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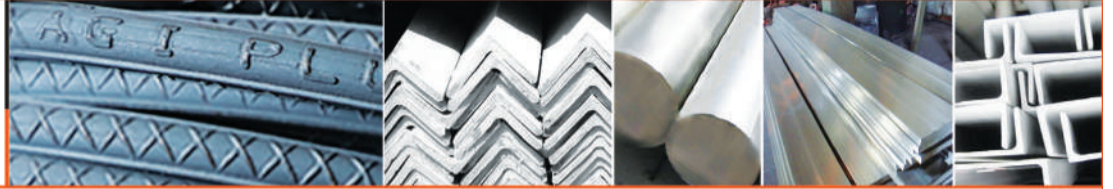
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New directive to liberalize core logistics operations, foreign players set to enter

By Muluken Yewondwossen

As part of a series of bold economic reforms, the Ethiopian government is set to invite foreign investors to operate freely in the logistics sector—an area previously closed to international players and reserved exclusively for local providers.

The new directive, recently unveiled by government officials, is expected to take effect before the end of the year, though an implementation date was not specified. Sources familiar with the matter told Capital that the legal process to liberalize core logistics operations is currently underway within relevant government authorities.

"The decision, which has been discussed for the past few years as part of the government's bold reform agenda, will become effective at the start of the coming budget year," these sources stated.

Foreign investors operating in Ethiopia have

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Africa Day must mean Africa's empowerment

Africa Day should be more than a ceremonial date on the calendar. It should be a reminder that the continent's future depends on whether Africans are given the power, resources and confidence to shape it themselves.

Each year, Africa Day offers an opportunity to celebrate the continent's history, resilience and cultural richness. But celebration without transformation risks becoming routine. If Africa Day is to have real meaning, it must be tied to a clear agenda: empowering Africans economically, politically, socially and intellectually. The continent cannot continue to be treated as a source of raw materials, cheap labor and endless potential while remaining underpowered in the decisions that shape global development.

Africa is home to the world's youngest population, vast natural resources, dynamic entrepreneurs and some of the fastest-growing cities. Yet too many Africans still face limited access to quality education, weak health systems, unemployment, conflict, debt stress and poor infrastructure. These challenges are not signs of failure. They are signs of unfinished work. And that work must begin with empowerment.

Empowerment means building systems that allow Africans to create value at home rather than exporting opportunity abroad. It means investing in schools that produce problem-solvers, not just certificate holders. It means financing small businesses, farmers, manufacturers and innovators so they can grow beyond survival. It means expanding access to electricity, digital connectivity, transport and affordable credit. Without these basics, talk of transformation remains empty.

It also means trusting African institutions and African talent. Too often, solutions to Africa's problems are designed elsewhere, with little understanding of local realities. Africa does not lack ideas; it lacks enough space, capital and policy consistency to scale them. Governments must therefore create environments where entrepreneurs, researchers, artists and community leaders can thrive. Development will not be delivered from outside. It must be built from within.

Women and young people must be at the center of this agenda. Africa cannot empower itself while excluding the majority of its population from decision-making and opportunity. Women drive households, markets and communities, yet they still face barriers to finance, land, leadership and safety. Young people are often spoken about as the future, but they are also the present. They need jobs, mentorship, digital skills and a real voice in governance. Empowerment is not complete if it leaves them behind.

Africa Day should also prompt leaders to think more boldly about integration. The African Continental Free Trade Area offers one of the strongest tools for empowerment if it is implemented seriously. A continent that trades more with itself, invests more in itself and solves more problems collectively will be harder to marginalize. Integration is not just an economic project; it is a political statement that Africa intends to stand together.

At the same time, empowerment requires accountability. African citizens must be able to demand better governance, less corruption and more responsible leadership. No amount of patriotic language can substitute for institutions that work. Empowerment is not only about what Africa receives; it is also about what African leaders are willing to reform.

As Africa Day approaches, the message should be simple: Africa does not need pity, and it does not need charity disguised as partnership. It needs fair terms, smart investment and the freedom to determine its own path. The continent's future will not be secured by speeches alone. It will be secured by policies, institutions and leaders that unlock the potential of its people.

Africa should not merely be celebrated. It should be empowered.



■ By Gurjit Singh

COMMENT

India Africa development cooperation: The Harambee Factor

India-Africa development cooperation has emerged as a substantive and enduring pillar of South-South engagement, rooted in a shared historical experience of colonialism, a common developmental trajectory, and a mutual aspiration for strategic autonomy. Over the past two decades, this partnership has been institutionalised through the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), which provided political direction and programmatic depth. Through 3 summits, India translated its political goodwill into tangible outcomes across human resource development, concessional financing, and grant-based assistance. Yet, after a decade-long hiatus since the last summit in 2015, the moment calls not merely for revival but for a recalibration of this partnership in line with Africa's evolving priorities and the shifting global context.

The most enduring success of India's development cooperation in Africa lies in the domain of human resource development. India's approach, unlike traditional donors, emphasized capacity building as a long-term investment rather than short-term project delivery. Through programmes like the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation initiative, thousands of African professionals have been trained in areas ranging from public administration and information technology to agriculture, healthcare, and defence. This has created a wide network of African alumni with professional and institutional linkages to India. The Pan-African e-Network, which connected African universities and hospitals with Indian centres of excellence, represented an innovative model of technology-enabled capacity building, bringing education and healthcare access to remote regions. Scholarships and training programmes strengthened this ecosystem, embedding India's presence in Africa's human capital formation. The success of this approach lies in its multiplier effect: it builds indigenous capacity, fosters institutional resilience, and generates enduring goodwill that transcends transactional engagement.

Complementing this has been India's use of concessional Lines of Credit, which have financed a wide range of infrastructure and development projects across 41 African countries. These included projects in power transmission, rural electrification, agriculture, transport, and water systems. For African governments, these LOCs provided an alternative to traditional finance, enabling them to pursue development projects aligned with national priorities. However, over time, the limitations

of this model have become apparent. Concerns over debt sustainability have grown, particularly in a global environment marked by rising interest rates and currency volatility. Project implementation has sometimes been slow. While LOCs played a critical role in the earlier phase of engagement (2003-2018), their centrality in the partnership is now reassessed.

Grant assistance, though smaller in scale, served as a visible component of India's engagement. These supported capacity-building institutions, community development projects, and technology demonstration initiatives. The IT centres, the vocational training and entrepreneurship development centres and now the IIT Zanzibar are important achievements. At the continental level, India has attempted to work with the African Union and regional organizations, though outcomes have depended on local ownership, budget support and passion among institutional partners. Grants retained their symbolic value as instruments of solidarity and partnership.

The urgency of rethinking India-Africa development cooperation has been heightened by recent global developments. A joint report by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Union in April 2026 has underscored the vulnerability of African economies to external shocks, particularly in the context of the ongoing Middle East crisis linked to Iran. The report warns of a slowdown in economic growth, widespread currency depreciation, rising inflation, and severe disruptions to food and fertilizer supply chains. Many African countries remain dependent on West Asia for a significant share of their imports, making them particularly susceptible to geopolitical disruptions. The crisis threatens agricultural productivity during critical planting seasons, raising the spectre of food insecurity for millions. At the same time, rising shipping and insurance costs are straining trade logistics, while humanitarian resources risk being diverted away from the continent.

Yet, within these challenges lie opportunities that align closely with Africa's long-term priorities. The crisis has reinforced the imperative of building self-reliance in key sectors such as fertilizer production, energy security, and manufacturing. It has also highlighted

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East Africa becomes battleground in satellite internet debate

By Groum Abate

Kigali, Rwanda

East African governments are being urged to rethink how they regulate satellite internet as a new Africa CEO Forum report warns that offshore telecom operators could weaken local investment, reduce public revenues and reshape the region's digital future. The report says satellite providers such as Starlink are expanding quickly across Africa, but their direct-to-consumer model raises questions about sovereignty, taxation and fair competition.

The report argues that Africa's biggest internet challenge is no longer coverage alone, but affordability. It says about 86 percent of people in sub-Saharan Africa live within coverage areas, yet only 38 to 43 percent are actually connected, meaning the region's digital divide is now driven more by cost than infrastructure gaps.

For East Africa, the issue is especially relevant because countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia are already weighing how to balance satellite services with mobile and fibre networks. The report says Kenya and Rwanda are among the markets where satellite internet has gained traction, while Tanzania and Ethiopia still face

major affordability and access gaps that make hybrid connectivity models more attractive.

The report says satellite internet can help connect remote schools, clinics and rural communities, but warns that offshore operators may also draw away high-value urban and enterprise customers that traditionally help fund broader network expansion. That, it says, could squeeze incumbent telecom operators, discourage investment in fibre and towers, and reduce the flow of licensing and tax revenue to governments.

The paper cites Kenya as an example of how policy can adapt, pointing to the country's growing use of disaster-risk financing and hybrid connectivity approaches. It says governments should require satellite operators to comply with the same rules as terrestrial providers on licensing, taxation, security and data handling.

The report also urges East African states to coordinate more closely through regional and continental frameworks so they can negotiate from a stronger position. It recommends a hybrid model in which satellite services complement, rather than replace, local telecom infrastructure, with more emphasis on African-owned gateways, data centres and network capacity.

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Austria announces major foreign policy shift towards Africa: Moving from aid to a "Whole-of-Nation" partnership

By Eyasu Zekarias

Austria, Vienna

The Austrian Federal Government has announced a comprehensive overhaul of its foreign policy toward the African continent, shifting from traditional development aid to a "whole-of-nation" partnership.

Stefan Scholz, Head of the Department for Sub-Saharan Africa and the African Union at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that this policy shift is driven by changes in the global balance of power, the relocation of supply chains, and domestic budget deficits, necessitating a departure from conventional development aid spending.

Speaking at the Austria-Africa Media Fellowship Programme, Scholz explained, "We are moving away from a recipient-donor approach toward interdependent, multi-sectoral, and comprehensive partnerships." He elaborated, "Due to the budget deficits we are all facing, development cooperation will not increase significantly over the next decade. Therefore, we must now make our activities across various sectors much more effective."

Instead of creating new, rigid bureaucracy, Austria's new approach integrates ten sectoral strategies from various ministries into a single

framework. These strategies span areas from foreign security policy and humanitarian aid to industrial strategy, hydrogen development, and climate protection.

This initiative further distinguishes itself by incorporating the Austrian Parliament, the Constitutional Court, trade unions, and industrial federations into a unified structure.

"This means Africa is a major reform project for us, unprecedented in Austria," Scholz explained. "Beyond inter-governmental coordination, we aim for a comprehensive approach that involves the entire nation."

A primary driver for this policy shift is the significant imbalance in Austria's foreign trade. Scholz highlighted that Austria's export volume to the entire African continent is only about 50 percent of its exports to neighboring Slovenia, a nation with a population of approximately two million.

"There is a huge gap," Scholz admitted. "Until now, we viewed Africa solely as a developing continent. Austrian businesses previously did not recognize the economic benefits of engaging in Africa's private sector development. Now, however, Austria aims to change this through de-risking."

To bridge this gap, the Austrian government is implementing plans to enhance the competitiveness of its businesses. These measures

include eliminating double taxation, accelerating investment protection and social security agreements, and launching a €30 million Austria-Africa SME Investment Fund, managed by the Ministry of Finance, to support Austrian small and medium enterprises entering the African market.

Scholz emphasized that Austria's new strategy is built on the principle of African Leadership, aligning directly with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and regional integration master plans, rather than imposing Western interests.

This strategy was unveiled during comprehensive briefings and discussions held for journalists from various African countries at the recent Austria-Africa Media Fellowship Programme in Vienna. Organized by the International Press Institute (IPI) in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the session at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also provided insights into Austria's communication philosophy, diplomatic priorities, and its campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2027–2028 term.

Officials stated that instead of extracting raw materials, Austria now aims to share its institutional strengths. For instance, while Austria lacks its own mineral reserves, it is home to some of the world's oldest mining and

technical universities. Scholz noted that Austria is actively working to train talented African students, enabling indigenous populations to manage their own mining and refining processes.

Additionally, Austria seeks to share its renowned "dual education" vocational training system. This system allows 14- and 15-year-old youths to combine school education with paid on-the-job apprenticeships, fostering domestic entrepreneurship. This geopolitical shift comes at a time when African countries are heavily impacted by the global energy crisis—a crisis Scholz summarized as the "4Fs": Finance, Fuel, Food, and Fertilizer.

In response, Austria plans to export its specialized expertise in renewable energy, environmental technology, and infrastructure. Under the new strategy, the country is moving away from projects focused only on specific nations, shifting instead toward broad regional connectivity corridors—such as green technology infrastructure partnerships like the one with Ethiopia. This approach aims to help African nations strengthen their economic benefits and regional integration.

To ensure this framework remains dynamic and continuously evolving, the Austrian Foreign Ministry has conducted 121 meetings with its African partners and is organizing "listening forums" with civil society and youth groups through its embassies.



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Africa Re says East Africa must put insurance at the center of growth

By Groum Abate

Kigali, Rwanda

East African economies should treat insurance and reinsurance as essential tools for growth, resilience and fiscal stability, according to a new Africa Re white paper presented at the 2026 Africa CEO Forum. The report argues that the region's governments and insurers need to move beyond viewing insurance as a niche financial product and instead use it to manage climate shocks, support investment and protect development gains.

The paper says East Africa is among the continent's most promising growth regions, but it is also highly exposed to droughts, floods and other climate-related shocks. That vulnerability is especially costly because insurance penetration remains low across the region, with Kenya leading at 2.25 percent of GDP, followed by Uganda at 0.87 percent, Tanzania at 0.60 percent and Ethiopia at 0.30 percent, according to the East Africa Insurance Outlook Report 2025.

Africa Re says this gap leaves households, businesses and governments to absorb most of the financial damage when disasters strike. The report notes that across Africa more than 90 percent of natural disaster losses remain uninsured, forcing public budgets to shoulder emergency spending and slowing recovery.

Kenya is highlighted as an example of how the region can respond. The paper points to Kenya's disaster risk financing reforms, including the use of index-based insurance for drought and flood risks, as part of a broader effort to embed risk transfer into public financial management.

The report also points to progress in East Africa's insurance distribution models.

It cites mobile and index-based products that have expanded cover for smallholder farmers in Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, and says digital platforms, bancassurance and insurtech are helping insurers reach customers that traditional models have

missed.

According to Africa Re, the wider opportunity is to turn insurance into a development asset by mobilizing long-term savings, supporting infrastructure financing and reducing pressure on public

finances. It says stronger reinsurance capacity, better regulation and deeper regional integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area could help build a more resilient East African insurance market.

