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New 30% VAT, Excise Tax on petroleum to raise fuel prices

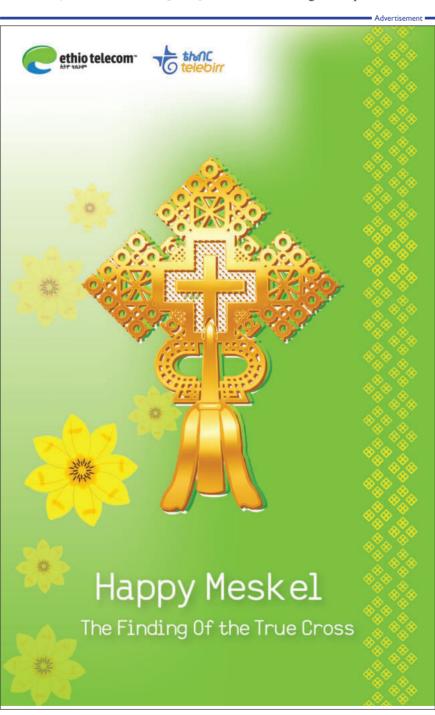
By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ministry of Finance has confirmed the full implementation of a combined 30 percent tax on petroleum products for the fiscal year 2025/26, comprising a 15

percent value-added tax (VAT) alongside a 15 percent excise duty. This move marks a significant shift in the country's fiscal policy, reinforcing the government's commitment to the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda but raising widespread concerns about its

The newly approved 'citizens budget' outlines these taxation measures, which collectively place a substantial new burden on fuel prices

▶ Page 6



Upcoming MPC meeting expected to lift credit growth cap

By our staff reporter

The National Bank of Ethiopia's (NBE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet early this week, with high expectations for a significant decision that could impact the economy.

The MPC was established following an amendment to the NBE proclamation at the end of 2023, which mandated its formation. After its inaugural meeting in December 2023 and a subsequent quarterly meeting in June, the committee will convene again at the end of the first quarter of the current fiscal year, which closes on Tuesday, September 30.

This upcoming meeting, the MPC's fourth, will be chaired by Eyob Tekalegn, the newly appointed NBE Governor, and is anticipated to introduce measures aimed at stimulating the economy.

One key decision expected from this meeting is the removal of the 18 percent cap on bank credit growth, one of the last remaining direct monetary policy instruments. This cap was initially set at 14 percent at the beginning of the 2023/24 budget year as part of a series of direct interventions to address inflation.

The MPC raised the cap to 18 percent during its first meeting in December 2023. In its third meeting, the committee eased controls by repealing a directive that required commercial banks to purchase Treasury bonds equivalent to 20 percent of every loan disbursement.

The private sector, including financial institutions and newly established banks, has consistently voiced concerns that the credit cap has hindered their operations.



Strength has a Name











ARRESTING

Journalists Is Never the Solution

n recent months, Ethiopia has witnessed a disturbing surge in the arrests of journalists, media professionals, and human rights advocates. The pattern of arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and systemic censorship raises serious questions about the government's commitment to freedom of expression and democratic openness. Yet, as critical as these developments are for the journalistic community and society at large, it is important to emphasize one overarching truth: arresting journalists will never be a solution to any of the country's challenges.

The role of the press is to scrutinize power, expose wrongdoing, and offer citizens truthful information. In a democracy, this role is not optional—it is essential. Attempts to silence journalists through harassment, imprisonment, and intimidation are a sign of weakness, not strength. They reveal a government unwilling or unable to justify its actions in the court of public opinion. Worse, such repression undermines the very foundations of governance and social trust.

Ethiopia's history of fluctuating media freedom encapsulates the complex challenges facing many transitional societies. When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in 2018, his accession to office raised hopes for a new age of openness. Political prisoners were freed, exiled journalists returned, and Ethiopia even hosted World Press Freedom Day in 2019. But this hopeful moment was short-lived. With the onset of conflict and political tension, the space for independent journalism rapidly shrank, and repression steadily mounted.

In 2025 alone, numerous instances highlight the alarming trend. Journalists reporting on sensitive issues, such as health sector strikes or allegations of human rights abuses, have faced arrest. Media outlets broadcasting stories critically examining government actions have endured raids, forced content removal, and suspension. Some journalists have been abducted, held incommunicado, or subjected to protracted detention without due process. Courts have been used not merely to adjudicate but as instruments to extend punitive measures against the press.

Such government behavior is not only a violation of international human rights norms but also counterproductive. It prevents a nation from confronting and resolving the deep-rooted social, economic, and political problems it faces. When journalists are muzzled, misinformation fills the vacuum. Public discourse becomes polarized, and grievances fester unaddressed. Moreover, repression triggers self-censorship, causing even the most principled reporters to withhold important stories out of fear.

Critics might argue that curtailing the media is necessary to maintain national security, social harmony, or political stability. Yet history teaches us that censorship and coercion breed long-term instability, undermining sustainable development and social cohesion. Ethiopia is at a critical juncture ahead of its 2026 elections—a moment that demands transparency, robust debate, and the free flow of information.

Society benefits when journalists are free to ask hard questions and hold institutions accountable. Investigative reporting plays a vital role in uncovering corruption, exposing abuses, and promoting justice. The public deserves access to news that is accurate, diverse, and independent. Without it, democracy is hollow, and governance becomes opaque and unresponsive.

Moreover, press freedom is a cornerstone of global legitimacy. Countries that restrict media risk isolating themselves diplomatically and economically. International partners look for signs of open society and rule of law when deciding on aid, investment, and cooperation. Ethiopia's international standing—and ultimately its prosperity—depends on respecting and protecting journalists' rights.

What, then, is the alternative to arrests and repression? The answer lies in embracing an open, tolerant, and responsive governance culture that recognizes the media as a partner rather than an adversary. Governments should engage constructively with journalists, improve access to official information, and establish transparent legal frameworks that protect the press while ensuring accountability.

This means repealing or reforming restrictive laws that criminalize journalism on vague charges such as "hate speech," "false information," or "terrorism." It requires independent and impartial media regulatory bodies, safeguards for digital freedoms, and a commitment to cease violent intimidation and unlawful detentions. Equally important is investing in journalistic capacity-building, ethical standards, and infrastructure so that media workers can report responsibly and effectively.

Civil society, professional associations, and international organizations play a crucial supportive role. They should provide training, legal aid, and solidarity networks to shield journalists from harm. Awareness campaigns can help citizens value and defend press freedom as a public good. Together, these efforts nurture a resilient media ecosystem that serves both democracy and development.

Fortunately, amidst the crackdown, there remain "sparks of hope" in Ethiopia's journalism landscape. Some reporters continue to produce brave investigations, shining light on corruption, conflict, and social injustice. Regional and global journalism networks have translated resources into local languages, fostering knowledge exchange and cross-border collaboration. These glimmers demonstrate that despite repression, the spirit of free journalism endures.

Silencing journalists through arrests will never solve Ethiopia's challenges—it only deepens mistrust, weakens institutions, and closes off pathways to progress. The government would do well to heed calls from rights groups, the international community, and its own citizens to restore media freedom and protect journalists. Doing so not only honors universal principles but strengthens Ethiopia's foundation for peace, justice, and sustainable development in the years to come.

The future of a democratic Ethiopia depends on it.



■ By Paul Chadwick

COMMENT

What is journalism for? In today's world, here are four key purposes

Faced with huge competition from social media, here are things that, to me, remain worthwhile in a free society

f, as Hilary Mantel memorably proposed, history is the way we organise our ignorance of the past, how might we tackle our ignorance of our radically changing communications present, to keep the future bright? Hope may be power, as the Guardian's recent promotional campaign slogan asserts it is, but nurturing hope requires some shared vocabulary.

Let's start small: what is journalism for? Besides making money and influence for a few, what purposes do media serve in societies that want to call themselves free? Even a rough consensus about that might help us assess how well those purposes are being fulfilled, and to know better how to adjust in an era of huge but clumsy social media entities and datahungry, ethically unaccountable artificial intelligence. Four purposes of journalism, familiar even if usually expressed differently, seem to me to remain worthwhile:

Help civil society to cohere Media, especially local media, serve as public forums, information collectors and disseminators and conduits through which many of the routine activities necessary to a healthy civil society happen – unnoticed until they are gone, or no longer sufficiently open. Crucially, these processes foster tolerance in the sense that they make it possible to observe the diversity, the "otherness", around us, without requiring us to join in, or even approve. They help us rub along together – no small achievement.

Facilitate democratic processes From campaigning, debating and voting to extracting accountability and forcing into view public interest issues which we do not want to see, but which will fester to our detriment unless we face them.

Lubricate commerce Through advertising and specialist business, finance and economics reporting, since the earliest days of newspapers, journalism has served this purpose – and while it can create conflicts of interest, its byproduct is financial independence from the state, which is essential to other purposes of journalism. (How media power is held accountable is a legitimate topic, but for another day.)

Make and mix the culture It sells journalism short not to acknowledge that its finest practitioners make a distinct contribution to the culture. But the emphasis here is on how journalism mixes what others make. Artists will create and cultural rituals will be acted out (and believed in) regardless of whether anyone observes, records, disseminates, applauds, tuts or hisses. But through reviews, listings, previews, interviews, profiles and their "nose for the new", journalists do much to raise awareness, generate opportunity and magnify.

These verbs matter: help, facilitate, lubricate, mix. Journalism has always been self-interested, but it has done, and still does, a lot of collateral good. As communications continue to change and other players take increasingly powerful roles, we will all be affected by what they decide they are for.

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Motorcycle logistics faces regulatory headwinds

By Eyasu Zekarias

Ethiopia's rapidly growing digital logistics sector, notably led by startups like Moteregna Transport, is facing significant regulatory challenges that threaten to slow its momentum and disrupt a vibrant segment of the economy. Central to the turmoil is the lack of consistent and clear policies governing motorcycle logistics, particularly concerning taxation, licensing, and insurance coverage.

Moteregna CEO and founder Mesfin Getahun emphasized the urgency of the issue, noting that "the sector is changing rapidly, creating an atmosphere of instability." Without a unified regulatory framework, businesses in the motorcycle delivery space are grappling with unexpected costs and legal uncertainties that could impair growth and innovation.

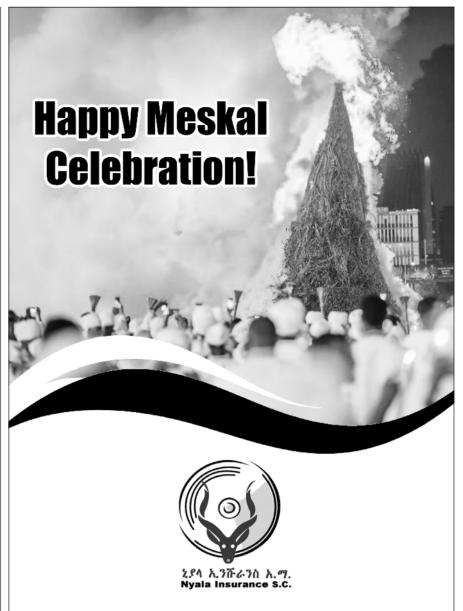
Rather than retreating, Moteregna has adopted a proactive stance, actively engaging with regulatory bodies to demonstrate how its business model aligns with job creation, tax transparency, and Ethiopia's broader Green Growth Strategy. "We aim to provide empirical evidence to help develop innovation-driven and law-abiding regulations," Mesfin explained. The firm collaborates with a range of stakeholders—including other businesses and community organizations—to push for policies

that promote sustainable growth, safety standards, and fair competition.

A critical gap in the current ecosystem is the absence of carrier liability insurance, exposing logistics operators and their customers to significant financial risks. To mitigate this, Moteregna has established a risk reserve fund and implemented rigorous safety and cargo handling protocols. The company is also in discussions with insurers to create partial coverage schemes for high-value delivery routes. These financial safeguards, together with clear contractual terms, enable Moteregna to operate securely while working toward comprehensive insurance solutions.

Mesfin further highlighted the importance of integrating technology with security, using digital tracking to monitor risks in real time and respond promptly. This combination of technological innovation and proactive risk management builds trust with clients, reinforcing Moteregna's reputation for reliability in a sector often perceived as informal.

A key part of Moteregna's vision is to tackle the informal nature of the logistics industry by building a digital taxation system that records every transaction and ensures transparency. The company plans to train government officials in the use of these digital tools to foster a culture of accountability, setting a new benchmark for the wider sector.



Nyala Insurance S.C. (NISCO) extends warm wishes for a joyous Meskal Celebration to all Christians celebrating the occasion with exciting festivities.

ECX digital leap drives 12.5 billion birr in online trade



By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) has taken a major step toward modernizing the country's agribusiness sector by facilitating digital trading valued at 12.5 billion birr through its new direct online trading system. This milestone underscores ECX's leadership in advancing Ethiopia's "Digital Ethiopia" agenda by providing a transparent, reliable, and efficient platform for trading

agricultural products.

The announcement coincided with ECX signing a service agreement with Sidama Bank S.C., its 26th payment partner. The pact, signed by ECX CEO Mergia Baisa and Sidama Bank President Tadesse Hitiya, strengthens the payment and delivery (PVD) system that ECX has operated flawlessly over the past 17 years. The online trading platform allows buyers and sellers to transact seamlessly from any

location, eliminating the need for physical presence and enabling market access even for remote producers and traders. Since its inception, the digital system has handled more than 27,830 metric tons of products, delivering services characterized by confidentiality, efficiency, and zero human contact, a feature particularly relevant in the current era.

Over the course of 17 years, ECX has facilitated the exchange of over 420

billion birr between market participants, generating more than 20 billion birr in domestic income taxes. The exchange currently markets over 28 products across 26 branches nationwide, continuously expanding to include new commodities in support of Ethiopia's export growth goals. Notably, during the 2024/25 fiscal year, barley, teff, flaxseed, castor bean, finger millet, and rapeseed were integrated into ECX's modern marketing system. Preparations are underway to introduce cotton, opal, leather, and lettuce into the

To enhance farmers' access to finance, ECX provided 1.011 billion birr in credit services to farmers, cooperatives, and processors in 2024/25. Its model has positioned Ethiopia as a continental leader in modern agricultural marketing and capacity building, offering training in areas such as coffee tasting and grain grading.

exchange as early as fiscal year 2018, signaling ongoing diversification.

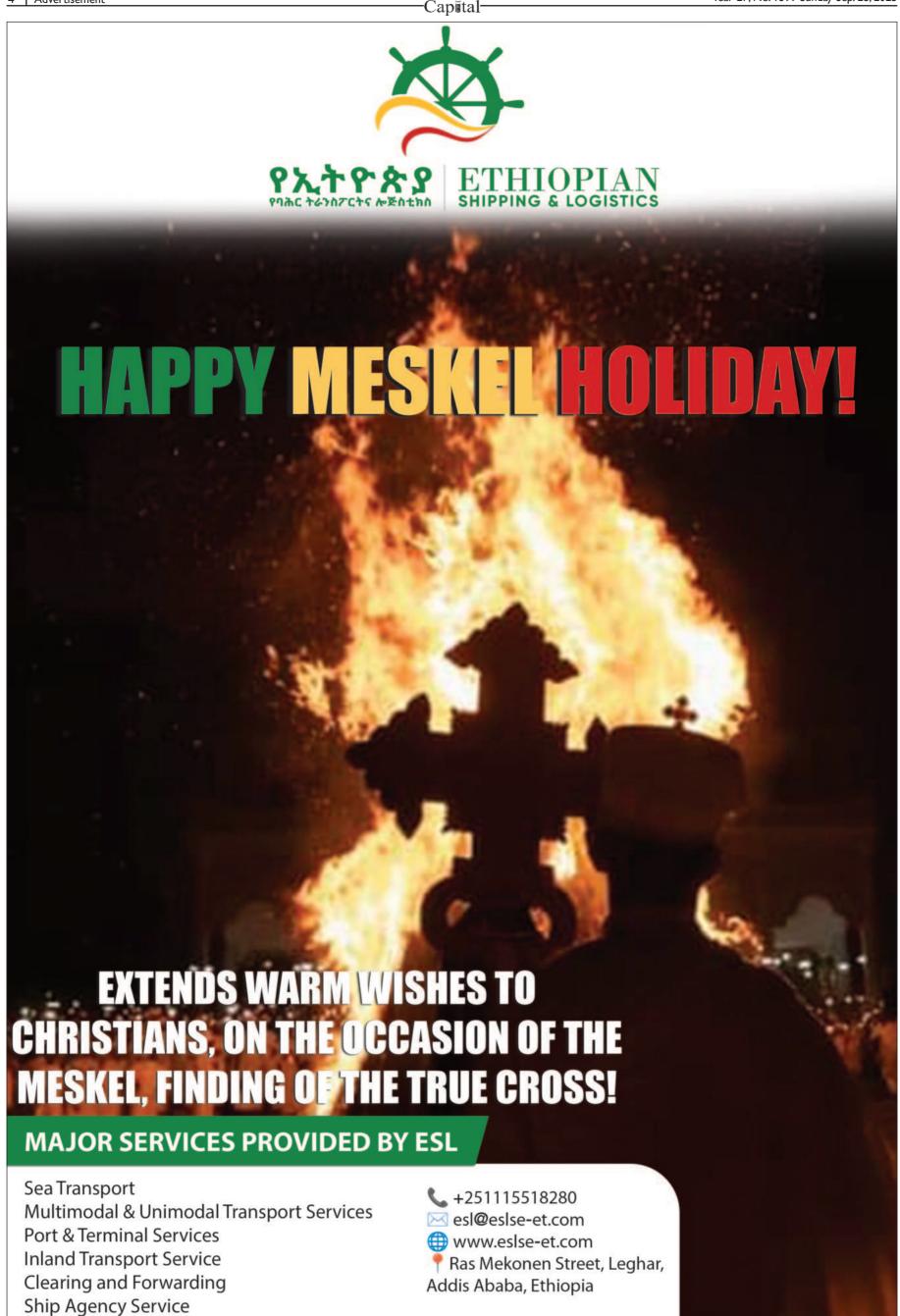
In tandem with trade modernization, ECX announced plans for constructing a 36-story headquarters in Addis Ababa, which is envisioned as a hub for continued innovation and service excellence. Additionally, a rebranding initiative is underway to update the 17-year-old corporate logo, reflecting ECX's commitment to maintaining competitiveness and pioneering Ethiopia's digital agricultural transformation.

AUCTION RESULT | Thursday, August 21st, 2025

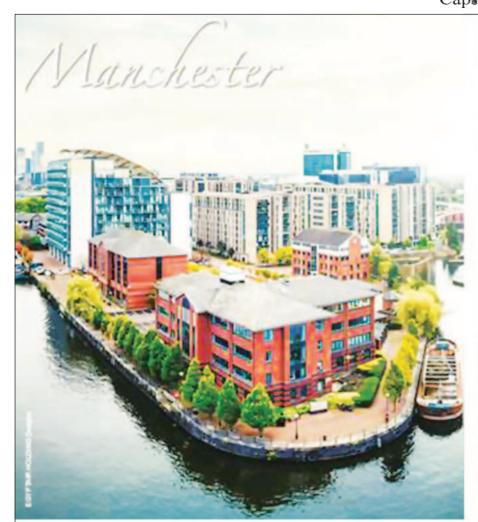
The 30^h OMO auction result for Liquidity-Absorbing Open Market Operation

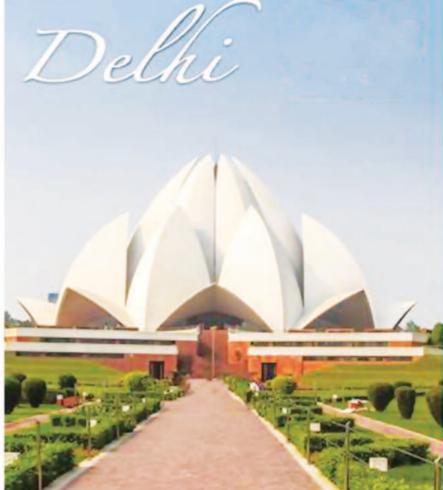
Auction No.	OMO-Auction No.30
Date of Auction	August 21, 2025
Type of Operations	2-Weeks-Deposit Taking Operation
Total amount of bids submitted by participants (in Millions of Birr)	99,500.00
Number of bidders	11

Total allotted amount (in Millions of Birr):	99,500.00
Fixed Interest Rate	15%
Start date of the operations	August 21, 2025
Maturity date of the operations	September 4, 2025
Settlement Date	August 21, 2025



BEYOND THE SEA







BANKS ASSET IN BILLION ETB AS OF JUNE 30, 2024

46

Bank of Abyssinia:

Berhan Bank:

Bunna Bank: 54.5 (17.5%) CBE: 1,440

(10%)

Coop Bank of Oromia:

140

Upcoming MPC meeting...

Consequently, removing it is expected to alleviate some of these constraints.

However, this potential move raises concerns among economic experts and market participants. They caution that lifting the cap could lead to an increase in the money supply, potentially driving inflation higher.

Some members of the business community, particularly those reliant on imports, welcome the prospect of improved access to finance but are apprehensive about a surge in demand for foreign exchange.

"I fear that the demand for foreign currency will spike when banks extend more credit to their customers," said a businessman with an economics background, adding that such an increase could exert downward pressure on the birr, leading to a higher exchange rate.

Despite these concerns, experts believe the central bank has the tools necessary to address potential challenges. The NBE has indicated its shift from traditional direct controls to conventional, market-based monetary policy instruments to combat inflation

Recent data from the Ethiopian Statistics Service shows that inflation has slightly decreased to 13.7% as of last month. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance projects that inflation will drop to 11.9% by the end of the budget year in June 2026. In a statement issued on June 30, the MPC reaffirmed its commitment to a disciplined monetary policy utilizing these market-based tools to reduce inflation to single digits while fostering economic recovery. The committee intends to carefully manage the money supply through the banking sector.

Before the third MPC meeting, Fikadu Digafe, Vice Governor and Chief Economist at the NBE, informed Capital that the bank would employ various policy instruments to ensure market stability.

The following statement clarified that although the credit growth cap is expected to be revised by September 2025, any adjustments would not inadvertently loosen monetary policy.

The NBE committed to utilizing its full range of tools, such as the policy rate, Open Market Operations, foreign exchange interventions, and adjustments to reserve requirements.

In a notable change, the NBE introduced its first-ever policy rate in July 2024, set at 15%, to transition to an interest rate-based framework. The central bank indicated that this NBE Reference Rate (NBR) would serve as its primary signaling tool for policy.

Experts predict a potential decline in this rate, pointing out that yields on Treasury bills (T-bills) have recently decreased compared to auctions prior to the start of the current budget year on July 7.

They attribute this decline to the government showing less interest in accepting highyield offers, a change possibly linked to the suspension of Treasury bond issuances for the current budget year.

Analysts argue that the removal of the mandatory Treasury bond requirement beginning in July has significantly enhanced bank liquidity, a change that is reflected in the recent bi-weekly T-bill auctions.

This improved liquidity was underscored in an extraordinary domestic debt bulletin published by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) a few weeks ago, which reported that investor demand for T-bills surged to 159% of the amount offered.

The Ministry attributes this increase in demand to better primary market conditions following the introduction of a three-month T-bill issuance

New 30% VAT...

for consumers and businesses alike. Given fuel's central role in transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing, experts warn that the tax increase risks exacerbating inflationary pressures already elevated by high costs and prior reductions in fuel subsidies.

Since mid-2022, the Ethiopian government has phased out fuel subsidies to curb public spending and correct market inefficiencies. This process has already led to more than a 50 percent rise in diesel and gasoline prices. Despite partial subsidies remaining, the national inflation rate was officially 13.7 percent in August 2025, and economists anticipate the new tax measures may push inflation higher.

Sector experts highlight the serious risks posed by the fuel tax increase, including the potential to dampen economic activity by raising operational costs for businesses and further eroding purchasing power among Ethiopian households. Critics argue that introducing such high taxation on vital commodities during a period of elevated living costs could trigger public dissatisfaction and financial instability.

calendar at the start of the budget year.

According to the MoF's first domestic debt bulletin, issued in early September, "The issuance calendar provides market participants with improved transparency regarding upcoming auctions, enabling better planning and fostering investor confidence.'

Since its implementation, participation and subscription rates in the market have notably improved across all T-bill tenors. In the first two months of the 2025/26 fiscal year (July and August), the government raised 111.1 billion birr through four T-bill auctions, surpassing its planned issuance of 103.4 billion birr.

In an unusual move, the government chose not

PACKING

Finance Minister Ahmed Shide emphasized the necessity of the reforms during a parliamentary session three months ago, acknowledging that domestic tax revenues have struggled to keep up with economic growth. He insisted that the fuel tax is not intended to completely eliminate subsidies but to control and ensure their sustainability. The minister further explained that alongside the VAT and excise tax, the government approved a new motor vehicle transfer tax as part of a broader strategy to strengthen public finances while gradually reducing subsidies without significantly widening the budget deficit.

Ethiopia currently struggles with one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in Sub-Saharan Africa, below 10 percent according to World Bank data, making revenue expansion through tax reform a cornerstone of fiscal consolidation efforts. The Ministry of Finance plans a series of complementary tax reforms, including the introduction of a Minimum Alternative Tax (MAT) and adjustments to withholding income tax rates, aiming to raise total government revenues to approximately 1.93 trillion birr.

to accept the full amount of funds offered by bidders, despite receiving significantly higher bids than anticipated.

The auction results also indicated a decline in yields, which experts suggest implies that potential buyers, primarily banks, are highly liquid. However, the most recent auction, scheduled for mid-last week, did not take place.

The NBE has stated that the NBR will be adjusted according to inflationary pressures and monetary conditions.

Additionally, a few months ago, the bank released a revised draft directive on reserve requirements to align with international standards.



SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING COMPANY

















ICO Indicator prices (US cents/lb) 18-Sep-25

I-CIP 330.63 **Colombian Milds** 410.52

1.11%

Other Milds 410.70

Brazilian Naturals 381.44

Robusta 213.54

0.09%

11b=0.45kg

Kenya's impact investment surge leaves Ethiopia struggling to catch up

By Eyasu Zekarias

Despite Ethiopia's impressive economic growth over recent years—with a robust GDP growth rate of 8.1% in 2024—new studies reveal that the country has fallen significantly behind its regional rival Kenya in attracting impact investment. This form of investment, which simultaneously generates social and environmental benefits alongside financial returns, is regarded as essential for bridging Ethiopia's widening development finance gap and unlocking its full economic potential.

Nasreen M. Adem, founder and managing partner of ACE Advisors, said that Ethiopia captured less than 4% of the East African region's impact funds, a stark contrast to Kenya's bustling landscape of over 126 active impact investment funds. This discrepancy highlights a fundamental challenge for Ethiopia: while showing strong economic indicators, the country struggles with complex structural issues that undermine its attractiveness to investors seeking social impact.

Ethiopia's challenges include persistent inflation nearing 30.8%, ongoing foreign exchange shortages, and rising external debt, estimated at \$29 billion. Youth unemployment remains a pressing problem, with the nation ranked 184th on the Human Development Index. The country faces an estimated \$397 billion funding gap for national development priorities through 2030—an amount compounded by the need for \$252 billion to address climate change and \$608 billion to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of Ethiopia's economy, face a financing shortfall estimated at \$4.2 billion. Although nearly 800,000 SMEs operate in the country, only about 130,000 have access to formal credit, reflecting an enormous mismatch between supply and demand for capital.

This gap restricts entrepreneurial growth, innovation, and job creation.

Impact investors typically focus on sectors aligned with sustainable practices such as agribusiness, energy, and fintech, while also aiming to generate social benefits including improved healthcare and education access, reduced inequality, and job stability. Despite these needs, Ethiopia's impact investment market remains underdeveloped, with fewer than 15 private equity and venture capital firms actively engaged, dwarfing the rapidly growing ecosystem in Kenya.

