that once was a symbol of freedom has turned into. The country that other African countries at one point looked up to now has internal disputes over ethnic groups that are dividing up the country. Now lacking a sense of pride and carrying the heavy weight of shame.

“Since this generation is still in the making, it is upon us - the generations who have come before - shape it for the good. The generation that is created in this era of Medemer, is coming of age at a historic time when our country and the continent are facing threats. It has the opportunity to shape the fate of Ethiopia and Africa. It would not be inaccurate to say that there has not been a previous generation in Ethiopia that sought to name, carefully nurture and shape the next generation.” (pg. 166-167)

Generation Medemer has the potential to completely transform Ethiopia. Everything has been planned and laid out, all we need is people to take on the responsibility and take the initiative to make it come to life. The past generations can’t make the Generation Medemer suffer for their selfish mistakes. If Ethiopia continues in the direction of ethnic division and political warfare the Generation Medemer that one half of the country is trying to nurture will become the victims to the victimizers of the past generations.

“Ethiopia is a symbol of African solidarity and a source of African pride. Nevertheless, all of this has been
See “Generation Medemer” ... page 16

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

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

A timely support from the seat of UNESCO

BY FIKADU BELAY

From the ancient breathtaking rock-hewn churches of Lalibela to the magnificent Axum castle, Semien Mountains, and others, Ethiopia stands shoulder-high in man-made and natural heritages. The historical country is also home to splendid and mosaic cultures that entice tourists in droves. Being home to UNESCO-inscribed tangible and intangible heritages, the country is also well placed in the first rungs in terms of rich tourism potential.

The heritages contribute also to the history of the world and the civilization of mankind. The internationally recognized heritages however face some threats requiring urgent and painstaking conservation and rehabilitation works.

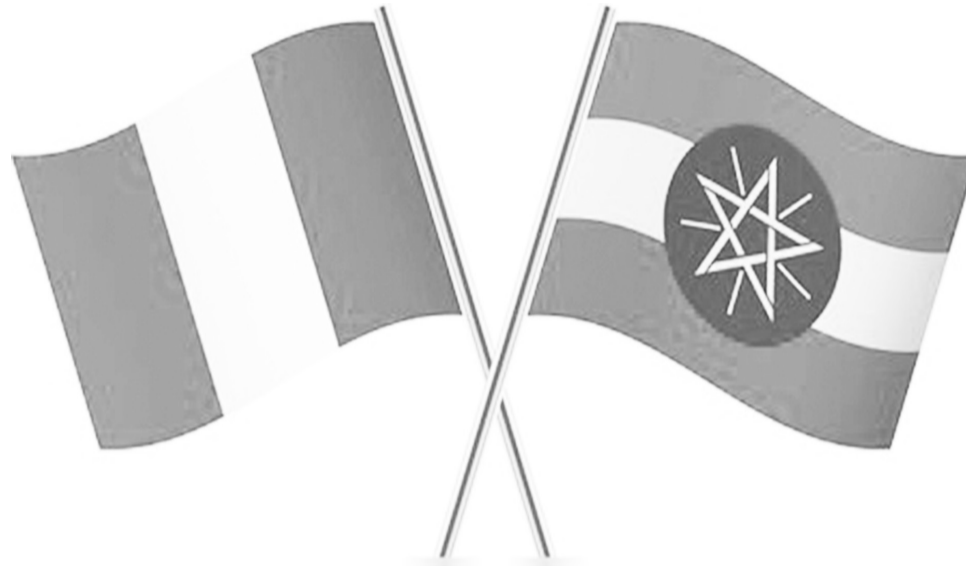
Factors such as limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled professionals hinder effective preservation efforts. Many historical sites are endangered by environmental degradation, urbanization, and neglect, all of which threaten to erase centuries of history and cultural significance. Furthermore, the lack of robust policies and management frameworks exacerbates these issues, leaving many sites vulnerable to deterioration.

Ethiopia stands to benefit immensely from leveraging its cultural assets to attract tourism, create jobs, and foster community pride. A comprehensive approach that integrates conservation with sustainable development practices is essential to ensure that Ethiopia's rich heritage is preserved for future generations.

Since the start of the 2018 reform, the Ethiopian government has made strides to enhance and promote the value of its cultural heritage, aiming to attract foreign interest and investment. This edge seeks to not only safeguard Ethiopia's rich cultural legacy but also to present it on a global stage, fostering international appreciation and collaboration. As per of heritage conservation works, the government has been working on rehabilitating some heritages with the support of UNESCO and countries like France.

