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CETU fosters global ties to safeguard workers' rights

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) is intensifying efforts to increase its visibility and enhance collaboration with international and continental trade confederations, taking

a significant step toward protecting workers' rights and contributing to Ethiopia's economic development.

Speaking during the 20th CETU Congress, Kassahun Follo, President of CETU, highlighted the union's longstanding commitment to advocating for workers'

rights. Since its establishment, CETU has achieved notable milestones despite enduring various challenges, including national and international economic crises, changes in government, pandemics, the Russia-Ukraine

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Foreign banks entry marks vital economic shift:

Expert

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's decision to allow foreign banks to operate in the country for the first time in 50plus years is a big step and marks a significant shift in its economic policy, so said an Economist.

During his stay with News Day, BBC, Global FiarFax Africa Fund

See Foreign banks ... Page 3



Israel lauds Ethiopian for continued service amid challenges

BY EYUEL KIFLU

JERUSALEM - Israel appreciated the Ethiopian Airlines for maintaining flights to the country during a particularly difficult period when many airlines have suspended operations.

Affairs, Deputy Minister Sharren Miriam Haskel emphasized the longstanding friendship between Ethiopia and Israel.

"We are very grateful for our allies in Ethiopia," Haskel stated. "Ethiopia has stood by Israel during challenging times, demonstrating true friendship and solidarity.

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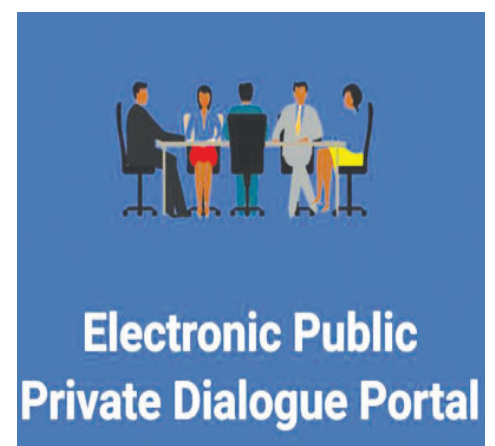
Digital Revolution : Bridging public-private communication divide

BY YESUF ENDRIS

The Ethiopian government, long criticized for its limited platforms to engage in dialogue with the private sector, is addressing these concerns by introducing digital platforms aimed at facilitating public-private communication.

Traditionally, direct meetings with government officials have been the primary means of engagement for private investors. However, this approach has faced significant criticism for its limited scope, accessibility, and inclusiveness. Investors have often expressed frustration over the lack of alternative mechanisms to ensure broader and more effective communication.

International Sales Director of the Czech company APIMOSO, Lukas Sastak, shared his concerns with *The Ethiopian Herald*, citing the inconvenience that he and many



Electronic Public Private Dialogue Portal

business representatives face in securing direct meetings with Ethiopian authorities. "They may be busy with several agendas, but there should be alternative platforms to engage with those who need direct discussions," he said. Similar sentiments have been echoed in multiple business forums,

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Holy Trinity Cathedral renovation nears completion

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - The iconic Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa is nearing completion of its extensive renovation project. The revered religious and historical landmark is expected to reopen to the public in mid-January 2025.

According to Reverend Abasirak Admasu, the cathedral's administrator, the renovation has progressed significantly, surpassing the 95% mark. The project was initiated after a comprehensive 17-month study revealed substantial structural damage, including cracks, ceiling deterioration, and water infiltration.

The restoration efforts are focused on preserving the cathedral's original character while addressing these critical issues. This includes repairing electrical systems, restoring intricate paintings and statues, and safeguarding the building's historical integrity.

To bridge the funding gap and ensure the timely completion of the project, a major global fundraising campaign is scheduled for December 21, 2024. The campaign will be live-streamed on social media platforms,



inviting people worldwide to contribute to this significant endeavor.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral, also known as Kidist Selassie, holds immense religious and historical significance in Ethiopia. As

the highest-ranking Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo cathedral in Addis Ababa, it stands alongside the revered Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum.

The cathedral's restoration is a collaborative

effort to safeguard its legacy for future generations. By preserving this architectural masterpiece, Ethiopia aims to honor its rich cultural heritage and provide a sacred space for generations to come.



Ethiopia's digital strategy considers refugees, host communities' integration: MinT

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's digital inclusion strategy has considered integration of refugees, internally displaced people and host communities, said the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT).

The MinT in collaboration with the ILO held a social dialogue event on an inclusive and transformative digital strategy for Ethiopia yesterday.

In his keynote speech, MinT State Minister Yeshrun Alemayehu (PhD) said that: "The digital revolution is reshaping industries, societies, the way we live today and paves a way for a more inclusive, suitable and sustainable future. However, the potential of digital transformation is very immense; the benefits of these technological revolutions must be accessible to everyone everywhere without divide."

Ethiopia has planned the development of a national fiber digital inclusion strategy. It is more focused on adoption of a comprehensive national fiber digital inclusion strategy that considers the integration of refugees and host communities. This can contribute to and benefit from the digital transformation, he added.

According to him, the country's digital inclusion vision is rooted in the idea that technology should be a force for social distress, bridging economies, education and social divides. Access to the internet, digital tools and technology best services is not luxury.

He stressed the government's commitment to inclusive growth through digital innovation.

According to ILO Chief Technical Advisor Stephen Opio, Ethiopia has steadily improved digital connectivity for refugees and host communities. Social dialogue plays a crucial role in fostering inclusion and sustainable growth. With Ethiopia currently hosting approximately 1.1 million refugees, Opio mentioned the country as a leading example of these efforts.

He appreciated the five million initiative launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) recently with the main focus of creating five million jobs in the sector as part of the digital Ethiopia strategy. This would highly support inclusiveness.

He commended Ethiopia's digital strategy initiatives, which have significantly improved refugees' access to connectivity over time.

Floating exchange rate spurs economic progress

• *MoTRI sets sights on quality exports*

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) has revealed that the floating exchange rate reform is yielding significant outcomes, with improving the quality of export products being a key future focus area.

This statement was made by MoTRI Minister Kassahun Gofe (PhD) during the launch of the Addis Gena 2017 Expo – Addis Christmas 2024 Expo on Tuesday.

In his opening remarks, Kassahun stated that the floating exchange rate, which removes restrictions and restores macroeconomic stability, has had a notable impact. The financial reform has created a favorable environment for both domestic and foreign investors by eliminating bureaucratic red tape, enabling businesses to operate more efficiently.

According to the Minister, Ethiopia has generated over 2.6 billion USD from exports in the first five months of the current fiscal year. To further enhance the quality of exported products and boost international competitiveness, MoTRI has been implementing various initiatives. Additionally, the ministry is working to bridge the gap between trade communities, consumers, and buyers



by ensuring reasonable pricing.

Kassahun emphasized that MoTRI is focused on modernizing products to maximize benefits and provide world-class goods in the international market in the coming years. He highlighted that Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform has been instrumental in reducing inflation, which dropped from 29% to 19% in recent periods.

He also stressed the importance of promoting expos and exhibitions, which connect consumers with suppliers and address issues such as price gouging by unscrupulous traders.

Furthermore, Kassahun indicated that such expos and exhibitions play a critical role in creating direct linkages between suppliers and buyers, fostering a more transparent and efficient trade environment.

CETU fosters global ties...

conflict, and civil unrest within the country. These challenges have created an unstable working environment, testing the resilience of the union.

In the face of such obstacles, CETU has witnessed growth in membership and the number of trade unions across the nation. It has consistently championed workers' rights, giving a voice to millions of workers. Kassahun noted that CETU is actively strengthening ties with international, continental, and Horn of Africa confederations. These efforts have yielded positive results, enhancing the union's influence and partnerships globally.

Addressing Ethiopia's macroeconomic challenges, Kassahun commended recent government policies aimed at tackling the high cost of living and the wage increase for low-paid workers. However, he stressed that the persistent high cost of living calls

for further measures, such as reducing taxes and introducing a minimum wage. He emphasized that implementing a minimum wage is vital for ensuring industrial peace and fostering economic growth.

Praising the ongoing macroeconomic reforms, Kassahun pointed out that while wage increases are commendable, additional efforts are required to create a sustainable and fair working environment. He urged the government to lower income taxes for workers and take further steps to alleviate the rising cost of living.

Senior Specialist for Workers' Activities at the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Addis Ababa, Kabu Mban, noted that inclusive social progress and decent work are essential for economic development. He indicated CETU's collaboration with relevant stakeholders has been instrumental in promoting peace and stability, key factors

for a conducive working environment. Protecting workers' rights, he added, is a crucial element of Ethiopia's economic development strategy.

Omar Faruk, General Secretary of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) and Deputy General Secretary of HACTU, echoed the importance of regional solidarity to safeguard workers' rights, contribute to economic growth, and reduce poverty.

He underscored that CETU's foundation is built on principles of justice, dignity, peace, democracy, and workers' rights. Collective commitment to these principles is essential for promoting social justice and upholding the freedom of association. CETU plays a pivotal role in advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions, and the protection of workers' rights, not just in Ethiopia but across the region, it was stated.



Foreign banks...

Chairman Zemedeneh Nigatu indicated that the decision is a big step taken by Ethiopia as it reforms its overall economy, in particular its financial sector.

He said foreign banks have been banned in Ethiopia for more than 50 years. There were foreign banks like Banko di Roma and Banko di Napoli, operating in Ethiopia in early seventies. Since then, the socialist government banned not only foreign banks but also private activities.

