



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol LXXXI No 096 31 DECEMBER 2024 - Tahisas 22, 2017

Tuesday

Price Birr 34.50

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Restored Nat'l Palace showcasing Ethiopia's resilience, Pan-Africanism: President

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA:- The newly restored National Palace, a project initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), stands as a testament to Ethiopia's resilience, history, and diplomatic legacy, President Taye Atske-Selassie said.

Speaking at the inauguration event yesterday, President Taye hailed the palace as more than an architectural masterpiece, describing it as a chronicle of Ethiopia's leaders, governments, and pivotal role in global diplomacy.

"Emperor Haile Selassie, inspired by

Western civilization, constructed this magnificent building, which later became a hub for hosting prominent African leaders who bravely fought colonialism," he said. The palace, he emphasized, became a beacon of hope for Africa, hosting critical diplomatic engagements that highlighted

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Expert suggests market expansion to increase export income

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA:- Ethiopia's agricultural products are grappling with market instability, a researcher said, while recommending the expansion of market options to improve export income and build the capabilities of local producers.

A research recently conducted on "Agricultural investment climate survey on pulses and oil seeds sector" highlighted policy

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Over 90% of IPs sheds occupied, creating 100,000+ jobs

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA:-The Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) has announced that over 90 percent of the 177 manufacturing sheds across the 13 industrial parks (IPs) it oversees have been successfully transferred to investors.

In an interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Corporation's Communication Head, Phawulos Belete, confirmed that more than 90 percent of these

See Over 90% ... page 3

Ethiopia, Djibouti reinforce partnership

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) has successfully concluded an official visit to Djibouti, where he held productive discussions with his Djiboutian counterpart, Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, and President Ismail Omar Guelleh.

The visit was aimed at further strengthening the robust partnership between the two countries, with a focus on trade, development, and regional security.

Reflecting on the visit, Minister Gedion expressed satisfaction with the discussions on enhancing port utilization, expanding trade opportunities, and fostering regional development. He emphasized the importance of joint efforts to address key priorities outlined in the 17th Ethio-Djibouti Joint Ministerial Commission meeting.

Both sides engaged in substantive talks on bilateral, regional, and continental matters of mutual interest, particularly in strengthening



cooperation for regional peace and stability, with a special focus on combating Al-Shabaab. Minister Gedion reiterated Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to

regional peace and security.

The visit also saw Minister Gedion

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News



Addis to host 1st monthly bike festival

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA:— The metropolitan city has made preparations to host the first monthly bicycle festival aimed at promoting sustainable transportation modes, and increasing tourist influx, the Addis Ababa Transport Bureau announced.

In a media briefing jointly organized with Neff Communication and Events, Bureau Head Yabibal Addis said yesterday that the capital city is finalizing preparations to host the 1st “Bicycle in Addis” monthly festival this Sunday.

The festival will take place from the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum to the Ras Mekonnen Bridge on the opening day, while it continue to be held each month on different routes. According to Yabibal, the bureau is working to ensure reliable, accessible, and sustainable transportation service.

He added that Addis Ababa has been carrying out corridor development project, which facilitates bicycle transport and pedestrian lanes to improve the health of citizens and boost the splendor of the city alongside reviving socioeconomic activities.

The Head explained that bicycle transport is preferable due to health advantages, traffic security, climate change mitigation, time and financial efficiency, and tourist attraction.

Yabibal noted that the city government built 100 kilometers of pedestrian and bicycle lanes last year, highlighting the numerous advantages of bicycle transport observed in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

He further stated that the Regulation of Bicycle Sharing System and Procedure is being prepared to enable bicycle operators to run the business effectively. The bureau called up on private sectors to involve in the efforts of developing bike transport in the city.

Though Addis is exerting efforts to adapt bike transport, Yabibal noted that the culture of the residents in riding bike is still low due to lack of awareness, and experience.

During the presser, Neff Communication and Events Manager, Henok Adane expressed that the bicycle festival would help creating awareness among residents. Efforts are underway to explain the significance of the event to residents through a strong communication intervention, he stated, while inviting the youth, women, persons with disabilities, and others to join the festival.

Enterprise implements rural industrialization initiative

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Enterprise Development (EED) disclosed that the rural industrialization initiative is entering into the implementation phase to further promote and expand enterprises.

The Ethiopian Enterprise Development launched manufacturing enterprises exhibition involving over 70 enterprises drawn from all states and city administrations aimed at creating market linkage, product promotion, experience sharing, maintaining collaboration, improving competitiveness and others.

The enterprises participating in the exhibition are engaged in textile and garment, leather and leather products, food and beverage, chemical and chemical products, metal and wood works and so on.

Speaking at the occasion, EED Director General Alebachew Nigusie (PhD) said that the implementation of rural industrialization initiative would highly contribute to creating ample jobs for rural communities.

Furthermore, he said that the launching of the Let Ethiopia Produce movement has been encouraging the manufacturing sector and registering achievements.

According to him, the preparation of the manufacturing sector roadmap, enterprises transformation strategies, proclamations, working manuals and others have been



contributing towards the effectiveness of enterprises.

EED has been providing support for 400 enterprises through identifying the challenges hindering them from realizing their goals. The enterprise has planned to expand this service to more enterprises in the future, Alebachew expressed.

He also stated that his organization has been facilitating the transformation of small and medium manufacturing enterprises.

The capacity building supports would facilitate an increase in the number of

enterprises, improve export and import substitution, among others, he said, adding that the efforts have registered a significant achievement in improving competitiveness and quality production.

According to the Director General, the exhibition would pave a way to share experiences, create collaboration and others.

To overcome small and medium enterprises' challenges, it requires transforming and modernizing enterprises' working culture, especially promoting entrepreneurship and expanding them.

State to export bananas to Middle East

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - The South Ethiopia State is preparing to export banana products to the Middle East, according to Halilemariam Tesfaye, Head of the State's Agricultural Bureau.

Tesfaye told local media that preparations are underway to ship bananas to countries in the Middle East. The state will also distribute bananas domestically and export to neighboring countries like Sudan, Somalia, and Djibouti.

The state boasts a favorable climate for banana cultivation, with 113,000 hectares currently under cultivation. In just five months, 15.8 million quintals of bananas were harvested, and the state anticipates producing 35 million quintals this fiscal year.

To meet market demands, the state is importing and distributing high-quality banana seedlings with specific size and



other requirements. This has significantly benefited farmers, with model farmers achieving yields of 400-450 quintals per hectare and up to 500 quintals in investment fields.

The South state cultivates export-standard organic bananas across all 12 zones. Gamo, Wolayta, and South Omo zones have the highest banana coverage.

Banana production plays a crucial role in job creation, income generation, and food security in the Southern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's banana export history dates back to 1961, with initial exports reaching around 5,000 tons. The recent export of organic bananas to Saudi Arabia marks a significant development for the country's horticulture industry.

Nib Bank pledges steady support to charity organizations

• Celebrates 25th anniversary with deprived citizens

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA:— Nib International Bank has vowed to provide sustainable support to charity organizations as it marked its 25th anniversary through sharing meals with people in need.

The bank has organized a special lunch program last Sunday to elders and mentally disabled people from Mekedonia and Babulkeyer Charity Organizations.

“We are happy to share a meal with the elders and individuals with mental disabilities,” said Bank CEO Henok Kebede Henok on the event. He also expressed that the bank

is committed to continue supporting various charitable organizations. “We will continue to back Mekedonia and Babulkeyer Charity Organizations and support similar initiatives in the future,” Henok said.

He noted that the bank contributed an estimated over 2.5 million Birr in meal support for both organizations.

Henok also emphasized that the bank has consistently provided financial and in-kind support to local charities since its inception, fulfilling its corporate social responsibility and promoting humanitarian efforts beyond banking activities. As part of its anniversary, the bank also held a “Staff Day,” in which

employees and management visited various facilities and ongoing projects at charity organizations, he said.

The CEO further stated that the bank operates under the theme “Committed to Service Excellence” and has been serving the community for 25 years. With a workforce of over 7,000, Nib International Bank remains committed to financial and humanitarian efforts supporting those in need.

In a show of solidarity, the bank staffers purchased T-shirts to support Mekedonia and Babulkeyer, while pledging a continuous support to the charity organizations.

News

Authority hails workshop's contribution to coffee sector growth

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority has lauded a recent workshop as a crucial platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge to enhance the country's coffee sector and strengthen its competitive position in the global market.

