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Financial independence pivotal for Africa's future: President

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA – Over-reliance on external incentives has hindered Africa's progress, making self-incentivization and robust collaboration crucial, stated President Taye Atseke-Selassie at the eighth African Business Forum.

The forum themed "From Potential to Prosperity: Activating Africa's Regional Value Chains," held yesterday here focusing on strategies for economic growth and development.

President Taye urged Africa to address financial dependency and prioritize self-incentivization.

He emphasized that strengthening regional value chains is essential for Africa

See Financial independence ... page 3

Ethiopia, UK ties evolving into higher level : Premier

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA – Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed(PhD) held discussions yesterday with UK Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, focusing on key bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

On his social media page, Prime Minister Abiy stated that Rayner's visit further solidifies the long-standing relationship between the two countries and strengthens their deep ties. "Our partnership will continue to evolve and expand to a higher level," he affirmed. He also expressed his commitment to strengthening political and diplomatic relations, promoting a favorable business ecosystem, and enhancing economic collaboration.

Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Biruk Mekonnen, emphasized the landmark nature of Rayner's visit, highlighting its crucial role in strengthening bilateral relations.

He noted that the visit comes at a pivotal time, as Ethiopia undergoes a significant political and economic transformation, seeks to reinforce strategic partnerships, and the UK defines a new approach to its relations with Africa.

Ambassador Biruk stated that the visit



presents a valuable opportunity to elevate cooperation in key areas such as economic growth, social development, technology, and climate change—domains that promise mutual prosperity and long-term collaboration.

He acknowledged Ethiopia's firm commitment

to durable peace and development, describing the nation as being at a crossroads of a new socio-economic and political awakening, presenting both challenges and opportunities.

He outlined Ethiopia's priority sectors,

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Valentina Matvienko

Russian federation speaker visits Ethiopia today

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Valentina Matvienko, Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, begins a three-day state visit to Ethiopia today.

The visit, scheduled to last until February 20th, aims to strengthen and expand the traditionally strong and mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

Speaker Valentina emphasized the historical significance of the relationship, noting that Ethiopia

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AU lauds Pretoria peace deal as model for Africa

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News

Metropolitan's makeover allures diplomats: Ambassador

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The corridor development project has made Addis Ababa more attractive to diplomats, said Ambassador Tefera Shawul.

Former Ethiopian diplomat Ambassador Tefera Shawul told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the project inspires leaders and diplomats from various African countries attending AU meetings in the city to return with their families in the future.

He emphasized that the city's development plays a crucial role in boosting tourism. The government has undertaken significant renovations, including the historical palaces of Emperor Menelik II and Emperor Haile Selassie I, and similar efforts will continue to enhance tourist attractions and increase visitor inflow.

Today, Addis Ababa has become more



attractive thanks to its ever-expanding hotels, modern roads, and other essential infrastructure built under the corridor development project, the former diplomat stated.

Ambassador Tefera also highlighted the ongoing construction of the African Village in Addis Ababa, along with new developments such as Kuriftu Hotel, recently inaugurated on the outskirts of the city. The hotel's halls have been named after

Ketema Yifru and Tsehafe Tiezaz Aklilu Habtewold, prominent political figures from the Haile Selassie I era.

"We Ethiopians should be proud of this. Even if we have differences on other issues, we must equally recognize the contributions of Ethiopian governments in the African context," Ambassador Tefera said.

He further noted that Addis Ababa is undergoing dynamic change, which comes with sacrifices. However, efforts will be made to compensate for these sacrifices. "It is an issue that concerns all of us. We should contribute by keeping our surroundings clean and beautifying our homes."

The corridor development project aims to transform Addis Ababa into a technologically advanced and sustainable urban center by enhancing infrastructure, improving public services, and creating a more efficient and livable city for both residents and visitors.



China registers Sidama Coffee trademark

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority (EIPA) has announced that the Sidama Coffee trademark has been registered in China.

A discussion forum was held on Sunday with the participation of Sidama coffee producers, suppliers, exporters, and other stakeholders in the region. Authorities provided an explanation regarding the Geographical Indication Product System.

Sidama Region Coffee Producers and Suppliers Association President, Zerihun Kamiso, stated that the registration result will play a significant role in making farmers more profitable and preserving the reputation of Sidama coffee.

He appreciated EIPA for its contribution to the registration of the Sidama coffee trademark in China.

A five-party agreement was signed on February 16 between the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority, Ethiopian Coffee Association, Sidama Regional Coffee Producers and Suppliers Association, Sidama Coffee Growers Union, and Daye Bensa Coffee Exporters PLC to further

manage the Sidama Coffee trademark and guide it through the Geographical Indications system.

Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority Deputy Director General Shafi Umer, said that coffee is an invaluable cash crop in Ethiopia. "We need to work on promoting, and producing quality coffee to get more benefit from the sector."

He added that the registration is very important for Sidama coffee to maintain its popularity and demand and become competitive on the international level.

EIPA's Director General Woldu Yimesel explained that protecting the trademark and managing the geographical indication system is essential for Sidama coffee to be presented to the world market.

This will preserve the original taste and quality of the product along with other benefits, he said, while underscoring the necessity of coordinated efforts among stakeholders.

At the event, certificates of appreciation were presented by the Sidama Regional Coffee Producers and Suppliers Association to institutions that made significant contributions to the registration of Sidama coffee in China.

AASTU consolidates university-industry linkage to expedite dev't

• Hosts 9th Annual Conference of STII 2025

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Activities are underway to promote university-industry linkages, thereby accelerating the country's economic development, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) has announced.

During the 9th Annual Research Conference on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Industry (STII 2025), held yesterday, AASTU President Dereje Engida (PhD) stated that the university is striving for excellence in applied science, technology, and engineering.

According to him, research and innovation are crucial in driving Ethiopia's industrial and technological progress while fostering global competitiveness and boosting production and productivity.

He noted that AASTU has eight centers of excellence under which all research activities are organized. These centers ensure resource optimization, execution, and continuity of research. Additionally, a state-of-the-art Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub will become operational in a month.

"Science and technology are essential for sustainable economic growth. For Ethiopia, investing in these fields is crucial to achieving long-term development goals. Such investments help address challenges related to food security, energy sustainability, healthcare, and industrial transformation," he added.

AASTU's eight centers of excellence play a vital role in fostering innovation, sharing best practices, and establishing platforms for industry professionals to discuss common agendas, build networks, and collaborate. In this regard, academia, research institutes, international partners, and both private and public institutions are working together to find real-world solutions, the president



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

noted.

Dereje emphasized that, in collaboration with industry leaders and experts, AASTU aligns its research efforts with practical needs to ensure that innovation contributes meaningfully to industrial advancement and economic growth. In addition to these initiatives, AASTU is committed to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

AASTU's Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer, Abraham Debebe (PhD), highlighted that conducting problem-solving research to support productivity and competitiveness in Ethiopian industries is one of the pillars of the university's strategic plan.

AASTU aims to bridge the university-industry gap by working in cooperation with various stakeholders. Among other initiatives, the university conducts research and provides training to students to help develop skilled professionals for the industrial sector, Abraham added.

At the conference, 89 research papers will be presented, with attendees including researchers, academics, and industry experts, representatives from research institutes, embassies, and delegates from eight different countries.

News

AU lauds Pretoria peace deal as model for Africa

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – The African Union (AU) has released a report titled “Lessons-Learned Report from the AU-led peace process for the Tigray State of Ethiopia,” praising the process as a successful example of “African Solutions to African Problems” and a testament to the commitment to silencing the guns.

