



# The Ethiopian Herald

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## Putin applauds Ethiopia's 'extraordinary' economic growth

• *Highlights Africa's rising potential*

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** - Russian President Vladimir Putin has commended Ethiopia for its remarkable economic progress in recent years.

Speaking at the 15<sup>th</sup> Russia Investment Forum, Putin noted that the economies of several African countries are expanding at an exceptional pace, citing Ethiopia as a standout example of this progress.

According to Putin, Ethiopia has achieved an extraordinary 120% economic growth over the past decade, which he described as a significant achievement.

The Russian President also underscored the strong relationship between Africa and Russia, describing the continent as a close and reliable partner.

He emphasized Russia's deep ties with numerous African nations and highlighted the continent's vast development potential, with Ethiopia serving as a key example of Africa's growing economic strength.

Putin's remarks reaffirmed Russia's commitment to supporting Africa's development and its role as a critical partner in the continent's growth. He expressed optimism about Africa's future, noting that the continent's rapid development is drawing increasing attention from global investors.



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## Ethiopia making strides in internet governance

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ethiopia has made significant strides in advancing accessible internet governance to realize its digital future, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) said.

MinT Minister Belete Molla (PhD) made the remark yesterday while officially opening the National Internet Governance Forum 2024 held under the theme "Multi-stakeholder Collaboration for Ethiopia's Digital Future."

Belete emphasized that over the past four years, the government has been tirelessly implementing impactful projects, policy shifts, and infrastructure developments on the realization of its vision to digital Ethiopia 2025 thereby making the digital space inclusive and improving accessibility.

Moreover, the country has been taking part in regional and international internet governance forums demonstrating its firm commitment on the issue in the global arena, he stated.

*See Ethiopia making ... page 3*

## Gov't insists transformative leadership for future generations

• *Reflection Leadership Conference underway*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**SULULTA** - Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tirunch emphasized the urgent need for Ethiopia to establish a system that fosters transformative leadership for future generations.

Speaking at the Reflection (*Netsebrak*) Leadership Conference hosted by the African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX) in collaboration with Inspired Development, the Deputy PM highlighted the importance of leadership competence, commitment, and integrity for driving national progress.

The three-day conference, themed "Leading



*Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tirunch with Purpose and Serving with Integrity," features interactive workshops, panel discussions, collaborative project-building*

*See Gov't insists ... page 3*

## Addis expands diplomatic role establishing 137 embassies :MoFA

*Slovenia, Colombia become latest to deploy ambassadors*

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** - The number of Embassies based in Addis Ababa almost reached 137 as Slovenia and Colombia deployed their ambassadors to Ethiopia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced.

Briefing diplomatic updates to media yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Nebiyat Getachew said that the number of Embassies in Addis Ababa is increasing each year, subsequent to the growing influence of the country in the region.

"President Taye Atseke-Selassie has received credentials of 24 countries"



*Amb. Nebiyat Getachew*

*See Addis expands ... page 3*

## Mayor Adanech calls for unity, shared strength on NNP Day

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA** - Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie urged Ethiopians to embrace their shared identity, strength, and mutual development as she spoke at the closing ceremony of the 19th Day of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (NNPD).

The event, organized by the Addis Ababa City Council and held at the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum yesterday, celebrated Ethiopia's cultural diversity and unity.

In her remarks, Mayor Adanech emphasized that division and conflict are counterproductive, calling on all Ethiopians to unite and strengthen the foundation of the nation. She acknowledged that past approaches to addressing ethnic group rights often created friction and division, challenges that persist today in some areas.

Adanech highlighted Addis Ababa as a symbol of unity and development, a city that transcends identity-based divisions and serves as a model for national collaboration. She stated that Addis Ababa belongs to all Ethiopians, fostering collaboration and mutual understanding to reinforce unity and



ensure the city remains inclusive.

"It is necessary to build our unity based on the diverse identities we hold and to pass this legacy to future generations," she added.

Speaker of the House of Federation, Agegnehu Teshager, also addressed the gathering, emphasizing that the Day of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples offers a platform for fostering National Dialogue and strengthening unity among Ethiopia's diverse ethnic groups.

"The day showcases the values, languages, and cultures of Ethiopia's ethnic groups, contributing to lasting peace and development," Agegnehu stated. He underscored the importance of unity in addressing the nation's challenges and nurturing national integration while respecting differences.

This year ceremony featured cultural displays from various ethnic groups, celebrating their identities and unity under the theme "National Consensus for National Unity."

## Ministry working on increasing women's participation in energy sector

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

**ADDIS ABABA**- Women are now being encouraged to take central stage to realize economic growth increasing their participation in the energy sector, said Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE).

The above remark came after Ethiopian Women Energy Association held yesterday its annual meeting and awarded those women who have made outstanding achievements in the energy sector.

On the occasion, MoWE State Minister's Advisor Gossaye Mengiste said that MoWE has been promoting gender equality and bringing about economic growth via rising women's participation in the energy sector.

The MoWE and Ethiopian Women Energy Association have been working in cooperation to develop possibilities that empower women by improving their abilities. "Expanding women involvement in the energy sector is essential to Ethiopia's economy and human development," he said.

Gossaye stated that "Diverse work force drives innovation by empower women in the energy sector. We are not only enriching the sector but also ensure that initiatives are more inclusive, sustainable and effective providing energy access for Ethiopians. This diversity strengthens the ability to tackle complex challenges and foster a holistic approach to development."

To continue the champion of women in energy, it is pivotal to recognize that empower women is not just a question of equity it is the strategic imperative that will drive the economy and human development, he noted.

"Together we can foster an environment where women not only just beneficiaries but also change agents leading the charge towards achieving universal energy access both electricity and clean cooking access and allotting new opportunities for a more sustainable future," he said.

He called the association to continue work together to build a more inclusive and vibrant energy sector.

Ethiopian Women Energy Association President Adey Getachew said that association is working to empower women in the energy sector, aiming to reduce the burden on society and the sector. The association is working to overcome barriers to entry and promote new innovations, aiming to increase women's participation in the sector.

Ethiopian Women Energy Association is a non-governmental organization founded by women professionals with the aim of closing the gender gap in the energy sector, it was learnt.

## Ethiopia strives to become Africa's leading quality hub

• *Marks World Quality Day 2024*

BY HAILE DEMEKE

**ADDIS ABABA** — The Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) said it has made remarkable progress in improving product quality to enhance competitiveness in global markets and integrate the nation into the international market system.

ECAE Director General Meaza Abera (Eng.) highlighted that Ethiopia has established a robust quality infrastructure, positioning itself to become a leading quality center on the African continent. ECAE provides conformity assessments through internationally recognized laboratory testing, inspection, and certification systems. These services are offered to exporters, importers, producers, and regulatory institutions to ensure product compliance with global standards.

Meaza emphasized that Ethiopia's quality infrastructure not only enhances product competitiveness but also allows the country to capitalize on opportunities created by regional and continental economic frameworks, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). She urged service providers and manufacturers to leverage ECAE's resources, noting that conformity assessment is vital



for achieving national social and economic development goals.