Dagmawit Shiferaw, director of the Innovative Finance Lab at the United Development Nations Programme (UNDP), highlighted ongoing efforts to mature Ethiopia's private capital markets by helping enterprises become "investmentready." The UNDP-organized Innovation Finance Laboratory works to bridge the gap between investor expectations and local business capacities.

Atieno Otonglo, market development manager at GSG Impact—a global nonprofit supporting impact investment ecosystems-stressed that impact investing is a financially sound strategy rather than charity. She underscored the importance of a holistic ecosystem encompassing supply and demand, intermediary institutions, regulatory frameworks, and market facilitators like research organizations and legal advisors.

Atieno noted that Ethiopia's financing challenges-including credit access gaps and stringent collateral demands—are not unique. She pointed to successful impact investment models from other African countries as blueprints for Ethiopia to emulate.

Efforts are underway to boost domestic investment sources, with plans to mobilize pension funds and establish a national impact investment partnership institution within the next one to two years. This entity aims to unite stakeholders from public and private sectors, foster innovation, attract capital, and pilot new financing approaches.

The inaugural Ethiopian Impact Dialogue, held in Addis Ababa on September 23, 2025 under the theme "Shaping the Future of Impact Investment," marked a historic step toward building consensus among policymakers, investors, and business leaders. Supported by GSG Impact, ACE Advisors, UNDP, and the Government of Japan, the forum symbolized Ethiopia's resolve to strengthen its impact investment ecosystem.

Analysts and practitioners emphasize that Ethiopia's future depends not only on economic metrics but also on leveraging impact investing as a catalyst for selfsustained growth. By channeling investment into local enterprises, promoting innovation, and generating broad-based employment, Ethiopia can unlock inclusive development and narrow the gap with regional frontrunners like Kenya.

Workshop highlights urgent need for support in investigative journalism

nvestigative journalists emphasize the importance of collaboration with media houses to enhance their impact, shape public opinion, and address misconduct.

On Thursday, September 25, a workshop convened media professionals to discuss the current trends, challenges, and future of investigative journalism in Ethiopia. This event highlighted the urgent need for increased institutional support to facilitate this critical form of reporting.

Organized by the Editors' Guild of Ethiopia,

the Consortium for the Safety of Journalists, and the international organization IMS, the workshop aimed to develop strategies for strengthening investigative reporting by addressing significant obstacles and ensuring journalist safety.

Participants, including reporters and editors from both public and private media outlets, shared personal experiences regarding the challenges they face in their work. A recurring theme was the considerable cost-both financial and in terms of personal safetythat has deterred Ethiopian media houses from pursuing investigative journalism.

Discussions centered on practical strategies for overcoming these challenges. A key conclusion was the essential role of stakeholders, especially the government, in creating an environment where a free and independent press can flourish, allowing journalists to operate without fear of reprisal.

The workshop underscored a shared commitment to revitalize and strengthen investigative journalism, recognizing its vital role in promoting accountability and transparency in the country.

Africa faces critical Al challenge: Leaders urge urgent investment to secure future growth

By Eyasu Zekarias

As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly transforms global economic and social landscapes, African leaders have issued a stark warning that the continent stands at a critical crossroads: failure to actively invest in AI innovation, leadership development, and infrastructure risks leaving Africa behind in global growth throughout the coming century. The cautionary message was delivered ahead of and during the 11th African Think Tank Summit, scheduled for October 8-10 in Ethiopia's capital.

Zadig Abraha, CEO of the African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX), emphasized that the competition shaping the future is no longer between developed and developing nations but between humans and machines. "The race is man with machines," he said. He warned that even global superpowers like the United States cannot guarantee their dominance in the next century without significant investment

in AI technologies and capabilities.

Describing a future full of unprecedented change, Abraha envisioned a world where long-standing practices and assumptions give way to emerging and transformative phenomena. He underlined that success will require visionary leadership capable of converting good ideas and policies into concrete outcomes, especially in public finance and governance.

The theme of the upcoming summit, "Bridging the Gap Between Public Finance Policy and Implementation: From Taxation to Action," reflects Africa's perennial struggle to translate well-crafted fiscal policies into measurable development gains. Abraha stressed that without farsighted leaders, competent public servants, and strong institutions, the most innovative policies risk remaining mere ambitions on paper.

AFLEX has been highlighted as a leading institution committed to nurturing such transformative leadership across the continent—leaders who can deliver results, amidst rapid technological and economic change.

Echoing these sentiments, Mamadou Biteyethe, Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), reminded participants that the core challenge in fiscal reform lies not in design but execution. "Knowledge without practicality has little effect," he cautioned, underscoring the need for rigorous policy monitoring and effective translation of reforms into tangible citizen benefits.

To bridge the gap between policy intent and real-world impact, the summit aims to prioritize actionable results over theoretical discussion. Leaders emphasized the urgent need to build a financial ecosystem capable of supporting Africa's AI-driven future, investing heavily in the continent's youth and innovation capacity to ensure they are active contributors—not mere observers to Africa's development.

Crucially, summit planners envision

manage complexity, and inspire confidence this event as a platform to jointly shape Africa's leadership evolution and fiscal transition, turning ambitious goals into real improvements that benefit citizens across the continent.

> As AI reshapes labor markets, commerce, healthcare, and governance globally, Africa's ability to harness the technology determine its developmental trajectory in the 21st century. Participants underscored that urgent collaboration among governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society is essential to build ethical, inclusive, and sustainable AI ecosystems tailored to Africa's unique socio-economic realities.

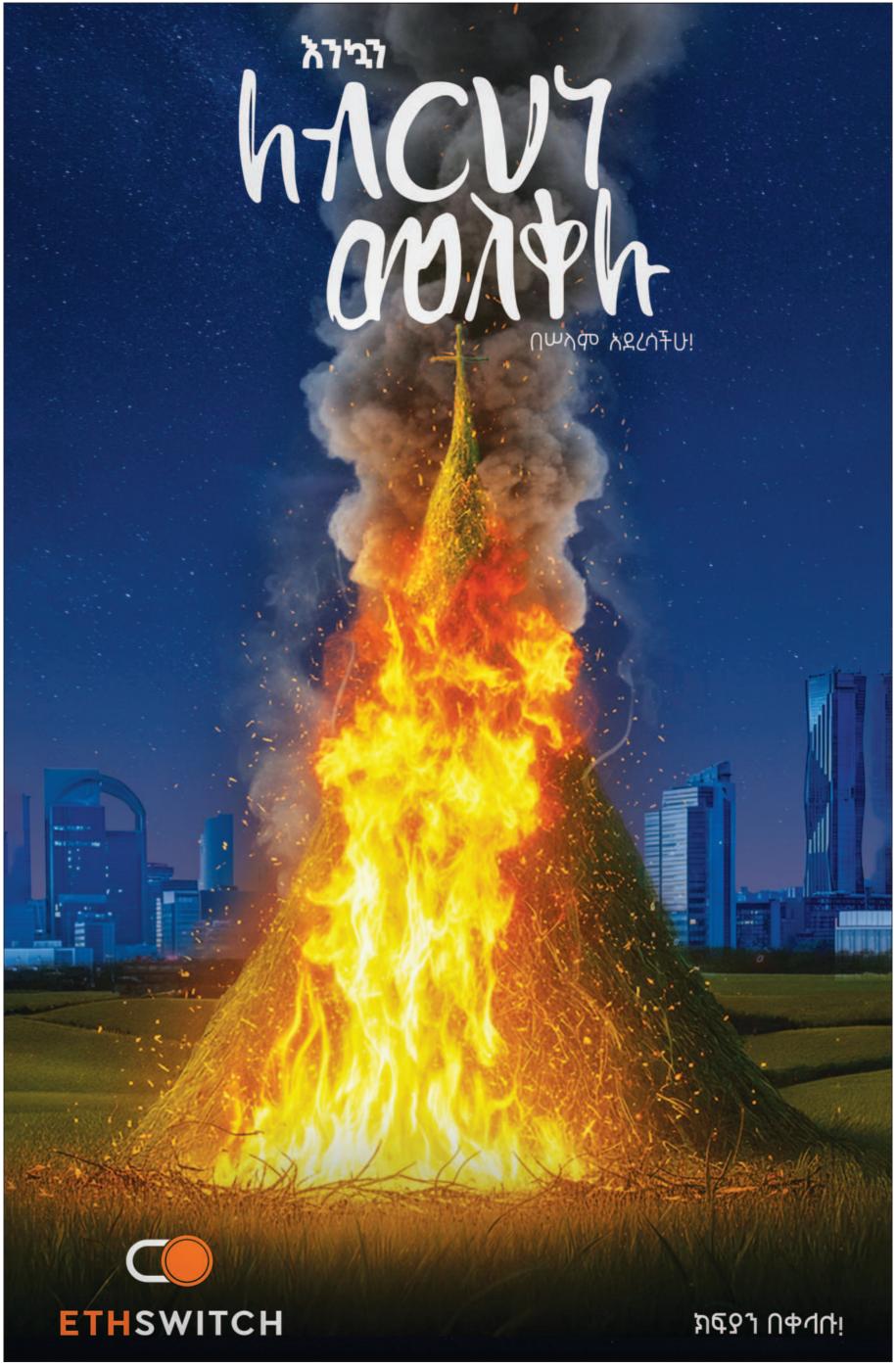
> The African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson, Selma Malika Haddadi, has earlier affirmed the continent's commitment to leveraging AI for inclusive prosperity, stressing investments in renewable-powered data centers, regional compute hubs, and data sovereignty to protect African identities.



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Africa's Persistent Energy Poverty: A Crisis of Access, Opportunity, and Lives Lost

By our staff reporter

Despite global progress towards universal electricity access, hundreds of millions of Africans continue to live without reliable power, relying on kerosene lamps, candles, and firewood for basic needs. This energy poverty exacts a heavy toll, manifested in stunted economic growth, lost opportunities, and an estimated 700,000 preventable deaths each year due to household air pollution.

The oft-repeated statistic that some 600 million Africans lack electricity access has become a familiar but sobering refrain. While it risks becoming a figure that fades into the background, the real-world impacts remain starkly visible in communities across the continent. Household reliance on polluting fuels releases toxic fumes that endanger health, particularly for children. The World Health Organization attributes 3.2 million deaths annually worldwide to indoor air pollution, with over 237,000 children under five among the victims. In Africa, the number reaches approximately 700,000, including deaths from pneumonia, heart disease, respiratory illnesses, strokes, and lung cancer.

Nigeria shoulders the greatest burden with over 80 million of its population still without electricity— the highest number globally. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia collectively add about 130 million more people facing power shortages. Together, these three countries represent nearly a third of the continent's population living in the dark.

The absence of dependable electricity

hampers prospects for industrialization, job creation, value-added manufacturing, and competitive exports that could transform African economies and improve living standards.

For Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO and UN Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), the foundational challenge lies in policy frameworks and financing mechanisms. Ogunbiyi stresses that translating lofty commitments into tangible implementation is critical. SEforALL tracks progress annually on electrification initiatives, infrastructure like electric vehicle charging stations, and quantifiable impacts to livelihoods. Though many countries' energy transitions will be gradual, Ogunbiyi encourages Africa to capitalize on the opportunity to forge a green energy future from the ground up.

Yet, this opportunity risks slipping away. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), laments that despite Africa's vast solar potential accounting for 60 percent of the world's total, the continent receives less than three percent of global energy investment. He warns that financing gaps risk locking Africa into short-term energy fixes rather than resilient long-term solutions.

To address these challenges, Robert Lisinge, Director for Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure at ECA, highlights collaborative efforts with the African Union and regional bodies like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to develop harmonized energy frameworks. These policies aim to align

continental priorities with international goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063, ensuring the continent's energy needs remain central in global discussions.

Despite daunting obstacles, progress is evident in several African countries. Kenya stands out for producing more than 80 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, serving as a replicable model. Morocco's Noor Ouarzazate solar complex is among the world's largest solar power facilities, demonstrating large-scale renewable energy deployment on the continent.

Discussions around integrating nuclear energy into Africa's energy mix are ongoing. More than 20 countries are considering small modular reactors and microreactors to boost rural electrification, though concerns about costs, safety, and waste persist. Proponents argue that countries like France and Canada have successfully harnessed nuclear power as part of their low-carbon energy portfolios and that, with appropriate regulation, nuclear could complement renewables in providing stable baseload power essential for growth.

Private sector engagement is also pivotal. Osayande Igiehon, CEO of Heirs Energies, emphasizes the firm's dual strategy of improving the efficiency and cleanness of existing oil and gas assets while expanding renewable energy projects. This approach aims not only to reduce emissions but also to facilitate socio-economic development by bringing infrastructure such as schools, clinics, and roads to underserved communities. He recognizes hydrocarbons continue to meet present energy demands but stresses renewables must drive Africa's future growth.

Young innovators across the continent—from Kenya, Rwanda's capital Kigali, Ghana, to Nigeria—are driving grassroots advances. Solar start-ups and community-led clean energy initiatives are gaining traction, generating localized solutions to close energy gaps and foster sustainable development.

Closing Africa's electricity access gap

will shape the pace of the continent's industrialization, the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and realization of the ambitious vision laid out in Agenda 2063. Most critically, it will determine whether millions continue to suffer and die unnecessarily from energy poverty or whether Africa's immense renewable resources are harnessed to power a more equitable and sustainable future.

Leading figures such as Damilola Ogunbiyi, Robert Lisinge, and Osayande Igiehon recently discussed these issues in the Economic Commission for Africa's Sustainable Africa Series, highlighting the urgency of coordinated action and innovative financing to unblock energy access and fuel Africa's transformation.

While the challenge is immense, Africa's experience in rapid electrification elsewhere, combined with global advancements in renewable energy technologies and growing private sector dynamism, indicate that the continent's energy revolution is within reach, provided sustained political commitment, smart investments, and inclusive policies are prioritized.

Utilities and policymakers must learn from regions like South and Central Asia, which dramatically reduced electricity deficits within a decade by emphasizing decentralized solutions such as mini-grids and solar home systems. With over 50 million off-grid solar products sold across Africa in recent years, these models offer efficient, resilient pathways to power remote and underserved areas that traditional grid expansion may not reach quickly.

To avoid losing the race against time and climate change, Africa must seize existing knowledge, mobilize financing at scale, and champion technological innovation to electrify homes, businesses, and public services across its vast and diverse landscapes.

The future of millions of Africans depends on turning these challenges into opportunities, ultimately ensuring reliable, affordable, and clean electricity for all.

Ethiopia emerges as top target of cyberattacks amid rapid digital growth

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia has been identified as the most targeted country worldwide for cyberattacks in 2024, highlighting critical cybersecurity challenges amid the nation's swift digital transformation. According to the INTERPOL Africa Cyberthreat Assessment Report 2025, Ethiopia leads globally in malware detections, underscoring the urgent need for strengthened cyber defenses and coordinated response mechanisms.

The report reveals that Ethiopia's critical infrastructure, including government institutions, financial services, and major development projects, faces frequent and sophisticated cyber threats. These attacks exploit the expanding use of mobile banking, e-commerce, and online public services which have grown rapidly as part of Ethiopia's broader digital economy expansion.

One of the most prevalent cyber threats in Ethiopia is online scams, particularly phishing, which accounts for a significant share of cybercrime incidents reported across Africa. Cybercriminals employ advanced social engineering tactics, including AI-generated texts and impersonation schemes, to defraud individuals and organizations. Ethiopia's growing internet user base, now part of over 500 million users in Africa, is increasingly vulnerable to such threats, which lead to financial losses and erosion of

trust in digital platforms.

Another rising concern in Ethiopia and the East African region is digital sextortion and online harassment, particularly targeting women and youth. These crimes involve the coercive use of explicit images to extort victims and have been on the rise as internet penetration deepens.

Ethiopia also faces challenges from ransomware attacks, business email compromise (BEC), and mobile-related frauds such as SIM swap scams, which compromise telecommunications security and enable fraudulent financial transactions.

Despite these threats, Ethiopia and other African nations are beginning to make positive strides. Efforts include establishing dedicated cybercrime investigation units, investing in digital forensic capabilities, and enhancing regional cooperation through initiatives like AFRIPOL and INTERPOL's African Joint Operation against Cybercrime (AFJOC). These collaborative platforms have recently led to significant takedowns of cybercriminal networks and hundreds of arrests across the continent.

However, the report cautions that legal frameworks across Africa, including Ethiopia, remain fragmented and enforcement capacities uneven. More harmonized legislation aligned with international standards, increased training for law enforcement, and improved access to

IMF forecasts tepid global growth; Ethiopia focuses on macroeconomic stability

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia continues to engage actively in addressing economic challenges amid a complex global environment marked by uncertainty, shifting trade dynamics, and the need for sustained reforms. According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2025 Annual Report, Ethiopia, like many low-income countries, faces significant external pressures but remains focused on fostering macroeconomic stability and growth with IMF support.

The IMF report highlights the global economy's tepid growth forecast of 2.8 percent for 2025 and 3.0 percent for 2026, pointing out challenges such as trade tensions, debt burdens, and the impacts of technological transformation including artificial intelligence. Low-income countries, Ethiopia among them, are implementing reforms to restore fiscal stability and enhance economic resilience despite harsh external shocks.

Ethiopia benefits from IMF capacity development efforts that strengthen crucial economic institutions including finance ministries, central banks, and revenue authorities. These efforts equip policymakers with tools to design effective policies aimed at improving public finance management, revenue mobilization, and financial sector

stability.

The IMF has approved lending arrangements for Ethiopia under concessional frameworks, supporting the country's endeavors for balance of payments stability and growth-friendly fiscal adjustments. Continued collaboration focuses on strengthening macroeconomic frameworks, expanding digital infrastructure, and improving regulatory environments to attract investment and boost productivity.

The report underscores the importance of Ethiopia's structural reforms aimed at easing bureaucratic hurdles, increasing economic participation, and deepening capital markets. It calls for Ethiopia to maintain fiscal discipline while investing strategically in infrastructure and innovation to sustain growth momentum.

Ethiopian authorities are also encouraged to pursue international cooperation to secure a stable trade environment and facilitate debt restructuring to manage vulnerabilities amid uncertain global financial conditions.

As Ethiopia progresses on its economic reform path, IMF engagement remains strong through technical assistance, surveillance, and supportive lending facilities. These efforts are integral to Ethiopia's quest to transform its economy, reduce poverty, and increase resilience to external shocks in a rapidly changing global landscape.

technological tools are essential to keep pace with rapidly evolving cybercrime tactics.

Public awareness campaigns are also being scaled up, aiming to educate vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and small businesses on cyber hygiene and threat recognition. Ethiopia's focus on integrating cybersecurity education within schools and government

entities marks an encouraging step towards building resilience.

The INTERPOL report calls for sustained multi-sectoral efforts involving governments, private sector, and civil society to safeguard Ethiopia's digital future and ensure continued trust in its blossoming digital economy.

IATA study confirms SAF technology rollout as key bottleneck to achieving net zero emissions

By our staff reporter

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), in collaboration with Worley Consulting, released a study on September 23, 2025, confirming that the main barrier to achieving the airline industry's goal of net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 is not a shortage of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) feedstock but rather the slow pace of rollout for SAF production technologies. According to the study, sufficient sustainable feedstock exists globally, meeting strict environmental standards without causing adverse land use changes, to support the required 500 million tonnes of SAF annually by 2050.

Currently, most commercial SAF production relies on hydroprocessed esters and fatty acids (HEFA) technology, which converts waste oils into fuel. The study pointed out the need to accelerate the development of new technologies to diversify SAF production methods, power-to-liquid especially technologies that rely on renewable electricity, green hydrogen, and carbon capture infrastructure. It also highlighted competition for biomass feedstock among various hard-to-decarbonize sectors, stressing the importance of prioritizing aviation in feedstock allocation.

IATA's Director General, Willie Walsh, emphasized that feedstock availability should no longer be viewed as a limiting factor. He urged industry stakeholders to accelerate investments and build the infrastructure necessary to scale up SAF production rapidly. "We now have unequivocal evidence that the challenge lies in technology deployment, not feedstock," Walsh said. "To meet net zero goals by 2050,

shovels must be in the ground now."

The study projects that biomass feedstock could sustainably supply over 300 million tonnes of bio-SAF annually by mid-century, with the remainder of the 500 million tonnes coming from PtL fuels. However, unlocking the full potential will require coordinated global policies, enhanced supply chain logistics, infrastructure investment, and technological innovation. Marie Owens Thomsen, IATA's Senior Vice President for Sustainability and Chief Economist, highlighted SAF's potential to create jobs, boost local economies, and support energy security. She stressed the critical need for governments, investors, and industry stakeholders to collaborate on policy frameworks and investment incentives to de-risk projects and hasten the development of a fully functioning SAF market.

The report underscores regional leadership from key global players such as North America, Brazil, Europe, India, China, and ASEAN countries as vital to scaling up production and meeting global demand. Energy producers and investors are called upon to align their strategies with global decarbonization goals to ensure the rapid commercialization of SAF technologies.

The study serves as a critical reminder that while SAF feedstocks are abundant, turning this potential into actual production hinges on the acceleration of technologies, infrastructure readiness, and cross-sector collaboration. With only 25 years remaining to meet the ambitious net zero target, timely action and focused investments are paramount to decarbonizing the aviation sector and securing a sustainable future for air travel.

Ethiopia among fastest growing productivity innovators with improved innovation efficiency ranking

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies in terms of labor productivity growth over the past decade. According to the 2025 Global Innovation Index (GII) released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Ethiopia recorded an annualized productivity growth rate of 5 percent between 2014 and 2024, placing it among the top three economies globally alongside China (5.9%) and Vietnam (5.4%).

While Ethiopia's overall rank in the GII stands at 134th out of 1399 economies in 2025, the country has improved its innovation efficiency—a key metric reflecting how well an economy converts innovation investments into tangible outputs. Ethiopia's rise in this indicator highlights progress in optimizing its innovation ecosystem despite volatility in its overall ranking.

The 2025 GII report further identifies Ethiopia among several economies, including Sweden, the United States, Malta, India, Mexico, Tunisia, and Nigeria, that have advanced in aligning their innovation investments with output. These countries are maximizing the productivity and impact of their innovation ecosystems to generate greater returns from resources committed to science, technology, and development.

Ethiopia's position in the GII and its enhanced efficiency rating reflect growing efforts to promote innovation-driven economic growth, leveraging education, research, and technology adoption. However, the report also underscores challenges remaining for Ethiopia in human capital development, infrastructure, and market sophistication, which are

crucial pillars for sustained innovation advancement.

Despite such challenges, Ethiopia's remarkable decade-long productivity surge is particularly important given its sizable population and the imperative for inclusive growth and poverty reduction. As one of the fastest-growing productivity performers, Ethiopia demonstrates significant potential to contribute meaningfully to global development agendas through strengthened support for innovation ecosystems.

The GII 2025 report highlights Ethiopia's capacity for knowledge creation, technology adoption, and business sophistication as areas to nurture further in order to ascend both innovation and economic development rankings in coming years. Policymakers and stakeholders are encouraged to sustain investments in research and development (R&D), support startups and scale-ups, and foster stronger linkages between universities, industry, and government to translate scientific discoveries into economic benefit.

In the broader African context, the GII places Ethiopia among countries showing growing innovation momentum amid mixed regional performance. With sustained focus on education, infrastructure, and policy reforms, Ethiopia can build on its rising innovation efficiency to accelerate diversified and sustainable growth pivotal to achieving long-term development goals.

Ethiopia's progress in innovation efficiency signals an optimistic trajectory that, if harnessed well, could enhance its competitiveness and integration into global knowledge economies, benefitting both its population and regional economic dynamism.

DAY ZERO DROUGHTS:

Africa among regions facing unprecedented water scarcity by 2030s

By our staff reporter

Multiple recent scientific studies have raised alarm over a looming global water crisis, with Africa among the most vulnerable regions. New research published in prestigious journals reveals that "day zero" drought events-moments when cities or regions completely run out of water—may become more frequent and severe over the coming decades, affecting hundreds of millions of people worldwide. A notable study released in the journal Nature Communications by researchers from Pusan National University in South Korea projects that by 2100, under a high greenhouse gas emissions scenario, approximately 750 million people globally could face unprecedented water scarcity. Alarmingly, nearly two-thirds of these individuals reside in urban areas. The study highlights northern and southern Africa as hotspot regions carrying disproportionate burdens of water stress, alongside the Mediterranean and parts of Asia.

The lead researcher, PhD candidate Vecchia Ravinandrasana, noted that global

warming drives and accelerates these extreme drought conditions worldwide. "Even if global warming is capped at 1.5°C, hundreds of millions can expect unprecedented water shortages," she said. The Mediterranean region, encompassing North African nations and European neighbors, is especially at risk, warming 20% faster than the global average. Around 196 million city residents in this region face exposure to severe drought events.

Africa's water crisis is both natural and man-made. While the continent boasts vast water resources, uneven distribution, climate change-induced droughts, population growth, and poor infrastructure exacerbate shortages. Over 400 million Africans currently lack consistent access to clean drinking water, fueling health crises and undermining livelihoods.

In Nigeria, more than 80 million people the largest number worldwide—remain without electricity-powered water access, compounding water scarcity challenges. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia add another estimated 130 million people facing water insecurity, collectively accounting for nearly one-third of Africans living without reliable water supply.

The health impacts are dire. The World Health Organization estimates that indoor air pollution from burning kerosene, candles, and firewood kills around 700,000 Africans annually, largely through pneumonia among children, respiratory and cardiac diseases, and lung cancer. Waterborne diseases from unsafe drinking water further burden vulnerable populations.

Meanwhile, climate variability fuels frequent drought cycles, desertification, and depletion of groundwater and glacial resources essential for rivers and agriculture. Failed rainy seasons lead to crop and livestock losses, threatening food security and intensifying poverty. In areas like the Sahel, water conflicts between pastoralists and farmers escalate, leading to displacement and regional instability.

Experts emphasize that immediate governmental policy reform, regional cooperation, and climate-smart investments in water management infrastructure are essential to avert worsening shortages. Innovative solutions like rainwater harvesting, irrigation

efficiency, and large-scale projects such as Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam offer hope but require diplomatic coordination and significant funding.

Renewed focus on climate-resilient agriculture and ecosystem restoration, such as the Great Green Wall initiative, seek to combat desertification and rehabilitate degraded land. However, insufficient financing and technological adoption remain significant constraints to turning strategies into outcomes.

The private sector is emerging as a critical partner in bridging Africa's water gap. Companies are investing in improved water delivery systems, pollution control, and community development with the dual goals of sustainability and social impact. Additionally, young African innovators are pioneering localized water solutions and technologies to expand access in remote and underserved communities.

Closing Africa's water scarcity gap is critical not only for public health but also for economic transformation. Reliable access to safe water underpins industrialization, agriculture, education, and gender equity, ultimately influencing the continent's ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

Efforts by regional bodies such as the African Union, Economic Commission for Africa, and Southern African Development Community aim to harmonize policies, attract investment, and prioritize equitable water resource management. Yet, experts warn that without swift action to mobilize financing, build infrastructure, and adapt to climate impacts, Africa risks leaving millions behind in a growing water crisis.











Capital -Capital-

Africa's Colliding Conflicts Compound Forced Displacement Crisis

An estimated 45.7 million Africans are forcibly displaced—refugees, internally displaced, or asylum seekers—comprising 3 percent of the total African population. This continues a pattern of 15 years of steadily increasing numbers of forcibly displaced populations on the continent. ... 69 percent of the 45.7 million are displaced within their own countries (IDPs). However, the share of externally displaced has expanded significantly in the past year largely due to increased refugee flows from Sudan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Mali. 97 percent of Africa's forcibly displaced population seek refuge on the continent. 96 percent of forcibly displaced populations are from countries facing armed conflict, underscoring the centrality of war as a driver to population displacement. ... This year saw a 13-percent growth of refugees and asylum seekers being hosted in another African country—11.44 million people underscoring the intraregional implications of these persistent population flows. ... Sudan is the country with the largest number of forcibly displaced (14.4 million people)—a 14-percent increase from a year previously.