Outgoing AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat emphasized the report’s significance in pursuing sustainable peace and stability in Ethiopia and across Africa. He stated that the commission rigorously examined its peacemaking efforts in Tigray to glean valuable insights for future African mediation initiatives.

The peace process in Tigray has garnered significant regional and international attention due to its importance for Ethiopia’s stability and the broader Horn of Africa (HoA) region.

“This report serves as a testament to our commitment to learning and improving our approaches to facilitating peace on the continent,” The outgoing Chairperson stated. The report explores critical themes,

including inclusivity, international collaboration, and implementation modalities.

Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) highlighted the comprehensive nature of the Pretoria Peace Agreement and stressed the importance of local ownership in the peace process.

He reaffirmed the Ethiopian government’s unwavering commitment to the agreement’s full implementation and its dedication to restoring sustainable peace and normalcy in the Tigray state. “The process is beyond silencing the guns as the two parties avoid violence and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia,” Minister Gedion added.

The Interim Regional Administration of Tigray President Getachew Reda acknowledged the process as a success and a realization of African solutions to African problems.

The TPLF Chairman Debretsion Gebremichael (PhD) stated that the agreement has significantly improved peace and stability in the state and beyond. He recognized the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) as a pivotal moment, marking an end

to the conflict and exemplifying African solutions to African problems.

AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Ambassador Bankole Adegboyega Adeoye, acknowledged the diverse stakeholders involved in the peace process and their crucial contributions to its success. He commended both parties for their resilience and willingness to engage in constructive dialogue, laying the foundation for rebuilding confidence and trust.

The AU report acknowledges the vital roles of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, as the host of the peace talks in Pretoria, along with Kenya, Nigeria, and various international organizations, including the USA.

It emphasizes the importance of national and regional leadership, the mobilization of key actors, and institutional resilience in conflict management and preventing state failure. The report also highlights the invaluable experience, expertise, and unwavering commitment of those involved in mediating the peace process and navigating its complexities, as well as the indispensable support from the international community.

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including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and information technology, emphasizing the potential for collaboration with the UK, given their expertise and experience.

“The UK’s Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) provides a promising framework for enhancing Ethiopia’s trade relations with the UK, opening new avenues for market access and deeper economic integration,” he explained.

He also pointed to the Digital Ethiopia 2025 initiative, which aims to leverage

technology for inclusive growth, as another area ripe for collaboration. “The UK, with its own climate goals and bold leadership on the global stage, shares Ethiopia’s vision for a sustainable future,” he added.

Ambassador Biruk emphasized Ethiopia’s growing economic potential and strategic geopolitical position in the Horn of Africa (HoA), positioning it as a crucial partner.

He also noted Ethiopia’s leadership in regional peace and security, particularly in the fight against terrorism, which

complements the UK’s broader foreign policy objectives in the Horn of Africa, underscoring Ethiopia’s significant role in regional and global affairs.

He concluded by reiterating that Rayner’s visit is one of many opportunities to deepen and diversify the partnership between the two countries, fostering shared prosperity and a strong future together.

Upon her arrival in Addis Ababa, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh warmly welcomed Angela Rayner for her official visit.

Russian federation...

was the first African capital with which Russia established diplomatic ties.

“Our countries are connected by a rich history of mutually respectful relations,” she stated.

“Ethiopia was the first African capital with which Russia established diplomatic relations, and since then, they have only developed and strengthened. I see our main task in supporting the growth of these endeavors in all areas.”

She expressed confidence that her visit, accompanied by a high-level delegation, would be productive and contribute to further development in traditional and new areas of cooperation.

Valentina acknowledged the deep respect Ethiopians hold for the Soviet legacy, highlighting the USSR’s significant contributions to major infrastructure projects, including industrial enterprises, energy facilities, and military-technical cooperation. She stressed that this shared history of support forms a strong foundation for future collaboration.

The speaker also pointed to Ethiopia’s recent admission to the BRICS group during Russia’s presidency as further evidence of Addis Ababa’s growing prominence on the global stage. This, she noted, positions Ethiopia as a strong and influential partner in both multilateral and bilateral relations.

Both Russia and Ethiopia anticipate that this visit will pave the way for numerous promising and mutually beneficial projects. The shared cultural heritage and religious similarities between the two peoples are seen as vital factors in fostering stronger ties. As Valentina stated prior to her arrival, the visit is expected to significantly enhance the relationship between the two countries.

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to meaningfully participate in and shape the global economy.

He also stressed the importance of developing climate-resilient infrastructure, investing in human capital, and embracing technology for digital transformation.

Addressing resource mobilization and the financing gap, the President called for increased collaboration between financial institutions and African nations.

He underscored the need for reliable and affordable energy, improved infrastructure connectivity, and support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

President Taye showcased Ethiopia’s progress, citing its transformation from a wheat importer to self-sufficiency, achievements in textiles and energy, and its success in attracting investments through macroeconomic reforms.

He highlighted key projects like the Abbay and Koysa dams, and noted the

establishment of two dozen industrial parks, attractive investment schemes, and enabling regulatory frameworks implemented over the past two decades.

The African Union Commission (AUC) Deputy Chairperson Monique Nsanabaganwa acknowledged the continent’s resilient achievements but stressed that structural transformation has been slow.

She emphasized the critical need for bold regional value chains and highlighted the importance of regional and intra-Africa cooperation in overcoming existing challenges.

Monique also stressed prioritizing public-private partnerships, domestic resource mobilization, and attracting more investment in infrastructure development to reduce transaction costs.

She noted that Africa’s current share of global exports is only 2.3%, underscoring

the need for fostering regional integration, enhancing investment, and creating jobs.

She cited promising sectors with identified value chains, such as automotive, pharmaceutical, infant food, and cotton and apparel, highlighting their potential to add value, reduce imports, boost trade, diversify economies, and create opportunities for women and youth.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Executive Secretary Claver Gatete emphasized the need for Africa to harness innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship to shape its future.

He acknowledged the continent’s potential for prosperity but highlighted the high unemployment rates among African youth due to limited access to resources.

Claver emphasized that the AfCFTA is a catalyst for growth in sectors like mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and

pharmaceuticals, with the potential to generate significant employment.

He stressed the importance of regional value chains and the forum’s role in fostering these connections.

He noted the high import dependence of Africa, particularly for medical supplies and food, and urged investment in high-value chains, infrastructure, and public-private partnerships to drive entrepreneurship and technological advancements.

The forum, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with organizations like the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), brought together officials, investors, and development partners to explore investment opportunities in Africa’s regional value chains and special economic zones.

Opinion

Speech by H.E. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados at the 38th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (15 February 2025, Addis Ababa)

Madame Chairperson,

Your Excellencies, may I start by acknowledging the Chairperson of the African Union, President of Angola

Your Excellency, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and our hosts. Dr. Abiy Ahmed

Excellency outgoing chairperson of the African Union, and president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania,

Your majesties, your excellences, heads of state and government of the African Union, and First ladies present,

Your Excellency, the president of the Palestinian Authority

Your Excellency, Antonio Gutierrez, Secretary General of the United Nations.

Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, To a person of the African Union Commission.

Your excellencies, former heads of state and heads of government of the African Union,

Distinguished delegates

Ambassadors and guests all

I stand here in the spirit of the battles of Adwa Conscious That it was that battle Within 24 hours That Shook the confidence of the powers of Europe But inspired the people of Africa And the children of the African diaspora That good Would Prevail over evil And light over Darkness, But only in the context of our Unity.

