



The Ethiopian Herald

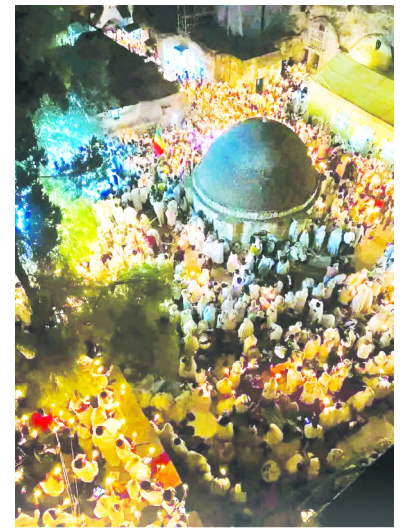
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Ethiopia at a brink of losing sole Jerusalem black Monastery

- Calls grow on Israel to resolve disputes

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Jerusalem, Israel: - Deir El Sultan Monastery, the only black heritage site in Jerusalem, is facing grave danger putting Ethiopia's ownership of the heritage at risk.

The sole black monastery has been a bone of contention mainly due to unwarranted claims of ownership from Egypt impeding Ethiopia from carrying out rehabilitation works in the site.

Ethiopia has been calling on the Israeli government to do more as it continues their struggle for

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Ambassadors promise to elevate ties with Ethiopia in 2025

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Ethiopia's 2024 in Recap

BY YESUF ENDRIS

As 2025 begins today, *The Ethiopian Herald* highlights key socio-political, economic, and diplomatic events that Ethiopia undertook in 2024.

The just concluded year began with Ethiopia officially setting its agenda for gaining access to the sea, a long-forgotten issue in international discourse. By December, after months of negotiations, Somalia acknowledged Ethiopia's need of sea access, as agreed in the Ankara Declaration. This agreement allows Ethiopia to negotiate and secure sea access through Somalia.

In July, Ethiopia initiated the implementation of a comprehensive macroeconomic policy reform. Key aspects included liberalizing economic sectors



and transitioning the foreign currency exchange rate to a market-oriented system. These reforms aim to establish a modern macroeconomic framework, improve the trade and investment environment, enhance

production, and strengthen public sector capabilities, according to the National Bank of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia also celebrated significant achievements in agriculture and tourism.

The dry-season wheat irrigation program was intensified, making Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Agricola Award winner in January. In September, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also named the Prime Minister as Tourism Champion for a three-year term, which recognized his leadership in promoting sustainable tourism and economic growth in the region.

On the diplomatic front, Ethiopia played a pivotal role in regional peace building. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) was the first head of government to visit Port Sudan following the outbreak of Sudanese civil war, advocating for sustainable solutions on July 9.

Ethiopia also hosted high-profile international events, including the United

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Ambassadors say renovated Nat'l Palace inspirational for posterity

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – The renovated national palace of Ethiopia reflects lasting symbolism and historic heights, inspiring future generations, Ambassadors of different countries commented.

The diplomats, who visited the renovated national palace expressed that Ethiopia's effort to conserve and retain its history is an important lesson to the world.

"I am incredibly impacted and impressed by the palace," U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ervin Jose Massinga said.

He expressed his appreciation to the people and government of Ethiopia for their determination to renovate the historic facility and to bring to life so many artifacts that have stood the test of time.

The Ambassador also stated that the palace is preserved meticulously to represent the country's history, in a way that gives a lesson to the rest of the world.

"Amazing, I will come back with families



Ambassador Ervin Massinga

and friends to show what I saw today," Massinga said.

Algerian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Selma Haddadi also said that she has observed an astonishing restored palace that represents Ethiopia's past, present and future cultural legacy.

She explained that the palace bridges the past and the future for the Ethiopian people



Ambassador Selma Haddadi

and the whole continent.

"There is no future without past," the Ambassador said, adding that future is always nourished by history since people correct mistakes by drawing lesson from previous deeds.

The restored national palace in Addis is an exemplary project to share experience with other nations, she noted.



Ambassador Alexis Lamek

France Ambassador to Ethiopia, Alexis Lamek expressed that he always impressed by the project as if it was his first time whenever he saw the palace.

According to him, the palace deserves to be visited especially by the younger generation to learn from history and to get inspiration from the success stories of the nation.

Ethiopia to host Int'l irrigation conference

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is set to host the inaugural international conference on irrigation and climate resilience from February 12-14, 2025, at the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.

The Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands (MILLs) is actively preparing for this groundbreaking conference, themed "Cultivating Resilience: Global Perspectives on Irrigation Development and Climate Adaptation."

This international gathering will bring together experts, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders from across Africa and the globe. The conference aims to address and share insights on irrigation-related challenges through global collaboration and knowledge exchange, discuss emerging trends, and showcase successful interventions in this critical area.

In a briefing yesterday, MILLs Minister Abraham Belay (PhD) emphasized the significant strides made by the ministry in irrigation development across various lowland areas. These efforts have had a profound positive impact on the livelihoods of farmers and pastoralists, contributing significantly to the country's socioeconomic development.

Recognizing the pivotal role of agriculture in Ethiopia's economic stability and the nation's vast agricultural potential, Minister Belay highlighted the government's strong emphasis on developing robust, adaptive, and sustainable irrigation systems. He further elaborated on the ministry's ongoing implementation of various irrigation expansion activities, aligned with national food security and economic resilience initiatives.

MILLs State Minister Tesfaye Yigezu em-



phasized that this conference will provide a valuable platform for sharing best global experiences and practices to enhance irrigation strategies, improve water use efficiency, and build resilience against the adverse effects of climate change.

Furthermore, the conference will explore innovative financing mechanisms that prioritize inclusivity by ensuring the active participation of women, youth, and marginalized communities in irrigation development efforts.

Beyond addressing pressing challenges faced by pastoralists, State Minister Tesfaye emphasized that the conference will contribute to mitigating macroeconomic breakdowns, promoting job creation, and empowering women through robust irrigation systems.

Additionally, this international event will create a valuable opportunity to enhance Ethiopia's global image, promote tourism, hospitality, and cultural exchange.

Dear friends! Please accept my heartfelt congratulations...

positioned the country as an attractive investment destination in Africa and encouraged Russian companies to capitalize on the favorable investment climate.

In 2024, many new agreements were signed between Russia and Ethiopia in various fields - from education, medicine, and climate change and low-carbon development to nuclear engineering.

This year, Days of Spiritual Culture and Science of Russia once again were held in Addis Ababa. As well, we increased the quota of Ethiopian students sponsored by the Russian government budget more than three times for the 2023-2024 academic years. Our goal is to continue increasing this number in the coming years.

The main impetus to pursue efforts in this direction is the visible interest of Ethiopian youth in receiving Russian education, which is known and highly praised for its quality. In addition, there are also a number of programs to improve professional skills for specialists in different areas. The leading role in the implementation of this task belongs to the activities of the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Addis Ababa, on the site of which various events are organized, including holidays, evenings, festivals, exhibitions, concerts, New Year's performances, etc., aimed at making popular the rich Russian culture among Ethiopians.

The partnership between our countries is based on friendship, mutual respect and trust, bringing benefits to the both peoples. We appreciate Ethiopia's balanced stance on any sensitive issues.

We highly esteemed Ethiopia's active part in the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia - Africa Partnership Forum in Sochi. In many ways our countries share the same views on international cooperation, from the need to build an equal partnership to the idea of shaping a multipolar world. In today's world, with its global challenges demanding joint efforts, cooperation within international groups is becoming increasingly important and consequential. The ties between Ethiopia and Russia have a long and rich history, and we feel secure about the future of our cooperation. We will keep expanding cooperation on different international platforms such as BRICS and will be eager to participate in events highlighting our mutual interest and helping us to withstand to resolve global challenges. I am confident that joint efforts will bring significant results and strengthen our relations for many years to come.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the team of *The Ethiopian Herald* newspaper for the fruitful and intensive cooperation in the outgoing year. I wish the newspaper further great success in its noble cause.

On behalf of the Russian Embassy in Ethiopia and on my own, I convey my warmest congratulations to the people of Ethiopia on the forthcoming New Year. May the year of 2025 be generous to all of my Ethiopian brothers and sisters with joyful events, brilliant victories and achievements, positive emotions and success in all their endeavors.

Happy 2025!

Ambassadors promise to elevate ties with Ethiopia in 2025

• Express New Year best wishes, extend Christmas greetings

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ambassadors in Addis Ababa pledged to enhance relations between their respective nations and Ethiopia in 2025.

In a best wish messages sent to *The Ethiopian Herald* regarding the 2025 New Year and Ethiopian Christmas, ambassadors of different countries have pledged to upgrade diplomatic relations with Ethiopia.

Accordingly, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Chen Hai expressed commitment to solidify the all-rounded strategic partnership with Ethiopia.

“We will make joint efforts and new contributions to China-Ethiopia all-weather strategic partnership and all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era,” Hai said.

