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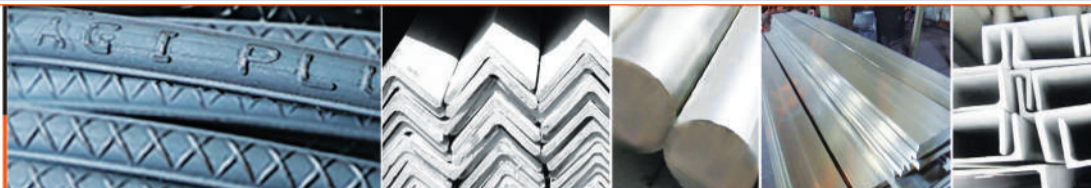
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Year 28, No. 1436 Sunday June 14, 2026 / Tel: +251-11 618 3253 | 11 661 0976 / Mob: +251-944 73 2300 / P.O. Box: 95/1110 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia / Price 45.00



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ESL resumes fuel imports after 40 years

By Muluken Yewondwossen

In a significant operational recovery, state-owned Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL) has resumed handling the country's petroleum imports, including from new international suppliers. This marks a historic first, as Ethiopia has now sourced fuel from within Africa. The Ethiopian government has diversified its procurement strategy to include West Asian markets and ports in western India. This shift

comes amid disruptions to traditional oil supply routes and rising domestic demand, particularly for jet fuel. The demand for jet fuel is largely driven by Bole International Airport's role as a major African aviation hub and the extensive operations of Ethiopian Airlines, a leading carrier on the continent.

A recent breakthrough saw Ethiopia import jet fuel from a terminal in Nigeria, operated by the Dangote Petroleum Refinery at Dangote Quays, Lekki, owned by billionaire Aliko Dangote.

This development represents a dual milestone: it is Ethiopia's first import of African oil for jet fuel and other domestic purposes since halting imports from neighboring Sudan, and it signals a departure from the importing practices observed over the past four decades.

Notably, ESL has not imported oil on behalf of its customers since approximately 1986. For the past 40 years, the state oil importer, the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE)

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Africa needs solutions, not endless forums

Africa does not suffer from a shortage of summits, forums, conferences or high-level gatherings. It suffers from a shortage of implementation. Every year, leaders, experts, diplomats and business executives fly from one polished venue to another, announce ambitious partnerships, pose for photographs and issue communiqués that promise transformation. Yet for ordinary Africans, too many of these meetings produce little more than expensive speeches and recycled commitments.

That is why the continent should ask a hard question: what exactly are these inaugural forums changing? In many cases, the answer is disappointing. They create visibility for a few organizers, networking opportunities for a select group of attendees and media headlines that quickly fade. They rarely fix broken roads, expand electricity access, lower food prices, create jobs or improve public services. Africa cannot afford to keep confusing activity with progress.

This is not an argument against dialogue. Africa certainly needs spaces where governments, private sector actors, civil society and development partners can exchange ideas. But the current culture of endless convening has become excessive. Too often, the same themes are repeated with new branding and a fresh venue, while the underlying problems remain unchanged. Food insecurity, debt distress, unemployment, weak industrial capacity, poor health systems and collapsing infrastructure do not disappear because people attend a forum on them.

The real issue is opportunity cost. Every dollar spent on lavish conferences is a dollar not spent on a classroom, clinic, irrigation system, local factory or community program. African governments and institutions must remember that public money is scarce and public trust is even scarcer. Citizens judge leaders not by how many panels they host, but by whether life becomes more affordable, more secure and more dignified. A forum that ends without measurable results is not a contribution to development; it is a distraction from it.

There is also a deeper political problem. In many African capitals, forums are used as substitutes for policy. Leaders gather to discuss agriculture, energy, digital finance, climate resilience or regional integration, then return home without changing budgets, laws or institutions. This creates the illusion of seriousness without the burden of delivery. The continent does not need more declarations of intent. It needs functioning institutions, disciplined execution and a willingness to measure success in concrete outcomes.

