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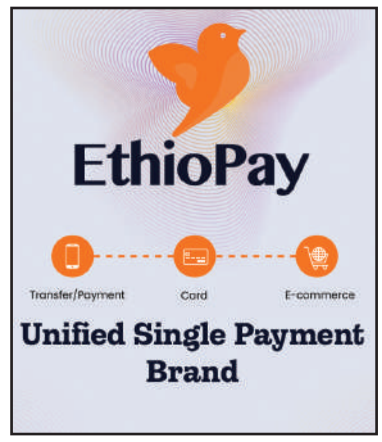

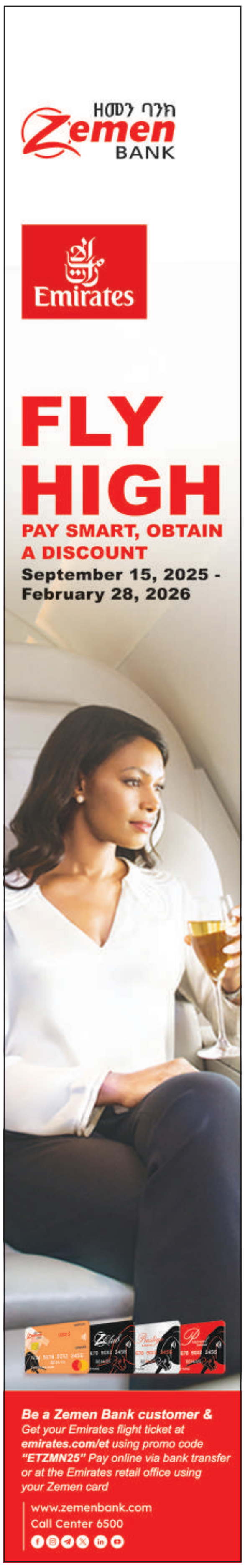

Addis' public service crisis blamed on centralization, low wages

By Eyasu Zekarias

Addis Ababa is struggling to deliver basic public services not because of a lack of funds, but because of an over centralized system and a demoralized workforce, a new study by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) warns.

The report, titled "Responsiveness of Public Institutions in Ethiopia: Practices, Challenges, and Policy Options," paints a stark picture of a capital city where frontline workers have little or no power to make decisions, are underpaid, and are increasingly absent from their posts — all of which has left residents facing long delays and frustration when trying to access government services.

The study identifies excessive centralization of power as the main bottleneck behind the city's service breakdown. While the city is growing fast and handling millions of citizen requests each year, decision making authority remains tightly concentrated at the top, leaving frontline workers with almost no autonomy.

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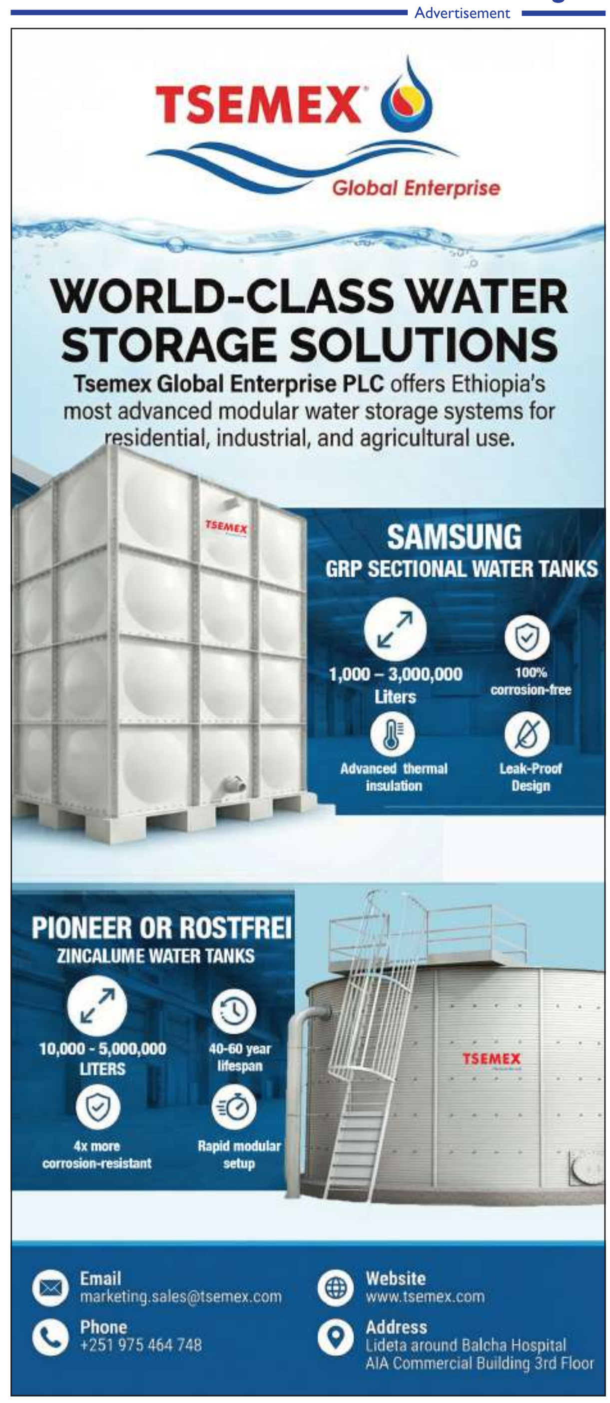


We are painfully, profoundly tired of war

We are tired of the endless headlines that bring new deaths, the names of the fallen read out like grim poetry, the villages burned, the children orphaned, the farmers who can no longer farm, the refugees who have lost everything. We are tired of the politicians who incite or stay silent while the country is torn apart, and of the narratives that force us to choose sides instead of demanding justice, truth, and peace for all.

We are tired, but we are also angry. We are angry not at individual soldiers or fighters, but at the political and military leaders whose choices have allowed war after war to erupt and now, again, at the threat of renewed conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Federal Government.

Enough is enough. The current tension must de escalate, immediately. Any further slide into open war is not only a moral crime, but a political and economic disaster for a country that cannot afford another round of bloodshed.

The people of Ethiopia have nothing more to gain from war. We have everything to lose.

The Ethiopian human toll of recent years is staggering. Hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced, countless women and children exposed to violence, trauma, and malnutrition. The scars run deep, not just in the physical wounds, but in the broken trust between communities, the fear in the eyes of children, and the silence of elders who have seen too many cycles of hope and betrayal.

And the economic cost? It is no less devastating. The war in the North alone destroyed hospitals, schools, roads, dams, and industries. It reversed years of development, pushed millions deeper into poverty, and turned productive land into zones of ruin. Now, with the country already struggling with inflation, debt, and unemployment, another war would be catastrophic.

Yet, despite all this, we see the same old patterns repeating. Political disputes become framed in existential terms. Each side accuses the other of betrayal and illegitimacy. Rhetoric becomes more aggressive. Troops are mobilized. The drums of war beat again. And once again, it is the ordinary peasant, the trader, the teacher, the student, who will bear the heaviest burden.

The people are watching. We are not blind. We see the posturing and the brinkmanship. We see the blame games, the nationalist slogans, and the silencing of voices that call for restraint. And we are clear: Ethiopia cannot survive another war.

There are many who still believe that war can bring decisive victory — that military force can crush opposition, restore order, and stabilize the state. This is a dangerous illusion.

History has shown, over and over, that war in Ethiopia does not end problems; it deepens them. It does not build national unity; it fractures it further. It does not deliver lasting peace; it plants the seeds of the next conflict.

Even if one side achieves a military "victory," that cannot be the foundation of a stable, prosperous Ethiopia. Victory through war creates resentment, not reconciliation. It breeds a culture of distrust and revenge, not one of justice and shared citizenship.

Ethiopia is not just a state; it is a nation of many nations, of many languages, religions, and histories. None can be forced into submission without destroying the very fabric of the country. The idea that one group can dominate the rest through force, or that another group can secede by force, is a fantasy that has already brought immense suffering.

War is not justice. War is not development. War is not strength. War is, ultimately, a failure — a failure of political imagination, a failure of leadership, and a failure of humanity.

The current tension between the TPLF and the Federal Government must not be allowed to erupt into open conflict. The signs are clear that the situation is volatile, and every day of escalation brings the country closer to a new round of violence.

De escalation is not weakness. It is wisdom. It is the only responsible choice for leaders who claim to serve the Ethiopian people.

First, both sides must stop the aggressive rhetoric and the military posturing. Words matter. When leaders speak as if war is inevitable, they make it more likely. They must instead choose language that creates space for dialogue, not justification for violence.

Second, the federal government, as the authority with the greatest responsibility for national security, must take the initiative to de escalate. This means halting any military movements that could be seen as preparing for war, reducing troop concentrations, and making clear, public commitments to a peaceful resolution.

At the same time, the TPLF leadership must also show restraint. The right to political grievance is real, but resorting to armed confrontation is not acceptable in a country that is still recovering from so much bloodshed. All parties must recognize that political differences must be settled through constitutional and democratic means, not through bullets.

Third, and most importantly, Ethiopia needs a credible, inclusive process of dialogue that addresses the root causes of conflict. This is not just about Tigray; it is about Ethiopia as a whole. Core issues — questions of power, identity, justice, land, the constitution, and the future of the federation — must be discussed in a forum that brings in all major political and regional actors, civil society, and independent mediators.

One sided decisions and closed door negotiations are not enough. The people of Ethiopia are not pawns in a power struggle between elites. They must be at the centre of any process that will determine the country's future.

The Ethiopian people have already paid too high a price. We have sacrificed children, livelihoods, and years of progress. We have poured our tears into the soil, praying for peace. We have endured the silence of the oppressed and the arrogance of the powerful.

Now, we say clearly: we will not accept another war. We will not accept another cycle of destruction in the name of politics, ideology, or so called "regional security."

The youth of Ethiopia, especially, must be heard. They did not ask for this war. They did not ask to grow up in a country where their dreams are limited by borders, checkpoints, and insecurity. They are demanding education, jobs, justice, and a peaceful homeland. They deserve that, not another generation of loss.

The clergy, elders, women, traders, and civil society leaders who have repeatedly called for peace have shown the true Ethiopian tradition. Peace is not surrender; it is courage. Peace is not passive; it is the active pursuit of reconciliation, justice, and a shared future.

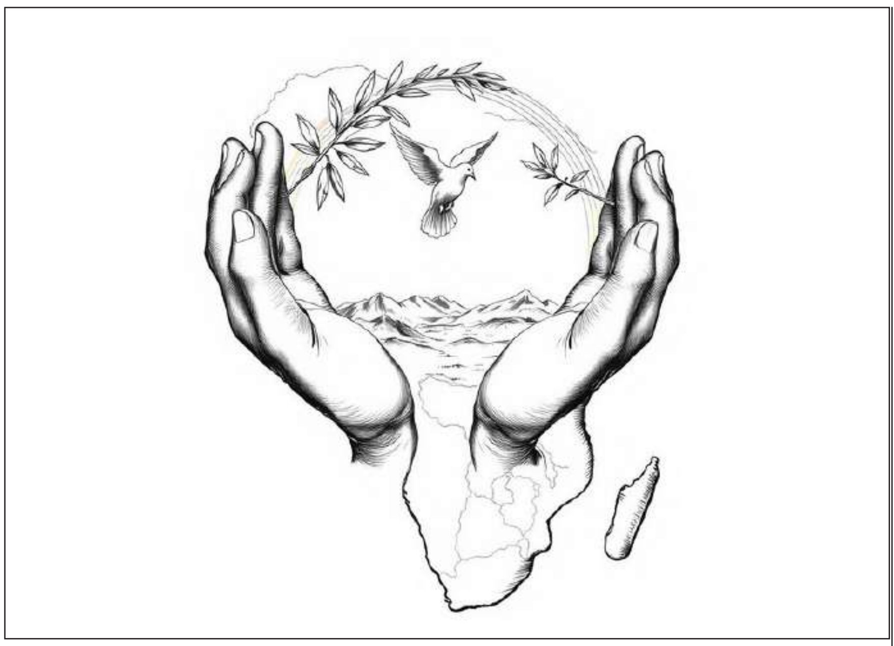
To the leaders in Addis Ababa and Mekelle: the people are watching. History is watching. The world is watching.

You have a choice: to continue down the path of confrontation, risk another war, and leave your names tied to more suffering and ruin — or to choose the harder, braver path of peace, dialogue, and national healing.

The people of Ethiopia are tired of war. We are not ready for peace, we are ready for survival, for dignity, for a future where our children can grow up in a country at peace.

War is never the answer. Ethiopia has already proved that beyond any doubt. The only way forward is through de escalation, dialogue, and a genuine commitment to peace.

Enough. No more war.



■ By Abdulgadir (Abdul) Mohammed

COMMENT

Sudan at the zero point: Why 70 of independence demand new political thinking

Today (January 2, 2026) marks 70 years since Sudan emerged from colonial rule in 1956 with immense hope: hope for dignity, justice, and a state that would serve its people rather than dominate them.

Seventy years later, Sudan is at war with itself. But it is essential to say this clearly, especially on such a symbolic date: this war does not reflect the character of the Sudanese people.

Anyone who has spent time among Sudanese communities knows this. Sudanese society is marked by generosity, civic solidarity, humor in hardship, and an instinctive care for others. Even during this devastating war, ordinary people have shared what little they have, sheltered strangers, organized neighborhood aid, and protected one another across ethnic, religious, and regional lines. The humanitarian work of the emergency response rooms speaks volumes about the character and spirit of the Sudanese people.

This civic spirit deeply impressed President Thabo Mbeki during his years leading the African Union mediation on Sudan. After travelling widely across the country and engaging communities far beyond negotiating halls, he once remarked: "I hope and pray that one day Sudanese will have a government that is as good as them."

That hope still matters. It matters because Sudan's tragedy is not a failure of its people. It is a failure of politics.

Why Zero Point matters for Sudan

I recently read a book called Zero Point by Slavoj Žižek. I did not read it looking for answers about Sudan, and I am not an academic. I am an African political activist and mediator. I read widely because reading sometimes helps me find language for realities that are difficult to name.

Žižek writes about moments when societies reach a point where the old order has already collapsed, yet everyone continues to behave as if it still exists. Governments are recognized, institutions function in name, negotiations continue, and official language remains confident—but none of this connects with lived reality anymore.

He calls this moment a "zero point."

It is not the end of politics. It is more dangerous than that. It is the moment when the ground under politics gives way, but we keep using the same words, tools, and assumptions as if nothing fundamental has changed. The state exists, but no longer governs.

Sudan officially has a government led by the Sudanese Armed Forces. It is recognized internationally. Ministries exist. Flags fly.

But recognition is not the same as responsibility.

The state does not protect civilians at scale. It barely provides services. It does not organize social life beyond survival and coercion. It offers no shared national vision capable of commanding consent.

On the other side, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) control large parts of the country. Their leaders claim to be dismantling the unjust "1956 state," a message that resonates with Sudanese at the peripheries who were excluded for decades. But what exists under RSF control is not reform or governance. It is rule by extreme uncertainty, displacement, and atrocity.

This is not a setback. It is disaster.

Much international engagement with Sudan treats the war as a setback: a failed transition, a power struggle between two generals, a crisis that can be managed with enough pressure and patience.

This is a profound misreading of the destructive nature of the war dynamic and its hostility to political settlement.

Defeat implies recovery. Disaster destroys the conditions of recovery.

In Sudan today, violence is not a breakdown of order—it is the order. Atrocity is not accidental—it is how control is exercised. Fear, hunger, and displacement are tools of power.

Polarization as an instrument of defeat

One of the most destructive features of Sudan's war is polarization—not as a social by-product, but as a political strategy.

Polarization narrows political space until only existential camps remain. Compromise becomes betrayal. Politics becomes war by other means. Even if guns fall silent, politics cannot resume because trust and shared language have been destroyed.

What Zero Point teaches

The key lesson from Zero Point is this: when societies reach a zero point, repeating old formulas becomes part of the problem. Reformist language, procedural optimism, and technical fixes no longer illuminate reality; they obscure it.

At the zero point, the choice is not between good and bad options. It is between thinking honestly or surrendering to catastrophe.

Mamdani and the slow poison of collapse

This warning resonates deeply with African political thought, especially the work of Mahmood Mamdani and his recent book, Slow Poison.

