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## Ethiopia, Algeria to elevate ties

• Premier meets Ugandan defense forces chief

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA** – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) discussed with the Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf on ways to reinforce diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Algeria.

The premier met the FM yesterday and received a message sent from the Algerian president Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

“This morning, I welcomed Ahmed Attaf, the Foreign Minister of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, to my office. As a

Special Envoy, he delivered a message from President Abdelmadjid Tebboune,” Abiy wrote on X social media.

He also noted that the discussion encompassed bilateral issues and the means to bolstering the

See Ethiopia, Algeria ... page 3

## MoTRI, ECCSA agree to enhance digital public-private dialogues

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations (ECCSA) agreed to improve public-private dialogue through digital platforms.

See MoTRI, ECCSA ... page 3



## Ankara declaration win-win diplomatic achievement: Scholar

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA**- The Ankara Declaration signed between Ethiopia and Somalia can be seen as a win-win diplomatic victory for both signatories, Scholar said.

See Ankara declaration ... page 3

## Ethiopia entices notable investment bonanza in SEZs

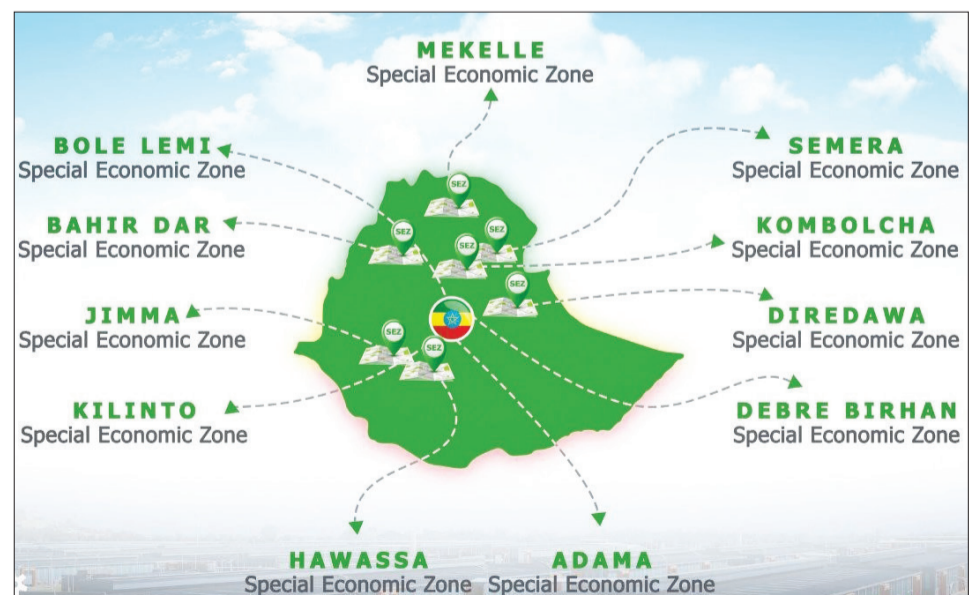
BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) said that Ethiopia’s Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have become ideal investment hubs for potential investors enabling the country to increase forex earnings.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), IPDC Chief Executive Officer Fisseha Yitagesu (PhD) stated that Ethiopia has been undertaking extensive infrastructural development activities and deploying state-of-the-art technologies in all its industrial parks and special economic zones aiming to allure potential investments.

He also emphasized that the transformation of industrial parks into special economic zones helped the country attract investors in various sectors, thus, managing to address forex shortages and promoting investors’ participation.

Furthermore, the transition is also helping to stimulate the manufacturing sector and foreign direct investment, export promotion and boost import substitution.



Accordingly, China, India and Middle East countries are not only taking the forefront in the parks but also in other investment areas. Fisseha also said that these zones are also delivering efficient, time saving and cost effective one stop services to investors in an organized manner to curb the lengthy bureaucratic red tapes that hinder the involvement of investors.

“The parks are implementing various plug-and-produce infrastructural developments, state-of-the-art technologies to modernize government services,” he noted.

Since these economic zones need a favorable environment, world-class infrastructure, and efficient workforce,

See Ethiopia entices notable: ... page 3

# News

## Commission lunches agenda gathering in Oromia State

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDIS ABABA-** The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) has commenced agenda gathering at Adama Science and Technology University, Oromia State yesterday.

In his opening remarks, ENDC's Chief Commissioner Prof. Mesfin Araya indicated that around 320 representatives that would take part in the main National Dialogue council will be selected.

The Chief Commissioner also emphasized the need to hold National Dialogue to resolve differences on national matters sustainably.

Highlighting that ideological differences that is observed among communities, political elites and intellectuals' center around major national issues, he stressed that the paths that have been taken so far, has failed the nation to bring about sustainable solutions.

Thus, the country established National Dialogue commission aiming to reach to consensus through sustainable and inclusive dialogue to address nation's long aged challenges, as to him.

To date, the Chief Commissioner further noted that the commission is undertaking effective activities through identifying nation's major areas of differences through its agenda gathering processes across the country.

Mentioning that the agenda gathering process in Amhara and Tigray states would be expected to follow the Oromia state's agenda gathering, he said it would increase the number of districts that have finalized agenda gathering from 615 to 971.

Agenda gathering process that is going to be facilitated in two phases will be held for nine consecutive days. While more than 7,000 participants that are drawn from 356 districts are expected to take part in the first phase of agenda gathering process, community representatives, political parties, Civic Society Organizations, representatives of different institutions, public figures, government bodies, are among other would participated



Prof. Mesfin Araya

in the second phase.

Mesfin called on participants to bring forth major agendas that need to be addressed through the National Dialogue.

## IES fortifying regional ties with comprehensive training initiatives

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

**ADDIS ABABA -** The Institute of Ethiopian Standards (IES) said it is strengthening regional ties through expanding comprehensive training initiatives.

IES Director General Meseret Bekele (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the institute is expanding training programs to neighboring nations leveraging its full-fledged academy.

"We have a full-fledged academy with the necessary accommodation facilities including bedrooms, media center, library with an e-library room and a video conference center, thereby suitable to trainees," she said.

Apart from Ethiopian experts, the institute provides training for standard experts from neighboring African nations on standards and laboratory test, she stated.

"Various African nations request training at our institute, and we participate in general council and assembly meetings here."

The institute in collaboration with ISO and ARSO, provides training especially for east African nations on standards and related issues while partnering with national and international organizations to align Ethiopian standards with global best practices, Meseret said.

Through its involvement with the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO), IES helps harmonizing regional standards and promotes their global adoption, she noted.

This collaboration supports the integration of Ethiopian standards into the international framework and enhances the competitiveness of Ethiopian products and services in global markets, according to the Director General.



Meseret Bekele (PhD)

IES is also enhancing the standards of Teff crop and its output Injera thereby improving the quality and competitiveness of Ethiopian products and services at regional and global scale, she stressed.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's recently inaugurated 'Quality Village' is becoming a hub for international standards training and collaboration, while African leaders are visiting the village, Meseret said.

IES is Ethiopia's national standards organization responsible for developing and promoting standards to ensure quality, safety, and interoperability in various sectors. IES also provides a comprehensive range of services, including standards development, certification, and training across diverse sectors such as construction, healthcare, and information technology.