However, the nation is not only reforming the banking sector but there is a new stock market that is set to start in January, which is another huge step as the country opens up its economy, as to him.

One of the last sectors that was restricted for foreigners, for instance, was the retail wholesale distribution system that is also opening up; he said, stressing that the decision need to be seen holistically.

Currently, there are over 31 banks, of which 28 of them are private and two are state-owned. With the entry of the foreign banks, these banks will face international competition that is good for the economy, he emphasized.

As to him, the decision has taken into consideration Ethiopia's economy, which is the third largest in sub-Saharan Africa that needs large banking sector.

He mentioned that his company is currently advising an international bank - M&A to do possible acquisition.

"Many banks in Africa have shown keen interest to enter Ethiopian financial sector. Banks from Middle East, the Gulf and Asia, China are also seriously considering entering in to the banking sector. We are looking in to a dozen banks."

He reminded the discussion held frequently about consolidating the banks (31) to at least five banks so that they can be large, competitive and have big balance sheet. By African standards, Ethiopian banks are small, except one of them, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, he added.

As part of the reform, he further stressed that a very large consolidation from 31 to five large banks is expected for the banks to become competitive.

"Ethiopia's economy has been gradually opening up in almost every sector. There were talks, for example, if the telecom were to open up, but, surprisingly, the telecom has become one of the most telecom in Africa due to the competition and I would expect the same thing in the banking sector."

Nonetheless, it needs strong regulator, he noted, adding that as long as the regulation and capacity of the central bank is enhanced, which they are doing, there would be no risk.

The move is part of a broader set of reforms aimed at liberalizing the economy and attempting to attract foreign investments thereby stimulating economic growth, it was learned.

Digital Revolution: Bridging...

reflecting the frustrations of numerous stakeholders who seek to contribute to Ethiopia's economy but are discouraged by logistical challenges.

In response to these longstanding criticisms, the Ethiopian government has launched an electronic public-private dialogue platform. This initiative, administered by the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Association (ECCSA), was made possible through financial support from the European Union and GIZ, according to a MoTRI report.

The report describes the platform as a supportive strategic communication system aligned with Ethiopia's broader economic reform agenda, which prioritizes the private sector as a critical driver of economic growth.

This week, MoTRI and ECCSA formalized their collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance the platform's functionality and accessibility. Speaking at the signing ceremony, MoTRI State Minister Abdulhakim Mulu (PhD) explained that the platform is designed to address systemic challenges in the public-private dialogue process. He emphasized that the government's economic reforms, aimed

at boosting private sector participation, require actionable strategies to ensure effective implementation.

"The government has reformed economic policies to favor the private sector. These reforms require platforms that can facilitate seamless and inclusive communication between the government and private entities," the State Minister said. He further noted that the platform would enable local and international investors to engage directly with Ethiopian officials, making investment negotiations and economic forums more efficient.

The platform's inclusivity and scalability are particularly noteworthy. Abdulhakim highlighted that it allows stakeholders from across the globe to participate in discussions, submit business issues, and receive timely updates from government institutions. "Using this platform, several investors from different countries can meet with government officials. It enables economic forums and investment negotiations to take place seamlessly. This platform is crucial not only for discussions but also for reaching stakeholders effectively and efficiently," he added.

ECCSA President Sebsib Abafira lauded the MoU as a milestone in improving the quality of public-private dialogues in Ethiopia. He described the electronic

platform as a transformative tool that centralizes communication and enhances transparency, accountability, and participation among stakeholders. "The platform serves as a centralized hub for submitting business issues, legal briefs, comprehensive reports, and updated decisions from government institutions. It is a vital tool for fostering transparency, accountability, and active participation among stakeholders," he noted.

Beyond its role in facilitating dialogue, the platform is also expected to support capacity-building initiatives. Experts believe it will provide a robust framework for training, information sharing, and fundraising for economic programs. Elie Sawaya, an electronic governance expert at the Business Environment and Investment Climate (BEIC), emphasized that the platform is a foundation for future collaborations and agreements. "Through the electronic portal, it is possible to provide trainings, share information, and raise funds for initiatives. This platform is a steward for establishing further agreements and fostering collaboration," he remarked.

With the platform now operational, stakeholders hope it will serve as a catalyst for increased collaboration, transparency, and investment.

Israel lauds Ethiopian for...

The resilience of Ethiopian Airlines in maintaining its flights throughout periods of conflict has been commendable."

Haskel highlighted the close collaboration and friendship between the two nations, noting the significance of the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel. "We celebrate this community and are proud of our historical ties," she added.

She also pointed out that the relationship between the two is rooted in Judeo-Christian values and biblical traditions, which hold

importance for both nations. "These shared values provide a strong foundation for our relationship," she explained.

Seconding to Haskel's sentiments, Ministry's African Division Bureau Head Noa Furman also appreciated the Ethiopian Airlines for its commitment to continue providing services despite regional challenges. "We appreciate the airline's efforts and convey our gratitude to Ethiopian authorities for their support," she stated.

The Ministry South African Region Director

Belaynesh Zevadia praised Ethiopian Airlines for its unwavering service during the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts. "Even during difficult times, Ethiopian Airlines continued its flights to Israel, a testament to our strong relationship," she remarked.

Belaynesh concluded by reaffirming Ethiopia's status as a true friend to Israel, highlighting the crucial role of Ethiopian Airlines in enhancing bilateral relations. "Their commitment is appreciated by our government and people," she said.

Opinion

Ethiopia's endeavor to mitigate climate change upshots

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Climate change and global warming have been pressing issues all over the world. Induced by gas emissions released from industrial countries, they have brought a multi-dimensional impact on people's livelihoods. According to scientists, since the beginning of the industrial revolution in 1850 in Great Britain, industries have released emission gas as a result of carbon-based energy utilization. The industrial revolution accelerated the advent of science and technology, facilitated modern transportation systems, advanced production and broadened society's consumption habits with a new way of life. However, it also brought its own demerits by exploiting natural resources excessively and creating scarcity.

In industrial countries, global warming increases energy consumption for refrigerators and ventilators and enhances living costs. Most developing countries, including Ethiopia, rely on rain for agriculture. When extreme weather conditions occur, such as drought or flood, crop failures happen.

As a result, farmers face food shortages and are forced to sustain their living with foreign aid. Water sources are also affected by global warming, leading to the dwindling of water sources, including rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and seas. Additionally, global warming is aggravating the expansion of desertification. The outbreak of new diseases has also burdened the health sector. Drought poses a reduction in grazing sources, critically harming the livestock sector.

The drying up of water sources and the decline in the volume of rivers reduce the inflow of water into dams, causing irrigation farms to run out of water and be forced to close. The decline in water in hydropower dams also hampers the power generation capacity of the dams. Consequently, the manufacturing sector suffers from a shortage of electric power and is forced to produce below its average capacity, reducing production and supply.

Ethiopia has long been exerting efforts to fight global warming and climate change through adaptation and mitigation programs. Additionally, it has crafted and implemented the building of a Climate Resilient Green Economy since 2005. To adapt to climate change, Ethiopia has been planting trees in selected places, particularly in lands critically affected by global warming and erosion. Many barren lands have been recovering as a result.

Studies have shown that Ethiopia is a country with severe environmental degradation problems, including soil erosion, land degradation, rainfall, and temperature variability. Several direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation have been identified, and efforts have been made to reverse the situation.

Through mass tree planting programs, billions of seedlings have been planted in recent years, providing opportunities to

To adapt to climate change, Ethiopia has been planting trees in selected places, particularly in lands critically affected by global warming and erosion

mitigate the impacts of climate change, enhance ecosystem services, generate revenue from timber and non-timber products, improve livelihoods, and meet national and global restoration and reforestation commitments.

However, these programs need to be closely monitored, and challenges should be identified to successfully achieve the objectives set by the initiative. In addition to conserving the environment, tree plantation enables the replenishment of underground water, increases the volume of river waters, preserves wildlife, and balances the ecosystem. Afforesting deforested areas also serves for carbon sequestration, which has not only domestic but also global effects.

Garnering foreign currency through carbon trading is also possible by evaluating the sequestered carbon emitted by industrial countries. Industrial countries are the major emitters, but developing countries, including Ethiopia, with insignificant contributions to climate change, suffer greatly from the burden of global warming.

Therefore, tree planting can be seen as a way to sequester carbon emitted elsewhere in developed countries, bringing financial benefits through carbon trading. Recently, farmers in the Wolayta zone of Humbo Woreda generated income by selling carbon to Norway, a global partner. The World Vision, an international non-governmental organization, facilitated the carbon market. Similarly, farmers residing in the Bale zone obtained money from the carbon market, and such practices have continued to date.

As global warming has a global effect,

the solution requires the cooperation of countries worldwide. In 1972, scientists from around the world who understood the negative consequences of climate change on Earth gathered in Stockholm, Sweden, to discuss the matter and show concern to find a solution.

After the discussion, it was decided that the United Nations would take responsibility to deal with the matter, and the UN has been playing a crucial role in this regard since then. Under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate negotiations have been conducted.

According to experts, developing countries, which are victims of climate change with very little contribution to gas emissions, have suffered critically from the effects of global warming. Sectors such as agriculture, health, and water have felt the brunt of climate change, and countries are not strong enough to withstand the effects due to a lack of financial, technical, and well-trained human resources.

