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Ethiopia boosts fight against malnutrition with 'Millers for Nutrition'

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopia is intensifying efforts to secure the production of nutritious food and address chronic malnutrition, a long-standing challenge to the country's development, according to the Food and Beverage Industry Research and Development Center.

In a major development, the Millers for Nutrition coalition, hosted by Techno Serve, was officially launched in Ethiopia, bringing together a wide range of food fortification stakeholders to combat malnutrition in the country.

The Center Director-General Bekele Mekuriya (Eng.) emphasized the critical role of collaboration among government bodies, partners, and stakeholders in addressing various forms of malnutrition, including stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.

"Ethiopia has made significant strides in fortification, but challenges persist, including issues related to food quality, safety, productivity,

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Formalizing MICE: unlocking Ethiopia's untapped potentials

BY YESUF ENDRIS

Ethiopia, a historic hub for global diplomacy and cultural exchange, possesses the potential to become a premier destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism. Its frequent hosting of international conferences underscores this potential.

Yet, the MICE sector has historically been undermanaged. Recognizing this,

the government established the Ethiopian Convention Bureau to professionalize the industry.

This initiative is already yielding positive results, improving management practices and attracting higher-quality MICE tourists, leading to increased revenue.

As the host of globally high-profile meetings such as the African Union General Assembly and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's annual

meetings, Ethiopia has been a prominent venue for international conferences. Yet, as the Ministry of Tourism acknowledges, the country has not fully utilized its economic opportunities presented by the MICE sector.

While the concept of MICE tourism is not new to Ethiopia, the formal bidding process for hosting international conferences was almost nonexistent until recent years. With the establishment of the Convention Bureau, Ethiopia now has the capacity

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Ethiopia makes significant strides in adoption of EVs

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South Korea to cement public diplomacy with Ethiopia

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – The Republic of Korea expressed interest to further strengthen public diplomacy with Ethiopia as the Asian nation plans to expand taekwondo sport in Addis Ababa.

South Korean Ambassador to Ethiopia, Jung Kang told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the fraternal relations between the two nations will further strengthen through the rising of taekwondo sport and other bilateral activities.

Ambassador Kang stated that the Korean Embassy in Addis Ababa will provide the necessary support to the growth of taekwondo sport in Ethiopia.

The embassy will continue sponsoring



every taekwondo competition in Ethiopia, he said, adding, "We look forward to the rise of taekwondo in Ethiopia to shine like athletics sport."

Taekwondo befits the Ethiopian culture and it is not just a physical exercise but also a

spiritual activity helpful for behavioral development, mental health and strength, which is vital to nurture children, according to Kang.

"I always amazed by people who love

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News

Nat'l festivals pivotal to promote unity in diversity: MoPD

• Ministry celebrates 19th Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) underscored the necessity to use festivals like Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day, to produce ambitious citizens through promoting unity in diversity.

The Ministry celebrated the 19th Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day yesterday. In her opening remark, State Minister Tirumar Abate, said that the festival helps to cement national unity and foster mutual understanding to achieve the country's aspirations.

She stated that this year's celebration intended to resolve problems and bring national consensus to seize future opportunities together.

In addition to recognizing Ethiopia's diversity, Tirumar said that it is high time to strengthen unity and hold discussions on issues that have not yet been resolved as a country in the process of state building.

According to the State Minister, such



Tirumar Abate

festivals would help to strengthen national unity and build a resilient economy with joined hands.

"Therefore, we must not only be part of the solution to current national problems, but also play our part in facilitating future opportunities," she noted.

Hence, Ethiopians would continue building on the successes they have achieved so far in the state-building

process through build Ethiopian unity on an unshakable rock by creating a common understanding on the interests of nations, nationalities, and peoples, Tirumar said.

The Ministry of Planning and Development has celebrated the 19th Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Day with a panel discussion regarding the activities to be implemented in connection with the celebration of the festival.

MoF acknowledges AfDB, calls for steady support

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Ministry of Finance (MoF) praised the African Development Bank (AfDB) for its contribution to Ethiopia's economic progress and urged the bank to continue supporting the nation to realize prosperity.

Finance State Minister, Semereta Sewasew acknowledged African Development Bank (AfDB) for backing Ethiopia's notable economic improvements as the bank celebrated its 60th anniversary themed: "60 Years of Making a Difference."

According to Semereta, the bank has been providing Ethiopia with valuable support to expedite development projects over the past many years. Accordingly, AfDB supported 230 projects including 39 transformational, 21 sectorial, 38 power transmission, and 66 agriculture projects since its inception.

She also expressed that the bank is engaged in the construction of schools, roads, sanitation and potable water supply, rural development projects, among others.

Currently, AfDB is supporting the construction of an 800 km road project which designed to deepen regional integration and market linkage, the State Minister expressed.

African Development Bank Group Deputy Director General, Leandre Basole (PhD) said that the bank has been providing supports to Ethiopia in particular and the African continent in general.

He stressed that the support will encourage ensuring prosperous Africa in the years to come.

The Bank has been active in Ethiopia since 1975, and the Bank Group approved 3,796 operations (loans and grants) totaling 96 billion USD. Besides, the Bank's support through the African Development Fund (ADF) during 2010-2022 has contributed to Ethiopia's ambitions of developing a prosperous, resilient, and inclusive economy, he added.

Basole further stated that the bank has supported over 2.1 billion USD to the construction of infrastructures like the Jimma-Mizan, Mombasa-Nairobi-Addis Ababa, Bedele-Metu Road, and Modjo-Hawassa road projects.

In the energy sector, he noted that the bank funded some 2,020 km of transmission lines and 7,851 km of distribution lines through projects like the rural electrification II, electricity transmission system improvements project, Ethio-Kenya electricity highway, and the Addis Ababa power and distribution system rehabilitation and upgrading project.

Likewise, AfDB assisted Ethiopia's basic service, water sector, sanitation, health centers, rural water supply, and the likes, according to the Deputy Director General.

Ethiopia has launched the 10-year development plan spending 338.6 billion USD to improve infrastructure services, with ADF resources estimated at 885 million USD, he mentioned, adding AfDB's commitment to evolve to meet the dynamic needs of the continent.



Cooperatives pave way for market stability, public welfare

BY NAOL GIRMA

ADAMA– The Addis Ababa Cooperatives Commission has highlighted the critical role of cooperatives in stabilizing market prices and alleviating public challenges.

This was stated during a summit held in Adama yesterday, aimed at fostering market links between manufacturers and suppliers.

Lilti Giday, Commissioner of the Addis Ababa Cooperatives Commission, stated that the City Administration has utilized a one-billion-Birr revolving fund over the past four years to support selected sectors. She mentioned the administration's efforts

to address the financial shortcomings of cooperatives.

During the event, Habteyes Diro, Deputy Commissioner of the Addis Ababa Cooperatives Commission, presented a document emphasizing that cooperatives act as vital bridges between consumers and producers. He noted their role in fostering trust, ensuring fair pricing, and eliminating illegal brokerage chains. He also underscored that cooperatives contribute significantly to economic stability and community welfare, aligning with the country's macroeconomic reforms.

Addis Ababa's Deputy Mayor, Jantir Abay, addressed the gathering, stressing that cooperatives are key players in

providing better prices and higher-quality products in the current market environment.