He added that China is committed to joining hands with Ethiopia in all walks of life and translating the great potentials of the five Ethiopian economic pillars which are agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and digitization, to the strong impetus for development.

“With more Chinese companies encouraged to play a greater role, the sun of development will definitely pour down its warmth upon more people on this promising land. The country will continue to lend support to build national peace and solidarity in Ethiopia,” he noted.

According to the Ambassador, both countries will firmly support each other on the multilateral occasions such as BRICS and the UN.

China will constantly implement the outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, he reiterated.

Russian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Evgeny Terekhin said that the two countries will keep expanding cooperation on different international platforms such as BRICS and will be eager to participate in events highlighting two sides mutual interest and helping us to withstand to resolve global challenges.

Russia has increased the quota of Ethiopian students sponsored by the Russian government budget more than three times for the 2023-2024 academic years, he added.

In the good wish message, Brazil Ambassador to Ethiopia, Jandyr Ferreira dos Santos expressed that his country will encourage ties with Ethiopia and look forward a strengthened cooperation in the years to come.

The 2025 New Year and Ethiopian Christmas is a significant occasion symbolizes the deep cultural heritage and enduring traditions that define this nation, he stated.

Israeli Ambassador Avraham Neguise (PhD) on his part said that his country would consolidate relations with Ethiopia in many fields.

“We saw ongoing medical delegations from Israel in fields such as neonatology, cardiac surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, trauma support, and more. We saw Israeli involvement in Ethiopian agriculture, promoting seed technologies, advanced propagation techniques, and innovative irrigation technologies,” the ambassador added.

He further stated that Israelis experts would continue involvement in developing the Ethiopian innovation ecosystem, a critical component of the country’s modernizing

and rapidly-growing economy.

A number of Israeli companies have been involving in Ethiopia in agriculture, mining, telecommunications, aviation, medicine, and more, which is important to reinforce the long-standing historical and cultural ties between the two nations.

In his New Year’s message, Barlybay Sadykov (the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Ethiopia and Kenya (concurrently), Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the African Union, and to the UN office in Nairobi), said that Kazakhstan and Ethiopia maintain active cooperation on a bilateral level and within international organizations. “We are keen to further deepen our bilateral relations with Addis Ababa.”

Kazakhstan and Ethiopia share similar positions on many international and regional issues and address common challenges, such as those faced by landlocked countries, combating climate change, fighting terrorism and organized crime, and countering the illicit drug trade, he said adding that these shared priorities call for closer collaboration in these spheres.

Ethiopia at a brink of losing sole...

recognition and preservation of this significant site.

Abba Gebre Selassie, Megabi at the Monastery expressed grave concerns about the unresolved tensions between the Ethiopian and Egyptian Coptic communities.

In an interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, he noted that the situation has worsened over time, attributing the lack of resolution to the Ethiopian government’s strained relations with Israel on the issue.

While he acknowledged assistance from the Ethiopian ambassador in Israel for temporary concerns, Abba Gebre Selassie stressed the need for high-level involvement from Ethiopian leaders to achieve a lasting resolution.

He warned that without decisive action from the Ethiopian president or prime minister to assert the site’s heritage, the situation could deteriorate further.

The monastery, particularly during Easter celebrations, has become a focal point of conflict. Abba Gebre Selassie recounted instances of Coptic opposition, saying, “They claim, ‘You can’t celebrate here,’ leading to chaos.”

He also highlighted the dilapidated state of the monastery’s buildings, which are no longer habitable. “We urge the Ethiopian government to negotiate with the Israeli authorities, asserting that this property belongs to Ethiopia,” he said. Despite the Israeli government’s recognition of the land’s Ethiopian heritage predating the establishment of Israel, Abba Gebre Selassie criticized its neutrality in diplomatic matters.

He called for an agreement to renovate

the monastery, noting that status quo laws prevent both Ethiopian and Egyptian parties from undertaking renovations due to Coptic claims. “Although we lack renovation rights, the Israeli government should have taken action to preserve this site,” he lamented, adding that inadequate services, including electricity, further complicate living conditions.

Belaynesh Zevadia, former Israeli ambassador to Ethiopia and current Director for the South African region at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, echoed these sentiments. “Resolving this matter requires collaboration among Israel, Ethiopia, and Egypt,” she stated.

Reflecting on her tenure, she advised Ethiopian officials to engage directly with their Egyptian counterparts, emphasizing the presence of various communities in the area complicates matters, requiring permissions for any developments.

Both current and former Ethiopian prime ministers have recognized the site’s importance, but Belaynesh underscored that Egyptian involvement is crucial for any resolution.

Formerly, during his interview with EPA Former Israeli Ambassador Alelign Admasu also emphasized Israel’s responsibility to preserve heritage sites, noting the friction between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Egyptian Coptic Church regarding Deir El Sultan. He suggested that the governments of Ethiopia and Egypt must convene to address the issue collaboratively.

Ultimately, Israel maintains that any country with heritage sites is responsible for their preservation and must uphold the status quo.

Ethiopia’s 2024 in...

Nations Financing for Development meeting in July and the FAO’s World Without Hunger summit. The summit was attended by global leaders and stakeholders, highlighted Ethiopia’s commitment to eradicating hunger and promoting sustainable development.

The opening session of the FAO’s World Without Hunger summit was attended by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, UNIDO Director-General Gerd Muller, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and African Union Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat. Other attendees included Heads of State/Government, Ministers, UN agencies, the private sector, financial institutions, donor community, DFI/IFI, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

Moreover, Ethiopia hosted the Confederation of African Football’s executive committee meeting in October.

Also, Leaders such as French President Emmanuel Macron and Czech Deputy Prime Minister Marian Jurečka had visited the country in the same year, fostering

diplomatic ties and discussing potential collaborations in investment, education, and culture.

“We have discussed potential collaborations in various fields, including increasing French investments, as well as strengthening ties in education and culture,” PM Abiy posted on his social media account after conferring with his French counterpart.

Urban corridor development was another highlight of 2024. The corridor development initiative, which began in Addis Ababa, has been expanded to other cities like Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Jimma, Adama, Bishoftu, Dessie, Kombolcha, Arba Minch, and Harar. This project aims to modernize the main roads and other infrastructures of cities and towns.

In November, Ethiopia officially launched the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program for ex-combatants in Tigray, marking a significant step toward long-term domestic peace and stability affairs.

As Ethiopia enters 2025, these milestones reflect its continued efforts toward progress and resilience on multiple fronts.

I see my role as Ambassador of..

businesspeople from Israel, with a focus on agriculture, mining, telecommunications, aviation, medicine, and more.

Meanwhile, Israelis kept visiting and Ethiopia and flying through Ethiopian Airlines, while Ethiopian tourists conducted pilgrimages to the holy sites in Jerusalem and the Galilee, while also experiencing the rich culture and innovative atmosphere throughout Israel.

Israel continued importing Ethiopian products, and remained one of the top importers of Ethiopian sesame seeds, used to make Israeli staple foods like tahini.

The relationship between Israel and Ethiopia stems from Biblical times, and yet today it

is enhanced by the more than 170 thousand Beta Israel Ethiopian-Israelis, who create a true human and cultural bond between the two nations. As part of this community, I am committed to advancing the ties and understanding between both countries and their leadership.

Through each of our unique, and sometimes mutual, challenges, Israel and Ethiopia know how to survive and look towards a brighter future.

Sending wishes of a Happy New Year to all of our friends in Ethiopia. May 2025 bring us all peace, prosperity, and development, and may the bond between our two countries continue to grow ever stronger.

Ambassadors' New Year Messages

Special Edition 2025

Happy New Year 2025!

2025 marks the 55th anniversary of China-Ethiopia diplomatic relations,*Mr. Chen Hai, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia*

We are about to bid farewell to the fruitful year of 2024 and welcome the hopeful year of 2025. I wish you all a happy new year!

I have been honored to work in Ethiopia since 4 months ago, when I finished my tenure in Myanmar. Ethiopia's long history, splendid civilization, beautiful scenery and hard-working people impress me deeply. I have witnessed great changes in Addis Ababa—known as heart of Africa—with each passing day. My exploring trip of harvest of coffee beans in Yirgacheffe and picturesque Lake Hawassa tells the glamour of this land of origin.

In 2024, Ethiopia has gained huge achievements. Its successful participation in the BRICS Summit for the first time after its joining in the BRICS family, recently signed Ankara Declaration for regional stability, and the national dialogue of reconciliation among different fractions for internal sustainable tranquility—all these show Ethiopia's great efforts for peace and prosperity.

As Chinese Ambassador, I am more than happy to see that, thanks to the policy dividend released by the FOCAC Beijing Summit, one flight after another of Ethiopian Airlines full of Chinese tourists and investors have arrived in this prosperous land. With diligence, wisdom and resilience, Chinese people

have endeavored to enrich not only their own families and factories but also Ethiopia, making new contributions to our bilateral friendly cooperation. I would like to extend my deepest reverence to those who have worked hard and strove for our common development!