New directive to liberalize . . .

Continued from page 1

long cited the logistics sector as a major challenge. Some countries and interest groups have pressed the government to open up the sector, similar to reforms that have largely liberalized the finance and telecommunications industries over the past few years.

However, the government's latest move has not been well received by local logistics operators. While acknowledging that the sector remains a bottleneck for the national economy and for doing business in the country, local industry players argue that the government has failed to provide the necessary understanding and attention for its growth and effective economic support. According to industry insiders, a lack of government focus on issues such as insurance access and financing has hindered the sector's development.

Dawit Woubeshet, CEO of Cosmos and President of the Ethiopian Freight Forwarders and Shipping Agents Association, confirmed that Ahmed Shide, Ethiopia's Minister of Finance, recently announced the decision to open the logistics sector at an industry event. Dawit recalled asking the Minister during a panel discussion what tangible benefits the country would gain from this liberalization. "I asked what advantage the country would benefit from liberalizing the sector," Dawit told Capital.

Logistics experts interviewed by Capital noted that Ethiopia handles fewer than 300,000 containers annually—a volume that a single large Chinese logistics firm could easily absorb. "Due to this, there may not be significant interest from international players. If any do show interest, it would likely be in the multimodal transport sector," one expert said.

A local logistics operator further argued that Ethiopian customs clearance is not particularly

difficult to manage. "The volume of Ethiopian cargo is very small and can be handled by local operators," he said. "Rather than allowing local firms to be swallowed up by monopolies, it would be better to help us enhance our capacity and expertise to operate seamlessly."

Experts point out that the Ethiopian government, unlike its approach to the banking and telecom sectors, did not protect and strengthen the logistics industry before opening it up. Consequently, the sector has suffered from a lack of proper understanding and government attention, leading to limited access to financing and land for investment.

Even with market liberalization, some analysts doubt that major global logistics firms will be attracted. They cite Ethiopia's relatively small economy and the slow inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) as disincentives for large international operators. As one expert put it, "Foreign operators will ask what the benefit is of investing in the country. The cargo volume is very limited, and there are other conditions that make the market unattractive."

Some observers suggest that the move towards liberalization may be primarily a political commitment, aimed at fulfilling World Trade Organization (WTO) accession requirements or satisfying foreign governments whose logistics companies are interested in Ethiopia.

An industry expert reiterated this view: "Logistics is one of the preconditions [for WTO accession]. So opening up the sector may be a political decision, but I do not expect companies to be interested in investing in Ethiopia's logistics sector."

Ethiopia, the world's most populous landlocked nation, faces one of the most expensive logistics environments globally, a factor experts say deters potential investors. Despite this, the government has recently undertaken significant reforms and infrastructure projects to boost the sector.

These reforms include ending the multimodal transport monopoly previously held by the state-owned Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL) by licensing six additional operators. Simultaneously, the logistics business was liberalized to permit up to 49 percent foreign ownership, a move that attracted Ceva, Bolloré Logistics, and DHL to acquire stakes in joint ventures with Ethiopian Airlines Group.

However, while some experts see the entry of these companies as a sign of foreign interest, others remain skeptical. One expert starkly noted, "A single large company handles more volume than the entire country of Ethiopia. There is no attractive market here unless the economy improves dramatically."

Adding to the challenges, the Office of the United States Trade Representative's '2026 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers', published three weeks ago, revealed that logistics costs in Ethiopia constitute approximately 22 to 27 percent of final product prices. Furthermore, shipping and freight costs are roughly 60 percent higher than in neighboring countries.

The Ethiopian government has assured its partners that complementary measures, including finalizing a legal framework for liberalizing key logistics sub-sectors like dry ports, freight forwarding, and logistics services, are expected to be completed by the end of December.

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Austrian banks hesitant on extra-European markets: 'Package Deals' needed for Ethiopia's risk profile

By Eyasu Zekarias

Austria, Vienna

At a time when Western green-tech and logistics companies are racing to secure positions within East Africa's rapidly expanding economic corridors, deep-seated risk aversion within the European financial sector has become a major bottleneck for large-scale infrastructure investments.

According to officials, private commercial banks are increasingly hesitant to finance operations outside traditional European markets, which is hindering potentially lucrative business partnerships in emerging economies like Ethiopia.

Roberto Thym, Deputy Director of the Business Services Department at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Capital that it is becoming increasingly difficult for domestic companies to enter the Sub-Saharan African market on their own.

According to Thym, the solution lies in implementing sophisticated and multi-faceted financial instruments, as well as public-private "Package Deals" designed to shift and distribute risk away from risk-averse commercial lenders.

Through the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a major renewable energy and infrastructure boom has been created in East Africa. While Austrian logistics and green technology providers possess the high-level technical expertise required to strengthen supply chains and build sustainable networks, turning these projects into reality requires substantial capital—capital that European banks are currently holding onto with extreme caution.

"We know that the Austrian financial sector is a bit hesitant when it comes to financing extra-European markets where they don't have much experience," Thym said during an official statement on trade relations. "There appears to be a certain hesitation for any single actor to take on the entire risk alone."

To break this financial deadlock, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is encouraging project developers to move away from conventional, straightforward bank loans and instead design comprehensive financing plans that combine commercial finance with development assistance funds (concessional capital/low-interest loans).

At the core of this strategy is the involvement of Oesterreichische Kontrollbank (OeKB), the country's main provider of export credits and international investment guarantees. By backing commercial bank loans with OeKB's state guarantees, the overall risk profile of an East African business deal can be lowered

to a level acceptable to conservative European banks.

Under this model, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs views its role not as a direct source of funding, but as an institutional matchmaker. "When we receive concrete requests, what we do as a networker is bringing the relevant partners together and facilitate the creation of this kind of package deal," Thym explained.

It was noted that the backbone of the Austrian export economy is built entirely on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Although these smaller entities are pioneers in green innovation, they have limited capacity to withstand the heavy administrative burdens associated with international project finance and regulatory compliance.

This structural vulnerability is currently facing a major test as the deadline for the European Union's revised Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) approaches. Under this deadline, international exporters—including Ethiopia's vital agricultural sector—must deploy strict digital traceability systems to prove that their

products did not originate from deforested land.

Building and expanding such national tracking databases is extremely complex. Even though the EU allocates significant financial resources for such infrastructure through its Global Gateway initiative, Austrian SMEs are frequently locked out of these opportunities due to excessive bureaucracy.

"The backbone of the Austrian economy consists of small and medium-sized companies," Thym explained to *Capital*. "Therefore, we face a slight challenge in connecting Austrian companies with EU fund opportunities because their sizes do not align. Austrian companies are too small to handle the comprehensive paperwork required behind it."

To fill this structural gap and prevent innovative small companies from being excluded from international contracts, the official confirmed that the Austrian government has launched an institutional initiative called "Team Austria."

This initiative brings independent

domestic SMEs together into a single, coordinated consortia, providing them with the collective weight, administrative assistance, and legal resources required to participate in large EU infrastructure financing.

Meanwhile, following the EU Council's decision to lift the restrictive Schengen visa measures previously imposed on Ethiopian citizens, it has been indicated that Austria is moving swiftly to capitalize on this regulatory reform.

This policy shift, unveiled this week, lifts the strict restrictions placed on short-term visas issued to Ethiopian citizens. Under the previous restrictive system—sparked by a diplomatic dispute regarding migrant readmission processes—the standard visa processing time had been extended to 45 days, additional fees were imposed, and multi-entry privileges were widely suspended.

Now, acknowledging that Addis Ababa has shown "substantial and sustained improvement" in identity verification and return logistics, the EU has reinstated the standard 15-day processing time and the

basic €80 visa application fee across all member states.

Speaking to Capital, Roberto, the Deputy Head of the Ministry's Business Services Department, emphasized the necessity of smooth trade exchanges between people and organizations. He noted that travel disruptions remain a global challenge and particularly impact exchanges with many African nations.

To forge robust economic ties, Roberto highlighted that ensuring the travel process is "as smooth as possible" is a key area from which both sides can mutually benefit.

To achieve this and facilitate convenient corporate travel for Ethiopian officials coming to Vienna, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plans to work closely with the Federal Economic Chamber, which bears primary responsibility for managing these high-level business visits. He explained that by coordinating visa pathways and business logistics, Austria aims to transform these diplomatic relations into active and prosperous economic partnerships.

UN warns Middle East crisis is hurting developing economies as growth slows and inflation rises

By our staff reporter

The escalating crisis in the Middle East is delivering a fresh shock to the global economy, slowing growth, pushing up inflation and tightening financial conditions, according to a new United Nations report released on May 19, 2026.

The report, World Economic Situation and Prospects as of Mid-2026, says global GDP growth is now expected to reach 2.5 percent in 2026, down 0.2 percentage points from the January forecast and well below pre-pandemic trends. A modest recovery to 2.8 percent is projected for 2027, but the UN says the overall outlook has weakened further amid higher energy costs, disrupted trade and rising uncertainty.

The UN said the impact of the conflict is being felt most sharply through energy markets, where constrained supply, surging prices and higher freight and insurance costs are feeding through supply chains and lifting production costs worldwide. While energy companies may benefit from the price surge, households and businesses are facing renewed cost pressures.

Inflation is also expected to rise again after easing since 2023. In developed economies, the rate is projected to climb from 2.6 percent in 2025 to 2.9 percent in 2026. In developing

economies, inflation is forecast to rise more sharply, from 4.2 percent to 5.2 percent, as higher energy, transport and import costs spread through consumer prices.

The report flags food prices as a major concern, saying fertilizer disruptions could reduce crop yields and put further upward pressure on food costs. It warns that central banks now face a difficult choice between tightening policy to contain inflation and holding back to avoid further damage to growth.

The UN said financial markets have so far remained broadly stable, but higher energy prices have raised inflation expectations and pushed short-term bond yields higher. For developing countries, that has meant tighter external financing conditions and weaker fiscal positions, especially where policy space is already limited.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua said the Middle East crisis has intensified pressure across developing economies. He warned that higher borrowing costs and renewed capital-flow pressures could deepen debt vulnerabilities and reduce the resources available for sustainable development.

The effects of the crisis are uneven across regions, with Western Asia taking the biggest hit. Growth there is projected to fall sharply from 3.6 percent in 2025 to 1.4 percent in

2026, reflecting not only energy disruptions but also direct damage to infrastructure and major setbacks to oil production, trade and tourism.

The United States is expected to remain relatively resilient, with growth forecast at 2.0 percent in 2026, supported by household demand and investment in artificial intelligence. Europe is more exposed because of its dependence on imported energy, with growth in the European Union projected to slow to 1.1 percent in 2026, while the United Kingdom is expected to ease to 0.7 percent.

In Asia, China's diversified energy mix and policy support are cushioning the impact, with growth expected to moderate to 4.6 percent in 2026. India is still set to remain among the fastest-growing major economies, though growth is forecast to slow to 6.4 percent as higher energy import costs and tighter financing conditions bite.

Africa's average growth is projected to ease slightly, from 4.2 percent in 2025 to 3.9 percent in 2026, but the report says that figure masks a widening divide. Oil and gas exporters are benefiting from higher prices, while net energy importers are facing heavier fiscal pressure from rising fuel and food costs.

The UN said the crisis threatens to reverse hard-won development gains and slow progress toward the Sustainable Development

Goals. It warned that higher prices are eroding food security, real incomes and investment, especially in low-income countries where food and energy costs take up a larger share of household budgets.

The report also says governments most in need of support are least able to respond. Aid flows are falling, debt-service costs are rising and fiscal room for health, education and social protection is shrinking.

On the environmental side, the UN warned that persistently high energy prices could trigger a short-term return to more carbon-intensive fuels, even as they strengthen the long-term case for faster clean-energy transitions. It said the response should include open trade, more concessional finance and stronger support for countries facing debt stress.

Beyond the immediate shock, the report says the world is also facing weaker medium-term productivity growth. It notes that productivity has slowed since the global financial crisis and warns that new disruptions could worsen the trend by discouraging investment and trade.

The UN said geopolitical fragmentation, constrained public finances and uneven access to innovation are deepening global disparities. Artificial intelligence could boost growth, it said, but the benefits are likely to be concentrated in a limited number of countries unless policy action broadens access.



Letter to the editor

Dear EDITOR IN CHIEF

Her is a feedback on statements made in the article 'Flipper International parents oppose 60% fee hike tied to Lancha campus rescue plan' published on April 26

1. Statement

"...accusing the administration of coercive decision-making and unfairly linking the fee hike to efforts to keep the school's Lancha campus open."

Response

Parents were presented with three options as part of a formal consultation and voting process. The 60% option was not limited to efforts to keep the Lancha campus open, but addressed a broader set of priorities required to sustain the school and maintain academic standards.

The increase supports several urgent priorities:

- Campus Relocation: Securing and preparing a new site for approximately 800 students affected by the Lancha campus closure following land expropriation

- Safeguarding Employment: Protecting the livelihoods of more than 120 staff members and ensuring continuity across teaching and support teams

- Technology Integration: Rolling out a USD 1 million programme to strengthen digital learning, improve network infrastructure, and equip teachers with the necessary tools

- Teacher Retention: Implementing market-related salary adjustments, with increases above inflation to retain experienced educators and maintain teaching quality

- Cross-Campus Sustainability: Supporting the continued operation of Beklobet and Goro Early Years campuses, facing financial pressure due to a reduction in capacity.

These are essential investments to ensure continuity, protect educational quality, and maintain the standards expected across Flipper International Schools.

2. Statement

"...they described as "take it or leave it": accept the increase or face the immediate closure of the Lancha, or Beklo Bet, campus."

Response

Parents were presented with three clearly defined options during the consultation process, not a "take it or leave it" decision. Each option reflected a different level of financial support for the school's operational needs.

While all scenarios were considered, securing and preparing a viable alternative site for the Lancha campus, while maintaining standards across the broader school network, would only be feasible under the 60% increase scenario. This was communicated transparently so that parents could make an informed choice based on the practical implications of each option.

3. Statement

"...process was legally flawed, emotionally coercive and designed to force approval through pressure rather than consultation."

Response

The fee consultation process followed a structured, multi-stage framework designed to ensure parents remained central to the decision-making process.

For the 2026/2027 academic year adjustment, the following steps were undertaken:

- Campus-based general meetings held in March 2026 across Summit, Beklobet and Lancha

- Two online consultation sessions on 6 and 13 April 2026 to maximise accessibility and participation

- A final in-person plenary and resolution meeting on 18 April 2026, allowing for direct engagement ahead of the vote

At the final meeting, 286 parents participated in the voting process, with 276 voting in favour of the selected option.

