



# The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXXI No 094 28 December 2024 - Tahisas 19, 2017

Saturday

Price Birr 34.50

## President appeals for global support to Mekedonia

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - President Taye Atske-Selassie commended the Mekedonia Humanitarian Association for its dedicated efforts and called on Ethiopians worldwide to support its future initiatives, helping to make its charitable work more accessible.

Yesterday, during his visit to Mekedonia and the building under construction on its compound, the President expressed his appreciation for the association's ongoing contributions.

During the occasion, President Taye emphasized the importance of supporting the association as much as possible. He noted that the good work being carried out at Mekedonia is a source of strength and inspiration, and urged everyone to contribute in order to make the center's charitable efforts more accessible to those in need.

He called on all Ethiopians who are capable, virtuous, sincere, compassionate, and committed to supporting their fellow citizens to donate generously to the national rescue programs initiated by the association.

"What I witnessed today was not despair, but human strength," President Taye said. "I realized that it is possible to rise above despair itself. This is the essence of preparing oneself for virtue and giving to others. Beyond goodness, what lies ahead is knowledge-because knowledge is the key to helping others overcome their struggles."

The President also expressed his gratitude



to Biniam Belete, the founder and CEO of the Mekedonia Humanitarian Association, for his dedication and kindness. He praised the association for its life-saving efforts and

reaffirmed his government's commitment to supporting Mekedonia.

See President appeals ... Page 3

**AGI** CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA  
Abyssinia Group of Industries

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

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

**Siinqee**

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

www.siinqeebank.com

## Capital market bridges innovations, startups businesses: CEOs

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – The promotion of capital market in Ethiopia would drive emerging innovative ideas and startup businesses, officials said, emphasizing its pivotal role towards addressing financial hurdles.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Innovation and Startups Development Lead Executive Officer Selamyihun Adefris said that introduction of capital market marks a significant milestone to mobilize proficient financial resources which help promote new innovations and startups.

See Capital market ... Page 3



Photo : Dagne Abera

Peter Fearnhead

## AP set to conserve Gambella Nat'l Park

Page 3

## AU Summit: Showcasing Ethiopia's leadership in African diplomacy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Ethiopia is vigorously preparing to host the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the 46th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) in February 2025. This significant event positions Ethiopia not only as the host nation but also as a key player in African diplomacy.

With a focus on seamless logistics, exceptional hospitality, and strategic image-building, Ethiopia is leveraging the summit as an opportunity to showcase its commitment to pan-Africanism and reinforce its diplomatic and cultural



significance within the African continent.

To ensure a successful summit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spearheaded a ten-day

training program at the Africa Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX). This program equipped youth volunteers and

See AU Summit: ... Page 3

# News

## MoLS highlights activities to protect housemaids' right

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – The government is facilitating positive work environment for maidservants across the country, Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) said.

The ministry, in collaboration with Consortium of Self-help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) and the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, wrapped up a three-day multi-sectoral advocacy workshop themed: "Promoting Decent Working Condition for Female Domestic Workers in Ethiopia."

During the closing event, MoLS Tripartite Relation Coordinator Head, Endalk Teklehawariat said yesterday that the workshop is organized to create a conducive environment for domestic servants thereby protecting their rights.

According to him, the ministry has been carrying out various activities to facilitate a smooth relationship between domestic servants and their employers based on legal frameworks.

Particularly, the ministry is striving to ensure the benefit of domestic workers through capitalizing their potentials and creating more jobs, he said, adding that MoLS is working in close with concerned bodies to this end.

Consortium of Self-help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP) Director, Yosef Akalu on his part said that putting an integrated effort is an urgent issue to address housemaids' complex challenges.

From Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, Wondemeneh Lemma expressed that his institute has been protecting domestic workers' benefit despite facing various challenges.

Among others, Wondemeneh underlined that the Association is focusing on providing fee free legal advice, educating, and research and advocacy service aimed at ensuring female housekeepers in a sustainable manner.

He noted that several efforts have been made in creating convenient environment to the female workers over the past three years, while introducing a free call center of 7711 to report any information.

Andinet Ethiopia Women Domestic Workers Association President, Hirut Abera on her part said that the government should encourage the ongoing effort on realizing citizens' rights in workplaces.

Domestic servants encounter different challenges. To address these challenges, the government, civil organizations, development partners, media, and other concerned bodies should play their roles to create a harmonious work atmosphere between workers and employers.

## Coopbank promises to foster vibrant cooperatives, unions

### • Offers 13 Billion Birr Loan

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADAMA** - Oromia Cooperative Bank (Coopbank) has pledged its commitment to building competent and influential cooperatives and unions by providing capacity building and financial support.

The bank celebrated the 6<sup>th</sup> Cooperatives Day yesterday under the theme: "Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All." The event was attended by Aba Gadaas, Ambassador Shiferaw Shigutie, Commissioner for the Ethiopian Cooperative Commission, regional cooperative heads, members, and other dignitaries.

Speaking at the occasion, Coopbank President Deribie Asfaw stated that the bank has implemented a wide range of business and customer-focused strategic frameworks to create a resilient banking sector.

Deribie emphasized the bank's close collaboration with cooperatives to address potential financial challenges and significantly improve their livelihoods and businesses.

In addition to capacity building trainings and facilitating international experience sharing, Coopbank is implementing various

initiatives and digital platforms to support the future growth of cooperatives.

To expand financial services, the bank has disbursed over 13 billion Birr through its Michu loan service, which requires no collateral, to approximately 700,000 small farming communities since its inception. This initiative has created an estimated 800,000 jobs, with youth constituting about 65% of the loan recipients.

Furthermore, the bank has dedicated one percent of its annual profit to empower cooperatives and unions.

During the event, Coopbank recognized the outstanding achievements of cooperatives and unions with various medals and certificates.

Sharing the Netherlands' success in the cooperative sector, the Ethiopian Cooperative Commission, Deputy Commissioner Abdi Mumed, emphasized the need for specialization and mergers among cooperatives as a crucial pathway for sector development.

According to Abdi, propelling digitization of the value chain, achieving financial self-reliance, and strengthening the visibility



Deribie Asfaw

of value chain actors and member value through competitive pricing are critical for the successful functioning of the cooperative sector.

The Ethiopian Cooperative Commission envisions becoming a leader in financial inclusion, sustainability, and community empowerment by 2030.



## Foundation focuses on economic empowerment, poverty reduction

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Gudina Tumsa Foundation (GTF) announced its continued focus on economic empowerment and poverty reduction initiatives across Ethiopia.

On Thursday, GTF inaugurated five biogas digesters in model households, along with school latrines, a school reading park, and vermin-compost projects in Suluta City, Oromia State. These projects aim to promote green and clean energy within the community.

GTF Healthcare Environment and WASH Program Manager Tekilu Hailu stated that the foundation prioritizes economic empowerment, poverty reduction, and livelihood improvement programs, particularly focusing on women and youth.

GTF has implemented various initiatives to

address community challenges, including programs focused on nutrition, pollution reduction, quality education, health, and environmental sustainability (green and clean energy). The foundation has also provided training to enhance teacher capacity and supplied educational materials to support quality education.

GTF has achieved significant success in recycling plastic waste. Four years ago, it launched a 28 million Birr Integrated Urban I-WASH project in Suluta City to enhance green and clean energy and reduce emissions.

Over the past four years, GTF has planted over 30,000 indigenous trees in Suluta, Dodola, Legetafo, Bishoftu, and other locations to contribute to green economy development through its integrated urban WASH program.

GTF aims to expand its projects to other states and is currently exploring various avenues to achieve this. However, securing adequate funding remains a significant challenge. The foundation is eager to collaborate with international and local partners to maximize resource mobilization and expand its outreach to more communities.

Tekilu Hailu emphasized the importance of strong support for local NGOs through financial assistance, capacity building, and other means.

The recently inaugurated initiatives are expected to benefit approximately five thousand citizens, including students, households, and other community members. GTF has been implementing livelihood improvement programs with the support of local and international donors.