2025 marks the 55th anniversary of China-Ethiopia diplomatic relations. We are committed to joining hands with all walks of life in Ethiopia and translating the great potentials of the 5 pillars advocated by the Ethiopian Federal Government, i.e. agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and digitization, to the strong impetus for development. With more Chinese companies encouraged to play a greater role, the sun of development will definitely pour down its warmth upon more people on this promising land. China will continue to lend support to build national peace and solidarity in Ethiopia. Both countries will firmly support each other on the multilateral occasions such as BRICS and the UN. We will constantly implement the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa. We will make joint efforts and new contributions to China-Ethiopia all-weather strategic partnership and all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

On the path towards modernization, China stands ready to be the partner of Ethiopia at all times.



Barlybay Sadykov
(the ambassador of the republic of Kazakhstan to Ethiopia and Kenya (concurrently), permanent representative of Kazakhstan to the African Union, and to the UN office in Nairobi)

On the eve of New Year celebrations, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan extends its heartfelt congratulations to the brotherly people of Ethiopia, wishing them enduring peace, prosperity, and further social and economic progress.

We hold great respect for the courageous and kind-hearted people of Ethiopia, guardians of a rich and ancient culture, who have not only preserved their independence but have also steadfastly overcome the challenges life presents.

We are witnessing Ethiopia's wide-ranging reforms aimed at transforming its economy to improve the standard of living for its citizens, strengthen national unity, and foster regional integration, both in the Horn of Africa and across the continent. With optimism, we look forward to Ethiopia's bright future and wish continued success in achieving its goals.

Kazakhstan and Ethiopia maintain active cooperation on a bilateral level and within international organizations. We are keen to further deepen our bilateral relations with Addis Ababa.

Kazakhstan and Ethiopia share similar positions on many international and regional issues and address common challenges, such as those faced by landlocked countries, combating climate change, fighting terrorism and organized crime, and countering the illicit drug trade. These shared priorities call for closer collaboration in these spheres.

Kazakhstan is also interested in enhancing cooperation with Ethiopia in the trade and economic sectors and is ready to engage in areas such as agriculture, logistics, green energy, and digitalization. We are confident that Ethiopia, with its dynamically growing economy, will become an important partner for Kazakhstan in these fields.

Through the "Born Bold" initiative, we aim to strengthen our ties, bringing Kazakhstan and Africa even closer through trade, transit, and tourism projects. Kazakhstan is open to dialogue on increasing trade turnover, attracting investments, and establishing joint ventures that will benefit our nations.

We remain committed to building bridges of friendship between our countries. May the New Year bring peace, happiness, and continued progress to the people of Ethiopia and Kazakhstan!

**Dear friends,
Please accept my heartfelt congratulations
on the upcoming New Year,**

Evgeny Terekhin
Ambassador of Russia

The outgoing year 2024 was of great importance for Russia and Russian-Ethiopian relations. We were especially glad to welcome our esteemed Ethiopian friends at key international events, such as the BRICS Summit in Kazan which culminated our country's annual presidency in this association.

It was the first time that Ethiopia participated in such a summit after its joining the BRICS as a full member in January 2024. High-level Ethiopian delegation led by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed actively took part in the October BRICS Summit discussions that aimed at shaping a more just, equitable and balanced global order, well representing Ethiopia's interests in the arena by contributing valuable insights to the deliberations. Given that the BRICS association represents a powerful economic group of nations accounting for a third of the global economy and about half of the world's population, its impact on world affairs cannot be ignored or sidelined, and we are happy that Ethiopia is now in the front line of the states which determine

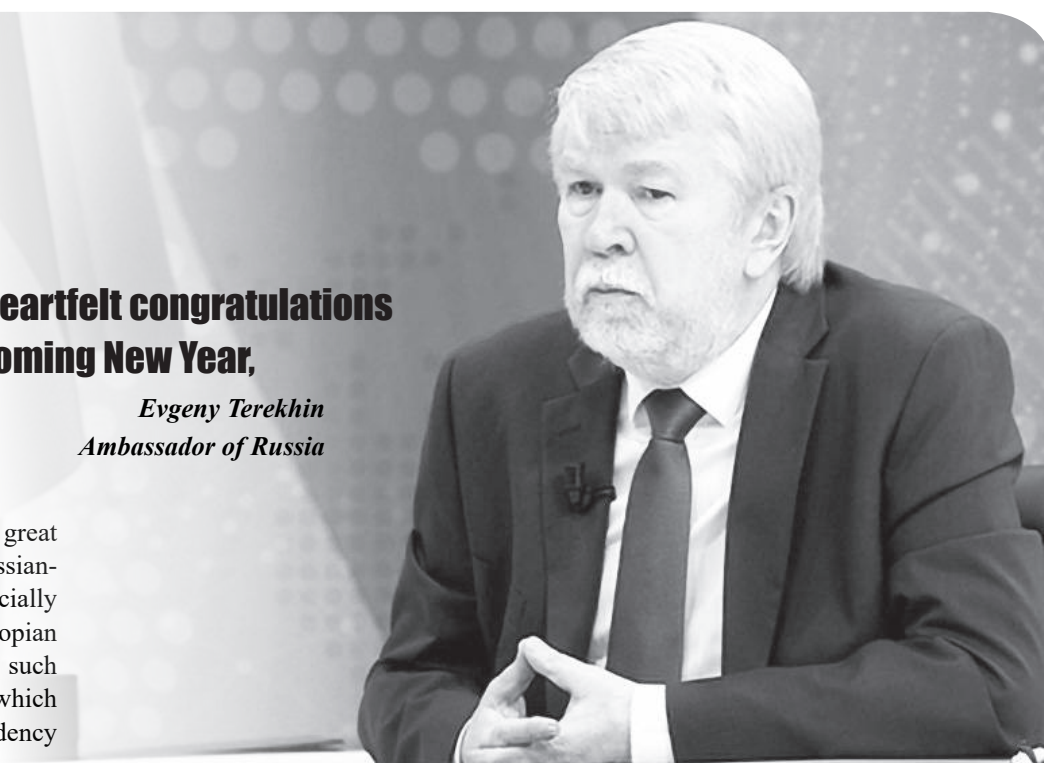
the future of the mankind. I believe that Ethiopia's accession to BRICS opens a hopeful new era for the nation on the international stage, promising benefits politically and economically.

During the year of 2024 interaction between our countries significantly grown on its upward trajectory. We are observing intensification of political dialogue at the high and highest levels, which is distinguished by its trust-based nature. In Kazan President of Russia Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister of FDRE Dr. Abiy Ahmed held an extensive exchange of views on the key issues of international, regional and bilateral agenda. Both leaders stressed the meaning of historical ties between

Russia and Ethiopia. They also noted that the common BRICS platform will allow Ethiopia to engage with broader economic cooperation with Russia.

Increasing the awareness of the Russian and Ethiopian business circles about each other is our urgent task on the trade and economic track. For this purpose, the creation of an effective communication system between government agencies and the business communities is highly relevant. To this end, in November we held in Addis Ababa the Russia-Ethiopia Business Forum under the theme "Russia: Ethiopia: Time Doesn't Wait" that underscored Ethiopia's recent macroeconomic reforms which have

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Editorial

Happy New Year!

Today, the global community is celebrating the arrival of New Year 2025, bidding farewell to the old year, 2024. As festivities fill the air, people are marking the day with hopes for a year of peace and prosperity, eagerly anticipating their dreams and wishes are realized and new opportunities unfold on the horizon.

In fact, the outgoing year was a time that the global community faced several significant opportunities and challenges. It was a year marked by notable successes such as advancements in technological innovations, thriving economic and business opportunities and ongoing peace initiatives though some challenges still persist.

At the same time, 2024 also saw pressing issues including economic instability, the climate crisis, and geopolitical tensions—especially the ongoing war in Ukraine which continued to create uncertainty, affecting international relations and global security. Despite such challenges, the global community showed resilience, with efforts toward cooperation, innovation and sustainability.

The past year was also a period in which Ethiopia made significant strides and achieved impressive progress across various spheres, including social, economic, political, and diplomatic realms. Despite facing some challenges, the country witnessed notable economic growth and saw promising advancements in its foreign currency earnings, making substantial strides to narrow the gap between exports and imports.

Mainly following the Home Grown Economic Reform program and initiatives aimed at boosting the production of wheat through irrigation as well as *Ye-Lemat Tirufat* program have brought about tangible results. The initiatives have elevated the country's agriculture system and moved Ethiopia closer to its goal. As a result, Ethiopia was awarded the prestigious FAO Agricola Medal for its commitment to ensuring food security and nutrition in a fast-changing and challenging global environment.

In addition to its economic achievements, 2024 was also a historic year for Ethiopia in the diplomatic sphere.