The initiative also focuses on fostering a sustainable manufacturing sector aligned with environmental protection principles, which is critical to boosting exports through efficiency and production.

Trade and Regional Integration State Minister Endalew Mekonen reiterated the government's commitment to enhancing product quality to meet global standards. He noted that ECAE is continuously expanding its capabilities to make Ethiopian products competitive internationally while addressing the needs of the domestic market.

This year's World Quality Day, celebrated in Ethiopia from December 5-7, 2024, emphasizes the theme "Quality: From

Compliance to Performance." The theme encourages producers and service providers to surpass minimal compliance and strive for excellence in performance.

The celebration aligns with Ethiopia's Home-Grown Economic Reforms, which aim to achieve national objectives by improving systems, ensuring fair trade, and enhancing production and productivity. These efforts include replacing imports with high-quality domestic products and making exports globally competitive.

Additionally, the adoption of consistent production process standards is increasingly demanded from the manufacturing sector to safeguard public health and safety, prevent resource losses, and enhance the country's economic resilience.

# News

## MoH, KOICA ink MoU on nutritional project

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** - Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Project of Sustainable Diversified Diets for Improved Nutrition in Seqota Declaration *Woredas* of Ethiopia.

In a press release sent to *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) announced that through the MoU, the project will be commenced and benefit stunting children aged 6-23 months and increase the consumption of diversified diets among pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as children under two years.

“KOICA has committed up to 6 million USD in grant funding for the three-year project, which will be implemented by the World Food Program (WFP) in selected regions under the Seqota Declaration.



The project will improve the availability and accessibility of nutrient-dense foods among selected beneficiaries, improve knowledge, attitude, and practices of caregivers towards feeding a child with nutrient-dense foods and care practices, and generate evidence for policy and program improvement, it was stated.

The main interventions of the project will

be the provision of nutrient-dense foods through the Fresh Food Voucher (FFV), improvement in the sustainability of nutritional supply through household or communal unit livestock and vegetable cultivation, and reinforcement of social and behavioral change to support long-term nutritional improvements, the release noted.

## Gov't insists...

sessions, and networking opportunities. It aims to connect visionaries, foster innovation, and provide hands-on leadership experiences. Temesgen stated that solutions to current challenges can be achieved through dialogue and discussion, emphasizing that transformative leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of nationwide initiatives. He underscored that leadership has a profound impact on a country's growth or decline, citing economic disparities between nations as a direct result of differences in leadership quality.

He further noted that building institutional capacity and empowering leaders are essential to overcoming Ethiopia's leadership challenges. The Deputy Premier added that the event is a vital platform for addressing leadership gaps, fostering collaboration, sharing experiences, and enhancing problem-solving and critical thinking skills among leaders.

AFLEX President Zadig Abreha also highlighted the academy's commitment to empowering emerging leaders through various short and long-term training programs for both local and international participants. He stated that these initiatives are instrumental in improving leadership competence and enhancing decision-making processes.

The conference serves as a significant step in addressing Ethiopia's leadership transformation needs and creating a strong foundation for future generations.

AFLEX was established to enhance the leadership and governance capacity of local institutions. It has been instrumental in transforming leadership and organizational culture in Africa by increasing access to learning opportunities, as well as providing quality research and data.

## Addis expands diplomatic role...

ambassadors over the past two days. The Ambassadors of Slovenia and Colombia are amongst newly deployed ones,” he said.

The Spokesperson also briefed that Foreign Minister Gedion Timotiwwos has discussed with counterparts and high-ranking diplomats of several countries on bilateral and multilateral issues.

“During his discussion with Sudanese Foreign Minister, Gedion has reiterated Ethiopia's strong stance in supporting Sudanese-led solutions to the (Sudanese) conflict. In his discussion with the European Union, the Minister also reflected similar position restating the

country's commitment to continue playing its anchor role to ensure peace in the region,” Nebiyat highlighted.

On the Economic front, the Minister has conveyed discussions with investors coming from several countries, Nebiyat stated, noting that the macroeconomic reform, the government implementing, has attracted many investors.

More than twenty companies from several countries have visited the business environment in Ethiopia. They have expressed their interests to invest as the economic reform provides those incentives, he indicated.

“The Board Chairman of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, for example, has visited Ethiopia last week and met with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) on green energy infrastructural developments,” he mentioned.

The Spokesperson also emphasized that the government of Ethiopia has continued its efforts of returning migrants under challenging conditions including from Myanmar and Lebanon.

More than 2000 Ethiopian citizens are registered to be repatriated, Nebiyat said, adding that the first flight to return 200 citizens from Lebanon will be commenced on December 11, 2024.

## Ethiopia making strides in internet...

He further noted that internet governance involving cultural and other societal interactions not only connects individuals, businesses and the government but also serves as a means to share information and knowledge.

Since the use of the internet is ever growing, the use and governance needs to be given special focus, the Minister said, adding that strengthening multi-stakeholders' collaboration would help the country to shape and expedite its digital growth and future prospects.

In the same vein, the country yesterday launched the Ethiopian youth internet

governance forum which is believed to bring an opportunity to the Ethiopian youth to reliable internet access and digital future as well.

In addition, the private sector has also been playing a crucial role by developing data centers and introducing new digital services to help ensure the digital future, Belete remarked.

He emphasized that the forum would create an ideal platform to promote stakeholders' collaboration to withstand pressing issues and contribute to the development of digital transformation.

For his part, ITU Regional Office Director Emmanuel Manasseh stated that impactful connectivity and access to affordable and secured ICT is critical for sustainable development and to tackle global digital urgent issues.

The director said that Ethiopia is undertaking a remarkable digital inclusion technology notably in digital financial services.

According to him, Global Digital Compact is also significant to build an inclusive, fair, secure and sustainable digital future.

“It also builds connectivity, digital skills, digital infrastructures, and accelerates progress across sustainable development goals. In Africa, merely 8% of the population has access to the internet compared from the 68% globally. This limited access impacts the ability to participate in the digital space,” Emmanuel said.

The forum, which sought to expand Ethiopia's digital ecosystem, brought various stakeholders from the government entities, private sector, academics, civil society organizations and the youth.

# Opinion

## Grand Abbay Dam: Sustainable development, African unity beacon

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is certain that Abbay Dam is an emblematic venture where Ethiopians residing at home and overseas have demonstrated unity in due course of constructing this colossal project amid numerous hurdles emanate from various Ethiopia's archenemies.

No matter how hard the country's adversaries attempted the whole thing they could to throw cold water on the positive strides of the construction of the dam coming up with a broad range of detrimental energies, accomplishing the desired goal turned out to be a wild goose chase and like attempting to discover a needle in a haystack.

Since the start of the laying of cornerstone for construction of the colossal dam, the country has been facing many challenges from various bodies that do not want to see the country's development by any means whatsoever. To this point, Ethiopia's adversaries have been pulling out all the stops to hoodwink the wider international community with cooked-up stories that do not reflect the existing reality.

In point of fact, in the present climate, the global community has been giving the cold shoulder to naysayers on the grounds that the international communities know the unvarnished truth going behind closed curtains and behind the scenes like the palm of their hand. Reasoning from this fact, some groups have been getting involved in various smear campaigns against Ethiopia.