# News

## AP set to conserve Gambella Nat'l Park

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – African Parks has expressed its commitment to supporting wildlife conservation and ecosystem development in Gambella National Park with the implementation of a Conservation-Led Economy (CLE).

The African Parks (AP), CEO Peter Fearnhead told *The Ethiopian Herald* that his organization has agreed with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and the Gambella State administration to help restore the landscape and channel significant investment into the region.

Accordingly, AP will provide technical, managerial, and financial support to ensure the sustainable conservation in the Gambella National Park, he said.

Fearnhead disclosed that the organization has allocated an estimated three million USD to undertake the conservation works in the park.

He also mentioned that the project would create over 150 permanent jobs in the area.



Peter Fearnhead

AP promised to continue the support of conserving other parks in Ethiopia by maintaining constructive discussion with relevant bodies in the years to come, he expressed.

The CEO noted that his organization

has valuable experience in preserving wildlife and ecosystem which is crucial for Ethiopia to learn from and implement to derive adequate benefits from the sector sustainably.

Similarly, encouraging and facilitating commercial enterprises to do business around the parks would help to increase visitors' satisfaction, improve the livelihoods of the local community and the income of the enterprises, Fearnhead suggested.

He further stated that spending money in the parks also mean creating meaningful jobs, building business, infrastructure, and benefiting residents.

The African Parks, which began its conservation works in Zambia and Malawi, is now preserving over 20 protected areas in more than 10 African countries, in which, the Gambella National Park is its 23<sup>rd</sup> project, according to the CEO.

The wildlife conservation organization was founded in 2000 with the ambition to conserve wildlife and ecosystem in partnership with governments, local communities, and other stakeholders.

## President appeals...

He highlighted the need for additional funding to complete the building under construction at the association's site, which is projected to cost 4.3 billion Birr. To help achieve this goal, a live fundraising event will take place on February 8 during the *Seifu on EBS* show, broadcasted on YouTube.

"February 8 is a pivotal day for Mekedonia," the President said. "It marks the first day when the association seeks intellectual, financial, and material support for its large-scale projects." He urged everyone to contribute, not only through financial donations but also with ideas and a sense of national solidarity, in order to help implement these compassionate initiatives.

The Mekedonia Humanitarian Association is working to expand its network to 240 branches across the country. According to Biniam, the association currently spends approximately two million Birr daily on various expenses, including employee salaries.

Biniam also called on religious leaders to help mobilize their communities in support of the association and to encourage participation in the upcoming live fundraising event.

Currently, Mekedonia supports over 8,000 elderly, mentally ill, and disabled individuals across 44 cities, with plans to expand this number to 20,000 in the near future.



## Capital market bridges ...

Mentioning the critical financial challenges that the emerging startups have encountered to start businesses so far, he said that this measure would have a valuable role not only to smoothen their financial flow needs but also help accelerate the national economic growth.

Selamyihun also stated that the innovators have been running their businesses through the loan and grants accessed from the government and various organizations to transfigure their innovative ideas into tangible actions.

The progress of the capital market would help advance startups with the cutting-edge technologies and has numerous benefits for the communities, investors and other companies' stock sharing and facilitates accessible financial capacities, he said.

Moreover, there needs to be a robust security exchange regulatory body that evaluates the profitability and entire operations of emerging startups, he added.

Stating the lengthy bureaucratic processes to get loans from the banking sector, he emphasized that it would also help solve this and other related financial challenges facing startups and stimulate their

developments.

Ashwa Technology S.C CEO Daniel Bekele for his part highlighted that the commencement of capital market in the country marks a significant step in promoting problem solving innovative startups financial capability and improving productivity.

According to the CEO, the developments of startups bring a lot of opportunities not only for investors but also for the country's thriving future.

Sharing the above justification, Daniel said that this measure will help address their financial limitations and serve as a springboard to transform to the next move.

"As most startups are driven by the youth, it helps change their theoretical knowledge into practical skills through sustainable financial provisions thereby transforming their profile to the national and international level. Consistent financial provisions are required as a huge number of startups are emerging and it is crucial to support the capital market." Daniel said.

They recommended startups to pay attention and make preparations to fully leverage the latecomer advantage wisely.

## AU Summit: Showcasing...

civil servants with essential skills, including diplomatic protocols and e-ticketing services, reflecting the growing importance of modernized guest service in today's globalized world.

Ethiopian officials, including Foreign Minister Gedion Timotiws (PhD), have commended the dedication of participants in the recent training program, recognizing their crucial role as cultural ambassadors for Ethiopia. This initiative not only underscores Ethiopia's readiness to host the upcoming AU leaders' summit but also exemplifies its commitment to aligning traditional hospitality with contemporary Pan-African and global standards.

Preparations for the summit extend beyond training, encompassing enhanced hospitality services across the country. Key stakeholders, including hotels and tourism operators, are actively engaged in these efforts. The Ethiopian Tourism and Hotel Market Association, in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, is working diligently to ensure seamless and all-inclusive service delivery for all guests.

To enrich the guest experience, Ethiopian coffee ceremonies and cultural performances will be integrated throughout the summit. This showcases Ethiopia's intention to leverage its rich cultural heritage as a tool of diplomacy, leaving a lasting impression on international guests. "Ethiopia aims to combine diplomacy with soft power," stated Getahun Alemu, President of the

Ethiopian Tourism and Hotel Market Association, in an earlier interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Ethiopia's preparations for the AU Summit extend beyond logistics, encompassing a multifaceted approach to solidify its position as a leading diplomatic hub in Africa. Hosting the summit presents a unique opportunity to showcase the nation's contributions to African unity and development, including achievements in urban development, tourism, and economic reforms, which will be highlighted through guided tours and city excursions for visiting dignitaries, according to Foreign Affairs State Minister, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano.

Effective communication management is paramount. Government Communication Service State Minister Tesfahun Gobeza emphasized the importance of robust media strategies and urged all stakeholders to embrace their roles as national responsibilities. This underscores Ethiopia's commitment to maintaining its leadership in African diplomacy.

Ethiopia views the AU Summit as a pivotal opportunity to assert its relevance in an era of critical regional and continental cooperation. By mobilizing its resources – from volunteers to hoteliers – and delivering seamless hospitality, Ethiopia aims to transform the 2025 Summit into a showcase of its capabilities and reaffirm its central role in shaping Africa's future.



# Ethiopia serves as a good example for countries undertaking economic reforms

Ambassador Randrianantoandro Eric

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

*Ethiopia and Madagascar have longstanding diplomatic ties, focusing on peace, stability, and development. Both countries have embassies in their capitals, promoting trade, cultural exchange, and cooperation. Last February, foreign affairs ministers discussed potential cooperation in tourism, leather production, agriculture, and aviation.*

*Today's guest on the Ethiopian Herald is Randrianantoandro Eric, Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of Madagascar in Ethiopia. During his time with us, Ambassador Eric discussed political, economic, and social affairs that will strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. Enjoy reading!*

**Ethiopia and Madagascar have a friendly relation and collaboration in trade, culture, and regional development. Can you share more details on this?**

The modern relationship between Madagascar and Ethiopia began with Madagascar's early independence. The shared views of the two countries' leaders even led Madagascar to be one of the founders of the OAU, now the AU, in Ethiopia. Two years later, in 1963, His Excellency, Emperor HaileSELLASIE I, visited Madagascar for four days.

Madagascar and Ethiopia have maintained a good and peaceful relationship at a high level for many years. This longstanding relationship is not new. In addition to the political ties between the two countries, economic cooperation is also crucial.

During the last summit, the two foreign ministers discussed various fields of cooperation between the two countries. They talked about tourism, agriculture, leather production and aviation. More and more Ethiopians are visiting Madagascar for vacations, birthday celebrations or visits.

They visit many places, with a particular interest in beaches, especially the beach of Nosy Be. The embassy facilitates the process, providing free visas for stays of less than 15 days. Ethiopians are welcome, and even if they cannot visit the embassy before departure, they will still receive a free visa upon arrival in Madagascar.