I stand here conscious that that battle forged the beginnings of pan-Africanism, which eventually led to the movement for independence and the destruction of the colonial powers, which gave us not Full development and Power but the first steps of political Independence.

I stand here conscious and buffeted by the dreams and works of the great pan-African pioneers; and conscious that, as children of the Caribbean, We have long dreamt of the moment of unity with our brothers and sisters of Africa.

A division That was secured by those whose success and survival depended on separation of us Rather than on the ability for us to act as one common people, Our relationship, you can say was embryonic. But regrettably, as long as it has been and as related as we have been, it has been sporadic.

And it is up to us as the children of independent states to determine whether the history of separation shall be our future or whether the spirit of Adwa can be our inspiration to confront the challenges of a new world.

Yes, I stand here as a daughter of Africa. I stand here equally as a proud Prime Minister of Barbados, a country which is the first land mass that you reach after you leave



this great continent of Africa. A country which became a hub for the wrong reasons But today I come to Ethiopia to share with you in the Africa Union that we can be a hub now, for the right reasons between our 2 people.

I stand here as a proud chairperson of CARICOM, the Caribbean Community recognizing that as a member of the 6 Regions of Africa, we have come to reclaim our Atlantic destiny.

We have come to ensure that the very futures of our people are different. And will not once again be determined by a middleman who will ensure that the middle passage is one, that sees our people at the bottom of the ocean's flow of the Atlantic, or in the fields of the plantations of the Caribbean. Instead, it will be a future that sees our people, hears our people, feels our people And that will determine in future that it is We who shall Forge how we cooperate, Integrate and invest, rather than simply being victims of history.

I stand here equally as a chair of the V-20; 70 countries across the world that are climate-vulnerable, 40% of whom come from this great continent of Africa. Recognizing that it is only through Unity that we can confront the existential crisis of our generation and that of the climate crisis the Secretary General of the United Nations has already laid out, ably so, many of the inequities that we continue to face despite political Independence. It was his

majesty [Emperor] Hailesellasie I who popularized and told us that there should be no first-class or second-class citizens; words popularized by Bob Marley. Learned by all of our people without appropriately recognizing the context in which he spoke and the mission, which must be ours for Generations until it is achieved.

He told us that there would be War If there were first-class, and second-class citizens. He told us that there would be War if the colour of our skin was more significant than the colour of our eyes, and we see here in the continent, the continued dissenting to conflicts blowing out of ethnicity. Differences, are born out of a Mad grab for resources, not invariably for our benefit but for the benefit of others who seek to use our people as Pawns in the determination of their own future.

But we stand here as proud people. And we have enough among ourselves to know the difference between right and wrong and to forge a future that is not for the few but for the many. Indeed, as the world confronts the climate crisis, it is the poorest of the poor who remain the most vulnerable to floods droughts and hurricanes. It is the poorest of the poor and soon to be the middle of the middle who will no longer be able to access insurance and therefore be able to forge ahead with development if we do not make changes. We have examples of a partnership that has worked for us, not just from the spirit of Adwa and the

conquests and the rise of the pan-Africanist movement in our history. But within recent times during the Covid 19 pandemic, it was the Africa Union Under the leadership, then of President [Cyril] Ramaphosa and with the assistance of Dr. Tedros of the WHO that recognised that the Caribbean which was being marginalized by denial of access to basic therapeutics, basic medical equipment, to vaccines that we should not be left as Pariahs on the global landscape, but that our brothers and sisters in Africa, would bring us through the Africa Medical supplies platform to be able to ensure that we could secure for our people.

It was with the solidarity of many of you in the African Union That the Bridgestone initiative has been able to take root and to make a case for a more modern and more and fairer system that allows us to be able to access finance and to be able to put in place, measures that allow us to be able to pause up repayment of debt during the consequent period of necessity for rebuilding after horrific climatic events. We have seen how partnership helps us. We do not need any more evidence. What is required of us is to lead the way to peace, prosperity and Justice. And the reparations, which we

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

Editorial

AU's summit successful completion: A significant milestone for continent

The grand summit has peacefully been accomplished, and the guests are safely and peacefully seen off. Congratulations Ethiopia for the greatest deed you did!

The glamorous left-right views, the skyrocketing buildings, the catchy bike lanes, attractive pedestrian walkways and mesmerizing boulevards Addis Ababa—Africa's Capital—has possessed at this moment have definitely won its prestigious guest's confidence during their stay. The calm accomplishment of the meeting signifies that Ethiopia has been working well on peace and security.

The 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which focused on critical challenges facing the continent that hinder integration and development efforts, has peacefully been and appealingly concluded.

True, the City saw its guests off to their respective states upon the peaceful completion of the grand AU Summit. To this end, the untold amalgamation of the security forces, concerned bodies as well as the public at large is really worth mentioning and appreciating, too.

The majority of the leaders who partook in the Summit have attested that Ethiopia has been trekking on the right track and committed to make a difference in all aspects. The country's effort for the proper implementation of the Pretoria Deal, which helped state's people in particular and the entire population of the nation in general breathe a sigh of relief has also been well acknowledged. Such a bold step needs to be well consolidated to help the nation come up with real growth and long-lasting stability.

As learnt from the gist of the Summit, Africans' descent have to be prettily provided with justice through reparation, which paves ways for compensation and it is stated that the continent has to pronounce 'bygone is bygone', let's enjoy reconciling and get the roots of all sorts of grudges and antipathies dried for good'.

The good thing is leaders meticulously discussed critical issues revolving around the effort geared towards promoting Africa's political, economic, and social growth. Drawing lessons from Ethiopia in terms of fueling development, crop production, particularly wheat, corridor development—targeting at beautifying Africa's capital—as well as boosting diplomatic efforts with neighboring states and beyond, African states need to work more to bring about real change.

Yes, Ethiopia is relentlessly working to contribute its share to the efficient attainment of AU agenda 2063. To this end, African countries need to work together to tackle the challenges that obstruct integration and prosperity. No doubt, Agenda 2063 is a well-defined strategic framework aims at transforming the continent into a global powerhouse and competent loaf of the globe.

The times to come would be rosy and torches of dawn of hope if the continent moves in unison against the multifarious pitfalls compromising its forward looking and dramatic agile towards being triumphant regarding sustainable prosperity, inclusiveness and peace records.

As Ethiopia is committed to undertake a number of social, economic and even political activities in tune with the AU vision, other countries of the continent have to follow suit. The ongoing transformation Ethiopia has been entertaining would be of a role model for other Africa countries as it is of significantly useful in strengthening its position as a key player on the African and global platform.

Not only does the Summit poised to be a pivotal event for the continent in addressing the long-standing issue of reparations for historical injustices but it does also usher in a new chapter in the leadership of the AU Commission.

In sum, the successful conclusion of the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union marks a significant milestone for Ethiopia and the continent as a whole. As African nations unite in their commitment to addressing critical challenges and fostering sustainable development, Ethiopia's ongoing transformation serves as an inspiring model for collaboration and progress. With a shared vision for peace and prosperity, the future holds great promise for Africa as it strives to achieve the ambitious goals set forth in Agenda 2063.

Opinion



Visit envisages fortifying, enhancing Russia-Ethiopia relations

BY STAFF REPORTER

Her Excellency Ms. Valentina Matvienko, Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has paid visit to Addis Ababa on February 18-20, 2025.

It is imperative that we fortify and enhance Russia-Ethiopia relations in both traditional and contemporary domains – says the Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Valentina Matvienko who is arriving in the country soon for an official visit

The primary objective of Valentina Matvienko's upcoming visit to Ethiopia is to provide a catalyst for the augmentation of traditionally mutually beneficial and productive bilateral cooperation across a diverse spectrum of sectors.