The people of Ethiopia at various points in time have been demonstrating the fact that the flagship dam is the shining example of their unity. All things considered, Ethiopians and foreign citizens of Ethiopian origin residing in various parts of the world have familiarized the international community with the unvarnished truth.

In point of fact, the general construction of the dam in black and white demonstrates the fact that it is a showcase for the synchronization of the people of Ethiopia. In good truth, a broad range of sacrifices have been paid by every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the construction of the dam. Had not been for the relentless support of Ethiopians residing in the length and breadth of at home and overseas, the dam would not have reached where it is in the present day.

Ethiopians from all corners of the country and overseas have given their all for the construction of the dam not only with their finance but have also sacrificed their lives to ensure the construction of the dam comes to fruition.

It is worth recalling that the people of Ethiopia at different points in time positively withstood external pressure that leaned backward to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and twist its arm.

Notwithstanding the fact that a broad range of endeavors have been made by various bodies bringing about the envisioned target turned out to be an unattainable dream.

In point of fact, the Abbay dam has been playing a huge role in smoothing the path of Ethiopia's economic growth and regional integration. Although Ethiopia is the major



*Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam benefits the Nile basin countries*

source of the Nile River, some groups have been making the most of the water utilizing the colonial-era treaty that pays no attention to upstream nations.

Panelists at the parliamentary citizen forum on hydro politics emphasized that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) transcends being merely a hydropower project; rather it represents a transformative Pan-African endeavor that fosters integration among Africans, according to information obtained from Ethiopian News Agency.

The House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) recently launched the first of its kind parliamentary citizen forum on hydro politics, the government and public role on GERD and its role for Pan-Africanism.

In his opening remark, House Speaker, Tadesse Chafo, emphasized that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam symbolizes Africa's efforts to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development and prosperity.

He highlighted that the GERD will not only improve the lives of millions of Ethiopians but also foster regional cooperation through renewable energy, thereby stimulating industrialization.

Additionally, the Speaker underscored that Ethiopia's commitment to prioritizing diplomatic dialogue grounded in mutual benefit and respect.

Government Chief Whip at the HPR, Tesfaye Beljige (PhD) said that GERD is not only a hydropower project; it is also a Pan-African project that fosters economic integration among Africans.

Regional economic integration project is one pillar of Pan-African sentiment, he said, adding that GERD symbolizes regional integration, corporation and defies pessimism against Africans.

"GERD is not only a project that produces energy but also a testimony of Ethiopia's Pan-Africanism advocacy towards cooperation and regional integration."

He stated that GERD is an emblem of cooperation towards mutual development and prosperity while defied the erroneous and pessimist thought against Africans,

underscoring that Ethiopia has already started sharing energy and benefiting its brotherly neighboring countries.

GERD, the largest hydropower project in Africa nearing its completion, is a tremendous achievement in disproving centuries old pessimism against African capability.

It is common knowledge that Ethiopia has been constructing the dam in accordance with the law of international water resources. The country strongly accepts as true the fact that worldwide water resources are the prevailing source of regional cooperation.

Some groups that hate the development of Ethiopia have been coming up with various fake news stories with the intention making dragging through the mud the promising strides of the country that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

Though worrywarts endeavor to blemish the overall undertakings of the country, Ethiopia has continued going forward in the right direction and heading towards success. In the present circumstances, the high-profile project has been winning the hearts and minds of the wider international community at various points in time.

As there is nothing that makes Ethiopians happier than standing in unison to make the dam see the light of day, it is going to become fully operational just around the corner.

The dam's filling practically reassured that the construction of the dam will not have a detrimental effect on the downstream nations in view of the fact that Ethiopia attaches due importance to equitable and sustainable water usage.

Since the start of the construction of the dam, Ethiopia left no stone unturned at different stages to acquaint this concrete truth with the wider international community.

It should be noted that apart from its financial contribution, Ethiopians residing at home and in every corner of the world have played a paramount role in oiling the wheels of digital diplomacy and forestalling defamation campaigns against the positive developments of the dam.

In the recent past, the Abbay Dam Negotiators

Team Member, Zerihun Abebe, told local media that Ethiopia firmly believes cross-border water resources are the main source of regional cooperation, not a cause for disputes.

Evidently, Ethiopia decided to construct the mega dam by its own finance and capacity since the downstream countries did not show an interest in developing a river in cooperation. Thus, the dam under construction by Ethiopia is laudable as it is meant to benefit all the stakeholders and to integrate the region.

He stated that Abbay Dam's filling practically reassured that it will not harm downstream countries, and Ethiopia has not missed its guarantee not to affect their water share. "The African Solutions for African Problems concept, public diplomacy, and other principles are highly contributed for Ethiopia's handling of the construction of a dam."

During the past 13 years of the Abbay Dam construction, Ethiopians in home and Diaspora have been exerting consolidated efforts to repulse some interest groups' unwarranted pressures and attempts to meddle in their domestic affairs. Indeed, the past four-year dam filling showcased the public diplomacy achievements without causing harm to downstream countries.

The effort of finalizing the Abbay Dam negotiation based on fair utilization and mutual benefit is of great significance for three countries and the dam's filling presenting Ethiopia's reality to the global community and it has been boosting the confidence of Egypt and Sudan.

It is abundantly clear that the dam is an expression of Ethiopia's Pan-Africanism activism towards collaboration and economic integration. As long as the construction of the dam assists the progress of regional cohesion in various development undertakings, African nations should stand in unison and with one accord more than ever before. In doing so, accomplishing the desired goal will be as easy as falling off a log and shooting fish in a barrel.

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

# Editorial

## Sea access not on mere individual ambition!

Paying dearly for being landlocked for decades, Ethiopia has unequivocally made its ambitions and solid position on finding reliable sea outlets or alternative port access clear time and time again. Prime Minister Abiy once told lawmakers that “Ethiopia has an unwavering national interest. The world should hear that Ethiopia needs access to the Red Sea through peaceful means Ethiopia has an “unwavering interest” in gaining access to the Red Sea and aims to pursue this objective through “peaceful means.”

PM Abiy told legislators, “We do not seek it through war or force,” and stated that Ethiopia deserves access to the Red Sea “by any law, by any country’s experience.”

As the country pushes on its ambition for a sea outlet there are solid national and regional rationales that cement the just cause. In addition to a burgeoning economy and sharp population growth, the unfolding regional and global geopolitics require the country to double down on its pursuit of alternative sea access. The desire is not merely individual ambitions but regional dividends.

The country’s quest also has profound implications for regional security. In a region beset by security threats posed by internal and external forces, coming up with collective action for the regional nations will definitely give a deterring power.

Efficient management of resources reduces vulnerabilities and drives a wave of regional collaboration that could stabilize the region often marred by conflict and instability.

It is obvious that excess reliance poses significant risks to its economic ambitions and undermines the broader goal of fostering a stable and integrated region.