Tourism is a significant area of cooperation, with many Ethiopian agencies involved in tourism in Madagascar. These agencies, run by Ethiopians and owned by Ethiopian businessmen, bring tourists from Gulf countries to visit beaches in Madagascar. Ethiopian Airlines plays a crucial role in linking Madagascar with major cities worldwide within a day, benefiting tourists and both countries.

The cooperation also extends to agriculture and leather production. Both countries face



similar challenges, such as drought and climate change. Ethiopian researchers have visited Madagascar to study sorghum, a crop that grows well in Ethiopia's arid regions and in the south of Madagascar. This cooperation has been fruitful, and efforts will be made to popularize sorghum cultivation among small farmers in Madagascar.

The cooperation can also extend to other cereals, vegetables, and joint research on climate. Bilateral cooperation in leather production can benefit producers in both countries, as they share knowledge and expertise. Ethiopian Airlines has increased its flights between the two countries, providing more opportunities for business, tourism, and citizen mobility.

Both governments can work together to deepen mutual benefits and prevent transnational crimes associated with free movement. Madagascar has proposed draft agreements to the Ethiopian government, which has shown a willingness to collaborate further. These are just a few areas of successful cooperation that can be further developed.

**In February 2024, foreign ministers of Ethiopia and Madagascar met to discuss cooperation in tourism, agriculture, aviation ... etc. How would you describe**

**the steps taken by the two governments to initiate cooperation in these areas?**

We are currently in the process of implementing the discussions held by the two leaders and foreign ministers of the two countries. We are working to turn these discussions into tangible actions.

As previously mentioned, we have proposed a framework for cooperation. Additionally, we are promoting cultural exchanges between Ethiopia and Madagascar by inviting Malagasy artists and musicians to events in Ethiopia to foster mutual understanding between the two nations.

Both governments and the private sector are actively engaged in these efforts. We are pleased with the progress being made and appreciate the support of our Ethiopian partners. Collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines is crucial for further developing and strengthening our relationship, as well as combating transnational crime. Following the meeting of the two leaders, the private sector and diplomats are working together to translate these discussions into concrete outcomes. This is a positive step forward in our cooperation efforts.

**Provide a brief overview of the trade relations between the two countries, focusing on trade volume. What are the**

**major challenges in solidifying relations?**

We have some trade exports and imports from Madagascar, imports from Ethiopia, and Ethiopia imports from Madagascar. However, the volume of trade between the two countries remains low, despite a slight increase last year. There are opportunities for growth between the two countries, especially considering our membership in COMESA, which provides a framework for trade.

Madagascar has products that Ethiopians may need, such as a variety of fruits, spices like vanilla and cloves, precious stones, and seafood. Ethiopian businessmen have shown interest in raw materials for soap production in Madagascar, as well as other products. Some Ethiopian businessmen have already established small factories in Madagascar, including candle and mattress manufacturing and barber shops.

Ethiopian businessmen import products from Madagascar and export them to Gulf countries. Building relationships between businessmen from both countries is crucial for boosting trade. A major challenge identified by businessmen from both countries is the need to ease regulatory pressures, lower domestic customs duties, and improve access to information about each other's markets.

*Continued to page 13*

# Editorial

## Ethiopia's thoughtful preparation

The African Union Summit, scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on February 17-18, 2025, will serve as a pivotal gathering of African Union member states, civil society organizations, philanthropic funders, and government representatives from various ministries. The summit will provide a significant platform for participants to reaffirm their collective commitment to Agenda 2063, a comprehensive blueprint for the continent's growth, unity, and development over the next several decades. Through strategic discussions and collaborative efforts, the summit aims to accelerate the implementation of key initiatives outlined in Agenda 2063, focusing on sustainable development, peace and security, economic integration, and social progress.

With the African Union (AU) summit just around the corner, Ethiopia is preparing to showcase its renowned hospitality and reaffirm its dedication to fostering unity across the African continent. The country has made remarkable progress in its preparations to welcome the distinguished leaders, diplomats, and global delegates who will converge in Addis Ababa for this pivotal gathering.

The AU summit is far more than a routine diplomatic meeting; it is an important occasion for reflection, dialogue, and collaborative action aimed at addressing the most pressing challenges facing Africa. Held annually in Addis Ababa, the heart of the African Union, the summit serves as a platform for member states to discuss vital issues such as peace, security, economic development, and sustainability, while shaping a collective vision for the future. As the host nation, Ethiopia plays a crucial role in setting the stage for meaningful conversations and ensuring the success of the event.

In preparation for this significant summit, Ethiopia has launched a comprehensive set of initiatives aimed at fulfilling the logistical, security, and infrastructural requirements needed to create a seamless experience for all attendees. The Ethiopian government, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, has worked diligently to finalize arrangements for the summit, ensuring that every aspect of the event is meticulously planned and executed.

A key focus of Ethiopia's preparations has been the development and enhancement of key infrastructure in Addis Ababa. The city's roadways, hotels, conference venues, and transport systems are being upgraded to accommodate the anticipated influx of guests. In addition, substantial improvements to the facilities at the African Union headquarters, along with bolstered security measures, will ensure that the summit proceeds smoothly and without incident. Ethiopia's transport and logistics networks are fully equipped to provide reliable services, ensuring efficient arrivals and departures for delegates.

Equally critical is the country's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the security of all summit participants. In collaboration with the AU, the Ethiopian government has prioritized the establishment of a secure environment for both delegates and the general public. A comprehensive security strategy will be in place to guarantee the safety of all attendees, while maintaining the peaceful and diplomatic nature of the summit.

Additionally, Ethiopia's renowned tradition of hospitality will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on the international community. The Ethiopian people are celebrated for their warmth and friendliness, and the upcoming summit offers an opportunity for the country to highlight these cultural values. The rich diversity of Ethiopian cuisine, coupled with the nation's vibrant cultural heritage, will serve as a unique and memorable backdrop to the diplomatic discussions that unfold.

At a time when Africa is grappling with numerous challenges, the AU summit serves as a crucial opportunity for dialogue, cooperation, and collective action. Ethiopia, through its meticulous preparation and steadfast support of the African Union's mission, stands ready to facilitate meaningful outcomes and foster cooperation among member states.

In sum, Ethiopia's thorough preparation for the AU summit reflects its deep respect for the African Union and the core values of unity and collaboration it embodies. As the event draws nearer, Ethiopia stands confident in its readiness to host its esteemed guests, ensuring that this summit will be another important step toward a prosperous, peaceful, and unified Africa.

# Opinion

## Comprehensive efforts to promote peace

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

leaders and institutions.

The Pretoria Peace Agreement signed between the federal government of Ethiopia and TPLF proves Ethiopia's capability to resolve disputes through peaceful means, bolster coexistence as well as ensure sustainable peace and other related aspects.

It should be borne in mind that following the war that lasted for two years in the northern part of the country, the region persistently went from the frying pan into the fire and moved into uncharted waters. However, through the commitment of the federal government, peace was set in motion prevailing in every corner of the country after the agreement at the earliest possible time.

Although some worrywarts pulled out all the stops to belittle the peace accord under the auspicious of the African Union, all their efforts went for nothing.

In actual fact, the peace accord has chartered a fresh perspective in all areas of the country settling differences in a calm and respectful manner. It needs to be taken into consideration that in the aftermath of the peace accord the delivery of humanitarian aid strengthened in the conflict affected areas of the northern part of the country has been worth mentioning.

It is important to emphasize that the government in a number of situations brought to light its approach to comply with the rules and regulations of the African Union (AU) led peace agreement. The country's stance demonstrates its self-reliance in Africa's competence to get to the bottom of its quandaries with success has been pointing in the right direction.

The Ministry of Peace and Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church announced to jointly work on national peace building activities in the country, according to information obtained from a local media.

The Ministry of Peace and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church have recently had an acquaintance event. On the occasion, the Minister of Peace, Mohammed Idris and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Patriarch, Abune Mathias discussed ways to strengthening the ongoing peace building efforts in the country.