## Admin expects to cement people to people ties : Envoy

BY HIZKEL HAILU

**Hargeisa -** Somaliland's new administration would bolster cooperation with the peoples' of Ethiopia, Somaliland Ambassador expressed, as he highlighted the significant role Ethiopia has played for regional stability.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Somaliland's Special Envoy to the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ambassador Abdillahi Mohamed Duale expressed his confidence on the newly appointed President of Somaliland to advance the long standing people to people relations.

He also outlined Somaliland's active engagement with IGAD and the AU, where efforts are underway to enhance the region's perception of the state.

These endeavors include promoting the state's achievements in democratic governance and stability to strengthen its case for international recognition, he noted.

While mentioning that the former President Muse Bihi Abdi's peaceful transition of power to Somaliland's newly elected leader, President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi, the Ambassador described the democratic process as a hallmark of Somaliland's political maturity in a volatile region.

The transition to President Abdirahman



Ambassador Abdillahi Mohamed

marks another milestone for Somaliland, which has consistently demonstrated its commitment to democratic principles for more than three decades. This peaceful transfer of power is being celebrated as a testament to the strength of its democratic institutions, he added.

Mohamed also stated his optimism that the new President and his cabinet would consolidate recent developments in the relations among Horn of African countries.

The renewed collaboration between the peoples of both countries would enhance economic and security cooperation, and infrastructure development, solidifying their longstanding relationship, it was learnt.

## Ethiopia commences power supply trial from Kenya to Tanzania

BY STAFF REPORTER

**ADDIS ABABA-** Ethiopia has successfully commenced power supply trial from Kenya to Tanzania, according to local media report.

The East Africa Electric Highway project, a key component of the power infrastructure initiative, linking Kenya to Tanzania

This milestone follows the successful establishment of the first power connection between Ethiopia and Kenya, made possible by an advanced power supply network, it was learnt.

The subsequent phase of the project, connecting Kenya and Tanzania, has now been completed,

allowing for the initiation of trial power distribution.

This regional power connection is set to enhance cooperation among the involved nations by providing a consistent and cost-effective power supply.

The statement further noted that it will also broaden Ethiopia's capacity to supply renewable energy, positioning the country as a leader in promoting green electricity trading in the region. Initial trading efforts are projected to generate approximately USD 200 million annually.

The World Bank, African Development Bank and French Development Cooperative have



provided financial support for the project.

"The East African Electric Highway Project's first power connection has been implemented through the infrastructure of power supply from Ethiopia to Kenya.

The project is part of the East African Electric

Highway project which is extended to Ethiopia-Kenya power transmission line."

"It can be taken as an indication that the power transmission line is going to be implemented because the Ethiopian-Tanzania power sales agreement is going to be applied."

# News

## Ethiopian traditional medicines set to enter formal market

BY YESUF ENDRIS

**ADDIS ABABA**-The Association of Addis Ababa Traditional Medicine Practitioners has announced that several traditional medicines currently undergoing laboratory testing are on track to be certified and enter the formal pharmaceutical market.

In an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, President of the Association Merigeta Mengistu Desta said that despite misleading claims by illegal practitioners, efforts to formalize traditional medicine are progressing, with some remedies nearing certification.

Mengistu revealed that Ethiopia currently lacks any registered or certified traditional medicine, though practitioners are typically registered to take responsibility for patient care. “Countries with similar indigenous knowledge are successfully utilizing traditional medicines, with practitioners receiving certifications and patents for their innovations. However, the formalization of traditional medicine is a relatively new concept in Ethiopia, and we hope the government will support the process,” he stated.

While experts are increasingly joining the



association and the government is registering practitioners, there are still no official criteria for evaluating the efficacy or safety of traditional medicines. Mengistu expressed optimism that more legal and technical frameworks will be developed over time.

“The public has a strong trust in traditional medicines, and no one can stop people from using them. Formalizing the practice to align it with modern healthcare is crucial,” he added.

The Association is also calling on security institutions to take action against illegal

practitioners. Mengistu urged those harmed by unlicensed practitioners to seek legal recourse, stressing that unjustly discrediting traditional medicine as a whole is both unlawful and unfair. “We work alongside modern healthcare providers, not in opposition to them,” he concluded.

Because traditional medicine is culturally entrenched, accessible, and affordable, up to 80% of the Ethiopian population relies on traditional remedies as a primary source of health care, studies indicated.

## Ankara declaration...

In an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wachamo University’s Peace and Security Studies Associate Professor Temesgen Thomas (PhD) further said that by fostering a cooperative framework with Somalia, the declaration not only addresses immediate tensions but also paves the way for Ethiopia’s long-term national interest in questing for access to the sea.

“The Ankara Declaration, signed on December 11, 2024, marks a significant development in Ethiopia’s long-standing quest for access to the sea. The successful mediation, therefore, illustrates not a diplomatic failure but triple success for Ethiopia that needs to be celebrated.”

He recalled that Ethiopia inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland aimed to lease port, which immediately sparked diplomatic tensions with Somalia. Recognizing the potential for destabilization in the region, Turkey, through its diplomatic channels, initiated mediation between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Hence, he stressed that the agreement signifies a breakthrough on Ethiopia’s quest for Access to the sea as both nations agreed to establish a technical committee to facilitate Ethiopia’s access to the sea. “This committee represents a structured approach to addressing logistical and operational works, which is crucial for ensuring reliable, secure and sustainable access to the sea.”

With regard to implications on bilateral agreement, he mentioned that the declaration not only affirms Ethiopia’s quest for access to the sea but also elevates it to an internationally recognized agenda. As to him, this shift is a notable diplomatic achievement, as it reflects a broader acknowledgment of Ethiopia’s national interests.

Similarly, he said that it would contribute to restoring peaceful relations with Somalia, a necessary step in a region characterized by volatility. The presence of potentially disruptive actors highlights the importance of diplomatic engagement in achieving regional stability, which is also key national interest of Ethiopia.

## MoTRI, ECCSA...

MoTRI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Associations to improve public-private dialogue through digital platform thereby facilitating the government’s efforts to boost private sector engagement in the economy.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, MoTRI State Minister Abdulhakim Mulu (PhD) stated that the agreement signed with ECCSA reaffirms the government’s commitment to increasing the private sector’s share in the economy.

“The government has reformed economic policies to favor the private sector. These reforms require actionable strategies for implementation. As part of this effort, the government is engaging in dialogues with local and foreign private firms to attract investment in Ethiopia. This digital solution is expected to streamline these discussions,” he said.

He added that existing challenges discouraging public-private dialogue can be addressed through such inclusive platforms.

“Using this platform, several investors from different countries can meet with government officials. It enables economic forums and



Abdulhakim Mulu (PhD)

investment negotiations to take place seamlessly. This platform is crucial not only for discussions but also for reaching stakeholders effectively and efficiently,” Abdulhakim stated.

“The government invites all legitimate businesses globally to negotiate and invest in Ethiopia,” he added.

ECCSA President Sebsib Abafira appreciated the MoU, noting that it will enhance the quality of dialogues between the government and the private sector.



Sebsib Abafira

“The electronic Public-Private Dialogue 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 highlighted.

The collaboration is expected to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of the digital platform, contributing to enhanced engagement between the government and private entities.



Fisseha Yitagesu (PhD)

## Ethiopia entices...

the CEO highlighted that the Corporation is currently commissioning various initiatives to bring about competitive parks and forging connectivity across Africa and beyond.

It is to be recalled that the country has recently transformed 10 IPs out of the 13 industrial parks to special economic zones aiming at enhancing FDI and economic growth among many others.

longstanding cooperation between the two nations. “We had fruitful discussions on strengthening the enduring ties between Ethiopia and Algeria.”