- Africa Center for Strategic Studies

South Sudan: Security Forces Block Independent Media from Covering Machar Trial

South Sudanese security forces on Monday barred independent media outlets from

covering the long-awaited trial of suspended First Vice President Riek Machar and seven senior officials of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO). Only the state-run South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation (SSBC) was granted access to cover and broadcast the court proceedings, which began in Juba. Several journalists told Radio Tamazuj that they were denied entry despite arriving early and attempting to follow procedures for coverage. "I woke up early to cover this case," said Denis Logonyi, a freelance journalist. "When we got to the prison, we found the prosecutor and a man called Nyibany, but they told us we needed a document from the Ministry of Information, which we were never informed about." Logonyi said a Ministry of Justice official later reiterated that only SSBC would be allowed to cover the trial. "This shouldn't be happening," he said. "The court is meant to uphold transparency. SSBC alone cannot provide comprehensive coverage for the entire country and the international community."

Radio Tamazuj

Ruto Presses Africa's Case for Permanent UN Security Council Seats

membership of the United Nations Security Council "indefensible" and urged African leaders to unite in pressing for reform. Ruto spoke at the Seventh Summit of the African Union Committee of 10 Heads of State and Government (C-10) on Security Council reform, saying Africa carries a

disproportionate share of the council's

Kenya President William Ruto has called

Africa's exclusion from permanent

agenda yet remains the only continent without permanent representation. "Africa's exclusion is indefensible. At 80, the United Nations' credibility will be judged by whether it finally delivers justice and representation for Africa," said Ruto on September 22. He noted that Africa contributes some of the largest numbers to United Nations peacekeeping operations but continues to be sidelined in decision-making. Ruto observed that unity among African states is the only way to secure permanent seats on the council. "To deviate from or dilute the Common African Position would betray the trust of our people. Unity is our greatest strength," he added. The summit coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which set out Africa's demand for at least two permanent seats with veto powers and five non-permanent seats on the council. Ruto explained that Africa must not only demand its rightful place but also prepare to shoulder the responsibilities of permanent membership, including how representatives will be chosen.

- The Standard

Africa CDC Earmarks \$3.2 billion to Boost Local **Drug Manufacturing**

The African Union's autonomous continental health agency, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), has announced a \$3.2 billion financing and grant package to support local drug and vaccine manufacturers. The initiative aims to reduce Africa's reliance on imported pharmaceuticals and foster self-sufficiency in healthcare production. Dr Abebe Getenu, the Africa CDC local manufacturing coordinator, revealed the funding details during a Thursday meeting with drug developers, manufacturers, and researchers in [Uganda]. The visit, part of a broader assessment of Africa's manufacturing capabilities, included a delegation led by Dr Mosoka Fallah, Africa CDC's director of science and innovation, alongside researchers from other African nations. ... "Finance is the core of any manufacturing," Dr Getenu said. "So for that, we have been working with development finance institutions (DFIs); we've got a \$2 two billion dollars pledge from African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) to finance manufacturing on the continent," he added. "We have [also] got \$1.2 billion from the Gavi African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA)."

Monitor

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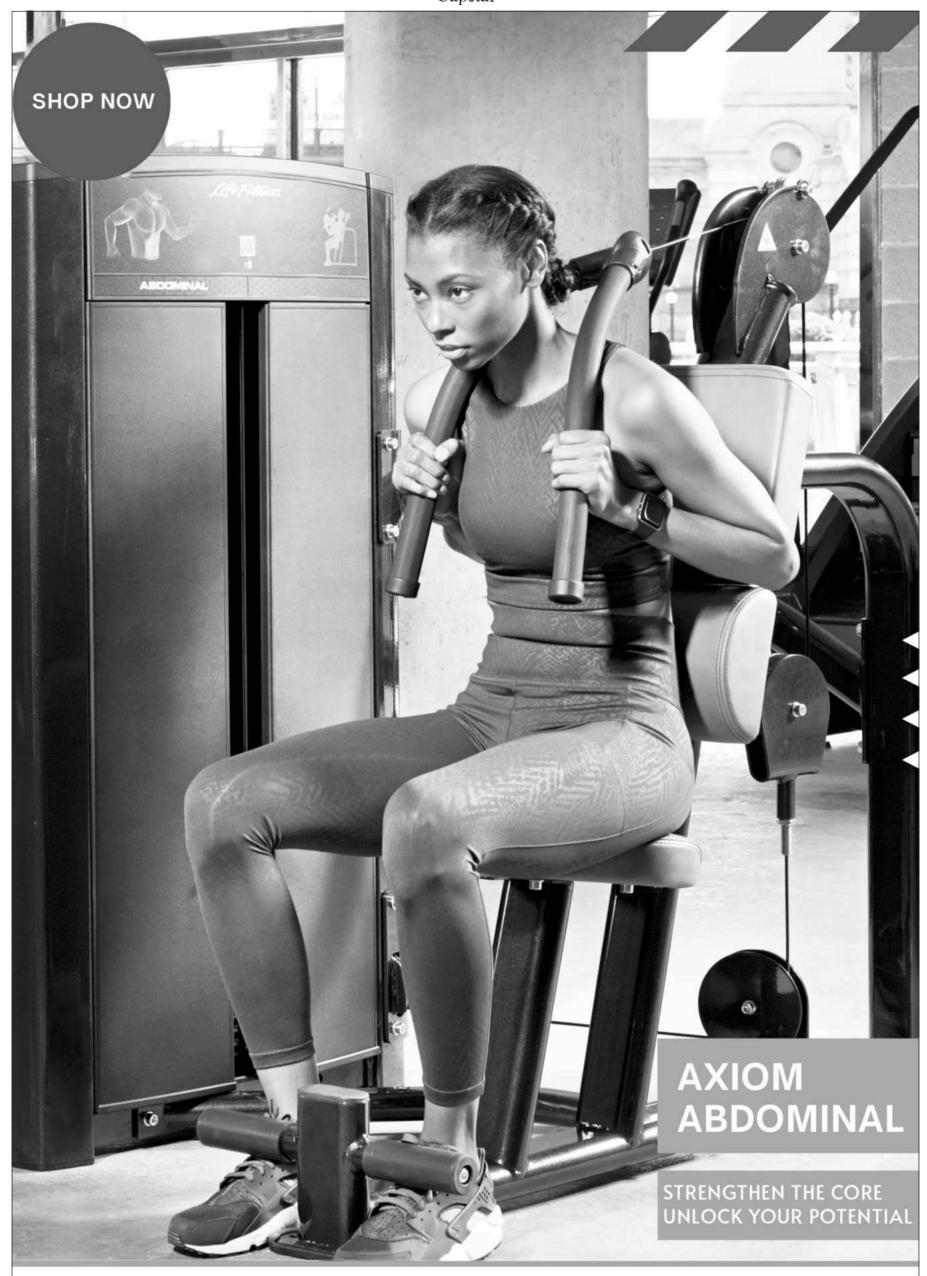
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The purpose of an irrevocable trust is to move assets from the grantor's control and name to that of the beneficiary. This protects the assets from creditors and reduces the value of the grantor's estate, which lowers estate taxes.

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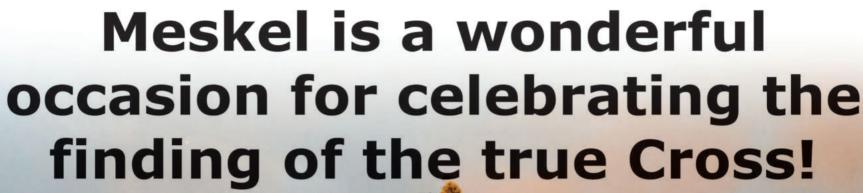
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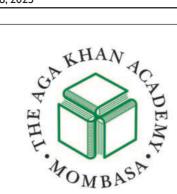




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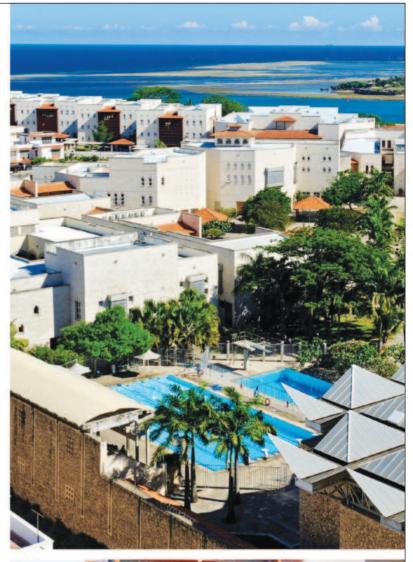
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Africa Policy Academy to Tackle Youth Skills Crisis on the Continent

The World Bank Group is convening a high-level Africa Skills for Jobs Policy Academy to address the skills gap on the African continent. The event, scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 30 September to 3 October 2025, will focus on sharing evidence-based approaches, examining emerging skills demands in key sectors, including agribusiness, energy, health, manufacturing, and tourism and developing actionable plans to reform technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Organized in collaboration with the Government of Kenya and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the event will bring together policymakers, World Bank task team leaders, and private sector representatives to address Africa's skills crisis. Coinciding with the official launch of the African Continental TVET Strategy 2025–2034, the event will serve as a platform for policymakers and stakeholders to engage and co- create innovative solutions aligned with the vision of "the Africa we want." This initiative builds on and complements existing programs, such as the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) that have demonstrated the impact of targeted skills development in flagship institutions.

The timbuktoo ManuTech hub in Addis hosts founders from 9 African countries

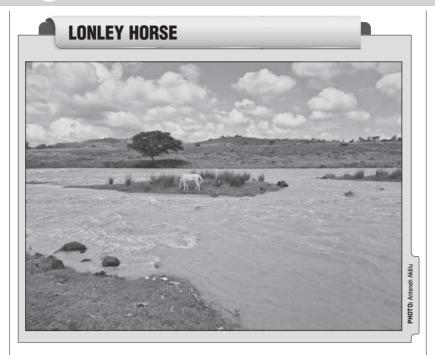
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the Ethiopian Ministry of Industry, is hosting the first-ever ManuTech Residency as part of the flagship pan-African innovation initiative, timbuktoo. The weeklong residency, taking place from 22–26 September 2025 at the ManuTech Hub in Kality, Addis Ababa, brings together 17 high-potential manufacturing technology startups from across Africa for an intensive program of learning, collaboration, and innovation.

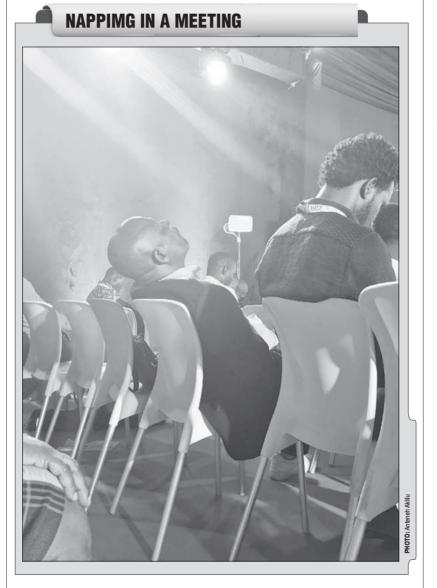
Addis Ababa is one of the ten African cities selected to host a timbuktoo hub. The timbuktoo Manufacturing Tech Hub (ManuTech Hub) was established to strengthen local and regional manufacturing ecosystems and drive socioeconomic transformation across the continent. The hub delivers a structured program of bootcamps, incubation, and acceleration for early-stage ventures. The ManuTech hub is in line with Ethiopia's ambition to become a manufacturing hub in Africa by 2030.

558 Students Graduate from the 2025 Pathways to Space Program in Africa

The Future African Space Explorers STEM Academy (FASESA), in partnership with Boeing, celebrated the graduation of the second cohort of the Pathways to Space program at the Planetarium Dome in the Science Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Henok Teferra Shawl, Boeing managing director for Africa, said: "African youth represent one of the greatest reserves of untapped aerospace talent anywhere in the world. By giving our young people access to subject matter experts and handson learning, Pathways to Space helps connect their ambitions with future opportunities laying the foundation for Africa to increase its contribution to the global space industry."

Sean Jacobs, founder and executive director of FASESA, reiterated: "Through Boeing's sponsorship and partnerships, we have been able to bring space into the classroom, directly to the learners. Pathways to Space is not only inspiring the students, we have created a life-changing movement that has brought actionable change and positive impact, shaping the lives of our future African space leaders, their communities, and their nations."







34 governments launch six-point plan to help close forest finance gap

The Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) - a focused effort of 34 governments committed to maintaining high-level political leadership on forests - launched the 'Forest Finance Roadmap for Action', in collaboration with the Government of Brazil and with support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Launched during Climate Week NYC in service of the COP30 Action Agenda, the Roadmap sets out six priority solutions to help halt and reverse forest loss by 2030. It also responds to new UNEP analysis released today, which estimates an annual forest finance gap of \$66.8 billion in tropical countries.1

The Forest Finance Roadmap for Action marks the first time that governments from across the Global North and Global South have come together around a shared vision to unlock and coordinate finance globally. The framework is aligned with the COP30 Presidency Priorities and translates the momentum from high-level commitments — including the COP26 Glasgow Leaders' Declaration to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030 — into priority action areas that can be realised in Belém and beyond.

Gates Foundation Partners with Indian Manufacturer to Drive Down Cost of, Accelerate Access to Groundbreaking HIV Prevention Tool

Millions more people at risk of HIV in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) will have access to a powerful new prevention option: a low-cost, generic version of lenacapavir, the world's first twice-yearly injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

A new partnership announced today between the Gates Foundation and Indian manufacturer Hetero Labs (Hetero)—supported by upfront funding and volume guarantees—will enable the company to manufacture generic lenacapavir at roughly \$40 per patient per year (after a short pre-treatment oral regimen), a price point designed to make the breakthrough treatment affordable for national health systems.

"Hetero is pleased to partner with the Gates Foundation to create a pathway for the sustainable and affordable supply of lenacapavir," said Dr. Vamsi Krishna, managing director of Hetero Group of Companies. "This collaboration reflects our commitment to ensuring access to innovative HIV medicines for patients in India and other low- and middle-income countries."

Global progress on social justice slowed by persistent inequalities, new ILO report warns

Despite major gains in education, poverty reduction and productivity over the past three decades, entrenched inequalities, fragile trust in institutions and slow progress in key areas continue to hold back social justice worldwide, according to a new International Labour Organization (ILO) report.

The study, The state of social justice: A work in progress, published ahead of the World Social Summit in Doha in November and marking 30 years since the landmark 1995 Copenhagen Summit on Social Development, finds that while the world is wealthier, healthier and better educated than in 1995, the benefits have not been evenly shared and progress in reducing inequality has stalled.

Key achievements since 1995 include halving the rate of child labour among 5- to 14-year-olds (from 20 to 10 per cent), reducing extreme poverty from 39 to 10 per cent, raising primary school completion rates by 17 percentage points, and achieving, for the first time, social protection coverage for over half of the world's population.

30 years after Beijing: Slow but steady gender equality gains in East and Southern Africa

Policymakers and gender and statistics experts in East and Southern Africa have spotlighted the need to harmonize legal systems based on equality guarantees provided in the constitutions of countries in the sub-region, and the full implementation of all gender-related initiatives for the achievement of gender equality.

The experts convened in a policy discussion following submissions from 23 countries that have been published in a new report titled "Gender Equality Response Systems in East and Southern Africa: 30 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."

The policy d was aimed at unpacking the submissions, which detail countries' progress and commitments towards gender equality, and reviewing trends and the policy actions to achieve equality in the context of the 30th anniversary of The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing—The Beijing Conference—a pivotal moment in the global history of women's rights.

Since last year, in readiness for the 30th commemoration of the Beijing Conference, countries in the sub-region have submitted a total of 41 cross-cutting commitments towards gender equality. Some of the most prominent commitments include increasing opportunities for youth and adolescent girls, strong emphasis on law and policy reform, increased financing for gender equality, and improving the collection of gender data.

UNAIDS welcomes the announcement of new deals to make new HIV prevention medicines available and affordable for people in need

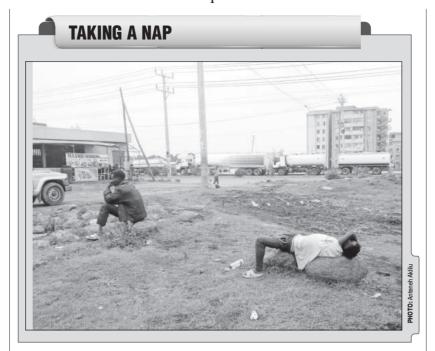
UNAIDS strongly welcomes the announcement of two new agreements to advance progress in stopping new HIV infections. UNAIDS estimates show that 1.3 million people were infected with HIV in 2024 far higher than the target of 370,000 by 2025. Lenacapavir, produced by US company Gilead, is a revolutionary new medicine that prevents HIV infection with injections just twice a year.

The current price of lenacapavir for HIV treatment in the US is USD 28 000 per person per year. These new agreements, crafted with generic producers, would bring the price for HIV prevention down to just USD 40 per person per year.

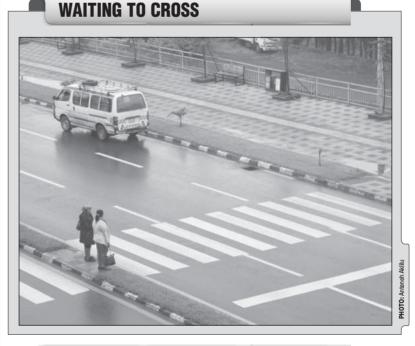
"This is a watershed moment. A price of USD 40 per person per year is a leap forward that will help to unlock the revolutionary potential of long-acting HIV medicines," said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS.

Kenya's President Demands UN Security Council Reform and Gaza Peace

Kenyan President William Ruto has urged a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, stressing strict adherence to international law and a credible path toward a two-state solution. Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Ruto also demanded long-overdue reform of the UN Security Council, arguing that its current structure is in a crisis of legitimacy. He declared that Africa will no longer accept being sidelined, noting that the continent contributes heavily to peacekeeping yet lacks a voice in key decisions. He insisted that granting Africa at least two permanent seats with veto power is a necessity for the UN's own survival and relevance. Furthermore, Ruto highlighted Kenya's leadership in the multinational mission to stabilize Haiti, urging the international community to remain committed to supporting the nation's path to peace and renewal.









Cholera vaccination campaign launched in Darfur to protect over 1.8 million people

A cholera vaccination campaign kicked off on 21 September 2025 in Nyala Ganoub, Nyala Shemal and Biliel localities of South Darfur and on 22 September in Abu Jabra and Ad Daein localities, marking the start of a campaign that aims to reach 1.86 million people aged one year and older with oral cholera vaccines in 6 localities of the Darfur states in response to the ongoing cholera outbreak. Plans are underway to launch the campaign in Tawila locality of North Darfur before the end of the month.

The campaign comes at a critical time, as cholera cases in Darfur continue to rise at an alarming rate and the ongoing conflict and lack of basic services make it increasingly difficult to support essential health services and deliver lifesaving medical supplies, including vaccines, nutrition kits and emergency supplies to most localities of the Darfur states, leading to an increased burden of disease, malnutrition and further spread of infectious diseases such as cholera.

International Volunteer Program for Child Assistance Presented in Brasília

At the 2nd BRICS Forum "Traditional Values" held in Brasília, the "Volunteers of the World" platform presented the international program "Assistance to Children in Crisis Situations – 2026." This initiative brings together specialists and volunteers from Russia, Brazil, India, and Ethiopia to find and apply effective methods of helping children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"Our project is about the most important thing: children who have experienced trauma. Our goal is to give them a chance for a healthy future," emphasized Lyubov Zueva, Director of the Elizaveta Foundation and project leader representing Russia. According to her, thousands of children worldwide live under the heavy burden of PTSD caused by war, hunger, loss of loved ones, and lack of prospects. "Our mission is not just to provide help, but to restore faith in life through support, creativity, and human involvement," she said.

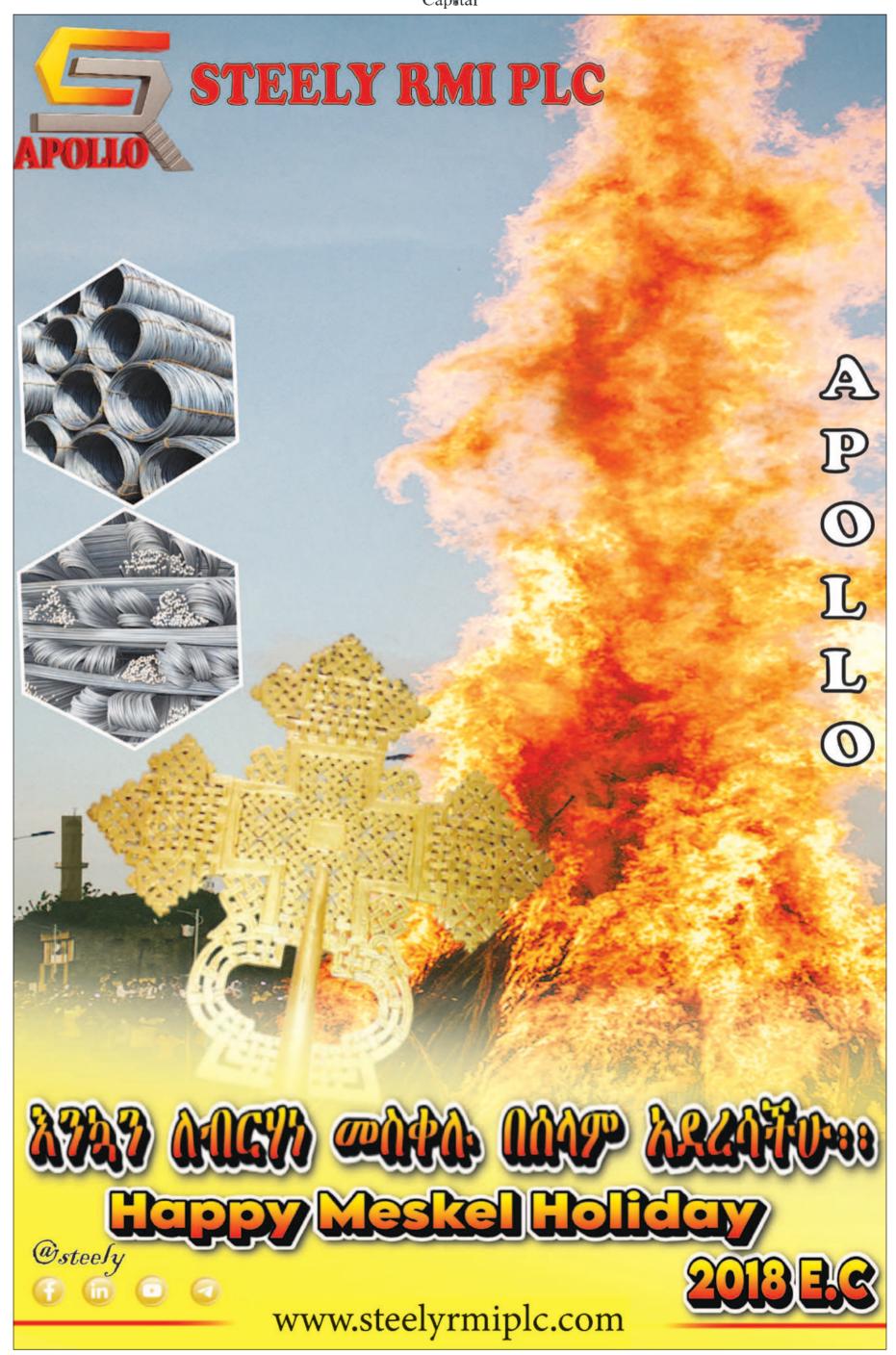
JMR Infotech enables Ethiopian Banks to Meet NBE's Recovery Plan Directive

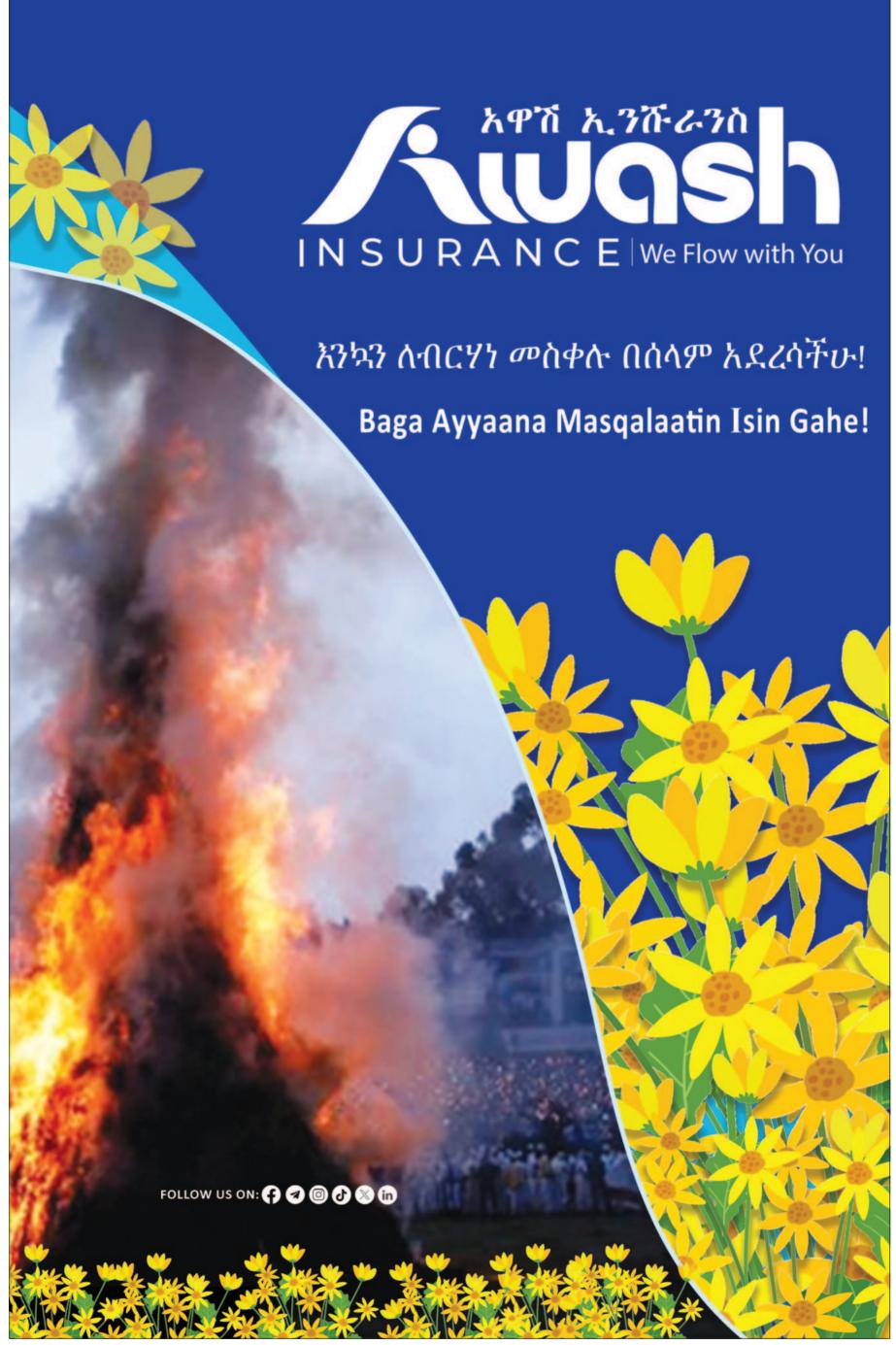
JMR Infotech, a global leader in digital transformation and banking technology solutions, today announced its commitment to supporting Ethiopian banks in complying with the National Bank of Ethiopia's (NBE) Recovery Plan of Banks Directive No. SBB/93/2025.