The Holy Patriarch confirmed that the church will work more diligently and closely with the government than ever before on peace building activities. The patriarch also expressed his appreciation and respect for the minister coming to the Patriarchate for acquaintance and discussion.

The Minister, for his part, appealed to the church for national peace prayers to strengthen prevailing peace building efforts and tackle existing challenges, drawing upon the church's extensive and well-established experience in peace and state building.

He further confirmed that the government will take whatever price for peace building efforts, pledging his ministry's dedication to work in cooperation and support with all religious

Even though the whole kit and caboodle went from the deep end to the shallow end, the northern part of the country in the present climate has jumpstarted leading a peaceful life and breathing a sigh of relief. The colossal move of the federal government without the interference of any third party proves the unwavering commitment of the government to ensure peace and tranquility.

It is common knowledge that the country has sustained moving forward putting in place the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration process. On account of the promising strides of the peace agreement, the war-torn areas have started attaining the desired goal within the shortest possible time.

It should be remembered that some groups moved heaven and earth to put a damper on the extremely significant initiative and promising development of the Pretoria peace agreement.

Whenever conflict arises among the various Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia, they put their conflict resolution mechanisms in place to resolve quandaries and conundrums. As peace is the pillar of development, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should do everything they can to ensure peace and tranquility in every square inch of the country.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has been discharging a broad range of undertakings with the purpose of resolving differences. It is anticipated that the upcoming national dialogue for sure will resolve backlogs of predicaments surfacing in some parts of the country at the earliest possible juncture.

It is recalled that speaking to local media, ENDC Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) in the recent past said the commission is working through streamlined home-grown knowledge, culture, and inclusive dialogue frameworks. The commissioner has also mentioned that it is facilitating and employing all the way out to table any of the militants' issues based on their own consent either in the form of face-to-face or via their representatives.

Unless each and every segment of the society works in close collaboration to ensure peace and tranquility achieving the pursued objective will be an impossible mission.

Apart from assisting the progress of the rebuilding of numerous services comprising electric supply, telecom, air transport, and banking among others, the inhabitants of the area set in motion a sigh of relief. Notwithstanding the fact that a lot has been said with regard to AU's capability in brokering the peace agreement, the continental bloc proved complainers wrong in ensuring peace. In point of fact, AU's role is worthy of immense admiration and overwhelming adoration.

On account of the positive moves of the peace accord, some worrywarts have sustained confounding the international community as a whole with quite a lot of unreliable information that do not demonstrate the current circumstances and the ongoing realities.

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



## The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays  
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

### Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22  
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62  
email- epa@press.et

### Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com  
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15  
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press  
Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew  
email- workubelachew@press.et  
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city  
Woreda - 05, House No----  
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama  
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

### Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu  
Elizabeth Mengistu  
Zekarias Woldemariam  
Desta Geberehiwot  
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et  
email: ethiopianherald@press.et  
Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/  
The Ethiopian Herald

# Art & Culture



## Connecting with roots: The journey of awakening African practices

By: MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Historical books have shown that Africa had been preserving traditional knowledge and practices for many years. However, after the arrival of Europeans for colonization, traditional practices began to diminish as exploitation primarily targeted the socio-cultural and religious ties of the people. Since culture and social construction are essential for identifying and shaping society, exploitation in these areas was multidimensional and extensively documented in the continent's history.

Sociologists and historians have found evidence that Africa had its own knowledge and practices to deal with life's challenges. From ancient times to the present day, the people of the region had a strong connection with nature. They sought solutions to their problems, such as health issues, through various traditional methods.

As agreed upon continentally and planned by the African Union, African issues should be resolved and decided by Africans themselves. There are various efforts in every aspect to achieve this goal. Nowadays, Africans are increasingly looking into their ancestors' knowledge and traditions. Experts in the field argue that Africa has much to offer for exploration through science. Traditional practices and connections with nature are gaining attention from scientists worldwide.

Professor David G. Milu, Africa's most published author and scholar of African spirituality, recently gave a lecture on Africa's potential and history of traditional practices and beliefs before colonialism. He noted that the current religion and Western civilization were deliberately introduced by Europeans to influence African identity. The practice of African traditions was portrayed as primitive, while adopting white philosophies and beliefs became synonymous with civilization. However, Professor Milu believes that Africa is now

reclaiming its culture and traditions. He encourages scientists to come to Africa, study traditional practices, and use the knowledge to solve human problems.

Dr. Joyce Wangari, a multidisciplinary psychologist, expressed concern that Africans do not always value their own prophets, knowledge, and traditions, instead elevating prophets from other regions. She believes that African knowledge and traditions have successfully addressed challenges that science alone cannot solve, particularly in mental health. She advocates for a combination of clinical diagnosis and African spiritual practices to tackle such issues.

Dr. Sylvester Annami said, a lecturer and scientist, noted that lifestyle diseases are increasingly affecting Africa due to people moving away from traditional foods. The continent's cultural food systems contain nutritious and organic ingredients, as evidenced during the Covid-19 pandemic, where reliance on local foods like ginger helped Africans combat the virus. He emphasized the importance of traditional foods for health and resilience.

In Ethiopia, people have preserved traditional knowledge of using natural ingredients for treating diseases. The writer recalls grandmothers using natural plants as herbal medicines, such as curing malaria with traditional way of treatments. There is a renewed interest in tracing back to these traditions and knowledge, with universities and research institutions conducting scientific examinations and research to preserve and utilize this valuable heritage.

Dr. Seid Mohammed, the director of the Language and Culture Research Institute at Arba Minch University, was interviewed exclusively by *The Ethiopian Herald*. He mentioned that the university focuses on research and studies that explore the indigenous traditional practices and knowledge of the nation. Dr. Mohammed emphasized that Ethiopia holds hidden

knowledge and traditional practices that could greatly benefit the nation if studied and explored scientifically. The institute is currently conducting studies in the Southern Nations and Nationalities region, where they have discovered magnificent traditional practices related to nature and spirit.

For example, in the GamoDubusha culture, the practice of truth-telling is connected to nature. When someone makes an oath, they are surrounded by elders who point out natural elements like mountains, trees, birds, and graves. If the person speaks falsely, the powerful association with nature causes them to shake. The institute has organized a scientific team to further study these unique practices and identify the scientific justifications behind them.

Professor David emphasized the importance of the scientific community and education sectors delving into this hidden knowledge, demystifying myths, and preserving African culture. He urged researchers to explore these traditions to prevent history from being forgotten.

Scholars argue that Africa's traditional practices could be the source of modern science. By examining and understanding these traditions, we can link science, research, and traditional medicine to benefit our communities and continent. Dr. Mohammed highlighted Ethiopia's wealth of traditional medicines and practices, emphasizing the importance of approaching them scientifically to benefit the nation.

African traditions should be a primary focus for scholars, as they hold the key to societal improvement and development. By incorporating indigenous practices into educational curriculums, we can pass down the knowledge and influence future generations. Understanding and preserving the real history of African ancestors is crucial for shaping the region's future. Let us prioritize our traditional values and strengthen them through research.

## A memo to my wife

BY ALEM HAILU GKRISTOS

Though I'm  
Less attractive  
As I'm not a fool  
I set criteria  
My wife to be  
Ravishingly beautiful.

Though I have  
A wandering eye  
Cast yours  
On lothario's why?

Though my  
Achilles' heel  
Is infidelity  
I demand from you  
Unflinching loyalty.

Though  
The breadwinner  
Is I  
To juggle  
Two or more jobs  
Try not you why?  
Of course  
Forget not to tackle  
Domestic chores.

Though I come home  
When peep stars bright  
Get home when  
Days cede place to night!

Though I'm spendthrift  
I expect you  
To prepare a dish  
I relish.

Though I don't know  
My son's grade  
I'm afraid  
Help him out with  
Assignments you have  
Before he  
Goes to bed.

Though I'm  
Growing grotesque  
And old  
Why don't you  
Exercise care  
Your beauty to  
Maintain or hold?