The sea access quest is not solely about economics. It signals that prosperity and stability are intertwined. Stable trade routes benefit not just Ethiopia but its neighbors, creating a network of mutual dependency that fosters regional cooperation. Sticking to the principle of a win-win approach can break the cycle of competition over resources that have historically fueled tensions among regional states.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ambassador Dina Mufti, a member of the House of Peoples’ Representatives Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee, emphasized that Ethiopia’s approach to seaport access is not solely a logistical issue but is rooted in a “win-win” framework benefiting both Ethiopia and its neighboring nations.

Ambassador Dina noted the importance of diversifying trade routes to support the nation’s growth. The interconnectedness of Ethiopia with regional neighbors will help ensure sustainable development.

Ambassador Dina highlighted that the destinies of regional nations are closely linked, and Ethiopia’s pursuit of alternative seaport access aligns with both its national interests and the mutual benefits of its neighbors. This reflects Ethiopia’s foreign policy framework, which prioritizes peace, cooperation, and regional integration. Through cementing its economic capacity through diversified trade routes, Ethiopia seeks to contribute to a stable and prosperous region.

The bottom line is Ethiopia’s quest for a sea outlet or an alternative port will not be serving the nation alone; it paves the way for increased regional cooperation and growth. Contrary to the ongoing attempt by some external forces, Ethiopia’s open and genuine proposal for sea access is timely and imperative with positive repercussions changing confrontations to cooperation.



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# Opinion

## GERD: A transformative Pan-African initiative promoting integration

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a pan-African project, continues to be a topic of discussion. Since its inception, the issue of GERD has been a continuous topic of discussion among top scientists and elementary students alike.

Recently, the House of Peoples’ Representatives (HPR) launched a groundbreaking parliamentary citizen forum on hydro politics, focusing on the government and public roles in GERD, as well as its significance for Pan-Africanism.

Panelists at the parliamentary citizen forum on hydro politics emphasized that the GERD goes beyond being just a hydropower project; it represents a transformative Pan-African endeavor that promotes integration among Africans.

The GERD symbolizes Africa’s efforts to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable development, and achieve prosperity. It will not only improve the lives of millions of Ethiopians but also enhance regional cooperation through renewable energy, thus stimulating industrialization.

Ethiopia’s commitment to diplomatic dialogue based on mutual benefit and respect is supported by other African countries. GERD is not only a hydropower project but also a Pan-African initiative that fosters economic integration among Africans. Regional economic integration is a key aspect of Pan-African sentiment.

GERD symbolizes regional integration, cooperation, and defies pessimism against Africans. It is not just an energy-producing project but also a testament to Ethiopia’s advocacy for Pan-Africanism, cooperation, and regional integration.

GERD is a symbol of cooperation towards mutual development and prosperity, challenging erroneous and pessimistic views about Africans, demonstrating Ethiopia’s willingness to share energy and benefit neighboring countries. As the largest hydropower project in Africa nears completion, it stands as a significant achievement in disproving centuries-old doubts about African capabilities.

Furthermore, Ethiopia’s quest for a sea outlet could be resolved through economic cooperation and integration among Africans. The legacy of the colonial past should not be a source of conflict among Africans. The historical contexts, conflicts, and challenges related to water diplomacy in Ethiopia have been significant.

Ethiopia has faced diplomatic pressures to manage its water resources and ensure that the GERD project does not lead to conflict. The successful development of the GERD is attributed to government determination, public participation, and strong diplomatic efforts.

The construction of the dam is expected to create substantial opportunities for electrical power generation, benefiting

Ethiopia and neighboring countries. This emphasizes the need for all institutions, including universities, to play a role in protecting Ethiopia’s national interests in water diplomacy.

The unresolved issues surrounding Ethiopia’s maritime policies, particularly regarding the Nile, are highlighted as significant challenges.

The forum stressed the importance of all institutions, including universities, in safeguarding Ethiopia’s national interests in water diplomacy, including access to a sea outlet.

Members of Parliament view GERD as a symbol of national unity and resilience, reflecting Ethiopia’s commitment to development and regional integration.

The complexities and critical nature of Ethiopia’s water diplomacy, especially in the context of the GERD, are emphasized, highlighting the need for collaborative regional approaches to water resources.

Enhancing regional cooperation among Nile basin countries and continued efforts to foster collaboration would address the rights and needs related to water usage over the Nile River, as well as shared concerns.

Ethiopia’s flagship project, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), launched in 2011, encapsulates the aspirations outlined in the goals of Agenda 2063’s “The Africa We Want” strategic plan.

The seven aspirations of Agenda 2063, each with its own goals and priorities, reflect Africa’s desire for shared prosperity, unity, integration, free movement of citizens, empowerment of women and youth, and freedom from fear and disease.

Agenda 2063 aims to eradicate poverty and enable shared prosperity through mutual collaboration and economic transformation. The GERD addresses the need for economic independence by generating electricity for industrialization, job creation, and improved healthcare services.

The dam is environmentally sustainable, with a net water loss estimated to be ten times less than the Aswan High Dam. The GERD represents Africa’s commitment to benefiting all countries in the Nile Basin and is 100% financed by its people. It is strategically important, as Ethiopian nationals from street vendors to investors are stakeholders.

The GERD can achieve several goals in Agenda 2063’s ten-year plan, including supplying power for an integrated high-speed train network, selling excess power to downstream and neighboring countries, and supporting regional suppliers in transforming the African continent from traditional to modern energy sources.

The GERD aligns with the goals of the global Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, making it a uniquely symbolic project that contributes to economic development and regional cooperation.

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

# Business & Economy

## Continental coordination for African Coffee competitiveness

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Experts in the sector have repeatedly said that Africa, despite being the birthplace of coffee and a major producer, is not reaping the full benefits of the sector. While coffee is considered the backbone of the economy for countries like Ethiopia, which has a large coffee farming community, it is said that its benefits are limited compared to Brazil and other countries in the world.

The reasons for this are problems that range from farm to market, and mainly due to lack of coordination among countries, which makes them unable to compete in the global market.

As the 64th Inter-African Coffee Organization High-Level Policy Forum held recently in Addis Ababa stated; cooperation and coordination among countries play a crucial role in the continent's ability to compete in the global coffee market. In particular, governments should work together to ensure that coffee is exported in a value-added manner, not just in raw form.

Minister of Agriculture, Girma Amente (PhD), announced at the forum that Ethiopia not only wants to be a coffee producer but also a world market leader by increasing productivity and product quality. To this end, it is working to ensure coffee productivity that can withstand global challenges. In addition, it is playing its part to make African coffee production competitive and resilient sector from field to market.

Dr. Girma said that Ethiopia has planted billions of coffee seedlings in the past five years in line with the direction and plan it has set to maintain coffee productivity and build a climate-resilient economy. He also mentioned that it has been able to increase its export earnings by producing coffee in both quality and quantity.

Stating the plans to earn more than two billion Dollars from coffee exports in the 2024/25 budget year, the Minister indicated that they are working hard on quality product, market access and benefits. He said that they will work with countries to find sustainable solutions to the problems the African coffee sector faced and explained that it is crucial to carry out the necessary work starting from policy implementation along the coffee value chain from the field to the international market.