The workshop, which recently brought together coffee growers and suppliers in Jimma, South West Ethiopia, facilitated direct linkages between manufacturers and suppliers, according to Adugna Debela, Director-General of the Ethiopian Coffee

and Tea Authority.

Debela highlighted the importance of the workshop in addressing the new coffee policies introduced by the European Union (EU).

Jimma Zone Administrator Tijali Nasir, noted that over 500 farmers, in addition to investors, are directly involved in the coffee sector in the state.

Representing Kerchanshe Trading Belayneh Gizaw emphasized the company's production of high-quality coffee and its exports of value-added coffee with

diverse flavors to the international market, including orange, banana, pineapple, and cinnamon. Gizaw also highlighted the use of various fermentation techniques, such as alcoholic and carbonic, to cater to customer preferences.

Selamawit Mekonen from Elu Ababora Yayo District emphasized the workshop's role in fostering vertical integration between coffee growers and suppliers.

She noted that the workshop not only presented new opportunities but also contributed to reducing the influence of

illegal brokers, a significant challenge in the coffee sector. She explained that previously, coffee growers faced difficulties in generating adequate income due to the long and often exploitative chains of brokers.

The workshop featured exhibitions by local and international participants showcasing their products and introducing the latest technologies in the coffee sector.

Ethiopia is actively working to generate two billion USD from coffee exports this year.

Restored Nat'l Palace ...

Ethiopia's leadership in the continent's decolonization efforts.

President Taye also praised the restoration as a model for future national projects, including the ongoing Chaka initiative.

Now transformed into a public museum, the palace encapsulates the highs and lows of Ethiopia's governance and its international relations, making the country's history accessible to all.

Expressing gratitude, the President commended Prime Minister Abiy for spearheading the restoration, noting his commitment to preserving Ethiopia's cultural and historical assets.

He also acknowledged French President Emmanuel Macron and the Government of France for their vital support in completing the project, which has strengthened the diplomatic ties between the two nations.

President Taye further highlighted the palace's significance as a symbol of Ethiopia's progressive ambitions and legacy.

He recalled the 1942 international architectural competition that transformed Addis Ababa into a hub of engineering innovation, resulting in iconic landmarks like the National Theatre and Africa Hall.

According to the Office of the Prime Minister, the restoration aligns with broader initiatives such as Unity Park, showcasing Ethiopia's artistry, resilience, and progressive vision.

The revitalized National Palace now stands as a monumental representation of Ethiopia's historical journey and enduring contributions to Pan-Africanism and diplomacy.

In addition, the President underscored the palace's role in promoting Pan-African unity, citing historic collaborations such as Emperor Haile Selassie's partnership with Guinea's President SékouTouré for African independence.

This restoration reflects Ethiopia's commitment to preserving its heritage while inspiring modern projects that honor its past and embrace its future.

Expert suggests market...

recommendations to overcome major bottlenecks impeding the sector's growth, while suggesting market diversification and enhanced investment.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Enlist Consult a group of Independent Consultant General Manager, Temesgen Tesfu emphasized that Ethiopia's overreliance on specific export routes, especially to markets in East Asia and the Middle East, exposes the nation to considerable economic risks and price fluctuations.

He indicated that expanding market options across the world would bolster the capabilities of local producers and avoid dependency on imported goods.

In his research, Temesgen identified foundational challenges, including financial and operational bottlenecks, workforce constraints, and limitations in logistics and infrastructure as critical impediments to enhancing Ethiopia's pulses and oilseeds production.

The concentration of export activities within a limited geographical scope further making the sector vulnerable to trade shocks that disrupt market stability and income predictability for farmers and exporters, he noted.

He pointed out that the detrimental impact of global price volatility on income reliability often results in reduced supply stability.

Responding to these challenges, Temesgen suggested that the urgent removal of payment restrictions that compel exporters,

particularly those involved in the sesame trade with China, to utilize the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE).

Instead, he expressed that enabling payment flexibility through private banking institutions could significantly enhance cash flow management, fostering a more resilient economic environment for these producers.

He also illustrated the complexities of fragmented supply chains that limit oilseed availability for domestic processing and the issues associated with limited irrigation, which undermines production scalability and consistency.

Moreover, sporadic access to improved seeds, fertilizers, and agrichemicals disrupts overall productivity, indicating a pressing need for enhancements throughout the agricultural supply chain.

The General Manager underscored the imperative for targeted investments and structural reforms within Ethiopia's pulses and oilseeds sector.

"By addressing these identified gaps and embracing a strategy of market diversification, Ethiopia not only stands to improve income for its agriculturalists but also to fortify its economy against external shocks," he stressed.

Temesgen asserted that by improving these, Ethiopian producers could capture premium prices in broader markets, contributing significantly to the nation's economic stability and growth path.

Over 90% of IPs sheds occupied, creating...

manufacturing sheds have been allocated to investors, creating substantial job opportunities for local communities. The initiative has already generated over 100,000 jobs, with ongoing efforts to create even more.

Phawulos explained that IPDC currently manages approximately 177 manufacturing sheds across the 13 industrial parks, with some sheds covering up to 1.1 hectares to accommodate various manufacturing activities.

He emphasized that the successful transfer of these sheds has positively impacted the economy and helped address the critical need for job creation.

The remaining 10 percent of the sheds have signed contracts, with negotiations still ongoing to finalize transfers.

Additionally, some investors have opted to lease developed land to construct their own manufacturing sheds.

The Corporation is focused on ensuring that all manufacturing sheds become fully operational to maximize their economic potential. Phawulos also highlighted that all 13 industrial parks are now operational

and contributing significantly to the economy by generating a wide range of employment opportunities.

Recently, the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) upgraded 10 of the 13 industrial parks managed by IPDC into Special Economic Zones (SEZs), aimed at stimulating economic growth and enhancing industrialization.

The parks now designated as SEZs include Adama, Bahir Dar, Bole Lemi, Debre Birhan, Hawassa, Jimma, Kilinto, Kombolcha, Mekelle, and Semera.

With the addition of the Dire Dawa Special Economic Zone, the total number of SEZs in Ethiopia has now reached 11.

The IPDC is also working to upgrade the remaining two industrial parks-Ararti and Addis Industry College-into SEZs, with the necessary infrastructure currently being developed to support this transition.

These efforts are part of Ethiopia's broader strategy to enhance its industrial base, attract more investment, and create sustainable jobs, further positioning the country as a key player in Africa's industrialization drive, it was learned.

Ethiopia, Djibouti reinforce...

and Minister Youssouf providing updates to President Guelleh on various issues discussed, including trade, port utilization, and regional security. The Ethiopian delegation visited the Doraleh Multipurpose Port (DMP) to observe ongoing import and export activities, emphasizing the need to improve port efficiency to support economic growth.

In his meeting with President Guelleh, Minister Gedion underscored the importance of reinforcing the enduring friendship and deep-rooted cooperation between Ethiopia and Djibouti. The two leaders also exchanged views on key priorities, including strengthening bilateral cooperation and addressing regional challenges.

During his discussions with Minister Youssouf, Minister Gedion highlighted that the long-standing ties between Ethiopia and Djibouti serve as a model

for regional cooperation. He reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to maintaining peace in the region and combating Al-Shabaab. The Ethiopian delegation also focused on improving Djibouti's port services, expanding fuel terminal capacity, and completing the Dikhil-Galafi road to enhance cargo transportation and import-export efficiency.

Minister Youssouf highlighted the deep familial bonds between the two nations and commended Ethiopia's efforts to promote regional peace and stability. He emphasized continued collaboration to counter Al-Shabaab and noted significant progress on strengthening the fuel supply line from Ethiopia to Djibouti's Damerjog terminal. He also reported that the construction of the Dikhil-Galafi road is progressing well and is expected to be completed in the coming months.

Opinion

Ethiopia maintains unflinching stance in welcoming, hosting refugees

BY ABEBE WOLDE GIORGIS

With more than 1 million registered refugees, Ethiopia is the third largest refugee hosting country on the African continent.

The Government of Ethiopia continues to provide access to asylum seekers within the context of the open door policy which it has maintained for many years, and UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are allowed to implement mandate related activities.

Ethiopia adopted its Refugee Proclamation in 2004, which is the main national legislation governing refugee issue. Refugees continue to arrive mostly from South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, and Yemen. Most refugees are granted prima facie refugee status, and the majority of the refugees are accommodated in camps, in which only a smaller percentage of the refugee population is permitted to reside in urban areas for medical and/or protection and humanitarian reasons.