Though I'm peevish  
Fix in your mind  
You must not  
Pay me in kind.

Though I'm  
To you  
Less respectful  
And rude  
To whatever I say  
Be crude.

Though I'm dictatorial  
And prefer to use  
The stick  
This habit of mine  
Get not sick.

Though I'm  
In love making weak  
Contentment elsewhere  
Do not try to seek.  
Though I'm  
Willing with you  
On marital avenue  
Long to walk  
Shun we must  
On the complication  
A hard talk.

Though I'm  
A grown up  
Pamper me  
As a newly born  
Its mother  
That has to worn.

# Law & Politics

## Ethiopia's currency swap agreements: A recipe to strengthen economic stability, reducing dependency

BY KALEAB GIRMA

USD has historically been the world's primary reserve currency, dominating international trade and finance. However, a growing number of countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, are beginning to challenge this long-standing reliance on the dollar. They are actively seeking alternatives to enhance their economic sovereignty and reduce vulnerability to fluctuations in the US economy and its monetary policies.

Ethiopia is among these nations taking proactive steps to diminish its dependence on the dollar. The country has been engaging in currency swap agreements with key trading partners, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and China, and is exploring similar arrangements with Russia. These agreements allow Ethiopia to conduct trade using its own currency or that of its partners, which can help stabilize its economy by reducing exposure to dollar exchange rate volatility.

Moreover, by fostering these partnerships, Ethiopia aims to streamline its trade processes, making transactions more efficient and accessible. This shift not only promotes local industries by encouraging the use of domestic goods but also strengthens Ethiopia's position in the global market. As more countries follow suit, the traditional dominance of the dollar may face increasing challenges, leading to a more diversified international monetary landscape.

The dominance of the US dollar in global trade has its roots in the aftermath of World War II. In 1944, delegates from 44 nations, including Ethiopia, South Africa, and Egypt, convened in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to establish a new economic order for the post-war era. This historic gathering resulted in the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). A pivotal decision made during this meeting was the IMF's policy of pegging member countries' currencies to the US dollar, which at that time was backed by gold. This arrangement not only solidified the dollar's status but also positioned it as the central currency for global trade.

Even after the US suspended the gold standard in 1971, the dollar's preeminence continued unabated. Today, it constitutes over 58% of global foreign exchange reserves and accounts for more than 50% of international trade transactions. However, as geopolitical landscapes evolve and economies become increasingly interconnected, nations worldwide including Ethiopia are actively exploring strategies to diminish their dependence on the dollar and seek alternative currencies.

Ethiopia has made significant strides in this direction, recently pursuing de-dollarization through currency swap agreements with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and China. Discussions for a similar arrangement with



Russia are also in progress.

In an exclusive interview, Sergei Ryabkov, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, highlighted the optimistic talks between Ethiopia and Russia regarding this swap deal, suggesting that an agreement may soon be reached.

According to the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), data shows that these agreements will allow Ethiopia to trade with these nations using its own currency, the birr, as well as the local currencies of its partners Emirati dirhams and Chinese Yuan. Specifically, the UAE and NBE have agreed to swap up to 3 billion dirhams and 46 billion birr, while a comparable agreement with China promotes the use of the birr and Yuan in trade.

He mentioned "We advocate for an expanded adoption of local currencies in trade and transactions with all partners. For example, in our trade with China, over 80% of transactions are now conducted in local currency."

Additionally, utilizing local currencies is integral to initiatives like the National Development Plan (NDP), which includes loans and other measures designed to address shortfalls in local and municipal budgets, he noted.

These currency swap agreements hold numerous advantages for Ethiopia. By bypassing the US dollar in trade transactions, the nation aims to mitigate the volatility and foreign exchange shortages that have historically hampered its economic growth, he said.

In his part, Economist Advisor and Experts, Mossisa Huruma (PhD), stated that these agreements facilitate smoother and more efficient cross-border transactions, enhancing trade relations with key economic partners.

Ethiopia has long grappled with foreign exchange shortages, a challenge that has

had significant repercussions for crucial sectors like agriculture; he said that the country often struggles to import essential agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilizers, many of which are sourced from countries like Russia. These imports typically require payment in USD currency, adding to the financial strain on Ethiopian businesses and farmers.

By entering into currency swap agreements with Russia, China, and the UAE, Ethiopia can alleviate these challenges. For instance, trading directly in birr with these countries simplifies the importation of goods, thereby lowering costs and supporting the agricultural sector, which is a cornerstone of Ethiopia's economy.

Mossisa further explained that rising food prices in Ethiopia, driven by supply and demand imbalances, are often linked to the restrictions associated with dollar-based trade. The new agreements enable more flexible and direct trade relationships, potentially stabilizing import costs and contributing to price stability in local markets. This, in turn, would bolster food security and reduce inflationary pressures, he said.

He emphasized the standing of these currency swap agreements for Ethiopia's economic stability. By providing liquidity in local currencies, the deals with the UAE, China, and Russia allow for more effective settlement of cross-border transactions. This financial and commercial cooperation enhances the flow of currency and goods, reducing reliance on third-party currencies like the US dollar.

Moreover, these currency swaps reflect a broader global trend towards a multipolar monetary system, wherein countries increasingly seek to diminish their dependency on the dollar.

Ethiopia's active participation in this evolving system empowers it to exert greater control over its economic future, thereby enhancing its resilience against

external economic shocks and fluctuations in global currency values.

The agreements with the UAE, China, and Russia represent vibrant steps toward improving Ethiopia's economic stability and fostering growth. By providing the nation with increased flexibility in international trade, these deals ensure access to essential resources while mitigating the risks associated with the volatility of global currencies, particularly the US dollar.

Facilitating trade in local currencies not only stabilizes Ethiopia's foreign exchange reserves but also strengthens its agricultural sector and helps alleviate rising import costs. As the Ethiopian economy becomes more integrated into the global marketplace, these currency swap agreements present a promising path forward, one that could enhance financial independence and support sustainable long-term growth.

This shift towards local currencies in international trade is not merely a reaction to economic pressures; it represents a strategic move towards greater sovereignty in financial matters.

By reducing reliance on the US dollar, Ethiopia joins a growing number of nations that recognize the benefits of diversifying their economic relationships. This strategy not only protects against the vulnerabilities associated with dollar dependency but also fosters closer ties with emerging economies that are willing to engage in mutually beneficial trade agreements.

Besides, the move towards de-dollarization through currency swap agreements with the UAE, China, and Russia marks a significant development in Ethiopia's economic strategy. This proactive approach to building a more resilient and independent economic future continues, and the implications of these agreements may extend far beyond immediate financial benefits, potentially reshaping Ethiopia's role in the international economic community for years to come.

# Opinion

## Addis Ababa is becoming more pan African metropolis

BY GETACHEW MINAS

As an ancient nation's capital, Addis Ababa is part and parcel of history, culture, continental diplomacy, and modernity steering urbanization in Africa. It is also proliferated with social and cultural relics, including ancient Orthodox Christian Churches, Mosques, and other religious entities. It is also the seat for international and regional organizations. It is known for its efficient air flights to and from African cities as well as other countries. These connections have made Addis Ababa one of the most accessible cities in the continent. The Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) has decades of experience in safe, efficient, and reliable connections in Africa and other continents. The Government has put in place simplified access to visa for travelers, including conference visas and visa on arrival. Travelers have easy access to hotels and conference centers upon arrival. There are efficient transport service providers for guests in the city.

Addis Ababa serves as a conference center and venue for the African Union and the United Nations and other international meetings. It provides ultra-modern and luxurious accommodations and excellent facilities for leaders, officials and technical personnel who attend periodic meetings. These are some of the events that attached the name of political capital of Africa to Addis Ababa. It provides extraordinary and unparalleled access to African policymakers and diplomatic communities.

