





## Ethio telecom secures 61.9 bln Birr in revenue

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

**ADDISABABA** – Ethio telecom, Ethiopia’s state-owned telecommunications company, announced impressive results for the first half of the fiscal year, achieving 90.7% of its revenue target with a total of 61.9 billion Birr.

CEO Firehiwot Tameru highlighted the significant contributions of mobile data usage and international services to this growth.

Mobile data revenue saw a substantial 48.8% increase compared to the same period last year, while mobile voice services expanded to 83.6 billion minutes, a 12.7% rise. Revenue from international services reached 64.4 million USD, achieving 63.8% of the target.

Ethio telecom also reported significant subscriber growth, reaching 80.5 million total subscribers, achieving 100% of its target. This represents a 7.9% increase (5.9 million new subscribers) compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year.

The company added 5 million new telebirr customers, bringing the total to over 51.5 million, nearly reaching its target (99.8%).

Telebirr, Ethio telecom’s mobile money service, facilitated over 1.03 trillion Birr in transactions during the first half of the fiscal year. Since its launch, telebirr has processed



a remarkable 3.58 trillion birr in electronic money transactions, playing a key role in expanding financial inclusion through digital services.

Foreign exchange earnings also saw growth, reaching 72.6 million USD. Of this, 67.36 million USD came from international services, and 5.24 million USD was generated through telebirr’s international remittance service.

The national digital registration system has registered 4.2 million customers in the first half of the year, averaging 27,000 registrations daily across 12 states, 2 city administrations, and over 275 regional cities and woredas. This progress is supported by 444 registration centers and 304 mobile

teams.

Ethio telecom has expanded its service offerings to 171 local and international services. Network capacity was boosted by 4.6 million, increasing total mobile network capacity from 86.1 million to 90.7 million. To improve accessibility, 68 new service centers were opened, bringing the total to 1,000 (513 franchised and 487 company-owned).

The company demonstrated its commitment to social responsibility by contributing 287.2 million Birr, including 131.3 million Birr in-kind and 155.9 million Birr in cash, to various initiatives in education, healthcare, humanitarian aid, environmental protection, green development, and national projects.

## STEMpower plans major STEM expansion across Africa

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

**ADDIS ABABA** - STEMpower announced that it had planned to expand across Africa this year by establishing 20 more STEM centers.

STEMpower Ethiopia’s Country Director, Simenew Keskes (PhD), told The Ethiopian Herald that the organization envisions achieving technology-driven development in Ethiopia and other African countries through practical STEM education, aiming to cover every African country by 2025.

Operating in about 35 African countries, the organization has provided access to practical science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to more than 2 million Africans. However, Simenew noted that, given the continent’s large population, this number remains insufficient.

Therefore, the organization is striving to reach the remaining 20 more countries and cover the entire continent this year. He emphasized that this is not an easy task, as each center is funded by a single philanthropist, Mark Gelfand.

STEMpower Ethiopia works on establishing centers and overseeing their functionality throughout the year. It strengthens existing centers and ensures that training continues year in and year out.

Simenew explained that engineers from the Ethiopian office travel to each African country to install facilities and train STEM center professionals.

According to the Country Director, trainees who utilize the organization’s services have the potential to become innovators, developing technological solutions for local problems. This local intervention can save foreign currency by reducing the need for imported technology.

STEMpower CEO, Edwin Kumfa, stated that the organization, which supports STEM education in Africa, began its operations in Ethiopia before expanding to other African countries.

He noted that partnerships are being strengthened, and equipment has already been purchased to promote the same concept across Africa.

Several African countries have expressed interest in receiving the organization’s support and expanding its initiatives. According to Kumfa, Agenda 2063 of the African Union can only be achieved when all Africans actively contribute to “the Africa that we want.”

In this regard, he highlighted the crucial role of youth in achieving the agenda. Therefore, STEMpower is investing in young people to help them become innovators and entrepreneurs, which will create jobs, foster new technologies, and enhance global competitiveness.

Promoting science and technology development will help African nations achieve growth by drawing lessons from the developed world, he stated.

Kumfa expressed that, based on his experience at the science fairs organized by STEMpower, it is possible to achieve development in Africa if every stakeholder contributes their fair share, particularly in STEM education.

The organization has called for partners to join hands in empowering African youth and promoting technology-driven development to achieve “the Africa we want” agenda.



South Sudanese scholarship beneficiaries

## Ethiopia strengthens ties with South Sudan via scholarships

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

**ADDISABABA** - Ethiopia and South Sudan committed to strengthening bilateral ties through education, with Ethiopia providing free education to 644 South Sudanese students this school year, Ethiopian Embassy in South Sudan announced.

Ethiopian Ambassador to South Sudan, Nabil Mehdi, stated that the free education opportunity was extended to 577 undergraduate and 67 postgraduate students. This initiative not only supports the educational advancement of South Sudanese students but also fosters mutual development and lasting ties between the two countries.

He urged the students to play an active role

in nurturing the bond between Ethiopia and South Sudan.

South Sudan’s Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Training and External Relations Director General, Prof. Touch Liem appreciated Ethiopia for its unwavering support in the field of education and training.

He highlighted the importance of such initiatives in addressing educational challenges and promoting regional cooperation.

Representatives of the South Sudanese students also conveyed their appreciation for the free education opportunity. They pledged to employ their education to contribute to the mutual benefit of Ethiopia and South Sudan, further solidifying the partnership between the two sister countries.

This initiative is a testament to the growing collaboration between Ethiopia and South Sudan in the education sector. By investing in the future of South Sudanese students, Ethiopia is not only supporting human capital development but also laying the foundation for stronger diplomatic and economic ties.

For the academic year 2024/2025, the Government of Ethiopia has granted scholarships for 110 TVET undergraduate program students out of 644 scholarships awarded for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programs for 2024/2025 academic year in different fields based on the amended MOU signed recently between the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of South Sudan.



## High time for Africa to ensure food sovereignty: AUC

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

**ADDIS ABABA** –The African Union Commission (AUC) stresses Africa's need to achieve food sovereignty by utilizing the African Continental Free Trade Area to cut 100 billion USD in annual food imports.

AUC's Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) Commissioner, Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, told The Ethiopian Herald that Africa must work towards food sovereignty by maximizing intra-continental trade and reducing its reliance on external food sources.

She stressed that ensuring food security for Africa's projected 2.4 billion population by 2050 is crucial.

Africa currently faces severe food insecurity, with 282 million people suffering from hunger—an increase of 57 million since the COVID-19 pandemic. The continent has the highest hunger rate globally, affecting 20% of its population, compared to a global average of 10%. Furthermore, over a billion

people are unable to afford a healthy diet, she stated.

“The main triggers of Africa's food crisis include internal conflicts such as the war in Sudan, global crises like the Russia-Ukraine war, climate change, and worsening economic conditions such as inflation, which makes food unaffordable,” Josefa explained.

However, she highlighted that a key achievement of the current African Union administration is the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2025-2026) and the associated “Kampala CAADP Declaration,” which were endorsed by African Heads of State in January 2025 in Kampala, Uganda. She noted that the strategy shifts focus from traditional agriculture to a broader agri-food systems transformation, outlining key actions to make Africa food sovereign.

In July 2016, African Heads of State adopted a 0.2% levy on eligible imports to ensure timely and full payment of AU membership contributions, the Commissioner recalled. The decision aims to provide the AU with sustainable, predictable, and accountable

financing.

“This decision has yet to be fully implemented. If funding shortfalls persist, the AU's financial independence—and, by extension, Africa's ownership of its development agenda—will remain a mirage,” Josefa warned.

She also noted that donor dependence remains a major challenge for the AU, adding that despite progress, member states contribute only a small fraction of the AU's budget. Currently, 75% of AU funding comes from external partners, primarily the European Union (EU) and the United Nations.

With donor funding becoming increasingly uncertain, Josefa urged African nations to diversify their financial partnerships, looking beyond traditional donors and strengthening ties with China and Arab countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Oman.

Recently, the U.S. President Donald Trump announced his administration's decision to disband USAID, which will have negative impacts on African countries.

## President pushes...

irrigation potential.

He urged collective leadership, collaboration, and consistent consultations.

“This event is a pivotal moment—a call to action to address the challenges of food security and climate change through strong resolve and innovative solutions,” the President stated, underscoring the shared vision for a prosperous, food-secure, and climate-resilient Africa.

He highlighted Ethiopia's commitment to transformative change, citing the country's dedication to climate-conscious food production through initiatives like the Green Legacy and the “Bounty of Basket” program, supported by sustained irrigation infrastructure. He noted that Ethiopia's significant irrigation projects have empowered pastoral communities, revitalized agricultural productivity, fostered agro-industrial development, and created job opportunities nationwide.

