

A Week in the Horn

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Africa and the African Union

The Forum on the Participation of Youth in Political and Public Affairs was officially opened in Moroni by Comoros President and African Union Chairperson Azali Assoumani together with Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the AU Commission Amb. Bankole Adeoye on Wednesday (July 19). The forum was attended by over 200 youth representatives.

On Tuesday, July 18, the *AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative* (AfCFTAGTI) witnessed its first-ever commerce between Cameroon and Tunisia, reaffirming the key role of AfCFTA in enabling economically significant trade among African states.

In conjunction with the 5th African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, the African Union Commission (AUC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) inaugurated the *Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions* (AFSIT) on Monday (17 July). AFSIT seeks to assist at-risk nations and nations through difficult political transitions.

The Pan African Parliament, Economic, Social, and Cultural Council, and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child all signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Monday (July 17). The MoUs were designed to improve coordination and collaboration in advancing and defending human rights for African citizens.

The 20th anniversary of the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and people's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* was recognized on Saturday (July 15) by the African Union Commission. The focus of the event was on how to speed up the implementation of women's rights while also recognizing its successes and challenges. With 11 states still pending ratification as of July 2023, the Protocol had been ratified by 44 member states.

Ethiopia

President Sahle-Work Zewde participated in the *Women Deliver 2023 Conference* (17-20 July 2023) in Kigali, Rwanda under the theme of "Maputo at 20: Bridging the Gap Between Policies and People". Participants included decision-makers from international organizations, the private sector, the government,

and civil society. Advocates of feminist movements and organisations that promote women, girls, and underrepresented groups were also among the attendees.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held a telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday (20 July) and discussed bilateral and international matters of mutual interest as well as means and ways of bringing peace between Ukraine and Russia.

On Monday (17 July), close to 34 million Ethiopians embarked on a nation-wide Green Legacy campaign to plant half a billion trees in a day and succeeded in surpassing the goal by seven million. PM Abiy congratulated fellow Ethiopians for the remarkable achievement of close to 567 million trees being planted across the country and Ethiopian diplomatic and consular missions overseas (**See Article**).

A delegation led by the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Mesganu Arga is attending the United Nations' *High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* at the UN Headquarters in New York City. In his remarks at the Forum on Tuesday (July 18), Ambassador Mesganu emphasized the numerous strides Ethiopia made in SDGs' implementation.

In response to the national call to plant 500 million trees in a day, a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led by State Minister Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, took part in a tree-planting activity in the cities of Dire Dawa and Harar on Sunday (July 16). While speaking at the event Ambassador Birtukan stated the momentous national significance of the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI).

Ambassador Meles Alem, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, delivered the *Bi-Weekly Press Briefing* of the Ministry to local and Addis-based international media corps on Wednesday (July 19). The briefing addressed issues pertaining to the Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), the African Union Executive Council's 43rd Ordinary Session, and other foreign affairs and diplomatic activities that took place over the past few weeks, among others.

Representatives of the European Union and Member States attended a briefing on *Transitional Justice Policy Options (TJPO)* on Tuesday (July 18) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. The briefing was provided by the Minister of Justice, Dr Gedion Timotheos together with the Special Policy Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ambassador Minelik Alemu.

Eritrea

A senior delegation led by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh and Presidential Advisor Yemane Gebreab met with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani on Wednesday (July 19) in Rome and discussed cooperation between the two countries. The delegation also conferred with Senator Anna Maria Bernini, Minister of Universities and Research.

Djibouti

On Monday (July 17), the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) announced the issuance of a \$120-million credit facility to Djibouti's Great Horn Investment Holding (GHIH) for the implementation of a number of development projects in the country's Damerjog Industrial Development Free Trade Zone.

Somalia

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud arrived in Jowhar, Hir Shabelle on July 18, as the government prepares to launch the second stage of its military campaign to root out Al-Shabaab. The president is in the area for the second time since the administration started an attack against Al-Shabaab.

Galgudud and Middle Shabelle districts saw the joint operation of the Somali National Army (SNA) and US forces, which resulted in the deaths of at least 100 al-Shabaab fighters on Tuesday (July 18).

The African Union (AU) announced on Sunday (July 16), that the second phase of *the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia* (ATMIS) withdrawal will commence soon in accordance with the *Somali Transition Plan* (STP). The second phase of withdrawal will see the reduction of 1,960 troops.

South Sudan

The United Nations Humanitarian Agency said on Saturday (July 16) that 169,060 people have been driven into South Sudan as a result of violent conflicts in Sudan. More than 19,000 refugees and asylum seekers sought asylum in South Sudan, the agency noted.