The process was structured to support broad participation, transparency and meaningful

engagement throughout. The Summit PTA withdrew from the consultation process on 27 March and indicated that the proposal should be shared directly with the parent body, which FIS did.

4. Statement

"... According to several parents, the proposed increase is not limited to the headline 60%. They said it is being combined with a separate "harmonization" adjustment meant to narrow gaps between tuition levels across grades, pushing some families' total costs far higher."

Response

Fee harmonization was introduced at the start of the current academic year, that stated in Sept 2025, as a phased process to ensure a fair and consistent fee structure across the school. The aim is to address historical differences in which parents in the same grade, receiving the same education, paid different fees, resulting in some families effectively subsidising others.

This phased approach continues into the 2026/2027 academic year, where the remaining categories will be consolidated into a single structure. Harmonization is therefore a separate, planned process and should not be combined with the annual fee adjustment to present it as a single increase.

5. Statement

"...Capital that some households could face total increases of more than 120%."

Yes, and some households have not had a fee increase for the past five years. Those who are experiencing increases of up to 120% have benefited from paying very low fees over a prolonged period.

6. Statement

"... "harmonization plus 60%." They said the last option was strongly favored by the administration, even though many families viewed it as unaffordable and unjustified."

Response

All three options were presented to parents as part of a structured consultation process, each linked to

the school's ability to sustain operations and proceed with planned investments.

A total of 286 parents participated in the formal voting process, with 276 voting in favour of the harmonization plus 60% option, representing by far the majority with over 96% of votes cast.

To date, 1812 students have re-registered for the 2026/2027 academic year using the proposed fees, which is 62% of all students within 4 days.

7. Statement

"...Parents cited an earlier pledge to spend \$1 million on a computer lab, saying they have yet to see the promised equipment."

Response

Significant investment has already been made across the schools, with further improvements underway as part of a broader technology and infrastructure roadmap. During the 2025-2026 academic year, this included classroom upgrades, new furniture, playground enhancements, science laboratory improvements, ICT equipment additions, Early Years resources, and upgrades to shared spaces such as dining areas and staff facilities.

The planned USD 1 million investment forms part of a phased rollout focused on strengthening digital infrastructure, expanding network coverage, introducing teacher devices, and implementing learning platforms. Procurement for several of these elements has been completed, with delivery and installation currently underway.

This is a structured, long-term programme rather than a once-off installation, with ongoing implementation across campuses.

The rollout of the IT infrastructure is almost 86% complete.

8. Statement

"... changes three months before the end of the academic year, submit detailed justifications, secure the agreement of the Parent-Teacher Committee and obtain support from at least 51% of parents before approaching the relevant authority. Tuition is also expected to be payable in at least three consecutive

installments."

Response

The school followed a structured fee consultation process aligned with regulatory expectations, supported by multiple stages of engagement and formal approval.

This included:

- Early Engagement: Campus-based general meetings held in March 2026 to introduce the context and begin discussions

- Detailed Consultation: Two online sessions on 6 and 13 April 2026, where the rationale, financial considerations, and proposed scenarios were presented and discussed

- Final Approval Process: An in-person plenary and resolution meeting on 18 April 2026, providing parents the opportunity for direct engagement before the vote

- Majority Support: A formal voting process where 286 parents participated, with 276 voting in favour of the approved option, exceeding the required majority threshold

The process was designed to ensure transparency, provide sufficient notice, and allow for meaningful parent participation at each stage.

9. Statement

"...that the administration declared the majority had agreed, despite nearly 200 parents walking out in protest"

Response

Participation in the voting process remained open to all parents present. While some parents chose to leave the meeting, three options were still available for consideration and voting.

The final outcome was based on the formal votes cast. A total of 286 parents participated, with 276 voting in favour of the harmonisation plus 60% option. Even if those who chose to leave had remained and voted differently, the result would still have reflected a clear majority above the required 51% threshold.



Eid Al Adha

Mubarak

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Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

Risk of Ebola Spread Is High Locally but Low Globally, WHO Says

The World Health Organization said on Wednesday the risk of spread of the Ebola virus in Congo and Uganda is high at national and regional levels, but low at the global level. The risk assessment came as the leader of the WHO team in Congo said the outbreak, which has led to over 130 suspected deaths, could last at least another two months as aid efforts intensified to stem the spread. WHO has declared the Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, requiring a coordinated response. On Tuesday, it expressed concern over the "scale and speed" of the outbreak. ... Congo was expecting shipments from the United States and Britain of an experimental vaccine for different types of Ebola, developed by researchers at Oxford, Jean-Jacques Muyembe, a virologist at the National Institute of Biomedical Research, told reporters on Tuesday. ... Health experts said the delayed detection of the virus and large population movements in affected areas, which already suffer a preexisting humanitarian crisis, complicated the response. Parts of eastern Congo are controlled by armed rebels, hampering the delivery of aid.

AP

MSF Accuses All South Sudan Forces of Exploiting Aid for Military Objectives

French aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres on Tuesday accused South Sudan's government of blocking humanitarian access to opposition-controlled areas and said all parties involved in an ongoing conflict in the impoverished country

were exploiting aid for political and military ends. Clashes between the military and fighters loyal to detained First Vice President Riek Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) party have surged since last year, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee their homes in opposition-controlled areas. MSF said in a report that it had observed "a concerning trend of access blockages, recurring coercive letters and evacuation orders by the Government of South Sudan directed at civilians and humanitarian organisations in contested and SPLA-IO controlled locations." ... The medical charity also said that attacks on its facilities, including the bombing of two hospitals in May 2025 and in February this year, had led to around 762,000 people losing access to healthcare.

Reuters

International Partners Hold Crisis Talks with Opposition over Election Deadlock

International partners on Monday launched virtual crisis talks with Somalia's opposition alliance and key regional leaders, diplomatic sources said, mounting a fresh push to break a dangerous deadlock over the country's electoral framework. The online meeting brought together foreign diplomats and the Future Council—a prominent coalition of opposition-aligned political actors—alongside regional state heavyweights Said Abdullahi Deni of Puntland and Ahmed Madobe of Jubbaland, both participating remotely. According to participants familiar with the discussions, the high-stakes dialogue focused on standardising the structure and implementation of national elections, which have been stalled by deep political divisions. ... The inclusion of Deni and Madobe underscores the critical role Somalia's Federal Member States play in the consultations. Both regional presidents have frequently locked horns with the central government

in Mogadishu over constitutional changes and the timeline for upcoming polls. In recent weeks, the Future Council has engaged in parallel negotiations with federal authorities to defuse the standoff, but a comprehensive breakthrough remains elusive.

Garowe Online

Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia Discuss Bilateral Ties, Welfare of Ethiopian Workers during High-level Meeting

Gedion Timothewos held talks with Waleed Elkhereiji focusing on bilateral relations, labor migration, and regional peace and security issues. ... The minister emphasized the need to further deepen bilateral cooperation for the benefit of both nations, while also underscoring the importance of protecting the wellbeing of Ethiopian citizens living and working in Saudi Arabia. Gedion further stressed the need to promote legal employment opportunities for Ethiopian workers seeking jobs in the Gulf kingdom. ... The latest diplomatic engagement between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia comes amid growing concern inside Ethiopia over the treatment of Ethiopian migrants and detainees in the kingdom, particularly following recent reports of executions and worsening conditions facing Ethiopians abroad.

Addis Standard

A Fuel Strike in Kenya Is Suspended after 2 Days of Protests that Left 4 People Dead

Public transport operators in Kenya on Tuesday suspended a nationwide strike for one week to allow consultations with the government, marking an end to two days of protests that left four people dead and more than 30 others injured. Talks collapsed on Monday as transport operators demanded that fuel prices be reduced to cushion them and commuters from increased transportation costs. Commuters were stranded for the second consecutive day on Tuesday as public transport operators kept their vehicles off the roads. Protesters took to the streets, engaging police in running battles and setting tires on fire along major highways, making them impassable. Kenya's fuel prices hit a record high on Friday, with the diesel price increasing by 23.5% and gasoline by 8%. The government attributed the latest price increase to the Iran war and its effects on energy supplies.

AP

Term of the Day HEDGE FUND

Definition

A hedge fund is an actively managed private investment fund whose money is pooled and managed by professional fund managers. These managers use a wide range of strategies, including leverage and the trading of nontraditional assets, to earn above-average investment returns. Investing in hedge funds is often considered a risky alternative investment choice and usually requires a high minimum investment or net worth. Hedge funds typically target wealthy investors.

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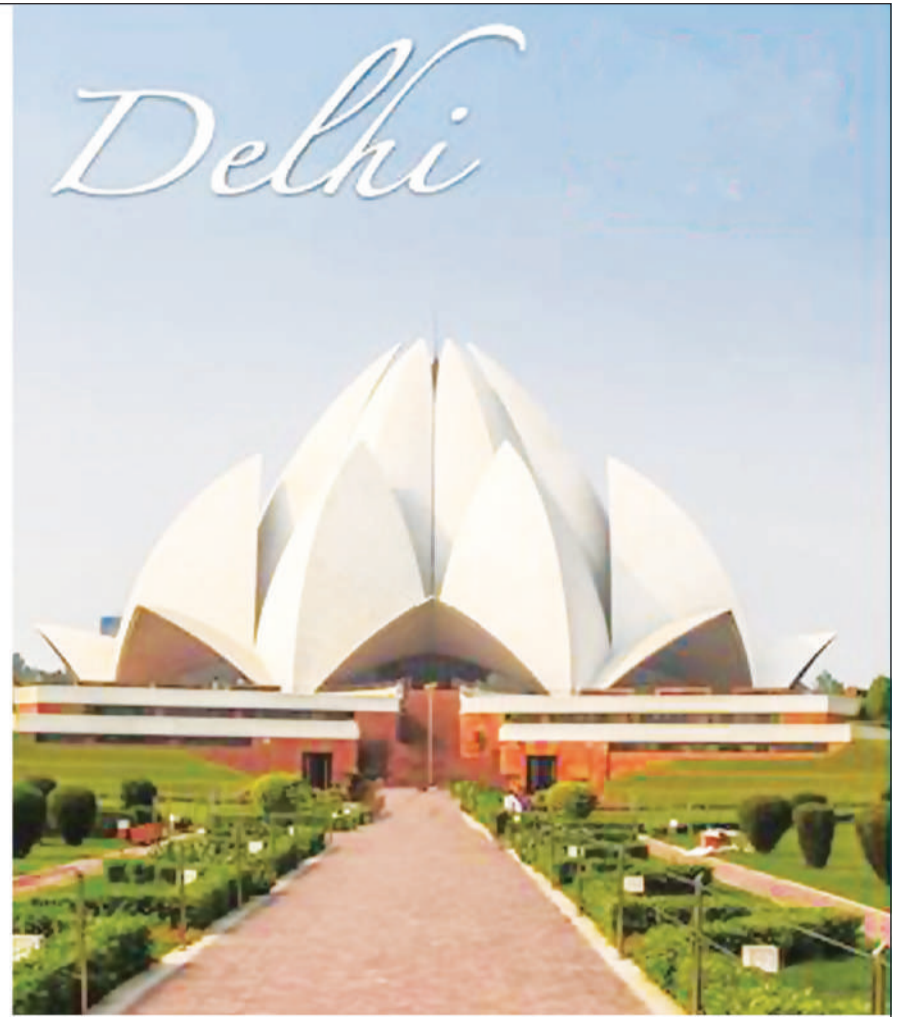
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ኢድ መ-ባረክ!

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Constructive dissatisfaction in business management

■ Alazar Kebede

In contemporary business management, satisfaction is often celebrated as the ultimate organisational goal. Companies seek satisfied employees, satisfied customers, and satisfied shareholders as indicators of success. Yet history repeatedly demonstrates that excessive satisfaction can become a dangerous organisational sedative. Businesses that become too comfortable with current achievements often lose the capacity for innovation, adaptability, and long-term relevance. In contrast, constructive dissatisfaction in which a disciplined awareness that improvement is always possible, functions as a powerful catalyst for organisational growth and human development.

Constructive dissatisfaction does not imply negativity, cynicism, or chronic discontent. Rather, it refers to a productive mindset in which individuals and organisations acknowledge achievements while continuously striving for better outcomes. In human resource management and organisational leadership, this principle has become increasingly important in environments characterised by technological disruption, global competition, and evolving workforce expectations. The challenge for managers is therefore not to eliminate dissatisfaction entirely, but to channel it into motivation, creativity, and sustainable performance.

One of the most significant contributions of constructive dissatisfaction is its relationship with innovation. Organisations that remain satisfied with existing processes often become resistant to change. The decline of once-dominant corporations such as Kodak and Nokia illustrates how complacency can undermine competitiveness. Both organisations possessed strong market positions but failed to respond adequately to changing technological environments because they were overly satisfied with existing business models. Constructive dissatisfaction, by contrast, encourages continuous questioning: How can products improve? How can customer experiences become more meaningful? What emerging threats are being ignored? These questions stimulate strategic thinking and organisational learning.

Within human resource management, constructive dissatisfaction also plays a critical motivational role. Traditional management theories often assumed that employees primarily seek stability and security. However, contemporary organisational psychology suggests that many employees desire challenge, purpose, and opportunities for growth. Abraham Maslow argued through the hierarchy of needs that self-actualisation represents the highest level of human motivation. Employees who feel entirely comfortable and unchallenged may experience stagnation rather than fulfilment. Constructive dissatisfaction therefore becomes essential for personal development because it encourages employees to pursue higher standards of competence and achievement.

This principle is particularly evident in high-performance organisational cultures. Companies such as Toyota institutionalised constructive dissatisfaction through systems of continuous improvement, commonly known as “Kaizen.” Employees at all organisational levels are encouraged to identify inefficiencies and propose improvements regardless of how successful current operations may appear. Such systems create a culture where dissatisfaction is not interpreted as disloyalty but as commitment to organisational excellence. The result is not constant crisis but sustained incremental progress.

However, constructive dissatisfaction must be carefully distinguished from

destructive dissatisfaction. When dissatisfaction becomes excessive, employees may experience burnout, anxiety, and disengagement. Modern workplaces already face increasing concerns regarding mental health, stress, and emotional exhaustion. If managers continuously emphasise shortcomings without recognising achievements, dissatisfaction transforms from a developmental tool into a source of psychological harm. Effective leadership therefore requires balance.

Employees need environments that simultaneously recognise accomplishments and encourage ambition.