Adding to the discussion, Abdi Mumed, Deputy Commissioner of the Federal Cooperatives Commission, highlighted the importance of creating market links between producers, manufacturers, and cooperatives to stabilize the market system and improve citizens' wellbeing. He praised the cooperative unions in Oromia and Amhara states for their exemplary performance, encouraging other states to follow their lead.

The summit underscored the pivotal role cooperatives play in driving economic stability and improving public welfare across the nation.

News

Ethiopia makes significant strides in adoption of EVs

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA –Private companies have commended the government’s measure to ban the importation of fuel-powered cars in order to advance electric vehicles and support the nation’s green energy transition efforts.

The Ministry of Transport and Logistics has launched Ethio-green mobility 2024 exhibition and symposium at the Huajian international light industry city special economic zone, showcasing the latest innovations in sustainable mobility, including cutting-edge electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy technologies. Banning the importation of fuel cars recently, Ethiopia is making significant strides in reducing carbon emissions and transforming urban mobility by embracing electric transportation.

EtiopiKar Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Samuel Addisalem, told The Ethiopian Herald that the nation is making significant strides in reducing carbon emissions and the recent move taken by the government

to ban fuel car importation is a testament of this commitment to realize green energy transition.

He believed that Ethiopia is aggressively working to shift its means of transport to EVs by leveraging its abundant renewable energy resources which is significantly important to reduce the nation’s reliance on fuels and minimize environmental impacts.

Recalling the recent decision by the government to cut the importation of fuel cars as part of its commitment to promoting electric vehicles, he stated that the nation is observing an increasing demand for EVs.

The decision is highly encouraging private sectors to engage in EVs and supporting the government’s effort to realize green energy transition, he added.

“We are importing fully electric cars and planning to establish local production in the near future. We have sub-dealers in various regions of the country,” Samuel said, adding that green mobility suggests the future of the transportation sector, given the country’s significant renewable energy potentials.

“This is a good move by the government

and winning the hearts of customers. To fully charge a vehicle, you will pay 150 Birr, which is a reasonable cost compared to fuel prices, and commercial users can operate for two to three days on a full charge,” he noted.

As part of its commitment to promote the adoption of EVs, the government has been expanding infrastructural facilities and providing tax incentives to encourage EVs transport as the way-out. The measure has created conducive environment for EVs market to boom locally and promote the merits of EVs, he stated.

The nation is witnessing a rapid growth of electric vehicle assembly and the government is working to develop EV’s infrastructure and strongly working to unlock renewable energy potential and fostering public-private partnerships to realize the nation’s move towards green energy transition shortly. Ministry of Transport and Logistics announced that the government is working to replace cars powered by fossil fuels with electric vehicles by harnessing country’s renewable energy resources.

South Korea...

Taekwondo here in Ethiopia, we will support taekwondo opportunities.”

Splendidly, taekwondo sport is precious and enduring Korean cultural root, identity and history, the Ambassador said, noting that the sport will help to bring attitudinal change as it is one of the mediums to learn about respect

each other and keenness towards harmony.

The fourth Ambassadors’ Cup Taekwondo competition was held in Ethiopia at the Ethiopian Sport Academy participating athletes from various states and city administrations. In the contest, Djiboutian competitors also participated, making the

tournament more vibrant and inclusive.

Ambassador Kang expressed that the resumption of the co-competition that was interrupted for five years due to the outbreak of COVID-19, will create a new chapter to the development of the Ethiopian taekwondo club.

Formalizing...

to actively negotiate and compete for hosting rights, signaling a transformative shift in its approach to MICE tourism, according to experts on the subject.

In an exclusive interview with the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Ozzie Business and Hospitality Group Managing Director and a MICE tourism expert, Kumneger Teketel highlighted the longstanding inattention of the sector.

“The government previously focused on promoting traditional tourism, such as cultural heritage and natural attractions, while MICE tourism remained a forgotten or underdeveloped area,” he said.

Ethiopia now has the potential to generate up to four times more revenue than in the past, but expected to provide and adopt competitive, proactive bidding strategies to attract more international conferences, he emphasized.

Despite its status as the diplomatic capital of the world and Africa, Ethiopia remains behind neighboring countries like Kenya in MICE tourism revenue generating.

According to Kumneger, this disparity is particularly alarming given Ethiopia’s unparalleled advantages, such as its

large diplomatic community and the globally recognized Ethiopian Airlines. “Even though Ethiopia has immense opportunities, it remains one of the lowest MICE revenue generators in the region,” he remarked.

The ranking of Addis Ababa as a conference city shows underperformance. While several African cities are ranked among the top seven MICE destinations of the continent, Addis Ababa remains absent from the list. However, the progress is evident: “a decade ago, Addis Ababa was not even among the top 15 African MICE cities, but it now ranks eighth,” he said, adding that this upward trajectory indicates the potential for Ethiopia to rise further if it continues to enhance its MICE capabilities.

The performance of the MICE sector depends on factors such as global tourism trends, hospitality capacity, and government commitment to hosting international events.

The Addis Ababa Hotel and Tourism Experts Association President, Ashenafi Mulugeta, also highlighted recent policy reforms that integrate MICE tourism into Ethiopia’s broader tourism strategy.

He emphasized that the government has shown growing commitment over the past five years by implementing incentives and initiating infrastructure projects aimed at improving the sector.

One of the most notable initiatives is the Corridor Development project, which includes city beautification efforts and the construction of convention centers. These developments, with improved governance and strategic bidding, are expected to enhance Ethiopia’s competitiveness in the MICE tourism market, he noted.

Ethiopia hosted more than 28 continental and international meetings in just the past three to four months, demonstrating the country’s growing capacity to attract high-profile events.

The country must overcome logistical and infrastructural limitations to maximize its potential. With its strategic location, rich cultural heritage, and unparalleled diplomatic presence, Ethiopia has all basic resources to become a leading MICE destination. As the Ethiopia Convention Bureau starts to modernize and professionalize the sector, the country stands at the better place to utilize opportunities offered by MICE tourism.

Ethiopia boosts...

inadequate capacity, packaging, and widespread malnutrition,” Mekuriya noted. He emphasized the need for modern production systems and adherence to international standards to overcome these ongoing obstacles.

The Ethiopian government is already taking steps to address these challenges. In June 2022, the country introduced mandatory food fortification standards for wheat flour and edible oil. The ongoing fortification efforts involve the installation of machinery, calibration, and certification of fortified products.

Out of Ethiopia’s 340 flour factories, 107 are now fortifying their products, with others in the process of installing fortification equipment.

Additionally, 38 edible oil processing companies have successfully implemented fortification with vitamins A and D, while 35 edible salt processors have iodized their products with potassium iodide.

Ethiopia has made notable achievements in food and beverage exports, which surged from 52 million to 120 million USD in the past year.

Import substitution has also reached 1.7 billion USD through strategic products. Additionally, large-scale industries have played a key role in job creation, offering employment to approximately 63,000 citizens last year.

Eyakem Amsalu, Program Manager for Millers for Nutrition, highlighted that the launch of the initiative represents a significant milestone in the battle against malnutrition.

“Through collaboration and the use of innovative solutions, we aim to make fortified foods the standard in Ethiopia, ensuring all citizens have access to the essential nutrients needed for a healthier future,” he said.