African people are increasingly aware of this gap. They do not need more speeches about empowerment while unemployment remains high. They do not need more summits about food security while farmers lack fertilizers, storage and access to markets. They do not need more elite conversations on climate action while communities continue to face droughts, floods and displacement without support. What people need most is practical progress in the areas that shape daily life: jobs, education, health care, housing, transport, energy and security.

This does not mean Africa should isolate itself from international dialogue. On the contrary, the continent needs stronger cooperation, better coordination and smarter partnerships. But those partnerships should be judged by their results, not by their ceremonial value. A modest working meeting that produces a loan guarantee, a trade corridor, a regulatory reform or a new production facility is far more useful than a grand summit that ends with applause and no follow-through.

There is also a cultural issue in how some forums are organized. The staging often matters more than the substance. Imported speakers, luxury hotels, executive dinners and glossy brochures may create an impression of importance, but they do little for the people who finance the continent through taxes, labor and sacrifice. African institutions should adopt a stricter standard: if a forum cannot demonstrate a clear problem it will solve, a timeline for action and a mechanism for accountability, then it should not happen.

The continent's priorities are not mysterious. African people want affordable food, decent incomes, reliable electricity, better schools, functional hospitals, safe transport, digital access and peace. They want governments that can manage public finances responsibly and businesses that can grow without endless obstacles. They want regional trade to move faster, borders to be more efficient and domestic production to replace import dependence. These are the real forums that matter — the ones happening in farms, markets, workshops, classrooms and households every day.

Some will argue that forums help attract investment. That may be true in limited cases, but investment follows confidence, and confidence follows results. Investors do not commit capital because a continent hosts a stylish conference. They invest when they see policy stability, credible institutions, infrastructure, market access and a reasonable chance of return. If forums are not helping build those conditions, then they are not advancing investment in any meaningful sense.

Africa should therefore be selective. Convene less, implement more. Reduce the number of ceremonial gatherings and increase the number of delivery-focused working sessions. Put the savings into programs that people can see and feel. Measure every forum by one question: what will change after this meeting that would not have changed otherwise?

That question would clear away a great deal of noise. It would force seriousness. And it would remind leaders that development is not performed on a stage. It is built through disciplined choices, hard work and accountability.

Africa does not need another round of expensive promises. It needs results.



■ By Dennis J. Snower

COMMENT

Learning to govern a fragmented world

When G7 leaders gather in Évian on June 15, they will confront a postwar order that has run its course. The United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, and other pillars of international cooperation—all founded on the belief that universal rules could underpin global governance—delivered decades of relative stability and economic integration. But today's world is too multipolar, too digitally interconnected, and too politically heterogeneous for broad consensus alone to serve as the primary mechanism for managing global affairs. As national interests diverge, economic interdependence is increasingly wielded as an instrument of coercion, giving rise to rival strategic blocs at a moment when global challenges such as climate change, migration, and AI are intensifying faster than existing institutions can respond. While it may be tempting to cling to a fading order or resign ourselves to permanent geopolitical rivalry, what is needed is a transition to a new model of international cooperation grounded in coalition-based governance.

In many respects, this shift is already underway, though it remains largely unrecognized. From semiconductor supply chains to climate and security, countries are increasingly cooperating through issue-specific coalitions—flexible partnerships reflecting the realities of a fragmented yet deeply interconnected world.

