



Ethiopia reveals 63.2 bln USD commitment to climate change

• Seeks 252.8 bln USD

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA— Ethiopia has committed to investing 63.2 billion USD in climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives using domestic resources between 2022 and 2030, FSD Ethiopia has announced.

Speaking at the Annual Climate Finance Summit yesterday, FSD Ethiopia’s CEO, Hikmet Abdella, highlighted that this investment is key to achieving the country’s broader goal of a climate-resilient green economy. Additionally, Ethiopia is seeking to secure 252.8 billion USD in conditional finance from international climate finance sources over the same period.

Hikmet noted that climate change is one of the most urgent global challenges, underscoring the critical need for substantial climate finance to meet Ethiopia’s green economy objectives by 2030. Over the past two years, FSD Ethiopia has focused on advancing financial inclusion and capital market development in the country.

According to the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ethiopia plans to invest 63.2 billion USD domestically in climate change mitigation and adaptation, but the country is relying on the remaining 252.8 billion USD in conditional finance from international sources within the same period. Hikmet stressed the urgent need for climate financing, particularly from the private sector, to accelerate Ethiopia’s transition to



a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

Addressing the significant gaps in climate finance is essential for achieving Ethiopia’s vision. A recent FSD Africa study revealed that Ethiopia has secured only a fraction of

the required funding—approximately 1.7 billion USD annually—while the country’s annual climate finance needs exceed 25 billion USD.

The Climate Resilient and Green Economy *See Ethiopia reveals ... page 3*

Experts vitalize media role in Nat’l Dialogue process

BY TEWODROS KASSA

ADDIS ABABA—The diversity of voice, balance and priority to human interest stories reporting are important in a bid to fulfill the media’s constructive role in the upcoming National Dialogue process, experts said.

A national conference on the role of media in the National Dialogue was held yesterday in the presence of the media professionals and other pertinent stakeholders.

Presenting a paper on the occasion about the role of media in National Dialogue process respective to conflict situation, Bahir Dar University Journalism and Communication Lecturer Negesse Belay (PhD) said that the media should promote public participation in ongoing National Dialogue.

He said journalists should be responsible and careful while reporting National Dialogue process, adding that, entertaining diversified voices and producing worthy stories is fundamental to fulfill the media role in reconciliation and peace building.

See Experts vitalize ... page 3

Addis celebrates inclusion, leadership on PwD Day

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – The Addis Ababa Women, Children, and Social Affairs Bureau is actively working to enhance the universal participation and well-being of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

Yesterday, the bureau hosted the concluding event for the International Day of PWDs. This year’s program was held under the theme “Inclusion, Sustainable Development, and Leadership Roles of Persons with Disabilities,” marking the 32nd celebration in Ethiopia and the 33rd globally.

At the conclusion of the program, Bureau Head Woynshet Zeryihun said that

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Ankara Declaration: Pragmatic approach to secure Nat’l interest

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Ethiopia’s quest for access to the sea, a trending issue in regional politics, has taken a significant step with the signing of

the Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia. After months of negotiations characterized by hot debates, the agreement empirically de-escalates controversies surrounding Ethiopia’s maritime ambitions.

Somalia has expressed its readiness to accommodate Ethiopia’s demands, while Ethiopia has reaffirmed its political and security support for Somalia in turn. This

See Ankara Declaration: ... page 3

GTF providing policy support to enhance agricultural production

• Holds consultative meeting on agricultural research findings

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA -The Gudina Tumsa Foundation (GTF) said that it is significantly contributing evidence-based policy advocacy to enhance agricultural production and productivity.

The Foundation held a consultative meeting on research findings on the current state of agricultural production and productivity in Oromia yesterday with stakeholders.

Speaking at the occasion, GTF Managing Director Lensa Gudina said that the GTF made a strategic shift from a merely service delivery to evidence-based policy advocacy focusing on enhancing agricultural production and productivity.

The research findings would shed light on the current state of agriculture production and productivity in the region and identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities where policy reforms can make a meaningful difference, she stated.

“While service delivery addresses immediate needs, policy advocacy tackles the root causes



Lensa Gudina

of inequality. We recognize that lasting impact requires evidence, not assumptions. For this reason, one of our most critical activities under the Healthcare and Livelihood Improvement Advocacy Project in Oromia (HaLIAPO) has been research and evidence generation,” she said.

Agriculture is the heartbeat of Oromia’s economy. It sustains families, fuels markets, and holds the key to food security and economic prosperity. However, climate change, traditional farming practices, financial

inadequacies, and gender inequalities continue to hinder the progress, she added.

HaLIAPO focuses on key pillars essential to development such as health, nutrition, agriculture, financial inclusion and women’s economic empowerment. It is a movement towards systemic change. The GTF has been also forwarding agricultural inclusiveness and others inputs to concerned bodies, the Director underscored.

For his part, Oromia President’s Office Deputy Head Faji Chala said that the state has been exerting efforts to improve livelihoods, especially it has been focusing on boosting agricultural production and productivity.

As a result, the implementation of proper policies have immensely contributed to transform a country’s overall development, he mentioned.

Since its establishment in 1992, the foundation has embraced communities across Ethiopia delivering impactful projects that empower individuals and uplift entire communities focusing on women and children support, health, education, water and environment, livelihoods enhancement and policy advocacy.

Metropolitan striving for holistic dev’t

• Addis, Shaggar cities sign MoU to ensure peace, security

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – As a hub for continental and international organizations, Addis Ababa is enhancing the peace and security of its residents and visitors, the City Peace and Security Bureau said.

Addis Ababa City Peace and Security Administration Bureau and Shaggar City Peace and Security Administration Office yesterday signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at ensuring sustainable peace, security, and economic stability.

During the signing ceremony, Bureau’s Head, Lidiya Girma said that as Addis is the hub of diplomacy, trade, and tourism, it prioritizes peace and security and the agreement is vital to this end.

According to her, the two bodies have been carrying out various activities to ensure sustainable peace and economic stability.

“Though the two bodies have been working to create a conducive living environment to residents, a lot remain to be done in fighting against illegal traders. The offices will work hand in hand and consolidate cooperation with other concerned bodies to ensure rule of law, peace, and security,” she added.

She underlined that working in collaboration would play a pivotal role in enforcing law with information based solution for peace, economic stability, and so on. Besides, efforts are underway to build a sense of ownership among the community and encourage participation in peacemaking activities.

Shaggar City Peace and Security Administration Office, Deputy Mayor and Economic Cluster Coordinator Guyo Gelgelo said that the agreement would play a decisive role in balancing trade and developing the economy alongside enforcing the rule of law within the two cities.

According to Guyo, the MoU would help the two neighboring cities to achieve their mutual goals of combating trade sabotage and ensuring peace.

He added that efforts are being exerted to realize infrastructural development, and improve the livelihoods of the community.

Ethiopia, EU commit to advancing all-round cooperation

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia and the European Union (EU) have agreed to intensify and deepen their cooperation during their second structured dialogue, held recently in Addis Ababa.

Foreign Affairs Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) emphasized that the EU is a vital development partner for Ethiopia, particularly in matters of peace and security. This partnership has opened doors for Ethiopia to engage with the EU on both national and regional issues. The discussions facilitated dialogue on Ethiopia’s peace and security, economic partnerships, and multilateral cooperation.

Minister Gedion stated, “Using power struggles as a weapon to win power has left a dark mark on the nation’s political history. To address this, the Ethiopian government is determined to tackle structural challenges through all-inclusive reforms.”

As part of Ethiopia’s ongoing reforms, the establishment of the National Dialogue Commission, the implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), and transitional justice are key initiatives. Additionally, homegrown economic and macroeconomic reforms are central to the process. According to Minister Gedion, the EU has been a crucial supporter of Ethiopia in these efforts.