The announcement of Ethiopia's incorporation into the BRICS bloc was made on the first day of the outgoing year, January 1, 2024, made the year both historic and at the same time a decisive diplomatic success for Ethiopia.

Another key achievement was the recent, Ankara Declaration, an agreement made between Ethiopia and Somalia that grants the former access to the sea. The accord is vital for bolstering Ethiopia's trade prospects, advancing strategic partnerships, enhancing regional influence, solidifying country's role as a key diplomatic player and strengthening its international relations.

The military accords Ethiopia signed with neighboring countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti and Somalia to elevate cooperation in security, intelligence and address regional concerns, represent another significant diplomatic milestone for Ethiopia in the just concluded year.

The official visits of French President Emmanuel Macron and Somalia's Head of the National Intelligence and Security Agency, Abdullahi Mohamed Ali, to Ethiopia are a testament to the country's growing diplomatic success. These visits highlight Ethiopia's strengthened international relations and its increasing role in regional and global security.

Such achievements reflect Ethiopia's resilience and determination to collaborate with global partners, its unwavering commitment to change, and its firm stance to emerge as a stable and prosperous nation despite challenges.

Embracing the promise of new beginnings, Ethiopia is poised to build on the successes of 2024 and strive for even greater accomplishments in 2025 with renewed hope and determination.

Ambassadors' New Year Messages



I see my role as Ambassador of Israel to Ethiopia to be a historic opportunity to strengthen our relations,

Dr. Avraham Neguise

As we end Gregorian year 2024 and begin 2025, it is my great pleasure and honor to wish the people of Ethiopia a very Happy New Year.

The unique and robust relationship between Israel and Ethiopia is more than just historic – it is a relationship with a past, present and future. As part of this special relationship, I see my role as Ambassador of Israel to Ethiopia to be a historic opportunity to strengthen our relations in all levels.

As we look back at 2024, we see a year which was not easy for both of our countries, yet one with continued engagement and development of the ties that bond us.

We saw ongoing medical delegations from Israel in fields such as neonatology, cardiac surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, trauma support, and more. We saw Israeli involvement in Ethiopian agriculture, promoting seed technologies, advanced propagation techniques, and innovative irrigation technologies.

We saw a continued involvement of Israeli experts in developing the Ethiopian innovation ecosystem, a critical component of the country's modernizing and rapidly-growing economy. Additionally, we saw both ongoing economic activities by Israeli companies in Ethiopia, as well as rising interest by

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Warm greetings for the New Year and Ethiopian Christmas,

*Jandy Ferreira dos Santos
Ambassador of Brazil to Ethiopia*

On behalf of the Embassy of Brazil, it is with great respect that I extend warm congratulations to the people and government of Ethiopia as we prepare to celebrate the New Year and Ethiopian Christmas.

These significant occasions symbolize the deep cultural heritage and enduring traditions that define this nation. As we look forward to the New Year, it is my hope that 2025 brings with it continued prosperity, growth, and peace for the people of Ethiopia and as communities and

families gather to commemorate Ethiopian Christmas, may this sacred time be filled with joy and reflection, reinforcing the bonds of unity that are so vital to societies.

The Embassy of Brazil expresses its solidarity with Ethiopia during this festive season. We cherish the ties between our nations and look forward to further strengthening our collaboration in the years to come.

Wishing to all Ethiopians a prosperous New Year and a Merry Ethiopian Christmas filled with blessings and peace.



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The Ethiopian Herald

New chapter of economic growth ushered in by the Macroeconomic reform

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Recently the National Bank of Ethiopia implemented major revision of the country's foreign exchange system. The reform introduces a competitive, market-based determination of the exchange rate and addresses a long-standing distortion within the Ethiopian economy.

Costentinos Berhutesfa (PHD), an economist says Ethiopia's foreign exchange reform is just one part of a wider package of economic reforms that are being implemented over the coming years. It has a power to stimulate various sectors including export, manufacturing and agriculture. In addition it enhances the National Bank currency reserve, shore up shortage of hard currency in private Banks, reduces illegal trade and attracts foreign investment.

In the past most financial resources were pumped to public investment and capital goods imported by the sector utilizes huge amount of money. Now the reform makes this disparity in the balance. As the result the flow of finance towards the private sector will enhance.

According to the Governor of National Bank of Ethiopia Mamo Mihretu, the package of reforms based on the country's Home-Grown Economic Reform aiming at restoring macro-economic stability, boost private sector activity, and ensure sustainable, broad-based, and inclusive growth.

The foreign exchange regime introduces significant new policy changes including, shifting to a market-based exchange regime and in such a way banks are henceforth allowed to buy and sell foreign currencies from/to their clients and among themselves at freely negotiated rates, and with the NBE making only limited interventions to support the market in its early days and if justified by disrupted market conditions.

NBE allows foreign exchange to be retained by exporters and commercial banks and this measure paves the way to inclusive growth thus substantially boosting foreign currency supplies to the private sector. On the other hand, the removal of import restrictions that previously prohibited 38 product categories and the broader liberalization of the foreign exchange market for the imports of goods and services broaden the role of private sector in the economic growth.

The improvement of retention rules allowing exporters to retain 50 percent of their foreign exchange proceeds which was 40 percent previously.

The complete removal of rules governing banks' allocation of foreign exchange that was based on a waiting list system for different categories of imports further relax the rule of the game.

According to Costentinos the introduction

of non-bank foreign exchange bureaus that are free to engage in the buying and selling of foreign currency cash notes at market rates brings tremendous impact in changing the level playing field of the business in favor of the private sector. The removal of restrictions on Franco valuta imports can make the import of capital goods simplified.

The African Initiative President Kibour Genna who is economist by profession said that, the simplification of governing foreign currency accounts, especially those currently held by foreign institutions, companies, and the Diaspora accelerate the incoming of Foreign Direct Investment.

The allowance for residents to open foreign currency accounts, based on remittance inflows, transfers from abroad, forex-based salary or rental income, and for other specified cases, as well as the ability to use such foreign currency accounts for foreign service payments brings remedy for shortage of foreign currency.

On the other hand, the opening of Ethiopia's securities market to foreign investors, with the terms and conditions to be specified further in the near future stimulate the economy. The ongoing granting of special foreign exchange privileges to companies within Special Economic Zones, including the ability to retain 100 percent of their foreign exchange earnings accelerates both export and import substitution.

The comprehensive set of measures that will support Ethiopia's current stage of development and its increasing integration with the rest of the world helps the nation to penetrate global market. These reforms are consistent with longstanding Government intentions outlined in key policy documents, which recognized that Ethiopia should eventually move towards a market-based foreign exchange system as its economy grows in complexity and evolves over time.

The reform in the exchange rate system is challenging in several respects but at the same time critically necessary.

In the past, the system has given rise to large-scale contraband exports of Ethiopia's precious resources and diverted the country's foreign exchange earnings away from both the formal banking system and the domestic economy. All of this has improperly benefitted a few illegal actors and middlemen at the expense of Ethiopia's productive sectors, which face chronic and acute foreign exchange shortages. Some of Ethiopia's most dynamic businesses and entrepreneurs have thus suffered significantly as a result, undermining policy efforts to expand exports, boost manufacturing, attract further foreign investment, and establish a stronger foreign currency reserve position.

By shifting to a market-based determination of the exchange rate, a number of widespread economic benefits can and will

earnings potential is properly captured and repatriated for the benefit of its residents and productive sectors.

The reform also will provide a major boost to Ethiopia's growing import-substituting industries, offering industries in this space an opportunity to scale up their operations and capture significant market share. Import substituting industries in the consumer and industrial sectors will be particularly important beneficiaries, in line with these, the "Ethiopia Tamrit" initiative currently being promoted for multiple local industries can be taken as the case in point. It also will complement numerous other reform measures taken in recent years to promote the private sector.

Moreover, such measures have comprised the opening up of sectors previously closed to private foreign investors including telecom, logistics, banking, capital markets, wholesale/retail trade, ease of doing business reforms, the start of private sector participation in public sector projects through Public Private Partnership initiative. The introduction of Special Economic Zone also can be taken as supportive tool in these regard.

The foreign exchange reform will improve Ethiopia's attractiveness to foreign investors, thus providing a big boost to FDI inflows and aligning the country business environment with those of our neighbors and peers.

Ethiopia's investment potential is strong on numerous dimension including a large population size, educated work force, widely available and competitively priced inputs such as labor and land, good air transport connectivity, improving logistics, and plentiful supplies of energy, natural resources, and mineral and all these advantages. Nevertheless, in the past these opportunities had not been fully exploited.

Putting in place a more conducive Foreign exchange regime removes what has been seen as a major deterrent by foreign investors and should deepen FDI interest and activity in Ethiopia. The reform will help address many long-standing business practices that hampered economic growth including informality and illegality in the economy.