Effective 13 May 2025, the directive requires all banks operating in Ethiopia to prepare credible recovery plans to withstand severe financial stress without government bailouts. The first submission deadline is 13 January 2026, with penalties of Birr 100,000 for failing to submit a recovery plan and Birr 50,000 for failing to update one on time.

Aligned with global Basel III standards, the directive emphasizes early distress detection, continuity of critical banking functions, and strong governance and oversight. Banks must address governance structures, recovery triggers (CAR, LCR, NPL ratio), stress testing and scenario analysis, recovery options, communication strategies, and preparatory measures.

"The NBE's Recovery Plan Directive is a significant step towards strengthening Ethiopia's financial ecosystem," said Suresha Ramachandra Iyer, President & Head — Enterprise Risk and Analytics, JMR Infotech. "At JMR Infotech, we are committed to empowering Ethiopian banks with the right tools, expertise, and frameworks to not only achieve compliance but also build long-term resilience."





I N T E R V I E W

DRIVING

ETHIOPIA'S GREEN FUTURE



Capital: How would you ensure Moteregna's operations maximize their contribution to Ethiopia's Green Growth Strategy?

Mesfien Getahun: Our business model aligns well with the Green Growth Strategy, as we specialize in motorbike delivery, which uses significantly less fuel than larger vehicles. In addition to this efficiency, we are assembling high-standard electric motors for our fleet, which reduces emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. We utilize digital tools to optimize routes, maintain our fleet for maximum efficiency, and train our riders in eco-driving practices. By integrating electric mobility and green logistics, we contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable Ethiopia while maintaining operational excellence.

We actively monitor and measure our environmental impact by tracking fuel savings, emission reductions, and the increasing share of electric vehicles in our fleet. We also seek partnerships with local suppliers and manufacturers to source sustainable materials and parts, further minimizing our ecological footprint. Through public awareness campaigns and client engagement, we encourage businesses and individuals to adopt green delivery solutions, creating a ripple effect that supports Ethiopia's national sustainability objectives.

Capital: How would you work with the Trade and Revenue Office to establish a "conducive platform for taxation" and gather real income data?

Messien: A sustainable logistics industry requires transparency. At Moteregna, we are dedicated to building a digital taxation ecosystem where every transaction is recorded and easily verifiable. We envision creating a shared platform with the Trade and Revenue Office that integrates data directly from our system, ensuring compliance and trust.

Moreover, we maintain open dialogue with authorities to ensure that the taxation framework reflects the realities of digital businesses. This approach builds confidence with regulators and helps set standards for the broader logistics industry.

Additionally, we plan to incorporate real-time reporting and analytics that allow regulators to efficiently monitor trends and patterns, reducing administrative burdens while improving accuracy. By providing training and support for government staff on utilizing these digital tools, we aim to create a collaborative and sustainable taxation ecosystem.

This strategy not only strengthens Moteregna's compliance but also promotes transparency across the logistics sector, fostering a culture of accountability and trust nationwide.

Capital: Given the "high risk of loss or damages," what strategy would you propose to address the absence of carrier liability coverage?

Mesfien: The lack of carrier liability insurance in Ethiopia poses a challenge, which we address through layered solutions. First, we establish a risk reserve fund to cover unexpected incidents. Second, we implement rigorous safety and handling protocols for our riders and cargo. Third, we are collaborating with insurers to design partial coverage packages for high-value routes. Strong contract terms and clearly defined responsibilities with clients further protect all parties involved. By combining prevention, financial preparedness, and partnerships, Moteregna can operate safely while working towards comprehensive liability coverage. We continuously train our riders on risk awareness, accident prevention, and emergency response, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle unexpected situations.

We also utilize digital tracking and monitoring systems to identify potential risks in real-time and respond promptly. By integrating technology with proactive safety measures, financial planning, and strategic partnerships, Moteregna not only safeguards its operations but also builds trust with clients, ensuring their confidence in our ability to deliver reliably under all circumstances.

Capital: What are the key implications for Moteregna of the "tremendous rising of fuel costs" for competitors, and how can we capitalize on it?

Messin: Fuel price increases significantly affect larger vehicle operators. Moteregna's motorbike model is much more fuel-efficient, and our transition to electric motors further reduces our fuel dependency, giving us a cost advantage. While our competitors struggle with rising costs, we continue to offer affordable and reliable

delivery. Our investments in route optimization and electric mobility enhance our competitive edge, allowing Moteregna to increase market share even during periods of fuel volatility.

Our commitment to operational efficiency and predictive planning enables us to quickly adapt to market fluctuations, ensuring uninterrupted service for our clients. By utilizing data analytics to monitor fuel trends and delivery performance, we can identify the most cost-effective routes while maintaining high reliability.

This combination of efficiency, technology, and sustainable practices positions Moteregna not only to withstand rising fuel costs but also to seize opportunities where competitors face operational challenges, expanding our reach and reinforcing our market leadership.

Capital: How would you build and maintain the necessary trust to ensure clients and corporations effectively use Moteregna's services?

Messin: Trust is the most valuable currency in logistics. We consistently deliver on time, provide clients with real-time tracking, and safeguard sensitive data with robust systems. For corporate clients, we assign dedicated account managers and maintain open feedback channels.

By consistently demonstrating accountability, transparency, and operational excellence, Moteregna establishes itself as a trusted partner for both individuals and businesses.

We focus on building long-term relationships by offering personalized solutions, anticipating client needs, and swiftly addressing any issues that arise. Our customer education initiatives inform clients about the benefits of our electric motorbike fleet and sustainable delivery practices, further reinforcing their confidence in our services.

By combining reliability, transparency, innovation, and proactive engagement, Moteregna not only maintains trust but also strengthens loyalty, ensuring that clients repeatedly choose our services and recommend us to others.

Capital: Moteregna is currently in its bike production phase; what are the three most critical operational challenges you foresee in scaling the service to achieve its vision of becoming Ethiopia's leading provider?

Mesfin: Scaling our business comes with challenges, especially as we manufacture high-quality electric motors. The three most critical areas are:

Maintaining Quality at Scale: Ensuring every motorbike meets safety and durability standards, particularly for electric models. We are implementing strict quality control processes, rigorous testing protocols, and continuous monitoring to ensure consistency across all units as production increases.

Building Infrastructure: Expanding maintenance hubs, spare parts distribution, and battery charging capabilities. Beyond physical infrastructure, we are also developing digital systems to track maintenance schedules, battery health, and inventory, ensuring our service network operates efficiently and reliably.

Human Capital: Recruiting and training skilled riders, mechanics, and supervisors to support a growing fleet. We are creating structured training programs focused on safety, electric motor technology, customer service, and operational excellence, ensuring our team develops in competence alongside the company.

Successfully addressing these areas will allow Moteregna to scale responsibly, maintain high customer trust, and ensure that operational expansion does not compromise service quality or reliability.

Capital: In what ways can a logistics company like Moteregna provide "Customer-Centric Service" beyond just fast delivery?

Mesfin: Customer-centricity involves understanding and anticipating client needs. In addition to speed, we provide end-to-end visibility, flexible delivery options, and responsive support. For businesses, we offer tailored solutions and data insights. Our commitment to green delivery using electric motorbikes allows clients to align their logistics with sustainability goals, creating added value beyond mere delivery.

We actively collect and analyze customer feedback to continuously improve our services and anticipate future needs. We also provide customized reporting and performance metrics for corporate clients, enabling them to make informed logistics decisions.

By combining speed, reliability, transparency, sustainability, and proactive engagement, Moteregna ensures that every delivery experience is efficient, safe, and aligned with the client's broader business objectives, fostering long-term partnerships and loyalty.

Capital: What is the biggest regulatory challenge?

Mesfin: The most significant regulatory challenge is the absence of standardized policies for motorbike logistics, especially concerning taxation, licensing, and liability coverage. As the industry evolves, this creates uncertainty. At Moteregna, we proactively engage with regulators, share operational data, and demonstrate how our model supports job creation, tax transparency, and Ethiopia's Green Growth Strategy.

Through these efforts, we help shape regulations that foster both innovation and compliance. We also collaborate with stakeholders, including businesses and community organizations, to advocate for policies that promote sustainable growth, safety standards, and fair competition.

This proactive approach ensures that Moteregna not only adapts to regulatory changes but also contributes to creating a predictable and supportive environment for the entire logistics sector in Ethiopia.

Capital: Where do you see Moteregna in five years, and how will your role directly contribute to achieving that vision?

Messin: In five years, Moteregna will be Ethiopia's leading motorbike-based delivery company, with operations expanded across all regions of the country. We will be recognized for our innovation, reliability, and green delivery powered by high-standard electric motorbikes. As CEO, my role is to drive this growth responsibly, secure strategic partnerships, scale our fleet, and cultivate talent.

Our vision is to connect businesses and individuals nationwide while contributing to Ethiopia's sustainable development.

We plan to invest in advanced digital systems to optimize fleet management, delivery routes, and customer engagement across all regions.

We will also expand our training programs to ensure that riders, mechanics, and support staff uphold the highest standards of safety, efficiency, and customer service.

By fostering a culture of innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence, Moteregna aims not only to lead the market but also to set a benchmark for green logistics in Ethiopia, empowering communities and businesses to thrive while minimizing environmental impact.





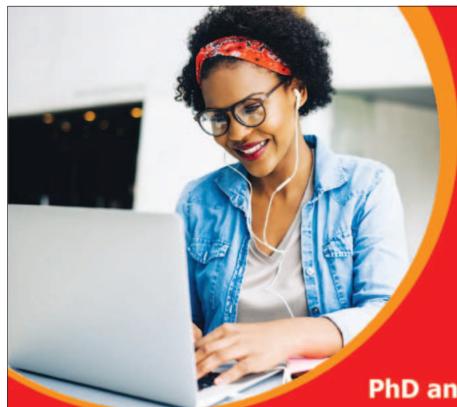
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AFRICA RE-UNION REVERSES 1884 BERLIN CONFERENCE

monumental artwork depicting some of Africa's great legends, past and present, in front of a reversed map of Africa, seeks to establish the true story of Africa as told by Africans.

The centrepiece for Africa's longest-running contemporary art fair, FNB Art Joburg is a monumental 3m by 2m canvas, Africa Re-Union, which reverses the context of the infamous 1884 Berlin Conference where Africa was carved up and divided among European colonial powers.

It has been described as an event "where art became manifesto and memory became movement" by restoring the continent as author of its own story and architect of its own destiny.

Conceived and co-created by the pan-Africanist founder of Brand Africa, Thebe Ikalafeng, realised on canvas by South African artist Mark Modimola, and anchored in history by Professor Kwesi DLS Prah, Africa Re-Union is not only an artwork but a challenging declaration to reimagine the African story and history.

One of the features of the painting is an inverted map of Africa – literally and philosophically – using the Equal Earth projection to restore the continent's true scale and dignity. Rendered without borders, it corrects centuries of cartographic distortion that made Africa appear smaller than its true size.

This echoes the call made by the Correct the Map campaign and supported by the African Union, Speak Up Africa, Africa No Filter and an army of historians and cartographers which challenges the outdated Western cartography and asks for equal-area maps that restore Africa's true size, scale, and significance in the world.

At the heart of the work stands a round table – because here there is no hierarchy, every voice matters equally. Seated are some of Africa's legendary leaders re-

imagining its future: Ghana's founding President Kwame Nkrumah; Kenyan environmentalist Wangarī Maathai; South Africa's Nelson Mandela; Tanzania's Julius Nyerere; Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda; Ethiopia's founding host of the OAU, Emperor Haile Selassie; Cabo Verde and Guinea Bissau's Amílcar Cabral; Senegal's poet President Léopold Senghor and anthropologist Cheikh Anta Diop; Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, proponent of the 'United States of Africa'; Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; South African anti-activist Zulaikha Patel; the USA's civil rights activist and pan-Africanist W.E.B. Du Bois; economist and writer Dambisa Moyo; USA's freed slave Sojourner Truth; South African singer, Miriam Makeba, the first artist to address the United Nations in 1963; cultural activist Credo Mutwa; pan-African advocate for a brand-led renaissance, Thebe Ikalafeng; and advocate of the African Renaissance, former South Africa President, Thabo Mbeki.

Their presence on the canvas affirms that Africa's story has always had authors – even when unrecognised. It's a gathering of the diaspora, the enslaved whose voices were stolen, the revolutionaries and artists, the freedom fighters and feminists, writers, sanusis, and youth across the private and public sectors and the civil service. Together, they embody the unfinished conversation of Africa's identity, memory and destiny.

One chair is left empty at the table. It is the most important seat of all – it belongs to the Unborn Child who will inherit this Africa, the ancestor whose spirit still hovers, the diaspora longing to remain rooted, and every African alive today who must rise, sit, and take their rightful place at the table of history. The empty chair is not absence; it is invitation.

In a symbolic act of permanence, the original canvas will not be sold.

Ikalafeng has instead gifted it to the UNISA Art Gallery at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, ensuring the work lives where Africa's future is being studied and shaped. Africa Re-Union will be preserved not as a commodity, but as a covenant – a manifesto for generations to come. Only 2063 signed limited reproductions will be made available to ensure the conversation goes far. The number is a reminder of the AU's Agenda 2063, aiming for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa.

"The Africa Re-Union is not a return to the 1884 Berlin Conference table, but the setting of our own table: equal, sovereign, and unapologetically African. It is both remembrance and declaration: Africa is whole again. This time, no one will define us but us," said Thebe Ikalafeng, Conceptual Author and Chief Curator of the Africa Re-Union.

"For me, Africa Re-Union is about shifting the canvas of our imagination. It's to challenge how we see ourselves and how the world sees us; not as fragmented, diminished, or peripheral, but as whole, central and sovereign. This work is both a mirror and a map, and

reflects our past, but points us toward a future we must author ourselves," said Mark Modimola, Visual Artist of the Africa Re-Union.

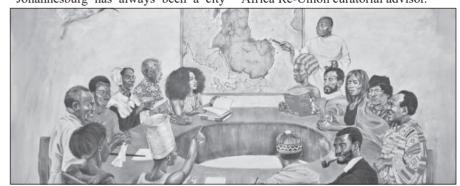
"Johannesburg has always been a city

of convergence, where Africa meets the world. To host the Africa Re-Union at FNB Art Joburg affirms our city's role as a crucible of ideas, creativity and cultural leadership. This is more than an artwork – it is a call to re-centre Africa in history and in the future," said Vuyisile Mshudulu, Director of Arts, Culture and Heritage for the City of Johannesburg.

"Correcting the map is about more than geography. It's about dignity. The way Africa is represented shapes how

the world sees us, and how we see ourselves. The Africa Re-Union is a bold and creative way of reclaiming that story, insisting that Africa is seen in its true scale, power and possibility," said Moky Makura, Executive Director of Africa No Filter.

Africa Re-Union was unveiled at the 18th FNB Art Joburg opening night, in a live performance led by celebrated actor Aubrey Poo and acclaimed poet Napo Mashiane, with costumes designed by award-winning wardrobe stylist, Sheli Masondo. The performance re-imagined the infamous 1884 Berlin Conference, but this time with African agency, voice, and vision at the table. "In curating the works and the performance, what we wanted to do was ensure that the story itself — not just the objects or aesthetics - carries the work. It is the story that gives it power and makes it unlike anything else," Dr. Sechaba Maape, Africa Re-Union curatorial advisor.



HOT MUSIC TABLE

HOTTEST ARTISTS

SEPTEMBER 18 - SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

HOTTEST TRACKS

RANK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
NAINK	AKTIST	KADIO	١٧	IOIALPLAI
1	Dawit Tsige	147	33	180
2	Addis Legesse	94	59	153
3	Michael Belayneh	112	6	118
4	Eden Aysheshem	68	33	101
5	Abdu Kiar	84	16	100
6	Veronica Adane	58	41	99
7	Kuku Sebsibe	73	22	95
8	Bisrat Surafel	55	34	89
8	Tewodros Tadesse	85	4	89
9	Nati Ker	37	51	88

THIS DATA IS GATHERED BY A 24/7 AUTOMATED RECORDING & ANALYZING AII SYSTEM FROM 35 TV & RADIO STATIONS. THERE WERE MORETHAN 3,375 TOTAL MUSIC PLAYS ACROSS THE BROADCAST MEDIUM FOR THIS WEEK.

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RANK	TRACK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Neger Neger	Nati Ker	37	51	88
2	Jegna	Helen Berhe	50	31	81
3	Ayewalewa	Eden Aysheshem	54	24	78
4	Yekete	Yalemwork Jemberu	27	45	72
5	Deja <mark>z</mark> mach	Kuku Sebsibe	46	22	68
6	Zemale	Addis Mulat	20	46	66
7	Tsigereda	Tewodros Tadesse	51	4	55
8	Meskel Yibir	Abeba Desalegn	48	6	54
9	Ende Amele	Lemlem Hailemichael	30	23	53
10	Etu	Addis Legesse	28	23	51



Thought Leadership on Economic Modernization and Development Anchoring Ethiopia's Development Plan

■ By Nicasio Karani Migwi

Adam Smith (1723- 1790) and David Ricardo (1772- 1823) classical economic theories emphasized invisible hand's free market forces of demand and supply, self-regulation plus prioritization of long run growth driving mean reversion to full employment.

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) posited that exponential population growth unless prevented will outstrip arithmetic growth of food and resources causing poverty, hardship and economic decline.

Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) entrepreneurship theories argued that entrepreneurs drive technical progress and innovation of a nation and that large companies use their capital to invest in research and development (R&D) of new products and services, distribute them cheaply to consumers and raise economies living standards.

Roy Harrod (1900- 1978) and Evsey Domar (1914- 1997) model postulates that higher savings increases investment which raises capital stock and economic growth.

Walt Whitman Rostow (1916-2003) five stages of economic growth posited linear transition from traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity and age of high mass consumption.

Daron Acemoglu institutional theory argues extractive institutions which concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few hinder economic development by discouraging investment, innovation, and economic growth while inclusive institutions which distribute power and resources promote it.

Ethiopia's Pathway to Africa's Beacon of Prosperity- Home Grown Economic Reform (HGER).

Ethiopia's 10-Year Development Plan (2021-2030) proposes home grown reforms to economic, social, administrative, and institutional problems.

Key major economic challenges were identified to include lack of quality GDP growth that creates jobs, reduces inequalities, and fosters sectoral transformation and linkages. FCY public debt distress as exports lag imports. National savings lag national investment creating imbalances.

Persistent and stubbornly high inflation. High unemployment, disguised employment and vulnerable employment in informal sector. Slow national transformation from low productivity agriculture to manufacturing.

Relatively low tax to GDP ratio. Low financial inclusion for banking and insurance plus "crowing out" of private sector credit by government and SOEs.

Low quality provision of infrastructure as well as health, education and other social services with wide rural vs urban disparities. Weak government capacity to drive achievement of development targets coupled with waste and corruption.

Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Targets.

Target for Real GDP growth was set at average of 10 percent over FY2020/21- 2029/30. This double digit growth was expected to reduce poverty level from 19 percent in 2020/21 to 7 percent in 2029/30.

Structural transformation targets for agriculture were set at an average growth of 5.9 percent while GDP share was to fall from 32.6 percent in 2019/20 to 22 percent in 2029/30.Industry average growth target was put at of 13 percent and its GDP proportion rise 29 percent to 35.9 percent.

Export promotion was to be prioritized with exports share of GDP expected to hit 12.9 percent by 2029/30. Agriculture exports were projected to fall from 77 percent to 36.4 percent.

Gross Capital Formation (National Investment) needed to deliver the double digit 10 percent average real GDP growth rate was projected at 36.9 percent of GDP.

Fiscal Policy and Public Finance Targets.

Gross domestic revenue was forecasted to rise by an average of 26.1 annually from birr 395 billion to birr 3.9 trillion with tax revenue (Income, VAT, Excise, Custom duties) increasing from birr 317.9 billion to birr 3.5 trillion. Tax revenue to GDP is expected to double from 9.2 percent in 2019/20 to 18.2 percent.

Public expenditure is estimated to increase from birr 480 billion to birr 4.5 trillion. Government budget to GDP will clock 23.4 percent by 2029/30. Recurrent expenditure share of budget will be 64 percent in 2029/30 while CAPEX development will comprise 36 percent.

Fiscal deficit was projected to remain below the 3 percent of GDP global threshold to stand by leveraging fiscal consolidation path discipline of cutting costs, increasing revenues and growing GDP at 2.9 percent of GDP (birr 556.4 billion) in 2029/30.

LCY fiscal deficit financing will by then comprise 79 percent while FCY deficit financing account for 21 percent.

Medium Term Debt Management Strategy -MTDS was to reduce Public and Public Guaranteed Debt to GDP ratio from 51 percent in 2019/20 to 48.6 percent in 2029/30.

Monetary Policy and Financial Sector Targets.

Inflation single digit bound target will be anchored by annual growth of M3 Broad Money at 21 percent and M1 Base Money 19 percent. Floating exchange rate target was to guarantee a stable exchange rate and increase NBE FX Reserves.

Interest rates to be determined by market demand and supply. Implement digital finance system. Establishment a functioning capital market (money market, bonds and stocks exchange, commodity derivatives market).

Total bank and MFI deposits average annual average growth of 22.4 percent from birr 1.04 trillion in 2019/20 to birr 7.9 trillion in 2029/30 driven by commercial bank deposits rise of 28.6 percent and MFI deposits 30 percent per annum

Development Financing Plan Targets.

Public budget-related financial planning with domestic revenue (tax and appropriations in aid) plus donor grants covering 88.7 percent and budget deficit financing 11.2 percent.

Non-budgetary financial sources include bank, MFI and other saving options deposits of birr 17.99 trillion (birr 15.565 trillion – 84.5 percent raised by banks, MFIs and loan repayment. birr 2.43 trillion - 13.5 percent from treasury bills, bonds, equity market and other financial sources). Private sector share of credit will be birr 12.2 trillion (87.2 percent) and government birr 1.8 trillion (12.8 percent).

Agricultural Development Targets.

Increase annual crop production from 543m quintals to 925m quintals. Grow crop production through irrigation from 8m quintals to 38m quintals. Raise fertilizers distribution from 16.1m quintals to 32.9m quintals.

Enhance horticulture production for export from 272.8K tons to 1.05M tons and horticulture export receipts from USD\$326.1M to USD\$950M. Raise milk production from 4.37bn litters to 11.8bn litters. Increase animal meat from 295K tons to 1.7M tons.

Manufacturing Industry Development Targets.

Raise manufacturing average capacity utilization from 50 percent to 85 percent.

Import substitution by increasing domestic market share of locally manufactured industrial products from 30 percent to 60 percent.

Grow number of manufacturing SMEs from 2,000 to 11,000. Create 5M new manufacturing jobs by growing them annually from 175K in 2019/20 to 850K in 2029/30.

Construction Industry Development Targets.

Raise the market share of local construction companies to 75 percent. Reduce the time wasted in implementing construction projects by 50 percent.

Raise Construction direct jobs from 710,000 to 3.3M per year and indirect jobs from 1.78M to 8.3M per year through 16.6% annual growth rate of job creation in construction. Meet 80 percent domestic construction inputs requirement.

Mining and Petroleum Development Targets.

Increase number of mining FDI entrepreneurs from 160 to 660 and domestic investors from 50 to 1,050. Grow number of mining services value chain investors from 1,700 to 6,700. Enhance annual gold production from 3.2 tons to 137 tons.

Foster number of minerals value addition manufacturing industries from 30 to 130. Raise mining and petroleum jobs from 200,000 to 1.8M.

Trade Development Targets.

Grow merchandise export revenues from USD\$3bn to USD\$18.3bn (USD\$6.7bn from agriculture, USD\$9bn from manufacturing, USD\$2.1bn from mining, and USD\$0.7bn from electricity and other commodities. Enhance number of foreign trade destinations from 37 to 96 by concluding WTO accession negotiations.

Raise ease of doing business score from 48 to 80 by removing trade barriers. Implement African Continental Free Trade Area, AFCFTA. Develop 3,055 new demand-based standards from international, continental, and national standards.

Tourism Development Targets.

Grow number of overseas tourists from 850,000 to 7.3M and domestic tourists from 24m to 70m. Increase tourism sector jobs from 1.6M to 5.2M .Expand tourist serving institutions from 1,348 to 2,696. Add 59 new tourist destinations.

Urban Development Targets.

Develop 4K towns and 14K rural development centers. Establishment 2M MSMEs for urban manufacturing. Raise ratio of urban housing demand satisfied from 64 percent to 80 percent by building more than 4.4M houses. Build 2.8M rural centers standardize houses.

Reduce urban unemployment rate from 18.7 percent to 9 percent by creating 15M jobs through food security system, community works and social safety net support. Increase liquid waste removal from 1 percent to 50 percent and dry waste removal from 30 percent to 80 percent in towns with a population of over 20K.

Transport Development Targets.

Build 102,000 km new roads to expand national road network from 144,000 km to 246,000 km. increase expressways from 301km to 1,650km. Grow Universal Rural Roads Access Program (URRAP) from 56,000 km to 109,000 km. Raise dry ports from 8 to 11.Increase railway length railway from 902 km to 4,199 km. Building 6 airports.

Increase international flight passengers from 10.2m to 48.4m. Developing inland rivers and GERD transport. Grow rural transport coverage from 67 percent to 100 percent and urban transport coverage from 34 percent to 70 percent. Create 1.4M transport sector jobs.

Water Resources Development Targets.

Increase rural dwellers with access to water within 1km from 54.88 percent and urban dwellers from 58.9 percent to 100 percent. Build integrated basic sewerage systems for 100 cities and ensure all rural villages to have access to toilets.

Increase application of modern irrigation techniques from 2 percent to 20 percent. Create 1.05M water sector jobs.

Energy Development Targets.

Increase power transmission lines from 18,400 km to 29,900 km. Grow electricity export from 2,803 GWH to 7,184 GWH. Expand electricity customers from 5.8M to 24.3M.

Raise grid-based electricity coverage from 33 percent to 96 percent and off-grid from 11 percent to 4 percent. Cut electric power wastage (loss) from 19.6 percent to 12.5 percent.

Innovation and Technology Development

Targets.

Increase access to mobile and internet from 37.2 percent and 18.6 percent respectively to 100 percent. Increase digital public services from 176 to 2,500. Raise the coverage of public institutions to be included in the government's electronic network system to 95 percent. Increase national data centers from 1 to 3.

Raise share of private sector jobs in technology and digitalization from 50 percent to 80 percent. Provide support to 3,000 selected tech startups. Increase potential workforce in innovation, technology and research to 5.7M

Demography and Human Resource Development Targets.

Limit population growth rate to a maximum of 2 percent. Increase urbanization rate from 21.4 percent to 35 percent. Cut maternal mortality rate-MMR per 100,000 live births from 401 in 2015/2016 to 140 in 2029/30; Infant Mortality Rate- IMR from 47 to 29 and under 5 years infant mortality from 59 to 25.

Raise medical doctors per 10,000 patients from 0.86 to 2.7.Increase community health insurance coverage from 49 percent to 95 percent. Increase life expectancy from 65.5 years in 2018/19 to 70 years in 2029/30.

Achieve 100 percent net enrolment rate in grades 1-8 and grade 8th completion rate from 62.1 percent in 2018/19 to 90 percent in 2029/30. Increase public higher education institutions from 45 to 55 and private from 238 to 550. Increase public TVETs from 672 to 922 and private from 950 to 1700.