Similarly, FM Ahmed Attaf also discussed with Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) on bilateral and continental issues.

The ministers agreed to revitalize the Joint Ministerial Commission, enhance cooperation and explore new partnership opportunities, according to the information obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of Algeria, Ahmed Attaf arrived in Addis Ababa for an official working visit.

## Ethiopia, Algeria...



Meanwhile, the Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia also reported that the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces Chief, General

Muhoozi Kainerugaba has met and discussed with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) yesterday.

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's BRICS membership as a gateway to economic growth

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is an undeniable fact that joining BRICS would clear the way for shielding its interest in shaping an all-embracing world order and accelerating Ethiopia's economy at some time in the future. On a more specific note, Ethiopia's admission into BRICS, beyond a shadow of a doubt, can assist in forging strong diplomatic collaboration.

There is no doubt that since the onset of joining BRICS, Ethiopians at home and overseas have expressed their contentment on the grounds that it plays a paramount role in taking the country to the next level of accomplishment and new opportunities just around the corner. It is no hyperbole to say that this is the outcome of Ethiopia's success in its modern diplomacy strides.

As things currently stand, Ethiopia's BRICS membership plays a huge role serving as a stimulus for the growth of the country's economy and bolstering noteworthy networks with fellow member nations. All things considered, this momentous milestone is set to get to the bottom of countless economic challenges for Ethiopia for the most part by smoothing the path of its import and export undertakings

It has commonly been assumed that this historic breakthrough will bring about a broad range of benefits for Ethiopia in oiling the wheels of import and export trade activities.

By the same token, the BRICS members would set the scene for accomplishing growth by standing in union and joining efforts. Albeit a lot has been said on the subject of the positive moves of joining the bloc, some groups that hate to see Ethiopia's development have been moving heaven and earth with a focus on tarnishing the positive strides of the country with barefaced lies and fabricated stories.

No matter how hard they attempted to materialize their dreams, all their efforts went for nothing and turned out to be a wild goose chase. But Ethiopia has sustained moving forward in the right direction giving the cold shoulder to their cooked-up stories.

There are various comments about the new BRICS+. Some Western media called the BRICS+ group as an anti-dollar group in the de-dollarization process. Others say the member states of the group have more disagreements and historical rivalries than harmony and cooperation. In explaining this matter many mentioned the disagreements between Saudi Arabia and Iran for their regional hegemony and religious sect competition; Ethiopia and Egypt on the Nile River; China and India on border issues; Brazil and Argentina on the geopolitical competition, UAE and Iran on the territorial dispute over three islands- Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb; the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in



Egypt as a threat to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, according to an article.

It went on to say this has ignited discussions about the political ramifications among member states of BRICS+6. Of course, there are some improvements in the above-mentioned problems. For instance, after China brokered a deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two governments are trying to overcome past hostility and boost cooperation.

Now they agreed to "end a diplomatic rift and re-establish relations following years of hostility that had endangered regional stability in the Gulf, as well as in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon". They have also reopened their embassies in one another's countries to improve diplomatic relations. Egypt and Ethiopia are also negotiating on the use of the River Nile or Abbay. Other member countries are also coming to terms.

Before the enlargement, BRICS covered 30% of the world's territory and 18% of global trade. As stated in the Declaration, BRICS countries produce "one-third of the world's food". Sources show that the additional six nations to BRICS have increased the coverage of the group concerning the world population from 42% to 46%, of global GDP from 23% to 36%.

Institute of Foreign Affairs, Training Director General Melaku Mululem told *The Ethiopian Herald* that at the BRICS summit in Russia in 2024, new paper money for the BRICS member countries was proposed. This proposal shows the member countries' commitment to having their own prominent currency for trading among themselves. This is a good initiative to apply the group's decision to have a common currency.

He went on to say, this currency has a lot of advantages for Ethiopia and other member countries. To begin with, it will be a good alternative hard currency to USD, EURO, and others. The member countries can also minimize the negative impacts of the dollar. This decision is not to be against the interest of the USA. It is also not to be regarded as anti-dollar actions. However, it promotes the national interests of member countries

and enhances trade among themselves.

He elucidated that this currency will increase Ethiopia's international economic relationships with other countries. Ethiopia can import and export products from member countries using the new currency by minimizing transaction costs. It is also a good opportunity to pay back loans using the new BRICS currency.

The use of BRICS currency will also help to counter inflation in the country. This is to mean that the exchange rate between Birr and USD will be stable. The people of Ethiopia will not suffer from the economic inflations caused by the dollar. Investors from member countries can also get an advantage of alternative currency to invest in Ethiopia. More to the point, the black market for hard currencies will not have room to flourish. Such currency will also minimize the injustices in economic globalization in the world.

The New Development Bank (NDB), aligned with BRICS, aims for a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable world, presenting member nations with equitable and accessible economic opportunities, Russian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Evgeny Terekhin told local media.

Briefing journalists on the outcomes of the BRICS + 2024 Summit in the recent past, the Ambassador said that with its democratic decision-making structure, BRICS is notably more egalitarian than many established organizations.

"The group's members are seeking alternative sources of funding. Developing countries are convinced that the New Development Bank, which has issued billions of dollars in loans and allows them to be repaid in national currencies," he emphasized.

The countries of the Global South are in considerable need of financial resources at present and the conditions for securing such resources are rather challenging, Ambassador Terekhin added.

Therefore, he stressed "it is crucial to provide funding in national currencies and in specialized formats. The New

Development Bank (NDB) is dedicated to this endeavor, funding not only sovereign projects but also private initiatives."

"Since 2018, the Bank has, funded about one hundred projects, amounting to a total of 33 billion USD. The increase in the share of settlements denominated in national currencies helps reduce debt servicing costs, strengthen the financial independence of BRICS states, and minimize geopolitical risks, that is, free economic development, as much as possible in today's world," Ambassador Terekhin elaborated.

Ethiopia's membership in the BRICS, which is the association of countries of like-minded economic aspiration, is of a milestone diplomatic achievement.

Both the expansion of BRICS and NDB emphasis on ensuring the necessary financial resources for projects in the countries of the Global South are of paramount importance.

As joining the BRICS assists the progress of the country's national economy more than ever before, all pertinent bodies should join hands and form an alliance. In doing so, achieving the desired goal will be as easy as falling off a log and shooting fish in a barrel.

As nothing can prohibit Ethiopia's growth, the country should unlock all opportunities and possible avenues attaching due importance to BRICS membership.

The bloc will combine the advantages of each member for the success of the members on the grounds that BRICS can turn their dreams into a reality at the earliest possible time. Other than that BRICS+ will bolster a multipolar world that can balance needless pressure from leading superpowers.

The cooperation can expedite access to financial resources, technical expertise among BRICS nations, and other things of a similar kind. The country also strives for effectuating climate-resilient and low-carbon growth approaches in accordance with the objectives of the AU Agenda 2063.

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

# Editorial

# Opinion

## Ethiopia's military collaboration: Enhancing peace and stability across Africa

Ethiopia has been initiating military cooperation with many African countries like Uganda, Kenya and the like. This cooperation would play an indispensable role in helping countries their military muscles towards contributing a great deal to the peace and stability of the continent. Moreover, this bold move helps them curb challenges and varied hurdles thrown from common foes.