The horn of Africa is highly vulnerable to Human made and natural disasters for many decades. Most of the area landscape is characterized by low land and arid in which the annual rainfall fall volume is very little.

Most of the population engaged in pastoral way of living. The number of cattle population is very high and feeding them needs moving from place to place for searching water and grazing land. In time of extreme climate condition, shortage of resources let the cattle to meet their death in the wilderness.

The pastoral communities, to escape disaster due to extreme weather condition migrate to the neighboring countries mainly to stay in camps as refugee. Such practices continued for many decades. The pastoral community who are rich in cattle population engaged in traditional way of cattle rearing, unable to modernize it.

In fact, modernization needs the availability of infrastructure such as roads, schools, health centers, veterinary and huge budget. As the location of the pastoral community is in the remotest areas of the countries, access to the market to supply their products is very hard.

Therefore, the economic value of their cattle resource is insignificant. In such a way crafting climate resilient economy strategy seems a farfetched ambition. Each generation repeats the same pattern of life.

Displacement due to drought and flood which is a natural phenomenon and political instability forces the community members to leave their areas and living in the neighboring countries as refugee particularly in Ethiopia.

Somalia is categorized as failed state and since the down fall of the Ziad Bare regime in 1991 War and displacement have been the common phenomena. The civil war ignited in 1990s among the warlords in Somalia left many to death, physical injury and psychological trauma and hundreds of thousands were forced to

find their way to live as refuge in Ethiopia.

Later the emergence of Islamist fighters known as “Al Shabaab” makes the matter worse and still displacement and migration due to war and fear continued.

Even though Ethiopia itself is still hit by natural calamities induced by drought and flood, it continued to host refugees in its land and one can observe many refugee camps in the south east of the country refugees living in tents. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Disaster Risk Prevention Commission of Ethiopia played pivotal role in hosting and supplying humanitarian aid to refugees in camps.

The other neighboring countries whom their population migrate to Ethiopia originated both from South Sudan and Sudan.

Before Sudan was split in to two countries in 2010, it descended in civil war that lasted more than 40 years. To escape war thousands of Sudanese migrated to Ethiopia by regarding the country as safe haven. The number of the refugees still increasing due to the rampant political instability and war. South Sudan gained its independence in 2011 and only five years after the independence the country indulged in to civil war and to escape the war, hundreds of thousands of Southern Sudanese migrated to Ethiopia and registered as refuge.

One can observe camps located in Benishangul Gumuz region hosting refugees from South Sudan living in tents. The outbreak of war in Khartoum between the government and the insurgents led by Gen Dagalo forces one year ago forced thousands to be displaced and many crossed the border through Metema town of Ethiopia and hosted as refugee.

There are also thousands of refugees resided here came from Eritrea due to lack of opportunity and escaping political repression. Most of them are living in Tigray region in camps. The political instability prevailed in the region can be said the most contributing factor for the emergence of migration and displacement.

Most of the countries still unable to build strong and functioning institutions helpful for the flourishing of rule of law which are key for establishing stability and building democracy.

It is common that some leaders come to power by unconstitutional means and imposed arbitrary rule which cause public grievance. As the result, the region unable to move forward and stayed in the cycle of violence which push the people to migrate. The absence of rule of law created fertile ground for illegal trading and arms smuggling which further exacerbate the movement of insurgency and conflict which intern pose displacement.

The external forces also exploit the political instability of the region to advance their own interest. They fuel violence through supplying weapon to their proxies and ultimately force the population

Ethiopia’s refugee policy is very progressive and generous. “The government has been very generous by opening the borders, and it has very accommodative policy and laws that it has put in place, which grants refugees the right to remain, access to services as well as the right to be able to make a livelihood,”

to migrate to the nearby countries.

Ethiopia not only hosts refugees from the neighboring countries but also serves as a transit to the third countries. Refugees from Somalia and Eritrea used Ethiopia as corridor to go to Libya via Sudan and after crossing the Mediterranean Sea they arrive in Europe.

Ethiopia properly treats all refugees as their second country and facilitates all the humanitarian assistances. Ethiopia has a very generous and very progressive refugee policy that accommodates and grants refugees the right to access services and make livelihood, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) deputy representative.

The Deputy Representative Andrew Mbogori recently said that, Ethiopia’s refugee policy is very progressive and generous. “The government has been very generous by opening the borders, and it has very accommodative policy and laws that it has put in place, which grants refugees the right to remain, access to services as well as the right to be able to make a livelihood,” He said.

“We have seen recently that instead of putting refugees in camps where they are confined and not able to move, the government has allowed them to settle freely within the community where they will be able to live normally”, Andrew Mbogori elaborated.

Moreover, the deputy representative added that the host communities are the first to respond when UNHCR encounters refugee crises. Even before it starts operation, Ethiopia provides food and share homes. Speaking about the recent Sudanese refugees entering Ethiopia, he said that the numbers are growing as the conflict has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighboring countries, including Ethiopia.

Sudanese refugees have been entering Ethiopia through multiple border crossing points in Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambella regions.

“Before the current conflict in Sudan, there were about 15,000 refugees from Sudan in Ethiopia. Since the conflict started last year we have seen close to 25,000 refugees came from Sudan,” Andrew stated.

According to UNHCR projection, there could be about 100,000 Sudanese refugees who

may want to seek asylum in Ethiopia by the end of this year if the situation is not changing.

The UNHCR is working closely with the Government of Ethiopia to support the refugees. Since the conflict began Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) established screening and registration facilities at the border of entering points, including in Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella regions.

RRS is also now putting structures for reception of transiting centers where refugees stay before being allocated for settlement, he added. The deputy representative stated that her organization has identified, again with RRS, two possible settlement sites.

Settlement is basically the government granting a piece of land where the refugees can find home, build their shelters, access education and health as they wait for lasting solutions. On the other hand, however, there is a shortage of resources to address the challenges facing the refugees.

Therefore, UNHCR is calling on partners who have the ability to respond mostly calling on international partners, to support the efforts financially. There is great interest in the part of the international community in terms of providing resources such as food, shelter and protection as well as provide support to communities that are receiving the refugees.

Ethiopia for long has hosted refugees open handedly even from hostile countries that are believed to meddle in its internal affairs. It showed its dedication to the international community that it abides by law which governs the refugee affairs. The Ethiopian peoples have a deep culture to regard refugees as brothers and sisters and do not show animosity towards them. Refugees not only from neighboring countries but also from far properly treated and allowed to live and work here.

In addition to endeavoring to attain socio economic development, Ethiopia devotes to treat refugees in a sound manner. Therefore, the international community should pay due attention to Ethiopia’s efforts and continue support to bring long lasting solution to the refugee crises.

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

Editorial

Glamorous celebrations await tourists

More than any other country in the African continent, Ethiopia is an ancient country whose unique cultural heritage, rich history, and remarkable biodiversity are reflected in a tally of many tangible and intangible UNESCO World Heritages.

Undeniably, the country has a lot to offer to visitors ranging from intangible heritages like Christmas and tangible tourist attraction sites like Lalibela Rock-Hewn Churches and Sof Omar Cave. From rich ancient history, fascinating age-old traditions to diverse cultural and religious experiences, from spectacular geographic formations to incredible geological resources, Ethiopia has been well known for its numerous tourist attraction sites, indeed!

It has been prettily obvious these days that Ethiopia has become the most attractive and popular emergent tourist destination in Africa. The country is gearing up preparations to warmly welcome tourists for the upcoming commemorations, encompassing Ethiopian Christmas (Genna) and Epiphany (Timket) celebrations. The latter, which is recognized as an intangible world heritage by UNESCO, has been bedecked with a range of religious processions. True, Ethiopia needs to deliver high-quality services to tourists visiting for the Christmas and Epiphany celebrations as the two scenes, not limited to of course, are viable tools to attract tourists thereby building the image of the nation.

Celebrations in Ethiopia are great and colorful events, mostly religious ones, and frequently take place over several days. Important Christian holidays like Meskel, Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter as well as 'Id Al Fatra, Ramadan and 'Id al Adha, which belong to the Muslim community, have long been intangible magnets to entice tourists towards this beloved motherland, Ethiopia.