For centuries, Ethiopia and France have maintained a strong diplomatic relationship, characterized by deep cultural connections. This bond has facilitated the exchange of ideas and practices related to cultural heritage conservation and promotion. Both nations recognize the significance of cultural heritage as a means to bolster their identities and promote mutual understanding. By sharing their experiences, Ethiopia and France can collaborate on strategies that both protect and celebrate their unique heritages.

Such collaboration can lead to joint projects, cultural exchanges, and educational programs that underscore the importance of preserving historical sites, traditions, and artistic expressions. Ultimately, this partnership enriches the cultural landscapes of both nations and serves as a powerful



diplomatic tool, promoting peace and solidarity through shared cultural values.

The relationship between Ethiopia and France is built on a history of collaboration, mutual respect, and a commitment to progress.

During a recent official visit to Ethiopia, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized Ethiopia's significance as a cradle of early human civilization. In a message shared in Amharic, he highlighted the historical ties between the two nations and their collaboration on significant projects.

Reflecting on past initiatives, Macron recalled that in 2019, both nations committed to preserving cultural heritage through a scientific program, announcing that the unique heritage protection project in Lalibela was nearing completion.

Macron's visit underscores a deepening partnership between Ethiopia and France, anchored in shared history and mutual commitment to cultural preservation and economic development. As Ethiopia navigates its path toward modernization, collaboration with France is poised to play a vital role in fostering growth and stability.

Discussions during the visit also explored opportunities for further collaboration in education and cultural exchanges. Ethiopia's commitment to enhancing its historical relationship with France demonstrates a focus on building long-term partnerships with global powers. Initiatives arising from this dialogue are expected to strengthen mutual understanding and facilitate knowledge transfer.

Abiy noted, "We discussed opportunities for collaboration across several sectors, including boosting French investments and enhancing our educational and cultural connections." He emphasized the importance of further developing the enduring historical ties between the two nations.

This strategic approach aims to increase foreign direct investment (FDI), crucial for Ethiopia's development. French investments are expected to aid Ethiopia in achieving economic growth, creating jobs, and improving infrastructure, he said.

Macron affirmed France's commitment

to supporting Ethiopia's development projects, including health, agriculture, and infrastructure initiatives. He also acknowledged Ethiopia's pursuit of access to the sea, expressing France's support for this goal.

France has consistently supported Ethiopia's social and economic development. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has expressed appreciation to the French government for its assistance in renovating the National Palace and aiding in the restoration of Lalibela's rock-hewn churches, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Such collaborations highlight Ethiopia's diplomatic success in securing international partnerships for the preservation of its historical landmarks.

Lalibela, famous for its 11 rock-hewn churches carved from volcanic rock in the 12th and 13th centuries, exemplifies Ethiopia's architectural and spiritual brilliance. However, these structures face serious threats from weathering, water infiltration, and seismic activity.

The support from the French government for the rehabilitation of Lalibela reflects the strong ties that Ethiopia has nurtured with France. This complex process aims to preserve the site's historical, architectural, and spiritual integrity while addressing contemporary challenges.

Cultural ties are further enhanced by the presence of the Alliance Française in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, which promotes French language and culture, as well as the Lycée Guébré Mariam, a French school in Ethiopia. The two countries also collaborate in higher education, providing French scholarships for Ethiopian students and engaging in scientific cooperation through the French Centre for Ethiopian Studies (CFEE), focusing on archaeology and environmental research.

The two countries not only have cultural ties but also they have strong military cooperation. With a defense agreement signed in March 2019 that facilitates mutual support. France is assisting Ethiopia in rebuilding its navy and providing officer training at its Naval Academy. Both nations are enhancing peacekeeping efforts through the Ethiopian International Peacekeeping Training Center (EIPKTC) and collaborating on counterterrorism and regional security in the Horn of Africa.

Looking ahead, President Macron expressed optimism about future cooperation to support Ethiopia's economic modernization. He reaffirmed France's commitment to assisting in the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, a vital framework for ensuring peace and stability in the Tigray region.

Ethiopia's diplomatic successes are vital for its future and for fostering a more peaceful and prosperous world. As they revel 127 years of diplomatic relations, Ethiopia and France emphasize their dedication to enhancing these bonds for future generations

Beyond military cooperation, France and Ethiopia collaborate in environmental and healthcare sectors, supporting initiatives related to climate change, green energy projects, and health infrastructure. The two nations are also working together to promote Ethiopia's historical sites, like Lalibela, as part of tourism development.