They forward their plea to industrially advanced countries to support them financially and technically. Because the climate impact not only affects developing countries but also has consequences for advanced countries. Additionally, they demand that industrial countries reduce their gas emissions released from their industries. Advanced countries also have their own shortcomings regarding emission reduction.

They argue that if they reduce emissions, the volume of their industrial production will be reduced, leading to negative consequences for the economy. Changing carbon-based energy sources to renewable energy sources is very expensive and beyond their financial capacity at the moment. Therefore, to mitigate the problem, they claim that they need time and sufficient finance. For instance, coal is a major energy source in Europe and the USA, and giving up its utilization and replacing it with renewable energy is currently beyond their capacity.

Another factor that hampers industrial countries from implementing agreements reached in climate negotiations is the developed culture in their countries, manifested by the separation of power among the three branches of government: legislative, judiciary, and executive, indicating the prevalence of checks and balances.

The executive branch of the government has the mandate to conduct climate negotiations with other countries under the UNFCCC, but to implement the negotiation outcomes; the approval of the legislative branch is required, which represents the citizens. If the legislative body rejects the negotiation outcomes, they will not be implemented, and the delegates of the climate negotiation will have to wait until another round of negotiations is conducted.

Such legal hurdles make the challenges of climate change remain unsolved. Another issue to note is that most of the time, developed countries pledge to support

developing countries financially to run their adaptation and mitigation programs but fail to live up to their pledges due to various reasons.

Technological support provided to poor countries is not sufficient compared to the challenges brought by climate change.

Compared to other developed countries, the USA and China are the major emitters, but when it comes to emission reduction, they have shown reluctance to heed the pleas of poor countries. They claim that they still need more carbon-based energy to meet their development aspirations.

Alongside the aforementioned efforts, Ethiopia has been doing its homework by enhancing the replacement of carbon-based energy with renewable energy sources, including hydropower, wind farms, geothermal, and solar. In the last three decades since the EPRDF regime took power, many hydropower dams have been constructed and have begun generating power. Dams like Tana Beles, Tekeze, Gilgel Ghibe I, II, and III have contributed to this effort. The completion of Gilgel Gibe IV and the Hidasie dam in the coming years is expected to tremendously enhance the nation's power generation capacity.

The hydropower generation endeavor not only supplies energy to the domestic power grid but has also become a source of foreign currency earning by exporting electric power to neighboring countries. Wind farms constructed near Adama town and Mekele also contribute to the national grid. The ongoing construction of wind powers near Asala town on Mount Chilalo and Shinele town near Dire Dawa is also expected to enhance the nation's power gigawatt stored in the grid. Ethiopia, located in the tropical zone where excess solar energy is available, could become a power hub in East Africa if the resource is exploited to its full capacity.

Currently, Ethiopia covers less than half of its electricity demand, and most of the population resides in the mountainous rural parts of the country. The population is mostly settled in a fragmented manner, making it difficult and expensive to supply electric power through stretching electric lines from the grid. Therefore, installing solar panels has been seen as the only option. Many private companies are engaged in distributing solar panels to rural communities, creating job opportunities for vendors.

Schools, health institutions, and others located in rural areas have been able to ease their shortage of modern energy sources due to the expansion of solar panels. Another energy source under exploration is the geothermal project, with the Corbete project run by foreign companies near the town of Batu in the Oromia region. Ethiopia has abundant geothermal energy sources in the Afar depression but lacks sufficient capital and technology to explore and exploit them. When the time comes, it is hoped that this potential will be realized.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia is excelling in modern and swift air transport

Ethiopia has been doing all its best to make air transport modern and comfortable for travellers as much as since long back. Of the myriads of activities it has been undertakings along this line, it has recently launched an airline named 'Air Congo' via working in collaboration with the government of Congo Democratic Republic. As to the information secured from Ethiopian airlines, Ari Congo commenced its function using two 737 Boeing and it would fly through seven airports of the skies of Democratic Republic of Congo.

The amalgamation of the two is part and parcel of the airlines mission of 2035 and it is well remembered that it had set up similar air routes with Lomie Skies airlines, Lilongwe Malawi airlines and Lusaka Zimbabwe.

The country is working hard to make the air transport competent, standardized, and swift as we as customer-friendly air transport. In the era of sophisticated aviation industry from which modern air conveyance has been garnered, Ethiopia's effort to come up with prompt and up-to-the-minute air transport is highly encouraging and many other African countries do have ample opportunity to draw important lessons from what the country has been undertaking.

The air transport association such as the aforesaid ones and what Ethiopia has been embarking on to make the air transport contemporary ever, is of paramount important in fostering country-to-country, people-to-people thereby bringing about painstaking cultural, social, economic and even political assimilation.

It is also well recognized that air transport is a major global employer, providing thousands of millions of citizens nationally, regionally, continentally and even worldwide with a number of jobs and employment opportunities. In so doing, countries GDP can be well robust and many more compatriots can have jobs they would love to engage in.

Unenviably, air transport provides significant economic and social benefits. It facilitates tourism, trade, connectivity, generates economic growth, provides jobs, improves living standards, alleviates poverty, provides a lifeline for remote communities and enables a rapid response when disasters occur. Ethiopia is working hard to make its air transport enlisted in the world's best preferred one.

The joint move it has been entertaining is a manifestation of such an astounding avenue. Yes, air transport is a major global employer and the prime unassigned ambassador to the respective nations of the world.

Especially these days, aviation's total global economic impact i.e direct, indirect, induced and tourism catalytic, is rising high and countries like ours are highly benefited out of it.

As Ethiopia is well endowed with several tourist attention sites, its airline, a game changer, is all the time regarded as a flagship of the country and all national and international tourists travel to various destinations using it. Unequivocally, air transport allows people to have adventures in new countries, to relax on tropical beaches, to build business relationships and to visit friends and family. As world's economy grows ever more linked, aviation is the factor that brings people together.

Ethiopia is working from dawn to dusk to a competent, latest and reputed airline. That is why it has devised all the necessary mechanisms towards that end. As air transport has helped people explore the various ways in which this means of transport contributes to the economy, jobs, many countries are capitalizing on their air transport. True, the swifter the air transport the more sustainable the economy of the country would be and the more convincing its influence would be.

All in all, Ethiopia is advancing towards providing clients/customers with state-of-the-art air transport system. Thence, the government, policy makers, line ministries, organizations working on the area, among others, is thus expected to move in unison to help the nation meet its mission regarding the air transport real. The current activity Ethiopia is undertaking provides policymakers with the important national and regional view of how air travel creates jobs and drives economic growth.

Opinion

A new dawn for Ethiopia's economy through macroeconomic reforms

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It appears clear that on the heels of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy, a broad range of sectors has kicked off yielding results and taking the right path. The unflinching stance of the federal government of Ethiopia to address vital economic encounters rotating around the economy of the country has been registering results giving a wide berth to hoax news.

In the face of worrywarts' wicked deeds and trumped up stories, Ethiopia has jumpstarted proceeding in the right direction proving them wrong. More to the point, they have been working their fingers to the bone with the intention of badmouthing the promising strides of the reform getting off the right track and bewildering the wider international community.

Following the ongoing macroeconomic reform policy, Ethiopia has become involved in lending a helping hand to its foreign currency reserve demonstrating in black and white the positive outcomes surfacing in a broad range of sectors.

Apart from that the recent macroeconomic reform policy has plunged into bringing widespread stable economic growth to fruition on a state-wide basis in the timeliest manner possible.

According to the current conditions, most people from all backgrounds and socioeconomic groups have been witnessing the prevailing circumstances and the existing scenarios on the ground.

The effectuation of the macroeconomic reform would play a significant role in augmenting efficiency, substituting imports, overcoming debt burden, getting better external earnings in foreign currency and other related aspects.

Ministry of Planning and Development revealed that remarkable achievements have been registered in major economic sectors following the implementation of comprehensive macroeconomic in the country.

Ministry of Planning and Development conducted review of quarterly performance plan for the 2017 EFY and comprehensive macroeconomic reform implementation. A quarterly performance report of major sectors was also presented in the presence of pertinent stakeholders.

Speaking at the occasion, Planning and Development State Minister Tirumar Abate in the recent past said that the recently implemented comprehensive macroeconomic reform has been achieving remarkable results in major economic sectors including in export, FDI, remittance, controlling inflation, among others, according to information obtained from ENA.

The state minister added that the economic reform has not only boosted foreign currency earnings but have also narrowed the gap between the black market and official exchange rates, creating a more favorable environment for exports and attracting foreign direct investment.

Owing to putting macroeconomic reform into practice, investors have begun demonstrating interest to invest in their motherland and taking the country to new frontiers and new opportunities in next to no time.

Ethiopia's recent commitments to effectuating comprehensive macroeconomic reform policies destines for correcting foreign exchange distortions, tackling the structural balance of payments deficit, and plummeting inflation by reforming the monetary policy framework. These reforms are designed to create a favorable

balance to meet national development needs by augmenting domestic income and addressing debt vulnerability.

As things stand at present, the country's all-embracing reforms have kicked off attaining considerable results and remarkable successes in breathing new life into boosting nation's economic growth in a permanent manner.

It appears clear that Ethiopia has been bringing into being an all-inclusive macroeconomic reform with the purpose of oiling the wheels of its competitive capacity in terms of business and investment sectors, reinforce indigenous production and other things of a similar kind.

The employment of macroeconomic reform in the immediate present has begun producing outstanding results in various sectors countrywide paving the way for the country's development undertakings.