“Our countries are connected by a rich history of mutually respectful relations. Ethiopia was the first African capital with which Russia established diplomatic relations. Since then, they have only developed and strengthened, and I see our main task in supporting the growth of these endeavors in all areas,” the Speaker said to *The Ethiopian Herald*.

Valentina Matvienko has expressed confidence that her visit will be productive. To this end, she will be accompanied by a highly representative delegation.

“It is widely acknowledged that the Ethiopian people hold the profound memory and reverence for the substantial and highly significant Soviet legacy. With the invaluable assistance of the former USSR, numerous major infrastructure projects were established, including industrial enterprises, energy facilities, and engaging in active military and technical cooperation,” Ms. Matvienko added.

According to Valentina Matvienko, the cornerstone of success for this visit lies in the rich history of bilateral relations and the enduring support provided to Ethiopia by our country for numerous decades. The shared cultural heritage of our peoples plays a pivotal role in fostering the development of relations between these two distinct cultures. Both Ethiopians and Russians predominantly adhere to Orthodox Christianity, with Islam holding the second most significant following.

The admission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia into the BRICS family during the year of the Russian presidency further solidifies Addis Ababa's position as a prominent actor on the contemporary global arena, a strong and influential partner in both multilateral and bilateral endeavors.

Both capitals anticipate that this historic visit will serve as the foundation for the establishment of numerous forthcoming promising projects that will be mutually beneficial to the people of both nations.

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



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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Ethiopia's economic reform gains momentum

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reached the significant milestone with Ethiopia, concluding a staff-level agreement on the second review of the four-year Extended Credit Facility arrangement. This agreement underscores the progress Ethiopia is making in its homegrown economic reform program, signaling hope for continued growth and stability.

In July 2024, the IMF approved a \$3.4 billion ECF arrangement to support Ethiopia's ambitious economic reform program. Now, with the second review, Ethiopia is set to access an additional \$251 million. These funds are expected to bolster ongoing efforts to stabilize the economy and create a conducive environment for sustainable growth.

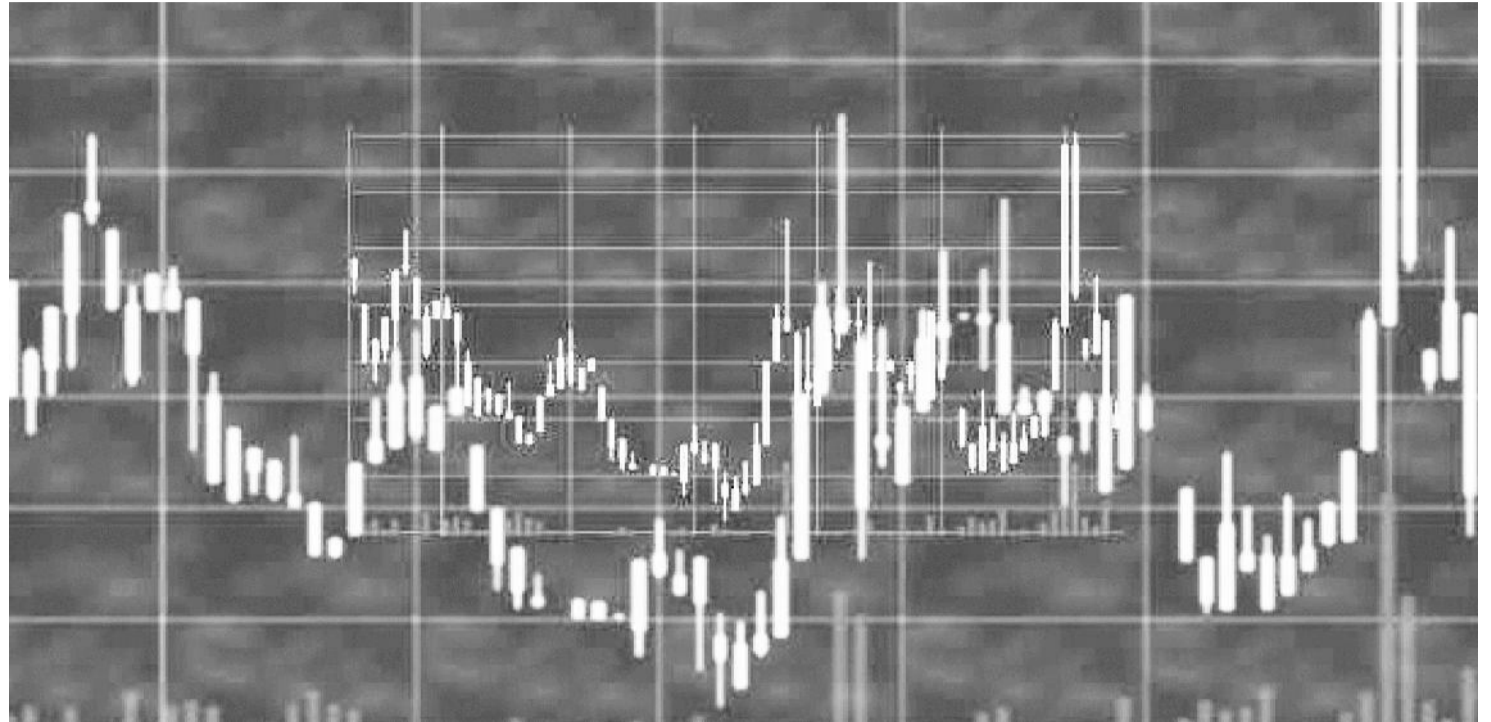
IMF staff, led by Mr. Álvaro Piris, conducted extensive discussions with Ethiopian officials, including Finance Minister Ahmed Shide and National Bank Governor Mamo Mihretu, during the recently working tour. The delegation also engaged with key stakeholders from the banking and business sectors to assess the progress and priorities of Ethiopia's economic program.

One of the standout successes of Ethiopia's reform program is the transition to a market-determined exchange rate. This policy shift has played a pivotal role in easing foreign exchange shortages, a persistent challenge for the Ethiopian economy. The narrowing of spreads between official and parallel exchange rates now below 10%—highlights the positive impact of these reforms.

Other achievements include regulating foreign currency surrender requirements made the level playing field of the economy conducive. Businesses are now experiencing more flexibility, leading to improved currency liquidity.

Solomon Zegeye is an economist working as consultant for various firms. As to him, securing of loan from the International Monetary Fund indicates that how Ethiopia is moving in the right direction to liberalize its economy and open up to the domestic and foreign investors to enhance their role which has been growing in the past six years.

He further said that, the loan also enables the nation to shore up shortage of hard currency, enhance its currency reserve and facilitate import and export trade. It also enables to creating space for priority public spending through mobilizing domestic revenue and restoring debt sustainability, including through securing timely debt restructuring agreements with external creditors and strengthening the financial position of state-owned enterprises to tackle critical macro-financial vulnerabilities. According to Solomon, the previous regime even though claimed that it pursued free market economy, it did not implemented in a full-fledged manner as the result, the role of the private sector in the economy has been limited in the specific sectors. The dominant role of the government in the economy hampered



The macro economic trends in graph

the growth of the private sector. Even though the public investment attributes for the development of infrastructure, the absence of proper management of resource paved the way for rampant corruption which intern negatively affect the growth and ultimately, left the nation to high indebted country which is beyond its repayment capacity.

He further said that, the development model in the past decade has generated greater demand for foreign exchange than supply. Large-scale public investment projects have absorbed a significant share of scarce foreign currency while the currency revenue anticipated from the projects didn't materialize in time.