Recognizably, Ethiopia still retains the ancient Julian calendar in which Christmas falls on 7 January (Gregorian calendar) People in towns and villages typically dress up in their finest to celebrate. Particularly, the holiday season is a peak period for tourism in Ethiopia and reiterated nation's commitment to providing exceptional services to both festival attendees and general tourists.

Obviously, the prominence of new tourism projects and destinations like Wenchi, Gorgora and Koysha, the tangible heritages, are also of significantly useful in attracting a greater number of tourists. Besides, these newly developed tourist destinations boast modern facilities and luxurious accommodations, addressing a significant gap in the Ethiopian tourism market for high-end travelers. Indisputably, these developments are poised to revolutionize the Ethiopian tourism sector. Furthermore, the sites like Entoto Park, Unity Park, Friendship Park, the Science Museum, and the National Palace Museum the city's allure in general, and the recently renewed national palace, the Adowa Memorial, among others, have been significantly amplified by the addition of several new attractions.

The tourist attraction sites are potential tourist magnetism spots apart from the aforesaid beguiling religious festivities. It is well recognized that Ethiopia has every time welcomed tourists and visitors who are fond of sharing experiences and having refreshment of body and mind. As usual, the country has been eager to welcome tourists during the upcoming holiday seasons like Christmas, Epiphany, and the likes. Country's commitment to delivering excellent and professional services to ensure a fulfilling experience for all visitors and foreign guests has been regarded as an exemplary one.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, natural beauty, and the development of new tourist destinations make it a highly attractive destination for international travelers and knowledgeable visitors. It has expressed readiness to roll out the red carpet for tourists flocking to it to witness the plethora of colorful cultural and religious festivals in January (Tir). A multitude of cutting-edge tourism infrastructures have been built in the country to tap the sector's potential for the development of the economy. Besides, creating a conducive environment is therefore so crucial for tourists to extend their stay while attending the cultural and religious festivals and visiting heritage sites. These events are very beneficial to the development of tourism in the country and provide opportunity to build the nation's image because many visitors come to enjoy them.

Opinion

Ethiopia's commitment in restoring peace, addressing challenges

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Despite facing numerous challenges, Ethiopia remains steadfast on its path to prosperity. The government has shown a strong commitment to transforming the nation from a state of economic, social, and political deadlock into a more inclusive and dynamic society. Through a series of reforms, Ethiopia is beginning to see positive results that promise a brighter future.

In a recent address to the House of Peoples' Representatives, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) declared that this year will mark a period of significant growth for Ethiopia. The government has acknowledged the necessity for comprehensive reforms to tackle the complex challenges facing the nation. These reforms are designed to boost economic growth, enhance social cohesion, and promote political inclusivity. By focusing on these critical areas, the government aims to cultivate an environment where all citizens can prosper, irrespective of their backgrounds. The reforms have already begun to bear fruit in various sectors. Economic policies focused on liberalization, investment, and infrastructure development are attracting both domestic and foreign investments. This influx of capital is crucial for stimulating job creation and driving economic growth. Additionally, initiatives aimed at supporting local businesses are fostering entrepreneurship, empowering citizens to contribute to the economy.

On the social front, the government is working to promote inclusivity and equity. Efforts to improve access to education and healthcare are ongoing, ensuring that marginalized communities have the opportunities they need to succeed. By addressing social disparities, Ethiopia is laying the groundwork for a more cohesive society, where individuals feel valued and empowered.

Politically, the government is striving to create a more inclusive environment. Engaging various stakeholders in the decision-making process is vital for fostering trust and collaboration. By encouraging dialogue among different groups, Ethiopia aims to build a political landscape that reflects the diverse voices of its population.

Despite these positive developments, Ethiopia continues to confront challenges from both internal factions and external pressures. However, the government's determination to push forward with reforms demonstrates resilience in the face of adversity. By maintaining a focus on peace and stability, Ethiopia can navigate these challenges and continue its journey toward prosperity.

Ethiopia's trek toward prosperity is a testament to the nation's resilience and commitment to reform. By addressing economic, social, and political issues holistically, the government is laying the foundation for a more inclusive and prosperous future. As reforms continue to take shape, Ethiopia stands poised to overcome its challenges and emerge as a beacon of hope and progress in the region. In a world fraught with conflict, the pursuit of peace remains an invaluable goal. Ethiopia's recent efforts to translate the Pretoria Peace Accord with the Tigray People's Front (TPF) exemplify the importance of dialogue in resolving African conflicts. This approach not only emphasizes the value of peace but also showcases the concept of "African problems requiring African solutions."

Ethiopia's commitment to peace is evident in its ongoing rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives for ex-combatants in the Tigray Region. The National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) has reported the successful reintegration of 640 ex-combatants who completed their rehabilitation training at centers in Mekelle and Edaga Hamus. This milestone represents a significant step towards restoring community life and ensuring that those who once took up arms can return to society as productive members.

The NRC's efforts are guided by a win-win philosophy, recognizing that true peace benefits everyone involved. Currently, 1,360 additional ex-combatants are undergoing training, with a focus on inclusivity—particularly for women and individuals with disabilities. Lt. Col. Gosaye Tilahun, the NRC's director of demobilization, highlighted the importance of enhancing training center capacities to facilitate smoother transitions for former militants.

This proactive approach not only addresses the immediate needs of ex-combatants but also fosters community cohesion. By focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment, Ethiopia is laying the groundwork for a more peaceful and stable society.

The NRC has set ambitious goals, aiming to support 75,000 ex-combatants from the Tigray region over the next four years. In total, the commission plans to disarm and rehabilitate 371,000 ex-combatants within two years. This comprehensive strategy reflects Ethiopia's commitment to peace and societal reintegration, demonstrating that rehabilitation is not just a process but a pathway to sustainable development.

While Ethiopia's initiatives are commendable, the role of the international community remains crucial. Support from global partners can enhance these efforts, providing resources and expertise to further strengthen rehabilitation programs. Collaborative efforts can lead to a more productive East Africa, where peace prevails, and communities thrive.

Ethiopia's journey towards peace through dialogue and rehabilitation serves as a model for conflict resolution in Africa. By prioritizing the reintegration of ex-combatants and fostering inclusive practices, the nation is not only addressing its internal challenges but also contributing to a broader narrative of peace and cooperation on the continent. As Ethiopia continues to implement the Pretoria Peace Accord and expand its rehabilitation efforts, it stands as a beacon of hope for other nations facing similar struggles, proving that dialogue and a commitment to peace can lead to a brighter future for all.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Unlocking economic potential through macroeconomic reform policy

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is abundantly clear that subsequent to the macroeconomic reform policy's implementation, a broad range of effective undertakings have been underway in every part of the country. Notwithstanding the fact that a lot has been said, the reform has been moving forward in the right direction proving naysayers wrong and throwing cold water on their cock-and-bull stories and barefaced lies.

It is common knowledge that since the inception of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy, worrywarts have gone to the ends of the earth at various times to tarnish the promising strides being witnessed in every square inch of the country in a triumphant fashion. To the surprise of everyone, though they keep on turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the positive strides surfacing all over the country, accomplishing the desired goal turns out to be an impossible dream.

As every Tom, Dick, and Harry knows the positive moves of the reform unfolding in every part of the country, naysayers failed to materialize their dreams. But nowadays, the whole thing concerning the reform has sustained demonstrating the encouraging moves of the reform through the determination of the federal government.

Ethiopia has been executing its macroeconomic reform with persistence and strict discipline of execution in order to realize the nation's inclusive growth, Finance State Minister Eyob Tekalign said, according to information obtained from a local media.

In his latest interview with the Office of the Prime Minister, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to respond to generational aspiration.

Press Secretary Office of the Prime Minister, Billene Seyoum, interviewed the state minister, who is also a member of the national macroeconomic committee.

The state minister stressed that the success of the reform registered in the various spheres is not only due to persistence and perseverance as well as the right idea and vision but also strict discipline of execution.

Prioritizing the private sector as one of key drivers of the economy, he affirmed what this reform did is rebalancing the role of the private and the public sectors and brought the private sector as the engine of the economic growth.

As an instance of the economic success in the country, Eyob cited the agriculture success. "We have managed to increase crop production by 200 million quintals. Now, Ethiopia is the number one wheat producer country in Africa."

In manufacturing, the country has increased the utilization of productive capacity by 10% which has attracted significant investment.

Regarding tourism, "Ethiopia (has) now become an important tourism and conference destination. We organized 25 more events compared to the same period last year."