Mamdani argues that many postcolonial crises are not sudden failures but the result of long-term, incremental damage—the slow hollowing out of political institutions, civic life, and popular sovereignty.

His critique of neoliberal governance is especially relevant. Neoliberalism weakens the state's social foundations while strengthening its coercive arm. Over time, politics is emptied of meaning, leaving force to fill the vacuum.

Sudan's collapse fits this pattern.

Beyond Islamism and neoliberalism

Sudan cannot be rebuilt within old ideological binaries. Islamism failed to build inclusive politics. Neoliberalism failed to build a socially rooted state.

New thinking must move beyond both. This does not negate negotiation or the urgency of stopping the war immediately. Ending the war is a moral imperative.

But without new thinking, a ceasefire risks freezing disaster in place.

Seventy years to nowhere—and a chance to begin again.

Seventy years after independence, Sudan stands at a painful crossroads. One could describe this history as seventy years to nowhere—a cycle of militarization, exclusion, and aborted democratic promise.

But Sudan's people have not failed. They have resisted, organized, and cared for one another. The failure lies in political systems that never rose to their level.

The Sudanese people deserve a government as good as they are.

Politics is still possible—but only if we are willing to think differently and rebuild from the truth.

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Zemen Bank achieves 50% capital growth, 20% asset increase in first half of 2025/26 fiscal year

By our staff reporter

Zemen Bank, one of Ethiopia's leading private financial institutions, has experienced remarkable growth in the first half of the 2025/26 fiscal year, with its capital increasing by 50% in just six months.

According to a statement from the bank, its total assets rose to 106 billion birr during this period, marking a 20% increase from the previous fiscal year's close in June 2025, when assets totaled 88.6 billion birr.

Founded in 2008, Zemen Bank has quickly become a key player in the financial sector, now holding a position comparable to institutions established over 25 years ago, following the reopening of the financial industry to private investment in the mid-1990s.

The bank's President, Dereje Zebene, reported that customer deposits have surged to 80 billion birr, reflecting strong growth and customer confidence. This represents a nearly 25% increase from the 65 billion birr mobilized at the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Dereje noted that Zemen Bank achieved a profit exceeding 5 billion birr and raised its paid-up capital to 14 billion birr, up from 9.4 billion birr in June 2025. He emphasized that the bank has experienced a significantly improved performance over the past six months compared to the same period last year.

After reviewing the bank's half-year performance, the Board of Directors, led by Chairperson Enye Bemir, expressed appreciation for these achievements and underscored the importance of continued effort in the second half of the fiscal year to attain even better results.

Dereje highlighted that the bank's growth is intrinsically linked to the growth of its customers. "Our Bank's growth is the growth of our customers. When we refer to the Bank, it also signifies that our customers have grown in tandem," he explained.

Zemen Bank is recognized for its commitment to technology and a customer-focused approach.

Dereje further emphasized that the bank's robust expansion contributes to national economic development by mobilizing savings, increasing credit supply, supporting investments, enhancing foreign currency earnings, and enabling the country to capitalize on these gains. This process allows customers to operate more effectively, create jobs, and contribute significantly to the economy.

During a half-year performance review meeting on January 24, 2026, attended by senior and middle management, Dereje stressed that sustainable performance relies on collective effort and mutual trust.

"Across all areas of operation, we must collaborate diligently to meet our customers' needs. If we succeed, I am confident that in the next six months, we will achieve even better results. Safeguarding our customers' trust remains our greatest responsibility," he stated.

Zemen Bank is recognized as an innovative financial service provider in Ethiopia, distinguished by its unique business model and modern banking services.

Its mission is to deliver a distinct financial experience, foster an engaging work environment, and create sustainable value for stakeholders through an empowered workforce and technology, applied in a socially responsible manner.

By evolving from a corporate-focused entity to a versatile bank serving both corporate and retail clients, and by prioritizing innovation and efficiency, Zemen Bank continues to make meaningful contributions to Ethiopia's economic development and the changing banking landscape.


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Ethio Telecom expansion slowed by forex constraints

By Eyasu Zekarias

The national telecom operator, Ethio Telecom, has acknowledged that its expansion plans are facing significant challenges due to the country's tight foreign exchange situation.

The company recently announced that critical infrastructure projects worth over 300 million dollars have been delayed or temporarily put on hold. The main reason, it says, is the difficulty in securing the Letters of Credit (LCs) needed to import essential network equipment and software from international partners, as the local banking system struggles to fully meet its large foreign currency requirements.

Despite the government's ongoing reforms to liberalize the financial sector and improve foreign exchange availability, the company notes that the gap between demand and supply remains wide, especially for large, capital intensive sectors like telecommunications.

While Ethio Telecom reports strong domestic revenue in Birr, the challenge of accessing sufficient foreign exchange continues to constrain its ability to modernize and expand digital infrastructure across the country.

In its 2025/26 budget year, the company's foreign currency needs exceed one billion dollars, primarily for network upgrades, expansion, and new technology rollouts. CEO Frehiwot Tamru explained that projects valued at over 300 million dollars, already completed up to the procurement stage, are now awaiting the necessary LCs.

"Although we have good relationships with local banks, their capacity to fully meet our large foreign exchange needs is limited," Frehiwot said.

The situation has been influenced by the exchange rate changes adopted in 2024, which led to a depreciation of the Birr. Since telecom equipment is largely priced in foreign currency, this has increased the cost of imports when calculated in local currency.

The company said it is in ongoing discussions with the National Bank of Ethiopia to address the issue, and is exploring alternative ways to ease the forex pressure on its operations.

Industry observers note that the telecom sector is highly dependent on imported equipment and capital investment, and that prolonged forex constraints could slow down the pace of digital transformation, especially in rural and underserved areas.

To help manage the situation, Ethio Telecom is broadening its revenue streams beyond the domestic market. It is expanding its footprint in neighboring countries and growing its international services, including international voice, data, and telecom related offerings.

The company is also in talks with international financial institutions to explore additional credit and financial support options for its expansion plans.

On the recent World Bank assessment of the telecom market, which raised questions about Ethio Telecom's pricing, CEO Frehiwot offered a clarification. She described the concern about "predatory pricing" as a misunderstanding of the company's earlier price reductions, which were introduced in 2018, long before the entry of new operators and the market liberalization process.

"These reductions were designed to make services more affordable and to support the vision of Digital Ethiopia," she said, adding that the company's low prices today reflect operational efficiency and internal cost saving measures, not a below cost strategy.

"If the company adjusts prices, the impact on its 87 million customers would be significant, and our intention is to keep that burden as light as possible," Frehiwot added.

In its half year performance for the first six months of 2025/26, Ethio Telecom posted Birr 85.02 billion in revenue, up 37% compared to the same period last year, achieving 81.1% of its target for the period.

The company earned 83 million dollars in foreign exchange (88.19% of plan), with 69 million dollars from international services and 16.02 million from telecommuting services, an increase of 7.2% year on year.

It saved over 4.15 billion Birr through cost efficiency programs (129% of plan) and generated an additional 89.9 million Birr by renting out unused space and properties.

During the period, Ethio Telecom recorded a net profit of Birr 42.36 billion, with a 49.8% profit margin. It has allocated 62.92 billion Birr for recurrent expenditure and 52.92 billion Birr for capital projects, while paying 35.6 billion Birr in taxes to the government.

PHOTO: Anteneh Akliilu

African leaders call for domestic funding to fill 6 million health worker gap

By Eyasu Zekarias

African leaders have launched a detailed investment blueprint to close the continent's massive health workforce shortage, warning that Africa will need an additional 6.1 million health professionals by 2030 to achieve universal health coverage (UHC).

The report, "An Analysis of Africa's Health Workforce Compact Investment," was released last week by the African Union and Africa CDC in response to a resolution from the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU in Addis Ababa. It provides a first ever continental investment baseline for the African Health Workforce Compact, mapping out how much African countries must spend to train and retain the doctors, nurses, midwives, and community health workers required to serve their populations.

The report makes a stark economic argument: while the cost of building a strong local health workforce is high, the cost of inaction is far greater. Africa is already losing an estimated $2.4 trillion through medical tourism, as people travel abroad seeking care that should be available at home.

By investing in its own health workers, the continent can keep this money within its economies, strengthen local health systems, and save lives. The model outlines three pathways: a "status quo" scenario, a "moderate" path to reach 70% health coverage, and an "ambitious" plan aiming at 100% coverage.

Under the most ambitious scenario, the continent's return on investment is projected to reach 19.4 by 2063 – roughly $19 in economic and social benefits for every $1 spent on the health workforce.

Currently, only two African countries meet the historic Abuja Declaration target of allocating 15% of their national budgets to health. Many others still rely heavily on foreign aid, which the report warns is becoming less predictable.

"With the changing landscape of international financial support, African countries must look inward," the report urges. It calls on countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, and Zimbabwe to prioritize domestic resource mobilization – using tax revenues, innovative financing, and health sector reforms – to pay for the training, deployment, and salaries of the continent's future doctors and nurses.

As host of the African Union and central to this initiative, Ethiopia is at the heart of the continental strategy. Yet the country faces the same dual challenge as many neighbors: a critical shortage of health workers and a persistent "brain drain."

The report notes that the annual migration of doctors and nurses from Africa is relatively low (0.5% and 0.4% respectively), but the desire to emigrate among health professionals is alarmingly high, averaging about 42.2%.

To stop this exodus, the report recommends improving working conditions, scaling up diaspora repatriation programs, and negotiating bilateral service agreements so that trained professionals choose to stay or return.

The compact proposes clear targets: for every 10,000 people, Africa needs 11.1 doctors (including specialists and general practitioners), 83.77 nurses and midwives, 36.2 community health workers, and 20 laboratory scientists.

Since not all students who start medical or nursing school complete it – the report cites completion rates of about 74.7% for doctors and 82.6% for nurses – governments must significantly increase enrolment to compensate and reach the overall goal.

Each additional doctor, the report estimates, saves an average of 1.72 mothers and children under five per year. Reaching ambitious workforce targets could prevent millions of deaths and illnesses, with total benefits in the highest scenario reaching about $410 trillion by 2063, including saved lives and avoided illness.

Addis' public service . . .

Continued from page 1

Chala Amdissa (Phd), an expert from Addis Ababa University involved in the research, described the city administration as being in a "major structural contradiction." "Frontline workers who interact with the public every day have no decision making power," he said. "They are treated only as informants, not as problem solvers."

According to the study, this has created a "responsiveness gap": institutions manage to provide information, but they fail to resolve citizens' problems quickly. Quantitative data from the research shows that while government offices scored a modest 3.37 (out of 5) on providing information, they scored the lowest, 3.02, on solving problems immediately.

"Employees often have to wait for instructions from senior leaders who are not on duty, who are busy in other meetings, or who are simply absent from their offices," Dr. Chala explained. "This is the main reason citizens do not get timely responses."

The problem is not limited to the city's bureaucracy; it is also a leadership culture issue. The report notes that many senior officials are frequently absent from their offices, attending political meetings or other events instead of managing their institutions.

This pattern has discouraged ordinary employees, who feel they lack the tools and authority to do their work effectively. "Leaders often prioritize political survival over institutional work," the study observes, weakening the memory and continuity of institutions, especially with frequent leadership changes.

Daniel Amente, a PSI researcher, stressed that genuine responsiveness means more than just technical competence. "It means empathy and sensitivity to the public's needs," he said. "It means providing services at the right time, in the right place, and at an affordable cost." But the study concludes that Ethiopia's path toward such a responsive government is still long and unfinished.

Another major driver of the crisis is low wages. The study found that low salaries are pushing workers to quit their jobs or show poor attendance, and are creating fertile ground for corruption and rent seeking behavior.

"It is impossible to expect an employee who provides efficient and ethical service while struggling to pay rent in the city he serves," the report notes.

Factors like the lack of decent medical equipment and severe shortages of basic medicines in health facilities have further eroded employee morale. In a city with a large budget, the research shows that "soft infrastructure" — the civil service system, staff capacity, and working conditions — has been systematically neglected.

In many offices, staff still rely on outdated paper files, and poor internet access is undermining the city's efforts to roll out digital e services, the study adds.

The research team emphasized that the public service challenges in Addis Ababa differ from those in regional states like Gambella or the Somali region, where the main constraints may be infrastructure and access. In the capital, the problem is more about governance culture, administrative culture, and the dismantling of frontline decision making capacity.

In a city where diverse communities live and demand for services is extremely high, such cultural and structural barriers are making it difficult for citizens, especially the poor and marginalized, to access equitable services.

To address these problems sustainably, the policy study outlines a clear path forward. The first step is to build a truly competency based civil service, where recruitment and promotion are based solely on knowledge, skills, and experience, not on political loyalty or other external ties.

At the same time, the study calls for a serious reduction in the excessive centralization of power by delegating more decision making authority to lower levels of the administration and giving frontline workers real capacity to solve citizens' problems where they occur, instead of forcing them to wait endlessly for higher level approval.

To boost morale and reduce turnover, the report argues that the city must undertake a serious wage and benefits reform that reflects the actual cost of living and treats equity and fairness as central principles. This is seen as a critical step to increase motivation and enable employees to serve faithfully and to their full potential.

The study also insists that civil service institutions must be shielded from political interference and frequent leadership changes, since institutional memory and long term continuity are essential for stable and effective service delivery.

The research group stresses that any reform will be incomplete without a strong, accessible, and reliable complaint system where citizens' grievances are properly heard, tracked, and resolved in a timely manner, so that accountability can be restored and public trust rebuilt.

Unless these structural issues are addressed, the study warns, more spending on roads and big infrastructure will not fix the everyday crisis at service delivery points — from health centers and schools to city halls and utilities.

NBE takes swift action against parallel forex market spike

By our staff reporter

A recent surge in the parallel forex market has prompted the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) to implement aggressive corrective measures. These actions include an unscheduled auction to sell half a billion dollars and a weekend directive requiring banks to exercise increased caution in their Letters of Credit (LC) issuance. The directive mandates that LCs for non-essential imports, which require significant amounts of foreign currency, align with the valuation benchmarks established by the Ethiopian Customs Commission.

Financial experts indicate that this new ruling, which instructs banks to synchronize their LCs with Customs Commission valuations, primarily targets the illegal exchange market.

This market experienced a significant spike the previous week, with rates reaching as high as 190 birr per dollar, compared to the official bank rate of under 160 birr.

The surge was fueled by a sudden increase in foreign currency demand from importers, prompting the NBE to act swiftly. On Tuesday, January 27, 2026, the central bank injected $500 million through a special auction to help banks meet this heightened demand.

Major investors who spoke with Capital attribute this timing to the Chinese New Year (CNY). This period, typically from late January to mid-February, often sees a significant slowdown in economic activity.

"Production slows, ports become congested, and global freight networks operate less efficiently, not only during the holiday but for several weeks afterward," they explained. To mitigate these supply chain disruptions, expected to peak around February 17–March 3 in 2026, importers are rushing to secure necessary commodities for as far ahead as April or May.

"As far as I understand, the government recognizes the link between foreign currency demand and CNY. This understanding is a major reason for the substantial sum provided in the extraordinary forex auction and the push for banks to help combat the illegal forex market," a major exporter told Capital. Experts added, "I expect the black market will gradually diminish due to the NBE's measures."

The NBE's latest directive, effective January 27, 2026, requires all commercial banks to use Ethiopian Customs Commission price data when processing forex for imports. In a statement on Sunday, the NBE noted that this move aims to "strengthen consistency and data integrity," citing significant discrepancies between values declared on LCs and official customs reference prices.

A key detail that remains unspecified is the exact list of "selected imported items" to which the rule applies. The NBE stated that, "with the objective of harmonizing price references and ensuring consistency in balance of payments data," banks must now apply customs values "as indicative prices."

This marks the latest phase in Ethiopia's forex market reforms, which began with the introduction of a market-clearing exchange rate system in July 2024.

While experts initially believed that the indicative rate would target major forex-consuming commodities like steel, a list reviewed by Capital also includes non-essential items such as vehicles, home and office furniture, electronics, and wires.

The central bank emphasized that this step aligns with its broader reform agenda and that it "will continue to monitor implementation and take appropriate measures."

However, the lack of specificity regarding covered goods is likely to raise concerns among importers, who will face an imminent shift in how their transaction values are assessed for forex access.