In actual fact, for the reason that the macroeconomic reform policy is put in place on proper way, it will boost productivity beyond a shadow of a doubt, facilitate imports, overcome debt burden, progress foreign currency earnings and more of the same at the earliest possible time.

It has commonly been assumed that the reform plays a paramount role in making economic growth happen, tackling structural economic predicaments and other things of a similar kind. Against this backdrop, no matter what naysayers say the positive development unfolding across the country signals the fact that the future is rosy for Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's comprehensive macroeconomic reforms, being implemented since July 2024, are demonstrating remarkable results in boosting the nation's economic growth in a sustainable manner, Ministry of Finance announced, as learnt from a local media.

Ethiopia has solidified its position as the largest economy in East Africa and the third-largest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country has been implementing a comprehensive macroeconomic reform since July this year with the objective of enabling the country achieve high and stable economic growth, maintain single-digit inflation, and build a globally competitive economic system.

The reform measures target a range of issues, including foreign exchange distortions, financial sector strengthening, inflation control, tax revenue mobilization, and improving the business climate.

State Minister of Finance, Eyob Tekalign, in the recent past stated the positive impact of the reforms on various economic indicators. These reforms aim to enhance trade, investment, domestic production, and service delivery.

The State Minister said these reforms have led to a higher and more sustainable national economic growth as evidenced by various indicators.

By enhancing trade, investment, domestic production, and service delivery, the government aims to propel Ethiopia's overall economic development.

As the whole thing on subject of the macroeconomic reform policy is moving forward in the right direction, the country's economy for sure will move to the next level of achievement at the earliest possible moment.

If every Tom, Dick, and Harry keeps on standing in unison and forming an alliance, attaining the entire objectives will be as easy as taking candy from a baby and as easy as shelling peas.

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Business & Economy

Wise use of fertilizer: Viable tool for food security, ecological safety

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that fertilizers are important ingredients for the agriculture sector since they are of significantly useful in improving soil fertility, increasing crop yields, preventing soil degradation as well as making plants and crops more residence. Fertilizers can restore and maintain soil health and fertility, which is the quality of soil that allows it to provide plants with the nutrients they need to grow. Fertilizers provide plants with essential nutrients, which can increase crop yields to meet the growing demand for food. Fertilizers can also help prevent and reverse soil degradation and desertification, which is the extreme degradation of land in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas.

The Ethiopian Herald had a stay with Serawit Muleta, an agro economist graduated from Dilla University with view to soliciting some important information about the use of fertilizers.

He said, “Fertilizers can help plants become more resilient to pests, weeds, and dangerous plant pathogens. Besides, they are useful in destroying pathogenic components. Fertilizers can destroy pathogenic components that cause disease in plants. They can be natural or artificial, and they typically contain chemical elements like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. However, inefficient use of fertilizers can lead to environmental degradation, economic losses, and reduced agricultural sustainability.”

To maximize fertilizer use efficiency, it is quite advisable to balance nutrient application with crop uptake. Factors that can affect this balance include soil type, climate, crop variety, and management practices, Serawit added.

Fertilizers provide the soil with the necessary nutrients and microbes for the growth of the plants as they help the soil to retain its fertility and are environment-friendly and also destroy pathogenic components responsible for causing disease in plants and crops. The massive use of fertilizers has allowed a great increase in the capacity of food production. However, the inefficiency and country asymmetries in the use of these fertilizers which generated environmental problems, soil nutritional imbalances and not optimal food production, are recorded as limitations.

As to Serawit, inadequate national, regional or management of fertilization produces areas with serious nutrient deficits in croplands linked with insufficient access to fertilizers that clearly limit food production, and areas that are over fertilized with the consequent problems of environmental pollution affecting human health.

A more efficient use of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertilizers for food security in due course of preserving the environment is thus needed. Nutrient imbalances, particularly the disequilibrium of the N: P ratio due to the unbalanced release of N and P from anthropogenic activities and this imbalance has already affected several terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, altering their



species composition and functionality and threatening global biodiversity.

True, he said agricultural output will need to increase substantially to accommodate the growing population. Most of the increase (in agricultural output) is expected to be from producing more food on existing farmland, and such intensification and expansion might, however, lead to undesirable impacts on carbon (C) stocks in soil and vegetation and on biodiversity in the most productive croplands of the world.

Boosting crop yields and closing the gap between actual and attainable yields can be achieved by implementing and advancing numerous practices and technologies, e.g., the adequate use of fertilizers and efficient nutrient management can play key roles for global food security. However, the fertilization intensification of the last decades aimed to increase yields has produced some new global environmental and geopolitical problems, such as nutrient imbalances, leaching of nutrients from crops to environment and the associated impacts, and increasing cost of fertilizers with serious geopolitical and economic problems for the food security in poor countries.

Agricultural sustainability, defined as the ability to use soil crops to produce continuous food without environmental (basically soil) degradation and other environmental impacts.

Farming practices have shown that organic and/or regenerative farming with conservation tillage, manual and biological weeding and pest control and use of farming and crop waster as fertilizers to reduce the need to apply industrial fertilizer, smart intercrop and crop rotation managements; all them improving soil health by increasing the abundance, diversity, and activity of microorganisms.

Crop fertilization, or the use of fertilizers to provide plants with nutrients, is a vital tool for modern farmers. Fertilizers are of significantly useful in increasing crop yields—fertilizers can help farmers achieve higher crop yields, which can help to reduce the amount of land needed for agriculture. Besides, they are useful in improving nutritional value, which means fertilizers can help to improve the nutritional value of

food by enhancing plants with nutrients like calcium, zinc, and magnesium.

Above and beyond, they are of significantly useful in replenishing soil nutrients. This means that fertilizers can help to replenish nutrients lost from the soil due to cultivation. Plus to this, fertilizers can also have negative environmental consequences like runoff, which reflects many fertilizers are not absorbed into the soil, but instead run off into water systems and ecosystems.

As to him, fertilizers can leach into the soil profile and contaminate groundwater. Specialized fertilizers can be used to provide the specific nutrient combinations that different plants need. This non-destructive method involves drilling holes in the field, inserting transparent tubes, and periodically taking images of the plant's roots.

High crop yields often come under scrutiny because of the fertilizer levels needed to produce such yields and because of the perception and reality of the potential environmental impacts of those inputs.

Yet, maintaining food production for the growing world population requires using new technology and intensifying production and management to grow more food on current cropland. Fertilizer is essential for accomplishing this.

Misuse of agricultural fertilizers has undoubtedly occurred, and its impact on the environment needs to be minimized. But it's important to remember to compare the risk of fertilizer application with the benefits for food production. The time has come to dispel misconceptions and myths about fertilizers and nutrients, and to convey a correct message to a world that's becoming increasingly urbanized and removed from what agricultural production is all about – providing healthy food.

Some of this improvement has also come from modern genetics and improved agronomic management. Animal manure can provide a useful nutrient supply for growing crops. Similarly, manures don't produce any organic matter that wasn't initially in the animal feed. The digestion process doesn't produce any additional nutrients or organic matter.

This means that whatever organic matter or nutrients are present in field-applied

manure are simply digested crops from somewhere else. The hay, grain or silage that's harvested to feed animals is simply taken from one field and then applied to another field after passing through an animal, with the inevitable loss of nutrients and carbon (C) to allow the animal to grow.

Animal manures rarely contain the essential plant nutrients in the proper ratio required for growing crops. In fact, certain types of manure application frequently result in imbalances and accumulation of nutrients in the soil that can pose an environmental risk. Composts and manures can be good nutrient sources, but their mineralization depends on complex interactions of both soil and environmental factors that are difficult to predict, which commonly results in a lower efficiency than fertilizer.

There will likely be more livestock and animal manure in the future, and these animals will consume more grass and crops that must be fertilized, and produce manure that must be managed. But the animals themselves will not provide the needed new nutrients. Expanding urbanization means more organic waste and bios lids to manage. But resistance to applying these materials back on the land seems to be growing, and their land application is banned in many countries.

Proper crop nutrition plays a vital role in maintaining the world's food supply. Use fertilizer appropriately to get the best results, and don't be afraid to speak out for farming practices that are such a benefit to humanity.

The production efficiency of all nutrients, applied as mineral fertilizers, can be evaluated mainly through their impact on nitrogen use efficiency.

Nowadays, to correct fertilizer doses, the absorption and reflection of solar radiation is used. Fertilization efficiency can be increased not only by adjusting the fertilizer dose to the plant's requirements, but also by removing all of the soil factors that constrain nutrient uptake and their transport from soil to root surface. Fertilizer use efficiency is the result of a series of interactions between plant genotype and environment, including both abiotic and biotic factors. The soil is both the growth environment for plants and their main reservoir of water and nutrients.

Art & Culture

Xeer Ciise-Heerlse – promoting cultural authenticity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Ethiopia has registered its sixth intangible cultural heritage, the traditional unwritten law of the Isa community, "Xeer Ciise-Heerlse", with neighboring countries, Djibouti and Somalia. The multi-national file submitted to UNESCO was jointly prepared by Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia under the coordination of Ethiopia.

The unwritten traditional law, approved by 44 members of the community in the 16th century, is located in the Ethiopia Somali State Sity Zone. The Issa, led by leader "Ugas", live in all three countries and have their administrative center in Dire Dawa.

This recognition celebrates the cultural richness of different nations and emphasizes the importance of preserving these practices for future generations.