He expressed his interest to work together to make African coffee competitive in the global market and remain resilient to challenges. To help achieve this, it is necessary to enhance benefits and expand market access throughout the chain from producers to coffee exporters.

According to the Minister, a concerted effort is needed to increase African coffee exports by producing sustainable and quality coffee. In particular, it is necessary to expand international market opportunities by adding value to coffee production. Value addition is needed to create more opportunities for African coffee in the international market. Ethiopia will continue to strengthen its efforts to improve the productivity, quality and market access of African coffee.



He noted that climate change, price volatility and the failure to strengthen regulatory frameworks in African coffee have prevented the continent from reaping the benefits it deserves from the sector. Ethiopia will work with African countries to find sustainable solutions to this focusing on new research, investments and strategic policy interventions.

The Secretary-General of the Inter-African Coffee Organization, Solomon Sabiti, said that the organization is a member of 25 African coffee-producing countries; the policy forum, which was attended by high-ranking African officials, mainly discussed issues and opportunities that could help solve the challenges coffee production encountered. Discussions were held on how to transform the African coffee industry, especially how to support the private sector.

"In addition to increasing income by adding value to African coffee, it will also help create job opportunities for many unemployed Africans," the Secretary-General said, noting that countries should focus on increasing productivity. At the same time, he noted that everyone should make their best efforts to solve the problems of price fluctuations and financial shortages in the continent's coffee market.

"Although this is the 64th time such a conference has been held, the organization is currently working on a strategy to increase the use of coffee in the African Union more than ever," the Secretary-General said; adding that this is seen as a major achievement. Adding value to African coffee should be given great attention. This would lay the foundation for the growth of African coffee income and lead to a revival of coffee.

He recalled that senior officials of the European Development Fund were present at the forum; this would provide support for the continental effort to add value to African coffee and present it on the world market.

According to him, the organization is working to strengthen the free trade system between countries, in addition to making African coffee a global commodity. Most of the coffee produced in Africa is exported to Europe, and the organization is working to increase the productivity of quality coffee

and expand market access.

He noted that, like Ethiopia, other countries on the continent should promote the culture of domestic coffee consumption. Everyone should play their role so that the continent can benefit from the sector by strengthening the value chain. The continent's top leaders and officials should support this and show their commitment in concrete terms.

"Ethiopia is a lucky country in this regard, because if the world market slows down, the coffee it produces will not lose its domestic market. Therefore, other African countries should learn from Ethiopia's experience and develop a culture of coffee consumption within their countries," he said.

The Director General of the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority, Adugna Debela (PhD), said that Ethiopia has been recording significant growth in coffee exports over the past five years. This has earned more than one billion Dollars in revenue, an unprecedented level in its history. He stressed the need for coordinated and transparent actions to increase Africa's coffee exports by ensuring sustainable and quality production.

Investment in the African coffee industry is necessary to maximize the benefits of the sector. African countries should work together for this. Forums involving such leaders will create the capacity of coffee-producing countries to address the challenges encounter the sector and seize the opportunities that exist.

The Director General also said that Ethiopia is committed to strengthening sustainable coffee supply chains and forest management, which will increase export potential and trade opportunities. African coffee industry requires public and private sector collaboration to achieve the desired growth.

Dr. Adugna pointed out that the organization that all 25 coffee-producing countries in Africa have come together to solve their problems on a continental level. Above all, working together plays a crucial role in the current continental effort to be competitive in the global market. Only 12% of the coffee produced in Africa is sold to the world market, while in terms of its utilization, it is at the level of 13% of the world.

This indicates that Africa can feed itself with coffee, but the continent is under a lot of pressure and is not benefiting as much as it should. He cited as an example of this, "When new laws are introduced and international coffee prices fall, Africa is not benefiting as a continent." working together will enable the countries to solve their common problems, and it is crucial to strengthen mutual trade, especially by taking advantage of the opportunities created by the African Free Trade Area.

He recalled that Ethiopia has been carrying out many tasks in this regard while being the leading country of the Union; in particular, it has made great efforts to have coffee approved as an African Union Agenda 2063, helping to discuss and find solutions to problems encountered at various forums.

On the other hand, Dr. Adugna pointed out that Ethiopia uses 50% of the coffee it produces domestically; "Other African countries, however, produce coffee but do not use it; for example, countries like Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda export 99% of their production; therefore, when the world coffee price drops, they are at a loss." a lot of work is being done to expand the opportunities for these countries to use coffee domestically, and he indicated that changes are being seen as a result. Ethiopia is also working to use this opportunity to supply the coffee it produces to various African countries.

According to him, in addition to the member countries of the organization, efforts have been exerted to make coffee-consuming countries members of the organization; this will create a favorable environment for strengthening trade and providing coffee at better prices. It will also reduce the possibility of falling under pressure from other countries. On the other hand, the macroeconomic reform is contributing significantly to the coffee export performance of Ethiopia.

He pointed out that the domestic coffee market has been stabilized by resolving the situation that caused the price of coffee to fluctuate domestically. This will give the country an opportunity to increase the foreign exchange it earns from the sector and produce quality coffee.

## Art & Culture

# Foreign languages as knowledge, breadwinners for youngsters

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

The young man whose name I withhold in this story, is probably in his late twenties, tall, handsome with curly hair that he had made in Rasta dreads that fall down his neck. The day I met him, he was walking to the local market with an elderly Chinese woman who was carrying a big straw bag for shopping. This particular vegetable market at the centre of this budding town of Dukem daily accommodates Chinese customers who came there for their daily shopping sprees. Those are the workers from the Eastern Industrial Zone, a sprawling industrial town in its own right.

The young man in this story was accompanying the elderly Chinese woman assisting and serving her private translator from Chinese to Afan Oromo or Amharic in their interactions with the vegetable sellers. The young man and the elderly Chinese woman stopped at one of the stalls that sell all kinds of vegetables ranging from garlic to carrots, to potatoes to beetroots. The Chinese woman was speaking to the young man while he was translating to the seller in Afan Oromo. The communication was going smoothly and the shopping was successful. The Chinese woman settled the bills and continued her walk with the young man by her side.

It was my first time to encounter Chinese living in Dukem town using private translators in their day to day communication with the local people for various reasons. What caught my attention was the young translator who was using a foreign language as his breadwinner as a private translator. I asked the vegetable seller whether there are many translators who come for shopping accompanying their Chinese employers.

"There are many youngsters who work as translators for the Chinese!" the vegetable seller told me, with an excitement that hid the smile that was struggling to leave her lips. I learned from the same seller that these young men had learned Chinese while they were working at the industrial zone where they took Chinese language lessons at the same time. Some of the youngsters have left their jobs to work as translators for Chinese housewives or any other Chinese national working and living in the same town. I also learned that working as translator has its advantage because the translators are well paid by their employers, far exceeding the wage levels at factories in the industrial zone. "They are paid two or three times higher than the wages at the factories!" the same vegetable sellers related to me. I realized that that was a smart way of earning one's bread in these tough times when jobs are hard to come by as wages are low due to the sharp competition and the availability of a large pool of potential workers who accept any job for any wage.