In the past the use of parallel market exchange rates has taken root in several segments of the economy and many parts of the private business community as well as for remittance senders/beneficiaries, transactions took place.

After the introduction of the new exchange regime, the gap between the parallel market and that of the formal one is reduced and the number of customers who purchase hard currency from Banks instead of the parallel market is increasing from time to time. This clearly indicates that the reform measures have taken the nation to the right path for attaining sustainable development.

According to the Governor of National Bank of Ethiopia Mamo Mihretu, the package of reforms based on the country's Home-Grown Economic Reform aiming at restoring macro-economic stability, boost private sector activity, and ensure sustainable, broad-based, and inclusive growth

be realized: The reform will benefit millions of Ethiopians in multiple foreign exchange-generating sectors. Key beneficiaries will include: millions of farmers involved in the production of exportable crops such as coffee, sesame, pulses, flowers, fruits, vegetables, and Khat.

Pastoralists and livestock owners exporting cattle and meat, tens of thousands of artisanal and formal miners engaged in mining activities, particularly of gold, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing sector employees in exportable sectors, thousands of business engaged in the services and tourism sectors especially those catering to international visitors, millions of individuals who regularly receive remittances from relatives living abroad and also hundreds of NGOs and private institutions who receive financing from external sources will benefit from the reform.

Beyond these, the business partners, suppliers, and dependents associated with all of the above entities also stand to benefit, further broadening the pool of reform beneficiaries. In addition, the reform will help ensure that Ethiopia's foreign

Art & Culture

Special Edition 

2024: The year of big shifts in African arts and culture

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

By 2024, African art, like arts anywhere in the world, is dynamic, very much alive and growing. However, that did not happen all over a sudden. It took many years of experimentation and the creation of favorable global and national opportunities for this unprecedented growth in the arts industry. What makes African arts different however is the fact that its development started late but is successfully catching up with the relatively more advanced continents and places. As we jot down these lines, African music and musicians have already claimed the top spots in global music industry.

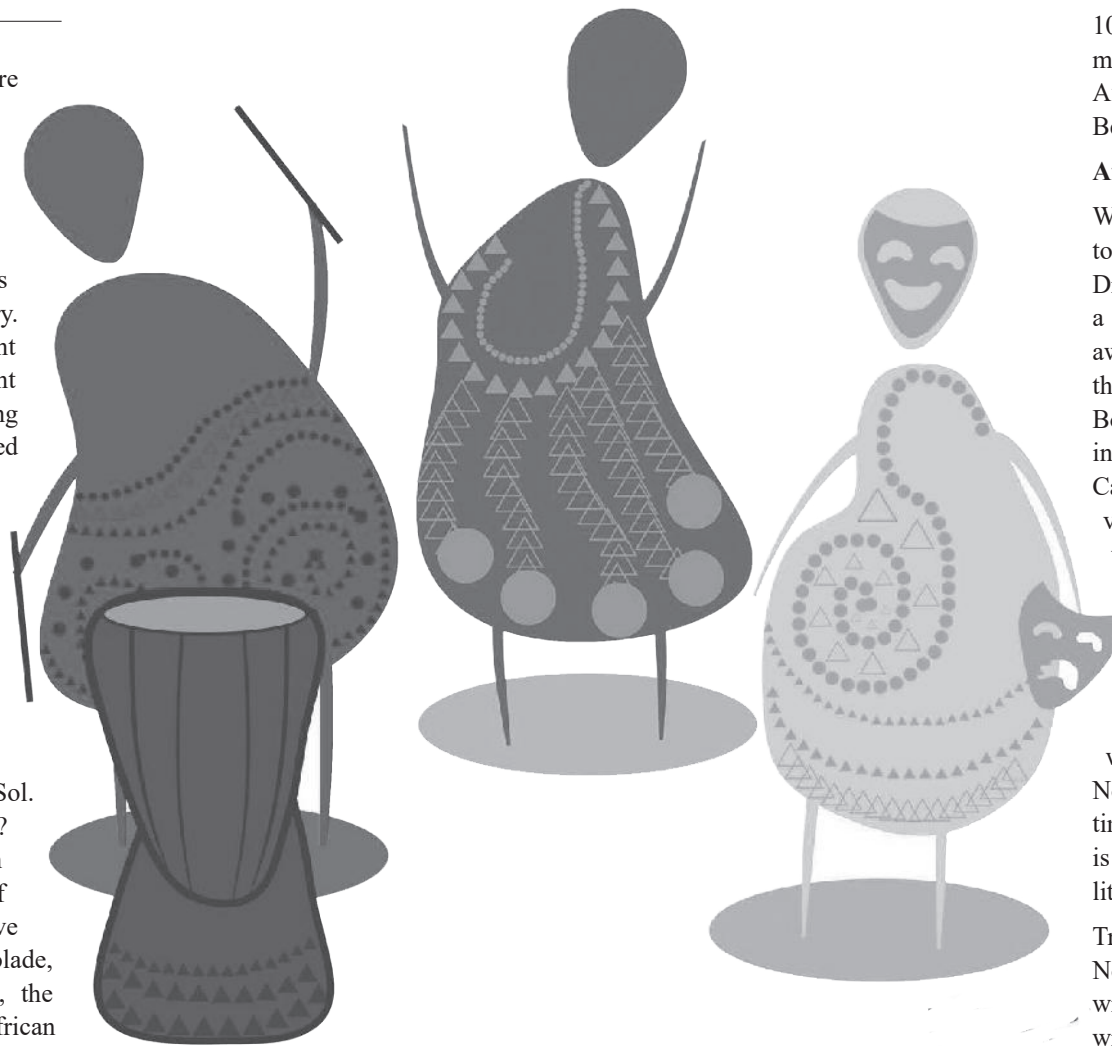
This has changed in 2024. New names have appeared on the most famous African musicians, names that were so far unknown or little known. You have names like Tekno, Die Antwoord, P-Square and Sauti Sol. Did you know these names before 2024? I did not. The biggest name in African music has also changed. Instead of Davido and his contemporaries we have now a young man called Ahmed Ololade, otherwise known as Asake. Davido, the leading name in contemporary African music has gone down to the fourth rank. This is the nature of arts. You rise for a few years and go down the following year. This is the nature of stardom. New stars are born every now and then, eclipsing those who came before them.

Contemporary African literature has produced what we may call the giants of African letters. The post-colonial African literature was mostly protest literature tinged by anti-colonial protest movements and ideologies and calls for liberation that were strong and militant. Chinua Achebe's classic "Things Fall Apart" became an instant sensation in the English-speaking world followed by such doyens of African letters as Wole Soyinka of Nigeria and Ngugi wa Tiongo of Kenya.

In 2024 many of the books that claimed the best selling list were not by the old school of African literature. New and highly talented female writers have started to knock at the doors of global literary stardom. When we look at the titles of the best African authors of 2024, we realize that there is a radical reality shift. Most of the names are new to readers and to the industry insiders. A new generation is coming up to claim its legitimate place. We have Onyi Niabineli with the novel entitled, "Allow Me to Introduce" (2024), Karen Jennings with "Crooked Seeds" (2024), Pemi Aguda with, "Ghostroots" (2024) and Ama Assantewa Diaka with "Someone Birthed them" (2024). One of the 20 most read African novels of 2024 is entitled "The Shadow King" and it is by Ethiopian female author Messeret Mengiste who lives in the United States.

African Music 2024

If there is anything 2024 announced to the arts and culture world, it is the fact that African music is experiencing its steep ascendancy. A few decades ago, Africans were mostly tuned



to Western music and worshipped Western music celebrities. In the 1980s, Michael Jackson had a huge number of fans in Africa not because he was black but because his music was appealing to the black audience on the continent. Bob Marley's revolution in black music had set the tone in the previous decades and these two celebrities had huge following not only within Africa but also across the entire world. For the sake of convenience I have taken the top musicians of two successive decades, namely the 1970s and 1980s.

The shift started after 2000 when African musicians, most of them talented, started to test the waters of international stardom. These were young singers and songs writers as well as composers who mostly lived in the West and mainly in the U.S., like Davido from Nigeria, and imbibed the styles, and tones and lyrics of black music from their elders and contemporaries. These young celebrities appeared on the global stage quite unannounced. They blended with singers who were already established. They studied what the industry needed and what the global music audience would like to hear. They had two opportunities, namely wither to imitate the Western pop tradition in its raw form and become mimics or else break from that tradition and go back to their African roots.

The first option was already a beaten track. Many African musicians who had the talent to develop independently lost their talents by trying to be other than Africans, that is to say by trying to sing like their well-established Western counterparts. And that was the road of perdition. Those who chose to base themselves on African music traditions or styles and absorb what is acceptable to the global audience, through a combination with the contemporary pop music well,

these were the successful ones. Thus the marriage between African traditional music and contemporary pop was accomplished and this in turn gave them plenty of rooms for experimenting and inventing while at the same time they became successful in the marketplace.