“The country needs strengthened collaboration with the EU to enhance both private and public investments, while the



ongoing reforms create opportunities for increased EU investment in Ethiopia,” Gedion emphasized.

He further noted that improved bilateral collaboration would significantly contribute to fostering regional and continental peace, not only in the Horn of Africa but also across the wider African continent.

EU Ambassador to Ethiopia, Sofie From-Emmesberger, highlighted Ethiopia’s pivotal role in ensuring regional peace and security. She reiterated the EU’s and its member states’ readiness to stand with Ethiopia and its people, commending the successful implementation of the Pretoria Agreement over the past two years. The Ambassador also praised the Ankara Accord as a significant step taken by Ethiopia, emphasizing the EU’s commitment to fully contributing to the region’s stability.

Ambassador From-Emmesberger added that

the discussions reaffirmed the EU’s support for the implementation of the Ankara Accord, regional integration, and peace and security issues, particularly in the fight against terrorism.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Nebiat Getachew (Amb.), reminded attendees of the strategic agreement signed between Ethiopia and the EU in 2016, which aimed to further strengthen their partnership on multilateral issues. “The EU has remained Ethiopia’s key strategic partner, known for its continued support of Ethiopia’s development efforts,” he said.

The spokesperson also noted that the major topics discussed during the structured dialogue included regional peace, stability, and recovery, economic development, finance, business, environmental issues, and cooperation within a multilateral framework.

News

Ethiopia reveals 63.2 bln USD ...

Facility (CRGEF) Director Yonas Getahun shared his insights on Ethiopia's climate finance efforts. He noted that while the country has made significant progress, it is aiming for an ambitious target requiring around 300 million USD annually by 2030, with most funds expected to come from external sources.

Finance Minister Ahmed Shide affirmed that Ethiopia is on the right track toward achieving a climate-resilient green economy, stressing the country's commitment to a sustainable, low-carbon future. Ethiopia's climate finance strategy includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 68.8% by 2030, as outlined in the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

While acknowledging Ethiopia's vulnerability to climate change, the Minister mentioned the country's determination to overcome these challenges. He indicated that the summit provided a critical platform to explore the financing mechanisms necessary



to achieve Ethiopia's ambitious climate goals.

The challenges Ethiopia faces—from devastating droughts to erratic rainfall—continue to affect local communities. Despite these obstacles, Ethiopia remains steadfast in its commitment to becoming a climate-resilient green economy by 2030. Ahmed also pointed to the government's efforts through the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) to restore degraded lands and reduce carbon emissions, calling for greater cross-sector collaboration to ensure a sustainable economy.

FSD Africa CEO Mark Napier praised Ethiopia's progress but called for more private sector involvement to close the climate finance gap. He noted that Africa currently receives far less climate funding than other regions.

The Ethiopian Capital Market Authority Director General Hana Tehelku emphasized the crucial role of the capital markets in climate financing. She stressed that capital markets offer alternative financing options for both the private and public sectors, providing not just financial support but significant potential for societal transformation.

Ankara Declaration: Pragmatic approach ...

mutual understanding is being supported by scholars for its potential to reshape regional dynamics.

The Ankara Declaration underscores the recognition of Ethiopia's right to access the sea, a cornerstone of Ethiopia's foreign policy in recent times. Institute of Foreign Affairs-IFA, European and American Affairs General Director and a Geopolitical Analyst Daraskedar Taye (PhD) expressed that the agreement represents a landmark in Ethiopia's access to sea agenda.

"Ethiopia's primary demand is securing access to the sea. This has been acknowledged, paving the way for further negotiations," he said.

To him, the agreement also averts potential conflicts fueled by external actors. Daraskedar pointed out some anti-peace elements' role in exacerbating tensions in the Horn of Africa (HoA). "Its attempts to meddle in Ethiopia-Somalia relations was concerning. 'If Somalia had continued conspiracies with external destructive forces, the two neighbors (Ethiopia and Somalia) might have entered into a mutual crisis,'" the Analyst stated.

The Red Sea region, a geopolitical hotspot attracting global powers, poses additional challenges. Ethiopia's quest for sea access directly intersects with the strategic interests of global actors and competitive regional

powers. The Red Sea' is significant. Ethiopia's demand to gain presence along the coastline is due to its economic and security issues. Potential threats from external forces seeking to exploit the region's instability are inevitable, he indicated.

Ethiopia's economic aspirations further stimulate its maritime agenda. Daraskedar explained that the country's growing economy and efforts to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are hampered by its landlocked status. Investors demand stable logistical services, including access to ports, which Ethiopia cannot guarantee them while remaining landlocked. The diversification of port access is also critical as Ethiopia's trade volume increases. Diplomatic proposals to secure sea access should continue until Ethiopia's demands are fully realized, he suggested.

From a legal perspective, Lawyer Andualem Bewuketu defined Ethiopia's access to sea quest as a strategically calculated initiative by the prime minister. He highlighted the significance of setting sea access as a national agenda.

The lawyer also praised the Ankara Declaration as a significant step towards achieving Ethiopia's broader and future diplomatic goals. The agreement lays a foundation for future cooperation. However, he cautioned that Ethiopia's journey to secure sea access would not be without obstacles.

He compared it to the challenges Ethiopia faced during the construction of the Abbay Dam, which succeeded despite intense opposition from external forces.

The Ankara Declaration's impact is beyond Ethiopia and Somalia. By averting a potential conflict, the agreement contributes to regional stability. "Preserving national interests while preventing conflict, is a double victory for Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the future remains fraught with challenges," Andualem described.

The HoA continues to face security crises, including Somalia's internal instability and Sudan's ongoing conflict. Ethiopia's access to sea ambition may also face resistance from other regional actors and global powers competing for influence in the Red Sea, he highlighted.

"The Ankara Declaration marks another milestone in Ethiopia's quest for sea access, balancing its national interests with regional stability. While the agreement has de-escalated immediate tensions, the implications of Ethiopia's maritime ambitions remain unexplained," he noted.

As Daraskedar noted, adjusting national interests without challenges is just an ideal. Ethiopia's path to achieving its maritime goals yet requires overcoming complex diplomatic, economic, and security hurdles.

Addis celebrates ...

increasing the participation of PwDs across all sectors requires the implementation of inclusive practices. She stressed that it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure persons with disabilities have full participation, access to education, and essential social services, safeguarding their social, economic, and political rights.

Woynshet further mentioned the importance of equal participation and benefits for PwDs in all aspects of society—social, economic, and political. She underscored the need for inclusive practices across all sectors to ensure their full integration into society.

President of the Addis Ababa Disabled People's Association, Woynshet Girma (PhD), shared that the association is actively working in 119 woredas and 11 sub-cities in Addis Ababa. She emphasized that promoting leadership roles for PwDs and fostering inclusivity cannot rest on one institution alone; all relevant organizations and institutions must collaborate.

Woynshet also noted that there are an estimated 25 million PwDs in Ethiopia. It is vital, she said, that everyone work together to enable PwDs to contribute to and transform society.

The President also acknowledged the significant support being provided by the Addis Ababa City Administration Women, Children, and Social Affairs Bureau to ensure the universal participation of PwDs.

Senior Expert in Social Rehabilitation for the Disabled at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Mahmed Kedir, indicated that efforts to increase the participation of persons with disabilities involve shaping policies, providing support, and raising awareness.

He added that these efforts will continue to be strengthened in the future. Mahmed emphasized that empowering PwDs for leadership roles is possible if all stakeholders fulfill their responsibilities. He concluded by stressing the importance of working together to increase the universal participation and benefits for PwDs.

Experts vitalize media role ...

Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission representative Tegegnetwork Getu (PhD) said that the commission has collected evidence based agendas from the public through participatory ways throughout the country.

So far, preparations are finalized to gather public ideas in Amhara and Tigray states.

Moreover, the final National Dialogue will be held in Addis Ababa very soon.