This revelation about Chinese translators



brought to my mind memories of the translators I used to meet in the streets of Addis back in my school days. Those translators often accompanied foreign tourists on their journey to various parts of the Ethiopian capital where they paid visits to various places, go shopping at the old and famous market, known as the biggest open air market in Africa" where tourists and locals brushed shoulders exchanging only broad smiles and friendly gestures. Language was a great barrier and communication was superficial, limited to "hello!" or "how are you?". The young translators who accompanied the tourists where

Speaking one or two foreign languages and Western languages for that matter, is a great blessing in many African countries. The era of considering European languages as the languages of "the enemy" or that of colonialism is now gone for good. In this time of fast technological advances, knowledge of a foreign language is a key that opens many opportunities.

In this time of fast development in cyber technology, knowledge of English, French, or any European language is a great asset not only in education and knowledge seeking but also in the day to day life, particularly among those youngsters who are facing the vicissitudes of joblessness.

According to reliable sources, there are between 1000 and 2000 languages in use or spoken across Africa. Most of the languages have no written scripts. Some of them have but have not yet developed enough to grow into literary languages. They rather use their national languages or some foreign language, French, Portuguese or French as language of oral and written communication. This does not however mean that the oral languages will not develop into generating their own scripts.

However, the focus here is on the increasing interest among many Africans to learn Western languages as a means of education or employment as the case of the young man in Dukem in our story. The opposing trend is however for Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Russians and people from other industrialized

countries to learn African languages.

This a recent trend born of the growing economic, political and cultural ties between these countries and Africa that has become the economic hub for many foreign businesses who have already opened shops in many African capitals. Geopolitical interests that bring foreigners to the continent of Africa where economic and other opportunities are still largely available. The foreigners who are interested in African languages may not know that the continent is not only ethnically diverse but also linguistically rich.

According to recent data, the number of languages spoken within the African continent range between 1000 and 2000. "Africa is home to approximately one-third of the world's languages. The diversity of African languages is evidenced by their populations." The same data indicates that the major African languages are, in order of importance, Swahili which has between 100 and 150 million speakers. Second place is occupied by Hausa alongside Yoruba are two Nigerian languages that are spoken in more countries, especially Yoruba spread out during the European conquests and all to Brazil.

According to another data, the most widely spoken languages in Africa are, Swahili, Arabic, French, Hausa, Yoruba and Afan Oromo. Arabic and French are not African languages or native languages as such but came to the continent following the spread of Islam in the first case and that of colonialism in the case of French. The French conquered almost half of Africa and their language is still spoken by many countries in West Africa in particular. The same data maintains that "30 million people in Africa speak Yoruba. It is spoken in everyday life, especially in Nigeria Togo and Benin but also in Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Just that many people in Africa speak Afan Oromo which is particularly widespread in Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Somalia."

Europeans and foreigners in general are displaying a growing interest to study African languages although the objective or purpose

of such study has drastically changed. Modern Europeans and also Americans want to study or know one or two African languages, for their personal consumption. According to one view, "Learning an African language will allow you to engage more deeply with African movies, TV shows and music. Learning an African language will allow you to engage more deeply with the music by dissecting the lyrics-opening a whole world of cultural. Socio-political critique and storytelling." The approaches to the study of African languages is thus different then and now.

What is more impressive nowadays is the fact that an increasing number of European as well as Asian countries, i.e. the Chinese and the Japanese in particular, are keen to understand or speak at least one African language both at the personal level and as inter-cultural exchange and understanding at the official level. For our purpose here, we turn to two major countries that are particularly interested in African languages such as Amharic, Swahili and Yoruba to name but only three of them. Economics, geopolitics and culture may be involved in this new quest at varying degrees but it nevertheless remains true that these countries are showing a new interest in African languages although Africans may not reciprocate this by learning the European or Asian languages.

Interests among young Africans in learning European or foreign or foreign language is growing slowly while the trigger is always economic one. Hundreds of thousands of Africans are trying to learn foreign languages to realize their dreams of going to those countries seeking job or employment opportunities. There are also many idealists among young Africans who regard or dream about the West as a place where milk and honey are flowing and life would look like heaven on earth. Yet, this is far from the truth. Western countries, like Africa, are still struggling with their economic and social problems and life is not as ideal as many dreaming Africans might think. Even the young Africans who migrate to Arab countries that are sometimes portrayed 'Eldorado in the desert' are disappointed by the kind of life they encounter there.

The young translator we portrayed above in this story might also be one of the young African dreamers who would migrate to any country where opportunities for, education work and a better life might be awaiting them. It may be in Beijing or elsewhere in Asia or a stint in any European country. In the mind of all young African dreams, language of a foreign language must be projected as the most important asset that will sooner or later change their lives to the better. This is a welcome that is bound to grow in the coming few years as many young Africans would be inspired by their friends who have already made it to Europe or America or as far as Australia. We may perhaps portray this trend as the outcome of the ongoing 'demographic globalization'.

# Science & Technology

## The rise of endogenous technologies in the Global South

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The southern part of the globe is rich in creativity, indigenous practices, homegrown innovations, deep-rooted knowledge, and best practices originating from the society's way of life. However, despite this, the southern hemisphere remains dependent on technological developments from the northern world. As a result, the endogenous innovations, local creativity, and indigenous knowledge of the southern hemisphere are overshadowed by the technological advancements of the developed world.

This dependency on imported ideas and technologies from the northern hemisphere has hindered the socio-economic development of the southern hemisphere, keeping it lagging behind. This situation not only impacts economic growth but also threatens the rich traditions and practices of the global south. Recognizing the importance of promoting homegrown ideas, innovations, creativity, and knowledge, the Global South has recently focused on developing local innovations and indigenous ideas.

As part of these efforts, the Ethiopian Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MIiT) and the Organization of Southern Cooperation (OSC) organized the first edition of the Endogenous Technologies Fair on the Global South (GreSFET). This two-day event took place at the Science Museum in Addis Ababa, featuring 41 startups and entrepreneurs from 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Abel Hailegiorgis, founder and CEO of Bamboo Labs, a company striving to produce various products from bamboo trees, was among the participants of the GreSFET and displayed his own innovative products produced from bamboo. Approached by The Ethiopian Herald, Abel stated that his company started manufacturing innovative products necessary for transportation. Abel's Bamboo Labs Company is manufacturing cycles, wheelchairs, and crutches from bamboo trees by developing his innovative skills and ideas.

Cycles, wheelchairs, and crutches are among the products of Bamboo Labs. "By using bamboo, we are producing locally designed bamboo cycles, wheelchairs, crutches, and other products," Abel said. According to him, Ethiopia has a huge potential of bamboo resources, with about 1.4 million hectares of land covered by bamboo despite the limitation to use this resource for socio-economic development.

"By using this untapped resource potential, Bamboo Labs started manufacturing products for market consumption, but with limited capacity," Abel reiterated. Due to financial limitations, the company was unable to produce for market consumption so far; however, as he found supporters, his startup company is working to manufacture more to make the products available for interested customers.