High demand for imports in the context of limited export growth resulted in large current account deficits and severe foreign currency shortages. An overvalued official exchange rate and a growing gap between the parallel and official market rates also discourage exports as the exporters' cost is likely to be affected by the parallel market rate while their revenue is determined at the official exchange rate. Maintaining a stable rate of exchange in the environment of relatively high inflation also means a real exchange rate appreciation, which is equivalent to a tax on exports.

According to the IMF officials, the government economic program, supported by the four-year ECF arrangement, envisages a comprehensive policy package to stimulate private sector activity and increase economic openness to promote higher and more inclusive growth. Strengthening social safety nets to mitigate the impact of reforms on vulnerable households is a critical component of the authorities' reform program.

The Key policies are elaborated including, moving to a market-determined exchange rate to help address external imbalances and relieve foreign currency shortages.

It also paved the way for combating inflation through modernizing the monetary policy framework, eliminating monetary financing of the budget and reducing financial repression.

Ethiopia's new IMF-supported economic program is intended to stimulate private-sector

led growth.

According to the IMF, this should allow for more spending on areas like health, education, investment and social safety nets.

Expanding the coverage and increasing support to the most vulnerable households was a key part of the government's reform agenda.

The IMF looks forward to supporting these efforts to help make the economy more vibrant, stable, and inclusive for all Ethiopians.

As to Solomon, the money obtained from IMF in the form of loan helps the nation debt service performance and enables to get green light to obtain more money to meet its development endeavor.

The introduction of new exchange regime could build confidence to the diaspora to send their remittance in the formal channel and helps to boost the nation currency reserve. He further said that the opening of private foreign currency exchange offices other than the commercial banks and monitored by the National Bank of Ethiopia dramatically reduced the scarcity of hard currency in the market. The ongoing inter-Bank business increased activity in the market is promoting transparency and efficiency in currency exchange and it can be said as good step in modernizing the nation financial infrastructure.

With macroeconomic stability supported by prudent policy measures, Ethiopia is poised for growth. The recently approved supplementary budget by the Council of Ministers aims to address tight liquidity conditions while maintaining fiscal discipline. Additionally, Ethiopia is transitioning to interest rate-based monetary policy, ensuring inflation remains under control.

The IMF emphasized that tight monetary and financial conditions are crucial during this transition to secure long-term economic stability.

The next steps involve the approval of the agreement by the IMF management and Executive Board in the coming months. Future reviews of the ECF arrangement will occur every six months, ensuring that

Ethiopia's progress remains on track.

As Ethiopia continues its journey of economic transformation, the collaboration with the IMF serves as a testament to the country's commitment to reform and resilience. With improved foreign exchange conditions, controlled inflation, and a clear focus on sustainable growth, Ethiopia is setting a strong foundation for a more prosperous future.

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Mr. Piris expressed the IMF's gratitude for the Ethiopian authorities' dedication and proactive measures in implementing the economic program. He also commended the constructive dialogue with Ethiopian officials and stakeholders, which has been instrumental in advancing the reform agenda.

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In the Sphere of Diplomacy

UK-Ethiopia partnership: What the future holds?



Biruk Mekonnen, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland

BY AMBASSADOR BIRUK MEKONNEN

At the start of this week, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom, the Rt. Hon Angela Rayner MP, will embark on a landmark visit to Ethiopia, marking a pivotal moment in the strengthening of the relations between Ethiopia and the United Kingdom.

This visit comes at a critical juncture, as Ethiopia, undergoing profound political and economic transformation, seeks to reinforce its strategic partnerships, and the United Kingdom aims to define a new approach to its relations with Africa. The visit offers an opportunity to advance cooperation in key areas such economic growth, social development, technology, and climate change—domains that hold promise for mutual prosperity and long-term collaboration.

The signing of a shareholder's agreement between Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH) and UK's United Green to develop a large-scale integrated agricultural project is a significant milestone for the launch of a reinvigorated partnership.

Ethiopia finds itself at a crossroads of a new socio-economic and political awakening, both a challenge and an opportunity. Emerging from a turbulent period of internal conflict, particularly in its northern region, the country has made remarkable progress since the signing of the Pretoria Peace Agreement. Ethiopia remains resolute in its commitment to fostering domestic peace, reconciliation, and inclusive development. The government's focus is now firmly on sustainable economic growth and structural transformation, with an emphasis on shifting towards a market-oriented economy. Key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and information technology are at the heart of Ethiopia's vision for the future, and the United Kingdom, with its wealth of expertise in these industries, is seen as an invaluable partner.

For Ethiopia, the UK's support in encouraging British businesses to invest in these high potential sectors is crucial for realizing its economic ambitions. The UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) provides a promising framework for enhancing Ethiopia's trade relations with the UK, opening new and alternative avenues for market access and deeper economic integration.

In addition to trade and investment, Ethiopia is also eager to bolster its burgeoning digital economy. The government's Digital Ethiopia 2025 initiative, which aims to



Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom Angela Rayner MP

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner's visit is among the many opportunities that helps to deepen and diversify the partnership between Ethiopia and the UK

harness technology for inclusive growth, presents numerous opportunities for collaboration with the United Kingdom. Given the UK's leadership in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, Ethiopia is keen to deepen its partnership in this critical area, particularly through initiatives like the Five Million Coders program, designed to build a digitally literate workforce.

Ethiopia's ambitious climate action agenda, epitomized by its Green Legacy Initiative, presents another avenue for meaningful collaboration. The UK, with its own climate goals and bold leadership on the global stage, shares Ethiopia's vision for a sustainable future. The countries' aligned priorities in addressing climate change and fostering environmental sustainability create a natural synergy for partnership in the face of global environmental challenges.

From the UK's perspective, Ethiopia's growing economic potential, coupled with its strategic geopolitical position in the Horn of Africa, places it at the forefront to be a crucial partner. As the United Kingdom seeks to strengthen its diplomatic and economic presence in Africa, Ethiopia's role as a stabilizing force in the region and

its increasing influence in global affairs are of great strategic importance. Furthermore, Ethiopia's leadership in regional peace and security, particularly in the fight against terrorism, complements the UK's broader foreign policy objectives in the Horn of Africa.

In addition to security cooperation, the United Kingdom sees immense potential in expanding its trade relations with Ethiopia. Sectors such as the newly liberalized banking and stock market industries, renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure development present opportunities for British businesses to engage in the Ethiopian market. Ethiopia's rapid growth and developmental needs make it a fertile ground for investment, while the UK can contribute with its expertise in these key industries.

Ethiopia is eager to ensure that this engagement with the UK is founded on mutual respect and a shared vision for sustainable development. The Ethiopian government stresses the need for international partnerships to foster long-term, inclusive growth, with foreign investments playing a key role in the diversification and resilience of the local economy. Ethiopia's approach is one of fairness and equity, aiming for a business environment where both Ethiopian society and foreign partners can thrive.

At the same time, Ethiopia is committed to managing irregular migration and people smuggling, which remains a critical issue. The UK's focus on tackling irregular migration aligns with Ethiopia's own priorities. Continued collaboration on migration management, alongside the broader efforts to promote economic development and create opportunities, will be crucial for both countries in meeting their shared goals.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner's visit is among the many opportunities that helps to deepen and diversify the partnership between Ethiopia and the UK. It is also an opportunity to cement a new chapter in the UK-Ethiopia relations, founded on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared ambition. Both nations stand to gain from a partnership rooted in collaboration, respect, and shared values. Ethiopia's commitment to peace, stability, and sustainability aligns well with the United Kingdom's global priorities, and the visit offers a chance to solidify a path forward that benefits both countries. Together, the UK and Ethiopia can build a relationship that contributes to the prosperity of both nations while addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing the region and the world.