Financial experts note that the directive is part of a broader government effort to curb forex flight and illicit remittance practices, which are seen as critical to the nation's economic reform program.

This action follows substantial forex injections; in the past two months alone, the government has sold $890 million via auction, including $650 million through extraordinary, unscheduled auctions.

African airlines lead global growth in 2025, IATA Report

By our staff reporter

African airlines posted the strongest year on year traffic growth of any world region in 2025, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), as demand for air travel and cargo surged across the continent.

In its 2025 full year and December performance report, IATA says global passenger demand rose 5.3% in 2025, measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs), with capacity (available seat kilometres, ASKs) up 5.2% and the overall load factor reaching a record 83.6% for the year. African carriers significantly outpaced this global trend, driving optimism about the continent's growing role in global aviation.

IATA's regional breakdown shows that African airlines' annual traffic rose 7.8% in 2025 compared to 2024, the highest growth rate among all regions and well above the global average of 5.3%.

Capacity for African airlines increased 6.5% in 2025, but load factor climbed 0.9 percentage points to 74.9% — a record high for Africa and the strongest load factor improvement of any region, despite still being the lowest regional load factor worldwide. Strong international demand contributed to this performance, with African carriers' December 2025 traffic rising 10.3% year on year, the second highest monthly growth globally.

"Africa's airlines delivered the strongest growth in passenger traffic in 2025, reflecting rising connectivity, an expanding middle class, and growing intra African and international travel," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General. "This demand surge puts into sharp focus two key challenges — decarbonization and the global supply chain crisis — that must be addressed to sustain long term growth."

Globally, domestic demand grew modestly in 2025, up 2.4% year on year, while capacity expanded 2.5%, with load factor averaging 83.7% (down 0.1 ppt from 2024).

However, the real story for Africa lay in the international market. Full year international demand rose 7.1% globally, with capacity up 6.8% and a record full year international load factor of 83.5%. African airlines were a key driver of this international expansion, especially on routes to and from Asia and Europe, where trade and tourism flows remained strong.

December 2025 provided a strong finish to the year, with total global demand rising 5.6% and load factor reaching 83.7%, again just below 84% — a sign that airlines, including African carriers, kept fleets full to meet robust demand.

Walsh noted that the strong and continuous increase in demand highlights two major challenges for the industry: decarbonization and supply chain constraints. Airlines wanted to expand capacity with new, more efficient aircraft, but faced delays in aircraft and engine deliveries, limited maintenance capacity, and cost pressures that IATA estimates exceeded $11 billion in 2025.

"Every new aircraft means a quieter, cleaner fleet, with more capacity and more flight options than at any previous point in history, which is what airlines and their customers want," Walsh said, urging governments to support rapid expansion of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production and stable fiscal frameworks for the energy sector.

Across Africa, many carriers responded by extending the life of existing aircraft and maximizing seat utilization, effectively using higher load factors as a short term "band aid" to meet rising demand until new capacity becomes reliably available.

On the cargo side, IATA reported that full year 2025 demand, measured in cargo tonne kilometres (CTKs), rose 3.4%, while capacity (ACTKs) grew 3.7%, with available trade flowing strongly into e commerce and just in time supply chains.

African airlines saw 6.0% year on year growth in cargo demand in 2025, with capacity increasing 7.8%. In December 2025, African cargo demand rose 10.1% year on year, the highest monthly growth of any region, with capacity up 9.8%.

Trade lane data shows a notable shift in 2025, with traffic from Asia–North America falling (–0.8% CTK growth), while Europe–Asia (+10.3%) and Within Asia (+10.0%) corridors grew strongly. African carriers, especially those serving the Middle East–Africa–Asia triangle, benefited from this shift, reinforcing Africa's role as a key node in the changing global air cargo network.

Looking ahead, IATA expects 2026 air cargo demand to moderate slightly to 2.4%, in line with historical trends, while trade and geopolitical developments, including US tariff policy and the removal of de minimis exemptions, will continue to shape cargo flows.

For African airlines, the 2025 figures are a clear signal of growing regional demand and the potential for deeper integration into global air networks. However, unlocking this potential will require coordinated action by African governments and industry on infrastructure, open skies, and support for sustainable aviation technologies.

"Africa's 2025 performance is impressive, but it must be the foundation for a more ambitious and sustainable aviation future," said Walsh. "The continent's connectivity is no longer a niche market — it is a core engine of global air transport growth."

BoA faces dividend tax dispute amid historic rights offer, ESX listing plan

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Bank of Abyssinia (BoA) is navigating a high stakes tax dispute with the Ministry of Revenues that could result in substantial back tax liabilities, even as it prepares for a landmark listing on the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX).

The legal controversy centers on the treatment of dividend withholding tax when dividends are used to cover shareholders' unpaid subscribed capital. The Ministry, through the Federal High Taxpayers' Office, views this as a payment of a personal shareholder debt, subject to the 10% dividend withholding tax under the Income Tax Proclamation No. 979/2008.

BoA, supported by the Ethiopian Banks Association, argues that such payments are effectively reinvested capital and should be tax exempt. The bank has frequently used this approach to help meet the National Bank of Ethiopia's minimum paid up capital requirements.

However, a recent Cassation Bench ruling in a case between Tsehay Industry S.C. and the Ministry of Revenues has shifted the landscape. The court held that dividends used to fulfill subscribed capital obligations are taxable, and though BoA was not a party to that case, the decision is now being treated as a binding precedent.

While the new Income Tax Amendment Proclamation No. 1395/2024 provides clearer rules going forward, BoA faces the risk of being held accountable for historical dividend allocations made before the amendment. If the tax authority prevails, the bank could face years of back taxes, penalties, interest, and significant legal and administrative costs.

In its 29 January 2026 Prospectus, the bank explicitly warned that this tax dispute "could have a material adverse effect on the Bank's financial condition, cash flows, and reputation." The matter remains pending before the Tax Appellate Assembly and the regular courts, and the outcome is expected to set a crucial precedent for the entire banking sector.

Amid the uncertainty, BoA has launched a 5 billion birr Rights Offer, a strategic move to raise capital and prepare for its historic listing on the ESX main board.

The Prospectus outlines three key goals: registering 15 million existing common shares, issuing 3.125 million new "rights to purchase shares" at Birr 1,600 per share, and ultimately listing 100% of its ordinary shares on the stock exchange. The rights issue is designed to strengthen the bank's capital base and support its growth ambitions.

The 1,600 birr price was set after an independent valuation by the bank's board together with Deloitte, using market and earnings based methods, since the shares are not yet trading on any public platform. Net proceeds of about 4.9 billion birr will be used to bolster the capital adequacy ratio and accelerate the bank's shift to 100% digital banking through its partnership with Temenos.

For the 2024/25 financial year, BoA reported a net profit of Birr 7.3 billion, up from Birr 4.2 billion the previous year. Total assets stood at Birr 286.2 billion, with customer deposits of Birr 211.7 billion and loan reserves of Birr 193.4 billion.

The bank acknowledges that "increased competition could reduce market share and erode profit margins," but sees ESX listing as an opportunity to enhance governance, improve transparency, and attract domestic and international institutional investors, including pension funds and sovereign wealth funds.

The rights subscription period runs until 3 March 2026. Once the capital increase is approved, BoA plans to list all its common shares on the ESX as soon as possible.

EIC launches certification system for investment consultants

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has announced the introduction of a new competency assessment and certification system for investment advisory services, aimed at professionalizing the country's investment sector and strengthening its appeal to foreign investors.

The initiative was unveiled during the inauguration of the European Chamber of Commerce in Ethiopia (EuroCham)'s new office in Addis Ababa, which also hosted the launch of the European Union Foreign Direct Investment (EU FDI) Excellence Centre, designed to support foreign investors operating in Ethiopia.

EIC Commissioner Zeleke Temesgen explained that the new regulatory framework is intended to protect the interests of foreign investors by ensuring that they receive advice only from qualified, certified professionals.

The move responds to long standing complaints from investors who, in the past, received poor or misleading advice from unqualified consultants, leading to wrong investment decisions and damage to confidence in the country's investment climate. According to the EIC, the absence of a standardized certification system has allowed gaps in the supervision and recognition of consultancy firms, undermining the credibility of the advisory market.

"Access to accurate, reliable, and timely advisory services is essential to attracting and retaining quality foreign direct investment," Commissioner Zeleke said. The EIC plans to conduct detailed consultations with stakeholders in the coming period to shape the implementation of the certification system.

The core aim of the reform is to raise the quality of professional services and ensure that investment consultants possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience. Once the system is in place, only certified consultants and firms will be authorized to provide formal investment advisory services, guaranteeing that investors deal with trusted and competent advisors.

The launch of the EU FDI Excellence Centre within EuroCham's new premises is expected to complement this effort by serving as an institutional bridge for new investors. The Centre will help them navigate Ethiopia's legal, regulatory, and institutional framework with greater confidence, reducing the risk of misinformation and delays.

During the event, Ben Depraetere, Board Chair of EuroCham Ethiopia, welcomed the EIC's move as an important step toward building a more transparent and professional business environment. He described Ethiopia's economic landscape as undergoing a "promising transformation," particularly in the area of foreign exchange.

"Forex has long been a major concern for the business community, but today, among our 185 members, this is no longer a primary issue," Depraetere said, indicating that the government's macroeconomic reforms are beginning to bear tangible results.

However, he added that the chamber continues to call for additional improvements in tax and customs procedures, the rule of law, and the overall predictability of government policy, which remain key for long term investor confidence.

The EIC's certification system is expected to be rolled out in the coming months, as part of a broader effort to upgrade Ethiopia's investment services and attract higher quality foreign direct investment amid growing regional competition.

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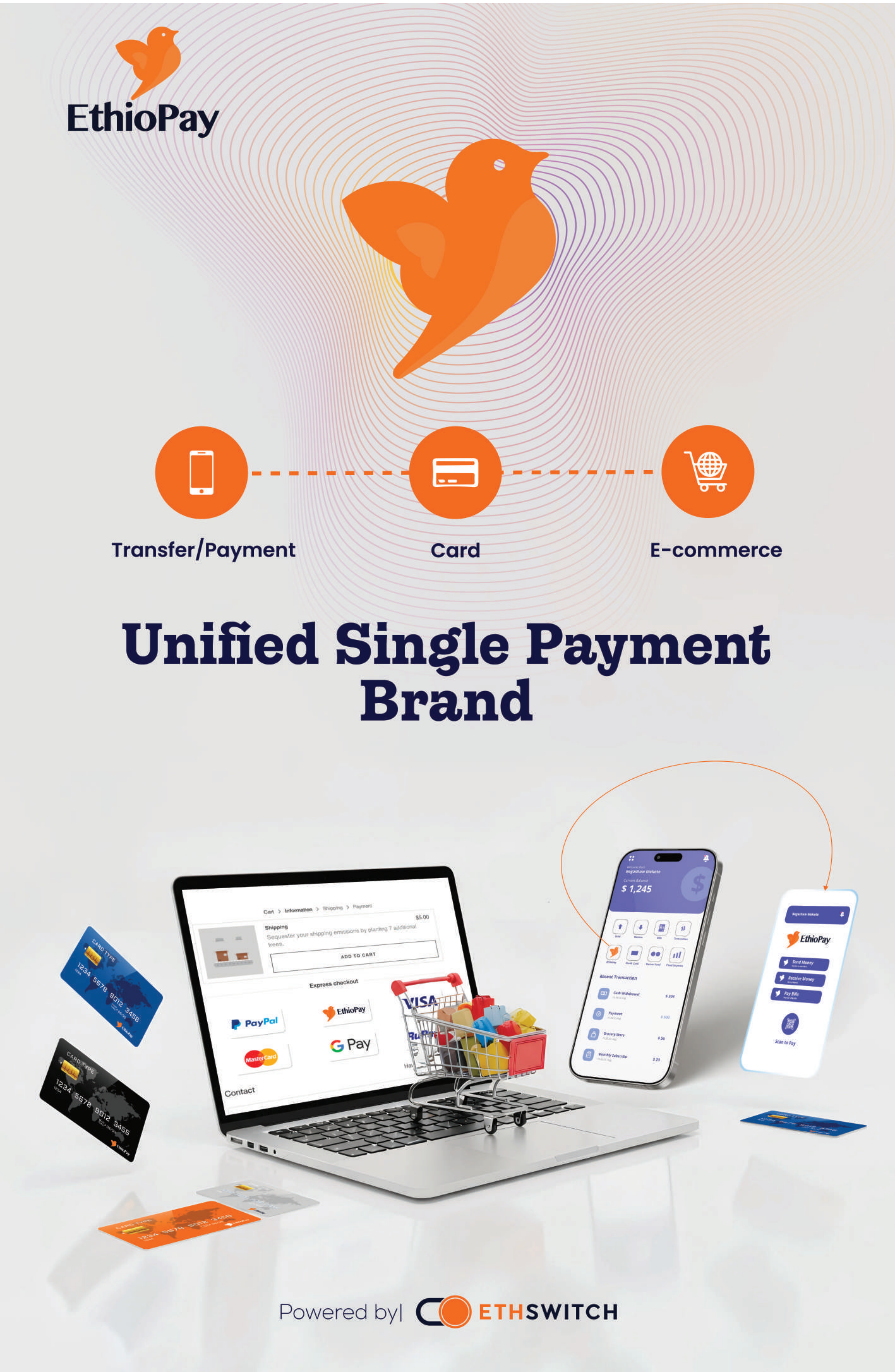
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Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

Ethiopian Police Arrest 22 in Human Trafficking Crackdown

Ethiopian police have arrested 22 people accused of smuggling nearly 2,000 migrants, in a network that reportedly caused at least two deaths and earned millions for those involved. Ethiopia is a key departure point for migrants heading to the Gulf and Europe and is known for human trafficking and scams. Authorities said the suspects ran "criminal gangs" and gave migrants false promises of a better life in Europe after crossing through Libya. Instead, migrants were held in warehouses, forced to contact their families for ransom, and effectively kept hostage until payment. The gang is believed to have made over 2.16 billion birr ($13 million) from smuggling around 1,800 people, resulting in at least two deaths and 15 disappearances. In August, Ethiopia sentenced five traffickers to death, though the country has not carried out an execution since 2007, according to the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

(Africanews)

Kenya Proposes Inclusive South Sudan Peace Talks

Kenya is pushing for inclusive peace talks in South Sudan that would bring together all parties and stakeholders, with the aim of concluding an inclusive peace process culminating in elections, diplomatic sources said. Diplomatic sources told Radio Tamazuj on Wednesday that Kenya proposed inclusive peace talks between the government in Juba and opposition groups, bringing together the various parties to the conflict. The proposal was discussed during high-level talks held in Nairobi in the presence of Tumaini Initiative Chief Mediator Lazarus Sumbeiywo. The Tumaini Initiative was suspended in February last year. ... Kenyan President William Ruto on Wednesday met South Sudan's Presidential Special Envoy Tut Gatluak Manime at State House in Nairobi. The South Sudanese government delegation included Foreign Minister Monday Semaya Kumba. Separately, the sources confirmed that a meeting was held with senior opposition officials who were part of the Tumaini Initiative to brief them on the plan for inclusive talks. ... South Sudan is witnessing escalating fighting between government forces (SSPDF) and SPLA-IO fighters loyal to detained opposition leader Riek Machar in northern Jonglei state and other parts of the country.

(Radio Tamazuj)

PM Abiy Receives US Deputy Secretary Christopher Landau, AFRICOM Commander as Ethiopia, US Agree to Deepen Security Cooperation

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said he received a courtesy visit from US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher T. Landau and the Commander of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), General Dagvin Anderson, describing the engagement as warm and constructive and underscoring the importance of continued collaboration and mutual respect between the two countries. The visit comes as part of a regional tour by Deputy Secretary Landau that includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, scheduled to run from 24 January to 1 February. ... During their stay, Landau and General Anderson also visited the International Aviation Expo organized by the Ethiopian Air Force, according to the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF). ... Following the visit, the US delegation met with Minister of Defense Aisha Mohammed. In a joint statement issued after talks with General Anderson, the Minister said Ethiopia and the United States had agreed to work together to safeguard their national interests and elevate their existing diplomatic and military ties into what she described as a higher strategic partnership. ... In Addis Abeba, Landau is also expected to meet African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf to discuss regional peace and security, commercial engagement, and humanitarian challenges across the continent.