Bamboo Labs is working to start manufacturing these new and fascinating products to join the transport market shortly, according to the CEO. "The products are locally designed, locally produced, affordable, and durable



Science and Technology Minister Belete Molla, OSC Secretary General Manssour Bin Mussallam and other guests visited technology innovators at the Science Museum during GreSFET

products," he stated, adding "Currently, we have found interested companies to work with us, and we are on the way to producing the products to reach more customers."

Abel said that locally innovated technologies and social enterprises are crucial for economic growth and in creating sustainable solutions for existing challenges in society. According to him, endogenous technological innovations are essential in solving the real problems of society sustainably and creating more opportunities in promoting local innovations and creativity as they develop from the rich traditions, creativity, and indigenous knowledge of the society using societal resources.

Teshome Girma was also among the participants of the GreSFET from Ethiopia. He is the manager of Green Mobility Technology-Ethiopia, a new company coming up with three types of locally developed technological products. Electric scooters, electric bikes, and tricycle electric wheelchairs are the three innovative products of Green Mobility Technology Company, Teshome told The Ethiopian Herald.

The electric scooter, named AD-36V, is a scooter designed for urban mobility. While the electric bike, ET-72V model is a locally produced motorcycle designed to replace fuel motorcycles. According to him, once charged, the bikes can provide services for up to two days, and his company aims to produce electric cycles and motorcycles for urban mobility, aiming to replace fuel motors.

The third product of Green Mobility Technology is a tricycle electric wheelchair produced for handicapped or physically disabled people. The electric wheelchair, designed to resist difficult topography, has the capacity to travel up to 25 kilometers per hour, as he mentioned.

These products are produced on a prototype level, and Teshome's company is in the

process of producing the products for market consumption. The prototype products are fully tested and ready to provide services. "We presented our products at this fair to promote our products, in search of support, and to share experiences from other innovators. We have the idea and the knowledge to manufacture the products, the limitation is finance," Teshome mentioned his company's eagerness to manufacture the products for market consumption.

Like Abel and Teshome, 41 different startup technology companies gathered from 14 different countries from the Greater South presented their technological innovations driven from indigenous knowledge and creative tradition of their respective societies. These homegrown technological innovations from the Global South originate from the traditions, knowledge, resources, values, and skills of the society. In addition, these technologies focus on solving the existing problems within the societies and sustainable development.

During the opening ceremony of the GreSFET, OSC Under-Secretary-General for Technological Innovation and Digitalization Enhancement (TIDE), Shumete Gizaw (PhD) said that the Greater South is rich in incredible talents and creativity, adding the necessity of cultivating and empowering these talents.

"Empowering local innovators create avenues for technologies that address real-world challenges," Shumete stated, adding GreSFET's role in catalyzing change in this regard. Education and skill development, sustainable agriculture, financial inclusion and fintech, clean and affordable energy, sustainable mobility, and integral health were the six thematic areas of GreSFET, according to Shumete.

For his part, Minister of Innovation and Technology of Ethiopia, Belete Molla (PhD) stated that the Global South has a rich

culture of innovations, creativity, indigenous knowledge, and problem-solving creative traditions. Hence, he underlined, cultivating the endogenous technological innovations and homegrown ideas in the Greater South would accelerate development endeavors of the Global South.

"Rooted in the realities of our people, endogenous technologies bridge tradition and modernity, offering a sustainable and inclusive blueprint for tomorrow," Belete stated, calling local innovators to continue their innovations using the untapped resources of the region and searching the knowledge and creativity of their respective societies.

OSC Secretary-General, Manssour Bin Mussallam for his part stated that empowering and promoting local innovators and endogenous technologies accelerates socio-economic development and competitiveness of the Global South internationally. As he mentioned, empowering technological experts and creative minds in the region is crucial to tackle pressing regional issues and to exploit the untapped potential of endogenous technologies in shaping sustainable development.

This generation of the Global South is striving for the revival and development of homegrown technologies and innovations, struggling with financial and other challenges to realize their innovations. These homegrown and endogenous ideas and technological products need support to realize the products to solve local problems and to compete at the international level.

As the youth generation of the Global South is striving to create, innovate, and invent new products using local resources and indigenous knowledge, empowering these endogenous technology startup companies and local innovators is crucial to realize sustainable development and prosperity in the Greater South.



# Society

## Inclusive national dialogue to lay strong foundation for peace, stability rule of law

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

At the heart of Ethiopia's ongoing pursuit for peace and stability lies the imperative of inclusive national dialogue. As the country continues to grapple with the lingering effects of conflict and political strife, both from the past and recent years, creating an environment where diverse voices are heard is not only essential but it is also an urgent necessity.

Inclusive dialogue serves as a vital mechanism for conflict resolution and as a cornerstone for establishing a robust framework that upholds the rule of law and fosters national cohesion.

It is also a process that brings together various stakeholders—government representatives, political parties, civil society, religious groups, and ordinary citizens—to address pressing national issues.

Experts in social science advise that national dialogues must be inclusive and follow a participatory approach because such methods yield positive outcomes. This approach ensures that representatives with diverse perspectives are included, and it allows for the engagement of a wide array of voices. Inclusive dialogue helps acknowledge the experiences and concerns of all communities, addressing grievances and fostering a sense of belonging, especially among marginalized groups.

Moreover, inclusive national dialogue plays a pivotal role in building trust among citizens. By offering a platform for open communication, it helps bridge divides and nurtures trust between different factions. When individuals feel heard and valued, tensions are reduced, and the way is paved for collaborative solutions.

Not only that; but inclusive dialogue also creates the space needed to devise shared solutions for resolving conflicts. By fostering a common understanding, dialogue enables participants to collectively identify and address the root causes of issues. This collective problem-solving approach encourages ownership of solutions, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation.

In light of these facts, Ethiopia has embarked on an ambitious initiative to promote inclusive dialogue as part of its efforts to foster peace and reinforce the rule of law. The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, led by Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya, has made significant strides in gathering diverse perspectives from communities and stakeholders. This initiative aims to address long-standing issues and create a platform for meaningful discussion among all segments of society.

In a recent briefing, Prof. Mesfin Araya confirmed that the Commission has completed the consultations in 615 districts, covering nine states and two city administrations. This milestone achievement marks a critical phase in the preparations for the upcoming National Dialogue

Conference. The Commission's three-month performance report, presented to the House of People's Representatives, detailed the extensive activities undertaken to gather agenda items that reflect the concerns and aspirations of the Ethiopian people.

The report highlighted the Commission's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that voices from all corners of the nation are heard. Notably, consultations have begun in Tigray, engaging regional leaders and academic institutions to initiate dialogue in an area deeply affected by conflict. This approach underscores the Commission's sensitivity to local contexts and the need for tailored solutions that resonate with the unique challenges faced by different communities. The dialogue process is designed to be participatory and inclusive, with a focus on gathering agendas from federal political parties, religious institutions, and the Diaspora Community.

Deputy Chief Commissioner Hirut Gebreselassie emphasized that the process is carefully structured to fit the context of each locality, ensuring that proposed agendas address national issues while respecting regional specificities.