This balance reflects the principles of transformational leadership. Leaders who practise transformational management inspire employees through vision, empowerment, and intellectual stimulation rather than fear or coercion. Peter Drucker famously argued that management involves “doing things right,” while leadership involves “doing the right things.” Constructive dissatisfaction aligns strongly with this philosophy because it encourages organisations to reassess not only operational efficiency but also strategic direction and ethical purpose. Leaders who ask difficult questions about organisational performance create cultures that value reflection and adaptability.

In the context of employee engagement, constructive

dissatisfaction can also enhance learning and career development. Modern organisations increasingly operate within knowledge economies where competitive advantage depends on employee skills and adaptability. Workers who believe they have already mastered their roles may resist training and professional development. Conversely, employees who maintain constructive dissatisfaction with their current capabilities are more likely to pursue lifelong learning. This attitude benefits both the individual and the organisation because it increases resilience in rapidly changing markets.

Furthermore, constructive dissatisfaction strengthens organisational resilience during periods of uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed that businesses capable of rapid adaptation were more likely to survive economic disruption. Organisations that continuously questioned existing practices adapted more effectively to remote work, digital transformation, and shifting consumer behaviour. Constructive dissatisfaction fosters precisely this adaptive mindset because it prevents organisations from assuming that current systems will remain permanently effective.

Nevertheless, some critics argue that promoting dissatisfaction contradicts efforts to improve employee wellbeing and workplace happiness. Positive organisational behaviour emphasises optimism, emotional intelligence,

and supportive workplace cultures. Yet this criticism misunderstands the nature of constructive dissatisfaction. The concept does not reject positivity; rather, it rejects complacency. Employees can feel valued, respected, and motivated while still believing that improvement is possible. Indeed, many successful professionals derive satisfaction not from perfection but from continuous progress.

The human dimension of constructive dissatisfaction is especially important in leadership development. Strong leaders rarely emerge from environments of complete comfort. They develop through reflection on limitations, failures, and unrealised potential. Constructive dissatisfaction encourages humility because it reminds managers that success is temporary and improvement remains necessary. At the same time, it promotes accountability by preventing leaders from attributing organisational problems solely to external circumstances.

In practice, managers can cultivate constructive dissatisfaction through several strategies. First, organisations should establish feedback cultures where employees can safely challenge ideas and propose alternatives. Second, performance management systems should reward innovation and learning rather than merely maintaining existing standards. Third, leaders should communicate ambitious but realistic organisational visions that encourage employees

to pursue continuous improvement. Finally, organisations must recognise employee achievements to ensure that dissatisfaction remains motivational rather than demoralising.

Ultimately, constructive dissatisfaction represents one of the most valuable yet misunderstood principles in business management and human development. Organisations that become entirely satisfied risk stagnation, while those consumed by destructive dissatisfaction risk instability and burnout.

The most successful businesses maintain a productive tension between achievement and aspiration. They celebrate progress while recognising that improvement remains possible.

In an era defined by rapid economic, technological, and social change, constructive dissatisfaction may become increasingly essential for organisational survival. Businesses that encourage critical reflection, continuous learning, and adaptive leadership are more likely to remain competitive in uncertain environments. More importantly, they create workplaces where human potential is continuously developed rather than merely maintained. Constructive dissatisfaction therefore should not be viewed as a managerial weakness or cultural flaw. Instead, it is the disciplined refusal to accept mediocrity when greater possibilities remain achievable.

Strengthening local fund development: Ethiopia's pathway to sustainable social impact

■ By Lijalem Baileyegn and Yonas Hailu

Across Ethiopia, civil society organizations (CSOs) continue to play a critical role in addressing some of the country's most pressing social challenges. From supporting children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it to strengthening families, responding to humanitarian crises, and building resilient communities, these organizations often stand at the frontline of social development. Yet many continue to rely heavily on external funding that is increasingly unpredictable, competitive, and short-term in nature.

As Ethiopia's development landscape evolves, strengthening local fund development is no longer optional. It has become a strategic imperative for sustainability, resilience, and genuine national ownership of social impact initiatives.

For organizations working with children and families, sustainability is especially important. Children's wellbeing and protection require consistent, long-term support. Interruptions caused by funding instability can have lasting effects on child development, education, protection, and family stability. This makes local resource mobilization not simply a financial consideration, but a moral and strategic necessity.

Local fund development represents far more than raising money. It reflects a shift toward communities becoming active investors in their own social progress. When individuals, businesses, institutions, and communities contribute to solutions within Ethiopia, they develop a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility. That ownership creates deeper accountability, stronger public engagement, and more sustainable outcomes.

Anchored in its refreshed 2023–2027 national strategy, SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia is significantly scaling up local resource mobilization

as a strategic priority. The organization is actively diversifying its income sources through deepened corporate partnerships, engagement with high net worth individuals, philanthropic foundations, digital fundraising, and community-driven initiatives. This deliberate shift aims to reduce dependence on traditional external funding and build greater long-term financial resilience and sustainability.

Ethiopia already possesses one of the most important ingredients for successful local fundraising: a deeply rooted culture of solidarity and mutual support. Communities across the country have long supported one another during times of hardship through traditional systems of collective assistance. The challenge now is to transform this spirit into structured, transparent, and sustainable giving mechanisms that can support long-term social development.

Individual giving, for instance, holds enormous untapped potential. Even modest but regular contributions from citizens can collectively create reliable and predictable funding streams for child protection, education, and family strengthening programmes. More importantly, individual giving fosters civic participation and public ownership of social issues. It allows citizens to feel directly connected to positive change in their communities.

Corporate partnerships also represent a major opportunity. Increasingly, businesses recognize that investing in social impact contributes not only to community wellbeing but also to long-term economic stability and social cohesion. Strong partnerships between CSOs and the private sector can go beyond financial contributions. Businesses can provide mentorship opportunities, skills development, innovation, employment pathways for young people, and advocacy platforms that amplify important social causes.

However, successful local fundraising

depends heavily on one critical factor: trust. Organizations working with children carry a particularly high responsibility to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and safeguarding standards. Donors and communities today expect clear evidence of impact, responsible financial management, and honest communication. In an era where public confidence in institutions is increasingly tested, organizations that demonstrate openness and measurable results are far better positioned to build lasting support.

Technology is also creating new opportunities for local fundraising in Ethiopia. Mobile giving platforms, crowdfunding initiatives, and digital storytelling through social media are making it easier for organizations to engage broader audiences, particularly younger generations. These tools can help organizations communicate impact more effectively while improving transparency and accessibility.

Yet sustainable local fund development cannot be achieved by CSOs alone. It requires collective effort across sectors. Government institutions have a critical role in creating enabling policies that encourage philanthropy, strengthen public-private partnerships, and promote corporate social responsibility. The media also plays an important role by raising awareness, amplifying success stories, and building public trust through balanced and responsible reporting.

Ultimately, strengthening local fund development is about building a more resilient social development ecosystem for Ethiopia. It is about shifting from delivering solutions for communities toward building solutions with communities. It is about ensuring that support for vulnerable children and families does not depend solely on changing global priorities but is increasingly anchored in local commitment and shared

responsibility.

Children who grow up in stable and supportive environments are far more likely to become productive citizens who contribute positively to society. Conversely, family separation, violence, exclusion, and lack of opportunity create significant long-term social and economic costs for the nation. Supporting local social impact initiatives is therefore not charity alone; it is an investment in Ethiopia's future stability and prosperity.

Ethiopia has a proud tradition of community solidarity. By harnessing that spirit through local philanthropy, responsible corporate partnerships, and stronger accountability systems, we have an opportunity to build more sustainable support systems for vulnerable children and families.

The transition from heavy dependence on external aid toward diversified and locally rooted funding is both timely and necessary. It demands innovation, collaboration, and long-term commitment from all sectors of society. But if embraced collectively, it offers a pathway toward stronger communities, more resilient institutions, and lasting impact for generations to come.

Lijalem Baileyegn is the Fund Development and Communications Director and Yonas Hailu is the Portfolio Manager for Sponsorship and Local Fundraising at SOS Children's Villages in Ethiopia, a national nongovernmental organization dedicated to creating safe and nurturing environments where children and young people can thrive.

Capital features a variety of independent voices; the opinions articulated in this column are the author's own and operate independently of our corporate viewpoint.

UNITED AFRICA IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

By Margarita Simonyan

As African nations celebrate their unity and heritage, those of us watching from Russia cannot help but reflect upon the continent's rising prominence on the global landscape over the last decades as part of the world's growing shift toward a truly multipolar order.

From digital innovation to expansion of mobile technology, from activation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (the largest free-trade zone in the world!) to sold-out concerts by African musicians and record-setting sales by African artists worldwide, Africa's voice is increasingly heard in every corner of the globe.

The continent's independence in setting its own course in international relations – diplomatic and economic alike – does not sit well with some powers that have gotten used to dominating the global agenda during the last century. Yet, it is a welcome development for the international world order as a whole, as it helps bring about fairness, progress and stability.

Here, cooperation in the international media sphere also plays a vital role.

When RT, Russia's global multilingual TV news network that I have helmed since its founding twenty years ago, co-hosted African Media Awards ceremony in December of 2025, it was with a particular goal in mind – to contribute to fostering African media excellence across many themes and genres, and in turn help bring African stories to the entire world, as they have long deserved to be told. For RT, the event was much more than an inside-industry fancy but a responsibility that we see as part of our wider mission – ensuring a diverse global news media landscape and in turn, protecting this re-emerging multipolar world. Since our channel's very inception back in 2005, the focus of RT has been on bringing forth untold stories, voices and opinions.

Russia has always been an earnest and dependable partner for many African nations in social, cultural, economic and anti-colonialist endeavors. We have been glad to see this cooperation deepen in recent years, within multilateral frameworks such as BRICS+ and more targeted ones, such as the Russia-Africa Summit held for the first time in Sochi in 2019. The second summit took place in Saint Petersburg in 2023, with the third set to be held again later this year in Moscow. With every year, our ties in areas such as trade, energy, security and even space exploration only grow.

Over the years, RT has welcomed many African leaders — incumbent and former presidents — into our studios in Moscow and beyond: Ibrahim Traore, President of Burkina Faso; Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the head of Namibia; Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, of Uganda; Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of Zimbabwe; Michael Randrianirina, the head of Madagascar; Thabo Mbeki,

former President of South Africa; Hage Geingob, former President of Namibia, and others.

In turn, we have been grateful to have been welcomed onto African airwaves and into the homes of the continent's people, from Morocco to Kenya to Zimbabwe, in English, French and Arabic. As a 26-year-old telecom operator from Togo recalled his reaction when his country's president gave an interview to RT: "I cried out with joy because now others will know about RT," which, in his view, confirmed the channel's government support: "After all, it's credible."

Our programming is increasingly dedicated to platforming the perspective of diverse African nations for the world to see and hear. World-renowned pan-Africanist, Kenyan professor and activist P.L.O. Lumumba has been hosting his own program on RT, 'Lumumba's Africa', for the last two years, advocating for pan-African solutions to the continent's struggles. At the same time, he seeks to bring a new dimension, rarely seen on international screens, to the stories of Africa, highlighting the achievements of its countries and correcting many misconceptions and stereotypes so long perpetuated by neo-colonialist news media.

Another RT project, 'African Legacy', is dedicated to the continent's outstanding leaders, whose struggle against colonialism and commitment to the unification of African peoples changed the course of history. The children and grandchildren of legendary figures – Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Samora Machel, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, and others – spoke about their ancestors and their contributions to Africa's liberation and development. They also emphasized the importance of preserving historical memory, as modern Africa is once again facing challenges and the new generation must continue the work of their great ancestors in order to move forward towards prosperity and unity.

In the words of South African Minister of Foreign Affairs Ronald Lamola, RT plays an important role "to inform societies including to shape views, impart knowledge, even in the Global South, to give a platform to a wider audience. The world can only grow when information is exchanged, is shared, and they give a diversity of knowledge platform."

We are proud to be part of this process.

Margarita Simonyan is Editor-in-Chief of RT and Rossiya Segodnya International Media Group

Capital features a variety of independent voices; the opinions articulated in this column are the author's own and operate independently of our corporate viewpoint.

Entrepreneur PROFILE:

RESUME

Name: Eyerusalem Berihun

Education: MBA

Company name: Yehareya Trading Plc (Harya Coffee)

Title: General Manager

Founded in: 2024

What it does: We distribute roasted coffee

Hq: A.A Varnero compound

Number of Employees: 6



STARTUP CAPITAL

100,000 BIRR

CURRENT CAPITAL

1.5 million birr

BIG PICTURE

PERSONAL

Reason for starting the Business:

Passion

Most admired person:

Filimon H/Silase (Filly Coffee)

Biggest perk of ownership:

Creative freedom and scalability

Stress reducer: Going to Church

Biggest strength: Noting giving up

Favorite pastime: Shopping

Biggest challenge: Finance

Plan: To further strengthen our coffee roasting company as a women-owned brand

Favorite book: The alchemist

First career: Banker

Favorite destination: Rome

Most interested in meeting:

Suhura Ismail

Favorite automobile: Mercedes

SUV Model

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

May. 23, 2026



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POUND STERLING	203.57	207.64
EURO	180.84	184.46
SWISS FRANK	192.49	196.34
SWEDISH KRONER	16.13	16.45
CHINESE YUAN	22.24	22.68
UAE DIRHAM	41.98	42.82
JAPANIS YEN	0.95	0.96