Ethiopia is progressing in modernization and development, leading to an increase in its diplomatic influence. The country's focus on multilateralism, regional cooperation, and economic advancement establishes it as a rising leader in international matters. Ethiopia's diplomatic successes are vital for its future and for fostering a more peaceful and prosperous world. As they revel 127 years of diplomatic relations, Ethiopia and France emphasize their dedication to enhancing these bonds for future generations.

Law & Politics

Ramping up development by ensuring peace

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

It is clear that any activity in a country cannot be imagined and carried out without reliable peace and stability. Peace is a 'sine qua non', for any development activities because no one would risk their capital and investment in a country where there is an atmosphere of uncertainty and doubts for their security and welfare. If there are violent activities in an area, that place is destined to be dismissed from the list of potential zones of investment and commerce by huge business groups. In countries where peace is precarious, interest in those places is pushed back because investors give priority to their safety and any risks in this regard are to them unsustainable and unacceptable.

On the other hand, where there is reliable peace and security, that place becomes an attractive place for all kinds of investment depending on several other preconditions such as the legal framework that governs investments, the availability of cheap labor and manpower, the crucial energy that is available to run the investment and the space and infrastructure that are indispensable for any kind of industrial and manufacturing activity to be embarked upon. The way the taxation is run is also another factor that adds up to the incentive for the big investors ready to engage in long-term activities.

Currently, one can say Ethiopia has updated these preconditions such as space where investment could be carried out. It can provide the ideal condition of enough human labor because it has immense youths who are ready to engage in every undertaking. Energy-wise, Ethiopia is now a huge producer of clean hydropower that would contribute to fighting climate change fulfilling the conditions of limiting gas emissions to the atmosphere. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD, is in this sense a huge development that may even contribute to the scarcity of power to neighboring countries after filling the gap in the provision of power needed to any potential investor. Infrastructure-wise, there are now huge and remarkable developments in Ethiopia with new roads and highways being constructed and old ones repaired and maintained to be up to current standards. The newly built railroad network that was realized in collaboration and support of the Chinese government and companies has become a plus for the easier and cheaper movement of goods and supplies imported from foreign lands and a gateway for export activities.

Ethiopia is also an attractive place in terms of climatic conditions with moderation in every season throughout the year. There are no extreme weather conditions with a big part of the year being stable and warm and ventilated, unlike many other zones in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. In terms of the legal framework and the way the government treats these would-be investors, there has been lately a lot of progress made with the recent restructuring of the bureaucracy by the government's relentless search for a speedy facility for

There are no alternatives to peace and stability for a country that tries to grow fast and fulfill the needs of its population. That is why the government insists that we should all work hard to resolve our differences peacefully and not by using guns and bombs against each other

investors not to take too much precious time with red tape. It was found out that in the past the slow-moving bureaucracy was a discouragement for potential investors in the country.

That is why today many of the conditions for issuing investment licenses and formalities to be fulfilled have been limited to a one-stop facility and arrangement easing the entire operation. Investors now do not have to waste their precious time and resources trying to secure a license or permit to embark on their projects and plans. In this sense, the legal framework has been well improved so that investors can feel comfortable in launching their endeavors. What should not be forgotten is also the cheap labor Ethiopia can avail to potential investors.

Nowadays, Ethiopia is being elevated to becoming a preferable destination for investment. The country is also improving its economic status with continuous economic growth and an increase in its GDP. Now Ethiopia is rated by economic parameters as the biggest economy in the East African region and the fourth largest economy in the entire continent. If current trends continue, it will soon reach the status of one of the medium economic realities of the world. It is good to see that things seem to proceed well despite certain challenges to be overcome sooner than later.

The government has said that the newly introduced Home Grown Economic Reform Program has prevented the country's economy from falling into potential chaos and breakdown of the banking system. The floating of the hard currencies exchange market rate has been considered a long overdue development and welcomed by international financial institutions because they say the local currency has long been

overrated and this has led to the illegal parallel market that affected the foreign currency reserves. This development is expected to be more attractive for investors even if many economists have expressed their reservations against this move which has contributed, at least in the short run, to more inflationary tendencies as the Birr's value has been diminished. This has affected most of the low-income circles of the population before the potential future benefits the government has been talking about can be realized.