(Addis Standard)

AU Chairperson calls for maximum restraint amid renewed tensions in Tigray

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, has urged all parties in Ethiopia's Tigray region to exercise maximum restraint as tensions rise and reports emerge of renewed clashes in parts of the region.

In a statement issued on Friday, the AU Commission said its Chairperson is closely monitoring developments in Tigray and expressed deep concern over recent developments. He re-emphasized the paramount importance of preserving the "hard-won gains" achieved under the African Union-led Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front in Pretoria on 2 November 2022.

The Chairperson called on all parties to refrain from actions that could undermine confidence and to resolve outstanding issues through constructive dialogue, in full adherence to both the obligations and the spirit of the Permanent COHA.

(Press release)

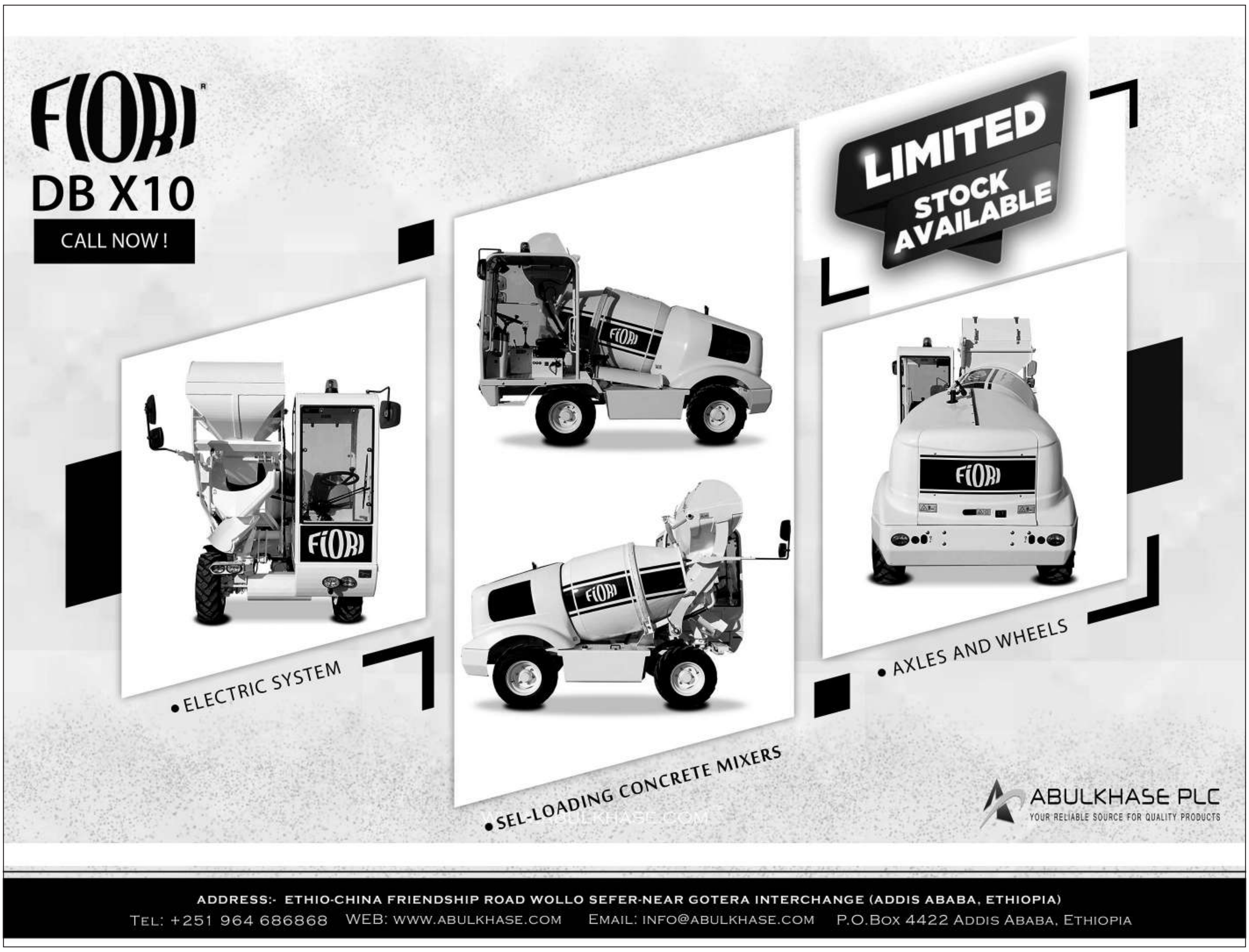
Term of the Day

JOINT TENANCY

Definition

Joint tenancy is a legal form of property ownership where two or more individuals hold equal rights and obligations to a property. This arrangement can be made by married or unmarried couples, business partners, friends, or even family members.

A unique feature of joint tenancy is the right of survivorship. When one joint tenant dies, their share of the property automatically transfers to the surviving tenant(s), bypassing the probate process.



Can Hope Be an Economic Policy?

Alazar Kebede

In moments of economic anxiety manifested by soaring prices, job insecurity, widening inequality, politicians often reach for a familiar language. They speak of hope. Hope for growth. Hope for innovation. Hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Some leaders pledged to their people by saying "believe it or not, by 2030, our country will be the top economy in the continent". "I am dead sure that the prosperity of our country is inevitable in short period of time."

Such messages are attractive messages, emotionally resonant and politically useful. But as households struggle to pay rent and governments juggle deficits, a hard question emerges: can hope itself function as an economic policy, or is it merely a substitute for one?

Hope has always played a role in economics, even if economists are sometimes reluctant to admit it. Markets are driven not only by numbers and models, but by expectations. Consumers spend when they feel confident about the future. Investors take risks when they believe growth is coming. Entrepreneurs build businesses because they imagine a payoff that does not yet exist. In this sense, hope is not a soft, sentimental concept, rather it is a real economic force.

John Maynard Keynes captured this idea nearly a century ago with his notion of "animal spirits," the emotional and psychological factors that influence economic decisions. When optimism is high, economies can accelerate. When fear takes over, even strong fundamentals can crumble. A hopeful society is more likely to innovate, invest, and adapt. From this perspective, hope does not sit outside the economy; it pulses through it.

Yet acknowledging the power of hope is not the same as elevating it to the status of policy. Hope is a catalyst, not a blueprint. It can amplify good policies and soften the impact of difficult reforms, but on its own it cannot create jobs, lower inflation, or fix broken supply chains. When leaders treat hope as a replacement for concrete action, it becomes dangerous which is an emotional cover for inaction.

History offers plenty of examples. After financial crises or political transitions, governments often promise that recovery is just around the corner, asking citizens to be patient and believe. Sometimes that belief is rewarded, as when post-war reconstruction combined optimism with massive public investment. Other times, hope is asked to do all the work. Wages stagnate, public services erode, and inequality deepens, while leaders insist that confidence and patience will eventually deliver prosperity. In these moments, hope begins to feel less like inspiration and more like deflection.

The problem is not hope itself, but empty hope. Empty hope is rhetorical rather than structural. It tells people to feel better without giving them a reason to. It emphasizes attitude over outcomes, optimism over opportunity. When economic policy relies too heavily on this kind of hope, it risks eroding trust. People are remarkably tolerant of hardship when they believe it is temporary and purposeful. They become cynical when hope is promised again and again but never fulfilled.

That cynicism has economic consequences of its own. When citizens stop believing in the future, they save instead of spend, disengage instead of innovate, and withdraw from institutions rather than invest in them. Hope, once depleted, is hard to restore. In that sense, treating hope casually as a talking point rather than a responsibility can undermine the very confidence policymakers seek to cultivate.

Still, dismissing hope entirely would be a mistake. The most effective economic policies are not purely technocratic; they are also narrative-driven. The post-Covid-pandemic stimulus in many countries worked not just because of the money involved, but because it signaled that governments would not allow economies to collapse. These policies combined material action with psychological reassurance. They earned hope.

So perhaps the better question is not whether hope can be an economic policy, but whether economic policy can succeed without hope. Data and discipline matter, but so does meaning. People need to understand where an economy is going and what role they play in it. They need to believe that effort will be rewarded, that systems are fair enough to justify participation, and that tomorrow is not rigged against them. That belief does not arise spontaneously. It is shaped by policy choices.

A hopeful economic agenda, then, is one that aligns expectations with reality. It invests in education so young people can realistically imagine upward mobility. It supports workers through transitions caused by technology and globalization, rather than asking them to simply "stay positive." It addresses inequality not only because it is morally right, but because extreme inequality corrodes social trust and long-term growth. This kind of hope is not a slogan; it is an outcome.

Crucially, hope must be shared to be effective. An economy where only a small elite feels optimistic about the future is not truly hopeful, rather it is fragile. Broad-based hope emerges when growth is inclusive and when risks are not borne by the most vulnerable alone. Social safety nets, fair taxation, and accessible healthcare are often framed as costs, but they also function as confidence-building measures. They tell citizens that failure is not fatal, and that taking risks, starting a business, changing careers, investing in skills, is worth it.

In the end, hope cannot replace economic policy, but neither can policy thrive without hope. Treating hope as a standalone solution is a form of magical thinking. Treating it as irrelevant is a form of technocratic blindness. The challenge for modern governments is to design policies that justify optimism rather than merely demand it.

If hope is to play a role in economic life, it must be grounded in reality and reinforced by action. Otherwise, it becomes a fragile promise which is one recession away from collapse. Real hope is not what leaders ask citizens to feel. It is what citizens feel when policy finally gives them a reason to believe.

From Tax Holidays to Performance-Driven Growth Ethiopia's New Investment Frontier

By Mekonnen Solomon

On January 20, 2026, during its 52nd regular meeting, Ethiopia's Council of Ministers approved the revised investment incentive regulations, recognizing them as a transformative policy tool. These regulations will take effect upon their publication in the Federal Negarit Gazette

The regulation is rooted in Investment Proclamation No. 1180/2012 and associated laws, marking a significant advancement in Ethiopia's strategy to attract foreign direct investment while ensuring accountability and performance measurement. It transitions towards a performance-based incentive model that emphasizes high-capital sectors, particularly agriculture and mining, which are crucial for economic diversification and job creation. In my view, this regulation not only fills the gaps of previous frameworks but also enhances Ethiopia's competitiveness against regional counterparts like Kenya, potentially boosting FDI inflows and promoting sustainable growth in these essential sectors.

The regulation introduces several refined mechanisms to incentivize investments, particularly in agriculture. Notably, it emphasizes investment capital allowances—a one-time deductible expense on capital assets, calculated per stetted sschedule to reward substantial capital infusions that drive technological advancement and productivity. This is complemented by income tax rates lower than normal, exemptions from alternative minimum tax, dividend tax, and capital gains tax, as well as customs duty and tax waivers on capital goods, construction materials, and vehicles. These incentives are conditional on performance agreements, which mandate verifiable outcomes in areas like job creation, technology transfer, and environmental protection.

What makes this framework compelling is its focus on transparency and revocation clauses, ensuring incentives are revocable if misused, thereby enhancing accountability. Regulatory authorities, including the Ethiopian Investment Commission and Ministry of Finance, are tasked with rigorous monitoring, including annual reporting on foregone revenue and economic impacts.

This performance-oriented design aligns incentives with national objectives, such as balanced regional development and efficient resource utilization, making it particularly attractive for horticulture and floriculture investors who often require significant upfront capital for irrigation, greenhouses, and cold-chain infrastructure.

In my assessment, these elements create a smart ecosystem: incentives are time-bound, non-transferable (except as specified), and non-cumulative, reducing fiscal risks while maximizing developmental returns. For horticulture and floriculture—classified under agricultural investments eligible for incentives—the regulation promises to catalyse exports of high-value crops like flowers, fruits, and vegetables, leveraging Ethiopia's favourable climate and proximity to European markets.

This new regulation repeals the Council of Ministers Investment Incentives Regulation No. 517/2014 (as amended), marking a clear departure from its predecessor. The 2014 framework, while progressive, primarily offered blanket income tax holidays (typically 2-7 years for agriculture, extendable in remote areas) and duty exemptions without stringent performance ties. It focused on sector-specific exemptions capital-based allowances and mandatory performance agreements introduced. For instance, under No. 517/2014, horticulture investors could import unlimited capital goods duty-free, but there was less emphasis on monitoring outcomes, and becomes suspicious for potential inefficiencies in revenue foregone.

The new approach refines this by making incentives focused on capital scale and performance, as per the preamble's intent to adapt to international dynamic conditions. In horticulture and floriculture, where investments often exceed millions in USD for modern farms, the capital allowance could provide a more substantial upfront relief than the previous holiday periods alone. Moreover, the emphasis on accountability—through fenced accounting systems and revocation for non-compliance—addresses criticisms of earlier incentives being prone to abuse. Transitional provisions allow existing investors to opt into the new system, offering flexibility while preserving vested rights. Overall, this evolution, in my view, elevates Ethiopia's regime from incentive-driven to impact-driven, better suiting sectors like floriculture that demand long-term sustainability.

In Comparison, Kenya, a regional leader in horticulture and floriculture, provides a useful comparator. Kenya's flower industry, cantered around Lake Naivasha and other valley , generates over $800 million annually in exports, contributing significantly to GDP and employing hundreds of thousands. Its incentives, primarily under the Export Processing Zones Act and Special Economic Zones framework, include 10-year corporate tax holidays (reducing to 20-25% thereafter), duty-free imports of capital goods and raw materials, and VAT exemptions for exports. Additional supports encompass streamlined export processes, infrastructure facilitation, and access to carbon credit projects for sustainable practices. The government also promotes value addition through processing incentives and has invested in cold-chain logistics to minimize post-harvest losses.

Some critiques argue However, Kenya's system faces challenges: bureaucratic levies, inconsistent tax policies, and water scarcity issues have prompted calls for more coherent incentives. Unlike Ethiopia's new regulation, Kenya's lacks explicit performance agreements, leading to occasional incentive retractions (e.g., from EPZs) amid fiscal pressures. In floriculture, Kenyan exporters benefit from preferential EU market access but contend with higher operational costs due to less aggressive capital relief compared to Ethiopia's proposed allowances.

Ethiopia's new framework, in my opinion, holds a competitive edge. By tying incentives to capital employed and verifiable performance—such as job creation and environmental safeguards—it offers a more predictable and accountable environment for FDI. For horticulture investors, Ethiopia's lower land and labor costs, combined with duty-free imports and tax exemptions, could outpace Kenya's, especially in scaling operations. Ethiopia's focus on substitution of imported products domestically and technology transfer aligns well with floriculture's need for innovation, potentially drawing investors deterred by Kenya's regulatory hurdles. Recent data indicates Ethiopia's floriculture exports have grown rapidly, and some critiques argue that regulation could accelerate that trajectory, positioning Ethiopia as a formidable rival.

This regulation is vital for attracting strong investors and FDI, as it balances generosity with fiscal prudence. By prioritizing high-capital, high-impact sectors like horticulture and floriculture, it fosters job creation , potentially thousands in rural areas, technology infusion, and export earnings—key to Ethiopia's ambition of middle-income status. The embedded monitoring enhances trust, mitigating risks of incentive misuse that have plagued similar policies elsewhere.

In conclusion, as someone attuned to economic dynamics, I believe this regulation is a good proposition—elegantly designed to allure global capital while delivering tangible results. It surpasses its predecessor in sophistication and edges out Kenya's in accountability, paving the way for Ethiopia to bloom as a horticultural powerhouse. Investors in these sectors should adopt and engage promptly, leveraging performance agreements to secure these benefits and contribute to Ethiopia's vibrant economic narrative.

Nonetheless every incentive must thoughtfully consider the specific sub sector's contributions, like floriculture sub sector, for their exceptional contribution for employment generation per farm, their incomparable foreign currency generation per unit area, their effectiveness in technology transfer, and its role in transforming the the country business and economic landscape.

In this context, incentives should be flexible with a keen awareness of the dynamic nature of horticultural export sub sector, and the support mechanisms provided by competing nations. Additionally, there should be powerfulness for regulatory agencies to offer exceptional support for specific sectors, such as horticulture, recognizing their unique export potential and importance.