Law & Politics

From pledges to real outcomes: AU's daunting task

BY FIKADU BELAY

Recently, leaders and representatives from across Africa gathered in Addis Ababa for the 38th African Union (AU) General Assembly and the 46th AU Executive Council Summit. The high level meetings, held at the AU headquarters, focused on addressing pressing continental issues and resulted in the adoption of key decisions to advance Africa's development and unity.

The summit brought together a diverse group of participants, including heads of state, foreign ministers, diplomats, and leaders of various AU institutions and organizations. Their collective goal was to deliberate on critical agendas that impact the continent's future. Key topics included institutional reforms of the AU, efforts to secure permanent representation for Africa in the United Nations Security Council, and strategies to enhance continental peace and security.

This year's annual continental meeting is a crucial platform for addressing the region's most pressing issues. The African Union has a long-standing tradition of addressing African problems through collective dialogue.

The union has settled into a significant body advocating for peace, security, and development across Africa. This year, the summit took place under the theme of "Justice for Africans and African descent," reflecting the AU's commitment to addressing historical injustices while promoting equitable growth.

Many African nations' leaders emphasized that the AU must evolve to better represent the interests of its member states and address the challenges posed by contemporary global dynamics. It aims to bolster the AU's effectiveness and ensure that it can respond swiftly to crises and developmental needs.

Among the outcomes of the assembly were resolutions to strengthen regional cooperation that were actionable to the theme of the meeting compensatory justice also featured prominently in through discussions.

Representatives highlighted the importance of acknowledging the deep scars left by colonialism, slavery, and systemic racism. These historical injustices have not only disrupted social and economic structures but have also instilled generational trauma in individuals and communities.

The summit further discussed that the leaders should remedy these historical injustices in nations. Also, by advocating for compensatory justice, the AU seeks to foster a sense of healing and empowerment among African nations, enabling them to reclaim their narratives and futures.

The 38th AU General Assembly reaffirmed the continent's commitment to unity and self-reliance, with leaders calling for increased collaboration to ensure Africa's voice is heard on the global stage. The AU



is trying to achieve an ongoing quest for Africa's permanent representation in the UN Security Council.

For years, Africa has been underrepresented in global decision-making forums, and leaders at the summit reiterated the necessity of amplifying the continent's voice in international affairs. Achieving permanent representation would not only enhance Africa's influence but also ensure that its unique challenges and perspectives are adequately addressed on the global stage.

The summit also focused on the African Continental Free Trade Area, aiming to facilitate trade and economic integration among member states. Participants discussed the importance of implementing free trade to boost intra-African trade, create jobs, and stimulate economic growth. By reducing trade barriers and fostering collaboration, the AU envisions a more interconnected and prosperous continent.

In addition to trade, the summit addressed critical issues such as agriculture and climate change. Representatives acknowledged that agriculture remains a cornerstone of many African economies, yet it faces significant challenges from climate change and environmental degradation.

Africa stands as the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, according to a recent report by the International Rescue Committee. Of the ten countries identified as being at the highest risk of climate-related disasters, seven are in Africa. This stark reality is compounded by the fact that while Africa is home to approximately 17 percent of the global population, it contributes a mere four percent of the world's carbon emissions, totaling around 1.45 billion tonnes.

In response to these challenges, many developing nations across Africa are implementing various initiatives aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. One prominent example is Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, a nature-based program designed to combat environmental degradation and promote reforestation. Such efforts reflect the continent's proactive approach to climate resilience despite limited resources.

is essential to address the disproportionate burden Africa faces in the fight against climate change to enhance agricultural productivity while ensuring sustainability.

This includes investing in climate-resilient practices with advanced technologies that minimize the adverse effects of climate change. The continent's leaders also urged wealthier nations to take responsibility for their contributions to environmental degradation.

The summit also mentioned that African leaders must focus on the goals of Agenda 2063 to build a more peaceful and prosperous continent following the Agenda 2063 development framework, which promotes infrastructure growth, economic development, social inclusion, and gender equality. Also, the Leaders should unify and sustainably advance Africa by aligning actions with Agenda 2063, positively changing citizens' lives, and enhancing progress.

Furthermore, human rights, gender equality, and youth empowerment were also key themes during the discussions. The AU has recognized that the future of Africa lies in the hands of its youth, who represent a significant portion of the population. Representatives emphasized the need to create opportunities for young people, ensuring they have access to education, employment, and leadership positions. Gender equality was similarly underscored, with leaders advocating for policies that promote the rights and participation of women in all sectors of society.

The AU meeting stands to address the root cause of ongoing civil conflicts on the continents to ensure peace development across the continents. However, some researchers indicated that many regions across the African continent have experienced frequent conflicts, leading to significant loss of life and hardships for survivors. The ongoing instability is making it increasingly difficult for individuals to find peace, employment, and other necessities.

Some critics may fear that these annual discussions at the Continental Conference will change into tangible outcomes. They describe these meetings are mostly used as paper tigers, suggesting that the conversations often fail to translate into real solutions for the continent's pressing issues.

The summit concluded with performance reports from various AU institutions, organizations, and committees. These reports highlighted progress made in addressing the agendas discussed in previous meetings, as well as identifying areas needing further attention.

The emphasis on accountability and transparency reflects the AU's commitment to ensuring that its initiatives translate into tangible outcomes for the people of Africa. As Africa continues to navigate complex global challenges, the collaborative efforts of its leaders and institutions will be crucial in shaping a brighter future for all Africans.

Many African nations' leaders emphasized that the AU must evolve to better represent the interests of its member states and address the challenges posed by contemporary global dynamics

Conversely, developed nations continue to rely heavily on industries that significantly contribute to global carbon emissions, such as fossil fuel-dependent factories. This disparity highlights a troubling imbalance: while Africa faces the effect of climate change, developed countries often evade the consequences of their high-emission practices.

The African Union is taking a strong stance on this issue, calling for developed nations to rethink their economic policies that prioritize carbon-intensive industries. The AU argues that a collective global effort



Addressing structural education deficits: Ensuring the right to education

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

In December 2024, the African Union Commission, the Government of Mauritania, and UNICEF, jointly convened a Continental Conference on education, youth, and employability from 9 to 11 December 2024 in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The Conference marked the conclusion of the broader AU Year of Education, and addressed number of critical issues, including sustainable education financing in Africa.

Following the in-depth technical engagement, and high-level political discussion, participants issued the 'Nouakchott Declaration', which emphasizes the issue of financing of education, and calls African Union member states, and education partners to increase funding for education through concrete actions.

The Declaration advocates for compulsory, free education, prioritizing girls in technical and vocational fields, and proposed that the period from 2025 to 2034 as a Decade for Educational Transformation across African Union member states.

According to the Declaration, ensuring every child's right to education, modernizing educational infrastructure and strengthening teachers' role, and enhancing science education to leverage new technologies thereby improving education quality is of critical importance for Africa's bright future.

It also emphasizes the need for rural youth to access learning opportunities and align educational content with labor market needs to attain social progress, ensure sustainable development, and bring about tangible economic change to Africa.

To this end, the Declaration urges African nations to take transformative actions, reduce barriers to education, and enhance the quality and accessibility of education in Africa by increasing funding for education to build a brighter future for the people of the continent.