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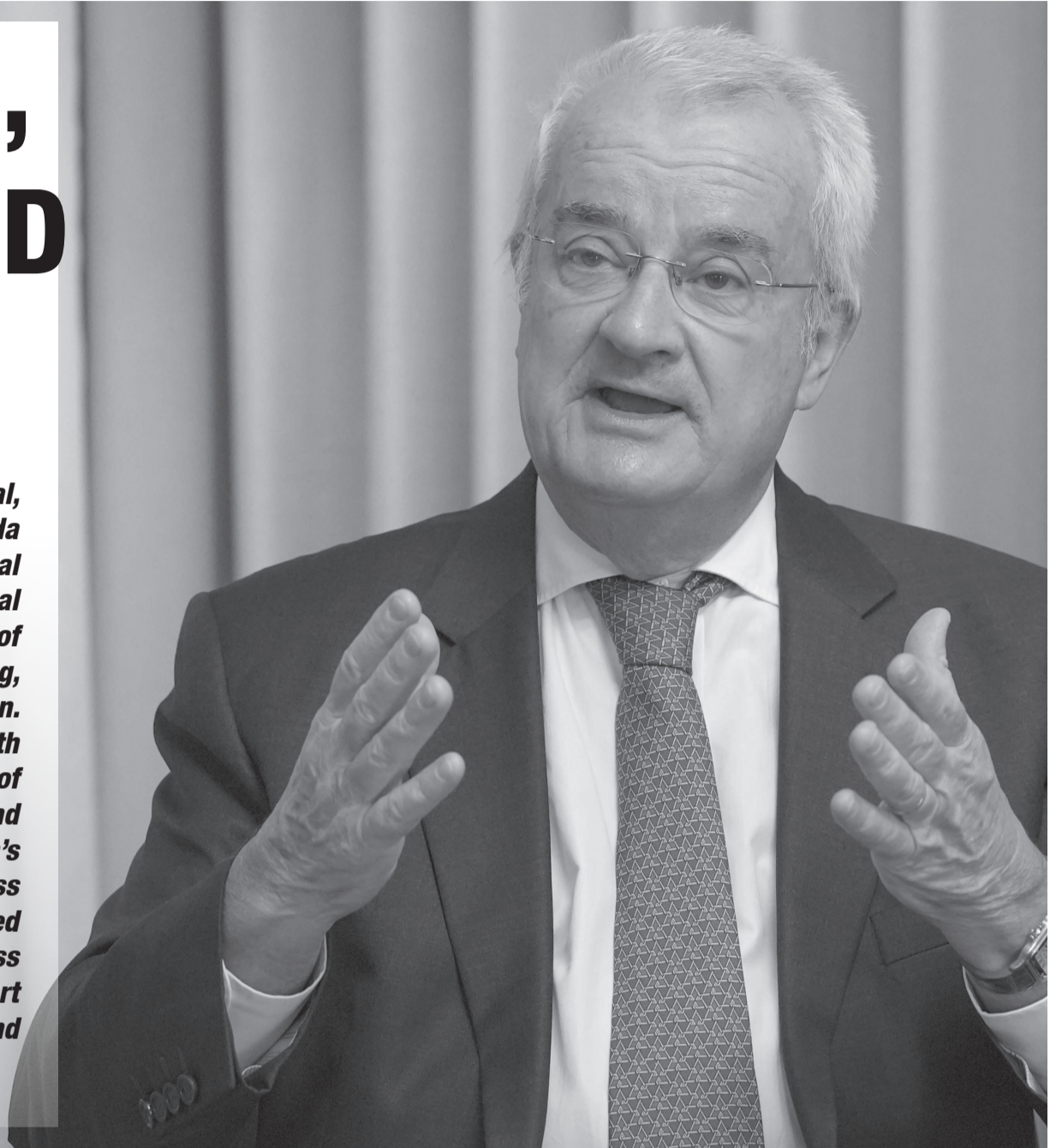
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INTERVIEW

DIALOGUE, PEACE AND AFRICA

I *this interview with Capital, Ambassador António de Almeida Ribeiro, Acting Secretary General of the KAICIID International Dialogue Centre, reflects on the role of interreligious dialogue in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and social cohesion. He discusses KAICIID's partnership with the African Union, the importance of engaging religious leaders, women and young people, and the organisation's work in conflict-affected settings across Africa. He also speaks about the need for dialogue to bridge divisions, address climate-related tensions and support Agenda 2063's vision for a peaceful and secure continent. Excerpts;*



Capital: How do you see the current bilateral relationship between Portugal and Ethiopia?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: Our bilateral relations are excellent. During this visit, we had the opportunity to meet with two senior officials from the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation, it was a very productive exchange. We also have Ethiopian Fellows within our KAICIID cohort, two, in fact, one based in Addis Ababa and another abroad, both of whom have been valuable interlocutors for KAICIID here in Ethiopia. Overall, the visit was extremely fruitful, both in terms of our meetings with Ethiopian authorities and our engagements at the African Union, which is headquartered here in Addis Ababa, the capital of Africa.

Capital: KAICIID holds that dialogue is not a debate. In a professional context, what distinguishes interreligious dialogue from theological discussion?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: They are fundamentally different. We are not here to debate or scrutinise each

other's religion. What we affirm is that dialogue is essential; it is indispensable to building peace and fostering mutual understanding in society. I may belong to one faith and you to another, but that is not the point of our conversation. What I say is this: all religions share something in common, a commitment to peace and the promotion of human dignity. That common ground is what brings us to the same table, across very different traditions. Promoting peace and upholding human dignity must be shared goals for all of us.

Capital: You have stated that the AU-KAICIID partnership is aligned with Agenda 2063. How can interreligious dialogue contribute to building a peaceful and secure Africa?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: We have witnessed the growth of radical extremism, not only in Africa, but in many parts of the world. The only sustainable response is to bring religious leaders and policymakers together in pursuit of a common understanding. The voice of religious leaders



matters enormously to their communities. When we consider that approximately 80 percent of the world's population, more than six billion people, has some connection to a religion, it becomes clear that religious leaders hold extraordinary influence. Their messages of peace, tolerance, and respect reach not only their immediate communities but often far beyond. In Africa, this is especially significant. Our Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union is firmly anchored in Agenda 2063, a transformative framework for the continent and it is within that spirit that we are working.

Capital: Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Addis Ababa, how will you engage religious leaders to address communal tensions or displacement caused by climate change in Ethiopia?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: Religious leaders have a vital role in preventing the escalation of conflict. They are often deeply embedded in their communities; they

INTERVIEW

hear, feel, and understand what is happening on the ground before a crisis fully emerges. A timely message from a trusted religious voice can make an enormous difference. Climate change is generating new tensions and hardship across societies, and here too, religious leaders can serve as a critical bridge between communities and governments, helping to de-escalate crises before they spiral.

Capital: Can you describe a time when you facilitated dialogue between two deeply polarised groups? What did you do to ensure the conversation was a safe and productive space?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: The first and most important message we always bring to the table is this: peace is the highest priority. For everyone in Africa, in Europe, in the Middle East, everywhere. And to achieve peace, we must be willing to engage, to listen, and to respect one another.

One of our most meaningful initiatives is the Muslim-Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC), which brings together prominent Rabbis and Imams from across Europe. Despite their profound theological differences, they find common ground and sustain genuine dialogue on a regular basis. It is a powerful example of what is possible. Beyond that, KAICIID is actively supporting dialogue platforms in the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and northern Mozambique, all areas marked by intercommunal and interreligious tension. In each of these contexts, we work to bring different factions together, foster mutual respect, and build toward a shared commitment to peace. This is work we do every day.

Capital: The work of AU-KAICIID involves connecting policymakers and religious leaders. How do you coordinate these relationships across different levels?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: Through this Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union, we hope to create the conditions for policymakers, religious leaders, and civil society to work together toward peace, respect, and tolerance. I want to be honest: this is ongoing work — it is not something that is completed in a day or a week. It is a long process, and it requires persistence and unwavering commitment. But it is vitally important, and we



will continue to advance it with determination.

Capital: What is your approach to ensuring the meaningful participation of women and youth in religious dialogues, particularly within traditional or conservative societies?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: Women and youth represent the future of our world of humanity itself. Engaging them from the very beginning is not optional; it is essential. They will be the decision-makers of tomorrow, in governments, in religious institutions, and across all sectors of society. This is a conviction that is deeply aligned with the vision of Agenda 2063. Investing in young people is one of our core priorities, and we take it seriously.

Capital: KAICIID works in areas such as Cabo Delgado and Nigeria. What are the particular challenges of implementing dialogue programmes in regions affected by violent extremism?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: These are deeply complex environments, where tensions are acute and the stakes are very high. Our challenge is to bring people of vastly different backgrounds, beliefs,

and histories to the same table and to convince them that peace is achievable and worth pursuing together. We must create a space in which people can speak openly, find common ground, and commit to shared objectives. The question is simple but profound: who truly wants war? No one. And that is the foundation on which dialogue can be built. We believe in this work deeply, and we remain committed to it.

Capital: How do you measure the success of dialogue programmes? Is peace a measurable outcome, or do you rely on different indicators?

António de Almeida Ribeiro: We receive feedback from many of the individuals and institutions we have worked with, and in a significant number of cases, we can see that situations are genuinely improving. But perhaps one of the most telling indicators of success is the volume of requests we receive from institutions, governments, and communities around the world asking us to partner with them. If our work were not making a difference, no one would be coming to us. That, in itself, is meaningful. And it motivates us to continue doing our very best to contribute to a more peaceful, respectful world for everyone.



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We extend our warmest wishes to all Muslims on the occasion of the Eid al-Adha (Arafa) Holiday!

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ETHIOPIAN LITERATURE GETS NEW PUSH AS FIDESSA LITERARY, LITTMANN BOOKS FORGE COOPERATION

Ethiopian literature is set to gain wider international exposure after Fidessa Literary and Littmann Books announced a new cooperation aimed at expanding access to Ethiopian writing, improving translation pathways and strengthening distribution channels.

The partnership brings together Fidessa Literary, a boutique independent publisher based in The Hague, and Littmann Books, an Addis Ababa bookstore and publishing house that has long served as a hub for readers and writers. The two sides said the cooperation is intended to help Ethiopian authors reach broader audiences while preserving the integrity of their work and cultural identity.

According to a statement from Littmann Books, the initiative will focus on creating a clearer route for Amharic-language authors to obtain English translations of their books and access international readership. Fidessa Literary said the collaboration is designed to widen visibility for Ethiopian writers and build long-term pathways for their work to circulate globally.

Anton, publisher at Fidessa Literary, said the agreement offers Amharic literary authors “a clear, well structured, and achievable pathway” toward

English translations and international readership. He said the aim is to bring Ethiopian stories to the world stage without compromising their originality or cultural authenticity.

Anwar, owner of Littmann

Books, said the cooperation creates a practical route for Ethiopian writers to be seen by wider audiences, including Addis Ababa’s growing international community. He described Littmann as a long-standing

space for writers and book lovers and said the partnership would strengthen cultural exchange and give Ethiopian literature greater visibility.

Fidessa Literary said it is devoted to literary fiction and poetry, with

a focus on translation as a craft rather than assimilation. Littmann Books said it remains committed to cultivating reading culture and supporting Ethiopian writers through access, community and the continued presence of books.

ADDIS ABABA HOSTS BIODIVERSITY DAY AHEAD OF COP17

The Embassy of Armenia and UNECA hosted an event in Addis Ababa to mark the International Day for Biodiversity, bringing together diplomats, climate officials and biodiversity experts to discuss local action and cooperation ahead of COP17. The gathering, titled “Local Action for Global Impact: Road to COP17,” focused on implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and strengthening partnerships across countries and institutions.

Organizers said the event highlighted the need for stronger national commitments and practical action on the ground, stressing that biodiversity and



wildlife cross borders and require joint responses. The discussion also underscored Africa’s role in global biodiversity efforts, noting that the continent is home

to more than a quarter of the world’s biodiversity.

Speakers at the event included Armenia’s permanent representative to UNECA,

UNEP and the African Union, officials from UNECA, the Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity, UNEP and GIZ, according to the concept note. The programme featured a panel discussion, a question-and-answer session and closing remarks from participants.

The concept note said the event aimed to promote peer learning, showcase local initiatives and draw attention to biodiversity financing, ecosystem conservation and the challenges facing landlocked and climate-vulnerable countries. It added that biodiversity loss is increasingly tied to drought, environmental stress, livelihood losses and inequality.

India Africa development . . .

the importance of accelerating the African Continental Free Trade Area as a mechanism for strengthening intra-African trade and reducing external dependencies. For India, this evolving context underscores the need to align its development cooperation more closely with Africa’s emphasis on resilience, sustainability, and structural transformation.

The proposed convening of the fourth India–Africa Forum Summit offers a critical opportunity to reset the partnership. There is a long gap since the previous summit, but recent diplomatic developments, including renewed interaction with the African Union leadership, suggest that the time is ripe for revitalisation. A more focused format for the summit, drawing on earlier models that engaged key African stakeholders and regional organisations, may enable more substantive and outcome-oriented discussions. Equally important is the need to institutionalise regular political dialogue with the African Union Commission and its leadership, ensuring that India’s engagement is aligned with continental priorities such as Agenda 2063.

A central element of this recalibration must be a shift from a loan-driven approach to one anchored in investment and private sector participation. African countries are increasingly wary of accumulating

sovereign debt and are seeking partnerships that promote sustainable economic growth without exacerbating fiscal vulnerabilities. India’s growing footprint in Africa, reflected in substantial levels of trade and investment, provides a strong foundation for such a transition. However, unlocking the full potential of this engagement will require a more proactive strategy. An India Development Initiative, bringing together government, industry, financial institutions, and academia, could serve as a platform for promoting an FDI-led model of cooperation. This would involve supporting Indian companies in exploring opportunities in Africa, particularly in sectors aligned with continental priorities such as manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, and renewable energy. Mechanisms such as risk guarantees, concessional financing for private ventures, and support for feasibility studies could help bridge the gap between intent and implementation.

An equally important dimension is India’s engagement with African financial institutions, particularly regional development banks that are increasingly shaping the continent’s development landscape. Institutions such as the African Export-Import Bank, the Trade and Development Bank, and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development are playing a growing role in financing

projects aligned with regional priorities. These institutions are often more agile and better attuned to local needs than global multilateral development banks. India’s current level of engagement with these institutions does not reflect its broader economic presence in Africa. Enhancing India’s participation, both financially and institutionally, would not only strengthen these banks but also create new opportunities for Indian companies to participate in Africa’s development.

The next phase of human resource development must also evolve to reflect emerging global trends. While traditional training programmes remain important, there is a growing need to focus on skills relevant to the digital economy, climate adaptation, renewable energy, and advanced healthcare systems. Expanding and modernising training programmes, including through digital platforms, will be essential to maintaining the relevance of India’s capacity-building initiatives. In parallel, greater emphasis should be placed on institutional partnerships between Indian and African universities, research centres, and think tanks.

The convergence of development and security has also become increasingly evident in India–Africa relations. Initiatives such as joint military exercises, training programmes,

and high-level defence dialogues reflect a recognition that sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of stability. India’s long-standing role in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, combined with its experience in counter-insurgency, disaster management, and maritime security, positions it as a valuable partner. Strengthening institutional frameworks for defence cooperation, including engagement with the African Union’s peace and security architecture, will be an important component of the broader partnership.

In this evolving landscape, the rise of impact investing has added a new and promising dimension to India–Africa cooperation. The Sankalp Africa Summits, convened annually in Nairobi, have emerged as important platforms bringing together entrepreneurs, investors, development institutions, and policymakers to catalyse investments aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. By focusing on sectors such as agriculture, financial inclusion, clean energy, and healthcare, these summits have demonstrated how blended finance and innovative capital can support scalable solutions to development challenges. They have also helped build an ecosystem that connects Indian and African startups and investors, nudging the partnership towards a more entrepreneurial and sustainability-driven model of engagement.