Looking ahead, the coalition aims to have over 80% of wheat flour and edible oil factories fortifying their products within the next two years.

This goal will be supported through technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and market linkages, equipping millers with the resources and expertise needed to uphold high fortification standards while enhancing operational efficiency.

Through these comprehensive efforts, Ethiopia is well on track to creating a sustainable environment where food fortification becomes a cornerstone of the nation’s health and development.

Opinion

Commencement of DDR: A fruition of Pretoria peace accord as an example for African solution for African problems

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Following the firm stance of the federal government of Ethiopia, the Pretoria peace accord has set in motion yielding results at the earliest possible moment. Even though rumormongers at all hours of the day and night pulled out all the stops to downplay the role of the continental bloc by spreading cooked up stories, all their endeavors went for nothing in the shortest possible time.

Notwithstanding the fact that a broad range of endeavors made by some doomsayers to attach little importance to the continental bloc repeatedly, Ethiopia ultimately attained the desired goal and accomplished the desired outcome. In the present circumstances, in the wake of the peace accord signed between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the northern part of the country has jump-started breathing a sigh of relief and continued moving forward in the right direction.

Among the successes the peace accord registered is the recently commenced DDR for ex-combatants. The National Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia announced that the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-militants and relocating them to rehabilitation centers in the country was started recently.

The move aims to reintegrate 371,971 ex-combatants identified across various regions of Ethiopia, facilitating their return to normal life within society. Speaking to the media, National Rehabilitation Commission Commissioner, Temesgen Tilahun highlighted the commission's mission and activities. The aim is to disarm former militants and integrate them into the country's peace, democracy, and development efforts.

Accordingly, with the government's allocation of 1 billion Birr and additional 60 million USD from international partners, the disarming of 75,000 ex-militants was begun in the Tigray state in the first phase to ensure their sustainable reintegration. Three rehabilitation centers have been identified in Mekelle, Edaghamus, and Adwa in the Tigray state, the commissioner pointed out.

Over a two-year period, the commission plans to reintegrate the 371,971 ex-militants identified nationwide ensuring their permanent settlement within the community. The Commissioner said that the government is working with commitment on disarming and rehabilitating ex-militants in various states, undergoing rehabilitation training and support necessary to rejoin society.

In a similar vein, after the peace accord, the inhabitants of the northern part of the country plunged into getting back on the right track. At that specific juncture, the challenges were not as easy as taking candy from a baby and as easy as falling off a log.

It is important to highlight that the AU-brokered peace agreement has been turning the mantra of African solutions to African problems into reality. The agreement that took place in South Africa has won the hearts and minds of the wider international community



Tigray launched DDR program for 75,000 ex-combatants – Photo Addis Standard

at the earliest possible juncture and has proven to be the talk of the world.

In point of fact, the federal government of Ethiopia at different points of time has been bending over backwards to put the Pretoria peace accord in place working in close collaboration with various stakeholders. On the basis thereof, the northern part of the country has been leading a meaningful life. On account of the commitment of Ethiopia, the inhabitants of the region have started getting back on the correct path and leading a meaningful life.

Albeit some entities have been making every possible effort to drag through the mud the AU brokered peace agreement, Ethiopia in the fullness of time turned out to be victorious over the ceasefire agreements. As things stand now, the quantum leap seized by the government has been assisting the progress of the implementation of the peace agreement.

On the heels of the unwavering stance of the federal government and various stakeholders, the Pretoria accord has been going as planned and coming to fruition.

Though a lot of endeavors have been made by various bodies to belittle the role of AU and take the case to other bodies under the guise of a broad range of lame reasons, they failed to attain the aspirational objective. The accord in black and white demonstrates the fact that any dispute can be resolved through round table discussions no matter what the case may be.

It should be remembered that in the course of the war, quite a lot of print and electronic media outlets had been pulling out all the stops with a focus on upping the ante and bamboozling the wider international community with their usual cooked-up stories that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

No matter how hard they tried, all their efforts went for nothing because of the concerted efforts of Ethiopians residing in every nook and cranny of world. By standing in unison the people of Ethiopia ended up pouring cold water on scaremongers' evil intention that do not reflect the existing reality on the ground.

In actual fact, the federal government has played a huge role in restoring peaceful relations in the timeliest manner possible. Other than that global community has been

playing a paramount role in standing by the side of the AU brokered peace deal.

Ethiopian President Taye Atseke Selassie lauded the Pretoria Peace Agreement as a landmark achievement, embodying the principle of African solutions to African problems, according to information obtained from local media.

Speaking at the Continental Conference on Peace, Prosperity, and Development held recently in Addis Ababa, the President emphasized that the agreement is a powerful example of Africa's capacity to address its own challenges through homegrown initiatives and collaboration.

Through the African Union (AU)-led process, a two-year northern conflict ended and the Pretoria Peace accord was signed in 2022.

"The Pretoria Peace Agreement, which has been mentioned time and again, is indeed a testament to the principles of African solutions to African problems," President Taye stated.

He also underscored Ethiopia's commitment to prioritizing peace and unity over discord, citing the ongoing national dialogue process as a cornerstone of the country's peace-building efforts.

"We decided to prioritize peace over discord. Once and for all, alongside our conflict, I want to open a new chapter of the national dialogue process that we have embarked upon to liberate indigenous peoples."

The President noted the vital role of development in fostering sustainable peace, calling for a "fundamental reimagining of development and security paradigms" to address the shifting geopolitical landscape.

Taye further highlighted Africa's untapped potential, particularly its youth and women, as key drivers of peace and prosperity.

It is crystal clear that following the war, the northern part of the country was between the devil and the deep blue sea. As the Ethiopian government is fully committed to effectuating the Pretoria peace agreement making the most of fruitful approaches, Ethiopia kicked off achieving the intended target over time. This being the case, the desired target is being accomplished at various points in time.

In concrete terms, the Cessation of Hostilities

Agreement (CoHA) brokered by AU is a living testimony to Africa's ability to get to the bottom of its quandaries devoid of the meddling of third parties' dictation. More to the point, the peace accord is the manifestation of the practicability of a continental-led approach to resolving skirmishes in negotiation in a peaceful atmosphere.

African nations without batting an eye should effectuate everything they can to duplicate Ethiopia's accomplishment in getting to the bottom of internal teething troubles by African mechanisms thereby bolstering the AU's role to make certain a peaceful and prosperous continent.

The Pretoria agreement, which successfully ended hostilities between the two parties, Ethiopian government and the TPLF, is a noteworthy example of Africa's ability to resolve predicaments independently.

Ethiopia's peace agreement has contributed a significant share to turn African solutions to African problems into reality.

The Pretoria peace agreement is an influential example of Africa's capability to tackle its own encounters through home-based ingenuities and partnership.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) Addis Ababa University Political Science Lecturer, Shimelis Hailu in the recent past, stated that the Pretoria accord not only curtailed the damage that had been posed on the livelihoods of civilians, but also tackled the immense damage that had been posed in strategic infrastructure.

"Ethiopia's ability to cease hostilities could be taken as a huge lesson for Africa as well as for the rest of the world. History has taught us that it took many years to reach an agreement for many countries in similar fashion as they failed to build trust on the outcomes."