Mekonnen Solomon is Former, Director of Horticulture Investment and Horticultural Export Coordinator ,can be reached at ehdaplan@gmail.com

A Legacy of Service Honored: Rotary International President's Historic Visit to Ethiopia

By our staff reporter

For seven decades, Rotary in Ethiopia has stood not as a distant donor, but as a quiet, persistent partner in the nation's journey toward health, education, and community development. That legacy was proudly celebrated this week when Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo, together with his partner Anna Maria Arezzo, made an official visit to Ethiopia, marking the 70th anniversary of Rotary's presence in the country and underscoring the enduring bond between Rotary International and Ethiopia's leadership, civil society, and the health sector.

At the heart of the visit was a simple but powerful message: service to humanity is not just an ideal, but a practical, measurable force that can move entire nations. As President Taye Atske Selassie, a long time supporter of Rotary Ethiopia, put it during the 70th anniversary ceremony held at the National Palace: "Rotary Ethiopia has implemented meaningful work in the health sector over the past 70 years. It has been a key partner in our national development, especially in improving health services and building resilient communities."

A 70 Year Journey of Service

Rotary's story in Ethiopia begins in 1956, when the first Rotary Club was chartered in Addis Ababa. Over the decades, Rotary Ethiopia grew into a network of clubs and districts — today known as District 9212, which includes Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Eritrea — driven by the motto Service Above Self and the mission of tackling the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges.

From the early days, health emerged as one of Rotary Ethiopia's core priorities. Long before "global health" became a buzzword, Rotarians were mobilizing local resources, raising international funds, and supporting the health system through sanitation, vaccination, and community health initiatives. Their work responded not to political cycles, but to the fundamental needs of Ethiopian communities: clean water, disease prevention, access to care, and strengthened health infrastructure.

What elevates Rotary's contribution is its consistency and depth. Rather than one off projects, Rotary Ethiopia has sustained long term partnerships in health, education, and peace-building, layering initiatives so that outcomes compound over time. When polio raged across Africa, Rotary Ethiopia became a central pillar in the push to eradicate the disease. When maternal and child health declined in hard to reach regions, Rotary clubs stepped in to support clinics and health workers. And in moments of national crisis, including the recent Marburg virus outbreak, Rotary's network mobilized rapidly to complement the work of the Federal Government and partners like the WHO and UNICEF.

Polio Eradication: A Model of Partnership

No single initiative better illustrates Rotary's impact in Ethiopia than the decades long fight against polio. Rotary has been one of the earliest and most consistent supporters of polio eradication, first globally and then specifically in Ethiopia, where the disease once threatened the lives and mobility of countless children.

Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo stressed this commitment during his meeting with Health Minister Dr. Mekdes Daba on 27 January in Addis Ababa. "Rotary International is deeply committed to eradicating polio not only here in Ethiopia, but across every country where children are still at risk," she said. "Globally, we have invested over four billion dollars in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and in Ethiopia alone, that investment has reached about 33 million dollars."

That funding has helped vaccinate millions of Ethiopian children, support cold chain logistics, train vaccinators, and strengthen surveillance systems. The results speak for themselves: polio transmission has been reduced by 99.9% worldwide, and Ethiopia, like most of Africa, now enjoys the hard won status of being free from wild poliovirus.

For Dr. Mekdes, Rotary's role has been indispensable. During the meeting, she extended heartfelt thanks to Rotary for its "high level contributions to eradicating polio and supporting other health sectors." She praised the synergy between Rotary, the Ministry of Health, and partners such as the Gates Foundation, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization, noting that this collaboration is now the model for how Ethiopia will tackle other health challenges, from non communicable diseases to outbreak preparedness.

A symbolic moment during the meeting was the awarding of an honorary Rotarian membership to the Minister herself, with President Arezzo and District Governor Wairimu Njage pinning the badge onto her dress. To the Minister, this honour was not about personal recognition, but about the shared mission: "Rotary's community service, done quietly and consistently in every district, is a true inspiration. It shows what can be achieved when professionals, citizens, and institutions come together behind the common good."

A Visionary Diplomat and Rotary Scholar

The 70th anniversary celebrations also brought a special guest from the diplomatic community: Sweden's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Magnus Lennartsson, himself a former Rotary Scholar. In a warm address at the National Palace event, Ambassador Lennartsson recalled how his Rotary scholarship opened doors to advanced education and shaped his career in diplomacy and international cooperation.

"As a Rotary Scholar, I learned that leadership is not just about holding office, but about serving others," he said. "Rotary's decades of service in Ethiopia, done with humility and focus, are a testament to that philosophy."

Beyond his personal connection, Ambassador Lennartsson highlighted the growing collaboration between Rotary Sweden and Rotary Ethiopia, particularly through the "Rotary Doctors Sweden" initiative. This partnership has brought Swedish medical professionals to Ethiopia to support the diagnosis and treatment of non communicable diseases, and to strengthen the capacity of general practitioners and dentists in towns like Nekemte and Dembi Dolo.

Such cross border medical partnerships, he noted, are not only technical exchanges, but also bridges of understanding that align with Ethiopia's broader goal of building a more equitable health system, especially in secondary and tertiary care. "When Rotary professionals from Sweden stand shoulder to shoulder with Ethiopian doctors and health workers, they are not just transferring skills — they are building trust and solidarity for the long term," he said.

The RI President's Agenda in Addis Ababa

RI President Francesco Arezzo's three day visit to Ethiopia, from 27 to 29 January 2026, was not merely ceremonial, but a substantive working programme that underscored Rotary's role as a convener and catalyst for development. Accompanied by RI Director Daniel Tanase, President Arezzo's agenda included project visits, high level meetings, engagements with Rotary leaders across District 9212, and interactions with the broader Rotary family in Ethiopia.

At the National Palace, RI President Arezzo held extended discussions with President Taye Atske Selassie, who

warmly welcomed him as a guest of the nation and as a long time friend of Rotary Ethiopia. The two leaders spoke at length about how Rotary's values — integrity, service, peace, and fellowship — can be aligned with Ethiopia's national development priorities.

President Taye emphasized that Rotary Ethiopia is a "unique organization with distinct values" and that, over the past 70 years, it has made "significant contributions to eradicating polio and improving health services." He noted that while the government has primary responsibility for health, education, and peace-building, its work is strengthened when partners like Rotary contribute not only funding, but time, expertise, and community mobilization.

They also discussed the importance of expanding Rotary's footprint beyond Addis Ababa — into secondary cities, rural districts, and conflict affected regions where the need for health and educational services remains high. President Taye expressed appreciation for Rotary's ability to operate at both the national level and the grassroots, ensuring that aid and development projects "reach the last mile."

Strengthening Health, Education, and Peace

During the talks, several key areas of cooperation were highlighted:

Health: Building on the success of polio eradication, future collaboration will focus on strengthening primary health care, expanding access to essential medicines, supporting maternal and child health, and combating non communicable diseases. The Ministry of Health's commitment to continued partnership with Rotary, the Gates Foundation, UNICEF, and WHO signals that Ethiopia intends to use polio eradication infrastructure as a platform for broader health system resilience.

Education: Rotarians have long supported education through scholarships, school construction, and teacher training. Going forward, the focus will be on STEM education, vocational training for youth, and improving learning outcomes, especially for girls and children in remote areas. President Arezzo encouraged Rotary Ethiopia to scale up its educational projects and to form partnerships with technical and vocational institutions.

Peace-building and Community Resilience: In a country that has experienced conflict and displacement, community based peace-building is a priority. Rotary Ethiopia's work in inter religious dialogue, youth leadership, and community service projects provides a practical model for restoring trust and social cohesion. The RI President expressed strong support for expanding Rotary's peace and conflict resolution programmes in Ethiopia, including the Rotary Peace Fellowship and community mediation initiatives.

A Model of Resilient Infrastructure and Sustainable Transition

Behind the symbolism of anniversaries and high level meetings lies a practical question: how can service organisations like Rotary maintain impact over decades, through political and economic shifts? The answer, Rotary Ethiopia's leaders argue, lies in three things: local ownership, financial sustainability, and adaptive leadership.

Rotary Ethiopia is not a project driven NGO that arrives and departs; it is a network of locally rooted clubs whose members are Ethiopian professionals, business leaders, and community figures. This local ownership ensures continuity even when international attention shifts. At the same time, the District has worked to diversify funding sources, combining Rotary International grants with local fundraising, corporate partnerships, and in kind contributions.

President Arezzo urged District 9212 to continue investing in sustainable models, such as social enterprises and blended finance projects, rather than relying solely on donations. For example, health projects that also generate income (e.g., through mobile clinics with user fees for non essential services) can become self sustaining over time, freeing up grant funds for the most vulnerable.

He also stressed the importance of succession planning and youth engagement. As an older generation of longtime Rotarians retires, the future of service in Ethiopia depends on bringing in younger professionals, women, and diverse voices into Rotary leadership. District Governor Wairimu Njage echoed this call, highlighting initiatives that support youth clubs and young professionals in Rotary.

A Proud Moment for Ethiopian Rotarians

For many Rotarians in Ethiopia, the visit of the RI President was more than a protocol event; it was a moment of pride in a 70 year legacy. The 70th anniversary ceremony at the National Palace was attended by dozens of club presidents, members, former district governors, and partners.

District Governor Wairimu Njage, who has led the preparations for the anniversary since assuming office, described the visit as "historic" and "a powerful recognition of what Rotary Ethiopia has achieved against the odds." She also reminded colleagues that the anniversary is not an end point, but a milestone in an ongoing journey: "What we celebrate is not just the past, but the commitment to serve the next 70 years."

Rotarians shared stories of projects that have changed lives: a mother in Harar who lost her child to polio but now advocates for vaccination; a school in Gondar built and maintained by multiple Rotaract and Rotary clubs; a water point in a drought prone village that has reduced the distance women walk for water by hours each day.

These stories, when woven together, form the real impact of Rotary: not just numbers, but transformed lives, healthier communities, and a culture of service that inspires others to give their time and talent.

The Road Ahead: 70 Years and Beyond

As the visit concluded and President Arezzo departed for his next destination, a clear vision for the next chapter of Rotary Ethiopia emerged. The 70th anniversary is not just about looking back, but about looking forward with purpose.

The immediate priorities include:

- Scaling up health projects, especially in rural and underserved areas, using the polio infrastructure as a foundation.
- Deepening partnerships with the Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, and international agencies on immunization, disease surveillance, and outbreak response.
- Expanding the scope of Rotary in education and youth employment, with a focus on skills development and entrepreneurship.
- Strengthening Rotary's role in peace-building and conflict transformation, especially in regions affected by recent conflicts.

The legacy of 70 years is that Rotary Ethiopia has proven that sustainable, people centered development is possible when communities, professionals, and institutions work together with a shared purpose. As President Taye Atske Selassie observed, it is not just about the projects built, but about the values promoted: service, integrity, peace, and unwavering commitment to the common good.

INTERVIEW

In this wide ranging interview, Capital sits down with Dagnachew Lule (PhD), Senior Director of Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC) at the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI), to discuss how the 15 year old institution has tried to shift Ethiopian agriculture from subsistence to market driven production. He reflects on ATI's flagship ACC programme, the expansion of cluster farming from 0.6 million ha piloted by ATI in 2019 to above 12 million hectares scaled by regional bureau of agriculture and MoA in 2025, persistent bottlenecks in inputs and data, and why he believes farmers must be allowed to move beyond mere production into processing, exporting and owning formal agribusiness companies. Excerpts;

FARMING AS A BUSINESS, NOT SURVIVAL

Capital: What tangible contributions has ATI made to the agricultural sector over the past 15 years?

Dagnachew Lule: The Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI) was established roughly fifteen years ago with the mission to catalyse sustainable development of agricultural value chains and markets, through promoting effective practices and approaches to address systemic constraints and coordinating execution and integration of high-impact interventions on the ground.

The strategic mandate of the ATI includes identifying systemic bottlenecks & undertake action research on policies, provide implementation support to sectors through human and technical capacity-building programs, strengthen linkage and coordination among actors, and pilot innovative projects & handover on scale-up. Besides, contributing to A Transformed Agriculture through building a market-oriented agriculture sector that uses natural resources sustainably, and generates improved production and productivity, improve the livelihoods of farmers beyond mere labor and finally seeing Agriculture significantly contributing to industrial economies & enterprise farming is the envisaged target of ATI.

One of our primary tasks has been identifying bottlenecks within the agricultural sector. Over the past 15 years, we have conducted nearly 400 studies to address these issues, and research efforts continue today. The agricultural transformation roadmap developed for 10 regional states, the digital agriculture road map, Agriculture and rural development policy, are few among others.

We have also initiated various projects to translate these findings into actionable solutions. Over the last fifteen years, approximately 70 projects have been developed and piloted. For instance, a comprehensive Ethiopian soil fertility mapping was carried out across 748 districts, analyzing nutrient levels and identifying deficiencies in the soil. This study serves as a guide to conduct soil test-based fertilizer rate recommendation and other agronomic practices.

Besides, ATI conducted an Ethiopian investment mapping study, which provides potential investors with information on opportunities within the sector.

We also examined very many climates smart and natural resource management related projects, including water availability. For example, research was conducted to identify the availability of shallow ground water (less than 30-meter depth) found that about 27B m3 water across 452 districts potential to irrigate 3.1million hectares were identified. Following this identification, we have piloted integrated shallow ground water benefiting 247 households with solar-powered modern irrigation systems plus solar electric energy.

Above all, our flagship initiative, the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC), represents our most significant effort to modernize the agricultural sector. All the projects we have discussed ultimately contribute to this overarching program.

Capital: What role does the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) play in the development of Ethiopian agriculture?

Dagnachew: The Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) is a market-driven value chain development approach to improve the livelihood of smallholder farmers through an inclusive & environmentally sustainable. It's not just about self-sufficiency; it's about moving away from a "hand-to-mouth" mentality and focusing on production, profitability and agribusiness.

When fertilizers and seeds are expensive, farmers may only plant local variety without fertilizer just to sustain their families, which perpetuates the "hand-to-mouth" approach. This mindset is inadequate in the face of a growing global population. If a farmer only cultivates their land without considering market demands, it won't contribute to broader economic change.

We recognized the need to evolve from a subsistence model to a commercial one, prompting us to rename our initiative from "subsistence" to "Commercial." This change encourages farmers to adopt a business-oriented mindset, focusing on market needs. As ACC, we lead market-driven projects that maintain the value chain.

Improving productivity cannot be achieved unless we work along the value chain of commodities. Take avocados, for example; success requires a comprehensive approach that includes nursery development, quality seedling production, cluster farming, market access, and export strategies. To date, the agricultural commercialization cluster has been implementing about 14 projects along the value chain that directly support cluster commercialization. For instance, we have projects that support research, early generation seed production, input production and distribution, mechanization, digital agriculture, irrigation, rural financing, marketing and agribusiness; all contributing to commercialize cluster farmers and beyond.

Capital: What challenges have you faced over the past 15 years, and what unresolved obstacles remain?

Dagnachew: We've encountered numerous challenges. Although the Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI) is a government entity, it relies heavily on foreign donors' partners and a limited government budget. Security concerns have caused significant setbacks. If the country were entirely peaceful, we could have made much more progress. This security also affected our partnership with some donor partners during northern Ethiopian conflict, which adversely affects our operations. Many initiatives within the ACC suffered losses during the conflict in the North, leading to the destruction of infrastructure and regression among cluster farmers. Those we hoped would develop into commercial enterprises were unable to produce due to these setbacks, input production and distribution centers, market shades, mechanization service centers were also damaged.

Climate change poses another persistent challenge. Conditions are worsening rather than improving in some parts of the country, which severely impacts the agricultural sector.

Additionally, there are still a mindset shifting assignment that has to be done on youth to consider agriculture as a business. While we can't claim to have completely changed attitudes, assessments indicate that 83% of our cluster farmers are willing to continue working within the cluster system.

The most significant one is the underutilization and limited supply of full packaged agricultural inputs. Timely and quality access to fertilizers and seeds are still problematic. We lack the capacity to apply site specific nutrients tailored to each piece of land, relying instead on "blanket applications " in areas unaddressed by research intervention. We require more soil analysis, laboratory facilities, and the capacity to reach that level of precision. Furthermore, there are gaps in seed production; we cannot yet guarantee that all farmers receive the seeds they need—both in terms of quality and timeliness.

Agricultural financing is also a very critical challenge that should be intervened by higher government bodies. Agriculture can give you an output if you give sufficient input including finance.