“These projects are not merely feats of construction, but lifelines for our citizens, demonstrating the transformative power of infrastructure when properly aligned with a clear vision for food security and resilience,” he emphasized.

The President pointed out that agriculture is not just a livelihood for 70% of Africans; it is a strategic imperative in the global food economy. He stressed the importance of scaling up investment and financing in irrigation farming to secure agricultural infrastructure. In the face of weakening multilateralism in agricultural investment, he urged investment in better technology, data collection and literacy, strong collaboration, knowledge sharing, and technologies that build a resilient and food-secure continent.

Irrigation and Lowlands Minister Abreham Belay (PhD) stated that erratic rainfall, prolonged drought, and devastating floods threaten millions of livelihoods and exacerbate food insecurity. He emphasized that harnessing the power of irrigation through innovation, inclusive policies, strategies, technology, and financing is central to building climate-resilient agricultural systems. He stressed the importance of government collaboration, research institutions, the private sector, and community involvement in expanding irrigation and resilience, and highlighted the need to empower women and youth in African agriculture.

Agricultural, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment to the African Union Commission (AUC) Deputy Commissioner Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, noted that the majority of African farmers rely on small-scale, rain-fed agriculture, making them highly vulnerable to climate change. She pointed out that only 6% of arable land in Africa is irrigated, a low figure compared to other regions, and commended the efforts to change this narrative and secure food resilience on the continent.

## Africanizing...

problem to financial and political dependence on external entities.

The union's extreme reliance on the financial assistance of affluent nations has made it susceptible to be weak in terms of becoming African institution, many argue.

For years, the continental bloc has claimed that it has been trying to prioritize the interests of the people across the continent. Yet, critics argue that the union is largely ineffective, after six decades, it has failed to be citizens' union.

Like other international and continental unions, African citizens want to participate in AU policymaking and political discourse to help foster strong democratic leadership and sustainable economic development across the continent.

This desire reflects a commitment to transparency, accountability, and civic engagement, empowering communities to influence decisions that affect their lives and ensure that policies address their needs effectively on the continent.

However, many argue that the union has no any platform that the African people participate in the bloc's policy formulation and discussion pertinent to the continent.

The African Union is so much weak to resolve the disconnected between the continent citizens' interest and the AU aims, said Dawit Mezgebe a PhD candidate, on African and Asian Studies at Addis Ababa University.

From January 2018 to April 2019, the EU Commission conducted over 1,100 Citizens' Dialogues. These sessions, featuring

citizens' questions and responses from EU Commissioners, aimed to foster diversity by randomly selecting participants from various EU member states.

European citizens have a platform to engage directly with EU policies and can propose new laws by collecting one million signatures. They can also petition the European Parliament and take part in public consultations by the European Commission.

Indirectly, citizens influence EU policymaking by voting in European elections, contacting Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and participating in national parliaments.

Despite the AU's efforts to establish human rights frameworks, conflict resolution mechanisms, and platforms for citizen engagement, Dawit argued that these initiatives are often hindered by a lack of financial support and a reliance on external funding. The union's edges may be well intentioned, but without sustainable funding and self-reliance, they risk becoming mere marks rather than effective solutions, he said.

On his part, African Change for Interaction and Think Tank General Director, African and foreign Affairs Policy Researcher Worku Yakob (PhD) pointed out that while citizens have opportunities to symbolize with the AU through various institutions, there is a troubling disconnect between their concerns and the union's actions.

He mentioned that citizens raise critical questions about peace, economic stability, and democratic governance, yet these concerns often go unaddressed. This gap between dialogue and action raises

doubts about the AU's commitment to its foundational goals, he noted.

On his part, Political Science & International Relation Expert and Peace Building at Global Peace Bank Director Deyamo Dale emphasized that the lack of tangible responses to citizen inquiries undermines the notion that the AU is truly inclusive or representative of the African citizens. This situation reflects a broader systemic issue where the voices of ordinary Africans are drowned out by bureaucratic processes, he said.

Furthermore, joining civil society organizations focused on the EU issues allows for advocacy. Citizens are encouraged to stay informed through news outlets and social media, fostering community discussions on EU matters.

Deyamo further emphasized that despite the existence of various institutions and civil organizations within the AU, they are yet to be vibrant and realize of the citizens' needs.

Due to this, Worku's assertion that some leaders prioritize political affiliations over continental unity underscores the need for a paradigm shift within the AU. For the union to regain its credibility and fulfill its mission, a commitment to collective African interests must replace individual or biased agendas.

The experts underlined that the AU must address its financial dependencies, enhance its leadership capacity, and ensure that the voices of African citizens are not only heard but acted upon. Also, it should create to genuine collaboration among African nations for fulfill its promises.

## Ethiopia calls for renewed...

unity, cooperation, and solidarity are of the utmost importance,” he remarked, adding, “The coming wave of change could either lift us all to a better position or throw us into the unknown.”

Minister Timothewos reiterated Ethiopia's

support for reformed global governance, including reform of the United Nations Security Council(UNSC). He also called for “an international financial system that supports Africa's growth and enables the continent to tackle its challenges effectively,”

demanding access to climate financing and technology.

AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat echoed the need for continental integration to address technological, social, political, and economic challenges with

innovative solutions and expressed optimism about the progress being made by the AU.

Claver Gatete, Secretary-General of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, highlighted the importance of facilitating the expansion of the AfCFTA.



# Opinion

## The significance of GERD in promoting Ethiopia's foreign policy, diplomacy

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Statistics indicate that the world's 263 Trans Boundary Lake and River Basins cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface. A total of 145 nations include territory within international basins, and 21 countries lie entirely within international basins. The Nile River is one of the longest Trans Boundary Rivers in the world cruising through 11 riparian countries.

Except for Sudan and Egypt who enjoyed a colonial monopoly of the river for centuries, the rest of the riparian countries have never benefited from this river. Ethiopia who contributes more than 86% of the Nile waters with 77 billion cubic meters of water from the Blue Nile not only abandoned from using its own water resources but was also totally ignored in the treaties that shared water between Sudan and Egypt for thousands of years.

Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) is not just about generating hydroelectric power for local and the neighboring countries. By sharing clean and cheap hydroelectric power with them, Ethiopia is effectively implementing her foreign policy and diplomatic objectives in a more meaningful and practical manner. Sharing electric power from GERD and possibly other dams under construction in the country is based on the principles of peace and peaceful coexistence with African countries near and afar.

### To what extent does the Dam promote the nation's foreign policy and diplomatic objectives?

GERD is just like a messenger of peace and equitable use of the waters of the Blue Nile. It is a tool for peaceful cooperation and mutually beneficiary undertaking to support the power needs of the countries of the Horn of Africa to energize their nascent manufacturing industries and other sectors of their economic development.

On the other hand, the experience gained in constructing GERD and the technologies thereof can establish good relationship and skill transfer to other African countries who may wish to build their own dams in the future. The institutes of higher learning and universities in these countries can gain experience from Ethiopian engineers and hydrologists in building their own capacity in science and technology.

The development of tourism and hospitality sector will make GERD a center for mutual friendship among the peoples of many countries and tourists coming from different countries across the world.

GERD will be an excellent venue for promoting Ethiopia's cultural and diplomatic relations among the youth across the world through educational tour exchange programs that could promote Ethiopia's relations with countries and peoples of the world.

The Revised Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of Ethiopia, in section 3 of the policy

document states that "Ethiopia will utilize her Trans Boundary water resources in an equitable and mutually beneficial manner and will strive to maximize her benefits through strong foreign relations and objectives."

This denotes that Ethiopia has never planned to use the waters of the Blue Nile only for herself but to share the energy resources with other African countries to promote economic integration and united action against climate change by using non fossil fuel energy resources like GERD.

As indicated earlier, by being an excellent venue for eco-tourism and hospitality center, GERD will be a major tourist attraction center in Africa in which visitors from Africa and the rest of the world can come together to promote peace and constructive dialogue.

Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan benefit more by cooperating to fulfill the 17 elements of SDGs which are directly or indirectly connected to the benefits they can secure from cooperating on equitable use of the Nile waters including designing areas of cooperation on joint utilization of resources from GERD.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has the potential to promote peaceful cooperation and regional development in the Nile Basin, despite the challenges and disputes surrounding its construction and operation. Here are some ways in which the GERD could contribute to peaceful cooperation:

The GERD will significantly increase Ethiopia's electricity generation capacity, providing reliable and affordable energy for domestic consumption and regional export. Access to clean and renewable energy can contribute to energy security and economic development in Ethiopia and neighboring countries.

The GERD has the potential to facilitate greater regional integration and cooperation among riparian countries in the Nile Basin. Shared infrastructure projects like the GERD can foster collaboration and mutual dependency, encouraging dialogue, trust-building, and joint management of water resources

The construction and operation of the GERD provide an opportunity for Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiation to address mutual concerns and interests related to water security, hydroelectric power generation, and environmental sustainability. Effective water diplomacy can help build confidence, resolve disputes, and promote peaceful coexistence.