Her Issa refers to the oral customary laws of the Somali Isa communities in Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia. These laws consist of a political constitution, criminal law, and a code of social ethics. They aim to ensure peaceful coexistence within the community and with other ethnic groups, including international values such as respect for women and children's rights, environmental protection, and mutual assistance.

In 2022, the traditional law of the Somali Isa community was recognized as an intangible cultural heritage at the national level. The community has twelve tribes, with a common Ugas or leader, who is considered a spiritual father in every area.

The Ugas, chosen from among the younger generations, hold political leadership and spiritual fatherhood. The law is regulated in six main sections, including blood, economic, humanitarian, and land issues.



The law ensures that daily life activities and interactions are peaceful and addresses problems ranging from simple to serious.

Issa holds a significant place in Somali history. At the tribal level, there are twelve tribes, with the origins of the community tracing back to three tribes: Dalol, Abgol, and Wardiq.

These three clans expanded into six as two children were born, resulting in Holo, Halulakade, Elye, Wardiq, Hornena, and Urwine. Each of these six clans then gave birth to two children, totaling twelve tribes within the Issa community.

The Issa community is unified regardless of location, led by a single Ugas, unlike other Somali communities represented by Gerad and Sultan. The Ugas is a spiritual father and political leader, selected through an election system outlined in Isa law.

The Ugas, chosen from younger generations, holds no hereditary power. The administrative seat of the Ugas is in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, as recognized by the community's elders.

Issa Somali customary law, known as Xeer Ciise-Heerlse, consists of six main sections with 160 articles, 336 sub-articles, and 444 directives. The law governs issues such as murder, physical injury, economic matters, humanitarian concerns, cultural preservation, and land disputes. The election of the Ugas is conducted in adherence to community culture, ensuring a fair and just process.

While women are not directly involved in the traditional judicial system, Issa law emphasizes respect for women and enforces severe punishments for crimes against them. Various categories, such as Beraad, Bilad, Gemboad, and HainGogla, outline specific

penalties for offenses against women, aiming to protect their rights within the community.

In traditional law ceremonies, symbolic elements like trees, stones, and rivers are utilized. Participants wear a white kanita above the waist, a gudete below, and a cowhide belt around the waist. Additionally, a gile (traditional knife) is worn, along with cowhide shoes without left or right distinctions. A small stick and delicate kuta complete their attire during these ceremonies.

In conflict resolution ceremonies, the number of camels offered as compensation to victims varies based on the severity of the offense. Additionally, a unique marking system is employed by the Issa community to identify and protect their goods, livestock, and wealth, ensuring their property remains secure and retrievable.

African paintings: A rich tapestry of cultural influences

One of the most significant aspects of African paintings is the way they reflect the continent's diverse cultural heritage. Africa is home to thousands of distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language, customs, and artistic traditions. This rich cultural tapestry is beautifully represented in African paintings, which draw inspiration from various sources, including traditional ceremonies, folklore, and the natural world.

The unique blend of cultural influences in African paintings is not only a testament to the continent's rich history but also a celebration of the resilience and adaptability of its people. As Africa has experienced waves of migration, trade, and colonisation, its artists have skillfully incorporated new ideas and techniques into their work, resulting in an ever-evolving art form that remains true to its roots.

Vibrant colours and bold patterns: The signature of African paintings

African paintings are renowned for their vibrant colours and bold patterns, which instantly capture the eye and evoke strong emotions. These striking visual elements are



more than just a stylistic choice; they are deeply symbolic, often representing important cultural themes, such as unity, fertility, and the cycle of life.

The use of vivid colours in African paintings

is also closely connected to the continent's natural beauty. Rich earthy tones, fiery oranges, and lush greens are all inspired by the African landscape, offering viewers a glimpse into the breathtaking environments that have shaped the lives of the artists and their communities.

Storytelling: The heart of African paintings

African paintings are not only visually captivating, but they also serve as a powerful means of storytelling. Through their art, African painters share stories of their ancestors, their communities, and their experiences. These narratives often contain valuable moral lessons, providing guidance and wisdom for future generations.

The storytelling aspect of African paintings invites viewers to engage with the artwork on a deeper level, fostering a sense of connection and empathy. By understanding the stories behind these paintings, we can appreciate the artists' skill and creativity while also gaining insight into the cultural context that shaped their work.

African paintings are special because they beautifully capture the essence of the continent's diverse cultures and traditions. Through their vibrant colours, bold patterns, and powerful storytelling, these paintings offer a unique perspective on the human experience, transcending borders and connecting us all.

Indepth

Interlinked solutions key to tackling biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change, says IPBES

Biological diversity is on the decline worldwide and current approaches to address its loss have been piecemeal and ineffective in tackling the crisis facing nature—this is despite estimates that over half of global GDP (USD 58 trillion of economic activity in 2023) is generated in sectors that are moderately to highly dependent on nature, a new report by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) finds.

The Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food, and Health—known as the Nexus Report—finds that biodiversity, water, food, health, and climate change are connected crises.

Recognizing and leveraging the connections between biodiversity, water, food, health, and climate change is the way to go about solving the crises, says the report approved at the 11th session of the IPBES Plenary being held in Namibia this week.

IPBES is a global science-policy body providing science evidence to decision-makers for people and nature.

The report, a product of three years of work by 165 leading international experts from 57 countries, finds that existing actions to address these crises fail to tackle the complexity of interlinked problems and result in inconsistent governance.

Integrated solutions needed

Prof. Paula Harrison (United Kingdom), co-chair of the assessment with Prof. Pamela McElwee (USA), highlighted that policymakers should decide and act beyond single-issue silos.

“Our current approaches to dealing with these crises have tended to be fragmented or siloed, and that’s led to inefficiencies and has often been counterproductive,” she says.

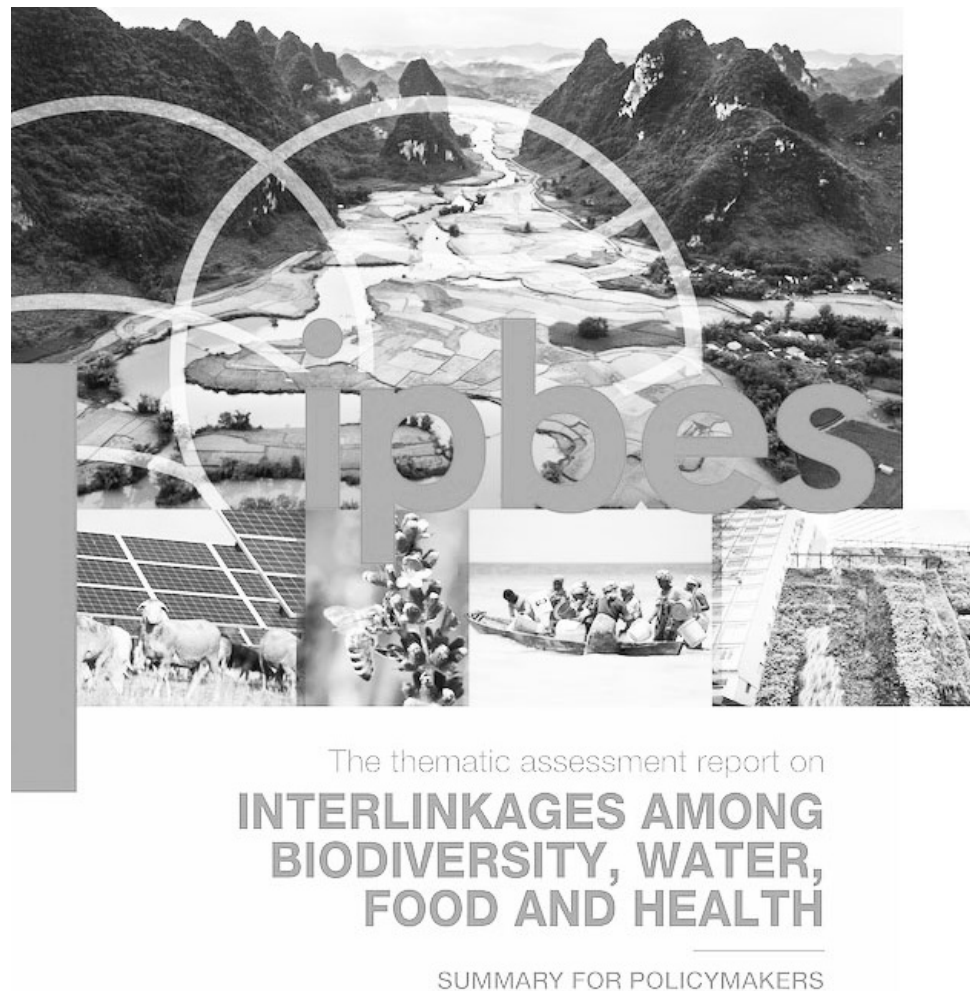
“If we try to address climate change, for example, by planting trees, we have to be really aware about what trees we are planting (to ensure they) are not actually making problems for biodiversity,” Harrison says, citing an often-implemented solution to reduce greenhouse gases.

Instead, the report offers response options, actions, or policies that can help advance governance and sustainable management of one or more elements of the nexus.

“What the report also offers is this suite of solutions. It stresses that we have over 70 response options available now that different actors can use in different context-dependent situations.”

The assessment also highlighted the unintended consequences when issues of nature are addressed in isolation.

For example, when the bat population in the United States declined due to a fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome, farmers increased their use of pesticides. This caused unintended health impacts, with an 8 percent rise in infant mortality reported in affected areas.