Capital: If ATI can help farmers, why are producers still restricted from selling their products directly?

Dagnachew: Our next step is to address where farmers sell their products after production. It would be beneficial for farmers to not only produce as a collective but also to process & export their produce.

Currently, we see high production levels of wheat and other grains, yet many farmers still face hunger. What is the issue? Are brokers the ones benefiting? When we evaluate whether the producing farmers are truly profit making, the answer is "not enough." Both consumers and producers are suffering, while only a small group of middlemen profits. We can resolve this by enabling farmers to add value to their products, transit them to agribusiness companies that can create jobs for their families and neighbors, and sustaining the value chain.

Capital: The first phase of the ACC has been completed. What tangible changes have you implemented since the start of the second season?

Dagnachew: A significant amount of work was accomplished during the first phase, which was crucial for shifting the mindset farmers and others. Today, the cluster expanded from 0.6 million hectares to 12 million hectares. This represents a substantial change for us, indicating a shift in our attitude. We've gone beyond simply improving the lives of those around us, which remains our goal for the future. This progress allows us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

What comes next? In the first phase, we were focusing to increase production and productivity, and farmers became more receptive. We've worked along the entire value chain and will continue to do so. Now, what's our next step? These cluster organizations, which were semi-informal, will transition into formal entities—specifically, agribusiness companies.

What will these companies do? They will address the issues I mentioned earlier, ranging from production to processing and value addition. If a cluster is formed and production is achieved, but the products cannot be sold at a fair price, that remains a problem.

Moving forward, we will ensure that these organized farmers form a company, creating a legal entity. What if we are allowed to add value, export, process, and aggregate? This transformation means agriculture will evolve into a business and the industry, moving more labor intensive farming to mechanization, digitization and other technologies that enhance surplus production .

This shift will create job opportunities not just for farmers but also for many others entering this sector. The ATI together with all partners, the MoA, research, other government institutions, regional Bureau of Agriculture, are committed to making this happen in the second chapter.

Capital: One of the challenges of working in Ethiopia is obtaining accurate data. What has ATI done to address this issue?

Dagnachew: In Ethiopia, we often rely on administrative data. The national data we use has historically been provided by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), which is now known as the Ethiopian Statistical Service.

Recently, there have been some gaps in their data collection, but I believe that process is now complete. We anticipate a significant amount of information will be available in the coming months, and we will be guided by this updated data. They are committed to taking a representative sample, which we expect will yield figures that accurately reflect our reality. Additionally, we utilize data from external sources and other entities.

What's next? We are transitioning to a digital framework. Currently, we are working on Cluster Farmer profiling, enhancing digital literacy, digital kiosk, etc. ATI is heavily involved in digital initiatives, including Digital Agriculture such as 8028 farmers hotline, national market information system and others, which we are currently using precisely. In the future, nationally, I am sure we will have reliable data management system that will be guided by digital tools.

If you take 8028 farmers hotline that benefited 7.1 million beneficiary to date, which allows any farmers to call for free and get information on 21 major crops production and management (plus some livestock commodities), would also serve to conduct survey, provide early warning on climate change, pests and diseases outbreak, providing farmers with vital information regardless of their location. The same is true for National Market Information System to generate up-to-date market price of 19 commodities collected across 307 market centers.

Moreover, if the Ethiopian Statistical Service can regularly address the data precision gaps identified, we will obtain data that is not only representative but also superior to what we currently have. Effective collaboration with organizations like the FAO and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is also another means to generate precise data from the ground.

Capital: International organizations like the FAO have reported that Ethiopia remains "food insecure." What is your perspective? Should we regard their conclusions as absolute truth?

Dagnachew: We cannot simply accept their conclusions as accurate. We are the ones who should understand our own situation. That is why I am saying outsiders shall be responsible to generate reliable data. It does not mean that they must report wrong data to build our image. Rather, let them work with national institutions relevant to collect data and understand the situation on the ground than projecting. Our first step should be to strengthen our own data collection and reporting method based on reality. This is era of digital and AI technology, where technology can track conditions in the specific locations today and compare them with the past, and predict the future based on evidence.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IVECO AMCE

Invitation to Bid for the Procurement of Contractors for Aluminium Cladding and Glazing Works

The Automotive Manufacturing Company of Ethiopia Share Company (AMCE) is seeking to engage a qualified GC/BC4 construction firm with demonstrated expertise in aluminium cladding and tempered glass curtain wall systems for the renovation of its workshop façade. We invite eligible bidders to participate in the bidding process for this project.

1. Bid Participation: Interested bidders can obtain the Terms of Reference (TOR) document by making a non-refundable payment of **Birr 500.00** (Five Hundred Birr) at the Purchasing and Logistics Department. The document collection period is from **January 26, 2026, during office hours from Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM.**

2. Required Documentation: Bidders must submit copies of their renewed Trade and Professional Licenses for the year 2018 EC, along with their TIN, VAT certificates, and tax clearance, as part of their bid submission.

3. Submission Requirements: The technical proposal must include all necessary documents, such as proof of successful completion of similar projects, qualifications, and any other legal documentation related to the project and CPO. These should be submitted in a sealed envelope as specified in the TOR document.

The financial proposal must include a detailed cost breakdown for the project, also submitted in a separate sealed envelope. Please ensure that both the technical and financial proposals are submitted in separate envelopes.

4. Submission Location: Bids should be submitted to the Purchasing and Logistics Department at the Automotive Manufacturing Company of Ethiopia (AMCE).

5. Bid Bond Requirement: Each bid must be accompanied by a bid bond of Birr 200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Birr) in the form of a CPO only.

6. Compliance: Bidders are expected to adhere to all requirements outlined in this invitation and the TOR.

7. Submission Deadline: The deadline for submitting bid documents is **February 10, 2026, at 11:00 AM. Bids will be opened on the same day, February 10, 2026, at 11:30 AM** in the AMCE Meeting Room, in the presence of bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.

8. Discretionary Rights: AMCE reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at its discretion.

9. Further Information: For additional information, interested bidders may contact Tower Consult at the following:

- **Telephone: +251911232683 / +251913978319**
- **Email: dawital2002@yahoo.com / merondejeneheyi@gmail.com**

IVECO AMCE

Invitation to Bid for Bulk parts sales for various IVECO models

The Automotive Manufacturing Company of Ethiopia (AMCE) invites eligible bidders to participate in the bidding process for the sale of various IVECO model spare parts.

1. **Bid Participation:** Interested bidders may collect the list of spare parts by making a non-refundable payment of **Birr 500.00** (Five Hundred Birr) at the Purchasing and Logistics Department. The collection period is from **January 26, 2026, office working days from Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM morning time and 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM afternoon time.**
2. **Required Documentation:** Bidders must submit a copy of their renewed Trade License, TIN, VAT certificate, and tax clearance along with their bid offer.
3. **Initial Bid Offer: Birr 1,680,000.00** (One Million Six Hundred Eighty Thousand Birr) before VAT, covering all parts listed in the TOR document.
4. **Submission Requirements:** All required documents (including financial offers indicating whether they are before or after VAT, renewed licenses, TIN and VAT certificates, tax clearance, and CPO) must be submitted in a sealed envelope corresponding to the specific bid.
5. **Submission Location:** Bids should be submitted to the Purchasing and Logistics Department at the Automotive Manufacturing Company of Ethiopia (AMCE).
6. **Bid Bond Requirement:** Bid must be accompanied by a bid bond of Birr 100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Birr) in the form of a CPO only.
7. **Compliance:** Bidders are expected to comply with all bid requirements outlined in this invitation.
8. **Submission Deadline:** The deadline for submitting bid documents is **February 10, 2026, at 10:00 AM. Bids will be opened on the same day, February 10, 2026, at 10:30 AM** in the AMCE Meeting Room in the presence of bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.
9. **Discretionary Rights:** AMCE reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at its discretion.
10. **Further Information:** Interested bidders may obtain additional information from the Purchasing and Logistics Department at the following contact details:

- **Telephone: 011 646 33 11 / 011 646 33 46**
- **Email: eskinder.wsenbet@ivecogroup.com**

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Nib Insurance Company (S.Co.)

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Nib Insurance Company (S.C) invites competent and qualified applicants to apply for the following vacant posts.

S.N	Positions	Grade	Minimum qualification and experience: Education	Minimum qualification and experience: Experience	Place of work
1	Procurement, Property, and Facility Management Division Head	X	BA Degree in Supply Chain Management or Procurement or Logistics or Management or in related fields.	7 years relevant experience, of which 3 years as (Senior Procurement, Property and Facility Management Officer or Senior Procurement and Facility Management Officer or Senior Property and Facility Management Officer) or 5 years in (Procurement, Property and Facility Management Officer II or Procurement and Facility Management Officer II or Property and Facility Management Officer II) or in a similar position	Addis Ababa
2	Officer I	V	BA Degree in Mathematics or Statistics. Applicants must be graduates of 2015 E.C or 2016 E.C. or 2017 E.C	A maximum of two years and a minimum of one year experience in teaching.	
3	Junior Auditor	V	BA Degree in Accounting or Accounting and Finance Applicants must be graduates of 2024/2025 G.C or 2017 E.C & Who Scored 60 and above in exit exam.	None	
4	Junior Officer	III	Diploma (Level IV) with COC in Information Technology or Customer Contact and Secretarial Operations.	None	

Terms of Employment: Permanent, after successful completion of probationary period.

Salary and benefit – as per the Company's salary scale and benefit packages.

Interested applicants who fulfill the above requirements are invited to submit their CV and copies of non-returnable credentials along with application letter within seven working days from the date of this announcement to the following address :-

Nib Insurance Company (S.Co.)
Dembel City Center, 11th floor
(Please use lift No. 2 or 3)
Addis Ababa

How to Help the World's Poor Most in 2026

By Bjorn Lomborg

The start of a new year is a time for reflection and resolve. Yet amid our personal goals for 2026, we rarely pause to ask a harder question: if we want to help the world's poor, how can we do this in the best possible way?

The United Nations' attempt to answer that question effectively died in 2025. A decade ago, it committed everything to everyone through the Sustainable Development Goals—it would fix poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, climate change, and war by 2030. Last year's progress report admitted the painful truth: only 18 percent of 169 UN targets are on track, while one-third are stalled or going backward. While global hunger declined slightly, child stunting crept upward in Africa. The learning crisis—where more than half of ten-year-olds in low-income countries still cannot read a simple sentence—barely budged.

We didn't hear much about these development challenges because 2025 was already crowded with urgent geopolitical and economic news. Russia's war in Ukraine continued to drive up food and fertilizer prices. Conflicts in the Middle East and Sudan displaced millions. Ballooning debt costs in developing countries made it ever harder to invest in health and education.

Rich nations, facing their own geopolitical threats, inflation, and deficits, slashed foreign-aid budgets. After a 9% drop in 2024, we're likely to see another 9-17% decline in 2025. Aid for the world's poorest countries could be cut by one-quarter. At the same time, major development organizations now divert over $85 billion of aid toward virtue-signaling climate projects, further starving basic development.

The sobering truth is that 2026 will mean even fewer resources to do good. We have to stop pretending that we can afford to do everything all at once, as the Sustainable Development Goals still do. When each dollar is fought over, dividing 100 cents across 169 promises means minimal progress anywhere.

But there are still hopeful ways to help in 2026. My think tank, the Copenhagen Consensus, has spent years working with more than a hundred top economists and several Nobel laureates to answer a simple question: Given money is tight, where can each scarce dollar do the most good? Our peer-reviewed research, published for free in a series of research papers with Cambridge University Press, points to a dozen phenomenal policies that deliver astonishing returns even in today's harsh fiscal reality.

Take nutrition. While over 8% of the global population is still undernourished, we know that helping children in the first thousand days of their lives — in the womb and in their first years — can do phenomenal good for little money. For about $2.50, we can supply mothers with multiple micronutrient supplements across their pregnancy. This will help avoid the baby becoming stunted and reduce irreversible cognitive damage, making the child more likely to become stronger and smarter, becoming more productive in adult life. Research shows that every dollar delivers around $40 in lifetime economic benefits—better than most policies being pursued today.

Or consider the learning crisis, where research has identified simple, proven fixes. Putting children in front of cheap tablets with educational software one hour a day can help each pupil learn at their own level and speed. Structured plans for every class can help teachers teach better. These policies cost just $10–$30 per child per year, but they can double or triple the school's overall efficiency. In an era of shrinking education budgets, these interventions return $65–$80 per dollar invested. Instead of condemning another generation to illiteracy and low productivity, these solutions offer hope.

The fight against tuberculosis and malaria is losing momentum. Yet scaling up diagnosis, six-month TB treatment courses, and insecticide treated bednets are among the very best buys in global health, delivering $46–$48 of social benefits for every dollar spent.

Altogether, the twelve policies would cost about $35 billion a year—a pittance compared to the over $10 trillion needed to deliver the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

These $35 billion could save more than four million lives every year and make the poorer half of the planet a trillion dollars better off annually—creating jobs and stability, making the world a more secure place. That is an average return of more than $50 for every dollar.

Governments should adopt these twelve proven policies first. Philanthropists and the rest of us can direct our own giving to the outstanding charities that deliver bed nets, vitamins, TB treatment, and effective teaching—organizations that achieve a hundred-times more good than feel-good campaigns with vague impact.

The lesson for 2026 is stark but powerful: when resources are scarce, we must stop promising everything and instead spend well.

Bjorn Lomborg is President of the Copenhagen Consensus, Visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and author of "Best Things First".

Entrepreneur PROFILE:

RESUME

Name: Haben Kiros Tesfay

Education: : MSc in Software Engineer

Company name: Seqela Technologies PLC

Title: CTO

Founded in: 2024

What it does: Developing Financial Products

Hq: Century Mall Brass, Bole, Addis Ababa

Number of Employees: : 15

STARTUP CAPITAL

1,000,000 birr

CURRENT CAPITAL

15,000,000 birr

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the Business: Experience and the gap on the market

Biggest perk of ownership: You can implement your ideas freely

Biggest strength: Understanding and Solving issues, working in every environment

Biggest challenge: Very competitive environment

Plan: Creating a simple automated banking system, and hardware implementation

First career: Core-banking system developer/implementation

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: Foreign Elon Musk, local PM Dr Abyi and Addis Alemayehu from Kazana group

Most admired person: Elon Musk

Stress reducer: Playing and watching Football

Favorite pastime: Having family time, playing football

Favorite book: Zero To one

Favorite destination: Silicon valley USA and Gigafactory Texas, Austin

Favorite automobile: Tesla cyber Truck

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

Jan. 30, 2026

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	151.60	154.6408
POUND STERLING	198.3835	202.3512
EURO	176.5027	180.0328
SWISS FRANK	184.981	188.6806
SWEDISH KRONER	15.8198	16.1362
NORWEGIAN KRONER	14.7246	15.0191
DANISH KRONER	23.1929	23.6568
JAPANIS YEN	0.9582	0.9774
CANADIAN DOLLAR	107.5779	107.5779
SAUDI RIYAL	40.402	41.2101
UAE DIRHAM	41.2821	41.2821

ART & CULTURE

SALWA BAKR RECEIVES FIRST BRICS LITERATURE AWARD IN CAIRO

Egyptian writer and novelist Salwa Bakr has been named the inaugural laureate of the BRICS Literature Award, an international honor established to foster intercultural dialogue and promote shared humanistic values through literature.

Bakr received the award at a ceremony held during the 57th Cairo International Book Fair, one of the largest literary gatherings in the Arab world. The event took place at the Egypt International Exhibition Center (EIEC), where she was presented with the prize by Aleksandr Ostroverkh-Kvanchiani, Executive Director of the BRICS Literature Award and Director of the Eurasian Foundation for Humanitarian Values. The recognition carries a cash prize of 1 million rubles (about 600,000 Egyptian pounds).

The ceremony drew international attention, with distinguished guests in attendance including Vadim Teryokhin, Co-chair of the BRICS Literature Network Writers' Association; Doha Mostafa Assi, Egyptian MP and co-founder of the award; and Sastri Bakri, Indonesia's national coordinator for the BRICS Literature Network.

Founded in 2024, the BRICS Literature Award highlights writers whose work advances cultural understanding among the member countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa — and their partners. The selection process spanned several months and countries: a long list of 30 candidates was unveiled in Brazil in September 2025, narrowed to 10 finalists in Jakarta, before Bakr's win was announced on November 30, 2025, in Khabarovsk, Russia.