The commission extends gratitude for the media for its unwavering commitment

towards a constructive dialogue in the country.

"Conducting inclusive and participatory dialogue is the only option to solve ongoing problems. The media should also fulfill its responsibility of educating the public about the National Dialogue and every citizen's role in ensuring the national interest."

Moreover, the media should play a neutral role in promoting the public participation throughout the realization of the dialogue.

Ethiopian Media Council (EMC) Executive

Committee Chairperson Amare Aregawi said that everyone is responsible for the fruitful accomplishment of the National Dialogue.

In this regard, the media is expected to contribute its part through facilitating the process of the National Dialogue, he added.

As to him, the National Dialogue should also include the agendas of the media to solve the ongoing challenges in the sector.

More importantly, ensuring press freedom and impartiality should be the core values

of the media in the efforts of realizing successful National Dialogue.

The council stresses the need to ensuring media ethics and media professionals' responsible reporting throughout the National Dialogue process.

Accordingly, the media should be active participant throughout the National Dialogue process in reporting stories and also presenting sector challenges for concerned body that requires solutions from the National Dialogue.

Opinion

The long winding road defining Africa's infrastructure development

BY STAFF REPORTER

Experts agree that Africa can accelerate its development by investing in infrastructure which stimulates trade and economic growth. Yet, thirteen years after PIDA - the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa was launched, research by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) indicates that Africa's infrastructure deficit reduces economic growth by 2% annually and cuts productivity by up to 40%.

To catch up, an impressive list of 69 PIDA projects is now in place, adopted by the African Union in 2021, with an estimated cost of US\$160.8 billion. The projects cover transport, energy, water and digital connectivity. If fully implemented, this consolidated infrastructure programme for the continent - PIDA - would facilitate trade, transform connectivity and foster inclusive growth.

"These projects are about empowering people - connecting farmers to markets, entrepreneurs to customers and students to access educational opportunities," according to Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), speaking at the recent 8th PIDA Week held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2024.

The journey towards the 69 PIDA projects has been decades in the making, according to infrastructure expert, Robert Lisinge, Director of the Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure Development Division at the ECA.

"Convinced of the need for a continent-wide transport network, the Trans-African Highways network (TAH) was conceived in the 1970s and the African Transport Policy programme in the 1980s. TAH became part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Short-Term Infrastructure Action Plan after African leaders realized that an infrastructure programme was needed to fast-track Africa's development. PIDA was developed in 2011 as Africa's Marshall plan for a consolidated infrastructure programme for the continent," he says.

ECA has played a key role in developing the second PIDA Priority Action Plan (2021-2030). A task force mandated by the PIDA Steering Committee was appointed to select projects for implementation. ECA, as the Secretariat of the task force, together with other members of the task force, developed the criteria for selecting the projects which were presented to African Heads of State.

Linking Large Infrastructure Projects to Development Outcomes

However, the challenge of physical assets-

roads, rail, etc. that are either incomplete or that are not interlinked in ways that contribute to real development outcomes, such as the opportunities found in the AfCFTA, worries the ECA Executive Secretary, Mr. Gatete and his team of infrastructure experts.

For this reason, "creating robust and integrated infrastructure is key to realizing the AfCFTA's transformative potential," he says and explains that the Lamu Port, South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor, which connects Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, is an example of the type of linkage that enhances connectivity, reduces trade costs and catalyzes regional economic integration. It's about translating big visions into real outcomes.

According to Gatete, 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. Studies by ECA also project that adequate infrastructure and implementing the AfCFTA could increase this figure to 33%.

"Infrastructure is the game changer. It's the glue that can make a real difference to our economies - moving from potential to connecting dreams and transforming lives - he says and adds that the AfCFTA is an opportunity to develop road and railway networks to increase intra-Africa freight demand by 28%. Estimates by the ECA also show that Africa will need to upgrade over 60,000 kilometers of regional roads and complete the missing links in the Trans-African Highways to meet the increased volume of trade.

Lisinge, for his part, sees a two-way relationship between transport and trade and states, "good transport will facilitate trade, and if the quality of the infrastructure is good, it means the cost of transport is lower and that increases trade and boosts intra-African trade."

Lisinge, who has led the research on this two-way relationship, says that by 2030, 1,844,000 trucks for bulk cargo and 248,000 trucks for containers would be needed under the AfCFTA. While 97,614 wagons for bulk cargo and 20,668 wagons for container cargo would also be required by 2030. This increases to 132,857 and 36,482 wagons respectively if planned infrastructure projects are implemented. Furthermore, 126 vessels would be required for bulk cargo and 15 vessels for container cargo by 2030 while 254 cargo airplanes would be required.

Wherewith the Financing?

The financing, while daunting can be achieved by attracting private sector participation through innovative de-risking mechanisms. The success of PIDA lies in our collective resolve to act decisively,

Already, the Global Gateway a European strategy to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world has prioritized support to some projects that are part of PIDA, such as the highway between Lagos and Abidjan in West Africa. The US and the EU are supporting the development of the Lobito Corridor, which links Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

He adds that "PIDA is a unique platform for engagement. The infrastructure challenge in Africa is much bigger than its 69 projects and there is a need to prioritise, with countries able to have the leeway to implement their own projects"

Closing the gap

The African Development Bank (AfDB) notes that between \$130-\$170 billion per year is required to fund infrastructure development. In other words, we have a financing gap of up to \$108 billion per year because of poor regulatory frameworks and red tape. AfDB has rolled out a financing strategy which identifies different options for financing PIDA projects. Member countries can raise domestic resources from national budgets or borrow from the market.

But, as cautions Mr. Lisinge, finance has been a critical challenge for infrastructural development in Africa and many countries are in a financial dilemma. They are unable to tap into domestic resources for infrastructural development, and international loans are expensive. Besides, many countries are experiencing poor credit ratings, which means the cost of borrowing is much higher for them in the financial markets.

"Countries can make use of the NEPAD service delivery mechanism which helps in developing and translating ideas to concrete projects. The mechanism helps in project preparation and feasibility studies to improve economic and financial viability to attract investors," he says.

"Furthermore, beyond development finance institutions, countries can tap into green funds that support green projects and private-public partnerships are also an option for funding infrastructural development in Africa where the government and the private sector can come together, share the risks and combine resources to implement commercially viable projects," he adds.

Source: UNECA



These projects are about empowering people - connecting farmers to markets, entrepreneurs to customers and students to access educational opportunities

mobilize the necessary resources, and align our efforts with the broader aspirations of the AfCFTA," says Gatete.

ECA has developed a partnership strategy for the implementation of PIDA. This follows the realization that development partners have their own projects which should not derail the implementation of PIDA. For example, the Chinese have the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Europeans have the Global Gateway.

"PIDA should be the building block for infrastructure partnerships with non-African countries and organizations," Lisinge says, noting that international partners are keen to connect to the rest of the world including Africa. Hence, it would be strategic if they invest in PIDA projects.

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

Editorial

People's call for peace reflects government's resolve

Ethiopia has been trying to find its way to full-fledged peace and stability. The country has embarked on big initiatives like national dialogue and transitional justice to create national consensus on major issues and resolve disputed matters.

And, to ease tensions redress conflicts, and bring armed groups to the roundtable, the government has been extending an olive branch. It has already entered a peace deal with TPLF with the Pretoria accord and recently, the Oromia administration and the self-proclaimed Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) have struck a peace deal. These efforts send a clear message that the government is ready to resolve differences using only peaceful means. The need for peace is of course in the best interest of the entire people and its dividends have been felt among people.

Over the years, the conflicts in some states and some pockets of the nation have already brought mayhem and suffering of civilians and caused property damage. That is why the incumbent has been taking the lead in calling for a peaceful settlement of conflicts the people have been on the same page. Part of this has been the demonstration held lately in Amhara State is a solid indicator and reminder that violence can no longer be an option to meet certain demands or express grievances.