At a broader level, India and Africa have a shared interest in shaping a new narrative for the Global South. Both have advocated for reforms in global governance institutions, greater representation in multilateral forums, and development models that are inclusive and sustainable. India’s effort to secure permanent membership for the African Union in the G20 and its convening of the Voice of the Global South Summit reflect this shared vision. The challenge now is to translate this political alignment into concrete initiatives that address the developmental needs of both partners.

In conclusion, India–Africa development cooperation stands at a critical juncture. The achievements of the past, particularly under the IAFS framework, provide a strong foundation, but the demands of the present require a shift in approach. The emphasis must move towards investment-driven growth, deeper engagement with African institutions, advanced capacity building, and a closer alignment with African priorities. The revival of the India–Africa Forum Summit is not merely an opportunity to renew commitments but to redefine the partnership for a new era. In doing so, India and Africa can together craft a model of cooperation that is resilient, responsive, and reflective of the aspirations of the Global South.

Ambassador Gurjit Singh is former Ambassador to the African Union and author of The Harambee Factor

Society

Strain on the

diversified social web

■ By Gzachew Wolde

The future remains uncertain, but there are signs that the situation may improve. However, it is difficult to predict what will unfold. Despite this uncertainty, it is impossible to overlook the persistent signs of ethnic marginalization. This phenomenon, widely discussed, involves prejudice against individuals identified as outsiders or those perceived as foreign or different from the dominant ethnic community within politically organized regions.

In practice, this marginalization manifests as hostility and an 'us versus them' mentality directed at those considered outgroup members. These individuals share resources, culture, and religion in ethnically divided yet socially intermingled regions. Such attitudes foster broad discriminatory perspectives, negative stereotypes, and even hostile behaviors toward people viewed as outsiders in a society where one ethnic group claims dominance as the native social group.

The social cohesion in Ethiopia, built over time, forms a strong web that cannot be easily dismantled. However, this web has been strained since the EPRDF government implemented ethnic-based rule, which divided society along ethnic lines. Historically, this mix has provided essential elements for peaceful coexistence, fostering valuable interactions across various regions.

Cultural evidence and religious ties suggest that positive change may be on the horizon, potentially leading to a better future for society. Numerous examples worldwide demonstrate that remarkable achievements can arise from individuals who have resettled in different societies for various reasons. For instance, Albert Einstein, originally from Germany, taught at Princeton University in the U.S. Jeff Bezos, born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has Cuban ancestry, while Elon Musk, born in South Africa, immigrated to Canada in 1989 and then to the U.S. in 2001, where he has founded groundbreaking tech companies.

Ethiopian-born individuals have also made significant contributions globally. Gebisa Ejeta, who earned his PhD in the U.S. in 1974, developed drought-resistant and striga-resistant sorghum seeds, enhancing food security for millions in sub-Saharan Africa. Dereje Agonafer, a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington, has conducted renowned research on thermal systems and energy sustainability. Mulatu Astatke, known as the "Father of Ethio-jazz," blended Ethiopian music with jazz and studied in the UK and U.S.

Sifan Hassan, an Ethiopian athlete now competing for the Netherlands, won Olympic gold in the 5000m, 10,000m, and marathon, becoming the first woman to achieve this feat. Haile Gebrselassie, an Ethiopian long-distance runner, has multiple Olympic golds and world records and serves as a global ambassador for athletics. Derartu Tulu made history as the first Black African woman to win Olympic gold in the 10,000m in 1992. Mohammed Hussein Al Amoudi, an Ethiopian-Saudi billionaire, is a major investor across Africa and the Middle East.

These examples highlight just a few of the many high achievers on the global stage. Mo Farah, a Somali-born British runner who moved to the UK as a child, has become a dominant force in long-distance athletics. Immigrants often

emerge as founders, innovators, and leaders across diverse fields, including sports, science, business, the arts, and public service.

Racism and anti-immigrant sentiment are fundamentally flawed ideologies that serve no constructive purpose. These attitudes work to maintain exclusive social categories, leading to the political and social marginalization of individuals under the guise of ethnic federalism. Such marginalization disrupts peaceful coexistence and undermines societal achievements. Consequently, immigrants—descendants of those who arrived in a region for various reasons—face significant challenges, depriving both local communities and the world of the benefits these individuals can contribute.

Evidence consistently demonstrates that immigration can drive significant societal progress. Societies that embrace newcomers often experience improved prospects for the future. However, racism and anti-immigrant sentiment threaten these advancements. Ethnic federalism, in particular, can create strains within social networks. While immigration and cultural diversity enhance economic dynamism, innovation, and social richness, racism, xenophobia, and rigid ethnic-based politics can fracture communities and negate these benefits.

The central issue lies in the fact that host societies that provide pathways for immigrants tend to enjoy higher productivity, entrepreneurship, and cultural vitality. In contrast, those that do not often face conflict and disunity. When ethnic federalism serves as a justification for political and social marginalization, it disrupts peaceful coexistence and complicates the lives of long-established residents. This reflects the workings of anti-immigrant racism, which employs formal categories of ethnicity, citizenship, and legal loopholes to justify exclusion and inequality, ultimately suppressing the achievements typically associated with migration.

When ethnic or national identities are legally privileged over others, it marginalizes individuals deemed outsiders, even if their families have lived in the area for generations or engage in intermarriage. This discrimination creates structural barriers that diminish social trust, economic productivity, and collective problem-solving.

Ethnic rationalization often relies on misguided assumptions about who truly "belongs" to a region, overlooking the reality that most societies are shaped by successive waves of migration. However, positive change is achievable when policies and public attitudes shift toward inclusion. Countries like Canada and New Zealand have successfully reduced anti-immigrant bias through multicultural policies and points-based immigration systems that prioritize contributions over origins.

Ethnic-based politics, particularly as seen in the ethnic federalism introduced by the EPRDF after 1991, can undermine social progress by dissecting communities into competing groups. Although the EPRDF aimed to empower marginalized populations, it often exacerbated divisions in societies with highly intermingled ethnic backgrounds.

The EPRDF's establishment of ethnic federalism through the 1995 Constitution sought to address historical grievances under centralized regimes by granting "Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples" self-determination

rights, including secession under Article 39. This approach has led to ethnic insurgencies from groups like the Tigray, Oromo, and Somali.

This did not bring about the promised national unity; instead, it has emerged as a threat to the nation's sovereignty, as earlier politicians had warned during its formation. Ethnic politics have intensified conflicts, resulting in over 4.38 million people being internally displaced by mid-2024 due to clashes in regions such as the Oromia-Somali borders and Benishangul-Gumuz. This situation incentivizes ethnic parties and regional elites to mobilize hardliners along identity lines, leading to violence, creating vulnerabilities for minorities, and resulting in fragmented security forces rather than fostering social cohesion.

While initial gains included infrastructure development under the EPRDF, the system has stalled progress by deterring investment amid insecurity and economic stress, as noted by the World Bank. In intermingled areas, such divisive governance fosters mutual suspicion, undermining broader social benefits like

national unity and equitable growth. Critics argue that it creates a "lose-lose equilibrium" characterized by brinkmanship instead of cooperation.

The rising internal displacement, intensified ethnic conflicts, political incentives for hard-line mobilization, fragmented security forces, stalled development, and weakened social cohesion align with numerous academic and policy analyses published since 2018, including reports from the International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, and the World Bank.

Ethiopia has accumulated decades of direct experience with ethnic politics, which provides a foundation for assessing and implementing measures for better outcomes. Now seems to be the appropriate time to consider fundamental alternatives. Our extensive experience suggests that exploring different approaches may help alleviate the strains on our diverse social fabric and foster peaceful coexistence within our intermingled society.

You can reach the writer via gzachewwolde@gmail.com



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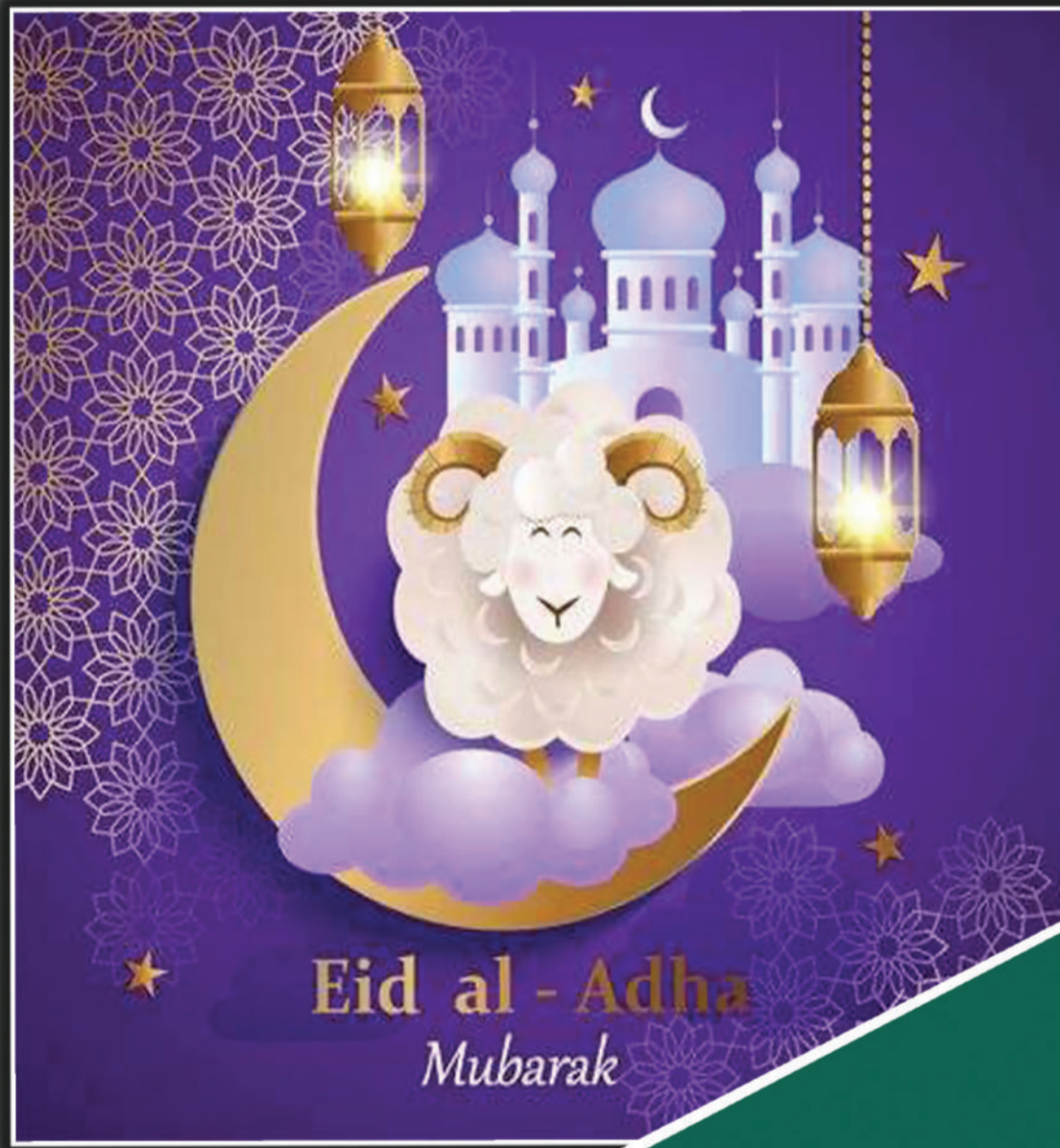




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ለመላው የሙስሊም ማኅበረሰብ እንኳን ለ 1447ኛው የኢ.ድ. አል አድሃ (አረፋ) በዓል በሰላም አደረሳችሁ!!



የሁሉም ምርጫ!
The Choice for All!



Africa needs a growth reset

By Grace Li, Constant Lonkeng, and Nikola Spatafora

At current growth rates, per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa would take roughly half a century to double. Our chapter in the IMF's latest Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa shows that implementing well-designed structural reforms—especially in governance, business regulation, and market openness—could lift output by around 20 percent within a decade.

The point is not reform for reform's sake. It is to shift the growth model from one led mainly by the state to one driven more by private investment, productivity, and jobs.

Why a growth reset is needed

Despite strong performance in a handful of countries—including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda—growth across the region has been too weak to deliver meaningful income convergence. Over the past three years, real GDP per capita grew by about 1.4 percent a year, compared with about 3.4 percent in emerging markets and developing economies overall.

Past growth spurts—often fueled by commodity booms or inefficient public investment—faded fast. They did not trigger the sustained private investment needed to keep growth going, with labor productivity nearly flat for three decades.

The public sector-led growth

model is now spent. With debt high, borrowing costly, and aid falling, the state can no longer be the main engine of growth. The region needs more private investment, backed by broad, business-friendly reforms.

Where should policymakers focus?

Sub-Saharan Africa lags other developing regions most in three areas: governance, business regulation, and market openness. These gaps are largest in fragile and conflict-affected states and oil exporters. But they are not immutable. Rwanda and Benin, for instance, have cut red tape and used digital tools to make it easier to do business.

Reforming state-owned enterprises, especially in energy and transport, is another key priority. When tariffs stay below cost-recovery levels, cash flow weakens, maintenance is delayed, and investment stalls. The result is a familiar tax on growth: unreliable and expensive services for firms and households. The better reform efforts use four ingredients: map stakeholders, align prices with costs, define social goals clearly, and explain how any savings will be used.

The payoff

Reform payoff could be large. IMF staff analysis suggests that closing just half the gap with frontier emerging markets in key reform areas could raise output by around 20 percent

over 5–10 years—through higher investment, faster productivity growth, and greater labor force participation—if macroeconomic stability is maintained.

Governance reforms matter especially because their gains are lasting. A fairer competitive field, stronger tax compliance, and better state capacity can unlock investment and build confidence at the same time.

Country experience backs this up. Following its post-2010–11 reform push, Côte d'Ivoire restored credibility and drew in capital; foreign direct investment rose more than tenfold, to \$3.3 billion by 2024. Botswana's transparent management of diamond revenues, backed by the rule of law and policy stability, helped sustain decades of strong growth. Earlier liberalization in Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia also produced sizable growth dividends.

How to make reforms stick

Choosing and designing reforms is only half the job. Implementing them is usually harder. This is because benefits often arrive slowly, sometimes beyond an electoral cycle, while vested interests resist change. Political feasibility matters as much as technical design.

Five principles help reforms stick:

- Start with the basics. Macroeconomic stability and predictable institutions come first. Quick, visible

wins—such as online business registration—can build momentum.