The government has also repeatedly vowed to fight this huge challenge of inflation by controlling it through the introduction of several fiscal and monetary policies. The government has remarked that unfortunately inflation is a worldwide phenomenon and presents a huge challenge to every country.

Despite the presence of all the above comfortable conditions to follow up with the development trajectory of the economy, what has endangered the entire process is the uncertainty that certain armed groups have been creating in certain areas with sporadic disruption in the smooth movement of people and goods. Even the perception of such a situation has become a point of relief and joy for those who do not want to see Ethiopia become an influential and important country in the African geopolitical scene.

It is evident that Ethiopia is growing fast and trying to assume the position it deserves with all the historical background it avails, the cultural heritage it shows to the world, and the present generation of citizens who may not be well informed about their forefathers' history. Its reputation and position as the beacon of Pan Africanism and freedom as well as a vanguard in the struggle for the liberation of Africans from colonialism contributes to that image as well. What is more, Ethiopia is also reputed for being the 'land of origin' where the oldest human species has been discovered by paleontologists. The history of the struggle against colonialism in Africa is mainly associated with Ethiopia. For all these points and the fact that Ethiopia has a huge population of more than 120 million completes the circle. This means the availability of a huge market is guaranteed provided the economy continues to grow at the current pace.

In the meantime, however, we risk losing all these advantages for growth and investment if we do not guarantee and conserve peace in every corner of the country. This is and remains a huge handicap for any healthy development in the country. That is why the government has given it maximum priority and continues to invite all those armed groups that say they have issues with the government that they would like to be addressed immediately. The government says it has created the ideal conditions to face the issue and deal with it with utmost urgency by preparing the groundwork to conduct peace talks around a table.

The formation of the National Dialogue Commission can be taken as one of the

efforts of the government to attain full peace embracing all the parties that are ready and willing to engage in discussions within this Commission. The assemblies and rallies that, the public was engaged in during the past days and weeks are other testimonies to the desire and anxiety of the public to do away with hostilities and violence in every part of the country and enjoy the benefits of permanent peace. The government has vowed that its efforts to bring to the table all parties that still believe that they can solve the problems of the country by engaging in armed struggle should put down their guns and abandon the violent ways and engage in open and frank talks in an atmosphere of good faith and utmost responsibility, and without posing any preconditions.

We are in a world where negotiations and peace talks are the order of the day and resorting to the use of force rather than reason and logic has not yielded any fruits. Moreover, we all know what violence and wars can result in. We have to learn from our own experience of the past few years alone. We have lost lots of resources, both human and material and we have dealt a tremendous blow to the country's economy just because we preferred the way of conflicts rather than the way of peaceful talks and ironing out our discrepancies.

Peace is clearly a diplomatic product of compromises and sacrifices but not protracted wars and conflicts. The experiences of the twentieth century must convince us to refrain from adopting outmoded manners of fulfilling our needs and wishes no matter how right we may be or have many claims.

In an atmosphere where there is space for peaceful discussions with guarantees of security for all parties that are involved in the talks by neutral observers such as the UN, the AU, and the EU or any other credible body, it should not be very difficult to sit down around a table and discuss the controversial issues in an open-minded manner, ready to compromise and sacrifices for the greater good. Undoubtedly, our destinies are intertwined and we cannot live by doing away with the other peoples of Ethiopia in an atmosphere of inequality and oppression.

The main advantage of a democracy is that everyone has a chance of a shot in affairs that matter to them. The government says it has no problems with guaranteeing such rights to all without any preconditions or discrimination. As long as we continue to stage intestinal fights and controversies, it is clear that we cannot attain our economic ambitions and objectives and that would be a huge failure to our citizens.

There are no alternatives to peace and stability for a country that tries to grow fast and fulfill the needs of its population. That is why the government insists that we should all work hard to resolve our differences peacefully and not by using guns and bombs against each other. All stakeholders are invited to put their pressure on those who do not want to divorce from violence and warfare and engage in peace talks.

Society

Enhancing participation of women, youth ensuring sustainable economic dev't

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

The rapid advancement of digital technology has presented substantial opportunities for women and youth across the globe to spearhead economic and social development.

By expanding access to digital tools and enhancing skills, technology enables women and young people to overcome traditional barriers and thrive in areas such as entrepreneurship and employment, leverage innovation, connect with global markets, and address local challenges.