The GERD's hydropower generation can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change impacts by displacing fossil fuel-based electricity generation. Additionally, the regulation of water flow and sedimentation by the dam can have positive environmental effects, including improved water quality

and ecosystem health.

The GERD's reservoir and associated infrastructure could support various economic activities, including fisheries, tourism, and irrigation, benefiting local communities and fostering cross-border trade and investment opportunities.

The management and operation of the GERD require robust institutional frameworks and mechanisms for cooperation, transparency, and dispute resolution. Participating countries can use the GERD as an opportunity to strengthen their institutional capacity and governance structures for managing Trans Boundary water resources effectively.

The construction and operation of the GERD can promote people-to-people interaction, cultural understanding, and collaboration among communities living in the Nile Basin. Educational programs, cultural exchanges, and joint research initiatives can help build bridges and promote solidarity among riparian populations.

While the GERD presents opportunities for peaceful cooperation and regional development, it is essential for Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan to engage in transparent and inclusive dialogue, respect international law and principles of equitable water allocation, and prioritize mutual benefits and shared prosperity for all riparian countries in the Nile Basin. Effective cooperation and collaboration will be a key to realizing the full potential of the GERD as a catalyst for peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region.

Power sharing among the East African countries will not only contribute to meeting the renewable energy needs of the region but is also instrumental in practically helping to promote peace and security cooperation among the countries.

Ethiopia showed her vision on multiple sets of cooperation among Nile riparian countries by playing a major role in establishing NBI and the resultant Nile Council which is already under operation. This is a typical manifestation of how Ethiopia worked towards using African resources for enhancing African economic development. Ethiopia has always cherished the values and operational objectives of Agenda 2063 by constructing GERD in the spirit of pan Africanism.

One important strategy that Ethiopia is pursuing is using African natural resources for Africa's development. This again is in line with Ethiopia's foreign policy and diplomacy.

In conflict ridden Africa cooperation on using the natural resources of the continent is of vital importance not only for economic development but also for promoting sustainable peace among the peoples and governments of the region.

Foreign powers often use conflicts in the region to pursue their own interests by taking sides among the conflicting parties.

Conflicts and poverty can be alleviated in Africa when the regional governments work to make up for lost opportunities for joint economic cooperation.

Africans cannot resolve the challenges they face cross border trafficking of arms and humans only in a single handed manner. They need to cooperate and use their resources as tools for uprooting conflicts and ensuring sustainable peace in the region.

GERD has a potential for promoting tourism and hospitality industry not only in Ethiopia but across the world. It stands to reason that GERD has a lot in store for Africa and the world. Ethiopia has to do much more to use her natural resources in the pursuit of peace and security as an important objective of the nation's foreign policy and diplomacy.

GERD has proved to be a reliable tool for developing common national narratives in ensuring national peace and stability in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the dam has now become a spot for developing cultural and diplomatic relations not only among African countries but also across the world. A new culture of self financing mega projects like GERD has set an example for African countries who are suffering from donor fatigue on development programs in the continent. Lessons in self reliance on funding huge projects have boosted Ethiopia's economic diplomacy by setting an example for the rest of Africa.

Ethiopia employed consistent and legally acceptable negotiations during the tripartite negotiations with the lower riparian countries. While the opponents of the construction of GERD fought to the extent of conducting misinformation and mendacious propaganda and taking the issue to the UN, Ethiopia employed rational and legal arguments based on international laws on utilization of Trans Boundary Rivers. Under the condition in which major western powers denied the rights of Ethiopia to use the water resources of the Blue Nile, Ethiopia's official negotiators and diplomats fought to defend the interests of their country.

Ethiopia has huge water resources and hydropower potentials. Over the next several years, Ethiopia is conducting diplomatic activities to share hydroelectric power from GERD with 14 African countries besides Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan.

Ethiopia will continue to develop more dams for generating hydroelectric power that could be shared with African countries near and far. This will enable Ethiopia to position itself as a real hydroelectric power hub for Africa over the coming several years.

Ethiopians here and overseas will celebrate the completion of GERD as a major economic and diplomatic victory for the nation.

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



# Editorial

## Charting a bright future for Black people worldwide

This week, the African Union (AU) is convening its 38th annual meeting here in Addis Ababa under the theme “Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations.” This timely topic calls for a deep examination of the continent’s past and an exploration of its hidden assets, which can significantly contribute to its future prosperity.

As the renowned novelist George Orwell once said, “Who controls the past controls the future.” For Africa, uncovering its rich history and civilization is essential to seeking justice for the wrongs committed against it. Only by addressing these historical injustices can the continent pave a clearer path toward a brighter future.

It is imperative for Black people in Africa and across the globe to reclaim their glorious past and actively work towards a better future. In this context, initiatives like the Global Black Center (GBC) deserve recognition and support, as they are vital for advancing the economic and political transformation of Black communities.

Africa is home to a significant population of Black individuals who embody the continent’s identity. However, both Africans and people of African descent have faced numerous challenges stemming from global phenomena. The slave trade alone resulted in the loss of a considerable portion of Africa’s young and working population, not only depleting human resources but also igniting a legacy of conflict and unrest that has marred its ancient civilizations.

Following the devastation of the slave trade, Africa fell prey to another tragic chapter: European colonization. While colonization has occurred in various forms around the world, Africa suffered uniquely due to its prior vulnerabilities. The continent was fragmented into artificial borders, leading to crimes against humanity and lasting repercussions.

As a result of this historical chain of events, Black people worldwide continue to grapple with the aftermath, facing social, economic, and ethnic challenges. It is crucial for them to unite in reclaiming their heritage and striving for success. Africans must tell their own stories, amplify their hidden histories, and celebrate their civilizations to chart a path toward a promising future.

Despite current challenges, Africans find themselves in a more empowered position today. The establishment of the African Union—a continental organization formed in the wake of liberation from colonization—serves as a testament to this progress.

To secure a better future, Africans must strengthen their unity and commitment within this robust continental framework. The AU is actively working on Agenda 2063, which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to shape a bright future for the continent.

Notably, the AU is advancing its flagship projects to ensure that Africa’s economic interests are prioritized in international trade relations. The operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds immense potential to enhance the continent’s economic competitiveness by fostering a unified market.

In addition to economic independence, the AU deserves commendation for its efforts to ensure political empowerment on global issues. For instance, it is advocating for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a move that reflects Africa’s current status in the global political and economic landscape.

In short, it is vital for all relevant organizations, including the African Union, member states, and various stakeholders, to collaborate closely with the Global Black Center. Together, they can ensure that Africa plays a pivotal role in shaping a better future for Black people, leaving no one behind in this essential endeavor.

# Opinion

## Russian Diplomat’s Day

BY EVGENY TEREKHIN

Annually on February 10 Russia celebrates a professional holiday of the diplomatic staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation – the Diplomat’s Day. It was established by a Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on October 31, 2002. This holiday testifies to the high recognition of diplomacy as a profession by the Russian state and its important role in the process of national development.

The history of Russian diplomacy has deep roots and today’s Foreign Ministry fully maintains continuity with its predecessors and is engaged in consistent, multi-vector and pragmatic activities. At all stages the development of national diplomatic service, the Ministry has focused on upholding Russia’s foreign policy interests at the international arena and facilitating consistent domestic development of the country.

The current world is changing rapidly, and with it the foreign policy of states in the new conditions is undergoing gradual changes. Russia, as well as other states has entered an acute phase of struggle for the right to lay down the basic principles of a new world order. The outcome of this process will determine the future of the world, which is steadily moving towards the formation of a polycentric multipolar order. It is objectively being created on an intercivilizational basis and will embody such a consent that will replace Western dominance with its unification, the imposition of its values and development models on other cultures. This will not be the great power policy of the past. It is no exaggeration to say that this will open up new horizons for diplomacy that history has not yet known. Violence, coercion and dictatorship of the past few centuries must sink into oblivion, since these methods are alien to all peoples of good will. States are called upon to negotiate on the basis of sovereign equality and non-interference in each other’s affairs. Such agreements and inevitable compromises are very essential for diplomacy. It is these fundamental questions of world existence that are being decided in the current conflict on the territory of Ukraine between the collective West and sovereign Russia, which is seen, as and indeed is incompatible with Western hegemony. Our sovereignty is an indispensable condition for the emancipation of all countries, and this is the World Majority/Global South, which is fighting against the remnants of neocolonialism. In relations with African countries, the Russian Federation continues to promote partnership cooperation in the field of politics and security, economics and trade, as well as in the humanitarian sphere, adhering to the approach of “African solutions to African problems” aimed at supporting the independence and sovereignty of the states of the continent.