Ethiopia's ability to cease hostilities could be taken as a huge lesson for Africa as well as for the rest of the world. History has taught us that it took many years to reach an agreement for many nations in a similar fashion as they failed to build trust in the outcomes. There is no doubt that the agreement allowed putting an end to the prolonged war that could cost the lives of many more civilians.

The agreement allowed putting an end to prolonged war that could cost the lives of many more civilians. Apart from serving as a model for African nations, this success shows a new path to peaceful resolution to differences for similar situations in the country.

Following Ethiopia's commitment to AU brokered peace deal, the country in the fullness of time turned out to be successful. Therefore, various African nations should go to the ends of the earth to follow in Ethiopia's footsteps in smoking the peace pipe and restoring friendly relations.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Ethiopia's food self-sufficiency: Global model for sustainable farming

Over the past few years, Ethiopia has made significant strides in revolutionizing its agricultural sector. Aiming to shift from food dependency to food sovereignty, the country is undertaking a series of far-reaching initiatives. By introducing innovative and climate-smart practices, Ethiopia is not only enhancing agricultural productivity but also securing a stable food supply, addressing immediate concerns, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

One such initiative is the "Summer Irrigation Wheat Production" program, designed to boost wheat production during the dry season. This program has expanded beyond areas traditionally known for agricultural production to dry regions such as Afar State that were previously reliant on livestock. These areas are now cultivating wheat during the dry season, yielding impressive economic outcomes.

As a result, over the past two or three years, Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in wheat production. The country has not only met the demands of its people but is also transforming its agriculture sector. From being a wheat importer, Ethiopia is on track to become a self-sufficient wheat producer and even a wheat exporter, thanks to year-round cultivation.

Another successful initiative that witness impressive results is "Ye Lemat Tirufat" program, which aims to achieve food sovereignty and improve nutrition at both the household and national levels. The program has strengthened food security, stabilized the market, and contributed to the economy.

In addition to these initiatives, Ethiopia has made strides in diversifying agricultural products, providing farmers with access to high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation systems, and promoting climate-resilient farming techniques. These efforts have increased agricultural output and productivity, further advancing the sector.

Ethiopia's efforts to improve food sufficiency have dragged international attention. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was awarded the prestigious UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Agricola Medal in Rome for his commitment to enhancing food security and nutrition, as well as pursuing innovative solutions for wheat self-sufficiency.

Further, nation's agricultural achievements, particularly in wheat production, have been cited as a model to be replicated in other countries, including African countries, to lessen the burden of malnutrition and food security.

In fact, food insecurity and hunger remain the most pressing challenges among countries of the world. Due to factors like climate change, land degradation, conflict, poverty coupled with a rapidly increasing population, many countries worldwide experience severe food insecurity challenges.

The recent "World without Hunger" conference, held in Addis Ababa from November 5 to 7, 2024 also, emphasized the importance of global collaboration to address food insecurity and create a hunger-free world.

As Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) stated yesterday, "Ethiopia is actively working toward food security and aims to unlock its vast potential to become Africa's breadbasket."

Ethiopia's success in wheat production has enabled the country to reduce imports, earning global recognition. Its strides in wheat development have positioned Ethiopia as a model for other African countries striving to enhance agricultural self-sufficiency.

According to the Premier, Ethiopia's strides in wheat development have positioned Ethiopia as a model for other African countries striving to enhance agricultural self-sufficiency.

In this regard, the path that Ethiopia has started to improve food security is witnessing promising results; and it is an ambition that it would further strengthen it.

Navigating the U.S. President-Elect's Tariff Threats: Implications for BRICS+ and Strategic Responses

BY MARKOS TEKLE RIKE

BRICS+

The BRICS+ initiative, an expansion of the original BRICS group, represents a strategic effort by non-Western nations to establish a more balanced global order by including additional emerging economies. This expansion offers new members access to investment and financing through the New Development Bank (NDB), enhanced trade opportunities, and avenues for technology and knowledge transfer, driving economic growth and innovation (Brookings Institution, 2024).

Politically, BRICS+ strengthens global influence and diplomatic ties among member nations, fostering coordinated stances on international issues while promoting economic diversification to reduce dependency on Western markets. Furthermore, by challenging Western dominance and advocating alternative governance models, BRICS+ aims to contribute to a multipolar world order, enhancing stability, security, and equitable global power distribution (World Economic Forum, 2024).

The Challenge

BRICS faces challenges to unified action due to its members' economic dependence on Western trade, investment, and aid, which complicates adopting collective stances (UNCTAD, 2024). Geopolitical differences and varying economic policies among members further hinder consensus building on global issues. Additionally, the group's institutional capacity is tested by the need for effective coordination mechanisms to align its members' diverse priorities and strategies (Brookings Institution, 2024).

The Threat

The BRICS+ initiative is a strategic effort to challenge the dominance of Western-led global economic structures and establish a multipolar world order. However, the proposed 100% tariffs by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on BRICS nations highlight the significant resistance such initiatives face. These threats aim to deter BRICS from creating an alternative to the U.S. Dollar as the global reserve currency, representing a broader strategy to maintain the Dollar's supremacy in international trade (Politico, 2024). In this context, BRICS+ must adopt a cohesive and strategic approach to navigate this geopolitical challenge.

The Impacts

The proposed 100% tariff on BRICS+ nations by the U.S. president-elect could backfire economically in the short and long term. While aimed at deterring BRICS+ initiatives, such as reducing reliance on the U.S. Dollar, the tariffs risk inflating consumer prices in the U.S. as critical suppliers like China, India, and Brazil face higher business costs (Business Insider, 2024). American companies, dependent on global supply chains could see operational costs rise, eroding competitiveness.

Moreover, reciprocal tariffs by BRICS+ nations on U.S. exports could harm sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and technology,

reducing demand and exacerbating trade deficits. The interconnected nature of global supply chains further amplifies the risk of disruptions, potentially driving BRICS+ nations to strengthen partnerships outside the U.S. and undermining American influence in international trade (The Australian, 2024).

The Repercussion

The U.S. tariff threat may drive BRICS+ and other nations to accelerate financial systems independent of the Dollar, potentially weakening its global dominance. Nations like Russia and China are already advocating alternatives, while BRICS+ expansion to include emerging economies like Egypt, UAE, and Iran could boost intra-bloc trade in non-dollar currencies (Politico, 2024). This shift could deepen BRICS+ cooperation and attract middle powers, eroding U.S. influence in global trade and finance.

Reciprocal tariffs by BRICS+ nations could harm the U.S. economy by restricting market access for key exports like agriculture, technology, and energy, exacerbating trade deficits. Such measures might also drive BRICS+ countries to deepen trade ties with non-U.S. partners, isolating the U.S. from key growth markets (Business Insider, 2024). Additionally, retaliatory tariffs could contribute to global economic instability, discouraging investment and slowing economic growth, with the U.S. also facing repercussions as a significant international market player (The Australian, 2024).