Unequivocally, reinvigorating military-to-military contacts and develop close ties with the soldierly forces of various nations, especially with neighboring ones, is of paramount importance in building confidence and enhancing security and tranquility of the region. Yes, the Ethiopian military forces have been contributing a lot to regional peace and stability. Of course, peacetime military diplomacy needs to be developed as one of the main and continuous peacetime activities in support of foreign and security policy objectives aimed at maintaining peace, establishing mutual trust, developing collaboration and enhancing durability and security in the region.

It is well comprehended that professional military interaction creates the linkages which help build a climate of common understanding in the international environment to face challenges together. Not only does such viable cooperation amount to a military alliance but it also sets up the foundations for a contingency of military inter-operability between/among nations. Ethiopian military, on account of its vast expertise of operating in varied terrains, has been proved effective and highly preferable these days.

Without a shadow of doubt, military cooperation can help countries protect themselves from external threats, manage conflict with other countries, understand a potential adversary's strengths and weaknesses, and how they might use their military force in a crisis as well as build trust with partner countries.

Cognizant of the fact that military cooperation can help improve the skills of personnel and promote human security and develop conditions for societies to transition back to peaceful and stable structures, Ethiopian and many other nations have enjoyed setting up this firm cooperation. If truth be told, forming military alliances is significantly useful in protecting themselves, improving ties with another nation, and managing conflict as it would confidently provide them with equipment, military personnel as well as the required supplies thereby making countries capable of defending themselves from common foes.

The best approach to the prevention of confrontation between/among countries is to identify of common interests and to widen cooperation between them in diverse fields, particularly in military scope.

Obvious, an important component of security cooperation is the military cooperation among the states of the continent. Apparently, growth and development and security go hand-in-hand. That is why the African countries, following Ethiopia's initiation, have well embarked on their military cooperation.

Most of these issues transcend borders or even providing easy movement in and out of countries so that government will have to tackle them together coming on a common platform and continent has already shown the way. A good example is this military cooperation.

In sum, continent's critical role in maintaining national security and the ability to muster assets and capabilities is assumed by the military. Most definitely, a defense relationship can be an important part of the broader pattern of relations among countries, as well as a sign of the maturing of the broader bilateral or trilateral relationship. What countries are doing, and will do together in the area of defense can indicate the level of trust they have developed in each other's strategic intentions and sovereign grade. Military relationships can also enable nations to influence and understand in both directions. Military cooperation can be important for confidence building because it enables nations to strengthen capacity and make armed force ground well founded. All in all, defense relationships increase understanding on both sides as to how either country might use its military forces in a crisis and at a peacetime military diplomacy.

## Intra-regional relations the key to sustainable development in the Horn of Africa

BY NAUREEN HOSSAIN

The Horn of Africa holds the resources and potential for lasting development and resilience. The countries in the sub-region and development partners need to come together to invest in regional cooperation and resource management.

On December 12, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the first-ever Human Development Report on the Horn of Africa sub-region, which includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

Horn of Africa Human Development Report 2024: Enhancing Prospects for Human Development through regional Integration, explores the key challenges that the eight countries and the sub-region are experiencing in.

In the Arab states and the African region, low productivity in economic activity will only continue in a "vicious cycle," one that perpetuates poverty for the population. Abdallah Al Dardari, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Regional Director for the Arab States, remarked that the countries in the sub-region have been taking what he described as a "siloed approach" to state affairs, even as its neighbors are dealing with the same issues. This is evident in how the region engages with the water and food sectors.

The report calls for recognizing and establishing a nexus between the water, energy and food sectors. Over 50 percent of the population across the Horn of Africa experience moderate to severe food insecurity and only 56 percent have access to electricity. Less than 56 percent have access to clean drinking water, yet the report indicates that this is not a consistent experience among the countries, given their geographical locations.

Conflict and disasters have also been persistent factors that have limited development in the Horn of Africa, as over 23.4 million people have been displaced in the wake of major conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and internal conflicts in other nations.

The report presents three priorities that will help to accelerate human development and build resilience: build on increasing intra-regional trade, enhance collaboration in the

water, energy and food sectors, and promote governance and peace.

The region could see a GDP increase of 3.9 percent by 2030 through liberalizing trade and reducing tariffs. The African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) agreement would also boost trade were it fully implemented; the countries in the ACFTA need to ratify the agreement for them to benefit. Regional integration through collaboration on resource management can help foster sustainable growth and climate resilience, as the report suggests. This could be seen in improved access to electricity and shared food value systems. This could be valuable in a subregion that holds a high share of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydro and yet faces significant energy gaps.

"What we've attempted to do with this report is see if we can begin to see a shift in the narrative on this region," said Ahunna Eziakonwa, the UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa. In working towards integration in economic and political relations, she argued, partnerships need to be established within the subregion that is built on finding commonalities and shared purposes. Changing the narrative is key towards achieving sustainable development.

At the report's launch, Eziakonwa remarked that certain demographics needed to be brought into the fold when discussing development, requiring a re-examination of the narratives associated with them. Young people make up a significant percentage of the population across the region, yet they have been characterized as the problem rather than the solution. Involving young people and recognizing the skills and perspectives they can bring to the table is critical, which will involve expanding socio-economic opportunities for the youth population that are not employed or in education. Investing in women's participation in the development sector is also needed, for they have been largely left out of decision-making spaces and policy discussions.

Through this report, UNDP is calling on governments and development partners to invest in infrastructure and policy frameworks that build up human development and resilience in the Horn of Africa.

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



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Department

email: [etpresspromotion@gmail.com](mailto:etpresspromotion@gmail.com)

Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15

Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- [workubelachew@press.et](mailto:workubelachew@press.et)

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: [wakuma220@gmail.com](mailto:wakuma220@gmail.com)

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu

Elizabeth Mengistu

Zekarias Woldemariam

Desta Geberehiwot

Daniel Beyene

Website: [www.press.et](http://www.press.et)

email: [ethiopianherald@press.et](mailto:ethiopianherald@press.et)

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The Ethiopian Herald

# Business & Economy

## Ethiopia's rise as a mining hub

BY ABEBE WODEGIORGIS

Mining plays a crucial role in Ethiopia's economic development, offering significant opportunities for growth, job creation, and infrastructure development. Ethiopia is quickly emerging as a significant hub in the Bitcoin mining industry, having generated an impressive 55 million USD over the past ten months.

This remarkable growth can be largely attributed to the abundant and affordable energy resources available in the country, especially hydropower, which have attracted numerous companies, particularly those relocating from China.

The Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) has committed 600 megawatts of electricity to support these operations, giving Ethiopia a notable 2.25% share of the global Bitcoin mining market.

The Minister of Mines Habtamu Tegegne recently announced that the growing utilization of technology helpful for the mining industry such as Bitcoin, has raised the interest of the private sector and foreign investors in the mining sector.

In another development, Ethiopian Investment Holdings also revealed a preliminary agreement with Hong Kong's West Data Group to inject 250 million USD into boosting the nation's digital infrastructure. Although the specifics of the deal are still emerging, the government has consistently highlighted these efforts as crucial components of its high-performance computing strategy, which prominently includes Bitcoin mining.

In an interview with BBC News Africa, Kal Kassa, Founder and Educator at Bitcoin Birr in Addis Ababa and Advisor at West Data Group, shared insights into Ethiopia's rise as a key player in the global Bitcoin mining scene. "Ethiopia is becoming a major hub for Bitcoin mining due to our extremely competitive electricity prices," Kal explained. "At just 3.2% kilowatt-hour, our electricity is much cheaper than many other parts of the world."