The question facing the G7, then, is not whether coalition-based governance will emerge, but whether democracies will shape this transition or allow it to be driven by power politics alone. Few bodies are better positioned to guide the process than the G7, which combines economic scale, technological capability, institutional capacity, and broadly aligned political values. But that requires rethinking governance accordingly. For starters, policymakers must move beyond the pursuit of universal agreement. Consensus increasingly leads to paralysis, and even when broad agreements are reached, implementation is often inconsistent. The 2015 Paris climate agreement illustrates the problem: while it established shared goals, national commitments vary widely and enforcement remains weak. Similar problems are now evident in digital governance, taxation, trade, and migration policy. Coalition-based governance offers a more practical alternative. Rather than requiring universal agreement, it allows countries to work together on specific challenges while committing to common standards, monitoring mechanisms, and enforcement tools. Participation remains voluntary, but membership comes with responsibilities. AI is a case in point. Countries could form a coalition to establish shared standards for frontier AI systems, common data-governance rules, coordinated oversight of AI supply chains, and safeguards against systemic risks. Access to coalition markets, financial systems, research networks, and digital infrastructure would be contingent on meeting those standards. The same logic could be applied to climate policy, trade, critical minerals, biotechnology, cybersecurity, and financial transparency.

Far from abandoning multilateralism, this approach adapts it to today's multipolar reality. Coalition-based governance offers a more flexible and effective framework for cooperation in a world in which major powers no longer share the same interests, values, or political models. At the same time, governance must become more integrated. Today's most pressing challenges are deeply interconnected, but governments continue to approach them through bureaucratic silos. This makes no sense. Trade policy cannot be separated from environmental sustainability and technological security. Financial regulation must

account for climate change and geopolitical risk. And digital governance must balance innovation and competition with democratic resilience and national security.

The G7 could lead this shift by building coalitions around interlinked systemic challenges that require integrated policy responses, such as food, water, and energy security; AI, employment, and digital human rights; and climate change, biodiversity loss, and industrial transformation. Bringing together finance ministries, regulators, central banks, security agencies, businesses, and civil-society organizations, these coalitions would align economic, technological, and security priorities rather than merely coordinate policy.

Perhaps most importantly, governments must rethink how they define success. For decades, economic output has been the primary measure of performance. But as recent experience has shown, robust GDP growth can coexist with economic insecurity, social fragmentation, political polarization, declining trust, and environmental degradation.

Governments that measure success narrowly tend to govern narrowly. One promising alternative is the SAGE dashboard, which offers a simple evaluative framework that organizes the major drivers of human flourishing around four factors that have enabled societies to thrive throughout history: solidarity, agency, material gain, and environmental sustainability. Instead of defining success solely in terms of economic output, this framework evaluates whether people enjoy cohesive communities, meaningful agency over their lives, and a healthy environment.

Crucially, such measures would not replace GDP; they would place economic performance in a broader context. The G7 could advance this shift by requiring major initiatives to be assessed against a wider set of social, economic, and environmental objectives. Infrastructure projects, for example, would be judged by their contributions to social cohesion and environmental resilience, alongside economic growth. AI systems would be evaluated according to the productivity gains they generate and their implications for democratic agency. Trade agreements, for their part, would be expected to advance sustainability, labor-market resilience, and digital accountability, not just economic efficiency.

No emerging international order will revolve around a single center of power, development model, or set of priorities. In the best case, it will comprise overlapping coalitions focused on different issues and sectors. The challenge is to ensure that what overlaps also reinforces, rather than causing friction, fueling conflict, and perpetuating incoherence.

The future of global governance lies in learning how to govern a more diverse and fragmented world. The G7 summit offers a unique opportunity to articulate a coalition-based vision of international cooperation that can expand and evolve to incorporate new partners from the G20 and beyond. In doing so, it can help lay the foundation for a more adaptive and resilient world order.

Dennis J. Snower, Founding President of the Global Solutions Initiative and President Emeritus of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, is a visiting professor at University College London and a professorial research fellow at INET Oxford. He is a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, an international research fellow at Oxford University's Said Business School, and a research fellow at the Centre for Economic Policy Research.

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Capital
THE PAPER THAT PROMOTES FREE ENTERPRISE

CAPITAL is a weekly business newspaper published and distributed every Sunday by CROWN PUBLISHING PLC.

CAPITAL is a registered newspaper with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Trade license number **14/673/21142/2004**.