As mentioned earlier, it is the center of Ethiopian culture with traditional music, dance, cuisine, and festivals that promote any event. Diplomats and tourists have the opportunities to explore significant landmarks such as the National Museum, Holy Trinity Cathedral, and the Ethnological Museum and other similar centers of interest. As a medium of connectivity, Addis Ababa is considered as the gateway to Africa, serving as a hub for international flights to and from the continent.

Experts have revealed that EAL alone has direct connections with over 150 destinations across the world. These render Addis Ababa as the most hospitable destination in Africa for participants in international meetings or other events. The international airport has been making better stride carrying the flag of the country with a pre prioritized aim to serve the world.

Visa-on-arrival is also available for tourists from AU member states and selected countries. Citizens from Kenya and Djibouti and other holders of diplomatic or service passports from any country are given visa-up-on arrival. On this issue, more information is given by the "Ethiopian Visa Guide" or the local Addis Ababa guides.

The city has also conference centers built for large diplomatic gatherings, including

the AU conference center located within the AU headquarters and the recently inaugurated Adwa Memorial Museum. This venue provides efficient facilities and security that serves high-level meetings and conferences. Also, the United Nations Conference Center provides several meeting rooms, VIP centers, indoor exhibition spaces and networking areas. To host events in these centers, it is necessary to follow strict security protocols. Those conducting meetings in these centers benefit from state-of-the-art conference facilities, advanced technology, and comprehensive support services.

If a conference center does not satisfy the needs of the organizers of meetings, Addis Ababa has plenty of alternative international and local meeting centers with state-of-the-art meeting rooms. These are known to be world-class venues for visiting diplomats and other visitors.

Apart from modern meeting centers, there are hotel venues across the city where diplomatic events take place. These venues are luxurious five-star hotels situated at the center of the city. They are known for their modern design and world-class facilities and amenities. Some of these hotels are located at the International Airport and they are known for their large ballrooms accommodating hundreds of guests.

Others hotels also combine modern facilities with traditional Ethiopian hospitality, creating a unique and memorable experience. They provide flexible meeting rooms, including beautiful gardens for outdoor events. A few of them are set on hilltops, offering panoramic city views and a serene environment for events. Their meeting rooms include a grand ballroom that can accommodate hundreds of guests.

Addis Ababa has served as the political capital of Africa for several decades since the inception of the OAU. Its stature within Africa offers numerous strategic advantages to organizers of meetings and events. As mentioned earlier, the AU and UNECA are located in the city, making it a center for political and economic meetings that shape the continent of Africa. Experts are of the opinion that those who attend meetings have an excellent opportunity to IT network that technically serve delegates engaged in significant continental affairs.

Addis Ababa is the seat of many embassies and international organizations fostering a vibrant diplomatic community. Diplomatic missions and delegates may easily facilitate bilateral and multilateral meetings, discussions, and partnerships for events to promote international cooperation and dialogue. The Ethiopian city has, therefore, immense experience in handling such events ensuring all the necessary protocols in place.

Ethiopia is one of the most culturally rich countries in Africa and the world. Exploring

Addis Ababa's cultural landscape connects visitors with the country's history. Through music, food, festivals and most importantly the coffee ceremony, the city provides rich and immersive cultural experiences to complement any event. The Ethiopian music and dance are, for example, deeply intertwined with the country's cultural and spiritual life. To experience in person, diplomats and country representatives are enjoying authentic cultural events, traditional dishes, dancing and music that reveal a variety of traditional styles from across the country.

The Ethiopian festivals are very fascinating for visitors and tourists. The Ethiopian calendar is full of events reflecting cultural and religious festivals throughout the year. There are important religious festivals, commemorating the Christian and Moslem holidays. During these holidays, the city becomes a center of attraction with processions, prayers, and celebrations. These religious events leave visitors and tourists with lifetime memories.

As mentioned earlier, the city's historic landmarks will add more depth to events of itinerary and cultural knowledge of visitors giving them a chance to bond with Ethiopia's fascinating past. They will also complement the contemporary cultural highlights, giving them context on how Addis Ababa emerged as a unique African city. Experts give advice to visitors on making valuable tour of the city with focus on important highlights. These are ethnological museums and various cathedrals and mosques.

Addis Ababa earned its importance as an African political center because of Ethiopia's role in defending itself against colonial and neocolonial interference. Except the five year occupation of only a few towns by the Fascist Italian forces during WW II, there was no colonial rule experienced by Ethiopia. The Fascist force had been expelled by strong patriots who fought against the imperialist power. This victory had once again confirmed the independence of the Ethiopian people for thousands of years.

The neocolonialists have also failed to directly control the country through armed and economic forces. However, having accepted their limitations they designed the strategy of destabilizing the country using religious, ethnic, tribal and clannish power mongers. The neocolonialists supported one of these elements against the others just to secure access to the country's precious resources, including human labor and rare earth materials.

Addis Ababa, as a center of economic and social activities in the country, the concerned authorities, will definitely resolve issues related to the natural resources of the country. Here only precious resources and rare earth materials are referred to for showing the natural wealth of Ethiopia

and role of Addis Ababa. As a seat of the AU, it shares its experiences in designing African policy on the use of continental resources, including precious materials. These resources are exploited by former colonialists who interfere in the internal affairs of African countries.

Addis Ababa is in a position to share its experience on how to reverse alien interference focused on the exploitation of continental resources. Thus, the city serves Africa not only as a diplomatic center but also as an instrument of economic integration. Socially, the city is a hub of various cultures of the people of the continent. African musicians, singers and dancers come from every corner of the continent to display their unique show. These events take place on special ceremonies attended by concerned officials and experts representing their respective countries at the AU.

On these occasions experts present the outcomes of their research work on various issues. They are accompanied by musicians and entertainers while they deliver their works. Addis Ababa provides luxurious conference rooms for those attending African cultural shows and speeches by professionals in selected areas of concern. These events represent both diplomatic and cultural events on current African issues. Before African countries were totally liberated, issues focused on ways and means of assisting those who struggle to liberate their respective countries.

Some countries, including Ethiopia, used to provide shelter for the leaders of liberation movements. They used to fight along with these movements. After total liberation, the focus was on economic and social development of the liberated countries. As a seat of the OAU and later AU, Ethiopia has played tremendous role in all the pre-and-post independence of African countries.

Currently, Addis Ababa is facilitating conferences, meetings and workshops on the political, economic and cultural areas related to the African continent. Former colonial and neocolonial masters of Africa have never wanted the critical role Ethiopia played. These alien powers have always been tarnishing the valuable results of decisions taken by African Heads of States and Governments, including Ethiopian leaders, with the objective of keeping the continent underdeveloped. But, this is only an outdated strategy in a world where the former dominant powers are playing only second fiddle with a contrivance to delude the African people once again. With Addis Ababa as a facilitator of AU economic and social development, the age of delusion seems to be over in the continent that reflects bright future.

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



# Society

## Eradicating malaria: A path to a healthier future

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Malaria has a profound impact on mothers and infants, contributing to high morbidity and mortality rates. According to documents, following the conducive climatic condition for the spread of malaria throughout the year, coupled with inadequate health systems, the situation is more severe in Sub-Saharan Africa resulting on the deaths of millions of people every year. Millions of people, most of whom are young children die every year from the disease, according to documents.

Over 90 percent of all malaria deaths occur in Sub-Saharan Africa, with children under the age of five being disproportionately affected. A child dies of malaria approximately every two minutes. What is more, the growing challenge of drug resistance complicates efforts to combat the disease.

In pregnant women, the disease can lead to severe complications, including anemia, preterm delivery, low birth weight, and maternal death. The malaria parasite disrupts the placental blood supply, which impairs fetal growth and increases the risk of stillbirths. For infants, malaria significantly raises the likelihood of neonatal mortality, particularly if the mother is infected during pregnancy. Newborns that contract malaria in the first few months of life face a higher risk of severe illness and death due to their underdeveloped immune systems. They [newborns] may experience low immunity, which makes them more susceptible to malaria infections. Moreover, maternal malaria can contribute to malnutrition and weakened immune systems, making both mothers and infants more vulnerable to other diseases.