Since the effectuation of the reform policy, the whole thing in every aspect of the



country has been making progress in the right direction. Without any hyperbole, this is the outcome of the commitment of the federal government and the people of Ethiopia.

In the present circumstances, the promising strides of the macroeconomic reform policy have continued winning the hearts and minds of the wider international community and receiving a pat on the back.

In a similar vein, it is worth mentioning that the macroeconomic reform policy has been paving the way for competitiveness and putting the kibosh on obstacles concentrating on various sectors, and fashioning favorable chances for investors at the earliest possible juncture.

In addition to enhancing economic circumstances and bringing up a more vigorous and advantageous business landscape, the reform indicates remarkable achievement and a major opportunity to attract a diverse range of investors from various regions of the world.

On the heels of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy, the country has jumpstarted accomplishing the intended outcomes and actualizing the desired end results. In light of the current situation, the macroeconomic reform policy has kicked off resolving difficulties spinning around foreign currency shortage.

Ethiopia's recent macroeconomic reform measures have increased remittance inflow to the country while narrowing the gap between official and parallel markets, Economic Experts said.

The Experts told local media that the implementation of the macroeconomic reform measures have substantially increased remittances that would help, in return, to stabilize the national economy.

Economist Bogale Boshe (PhD) in the recent past stated that the implementation of macroeconomic reform has been scaling up the revenue the country secures from remittance as it has been narrowing the gap between the formal and informal exchanges.

Currently, there is no reason to exchange forex in black market since the transaction of remittance through banks creates credibility, he said, adding that this development encouraged Diasporas to send money home using formal means.

According to him, investors' property should

be legally protected to sustain the increased inflow of remittances. Hence, the loans for local investors should be maximized side by side to the growing remittance to meet demand and supply.

Economic Expert Atinafu Gebremesekel (PhD) also believed that the policy shift has accelerated the flow of remittance to the country. However, the effort requires building trust among investors regarding property ownership, investment protections and others.

It is crystal clear that the recently executed macroeconomic reform policy has begun bringing into play compressive stable economic growth on a national scale.

According to the current situations, most people from all components of the population have been making certain the positive strides and encouraging maneuvers of the macroeconomic reform implementation.

If the whole thing sustains moving in this fashion, the country through the passage of time will embark on breathing new life into creating new commercial prospects, improving competitive capacity and more of the same. By the same token, the reform down the road assists the progress of boosting productivity, overcome debt burdens, progress foreign currency earnings and other related aspects.

It is a widely held view that the macroeconomic reform policy plays a paramount role in taking the country's economy to the next level of accomplishment at the earliest possible juncture. Boosted opportunities, hard currency reserves, and other related aspects will take the country to new possibilities.

The effectuation of the macroeconomic reform policy in the country is a fundamental change to place Ethiopia as a more desirable spot for direct overseas statements.

The implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy has been sending a signal that the country is settled on a market-driven economy and amalgamating collaboration with financial institutions in the world.

Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform is a crucial point in uncovering new markets for the entire country by attracting both domestic and international investors.

The Institute of Policy Studies has stated that the comprehensive macroeconomic reform will make Ethiopia's banking sector

to become competitive and market-driven.

Since July 2024, Ethiopia has embarked on implementing a comprehensive macroeconomic reform program, through enhancing the financial sector to become inclusive and competitive.

The macroeconomic reform aims to address foreign exchange distortions, resolve long-standing foreign payment imbalances, curb inflation through modern monetary policy frameworks, mitigate debt vulnerabilities, boost domestic income and accelerate sustainable economic development of the country.

In addition, by enhancing the inclusivity, competitiveness, as well as health and resilience of the financial sector, Ethiopia aims to foster a robust, inclusive, and sustainable economic system.

Coordinator of the Macro Policy Department at the Policy Studies Institute, Tewelde Girma told ENA that the ongoing macroeconomic reform has multifaceted benefits.

Mentioning the benefits of the reform, the coordinator stated that the entire financial and banking sector would be driven by excellent professional expertise, competition and market.

Additionally, the entry into force of foreign banking proclamation in Ethiopia will enhance the capacity of the sector. This will significantly enhance the competitiveness of the banking sector and sustainable national economic growth in the country.

As the reform policy plays a huge role in taking the country's economy to new dawn, everyone irrespective of sexual category, religious and educational backgrounds, and whatnot, should join hands to realize the goal and pursue the target.

It is certain that the effectuation of the macroeconomic reform policy clears the way for the country's fast growth.

As the macroeconomic reform policy plays a significant role in attracting investors from various parts of the world, bolstering the country's economy, creating a broad range of job opportunities and import substitutions, achieving the desired goal will be as easy as low hanging fruit. Taking the paramount role the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy into consideration, all actors involved in the move should do all they can for the realization of the reform.

In the Sphere of Diplomacy

Israel's renewed commitment to African relations

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The relationship between Africa and Israel has been a complex and evolving narrative, shaped by historical events, political dynamics, and mutual interests. Since Israel's independence in 1948, this bond has witnessed phases of close cooperation and significant estrangement, reflecting the broader geopolitical shifts within the region.

In the immediate aftermath of Israel's establishment, many African nations freshly liberated from colonial rule saw Israel as a kindred spirit in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. This shared experience fostered a sense of solidarity, leading numerous African countries to support the establishment of the Israeli state.

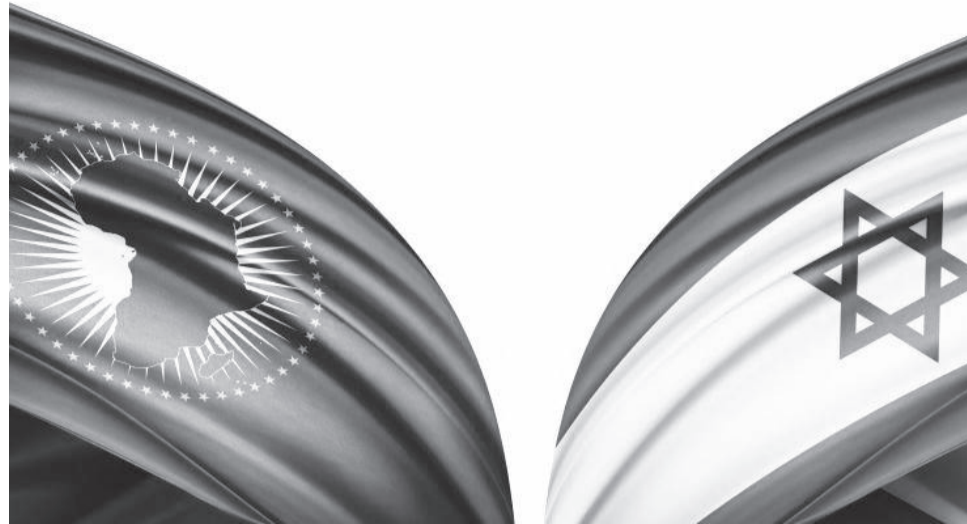
The cooperation flourished in several sectors, particularly in agriculture and military training, with Israel providing much-needed expertise and support to newly independent African states. Initiatives in agricultural technology and irrigation, for instance, played a crucial role in bolstering food security in various nations.

However, the landscape of this relationship began to shift dramatically following the 1967 Six-Day War. The subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict strained ties, as many African nations, responding to pressures from Arab states and the broader context of Cold War politics, severed diplomatic relations with Israel. This period marked a significant decline in cooperation, as African leaders reassessed their alliances in light of regional dynamics and solidarity with Arab nations.

Despite these challenges, recent decades have witnessed a renewed push for closer ties between Africa and Israel. In a strategic bid to expand its diplomatic and economic influence on the continent, Israel has intensified its outreach efforts. A notable milestone in this endeavour was Israel's acquisition of observer status at the African Union (AU) in July 2021. This status not only represents a formal recognition of Israel's engagement with African nations but also signals its intent to play a more active role in addressing the continent's challenges and opportunities.

This development, articulated by Israel's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, Sharren Miriam Haskel, underscores a potential paradigm shift in the dynamics of Israel-Africa relations, with implications that could reverberate across multiple sectors.

During a recent address, Haskel articulated the significance of Israel's engagement with Africa, stating, "This is why we have come to the AU as observers." This statement reflects Israel's strategic positioning, aiming to leverage its observer status to foster collaboration on various fronts, particularly at the United Nations.