The front cover of the IPBES Nexus assessment report

However, where a problem is tackled holistically, it can have positive impacts, as in bilharzia, a parasitic disease that affects more than 200 million people worldwide but is especially prevalent in Africa.

“Treated only as a health challenge—usually through medication—the problem often recurs as people are reinfected. An innovative project in rural Senegal took a different approach—reducing water pollution and removing invasive water plants to reduce the habitat for the snails that host the parasitic worms that carry the disease—resulting in a 32 percent reduction in infections in children, improved access to freshwater and new revenue for the local communities,” says McElwee.

“The best way to bridge single-issue silos is through integrated and adaptive decision-making. ‘Nexus approaches’ offer policies and actions that are more coherent and coordinated—moving us towards the transformative change needed to meet our development and sustainability goals.”

The high cost of inaction

Warning of the high economic costs of inaction and the significant cost of biodiversity loss and climate change impacts, the report highlighted that biodiversity has been the loser in the tradeoffs where short-term gains are implemented and often neglect long-term sustainability.

“Policies informed by Nexus principles can create “win-win” solutions across sectors,” the report says.

According to the report, unaccounted-for costs of current approaches to tackling the multiple crises of biodiversity, water, health, food, and climate change are at least USD 10–25 trillion per year.

McElwee stressed that unaccounted-for costs, alongside direct public subsidies to economic activities worth about USD 1.7 trillion a year, have negative impacts on biodiversity. These subsidies have enhanced annual private sector financial flows estimated at USD 5.3 trillion, which are directly damaging to biodiversity.

“Delayed action on biodiversity goals, for example, could as much as double costs—also increasing the probability of irreplaceable losses such as species extinction,” McElwee warned, emphasizing that delayed action on climate change adds at least USD 500 billion per year in additional costs for meeting policy targets.

The Nexus report, building on previous IPBES reports that identified the most important direct drivers of biodiversity loss, states that indirect socioeconomic factors such as increasing waste, overconsumption, and population growth have intensified the direct drivers of biodiversity loss.

“Efforts of governments and other stakeholders have often failed to take into account indirect drivers and their impact on interactions between nexus elements because they remain fragmented, with many institutions working in isolation—often resulting in conflicting objectives,

inefficiencies, and negative incentives, leading to unintended consequences,” says Harrison.

Tapping opportunities

The Nexus Report recommends a shift from the ‘business as usual’ approach to direct and indirect drivers of change, spelling doom for biodiversity, water quality, and human health. Furthermore, it warns that maximizing the outcomes for only one part of the nexus in isolation will result in negative outcomes for other nexus elements.

For example, a ‘food first’ approach prioritizes food production with positive benefits for nutritional health, arising from unsustainable intensification of production and increased per capita consumption. But this has negative impacts on biodiversity, water, and climate change.

“Future scenarios do exist that have positive outcomes for people and nature by providing co-benefits across the nexus elements,” Harrison says. “The future scenarios with the widest nexus benefits are those with actions that focus on sustainable production and consumption in combination with conserving and restoring ecosystems, reducing pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.”

Noting that current governance structures and approaches are not responsive enough to meet the interconnected challenges from the accelerated speed and scale of environmental change and rising inequalities, the report has recommended a shift to more integrated, inclusive, equitable, coordinated and adaptive approaches.

The work of IPBES provides the science and evidence to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Paris Agreement on climate change, says Harrison.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), commented that the IPBES Nexus Assessment is the first comprehensive global assessment that looks at the interlinkages between crises and identifies solutions.

“Biodiversity is vital to the efforts to meet humanity’s growing need for food, feed, fiber, and fuel while protecting the planet for future generations,” Andersen says. “We need to produce more with less, through the Four Betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life—leaving no one behind.”

While Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), added that actions to address global challenges affecting biodiversity, water, food, health, and the climate system are often taken without sufficient regard to the interlinkages between them. She says such actions result in shortcomings and adverse impacts on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people.

(SOURCE: IPS)

Law & Politics

The unbreakable ties between two sisterly countries

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia transcends mere diplomatic or political ties; it is deeply rooted in the connections between their peoples. This bond, forged over centuries, goes beyond politics and is characterized by shared cultures, languages, and traditions. The two nations share a long border and a rich tapestry of ethnic ties, particularly among the Somali tribes. Notably, tribal leaders in Somalia often hold roots in the Somali region of Ethiopia, highlighting the intertwined nature of their societies.

The historical relationship between the two countries has been particularly significant during challenging times. Throughout Somalia's struggles, especially during the peak of the civil war and the rise of extremist groups, Ethiopia has played a crucial role. The Ethiopian military's sacrifices during these turbulent periods have been vital in stabilizing the region. By engaging in operations against the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, Ethiopian forces have achieved remarkable victories that are well-known among the Somalia populace and the world. This military intervention has not only contributed to security but has also fostered a sense of gratitude among many Somalis, who view Ethiopia as a protector in times of need.

Ethiopia's commitment to Somalia extends beyond military support. The country has served as a second home for many Somalis fleeing violence and instability. During the Al-Shabaab attacks, thousands sought refuge in Ethiopia, where they found safety and support. This humanitarian aspect of their relationship has strengthened the bonds between the two nations, showcasing deep-seated empathy and solidarity.

Despite this strong foundation, recent developments have strained the relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia. Various entities, both internal and external, have sought to exploit these tensions for their own interests, complicating the dynamics between the two nations. However, in a significant shift towards reconciliation, both countries have taken bold steps to mend their ties.

The two Horn of Africa nations have signed a landmark agreement aimed at resolving longstanding disputes and unlocking shared opportunities for development and growth. This agreement, brokered by Turkey, represents a significant milestone in the relationship between the two countries. Signed by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somalia President

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, it sets the stage for collaborative efforts in various sectors.

Following the agreement last week Prime Minister Abiy and Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud issued a joint statement emphasizing the importance of cooperation and dialogue between their nations. Both leaders committed to moving forward together to achieve common prosperity while addressing Ethiopia's need for sea access.

The Premier thanked Türkiye for its dedication to peace efforts in the Horn of Africa, noting, "A venture like this must be met in the spirit of cooperation and not suspicion. I believe today's constructive discussions will pave the way for a new year marked by cooperation, friendship, and the willingness to work together rather than against each other."

Abiy highlighted that Ethiopia's growing youth population and economic demands necessitate access to the sea, which would unleash economic dynamism and generate positive spillover effects across the Horn of Africa.

"As neighbors, Ethiopia and Somalia share centuries of relations. We are not just neighbors but brothers and sisters, bound by blood," he said. "Ethiopians and Somalis share a common history, language, and culture, strengthened by the sacrifices of thousands of Ethiopian soldiers who defended Somalia against terrorist threats."

Expressing gratitude for the year-long efforts to facilitate the discussions, PM Abiy stated, "Ours was never a case for third-party intervention; rather, it was meant to be a family dialogue." He reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to regional integration, emphasizing mutual development and shared growth as the foundation for stability in the Horn of Africa.

Similarly, Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud pledged to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by Ethiopian troops in safeguarding Somalia from terrorist attacks, particularly within the African Union peacekeeping missions.

"Ethiopian forces have shown their commitment to Somalia's security over many years," President Mohamud said. "Ethiopia and Somalia have more commonalities than differences. Our shared history, culture, and values highlight how interconnected our people are. We must build on these commonalities for mutual benefit."

He underscored the region's need for collaboration, adding, "The Horn of

Africa is a fertile but volatile region that requires Ethiopia and Somalia to work together to achieve peace and prosperity for our peoples and the region at large."

At a joint news conference, Turkish President Erdogan lauded the progress made during the peace talks. "We have taken the first step toward a new beginning based on peace and cooperation between Somalia and Ethiopia," he said.

Erdogan expressed satisfaction with hosting the delegations in Türkiye and highlighted the success of the Ankara Process, initiated eight months ago. "This achievement reflects the trust Ethiopia and Somalia have placed in Türkiye's mediation efforts," he remarked.

The signing of this agreement marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the two countries. It is seen as a testament to the growing regional cooperation and the desire for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Also, following the agreement different blocs are commending the pact. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia and Head of the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, has welcomed the communiqué signed on December 11, 2024, in Ankara.

Ambassador Souef commended this exemplary act of leadership, highlighting its significance in advancing regional peace, security, and stability. He encouraged both parties to implement the agreed measures to further solidify mutual trust and cooperation for the benefit of their people.

ATMIS remains fully committed to supporting Somalia's state-building and security transition, by the aspirations of the Somali people and the African Union's vision for a stable and prosperous Africa.

Also, African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu (PhD), and the European Union have commended the landmark Ankara Agreement reached between the two sisterly countries.

Overall, as both countries embark on this new chapter, the international community is closely watching. The agreement could serve as a model for other regional conflicts and inspire hope for a more peaceful and prosperous future for the Horn of Africa.

The

signing of this agreement marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the two countries. It is seen as a testament to the growing regional cooperation and the desire for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa

Women in Focus

Dedication to helping the underprivileged

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In today's era of technological advancement, many parts of the world are enjoying a luxurious life, and the innovations of high-tech have improved daily life significantly. On the other hand, millions of people across the world continue to lead a miserable life, trapped in a chain of poverty and hardship. Thus, to address these challenges, alleviate the burdens of the disadvantaged segment of the society and create a more equitable environment for all, thereby fulfilling their social responsibilities, several organizations and individuals around the globe are undertaking activities and offering vital help to the underprivileged.