The burden of malaria on healthcare systems is huge, as prevention and treatment efforts require specialized care, including intermittent preventive treatment for pregnant women. Efforts to reduce malaria transmission and provide timely care are crucial in improving the health outcomes for both mothers and their infants, as to studies.

In recognition of malaria's devastating effects—both in terms of fatalities and long-term health complications for survivors—Ethiopia has taken extensive measures and implemented various approaches targeting to combat malaria and safeguard public health although the disease has not yet been eliminated.

In relation to the burden of malaria and its long term health impacts, mainly on pregnant women and newborns, *The Ethiopian Herald* approached Abel Gedefaw, an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Hawassa University to gain deeper insights on this same issue.

With his extensive background in maternal and child health and infectious diseases, coupled with his role as the national Principal Investigator for the PREGART clinical trial, Abel (MD) is uniquely positioned to illuminate the impacts of malaria on vulnerable populations. His expertise provides a crucial perspective on the challenges and opportunities in addressing this ancient disease within an



evolving health landscape.

According to him, malaria has serious potential consequences, particularly for perinatal health, and significantly impacts on mothers, newborns and infants, contributing to higher rates of miscarriage or spontaneous abortion, intrauterine fetal death (IUFD), preterm delivery, and low-birth-weight newborns. Even the fetus is born alive, low birth weight and premature newborns are the highest risks of death before their first-year of life. What makes the situation worse is that even if premature babies survive, they are at high risk of neurodevelopmental impairments, learning disabilities, and vision, and hearing problems.

Not only that, apart from affecting pregnant women, malaria also disproportionately affects other vulnerable populations, including children and individuals with compromised immune systems, such as those living with HIV. Beyond its devastating health and economic impact, malaria can pose severe challenges to the country's economy, education system, and societal stability. The disease also disrupts development through various channels, including increased healthcare costs, decreased worker productivity, absenteeism, premature mortality, and impeded educational progress. Without decisive action to control malaria, any country can face severe challenges, he remarked.

Top of Form While talking what preventive measures are currently in place to combat malaria outbreaks, and how effective have they been, Ass. Prof. Abel said referring to the national malaria control guidelines, malaria control and prevention strategies in Ethiopia focus on two primary approaches. The first strategy is vector control interventions and preventing approach which aims to reduce human contact with malaria-carrying mosquitoes. The vector control targets both the larval and adult stages of the mosquito. Larval control is achieved

### Strategic efforts to enhance early diagnosis and treatment, coupled with increased public awareness campaigns, have contributed to a substantial decline in both the incidence of malaria and related mortality

through environmental interventions, such as eliminating water reservoirs to disrupt breeding sites mechanically and using chemicals called larvacidal specifically designed to kill mosquito larvae by spraying them in the water sources.

Adult mosquitoes are managed through Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), where chemicals are applied to walls and surfaces to kill mosquitoes that come into contact with them. The primary strategy for preventing mosquito bites relies on the widespread use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), which provide a protective barrier against mosquito vectors. The second strategy focuses on ensuring that all malaria cases are promptly diagnosed at healthcare facilities and treated with effective antimalarial

medications to prevent mortality and further transmission.

However, a detailed investigation is needed to assess the extent to which these prevention measures have been implemented in malaria outbreak districts and to evaluate their effectiveness. The rising incidence of cases since 2021 suggests that either the control interventions face significant challenges, such as financial constraints and operational limitations, or that their outcomes have been unsatisfactory, said Associate Professor Abel.

With its diverse ecological characteristics in terms of malaria transmission, ranging from low to high, Ethiopia is one of malaria-prone countries. About 75 percent of the country's land and 69 percent of its population are exposed to the risk of Malaria. In fact, over the past few years; Ethiopia has made significant progress in controlling the spread of malaria and reducing the number of individuals affected by the disease. Through a combination of effective interventions, including widespread distribution of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), indoor residual spraying (IRS), and improved access to healthcare services, the country successfully managed to reduce malaria transmission in many regions.

Strategic efforts to enhance early diagnosis and treatment, coupled with increased public awareness campaigns, have contributed to a substantial decline in both the incidence of malaria and related mortality. However, despite these successes, challenges remain, particularly in high-risk areas where malaria transmission persists. Continuous monitoring, resource allocation, and adaptation of control strategies are crucial to maintaining and furthering these gains in the fight against malaria.

As Ethiopia reflected on World Malaria Day 2024, unified, focused, and sustainable action is essential to curb the malaria burden, embark towards national elimination, and ensure health equity for all.

## Ethiopia serves as a good example for countries ...

To enhance cooperation between the two countries, it is essential to strengthen political relationships between leaders, which can provide momentum for the private sector and other stakeholders to develop trade and investment. Harmonizing customs rules and facilitating trade integration are also important steps. Bringing the private sector together and fostering relationships with the Chamber of Commerce are key strategies.

Overall, promoting trade among African countries is crucial, as many African consumers tend to buy goods from abroad. Encouraging intra-African trade is beneficial for all citizens and businesses. The embassy is open to Ethiopian businesspersons seeking information or partnerships in Madagascar.

**Ethiopia plays a significant role in East Africa. How do you view Ethiopia's role in regional integration? Do you believe Ethiopia has fulfilled its responsibilities in this regard?**

Ethiopia and its people are known for being pan-Africanist, advocating for the unity of African countries. This includes promoting regional integration. Since its inception, Ethiopia has been a key player in the African Union, with Addis Ababa serving as its headquarters and being referred to as the capital of Africa. This is a crucial role that Ethiopia plays not only for African nations but for the world as a whole.

One of Ethiopia's notable achievements is the Addis Ababa city corridor project, which is a source of pride for all. Ethiopia is also a founding member of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and actively participates in regional integration efforts. Additionally, Ethiopia is a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), further demonstrating its commitment to regional cooperation.

Beyond mere membership in regional organizations, Ethiopia sets an example of physical integration with other African nations. The country has established road, rail, and air connections with neighboring countries, facilitating greater connectivity and cooperation. This infrastructure is essential for fostering integration and Ethiopia plays a vital role in this aspect.

In conclusion, Ethiopia's contributions to regional integration are commendable and serve as a model for other African nations. Through its active participation in various regional initiatives and its efforts to enhance physical connectivity, Ethiopia continues to play a crucial role in promoting unity and cooperation across the continent.

**Ethiopia is seeking access to a sea port, and Ethiopia and Madagascar can explore different transport options beyond aviation. How do you view Ethiopia's efforts to secure a sea port?**

The integration between Africa and the rest of the world requires infrastructure, such as aviation and sea transportation. Sea transportation is crucial for global trade, and Ethiopia aims to access it through peaceful means. Madagascar, known for its peaceful approach to conflict resolution, can engage in dialogue to find solutions.



Ethiopia recently reached a peaceful agreement with one of its neighboring countries, showcasing the African way of resolving issues through peaceful means. This approach is essential not only for trade and integration but for any problem that may arise. Africa has the potential to achieve this goal.

**Madagascar is part of the African Free Trade Area. The Malagasy National Assembly ratified the Africa Free Trade Area Agreement on November 21, 2024. Is the Africa Free Trade Area beneficial for Africa, especially for Ethiopia and Madagascar? What is causing the delay in its implementation?**

Africa should unite, and economic integration is one of the ways we need to undertake. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) will bring new opportunities for all African countries, including Madagascar and Ethiopia. Africa is one of the biggest markets in the world, and we have a lot to offer.

We have many products that are in demand worldwide, and the continent is a close market for African producers. If our exporters can meet the requirements of markets outside of the continent, they can easily meet the demands of African countries, as we share similar needs and culture. This is a significant opportunity for Africa, and the AFCFTA is one of the regional integrations that is developing rapidly.

It has been almost one year since the implementation of the AFCFTA, but it is a process that involves many stakeholders, including governments, various African Union organs, private sectors, and African citizens. Each one of us needs to coordinate to ensure the success of the AFCFTA. In the case of Madagascar, we have been members for a few years, but we ratified the agreement at the National Assembly level a few months ago. This process requires readiness from the private sector and all stakeholders, as well as infrastructure development. Being an island, we rely on ports and aviation for

trade, which means we need to invest in more infrastructures.