- Build support early. Durable reform needs genuine consultation, cross-party backing, and candid communication on benefits, trade-offs, and timing. Political openings matter, but crises can also create them—as seen in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Zambia. South Africa's Operation Vulindlela shows how structured engagement can sustain momentum.
- Bundle reforms. Measures often reinforce one another. Pairing reform of state-owned enterprises with pro-competition regulation, for example, can attract private participation rather than entrench monopolies. At the regional level, harmonizing rules under the African Continental Free Trade Area can expand market access.
- Protect the vulnerable. Targeted, temporary cash transfers—based on current registries and delivered digitally—can cushion short-term costs.
- Strengthen the state's implementation capacity. Better systems for learning, institutional memory, and monitoring are essential. External partners can help by supporting sustained capacity building.

The road ahead

There is no one-size-fits-all playbook. Countries with stronger institutions can move faster with broader reform packages. Others—especially fragile states—may need to focus first on core governance reforms and a few early wins that build trust. Resource-rich economies should put transparency and sound revenue management first, so natural wealth translates into broad-based development.

For policymakers, the choice is increasingly clear: press ahead with well-sequenced, inclusive reforms now—or risk another decade of missed convergence. With debt high, aid declining, and global headwinds worsening, the window for action is narrowing. Done right, today's reform push can turn stabilization into sustained growth, quality jobs, and rising living standards for the region's rapidly growing young population.

Grace Li and Nikola Spatafora are senior economists, and Constant Lonkeng is a deputy division chief, in the IMF's African Department.

Capital features a variety of independent voices; the opinions articulated in this column are the author's own and operate independently of our corporate viewpoint.



UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

TENDER NOTICE

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Representation Office in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, invites qualified and registered Suppliers to participate in the following tender:

SN	Tender Subject	Closing Date
1	Simplified Request for Proposal (SRFP) - Tender Extension Notice UNHCR SRFP 2826 - Provision of Maintenance and Repair Works for the Gambella Sub-Office and Accommodation Facilities	27 May 2026, 05:59 PM
	Request for Proposal (RFP) - Tender Extension Notice UNHCR RFP 2839 Provision of Consultancy Services for the Assessment of Microfinance Capacity and Access to Financial Services in the Melkadida Refugee Operation	27 May 2026, 12:59 PM
	INVITATION TO BID (ITB) Reference No.: UNHCR ITB 2895 FOR THE PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE GAMBELLA OPERATION TO THE UNHCR WAREHOUSE IN KALITI, ADDIS ABABA	023 June 2026.11 59 AM

Interested suppliers can Visit the following portal:

[How to become a supplier | UNHCR](https://www.unhcr.org/get-involved/work-us/become-supplier/how-become-supplier): please read on this link <https://www.unhcr.org/get-involved/work-us/become-supplier/how-become-supplier>

UNHCR encourages companies to also register on the online [United Nations Global Marketplace \(UNGM\)](https://www.ungm.org) to receive announcements only. This portal may not be used by vendors for submitting offers.

Announcement for those Tenders are available on UNGM on this link <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/284300>,

Companies interested in engaging with UNHCR for business opportunities and tender processes are invited to register on the [UNHCR Supplier registration portal](https://bit.ly/482Fqam), please use this link to access the portal (<https://bit.ly/482Fqam>).



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

This notice is placed on behalf of UNECA. You are therefore requested to direct all your queries to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa using the e-mail address provided below.

Title of the EOI:

Re-BID - Request for Procurement of Supply and Installation of Outdoor Welcome Signage at UNECA Compound

Date of this EOI: 21 May 2026

Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: 03 June 2026

EOI Number: EOIUNECA24439

E-mail address: demissew.sahle@un.org; rachael.chironga@un.org

Address EOI response by fax for the Attention of: Mr. Demissew Ashagre / Mrs. Rachael Chironga

Fax Number: N/A

UNSPSC Code: 41116100 Food Testing

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) invites qualified and experienced firms to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the provision of food safety laboratory testing services for its catering facilities, cafeterias, and restaurants in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

UNECA seeks to engage a competent and accredited laboratory to carry out microbiological and chemical analysis of food samples, as well as environmental hygiene testing, on both a routine (monthly) and ad hoc basis. The selected service provider will be responsible for sample collection, transportation, laboratory analysis, reporting, and providing professional recommendations to improve food safety practices.

The scope of services includes testing for foodborne pathogens (such as Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria), chemical contaminants, food additives, water quality, and surface hygiene, in accordance with internationally recognized standards, including ISO/IEC 17025 and relevant WHO/FAO guidelines.

Interested firms must be legally registered and licensed to provide laboratory services, hold valid accreditation, and demonstrate relevant experience in food safety testing. Applicants should have qualified technical staff, adequate laboratory facilities, and the capacity to deliver accurate, timely, and high-quality results in line with international standards.

UNECA reserves the right to verify statements by the EOI respondent and not to invite all those companies who had expressed interest. Only eligible firms that are successful at this pre-qualification stage will be invited to participate in the later stage.

Interested vendors should submit a fully completed Vendor Response Form to the link provided by the deadline of 03 June 2026.

It is to be noted that the successful bidder will be required to Register in UNGM before Contract award.

- Vendors interested in participating in the planned solicitation process should complete the Vendor Response Form <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/301637> of this EOI before the closing date set forth above.



Request For Proposal (RFP)

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

No.	Post	PROCUREMENT REF. NO.	Brief Job/Consultancy Description & Web-link for detailed advert	Submission deadline
1	National IC to conduct Targeted Gender Fiscal Impact/Fiscal Incidence Assessment and M&E Framework Development for Execution of Gender-Tagged Budgets	RFP UN- DP-ETH-00723	Procurement Notices - UNDP-ETH-00723 - IC-National to produce Targeted Gender Fiscal Impact/Fiscal Incidence Assessment OR https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/300824	27 May 2026

Important information on UNDP employment modalities

The use of UNDP's name and logo without UNDP consent is inappropriate. UNDP strongly recommends that people who receive solicitations to apply for positions or engage in procurement processes exercise caution to ensure authenticity. UNDP advises the public that:

- UNDP does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment or procurement process. All information related to these processes is published on the national or global UNDP websites.
- UNDP does not request or issue personal bank checks, Money Grams, Western Union or any other type of money transfer at any stage of its procurement or recruitment processes.
- UNDP does not request any information related to bank accounts or other private information prior to formal registration as a vendor.
- UNDP does not offer prizes, awards, funds, certificates, scholarships or conduct lotteries through telephone, e-mail, mail or fax.
- Related queries can be sent through scam.alert.et@undp.org.

ግሎባል ባንክ
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ለገራ ለሌሎች



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ለድርጅቶች የታክሲ አገልግሎት በተብብር ለማቅረብ ያለንን ፍላጎት ለማሳወቅ የቀረበ መግለጫ

ዋነኛ አላማና ግብ

ሳፋሪኮም ኢትዮጵያ በመላ አገሪቱ ፍላጎትን ላይ መሰረት ያደረገ የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) የሚያቀርብ ታማኝ አጋር ይፈልጋል። በመሆኑም የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎችን ለይቶ ለመቅጠር ይህን መግለጫ አውጥቷል ። በመላ ኢትዮጵያ ቀን ከሌት ለሚተገኙ የሳፋሪኮም ስራተኞች የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አገልግሎት እንዲሰጡ ይጠበቃል።

ይህ መግለጫ የሳፋሪኮም ኢትዮጵያ ፍላጎት የሚያሟሉ ፣ በተሻለ መንገድና በብቃት የማቅረብ በቂ አቅም ያላቸውን ለመለየት ያለመ ነው።

ፍላጎት መግለጫ (EOI) መስፈርቶች

ሳፋሪኮም ኢትዮጵያ ፍላጎትና ብቃት ያላቸው የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎችን ከዚህ በታች የተዘረዘሩትን መረጃዎችና ሰነዶችን በማቅረብ አብሮ የመስራት ፍላጎታቸውን እንዲያሳዩ ይጋብዛል።

የድርጅትን ሰነዶችን ስለማቅረብ :-

- የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎች በአዲስ አበባና ሽገር፣ ድሬዳዋ፣ ጅጅጋ፣ ሀምሳ፣ አርባምንጭ፣ አዳማ፣ ጅማ፣ ባህርዳር፣ ደሴ፣ ጋምቤላ፣ መቐለ፣ ሰመራና አሰላ የጋራ የመኪና አቅርቦት ሊኖራቸው ይገባል።
- የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢው ድርጅት ከላይ በተጠቀሱት ከተሞች ውስጥ ህጋዊ የንግድ ፈቃድ ሊኖራቸው ይገባል ፤ በተለያዩ ከተሞች የሚሰሩ ከሆነ ከአንድ በላይ ፈቃድ ማቅረብ ይችላል
- የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) መገለጫ፣ የንግድ ፈቃድ፣ የንግድ ምዝገባ፣ የቲን ሰርተፍኬትና የመመስረቻ ሰነድ (Memorandum of Association)
- የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎች ቢያንስ የሁለት(2) ዓመታት የሥራ ልምድን ከሰሩላቸው የድርጅት ደንቦች ስም ዝርዝር ማቅረብ አለባቸው።
- የድርጅቱን የፋይናንስ አቅም የሚያረጋግጥ ሰነድ ከህጋዊ ከሆነ የሂሳብ መግለጫ (Audited Statement of Accounts) እና/ወይም የባንክ መግለጫ ።
- ተሽከርካሪዎችን መከታተልና ያሉበት የቴክኒክ አቅም ምዘናን የሚያሳይ ማስረጃ እንዲሁም የሚቀጠሩት ተሽከርካሪዎች በ7/24 ሰዓት ውስጥ በግልፅ የመገኛ ቦታን ማወቅ የሚያስችል አገልግሎት ማቅረብ።
- የተሽከርካሪ የባለቤትነት ማረጋገጫ ሰነድ ፣ የኢንሹራንስ ሰነዶች፣ የመንጃ ፍቃድና የስልጠና ሰነዶች መረጃ መቅረብ አለባቸው ።

የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) ፍላጎት ያላቸው እጩዎች የህግና ደንብ ተገዢነት ማረጋገጫ መግለጫ የህግና ደንቦችን የማክበር መግለጫ ዝርዝር መረጃ

1. በስምምነቱ መሰረት በመላው ኢትዮጵያ ከመጀመሪያው የስራ ቀን ጀምሮ 24/7 ጥራት ያለው አገልግሎት ለመስጠት ቁርጠኝነት።
2. የታክሲ አገልግሎት ለመስጠት ከሚመለከታቸው ፍቃድ ሰጪ አካል ማረጋገጫ የተሰጠው።
3. ከሚመለከተው የተሽከርካሪዎችና ትራንስፖርት አስተዳደር ጋር በመነጋገር ቀልጣፋ የታክሲ አገልግሎት አሰጣጥን ማመቻቸት።

4. ብቃታቸው የተመሰከረ፣ በብቃት የሰለጠኑ አሽከርካሪዎችንና አገልግሎቶችን ያለምንም ልዩነት የማቅረብ የተረጋገጠ አቅም ያላቸው
5. የሳፋሪኮም የደህንነት ህጎችን የሚያከብር
6. በክራይ የሚዋዋሉ ተሽከርካሪዎችን መከታተል የሚችሉና በየትኛውም ቦታ መረጃ እንዲያቀርቡ ሲጠየቁ ማቅረብ የሚችሉ።

ማመልከቻዎችን ስለማስገባት

የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) ፍላጎት ላይ ለመሳተፍ ፍላጎት ያላቸው አቅራቢዎች ከላይ የተዘረዘሩትን ሰነዶችንና የህግና ደንብ ተገዢነት ማረጋገጫ መግለጫው ላይ ያልቸውን ስምምነት በማያያዝ እስከ ማክሰኞ ግንቦት 25, 2018 ዓ.ም 11 :00 ድረስ በbids@safaricom.et ኢ.ሜይል አድራሻ መላክ አለባቸው።

የኢ.ሜይል ማስረከቢያዎች ከ20MB በታች መሆን አለባቸው፤ ከዛ በላይ ከሆኑ በGoogle Drive ሊገኙ መጋራት አለባቸው። የኢ.ሜይል ርዕስ “PROVISION FOR CORPORATE TAXI SERVICE” መሆን አለበት።

ቀጣይ ሂደት

በአድራሻዎ ምላሽ ከደረሱ በኋላ የሚከተሉትን ቀጣይ ሂደቶችን ይከተላሉ፦

- የተጠቀሱትን ዝርዝር ፍላጎቶች በመገምገም ምዘናውን ያለፉ የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎችን ብቃት ማረጋገጥ።
- የድርጅት ታክሲ አገልግሎት (corporate taxi) አቅራቢዎች ምዝገባ (onboarding)፣ ብቃት ማረጋገጥና ለአቅራቢዎች የጨረታ ግብዣ መላክ።

ማስታወሻ

- የሳፋሪን ዝቅተኛ መስፈርቶች የሚያሟሉ አቅራቢዎች ብቻ ለተጨማሪ ወይይቶች ከግምት ውስጥ ይገባሉ።
- ምንም ዓይነት ክፍያ ፍላጎትን ከማሳያው ጋር ማቅረብ አይፈቀድም ።
- ቅደመ ምላሾችን በመቀበል ብቻ ሳፋሪኮም ለማንኛውም ውል አያስገድድም። እንደዚህ ያሉ ስምምነቶች የሚፀኑት ከጨረታ ሂደት በኋላ አሸናፊ ለሆነ ተጫራች ሽልማት ሲሰጥ ብቻ ነው።
- ይህንን ሂደት በማዘጋጀት ሂደት ውስጥ የሚወጡ ማንኛውም ተያያዥ ወጪዎችን የፍላጎት መግለጫ (EOI) ጋር ተያይዘው የሚሰተናገዱ ይሆናሉ ።

ማስታወሻ

ሳፋሪኮም በዚህ የፍላጎት መግለጫ (EOI) አውድ ውስጥ የቀረቡ ማናቸውንም ወይም ሁሉንም ሀሳቦች በሙሉ ወይም በከፊል የመምረጥ ወይም የመሻር ሙሉ መብት አለው ። የሚደረጉ ማናቸውም እንደዚህ ያሉ ውሳኔዎች የመጨረሻ ይሆናሉ። ከተጫራቾች የሂደቱን ውጤት ከማሳወቅ ውጭ ምንም ዓይነት ግንኙነት አይደረግም። ሳፋሪኮምና በህጉ መሰረት ስልጣን የተሰጣቸው ተወካዮቹ ከዚህ ማመልከቻ ጋር ተያይዞ የቀረቡትን ሰነዶች እና መረጃዎች ለማጣራት ማንኛውንም ጥያቄዎች ወይም ምርመራዎች እንዲያደርጉ መብት ተሰጥቷቸዋል።

The glaring injustice of maternal deaths in Africa

■ By Amma Twum Amoah, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Claver Gatete and Diene Keita

We have the knowledge and resources to end preventable maternal mortality – today. So why are women still dying while giving birth? Because for too many women, a safe birth still depends on a chain of simple, but life-or-death contingencies: whether a family can find transport to skilled care, whether a midwife is on duty, whether the clinic cupboards are stocked. If any links in this chain falter, the consequences can be catastrophic.