Response by BRICS+

BRICS+ should respond to U.S. tariff threats by strengthening internal economic integration through enhanced trade agreements and New Development Bank (NDB) financing, reducing reliance on Western systems (UNCTAD, 2024). Strategic diplomacy with emerging economies and the Global South can amplify collective bargaining power and attract new members. To ensure cohesive responses, BRICS+ must align member priorities and develop shared policies while advancing alternative financial mechanisms, such as a BRICS reserve currency, to reduce dollar dependence (Brookings Institution, 2024). Public diplomacy, highlighting the benefits of a multipolar trade system, can garner international support and counter-economic coercion (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Conclusion

The U.S. president-elect proposed 100% tariffs on BRICS+ nations, posing a significant challenge to the bloc's efforts to reduce reliance on the U.S. Dollar and advance a multipolar global order. However, these threats could unify BRICS+ and accelerate its strategic initiatives. The bloc can reduce Western dependency by enhancing internal economic integration through trade frameworks and New Development Bank financing, fostering strategic diplomacy with the Global South, and advancing alternative financial mechanisms like a BRICS reserve currency. Public diplomacy and cohesive policy alignment further strengthen BRICS+'s resilience, enabling it to counter coercive measures, promote equitable governance, and challenge Western-led economic dominance.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Expo that promoted minerals, created market linkages

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

The third International Mining and Technology Expo, MINTEX Expo, was recently held at the Millennium Hall. In the expo, which was described as a feast of minerals, a variety of beautiful and precious and ornamental minerals, gold, coal, industrial and construction materials, and other minerals were presented in various forms. Many types of minerals, whose names we have never heard or seen, were presented and visited.

The expo, which was held for four days from November 23 to 26, 2024, was attended by government bodies, many developers involved in the mining sector, value-adders, buyers, exporters, and many local and international visitors.

President Taye Atsike Selassie and other high-ranking officials attended the opening of the expo, which featured a wide range of activities including promoting minerals, creating market linkages for mineral products, showcasing and promoting technology, and holding various forums on the opportunities, challenges, solutions, and successes of the mining sector.

President Taye, while opening the Expo, announced that Ethiopia should establish a system to develop and utilize its mineral resources in a modern way. He indicated that the country should adopt a modern system and use technologies to identify, develop and utilize its mineral resources; and investors engaged in the sector should widely use technologies that enable knowledge transfer.

According to the President, mineral resources are crucial for increasing foreign exchange earnings and for the country's overall economic growth. In addition to the government, investors and stakeholders should help develop the mining sector.

Among the participants in the Expo was Jimiti Coal Production Enterprise, which is engaged in coal development. The enterprise located in the Jimma Zone of the Oromia Regional State was established three years ago. It produces coal and supplies it to cement and steel factories.

According to the company's sales expert, Dawit Kitila, the Company was established to substitute the coal imported from foreign countries at high foreign exchange rates. It produces natural coal with a calorific value of 4,500 to 5,000 calories. It produces more than 3,000 tons of coal per day and supplies it to factories at a reasonable price.

He mentioned that the company is producing coal, which was previously imported at high foreign exchange rates, locally; and indicated that the benefits of producing coal locally are also high for the country.

The company's presence at the expo has many benefits, especially in terms of creating market linkages. There are many people who are unaware of the fact that Ethiopia has many types of minerals that will help investors find opportunities to



work with the company.

Dawit said that the company wants to expand its coal business by opening more branches in the future and plans to export coal. The government and other relevant parties should support it for this.

Another participant in the expo is MHNW, established in 2022. It exports industrial, precious and ornamental minerals to the foreign market.

Negash Yirga, founder of the company, said that they export lithium, copper, manganese and other minerals used as industrial inputs, as well as precious and ornamental minerals such as ruby and opal.

"Our participation in the expo helped us attract domestic and foreign participants and visitors and promote minerals," he said, adding that it also helped them to have close relations with domestic and foreign visitors who are needed in connection with their work.

According to him; these minerals are found in different parts of the country. Lithium, copper and manganese are often found in the Afar and Oromia regions. Gemstones and precious metals such as ruby and opal are found in Amhara region, and minerals such as fluorite are found in Somali region.

He said that the company is expanding its market by exporting its minerals to different countries; precious metals are exported to Europe, Turkey, Dubai, Germany and Sweden. Industrial metals such as lithium and copper are also exported to China and occasionally to the US market.

The company currently exports most of the minerals other than gemstones in their raw form without adding value; but it receives gemstones from producers and processes for sale. He also stated that in the future, it plans to add value and carry out the work itself.

Adding value to minerals requires technology and especially importing machinery. Now, the Ministry of Mines is focusing on creating a favorable environment for the production of minerals that can be produced domestically. Especially if the minerals are exported value added, the price will be four to five times higher than the current price.

The countries that buy the minerals are very aware of the minerals and want to be supplied with quality minerals. The sector is still untapped and can be used by many people and can create job opportunities for many.

"Participating in the MINTEX Expo has helped us promote our products and create market connections. It has created opportunities for us to attract more customers and partners," he said. He indicated that the company will continue to focus on adding value to minerals and offering them to the foreign market, and that it will work to strengthen its capabilities and benefit itself and the country.

Museum Jim Stone Trading is another participant in the Mineral Expo. According to the company's sales expert, Rahmet Taju Abdella, the company produces and sells many types of precious minerals to the foreign market.

It processes and sells minerals such as jasper, obsidian, amethyst, agate and others to the foreign market. These minerals are made with gold and silver and are used to make earrings, necklaces and bracelets. After the minerals are processed into jewelry, they are sent to the markets of India, China and other Asian countries.

Adding value to minerals and processing them into jewelry and offering them to the foreign market is a job that benefits and encourages not only the individual but also the country. The situation of precious and

jewelry minerals being illegally exported from the country in various ways is causing the foreign market to freeze. She pointed out that there is a need to raise awareness by focusing on preventing illegality.

She stated that precious metals are widely available in various parts of the country and that there is no problem of supply; but the peace and stability problems seen in some areas have created obstacles in the work.

She mentioned that they use various platforms to promote these products and that they sell them in the online market; finding a market is the main problem, and when the market is found, there is a shortage of products so that the work requires more effort.

According to Rahmet, since the expo attracted many domestic and foreign visitors, it could create a good opportunity for the company to promote and sell its products and find a market. This is the third time that the company participated in the expo. She recalled that the first year's expo was very lively, on which they introduced themselves a lot. The second and current expos were also cool.

While the public's understanding of minerals has changed, there is still much work to be done; especially in comparison to other minerals, the work being done on precious and ornamental minerals has been weak. Therefore, these minerals should be given attention wherever they are produced.

Rahmet said, "When precious and ornamental minerals are value added and exported to the foreign market, they have a price increase of about 50% to 60% compared to the raw materials; they can earn a lot of foreign exchange. Many people do not know that these minerals are found in Ethiopia, and therefore do not use them."

The only minerals known are gold and silver. Precious minerals are not seen as minerals, but as stones. Therefore, it is necessary to work on creating awareness among the public. "When we export the minerals, they can be sold at a higher price than gold; but when they are sold in the domestic market, they are sold at a lower price," she explained.

The other participant is a company called Kauser Precious Minerals Export and Import. The company exports precious and ornamental minerals as well as industrial minerals to the foreign market. It sells precious and ornamental minerals such as opal, sapphire, and emerald on an online market.

According to Huda Abdal Fata, a sales expert of the company, it supplies industrial minerals such as tantalum and coal to various factories. It receives these minerals from various producers and supplies them to the factories.