Kal highlighted Ethiopia's reliance on renewable energy, with over 92% of its power coming from sources like hydroelectricity, notably the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) which is expected to generate six Giga Watts of power from the Nile River. "This combination of low electricity costs and sustainable energy sources indicates why Bitcoin miners are flocking to Ethiopia," he said.

While Bitcoin mining has traditionally been concentrated in countries like the United States, Russia, and China, rising energy costs in those regions have led many miners to seek out more affordable alternatives. Ethiopia now commands about 5% of the global Bitcoin hash rate, a measure of the computing power used in mining. "Previously, miners were operating in places like Venezuela and Kazakhstan, but Ethiopia now offers a more favorable energy market," Kal explained.

The influx of miners has had a noticeable impact on the Ethiopian economy. "Currently,



*The Bitcoin data crucial for mining*

there are 20 registered mining companies in Ethiopia, with 11 operational," Kal said. "Around 80% of these companies are from China, with the remainder coming from Russia and the United States." This surge in mining activity has translated into substantial revenue for Ethiopia's state-owned utility, Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP), which earned 55 million USD from Bitcoin miners in the past year. Next year, that figure is expected to rise to 123 million USD.

"The revenue generated from Bitcoin mining can be used to further develop Ethiopia's power grid and provide electricity to the approximately 50% of Ethiopians who currently lack access," he noted.

Currently, authorities in Ethiopia are actively developing regulations for crypto mining. Over the past two years, there has been a notable increase in crypto-mining companies establishing operations in the country, driven by relaxed regulatory restrictions and a modest boost in electricity generation capacity. Ethiopia's growing prominence in the Bitcoin mining industry highlights its strategic use of renewable energy and competitive pricing.

Since mining is pivotal for Ethiopia's development, offering numerous economic, social, and infrastructural benefits, it is essential for the stakeholders to implement policies that promote responsible mining practices, ensure community engagement, and safeguard the environment.

BTCM, a leading technology-driven cryptocurrency mining company, has announced a landmark acquisition aimed at expanding its operations into Ethiopia, one of the world's emerging Bitcoin mining hubs. The company will acquire 51-megawatt crypto mining data centers and 17,869 high-performance Bitcoin mining machines in Ethiopia for a total of 14.28 million USD, marking a significant step in its global development strategy.

The deal will be executed in two phases, with BIT Mining acquiring a 35-megawatt

operational data center and all mining machines in the first phase, expected to close in the coming months. The second phase, which will involve the transfer of additional data centers upon completion of construction, is expected to follow shortly thereafter. This acquisition not only strengthens BIT Mining's operational capabilities but also positions the company to take advantage of Ethiopia's rapidly growing Bitcoin mining market.

This growing presence of foreign mining companies is expected to result in even more substantial revenue for the Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP), with earnings from Bitcoin mining projected to rise from 55 million USD by many folds. These revenues not only benefit the state-owned utility but also contribute to the further development of Ethiopia's power grid. Kal emphasized the potential of Bitcoin mining to fund much-needed infrastructure improvements, providing a clear example of how the cryptocurrency industry can help drive broader economic development.

For BIT Mining, this acquisition marks a pivotal moment in its strategic global expansion. Xianfeng Yang, CEO of BIT Mining commented, "This transaction represents a significant milestone in advancing our global development strategy. With our expanded market presence and robust operational capabilities, we are well-equipped to further solidify our competitive edge and enhance our profitability and financial standing, paving the way for long-term, sustainable growth."

By acquiring data centers and mining machines in Ethiopia, BIT Mining will be able to tap into the country's affordable electricity, renewable energy sources, and growing infrastructure to scale up its operations. This acquisition aligns with BIT Mining's vision of focusing on self-operated mining and data center operations, positioning the company to capitalize on the rapidly increasing demand for cryptocurrency mining resources worldwide.

Ethiopia's position as a competitive player

in the Bitcoin mining market is expected to grow. The combination of low electricity costs, abundant renewable energy, and a strategic location has made the country an attractive destination for international mining companies. BIT Mining's acquisition of data centers and mining machines in Ethiopia is not only a testament to the country's appeal but also underscores the potential for Ethiopia to continue playing a central role in the global Bitcoin mining industry.

As the country's mining sector expands, it will continue to provide opportunities for economic growth, infrastructure development, and technological advancement.

Bitcoin emerged in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2008 as a decentralized alternative to standard currency systems, which are under scrutiny by central banks. The decentralization stems from the blockchain technology as a public ledger where all verified transactions are being recorded. The verification itself is not conducted by any central authority but by a large network of nodes that undertake and solve complex mathematical problems. This cryptographic element has given the name to the whole family of crypto currencies. As a reward for the verification, a pre-specified number of bit coins are emitted forming an algorithmically given monetary supply.

In parallel to fiat money being historically backed up by gold, which needs to be physically mined, the process of Bitcoin creation is also referred to as mining as work of the network is needed to verify the transactions and be rewarded as a miner.

As all the transactions are being recorded, the system boasts transparency, even though the actual addresses of sending and receiving parties are represented by alphanumeric chains that cannot be directly linked to a specific geographic location or a person. In addition, creating a new address (wallet) is trivial and free so that hypothetically, a new one can be created for every single transaction.

# In the Sphere of Diplomacy

## Cultivating regional stability through security alliance

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia, a pivotal country in the Horn of Africa, has been strengthening its military cooperation with neighboring nations, including Uganda, Kenya, and other African countries. This collaboration underscores the growing recognition that regional security is a collective responsibility, especially in a continent grappling with persistent threats such as terrorism, armed insurgencies, and cross-border conflicts. Ethiopia's strategic partnerships with its African counterparts reflect a broader commitment to fostering peace, stability, and mutual development across the region.

Historically, the country has been a key player in the pursuit of regional stability. As one of Africa's oldest nations and a significant contributor to the African Union, headquartered in its capital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has consistently demonstrated its commitment to continental peace initiatives. The country's strategic geographical location, coupled with its robust military capabilities, positions it as a critical ally for regional security efforts. Collaborations with Uganda, Kenya, and other African nations illustrate Ethiopia's dedication to addressing shared challenges through joint initiatives, intelligence sharing, and capacity building.

In recent years, Uganda has emerged as one of Ethiopia's vital partners in military cooperation. Both nations share concerns about the spread of extremist groups, particularly in East Africa, where Al-Shabaab and other terrorist organizations operate. The Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) have worked together on various fronts, including within the framework of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Ethiopia and Uganda's joint efforts in Somalia have been instrumental in countering Al-Shabaab's influence, showcasing how bilateral military cooperation can yield tangible results in combating terrorism.

Ethiopia and Uganda have also deepened their engagement through training programs and the exchange of expertise. By sharing best practices and enhancing operational capabilities, both nations aim to build resilient and adaptable military forces. Ethiopia, with its significant experience in peacekeeping missions and counter-insurgency operations, has provided valuable support to Uganda, while Uganda's long-standing focus on guerrilla warfare tactics and regional diplomacy has complemented Ethiopia's strategies. This exchange has fortified both nations' abilities to respond effectively to regional crises.