By the beginning of the 2020s, African musicians were not only starting to dominate the global music industry. They were also becoming some of the well-known names in international entertainment business. The richest musicians in the world are now not only black but also Africans. If we look at the data for 2024, we realize that Davido from Nigeria is leading the pack of richest African musicians with total revenue of 2.3 billion dollars followed by Wizkid worth 125 million dollars and Black Coffee with 16 million dollars. Fortunately popularity and wealth are two different things.

American rapper Jay Z is the wealthiest music artist in the world with Forbes magazine estimating his net worth at 2.5 billion dollars in 2024. According to the figures, Davido is the second richest musician in the world.

Unfortunately, the most popular musician in Africa is not the richest one. Burma Boy from South Africa is topping the list of most popular African musicians in 2024 while the crown of best artist went to South African singer Tyla who shined at the Grammy Awards this year. He won the title of Best African Music Performance Awards. 22-year-old outshone notable Nigerian contenders, including Davido, Asake, and Burma Boy.

According to the latest information on the subject, in 2024, the African music scene continued to thrive with a diverse array of talented artists making waves not only on the

continent but also on the global stage. The 10 top African nations that produce the best music are ranked as, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Congo Democratic, Benin, and Senegal.

African Literature 2024

Western media are serious when it comes to making money by selling the American Dream to the rest of the world. They have a number of prestigious literary and arts awards such as the Nobel, the Booker, the Commonwealth, Pulitzer, National Book Awards...etc. They have built solid institutions for movie awards such as the Cannes, Berlin, and other movie awards in various categories. True, there are African writers and moviemakers, or black actors or writers who are accorded one of these awards to celebrate their merits. Let's look at this year's Nobel Prize for literature. Personally, I was expecting Kenyan author James Ngugi, or Ngugi wa Tiongo in his native Gikuyu, to win the Nobel this year as he was shortlisted several times in the past. Ngugi, along with Soyinka is no doubt the great old doyens of African literature.

True, longevity has nothing to do with the Nobel award but Ngugi is an exceptional writer who has spent his entire working life writing books that matter for Africa and the world at large. Unfortunately an obscure author from Europe has dashed our hopes and Ngugi is left behind this year. Who knows next year may be his time for revenge.

African Cinema 2024

In 2024, African films and filmmakers have won some prestigious awards but the situation in this area has gone from bad to worse. The generation of Ousman Sembene's film writers and producers is now almost forgotten. The new and emerging producers are struggling in the shadows of the big studios who choose what kind of movie to make as well as what kind of movie the audience should see. Otherwise, Ethiopian filmmakers Haile Gerima should at least be nominated or shortlisted for another prestigious award. He is still struggling to finish his new film that he started more than a decade ago and has rewritten for more than a dozen times.

When we look at the state of Ethiopian cinema, we feel nostalgic of the 1990s although the industry is still struggling with 'pangs of childhood', so to say. In a global industry dominated by the money churning studios in Hollywood, Ethiopian artists like Haile have little or no chance to catch the attention of movie moguls and the studios they control. The actors and producers of the 1990s are mostly out of business and there are no visible stars of the industry yet. There is no notable movie in 2024 and the prospects are not encouraging at all.

Ethiopia must be one of the countries in Africa where the arts in doldrums. 2024 can be considered the year of the big shifts in African arts and Artists. 2025 might also be a year of another big shift, a shift for the better. What we can do now is to enjoy the little art we have and expect the best next year. Sounds optimistic, doesn't it?

2024 is the hottest year ever recorded

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) warns that 2024 is on track to be the hottest year in recorded history, surpassing 2023. This can be attributed to heightened reliance on fossil fuels and the reluctance of industries worldwide to pivot to green energy practices. The rapid acceleration of global temperatures has alarmed scientists, with many expressing concern over the environmental, economic, and social implications of the worsening climate crisis.

In light of this fact, ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, UN Secretary-General António Guterres remarked: “Humanity’s torching the planet and paying the price.”

In addition to being the hottest year, 2024 is also the first year in recorded history to have an average temperature of over 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. According to data from the European Union’s (EU) Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), the average temperature for 2024 is expected to be 1.60 C, marking a significant jump from last year’s average of 1.48 C.

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty that has been signed by 196 countries at the UN. The objective of this agreement is to reduce carbon emissions by 43 percent by 2030 and mitigate the climate crisis. Samantha Burgess, the deputy-director of C3S) confirmed that the rising temperatures do not make the Paris Agreement implausible but rather, makes the climate crisis much more urgent of an issue.

According to Oxford Net Zero, a platform of researchers hosted by the University of Oxford, in order to have a reasonable chance of bringing global temperatures back to 1.5 C, fossil fuel emissions must fall by 43 percent. Major corporations and governments around the world have announced plans to reduce carbon emissions to achieve these goals.

Although industries around the world have slowly begun to adopt healthier fossil fuel consumption habits and alternative sources of energy, global consumption of coal has nearly doubled in the past three decades. On December 18, the International Energy Agency (IEA) published a comprehensive report titled *Coal 2024*, that analyzed global consumption of coal in the 2020s and provided a forecast of coal use for the next three years.

The report states that in 2023, the global coal demand reached a record 8,687 metric tons, marking a 2.5 percent year-over-year increase. The global demand for coal is expected to have grown by 1 percent in 2024. The increased demand for coal can be attributed to the relatively low supply of hydropower.

China is ranked as the world’s biggest consumer of coal, accounting for up to 56 percent of 2023’s global coal consumption, equivalent to 4,833 metric tons of coal. It



A young girl trying to cross a flooded road in Bangladesh following the wake of Cyclone Remal. Bangladesh is one of the world’s most climate-sensitive nations and is expected to be significantly impacted by rising global temperatures.

is estimated that in 2024, Chinese coal consumption has increased by 1.1 percent, or an additional 56 metric tons.

Approximately 63 percent of China’s coal consumption is used to fuel the nation’s power sector. Despite a measured global increase in renewable energy use, China’s generation of electricity has declined in recent years.

According to the IEA, fixing the world’s over-reliance on coal consumption begins with China. “Weather factors – particularly in China, the world’s largest coal consumer – will have a major impact on short-term trends for coal demand. The speed at which electricity demand grows will also be very important over the medium term,” said IEA Director of Energy Markets and Security Keisuke Sadamori.

Scientists and economists have predicted that the acceleration of the climate crisis will have severe environmental and economic impacts going forward. According to the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, increased temperatures could cost the global economy approximately 38 trillion dollars in damages. Maximilian Kotz, a researcher at the institute, states that much of these losses can be attributed to decreased agricultural yields and labor productivity, as well as damage to climate-sensitive infrastructures.

2024 has seen a host of climate-driven natural disasters that have devastated communities. Extreme weather, such as cyclones, monsoons, wildfires, heat waves, hurricanes, and rising sea levels, continue to endanger the lives of millions of people. According to estimates from

the UN, approximately 305 million people around the world will be in dire need of humanitarian assistance for support due to worsening natural disasters.

Other environmental impacts of climate change include deforestation, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, water cycle disruptions, and impacts on agricultural outputs, all of which have disastrous consequences for life on Earth. If global temperatures and carbon emissions are not reduced by 2030, these consequences could significantly increase in severity.

Scientists have warned that it is critical for global temperatures to not exceed 2 C. The world would experience widespread species loss, including several species critical for the sustenance of human life, including fish and many species of plants. Alice C. Hill, a Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) senior fellow for energy and the environment, stated, “We’re headed toward disaster if we can’t get our warming in check and we need to do this very quickly.”

Another climate researcher at Potsdam, Anders Levermann, predicts that economic and environmental impacts will be far more severe for developing countries than for major commercial powerhouses such as the United States and China. “We find damages almost everywhere, but countries in the tropics will suffer the most because they are already warmer,” said Levermann.

Furthermore, the countries that are the least responsible for climate change (developing nations) are expected to suffer the greatest economic and environmental impacts as they have the fewest resources “to adapt to its impacts.” (IPS)

In addition to being the hottest year, 2024 is also the first year in recorded history to have an average temperature of over 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. According to data from the European Union’s (EU) Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), the average temperature for 2024 is expected to be 1.60 C, marking a significant jump from last year’s average of 1.48 C

A year of optimism against the odds

BY FIKADU BELAY

The year 2024 was marked by significant accomplishments and continued setbacks. Albeit marred by past and present challenges, Ethiopia has seen a string of achievements in diplomacy, economy, and other spheres. The conflicts in some pockets of the country, economic inflation, and backlogs of predicaments did not deter glittering stories unfolding in the nation.

From energy to diplomacy, Ethiopia enjoyed remarkable growth in 2024. In what could be an extension of the Pretoria peace deal, the country extended an olive branch to an armed group, sending a message of reconciliation.

The year also saw an unprecedented turnaround in the economic sector with the government introducing a macroeconomic reform and floating currency system. The year also witnessed a greater economic liberalization with lawmakers ratifying a bill that allow foreign investment in the banking sector.