Gender and Social Inclusion Targets.

Increase the share of female decision makers in legislature, judiciary and executive to 50 percent. Eliminate 44 percent pay differential between men and women for similar jobs

Increase women engaged and benefiting from micro enterprises from 41 percent to 50 percent and women engaged in income generating activities using microfinance loan from 33 percent to 55 percent.

Raise youth with access to credit from 25 percent to 50 percent. Increase the number of persons employed through job placement support systems from 1.96M to 20M.

Grow number of the vulnerable, persons with disabilities, elderly and street dwellers in safety net programs from 1.3M to 1.53M.

Justice and Public Services Targets.

Increase criminal case clearance from 80 percent to 100 percent. Enhance resolution of civil court cases enforcement from 50 percent to 100 percent and arbitration from 70 percent to 92 percent. Grow ICT supported legal services coverage to 100 percent. Implement international human rights 100 percent.

Raise satisfaction with public service delivery from 59 percent to 90 percent. Grow share of women in public institution leadership posts to 36 percent. Employ 50 percent of new graduates.

Peace Building and Regional Development Cooperation Targets.

Build trust between communities and security forces from 40 percent to 95 percent. Enhance level of confidence and understanding between Federal Government, Regional States and between Regional States from 25 percent to 95 percent.

Create 6M overseas employment opportunities. Support Ethiopians in diaspora to create a wealth worth of USD\$7bn and 100,000 jobs inside Ethiopia.

Environment and Climate Change Targets.

Raise Greenhouse Gas-GHGs emissions reduction capacity from 92.7M metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2E) to 162.3M metric tons.

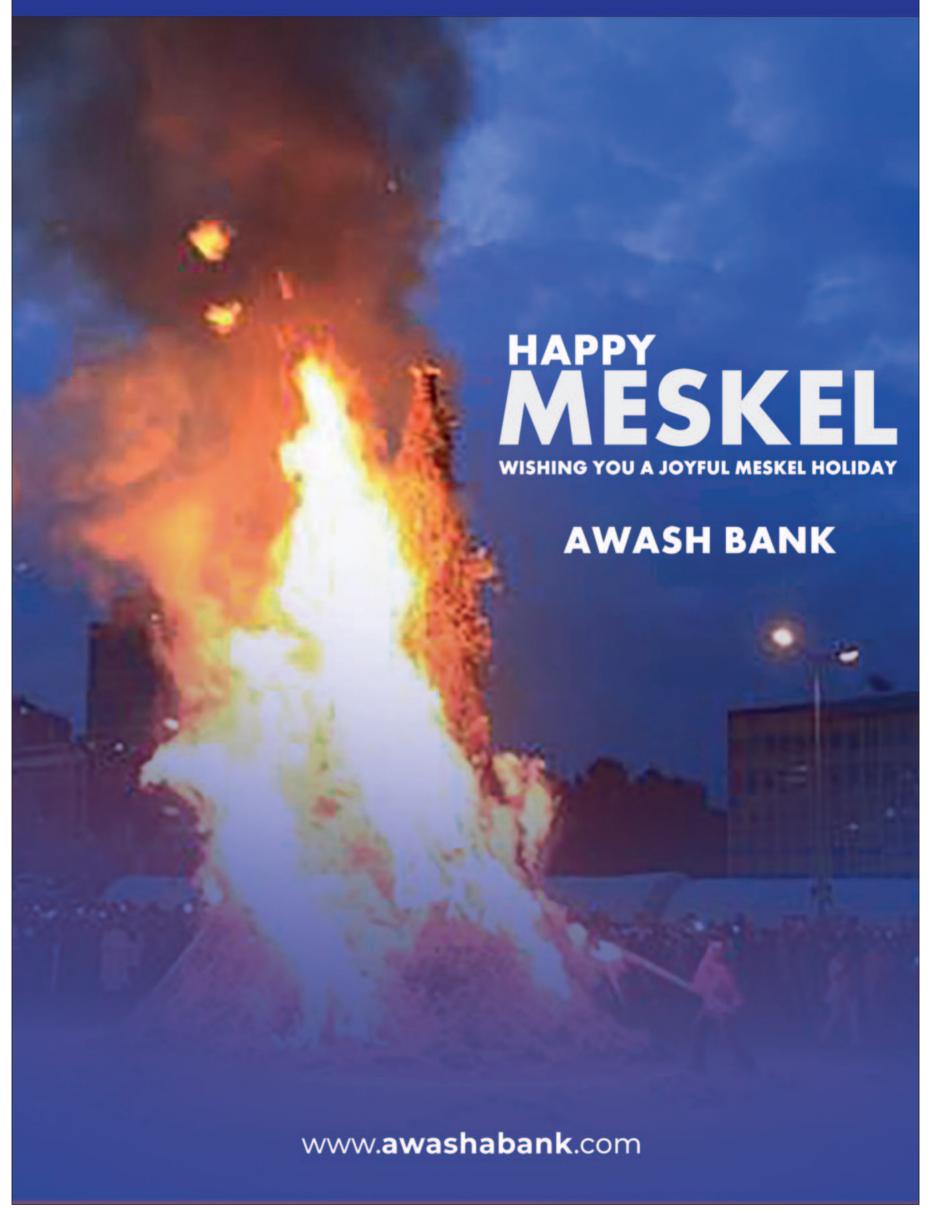
Increase terrestrial coverage of protection of wild life against illicit activities from 62 percent to 92 percent.

Buffer national forest coverage from 15.5 percent to 30 percent. Increase number wild life and biodiversity species maintained from 179,285 to 764,361.

Nicasio Karani Migwi is a specialist in banking and financial services, macroeconomics, strategic management, international business and Corporate Governance (Board Directorship). He currently works as a General Manager- Special Projects and Bank Economist - real economy & financial markets at Equity Group Holdings PLC. He did parttime lecturing for the MBA Global Strategic Management at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.







COMMERCIALIZING POLITICS:

The Marketization of Democracy

Alazar Kebede

Politics, once rooted in ideology, social vision, and collective aspirations, is increasingly being transformed into a marketplace. Campaigns resemble advertising launches, politicians operate like brands, and voters are courted as consumers. This phenomenon—often referred to as the commercialization of politics—raises pressing questions about the health of democratic systems, the authenticity of political discourse, and the degree to which governance serves citizens or capital.

Commercialization in politics refers to the adaptation of marketing strategies, branding techniques, and consumeroriented practices to political activity. Parties and candidates, like corporations, package themselves in appealing ways to maximize outreach and votes. From slogan crafting to targeted digital ads, the political sphere mirrors commercial industries. In this model, elections are less about ideas and more about salesmanship—less about debate and more about persuasion.

Several forces have fuelled this shift: Media Expansion: The rise of television and later social media platforms turned politics into a performance art. Candidates learned to master soundbites, stage-managed events, and viral content to remain visible. Big Money: Expensive campaigns require corporate sponsorship, donations, and fundraising, making financial capital indispensable.

Political strategy firms and PR agencies now shape electoral outcomes with sophisticated data analytics. Consumer Culture: As societies increasingly define identity through consumption, politics has adapted to resonate in a language of choice, lifestyle, and personal branding. Technological Data Mining: Microtargeting allows campaigns to tailor messages to narrow segments of the electorate, akin to product advertising.

commercialization politics accessible and engaging, it also carries significant consequences: Shallow Engagement: Substance gives way to spectacle, reducing complex policy debates to catchy slogans. Brand Loyalty Over Civic Duty: Voters may identify with candidates as fans do with products, prioritizing loyalty over critical evaluation. Money-Driven Inequality: candidates or Wealthier parties dominate airtime and digital presence, marginalizing grassroots movements. Erosion of Ideology: Politics shifts from conviction to convenience, with leaders altering positions to satisfy market demand rather than uphold principles.

It would be incomplete to dismiss commercialization entirely as corrosive. Some benefits include: Wider Reach: Marketing techniques enable engagement previously disconnected demographics. Political Innovation: Creative campaigns attract youth participation and use modern platforms to broaden discourse. Accountability Visibility: Politicians Through functioning as brands risk reputational damage if caught in hypocrisy, forcing a measure of transparency.

There are global examples. Take the 2008 Obama campaign, often hailed as the "Apple launch" of modern politics. The sleek visuals, the iconic "Hope" poster, the mobilization through social media - it felt less like a campaign and more like the unveiling of a revolutionary product. Since then, this model has only intensified. Donald Trump's rallies doubled as entertainment spectacles; Narendra Modi's holographic appearances in India resembled high-tech product demos; Emmanuel Macron's movement in France was marketed with the crispness of a start-up brand.

Political consultants and Public Relation strategists now function like advertising agencies. Focus groups test slogans. Data teams segment voters like Netflix recommends shows. Ads follow people across their devices. The candidate isn't just a person; they're a carefully curated image.

In the United States, presidential campaigns increasingly resemble multimillion-dollar product launches, with consultants, advertisements, and brand strategies at the center. In India, large rallies and Bollywood-inspired campaign songs blend entertainment with political messaging. Across Europe, populist leaders have deployed marketing-style tactics to amplify nationalist or identity-based appeals.

The central challenge is not whether politics will remain commercialized - it undoubtedly will - but how to balance marketing with meaning. Regulatory reforms, transparency in campaign financing, and media literacy among citizens are crucial in ensuring that commercialization does not overwhelm democratic accountability.

Citizens must also reflect: Are we consuming politics passively, or are we engaging as active participants in shaping governance? If voters continue to embrace political branding without questioning its substance, democracies risk devolving into marketplaces where the loudest seller- not the most capable leader - wins.

To conclude, commercializing politics has transformed democracy into a competitive arena where image often trumps integrity. Yet, its tools need not always corrupt; when harnessed responsibly, they can energize civic engagement. The task ahead is to reclaim politics as a realm of ideas and public service, ensuring that commercial strategies serve democracy rather than replace it.

Profits Bleed When Developments Initiatives Ignore the Wellbeing of Ethiopia Women

'7.2 million people identified as needing GBV support, 45% were children, and 44% were women- Report'

■ By Myriam Sidibe

Amid predictions of Africa's growth and the potential of its youth, one inconvenient statistic tells a different story. Africa has the highest rate of femicide worldwide [2.9 victims per 100,000 in 2023] around 22,000 women and girls are killed every year by an intimate partner or family member.

I spend a lot of time tackling this inexcusable epidemic through the organisations, brands and companies I work with. This week I am at the United Nations General Assembly in New York trying to keep this overlooked issue on the agenda. The single most powerful accelerator for Africa's progress is not another flashy tech or mining infrastructure project; it is the autonomy of our girls and women. Quite simply, we make it too hard for a girl to become a woman. Until we confront this, we limit our potential.

According to the Ethiopia Gender-based violence secondary data review report 2024, that explores the effects of the USAID funding freeze and cuts on GBV service provision, out of the 7.2 million people identified as needing Gender Based Violence support, 45 percent

were children, and 44 percent were women. Women and adolescent girls are at greatest risk of GBV owing to deeply rooted gender norms and traditional beliefs that relegate them as wives or mothers only, besides limiting their autonomy and decision-making power.

How can we build the continent and workforce of the future while 1 in 3 schoolgirls miss school monthly because of their period? Across sub-Saharan Africa, 55 percent of girls face the monthly fear of people seeing their menstrual blood. We cannot be squeamish about this; it's a fact of life. Period. Millions of girls and women are menstruating right now. They need acceptance, education and products to manage it. How can businesses and society claim 'inclusive growth' when half our population's needs are systematically ignored? There is silence around safe sex in most African schoolrooms. Women risk violence for seeking contraception. Safe abortion is a taboo topic. Unplanned pregnancy causes thousands of deaths each year. Yet despite the evidence, governments underfund it, communities stigmatise it, and businesses shy away from it. The result? Preventable pain and suffering; preventable losses in productivity and growth. Where would Africa be without its women?

Businesses have huge influence across the media and plough millions into marketing their brands to women and families yet remain silent - scared and squeamish - on sexual and reproductive health. To me, it's bad business. Women grow Africa's economies as both consumers and entrepreneurs. Their unmet health needs are unmet business opportunities.

The private sector has the creativity and influence to act differently. We see glimpses of this affordable sanitary product innovations designed for lowincome communities, confidential access to contraception and counselling through telehealth platforms and the taboo-breaking campaigns from unlikely brands from soap to beer showing that what is good for women is good for business and society.

The lesson is simple: when companies put women's needs at the heart of their strategy, they don't just sell more products - they earn trust, loyalty and long-term growth. I make the case for this in my recent global TED Talk and call for a new kind of business leadership.

I mean someone using their influence to change cultural norms, to stand up for those they sell to. Normalising periods, contraception, and sexual health through education, product design and campaigns that dismantle barriers and break taboos. Let's stop whispering about women's bodies and start designing for them.

This is not philanthropy. It's smart, strategic and inclusive growth. Because the inconvenient truth is, you cannot build strong markets on the backs of disempowered women. Africa's girls and women form half of this magnificent continent: half of its potential workforce and its most powerful consumers. philanthropists, and Governments, businesses must join forces for and with women – not because it's 'nice to do', but because it's the most impactful unlock for an unstoppable Africa.

Until then, every promise about Africa's future is just empty words. Will leaders continue to tiptoe around women's health, or will they step up to drive the change our continent needs?

Professor Myriam Sidibe is the Chief Mission Officer and Founder of Brands on a Mission.

A Necessary Cure for Ethiopia's Retail IIIs

■ By Befikadu Eba

I recall a particularly frustrating experience from a couple of years ago, one that likely resonates with many of us. I visited a local retailer to buy some essential itemscooking oil and rice. The price quoted was shockingly high, significantly more than the standard rate just a week earlier. When I cautiously inquired about the increase, the shop owner responded with a dismissive shrug. "That is the price now," he said. "Everyone is selling at this rate. You can take it or leave it." His indifferent tone felt like a slap in the face, a moment that has become all too familiar for many. In that moment, I wasn't just a customer; I felt like a captive. My choices were to pay his inflated price or return home without dinner ingredients for my family. This situation is not merely about one rude shopkeeper; it reflects a much larger economic issue. This is precisely why the government's recent decision to open the wholesale and retail sector to foreign competition is not just a policy shift it offers a potential lifeline for every Ethiopian struggling with the cost of

For decades, Ethiopia's wholesale and retail sectors have been reserved for local businesses. While the intention to nurture domestic enterprises was commendable, the lack of real competition has fostered complacency and unethical practices. We have all witnessed the symptoms: sudden, unexplained price hikes on essentials, the mysterious disappearance of items only to reappear at a premium, and a general attitude of exploitation due to the absence of alternatives. These are not isolated incidents; they form a consistent pattern of market failure.

Such practices are a primary driver of the cost-of-living crisis. When a limited number of players control supply and pricing without fear of competition, the result is inevitably inflationary. Monopolies and protected oligopolies serve the interests of sellers, not consumers. While local businesses cite challenges like access to finance, these difficulties cannot justify practices that harm the public and distort the economy. Decades of protection have done little to encourage these businesses toward the efficiency and innovation that characterize mature economies. This short-term mindset has backfired, limiting their potential and damaging their reputation.

The government's decision to open these sectors is a pragmatic intervention rather than an ideological shift. Introducing foreign competition is the only proven remedy for market abuse. Imagine being able to leave an indifferent shopkeeper and take my business to a competitor known for consistent, transparent pricing. That simple act of choice is transformative. It compels every market player to elevate their standards, competing on price, quality, and service. The consumer, no longer held hostage, becomes a king whose loyalty must be earned.

Importantly, this move does more than enhance our retail sector; it sends a strong, clear message to the global investment community. Opening a long-protected sector is a tangible indication that Ethiopia is genuinely committed to economic modernization and market-led principles. For foreign investors, actions speak louder than words. This policy shift is a decisive step that fosters immense confidence, demonstrating government's the willingness to implement challenging structural reforms to create a more open and predictable business environment.

This confidence is the foundation for large-scale, long-term investments. When investors observe a nation transitioning from a protected, opaque market to a competitive, transparent one, they perceive lower risks and a stronger commitment to the rules of global commerce. The initial wave of investment in retail will serve as proof of concept, encouraging further investments in manufacturing, logistics, and technology, thus creating a virtuous cycle of capital inflow that benefits the entire economy.

The advantages extend beyond price tags and investor sentiment. Foreign entrants introduce sophisticated, technology-driven supply chains that significantly reduce waste, spoilage, and costs. This efficiency dismantles the bottlenecks often used to justify hoarding and price gouging. They also foster a culture of long-term investment, creating new jobs and providing valuable training that enhances human capital within the country. Their presence raises standards across the entire sector.

However, a strong counterargument persists: that this move equates to selling our economic sovereignty, replacing local exploitation with foreign domination. This fear, rooted in post-colonial suspicion, is powerful but ultimately misplaced. I contend that the true betrayal of sovereignty lies in allowing the current, dysfunctional system to persist.

Economic sovereignty is not solely about ownership; it involves control and the distribution of benefits. Who truly gains from the status quo? A narrow segment of local business owners. Who bears the cost? The vast majority of the Ethiopian public. By introducing competition, the government reasserts its sovereignty on behalf of its people, restructuring the market to serve the public good, which is the highest expression of national interest. Moreover, the notion of foreign "domination" misunderstands modern retail investment. These companies are not colonial enterprises; to succeed, they must integrate into the Ethiopian economy. They will source products locally, employ thousands of Ethiopians, pay taxes, and invest in physical infrastructure. This is a partnership governed by Ethiopian laws, not an act of domination.

The goal is not to replace local businesses but to stimulate their evolution. The future should be a blended, dynamic ecosystem. The presence of efficient foreign players establishes a high standard of performance, demonstrating to local entrepreneurs what is achievable. Ambitious Ethiopian businesses will learn, adapt, and innovate. This is how local businesses transition from being protected infants into robust, competitive entities.

The opening of the sector represents a bold act of confidence, reflecting faith in the Ethiopian consumer and the potential of our entrepreneurs to rise to new challenges. This decision reclaims economic sovereignty for the benefit of all. While it may be disruptive, the appropriate response is not to retreat into fear but to adapt and improve. Ensuring the public's livelihood and attracting global capital to shape our future is the highest form of sovereignty.

Befikadu Eba is the Founder and Managing Director of Erudite Africa Investments. A former banker, he has a strong interest in economics, private sector development, and financial inclusion. He can be reached at befikadu. eba@eruditeafrica.com.



RESUME

Name: Worknesh Begna

Education: Journalism and communication

Company name: Fidel Translation and Content

Title: Founder

Founded in: 2024

What it does: Translate documents and to develop and mange social media contents

Hq: Addis Ababa

Number of Employees: 3



STARTUP CAPITAL

50,000 birr

CURRENT CAPITAL

Growing

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the

Business: To fill the gap in quality content creation

Biggest perk of ownership:

Ability to set hours and work environment

Biggest strength: Attention to details and timeliness

Biggest challenge: Corporate client base

Plan: Expanding content creation service

First career: News reporter and lecturer

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: Owners of successful African Digital Content Agencies

Most admired person: None

Stress reducer: Listening soft jazz

Favorite pastime: Reading books

Favorite book: Fiker esk Mekaber

Favorite destination: South Korea

Favorite automobile: Toyota

Yaris

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

Sep. 26, 2025

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
CHINESE YUAN	20.1701	20.3718
SOUTH AFRICAN RAND	8.3051	8.3882
SDR	196.9966	198.9666
EURO	168.8234	170.5117
UAE DIRHAM	39.1123	39.5034
SAUDI RIYAL	38.3041	38.6872
AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR	94.8061	95.7541
CANADIAN DOLLAR	103.4247	104.459
KENYAN SHILLING	1.1103	1.1436
INDIAN RUPEE	1.6202	1.6364
US DOLLAR	143.6673	145.1081





Oromia Tourism Commission















Vision

OTC envisions Oromia being the leading tourist hub with sustainably managed destinations having demonstrated lasting positive impact on the quality of life of local communities.

Mission

OTC exists to achieve the featuring of Oromia as top tourist destination in Ethiopia.

Values

Partnership **Accountability**

Pragmatism Excellence & Innovation

Team work Integrity

Transparency Empowerment

OTC's Mandates

Destination Development and Product Development, Marketing and Promotion, Research and Analytics, Partnership and Resource Mobilization, Tourism and Technology, Service Quality Accreditation and Standard.

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<u>የንብ ኢንተርናሽናል ባንክ አ.ማ</u> የባለአክሲዮኖች 26 *ሞ*ደበኛ ጠቅሳሳ *ጉ*ባዔ ጥሪ

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1. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩን የሚመስከቱ ዋና ዋና መረጃዎች

- 1.1. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ ስም፦ ንብ ኢንተርናሽናል ባንክ አ/ማ
- 1.2. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ ዋና መስሪያ ቤት አድራሻ፡- አዲስ አበባ፣ ልደታ ክ/ከተማ፣ ወረዳ 09፣ የቤት ቁጥር አዲስ
- 1.3. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ ድረ-ንፅ፡- https://www.nibbanksc.com
- 1.4. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ የምዝንባ ቁጥር፡- KK/AA/2/0000814/2004
- 1.5. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ የተፈፈመ ዋና *ገን*ዘብ (ካፒታል)፡- ብር 7,847,553,500.00
- 1.6. የአክሲዮን ማህበሩ የተከፉስ ዋና ንንዘብ (ካፒታል)፡- ብር 7,847,553,500.00

2. የባለአክሲዮኖች 26ኛ መደበኛ ጠቅሳሳ ጉባዔ አጀንዳዎች

- 2.1 እስከ መስከረም 30 ቀን 2018 ዓ.ም ድረስ የተደረጉ የአክሲዮን ዝውውሮችን መቀበል፤
- 2.2 የዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድን እ.ኤ.አ የ2024/25 የሒሳብ ዓመት ዓመታዊ ሪፖርት፣ የባንኩን የሀብትና ዕዳ ሂሳብ መግስጫ እና የትርፍና ኪግራ ሂሳብ ማዳመጥ፣
- 2.3 የባንኩ የውጭ *ኦዲተርን እ.ኤ.አ የ*2024/25 የሒሳብ ዓመት ሪፖርት ማዳመጥ፣
- 2.4 ክሳይ በተራ ቁጥር 2.2 ላይ በቀረበው የዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድ ሪፖርት ላይ ተወደይቶ ማፅደቅ፣
- 2.5 ክሳይ በተራ ቁጥር 2.3 ላይ በቀረበው የውጭ አዲተር ሪፖርት ላይ ተወያይቶ ማፅደቅ፣
- 2.6 እ.ኤ.አ የ2024/25 የዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድን ዓመታዊ የአንልግሎት ክፍደ እና እ.ኤ.አ የ2025/26 ወርሃዊ አበል መወሰን፤
- 2.7 ከባንኩ የቀድሞ ዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድ አባላት ክስ ጋር በተያያዘ በቦርዱ በሚቀርበው ሪፖርት ላይ ተወያይቶ መወሰን፣
- 2.8 እ.ኤ.አ በ2024/25 ከባንኩ ቦርድ አባልነት በስቀቁ አንድ የቦርድ አባል ምትክ ከተጠባባቂዎች መካከል በቦርዱ የተመረጡትን የቦርድ አባል ሽ፡መት ማዕደቅ፣
- 2.9. የባንኩን ሬቂቅ የዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድ አባላት የጥቆጣ እና ምርጫ ፖሊሲ እና ማስፌፀሚያ መመሪያን ተወያይቶ ማፅደቅ፣ (ሬቂቅ መመሪያውን ከባንኩ ድረ-ገጽ ላይ ማግኘት ይቻላል)፡፡

3. *ማ*ሳሰቢ*ያ*

- 3.1 በጉባዔው ላይ መንኘት የማትችሉ ባለአክሲዮኖች ለተወካዮቻችሁ ስልጣን ባለው የመንግስት አካል ተፈጋግጦ የተሰጠ የውክልና ስንድ ዋናውን እና ፎቶ ኮፒ በመያዝ ወይም በንግድ ህጉ አንቀፅ 377 መስፈት ከጥቅምት 6 ቀን 2018 ዓ.ም እስከ ጥቅምት 13 ቀን 2018 ዓ.ም ድረስ አዲስ አበባ ሜክሲኮ ራስ አበበ አፈጋይ ጎዳና በሚገኘው የንብ ኢንተርናሽናል ባንክ አ.ማ ዋና መሥሪያ ቤት 1ኛ ፎቅ የባንኩ የባለአክሲዮኖች አስተዳደር ዋና ክፍል በአካል በመቅረብ ለዚሁ አላማ በባንኩ የተዘጋጀውን የውክልና ቅፅ ሞልተው በመፈረም ተወካይ መሾም እና ተወካዩም ዋናውን የውክልና ማስረጃ በመያዝ በንባዔው ተካፋይ ለመሆንና ድምፅ ለመስጠት የሚችል መሆኑን እንገልዛን። ሆኖም አንድ ባለአክሲዮን በማህበሩ ጠቅላሳ ጉባዔ በማንኛውም ችሎታ መወክል የሚችለው አንድ ሰው ብቻ መሆኑን በማክበር እንገልዛለን።
- 3.2 ባለአክሲዮኖች ወይም ህጋዊ ወኪሎቻቸው በጉባዔው ላይ ለመሳተፍ ሲመጡ ማንነታቸውን የሚያፈጋግጥ የታደስ የነዋሪነት መታወቂያ ወይም ፓስፖርት ወይም መንጃ ፌቃድ ወይም የፋይዳ መታወቂያ ዋናውን ከፎቶ ኮፒ ጋር በመያዝ በጉባዔው ላይ መሳተፍ የሚችሉ ሲሆን ተመካዮች የውክልናውን ስነድ ዋናውን ከአንድ ፎቶ ኮፒ ጋር ይዘው መቅረብ እንዳስባቸው በማክበር እንገልባለን።
- 3.3 በኢትዮጵያ ብሄራዊ ባንክ መመሪያ ቁጥር SBB/91/2024 አንቀፅ 20(3) መሰረት የባንኩ የቦርድ አባላት እና የባንኩ ሰራተኞች በየትኛውም የባለአክሲዮኖች ጉባዔ ላይ ማንኛውንም ባለአክሲዮን ወክለው መሳተፍ የማይችሉ መሆኑን በማክበር እንንልፃን።

የዳይሬክተሮች ቦርድ ንብ ኢንተርናሽናል ባንክ አ.ማ





ኬኬ ኃላፊነቱ የተወሰነ የግል ኩባንያ KKPRIVATELIMITED COMPANY

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

KK Private Limited Company (KK PLC) is a privately owned company engaged in the textile industry, import & export business, real- estate development and others. Our company KK PLC is looking for competent, motivated & energetic employees on the following position.

Position:- Public Relations & Liaison Division Manager

1. Job Summary

The Public Relations & Liaison Division Manager is responsible for managing the Company's public image and liaising tasks while acting as the primary link between the company and external stakeholders, including government agencies, clients, media, and community organizations. The role ensures effective communication, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the promotion of a positive reputation for the company to build and sustain positive image or brand. It also acts as a central point of contact and a bridge between the Company and external bodies to improve communication, collaboration, and the resolution of issues. It includes communicating on behalf of the company, building and maintaining smooth relationships with stakeholders, managing information flow and performing related to the given assignments.