Kenya

Speaking in Isiolo County on Thursday (July 20), President William Ruto urged Kenyans to join him in constructing their nation by abstaining from violence. Stating the importance of peace and stability for the nation, the President praised Kenyans for resisting pressure to participate in the protests and maintaining their ground.

On Thursday (20 July), Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Dr. Alfred Mutua addressed the diplomatic corps in Nairobi on the current state of affairs in the country, with a view to discuss and deliberate on issues that underpin Kenya's domestic and foreign policies. He told the senior diplomats, solution will never come from violent protests but through imaginative solutions addressing the recent demonstrations across the country. He also called upon the diplomatic community to be an active partner in the journey to reform Kenya.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday (July 17) authorized about USD 1 billion for Kenya, to support economic development and address climate change-related issues in the country.

Sudan

The United Nations stated on Tuesday (July 18) that the rate at which civilians are being displaced by the violence in Sudan is disturbing. Stephane Dujarric, a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, cited recent data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and said that the conflict inside Sudan alone resulted in the displacement of up to 200,000 people last week.

According to information provided by the China International Development Cooperation Agency, a shipment of medical supplies left Shanghai on Saturday (July 16), as part of the Chinese government's \$1.39 million humanitarian emergency aid to Sudan.

Ethiopia's Record-Breaking Green Legacy Initiative drive

On 17 July 2023, spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew, Ethiopians embarked on an historic record-breaking yet Green Legacy Initiative drive to plant half a billion trees in a single day. To this effect, concerted, nation-wide effort in different parts of the country resulted in a total of about 567 million trees being planted. To put it in a detailed manner, 566,971, 600 forest, bamboo, agroforestry and ornamental seedlings were planted by up to 34 million children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities (PWDs), urbanites, farmers, pastoralists, diplomatic corps, etc. on georeferenced locations on 302,000 hectares of nationwide. As echoed by the Prime Minister, the undertaking was a testament to the beauty of Ethiopians working for a definite success. It's our local approach to tackling climate change and environmental degradation. It is one of our means to creating job opportunities.

As part of the GLI several drives were led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen in Addis Ababa and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Birtukan Ayano in the historic city of Harar. Ambassador Birtukan lauded the landmark event as having immense national significance. She said, Ethiopia is doing its level best to continuously contribute to international efforts to achieve a greener and cleaner world while tackling the adverse effects of climate change.

More than an annual, national tree-planting customary practice, the GLI first and foremost is Ethiopia's perennial pledge to significantly contribute to the global climate agenda and to bring about a low-emission, resilient and climate resilient development by capitalising on renewable energy sources. To give the GLI a global perspective, it is being conducted in line with both the *Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda*, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. It is one of the earmarked national initiatives in the recently launched *Long-Term Low-Emission and Climate-Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)*. The LT-LEDS was designed with a long-term planning horizon in due consideration and taking into account interactions, synergies, and trade-offs between different sectoral climate goals and national development priorities. As per the LT-LEDS, the GLI is part of the national roadmap for a long-term decarbonization and climate-resilient development in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, Green Legacy is also a food security initiative. It is one of the means of enabling food security across the country through planting edible seedlings. As a flagship environmental project, the GLI is also instrumental in combatting water shortage thereby addressing climate-change induced drought and famine across the Horn of Africa. This necessitates for it to be adopted by countries of the region to tackle vulnerabilities borne by shortage of the most sought-after natural resource in our daily lives.

Last but not least, Green Legacy is Ethiopia's *Green Diplomacy* in East Africa. As a matter of fact, the GLI is Ethiopia's continued commitment to championing green diplomacy on the world stage and combatting environmental degradation as well as its drastic effects and disasters borne of it in tandem with increasing agricultural productivity. In this regard, through this exemplary campaign Ethiopia is considerably contributing to peace and stability, development and strategic cooperation in the region by laying a solid foundation for effectively addressing and solving resource-related conflicts.

As correctly stated by DPM and FM Demeke, Ethiopia's regional ties and influence in East Africa should be reflected in peace, development, problem-solving and strategic partnership. Accordingly, Ethiopia is striving to forge multi-spectral cooperation to enhance economic integration and infrastructural linkages across the Horn of Africa by capitalising on the successes and achievements of this monumental green

development initiative that is anchored in Ethiopia but also expanding in the region further strengthening cross-border and overall regional people-to-people ties.

Why Ethiopia's Accession to BRICS Matters: An Economic Perspective

Ethiopia is well-known for its longstanding commitment to multilateralism and champions its reinvigoration for shared interests. It has dedicated its statecraft for further enhancing this global imperative.