The previous peace deals signed between the government and other armed groups are the result of good faith and a genuine position for reconciliation and stability. The reliance of the government to bury the hatchet and turn the tide has been ardently supported by the Ethiopian people. The demonstration held in Amhara State and the joy witnessed in Oromia State following the deal with the OLA wing are strong testimonies.

The peaceful demonstrations held across the Amhara region, from Gendawuha to Gondar, have been a great reminder that violence cannot be an option and that peace and development are the priority of the country. This strong public demand for non-violence and dialogue should be very much felt by the armed groups.

The demonstrators carried placards declaring a united stand for peace and development that encapsulated the region's aspirations. The rallies at Gondar's Fasiledes Stadium reflected a shared rejection of war and a deep yearning for growth and stability. The involvement of youths, women, elders, religious leaders, students, and government employees demonstrates a community-wide determination to prioritize dialogue over discord. These demonstrations serve as a reminder that peace is not just the responsibility of governments but a collective endeavor.

Commending the widespread public support for peace and condemning extremism, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh aptly highlighted the importance of this collective action in his remarks. He underscored a critical truth: lasting peace can only be achieved through collaboration and shared commitment. His call for armed groups to embrace dialogue reflects the government's openness to reconciliation.

Yes, Ethiopia like other nations has some setbacks of the past and challenges of the present. And, it is working fingers to its bone to dress for the many problems facing it. And, these efforts have strong public support and will be effectuated with the full commitment of all. Any attempt that runs against these causes is surely to be and must be condemned!



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Opinion

Ethiopia's comprehensive achievements in multilateral, bilateral diplomacy

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Since time immemorial, Ethiopia has been working at all hours of the day and night to augment diplomatic relations with various nations worldwide in a successful manner. Reasoning from this fact, the country has been accomplishing various diplomatic triumphs in various sectors that have taken it to the next level of achievement at the earliest possible juncture.

From the dawn of history, Ethiopia has undertaken a broad range of multilateral and bilateral diplomatic undertakings on issues of international and regional concern.

Through its diplomatic acceptance, Ethiopia has pushed forward working hard with the intention of ensuring Africa's interest in multilateral landscapes. It is acknowledged that Ethiopia's peacekeeping troops have been paving the way for ensuring peace and tranquility in the Horn of Africa and beyond with great speed.

Albeit Ethiopia has been smoothing the path of restoring peace and tranquility in the length and breadth of the Horn of Africa and beyond, other nations in the continent of Africa have not yet fully attached due emphasis as it has; hence they have to be determined enough to foster what Ethiopia has been doing on the topic of ensuring peace and tranquility.

It is generally recognized that as the Horn of Africa region is a breeding center for illicit arms, terrorism, human trafficking, and more of the same, Ethiopia has continued eradicating terrorist groups from every nook and cranny of the region.

A case in point in this regard is Ethiopia's unceasing efforts to build sustainable peace in Somalia putting the focus on shared interests have sustained attaining the desired goal. By working in close relationship with various nations, the country's peacekeeping forces have been restoring peace in the Horn of Africa.

It is worth recalling that Ethiopia has registered remarkable diplomatic outcomes and ensured its national interest last fiscal year. More to the point, the country has signed various agreements with neighboring countries in various sectors such as education, tourism, economy and infrastructure, according to a source.

Ethiopia has marked a series of significant diplomatic achievements over the past fiscal year in which key areas of progress include neighborhood diplomacy, BRICS membership, migrant repatriation, multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, and foreign direct investment, the source indicated.

Ethiopia's membership in BRICS is another notable achievement. Amid regional challenges and global geopolitical shifts, Ethiopia's diplomatic mission has successfully navigated complex negotiations, secured critical partnerships, and advanced national interests on the global stage.

In an interview he gave to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Melaku Mulualem, a researcher on International Relations and Diplomacy in the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia in the recent past expounded upon the extensive diplomatic efforts and endeavors Ethiopia has

put forth in order to join the BRICS group. As he explained, the country has had to engage in rigorous competition with many African nations in order to secure its place in the group.

"Ethiopia's government has played a crucial role in facilitating access to this elite group through various diplomatic activities. These efforts have included intensive engagement with other nations, extensive negotiations and discussions, as well as other important diplomatic activities aimed at securing Ethiopia's rightful place among the world's most powerful and influential countries."

Gaining membership in the BRICS group would be an extremely noteworthy accomplishment for Ethiopia, as it would provide the country with a wealth of crucial benefits and opportunities for both its citizens and its government.

As the federal government of Ethiopia has sustained pursuing a wide-ranging and diversified diplomacy on bilateral as well as multilateral platforms with the purpose of moving ahead with the country's national interests, the whole thing has continued yielding results and moving forward in the right direction.

It is common knowledge that since the beginning of time, Ethiopia has been going to the ends of the earth with the aim of bolstering regional collaboration, peace-building operations, contention resolution, and other related aspects.

By taking part in a considerable number of dialogues on the subject of Africa, Ethiopia has registered quite a lot of beneficial outcomes and positive results in getting to the bottom of shared challenges such as climate change, security threats, migration, and whatnot.

As things currently stand, the aforesaid reality on the ground has been assisting the progress of unity among African nations giving rise to augmented stability and economic advancement.

The Ankara declaration signed between Ethiopia and Somalia demonstrates the diplomatic maturity and moral high ground of Ethiopia to achieve its legitimate quest for access to the sea through mutually beneficial and peaceful means, Institute of Foreign Affairs Deputy Executive Director said.

Ethiopia and Somalia have reached an agreement following Turkish-mediated negotiations in Ankara, marking a breakthrough to resolve misunderstandings between the two nations.

The Ankara Declaration stipulates that Ethiopia and Somalia resolutely move forward in cooperation towards common prosperity.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, Deputy Executive Director of Institute of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdi Zenebe said that it is a historic declaration and goes beyond Ethiopia while positively impacting the economic, political, security, and diplomatic as well as international relation of the Horn of Africa.

"This shows Ethiopia's diplomatic maturity that reflected high moral ground in a number of different areas; one clear demonstration in this very important element that the commitment of Ethiopia to ensure peace and stability in the region and to pursue its legitimate agenda access to the sea through a peaceful means."

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

Business & Economy

Significance of using renewable energy in transport sector

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The global greenhouse gas emissions are increasing. One of the reasons for this is the use of fuel-powered vehicles. According to data, vehicle greenhouse gas emissions are expected to reach 40 million tons by 2029/30. This has a significant negative impact on climate change.

Countries are taking various measures to address the problem; one of these is promotion of vehicles powered by renewable energy. Following this, electric vehicles are being widely used on highways.

The Ethiopian government is also focusing on the development of the sector considering the relative advantages of electric vehicles compared to fuel-powered vehicles and recognizing the benefits of building a transport sector based on renewable energy to build a green economy that is resilient to climate change. The implementation of green transportation in accordance with the ten-year plan that uses renewable energy properly, does not harm the health of the community and does not cause environmental pollution.

The government has implemented a tax reform that encourages industries and importers to invest in electric vehicles and makes the community benefit from this service. The tax reform aims to make the rapidly growing number of vehicles in Ethiopia compatible with environmental safety within a policy framework, to implement a transportation system that does not harm the health of the community, does not affect the climate and biodiversity, and uses renewable energy sources properly, and to enable electric vehicles to be made available to the community at an affordable price.

These vehicles were previously imported directly from abroad, but understanding their benefits, the government has not only created a favorable environment for their widespread import from abroad, but also created a favorable environment for their assembly in the country. Following this, investors have invested in the assembly of electric vehicles.

Following the steps taken by the government to encourage electric vehicles, the number of electric vehicles has increased. According to last month's data; the number of companies assembling electric vehicles in the country has reached 15, while those importing the vehicles have increased to more than 200.