Kenya, another key ally of Ethiopia, plays a crucial role in the broader framework of regional security. Sharing a long and

***As one of Africa's oldest nations and a significant contributor to the African Union, headquartered in its capital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has consistently demonstrated its commitment to continental peace initiatives***

sometimes contentious border, Ethiopia and Kenya have worked diligently to address cross-border challenges, including the movement of armed groups, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms. Both countries have realized that their mutual prosperity is inextricably linked to stability along their shared border, prompting extensive cooperation in military and security matters.

The Ethiopia-Kenya partnership is particularly evident in their joint efforts against Al-Shabaab. As frontline states in

the battle against this extremist group, both nations have contributed troops to AMISOM and collaborated on intelligence sharing to disrupt terrorist networks. The porous borders between Kenya and Somalia have long posed a security threat, and Ethiopia's military expertise has been critical in supporting Kenya's efforts to mitigate this risk. Additionally, joint military exercises and capacity-building initiatives have enhanced the interoperability of Ethiopian and Kenyan forces, ensuring that they can operate cohesively in addressing common security threats.

Beyond bilateral relations, Ethiopia's military cooperation extends to multilateral platforms such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union. IGAD, a regional bloc comprising eight East African nations, has been instrumental in fostering dialogue and collaboration among member states. Ethiopia has actively participated in IGAD-led security initiatives, including peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution efforts. By working within such frameworks, Ethiopia has not only strengthened its bilateral ties with countries like Uganda and Kenya but has also contributed to the collective security of the region.

Ethiopia's engagement with other African countries highlights its commitment to fostering continental solidarity. For instance, Ethiopia has maintained strong military ties with Sudan and South Sudan, two nations that have faced protracted conflicts and internal instability. Ethiopia's role as a mediator in the South Sudanese peace process underscores its diplomatic and military influence. Ethiopian forces have also been involved in peacekeeping missions in South Sudan, demonstrating the country's dedication to supporting its neighbors in achieving sustainable peace.

Similarly, Ethiopia has collaborated with Djibouti, a small but strategically important country in the Horn of Africa. The two nations have worked together to secure their shared border and combat the trafficking of illicit goods and weapons. Djibouti's location at the crossroads of major international shipping routes makes it a critical partner in ensuring maritime security, a shared priority for Ethiopia. Through joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and coordinated operations, Ethiopia and Djibouti have bolstered their capacity to address emerging threats.

In recent years, the country has also sought to deepen its military ties with countries in West and Central Africa. This broader outreach reflects Ethiopia's recognition of the interconnected nature of security challenges on the continent. For instance, Ethiopia has contributed troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions in countries like Mali and the Central African Republic. These deployments underscore Ethiopia's

willingness to play a proactive role in addressing conflicts beyond its immediate neighborhood, reinforcing its reputation as a reliable partner in African security initiatives.

Despite these successes, Ethiopia's military cooperation with its neighbors is not without challenges. Internal conflicts within Ethiopia, such as those in the Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia regions, have strained the country's resources and diverted attention from regional security priorities. Moreover, political tensions with some neighbors, including Eritrea, have occasionally complicated Ethiopia's efforts to foster regional unity. Nevertheless, Ethiopia has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in navigating these complexities, ensuring that its military partnerships remain robust.

Economic considerations also play a significant role in Ethiopia's military cooperation. Regional stability is essential for fostering economic growth, trade, and development, all of which are priorities for Ethiopia and its partners. Initiatives such as the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor highlight the interconnectedness of security and development. By securing trade routes and addressing cross-border threats, Ethiopia and its allies aim to create an environment conducive to economic prosperity.

The role of external actors in shaping Ethiopia's military cooperation cannot be overlooked. The involvement of global powers, such as the United States, China, and the European Union, has influenced the dynamics of regional security partnerships. These actors have provided funding, training, and logistical support to African militaries, including Ethiopia's, enabling them to address complex security challenges more effectively. However, Ethiopia and its partners have emphasized the importance of African-led solutions, ensuring that external assistance complements, rather than undermines, local initiatives.

Ethiopia's military cooperation with Uganda, Kenya, and other African countries underscores the importance of collective efforts in addressing regional security challenges. By leveraging bilateral and multilateral partnerships, Ethiopia has played a pivotal role in promoting peace and stability across the continent. While internal and external challenges persist, Ethiopia's commitment to fostering solidarity and mutual development remains steadfast. Through joint initiatives, intelligence sharing, and capacity building, Ethiopia and its allies are building a more secure and prosperous future for the region. This spirit of cooperation not only enhances the resilience of African nations but also reinforces the principle that regional security is a shared responsibility, requiring unity, collaboration, and a long-term vision.

# Law & Politics

## Developed nations failing the world in the fight against climate change

BY FIKADU BELAY

Climate change is not directly responsible for conflict, disease, or toxic warfare. However, it significantly contributes to conditions that can lead to war and the displacement of millions of people worldwide. The consequences of climate change manifest through extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, which can devastate communities and disrupt livelihoods. As resources become scarcer due to these environmental changes, competition for essentials like water and arable land may intensify, increasing the likelihood of conflict.

Furthermore, climate-related disasters can exacerbate health issues, making populations more vulnerable to diseases. In fact, the impact of climate change could double the mortality rates associated with these factors.

For almost three decades, leaders from around the globe have assembled to tackle the underlying causes of climate change while promoting sustainable development. However, effective and sustainable solutions remain intangible. The situation is terrible for developing and underdeveloped nations, which frequently struggle with insufficient resources and infrastructure.

Research indicates that Africa contributes merely 3.8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 23% from China, 19% from the United States, and 13% from the European Union. Despite this minimal contribution, Africa remains exceptionally vulnerable to climate change impacts. As a result, the gap between nations widens, exacerbating vulnerabilities and hindering progress toward sustainability.

In a recent discussion, Ethiopian President Taye Atskeselassie emphasized the critical need for sustainable practices to address environmental issues. He condemned the global response to climate change as insufficient and urged African nations to take the lead in implementing effective solutions.

The President called for African countries to mobilize their resources and workforce while being vigilant against the adverse effects of climate change.

Some Experts also argue that the Global North must cease its unilateral approaches and commit to environmentally sustainable practices.

Speaking with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Researcher, and Climate Advocate, Nuhamin Tibebe highlighted how the Global North influences and shapes international climate policies and regulations. She pointed out that developed nations often prioritize their political and economic interests, exempting themselves from accountability for the environmental consequences of their actions

on developing countries. This unilateral approach neglects the harm caused to Africa and other countries in the Global South by their policies.

Nuhamin noted that, the Global North's established international climate regulations often fall short, resulting in minimal accountability. This inadequacy poses significant challenges for developing countries, which fear that strict adherence to these standards could harm their economies presents significant challenges. Consequently, the urgency of addressing climate change can be overshadowed by concerns about economic repercussions, hindering decisive action, she noted.

In his part, the Director of the Consortium for Climate Change Ethiopia, Yonas Gebru, stated that the damages caused by climate change primarily arise from the Global North's failure to meet its responsibilities. He asserted that, these countries should provide adequate compensation for the harm they have caused, which significantly contributes to global climate issues.

When climate change impacts industrialized nations, they typically manage to address the challenges effectively, due to their robust economies and advanced technologies. In contrast, the Global South lacks these advantages, making them more vulnerable to climate repercussions, he said.

For instance, a recent global study of over 100,000 weather-related research findings revealed that 80% of the world's land mass has been affected by climate change, impacting the majority of the 7.7 billion global populations.