By holding the first ministerial conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum

on November 9-10, 2024, which most of African foreign ministers and the leadership of the African Union Commission and the executive bodies of regional integration associations attended, the Russian Federation confirmed the strategic level of cooperation between Russia and Africa aimed at promoting the formation of a fair and stable world order based on the principles of sovereign equality of states and non-interference in their internal affairs. The signed joint statements on ways to form a fair, transparent and equal system of international information security, on strengthening cooperation in the fight against terrorism, statements on topical issues of exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes testify to the intention of Russia and African countries to continue our strategic interaction in order to achieve a fair world order and ensure international peace and security for all states, regardless of differences in political, economic and social systems.

We share the same confidence with regard to partnership between Russia and Ethiopia and highly value, as well as appreciate our cordial and friendly bilateral relations, distinguished by their unique and multifaceted nature. Within last years, together with our Ethiopian partners, we did plenty of good work to qualitatively improve our interaction. Russia’s chairmanship of BRICS in 2024 and Ethiopia’s active participation in the association contributed to increased foreign policy coordination of the participating countries and the harmonious integration of Addis Ababa into all formats of the association’s activities.

The expanding participation of Africa, in particular Ethiopia, in the BRICS process over the last year, as well as the strengthening of the continent’s position represented by the African Union in the G20, indicate that the opportunities and alternative platforms provided by non-Western formats contribute to the sovereignty of African countries, opening up prospects for getting rid of neocolonial dependence and overcoming what is commonly called the “resource curse”. The word “justice” is key in the discourse of African development, reflecting, among other things, the importance of affirming Africa’s civilizational identity in the entire system of international relations, including the UN system and the issue of its reform, including its Security Council.

In the conclusion, as we celebrate this professional day, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my friends and colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia for their unwavering support and assistance to the Embassy in fulfilling its duties. I am glad to certify that the positions of our countries are close or coincide on almost all acute modern issues. So, let me express my assertion that with joint efforts we will achieve new successes for the good of our peoples and countries.

*The author, H.E. Mr. Evgeny Terekhin, is Ambassador of Russia to Ethiopia*

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# Business & Economy

## The corporation that is promoting manufacturing industry culture

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Manufacturing industry is one of the sectors that have been working hard to bring about economic transformation in the country. Many activities have been carried out to shift the economy to manufacturing industry, which has been dependent on agriculture for centuries.

One of these activities is to solve the chronic problems that have been seen in the sector by building industrial parks and transferring them to investors. The country has done a lot to create a favorable investment environment for investors who want to engage in the industrial sector, especially foreign investors.

In particular, in the activities carried out to attract foreign direct investment, it is believed that industrial parks play a significant role in solving the problems of providing workplaces and infrastructure, and bureaucratic red tape that foreign investors face when coming to the country. As a result, 13 industrial parks have been built; thus, many changes have been brought about in the sector.

These industrial parks, built in Hawassa, Adama, Addis Ababa/Qilinto, Bole, Debre Birhan, Kombolcha, Dire Dawa, Bahir Dar, Mekele, Semera and Jimma, are contributing to the development of the sector by attracting investment that contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings, job creation, knowledge and technology transfer.

The industrial parks are managed by the Industrial Parks Development Corporation, which was established by the government through a proclamation, and the corporation has made significant contributions to the country's industrial development by developing and managing the parks over the past ten years since its establishment and operation.

Following the issuance of the Special Economic Zone Proclamation, the corporation has recently converted eleven of the industrial parks it manages into special economic zones, where extensive work can be carried out. The corporation is also responsible for developing and managing the special economic zones.

It is believed that these special economic zones will continue to play a significant role in the country's industrial development. In addition to being centers of manufacturing industries, the special economic zones will serve as multi-sector trade and logistics centers.

Besides, the Special Economic Zones will enhance the country's participation in the global value chain and enable it to participate effectively in regional trade, strengthen its ability to compete in terms of time and cost, and ensure the benefit of the people.

The Industrial Parks Development Corporation recently celebrated its 10th anniversary in developing and managing these former industrial parks, today's special economic zones, at the Dire Dawa Special Economic Zone.

Responding to questions from journalists regarding the corporation's 10-year journey and its future, the corporation's CEO, Fisseha Yitagesu (PhD), stated that the



*Ethiopia upgrades 10 Industrial Parks to Special Economic Zones for attracting more FDI-ENA*

corporation has been gaining experience in developing and managing parks over the past 10 years.

He also indicated that he expects more projects to come forward, and that new projects have also been launched as the 10th anniversary is being celebrated; one of these is the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone.

As he explained, it has been a while since the Special Economic Zone proclamation was issued. Until recently, the parks were mainly focused on manufacturing, where products for export were produced.

The Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone will also be a multi-sectoral zone where manufacturing, trade and logistics activities will be carried out. He also explained that the free trade zone, especially its proximity to Djibouti, will facilitate the direct unloading of goods imported through Djibouti and their movement to the interior of the country.

He said that the corporation was established by law in late December 2014, and since then it has developed and managed 13 industrial parks in different parts of the country.

It has exported products worth nearly two billion Dollars to the foreign market so far, and has created job opportunities for more than 300,000 citizens. He described the corporation as having made a significant contribution to the expansion of manufacturing industry culture.

The corporation is still in its infancy; after this, many jobs are expected in logistics, trade and manufacturing. This work is not enough for over 120,000 people, and the special economic zones are being created in both the private and public sectors where job opportunities are created, trade is integrated, and production is carried out, he added.

The CEO mentioned that within ten years, the corporation will develop leading industrial parks in Africa, and pointed out that there are industrial parks or infrastructures where any developer can come and easily start working. This is not an easy development, and it is contributing to the industrialization of Ethiopia.

"To what extent have the parks achieved the objectives for which they were established? For example, when the Hawassa Industrial Park was fully operational, it was expected to generate one billion Dollars a year; this

is not the case for Hawassa Park, but for all parks in general; how can it be said that the parks have been effective when their foreign exchange earning capacity is at this level?" the CEO said, "First of all, there are many parameters by which the parks are measured."

He said that this year, macroeconomic reforms have been fully implemented and the overall government development policy is being changed, which will play a significant role in exports; he believes that it will also contribute to the import trade, which is facing significant difficulties. Exports have not progressed as expected, and that exports are expected to expand well from now on.

Regarding shifting of industrial parks to special economic zones, the CEO explained that industrial parks focus on traditional manufacturing; most of the country's industrial parks are engaged in small-scale manufacturing such as textiles.

The shift to special economic zones can also be seen in the context of global economic activity; many countries are also shifting from traditional industrial parks to special economic zones. The government's policy direction is to make them special zones that encourage more entrepreneurship, trade, and real estate, and that the global trend is the same.

Industrial Parks Corporation Investment; Promotion and Marketing Executive Director, Zemen Junedin Abubakar, for his part, said that the main focus of the special economic zones is to expand industrial culture and create employment opportunities, rather than foreign exchange, from the industrial parks of the past.

The Executive Director said; "The Special Economic Zones, especially in the agro-processing sector, have been made to focus on the benefits of the farmers and pastoralists around them; thus, it has been possible to create a sustainable market connection for more than 90 thousand farmers. This market connection created through the supply of beer barley that has been created in the Bole and Debre Birhan Special Economic Zones."

In general, the Executive Director mentioned that a sustainable market connection of 350 million Dollars has been created through

all this, and this has ensured the sustainable benefit of the farmers; they have eliminated the illegal middlemen who were making profits without adding any value, and have enabled producers and consumers to connect directly.

According to his explanation; another major achievement is the performance achieved in proxy production. One of the efforts made to maintain the balance of trade between exports and imports over the past 4 years is the process of producing imported products domestically and substituting imported ones.

In particular, the production of uniforms for the defense and security forces in the Hawassa Special Economic Zone and other economic centers focused on garments and textiles has saved more than 800 million USD in foreign exchange. This performance is not limited to clothing, but also in the pharmaceutical sector, as imported drugs being produced in the Kilinto Pharmaceutical Special Economic Zone.

He also announced that they are contributing significantly to environmental protection by planting an average of more than 600,000 indigenous seedlings every year. These special economic zones have been in operation for the most part in the last five years; "They have an irreplaceable role in the structural transformation we envision as a country; the development of industrial culture."

According to the executive, the centers have no competitors in Africa; they are preferred and competitive in terms of energy supply and infrastructure at the international level. "Since their products are in demand in the world market (they are said to be 'Made in Ethiopia'), they have a positive contribution to the construction of the country's infrastructure and show our potential in the sector," he said.

He also mentioned that out of the 177 manufacturing sheds in all special economic zones, more than 87% are now owned by foreign and domestic investors. The focus on garment/textiles has been shifted to other sectors, especially pharmaceuticals; agro-processing; technology; domestic car assembly and aircraft parts manufacturing; trade; logistics and ICT development sectors, and that results can be achieved in a short time.