2. Detailed duties and Responsibilities:

- → Plan and implement public relations and liaison strategies to shape public perception and promote client goals.
- → Organize and attend promotional events such as press conferences, product launches, exhibitions, and fairs.
- → Monitor media coverage and public sentiment through social media and news articles to provide insights to management.
- → Draft and distribute responses to public inquiries, manage internal communication, and serve as a spokesperson for the Company.
- → Conduct market research & compile reports on the progress & success of PR campaigns & activities.
- → Act as the main point of contact with government entities, regulatoryauthorities, embassies, and community organizations.
- → Coordinate events, press conferences, and promotional activities on behalf of the company.
- → Manage relationships with media outlets and respond to inquiries in a timely and professional manner.
- → Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, and administrative requirements by liaising with government offices and other
- → Address and resolve misunderstandings or conflicts to foster productive working relationships.
- Support employees with official documentation processes (visas, permits, licenses, etc.) when needed.
- → Monitor public and media perception of the organization and provide regular reports to management..
- → Handle crisis communication and ensure accurate, transparent messaging.
- → Provide information about new promotional opportunities and current PR campaign's progress.
- → Develop and maintain positive relationships with external

entities, the community, and internal stakeholders.

- → Prepare reports, correspondence, and other documents to support communications and maintain records.
- → Handle administrative tasks such as processing documents, monitoring permits, and maintaining organized files.

3. Basic Skills and competencies

- → Strong communication skills, encompassing writing, speaking, and active listening in multiple languages for crafting messages & engaging with stakeholders.
- → Adaptability, organization, and crisis management to navigate challenges & evolving situations.
- → Strategic thinking to plan & execute effective campaigns.
- → Media relations & digital expertise to manage different platforms..
- → Ethical judgment & critical thinking to manage public perception, build relationships, and deliver compelling narratives.
- → Ability to build rapport and trust with diverse groups of people.
- → Excellent interpersonal & organizational abilities.
- → Negotiation, conflict resolution and cultural awareness skill.
- → Strong background in strategic communication & public relations.
- → Experience working in multinational environments.
- → Proven experience in public relations, corporate communications, or liaison roles..
- → Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills, with the ability to build strong networks.
- → Knowledge of government procedures, compliance requirements, and corporate communication practices.
- → Strong organizational and problem-solving skills.

4. Qualifications & Skills:

Education Level: BA/MA Degree in Business Communication, Public Relations, Management, Marketing and other business fields.

Work experience: 10/8 years of relevant experience for BA and MA respectively, out of which 3/4 years served in the same position.

How to Apply

Interested applicants who fulfill the above requirements are invited to apply with original and non-returnable copy of qualification & supporting documents with covering letter, in person to the Human Capital & Property Administration Department or Send to the email address:- kkplc.job@kkplcethiopia.et within 7 working days from the date of this announcement.

Location:- KK PLC Textile Factory, Akaki Kality, Woreda 9

Tele: +251-115-159015



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Get Ready for a Floral Paradise: An Exciting City Experience Ahead

■ By Mekonnen Solomon

I grew up in the charming town of Merti-Methera, Ethiopia, established by the Dutch agricultural conglomerate HVA, Handelsvereniging Amsterdam. This Dutch firm has a long history of large-scale farming in Ethiopia's Rift Valley, particularly in sugar cane cultivation and processing. Designed by Dutch architects, the town features a unique European flair, with exquisite gardens filled with vibrant blooms, colorful trees, and ornamental plants celebrated for their breathtaking flowers and enchanting fragrances. The Climbing Lily, along with geraniums and petunias, serves as a prominent floral emblem of Methera, known for its striking beauty and distinctive tropical growth habit. This lush flora has enriched the region's landscapes and gardens, significantly enhancing the well-being and quality of life for Methera's residents.

Despite efforts to restore Merti's former glory, the once-beautiful city has faded into history. An influx of people has overwhelmed the city's resources, infrastructure, and services, compounded by a lack of care and maintenance. As a result, the city has lost much of its vitality and charm.

Growing up in this delightful small town and continuing my work in Ethiopia's floriculture sector brings me a profound sense of tranquility. Surrounded by lush vegetation and vibrant flowers, I find a heightened sense of faith and peace in this verdant yet challenging environment, which serves as a sanctuary from stress.

Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of traveling extensively across Europe, Asia, Africa, and beyond. During these journeys, I noticed intriguing parallels between my hometown of Methera and various European towns in terms of landscaping and the community's efforts to care for, share, and celebrate flowers and green spaces. Upon returning to my hometown, I was struck by the harmonious blend of urban infrastructure and ornamental flora. The abundance of flower shops and markets reflects a modern cultural trend that not only elevates community spirit but also fosters connections, alleviates stress, and enriches the overall environment.

Recently, I had a thought: Ethiopia stands out as a prominent supplier of flowers to Europe and the Middle East, offering a remarkable variety of exquisite blooms—from roses to summer flowers, ornamental cuttings, and potted plants. With an impressive average daily export of 274 tons, the nation's annual flower production reaches 100,000 tons. Many believe that this flourishing flower industry fosters a sense of value and connection to nature among urban residents in Europe, ultimately enhancing their self-esteem. If this is indeed the case, why shouldn't the people of Addis Ababa enjoy the same enriching benefits? Certainly, there exists a delicate balance between export demands and domestic consumption. Critics argue that this tension arises as the government prioritizes increasing export volumes while navigating the needs of the home market.

On the other hand, the middle class in the main towns of Ethiopia is expanding at an extraordinary pace, driving increased demand and purchasing power that is reshaping the country's business and commercial landscape. The capital city, Addis Ababa, is home to 134 embassies, 28 UN agency offices, and 2,953 civil society organizations. This trend, combined with the presence of diverse cultural institutions, is expected to create substantial demand for flowers to beautify office spaces, meeting halls, and for occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, graduations, and holidays like New Year, Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, and Valentine's Day.

According to a survey by the Addis Ababa City Administration Revenue Bureau, there are approximately 903 flower retail shops in Addis Ababa, mainly located in Bole, Yeka Kirkos, Kolefa, Akaki-Kaliti, Nefas Silk, Addis Ketema, and Lideta. Most flowers sold in these shops are sourced from the flower-growing clusters in Ethiopia's highland and midland regions. Unfortunately, these flowers often do not meet export standards

and are known for their poor quality, including flaccid stems, faded colors, weak leaves, and poorly formed blooms. The average selling price of flowers in Addis Ababa varies significantly based on location, flower type, color, and season. A recent survey conducted in September 2025 found that the average price for a mixed flower bouquet ranges from 59 USD (8,000 Birr) to 259 USD (35,000 Birr).

While flower shops hold significant importance, the current traditional and outdated flower retail environment does not align with the progress of the innovative smart city infrastructure. The number of flower gift shops and florists in the city remains relatively low, and their facilities are often inadequate. Additionally, logistics providers and flower gift shops frequently lack the necessary cold chain facilities for transporting and temporarily storing flowers. Despite digital advancements, critics argue that the absence of aesthetic features in flower shops makes Addis Ababa feel incomplete or less inviting, highlighting the need to balance modernity with elements that enhance the quality of life and community spirit. The significance of both formal and informal education in the floristry industry has largely been overlooked, with a notable lack of training in areas such as flower arrangement, design techniques, personal style development, the art of combining flowers and plants, nature-inspired aesthetics, and floral shaping. Typically, no courses are available through colleges, public or private post-secondary vocational schools, or professional associations.

Currently, the corridor development project in Ethiopia is transforming Addis Ababa and other cities into vital commercial hubs. generating new economic opportunities. This initiative has led to improved infrastructure, expanded recreational areas, enhanced connectivity, increased business competitiveness, and a better overall quality of life. Many now believe that Addis Ababa is evolving into a vibrant and dynamic global city. This transformation is characterized by the establishment of smart infrastructure aimed at promoting a strong economy and positioning the city as a tourism hub, reflecting a modern vision inspired by other major cities worldwide.

In this context, the flower industry is at a crucial point in its growth. The emergence of retail flower shops is expected to significantly enhance the city's aesthetic evolution. In line with this progress, the Ethiopian Investment Board introduced Directive 1001/2024 in March 2024, allowing engagement in business sectors that were previously off-limits. Under this directive, foreign investors can now participate in trading activities, including wholesale and retail flower businesses.

The entry of investors into the flower retail and wholesale sector is believed to bring significant changes to the aesthetic value of Addis Ababa and improve the quality of urban life. Additionally, some foreign investors in Ethiopia are attempting to establish a florist university and college in the main city. The college aims to offer courses in floral design, floral arrangement training, plant care, and the business skills necessary for running a florist shop.

Addis Ababa has recently garnered significant attention, both domestically and internationally, with over a dozen visitors exploring development and business

opportunities. This increased interest can be attributed to a growing focus on commercial activities. The city has become a testing ground for various initiatives, such as hanging flower decorations, hillside forest preservation, sidewalk flower planting, and river cleaning efforts.

Hanging flower decorations along Addis Ababa's main roads, including Bole, Kasanchis, and Megenagn, are becoming a new phenomenon. Proponents of smart cities argue that one of the key benefits of these decorations in urban centers is their ability to transform gray, monotonous spaces into more attractive environments. Concrete buildings, sidewalks, and roads often feel cold and impersonal, but the addition of colorful flowers has completely changed the city's atmosphere, making it feel more pleasant. Furthermore, incorporating ornamental plants into city centers positively impacts residents' health. Urban greenery, such as hanging floral decorations, potted plants, and flower meadows, enhances both the physical and mental well-being of residents, thereby improving the overall quality of life.

In the future, the symbolic significance of flowers will continue to resonate within Addis Ababa's cultural landscape. Floral patterns inspired by hibiscus and bougainvillea are expected to flourish, embodying the beauty and resilience of the nation. These blossoms will become increasingly central to the branding of Ethiopian tourism, with their vibrant hues capturing the allure and tropical essence of the country.

Mekonnen Solomon is Horticulture Export Coordinator at Ministry of Ethiopian Agriculture (ehdaplan@gmail.com)

Cross Border Seamless Travel Is Closer Than You Think, But Data Rules Need to Catch Up

By Louise Cairney

Picture this: no passport to dig out, no boarding pass to scan. You walk into the airport, look into a camera, and head straight to your gate. Your identity is confirmed, your documents are verified, and your journey begins without touching your wallet.

This isn't a futuristic fantasy. It's the vision shaping the next generation of air travel. And while parts of it are already in motion, one big hurdle remains: data.

The Digital Passport Is Ready, Just Not Fully Ready for Take-off

At the heart of this transformation is the Digital Travel Credential (DTC), developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The DTC is a digital replica of your passport, securely stored and ready to be shared at the tap of a screen.

But here's the catch: the current version of the DTC packages all your passport information - name, number, nationality, date of birth - into one file. That works well for border agencies, who need the full picture. But airlines? They typically only require a few basic details to complete check-in and security screening.

Sharing the entire passport file just to access your name and date of birth isn't just inefficient, it's a legal problem in many jurisdictions. Under data protection laws like the EU's GDPR, collecting more personal information than necessary is a breach.

So, while the technology exists to streamline your journey, the way it's set up is slowing progress down.

The Solution: Give Only What's Needed

The fix lies in a principle known as data minimization: sharing only what's essential, no more.

That means breaking your digital passport into encrypted "data envelopes". Each envelope contains a single piece of information such as just your name, date of birth etc. When an airline needs to verify your age, they request

that envelope and nothing else. The rest of your data stays sealed unless you explicitly consent to share it.

This gives travelers control. Participation is voluntary and transparent. Refuse consent, and you fall back to the manual process we use today. Say yes, and your airport journey becomes seamless.

There are two possible paths forward:

- > ICAO could update the DTC standard to allow selective data release.
- Or, offer technical guidance to help implement data minimization within the existing framework.

Either route would unlock huge efficiencies without compromising on privacy. By ICAO adapting the DTC or providing guidance so it can be implemented in a way that allows secure, selective data sharing, fully seamless travel will be closer to reality.

The Industry Isn't Sitting Still

While global standards take time to update, the aviation industry is already moving forward. Airlines, airports, and governments are piloting digital identity programs (using different forms of digital ID) and biometric journeys built around the principles of consent and minimal data use.

IATA's One ID framework is central to this momentum. One ID defines how a digital identity like the DTC can be used in practice: verifying passengers, securing consent, and enabling a paperless journey from curb to gate.

Progress is accelerating:

- IATA has conducted successful trials proving that digital-first travel experiences are feasible today.
- Technology providers are developing digital wallets that integrate seamlessly with One ID.
- A transatlantic pilot is in the works, with countries exploring temporary agreements to enable cross-border trials of digital passports.

Governments are taking notice, too. The

European Commission, for instance, proposed new rules in late 2024 to support digital identity for cross-border travel across the EU. Meanwhile, the OECD is mapping national digital ID frameworks to help guide global policy and interoperability efforts.

From Vision to Reality

Digital travel isn't just an ambition, it's already happening.

Take India's Digi Yatra program. It's live in over 20 airports and lets domestic passengers fly using only facial recognition linked to a verified digital ID. The entire journey, from terminal entry to boarding, is contactless and consent-based.

Globally, biometric systems are operational in more than 70 airports, streamlining passenger flows and enhancing security. And to help airlines navigate this new landscape, IATA has created a Contactless Travel Directory, which maps out where these services are available.

According to IATA's 2024 Global Passenger Survey:

- ➤ Nearly half of passengers have already used biometric ID at the airport.
- Of those, 84% were satisfied with the experience.
- And 73% say they'd prefer biometrics over traditional passports and boarding passes in future.

The demand is clear. The infrastructure is emerging. And the industry is building toward scale

Boarding Soon

So while your face and phone aren't quite enough to get you through the airport yet, the trajectory is set. The technical runway is ready. All that's needed now is regulatory clearance — the DTC to support data minimization. The era of digital-by-default travel is approaching final call. And this time, you might not need your passport to board.

Louise Cairney is IATA Head of Customer Experience and Facilitation

"Africans were taught this unreal map of Africa" — now what?

By Conrad Onyango, bird story agency

As momentum builds on the campaign to adopt a "correct map" of Africa, older generations who were taught using the Mercator projection throughout their lives are voicing various views around the recent debate. For many, the map was simply part of the classroom furniture, a tool that defined their earliest understanding of the world. But later on in their professional lives, some begun to question how the projection shaped geography and identity of Africa.

Keith Claybrook, an Associate Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach in an interview with bird, recalled growing up, seeing and studying flat maps and globes. According to the professor, the size and location of the continents were taken for granted.

"Seeing distorted images often, presented as normal, and without the context of cartography shapes one's reality. The current map of Africa reduces its significance in the world while enhancing Europe and North America," he said.

For Claybrook, the implications extend far beyond classroom geography lessons. He argues that representation on maps has a direct link to how nations and continents are valued on the global stage. Changing to a correct map, he said demonstrates a commitment to truth and accuracy.

"In a world where 'size matters' and 'bigger is better,' Africa's correct scale enhances Africans' presence in the world—including its historical, cultural, demographic, economic, and political significance," Claybrook explained.

Historical researcher, Marcus Boni N'Piénikoua Teiga had a similar early encounter with the Mercator projection. But, he only realised its implications much later.

"For a long time, Africans were taught this unreal map of Africa, and it has undoubtedly impacted their worldview," he said.

Now, he views the campaign to correct the map as important for re-contextualising Africa's place in history. However, in his view, it is not necessarily a silver bullet.

"Correcting it won't automatically give us pride, because that must come from within, but it will restore Africa's true scale," said Teiga.

Not everyone sees the issue with the same urgency, with some experts remaining unconvinced that the distortion carries much weight in Africa's larger struggles for opportunity and equity. South Africa-based urban planning expert, Kathu Muruba who admitted to never paying attention to what map was used during his early years, questioned whether cartography alone can address Africa's deeper challenges.

"I don't think changing it has any benefit if the same Africa is still not creating equal opportunity to jobs and education. Our economy is still a cat-and-mouse race," said Muruba.

While recognising the distortions in the Mercator map, Nigeria-based geospatial scientist, Emmanuel Avula argues that they were not intended as deception, but as trade-offs in map-making.

"A choice for any projection depends on needs, conditions, and circumstances. The Mercator preserves shape, even if it distorts size. Africans may choose to adopt other projections, but calling Mercator a lie misreads cartographic intent," explained

The debate was stirred with the recent push

to promote the Equal Earth projection, developed in 2018 as a fairer representation of land masses, by the African Union (AU) in August. The AU sees the shift as symbolic but also as a political gesture in line with its agenda of repositioning Africa in the global order.

"It might seem to be just a map, but in reality, it is not. The Mercator entrenches a false impression that Africa is marginal, despite being the world's second-largest continent," said African Union Commission, Deputy Chair, Selma Malika Haddadi.

The Mercator was created in 1569 by a Flemish cartographer, Gerardus Mercator with its projections still used in tech companies, institutions, and schools to date. However, there have been signs for a change in over-reliance of Mercator map with search engine giant Google's Google Maps replacing it with a 3D globe on its desktop version. While the change is yet to happen on cell phone app, Desktop users can switch back to Mercator if they prefer.

The media organization Africa No Filter and Speak Up Africa launched the #CorrectTheMap campaign to support the adoption of accurate, equitable map projections such as the

Equal Earth Projection and make them more mainstream. The campaign has garnered more than 6,000 signatures on Change.org. Africa No Filter Executive Director, Moky Makura, describes the Mercator as 'arguably the longest-running misinformation campaign in the world.'

"When Gerardus Mercator introduced it in 1569, Pope Pius V was in power - and there have been 52 popes since then," she noted. She is now calling on global publishers, software platforms and educational bodies like Google, Microsoft, Pearson, Oxford University Press, Collins, Canva to adopt Equal Earth on their textbooks, templates, slide decks, design platforms, and classroom resources.

"If Equal Earth is the default in PowerPoint, Google Maps, or Collins World Atlas, then teachers, students, journalists, and policymakers everywhere will make the switch easily," she said.

So far, Africa No Filter and Speak Up Africa have partnered with ESRI the global market leader in geographic information system (GIS) software - that helped them recommend the Equal Earth Projection. They have also reached out to National Geographic, one of the most influential publishers of maps in education and media,

for a partnership. For Makura, changing the default is less about cartographic aesthetics and more about disrupting a global hierarchy encoded into everyday tools.

"Maps are not just geographic tools, they have been political weapons," Makura said

Speak Up Africa co-founder, Fara Ndiaye is also lobbying for Equal Earth to become the classroom standard across Africa, in the hope that international institutions will follow suit.

"The Mercator affected Africans' identity and pride, especially children who might encounter it early in school," said Ndiaye.

Claybrook and Teiga also echoed Makura's sentiments. They believe Africa needs all hands on the deck to make the change happen.

"It becomes our responsibility and obligation to update the map. The significance of Africa's physical presence increases with its true scale," Claybrook said

"Greater Africa will be built—or not built—from within. A corrected map may help reframe history, but it cannot substitute for deeper structural changes," said Teiga.

Can Boniface Mwangi, a political outsider, become Kenya's next president?

■ By Conrad Onyango, bird story agency

Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi is charting a totally new path in a bid for Kenya's highest office. Rather than playing up ethnic affiliations or charming voters with an expensive campaign, the popular social activist hopes to secure the support of Gen Z and Millennials who spearheaded nationwide protests in 2024, in a run against corruption and poor governance.

Mwangi is building his presidential campaign around empathy, honesty, and the ability to "orchestrate" talent. The self-styled "orchestra leader" affirmed that his role will be to ensure the musicians produce harmony.

"I'm seeing myself as an orchestra bandleader and in an orchestra. The orchestra lead does not play an instrument. The band plays the instrument, and they make beautiful music. So that's what we're going to do between now and next year," Mwangi told bird in a recent interview about his ambition to unseat the country's current president, William Ruto, in the 2027 general elections.

For Mwangi, the "musicians" are everyday Kenyans, in the country and in the diaspora.

"And one of the biggest resources we have in this country is human capital. We have Kenyans everywhere in the world. We are the best in almost everything. The only problem is we export our best resource to work outside our country? And I want to bring those people to work in our country. The problems that ail our country are fixable. It's corruption, ignorance, poverty and disease, and we have the money to do that," he explained.

Mwangi's spirit of championing the rights of others was formed way back in his school days. Born into poverty, he was once expelled from an approved school after exposing teachers who had exploited students as servants and, in some cases, as victims of molestation.

He recalled his mother's words: "If you were silent about what you saw about the injustice, maybe you wouldn't have been expelled."

He evolved into what he describes as a "silent observer." This practice propelled him into photojournalism, a profession that gave him room to continue to observe. As a young photographer, he documented the disturbing incidents that unfolded after Kenya's 2007-2008 election. His work earned him international recognition, but also scarred him.

"I was just a bystander again. I was someone who was photographing violence every single day... for the next couple of months I was a very depressed person," he said, acknowledging that he had suffered from PTSD and anger.

His childhood experience and early adult life pushed him to abandon journalism in 2008 and step onto the streets as an activist. Mwangi started organising protests and public demonstrations in 2009, sometimes standing alone, holding up placards that artistically illustrated his stance against corruption and land grabbing. He was hit with police batons, jail time, and uncountable lawsuits that secured him a reputation as one of the few Kenyans willing to confront the political class headon.

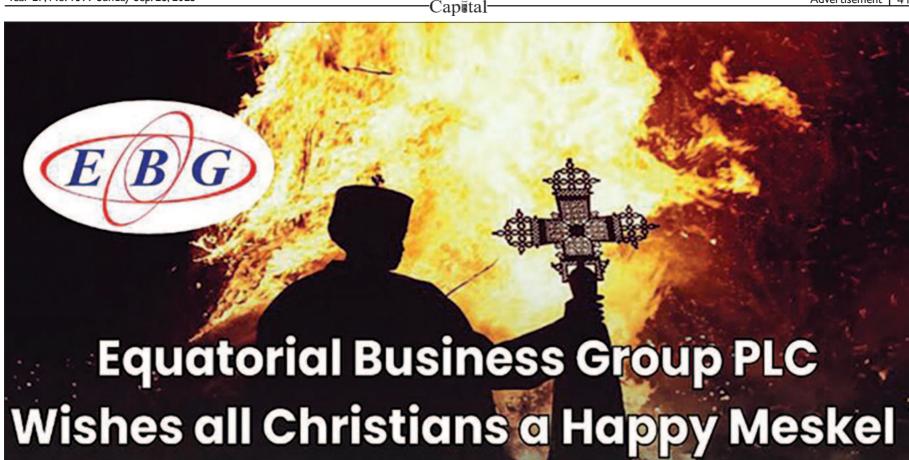
Like his activist ethos, challenging the monopoly of the political elite and placing ordinary citizens at the centre of decision-making, he has promised voters a participatory process in his manifesto making. He said he is preparing a nationwide "meet the people" tour, dubbed, "Bonga na Bonnie," a slang-infused Swahili phrase that translates to, 'Talk to Bonnie."

"The Kenyans who are suffering today know that they're suffering and they know what could actually alleviate the suffering. So I want to go and hear them out. The plan and the master plan to fix this country will come from the Kenyan people, and that's why we have participatory democracy," he said.

Other places in Africa are witnessing the entrance of outsiders usually activists, reformists and youthful aspirants in its political landscape. They are shaking things up and amplifying marginalised voices. In Uganda, musician-turned-politician Bobi Wine electrified a generation by framing politics as a battle between the old and the young, even though state machinery ultimately blunted his presidential challenge. In Senegal, 44-year-old Bassirou Diomaye Faye, propelled by youth frustration with growing government unaccountability and the country's ongoing allegiance to the former colonial power, France, defied entrenched structures to win the presidency in 2024, becoming Africa's youngest elected head of state. His victory has become a reference point for movements across the continent searching for change agents beyond the traditional political elite.

If Mwangi breaks Kenya's presidential ceiling, he will be the first in Kenya and will be among the few who have toppled incumbents. In the recent past, a number of Kenyan reformists have tried to attain the presidency, but they did not manage to attract significant votes. In 2013, Kenya's former assistant minister Peter Kenneth, running on a modernising, technocratic platform, was touted as a "third force" but garnered only 72,786 (0.6% of the total presidential votes). Veteran reformist Martha Karua, long respected for her principled politics, fared even worse at 43,881 (0.4%). In both 2013 and 2017, Abduba Dida, a teacher-turned-activist, captured headlines with fiery rhetoric but translated that into slightly above 50,000 votes (0.4% and 0.3% of the votes) respectively.





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Egypt, Morocco Renew Push for Balanced Trade at AfCFTA Meeting

gyptian Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Hassan Al-Khatib has reiterated the importance of achieving a more balanced trade relationship between Egypt and Morocco.

The talks, he said, also laid the groundwork for the upcoming Joint Trade Committee meeting in Marrakech, which is expected to set concrete steps for improving trade flows.

"We are entering a new chapter in trade relations between the two countries, thanks to the distinguished relations between President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and King Mohammed VI," Al-Khatib said.

Morocco's perspective

For his part, Hejira stressed that Morocco sees Egypt as a key partner in advancing South-South cooperation. He said the discussions focused on practical mechanisms to support Moroccan exports to Egypt to narrow the trade imbalance that has long characterized bilateral exchanges. Hejira underlined that both countries recognize the need for sustainable trade partnerships that go beyond short-term deals. "This meeting provided an opportunity to follow up on efforts to enhance trade exchange between the two countries and facilitate access for Moroccan goods and exports to Egyptian markets," he said.

Broader African context

The Cairo meeting comes as African countries push forward with the implementation of the AfCFTA, a landmark agreement designed to create a single continental market of more than 1.3 billion people. Egypt and Morocco have been strong advocates of the pact, seeing it as a tool not only to diversify their

economies but also to build stronger interregional value chains.

The two governments have voiced determination to scale up their cooperation. The emphasis on a "balanced" trade relationship reflects longstanding concerns about asymmetries in imports and exports, with Morocco often recording deficits in its trade with Egypt.

In May, Morocco announced plans to sharply boost its exports to Egypt, with targets set to rise from MAD 755 million (\$75 million) to MAD 5 billion (\$500 million) over the next three years. The initiative came on the heels of a visit to Cairo by a Moroccan trade mission of 40 representatives, during which business leaders and exporters held more than 200 meetings with their Egyptian counterparts.

The mission was launched by Hejira and led by Hassan Sentissi El Idrissi,

president of the Moroccan Confederation of Exporters (ASMEX), with the clear objective of strengthening the presence of the "Made in Morocco" brand.

South-South partnerships

For Morocco, the renewed dialogue with Egypt aligns with its broader policy of reinforcing South-South economic partnerships, particularly in Africa. This strategy has been central to Rabat's diplomacy over the past two decades, with Morocco investing in infrastructure, banking, and energy projects across the continent.

Egypt, for its part, has sought to position itself as a gateway to African markets, leveraging its industrial base and geographic location. By reinforcing bilateral trade, both countries are aiming to strengthen their roles as regional hubs within the framework of the AfCFTA.

Recently, King Mohammed VI reaffirmed Morocco's commitment to South-South cooperation as a cornerstone of Africa's sustainable development in a message to the 2025 Ibrahim Governance Weekend in Marrakech.

Delivered by Advisor André Azoulay, the message urged African countries to take charge of their development agendas through shared initiatives, stressing Morocco's role in fostering regional partnerships.

"Morocco has managed to strengthen its role as a strategic catalyst for South-South partnerships, and to serve as a natural bridge between the continent's various regions and the countries of the South," the King declared.

He cited flagship projects such as the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline, which he described as "a concrete example of integrated economic development," and the Atlantic Initiative, designed to give Sahel countries access to the ocean and lay "a solid foundation for a new model of regional cooperation."

Speaking on the sidelines of the 17th Ministerial Meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Cairo, held on Monday and Tuesday, Al-Khatib noted that Morocco and Egypt are entering "a new chapter" in their bilateral relations.

He pointed to the alignment between the two countries' governments in their drive to boost trade flows, expand investment, and dismantle barriers hindering the free movement of goods and services.

"New Chapter" in bilateral relations

Al-Khatib noted that he had met with Moroccan Secretary of State for Foreign Trade Omar Hejira to discuss ways of facilitating investment and easing access to each other's markets.