As a founding member of various international bodies (United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation of African Unity/African Union, G77, etc) and a member of the League of Nations, as well as several other global platforms, Ethiopia has always been committed to African interests and of the Global South to garner support and resources as well as expertise to realise the collective security and development aspirations of humanity. It is a nation that strongly believes in the fact that sustainable peace and development are best achieved through genuine and continued global cooperation and partnership among States. To this end, the East African country is increasing its engagement in global affairs and multilateral settings to advance development interests and address common challenges. It is also stepping up South-South cooperation efforts to promote the collective development of the Global South.

With the signing of the *Pretoria Peace Agreement* and its subsequent holistic implementation, Ethiopia also has heralded a new chapter in its history. That of a journey of recovery, reconstruction, peace consolidation and ultimately healing. It is a watershed moment to further accelerate political and economic reforms to realize its vision of prosperity for all. As a necessary ingredient to economic prosperity, the dividends of the hard-earned peace are crucial to bringing about significant changes in forging cooperation in the region and countries of the Global South towards shared development and prosperity.

Moreover, Ethiopia is the third largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa and the second most populous on the Continent. In this regard, Ethiopia is on a firm social capital foundation to take the road of economic recovery guided by its homegrown economic development vision.

Taking the above issues into careful consideration, Ethiopia's accession to the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) bloc has to be seen from its immense contributions to multilateralism and huge economic potential.

The BRICS platform offers unprecedented opportunity for developing countries to advance inclusive and sustainable development based on mutual respect and a win-win principle. It is in this regard that Ethiopia has submitted its application for membership to join the BRICS family. This strategic move taken by the current administration strikes a carefully balanced approach towards international development cooperation focused on realizing its national development plans.

In a nutshell, Ethiopia's initiative to accede to the biggest economic bloc in the Global South is demonstrative of its utmost attention to economic diplomacy as a path towards leveraging existing and capitalising on emerging multilateral collectives to advance development and prosperity while staying abreast of the evolving regional and global situation.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's gradual membership in the BRICS could bring economic dividends in supporting economic integration and long-term economic prosperity taking mutual benefit and mutual contribution as the foundational basis for the ultimate goal of collective development.

The strategic thinking behind this decision emanates from a rational calculus to make full good use of the peace dividend as well as engage the country with BRICS and existing platforms to enable Ethiopia to become a manufacturing hub and a recipient of global capital, investment, technology, talent, and knowledge. Financing for development is at the heart of Ethiopia's desire to join the BRICS platform as financing is the driving force for the national economic recovery, reconstruction, and development plan.

Industrialization is one of the key priority areas where Ethiopia is interested to collaborate with BRICS member states to structurally transform its economy and connect its economy with the economies of BRICS states that will ensure shared prosperity for all. Another priority issue that brings both Ethiopia and BRICS together is technology transfer and knowledge sharing as it is a crucial area to tap the opportunities of the global knowledge economy and close the technology gaps. Technology transfer is one of the hallmarks of Ethiopia's economic diplomacy to modernize the country's economy.

Moreover, Ethiopia's accession to the BRICS platform deepens the development cooperation and partnership of African countries with BRICS member states. Ethiopia wishes to cooperate with this year's host of the BRICS Summit--South Africa—to maximize the synergy between the AU and BRICS development projects. Ethiopia mainstreaming the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the AU Agenda 2063 of the African Union as its starting point in its relations with the outside world will collaborate with South Africa to play a significant role in identifying key areas of cooperation including industrialization, financing for development and poverty reduction and infrastructure; All this would contribute to translate the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into tangible outcomes in the years ahead.

Detractors see Ethiopia's move to join BRICS as a drift into an alternative geopolitical orbit of BRICS. A deeper study of Ethiopia's rich history of multilateralism reveals a different story—that is--the country's principled international policy placing non-alignment front and centre as well as putting a premium on collective security and collective development. Ethiopia's accession to BRICS should be seen in the light of the principle of collective development as a key to addressing global underdevelopment and insecurity. These principles could place Ethiopia to play a constructive role.

In conclusion, what makes Ethiopia to be part of the BRICS platform must not be viewed through the distorted prism of global power rivalry. Rather it should be seen on account of a rational assessment of its economic policies paying special attention to balanced and diversified economic relations with all our partners using various platforms that advance peace, security, and prosperity. Ethiopia's desire to join BRICS is grounded on the core national interest to maintain a diversity of strategic relations with all as well as to contribute to creating a fair, inclusive, and sustainable international environment that works to advance the interests of all developing countries.

‘Industrial Decarbonisation’: A UK-Africa Ministerial Roadshow

Ethiopia is taking part in the UK-Africa ministerial roadshow that is taking place in the United Kingdom from 17-26 July 2023. The Ministerial roadshow looks at the development of decarbonisation in the Infrastructure, Mining and Energy sectors. Moreover, it stands as a significant platform for fostering partnerships, collaboration, and mutual development between the United Kingdom and African nations. The program brings together government officials, business leaders, and civil society representatives to discuss various aspects of the UK-Africa relationship, including trade, investment, development, and

cooperation on global challenges. It demonstrates both sides' commitment to working together as equal partners, leveraging their respective strengths and expertise to achieve common goals.