Promoting quality education is key to unlocking Africa's potential, prioritizing continent's key priorities, accelerating social progress, economic growth, and sustainable development

This was also reflected by AU's Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, Prof. Mohammed Belhocine.

In his recent briefing to journalists at the side event at the 38th AU Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Prof. Belhocine highlighted the urgent need to mobilize resources and implement transformative measures to address the structural funding gaps in education and eliminate learning poverty in Africa.

Promoting quality education is key to unlocking Africa's potential, prioritizing continent's key priorities, accelerating social progress, economic growth, and sustainable development. In this regard, the last four years have witnessed strong commitment to advancing education, science, technology and innovation across the continent.

Through sustained advocacy and engagement with member states and stakeholders, education was successfully positioned as the African Union's theme for the year 2024, among the many other pressing priorities. Throughout the year, we counted over 62 activities that had been implemented; he said indicating that this reflects a holistic approach to educational transformation.

Mentioning that no single African country currently possesses enough resources to ensure that all children receive quality education at the primary and secondary levels, and education is fundamental to exploiting Africa's full potential Prof. Belhocine stressed the need to enhance resource mobilization at global level.

"There is a structural deficit in financing, and this must be taken by all of us, and we must advocate locally with our governments to make the best use possible with the little resources that we have," he remarked.

Africa must mobilize sufficient funds to implement the Noukchott Declaration, which is a crucial framework adopted late last year. The Nouakchott Declaration is a bold commitment by African nations to take transformative actions, including making public education compulsory. The full implementation of this declaration requires a significant increase in financial investments from both national governments and international partners.

"Ensuring full implementation of the Nouakchott Declaration, particularly in areas of compulsory education and increased financing, scaling up digital learning innovations, and deepening partnerships to mobilize resources are essential to transform education in Africa," Commissioner Belhocine emphasized.

The AU commitment to address the funding deficit is not limited to increase the overall amount of resource allocated to education. It also needs to focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness of financial management within the sector which is one of the serious challenges that hamper sector's performance. This challenge includes absence of transparency, accountability and poor governance. In this regard, proper management of funds creates an opportunity to the sector.

The AU declared 2024 as the "Year of Education," under the theme "Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century," aiming to strengthen education systems, promote innovation, and foster resilience in learning. This theme underscores the importance of

equipping African learners with the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving global landscape. In this respect, the initiative aims to strengthen education systems, promote innovation, and foster resilience in learning environments, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to quality education.

Based on its theme, strengthening the educational system is given priority. This involves a comprehensive overhaul of existing education systems, including improvements in infrastructure, curriculum development, and teachers training programs. In this regard, the AU has given significant attention and is committed to supporting member states in strengthening education financing, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships and ensuring equitable access for all learners, especially girls, youth and children in conflict zones during 2024.

According to him, AU is aware of the challenges that can disrupt education, including conflict, natural disasters, and health crises. The Year of Education will prioritize building resilience in learning environments, ensuring that education continues even in the face of adversity. This involves developing contingency plans, providing psychosocial support to learners affected by trauma, and promoting inclusive education that caters to the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities.

"We have in Africa more than 100 million children that are not going to school or dropped out of primary or secondary schools. So, we need to reintegrate these school children and give them a second chance.

The only way to have real opportunities for them is to have strong technical and vocational education and training policies and strategies at continental level," the Commissioner said emphasizing the urgent need to address structural deficits in education funding to eradicate learning poverty in Africa by 2035.

Opinion

Speech by H.E. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados...

call for the International Community is to be able to recognize first and foremost that which we ask from each of our children: Say sorry, Say sorry and mean it.

And after you say sorry recognize that the future of the world is not possible without the stability of Africa and its diaspora. For as long as hypocrisy and double standards remain, it will be impossible to secure stability and peace in any Nation across the Earth.

The operations that we call for beyond Sorry, must be for fair access and development and compensation because we each started the Journey of independence with a chronic deficit, a deficit of resources, a deficit of fairness, a deficit of opportunity. And it is up to many of us in the second and third generation of independence, to be able to frame out fairly in a mature conversation, what those reparations must look like, if we are to attain Justice and to inspire the young people of this world that good must always prevail over evil. But it is not only the reparations that we ask from the International Community but it is also hoisted on us.

The notion that Transit visas, begging for them must be the lot of our people to move across this world cannot be something that gives us satisfaction.

To go east and to go west we are forced to go north. It is not right. It is not beyond the heads of government and heads of state, the region of the Caribbean Community and the continent of Africa to determine that we must stop talking about And simply do what is necessary to build the air Bridges and sea Bridges to guarantee That we control our destiny.

I ask us to reflect on this because it is this simple act, apart from music our culture and our food that will guarantee that it is not simply heads of government and heads of state that will meet in Accra or Bridge town. But it is Ordinary People Who will be able to trade and move from the closest point of Dakar To the closest point of Bridgetown. To be able to open up the opportunities that technically ought to be available not just simply through the African free trade area or the CARICOM single market and the economy But through the combined opportunities, provided by both. I ask us equally to recognize that in an era where AI is threatening to redefine what Humanity can do and even if we can survive, it is not ours to be the victims once again of Technology as we were with gunpowder. But it is for us to help shape the future of the world because more often than not, it is Africa And its people who have brought the humanizing forces to bear on civilization. And if we are to be the cradle of civilization, then we are to be the Protectors of people and the planet of humanity as we go forward.

And they say "How?" And I say, "How

not?" How long does a continent that has 40% of the world's minerals not be in charge of helping to secure the destiny and stability of the planet?

How long do the members of our two communities Who constitute a third of the world States, not acting singularly, purpose to forge The kind of world that we want And to be able to ensure that the institutions that deny access to us to hear our voices, as reflective of the continent and the small island developing states of the world. How do we not secure the admission which is not only just but a moral imperative if the world is to have stability in this 21st century?

My friends, I asked you how do we not secure this Victory when 1 in every 5 and possibly 1 in every 4 persons on the planet will come from this continent and its diaspora.

Those who lead today Have a moral imperative, not just to citizens in our own countries but above all else to Unity. The spirit of Adwa demands that we recognize that even in the face of the greatest technology being foisted upon us, we can rise and win if we act in unity. This has been a message given not by our generation alone but by previous generations of African and Caribbean leaders. But we ask ourselves "Why does it elude us?" And the answer comes not from outside, but only from within. When I speak of the USA With affection, I do not only want to speak of that, which is known in the Americas. I want to speak about what ought to have been possible if the 1884 Berlin talks did not take place. The possibility of the United States of Africa, which is, as diverse as India, which is, as diverse as China, in terms of ethnicity and language and religion, but which is entirely possible if we see not ourselves first but we see the unity of ourselves together.

This may be the Cry of a naive and romantic daughter of Africa. But if that is the case, I prefer to die, being a naive and romantic daughter of Africa than one who is cynical.

And one who is daunted by the actions and power of others. We know what it is to stand in unity with you to fight Apartheid and to fight for the liberation of the peoples of Africa. When President Castro stood, To send people from his own country to Southern Africa, to free your people It was in my own country that the planes refuelled Ensuring that that battle was possible.

And 100 years ago, almost a Barbadian, man and woman left our nation and left the United States to come here Arnold and MN Ford.