Members of Parliament have praised the Commission for its progress in conducting dialogue in a manner that encourages broad participation. Government's Chief Whip Tesfaye Beljige expressed the administration's strong belief in resolving enduring issues through constructive dialogue, highlighting the potential for sustainable solutions to emerge from these discussions.

Ethiopian leadership recognizes the significance of the national dialogue as a viable means to addressing the root causes of conflict and misunderstanding. Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Tagesse Chafo, stressed the need for sincere and active participation from all stakeholders



### Ethiopian leadership recognizes the significance of the national dialogue as a viable means to addressing the root causes of conflict and misunderstanding

to ensure the success of the dialogue's process. He affirmed that the House would provide the necessary oversight and support to the Commission, reinforcing the government's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to peace.

The collaborative spirit observed within the Commission and among political leaders reflects a shared understanding that the path to national reconciliation requires collective effort. By prioritizing dialogue, the Ethiopian government is laying a strong foundation for peace, stability, and the rule of law.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council handed over agendas collected by states and national political parties to the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission.

The agendas submitted to the Commission by the Chairperson of the Joint Council

Solomon Ayele and the executive members of the Council, compiled in seven main sections and 64 detailed issues, focusing on important national issues.

Speaking on the handover ceremony, Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin said that the Commission has been working closely with the Joint Council in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed to work together for the successful accomplishment of the national dialogue process.

The Commission will properly and effectively utilize agendas organized by institutions and community sections, the Chief Commissioner added.

He also urged other institutions and associations to submit their agendas in an organized manner.

Chairperson of the Joint Council Solomon Ayele also stated that the Council is doing its part to make the national consultation a reality.

Ethiopia's efforts to orchestrate inclusive dialogue represent a hopeful path forward for a nation that has faced significant challenges. By embracing the voices of diverse communities and fostering collaboration, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission is paving the way for constructive solutions to longstanding issues.

As the nation moves towards the National Dialogue Conference, the commitment to inclusivity and participation will be crucial in addressing the complexities of Ethiopian society. With the support of government leaders and the active involvement of citizens, Ethiopia can cultivate a culture of dialogue that not only resolves current conflicts but also strengthens the bonds of unity among its people. The journey towards peace is ongoing, but with these concerted efforts, Ethiopia is taking important steps towards a more harmonious future.



# This is Ethiopia

## Must-visit attractions in Addis Ababa

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Addis Ababa, which means "New Flower" in Amharic, serves as the political, economic, and cultural hub of Ethiopia. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in the captivating blend of ancient traditions and contemporary developments. The city's distinct charm lies in its ability to preserve its historical heritage while embracing modern influences.

Tourism experts also laud the new destinations development, tourism infrastructure expansion, and measures regarding beautifying the city significant contributions to promote tourist inflow.

Ministry of Tourism (MoT) State Minister Sileshi Girma told local media that the government is providing land and technical support for both local and international investors that are engaged in the hotel and tourism sector.

It has also allowed various incentives such as a five-year income tax exemption for investors engaged in the aforementioned sector, he added.

Following the action, the nation has seen a number of constructions - hotels and resorts - in various parts of the country; but mainly in main cities.

He further noted that local investors that are said to be competitive at the international level have built a hotel business chain which is promising to enhance the sector's potential.

Nonetheless, poor infrastructure in tourist destinations remained a challenge. Private sectors are being shy to engage in areas with low infrastructure development. The private sector, however, is expected to invest in rural areas that are enriched in tourism potentials, he stressed.

As to the State Minister, the Ministry of Tourism has introduced a new Hotel star rating legal framework and service quality assurance to allow newly built hotels and the service sector to be graded while enabling the existing hotels to update their rates

Getahun Alemu, President of the Ethiopian Hotel and Tourism Association, on his part, highlighted that several tourist destinations are under construction in different parts of the country.

He also mentioned the emerging smart hotels in the city which are believed to be one of the tourist attractions in the nation.

The following are among the age-old and must-visit tourist attractions of the city.

**National Museum of Ethiopia: Unearthing ancient treasures**

A must-visit attraction in Addis Ababa is the National Museum of Ethiopia. This



renowned museum showcases an impressive collection of archaeological treasures and ancient artifacts, providing insight into the country's captivating history. One of its greatest highlights is "Lucy," or Dinknesh, a famous 3.2 million-year-old fossilized human that offers a glimpse into the origins of humanity.

### **Meskel Square: A vibrant center of activity**

Head to Meskel Square, the heart of Addis Ababa, where locals and tourists alike gather to witness the city's vibrant energy. This bustling square serves as a venue for various celebrations, cultural events, and

public gatherings. It is an excellent spot to people-watch, experience the city's pulse, and immerse yourself in the local culture.

### **Ethnological Museum: Exploring Ethiopia's diverse heritage**

Immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage of Ethiopia by visiting the Ethnological Museum. Housed in the former palace of Emperor Haile Selassie, this museum offers a comprehensive collection of artifacts, artworks, and traditional crafts from different Ethiopian ethnic groups. Gain a deeper understanding of the country's diverse traditions and customs as you

explore the exhibits.

### **Holy Trinity Cathedral: A reflection of faith and history**

For those interested in religious and architectural wonders, a visit to the Holy Trinity Cathedral is a must. This magnificent Orthodox Church is renowned for its stunning stained glass windows, colorful murals, and beautiful gardens. It is also the final resting place of Emperor Haile Selassie and other prominent figures in Ethiopian history.

### **Mount Entoto: Embrace nature's beauty**

Escape the city's hustle and bustle by taking a trip to Mount Entoto, the highest peak overlooking Addis Ababa. Enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of the city, as well as the lush greenery and eucalyptus forests that surround the area. Mount Entoto is also home to several historic churches, making it an ideal destination for nature lovers and history enthusiasts alike.

### **Merkato: The largest African open market**

No visit to Addis Ababa would be complete without exploring Merkato, one of Africa's largest open-air markets. Here, you can immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere, haggle for unique souvenirs, and indulge in delicious local cuisine. From intricate handicrafts to colorful fabrics and aromatic spices, Merkato offers a sensory overload and a true taste of Ethiopian culture.

### **Addis Ababa city tour: Discovering the highlights**

To maximize your time in Addis Ababa and explore its many attractions, consider joining a city tour. Expert local guides will take you on an immersive journey, leading you to iconic landmarks, hidden gems, and cultural hotspots. Whether you're interested in history, architecture, or local cuisine, a city tour is the perfect way to navigate and discover the best of Addis Ababa.

Moreover, Addis Ababa is the third largest diplomatic hub in the world next to New York and Geneva. It also hosts numerous international and continental organizations. Besides, the city hosts many international conferences and summits including the annual African Union Summit which makes it a potential tourist destination.

In sum, Addis Ababa is a captivating city that abounds with cultural treasures, historical landmarks, and vibrant markets. From exploring ancient artifacts at the National Museum to witnessing the busy energy of Meskel Square, there is something to enchant every traveler. Experience the unique blend of tradition and modernity, immerse yourself in the diverse Ethiopian heritage, and create lasting memories in this vibrant capital city. Addis Ababa truly is a must-visit destination for any adventurer seeking to explore Ethiopia's rich cultural tapestry.