According to WHO data, around 2 billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and 600 million suffer foodborne infections annually, with 30% of foodborne deaths occurring in children under five. In 2020, 770 million individuals, primarily in Asia and Africa, faced hunger. Climate change exacerbates nutrition issues, affecting the diversity, quality, and availability of food.

In 2022, over 110 million people in Africa experienced direct impacts from weather-related hazards, leading to economic damages exceeding 8.5 billion USD and approximately 5,000 fatalities, primarily due to drought and flooding, according to the Emergency Event Database.

The Research indicated that 3.6 billion people currently reside in areas highly vulnerable to climate change. From 2030 to 2050, climate change is expected to result in around 250,000 additional deaths annually due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, and heat stress.

Nuhamin emphasized that the detrimental effects of climate change, particularly in Africa, are exacerbated by the industrialized nations' lack of engagement. Climate-related issues impact about half of the

universally accepted solution to the climate crisis remains intangible. She emphasized those international climate conferences like COP and other meetings as paper tigers, highlighting their frequent failure to transform discussions into tangible actions. Nuhamin stressed the need to move beyond mere dialogue to ensure that commitments made at these meetings result in tangible real-world impacts.

Yonas pointed out that, financial support for climate change from wealthy nations should only be viewed as aid but the global north shouldn't be assumed and structured these finances as loan standings. He condemned the frequent failure to implement commitments made at international forums, including COP meetings, where pledges for climate action and financial aid are often made but not fulfilled. Moreover, he advocated for Africa and other developing nations to actively pursue promised climate finance to enable significant progress in mitigating climate change effects.

To combat climate change effectively, Nuhamin called for enhanced initiatives from engaged countries. She cited Ethiopia's Green Legacy program and similar renewable energy projects as examples that should be expanded.

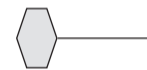
Many vulnerable countries are struggling to tackle this scary challenge, resorting to a variety of actions and initiatives to address the problem. One of the mechanisms being employed to address the issues arising from climate change is the planting of trees.

In this regard, Ethiopia has been actively working on this initiative, especially over the last five years, by planting around over 40 billion seedlings. These seedlings are being planted under the "Green Legacy initiative," which was launched in 2019.

Nuhamin advocated for greater collaboration among leaders and regional organizations, particularly during African Union meetings. By sharing successful experiences in climate action, nations can develop practical policies to address climate change.

To keep industrialized nations accountable, Yonas also underlined the necessity for Africa and other developing nations to work together in their calls for climate funding. He emphasized the reason that of the contributions made by wealthy countries to the effects of climate change, financial help should be seen as a duty rather than just as charity.

Furthermore, Nuhamin called on prominent individuals and climate specialists to step up their lobbying efforts against the Global North to raise awareness of climate challenges and promote concrete pledges. The international community may strive toward a more sustainable and just future by encouraging cooperation and giving vulnerable countries priority.



**Many vulnerable countries are struggling to tackle this scary challenge, resorting to a variety of actions and initiatives to address the problem. One of the mechanisms being employed to address the issues arising from climate change is the planting of trees**



Global South's population, and the disparity between these regions complicates the implementation of effective mitigation strategies.

Despite numerous global summits and conferences over the years, a clear,



# Society



## Addis Ababa: A beacon of African growth and resilience

BY ELIZABETH MENGISTU

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and economic and diplomatic hub of Africa, has experienced notable growth in recent years, solidifying its position as a key development center in East Africa.

Mainly, following the Addis Ababa Corridor Development Project, designed to transform the landscape of Addis Ababa, strengthen the city's role as a regional economic and diplomatic hub and improve the living standards of its residents, the city has seen palpable improvements.

Including the construction of new roads and bridges, the development of green parks and recreational centers, fountains and public spaces, the expansion of pedestrian walkways and cycle routes, as well as the restoration of historical sites, the capital city has significantly transformed itself, driving rapid urban growth.

Anyone with a positive mind can witness the tangible impacts of the corridor development initiative - how the capital has revitalized and the way it is shaping Addis Ababa's future.

In fact, the recent infrastructure development of Addis Ababa has been receiving appreciation by various local and international observers, highlighting its impressive progress and rapid transformation- how quickly the capital has transformed into a modern metropolis.

Recently, Busani Ngcaweni, Director-General of the National School of Government in South Africa, reaffirmed this positive reality.

In his article produced under the title "Addis Ababa — a city of resilience where modernity meets the heart of Africa," and appeared at Daily Maverick – the South African online news publications Ngcaweni said that, Addis Ababa stands as a defiant symbol of motion and progress. Unlike the stasis that has gripped cities like Durban, Luanda, Mombasa and Kinshasa, this mountainous city carves its identity as a hopeful antithesis — a space where despair melts into the promise of something greater.

According to the Director General,

**The corridor development projects being implemented across the city are not only transforming the landscape and infrastructure of Addis Ababa, but they are also playing a crucial role in building a resilient, sustainable, and thriving capital for future generations**

Addis Ababa has become a symbol of development and growth and its forward move is increasingly visible over time.

Ngikaweni, also a renowned South African commentator, stated that Addis Ababa, like cities such as Durban, Luanda, Mombasa, and Kinshasa He elaborated that the city's progress is an indication of the success of its ongoing transformation.

Ngikaweni also highlighted the city's architectural boom; with, the sky-high buildings under construction in Addis Ababa reflect the city's rapid growth. He further mentioned that, like Cairo and Cape Town, Addis Ababa is putting significant effort into fostering development and change to meet the challenges of modernization.

"In every corner, Addis negotiates between the hard truths of its political past and the dream of a brighter African future. It breaks free from the shackles of the sub-city that many old urban spaces have become in both the Global North and the Global South," Ngikaweni.

Skyscrapers rise like glass exclamation points in a narrative crafted by capital, yet there is something fiercely unique here. Unlike Cairo, a city wrestling with the artificial sterility of its "smart city" developments, or Cape Town, caught in the vice of gentrification and privilege preservation, Addis experiments boldly, refusing to be fully captured. There is grace in its evolving beauty, he reiterated.

According to him, in all these, one cannot help but marvel at Addis's meticulous governance. From the airport to the mayor's office, the city radiates an air of order and purpose. Men in orange uniforms overalls sweep the streets with a quiet dignity, while wheelbarrows carry away the dust of change. Beneath every pavement, new water pipes and fiber optic cables are being installed, ensuring the veins of the city pulse with the lifeblood of progress. Walkways and cycle paths are under construction, even if it means breaking and pushing back the boundary walls of banks and embassies.

Traffic lights and roundabouts, often overlooked in the post-colony, act as metaphors for the rhythm of Addis, a

rhythm that invites you to pause, to share space, to observe, he added while stating the ongoing development activities.

Mentioning an Inanda proverb: "The future belongs to the united," the Director General said through Agenda 2063, there is a common determination to accelerate national and regional development resulting in jobs and prosperity for all Africans.

In this regard, according to him, Addis is more than just a meeting place; it is a catalyst for unity, a stage where dreams of social and economic transformation take shape.

"The sun rises over Addis to illuminate more than just its streets; it lights the path to a better future for all of Africa. In its clean pavements, its magnificent streetlights, the burgeoning palm trees, its bustling traffic circles, its gentle people, and its soaring ambitions, Addis restores faith — not just in the city itself, but in the broader African vision of a renaissance — regular power cuts notwithstanding. Like a great love affair, it challenges you, tempts you, and ultimately leaves you transformed," he remarked.