As Israel navigates the complexities of its historical ties with Africa, it must also remain mindful of the diverse political landscapes and aspirations of African nations

"I believe there are incredible projects and partnerships we can develop together," she added, highlighting her optimism about future cooperative endeavours.

Haskel noted that, Israel has welcomed workers from various African countries, particularly in sectors like agriculture and nursing. This initiative not only helps address labour shortages in Israel but also fosters skill exchange, enhancing human capital development in both regions. "I am planning to join multiple delegations to assess how we can enhance our cooperation and strengthen our friendship," she said, indicating a proactive approach to diplomacy.

Economic collaboration forms the bedrock of Israel's renewed focus on Africa. The Israeli government has been proactive in providing expertise in critical areas such as agriculture, water management, and technology fields that are of immense interest to many African nations grappling with challenges in food security and sustainable development. In addition,

numerous Israel-based companies are actively operating in various African countries, further solidifying economic ties.

It also known that the country's health delegations have played a pivotal role in supporting African medical professionals through training and material assistance. This humanitarian aspect of Israel's foreign policy not only addresses immediate health challenges but also strengthens long-term partnerships in healthcare.

A significant highlight of Israel's outreach has been its relationship with Ethiopia, a nation that has stood by Israel during challenging times. According to Haskel expressed gratitude for Ethiopia's steadfast support, particularly through its national airline, Ethiopian Airlines. "Ethiopia has stood by Israel during challenging times, demonstrating true friendship and solidarity," she remarked.

Ethiopian Airlines has maintained its flights to Israel even amid regional conflicts, showcasing resilience and commitment

that have not gone unnoticed by Israeli officials. Ministry's African Division Bureau Head, Noa Furman, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the airline's role in enhancing bilateral relations. "We appreciate the airline's efforts and convey our gratitude to Ethiopian authorities for their support," she stated.

Moreover, Haskel highlighted the historical ties between the two nations, rooted in Judeo-Christian values and biblical traditions. "These shared values provide a strong foundation for our relationship," she explained, underscoring the cultural and religious commonalities that bind the two countries.

Despite the mutual interests and historical ties, the relationship between Africa and Israel remains complex. It is shaped by a history marked by both cooperation and conflict, influenced by various political, economic, and cultural factors. As both regions advance, the evolving dynamics of their relationship present new opportunities for mutual growth and partnership.

However, challenges persist. Geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts, and varying political ideologies among African nations can complicate Israel's diplomatic efforts. Additionally, public perceptions of Israel in certain African countries, shaped by historical grievances and contemporary political narratives, may also pose obstacles to deeper engagement.

So, the future of Israel-Africa relations remains uncertain. While there are opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation, the challenges posed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the diverse political landscape of Africa will continue to shape the trajectory of these ties.

As Israel navigates the complexities of its historical ties with Africa, it must also remain mindful of the diverse political landscapes and aspirations of African nations. By fostering genuine cooperation and mutual respect, Israel can not only enhance its diplomatic presence but also contribute to the continent's development in meaningful ways. The road ahead is filled with opportunities, and both regions stand to benefit from a strengthened partnership that honors their shared history while looking towards a collaborative future.

Despite maintaining only 12 embassies across the vast continent of Africa, Israel's engagement with numerous African nations suggests a burgeoning potential for deeper diplomatic and economic ties. This limited presence does not reflect the growing interest and investment that Israeli businesses have in various sectors throughout Africa.

In recent years, Israeli entrepreneurs have increasingly turned their attention to the continent, recognizing its rich resources and emerging markets.

Law & Politics

The Ankara Declaration is a huge diplomatic success

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

While we reach the end of 2024 we can reflect on a series of important diplomatic developments that has characterized the country. It is well known that Ethiopia has made it clear to all that have a stake in the Horn of Africa that it cannot afford to live as a landlocked country with more than 120 million people most of whom are young. It is a country that needs to grow faster than the pace of population growth and sooner or later the current atmosphere of its economic situation does not guarantee reliability unless it finds ways of expanding its international trade and make it fast. Consequently, it has proposed to its neighbors who have thousands of kilometers of land that are adjacent to the sea to make a deal with it in a diplomatic and give and take formula. It has proposed that it is ready to negotiate on the terms of a potential agreement with any nation that is willing to do that in a mutually beneficial condition.

The fact that Ethiopia gets the opportunity to expand its economy in a very profitable manner by restricting its unnecessary excessive expenditure for hiring any port, will open the door for more intensive and advantageous relationship with its neighbors in the region. That would potentially stimulate the growth of the economies of all the countries involved in these commercial and trading transactions. The long plan of the African Union Commission to realize the Agenda 2063 will have one step into the right direction by promoting regional integration such as what Ethiopia is planning. It is known that another factor in this respect is the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD, which is about to open a new chapter of economic cooperation by supplying easily accessible, cheap and clean hydropower to the region.

All east African countries can benefit from this circumstance beside its contribution to the struggle to contain climate change by encouraging the use of clean energy and the contribution it has in expanding the green environment the damming of the river Nile results in. Soil erosion would be limited and there will be more expansion of greenery in the region. Ethiopia's famous program of the Green Legacy Initiative has been inspiring other nations to do the same and it has also supplied millions of tree seedlings to be planted in the subregion. For this, environmentalists have praised Ethiopia's exemplary move that has been in vigor since more than five years ago.

Ethiopia has a profound tradition of living with its neighbors respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity since time immemorial and it also known that it has never invaded any country except when aggressors encroach on its borders or try to outright invade it. It is the duty and prerogative of any sovereign nation to be totally committed to defend its interests and prevent that its territory be subject to any sort of aggression. It believes in peace and it has always contributed to

The African integration that we seek to achieve cannot be implemented or realized by the multiplication of conflict areas. Rather the contrary and Ethiopia's efforts to iron out its disputes or discrepancies through acts such as the Ankara Declaration must be considered as a success to Ethiopia's diplomatic ventures and an example to be simulated by other nations

peace keeping and smooth diplomatic relations with any country be it neighbors or those that are distant and for that it has built a shining reputation. Ethiopia's engagements in every peace move to which it has been solicited by the UN or the AU has been fulfilled successfully. And this has helped it deserve the gratitude and respect of everybody which has benefited from its services.

Ethiopian troops have served in a number of peace keeping missions in various parts of the world where there was need across the decades including the mission in the

Korean conflict in the nineteen fifties and the Congo mission during the Katanga crisis in 1960. Ethiopian troops have also contributed their share in missions in Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan and most recently in Somalia. It has sacrificed many troops in Somalia's efforts to fight the radical group of Al Shabaab which is considered a terrorist organization by the international community and associated with the notorious Al Qaida group.

Ethiopia's position in the Horn of Africa makes it a key country that has crucial interest not only in terms security but also economically. Its gate to the outside world is linked to its access to the sea. That is why it cannot afford to be disinterested in any thing that happens there just as the other nations that claim the same interest. The Government of Ethiopia has been working on this issue as a matter of necessity and an imperative to its very survival. That is why it has made its plan to have access to the sea with its neighbors in a voluntary and diplomatic manner. The propaganda that certain nations have been engaged with to tarnish the image and reputation of Ethiopia as a potential aggressor and one that tries to colonize others is unfounded and baseless. The history of Ethiopia has ample evidence to the opposite and those who accuse Ethiopia of being a threat to subregion's peace know that they are only trying to control the area by excluding Ethiopia from the right to access the sea based on international principles and traditional practice.

We have seen lots of negative propaganda on the part of certain nations who have gone to extent of accusing Ethiopia of trying to invade a sovereign country. Of course this is baseless and the Ethiopian government has made it clear to the international community. Those who claim to have a stake in what is going on in the Horn of Africa should not be surprised to know that sooner or later Ethiopia will assert its right to access to the sea in a peaceful and diplomatic manner. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has made a solemn declaration that Ethiopia would try to secure access to the sea through peaceful and diplomatic means and in no other ways. He explained that the population pressure in Ethiopia and the consequent economic response cannot be answered without it having access to sea because its development would otherwise be limited or constrained. That would in turn become an unavoidable threat to the peace, security and stability of the entire subregion. The push effect that develops in the country due to the scarce possibility of full employment for the millions of youths every year grow will result in a kind of exodus that would be too hard to manage. There are already millions of Africans and people from other not developed countries or people in conflict areas that have been flocking to the outside world particularly to Europe across the deadly trip through the Mediterranean Sea and to the US across the toilsome and risky Mexican border. More millions of migrants coming out of Ethiopia and the neighboring

countries could be a probable scenario and the potential for further destabilization of the subregion cannot not to be excluded.