He wrote The Anthem of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and his wife dared to establish a co-educational school here in Ethiopia ensuring that boys and girls could receive education at a time when war was dominating the global

landscape. They chose to see light rather than Darkness. I asked us today In tangible terms that will allow our people to travel and will allow us to pull our investments to ensure that the people of Africa have not been denied the electricity That is so necessary as a platform for participation in the New World. I ask us not only to pull that investment but also to ensure that we pull our voices because there is too much division in the world today. There is too much war and there is too much conflict. And we know what precipitates and causes that. If we leave Addis Ababa with the commitment that the world is not going to be safe without a prosperous and stable Africa Then we understand what the moral imperatives We must undertake in each of our countries to secure that Unity of purpose and to secure ultimately, the saving of the people and planet. I ask you today to recognize that and I thank Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for agreeing that the first in-faith summit of CARICOM and the African Union should take place here in Addis Ababa, on the 7th of September of this year of Our Lord.

By that simple act, we build on the inaugural Summit which took place virtually in 2021. But more importantly, we seek to regularize and establish as a permanent point of interaction. The unity of which I speak and call for And I ask you as I leave this podium To recognize that we too in the Caribbean want to see you indeed in my own country In Barbados, we will celebrate the Caribbean Festival of Arts, The 15th Carifesta from August 22nd to August 31st and we do so, not only asking for those from Cuba and Bahamas in the North, To Venezuela to Surinam and Guyana in the south, to Belize in the west and Eastern Caribbean to come together to express our commitment to each other creatively through food, and fashion, and music and dance and art And Sculpture And talk. Talk a philosophy, talk of religion, talk of who we are, talk of the future. I ask us to recognize that we celebrate this year, our resilience and that we do so, not only by asking the people of the Caribbean to come but also the people from whom we came here in Africa, India in China. And the continent to which we went in particular in Central America and Latin America. This is our moment to show the world that we were not simply apostrophes To the history and the modern history of humanity. But that truly we are the ones who can level the playing field and create the opportunities that will allow the world to see people hear people and feel people and to Value the planet and its biodiversity at the very time when it is greatest in crisis. Let us remove the scars of History and be Craftsmen of our faith recognizing that the only people who can stop us now are we ourselves. We have to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery and build the future that our people want of us and give them that Pride, which is theirs. And we must do so in the spirit and with the results of Adwa. Thank you!

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Planet Earth

Pan-Africanism spirit to implementing 10 years strategy, ensure food security

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Food security has been a growing concern for Africa due to a variety of issues. Population growth is one factor. Africa has one of the world's fastest-growing populations, which drives up food consumption. By 2050, the continent's population is predicted to double, putting enormous strain on food production tasks.

Additional issues contributing to the problem of food security include climate change, recurring drought, economic difficulties, violence, and instability throughout the continent. Furthermore, a sizable section of the African populace makes their living from agriculture. According to data gathered from AU, more than 70% of Africa's workforce works in agriculture. For example, more than 85 percent of Tanzanians work in agriculture. In 2023, 62.37% of Ethiopia's workforce worked in agriculture. In 2022, agriculture employed 39.74% of Ghana's workforce. These statistics show that agriculture is the primary economic activity for more than 70% of the continent's poor, who reside in rural areas.

Agriculture is the backbone of Africa, despite its potential and sources of income for Africans, but it is not as developed as it could be. Here, the fundamental issue should be: what are the causes of Africa's undeveloped agricultural sector? Another crucial subject that requires answers is what should be done in the agriculture sector to ensure food security?

Farmers in many African countries do not have access to modern farming techniques, technology, or inputs, which limits their production and productivity. As a result, tackling food security in Africa necessitates a holistic strategy that involves improving agricultural techniques, investing in infrastructure, boosting market access, and addressing the underlying socioeconomic challenges that contribute to food insecurity.

According to Ethiopian President Taye Atske-Selassie, Africa's agri-food systems are undergoing transformational changes as a result of a complex interplay of economic, demographic, technical, environmental, and climate change factors. Hence, it is imperative to work on the following four critical factors that can alter the African agri-food system, supporting economic growth and improving livelihoods across the continent:

First, rapid urbanization: The impact of urbanization in Africa particularly the growing demand for freshly processed foods and ready-to-eat meals significantly reshapes consumption patterns in urban areas. This shift creates vital linkages between small-holder farmers and expanding domestic markets, driven by sustained economic growth and a growing middle class. Nonetheless, all people



should know that Africa's rapid population growth, and meeting the increasing demand for diverse and high-quality food products will present challenges.

Secondly, the huge potential of technological innovation such as digital agriculture, precision farming, and other advancements is pivotal to transforming Africa's agrifood systems. These technologies can enhance productivity, improve efficiency, and increase access to information and markets for farmers. This indeed is attainable as Rwanda effectively employed Digital Soil Mapping and used drones to monitor crop health and assess damage from pests and diseases. Though few in number, African countries such as Egypt and Morocco have also improved the traceability of agricultural products, ensuring food safety and improving supply chain efficiency. Ethiopia's collaboration with the African Development Bank brought forth climate-smart and heat-resistant wheat varieties; making the country as one of the leading wheat producers in Africa.

Thirdly, empowering women and engaging the youth will unlock the full potential of the sector as they are the drivers of innovation and resilience in our food systems. Angola and Uganda recognize

the crucial role of women and the youth in transforming its agriculture, particularly in expanding access to resources, developing agribusiness incubators, and mentorship programs, and enhancing market linkages.

Fourth, fostering regional policies such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is essential for expanding market access, improving food security, and creating more resilient food systems across the continent. Ghana's achievement in reducing poverty by half through agriculture by 2025 serves as an inspiring example of the transformative potential of improved food security. The full realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area promises to amplify the success of many African countries that are determined to be on track to building a resilient system of food security.

The outgoing Commissioner of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission, Josefa Sacko said that since 2003, African heads of state and government have made agriculture a priority. Furthermore, the Maputo declaration focused on food security and agricultural investment, but after ten years, the continent continues to face challenges

due to several gaps in implementing the declaration and ensuring food security.

"We saw that the continent still has the problem of implementing decisions of heads of state," Josefa explained. "So, we had a lot of gaps in terms of implementing the Maputo Declaration. Considering these challenges, the African Union is concentrating more on food security and investing in agriculture."

Currently, the AU prepares the 10-year (2026-2035) strategy that represents a more inclusive and equitable approach, developed through extensive consultations with regional bodies. "We really want this strategy an African-led strategy," Josefa stated, expressing confidence that this African ownership will be crucial in ending hunger. She also stressed the importance of partnerships in implementing the plan.

Key pillars of the new strategy include intensifying sustainable food production, boosting agro-industrialization, opening markets to other African countries, and liberalizing the agricultural sector to attract investment. Josefa highlighted the urgency of these initiatives, noting that Africa's population is projected to reach 2.5 billion within the next decade.

"The continent needs to really mobilize investment in this area so that it can transform the agriculture and food system transformation," she asserted.

According to Josefa, addressing the lack of value chains in the current food production system is critical. Enabling farmers to access markets will help satisfy the still-unmet food demand.

Former Prime Minister of Niger and AU Special Envoy on Food Safety Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki underscored the need for Africa to move beyond simply producing food. He emphasized the importance of Pan-Africanism in addressing economic and food security issues.

"This strategic plan is substantial to industrialize and enhance agricultural productivity," Mayaki stated. "The industrialization of this continent will come from agri-food production."

Indeed, food security has received increased international attention because of its consequences for African stability, health, and development. Global efforts seek to address these concerns through agricultural alliances and investments. Hence, tackling food security in Africa involves a holistic approach that includes improving agricultural methods, investing in infrastructure, increasing market access, and tackling the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to food insecurity. More significantly, Africans should collaborate with the spirit of Pan-Africanism to implement and achieve the 10-year (2026-2035) strategy, which is critical to maintaining food security across the continent.