She said that the company's presence at the expo enabled it to promote these products and create market connections, adding that the expo enabled them to sell products and generate many foreign and local customers.

Art & Culture

Restoring African cultural heritage: What the time requires

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Cultural assets depict the way of life of a community or society. Sculptures, manuscripts, monuments, and artifacts are some of the legendary artistic works of Africans that showcase the continent's ancient civilization.

African cultural heritage serves as a mirror of people's identities and is a crucial foundation for building a common future. It is a legacy that unites all Africans, strengthens their solidarity, and shapes their identity as a continent.

However, these cultural assets, which represent the ancient civilization of Africans, have either disappeared or are not currently in their rightful place. These heritages were either looted by African colonizers or stolen by individuals seeking wealth through selling and collecting these materials.

Experts estimate that 80-90% of Africa's cultural heritage can be found in European museums, or in their storage facilities. Regardless, all Africans agree that these heritages are now in the museums of European countries.

The looters do not show remorse for their actions; instead, they proudly display these cultural works in their museums to generate income. The displayed cultural assets of Africa highlight the immoral behavior of European countries and their exploitation of African countries instead of honoring their identity.

Under no circumstances should these cultural assets of Africa remain in their current locations. Looting cultural heritage is a disgraceful act that tarnishes the reputation of these countries. Ultimately, looting cultural heritage is a criminal act that must be condemned.

The restitution of Africa's cultural heritage is not just about reclaiming art objects; it is about preserving and passing down our history, values, and culture to future generations. Therefore, the return of African cultural assets requires close collaboration among African countries and dialogue

with the countries currently holding these cultural treasures.

The importance of preserving and enhancing African heritage has grown, particularly in regards to classical African artworks located outside the continent. This allows our culture to shine globally.

Africans are encouraged to work together towards the common goal of developing continental and national policies to protect and enhance their cultural heritage, especially by educating the younger generation on its significance and preservation. Additionally, they should support policies that promote cultural and creative works contributing to the continent's sustainable development.

Africa is currently experiencing a cultural revolution, with the creative and cultural industries becoming a powerful force in global competition. Preserving and promoting cultural heritage involves focusing on monuments, artworks, and cultural practices that reflect the identity of a society or community.

The objective of the flagship on cultural heritage within the intergovernmental committee for promoting the right of cultural property to the country of origin is to facilitate the return and restitution of cultural properties. This is to support African Union member states in preserving their cultural heritage.

African countries must work together to preserve and restore their cultural heritage. The Africa Union plays a crucial role in fostering solidarity among nations and creating conditions for the return of cultural treasures.

Restoring cultural heritage is a lengthy process that requires careful negotiation and

attention from Africans. For example, the Axum obelisk was returned to Ethiopia after 68 years in Rome. The continent must persist in its efforts until diplomatic success is achieved. Restitution should focus on culturally significant and historically important objects to prevent damage.

In addition to returning these heritages,



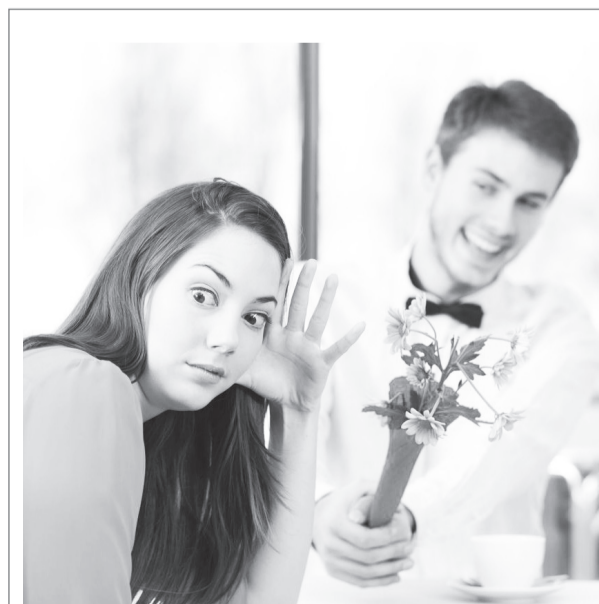
A life-sized Benin bronze, stolen from Nigeria during colonial times, is returned to its rightful owners. Standing beside it is an Englishman who inherited the looted artifact from his family. Recognizing the injustice, he took the extraordinary step of returning it to Africa. The Benin Bronzes, created in the 13th-16th centuries, are renowned for their beauty and cultural significance. Unfortunately, many were melted down for their gold.

providing training for Africans in heritage management is essential to prevent further looting by thieves.

African countries have engaged in discussions regarding the restitution and preservation of cultural heritages. However, these discussions have not always translated into action. In addition to condemning

the looting of cultural heritage, African countries must engage in dialogue with the countries where these treasures are located.

Furthermore, African countries should implement strong policies and strategies to combat the illegal trafficking of cultural heritage. It is time for Africa to work towards the return of its heritage!



A Hell Turned Paradise

BY ALEM HAILU

My beloved
I always remember
Once my soul
Had taken a ride
On a marital-bliss river
Jubilant nothing or no one
Could put us asunder.

But after I learnt

You have sown mistrust
On the fertile ground
Of my heart
When you cheated on me
Wilfully letting
A cherished corner
To a lover another
The quite donning
Ecstasy's river
Which I happily
Used to ride

Had taken leave
For ever
To uncharted water!
Bringing warmth
To my hearth,
Once you had made
My life a paradise on earth
Soon to change it to
An earthly hell
Worse than what sinners
Expect after death!

Global Affairs

COP29 falls short on finance

COP29, the latest annual climate summit, had one job: to strike a deal to provide the money needed to respond to climate change. It failed.

This was the first climate summit dedicated to finance. Global south countries estimate they need a combined US\$1.3 trillion a year to transition to low-carbon economies and adapt to the impacts of climate change. But the last-minute offer made by global north states was for only US\$300 billion a year.

The agreement leaves vague how much of the promised target, to be met by 2035, will be in the form of direct grants, as opposed to other means such as loans, and how much will come directly from states. As for the US\$1 trillion annual funding gap, covering it remains an aspiration, with all potential sources encouraged to step up their efforts. The hope seems to be that the private sector will invest where it hasn't already, and that innovations such as new levies and taxes will be explored, which many powerful states and industry lobbyists are sure to resist.

Some global north states are talking up the deal, pointing out that it triples the previous target of US\$100 billion a year, promised at COP15 in 2009 and officially reached in 2022, although how much was provided in reality remains a matter of debate. Some say this deal is all they can afford, given economic and political constraints.

But global north states hardly engaged constructively. They delayed making an offer for so long that the day before talks were due to end, the draft text of the agreement contained no numbers. Then they made a lowball offer of US\$250 billion a year.

Many representatives from global south states took this as an insult. Talks threatened to collapse without an agreement. Amid scenes of chaos and confusion, the summit's president, Mukhtar Babayev of Azerbaijan, was accused of weakness and lack of leadership. By the time global north states offered US\$300 billion, negotiations had gone past the deadline, and many saw this as a take-it-or-leave-it offer.

The negotiating style of global north states spoke of a fundamental inequality in climate change. Global north countries have historically contributed the bulk of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions due to their industrialization. But it's global south countries that are most affected by climate change impacts such as extreme weather and rising sea levels. What's more, they're being asked to take a different development path to fossil fuel-powered industrialization – but without adequate financial support to do so.