The only solution to this challenge is the sustained growth of all the countries that contribute to the exodus of migrants to the western world. This must constitute a concern to all. The Ethiopian government has made its stance clear. It has spoken loudly and clearly. There are no alternatives to Ethiopia having access to sea and it intends to do it diplomatically and peacefully not by the use of force. It condemns and warns that the interference of countries that have nothing to do with what is happening between Somalia and Ethiopia should refrain from encroaching on the vital interest of the Horn of Africa. Any negative propaganda against Ethiopia's legitimate interests, any intimidating campaigns against the Ethiopian government will not be acceptable. Ethiopia is a peace loving country with a glorious reputation for working for the advancement of peace in Somalia and elsewhere by making enormous sacrifices. This has been admitted and recognized by the government of Shiek Mahmoud of Somalia when the Ankara Declaration was signed between Ethiopia and Somalia with the mediation of the president of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

This agreement has been considered as a huge achievement for the diplomatic efforts of Ethiopia in its bid to access to sea. This would not have been successful if what Ethiopia is asking was considered as unacceptable and hence with no relevance to the Horn and beyond. On the contrary, many countries in the international community have acknowledged Ethiopia's pleas and stance and one of the results is the intervention of Turkiye to mediate between the two nations. It has also been announced that President Erdogan will soon pay a working visit to both Ethiopia and Somalia to further advance the details of the agreement. This declaration is clearly in the interest of all nations with a stake on the Horn and an example for other countries who try to deal with their neighbors peacefully using diplomatic means rather than force and pushing the continent to further chaos and instability.

Africa has already enough of its conflict zones and millions are already fleeing unsustainable conditions, and the tragic example of Sudan's internal woes are evident. It is naturally a sad development and it needs to be stopped and not create another conflict in the Horn. Ethiopia is striving to do its part in any way possible because it realizes that as long as there is no peace in any part of its neighboring countries, there will not be peace at home as well. The African integration that we seek to achieve cannot be implemented or realized by the multiplication of conflict areas. Rather the contrary and Ethiopia's efforts to iron out its disputes or discrepancies through acts such as the Ankara Declaration must be considered as a success to Ethiopia's diplomatic ventures and an example to be simulated by other nations.

Society

Religious institutions in conflict prevention, peace building

BY STAFF REPORTER

Religious institutions play a pivotal role in sustaining peace, stability, and development by promoting moral values, fostering social cohesion, and advocating for tolerance.

By preaching their core values which encompass compassion, forgiveness, love empathy and integrity and they can reinforce social unity and stability, support communities to resolve conflicts peacefully and maintain harmony thereby create a sense of togetherness and belongingness between and among peoples with diverse culture. Serving as an agent of social control of behavior, they can contribute significantly to the peaceful coexistence of diverse societies.

Ethiopia, with a rich mix of ethnicities and religious traditions religious leaders help promote harmony, understanding, and mutual respect among different communities. By encouraging dialogue, tolerance, and collaboration, they serve as key figures in mediating conflicts and fostering unity. Through their teachings and actions, religious leaders in Ethiopia play a significant role in sustaining peaceful coexistence and building a peaceful society where people of various faiths live together in harmony.

In essence of this, the Ministry of Peace recently held discussions with religious leaders of different faiths focusing on national peace building activities.

During the discussions held with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the two parties agreed to collaborate on ways to strengthening the ongoing peace building efforts in the country and promoting peace.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Patriarch, Abune Mathias confirmed that the church will work more diligently and closely with the government than ever before on peace building activities.

The Patriarch also expressed his appreciation and respect for Minister of Peace, Mohammed Idris for coming to the Patriarchate for acquaintance and discussion.

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

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

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Peace held discussion with leaders of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council ((EIASC)) centering on this same issue – on national



peace building and development initiatives in the country.

During the discussion, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council President, Sheikh Haji Ibrahim Tufa said that the Council has been carrying out various activities to strengthen Muslim unity and peace in the country.

Mentioning that two years has already elapsed since the Majlis's reform in the Supreme Council has begun; the President said that, during this period, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council has been carrying out various activities to strengthen Muslim unity and peace in the country.

Sheikh Haji Ibrahim also reiterated Council's cooperation with the government on the peace building and development initiative that will continue to be strengthened in the future.

The President also requested the government, especially the Ministry of Peace, to provide the necessary support in the upcoming Majlis elections.

Minister of Peace, Mohammed Idris on his part appreciated the Council's efforts in addressing the long-standing dispute between clans in the border areas of Afar and Somali regional states. The Minister also called for the continuation of the Council's engagement in comprehensive peace and development activities.

Acknowledging the invaluable role of religious institutions in building lasting peace, the Minister called on the Supreme Council to hold nationwide prayers for the country's peace.

Citizens should not suffer due to the lack of peace as long as Ethiopia is a religious country and has many cultures and experiences of resolving conflicts.

The Minister called on the Supreme Council to issue a national call for peace and a prayer for peace during Friday

prayers so that the current peace can be strengthened, the emerging peace challenges can be resolved and a lasting solution can be found.

Mohammed also reiterated his government's unwavering stance to ensure durable peace.

Stating that the government has always been committed and repeatedly called for peace, the Minister said it will further strive to resolving conflicts through dialogue. The Ministry of Peace will work in cooperation with all religious leaders and institutions and renewed the government's determination to provide the necessary assistance to ensure that the upcoming Majlis elections are held peacefully, ENA reported.

In related development, at the discussion forum organized by the Ministry of Peace in partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Fellowship yesterday under the theme "The Role of Religious Leaders in Sustaining Lasting Peace and National Development." a call was made for the contribution of religious leaders to the country's development process.

Speaking at the event, Peace State Minister, Keyredin Tezera (PhD) emphasized that national development requires inclusive participation and collaborative efforts from all. He noted that Ethiopia, with its diverse identity, should not focus on issues that separate us but rather on fostering unity, and building a strong and resilient government.

"Our national challenges should be addressed through dialogue, peaceful talk and negotiation to ensure lasting peace and development. In this regard, the aim of the forum is to create a platform for religious leaders to contribute their share and perspectives on the nation's development process." he remarked.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Fellowship President, Pastor Tsadiku Abdo, on his part highlighted the importance of genuine cooperation and justice in the national development. He explained that development work is a continuous process that requires regular monitoring and accountability.

Pastor Tsadiku also remarked that much of Ethiopia's challenges are due to the lack of understanding of the role of religious leaders in national development and peace-building. He emphasized that religious leaders play a critical role in the development process and should contribute practically to these efforts.

During the event, a book titled "Peace Building Training Manual" was inaugurated and the Ministry of Peace, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Fellowship signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that enables the two to work together on national and peace-building efforts.

“Our national challenges should be addressed through dialogue, peaceful talk and negotiation to ensure lasting peace and development

International News

Jimmy Carter: The American president whose commitment to Africa went beyond his term

Former US president Jimmy Carter, who had been frail for some time, has died at the age of 100.

His opposition to racism and his support for human rights are legendary, made more compelling by his life-long commitment to live among rural Georgians where segregation was severe and discrimination remains prevalent today. This enduring commitment to non-racialism and human rights at home also shaped his interest and engagement in Africa.

We discussed African affairs often during the nine years (2006-2015) when I directed the Carter Centre Peace Programmes. My most frequent trips to Africa for the centre were to lead election observation missions, in which he was keenly interested.

His views on Africa can be assessed from three angles:

- Africa policies pursued during his presidency, 1977-1981
- Programmes in Africa with the Carter Centre while he was its leader, 1982-2015
- His moral determination to reckon with racism.

Africa policies

In her book *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War* Nancy Mitchell, a professor of history at North Carolina State University, analyses in 900 pages how Carter's leadership and core values, discussed in the third section, influenced his approach to southern African. But Mitchell reminds us that in the 1970s Africa was the hottest theatre of the Cold War.

The book's subtitle, however, highlights a significant shift of emphasis skilfully effected by Carter and key to his success in helping liberate Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) by treating all sides, even "Communists", with respect. Carter's behind-the-scenes role in supporting the 1979 Lancaster House agreement, which led to Zimbabwean independence, was among his greatest diplomatic achievements.

Many years later, I was told by a close advisor to longtime Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe that, had Carter won a second term, he said he would work to raise US funds to facilitate a key element of the peace accord, land reform based on 'willing seller, willing buyer'.