In her acceptance remarks, Bakr expressed pride in representing Egyptian and Arabic literature on an international stage, calling the award "deeply meaningful" for its emphasis on civilizational dialogue through the arts.

"Ancient Egypt was developing literature at a time when Europe was living through the Dark Ages," she said, emphasizing the shared literary heritage among BRICS member nations.

Known for her vivid portrayal of Egyptian society and women's experiences, Bakr has authored seven novels, seven short story collections, and a play, with her works translated into multiple languages.

Member of Parliament Doha Mostafa Assi hailed Bakr's win as a milestone for modern Egyptian writing. "This is not just news about a prize — it is a message that contemporary Egyptian prose is being heard far beyond our country," she said. "Within BRICS, cultural dialogue is taking shape on equal terms, beyond politics and economics."

The BRICS Literature Award, according to Ostroverkh-Kvanchiani, offers "a living dialogue between writers and readers across nations," promoting translation, publication, and global recognition of diverse voices. Russian State Duma deputy Dmitry Kuznetsov added that Bakr's works will be published in Russian by Zakhar Prilepin's "KPD" publishing project, underlining BRICS' commitment to literary exchange.

The award's first season also saw a special honor for Indonesian writer Denny JA, who received the prize "For Innovation in Literature" for his pioneering of the poetic essay — a genre blending imaginative writing with factual and documentary elements.

Concluding the ceremony, Vadim Teryokhin highlighted the network's growing reach. "The BRICS Literature Network has become a true platform for dialogue," he said. "Each member country has added its voice to the global conversation about the future of literature, and the works of the winners will soon be available in 10 languages."

As BRICS expands its cultural collaboration, Bakr's recognition marks a promising beginning for the award — and a significant moment for the international presence of Arabic and Egyptian literature.

HOT MUSIC TABLE

JANUARY 15 - JANUARY 21, 2026

HOTTEST ARTISTS

RANK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Yehunie Belay	432	172	604
2	Aschalew Fetene	110	68	178
3	Neway Debebe	95	12	107
4	Fikeraddis Nekatibeb	52	36	88
4	Solomon Tigabe	42	46	88
5	Dawit Tsige	60	26	86
6	Abdu Kiar	68	5	73
7	Hana Girma	39	31	70
8	Michael Belayneh	57	1	58
9	Tesfaye Taye	22	34	56
10	Addis Legesse	38	17	55

THIS DATA IS GATHERED BY A 24/7 AUTOMATED RECORDING & ANALYZING AII SYSTEM FROM 35 TV & RADIO STATIONS. THERE WERE MORETHAN 5,799 TOTAL MUSIC PLAYS ACROSS THE BROADCAST MEDIUM FOR THIS WEEK.

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HOTTEST TRACKS

RANK	TRACK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Zegelila	Yehunie Belay	432	172	604
2	Enatewa Gonder	Aschalew Fetene	71	29	100
3	Shir Bila	Solomon Tigabe	42	46	88
4	Hayyee	Hana Girma	32	28	60
5	Zarem Atirsagn	Fikeraddis Nekatibeb	28	30	58
6	Sodo	Tesfaye Taye	22	34	56
7	Amoraw Kamora	Aschalew Fetene	34	21	55
8	Awdamet	Birtukan Dubale	47	7	54
9	Awdamet	Amsal Mitke	33	20	53
10	Melkam Ametbal	Abdu Kiar	48	3	51

Spotlight

Ever catch the perfect picture with your digital camera or camera phone and wish you could find a way for others to experience it? Here is your chance. If you find yourself at the right place at the right time and happen to catch an amazing scene you believe someone else should see, send us your news pictures with no more than 30 words to spotlight@capitalethiopia.com and we will publish it.

Africa's economic outlook to remain solid in 2026

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) today launched the United Nations flagship World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026 (WESP 2026) report at its headquarters in Addis Ababa, highlighting a modest improvement in Africa's growth outlook.

According to the report, economic growth in Africa is projected to rise to 4.0 per cent in 2026 and 4.1 per cent in 2027, up from 3.5 per cent in 2024 and 3.9 per cent in 2025. The acceleration reflects greater macroeconomic stability in several large economies, supporting investment and consumer spending.

Speaking at the launch, Stephen Karingi, Director, Macroeconomics, Finance and Governance Division at ECA, said that Africa's improving outlook remains fragile in the face of global uncertainty. "Despite the positive outlook, high debt-servicing costs, limited fiscal space and volatile commodity prices continue to weigh on Africa's prospects for inclusive and sustainable growth," Karingi said.

ECA, Morocco sign host agreement ahead of 2026 conference of ministers

UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary, Claver Gatete and Morocco Minister of Economy and Finance Nadia Fettah Alaoui signed the Host Country Agreement for the organization of ECA's 58th session and Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (COM2026). The agreement sets out the areas of cooperation between the Morocco and the United Nations secretariat in planning and organizing the session, which serves as ECA's principal policy-making organ.

COM 2026 will be taking place later this year in Tangiers, northern Morocco, from 28 March to 3 April under the theme: "Growth through innovation: harnessing data and frontier technologies for the economic transformation of Africa".

"We thank Morocco for its leadership and trust. By hosting COM 2026 in Tangier, Morocco is helping elevate Africa's collective economic voice and demonstrating how national leadership can drive regional solutions with global impact. Hosting COM 2026 in the city of Tangier also positions Africa's economic message at the intersection of regions, institutions, and markets, strengthening Africa's voice in global economic governance," said Gatete about the agreement.

Africa can achieve extraordinary results, including in manufacturing and high-technology – Algerian President

UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary Claver Gatete met0020with President Abdelmajid Tebboune at the start of his first work visit to the country, to strengthen cooperation with Algeria and identify priorities for bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting, President Tebboune expressed his strong intention to strengthen cooperation with ECA, with a focus on strategic priority areas including statistics, public policy monitoring, digitalization, governance, and South-South cooperation.

Africa is capable of achieving extraordinary results, including in manufacturing and high-technology, said President Tebboune, who stressed the importance of industrialization in helping to reduce unemployment and dependency on imports. He also stressed that development must go beyond macroeconomics and should include human development and income redistribution.

The ECA Executive Secretary Gatete is currently on a work visit to North Africa, to meet with government officials in Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco, for a deeper firsthand understanding of their countries' development priorities, needs and areas of support and to explore shared opportunities for increased South-South cooperation.

LITTLE DETOUR

PHOTO: Anteneh Akililu

CROSSING THE GRASS

PHOTO: Anteneh Akililu

NO COMMENT

PHOTO: Anteneh Akililu

Six African cities take stock of fiscal reforms in drive toward sustainable urban finance

City leaders and finance officials from across the continent gathered in Addis Ababa for a day-long regional peer learning and action plan progress review workshop, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with UN-Habitat, UNCDF, and the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Held on 22 January, the meeting brought together mayors, technical experts, and representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Planning of six cities — Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, Kigali, Nairobi, Lusaka, and Yaoundé — under the ECA-led project titled, "Expanded and Resilient Urban Fiscal Space for an Inclusive and Resilient COVID-19 Recovery in Africa."

The initiative, supported through the United Nations Development Account, aims to help local governments mobilize and better manage financial resources to support inclusive and sustainable urban transformation. It demonstrates the ongoing efforts made in selected cities to strengthen municipal finance systems and build fiscal resilience following the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Network Launches to Strengthen Collaborative Disease Surveillance in 7 African Countries

Project ECHO at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center has launched an innovative initiative that aims to significantly strengthen infectious disease collaborative surveillance in seven African nations: Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia. Project ECHO and partners will support ministries of health and national public health institutes through learning and knowledge exchange to strengthen the detection and response to disease outbreaks — all while making the countries' health systems stronger and more resilient.

The new collaborative surveillance initiative contributes to Project ECHO's mission to democratize knowledge and expand access to best-practice health care around the world. The work is supported by a two-year, $2.2 million grant from the Gates Foundation.

"Health workers and public health professionals need up-to-date information to respond quickly and effectively to disease outbreaks when time is of the essence. We're here to help bring them the training they need," said Dr. Caroline Kisia, Project ECHO's Africa director. "This work is incredibly urgent. Africa CDC reported 242 outbreaks on the continent in 2024, a steep rise from previous years. If we contain outbreaks quickly, we reduce the risk of future epidemics."

KOICA strengthens WFP's efforts to prevent malnutrition in Ethiopia

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has welcomed a contribution of USD 5.5 million from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to help prevent malnutrition in pregnant and breastfeeding women and young children by improving access to healthy, nutritious foods, strengthening local food systems, and building community resilience among food insecure families in Ethiopia.

The contribution was announced during a launching ceremony in Addis Ababa on December 16, 2025, where Dr. Dereje Dugma, State Minister of Health, emphasized how the initiative aligns with government efforts to improve nutrition and resilience for food insecure families.

"WFP is grateful to KOICA for this strategic investment, delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Health. This is critical to advance Ethiopia's food and nutrition security and human capital outcomes." said Zlatan Milisić, WFP's Country Director in Ethiopia. "This will deliver a triple impact: improved nutrition for vulnerable families, stronger local food systems, and greater household resilience through better access to diverse diets and best agricultural practices."

The Hidden Cost of Blocked Funds

By Thomas Reynaert

Imagine running a business where you sell your products in certain markets but access to your revenue was not guaranteed. Would you keep operating there? For many airlines, this isn't hypothetical – it's a reality. Despite selling tickets and providing services, millions of dollars in airline revenue remain trapped in countries for extended periods of time. In aviation, this problem is known as blocked funds, and it's a serious threat to global connectivity and economic growth.

Blocked funds are revenues earned by international airlines in local currencies that cannot be repatriated in US dollars due to government-imposed restrictions or foreign exchange shortages. Why does this happen?

Airlines have a unique business structure. They earn revenue in many countries, but most of their major costs—aircraft, maintenance, and people—are centralized at their home base and are paid in US dollars.

To make this system work, when countries sign air services agreements, they also agree that airlines should be able to repatriate the funds earned from sales in those countries back to their base. That ensures airlines can pay their bills and keep operations running safely and reliably.

But countries do not always abide by what they have agreed. Sometimes they place restrictions on currency leaving their borders or limit access to foreign exchange. That puts airlines in a very difficult position: it's hard to sustain operations if you can't use the revenues you've earned to pay the bills.

As of October 2025, airlines had a staggering USD $1.2 billion in blocked funds globally. Timely repatriation in US dollars is essential for airlines to meet dollar-denominated expenses like leasing, fuel, maintenance, and salaries.

Beyond the immediate cash flow impact, these restrictions carry hidden costs that compound the problem.

Connectivity Risk Premium

When funds remain trapped, airlines are exposed to currency depreciation. If a local currency loses 20% of its value during the delay, the airline suffers a direct financial loss when converting back to dollars. At the same time, carriers often borrow to cover operational expenses while waiting for blocked funds to be released, and rising interest rates can add hundreds of thousands in unplanned costs. Or there could be opportunity cost: capital tied up in blocked funds cannot be invested in fleet upgrades, route expansion, or sustainability initiatives, slowing growth and competitiveness.

This is what we can call the 'connectivity risk premium'. Airlines must factor this risk into their network and financial planning, which often leads to reduced flight frequencies, higher fares, or even the suspension of routes altogether. In effect, blocked funds make a country more expensive and less attractive to serve.

Nigeria is a case in point. At one stage, blocked funds hit $850 million. Economy tickets soared into the thousands of dollars, limiting access both to and from Nigeria. Some airlines suspended flights to Nigeria while others reduced frequencies or restricted ticket sales.

Economic Trade-offs

For countries with limited foreign exchange, deciding how to allocate hard currency is a tough economic policy choice. Every dollar matters. Should reserves go toward importing fuel and medicine—essentials for daily life—or toward clearing blocked airline funds to maintain vital connectivity, tourism, and trade? These are not easy decisions. Yet blocking airline funds comes at a steep price. Over time, these restrictions ripple through the economy, affecting jobs, investment, and growth.

The longer funds remain trapped, the greater the damage to confidence. International airlines and investors see blocked funds as a warning sign of financial instability. Currency controls, while sometimes necessary during crises, can tarnish a country's reputation and strain relationships with global institutions, making recovery harder and slower.

Protecting hard currency may offer short-term relief, but the long-term costs—lost competitiveness, weakened investor trust, and strained diplomacy—often outweigh the immediate gains.

It is worth remembering that aviation is not just about moving people from point A to point B. It is a powerful economic engine. It connects markets, drives trade and tourism, and supports millions of jobs worldwide. Every dollar spent on air transport multiplies across the economy. In 2023, aviation supported 86.5 million jobs globally and contributed USD 4.1 trillion to GDP—3.9% of the world's total. It also carried 33% of global trade by value, moving goods worth USD 8 trillion.

Resolving the Blocked Funds Conundrum

The good news is that solutions exist. With political will, open dialogue, and a commitment to transparency, governments can resolve blocked fund challenges in ways that support economic and aviation growth.

Prioritizing aviation in foreign exchange allocation is the first step toward clearing blocked funds. From there, authorities can streamline administrative processes and eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that slow repatriation. Enforcing the provisions of bilateral air service agreements within regulatory frameworks is equally critical to remove ambiguity and ensure compliance.

Alongside advocacy for full clearance of blocked funds, we also help airlines manage short-term pressures. This includes negotiating with commercial banks for competitive foreign exchange rates and identifying opportunities to use local currency for local expenses—such as airport fees, air traffic control charges, ground handling, and catering.

Experience shows that with the right approach, blocked funds can be released without destabilizing local economies. Nigeria offers a clear example: through constructive engagement and phased repatriation, the backlog was successfully cleared.

IATA continues to work closely with governments, central banks, and airline partners to resolve currency repatriation challenges on behalf of our members. Our message is simple: unblocking funds is not just about improving cash flow. It is about safeguarding connectivity, protecting livelihoods, and unlocking economic potential. Together, we can ensure aviation continues to deliver prosperity for all.

Thomas Reynaert is IATA's Senior Vice President, External Affairs

Ethiopia's strategic moves on the development chessboard

By Gzachew Wolde

Ethiopia is making significant strides in becoming Africa's aviation hub, with the grand airport project serving as a key initiative. This, alongside the rapid achievements in the corridor and the major milestone of the Koisha Dam, represents strategic moves that enhance connectivity, tourism, and trade. These efforts solidify Ethiopia's position in securing long-term energy sovereignty and regional influence.

The Ethiopian government funded the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) through sovereign bonds and public contributions, generating over 5,150 MW without accumulating foreign debt. This approach prioritizes national sovereignty over the risks associated with private capital. The GERD project supports industrialization, exports (over 2,000 GWh/year), and rural electrification, contributing to an average GDP increase of 2.29% through 2027 via sector-wide productivity gains.

Ethiopia is not merely building infrastructure; it is creating vital trade, tourism, and energy networks that foster mutual benefits among neighboring countries. These are not isolated achievements but part of a calculated strategy to secure long-term energy sovereignty and bolster regional development.

An airport now serves as more than just a runway; it is a critical artery for tourism and high-value trade. Corridor walkways, plazas, riverside developments, and parking lots transcend basic functionality, acting as circulatory systems for healthy living and commercial growth. Similarly, a dam is transformed from mere concrete into a crucial component for energy grids and water security.

Ethiopia is progressing on the development chessboard by skillfully utilizing its natural resources—rivers, wind, and solar energy—turning them into economic advantages. A stable energy supply fuels manufacturing in industrial parks, creates jobs, and drives the economy to reach its full potential.

Reliable energy significantly enhances the quality of life in local communities by providing consistent electricity for homes, schools, and healthcare facilities. It has already allowed small businesses to thrive, enabling entrepreneurs to operate machinery and technology essential for production and services. Furthermore, access to energy opens up educational opportunities, allowing students to study longer hours and utilize online resources.

These infrastructure advancements foster regional cooperation, creating interconnected networks that facilitate the movement of goods, people, and resources. By investing in these projects, Ethiopia not only promotes its economic growth but also strengthens ties with neighboring countries, encouraging collaborative efforts in trade and energy sharing. This regional synergy supports peace, stability, and shared prosperity as countries work together toward common development goals.