It is a known fact that Africa is a continent characterized by its youthful population and hard working women, both of whom are crucial to its economic future. With over 60% of Africa's population under the age of 25, the youth represent a dynamic force for growth and innovation. In this regard, digital technology plays a pivotal role in unlocking opportunities for this demographic, from creating new job markets to enabling access to education and skills development.

Women, too, benefit as digital platforms empower them to run businesses, access healthcare, and participate in the global economy. This technological revolution accelerates Africa's economic development driving inclusivity and growth. By providing access to digital tools and skills, and equipping youth and women with the skills and confidence needed to initiate their own businesses, digital technology enables Africans to break barriers in entrepreneurship, education, and employment, to harness innovation, access global markets, and solve local challenges.

Mainly, programs focused on digital literacy and STEM education play crucial role to ensure that women and youth are not left behind, fostering inclusivity, boosting productivity, and accelerating sustainable development and social change.

Such initiatives not only enhance individual livelihoods but also contribute to broader economic resilience and social equity. As we recognize the untapped potential of these demographics, it is high time to create an enabling environment that facilitates their active participation in entrepreneurship, ultimately leading to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.

The recent forum, the African Entrepreneurship Forum, held here in Addis Ababa at the African Hall and deliberated on ways of increasing the participation and equitable benefits of African women and youth from the rapidly growing digital economy emphasized the critical role that the young people and women can play in driving sustainable economic development in Africa. Africa to realize inclusive, sustainable economic growth in the rapidly advancing digital economy should make the participation and fair



Solomon Soka Labor Employment and Market Sector State Minister, Mols

benefits of its young people and women its primary agenda and work for it, the Forum highlighted.

Speaking at the Forum, State Minister for Labor Employment and Market Sector at the Ministry of Labor and Skills (Mols), Solomon Soka, reiterated that Africa, should ensure the participation and benefits of its women and young people in the digital economy; and make it its main agenda in order to achieve sustainable economic growth by using Africa's untapped natural resources and large number of young people.

The State Minister said that, the Ethiopian government is working determinedly to enable young people to benefit from digital business and financial services. Concurrent with this initiative, in collaboration with the private sectors and development partners, various plans that target to ensure the success of Ethiopian entrepreneurs and enable to carry out multi-dimensional activities have been designed.

He added that, the Ministry of Labor and Skills is recording encouraging experiences in the development and expansion of micro and small enterprises engaged in various sectors.

At the forum, it was also pointed out that due emphasis would be given to benefit Ethiopian women and youth from the WYFIE 2030 initiative designed to build a resilient continental ecosystem that fosters impactful actions to improve women and youth financial and economic and the Sokokuu-Africa, the efforts being made to develop a digital platform where Africans can trade together and aimed at empowering African SMEs, youth and women.

At the forum, concurrent to the discussion on various agendas in order to ensure the economic benefits of African women and youth, an exhibition and bazaar was held in which micro, small and medium enterprises participated, alongside

As Ethiopia aligns its national strategies with global agendas, the emphasis on empowering marginalized groups not only fosters economic resilience but also promotes social equity. By championing the contributions of women and youth, Ethiopia is taking significant strides toward a more sustainable and prosperous future, demonstrating a commitment to inclusive development that resonates with the broader objectives of the African Union and the United Nations.

Ethiopia's entrepreneurial culture is rapidly evolving, characterized by a growing recognition of the importance of innovation and small businesses in driving economic growth. This shift is supported by the Ethiopia Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EEDI), which plays a crucial role in fostering this culture by collaborating with various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector. EEDI's initiatives aim to provide training, resources, and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly targeting youth and women, who represent a significant portion of the population.

According to reports, Ethiopia possesses significant potential, making it one of the most promising destinations for the private sector. Its strategic proximity to major global markets in both Europe and Asia has led to a growing influx of manufacturing companies, particularly in the ready-made garments sector, with a shift in focus from traditional hubs like Bangladesh and Vietnam. As the continent progresses towards greater economic integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Ethiopia is becoming an increasingly attractive hub for manufacturing and commerce.

Furthermore, the government is actively driving digital transformation, enacting several reforms to position Addis Ababa as Africa's e-commerce hub. This includes the establishment of the continent's first logistics and courier hub tailored to the African market.