# Art & Culture

## Ethiopian authors who write in African 'national' languages

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Presently, Nigeria is one of the leading African countries in terms of economic development and cultural and linguistic vibrancy. The Nigerian economic is one of the biggest in Africa. Although studies are not readily available, its cultural industry is one of the leading in the continent. Nigerian cinema and literature in English can be considered the best on the continent. Proof of it is that many Nigerian writers have won prestigious international literary awards including the noble Prize. The prestigious Nigerian cinema has joined the global stage and continues to grow as a high speed. Some of the best and richest black musicians in the world are Nigerians.

One of the major problems in Africa is the absence of cross-cultural or cross-linguistic integration or vertical links between the people of different African countries. Even countries who are geographic adjacent to one another, display a very weak cultural and linguistic linkages. It is easier to read Kenyan writers in English than in Swahili. People at the grassroots level have developed cross-cultural relationships that are mainly confined to cross border trade or security. Culture or language is not yet a factor of Africa's integration. African arts and culture is more available in English or French rather than in African languages. You cannot imagine a Kenyan writer working in English or an Algerian writer working in Portuguese.

Ethiopian writers who wrote novels or short stories in English are very few. First, English has never been Ethiopia's national language but a second working language. Secondly Ethiopia has not been under colonial administration in its history. Third, English as a foreign language was introduced to Ethiopia around the last century as part and parcel of the modernization of the educational system under Emperor Haile Selassie. Most, if not all the Ethiopian writers who started to write in foreign language were members of the first or second generation of students.

Among the first generation of Ethiopian writers who wrote in English is Haddis Alemayehu who is considered the best writer in Amharic, the national language. Haddis Alemayehu has not written a novel in English. His work consists of a short story entitled, "The War of Cats and Mice". Below is an excerpt from the story:

*Once upon a time there were two independent governments. The first was the government of cats and the second that of mice. Because there was a vast sea separating them, the two governments were living in isolation from one another and did not even know each other's existence.*

*The government of cats made progress with population, civilization and power. Consequently, it started to face difficulties feeding its people and developing its*

*industries. It felt the need to send envoys across the sea to see the world beyond the horizon. It was necessary to see how the creatures were living there. They had to find the means to save the race of cats from dying of hunger. The order came from the monarch to spend a great amount of money for the construction of a huge boat that would carry handsome male and female diplomats selected from across the empire of cats. The diplomats would travel with gifts of all kinds. They would then present the gifts to the government of mice.*

Haddis Alemayehu's style is something like the writing of French author called "La Fontaine", a traditional style of storytelling that is slowly developing and uses the technique of personification to tale a moral tale.

According to my information, I would put Abe Gubegna, the second Ethiopian writer in English with his short novel entitled, "The Savage Girl". Abe was what you might call a rebellious and courageous writer who was not afraid to criticize even top government officials of the monarchy as well as the Derg regime. He was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned as well as banished to the remotest and coldest part of Ethiopia in former province of where he spent some time before his release. But that did not deter him from writing political novels that criticized the two regimes. Abe was allegedly assassinated by the military government. He is one of the two Ethiopian writers to be killed by people in power.

The other one is of course Be'alu Girma, an American-educated journalist and author whose novels in Amharic are considered classics. Although he was educated in the States, Be'alu never wrote fiction in English although he was a consummate columnist who wrote in English for local magazines like the old or defunct Addis Reporter.

The more prominent and more prolific among that generation of writers who penned fiction in English is Sahle Selassie Berhane Mariam with his, with his debut novel "Dinega's Village", followed by "The Afersata", "The Firebrands", "Warrior King". He also wrote a short story in English entitled, "The Woman of Azer" (1969). Sahle Selassie was also a historical novelist known for his work, entitled "Basha Kitawu" the story of an Ethiopian patriot during the Italian occupation. Sahle Selassie was also educated in the United States and used English as his main medium of expression.

Among Ethiopian authors who wrote in English is Dagnachew Worku with his famous "The Thirteenth Sun" which is considered a modernist work. Dagnachew used a new technique known as stream of consciousness in The Thirteen Sun, a technique little known among Ethiopian authors at that time. Dagnachew might have borrowed it from the works of William Faulkner who used the same technique to

*means and all types of possibilities about him, I went out one day to explore the world-the world I have lived in but which I hadn't had the chance to know. There was nothing unusual in my exploration except that it was a night out with a definite objective in mind - to paint the night red, you know, drink, music, women, and all that sorts of thing. Sometimes it helps to have had the chance of visiting other countries. You'll know how to go about such things - and I happened to be among such fortunate few.*

*So, I was loitering about on one of the obscure back streets of "A" about which I was told so many unheard stories. My God! I've forgotten to start at the right place; it puts me out of orbit - the story you know, sort of what you might feel without your compass. ---god-damn-boogie....*

One of the still surviving legacies of colonialism in Africa is the fact that many countries are still using English, French, or Portuguese as their national languages. These countries have found it convenient to keep on using these languages as their national working languages. The division of Africa into Francophone or French speaking and Anglophone or English speaking Africa is at the root of this embarrassing legacy. The question that often pops up among linguists or politicians is why African countries still use the languages of the colonialists instead of their own languages.

Most of them point out at Nigeria as an example. When we see the historical evolution of language usage in Nigeria from 1951 to 1967, we realize that Hausa was the official language of the northern states as the most widely spoken language although English is the official language of Nigeria. In addition to English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fula and English Creole are widely spoken. Many of the languages also exist in written form.

Many African countries are using foreign languages in their daily life because language is primarily a tool of interpersonal communication. The trouble with African writers is that they don't read much of the works of their counterparts or exchange experiences with them mentally, most African writers are still "Eurocentric", focusing on the West where their books are sold and earn them big royalties and their personal survival is secured. Nowadays, many of them live in the West, in the United States and Europe in particular. Ethiopian writers who wrote in English have become a 'vanishing species' and the new generation seems to have lost the appetite to read books leave alone write one. However, there is still hope. Africa is full of fantastic and amazing stories awaiting their writers. maybe one day, the writers from the African Diaspora may decide to written to the continent and write in their languages as well as in the common language which is now English as African singers are now writing their lyrics in English or French or any other European language.

**M**any African countries are using foreign languages in their daily life because language is primarily a tool of interpersonal communication

write immortal tales and won the Nobel Prize for his works. Like the other writers, Dagnachew was also famous for his novels in Amharic one of them being "Adefres" in which he criticized the feudal system in Ethiopia and gained fame and recognition for his excellent narrative techniques and the flow of his tales. I personally remember Dagnachew's other work in English, entitled, God - Damn - Shot - Gun - Boogie".

This is one of the best short stories ever written in English by an Ethiopian author. Dagnachew's mastery of English, the exquisite way he used the language and his narrative technique, ranks him even among the best short story writers anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, Dagnachew wrote only one short story and it has remained obscure until his death, when it was published in a local magazine. Below is a simple from Dagnachew's short story. One can enjoy the taste of his language and his mastery of the genre.

*" It happened after I returned from the Congo. I had plenty of money, American money, you know... and as a man with such*



# Indepth

## Extending topnotch services for AU participants

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia, well-known for its rich cultural hospitality, is poised to showcase its warm welcome as it prepares to host the 38<sup>th</sup> African Union (AU) General Assembly and the 46<sup>th</sup> AU Executive Council.

The country's commitment to hospitality is deeply ingrained in its culture, where the warmth and care extended to guests often surpass self-needs. Visitors from Africa and beyond frequently express admiration for the nation's diverse cultural landscape, deep-rooted faith, historical significance, and remarkable architecture. This unique combination of attributes leaves a lasting impression on those who come to experience it.

In line with this tradition of hospitality, Addis Ababa has been rolling out the red carpet to warmly welcome officials and guests from various African nations to attend the annual continental meeting.

The city is committed to fostering unity and collaboration across the continent. In preparation for the AU meetings, extensive efforts have been implemented to ensure that the events run smoothly and effectively, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and cooperation among African states.

During a recent media briefing, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, emphasized that meticulous preparations have been made to ensure this year's summit is organized uniquely.

She expressed optimism about welcoming guests to Addis Ababa, which has a rich history of hosting the AU Summit. The preparations reflect Ethiopia's dedication to serving as a diplomatic hub, highlighting its role as a leader in continental affairs.

This year, Ethiopia established a national coordinating committee comprised of representatives from 35 different institutions. The theme for the continental meeting, "Every Citizen is a Diplomat for His Country," underscores the significance of citizen involvement in diplomacy.

In line with this theme, 101 protocol cadets have undergone training to ensure the smooth and coordinated execution of this high-profile gathering. This initiative aims to foster a sense of national pride and responsibility, empowering citizens to play an active role in their country's representation on the international stage.