While the vision for shared energy grids is clear, regional cooperation faces challenges. Differing national energy policies, variations in existing infrastructure capacity, technical standards, and the complex political and economic realities, along with historical disparities in water usage among neighboring states, complicate cross-border trade and collaboration.

Nevertheless, each strategic move in this forward-thinking development game has substantial effects on both national and regional economic landscapes. Countries are encouraged to innovate and adapt their economic strategies to remain competitive. Through collaboration and competition, technology and infrastructure advance, influencing trade policies and investment decisions on a regional scale.

This development initiative fosters regional integration, enabling interconnected economies to share resources and expertise. It also promotes sustainable practices, such as renewable energy adoption, to support long-term growth. Improved infrastructure attracts foreign investment, further enhancing economic resilience and opening new markets for local businesses to expand globally.

These initiatives showcase Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable growth by utilizing its geographic advantages and investing in infrastructure. By focusing on connectivity and energy independence, the country boosts its global competitiveness while fostering economic resilience and long-term stability in a rapidly changing regional and international landscape.

Ethiopia's investments in energy and transport infrastructure, including power export lines to neighboring countries and road corridors connecting to Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Somalia, promote shared resources and economic interdependence. These efforts position Ethiopia as a regional hub, enhancing trade flows and facilitating mutual development.

The country aims to generate nearly 100% of its electricity from renewable sources, such as hydropower from the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and expanding solar and wind projects, which support long-term environmental resilience. Initiatives like the Green Legacy reforestation project and solar-powered irrigation integrate climate policies into economic planning.

Improved infrastructure attracts foreign investment through partnerships, such as China-Ethiopia projects in roads and railways, which mitigate risks and strengthen local markets. This influx of capital supports agro-industrial growth, exemplified by Nekemte's bus terminal, which is linked to expressways, opening up global opportunities for businesses.

Expanded road corridors to Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Somalia reduce transport costs, enhance trade, and provide diversified port access, decreasing reliance on singular routes like Djibouti. Power export lines interconnect with neighboring countries, enabling the sharing of surplus hydropower and positioning Ethiopia as East Africa's energy leader.

The Green Legacy Initiative aims to plant nearly 40 billion seedlings since 2019, with a target of 54 billion by 2026, focusing on indigenous species for reforestation and soil restoration. Solar-powered irrigation systems enhance agricultural resilience, integrating climate action into economic strategies through community mobilization and technological monitoring.

As East Africa's leading power exporter, Ethiopia shares electricity with neighbors like Sudan (100 MW), Kenya (200 MW), and Djibouti (80 MW), fostering interdependence through interconnected grids and establishing Ethiopia as the regional energy hub. Delays in infrastructure development could result in significant economic losses—$24.7 billion in foregone GDP if projects are postponed until 2030—making timely commissioning essential for sustained growth.

Projects in areas like Bulbula, Yirgalem, and those near the GERD focus on value-added processing in fruits, aquaculture, and leather, connecting smallholder farmers to export chains.

Ethiopia's agro-parks and manufacturing hubs leverage the reliable power from the GERD to reduce production costs and attract foreign direct investment (FDI), with government mechanisms ensuring broad-based benefits. Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks (IAIPs) cap foreign ownership at 60% equity in key zones, mandate technology transfer, and subsidize utilities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), fostering self-sustaining clusters linked to GERD corridors. Parks like Yirgalem (Sidama) and Bulbula process high-value exports in dairy, avocado, coffee, and leather, saving $14 million in imports while generating $15.5 million from avocado oil alone. Proximity to Rural Transformation Centres (RTCs) connects over 16,000 smallholders to supply chains, reducing post-harvest losses through cold storage and irrigation powered by the GERD.

Overall, these initiatives highlight Ethiopia's dedication to sustainable growth by leveraging its geographic advantages and infrastructure investments while prioritizing connectivity and energy independence. Consequently, Ethiopia enhances its global competitiveness and lays the groundwork for long-term stability in an increasingly dynamic regional and international environment.

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Society

By Tesfu Telahoun

> *A poignant aspect of this art form is that many of Ethiopia's comedians, especially the unsung pioneers who laid the foundation for the craft, have not been adequately recognized or compensated in proportion to their impact.*

Keepers of the Laugh in Classic & Contemporary Architecture of Ethiopian Comedy

By Gzachew Wolde

Ethiopian comedy uniquely intertwines satire and social critique with cultural humor, distinguishing it from Western stand-up. This exploration highlights a tapestry of performers who have shaped the country's humor landscape through stage, television, satire, and social commentary. Ethiopian comedy stands out for its deep cultural integration, emphasizing communal resilience and subtle political commentary rather than individual punchlines.

Aleka Gebrehana (1814–1898) was a legendary 19th-century Ethiopian intellectual, Orthodox Church scholar, and wit. He is celebrated for his humorous tales that defended classical art traditions among the nobles during Emperor Menelik II's reign. His title, "Aleka," indicates a high-ranking church scholar, enhancing his role in preserving Ethiopian Orthodox chants like Tekle Aquaquam and poetic arts through clever storytelling, making him a household name and guardian of cultural heritage to this day.

Abera Joro is a legendary Ethiopian stage performer and comedian known for his powerful presence in theater. He is widely recognized for blending humor, social critique, and dramatic performance, solidifying his status as one of Ethiopia's most iconic entertainers.

Tesfaye Sahlu, better known as Ababa Tesfaye, is celebrated as the "father of Ethiopian comedy." He is a legendary stage performer, actor, singer, and beloved children's storyteller on Ethiopian Television (ETV). With a career spanning decades, he is one of the most influential cultural figures in Ethiopia.

Wegayehu Negatu and Debebe Eshetuare towering figures in Ethiopian theater and comedy, remembered as legendary performers, actors, and satirists whose artistic contributions have shaped modern Ethiopian performing arts.

Tamagn Beyene is one of Ethiopia's most influential comedians and satirists, known for blending sharp social critique with cultural and political humor. His career, which spans decades, has transitioned from stage performance to activism, making him a unique figure that bridges entertainment and civic discourse.

Kebebew Geda is a veteran Ethiopian comedian and stage performer widely recognized for his sharp stand-up routines and theatrical sketches that blend humor with social critique. He remains a classic figure in Amharic comedy, with performances that continue to circulate in ETV archives and on YouTube.

Lemeneh Tadesse and Alebachew Teka are two of Ethiopia's most beloved comedians, remembered for their witty sketches and sharp social commentary. Their ability to blend humor with cultural critique has significantly shaped modern Ethiopian comedy, entertaining audiences while reflecting on everyday struggles and politics.

Engdazer Nega and Abebe Belew are well-known Ethiopian comedians who gained fame through their witty stand-up and satirical performances on ETV, using humor to critique social and political issues while entertaining audiences nationwide. Engdazer Nega, in particular, became popular for her sharp delivery and ability to transform everyday Ethiopian life into humorous sketches, often collaborating with Lemeneh Tadesse, Alebachew Teka, and many others.

Nesanet Workneh was one of Ethiopia's most beloved comedians and entertainers, remembered for his witty humor and versatile acting. He connected with audiences through both stage and television. He passed away in January 2026, leaving behind a legacy that has significantly shaped modern Ethiopian comedy and media.

Dereje and Habte are a legendary Ethiopian comedy duo celebrated for their hilarious stage and television performances that capture everyday life with sharp wit and relatable humor.

Serawit Fekre and Mulalem Tadesse are well-known Ethiopian comedians, actors, and theater performers who have also gained recognition through advertising work. Their careers highlight the versatility of Ethiopian entertainers who seamlessly transition between stage, screen, and commercial media.

Tesfaye Kassa was one of Ethiopia's most celebrated stand-up comedians, renowned for his sharp wit, stage charisma, and pioneering contributions to Amharic comedy. He played a crucial role in popularizing modern Ethiopian stand-up by delivering humor directly to audiences without the need for elaborate props or sets. Tesfaye often exaggerated everyday aspects of Ethiopian life—such as family struggles, bureaucracy, and cultural contradictions—transforming them into sources of laughter.

Meskerem Bekele is an emerging Ethiopian stand-up comedian who has gained recognition in recent years for his witty performances and relatable humor, making him one of the few male comedians to break through in the contemporary comedy scene.

Bewketu Seyoum is a celebrated Ethiopian poet, writer, and comedian known for his unique blend of satire and storytelling in contemporary Ethiopian literature and performance. He has published several poetry collections and essays that often weave humor into serious themes, critiquing Ethiopian politics, culture, and everyday contradictions with a wit that softens harsh truths. His performances combine traditional Ethiopian oral storytelling with modern satire, making them both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Tesfahun Kebede is credited with some of the most popular clips circulating under the "Firashi Adashi" comedy brand.

Asseres Tesfaye is recognized as an Ethiopian comedian and stage performer, celebrated for his witty humor and contributions to the country's comedy landscape. While not as widely documented as icons like Tamagn Beyene or Lemeneh Alebachew Teka, he is remembered for his live performances and masked sketches that reflect everyday Ethiopian life.

Mekonen Lake is a contemporary Ethiopian comedian who has gained recognition through stage performances, comedy films, and viral clips on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. He is known for his witty humor, relatable storytelling, and ability to connect with audiences across generations.

Shewaferaw Desalegn is a contemporary Ethiopian comedian and actor, best known for his viral comedy clips on YouTube and TikTok, as well as his stage performances and humorous short films. He has garnered a strong following by blending traditional Ethiopian humor with modern digital storytelling.

Almayehu Tadesse is a well-known Ethiopian comedian, actor, and playwright whose career spans stage, radio, and television. He is celebrated for his witty humor, dramatic versatility, and significant contributions to Ethiopia's modern comedy and theater scene.

Telahun Gugessa is an Ethiopian comedian and stage performer recognized for his witty humor and contributions to televised and live comedy shows. He is part of the generation that helped popularize Ethiopian comedy through ETV and live performances.

Sirak Tadesse is a contemporary Ethiopian comedian and actor known for his sharp wit and relatable humor. He has made significant contributions to stage and television comedy, helping to bring Ethiopian comedy into the mainstream. Sirak has built his reputation through live shows, often exaggerating everyday Ethiopian life, and is sometimes paired with other icons like Kibebew Geda. His humor blends satire with relatable storytelling, solidifying his place in the generation that popularized Ethiopian comedy.

Dokile, also known as Wondwosen Berhanu, was a beloved veteran Ethiopian comedian who passed away in 2022 at the age of 57. Celebrated for two decades of entertaining and educational sketches that blended humor with social critique, his relatable routines on topics like job interviews, marriage, and bureaucracy—such as "Yegna Mushera" and "Girgir"—made him a staple on YouTube and the Ethiopian comedy circuit.

The list of stand-up and other comedians in Ethiopia extends far beyond this, highlighting just a few among many. A poignant aspect of this art form is that many of Ethiopia's comedians, especially the unsung pioneers who laid the foundation for the craft, have not been adequately recognized or compensated in proportion to their impact. This creates an uneven playing field in the industry.

To foster fairness and growth, multiple strategies can be employed. Retroactive recognition through benefit shows and endowments could provide a practical path to honor foundational Ethiopian comedians who shaped the art but faced economic challenges.

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RE-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 (2018). 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 Forage machineries (Sourcing brand: John Deere, CASE IH or equivalent)**	**Qty**
Type of Procurement:	- **Hay baler** - **Chopper** - **Grass mower** - **Silage wrapper machine** - **Shoulder type mower/ Handheld mini harvester** **Including transportation cost of machineries to grantee's site**	9 pcs 7 pcs 8 pcs 8 pcs 14 pcs
Participation and Evaluation Methodology for Lots and Items	Bidders can submit partial bids for items listed in the LOT Awards will be made based on compliance with technical specifications, other evaluation criteria, and the best-evaluated bid.	
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:	InkindProcurement.ETA@transforming-agriculture.org	
Date of Issue of RFP:	**February 1, 2026.**	
Date of Bidders' Conference: A bidders' conference will be conducted at the indicated date and time. Interested bidders who wish to attend are required to submit a participation request via email to **InkindProcurement.ETA@transf orming-agriculture.org** Upon receipt of the request, the conference details, including the venue/ location, will be shared with the registered participants	**February 9, 2026, 10:00 AM**	
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	**February 11, 2026.**	
Date Response Posted on RTI website	**February 13, 2026.**	
Date Proposal Due:	**February 20, 2026.**	
Approximate Date Purchase Order Issued to Successful Bidder(s):	**TBD**	
Method of Submittal:		
Respond via e-mail I**nkindProcurement.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-25-035-GRT**	

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

unicef | for every child

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SERVICE

LRPS-2025-9202329

UNICEF (Ethiopia) wishes to request eligible bidders to participate in a Request for Proposal (LRPS)

PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DESIGN AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL BASED CONTINOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (SBCPD) PROGRAMME FOR ETHIOPIA

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 link below.

https://tender.2merkato.com/tenders/697b6c970a538a72a7000001

The tender is open only to local bidders.

ENQUIRY CLOSING DATE:

13 February 2026 @04:00PM Local Time. All enquiries should be sent to email id

eth-supplyQAservices@unicef.org

Title: Provision of Technical Assistance to Design and Support the Implementation of a school based continuous professional development (SBCPD) programme for Ethiopia

BID CLOSING DATE:

19 February 2026 @ 04:00PM Local Time

SUBMISSION OF BIDS ONLY ALLOWED THROUGH THE SECURED E-MAIL ADDRESS:

eth-tenderservices@unicef.org

Bids received after the stipulated date & time, to incorrect email ids will be invalidated.

MODALITY OF SUBMISSION

Bids must be split into 2 (two) separate emails as follows:

i. **Technical Proposal (TP) -** All TP must be submitted in PDF format. TP SHOULD NOT CONTAIN any information relating to prices or fees. All legal, credential and any other document submitted in the TP should be clearly scanned and visible.

Email subject line must be titled #LRFP-9202329-Technical Proposal-Company Name)".

ii. **Financial Proposal (FP) -** all information relating to prices or fees must be submitted in bidders own template an e-mail as an attachment in both PDF.

Email subject line must be titled #LRFP-9202329 - Financial Proposal- (Company Name).

Proposals submitted in any other way will be invalidated, even if received before the stipulated deadline.

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

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 on the UNGM website: www.ungm.org.

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

RESDO Relief and Sustainable Development Organization

Relief and Sustainable Development Organization (RESDO).

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Relief and Sustainable Development Organization (RESDO) is a national non-governmental humanitarian organization established in 2017 in Jigjiga Ethiopia, serving pastorals and agro-pastoral communities in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia. RESDO has received a fund from OWDA for the implementation of project entitled **Life-saving humanitarian assistance to address the most critical needs of internally displaced people, living in informal settlements in Hudet Woreda Districts, Somali Region, Ethiopia.**

The purpose of this advertisement is to invite competent contractors for Procurement and Distribution of Improved Crop seeds

Sn	Description	Location
1	Procurement and distribution of MESNFI kits to HHs In Hudet Woreda.	Hudet, Woreda.

Interested Contractors qualified and legally registered in Ethiopia for Procurement and distributions and have valid trading licenses, meet their tax obligations may obtain, the complete set of tendering documents at the following RESDO Office during office hours:

RESDO Jigjiga Office, Kebele 03, Rabaah building; Floor 3, Rome 308, Jigjiga, Ethiopia, Telephone **+251942365536 or +251942395539.**

The tendering is from 1st Feb up to 15th February 2026. The deadline for picking the tender documents is February 15th 3:30 pm and submission of tender is **February 16st, 10:00AM.**

Bids shall be opened at the RESDO Jig-jiga office on **February 16th, 2026, 10:30 AM** in the presence of tenders who may wish to attend.

The Relief and Sustainable Development Organization (RESDO) **reserve the right to reject the whole or part of any or all Tender.**

NB: Both the receiving and the submission of bid document will be at Jig-jiga office.

Further instructions are contained in the tender document.

DORALEH MULTI-PURPOSE PORT

PORT DE DJIBOUTI S.A.

DORALEH MULTI-PURPOSE PORT

The Natural Gate of COMESA and Hinterlands

RORO TERMINAL | CONTAINER TERMINAL | BREAK BULK | DRY BULK

TON

24,080

METRIC TONS PER DAY

454

TRUCKS

+100

CONTAINERS DELIVERED BY RAIL IN 3 HOURS

40,000

VEHICLES SLOTS

Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port

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Email: customercare@dmp.dj

ADDIS ABABA Representative Office

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