In Ethiopia, numerous humanitarian organizations and individuals are dedicated and stand at the forefront to improving the lives of marginalized and underprivileged communities in various ways. Meseret Humanitarian Organization (MHO) is one of the leading organizations that strive to create a better future for mothers and children facing significant challenges in their lives.

Meseret Azage, Founder and Director of MHO, told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the primary mission of the Organization is to rehabilitate women and children affected by psychosocial stress and improve their lives through undertaking sustainable rehabilitation and support efforts.

The Organization's center situated in Addis Ababa, near Kality, provides unreserved support to several mothers and their children who have been rescued from the streets. These women and children often arrive at the center from the streets of the city in a state of despair and heartbroken, deeply affected by the tragedies of street life.

Meseret said that many of these women arrive to the Organization while they are pregnant or shortly after giving birth, and the organization provides them with essential services to help rebuild their morale and address the psychological trauma they have experienced. It also offers skills development training, financial and in-kind support to the women from three to six months. After this period, mothers will continue leading their lives through the support received by the organization. As to her, her organization rents houses; and supports them to start their own businesses based on their interests.

Mentioning that currently MHO has expanded its branches across the country and reached over 11 destinations, Meseret said that the offices provide rehabilitation services to vulnerable women and children in various areas. The organization provides training to those women in various fields based on their interests including courses in babysitting, hairdressing, and fashion



Meseret Azage, Founder and Director of MHO

design, among others.

Additionally, it creates employment opportunities within its centers for women who have previously joined the organization, allowing them to care for children and continue their rehabilitation.

"Many of the women who joined the Organization want to engage in small businesses, particularly in bread and *enjera* business. We offer financial and technical support to help them achieve their goal. To make these ambitions a reality, we work in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and the World Bank. However, the effort requires more capital and material support. Thus, we are working hard to mobilize resources by involving volunteers from at home and abroad as well as working in partnerships with public and private institutions," she said.

Despite the efforts, the Organization continues to face challenges due to rising living costs and financial constraints. Therefore, it is working towards expanding its activities by exploring more financial sources from volunteers.

"Currently, MHO hosts over 1,200 mothers. Most of mothers joined the organization with one child while others arrived having two to five children. We provide services irrespective of religious or other differences. Our organization remains open to anyone in need of assistance."

Meseret also urged all Ethiopians living at home and abroad to extend a helping

hand to the organization in its mission of rehabilitating mothers and children from the street to lead a better life. "MHO needs the support of essential supplies, including clothing, hygiene products, and household items among others, to continue its important work of rehabilitating mothers."

Lula Ali came from the rural part of the country. She arrived to the Organization along with her one-year-old daughter and stayed in the organization for a year. She extended her gratitude to MHO's for taking care of herself and her daughter during this difficult time as well as providing her with basic life skills training. After spending a year at the center, she has received life skills training and is now prepared to start a career in catering upon leaving MHO.

Recently, the Ebenezer Baptist Church Global Mission team, and a group of journalists, visited Meseret Humanitarian Organization Kality Center and observed center's activities. The Global Mission team spent a week at the organization, bringing hope and tangible support to the women and children in need. They provided life skills and self-care training, donated materials, and established meaningful connections to help brighten the future of these vulnerable mothers.

On the occasion, Meseret expressed her appreciation to the visiting team for their efforts, noting that such institutional visits play a significant role in fostering a sense of community and encouraging collective action to support those underserved group.

Such institutional-based visits to the organization and staying with the underserved mothers will have significant contributions to promoting togetherness and extending hands to the needy.

In addition, it could be a great lesson to future generations to engage in voluntarism and sustain togetherness through helping each other in both good and difficult times.

In sum, Meseret Humanitarian Organization (MHO) is a woman-led, non-governmental, and not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to reducing vulnerability among children and women in Ethiopia. Founded in July 2011 by Meseret Azage, a seasoned humanitarian who has long been involved with the Ethiopian Red Cross, MHO has been serving the most impoverished communities in Ethiopia for over a decade.

The organization is one of the leading local NGOs in Ethiopia, engaged in various exemplary and impactful development initiatives, especially in remote and underserved areas. Over the past 10 years, MHO has been working in close collaboration with underprivileged communities, the government and other agencies, especially by extending its projects to remote and backward areas to improve the lives of vulnerable women and children.

Meseret also urged all Ethiopians living at home and abroad to extend a helping hand to the organization in its mission of rehabilitating mothers and children from the street to lead a better life

Society

From despair to triumph

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

From a young age, Habtamu Belay had his own dream—a dream not just to survive, but to thrive. He envisioned a future where he could overcome life's challenges and create a life filled with purpose and success. His dreams were fueled by a deep sense of hope. Though uncertain of what life might bring, he was confident that, one day, he would find himself in a better position.

To him, this was not merely an aspiration, but a certainty. He understood that success required more than desire; rather it demands hard work, persistence, and determination.

For Habtamu, wealth is not just measured in material terms, but in fulfillment and purpose. Thus, believing that consistent and persistent actions lead to meaningful results, each day he worked untiringly targeting to realize his long sought ambition.

However, in one of the odd days, everything changed in an instant. Following a health check-up he conducted, Habtamu heard the unexpected and heartbreaking news that turned his world upside down.

The doctor, reviewing Habtamu's medical results, told him the hard truth that would alter Habtamu's life forever—the young man had been diagnosed with a severe illness that was beyond the point of treatments. Even worse, the doctor stated that the case would lead him to serious complications and affect his entire body, restricting his movement; limiting his ability to perform even the simplest actions.

The bad news shattered Habtamu's world. What had once felt within reach now appeared impossible. His dreams, hopes, and goals seemed to vanish before his eyes. It was not only the diagnosis; but the thought of what it meant for his future sent shivers down his spine.

A wave of despair swept over him, leaving him swamped in a storm of grief, disbelief, and an overwhelming sense of loss. His once-vibrant future seemed to collapse, and the path he had so carefully planned was now appeared blocked. All that remained was a deep, painful silence. The words that once empowered him now felt hollow and meaningless.

The reality of his illness—a condition that could not be easily cured—filled him with ambivalence.

As he stated to EPA, the moment was too frustrating and a thing that cannot be expressed in words. For days, Habtamu was consumed by sorrow. Anxiety and exhaustion took over him. His thoughts were endlessly circling back to his diagnosis, leaving him helpless. There seemed to be no way out. Then, in the midst of his despair, he made a decision— not to remain



Habtamu Belay

locked in the invisible shadow of grief; but to look for a way out by any means. Finally, seeking divine guidance to lessen his burden, take time for himself and soothe his troubled soul, he went to the nearby monastery where the noise of the world could not reach him.

The sounds of human voices faded behind him, and replaced by the soothing melodies of birds. At the monastery, he spent three days in deep reflection, alone with his thoughts. The silence was thick, but it allowed him to think—really think—about what mattered. And after those three days, something changed. He realized that while his body might be frail, his mind and spirit remained unbroken.

The time marched on, and the world continued its cycles. The first three days that he had decided to stay turned into weeks, months and even seasons. But Habtamu did not return to his old life. He withdrew from the world, not out of defeat, but with a desire to reconnect with his inner strength. He spent his days in solitude, praying and reflecting, often in the monastery where he had found inner peace. Time elapsed so swiftly and Habtamu, who at first intended to stay for only three days, ended up staying for five consecutive years.

But then, one day, Habtamu woke up in unbearable pain. His legs were numb, paralyzed in a way he could no longer move his body. The idea of recovery seemed distant, and each day was filled with physical struggle. Turning his neck, moving even the smallest part of his body, became a

battle.

The season was the fasting time of Lent when many Christians commit to fasting. Habtamu's longing for salvation intensified, and he found solace in prayer. Above all, the notion that "in life, whatever is going to happen, is going to happen and whatever is not going to happen, is not going to happen" gave him the strength to face the reality and move forward.

"I can endure anything. I will bear up and overcome whatever comes my way," he promised to himself. These words became source of his strength. His spirit, once dimmed, reignited. From that moment on, Habtamu felt a shift within him. He began to rise, not physically, but emotionally and spiritually, ready to embrace a new chapter in his life. This marked the beginning of Habtamu's transformation. He discovered a new sense of purpose that went beyond his physical limitations.

Leaving his past behind, today, Habtamu has found his own path in life and entered a new chapter.

Taking part at the Fourth Edition of the Focus on Ability Ethiopia Film Festival, a competition celebrating the achievements and abilities of people with disabilities and encouraging the community to become more aware of their contributions, Habtamu won, owing to his short film titled "Good View."

This short film was also selected as popular and interesting film at the international competition, representing the country.

At the film, Habtamu reflected his own story— his struggles, triumphs, his journey toward self-acceptance, how he continues to pursue his dream despite his disability as well as his future ambitions.

Habtamu aspires to become one of the leading business persons in Ethiopia and contribute his share to the growth of his country and community.

According to him, disability does not mean inability; rather persons with disability are strong people who can face and overcome challenges with strength and resilience; no matter in what situation they may be in. In this regard, there are countless individuals with disabilities, who can turn their disabilities to their strength and bring about tangible outcomes.

"I am a winner," he always says, for overcoming his obstacles, achieving success and reaching where he is now. Truly, Habtamu is a winner who can make a name for himself through overcoming obstacles with strength, resilience, determination, and unwavering hope.

At the fourth edition of the "Focus on Ability" festival held at the premises of the British Council, other films that won international awards were also received recognition.