Equally true, the country had also seen a fair share of problems, from the ongoing conflicts in some Amhara and Oromia states to the rising cost of living, the country faced various obstacles with some awaiting stopgap and long-term remedies. And, the ongoing National dialogue and transitional justice also flicker a ray of optimism, especially in redressing lingering contentious issues.

Against the odds, the positive achievements the country registered outweighed the shortfalls. The country has made significant strides in terms of pursuing peace and advancing various development initiatives. The previous period has been marked by numerous successful projects that reflect the nation's commitment to growth and stability.

In the past year, the country had undergone a key shift towards peace, driven by the government's proactive strategies and the readiness of various armed groups to engage in meaningful dialogue. This environment fosters hope for resolving the country's myriad conflicts, demonstrating the potential for unity and reconciliation among its diverse communities.

Quite for a while now, the Ethiopian government has been actively engaging in dialogue with various armed groups throughout the country. A recent breakthrough was achieved when the Oromia Regional Government successfully entered a deal with former leaders of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), including Jaal Segni Negasa. This crucial development highlighted the power of communication and negotiation in alleviating political tensions and fostering reconciliation.

The country's genuine position to bury the hatchet and resolve disputes reverberate beyond its borders. At the heart of the diplomatic triumph is Ankara's declaration

that foiled external aggression and unholy alliance.

The peace deal with Ethiopia and Somalia signed on 11 December 2024, serves as a fundamental framework aimed at promoting enduring peace among neighboring countries. This agreement emphasizes collaboration in areas such as security, economic development, and environmental sustainability, underscoring Ethiopia's commitment to being a key player in regional stability.

The discussions surrounding the Ankara Declaration focused on several critical issues, including the need for collective security measures to minimize the cross-border conflicts that threaten regional stability by accepting the legal question of sea access.

Furthermore, it highlighted the standing of economic integration, advocating for sea access that enhances trade and investment among East and Horn African nations. This sea access not only boosts the country's economies but also creates jobs and reduces poverty, contributing to long-term stability among the nations of the region.

Moreover, it represents a comprehensive approach to regional peace and stability, exemplifying Ethiopia's proactive role in addressing multifaceted challenges and creating a foundation for a prosperous future in East Africa.

Beyond peace-building efforts, Ethiopia has also taken measures to tackle the pressing issue of climate change while striving for sustainable economic development. The government is focusing on non-polluting industries such as tourism and renewable energy sources, including solar and hydroelectric power. This dual approach addresses environmental challenges while fostering economic growth.

One notable initiative within this climate change action outline is the Green Legacy Program. Over the past five years, Ethiopia has successfully planted more than 40 billion seedlings across various regions, significantly contributing to reforestation and biodiversity efforts.

The country even made history by planting over 615.7 million saplings in just one day, surpassing the initial target of 600 million. This monumental achievement is a critical milestone in Ethiopia's Green Footprint program, which aims to combat climate change, restore degraded lands, and ensure food security for future generations. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's inspiring leadership has galvanized a nation, uniting citizens of all ages in a common cause to rejuvenate the environment.

In a similar development, on August 24/2024, Ethiopia started the third and the fourth turbines of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a milestone achievement for the development of the

nation.

During the inauguration, the country's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) highlighted its transformative impact on Ethiopia's energy landscape. This advancement not only significantly boosts electricity access for millions of Ethiopian citizens, enhancing their quality of life, but it also greatly increases the country's capacity to export electricity to neighboring nations such as Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti.

According to the government data, the GERD is a crucial element in Ethiopia's vision for economic development and energy security. With these new turbines, the dam's total electricity generation capacity grows, positioning Ethiopia as a regional leader in renewable energy production. This development fosters stronger energy cooperation with neighboring countries, promoting both economic interdependence and regional stability.

Moreover, the successful start of the third turbine reinforces Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience. The GERD is not only a source of clean energy but also serves as a model for large-scale infrastructure projects that prioritize environmental sustainability. The dam symbolizes national pride and collective aspiration for a prosperous future, facilitating greater energy access while contributing to regional integration and cooperation.

Additionally, the government inaugurated several recreational tourism villages, such as Beynouna Village and National Palace in the previous year. These areas have transformed from volcanic landscapes into serene retreats, showcasing Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable tourism development.

Beynouna Village, in particular, merges traditional architectural styles with modern construction, creating a unique space that attracts visitors while enhancing local economies. It exemplifies the belief that transformation is possible, according to the Premier. The ongoing development initiatives and resilience exhibited by the Ethiopian government in the face of natural challenges suggest a bright and prosperous future for the nation.

Recognizing untapped potential is crucial for fostering economic growth and enhancing Ethiopia's global reputation. It is essential to promote both developed and underdeveloped facilities that can significantly contribute to the country's economic landscape.

To sustain these development efforts, continued collaboration with international partners is necessary. Their support will help accelerate growth and development across various sectors, ensuring that Ethiopia remains on its path to prosperity.

All in all, the year 2024 stands as a period marked by significant advancements in both peace and economic sectors.

In a similar development, on August 24/2024, Ethiopia started the third and the fourth turbines of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a milestone achievement for the development of the nation

Society

Special Edition 



Major tourism sector achievements in 2024

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In recent years, Ethiopia has emerged as one of the top tourist destinations in Africa, attracting visitors from all over the world with its rich history, diverse culture, and stunning landscapes. The country has made significant strides in developing its tourism sector, with 2024 shaping up to be a pivotal year for the industry. The country's major tourism sector achievements in 2024 are exciting developments that are shaping the country's future as a premier travel destination.

No doubt, in 2024, the country achieved a major milestone in boosting its tourism industry, attracting visitors from all around the world. The major achievement in 2024 was the development of new destinations and the improvement of infrastructure, including upgrades to airports, roads, resorts, lodges, and accommodations, making it easier and more convenient for visitors to explore Ethiopia. The following are among the major tourism sector achievements in the past year.

Inauguration of Wenchi-Dendi Eco Tourism Village

The Wenchi-Dendi Eco Tourism Village was the third tourist destination developed through Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's 'Dine For Ethiopia' initiative.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew along with Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), ministers, regional chief administrators, Addis Ababa-based diplomatic community, other senior government officials, and representatives of the local community.

It is known that the Wenchi-Dendi ecotourism project, constructed as part of the grand 'Dine For Ethiopia' tourism destination projects, was initiated by the premier himself.

The Wenchi-Dendi Eco Tourism Village created between 8,000 and 12,000 jobs during its construction phase. The massive



infrastructure projects were introduced, including 43 kilometers of access roads, 35 kilometers of road lights, power supply, and a 72-meter-long crossing bridge.

Gorgora Eco Resort

Gorgora Eco Resort, another major tourism projects developed under the "Dine for Nation" initiative was inaugurated in 2024 in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Office of the Prime Minister confirmed.

The first phase of the project was launched in March 2021 by the Prime Minister himself. The inauguration ceremony was attended by PM Abiy, federal and regional government officials, local community representatives, diplomats, and representatives of multilateral organizations based in Ethiopia.

Located on the shores of Lake Gorgora, in the southwestern part of the historical city of Gondar in the Amhara State, the Gorgora Eco Resort is poised to boost tourism in the area.

Ethiopian Airlines takes over management of Gorgora Resort

The Ethiopian Airlines has taken over the management of the newly inaugurated Gorgora Resort in the Amhara State. The Resort is now under the management of Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, which also oversees other resorts in southern Ethiopia and the Oromia State.

An agreement ceremony was held at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, attended by the President of the Amhara State, Arega Kebede, senior regional officials, Ethiopian Airlines' Chief Commercial Officer Lemma Yadecha, and other executives. Ethiopian Airlines has also taken responsibility for managing other resorts built under the "Dine for Ethiopia" initiative, including Halala Kela Resort, Wonchi Eco Lodge, and Chebera Churcra Elephant Dana Lodge.

Ethiopian Airlines recently took the responsibility of managing Halala Kela Resort, Wonchi Eco Lodge and Chebera Churcra Elephant Dana Lodge which were built in Dine for Ethiopia Project and is working tirelessly to play its part in the development of Ethiopia's tourism industry."

Addis Ababa Corridor Dev't Project

The Addis Ababa Corridor Development project is a project that beautifies and transforms the feature of the capital. Following the task Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) announced that the Addis Ababa corridor development project, designed to create a clean and livable environment, has produced significant benefits for many citizens.

Abiy noted that the project in the capital has generated more jobs, improved living standards, and created a cleaner

environment.

"The mayors of 38 cities discussed the plan before its implementation in Addis Ababa. They are now expected to replicate this successful project in their respective cities,". Mentioning that the corridor development is for the common good and he urged all stakeholders to collaborate, stressing that much work remains for the future. "We should not be satisfied with this result as we have a lot of work to do in the future," he said while talking about the city's remarkable progress.