The election of Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, however, resulted in a very different US policy of "constructive engagement" in southern Africa. It was widely perceived among anti-apartheid groups in the US and presumably in Africa as helping to ease the pressure of the Carter era against White minority rule.

Southern Africa remained Carter's top priority, as Mitchell notes:

Given their druthers, the Africa specialists in the Carter administration would have



devoted their full attention to resolving the problems of Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa. (p. 253)

Carter told me several times that he spent more time pursuing peace in southern Africa than he did on the Middle East, and having read now declassified files in the Centre library, I agree.

Post-presidency

Africa has claimed the lion's share of resources and energy since President and Mrs Rosalynn Carter founded their centre in partnership with Emory University 41 years ago, to work in poor nations, where colonialism and racism, had curtailed growth, opportunity and the sense of shared humanity. In 2015, their grandson Jason Carter, who lived in South Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer and speaks one of the country's 11 official languages, isiZulu, was elected chair of the centre.

Africa remains the region of the Carter Centre's biggest and most enduring commitments, under its motivating slogan "Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope". According to the 2021 financial report, the centre's annual fundraising campaign raises about US\$300 million annually. It now operates with a core staff in Atlanta of about 230 and field staff, mostly in Africa, of some 3,100. The centre also has an endowment fund in excess of US\$1 billion.

The Carter Centre's most significant contributions to development have been in the field of African public health, to end, mitigate and prevent six diseases, among them malaria and river blindness.

Democracy is the biggest of the peace programmes; election observation and support claim the greatest amount of resources and personnel.

Carter's moral compass

Motivations for Carter's interest in Africa are deeply personal. A brief address at a staff

celebration of his 90th birthday revealed his own reckoning with race at home. This, I believe, may have driven his long involvement in Africa.

Having grown up in tightly segregated rural Georgia, he recalled that his family was *completely surrounded by African-American children, with whom I played and worked in the fields and hunted and fished in the woods. And I got to know, eventually and slowly, the difference between a privileged group and the ones around us who were not permitted to vote, or to serve on a jury, or to go to a decent school.*

He added:

I think this, more than anything else, has shaped my life — partially because of the guilt I still feel in not having recognised that disparity between us early on. I took it for granted that if the Supreme Court and the Congress and the American Bar Association and the universities and the churches said it was OK for white people to be superior that was OK with God. And I think that that experience has been the most overwhelming factor in shaping my life ...

Carter, as I discovered, could be a hard man to work for. He held himself and those around him to extremely high moral and ethical standards. As president, he kept the peace, told the truth, and obeyed the law. Carter also promised never to profit from the presidency — a pledge, from my observation, that he has scrupulously honored.

His record should remind all democrats, including those in Africa, to hold leaders accountable to similar standards. For as he declared during his 2002 Nobel Peace lecture:

The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

Planet Earth

Special Fund establishment demonstrates Ethiopia's determination to tackle climate change impacts

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

A comprehensive strategy incorporating governmental policies, community involvement, sustainable practices, and international cooperation is necessary to address Ethiopia's complex challenges of deforestation, land degradation, and climate change.

Both the current and former governments have initiatives and strategies that can be used to successfully address climate change and environmental protections. Afforestation and reforestation are two strategies to counteract climate change. They utilize them to restore degraded landscapes and improve carbon sequestration in collaboration with stakeholders, and the general public. They plant trees nationwide, including indigenous tree species that can be planted in reforestation projects.

Despite their commitment to climate change mitigation and environmental work, they lack a reforestation and afforestation proclamation for sustainable land management, resulting in the absence of agroforestry practices that integrate trees into agricultural systems to improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and provide farmers with additional income sources.

It was also difficult to reinforce environmental tasks through legislation that is critical for implementing regulations against illicit logging and land conversion for agricultural or urban expansion. Develop comprehensive land use plans that strike a balance between agricultural requirements and conservation activities.

Hence, tackling deforestation, land degradation, and climate change in Ethiopia necessitates a comprehensive strategy that integrates economic development and environmental sustainability. By putting these strategies into practice, Ethiopia can improve the lives of its citizens and work towards a more resilient environment. Cooperation between government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and international partners is crucial to achieving long-lasting results.

In light of these, the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia passed bill No. 1361/2017 during its 12th regular session, allowing for the creation and administration of a special fund for the country's degraded land restoration and green legacy initiative. Here, the key question in this case is why it is important to pass this proclamation for Ethiopia.

According to Ethiopian Forestry Development Director General Kebede Yimam, establishing a special fund proclamation is essential for effectively implementing the Green Legacy Initiative and supporting the rehabilitation of degraded land. It also helps to meet the objectives of the Green Legacy Initiative and afforestation by financing large-scale



Ethiopian Forestry Development Director General Kebede Yimam



Ethiopia's House of Peoples Representatives Planning, Budget, and Finance Standing Committee Chairman Desalegn Wedaje

Indeed, Ethiopia's efforts to prepare a proclamation to combat deforestation, land degradation, and climate change are unprecedented in the country. It contributes to the fight against deforestation, land degradation, and climate change in a compressed manner

tree-planting campaigns to meet ambitious reforestation targets.

He added that supporting initiatives that use soil conservation, agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture methods to restore degraded landscapes is also important. It guarantees local communities' involvement and benefits in land management and tree-planting initiatives. Moreover, the establishment of a special fund for the implementation of the green legacy initiative and rehabilitation of degraded land in Ethiopia will help the efforts being carried out to sustainably develop the degraded lands across the country.

He also stated that climate change remains a global concern, particularly for developing countries, and that Ethiopia is implementing commendable natural resource development strategies to mitigate climate change, noting that significant results have been achieved thus far.

Kebede further mentioned that the restoration of degraded lands in Ethiopia is being conducted sustainably, allowing for rapid recovery. In this regard, the establishment of a special fund for the implementation of the Green Legacy Initiative and the rehabilitation of degraded land is crucial for the ongoing success and advancement of the sector in Ethiopia.

Besides, the move taken by the government demonstrates Ethiopia's determination to tackle the negative impacts of climate change, which is a global challenge. Moreover, the implementations of this bill have a greater meaning for Ethiopia's efforts in the protection of natural resources, the success of green development, and tackling greenhouse gas emissions.

Ethiopia's House of Peoples Representatives Planning, Budget, and Finance Standing Committee Chairman Desalegn Wedaje stated that the proclamation has various objectives. Through afforestation, reforestation, and assisted natural regeneration, it promotes the development of both new and existing forests and the restoration of degraded landscapes.

It also improves the sustainability of tree seedling planting works as part of the Green Legacy effort, as well as the productivity of degraded landscapes that have been restored through community mobilization. Furthermore, it generates job possibilities and long-term livelihoods, particularly for youth and women, through forestry development and improved supply of ecological services, he noted.

He further mentioned that using locally adaptable perennial plants develops riversides, areas around dams, and other water bodies, supports urban beautification and greening work, contributes to achieving Ethiopia's international forest sector-centered goals, particularly the goal of lowering carbon emissions, mobilizes additional resources to forest development and conservation from development and conservation partners, and allows Ethiopia to benefit

from an international carbon financing.

More importantly, the proclamation aims to restore the estimated 54 million hectares of degraded land across the country, of which 11 million hectares need immediate action. Besides, for the reform to continue in a meaningful way, it is also critical to implement the nation's green legacy initiative consistently with financial support, he pointed out.

According to him, 60 percent of the 40 billion saplings that have been planted in the last six years are used for food and medicine. Therefore, the proclamation is necessary to reinforce this all-encompassing action and carry on in a more effective manner to improve the exceptional results seen in the forest cover.

Indeed, Ethiopia's efforts to prepare a proclamation to combat deforestation, land degradation, and climate change are unprecedented in the country. It contributes to the fight against deforestation, land degradation, and climate change in a compressed manner. This decree also supports the planting of billions of tree seedlings around the country, enhances biodiversity, and recovers degraded lands, thus boosting the overall ecological health of the environment.

More importantly, the establishment of a dedicated fund for the Green Legacy Initiative is a critical step in addressing Ethiopia's environmental concerns. Ethiopia can make considerable gains toward restoring its ecosystems, combatting climate change, and promoting sustainable development by obtaining enough resources and encouraging community participation.

Therefore, collaboration across all government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners is crucial for attaining sustainable outcomes through a more resilient ecosystem while improving the livelihoods of the community.