Moreover, the State Minister pointed out that Protocol Guidelines and Administrative Arrangements have been accurately crafted and shared with participants, ensuring that everyone is well prepared for the AU meeting.

A comprehensive manual for the Summit has been prepared to ensure clarity, while volunteer cadets fluent in various foreign languages, including English, Arabic, and French, have been trained to avoid communication gaps. Awareness



### To facilitate a smooth experience for visitors, the government has established robust systems for electricity, water, and telecommunications

campaigns have also been launched for hotels, transportation, and service providers to ensure a seamless experience for all attendees.

In terms of security, the Ethiopian Federal Police, Addis Ababa Police, and the National Intelligence Service are working together to enhance safety measures ahead of the AU Summit. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of providing a secure environment for dignitaries and guests, she noted.

According to the State Minister, Addis Ababa has hosted over 40 continental and international events in the past six months alone, solidifying its role as a diplomatic hub with immense experience in hosting significant gatherings. This impressive feat highlights the city's capability in managing events on both continental and global scales.

Furthermore, this trend not only showcases Addis Ababa's strategic importance but also enhances its reputation as a premier destination for international diplomacy and

collaboration.

On his part, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has extended an invitation to attendees of the 38<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, encouraging them to extend their visit and immerse themselves in Ethiopia's rich history, diverse cultures, and stunning landscapes.

In a welcoming message shared on social media, the Prime Minister emphasized that these attributes make Ethiopia the "Land of Origins." He urged participants to take the opportunity to explore the country's ancient heritage, vibrant traditions, and remarkable natural beauty beyond the summit activities.

"From ancient heritage sites to vibrant traditions and unparalleled natural beauty, there is so much to discover beyond the summit," the Prime Minister stated. This invitation reflects Ethiopia's desire to share its cultural wealth with the world while fostering greater understanding and collaboration among African nations.

To facilitate a smooth experience for visitors, the government has established robust systems for electricity, water, and telecommunications. Ethiopian Airlines has also designated staff to ensure efficient immigration and customs processes for participants arriving for the summit. This attention to detail is crucial in providing a welcoming atmosphere that reflects Ethiopia's commitment to hospitality.

Participants, side by side, will have the chance to immerse themselves in the city's rich cultural offerings and historical landmarks. Among the highlights is the newly inaugurated Addis Corridor Development, a modern initiative aimed at enhancing urban life. Attendees can also visit the recently renovated National Palace, a stunning example of Ethiopia's architectural heritage, a hub for international gatherings.

Additionally, the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum stands out as a significant tribute to Ethiopia's history, commemorating the nation's triumph over colonialism. Unity Parks, Friendship Parks, and Entoto Parks will also serve as important tourist

destinations, offering serene environments for reflection and relaxation.

These sites not only celebrate Ethiopia's vibrant culture but also provide an ideal backdrop for meaningful interactions and networking among delegates. As participants explore these attractions, they will gain a deeper understanding of Ethiopia's past and present, enriching their overall experience and facilitating dialogue and cooperation among African nations.

The local business community is also poised to benefit from the influx of visitors, with hotels, restaurants, and transport services gearing up to provide exceptional service. This event presents a unique opportunity for Ethiopia to demonstrate its capacity to host international gatherings while highlighting its rich cultural tapestry.

The significance of this assembly extends beyond mere discussions; it represents an opportunity for African leaders to address pressing continental issues, share insights, and forge new partnerships.

Ethiopia's Permanent Representative to the African Union, Ambassador Hirut Zemene, has outlined the country's priorities for the summit, focusing on agendas that safeguard its national interests. She indicated that Ethiopia intends to highlight its initiatives in green development, agricultural practices, environmental conservation, and school feeding programs, and infrastructure development during the discussions.

As the countdown begins to the 38<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, Ethiopia stands ready to showcase its capabilities as a host nation while addressing critical issues facing the continent. The summit represents not only a platform for dialogue among African leaders but also an opportunity for Ethiopia to demonstrate its commitment to regional cooperation and development.

The State Minister urged the residents of Addis Ababa to continue their tradition of warmth and hospitality towards the participants, contributing to a welcoming atmosphere.



# Law & Politics



## Rectifying historical wrongs through reparation

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The 38<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit is set to take place in Addis Ababa from February 14 to 16, 2025. This year's summit will focus on the theme "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations," underscoring the urgent need for reparatory justice and racial healing across the continent.

This year, African leaders face significant challenges as they gather to identify and implement strategies that will address the historical injustices stemming from the colonial era. The scars of colonialism run deep, and calls for justice and reparation from former colonizers remain a pressing issue. While some former colonial powers have made gestures toward reconciliation, much work remains to be done. It may key topics on the agenda include financial reparations, historical acknowledgment, cultural preservation, and more.

In a significant development, a coalition of European countries has committed to a comprehensive reparations package for their former African colonies after years of negotiations. This agreement includes financial compensation, debt forgiveness measures, and technology transfer agreements aimed at bolstering Africa's economic growth and sustainability. Additionally, there is a pledge to return cultural artifacts taken during colonial rule a move that many see as essential for healing and recognition.

A 2022 report by Deutsche Welle (DW) highlighted Germany's commitment to pay Namibia €1.1 billion (approximately \$1.3 billion) in reparations for the genocide committed during its colonial occupation. This acknowledgment comes after years of Germany's reluctance to accept responsibility. In 2016, Berlin indicated its willingness to apologize, marking a pivotal moment in its relationship with Namibia.

Germany has also taken steps to return some stolen artifacts, including the recent return of cultural items to Nigeria. Furthermore, Belgium made headlines by returning the remains of Patrice Lumumba, a prominent figure in the Democratic Republic of Congo's independence movement, to

### A critical component of Africa's future is the urgent requirement for strong and uncorrupted leadership

his family for proper burial a significant gesture in the context of colonial history.

Despite these advances, the debate surrounding the implementation of reparations remains contentious. Many argue that the pace of restitution is too slow and that deeper, systemic changes are necessary to rectify historical wrongs.

As the AU Summit approaches, expectations are high that tangible outcomes will emerge from discussions on reparations and justice. The leaders of the continent will be tasked with not only addressing the historical grievances but also laying the groundwork for a more equitable future. The summit represents a crucial opportunity for African nations to unite in their quest for justice and recognition, aiming to heal the wounds of the past while forging a path toward sustainable development and

empowerment.

In an interview with ENA, Desta Meghoo, a reparations expert at the Diaspora Africa Forum, stressed the necessity for Africans to come together under a cohesive policy and legal framework to effectively address the lasting damages inflicted upon the continent. She emphasized the importance of a unified African voice in securing justice and restitution for the enduring scars of slavery and colonialism.

Reflecting on her personal history, Meghoo shared, "My ancestors were ripped from the shores of West Africa and taken to Jamaica." She underscored the significance of reparations, stating, "For us, this issue is relevant and important. We have been fighting for many decades, if not over a century."

Meghoo believes that the reparations initiative has the potential to unite both Africa and the diaspora, as the repercussions of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism have profoundly affected both groups. She noted that while Ethiopia was never colonized, it has still felt the impacts of colonial policies. "These policies continue to affect Ethiopia today," she explained, advocating for Ethiopia to lead by example in supporting the African Union's reparations initiatives.

Highlighting the importance of Ethiopia's leadership, Meghoo also called for unified continental policies regarding the return of artifacts, rather than fragmented national approaches. "Whether these items were taken during the transatlantic slave trade or in conflicts like those at Adwa, we must unite in solidarity to create robust policies for their return," she stated.

While recognizing the efforts of West African nations, particularly Ghana, in advocating for the return of stolen artifacts, Meghoo expressed hope that these initiatives would be coordinated through a continental framework established by the AU. She firmly believes that there should not be separate policies for each country, such as Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria.

To achieve meaningful reparations, Meghoo outlined a two-pronged strategy: first, fostering government-to-government engagement to negotiate policies and laws

through the AU, and second, raising public awareness to support these efforts.

Beyond discussions around reparations and historical acknowledgment from former colonizers intensify, many African voices are emphasizing that the continent's needs extend beyond these measures. A critical component of Africa's future is the urgent requirement for strong and uncorrupted leadership.

In particular, the youth of Africa face daunting challenges due to unfavourable political climates in their respective countries, often leading them to undertake perilous migrations in search of better opportunities. Many young people are questioning the effectiveness of their governments in ensuring democracy and facilitating peaceful transitions of power.

The on-going conflicts and instability across various regions have left citizens tired of the nonstop sounds of gunfire and violence. This climate of unrest has sparked a collective yearning for leaders who can create a conducive environment for peace, stability, and economic opportunity.

Citizens across the continent are demanding accountability and transparency from their leaders, seeking governance that prioritizes the welfare of the populace rather than personal or political gain. There is a growing consensus that effective leadership is essential not only for addressing historical injustices but also for laying the groundwork for a prosperous and peaceful future.