These evident injustices led some states, angered by Babayev bringing talks to an abrupt end, to believe that no deal would have been better than what was agreed. For others, waiting another year for COP30 would have been a luxury they couldn't afford, given the ever-increasing impacts of climate change.

Financing on the agenda



If the money isn't forthcoming, the sums needed will be eclipsed by the costs of cleaning up the disasters caused by climate change, and dealing with rising insecurity, conflict and economic disruption. For example, devastating floods in Valencia, Spain, in October caused at least 217 deaths and economic losses of around US\$10.6 billion.

Far from being settled, the conversation around climate financing should be regarded as only just having begun. The figures involved – whether it's US\$300 billion or US\$1.3 trillion a year – seem huge, but in global terms they're tiny. The US\$1.3 trillion needed is less than one per cent of global GDP, which stands at around US\$110 trillion. It's a little more than the amount invested in fossil fuels this year, and far less than annual global military spending, which has risen for nine years running and now stands at around US\$2.3 trillion a year.

If the money isn't forthcoming, the sums needed will be eclipsed by the costs of cleaning up the disasters caused by climate change, and dealing with rising insecurity, conflict and economic disruption. For example, devastating floods in Valencia, Spain, in October caused at least 217 deaths and economic losses of around US\$10.6 billion. Research suggests that each degree of warming would slash the world's GDP by 12 per cent. Investing in a transition that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and enables communities to adapt isn't just the right thing to do – it's also the economically prudent option.

The same problems arose at another recent summit on a related issue – COP16 of the Biodiversity Convention, hosted by Colombia in October. This broke up with no agreement on how to meet the funding commitments agreed at its previous meeting. The international community, having forged agreements to address climate change and protect the environment, is stuck when it comes to finding the funding to realize them.

What's largely missing is discussion of how wealth might be better shared for the benefit of humanity. Over the past decade, as the world has grown hotter, inequality has soared, with the world's richest one per

cent adding a further US\$42 trillion to their fortunes – less than needed to adequately respond to climate change. The G20's recent meeting said little on climate change, but leaders at least agreed that ultra-wealthy people should be properly taxed. The battle should now be on to ensure this happens – and that revenues are used to tackle climate change.

When it comes to corporations, few are richer than the fossil fuel industry. But the 'polluter pays' principle – that those who cause environmental damage pay to clean it up – seems missing from climate negotiations. The fossil fuel industry is the single biggest contributor to climate change, responsible for over 75 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. It's grown incredibly rich thanks to its destructive trade.

Over the past five decades, the oil and gas sector has made profits averaging US\$2.8 billion a day. Only a small fraction of those revenues have been invested in alternatives, and oil and gas companies plan to extract more: since COP28, around US\$250 billion has been committed to developing new oil and gas fields. The industry's wealth should make it a natural target for paying to fix the mess it's made. A proposed levy on extractions could raise US\$900 billion by 2030.

Progress is needed, and fast. COP30 now has the huge task of compensating for the failings of COP29. Pressure must be kept up for adequate financing combined with concerted action to cut emissions. Next year, states are due to present their updated plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate change. Civil society will push for these to show the ambition needed – and for money to be mobilised at the scale required.

(SOURCE:IPS)

Law & Politics

Utilizing Abbay Water Resources for shared future

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

The Abbay river, the world's longest water resource, has been a lifeline for its beneficiaries since time immemorial. Beyond serving as a vital natural resource, it has the potential to foster regional and multilateral economic, political, and social collaboration. Riparian nations must shift their perspective to see the Nile as a bridge for cooperation rather than a source of discord.

Historically, the Abbay has been perceived differently by upper and lower riparian countries. For centuries, the lower riparian nations have relied on the shared resource as their lifeblood, benefiting immensely from its waters. In contrast, the upper riparian countries, through which the river flows, have remained passive, unable to utilize this resource effectively. This disparity has long favored the lower riparian nations while marginalizing the upper riparian states, causing tension and rivalry.

The inequity stems from colonial-era agreements that heavily favored the lower riparian countries, excluding the upper riparian nations from utilizing the Nile's waters. The Nile Water Agreements of 1929 and 1959, orchestrated by colonial powers, granted exclusive rights to the lower riparian nations, sidelining the contributions and rights of the others. These agreements left upper riparian countries like Ethiopia without a fair share of the resource, an arrangement that is neither just nor sustainable.

Ethiopia, known as the "Water Tower of Africa," contributes 85% of the Nile's total flow. Yet, it has long been deprived of the opportunity to utilize this vital resource.

There are still various arguments regarding the utilization of the Nile River water resource. Lower riparian nations especially Egypt has been using its ultimate wisdom and resource to stop the construction. Not only that, even at this moment where the dam is on the verge of completion, its pressure has been exerted in a number of ways. In such a case, some Egyptian scholars and elite groups stop pushing forward as the dam's completion is imminent.

Adversely, the Ethiopian Government has kept the doors open for any negotiations that could bring the parties together and discuss on the matter. Besides, Ethiopia has been expressing its desire to work together and build some common grounds for further cooperation. Ethiopia believes that the water resource is for all the riparian countries and all have full right to utilize the resource without affecting the other. The same this has occurred in Ethiopia's

Adversely, the Ethiopian Government has kept the doors open for any negotiations that could bring the parties together and discuss on the matter. Besides, Ethiopia has been expressing its desire to work together and build some common grounds for further cooperation. Ethiopia believes that the water resource is for all the riparian countries and all have full right to utilize the resource without affecting the other.

situation. Using the resource for economic growth is what nations like Ethiopia wants to achieve.

Apart from being the source of dispute and argument, the Abbay River can also be create a chance for those nations a way for building economic integration among them. Leaders of the countries can discuss on such transboundary natural resources and change them to a means of cooperation.

With the help of their leaders and regional and continental blocs, riparian nations can do much more and convert the longest river in the world to the economic destination and regional integration. With its immense advantages, Nile River can pave a way for the upper and lower riparian countries for their economic and political togetherness.

To address this imbalance and drive its economic growth, Ethiopia began constructing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Abbay River in 2011. This ambitious hydroelectric project, one of the largest in the world, aims to provide sustainable energy for the country, where over 60% of the population still lives without electricity.

Despite the immense benefits GERD offers, the project has faced significant resistance, particularly from Egypt, which has employed various strategies to halt its progress. Even as the dam nears completion, opposition persists. Nonetheless, Ethiopia has consistently maintained an open-door policy for dialogue and negotiations, seeking to build consensus and promote cooperation among Nile riparian countries. Ethiopia's vision is clear: to utilize the Nile for its development while ensuring that all riparian nations benefit equitably.

Rather than being a source of contention, the Abbay River can serve as a catalyst for regional economic integration. Leaders of the riparian nations have the opportunity to transform this shared resource into a means of collaboration. Through regional and continental initiatives, the Nile can be harnessed to foster economic and political unity.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Ustaz Jemal Bashir, Media Manager of Kings of Abay Media and a prominent advocate for equitable Nile water utilization, highlighted the river's immense potential for regional cooperation and growth. He emphasized the importance of economic interdependence among riparian countries and noted a gradual shift in the perception of some Egyptian scholars, who now acknowledge the significance of Nile waters to Ethiopians. He urged Egyptian policymakers to adopt a cooperative approach for mutual benefit.