Over the past decade, the government has made significant strides in fostering a favorable environment for entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as the gradual privatization of state-owned enterprises, investments in 13 industrial parks, and partnerships with local governments—such as designating Addis Ababa as the nation's first startup city—have effectively promoted innovation. These efforts are expected to foster clustering benefits for the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

As we recognize the untapped potential of these demographics, it is high time to create an enabling environment that facilitates their active participation in entrepreneurship, ultimately leading to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all

Business & Economy

Africa should harness maximum benefit from critical mineral development

BY STAFF REPORTER

Africa is a continent well known for its rich reserve of mineral resources. However the continent is also known for its poor and struggling economy despite its rich potential for development. This is mainly because the continent had not devised the right policies and working mechanisms to reap the necessary benefit out of it.

Especially at the present global economic dynamics various opportunities that make the continent a decisive player are unfolding year on year. This is related to the continent's possession of about 30% of the global reserve of critical minerals.

In recent years the world is highly worried about the burning issue of climate change which has become an imminent threat to the existence of life on earth. This global threat is mainly outcome of human's use of unsafe or unclean sources of energy that are polluting the environment. Hence it is a vital topic of everyone to prevent the destruction of the environment by making a transition from the existing energy system to a safe and clean energy sources.

Such energy sources are principally obtained from hydropower, solar energy, nuclear energy and other renewable sources like battery. Especially the massive and cost effective production of rechargeable batteries is possible with the use of critical minerals. According to the United Nations University (UN) Critical minerals are subsets of minerals considered crucial for the manufacturing and technological needs of companies, industries, nations, or even the world. For example, rare earth elements are required for the production of permanent magnets used in wind turbines, while electricity networks need vast amounts of copper and aluminum. The definition of whether a mineral is considered critical or not is somewhat flexible, since this classification depends on not only the context and the stakeholder's point of view, but is also subject to change over time because the current techno-socio-economic paradigm largely defines the criticality level of minerals.

It is good to critically look in to the state of Critical Mineral in the continent as they have the potential to determine its future. In deed as indicated by the American Geoscience Institute, critical minerals are mineral resources that are essential to the economy and whose supply may be disrupted. The 'criticality' of minerals changes with time as supply and society's needs shift. Table salt, for example, was once a critical mineral. Today, many critical minerals are metals that are central to high-tech sectors. They include the rare earth elements and other metals such as lithium, indium, tellurium, gallium, and platinum group elements.

By definition, critical minerals are essential for society. Demand for critical minerals such as rare earth elements has increased in recent years with the spread of high-tech



devices for personal and commercial use such as wind turbines, solar panels, and electronics such as smartphones and tablets.

With approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including cobalt, lithium, and nickel, which are considered essential for the green transition, African countries need to exploit these resources to drive its development, particularly trade and industrialization, experts say.

Recently, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Africa's Critical Minerals in the Context of Trade Policy hosted by the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The Press Release obtained from UNECA indicates that the meeting highlighted that Africa already has the right strategies and policies in place to harness its mineral resources. However, what is missing is deliberate action to realize this potential as the continent risks losing the full benefits of these critical minerals to global investors.

Speaking at the opening of the EGM, ECA Deputy Executive Secretary, Antonio Pedro, stressed it was time for Africa to leverage its political and economic integration for development. The continent already has policies to promote the development of its mineral resources.

"There is no reason why we should have a repeat of the scramble for Africa, especially at a time when greater political and economic integration has also taken place at the regional and continental levels," Mr. Pedro said, pointing that supportive continent-wide policies such as the African Mining Vision (AMV), the African Commodity Strategy and now the African

Green Minerals Strategy have been adopted across Africa.

Research by the ECA shows that demand for critical minerals will drive the quest to decarbonize economies and to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. It is estimated that the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy will create demand for 3 billion tons of minerals and metals to deploy solar, wind, and geothermal energy by 2050. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo alone supplies about 70% of the global cobalt market, a mineral critical in electric vehicle battery production.

Critical minerals, sought after for just energy transition, could power Africa's development and sustainable future, according to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which has identified critical minerals as a key revenue generator for governments to finance development and lift millions of Africans out of poverty.

Africa could be the go to industrialization destination by adding value to the critical minerals on the continent, argued Mr. Pedro. The value addition of critical minerals could boost e-mobility in Africa, while creating decent jobs and make Africa a competitive hub for green industrialization.