As highlighted at the recent Ethio-Green Mobility 2024 International Exhibition and Symposium on Green Transport and Logistics organized by the Ministry of Transport and Logistics, the country needs to continue to invest extensively in this important investment for building a green economy and breaking away from oil dependence.

Attending the opening of the forum, Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Tagese Chafo, said that sustainable and reliable green development that can withstand the global impact of climate change must be carried out. Ethiopia has a potential for renewable energy that can support green transport. It is working to become a pioneer in green transport by utilizing this potential.

He indicated that the country is using its



Electric vehicles are essential to build a green economy that is resilient to climate change

green potential to prevent damage to the environment and to realize strong renewable energy generation that supports national prosperity in the long term. He also noted that the Ethio-Green Mobility 2024 Exhibition and Symposium is a showcase of how the country can harness the potential of green energy; it indicated the level of progress the world has made in the sector and the great work that waits ahead.

The Speaker said promising results are being recorded in the efforts to bring about a complete transformation in the country, ensure growth and prosperity, and gradually improve the lives of the people. However, there are also challenges that require further efforts, both national and global, such as climate change and urban sprawl. New innovations and good opportunities are being observed in the efforts to overcome these problems. This creates opportunities to grow the economy and utilize potential resources.

Speaker Tagese noted that countries are moving away from carbon-based transportation and are introducing electric and other renewable energy vehicles into service, and said that Ethiopia is also working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels in the transport and logistics sector. A policy is being developed and implemented to encourage the production and assembly of electric vehicles in the country and to encourage investments in infrastructure for this purpose. Since renewable energy is sustainable and a cornerstone for improving the lives of citizens, all stakeholders should work together to ensure the success of investments in this direction.

Minister of Transport and Logistics, Alemu Sime (PhD), for his part, said that the program is one of the activities aimed at realizing a green economy to ensure equal benefits for citizens, citing Ethiopia's commitment to green development. He indicated that Ethiopia is improving its transport landscape to become a pioneer in green economic development by utilizing its renewable energy resources.

He also stated that the ten-year transport plan will prioritize non-motorized transport strategies, public transport policies and electric vehicles, and that the necessary infrastructure is being developed to meet

this need and create a healthy lifestyle. The Ministry is working hard to provide various incentives for vehicles using renewable energy or electric vehicles and to establish convenient infrastructure.

As to him, green development projects initiated to maintain Addis Ababa as a diplomatic and economic center are being supported by green transportation. Electric vehicles will help reduce the foreign exchange spent on fuel purchases by reducing the dependence on oil; the sector has a significant contribution to economic growth, and the Ministry is providing the necessary support to the private sector that is engaged in the sector.

The Minister noted that electric vehicles, in addition to their economic benefits and air pollution prevention, will also help reduce noise pollution and accelerate technology transfer. He also confirmed that efforts to expand bicycle and pedestrian paths will continue to be strengthened in addition to vehicle infrastructure to reduce fuel dependence, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create a healthy society.

Executive Director of Electrification and Energy Information at the Ministry of Water and Energy, Mesfin Dabi, said that the Ethio-Green Mobility 2024 Exhibition and Convention showed that there is a wide opportunity to use renewable energy technologies other than fossil fuels. It has provided a great experience that enables replace the fossil fuel-based transport sector with a completely renewable energy supply.

According to him, the introduction of renewable energy-based transport services will contribute significantly to preventing climate change by reducing carbon emissions from fossil fuels. In addition, the economic benefits are significant in terms of reducing the country's annual expenditure on fossil fuels.

He pointed out that the Ministry of Water and Energy is working to increase the use of renewable energy in all sectors such as; the manufacturing industry, the transportation sector, and even the household level is based entirely on renewable energy technologies. A policy has been formulated and implemented to ensure that energy development is based on renewable energy and is inclusive.

Setegn Engdaw, Head of Communications at

Belayneh Kinde Group, one of the institutions participated in the fair, noted that the Group has been manufacturing dry and liquid cargo trucks domestically for the past eight years, and since 2023, it has shifted to assembling electric vehicles.

In this regard, he indicated that in the first round, 216 electric minibuses with a capacity of more than 15 people were assembled and put into operation by the Addis Ababa City Administration and other institutions, and that a sister company called Velocity has been established and is providing transportation services in Addis Ababa city with 20 minibuses and two buses.

He recalled that the company has been focusing on minibuses; and through the factory it built in Debre Birhan city, it is assembling and marketing electric buses that can reach most of the community. He announced that so far, about ten buses have been assembled and delivered to users.

He also stated that in order to solve the problem of electric car chargers that is being faced as a country, fast electric chargers with a capacity of 60 to 160 kilowatts have been imported and marketed.

According to Engedasew Demise, Public Relations Manager of Khaki Motors, who participated in the event, Khaki Motors has been providing a wide range of trucks in the country for over twenty years; it is also providing services by opening a large Isuzu dealership in the country.

He noted that in order to achieve the country's focus on renewable energy, it is importing electric vehicles into the country and providing them to consumers, and that it is continuously working to assemble imported electric vehicles locally. The exhibition showed how much potential there is in the sector, and the benefits for market linkages are high.

More than 700 stakeholders participated in the first-ever Ethio Green Mobility 2024 Exhibition and Symposium. The event brought together green transport and infrastructure manufacturers, installers, importers, industry leaders, policymakers and other stakeholders. It was noted that this was held with the aim of creating collaboration opportunities, exchanging best practices and promoting technologies that contribute to a green and safe and efficient transport sector.

Art & Culture

The Artistic treasures of St. George Cathedral Museum

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

St. George Cathedral Church is located in the central part of Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. The church was constructed during the era of Emperor Menelik II in 1896. Since the church and state were strongly tied in the history of the country, the emperor used the church to alert the people on national issues. When Italy invaded Ethiopia, it was at this church that Emperor Menelik called the nation to join the liberation war.

Though most of the people at that time were Orthodox Christians, the call was made for every person in the country. To mobilize the people with a good number and commitment, he took part of the Arc from this church and priests to the battle of Adwa. This was the greatest strategy that initiated the sense of nationality and sympathy, as documented facts showed almost all Ethiopians were passionately running to the battle and defeated the exploiters, leaving the nation proud and heroic in the face of the globe.

Information gained from the museum revealed that after the victory of Adwa, Emperor Menelik planned to construct the church with a modernized structure that could remind the nation and all blacks about the history of Adwa. The architect from Greece named Orphanidis and the engineer from Italy named Ostagna were the leading contractors of the church. In the process, some Indians and Armenians also participated passionately.

Menelik died before the completion of the church, so it was his daughter Empress Zewditu who took over the responsibility. The empress herself was crowned in 1916 as empress at this church. After the death of this empress, Emperor Haile Selassie I was crowned in the church in 1930.

Inside the church, there are stunning cultural, historical, and religious paintings painted by the well-known artist Afework Teklie. They are well-kept and still shining to catch the interest of visitors. As evidence from the church museum showed, visitors frequently love to see these paintings as valuable heritages and appreciate the work of this prominent artist too.

The Ethiopian Herald was visiting St. George Cathedral Museum as well. After a short stay and admiration of the church's architectural design, the Herald met with Leke Heruyan Sisay Berhe, the head and guide of the museum.

The museum, located on the left edge of the main gate, had its own compound. This museum, as the guide said, was built at the same time as the church. Inside its fence, there is a statue of Abune Peteros, the most significant bishop in 1933 who challenged the Italian invasion. He opposed the massive killings Italians made on Ethiopians and the different religions they were trying to expand in the country.



Photo: Eyob Teferi

They tried to deceive him with luxury presents in exchange for his efforts to persuade Ethiopians to accept Italians, but he never agreed to this appeal. Finally, they killed him in front of the gathering around the church. In the memorial of this commitment, his effigy is sculpted in the compound of this museum.