Four Years Later, Between Hopes, Delays, and Resurgence of Nationalism

igned in 2018 in Kigali and entered into force on January 1, 2021, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was supposed to give birth to the world's largest common market. Four years later, amidst delays, persistent barriers, and the resurgence of nationalism, its future is uncertain. "AfCFTA in the face of the resurgence of nationalism" is at the heart of Financial Afrik's Grand Debate, with Dr. Mohamed Hamidouch, development banker and former senior executive of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Rivo Ratsimandresy, CEO of the Rencontre des Entrepreneurs (RDE), and Adama Wade, publisher of Financial Afrik, moderated by Amadjiguène Ndoye.

Institutional progress, but limited impact

Certainly, the majority of African countries have ratified the agreement, a permanent secretariat has been established, and several awareness initiatives have been organized across the continent. However, as Dr. Hamidouch points out, "the African street has not yet felt the AfCFTA." In other words, apart from major conferences and diplomatic meetings, the impact of this initiative remains hardly noticeable in everyday economic life.

To better measure its effectiveness, Dr. Hamidouch emphasizes the need to establish real performance indicators. This includes assessing the share of intra-African trade in total trade, monitoring the volume of crossborder trade, evaluating the level of tariff line openness, analyzing the performance of customs systems. It is also important to monitor the deployment of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), measure the evolution of services and investments, and, most importantly, further integrate small and medium enterprises into regional value chains.

The weight of informal trade and persistent barriers

One crucial element is often overlooked: informal cross-border trade. This sector represents a volume much higher than official statistics, which place intra-African trade between 12 and 20%. In reality, these informal flows reach considerable amounts. For example, annual trade between Morocco and Mauritania in agricultural products is estimated at \$2.5 billion, between Tunisia and Libya in fuel and foodstuffs at \$1 to \$2 billion, and \$15 billion in recorded flows on the Abidjan-Accra corridor. Similarly, trade between Kinshasa and Brazzaville represents about \$2.5 billion, while the border area

between Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad totals around \$3.5 billion.

Thus, African trade integration already exists, but it develops outside official channels. This reality reveals the limitations of the current process. Beyond the stated political will, several obstacles hinder the realization of the AfCFTA. Economic nationalisms persist and prompt some countries to protect their domestic markets. Non-tariff barriers remain numerous, including customs complexity, bureaucratic slowness, and lack of harmonization. Furthermore, the commercial dependence on external sources remains strong, with the majority of African trade still conducted with Europe, Asia, or America, a direct legacy of post-colonial economic structures.

In conclusion, the AfCFTA remains a major ambition to transform African trade and promote continental integration. However, four years after its launch, the gap between political vision and economic reality remains significant. To prevent the project from becoming just a slogan, it is essential to address the accumulated delays, strengthen the involvement of SMEs, and recognize the central role of informal trade, a true driving force of exchanges in Africa.

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How Africa's logistics corridors shape the success of AfCFTA trade

frica's logistics corridors are emerging as dynamic arteries, linking remote production hubs with growing urban markets and fuelling the ambitions of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The promises of seamless trade and pancontinental growth are anchored not only in grand highways but in the dayto-day realities of the truckers, freight forwarders, and customs officials who hold the fate of shipments in their hands. When the AfCFTA agreement came into force in January 2021, it was a turning point for Africa, a chance to rewire trade away from global dependencies, build internal economic muscle, and create value across borders. Yet the road from vision to reality is rutted and fraught. For years, intra-African trade has languished at just 14-17% of total exports, a fraction of regional trade in Europe or Asia. Among the top reasons are chronic border bottlenecks, fragmented regulatory regimes, and the very absence of enabling logistics infrastructure, particularly for large or complex cargo.

"For the abnormal load industry," notes Ryan Hosking, Director at Vanguard, "it's not always easy to draw a clear comparison for large-scale cargo against AfCFTA. We have observed a fair amount of cross-border transport RFQ's for the mining and power industries, but given the nature of the industry, assessing the impact of AfCFTA on heavy cargo movement is complex." Even as crossborder requests grow, the workflows for oversized logistics remain as unpredictable as ever. Corridors changing the game Africa's flagship corridors are more than infrastructure; they are experiments in connectivity. Consider LAPSSET, linking Kenya's Lamu Port to Ethiopia and South Sudan, or the North South corridor which threads through Southern Africa's mining belt to bustling ports. The Abidjan Lagos coastal highway, bridging five West African countries, is seeing rapid upgrades in customs procedures and trucking standards. These corridors are now lifelines of intra-African commerce, connecting millions and compressing distances that once punished traders with weeks-long delays.

The reality, though, is that progress can be uneven. "We have not observed any major changes to border processes for heavy cargo," adds Hosking. "From a heavy cargo perspective, regulatory and infrastructure bottlenecks still restrict trade flows. Our role is to continue active collaboration with the relevant authorities. providing input and recommending practical measures to enable smooth, compliant transit of heavy cargo across borders." For all the headlines about digitised border posts and regional tariff alignment, the daily grind too often sees trucks idling at customs yards, drivers napping in their cabs, and coordinators shuffling stacks of paperwork.

The human element It is the people, the truckers, customs officers, and freight agents, who truly live the corridor reality. Their work shapes every ton and pallet passing from warehouse to marketplace. Rodney Seema, Director of EAMT (East Africa Marine Transport Company), describes how the company's roll-on/rolloff (RoRo) vessels have transformed cargo movement: "With the introduction of M.V. MPUNGU, the first scheduled RoRo freight vessel on the lake, EAMT offers a dependable alternative to overcrowded and less efficient road transport. This reduces travel times from days to hours, lowers carbon emissions, decreases costs, and improves regional connectivity. EAMT's long-term vision is to expand its services, integrate multimodal logistics, and support the trade objectives of AfCFTA and EAC."

Truck drivers now take scheduled ferries across the lake, bypassing dangerous and congested routes. "For drivers, the journey is significantly safer and less stressful, with reduced risks to both their personal safety and their cargo. Incidents of fuel and cargo pilferage are minimised, improving overall security," Seema reports. The impact on communities is palpable: shortened travel distances mean less wear on vehicles, lower running costs, and improved delivery times that ripple outward to local businesses and

economies. Traders and forwarders emphasise these efficiency gains, freight arrives quicker, cheaper, and with fewer documentation headaches. "The quicker turnaround time translates into increased volumes, which benefits not only the trucking and trading community but also the wider regional economy," Seema says. Bottlenecks and the reality of AfCFTA Despite these strides, the bottlenecks stubbornly persist. Customs harmonisation remains patchy, with each corridor and border post enforcing unique regulatory requirements. Truck drivers still recount stories of hours, sometimes days, spent waiting for clearance, trips marred by unexpected fees and inconsistent paperwork. Even digital systems can be only as strong as their weakest human or physical link. Hosking underscores the specificity of the problem: "From a heavy cargo perspective, major changes have yet to materialise." Still, there are reasons for optimism. Investments in infrastructure, better roads, smarter border posts, and modernised ports, are beginning to pay dividends in places like LAPSSET and Abidjan Lagos. The real test for AfCFTA is not in grand policy statements but in the lived experience of those tasked with moving Africa's goods.

The Road Ahead: Policy, Infrastructure, and Collaboration Looking forward, the solution is clear: scale up multimodal logistics, streamline documentation, and

standardise tariffs across regions. "The introduction and alignment of tariffs across the region, particularly for Ro-Ro vessels transporting trucks, would provide a highly efficient model for trade facilitation," argues Seema. "By ensuring tariff alignment for such services across ports, EAMT can help create a predictable and competitive pricing environment, incentivising greater use of Ro-Ro shipping, increasing cargo volumes, and boosting intra-African trade flows in line with AfCFTA's objectives." What single change could create the most impact? Seema is unequivocal: "Stronger collaboration among corridor authorities to harmonise policies and tariffs and make regional trade more competitive. By working together to reduce inefficiencies and align regulations, authorities can unlock greater opportunities for intra-African trade and ensure that regional goods remain more attractive than imports from outside the continent." A Continent at the crossroads Africa's logistics corridors are at a crossroads, embodying both the promise of AfCFTA and the stubborn realities of cross-border trade. For the truckers and traders, each trip is a test not just of machines but of systems and cooperation. Will investments in logistics infrastructure, smarter policy, and real harmonisation finally break the bottlenecks choking the flow of goods? The answer will decide whether AfCFTA's grand ambitions translate into tangible prosperity for Africa's people, businesses, and economies.

IATF 2025: AFCFTA CHIEF CALLS FOR UNITY TO BUILD A STRONG INTERNAL MARKET

he Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Wamkele Mene, on Thursday in Algiers called on African Union member states to unite efforts to build a strong internal market through the AfCFTA in order to strengthen resilience and safeguard common interests in the face of current global challenges.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 4th Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF 2025), held under the patronage of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and attended by heads of state and delegations, Mene stressed that the global context is marked by uncertainty in trade exchanges, rising economic nationalism, and protectionist policies. These conditions, he said, compel

African countries to act "with unity, determination, and speed" to consolidate a robust internal market that can boost the continent's capacity to withstand shocks and defend its collective interests. He highlighted Africa's structural challenges, particularly in transportation, underscoring the need to implement the Single African Air Transport Market, accelerate the rollout of support mechanisms such as the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund—set to be launched in Algeria in the coming days—and mobilize African investment in infrastructure, logistics, and transport networks.

Mene noted that these challenges are within reach, citing encouraging results: intra-African trade surged in 2024 to

over \$220 billion, up 12.5% from 2023, with a marked shift toward manufactured goods such as cars, processed foods, chemicals, and electronics. This shift, he underlined, signals Africa's transition from a raw-material-exporting economy to a more industrialized one. To sustain this trajectory, Mene called for deeper reforms in transport infrastructure, industrial development, and the adoption of economic protocols such as the Digital Trade Protocol, which could create vast opportunities for African youth. He also praised Algeria for hosting the fair, describing it as "the most fitting country to organize this edition, given its long history of struggle for African unity and its pioneering role in the fight against colonialism."



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Ugandan women: unsung heroes in Kenya's rice sector

Ugandan women are making a robust contribution to Kenya's rice production industry. Progressive policies around free movement have helped to make that possible.

■ By Viola Kosome

Alice Auma Obora, a mother of three, breathes a sigh of relief as ten strong hugely-built men load 45 bags of paddy rice on a flatbed tractor after a tiring harvesting exercise at West Kano Irrigation scheme. She takes out a handkerchief and wipes lines of sweat cascading her face as she sits on one of the bags of paddy next to her two acres of rice.

"It has been a long journey. I can now rest and enjoy the fruits of my labor," she says with a broad smile.

A few meters away from where she sits, a group of women are busy conversing in the local Luo language as one cracks a joke in Acholi. Auma waves at them and smiles before shifting her attention to the men who were still busy arranging the bags of rice to ferry them to the National Irrigation Authority's depot, where they dry the harvested paddy before milling. In the past, such harvesting seasons spelled doom for her and ushered in another face of stress-accessing markets and customers. She would struggle to sell her produce, a problem that affected the region until three years ago. But this is no longer the case for Auma and hundreds of other farmers operating at the scheme and at Ahero Irrigation scheme which is located several kilometers away.

Ease of Movement

A vibrant migration and cross-border trade involving Ugandan nationals who have made the rich agricultural Kano plains their home away from home, has transformed access to markets for these

Buoyed by the ease of cross-border movement of people enacted by the Kenyan government, the Ugandan nationals who have migrated to the region buy unprocessed rice in bulk from farmers and export to Uganda. Unlike the past where one was required to have a passport or a temporary pass to travel to or from Uganda, today, it requires only a national identity card for one to cross over. The women attribute the ease of movement to the vibrant rice value chain that is breathing life to the rice farms in the Nyando rice belt area

"They have given us a lifeline. We no longer struggle to find markets. They help us to access markets in Uganda by buying our produce," she explains.

So significant is their influence that some of them have integrated with the community, speak the Luo and Swahili languages in near-perfection. According to her, she relies on women migrants from Uganda to buy her produce and have helped her get new markets in the neighboring country with ease.

"I started rice farming in 1992. It has been a torrid journey. However, women traders from Uganda who are now a part of us are helping us find and open new markets," she explains.

In the past, she says, they used to rely on brokers to connect them to the Ugandan traders. However, with time, they have managed to create their own links to the markets as integration gains root.

"We are really impressed with the coming in of Ugandan traders. They are the number one market for our produce," she explains.

Georgina Kizza, a Ugandan migrant who says she has been involved in the rice value chain since 2015, says that she is happy to contribute to the economy and improve access to nutrition through rice farming. She is among several women hoping to exploit Kenya's efforts to embed its economic network with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The AfCFTA is an African Union Agenda 2063 initiative that is expected to be a key driver for Africa's continental structural transformation and industrialisation. Kenya is among the countries that have ratified the policy and is encouraging its implementation as it aims to create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons. When we caught up with her at her farm in Nyamware in West Kano, she was inspecting her crop which was almost due for harvesting.

Regional Integration

For a person visiting the area for the first time, you cannot tell that she is not from the area. She speaks the local language fluently despite having Ugandan roots and has integrated well.

"Kenya is my home. I am glad, I have been able to venture into agribusiness and contribute to the production of nutritious varieties of rice," she explains. Initially, she would buy paddy rice from brokers who acquired them from farmers. She would then export the rice to Kampala to mill it and resell it to her customers in Uganda. Today, however, her modus operandi has changed. She has become part and parcel of the community and is a darling to other farmers. While she still exports part of her produce, a huge bulk of her produce is consumed locally. She says after milling the rice, she sells some at Ahero shopping center. In the last planting season in December, she leased three

acres of land and used them to plant the pishori variety of rice.

"I work with several women who assist me in the production of rice. I also employ three casual workers who assist me with chasing birds when it is almost harvest time," she explains.

The casuals who undertake this are each paid Ksh 6,000 (USD47) per month. Additionally, she believes she is contributing significantly to the economy by also improving food security. At Ahero market, we meet Joan Neza (not her real name), a Ugandan national who has settled in the busy agricultural town whose economy is largely supported by rice production. When she first came to the country, she had hoped to sell second-hand clothes. But as fate would have it, she says she met someone who introduced her to rice production in Ahero.

"I started by hawking rice with the local women at Ahero. I did it for almost six months before I started buying paddy rice from farmers," she says.

The woman who stays in a rental house says she has created links with other traders and helps farmers to access markets in other parts of the region.

"I have business partners in the region who buy paddy rice in bulk and in trucks. I have been helping them to get their products from farms," says Neza.

According to a section of residents, the migration is contributing significantly to the growth of the Nyando rice belt where West Kano and Ahero Irrigation schemes lie.

Increased Production

Joseph Ochieng, a farmer, some of the migrants also assist rice farmers with farm inputs to help them with the production circle.

"Some of them invest indirectly in the farms by providing the farmers with fertilizers as well as preparing the lands. After harvests, they split the income with the local farmers," he explains.

Consequently, this has helped increase the area under rice production which has been steadily rising in the last couple of years. For instance, statistics by the county government indicate that the two rice schemes has seen almost 8,000 acres of rice brought under rice production. The rise in production has also been buoyed by the shift from better harvest to reliable market, courtesy of a new technology dubbed system for rice intensification (SRI) as well as regional integration. The system, borrowed from Mwea Irrigation Scheme, involves

intensive utilization of water, where farmers have equal access to the limited commodity for a particular number of days, then they give it to other farmers, and the cycle continues. The bright prospects paint a picture of a rosy situation where there is an apparent lure to rice production and farmers toiling in the paddies smile all the way to the bank at the end of a season.

Women Power

According to Kennedy Ouma, the National Irrigation Authority (NIA) Western Kenya schemes branch manager, the intense production of rice in the two schemes is a game changer, especially for women. He noted that some of the migrants have encouraged more women to engage in rice farming. For instance, as at the end of March, the number of women who are directly managing the farms both in Ahero and West Kano has grown up to 45 percent from 30 percent four years ago.

"Women empowerment is gaining root in the rice belt. The increasing number of women involved in rice production is a testament of the role women are playing in improving food production," said Ouma.

He noted that the Ugandans also contribute to the production activities as they support the women farmers with inputs

"A group of women from Uganda also support our women farmers in provision of inputs. We also note that the immigrants comes in handy to support women farmers with inputs and also some advances to be able to support some of their activities," he said, adding that production increased in West Kano from 2 tones per hectare to around 2.8 tones per hectare.

He said the government is pursuing initiatives to plead with the women to join cooperative societies for better prices.

"I want to encourage our women to take a lead role to get a better livelihood and also to tell our men to give women the opportunity became even farms that are managed by women do better than those managed by men and so women play a big role in rice production in this region and they need to be supported even financially," he said.

According to the International Rice Research Institute, Kenya's annual rice consumption is increasing by over 12 percent. The institute projects that with a growth rate of 2.7 percent annually, the estimated annual national need can reach 1,290,000 tonnes by 2030. As part of an effort to encourage rice production in the region, the government recently installed a new rice mill at Kibos rice mill to serve rice farmers from the region. The new rice mill being managed by the Lake Basin Development Authority has a processing capacity of 4,000 tonnes an hour. The plant is expected to promote rice cultivation in the more than 6,000 acres in Chiga, East Kano, and West Kano schemes, supporting more than 10,000 households. It has also been tipped to improve participation of women in rice production.

With the investments put in place and the free movement of goods and people between Kenya and Uganda, the contribution of Ugandan women in the rice value chain can only get better.

Furthermore, the East African Community's partner states are also pursuing policies to expand cross-border trade, consequently breathing life into the regional economy and enhancing integration.

Africa's urban-rural digital gaps are closing

■ By Bonface Orucho, bird story agency

Senegal has announced plans to build 774 new telecom sites, part of a broader US\$115 million digital push to connect 1,540 towns by 2029. According to findings from the Digital Economy Acceleration Project (PAENS), the rollout targets long-standing blackspots across four zones: the Groundnut Basin, Casamance, the southeast, and the northwest.

"The study highlighted a persistent digital divide: 24% of localities have no network, 37% experience frequent signal loss, and only 52% have 4G coverage," a government workshop report stated. "These deficiencies also affect social infrastructure, schools and health centers located in remote areas of the country, thus hampering access to essential services."

Planned as a mix of new and upgraded sites, the 774 installations aim to close gaps for more than 436,000 people, especially in rural communities where schools and clinics remain unconnected. Zambia is moving at a faster pace with a marketdriven sprint. Airtel and tower company IHS have already activated dozens of towers and are promising more than 150 live sites before the year ends. So far, 38 towers are already standing. Another dozen are due to go live before September ends. Airtel has committed US\$14 million to the rollout, capital that can be mobilised quickly without waiting for budget cycles or donor support. The Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) is also building. The regulator has already switched on 43 rural towers and plans to add 80 more in the final quarter of 2025, fitted with hybrid systems to stay online round the clock. These rollouts capture a bigger trend in 2025. African states are leaning on public universal access funds while operators and tower companies accelerate builds through private capital.

"The question is not just how many towers go up, but how long they stay operational," explained Robert Kirong, an ICT lecturer at Masinde Muliro University in Kenya. "Rural sites are often at risk from theft, vandalism or maintenance neglect. Without budgets for spare parts and security, investments can degrade quickly."

Earlier this year, the government of Zimbabwe announced a plan to set up digital hubs in Bikita and Mhondoro-Ngezi districts, in partnership with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. The hubs will operate as one-stop shops to enable the residents of these rural districts to access digital tools and services, such as artificial intelligence, mobile apps, and financial services, which could improve their agricultural production output. It's part of a larger initiative to improve efficiency in Zimbabwe's agri-food systems by leveraging digital innovation.

Only 38% of Africans were online in 2024, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The divide is stark: 57% in urban areas compared to just 23% in rural communities.

Mulongo adds that affordability is just as critical.

"Data costs and handset prices remain structural barriers that no amount of masts or satellites will fix on their own," he said.

Nigeria is betting on scale. In January 2025, the Federal Executive Council approved the construction of 7,000 telecom towers to extend 5G and rural coverage. Ethiopia is pursuing both state and market routes. Ethio Telecom announced plans to deploy 1,298 new mobile sites in FY2024-2025, including 165 rural sites, alongside major fibre extensions. It is currently seeking more than US\$1.1 billion to facilitate this deployment. Safaricom Ethiopia is matching that with private investment. The company launched a US\$1.5 billion programme to build 5,000 new towers over three years and began switching on the first locally manufactured units early in 2025. Kenya is also densifying. Atlas Tower Kenya marked its 400th tower in early 2025, underscoring the pace of independent tower company expansion. Meanwhile, Safaricom has been rapidly expanding its 5G footprint, adding hundreds of new 5G sites in the first half of the year.

Tanzania's Universal Communications Service Access Fund has overseen hundreds of rural builds and upgrades, with reports in 2025 noting several hundred new towers and many site upgrades to 3G/4G to widen rural access. Satellite services have become a third, fast-moving vector for connectivity in 2025, especially where ground builds are slow or terrain is hostile.

Starlink and other LEO providers have been rolling into African markets this year, offering near-immediate coverage in remote areas. Starlink went live in Chad and more than 20 other African countries in 2025.

National actors are pairing with LEOs too. Nigeria's NIGCOMSAT signed a deal to partner with OneWeb to deliver LEO connectivity nationwide, blending state satellite infrastructure with commercial capacity. Private distribution and reseller deals are accelerating reach. Airtel Africa, for instance, has agreed to distribute Starlink connectivity in select markets since May 2025, signalling that traditional operators see satellite services as complementary rather than purely competitive. New LEO constellations beyond Starlink are also advancing. Amazon's Project Kuiper launched initial production satellites in 2025, a development that will add capacity options for regions with limited terrestrial reach.Ground infrastructure is following. Atlas Space Operations and others expanded ground-station capacity in Rwanda and Ghana in 2025, improving the ability to manage LEO services locally and support national data needs. While satellites bring speed and reach, they are not a silver bullet. Capacity limits, licensing and regulation remain hurdles. Nigeria's recent Starlink waitlist surge and service pauses highlight how demand can outstrip satellite capacity and draw regulatory scrutiny.

The acceleration of tower builds, combined with momentum in satellite technology, offers a hybrid playbook for tackling Africa's connectivity gap, with towers densifying population centres and serving public institutions, while satellites plug remote blindspots and provide resilience where terrestrial grids fall short. Experts argue blended finance is the way forward.

"Public funds can de-risk rural sites while private capital drives scale and speed, and satellites can be gated into national plans to serve schools, clinics and emergency services," Mulongo added.

Africa's rising elite are buying these cars

Bentleys, Ferraris and Rolls-Royces...more and more of these high-end vehicles are cruising through Africa's cities. The rise in luxury car ownership comes as Africa's middle class continues to grow in many parts of the continent. According to the 2025 Africa Wealth Report, Africa is home to 122,500 millionaires, 348 centi-millionaires, and 25 billionaires.

■ By Seth Onyango, bird story agency

Ownership of premium car imports priced above \$100,000 will grow over the coming years in Africa, driven by the rise in millionaires and middle class on the continent. In Nairobi's upscale Westlands district, sleek Range Rovers, BMWs, and Mercedes-Benz SUVs are becoming as conspicuous as boda bodas navigating the city's quotidian traffic. This surge in luxury car ownership extends beyond Kenya, with premium vehicles, including higher-end automobiles such as Bentleys, Rolls-Royces, Mercedes G-Wagons, and Ferraris, increasingly popular in African cities like Lagos, Kampala, Kinshasa, and Johannesburg, a longstanding hub for topof-the-range cars.

Africa's luxury car market is projected to generate \$499 million in revenue in 2025 for cars costing over US\$100,000, according to Statista. The figure reflects a modest but steady expansion, driven by rising incomes, urbanisation, and shifting consumer preferences across the continent. Unit sales are expected to reach 5,000 vehicles by 2029, with the average price per vehicle estimated at \$102,000 in 2025.

The market is forecast to grow at an annual rate of 1.02% between 2025 and 2029, reaching a total volume of \$519 million by the end of the period.

Africa's number of millionaires is expected to grow by 65% over the next decade, underscoring a structural shift in purchasing power. The expanding wealth base is concentrated in countries like South Africa (41,100 millionaires), Egypt (14,800), Nigeria (7,200), Kenya (6,800), and Morocco (7,500)—all of which are seeing increased demand for luxury vehicles.

Demand is concentrated in South Africa, where luxury car sales have risen consistently over the past decade. German brands dominate, but international manufacturers, including Lexus, Jaguar Land Rover, and Porsche, have expanded their presence, citing favourable conditions and a growing appetite for premium vehicles. In Nigeria, celebrities and influencers are helping drive demand. Social media platforms are awash with images of musicians, actors, and business moguls posing beside bulletproof Mercedes-Maybachs and custom-painted Rolls-Royces. The vehicles are often imported through private dealers and showcased as symbols of success and status.

Orders for high-end models more than doubled in the first quarter of 2025 compared with a year earlier, according to data from local dealers Inchcape and CFAO Motors. A stabilising shilling and easier access to credit have encouraged buyers, many of whom are professionals and business executives seeking vehicles that serve as both status symbols and practical investments in safety and durability. The Economist recently described Africa's luxury goods market as "remarkably efficient," despite regulatory gaps.

But, there is a shady side of luxury consumerism. In an exposé on car theft and global trafficking, the publication found that nearly 40% of stolen vehicles from the UK end up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which serves as a gateway to the wider African market. The report attributes this to weak export checks and a fragmented container booking system.

"As Africa becomes wealthier, black market demand for stolen goods will only increase," the article states, adding that both Africa and the Gulf are experiencing a rise in middle-class consumption.

The formal market, however, is also expanding. Improvements in infrastructure, favourable import policies, and access to financing have made luxury cars more attainable. In countries such as Morocco and Mauritius, tax incentives and streamlined customs procedures have helped stimulate

demand. Trends in consumer behaviour are shaping the market's evolution. SUVs and crossovers are gaining popularity, offering a blend of comfort, off-road capability, and prestige. Hybrid and electric models are also entering the market, albeit slowly, as environmental awareness grows among affluent buyers.

The market remains small compared to global leaders. The United States is expected to generate \$9 billion in luxury car revenue in 2025, nearly 18 times Africa's projected volume. But analysts say Africa's trajectory is notable given its structural constraints.

"The growth may be incremental, but it's consistent," said Nairobi-based automotive systems dealer Martin Ogeto . "That's strong signal in a region where there is still some volatility."

Local conditions vary. In Nigeria, demand is tempered by currency instability and import restrictions. In Kenya, rising fuel costs and limited charging infrastructure have slowed the uptake of electric vehicles. Yet in both countries, luxury car dealerships report increased foot traffic and higher conversion rates. The market's expansion is supported by macroeconomic factors. Rising GDP, urbanisation, and increasing disposable incomes are creating a larger base of potential buyers. Financing options offered by banks and leasing firms have also made luxury vehicles more accessible. While challenges remain—including poor road networks, limited after-sales service, regulatory inconsistencies—the outlook is broadly positive. Manufacturers are investing in local partnerships, training programmes, and digital platforms to improve customer experience and brand loyalty. Meanwhile, aftermarket opportunities are also expanding. Servicing, spare parts, and bespoke insurance products are emerging as lucrative side businesses, particularly as owners seek to protect highvalue assets in markets where road and security risks are elevated.