Africa is home to significant reserves of critical energy transition minerals such as 55% of cobalt, 47.65% of manganese, 21.6% of natural graphite, 5.9% of copper, 5.6% of nickel, 1% of lithium, and 0.6% of iron ore globally, according to UNCTAD.

Research shows that Africa is yet to fully realize the potential of its mineral resources as it estimated that African countries

generate only about 40% of the revenue they could potentially collect from these resources.

The meeting noted that, the growing global demand for critical minerals is an opportunity for Africa to maximize its revenues from mineral exploitation, value addition and the development of minerals-based regional value chains to spur industrialization. This can be done through leveraging Africa's trade and integration programme, including its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The AfCFTA represents a market of 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of over US\$3.4 trillion but intra-African trade accounts for only 15% of the continent's total trade.

The EGM considered the current demand for critical minerals in the broader historical and intellectual context of commodity dependence, examined Africa's recent experiences dealing with commodities, and explored the role of Africa's trade and integration policy to safeguard Africa's interests internally and boost its negotiating power in its dealings with external partners.

The EGM which featured panels led by prominent experts and researchers from the African Union Commission, United Nations agencies, regional development banks, think tanks, and the private sector, drew a number of recommendations for action. It recommended that Africa's commitment to trade-led economic integration should be leveraged to support the development of minerals-based regional and continental value chains and economic diversification.

Planet Earth

Stakeholders reaping economic benefits after Lake Haramaya rehabilitation

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Lake Haramaya is a well-known lake in eastern Ethiopia, close to the town of Haramaya in the Oromia region. The lake, which is part of the larger Ethiopian Rift Valley system, is known for its scenic beauty and ecological importance. It is also rich in biodiversity, with various fish and birds, making it an important habitat for local creatures. The surrounding marshes and forests sustain a broad range of flora and species.

For the local community, the Lake has cultural and economic importance. The place is known for agriculture and fishing. In addition, a lot of people go there to enjoy outdoor pursuits including fishing, birdwatching, and picnics. Its calm atmosphere draws people looking for leisure and natural appreciation.

Despite its economic, social, and environmental importance, the Lake, like many other Ethiopian lakes, used to face pollution and water level changes induced by climate change and human activities.

However, the lake functioned as the sole source of drinking water for the population of Haramaya and the surrounding towns, primarily Aweday and Harar, but it was dry. Even the dried-up lake was transformed into land, filled with agricultural activities, youngsters playing football, and animals grazing.

Mayor Efraha Wazir Abdulla (PhD) of the Maya City Administration previously told The Ethiopian Herald that the lake had dried up due to excessive lake and groundwater pumping, environmental deterioration, and climatic changes. Before it dried up, the lake provided a wonderful view and was utilized for drinking by both humans and animals. After it dried up, residents had to dig a 20-meter-deep well to get water, as life became difficult without it.

She recalled that Haramaya University (HU), one of Ethiopia's oldest public universities



which is located near Lake Haramaya, devised and began implementing the "Lake Haramaya Watershed Rehabilitation Project" with the primary purpose of recovering the lake. Furthermore, the lake is used as a demonstration place for students, teachers, and agricultural experts. This as a result helps the lake to be restored.

To restore the Lake, HU has initiated a number of research-based programs, according to Dine Rashid, coordinator of the Lake Haramaya Watershed Development Project. Additionally, the catchment area of the Lake was divided into three zones: lower, middle, and upper riparian. Around 400,000 fruit and forest saplings are planted annually in the upper basin by HU in addition to soil protection initiatives. In the core of the basin, more than 300 cubic meters of gabions are built annually to repair and rehabilitate the ground in areas that have been damaged and hollowed out.

HU organizes a cleanup program twice a year in partnership with university staff and local residents to stop waste and garbage pollution in the lake's surroundings. He also mentioned that the university provides training and material assistance to the farmers who reside close to the lower base of the lake to enhance their knowledge of water use, management, and the importance of using water wisely.

According to him, the restoration and other environmental initiatives made it possible

for the lake to be completely restored to its natural condition and its water level to rise annually.

HU Research and Community Engagement Vice President Dr. Isaac Yusuf said that three lakes in Haramaya now have higher water levels as a result of local conservation and environmental preservation initiatives. More significantly, the water levels in Tinike, Adele, and Haramaya lakes have been measured for the fifth time by Haramaya University in partnership with the Ministry of Water and Energy. Hence, it is evident that the lakes have grown in size and their water level increased.