Just next to this statue, there is another sculpture designed for the memory of Fitawurari Habte Giorgis, who was the war minister, especially at the battle of Adwa. He was the virtuous leader in organizing and mobilizing the people for war.

After Adwa, he served as the war minister during the time of Empress Zewditu and Lij Eyasu. He also worked as head of the minister and advisor. That was why he was known by his nickname 'Abamela,' meaning solution finder. He was smart in alerting the soldiers about nationalism and integrity, which was very important for winning the battle.

Just nearer to the gate into the museum, there is a medium-sized bell. This bell, as the guide said, was a gift from the last Russian king, Nicholas II, in 1896. This bell was the first bell for the cathedral. Another bigger bell was also received from the Italians. This bell is placed on the roof of the museum for better echo and a grander view for visitors.

The museum had six sections. In the first section, there are photographs that are sequentially ordered to show the history of the church. In the photos, a very small church that was hanging beside the present-day church status is shown. The progress of the church construction was also recorded

and displayed in this section. Different ceremonies and holiday celebrations are also portrayed sequentially on the wall. In this section, maps that clearly show the ancient civilization destinations of Ethiopia and the major places of Christianity are seen in photographs.

In the second section, clothes for crowns and ornaments used for Empress Zewditu and the royal families are carefully preserved. In this section, the photos and some materials of Empress Taytu, who was the most prominent woman that contributed a lot to the Adwa battle, are exhibited. In this section, the Egyptian Bishop called Abune Mathiwos, who participated in the war, is also preserved. The third section is about the spiritual materials used for religious worship. These materials include a processional cross used for chanting, a cestrum, and for singing in front of the mass. These materials are unique since they are only found in Ethiopia. In this room, religious clothes for priests and deacons are also exhibited. The clothes are very shiny and designed differently. They are made by Indians and Armenians.

In the other section, there are different gifts received from different countries. The guide showed us the incense-burner that the church received from St. George Icon of Russia. He said the church received a precious gift called challahs, which is purely made from gold from Britain too. This gift was given to Emperor Haile Selassie when he was crowned as an emperor at this church. Then he gave it to the church. Other material gifts made from silver, gold, and bronze were also given

to the church by different royal families. Another gift from Greece is also exhibited.

The fifth section had paintings that showed the mercy of God for Ethiopia. In the painting, which was drawn by an artist who used to live in Israel, it showed that during the Italian invasion, Emperor Haile Selassie was in exile. At that time, Ethiopia was with no ruler. Thus, it is only God's mercy that could safeguard the people. In the painting, it is seen that St. Mary holds the map of Ethiopia with its original land size. The basis for the painting is the phrase found in the Holy Bible that is 'Ethiopia will stretch its hand to God.'

Different umbrellas with varied sizes and designs are also kept in the museum. The bigger and high-quality umbrellas were used by the emperor. As the guide said, until 1974, the church and the state were tied together; thus, the emperor was seen celebrating holidays and different religious ceremonies in the church. After his coronation in 1930, he frequently came to this church for worship. The chairs that he and his wife used to sit in the church are also exhibited in the museum.

The last section is about the collection of different parchments made from animal skins, especially goat and horse skins. They were written by hand by the priests using inks prepared from different colors of flowers. Though the writings were done by cultural means and by hand, they are very neat and readable, as if they were typed on a computer. These collections are bibles and stories about St. Mary, Salem of David, St. Michael, and the like.

All these books were written in the Geez language. This language was an official language, especially in the northern part of the country, for more than a thousand years. Using this language, the ancient civilization of Ethiopia was documented and exhibited. Knowledge related to medicine, science, technology, and the like are preserved with this language. Thus, to understand the knowledge and to learn from that generation, the church is trying to revive this language by teaching it as a lesson in its Sunday school program and theology classes. Learning this language means knowing one's identity and history.

The guide said that the museum is open to all people. He said they are already serving all people coming from every corner of the world. What matters here is that especially Ethiopians should know their history and make their future ahead.

Since the museum and the church are very old, they need to be modified in the near future. The guide said the modifications could take place after a month.

Though there are many antiquities in this museum, I can't mention every detail in this article. Thus, I encourage you to go and visit your human history and create a better vision for your tomorrow.

Science & Technology



Cyber Security for sustainable smart city development

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

A smart city needs smart security. It is critical to build strong and resilient cyber security to protect the digital infrastructure of smart security in order to provide secure and safe services. A smart city integrates its services and systems through digital technologies to provide services for its residents and manage those services. Smart cities rely on interconnected systems for essential services, such as transportation, electricity, water, and other basic services provided through online systems.

The development of a smart city is improving and modernizing services to make them easily accessible for residents. The development of a smart city is facilitated by digital communications and helps to enhance the quality of life and satisfaction of urban residents. It improves social services and promotes sustainable development of services. Despite the improvement and modernization of service provision in urban centers, as all services are interconnected through the digital system, there is a high security threat unless cities develop resilient and secure cyberspace. Therefore, developing resilient cyber security is critically essential to protect the system and prevent disruptions that could have a cascading effect on public safety and well-being.

Cyber security remains a top and critical issue for smart cities. Without building secure cyber security, it is tough to manage and secure the interconnected devices that provide daily services for millions of residents. As the role and use of digital infrastructure grow rapidly, the risk of cyber-attacks also grows rapidly. Hence, it is a high alert for regulators and policymakers to give due consideration to building resilient cyber security to manage the risks and take appropriate measures to safeguard sensitive data.

Smart cities integrate elements of social, environmental, and economic advancement through decentralized approaches, enabling more effective management of critical resources, urban dynamics, and real-time

operations. With the vision of providing easy and accessible services for their citizens, cities globally are transforming themselves into smart cities.

Ethiopian cities are also eyeing to transform into smart cities to modernize services and improve service delivery using technological advancements. Currently, there are national initiatives to develop cities into smart cities, especially the current corridor development project in urban centers, which develops urban infrastructure and modernizes urban centers to make them more livable and comfortable for their residents, pushing towards a smart city. At this time, smart city incorporation is part of the country's urbanization strategy.

Due to technological developments and the expansion of the internet, cities like Addis Ababa, Adama, and others are on the way to transforming into smart cities and have started undertaking various activities, including signing memoranda of understanding (MoU) with Ethio Telecom to realize the vision.

No doubt, transforming cities into smart cities will develop and ease service delivery and infrastructural connectivity within the cities. In realizing a smart city, building smart security in the cyber sector must be a critical step for cities parallel to realizing a smart city. Hence, if not prior, parallel to investing in transforming cities into smart cities, it is essential to build secure, safe, and resilient cyber sectors to safeguard the critical infrastructure that interconnects all services and infrastructures.

Recently, Addis Ababa City Administration's Innovation and Technology Development Bureau (ITDB) organized a symposium entitled "Cyber Security for Smart City" to discuss the issue of cyber security in developing smart cities. During the opening speech at the symposium, ITDB head Solomon Amare said that Addis Ababa City Administration is on the way to transforming into a smart city where various measures are being undertaken. To facilitate and support the city's transformation into a smart city, the city's ITDB already prepared an eight-

year Smart City Strategic Plan developed two years ago.

According to the head, parallel to working to develop technological connectivity and facilitate the journey towards a smart city, efforts are underway with stakeholders to make Addis Ababa among the best cyber-secure cities in East Africa. Accordingly, the bureau applied a Smart City Strategy to be applied from 2022 to 2030, with the aim of making Addis Ababa a technology hub with resilient cyber security. Based on this strategy, the city's public institutions are interconnected from the center up to the district level with the "City Net" Network.

In this regard, he said, preparation activities are underway to prepare manuals, technological implementation, and human resource development through training to strengthen technological implementation in the city. Accordingly, to develop skilled human resources in the cyber sector in Addis Ababa, for the past two months, cyber security training has been prepared across all 11 sub-cities in Addis Ababa.