The program consists of different ministerial symposiums of G2G and G2B including a tour of industries to share UK's best practice in decarbonisation. On the G2G Symposium Minister of Mines Eng. Habtamu Tegegn emphasized on Ethiopia's policy commitment in making its development greener. In its attempt to combat climate change, said minister Habtamu, "Ethiopia is not only committing on the policy aspect but also as we speak today Ethiopian all over the country are planting a record breaking 500 million plant seedlings in less than a day, following our Prime Minister's Green Legacy Initiative."

The Minister also stated that Ethiopia is working to put in the right infrastructure in place in the sectors of Mining and Energy for an efficient use of its rich of natural resources. Moreover, he underlined the need of support from development partners in terms of technology transfer, human capital development, Infrastructure development and most importantly financial support.

Similarly, on the G2B symposium State Minister of Water and Energy, Dr Sultan Welle, stated that Ethiopia is making its own moves designing a detailed Master plan and taking pragmatic action to further develop the energy sector, aiming to produce several green powers from a renewable source. The state minister showed the business sector, Ethiopia's investment opportunities in the manufacturing and distribution of green power. He explained Ethiopia's immense capacity to produce wind, solar, geothermal and hydropower energy. In addition to the manufacturing of power from these renewable sources said Dr. Sultan, there is a huge investment conducive opportunity in the power distribution sector as there is a plan to add on the already existing neighbours who get power from Ethiopia.

In conclusion, the roadshow fosters mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to the sustainable growth and prosperity of both regions. Especially for Ethiopia, it was successful in creating the platform to explain the country's home-grown economy policy and the opportunity it has created for foreign business to invest in Ethiopia. It also played an important role in introducing Ethiopia's commitment in combating climate change through the green legacy initiative and green development policies.

Ethiopia at the Geneva *AI for Good Global Summit 2023*

Ethiopia shared its experiences on Artificial Intelligence (AI) at an Ambassador's Roundtable discussion at the "AI for Good Global Summit 2023" organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which was held from 6-7 July 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In his intervention, Ambassador Tsegab Kebebew appreciated the Secretary General of ITU for convening the meeting as it enables the participants to share experiences and learn from the positive developments in the area from others. He used the opportunity to share Ethiopia's experiences and highlighted areas of support for developing countries.

In his briefing he stated that as part of Ethiopia's digital strategy, *Digital Ethiopia 2025-A Digital Strategy for Ethiopia Inclusive Prosperity*, the Government established the first ever Artificial Intelligence Institute in 2020. He further stated that, among others, the institute is mandated to provide research-based artificial intelligence services and products, set a national infrastructure that enables artificial intelligence research and development programs, formulate national Artificial intelligence related policies, legislation, and regulatory frameworks as well as ensure that artificial intelligence supports socio-economic programs such as health, education, agriculture, and utilities.

He also explained that in close collaboration with local and international partners, the institute has made several efforts to make Ethiopia an African AI hub and to benefit it from relevant technology. He said, the Institute has also been working to foster the development of a nationally recognized Artificial Intelligence ecosystem to empower and inspire the nation for peace and prosperity and to further achieve the SDGs in Ethiopia. Preparation is also being finalized to develop a National Artificial Intelligence Policy; the Ambassador further added.

Amb Tsegab also elaborated on the major focus areas of the Institute and he said the Institute focused on five major areas such as AI Robotics, Big Data, Natural Language Processing (NLP), Machine Learning and Computer Vision. On the primary use of AI in Ethiopia, Amb. Tsegab said that the government primarily used AI for the improvement of the country's health, agriculture, revenue assurance in tax collection and customer chatbot for Ethiopian Airlines. He informed that the projects in the health sector are focused on disease prediction, detection and management; on agriculture, for enhancing Ethiopian crop productivity using AI application with emphasis on diseases management and crop data labelling; on Revenue Assurance in Tax Collections, and in Customer ChatBot for Ethiopian Airlines using four local languages (Afaan Oromo, Amharic, Somali and Tigrigna) and English language.

Ambassador Tsegab underscored that in the long run, the implementation of the AI policy would increase productivity and would also help to achieve the SDGs in Ethiopia. To this end, he called for enhanced international support to developing countries, particularly in Africa. He said, Ethiopia's experience is a clear attestation of its desire to utilize advanced technology for its prosperity and informed that it welcomes collaboration in the context of development support, financing and transfer of technology.