He remembered that Haramaya Lake held 8.6 million cubic meters of water in 1986. However, the lake's water level was declining, and it was even completely dry as a result of ineffective water and lake management. As a result, HU, in partnership with the community and relevant organizations, has undertaken numerous environmental preservation and conservation efforts.

HU rehabilitates the Lake by implementing a variety of environmental preservation measures in partnership with the local community. To analyze this finding, the lake's water level has been rigorously measured every year. Particularly since 2013, and data has been collected to provide input for future study.

Annual soil and water conservation tasks

around the lake assist in its restoration. The lake's water level and size have increased since the university's planting of several tree seedlings annually. For example, in 2016 E.C., the lake's water volume was 9 million cubic meters, but in 2017 E.C., the lake's water level increased to 12 million cubic meters, he explained.

Expert Birhanu Legese of Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Energy, who has been measuring Haramaya Lake using bathymetry for five consecutive years, indicated that the lake's water level is increasing on an annual basis. In 2016 E.C., the lake's greatest water level was 4 meters and no more than 20 cm. According to current data, the lake's water level has reached 6 meters.

More importantly, the lake's level has increased because of the watershed management and environmental protection projects being carried out in the lake basin, which have induced rainwater to submerge rather than flood. It has been verified that the water level in Tinike, Adele, and Haramaya lakes has risen this year.

In fact, HU and the local community's collaboration in integrating the country's greenery program, mainly the green legacy initiative, planting saplings, conserving soil and water, and hiring farmers to care for the planted seedlings made this result possible, he added.

The restoration and increase in lake water levels show how degraded land may be restored through environmental conservation initiatives and partnerships between local communities and universities. Rehabilitating and restoring the nation's degraded lakes and land also requires better collaboration between universities, the local community, the city government, and other organizations. Therefore, in order to maintain sustainable water levels, the community needs to use the lakes properly. It is also crucial to plant tree seedlings and increase efforts to conserve soil and water, among other things.

"Generation Medemer" ...

forgotten and its role has diminished as we have been caught up in our troubles. It has become a country that is unable to free itself from its problems despite being revered as a symbol of African freedom. While being the seat of the African Union, it is a country that is beset by its own internal division and discord making it vulnerable to the machination of its external enemies. What kind of message does this convey to those who consider us to be an example of unity and freedom? The center of gravity for African unity has been the peace and unity of Ethiopia. If the peace and unity of Ethiopia are further eroded, this generation should be held responsible in the annals of history." (pg.136)

Ethiopia is an independent country, showing its remarkable power and strength to the other African countries. Many other

Africans looked to Ethiopia with a sense of pride and hope. Ethiopia has so many admirable qualities including having its alphabet and just its beautiful landscape, but most of all it never backed down from any European power.

"These projects that have been executed over the past few years have created an interest in visiting parks and recreational sites such as Entoto, Sheger and Unity Park. When such sites become more and more common in Ethiopia, the tendency to be fascinated with all things foreign will diminish and there will be more desire to appreciate what we have in the country. Instead of Ethiopians going abroad to see the world, we could also have the world coming to see Ethiopia... St. Lalibela wondered why Ethiopians were going all the way to Jerusalem and why we could not go to Jerusalem in

Ethiopia." (pg.126)

I was privileged enough to go to newly constructed museums and renovated recreational parks that are located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I was able to witness great improvements and these modernized locations truly were remarkable. The author's ability to construct these parks highlights Ethiopia's natural characteristics of the landscape and also uses the historical location to display the unique artifacts our country holds. The fact that Generation Medemer is growing up in a country that displays their history so that the kids can go and see the very beautiful things that not all Africans are privileged enough to do. Sadly, today's Ethiopia no longer represents all of the desirable qualities it used to represent.

In conclusion, this book was very informative and persuasive. Seeing that a

lot of the plans mentioned in this book have already come into action is truly admirable. I think the problem with today's Ethiopian society is their mentality. Ethiopia's political and economic issues didn't come overnight, it has been manifesting over many generations. And now it has reached its limit to the point where it can't be ignored. People nowadays are searching for a leader to take away all the problems overnight when it's going to take a while. But we need people who idolize the Medemer philosophy to take it one day at a time. If everyone put their opinions aside and started working towards a common goal, as a unified country, maybe then we would be witnessing progress. If you want to see change, it all starts from within. Unfortunately, today's Ethiopia is filled with greed. Everyone wants to be prosperous for themselves and not for the country.