"Smart City and Cyber Security are two sides of the same coin and are inseparable," Solomon said, adding that building smart cyber security is a backbone to safeguard systems and applications developed for smart city purposes. According to the head, considering the seriousness of the issue, the bureau and Addis Ababa city, in general, give due attention to cyber security parallel to transforming the city. "We have to give due attention to cyber security to build a safe and secure digital city," Solomon reiterated.

For her part, Information Network Security Administration (INSA) Director General, Tigist Hamid, said during the event that not only in realizing a smart city but also during this digital era, ensuring cyber security is a must to achieve. According to her, building resilient cyber security requires the responsibility of all institutions and citizens as it is tough to protect every sector and infrastructure by a single national institution. According to her, Addis Ababa City is taking various measures to develop the culture of cyber security to safeguard its

digital infrastructures from cybercrimes and taking preparations to build a cyber-resilient city for the future smart city's infrastructure.

As it stands, Tigist stated, the issue of cyber security in smart city development should become the first priority. In this regard, she underlines the need to give due focus to the development of citizens' awareness and understanding of cyber security. The 5 Million Ethio Coders Initiative is one initiative in developing the capacity and awareness of citizens towards digital security and digital literacy. "Let's give due focus to cyber security to build a secure, beautiful, and African model city," Tigist calls the public.

Appreciating the modernization activities being implemented in Addis Ababa to make the city deserve its name, beautiful flower, and its diplomatic hub, Tigist said that as the city is investing in incorporating technology to provide services, building a resilient cyber sector should become a priority issue in the city. "Cyber security is the backbone of a smart city's digital infrastructure," she added.

Given the critical importance of cyber security in the context of smart cities, which are interconnected through various digital technologies, officials and experts in the field are urging stakeholders and public institutions to prioritize investments in cyber security.

Parallel to introducing and implementing modern technologies, investing in citizens' awareness in digital literacy and developing well-trained and equipped professionals in the cyber sector remains a top agenda while transforming cities into smart cities. It is also crucial to strengthen collaborations among stakeholders and institutions to develop resilient cyber security in public and private institutions.

Officials in the public sector and civil servants should understand the critical nature of cyber security in this digitalized world, and developing awareness and building safe and resilient cyber security remain part of ensuring the sustainable development of cities in the current world.

Society

Local organizations to breaking barriers; enhancing inclusion



BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

The sociocultural reality of a given nation is a preliminary ground in the process of dealing and understanding that nation. A given section of the society's psychological makeup, historical background, interest, religious view, perception, imagination and identity in general is possibly reflected through the cultural reality of the people. Thus, when a certain kind of threat or inefficacy happens within humanity, it touches the whole eminence of society. Since those developments, transformations, innovations and even all destructions are driven by human actions; the social and individual status of the person is the basic factor for the success or failure of the society and the nation at large. Thus, the cultural thoughts and practices that highly played a pivotal role in the construction of the society largely affected its various faces.

In response to these challenges, institutions, associations and numerous organizations have been established, targeting to address the most crucial aspects of the society and be part of the solution in the process of nation-building. Among the controversial issues that stemmed for years, women's issues are the unsettled and still hot issues in Ethiopia. Thus, various organizations and associations have been working as an independent institution to address these subjects, alleviate women's challenges by striving for gender equality. In nations like Ethiopia where women's patriarchy and inequality has been witnessed for years, disability is an additional fuel that exacerbates the burden of women.

Since femininity and disability are the most critical issues that worsen the social reality and productivity of people, such social burdens need to be shared by organizations and associations to better combat the challenges for inclusive and sustainable development. For such double threats, an association was built as a reaction to the said problems.

In 1995 an association called Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) was organized by eight women- seven of whom, were disabled and one able-bodied woman, in Addis Ababa. The Association was exceedingly concerned with empowering and supporting women with various types of disabilities and to include them at every space as any human beings.

The enticing factor that gave birth to EWDNA, as the leaders of the association mentioned, is that women and girls in Ethiopia who have got a certain type of disability have been facing barriers in accessing their rights; including protection from sexual violence.

Such barriers stretch their scope to workplaces where women with some type of disabilities get to that level through lots of crossing challenges which are associated with femininity and disability. Even after reaching a competitive workplace, discrimination and ignorance became the hindering factor for taking positions and improvements. Very few women with disabilities (WWDs) join the formal sector after passing through a difficult inaccessible education system, limited or no support from family and discouraging situations along their way.

Specifically, the Association focuses on issues that affect women and girls with disabilities. A disability could be one or multiple type. The identified disabilities by the Association are visual impairment, intellectual disabilities, hearing and speaking deficiencies, physical disabilities, and leprosy. Today, as the Association's leaders said, the number of members exceeded 12,590 and carries out its activities in its branch offices established in eleven states and the two city administrations.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Executive Director of EWDNA Dibabie Bacha that the primary objective of EWDNA is to enable women and girls with disabilities to speak their minds, know their rights to fully participate at every edge as any human through providing them a platform. The association has a mission to bridge women's disabilities challenges to the relevant government bodies.

As to the Director, women and girls with disabilities in the center confirmed, the association carries out multiple tasks with very few employees and limited space. Though the compound that the Association is operating now is not fully accommodating, it hosts a regular bi-weekly coffee ceremony at its main office.

As *Herald* observed, during the programs, various critical issues that are related to health, violence, and other social challenges will be discussed, experiences will be shared and fascinating contextual stories and critical alerts are presented.

The participants also mentioned that the topics discussed at every ceremony are diverse and very relevant that keep them fascinated, confident in their own abilities and alert them on issues of their interests.

At one of such ceremonies, as *Herald* observed, two medical doctors from American Medical Center were present. They gave medical guidance and made arrangements for further medical treatment for the future. Regarding violence, a representative from Yeka Sub-City police gave an extensive explanation and expressed willingness and readiness to hear any complaints and provide the required assistance for them. The gathering was very happy and active throughout the program.

Association's Managing Director Fikrte Shumet also mentioned that the primary concern of EWDNA is to build the capacity of women and girls with disabilities to advocate for their basic rights and enable them to find their own spaces within the society. She said since the organization is a non-profit charity organization, it raises funds from different organizations and individuals by explicitly projecting its planned activities for its members. Based on the funds raised, the Association has been distributing resources to the eleven states and the two sub-city administrations as per to their needs. According to her, the training, ceremonies and financial assistance delivered by the Association, have brought about tangible changes not only to women and girls with disabilities; but also in the wider community.

Herald had a short stay with some of the beneficiaries. Banchigizie Adane who has been a member of EWDNA since 2005 is a visually impaired woman. She said, "I was not confident enough to express myself. But after I joined EWDNA, the regular training and the coffee ceremony programs in which I took part uninterruptedly played a greater role in changing my mindset. I have started valuing myself and become confident enough, thanks to the experiences I received from the Association."

She was talking with energy and passion. Stating that she is a teacher, she said that the training she received from the Association enabled her to raise awareness among her students and the society regarding disability. She also mentioned that since the issues that EWDNA is taking care of are generational, responsible stakeholders and the government

should give greater attention to attain better change.

Yeshihareg Abera, another beneficiary in EWDNA is the mother of Yordanos, a girl with intellectual disabilities.

According to her, since the society in her surroundings is not tolerant of her daughter's health condition, Yeshihareg said, she faced lots of challenges. To make matters worse, even her husband abandoned her when he learned the disability of Yordanos.

As Yeshihareg stated the perceptions and comments of people that she met in the street led her to inconveniences. She was not able to tolerate that. Thus, she preferred to hide her daughter at home, worsening her daughter's future.

However, after Yeshihareg brought Yordanos to EWDNA, things started to improve. She began bringing her daughter to the ceremonies, where the interactions, experience sharing, and exposure to important messages played a crucial role in improving their lives. "Now, she is showing greater improvements and far better than before. She can now recognize things," Yeshihareg said optimistically.