As for Ngikaweni, Addis, in this new era of growing multipolarity, will continue to embody the spirit of a true "New Flower"— remaining so not merely in name, but in its very essence. The city also stands as a symbol of renewal, embodying the beauty that lies in resilience and hope. Moreover, Addis defies the premature conclusions often drawn about African cities, proving such assessments wrong. Furthermore, Addis challenges the premature judgments frequently made about African cities, disproving such assumptions with its growth and vitality.

Undeniably, the corridor development projects being implemented across the city are not only transforming the landscape and infrastructure of Addis Ababa, but they are also playing a crucial role in building a resilient, sustainable, and thriving capital for future generations. These projects, aside from enhancing connectivity, boosting economic growth and making it a comfortable and attractive place for its residents, will help it to be a vibrant and progressive city for years to come.

# Planet Earth

## Trees have archived centuries of climate data that determine our future

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

Drought and famine occur in our country at least every 10 years. Establishing the trend and/or frequency of such natural environmental disasters is helpful in preparing for future prevention of similar catastrophes. Based on climate data obtained from trees, scientists say that drought has been plaguing our country since at least the 18th century.

“I have studied trees from mountains around Gondar. The study of the tree rings shows that drought has been there since 18th century” says Aster Gebrekristos, (PhD).

She says that the rings on the trees show that drought is not a new phenomenon in the country; what makes it different now is that it has become more frequent. In the near future, too, it is likely to be occurring as frequently as every three years, and all concerned bodies need to prepare for that.

Aster is a Dendrochronologist and a global scientist specializing in the science of forestry. She works for Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF). Dendrochronologists specifically study the formation of rings in the stem of trees and decipher various types of information that the trees store throughout their lifespan. They mainly study the tree rings in the trunks to find out the ages of the tree as well as the climatic or ecological events that occurred at some point during their life span.

Traditionally, people guess the age of the tree by counting the rings. However, Dendrochronologists do not only tell the ages of the tree based on the number, shape, or colour; they analyze what really happened in that particular place in that specific year or period.

“Following those Rings, we should be able to reconstruct climate. If you want to know what has been happening in the past, maybe 100 years. If you don’t have the climate data, we can reconstruct from the temperature, we can reconstruct from there and using the reconstructed data, we can also project how the temperature or the rainfall can be projected for some number of years,” says Justine Ngoma (PhD) a dendrochronologist from Zambia.

Aster and Justine indicate that studying the number and formation of the rings helps find information that can assist many other disciplines in the field of science.

“The formation of the rings is just marking something. It’s marking the end of the growth period. That means, during the rainy season, they might grow. And towards the dry season, they stop. So that’s a mark, we call it a ring. That could be different in its formation, species, colour...etc” says Aster.

The analysis of the tree rings gives more insight to the dendrochronologists beyond the climate data in the past. According to Aster and Justine, it is possible to use the



Aster Gebrekristos (PhD)

knowledge obtained from the tree rings in other disciplines, too.

“There are different branches within dendrochronology. Some people study climate, archaeology, and the dynamics of the forest, earthquakes, volcanism, climate history, and fire frequency. It’s just like a book. It’s about asking the right question to the tree” elaborates Aster.

At present our planet is highly troubled by climate change. To rehabilitate the climate, people need to have data about the trends of weather, natural disasters... etc. In this regard, trees are found to be the most reliable archives of climate-related data. Based on data that they have been gathering for centuries and even for millennia, trees can tell us about what was happening in that area so that we can figure out what we have to do now and in the future.

“Tree rings are just like the indicators of climate variability; it is actually like climate records. It’s like information that trees are recording in their biomass. During favourable climate conditions, the trees grow. And when the conditions become unfavorable, they stop the growth. The stop is marked by a growth ring, what we call growth ring boundaries. When we use it, we can know the growth rate of the species,” says Balima Larba Hubert (PhD), a dendrochronologist from Burkina Faso.

In the course of their growth, trees keep a record of their response to the environment or climatic condition of a particular event. As a result, they can serve as natural archives of environmental or ecological data centers.

“We can also extract climate information from the species. We can also extract all the environmental information from the stem. When we combine the rings of different species giving time, we can be able to reconstruct the climate condition and history. So we say that the tree rings are really like dramatic information, environmental information in the broader sense,” says Balima.

Trees indeed outlive any living thing. For instance, in the USA there is a tree that is about



Balima Larba Hubert (PhD)

4000 years old. In Ethiopia too there is a tree that is as old as 500 years old, Aster recalls based on her study. In addition, naturally, trees are static. As they remain there fixed throughout their life, they remain living and permanent witnesses to the events that took place there over the years. It may be drought, forest fire, insect outbreak, or massive deforestation by humans ..., everything is recorded and documented by the trees that remain in the place.

“The good part of the science is that you’re dealing with a tree that does not move, so it keeps the history of that particular place. You can tell the trend of what has been happening in that area because everything that is happening around that area is registered in that tree. For instance, sometime ago people were cutting trees in that area; go and check the trees that are growing there; it is reflected in the growth ring,” Justine explains.

Analysis of tree rings helps not only find out the frequency and intensity of climate change, but also enables future climate reconstruction or environmental rehabilitation works by indicating the species of trees that can tolerate specific weather conditions in an area.

Based on data obtained from the tree rings, dendrochronologists are able to conclude what caused the depletion of forest in the specific area, speculate what is going to happen in the future and how to rehabilitate the area.

For instance, Aster indicates that a study in one of the forest areas in North Ethiopia, called Des’a shows that the common trees were forced to migrate uphill as they could not withstand the deteriorating weather at the nearby lowlands. This also suggests that the future rehabilitation of the area should consider what kind of trees that should be planted as part of the reforestation of that place.

“We studied some species from the mountains of Des’a and then we found tree mortality at the lower altitude, so we took samples from the trees and we tried to analyze what happened. It’s because of heat stress of lower altitude that the species are migrating up to higher altitudes. So if you want to plant species in that area you



Justine Ngoma (PhD)

don’t plant the same species but different one that can tolerate the heat or drought.”

In general, the knowledge and information obtained from tree ring analysis data is an indispensable input that can be used by the government or policymakers and other institutions to plan for future national and international programs.

“Basically, it’s a science that if embraced very well, can be used by the government and different stakeholders to plan. So, you understand what is happening now and also in the past and then it helps you to plan for whatever you want depending on the problem that you have noticed through the growth ring pattern,” says Justine.

Figuring out the problems of the past becomes mandatory as it avails indispensable data to properly implement interventions for rehabilitating the environment and prevention of climate change or climate reconstruction.

For instance, the government of Ethiopia has been undertaking a large-scale nationwide afforestation campaign entitled “The Green Legacy Initiative” for the last 6 years. The initiative aims, among other things, to reclaim the depleted forest coverage, assist the income generated from fruit trees, and timber production as well as increase the benefit from carbon trade.

Tree planting should make use of information about selecting the most suitable, adaptable species to a certain purpose and a particular planting site based on the data obtained from the tree ring analysis.

“If it is planted for income purposes like timber, then we know when it’s optimal harvesting period by looking at the growth trajectory, for some species, it can be 30 years and for others a hundred years. Then we can determine the rotation period of that forest. And about the carbon payment ... you can also determine if the carbon per species or tree can change to landscape level so you can ask, ‘This area sequesters this amount of carbon,’ so that can be changed also in terms of payment for ecosystem services,” Aster explains.