The desire for change is palpable; many Africans are tired of governance that fails to deliver on promises of democracy, development, and safety. They want leaders who will actively work to cultivate an atmosphere where they can thrive where education, employment, and security are accessible to all.

Overall, while reparations and historical acknowledgment are crucial steps in addressing the injustices of the past, the present and future of Africa depend heavily on the emergence of strong, ethical leadership. The youth, in particular, are looking for leaders who can inspire hope and foster an environment where peace and opportunity flourish.



# Women in Focus

## Combatting FGM

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Ethiopia has made significant strides in combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), acknowledging it as a critical issue that impacts the health and rights of women and girls. Over the past decades, the Ethiopian government, in collaboration with various non-governmental organizations and community groups, has implemented comprehensive strategies aimed at eradicating FGM. These initiatives encompass legal reforms, extensive public awareness campaigns, and community-based interventions focused on education and empowerment. By engaging local leaders and fostering open dialogue, Ethiopia is actively working to eradicate harmful traditional practices including FGM thereby safeguarding the dignity and well-being of women and girls throughout the nation. As a result, it was possible to mobilize the community and bring about an attitudinal change thereby reducing the problem though a lot remains to be done.

Recently, in relation to the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), observed every year on February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) launched eight national strategic documents aimed at eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage in Ethiopia by 2030.

During an event, marked under the theme “Stepping Up the Pace: Strengthening Alliances and Building Movements to End FGM,” MoWSA Minister Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that the launch of the new strategic documents came following the recent recognition of Ethiopia by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its efforts in combating these harmful practices. “This honor reaffirms our relentless commitment, unity, and determination to eradicate these practices by 2030,” she added.

The strategic documents would serve as a comprehensive framework for systematic reporting, monitoring, and evaluation across all stakeholders involved.

They also encompass ideas including protecting women and young girls from harmful practices, enhancing the capacity of women, bringing about social change, and increasing the participation of men for better outcomes.

According to her, the strategic documents were developed focusing on around five key pillars: empowering adolescent girls, shifting harmful social norms, strengthening systems and institutions, enhancing the enabling environment, and generating and utilizing robust data and evidence. She emphasized that the new strategic documents provide a guiding framework for systematic reporting, monitoring, and evaluation across all stakeholders.

Worldwide, approximately 650 million women were married as children, and 230 million have undergone FGM. In Ethiopia,



*While Women and Social Affairs Minister Ergogie unveiling the national strategic documents developed to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage by 2030*

despite significant progress, around 17.3 million women and girls were married before the age of 18, and nearly 25 million have experienced FGM.

The Ethiopian government has enacted legal reforms, including revisions to the Criminal Code, Family Law, and the Federal Constitution, to address these issues. The National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM, a pioneering multi-sectoral initiative, is currently being evaluated in an end-line evaluation, with the support from UNICEF, UNFPA, and other partners. The evaluation’s findings will guide the next phase of the roadmap, directing efforts towards the 2030 goal.

“Through the implementation of this roadmap, we have learned that community-based interventions, facilitator manuals, strategic frameworks, and research are essential in driving change,” Minister Ergogie remarked

The strategic documents have been developed in five languages (Amharic, English, Oromia, Afar, and Somali) with contributions from regional bureaus of Women, Children, and Social Affairs, justice bureaus, and UNICEF Ethiopia. Minister Ergogie also expressed gratitude to UNICEF, UNFPA, and the National Alliance for their technical and financial support in the effort exerted to end FGM and child marriage. She also stressed the importance of exerting utmost efforts and discharging responsibilities by all actors in turning the documents to practical activities thereby bringing tangible outcomes.

Deputy Representative of UNICEF Ethiopia, Mariko Kagoshima, also acknowledged the significant reduction of the FGM in the country and emphasized the importance of the new documents in

addressing remaining gaps.

Representatives from regional Bureaus of Women and Social Affairs, Justice Bureaus, CSOs, and other stakeholders participated in the launching event.

As the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM was celebrated under the theme “Stepping Up the Pace: Strengthening Alliances and Building Movements to End FGM,” the UNFPA and UNICEF jointly urge partners to intensify interventions against FGM.

In a joint press release, the organizations also called on Ethiopia to accelerate its current progress on FGM prevention fivefold (UNICEF 2024) to protect an estimated 2.5 million girls who are at risk of undergoing FGM by 2030 (UNFPA 2015).

“FGM is a serious violation of human rights, undermining principles of equality, bodily autonomy, and non-discrimination based on sex, as well as the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The practice restricts girls’ and women’s access to opportunities and essential services, including health and education, hindering their potential. Despite being recognized as a human rights violation in Ethiopia, approximately 25 million women and girls have undergone FGM for various reasons, the statement added.

In a press release, UNFPA Country Representative Koffi Kouame stressed the need to ramp up efforts fivefold from the current pace to end FGM in Ethiopia stating that the UN Joint Program on FGM in Ethiopia will persist in promoting a community-driven movement that includes girls, religious leaders, boys, men, and

women. “By aligning and strengthening the collective efforts of these community members, we can build local champions and alliances to eliminate FGM,” he added.

UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia Aboubacar Kampo (MD), on his part, emphasized the urgency of strengthening multi-sectoral advocacy and programmatic interventions at all levels to end FGM.

“The continued practice of FGM on girls is unacceptable. With just five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending FGM by 2030, it is crucial to strengthen our multi-sectoral efforts in advocacy and programmatic interventions at national, regional, and local levels. Community involvement is vital in eradicating this practice, and we are proud to see communities leading the change for lasting change in Ethiopia—particularly through youth-driven initiatives, which exemplify the power of empowering young people to transform lives,” he remarked.

Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in reducing FGM prevalence. According to a 2024 survey by the Network of Ethiopian Women Association (NEWA), which included over 36,000 households across twelve regions, FGM prevalence among women aged 15-29 decreased from 47 percent in 2016 to 38.9 percent in 2024. Among women aged 15-50, prevalence declined from 65 percent in 2016 to 48.5 percent in 2024. However, significant work remains to eliminate FGM ahead of the 2030 target.

The UNFPA and UNICEF Joint Program on the Elimination of FGM will continue to support the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and other partners in intensifying efforts to end FGM by 2030 in Ethiopia, the statement indicated.



# Society



*Partial view of Entoto Park*



*Renovated National Palace Museum*

## Addis: A treasure trove of history, culture

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Finalizing all the necessary preparations, Ethiopia is welcoming its guests arriving from various countries to Addis Ababa to participate at the 46th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union Summit which began yesterday and runs from February 12–16, 2025, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

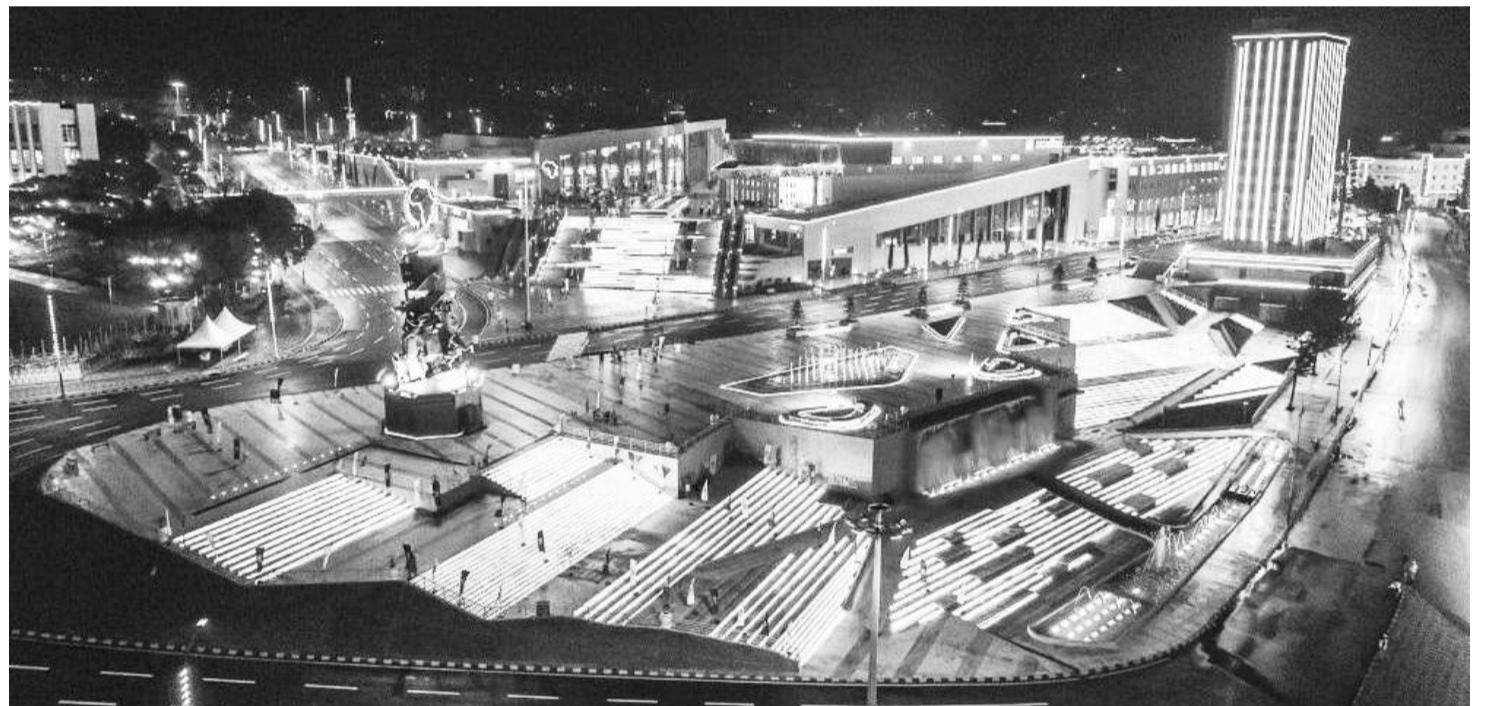
As indicated by the Government Communication Service, all the preparations are made for the successful hosting of the Summit. A grand committee supported by specialized sub-committees composed of 35 federal institutions and the Addis Ababa City Administration has been formed to facilitate and coordinate activities during the Summit. These committees are tasked with the mission of ensuring the seamless operation of the Summit.