Jemal underscored the potential of GERD to supply hydropower not only to Ethiopia but also to Sudan, Egypt, and other riparian nations, meeting regional energy demands. He called for multilateral collaboration in sectors such as investment, transportation, communication, and trade to strengthen regional ties. "Joint initiatives for managing water resources are encouraged to ensure equitable distribution and address concerns about water security," he remarked.

He also stressed the need to overcome historical mistrust among Nile Basin countries through dialogue and negotiations. Rebuilding confidence and fostering mutual understanding are essential for resolving longstanding disputes over water rights.

Jemal further cautioned against external interference in Ethiopia's domestic affairs, noting that such actions exploit ideological and political differences among Ethiopians for gain. Despite internal disagreements, Ethiopians share common values that have united them in tolerance.

Joint initiatives for managing water resources are encouraged to ensure equitable distribution and address concerns about water security."

Ustaz Jemal also emphasized that historical mistrust among the Nile Basin countries concerning water rights must be overcome through dialogues and negotiations, which are still ongoing. Thus confidences should be rebuilt as well as mutual understandings need be created.

Using the political and ideological differences among Ethiopians, there are some external elements who are interfering in the country's domestic affairs to gain political benefits. However, he noted that Ethiopians have common values which kept them together in tolerance regardless of any kind of disagreements.

Ustaz Jemal also suggested the need to maintain Ethiopia's fraternity with the Arab world. "We have preserved a long-lasting relationship with Arab Countries especially with the Arab League. This relationship should further be strengthened in trade and investment and other spheres," he recommended.

In conclusion, he recommended strengthening Ethiopia's relationship with Arab countries, particularly those in the Arab League. "We have maintained a long-standing relationship with Arab countries. This should be further enhanced in trade, investment, and other spheres," he added. By leveraging the Nile as a tool for cooperation rather than conflict, riparian nations can transform this natural resource into a cornerstone of regional development and unity.

Planet Earth

FSC promotes Ethiopia's forest management, overall development goals, natural resource management techniques

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification is a widely accepted standard for responsible forest management. It was founded in 1993 to encourage forest management that is environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable.

FSC certification encompasses various aspects. It establishes forest management principles to ensure that forests are managed in a way that preserves biodiversity, safeguards water resources, and respects indigenous and local communities' rights.

It also enhances forest management accountability through chain of custody certification. This certification ensures that products derived from certified forests can be traced throughout the supply chain to ensure they come from responsibly managed sources. This is critical for firms seeking to demonstrate their dedication to forest development and sustainability.

More importantly, it has many environmental benefits, including helping to maintain ecosystems, promoting sustainable forestry practices, and combating deforestation and illegal logging. This, in turn, places social duty on the government, the local community, factories, and so on. The FSC standard includes standards for protecting the rights of workers and local communities, ensuring that forestry methods are socially responsible. Furthermore, it plays an important role in market awareness since products bearing the FSC label are increasingly recognized by consumers and businesses as being sustainably sourced, which can improve brand reputation and customer trust.

Sustaining the forest and effectively utilizing it in accordance with FSC guidelines enables countries to attain global levels. The FSC operates globally, with certification schemes in numerous countries, tailoring its criteria to local requirements while remaining committed to sustainability.

According to data gathered from Ethiopian Forestry Development, there are several sorts of certification. The first is forest management certification. This refers to forest owners and managers who meet the FSC's standards for responsible forest management. Second, the chain of custody certification assists enterprises that produce or sell forest products by allowing them to track the origin of their resources back to certified forests. As a result, FSC certification is a valuable tool for encouraging sustainable forestry practices, conserving ecosystems, and guaranteeing that forest products are sustainably obtained. It helps not only the environment but also communities and economies that rely on trees.

In recognition of these advantages, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has officially launched the Interim Forest Stewardship Standard (IFSS) to enable Ethiopia to enter



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global markets for certified forest products. The most crucial question here is: How does FSC support Ethiopia's forest development? What are the advantages of Ethiopia implementing FSC?

Ethiopian Forestry Development Director General Kebede Yimam said that given Ethiopia's high biodiversity and expanding forestry industry, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification can offer the nation several important advantages. Additionally, the FSC standard seeks to improve the value of verified ecosystem services like carbon, water, biodiversity, recreation, and cultural advantages; boost Ethiopia's forestry industry; and make it easier for certified forest products to reach specialized international markets.

The standard allows companies, governments, and forest managers to access and exchange data on the impact of their forest management operations in FSC-certified forests. As a result, the council is a responsible authority that encourages forest management through certification while also helping to conserve the country's rich biodiversity.

For instance, the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR) and Ethiopian Forestry Development have started a project to pilot the standard on 1,000 hectares of bamboo forests in the Adiyo district in southwest Ethiopia. However, the director general stressed that FSC certification strengthens supply chain management and guarantees sustainable forest management for both timber and non-timber goods.

He added that understanding these supply chains is critical for Ethiopia's increased participation in global forest product markets. The director general further stated: "By equipping ourselves with the necessary knowledge and tools, we can ensure our products meet international standards, opening doors to new opportunities and partnerships on the global stage."

FSC Coordinator for Eastern Africa Annah

Agasha praised Ethiopia's FSC launch as a monumental success resulting from years of collaboration and a common vision. She emphasized that FSC Eastern Africa is dedicated to assisting the Ethiopian government, communities, and partners in implementing the standard across all relevant sectors.

Smallholders and communities can maximize the benefits of the forests they manage if they adhere to the standard. FSC certification also complies with the European Union Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products (EUDR), which requires enterprises to verify that their products do not contribute to deforestation or forest degradation. This agreement enables Ethiopian forest products, including bamboo, to participate in the burgeoning worldwide market for sustainably sourced goods, which includes coffee, honey, and spices, she added.

The Forest Stewardship Council certification guarantees the future of sustainable forest management for timber, non-timber products, and allied forest products throughout supply chains. As a result, she explained that it is critical to enhance Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Ethiopia.

According to Kebede, FSC is critical to the country's ongoing restoration efforts, including the Green Legacy Initiative and extensive forest development, conservation, and use initiatives with key stakeholders.

Ethiopia is also aiming to increase the forest sector's economic contribution by promoting growth, creating jobs, and assisting local communities while maintaining forest integrity. "As forest and woodlot management intensifies, establishing standards for their management and products becomes increasingly important," according to him.

Furthermore, the FSC provides a strong framework for voluntary accreditation and third-party certification, allowing certificate holders to promote their products as the outcome of responsible forest management practices. This accreditation demonstrates a dedication to the highest levels of environmental sustainability, social equality, and economic viability, he stated.

By launching the FSC, Ethiopia joins over 85 other nations for whom the FSC has set standards, allowing them to practice responsible forest management.

This means Ethiopia can now produce products from its forests in a responsible manner, guaranteeing that they move through a traceable chain of custody to any worldwide market.

In general, FSC certification in Ethiopia can promote sustainable forest management, economic development, community empowerment, environmental protection, and social fairness. These advantages can greatly contribute to the country's overall development goals and improve its natural resource management techniques.