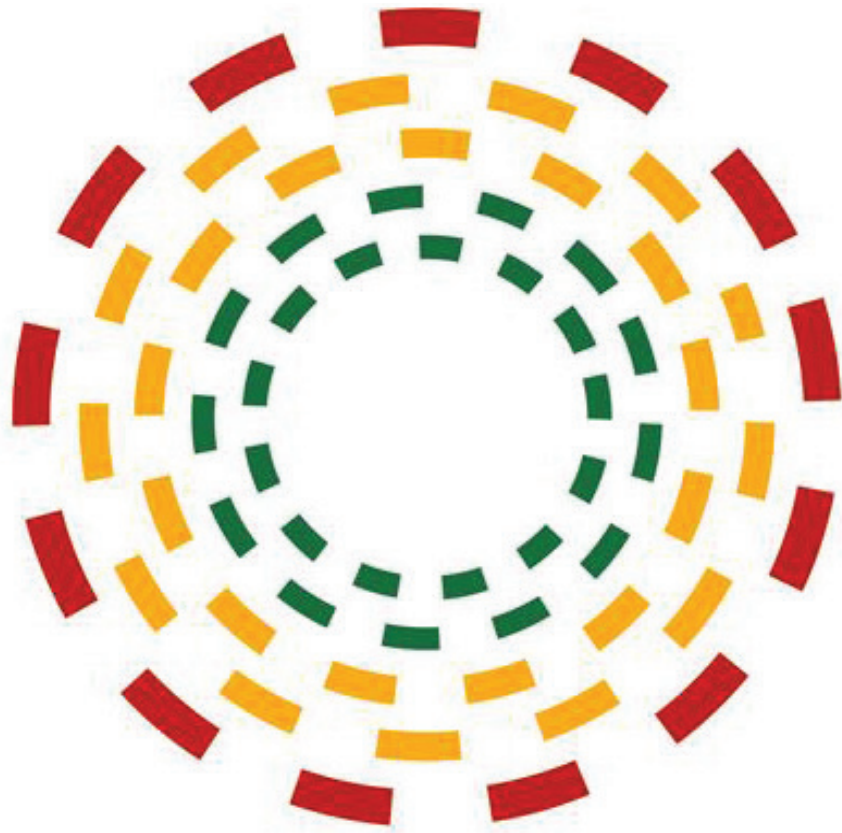
The Association is a membership-based organization working to promote equal rights and fight social discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities. As *Herald* observed in person, there is a significant mismatch between the services that the Association is providing in terms of its capacity and the demand.

As the leaders explained, currently they are operating in a privately owned house, paying huge amounts of money for rent; which could be better invested in supporting the members. Thus, to increase their positive impact and reach more members, the responsible bodies and partners need to provide the necessary support to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable development.

According to information gathered from the Association, all women and girls with any type of disability are welcome to be members. Based on their experience, the social workers of EWDNA have been running to each door to identify and bring in disabled girls and women. Thus, once they become members, they are going to pay 2 birr per month. The purpose of this pay, as the leaders said, is to let them feel free and instill a sense of ownership in the Association.



This is Ethiopia



MICE Ethiopia

Meet in the Land of Origins

Headway to harness conference tourism potentials

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Currently, conference tourism has become a significant source of revenue for many countries around the world. Ethiopia, with its rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes, has the potential to attract a large number of conference attendees.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report, Eastern African countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya are among the top preferable countries in becoming the leading choice of international and regional conference organizers in Africa.

In recent years, Ethiopia has emerged as a top destination for conference tourism, attracting delegates from around the world to participate in various events and gatherings. With its rich history, diverse culture, and stunning landscapes, Ethiopia offers a unique experience for conference attendees.

With this in mind, so far, efforts are underway to stimulate and develop the country's conference tourism. Private actors in the hospitality industry are working closely with the government to render quality conference services in the country. Active Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) is also fundamental to leading the sector effectively.

Recently, State Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Birtukan Ayano said that training cadets is crucial for maximizing Ethiopia's benefits of conference tourism by magnifying national unity and diversity of the country on the global stage.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia launched a training program for 100

protocol Cadets for the upcoming African Union Summit.

During the occasion, State Minister Birtukan said the initiative reflects the country's growing diplomatic influence and emphasizes the importance of hospitality in establishing Ethiopia as a premier destination for international conferences.

The selected cadets will receive training to effectively serve guests during the AU meetings, which include the African Heads of State and Government of the 38th AU Summit and the 46th Executive Council Regular Session, she added.

Birtukan stated the significance of the training as Ethiopia's diplomatic influence continues to grow.

She also underscored the importance of the training, noting that it will also elevate Ethiopia's international image and strengthen bilateral relations with its allies.

Producing these cadets is crucial for maximizing the benefits of conference tourism for the country, she said.

Birtukan also underlined the significance of national unity and the role of every citizen in promoting Ethiopia on the global stage, showcasing the nation's organizational capabilities and fostering national pride.

The State Minister also emphasized the importance of every citizen acting as an ambassador to enhance Ethiopia's attraction as a premier destination for international and continental conference tourism.

Meanwhile, the ongoing Addis Ababa's Corridor Development project is driving a powerful synergy between the public and private sectors, fueling economic growth, boosting development, and enhancing the sustainability of livelihoods,

according to the Mayor.

During a site visit to three key corridor development projects, Mayor Adanech Abiebie, accompanied by senior government officials, updated journalists on the progress of the initiative. She highlighted that the corridor development is playing a pivotal role in fostering a 24-hour working culture in the city, improving business efficiency, and contributing to safer, more peaceful nights, with expanded public and private transport services.

The Mayor stated that the project's main objectives are to improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, enhance cleanliness, and create a more conducive environment for economic activities. She added that it will promote market growth, facilitate easier movement of people, and ultimately make the city more competitive, aligning it with global standards.

As the first phase of the corridor development nears completion, business activity in the affected areas is flourishing, and the city is becoming increasingly attractive to investors. The project is also focused on transforming Addis Ababa into a vibrant diplomatic and investment hub, with key improvements such as underground construction and the renovation of historical sites.

Among the key renovations are the historic monuments in Piassa and Arat Kilo, including the statues of the Emperor Menelik II and, Abune Petros, Cinema Empire, Cinema Ethiopia, and the Hager Fikir Theatre. These landmarks are being modernized with stone cladding while preserving their original identities, ensuring their legacy for future generations.

Mayor Adanech added that once the corridor development is completed, it will enhance the beauty of the area, boost residents' daily

income, and transform the lives of those in surrounding communities aside from increasing the number of visitors. Notable projects, such as the Adwa Memorial Museum, are also part of this large-scale transformation.

In areas like Arat Kilo and Piassa, private businesses are thriving in a peaceful environment, contributing to local economic growth.

The first phase of the corridor development included car parking spaces, business shops, rest areas, and terminals for buses, taxis, and tourists, along with plazas and major road junctions connecting key areas of the city. This phase covers routes from 4 Kilo to Churchill Road and from 6 Kilo to *Itegue Taitu* Hotel, with large parking lots and terminals for buses, taxis, and tourists.

Phase two of the development is already underway, covering a larger area of the city and set to bring further improvements to Addis Ababa's infrastructure and economy, according to Mayor Adanech.

So far, the city's beautification immensely contributes to harnessing the country's potential of attracting more conference tourism and more participants. Addis Ababa, being the headquarters of numerous international and regional organizations could become more competitive to host more conferences.

In sum, Ethiopia offers a wealth of opportunities for conference tourism, with its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes. By taking advantage of all that Ethiopia has to offer and showcasing the country's unique charm, conference organizers can create an unforgettable experience for attendees and maximize the benefits of hosting events in this diverse and exciting destination.