Addis Ababa, often referred to as the political capital of Africa, is not just preparing for an important diplomatic gathering but also showcasing what makes it a unique and vibrant destination. With its rich history, cultural diversity and stunning landscapes, Addis has so much to offer to its esteemed guests from Africa and beyond.

In his welcoming message conveyed via his social media page, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) invited the participants to make their stay in Ethiopia memorable by visiting the various cultural and historical places of the country and immersing themselves in the natural beauty of its landscape.

“As Ethiopia welcomes you to the 38th African Union Summit, I encourage all participants to extend their stay to explore the rich history, diverse culture, and stunning landscapes that make Ethiopia truly a land of opportunity. Beyond the summit, there are many destinations worth exploring, from ancient heritage sites to vibrant cultures, including unparalleled natural beauty,” he stated.

Indeed, as indicated by the Prime Minister, Ethiopia has a lot to offer to its visitors. The various tourist sites that are found all over the country has a rejuvenating effect on the soul and mind of guests and, the historical and cultural richness of the nation has a lot to say about the country-providing insight into the country's past



*View of Adwa Victory Memorial Museum*

and present. This is especially true in Addis Ababa, where people from various culture and value systems live in harmony and are always eager to host newcomers. What is more, besides its role as a political center for Ethiopia and Africa, the city is home to numerous parks, museums, and other tourist destinations that further make it unique.

As the city embraces modernity while cherishing its rich heritage, Addis Ababa stands ready to showcase its transformation and potential to summit participants. The government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), has actively involved communities and stakeholders in the city's development, demonstrating that progress is a collective effort. Initiatives such as the restoration of tourist destinations and the implementation of corridor projects are part of the ongoing modernization efforts. The government is actively exerting its effort to make Addis more attractive, livable, and modern city not only to its residents but also to diplomatic communities living in Addis Ababa.

Addis Ababa is not only a city of cultural diversity, but it is also a place where visitors can have access to a wide range of attractions and tourist destinations. Entoto Park, located on Entoto Mountain, is one such example. Known as the roof of Addis Ababa, Entoto offers a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of the

city. Surrounded by natural beauty, the Park features walking trails and panoramic views of Addis Ababa to all nature lovers,

The National Museum, located in the heart of Addis Ababa (Amist Kilo) is home to the famous fossilized remains of Lucy, one of the world's oldest hominids. The Museum is a treasure trove of archeological wonders that not only shed light on the lives of Ethiopians but also serve as a living testament to the socio-cultural integration across generations.

The National Palace Museum which offers visitors a glimpse into Ethiopia's past with its stunning architecture and beautifully preserved artifacts, tells the story of the nation's economic and political position. Whoever has an opportunity to visit the National Palace Museum S/he will be mesmerized by its unique collection of royal vehicles, artifacts and other collections, which reflect the true color of Ethiopia and its greatness.

Another prominent historical site is the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, situated at the heart of Addis Ababa- Piassa. This Museum commemorates the Battle and Victory of Adwa, where Ethiopians successfully defended their sovereignty against the Italian invasion. The memorial stands as a symbol of Ethiopia's unity, resilience, and unwavering spirit, offering a powerful reminder of the country's struggle for independence, and still serves

as an emblem of freedom for people who seek.

It is obvious that Addis Ababa is not simply a hub for political discourses; it is also home to an array of tourist destinations that speak about Ethiopia's past and present. Beyond its cultural and historical significance, Addis Ababa is also home to impressive infrastructure projects, including the Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit and several corridor developments that enhance urban mobility and connect different regions of the city. These projects exemplify Ethiopia's commitment to modernization and sustainable urban planning, presenting a progressive image to the world as it prepares to host the summit.

Aside from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is endowed with a wealth of natural, historic, and cultural attractions that highlight the country's rich heritage. From the ancient Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela and the towering Axum Obelisks to the fascinating Sof Omar Caves and the historic city of Harar Jugol, these sites showcase Ethiopia's deep cultural and historical significance.

Hence, attending the Summit offers a unique opportunity to explore Ethiopia's exceptional natural beauty and vibrant history. Participants will gain an in-depth understanding of the country's rich traditions, culture, and way of life, all of which offer valuable insight into the complexities of Africa as a whole.





## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University

### HU's drone technology application helps to improve research and social engagement

BY EPHREM ANDARGCHEW

Haramaya University (HU) is working diligently to strengthen its research and social engagement initiatives through the application of drone technology.

Dr. Yishak Yousuf, the Vice President for Research and Community Engagement at HU, stated that university research and social engagement activities are essential for building digital technology capabilities. As a result, the university is beginning to implement drone technology to enhance its research and social engagement programs.

He also mentioned that HU intends to participate in a Drone Technology Scholarship for academic purposes, including research and social engagement activities. Participants in the scholarship not only collect information for their research but may also provide data and services aimed at increasing production and productivity in the agricultural sector.

Currently, the world is reaping numerous benefits from the use of civil drones. Therefore, HU's initiative to utilize drones is critical for expanding research and social engagement efforts across various aspects of life. Drones also contribute to advancements in agriculture and science, he added.

HU has been utilizing drones from the World Red Cross Institute to support agricultural research and projects. This collaboration allows the university to follow up on research projects and conduct timely, high-quality research by gathering relevant information. It is also beneficial for monitoring various HU projects, he noted.

Kemal Kasim, the Director of University-Industry Linkage and Entrepreneurship Development at HU, stated that drone technology is currently being employed in various university settings, including security, surveillance, and research. He elaborated that drones can be used to collect data across multiple sectors, including environmental science, agriculture, and geography, as well



as to capture aerial imagery, monitor wildlife, and assess land use. They can also enhance campus security by providing aerial surveillance.

As a result, HU's efforts to integrate

drone technology into the university's diverse activities can boost research capacities, improve operational efficiency, and provide significant educational experiences for researchers and students, he explained.



## Published Weekly in Cooperation with Dambi Dollo University

### DaDU's efforts to create clean, visually appealing, environmentally friendly surroundings

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

One fundamental principle that aids public institutions in enhancing service delivery is the creation of an appealing work environment. Dambi Dollo University (DaDU), a fourth-generation institution, has recently been established and is actively engaged in initiatives through its General Services Office to ensure the campus is clean, visually appealing, and environmentally friendly.

Elias Shamako, the Executive of General Services at DaDU, stated that efforts are underway to enhance campus coordination in order to implement the cleanliness and beautification initiative effectively while also providing clear services to the university community.

He emphasized that consistent efforts are



being made to maintain the cleanliness and appeal of the campus. This includes regular upkeep of offices, classrooms, laboratories, dormitories, cafeterias, and asphalt roads, ensuring that employees and stakeholders can enjoy a comfortable working environment while accessing services from one another.

He added that over 2,000 aesthetically

pleasing trees have been planted, providing shade and enhancing the campus's visual appeal. He also mentioned that a beautification and greening initiative is underway, covering 28 hectares of land in its initial phase. Additionally, he noted that these efforts have resulted in the creation of 168 permanent positions and job opportunities.

In summary, considerable initiatives are being implemented to improve service provision for both employees and stakeholders at Dambi Dollo University campus, with a focus on establishing a clean, attractive, and eco-friendly work environment.

Source: DaDU Public and International Relations Directorate



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