Truly speaking, over the past six years Ethiopia has been working on persistently in expanding its tourism destinations, by renovating the existing ones, building the necessary facilities, devising several initiatives Dine for Sheger, Dine for Nation, and Dine for Generation initiatives designed to increase the earnings from the sector and enhance its contributions for the country's development.

In 2024, the country experienced rapid growth in the tourism sector, with an increase in visitors exploring its ancient landmarks, vibrant markets, new destinations, and stunning national parks. The government's focus on sustainable tourism practices helped attract environmentally-conscious travelers.

Ethiopia's tourism sector achievements in 2024 underscore the country's commitment to sustainable, cultural, and inclusive tourism. With its diverse attractions, improved infrastructure, and focus on preservation, Ethiopia is poised to continue attracting visitors from around the world. Whether interested in exploring ancient historical sites, immersing in local traditions, or enjoying the country's natural beauty, Ethiopia offers something for every type of traveler.

Looking ahead, Ethiopia is on a path to continued growth and success in the tourism sector. With a strong focus on sustainability, infrastructure development, and cultural preservation, the country is well-positioned to become a leading travel destination in Africa and beyond. The achievements of 2024 are just the beginning of what promises to be a bright future for Ethiopia's tourism industry.



2024,

Ethiopia tackled major environmental challenges, achieved visible results

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Ethiopia has been continuing its climate change mitigation efforts and strategies in 2024. As a result, the country made significant progress in the areas of Green Legacy Initiative, COP29, corridor development, Yelemat Tirufat area, and summer wheat production.

Ethiopia has experienced recurrent environmental problems that have impacted agriculture and livelihoods, such as soil erosion, the effects of climate change, and the loss of forest cover. Taking this fact into account, Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed started the Green Legacy Initiative, a massive afforestation and reforestation project, in 2019. The initiative has been continuing with the aim of improving biodiversity in the nation, restoring degraded lands, and fighting deforestation.

Accordingly, the country successfully planted 7.5 billion tree seedlings across the country in 2024. More importantly, on August 23, Ethiopia managed to plant more than 600 million tree saplings in a single nighttime event. This environmental protection work in general and initiative efforts in particular help Ethiopia's forest cover to increase from 17.2 percent in 2019 to 23.6 percent in 2024. Additionally, it has improved soil fertility, reduced erosion, absorbed carbon dioxide, and so on. In addition, it has boosted economic growth and reduced poverty in rural areas by generating jobs, particularly for women and young people.

Since reducing climate change impacts necessitates both regional and international cooperation, Ethiopia has urged the international community to support its green legacy initiative efforts and work with other African countries to join its tree-planting initiative.

In 2024, Ethiopia is also actively engaging and demonstrating its commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The annual Conference of Parties (CoP) serves as a critical global venue for countries to negotiate and advance climate action, including debates on emissions reduction, adaptation methods, and climate-related project finance. As a result, Ethiopia's climate change mitigation path is being presented to the world on COP every year. Similarly, COP29 was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22, 2024. Ethiopia not only participates but also demonstrates its global commitment.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Planning and Development Minister Fitsum Assefa (PhD) said that the COP29 conference demonstrated the value of collaboration and how collaboration efforts can strengthen a country's position internationally. With the unwavering backing of its partners, Ethiopia was able to host a vibrant pavilion, lead important talks, and propose ambitious climate measures at COP29. In addition to participation, Ethiopia has prepared climate change pavilions, which give an important chance for the country to highlight its numerous steps to address the impact of climate change and environmental disasters. The pavilion highlights Ethiopia's efforts to develop climate-resilient infrastructure,

sustainable land management methods, and renewable energy initiatives. Accordingly, the Pavilion demonstrated Ethiopia's strong commitment to addressing climate change with realistic solutions and also encouraged the international community to support Ethiopia's green legacy efforts, such as the irrigated summer wheat program and climate-smart urban development, she added.

Another significant effort implemented in 2024 is Yelemat Tirufat, also known as the Bounty of Basket. The initiative is a national program that aims to increase the production and productivity of dairy, poultry, eggs, honey, fish, and meat. It also intensifies efforts to ensure nutritional opulence and food self-sufficiency at the national and family levels.

According to Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture State Minister Fikru Regassa, the Initiative's implementation in 2024 is not only meeting but exceeding its expectations, with results coming ahead of schedule this year. This success considerably alleviates community issues by increasing agricultural yield and stabilizing market circumstances.

He also stated that the four-year initiative, which began two years ago, had already exceeded some major output targets. Milk output increased from 5.8 billion liters in 2021/22 to 10 billion liters last year, with expectations for 12 billion liters by the end of 2024/25. This year, the project intends to produce 12 billion eggs, up from 5.7 billion last year and 3.2 billion two years ago.

As stated by Fikru, tremendous progress has been made in genetic enhancement through artificial insemination. "2.4 million cows were inseminated with enhanced breeds last year." While local cows produce an average of 1.5 liters of milk per day, improved types produce an amazing 15 liters per day, emphasizing the importance of intervention. Although artificial insemination has been conducted in the country for 70 years, the program has revived the effort, resulting in 3.5 million inseminations in 2020, with 3.6 million expected this year.

When the Yelemat Tirufat (the Bounty of Basket) initiative was initiated, it was only 500,000 cows were inseminated; this number surged to 1.2 million in the following year and reached 2.4 million last year.

To increase egg output, 80 million improved chick varieties were also delivered last year. Improved animal feed and fodder kinds have been made available as part of efforts to increase productivity, he added.

Ethiopia launched the Corridor Development Project in 2024. This project combines urbanization projects with environmental conservation and climate change mitigation initiatives. The project began in Addis Ababa intending to improve transportation infrastructure, increase connectivity, and stimulate economic growth along major corridors in the city. Besides, its goal is to develop lively and sustainable urban places and promote environmental protection which improves residents' quality of life.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) explained that the Addis Ababa corridor development project intends to produce a clean and convenient environment, with



major benefits for many people. In addition to other benefits, the project has increased job opportunities, elevated living standards, and improved general environmental cleanliness.

The government extends the Corridor development project throughout the country by assessing and considering its advantages. Because the project improves Addis Ababa's transportation infrastructure by building roads, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, and bus rapid transit (BRT) systems along major thoroughfares. Enhancing accessibility, lowering traffic, and encouraging environmentally friendly forms of transportation are all achieved by improving transportation linkages.

The development and production of summer wheat is another significant 2024 endeavor. Ethiopia has been striving to boost its agricultural output, notably summer wheat, as part of its larger initiatives to improve farmer lives and ensure food security.

Despite environmental concerns and climate change challenges, Ethiopia's summer wheat production is progressing well. The government has doubled the quantity of land used for summer wheat cultivation, with intentions to cultivate wheat on nearly 3 million hectares during the dry season. This represents a 130 percent increase over the previous year's coverage.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture reported that Ethiopia has become the best self-sufficient country in Africa by covering its wheat demand within three years of the 10-year development plan. Currently, Ethiopia, with its enhanced production and productivity, can harvest 40 quintals of wheat per hectare in its summer wheat program. The normal yield in the previous main rainy season was 30 quintals per hectare.

As stated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia has become a self-sufficient country, having met its wheat demand within three years of the 10-year development plan. The country's summer wheat program can now harvest 40 quintals of wheat per hectare due to increased production

and productivity.

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture Minister Girma Amente (PhD) noted that Ethiopia became Africa's largest wheat producer in 2024. "Ethiopia as of 2024 become Africa's largest wheat producer. In volume terms, I mean. This is in fact a natural status the country deserves due to its convenient agroecology. Previously, countries which used only irrigation produced more than us. For we use both irrigation and rain our production makes 6 million quintals, assuredly covering the entire domestic consumptions."

Ethiopian summer wheat cultivation is taking place over three million hectares. "Ethiopia stopped importing wheat last year because it had become self-sufficient." Summer wheat production has surpassed the major rainy season yield."

He also stated that Ethiopia's produce from the summer and winter harvests of 6 million hectares exceeds domestic demand and is exported. "We are now convinced that we can completely cover what we desire. In 2024, we intend to cultivate three million hectares, with 1.9 million of that total already covered. This is 1.7 million hectares more than 2023."

In general, all Ethiopian leaders have been attempting to address climate change in different ways, regardless of their political preferences, ideological differences, and styles of government. They have been giving due attention to water and soil conservation as well as planting tree seedlings.

Taking these facts into consideration, the current government is not only keeping up these efforts, but also widening the prevention of climate change through initiatives that are intended to save foreign currency, protect the environment, promote indigenous knowledge, ensure food security, beautify the city, and be used for food. In 2024, the Green Legacy Initiative, COP 29 Corridor Development, Summer Wheat Development, and Yelemat Tirufat (the Bounty of Basket) initiatives have all amply illustrated the efforts of the country. Therefore, it would be wise to step up these efforts in 2025.