Integration also involves harmonizing regulations and changing domestic regulations to meet the requirements of the AFCFTA. This process may take time, but with the commitment of all African countries, we believe we can achieve it. This will enable us to trade with mainland Africa and specifically with Ethiopia.

**Both Ethiopia and Madagascar are members of COMESA. So, what can these two countries gain from being part of this large institutional organization?**

COMESA is a significant market that is also well-developed and integrated in terms of trade. One benefit for the countries is the opportunity to harmonize formalities for transport and trade, as well as to promote trade between the two nations. This is a positive aspect of being part of COMESA, as it allows for stakeholder engagement in various sectors of the economy.

For example, producers, leaders, and handicrafts people from both countries can come together within the COMESA framework to collaborate and benefit from this partnership. This integration process involves many agreements that each country must implement within its own space, requiring significant domestic changes.

Overall, being part of COMESA helps to improve trade and free movement between Madagascar and Ethiopia. As a result, Madagascar offers free visas for Ethiopians staying for less than 15 days, even for ordinary passport holders, as a welcoming gesture facilitated by COMESA.

**Ethiopia is currently implementing home grown economic reform. What does this mean for the people of Madagascar and investors?**

Economic reforms are important and many African countries, including Madagascar, have undertaken them. Globalization and integration have opened up national economies to competition, leading to broader

economic reforms that involve significant changes in how the economy functions.

While economic reforms may have short-term negative effects, the long-term benefits are numerous. Social costs, such as rising unemployment and disparities in living standards, are common in the short term. This makes it challenging for leaders to implement reforms, but Ethiopia has managed it well due to its strong economy.

Over the past 20 years, Ethiopia has seen a remarkable increase in per capita GDP and improvements in education, health, infrastructure, and social sectors. Despite some social costs, the Ethiopian government has taken corrective measures. The country has made progress in macro-financial, structural, and sectoral reforms, setting the stage for stable economic growth and prosperity.

Madagascar is also working towards economic reforms, following in Ethiopia's footsteps. Ethiopia serves as a good example for countries undertaking economic reforms, and Madagascar is striving to achieve similar success.

**Mr. Richard Randriamandrato from Madagascar is a nominee for Chairperson of the African Union. What are his thoughts if he wins?**

I believe there are two key points to consider. Firstly, Madagascar, as one of the founding members of the AU, has never before nominated a candidate for the leadership position. With our current president, Ander Azuel, we aim to demonstrate that we are African and contribute to our collective progress. This is a significant moment for our country.

If elected, I believe Mr. Richard Randriamandrato would prioritize bringing the AU closer to African citizens. It is crucial for them to recognize the importance of the AU in their lives, bringing peace, development, and hope. Strengthening the credibility of the AU among citizens is essential.

Additionally, he aims to adapt the AU to the changing world, playing a proactive role in shaping a new global order. As a member of the G20, he would work to solidify Africa's position and elevate it as a key player in international discussions.

When significant global decisions are made, Africa should have a seat at the table. This is a top priority for Mr. Richard Randriamandrato.

**These are the questions we have prepared for you today. If you would like to add any additional points, please feel free to do so.**

I am very grateful for this opportunity to speak with you, as well as with the people of Ethiopia and Madagascar. I am confident that Ethiopia and Madagascar will continue to benefit from peaceful and productive cooperation in various areas. The embassy in Madagascar is dedicated to this goal, and we are aware of the Ethiopian government's strong commitment to enhancing this cooperation.

**Thank you very much.**

Thank you, Ambassador.

# Verbatim and Caption

## Ethiopia becomes top wheat producer in Africa: *Finance State Minister*

Ethiopia has been diligently implementing macroeconomic reforms with persistence and strict discipline in order to achieve inclusive growth for the nation. The success seen in the agriculture sector is the best example of Ethiopia's economic progress.

Ethiopia has increased its crop production by 200 million quintals, making it the top wheat producer in Africa.

*Eyob Tekalign (PhD), Finance State Minister*



## Ethiopia creates 1.5 mln jobs in five months: *MoLS*

Ethiopia has created 1.5 million domestic jobs over the past five months of the current fiscal year. The national plan for the 2024/25 budget year is to create 4.9 million jobs.

The government is focusing on providing skill-oriented training and innovative developments to equip the workforce with the required know-how that meet employers' standards and improves productivity.

*Muferihat Kamil, Minister, Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS)*

## Three months import-substitution exceeds 816 million USD: *Industry Minister*

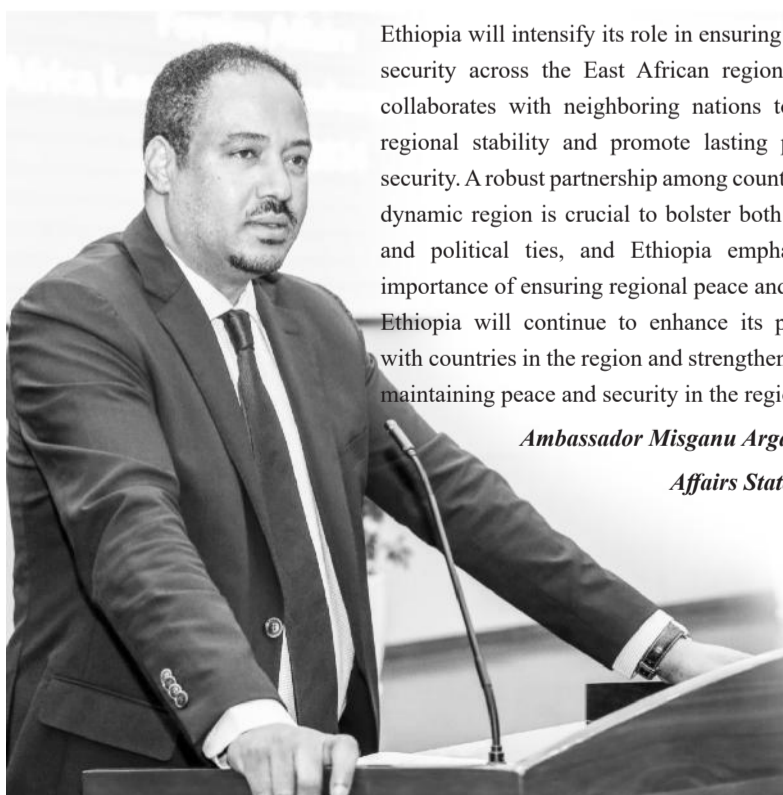
Thanks to the macroeconomic policy reform, Ethiopia's manufacturing industry is undergoing a remarkable transformation and revival. In this regard, the achievement in the area of import substitution is noteworthy.

The manufacturing industry has substituted approximately 816 million USD in the past three months alone. Similarly, the macroeconomic reform has alleviated the foreign currency shortage, enabling manufacturers to become more competitive.

*Melaku Alebel, Industry Minister*



## Ethiopia will strengthen its role in maintaining regional peace, security: *Ambassador Misganu*



Ethiopia will intensify its role in ensuring peace and security across the East African region. Ethiopia collaborates with neighboring nations to enhance regional stability and promote lasting peace and security. A robust partnership among countries in this dynamic region is crucial to bolster both economic and political ties, and Ethiopia emphasizes the importance of ensuring regional peace and security. Ethiopia will continue to enhance its partnership with countries in the region and strengthen its role in maintaining peace and security in the region.

*Ambassador Misganu Arga, Foreign Affairs State Minister*

## Efforts underway to improve women's leadership in diplomacy: *MoFA*

Concerted efforts are being made to enhance women's leadership roles in diplomacy.

The Ministry is actively promoting programs and initiatives aimed at improving the leadership roles of women diplomats with a determined and strategic approach. MoFA is providing training for women diplomats and staff members focused on leadership skills, strategic communication, self-empowerment, and diplomatic competencies.

*Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of MoFA*