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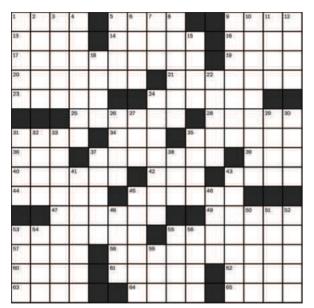
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eremmen

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1. Animation pioneer Disney
- 5. CGI emu who wears sunglasses in insurance ads
- 9. Chichén __: Mayan ruins
- 13. Word of woe
- 14. Ain't right?
- 16. "Carpe __!": "Seize the day!"
- 17. Architectural component of many a stained glass window
- 19. Ranch division
- 20. Lures
- 21. 2,240 pounds
- 23. Big name in tractors
- 24. Lady of Spain
- 25. Shape-fitting video game 28. Computer pros
- 31. Puts in
- 34. Bit of black magic 35. Cape __ Island, Nova Scotia
- 36. Summer zodiac sign
- 37. Nitpick
- 39. Lisbon greeting 40. Scarf down

- 42. One seeking platonic love, informally
- 43. Slugger Matt who led the NL
- 44. Puccini work

47. Scamp

- 45. Pester continually
- 49. Mookie of the Dodgers
- 53. Stronghold
- 55. Get ready
- 57. French for "mine"
- 58. Jukebox musical featuring Gloria Estefan songs, or where to find the ends of 17-Across and
- 10-, 24-, and 33-Down 60. Approximately 2.2 lbs.
- 61. Marshmallow treats
- 62. Words often said sarcastically
- 63. Genesis garden
- 64. Small amount
- 65. list

DOWN

- 1. Fought, as a war
- 2. Unaccompanied
- 3. Starbucks order
- 4. Some concert merch
- 5. Lingerie trim
- 6. Golden yrs. funds 7. Crème de la __: luxury skin care product made with kelp
- 8. Parents' brothers
- 9. "Can't argue with that"
- 10. Pencil game that often has no winner 11. Goose egg
- 12. Prayer ending
- 15. Suffix for a lengthy fundraising event
- 18. Slushv drink
- 24. Billiards game
- 22. Dame: South Bend school
- 26. Calendar abbr.

30. Break sharply

- 27. L.L.Bean rival
- 29. Ian of "The Hobbit"

38. Lingerie item

Atlantic

41. Formal speech 43. Stay in shape

31. Gucci of fashion

35. Internet journal

37. Somewhat

32. "Take a __ breath"

33. Flatfish native to the northern

- 45. Reviewed harshly
- 46. Lvft rival
- 48. Member-owned grocery
- 50. 1990s fitness fad
- 51. Trapped on a branch, as a cat
- 52. Minor scuffle
- 53. Make a cake, say
- 54. Within
- 55. Unwelcome sounds for a balloon artist
- 56. Work with haste
- 59. Affirmative vote

Solution: see below









WEEKLY HOROSCOPES

teamwork and finding better or cheaper sources to



Aries

This is a high-energy time for you. Be very honest. You may have a tendency to exaggerate. You could find ways to combine business with pleasure. Your natural charm and optimism are strong. Dress your best and expect to make a good impression. This can lead to contacts that will help you later. This period is positive for



Cancer

You're better off ignoring the gossip that's flying around your workplace. Just go about your business and do the best

you can. Some may face a significant challenge. You should have the respect and support of superiors. Your efforts haven't gone unnoticed. The cosmos supports positive outcomes. A decision will come soon and it should be in your favor. Think about scheduling some



Many of the factors that have delayed or stalled progress will begin to ease now. If you're feeling frustrated, it may be time to take on a bigger or more ambitious project. This is a lucky time for work-related travel and doing research to upgrade your training or education. There can be conflicts with customers or co-workers. It could be a matter of listening more carefully to understand their perspectives.



Capricorn

You can be an ocean of serenity at this time even if emotions run high or rumors fly. There could be challenges concerning your desire to work independently. Avoid making a change without consulting others. Family responsibilities may require making adjustments at work. Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. Accidents are possible if you move too quickly or attempt to do too many things



support your interests.

Taurus

Hard work will begin to show results. People who have heard about you

through other satisfied customers may at last get in touch. You may be angry or in a state of denial about something. A strong focus of yours will begin to bear fruit, but maybe not in the way you hoped. You might get an offer from another company for more money or better hours. This period is lucky for finding a new job.



Leo

This can be a very exciting time. Many areas that have stalled or suffered from a lack of resources will at last begin

to show progress. If you're careful about following established procedures, your natural expansiveness is going to win you recognition. An easy flow supports applying for a job or any sort of active marketing of your business interests. It will be easier to present your products to a wider audience.



Scorpio

This is a high-energy time for you! Anything you're enthusiastic about will find additional support. Budgets and financial challenges will benefit from a careful and realistic analysis. Big

dreams require a solid foundation. It's possible to take on too much, especially if you're hoping to make a good impression. The energy demands a direct approach. It's a lucky time to make contacts to secure your position within an organization.



Aquarius

You should enjoy an easier flow of communication, fewer nagging details, and a greater sense of optimism now.

Network as much as possible. Even if your job isn't your favorite, speak positively about your situation and co-workers will help you in the end. Focus on good customer relations even if this puts you behind. This period can bring you to an important decision about the direction of your career.



Gemini

This period can present you with the door to your future. If you've wanted or needed to make a change, this is

the time to act. Step through with confidence. Your work may require a move to another city or other big adjustment. Consider getting additional training or education. You're about to encounter improved conditions. Things can be frustrating with the downturn and increased competition.



Virgo

This can be a very exciting time. Many areas that have stalled or suffered from a lack of resources will at last begin to

show progress. If you're careful about following established procedures, your natural expansiveness is going to win you recognition. An easy flow supports applying for a job or any sort of active marketing of your business interests. It will be easier to present your products to a wider audience.



Sagittarius

Be sure you're getting enough sleep and not letting stress increase conflict on the job. Do your best on any assignment.

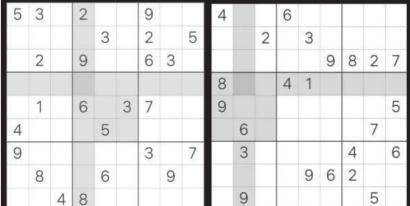
You may be feeling restless and could do with a break from the usual routines. A difficult boss or customer can sidetrack your best-laid plans. It's wise not to take personally other people's negative reactions. Say what you really think. You can make an important contribution to any team effort.



Pisces

You may be feeling particularly restless or emotionally unsettled now. Misunderstandings and hurt feelings

are possible but unnecessary. Do your best to assume everything is working out for the best. You'll make a better impression if you're willing to talk about your feelings. Avoid idle gossip and don't take rumors seriously. Do your best to complete outstanding assignments. Stand strong beside yours and don't



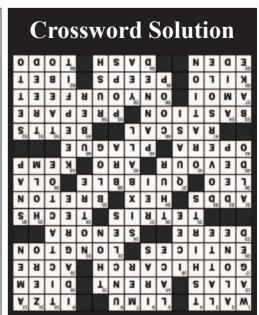
Sudoku

The game is easy, the rules are simple. All you have to do is make sure you fill every 3x3 box every row and every column, without repetition, using the number 1-9.

0 M M A G 0 E U C I 0 T ON I R MARISA UNDERCOVER ERNIE INFORMATION TEACHER SPY HE OTHER SIDE GADGETS LIPSTICK

CRAIG

JUDI





Request for Proposal for Long Term Agreement for Providing Corrective and Maintenance Service for the UN System

LRPS-2022-9199294

UNICEF (Ethiopia) wishes to request eligible bidders to participate in a Request for proposal (LRPS) **FOR ESTABLISHING LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENTS** for the provision of **Corrective and Maintenance of ICT Equipment services for the UN System.**

Details of the requirements for this bid and eligibility criteria etc. can be found in the bid document.

Interested and eligible bidders can get the bid document with the below links;

2merkato.com: https://tender.2merkato.com/ tenders/68d4de8f0a538a5373000001

Bids must be received by latest on 15th October 2025 @ 10:00 am-East African time.

Bids received after the stipulated date and time will be invalidated. Proposers can be submitted through UNICEF Ethiopia secured email address: "ETH-Tenderservices@unicef.org>. A bid conference will not for available for this bid.

The last date for accepting inquiries from the bidders is **08 October 2025 at 04:00 am.** Proposals submitted in any other way will be invalidated, event if received before the stipulated deadline.

UNICEF is part of the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM). Accordingly, all proposers are encouraged to become a UNICEF vendor by creating a vendor profile in the UNGM website: **www.ungm.org**

The tender is open only for local bidders. It is important that you read all the provisions of the Request for Proposal to ensure that you understand and comply with UNICEF's requirements.

Proposers are required to provide their financial proposal ONLY with the format provided with the bid document.

Note that failure to submit compliant bids may result in invalidation of your proposal.



Request for Proposal for Rehabilitation and upgrading of school WASH and Menstrual Health Management/MHM/ facilities for 15 Secondary Schools in Afar Region

LRFP-2025-9200050

Topic- **UNICEF** (Ethiopia) wishes to request eligible bidders to participate in a Request for Proposal (LRFP) for Rehabilitation and upgrading of school WASH and Menstrual Health Management/MHM/ facilities for 15 Secondary Schools in Afar Region.

Details of this bid's requirements and eligibility criteria can be found in the bid document.

Interested and eligible bidders can get the bid document with the below links;

2merkato.com - https://tender.2merkato.com/ tenders/68d548ff0a538a5f11000001

Any query or clarification regarding this bid shall be sent through an email to

eth-supplyQAconstruction@unicef.org before or on 10 October 2025. There will be a pre-bid meeting on 01 October 2025 @ 2:00 PM. Bid clarification will be communicated on the same website at 2merkato.com to the public. While sending your request for clarification, please ensure that you specify the LRFP number in the subject email, and provide the name of your company, contact person, and email.

The due date for submission of proposals/Bids to the UNICEF Addis Ababa Office is on or before 2:00 PM (East African Time) on **15 October 2025.** Please read the LRFP for detailed requirements and due dates.

Please quote the respective LRFP (request for proposal) numbers with the request for the

REHABILITATION AND UPGRADING OF SCHOOL WASH AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT/MHM/ FACILITIES FOR 15 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AFAR REGION.

Submission of bids should be done as per the below requirements.

- a. Technical bid submission should be with a separate email from the Financial bid submission
- b. RFP reference and whether Technical or Financial submission should be indicated on the Subject of the email.
- c. ONLY email submissions are acceptable.
- d. To reduce the risk of late delivery emails should be sent in good time before the deadline of the bid submission.



3040 Cornwallis Road • PO Box 12194 • Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 • USA Telephone 919.541.6000 • Fax 919.541.5985 • www.rti.org

Invitation for BID

RTI is an independent organization dedicated to conducting innovative, multidisciplinary research that improves the human condition. Founded as a centerpiece of the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina in 1958, RTI offers innovative research and development and a full spectrum of multidisciplinary services. It has a worldwide staff of more than 6,000 people.

Feed the Future Ethiopia Transforming Agriculture (FTF-ETA) is inviting all eligible bidders to submit their detailed company profile, including their experience in producing similar machinery. We are seeking qualified manufacturing, importing, and wholesale companies with the necessary technical and financial capacity, and a valid business license for the current Ethiopian fiscal year (2017). Qualified bidders are invited to collect the RFQ/RFP from the RTI International website at https://www.rti.org/current-opportunities.

Commodity/ Service Required:	Purchase of Enset Machine
Type of Procurement:	Hydraulic press machine: Machine size: 1200x6000x600mm, Pressing capacity: 554 kg kocho and bulla dough/ day Kocho and bulla dough dryer machine: Machine size: 2500x150x1200mm, Drying capacity: 554 kg kocho and bulla dough/ day Enset flour miller with sucker: Machine size: 3000x1200x600mm, Grinding capacity: Grinding at least 360 Kg kocho flour/ day Enset flour sieving machine:
	Machine size: 2000x1000x1000mm, grinding capacity: Grinding at least 360 Kg kocho flour/ day
Type of Contract:	One – time contract of fixed price
Term of Contract:	One Time
Contract Funding:	Department of State
This Procurement supports:	Department of State Ethiopia Transforming Agriculture
Submit Proposal to:	Inkind Procurement. ETA@transforming-agriculture.org
Date of Issue of RFP:	September 28, 2025
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	October 13, 2025, 16:00 East Africa Time (EAT)
Date Proposal Due:	October 20, 2025, 16:30 East Africa Time (EAT)
Approximate Date Purchase Order Issued to Successful Bidder(s):	ТВО

Method of Submittal:

Respond via e-mail **InkindProcurement.ETA@transforming-agriculture.org** with attached document in MS Word

/ Pdf format. Please provide digital brochures as deemed necessary to support your offer.

Solicitation Number: | ETA-AA-25-028C-GRT

The RTI- FTFETA project reserves the right to reject any or all bids.





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> የሁሉም ምርጫ! The Choice for All!



The discovery of the true cross is seen as a confirmation of Jesus' death and the significance of his sacrifice.

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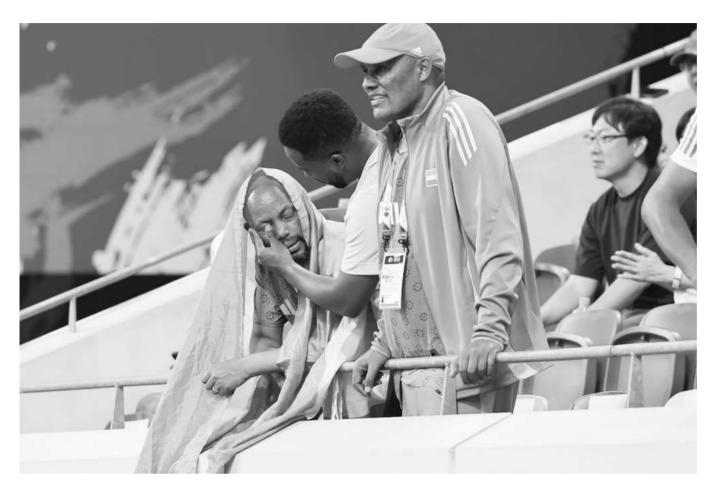
> HAPPY ETHIOPIAN TRUE CROSS LION INSURANCE COMPANY (S.C.)

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For Reliable Service and Dependable Capacity!!

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ETHIOPIA MISSES GOLD

at 2025 World Athletics Championships amid Kenyan Golden Girls' Triumph

he 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo highlighted a remarkable golden generation for Kenya's female runners, who secured six of the country's seven gold medals and propelled Kenya to second place in the overall medal table behind the United States. The Kenyan women swept the top podium positions in every middle and long-distance track event from 800 meters to the marathon, electrifying global audiences.

Among the crowning achievements was Lilian Odira's stunning upset in

the women's 800m final, where she shattered her personal best by nearly two seconds and broke a 42-year-old championship record. Alongside Odira, 1500m champion Faith Kipyegon and marathon winner Peres Jepchirchir—all mothers—have become powerful role models redefining cultural norms for women athletes in Africa.

Janeth Jepkosgei, former world 800m champion and Olympic silver medallist, praised these trailblazers for challenging traditional societal expectations and inspiring young African girls. "Even

when you are a mother, you can still rule the world," Jepkosgei said. "Their success marks a cultural shift in Kenya, showing how athletes can continue their careers after marriage and childbirth."

Another Kenyan highlight was Beatrice Chebet's historic double victory in the women's 5000m and 10,000m, becoming just the third woman to achieve this feat at a World Championships. The defending Olympic champion and world record holder etched her name alongside Ethiopian legends Tirunesh Dibaba and Vivian Cheruiyot—both double gold

medallists from previous championships. Ethiopia's performance, by contrast, was strikingly subdued after decades of middle and long-distance dominance. The team ended the championships with no gold medals, earning two silver and two bronze medals instead. This marked the country's worst showing in recent World Athletics history and a stark departure from its historic successes.

Among the notable Ethiopian medalists were Tigst Assefa, who earned silver in the women's marathon, and Yomif Kejelcha, silver medallist in the men's 10,000 meters. Gudaf Tsegay and Sembo Almayew won bronze in the women's 10,000 meters and 3000 meters steeplechase, respectively. However, their contributions could not offset the absence of a gold medal finish.

Behind the scenes, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation has been rocked by controversy and accusations of mismanagement. Veteran athlete and federation president Derartu Tulu, a two-time Olympic champion, has faced sharp criticism regarding organizational leadership. A public rift with Gezahegne Abera, the marathon gold medallist from the 2000 Sydney Olympics and current first vice president of the federation, has further highlighted administrative discord.

Experts and former athletes cite poor preparation, leadership disputes, and inadequate support structures as key factors undermining the Ethiopian team's competitive edge. The cupboard seems bare compared to the well-supported, unified, and deeply motivated Kenyan squad.

The Kenyan women's success story reflects deep investments in athlete development, a culture of mutual support, and progressive attitudes toward female runners balancing sport and family. Kenyan stars emphasize internal competition and solidarity as drivers pushing their performances higher.

Ethiopia's disappointing medal haul has sparked calls for urgent reforms in coaching, administration, and athlete support to restore the country's stature as a global athletics superpower. As Kenya's golden girls bask in global acclaim, Ethiopia confronts the challenge of reinventing its athletics system to reclaim its legacy and prepare a new generation of champions fit for the world stage.

The 2025 World Athletics Championships marked not only a sporting contest but a cultural and administrative crossroads for East Africa's dominant track and field nations. With Kenya ascending and Ethiopia reflecting on its struggles, the region's athletics future hangs in a delicate balance, heralding possible shifts in influence over the coming years.

World Athletics announces new Athletes' Commission members

orld Athletics has announced the results of the Athletes' Commission elections, which took place during the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 25.

The six newly elected or re-elected members of the 2025-2029 Athletes' Commission are:

Andreas Almgren (elected – 1428 votes) – Sweden Lia Apostolovski (elected – 1201 votes) – Slovenia Lisanne de Witte (re-elected – 1566) – Netherlands Thea LaFond (elected – 1293 votes) – Dominica Anna Ryzhykova (re-elected – 1244 votes) – Ukraine Gia Trevisan (elected – 1456 votes) – Italy

The full World Athletics Athletes' Commission will be listed on the World Athletics website shortly.

All athletes accredited for the World Championships in

Tokyo had the right to vote in the elections, which took place before and during competition time – from 8-20 September.

This year's elections featured a record vote participation of 95.5%.

To be eligible for election, athletes needed to have competed in at least one of the past two editions of the World Championships, or in the most recent Olympic Games, or be a competitor at this year's World Championships.

This year's elections introduced an innovation in voting. For the first time, athletes could vote either in person or online. In addition, the extended voting period was designed to give athletes who arrived later or departed earlier maximum opportunity to cast their votes.

The six seats that were available for election in 2025

include the Deputy Chair position, which will be voted on by the Athletes' Commission now the elections have been held.

The importance of athletes to decision-making within World Athletics was recognised and embedded into the World Athletics structures with the governance and integrity reforms approved in December 2016.

Since 2019, the Chairperson and one other member of the Athletes' Commission – one man and one woman – have been full voting members of the World Athletics Council.

"I'm proud to see the incredible turnout in voting for the Athletes' Commission election, with more than 2000 athletes participating to vote for their representatives this year," said Athletes' Commission Chair Dame Valerie Adams.

"The recent changes that were championed by the Athletes' Commission and implemented by World Athletics regarding the placement of our voting station, the extended voting period and a hybrid solution to allow athletes to vote more flexibly during the World Championships have proven highly effective and we are truly grateful for the support we have received from the team on the ground that has contributed to the seamless delivery of this historic voting turnout."

World Athletics Championships Tokyo 25 sees record number of nations win medals, surge in reach

record number of nations won medals at the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 25 from September 13-21, during the most impactful edition of the sport's flagship event in history.

A total of 53 nations made it on to the medal table after nine action-packed days of competition at the 20th running of the World Championships. This surpasses the previous record of 46 that was set at Osaka 2007 and equalled at Budapest 2023.

One world record, nine championship records and nine area records were set or equalled, and there were a series of historic firsts, including the first ever World Championships medals for Samoa, Saint Lucia and Uruguay, and a first ever World Championships gold for Tanzania.

The world record was set by Sweden's Mondo Duplantis, as he improved his pole vault mark to 6.30m. As well as the historic firsts by Alex Rose (SAM), Julien Alfred (LCA), Julia Paternain (URU) and Alphonce Felix Simbu (TAN), other highlights include:

- US sprinter Melissa Jefferson-Wooden completing a sprint treble in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m
- Two other athletes achieving double gold in individual events: Kenyan distance runner Beatrice Chebet and Spanish race walker Maria Perez
- Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone winning the 400m in a championship record of 47.78 the second-fastest time in history to become the only athlete in World Championships history to win gold medals in the 400m (2025) and 400m hurdles (2022)
- Ethan Katzberg winning the hammer with a championship record of 84.70m the farthest throw in the world for 20 years

A total of 1992 athletes took part from 193 different countries and the Athlete Refugee Team.

Away from the many magnificent performances on the track, field and road, the championships achieved record reach as the most widely covered and impactful World Championships in history.

"What we have seen over the past nine days here in Tokyo is an indelible and compelling celebration of human sporting endeavour," said World Athletics President Sebastian Coe. "Tokyo has set the stage for some of our sport's most extraordinary performances.

"This has been a championships for the ages and we are profoundly grateful to the people of Japan for hosting our showcase championships for the third time.

"Following the Olympic Games in 2021, I made a promise to the people of Tokyo that we would bring our sport back to the National Stadium as soon as we could. I am delighted that we kept our promise and that Tokyo kept its promise to fill the stadium with noisy fans."

President of the Local Organising Committee Mitsugi Ogata also reflected on the great performances — by national and international athletes — and the emotion of seeing the stadium full, four years on from a Tokyo Games devoid of crowds.

"Over the past nine days, we have witnessed so many unforgettable moments," he said. "There was never a quiet moment in the stadium. As we said: 'Every second, SUGOI', which was the slogan for this event. We delivered on that promise."

Ogata also highlighted the various initiatives that formed part of the championships programme, including those related to Kids' Athletics and sustainability.

"One of the greatest achievements of this championship, I believe, is reaching new audiences," he added.

Record reach

A total of 619,288 fans attended the World

Championships in Tokyo – more than the 581,462 who were there for the Tokyo 1991 World Championships – with sell out evening sessions across the week.

TBS saw huge TV audiences as the championships captured the nation's attention. There was a peak of more than 12 million viewers in Japan on the opening day, and audiences were well over 10 million for each evening session. The vast majority of evening sessions surpassed both the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games TV audiences for athletics.

Audiences were also engaged around the world, and in Sweden SVT 1 saw 75% of the total Swedish TV audience tune in to their broadcast to watch Duplantis break the world pole vault record for the 14th time – the highest share ever reported for World Athletics Championships coverage in Sweden.

The popularity of the World Athletics website continues to grow, with around 13

million fans visiting the website across the nine days of competition. This translates into a traffic increase of 50% over the already very successful 2023 World Championships in Budapest.

World Athletics has continued to develop AI athlete tracking for field events covering horizontal jumps, long throws and pole vault events. More than 2000 attempts were tracked and over 14 million data points were collected

The World Athletics social media channels have grown by 700,000 followers during the championships, with 700 million video views on these channels.

Over the last month, more than 125,000 news articles about the championships have been published in international media, with a potential reach of more than 180 billion.

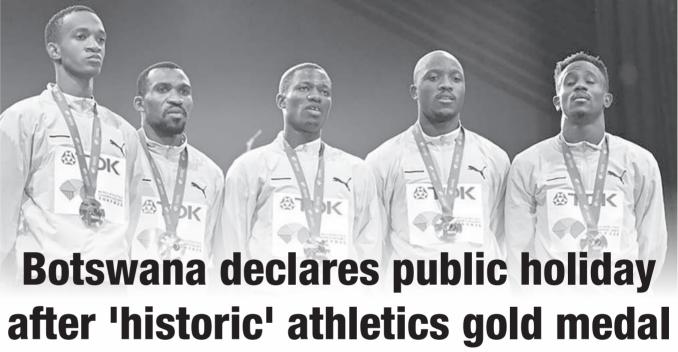
Never has a World Championships had so many commercial partners, with 17 sponsors for World Athletics and 14 for the Local Organising Committee in Tokyo completing a sold-out commercial programme.

Ultimate Championship

As well as witnessing the sport's current stars making history, the championships welcomed a series of athletics legends, including Usain Bolt, the face of the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship in Budapest in 2026 – the next major global outdoor track and field championships after Tokyo.

Some 300 VIPs, athletes and media attended the Ultimate Media Party on 11 September to mark the one-year-to-go milestone to this new and unmissable championship in Budapest.

Twenty-six athletes at the Tokyo World Championships won their place at next year's Ultimate Championship, joining the 26 athletes who automatically qualified after becoming Olympic champions at last year's Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



otswana has declared a public holiday to celebrate the country's victory in the men's 4x400 metres at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, the first African nation to win the event.

President Duma Boko hailed the gold medal as a "historic African win", in an online address praising the team for their performance.

He announced Monday, 29 September, as a holiday to celebrate the achievement - a day ahead of the country's independence day.

On Sunday, Botswana's team of Lee Bhekempilo Eppie, Letsile Tebogo, Bayapo Ndori and Busang Collen Kebinatshipi edged out the US, the winners of the last 10 world titles, in a rain-drenched race. South Africa took third position.

"I'll be sure to tell everyone, Botswana's natural diamonds are not just in the ground, they are our World Champion athletes," the president said, speaking from New York where he is attending the UN General Assembly.

He described the moment as "electric", adding that Botswana's performance spoke to its rising stature on the global stage.

The southern African nation finished fifth overall in the championship's medal standings - behind the US, Kenya, the Netherlands and Canada - their best ever return after taking two golds, one silver and a bronze.

Last year, Botswana celebrated another historic milestone as Tebogo won the nation's first Olympic gold medal with his victory in the men's 200m in Paris.

His triumph, which also marked the first time an African athlete had won the event, became a national sensation, with tens of thousands of people celebrating him at the National Stadium in the capital, Gaborone, after he returned to the country.

The government declared a half-day holiday allowing citizens to "pause and celebrate him" - in what then-President Mokgweetsi Masisi described as a "most unique... manner that will be etched in the annals of the history of the Republic".

Kenya's Sawe and Wanjiru win Berlin marathons

enya made it a clean sweep at the Berlin Marathon with Sabastian Sawe winning the men's race and Rosemary Wanjiru triumphing in the women's

Sawe finished in two hours, two minutes and 16 seconds to make it three wins in his first three marathons.

The 30-year-old, who was victorious at this year's London Marathon, set a sizzling pace as he left the field behind and ran much of the race surrounded only by his pacesetters.

Japan's Akasaki Akira came second after a powerful latter half of the race, finishing almost four minutes behind Sawe, while Ethiopia's Chimdessa Debele followed in third

"I did my best and I am happy for this performance," said Sawe.

"I am so happy for this year. I felt well but you cannot change the weather. Next year will be better."

Sawe had Kelvin Kiptum's 2023 world record of 2:00:35 in his sights when he

reached halfway in 1:00:12, but faded towards the end.

In the women's race, Wanjiru sped away from the lead pack after 25 kilometers before finishing in 2:21:05.

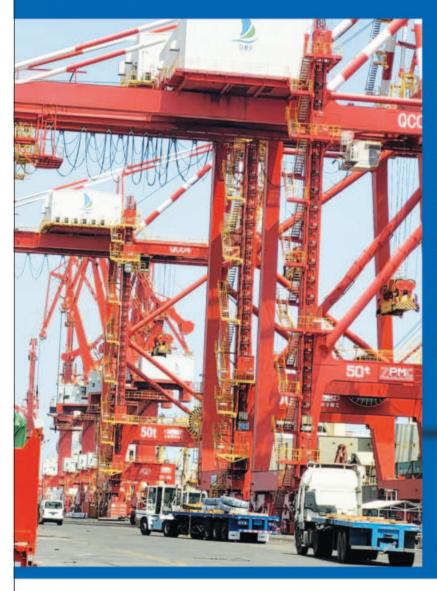
Ethiopia's Dera Dida followed three seconds behind Wanjiru, with Azmera Gebru - also of Ethiopia - coming third in 2:21:29.

Wanjiru's time was 12 minutes slower than compatriot Ruth Chepng'etich's world record of 2:09:56, which she set in Chicago in 2024













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