According to him, disability does not mean inability; rather persons with disability are strong people who can face and overcome challenges with strength and resilience; no matter in what situation they may be in

INTERNATIONAL

Search continues for missing after DRC boat capsizing kills at least 25

Dozens of people are missing after an overcrowded boat capsized in central DRC on Fimi river

An overcrowded boat has capsized on a river in the central Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), killing at least 25 people, including children, and leaving dozens missing, according to officials and residents.

The vessel, which was believed to have more than 100 passengers on board, had left from the town of Inongo, northeast of the capital of Kinshasa, on Tuesday. It sank a few hundred metres into the journey along the Fimi river.

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A search was under way for the missing hours later.

“There was overloading at roof level and, as far as the lifeless human bodies are concerned, at least 25 have been recovered so far,” said David Kalemba, Inongo’s river commissioner.

The capsized boat was also loaded with



Deadly boat accidents are common in the DRC

goods, according to Alex Mbumba, a resident of the area. “Among the dead are children ... the boat had a lot of

passengers,” Mbumba told the Associated Press news agency.

Deadly boat accidents are common in the

DRC, where vessels are frequently loaded well beyond their capacity. The country has few tarred roads across its vast, forested territory, and river travel is common.

At least 78 people drowned in October when a boat that was reportedly carrying hundreds of people capsized on Lake Kivu, in the country’s east. Another 80 lost their lives in a similar accident on the Kwa river, about 70km from the city of Mushie in Mai-Ndombe province, near Kinshasa, in June.

The latest accident is the fourth this year in the Mai-Ndombe province, a region surrounded by rivers, prompting calls for authorities to equip it with flotation devices.

“The government must act to improve safety on the waters of our province [because] navigation conditions are dangerous,” Mbumba said.

Source: Aljazeera

First Syria flight takes off from Damascus airport since Assad’s downfall

As efforts get under way to restart economy, UN envoy calls for ‘free and fair elections’ after transition

The first commercial flight in Syria since the toppling of longtime President Bashar al-Assad earlier this month has taken off from Damascus airport.

The flight landed in Aleppo, in the country’s north, on Wednesday with 43 people on board including a group of journalists.

Pro-Assad forces abandoned the airport in the capital on December 8 as opposition fighters closed in on the city following a lightning offensive that began on November 27. Since then, no flights had taken off or landed due to security reasons.

Earlier this week, airport staff painted the pro-opposition three-star flag on aeroplanes, a symbol of the 2011 uprising now adopted by the transitional authorities. Inside the terminal, the new flag has also replaced the one associated with the government of al-Assad, who fled to Russia.

An airport official told the AFP news agency on condition of anonymity that international flights would resume on December 24, following maintenance work.

Meanwhile, neighbouring Jordan has reopened the Jaber border crossing with for trade, resuming the flow of goods and freight traffic between the two countries.

More than 13 years after a brutal crackdown on antigovernment protests morphed into a multisided war that killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions, Syria is struggling to get back on its feet as it comes to terms with the scars of torture, disappearances and summary executions.

The group at the helm of Syria’s new ruling coalition, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), has sought to keep its institutions going and kickstart its economy. Once rooted in Syria’s branch of al-Qaeda and designated a “terrorist” organisation by several Western governments, HTS has softened its rhetoric



Syria’s first domestic flight since the fall of Assad regime takes off from Damascus

and pledged to protect the nation’s diverse religious and ethnic communities.

While the new caretaker administration in Damascus has set out few details on its thinking for the next steps for the country, newly appointed Prime Minister Mohammed al-Bashir, who formerly led an HTS-affiliated government in Idlib province, has said he will remain in office until March.

‘Free and fair elections’

On Wednesday, a day after meeting HTS leader Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus, United Nations Special Envoy Geir Pedersen called for “free and fair elections” in Syria after the transition and urgent humanitarian assistance for the country.

Pedersen, who on Tuesday warned that the war has not yet ended, told reporters in Damascus that “there is a lot of hope that we can now see the beginning of a new Syria”.

He also expressed hope for a “political solution” in the Kurdish-held northeast, where the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian

Democratic Forces (SDF) are battling Turkish-backed groups who have captured several Kurdish towns since the offensive began in the rest of the country last month.

Speaking to AFP, HTS military chief Murhaf Abu Qasra said Kurdish-held areas would be integrated under the country’s new leadership, adding that the group rejects federalism and that “Syria will not be divided.”

“The Kurdish people are one of the components of the Syrian people ... Syria will not be divided and there will be no federal entities,” he said.

Abu Qasra, known by his nom de guerre Abu Hassan al-Hamawi, also said the group would be “the first” to dissolve its armed wing and integrate into the armed forces.

Meanwhile, Hadi al-Bahra, head of the Syrian National Coalition that grouped opponents of al-Assad during the war, said on Wednesday that Syria’s transitional government should be credible and not exclude any Syrian party or be based on sectarianism.

The Turkiye-based Syrian National Coalition would return to Syria and set up headquarters there, al-Bahra told journalists at a news briefing, adding that he intended to return as well.

“Logistics should be worked out and freedom of speech should be guaranteed,” he added.

His comments came a day after members of the UN Security Council in a statement called for the implementation of “an inclusive and Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process” that they said should meet the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians, protect all of them and “enable them to peacefully, independently and democratically determine their own futures”.

The 15-member body also emphasised battling “terrorism” across the country, stressing that Syria must abide by council resolutions on non-conventional weapons and reiterating support for UN peacekeepers and the inviolability of diplomatic premises.

Source: Aljazeera



Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

HU's commitment to becoming center of excellence in East Africa

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

HU's efforts to combine academic excellence and community engagement tasks are evident in its meticulous preparations to become an autonomous entity.

Dr. Jemal Yousuf, the President of Haramaya University, stated that as part of its autonomy tasks, the university has been integrating research, teaching, learning, and community engagement. It aims to strengthen its income-generating enterprise as a viable model to raise funds, improve infrastructure, conduct quality research, and promote education.

The university is also focused on internationalization by enhancing its visibility. Many students and faculty members are pursuing Master's and PhD degrees as part of internationalization programs.

In addition to forming partnerships with local and international higher education institutions, HU has collaborated with



Dr. Jemal Yousuf

universities in Europe, the United States, and others. Regionally, it has partnered with universities to improve educational diplomacy, regional development, and integration.

HU has developed a curriculum based on the country's program and specific programs tailored to its character and strategy. For example, the African Center of Excellence in Climate-Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation addresses climate change

challenges in Eastern and Southern Africa. Despite the World Bank discontinuing sponsorship, HU continues to fund the program.

The university also offers regional programs focused on Agriculture information communication management, critical for East and Southern Africa. It is part of the Regional Universities Network, involving about 170 universities from different African countries.

To ensure quality research, the University has implemented a thematic-based research approach based on national and local needs, including Grand Challenges research to address community challenges and national development.

Community engagement projects such as free legal services and improved seed varieties benefit households and save millions of birr for the needy. HU also engages the diaspora in providing medical equipment support to hospitals in Oromia's Eastern, West North, and Southern areas.

Currently, HU is working to turn location disadvantages into opportunities by creating

an enabling environment for students, facilitating residence for academic staff, and offering transportation services.

The university plays a significant role in Ethiopia's agricultural activities by releasing over 23% of improved seed varieties, contributing to food security. It aims to scale up its achievements by intertwining autonomy with academic success.

HU is actively addressing climate change through green projects such as *Yelemat Turufat* and green legacy initiatives. Ensuring the sustainability of Lake Haramaya and enhancing its fish and water quality are also major goals. The university provides training to the local community, especially the youth, to develop a sense of ownership and utilize the lake for tourism and sports.

HU aims to be one of the top 10 universities in East Africa by focusing on human-centered activities and creating an enabling environment for senior instructors. It also emphasizes mentorship between senior professors and junior lecturers and researchers.



Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

DaDU's community service in action

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Ethiopia boasts favorable agricultural productivity and a conducive climate, coupled with significant productive capacity. The government is currently implementing strategic plans to shift from imports to domestic production, aiming to export goods to generate foreign exchange and ensure food security. An example of this initiative is the rapid development of rice production in recent years, resulting in substantial returns for farmers.

DaDU is dedicated to cultivating a proactive, knowledgeable, and socially responsible generation to fulfill its national mission. The institution actively participates in community engagement and nation-building efforts.

In line with the government's food security initiative, the university has organized farmers in the If a Gelano vicinity in Sayyo district under the "Mole Association."



DaDU is providing professional expertise and material resources to improve rice production through scientific techniques.

The university supplies the community with rice seeds and fertilizers from research and development efforts, enabling farmers to

demonstrate effective agricultural practices. DaDU plays a crucial role in delivering significant assistance to farmers, leading to community benefits and increased agricultural productivity.

By showcasing scientifically validated

agricultural practices and technology-driven farming techniques, the university supports economic development and helps farmers adopt agricultural innovations for improved production capabilities and food supply stability. Farmers engaged in rice cultivation express gratitude for the university's support and are optimistic about the initiative's results.

Soressa Shuma, Assistant Professor and Director of the Integrated Agricultural Research Centre at DambiDollo University, highlights the university's focus on enhancing farmers' economic well-being and promoting knowledge of rice cultivation in the region.

In conclusion, rice cultivation is essential for ensuring food security, driving economic growth, and fostering sustainable development.

Source- DaDU Public and International Relations Directorate



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