A woman named Mercy recently saw this first-hand: She traveled to a clinic in Zambia's capital, Lusaka. She experienced a routine labour and a safe delivery. She held her baby in her arms. And then, without warning, she began to bleed profusely.

That condition, post-partum haemorrhage, is the world's most common cause of maternal death, but there are many others, from dangerously high blood pressure to infections. Every day, on average, more than 700 women die from causes linked to pregnancy and childbirth.

And in Africa, these risks are multiplied to a staggering degree. On this continent, a 15-year-old girl has a 1 in 57 chance of dying while pregnant or during childbirth; for a girl in Australia, that risk is 1 in 21,000. Africa accounts for 70 per cent of all maternal deaths globally. That isn't a health gap, it's a moral chasm.

Just 7 African countries are on track to meet the global goal on reducing maternal death. This is not a failure of science or clinical know-how. It is a failure of systems, and a failure to sustain high-level commitments.

Beyond aid: A new public health order

The truth is that, with timely access to quality supplies and healthcare, most maternal deaths are avoidable. A woman does not die because we cannot save her; she dies because the ambulance has no fuel. Because the supplier was not paid on time. Because supplies are sitting in a warehouse instead of a clinic. Because the medicines are expired. Because staff training has been delayed.

The links in Mercy's chain of contingencies were, thankfully, unbroken. Her clinic in Lusaka was part of the UNFPA-supported SafeBirth Africa initiative, where midwives are equipped with the tools and skills to quickly diagnose the severity of post-partum bleeding and initiate life-saving treatment.

Every woman on the continent deserves to benefit from that kind of care. And it is possible with the African Union's New Public Health Order, which shifts the continent away from donor-led procurement and towards a unified, African-led agenda. That means coordinated disease control led by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and regulations harmonized by

the Africa Medicines Agency. It means the production of quality-assured medicines by Africa's own dynamic pharmaceutical manufacturers and a strengthened African health market championed by the African Union Development Agency. It means the creation of robust intra-African supply chains, and partnerships with the UN and others to ensure monitoring and accountability.

The global battle against maternal mortality will be won or lost in Africa. We have the research, the technical expertise and the roadmap. What we need now is to unite behind Africa's public health leadership.

Africa's future is the future of the world

This is the world's youngest region, with nearly one third of the population between the ages of 10 and 24. Their future – and the world's future – depends on

Africa's ability to address these systemic failures now.

We do that not just by disseminating health commodities and building supply chains but by understanding mothers and their children as the inseparable link from one generation to the next. When a mother is able to give birth safely, her children can thrive – a process that starts even before her child is born, when she is able to access family planning, antenatal care and safe delivery services. It continues into the life of the child, as she is able to access healthcare, education, and an unfolding universe of possibilities.

But those services do not appear by wish alone. Health sovereignty, the genuine ability of a nation to decide and deliver care for its own people, requires financing sovereignty. Maternal mortality is not only a health service delivery issue, but also a matter of budgetary fiscal

space and careful public financial management.

As much as this is a moral and social argument, it is also an economic one: When a mother dies, her potential contribution to the economy, her labour, her innovation, her enterprise dies with her. The cost of inaction is staggering and quantifiable: A recent Lancet Commission showed that failure to invest in maternal and child health could lead to productivity losses amounting to \$3.8 trillion by 2035. On the other hand, every dollar invested in family planning can yield up to \$27 in economic benefits, and broader investments in maternal health deliver substantial returns. We see clearly that the failure to act is the most expensive choice of all.

If we are serious about building healthy generations and a sustainable future for the continent, we must ensure that childbirth is a

safe, empowering experience that secures the future for every woman and her family.

Ambassador Amma Twum Amoah is African Union Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development

Nardos Bekele-Thomas is CEO of the African Union Development Agency, AUDA-NEPAD

Claver Gatete is UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa

Diene Keita is Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

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Ethiopian coffee's opportunity in China: Arhibu China

■ By Sintayehu Girma

China's economic prowess is undeniable. In 2022, its Gross National Product (GNP) reached an impressive \$16.94 trillion, representing 18% of the global economy and contributing to 40% of worldwide economic growth (Xinhua 2022). While traditionally a tea-drinking nation, a significant cultural shift is occurring in China: coffee consumption is on the rise. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported a staggering 80% increase in Chinese coffee consumption in 2020/2021 compared to the previous year, signaling a rapidly burgeoning market.

Ethiopia, the historic birthplace of coffee, offers the world a truly exceptional product. Ethiopian coffee is more than just a beverage; it is a powerful global brand and a vital component of Ethiopia's social fabric, uniting its people and driving national prosperity. In today's highly competitive, globalized economy, nations must leverage their comparative advantages by branding their unique products and services. For Ethiopia, coffee stands out as its ultimate international ambassador.

Coffee is the second most traded commodity globally, surpassed only by oil, with over 3 billion cups consumed daily. Ethiopian coffee holds a distinct competitive edge, frequently securing the top spot in blind taste tests among famous exporting nations.

Despite this superior quality, Ethiopia has yet to fully capitalize on its coffee's economic potential due to a skewed global trade system. To rectify this imbalance, a crucial strategic shift is required:

Ethiopia must actively promote its coffee in rapidly developing nations, particularly targeting the emerging youth demographics.

While China has historically been a tea-consuming nation, The Economist highlights a growing adoption of coffee, especially among younger generations. For many young Chinese citizens, coffee shops are transitioning into trendy social hubs—spaces utilized as much for socializing and digital content sharing as for the beverage itself.

The Economist notes examples such as a young woman in Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan Province) who earned European certification for her barista and hospitality skills, and now teaches courses to aspiring coffee shop owners. This trend aligns with the broader surge of coffee culture across China's middle- and high-tier cities.

Prior to the 1990s, coffee in China was a rarity, primarily consumed by foreign nationals in luxury hotels. This dynamic began to shift with Starbucks' entry into the market in 1999. To cater to local palates, the chain initially introduced coffee heavily mixed with milk and sugar.

Key Market Insight: Despite rapid market growth, the International Coffee Organization (ICO) notes that the average per capita coffee consumption in China remains at just five cups per year—roughly a third of the consumption rates seen in the United States or Japan. However, among middle-income Chinese citizens, drinking coffee is increasingly viewed as an aspirational fashion and lifestyle statement.

The retail landscape reflects

this massive market potential. Starbucks currently boasts over 3,800 locations in China, making it their second-largest market after the United States. Concurrently, business intelligence data indicates that China's roasted coffee market is expanding at an impressive rate of 10% annually.

A notable domestic disruptor is Luckin Coffee. Launched in Beijing, the company achieved phenomenal growth by opening 2,300 outlets within its first two years alone. In May 2019, Luckin Coffee raised \$570 million in a stock auction, elevating its valuation to \$4 billion. Luckin's rapid ascent signifies a permanent shift in consumer perception: coffee is no longer viewed as an exclusive luxury. Many of Luckin's patrons are busy, urban professionals who prioritize convenience, frequently ordering online for quick pickup or delivery.

Market Dynamics: Tea vs. Coffee
The tea and coffee markets in China exhibit distinctly different cultural dynamics:

Metric Traditional Tea Houses
Modern Coffee Shops

Primary Audience Older generations / Traditionalists
Youth / Young professionals

Cultural Value Centuries-old heritage and ritual
Lifestyle, fashion, and social status

Social Media Role Low digital footprint
High engagement (sharing photos/experiences)

Strategic Recommendations for Ethiopia

Significant opportunities exist for Ethiopian coffee to penetrate the Chinese market deeply. Capitalizing on this requires a

strategic, ethical, and targeted marketing campaign that emphasizes both the experiential and health benefits of coffee.

Medical and demographic studies have frequently linked moderate coffee consumption to health benefits, including localized data suggesting impacts on life expectancy—a compelling marketing message given that longevity is a key human development indicator.

Action Plan

To secure long-term success, Ethiopia must design and execute a promotional strategy for the Chinese market focused on two pillars:

- The Health Benefits:** Positioning premium single-origin Ethiopian coffee as a healthy, antioxidant-rich daily habit.
- The Social Experience:** Leveraging the rich history of the Ethiopian coffee ceremony to appeal to young Chinese consumers seeking authentic, communal, and "shareable" social media experiences.

Implementing this targeted marketing strategy without delay is crucial to securing Ethiopia's rightful share of the booming Chinese coffee market.

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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.

PHOTO: Anteneh Aklilu

Abdoulaye Ndiaye, winner of the first edition of the Africa NextGen Economist Prize

The Africa NextGen Economist Prize, created by Jeune Afrique and The Africa Report, in partnership with the African Development Bank, has been awarded to Abdoulaye Ndiaye, a 37-year-old Senegalese economist, assistant professor at New York University's Stern School of Business and affiliated with the Finance for Development Lab.

Presented in Kigali, on the sidelines of the Africa CEO Forum, the prize aims to spotlight a new generation of African economists whose research helps renew economic thinking on the continent and inform public policy. For this first edition of the Africa NextGen Economist Prize, the jury chose to recognize Abdoulaye Ndiaye for the rigor, originality, and relevance of his research in addressing the economic challenges facing African states.

Selected from more than 70 candidates from 14 African countries, Abdoulaye Ndiaye is a graduate of École Polytechnique and holds a PhD from Northwestern University in the United States. He conducts research at the intersection of public finance, development economics, and political economy. His work seeks to identify the institutional and market constraints that limit African states' ability to ensure households, mobilize domestic resources, and preserve macro-financial stability. His research focuses on unemployment insurance in economies with high levels of informality, tax productivity, and sovereign debt management, with findings that can be directly applied to the design and evaluation of public policies.

UNESCO honors Sudanese journalists syndicate with 2026 World Press Freedom Prize

The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2026 was awarded to the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate, in recognition of its courageous work defending press freedom amid the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

Over the recent years of conflict, the Syndicate has documented dozens of journalist killings and hundreds of violations against media workers, continuing to provide vital, reliable information under extremely dangerous conditions. With much of the country's media infrastructure destroyed, their work remains essential to ensuring access to information in what has become a "zone of silence."

The Award Ceremony was held in UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 4th May. UNESCO's Director-General Khaled El-Enany awarded the Prize, on the recommendation of an independent international Jury, at the presence of a delegation of fourteen representatives of the Sudanese Journalists Syndicate (SJS).

Ethiopia sets course for a decade of capital market reform

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority (ECMA), FSD Africa and Ethiopia convened over 80 representatives from Ethiopia's financial sector this week for the Stakeholder Validation Workshop of Ethiopia's Capital Markets Master Plan (CMMP), a ten-year strategic roadmap designed by Genesis Analytics and Bourse Consult to develop a deep, diversified, and trusted capital market capable of financing the country's economic transformation.

Held at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, the two-day workshop brought together regulators, government ministries, financial institutions, capital market intermediaries, professional associations, and development partners to review the draft CMMP, stress-test its implementation priorities, and build collective ownership of the reform agenda it sets out.

Ethiopia's capital market has moved rapidly from institutional establishment into early market operation. The Ethiopian Securities Exchange is operational, the Central Securities Depository is advancing, and licensed intermediaries are active. The CMMP now provides the strategic framework to consolidate these gains and move toward a more mature, diversified market over the coming decade.

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Africa cannot industrialize in the dark, says ECA chief as continent weighs nuclear energy future

Africa must urgently close its electricity gap if it is to industrialize, expand regional value chains and deliver on the promise of the African Continental Free Trade Area, Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary Claver Gatete said.

Speaking virtually at the Ministerial Compact Roundtable on Financing Africa's Nuclear Energy Future, held during the Nuclear Energy Innovation Summit on Africa 2026, Gatete said reliable and affordable power would determine the continent's economic competitiveness.

"No nation industrializes in the dark," he said. "Africa cannot realize the promise of the AfCFTA or build competitive regional value chains on intermittent power alone."

Gatete said Africa's energy challenge is taking place at a time of overlapping global shocks, including climate extremes, high borrowing costs, tighter finance, and geopolitical instability. These pressures, he noted, are disrupting energy markets, trade routes and public finances, while limiting the ability of many African countries to finance the infrastructure they need.

He said the AfCFTA offers Africa a historic opportunity to deepen intra-African trade, expand productive capacity, strengthen regional value chains and build long-term resilience. But this transformation, he warned, will not happen without electricity at scale.

COP 31 President urges world to switch on to electrification

COP31 President-Designate Murat Kurum called for an urgent increase in the pace of electrification of the world economy, saying it was critical to the fight against climate change and to implementing the commitments made at previous COPs.

Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change in COP31 host Türkiye, said the current energy crisis had underscored the importance of renewable power generation and the national diversification of energy sources. This all pointed to the importance of increasing electricity as a power source across the globe.

"Governments, international agencies, and the private sector are increasingly focusing on electrification as a critical frontier of the transition," Kurum told the Copenhagen Climate Ministers' Meeting.

"Today, around 20 percent of final energy consumption is met by electricity. Together, we should aim to raise that number as quickly as possible."

Final energy consumption refers to the energy consumed by end-users such as individuals and businesses to heat and cool buildings, run lights, devices, and appliances, and power vehicles, machines and factories.

Elon Musk's SpaceX plans for biggest IPO in history to shake Wall Street

SpaceX's IPO filing – the biggest in history – shows AI's next trillion-dollar trade is infrastructure, not software, affirms the CEO of global financial advisory giant deVere Group.

The analysis from Nigel Green comes as SpaceX prepares a major fundraising round expected to value the Elon Musk-led company at around \$400 billion, a figure that makes it one of the most valuable private companies in history and underlines the scale of investor appetite surrounding the infrastructure powering the artificial intelligence boom.

He comments "The market is entering a new phase in the AI cycle, one in which the biggest opportunities are no longer concentrated solely in software developers or chatbot platforms, but in the physical systems required to sustain the rapid expansion of AI globally."

He argues that investors are now beginning to understand the sheer scale of infrastructure spending AI will require over the next decade.



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