◀ **Managing Editor**

Teguest Yilma
teguest@capitalethiopia.com

◀ **Editor-in-chief**

Groum Abate
groum@capitalethiopia.com
Addis Ababa, Yeka sub-city,
Wereda: 06 H. No. 514,
011 618 3253/011 661 0976

◀ **Deputy Editor-in-chief**

Muluken Yewondwossen
muluken@capitalethiopia.com

◀ **Reporters**

◀ Eyasu Zekarias
Eyasu@capitalethiopia.com

◀ **Graphics Designer**

◀ By Capital

◀ **Photographer**

◀ Anteneh Aklilu
antenehak@capitalethiopia.com

◀ **Sales Account Executive**

Meseret Tsegaw
Meseret@capitalethiopia.com

◀ **Columnists**

◀ Alazar K.
alazark@capitalethiopia.com

CROWN PUBLISHING is a private limited company registered with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Broadcasting Authority under registration no. **34/2001** and with Addis Ababa City Administration Trade and Industry Development office under registration number **14/673/21142/2004**.

Address: Addis Ababa, Bole Sub City, Wereda 1, House no. New

Mob: +251 - 944 73 23 00
+251 - 911 22 69 00

Tel: +251-11 618 32 53
+251-11 661 0976
+251-11 662 6958

E.mail: info@capitalethiopia.com
capitalethiopianewspaper@gmail.com

Website: www.capitalethiopia.com

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CAPITAL is printed by **Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise** since December 1998.

Address: Addis Ababa, Arada Sub-city Wereda 9 H.No. 984
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"Capital size alone is not the ultimate goal; Global competitiveness is key" - Zemen Bank

By Eyasu Zekarias

As Ethiopia's financial sector undergoes its most significant institutional and policy reforms in history, it has become clear that simply increasing banks' capital size should not be the ultimate objective. Instead, the primary goal is to foster regional and international competitiveness, enhance technological adoption, and establish robust corporate governance systems.

This perspective was emphasized during a panel discussion hosted by Zemen Bank, themed "Financial Sector Reforms in Ethiopia: Capitalization, Mergers, and the Role of Shareholders." The event convened banking experts, economic researchers, and stakeholders, generating extensive debate on the sector's current challenges and its future strategic direction.

Dereje Zebene, CEO of Zemen Bank, highlighted that the dynamic growth of both the global and domestic economies, coupled with market expansion, technological innovation, and policy reforms, is compelling local banks to become stronger, more competitive, and more capable.

"Globally, mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in banking, as well as decisions to increase capital, have served as reform tools across different eras and under various circumstances," the CEO stated. He observed that while some countries have leveraged these options to strengthen financial institutions and enhance market competitiveness, others have prioritized internal capacity, opting for organic growth, capital increases, or structural reforms.

According to Dereje, a key lesson from Africa and other regions is that no single solution fits every country. Nevertheless, despite differences in timing and implementation, the overarching objective remains consistent: to cultivate strong institutions with greater capital, the capacity to finance major national projects, the ability to

support technology investments, and the resilience to withstand market competition.

Dereje further elaborated: "The growing capital requirement enables banks to strengthen their financial position and better compete with regional and international institutions.

However, capital size alone is not the ultimate goal. The main objective is to build financial institutions that can withstand global competition, are technologically advanced, possess strong governance, and create tangible value for the economy."

He also stressed that, throughout this process, shareholders must play a more critical role than ever, not only by contributing capital but also by providing strategic direction and helping to embed sound corporate governance.

Sharing his insights at the panel, renowned economics researcher Professor Alemayehu Geda suggested that the current deadline for capital fulfillment in the banking industry might not be the final benchmark.

He said the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) might introduce additional policy measures to achieve its envisioned level of institutional strength.

"Some argue, 'Why do we need such huge capital? We can just take our market segment and operate.' But where will the next structural pressure come from?" the professor asked, explaining that the central bank views the mandatory capital increase as merely one tool.

He clarified that the regulator's primary goal is to foster banks that can withstand the entry of foreign banks, are easier for the National Bank to supervise, are efficient, and can expand internationally.

Alemayehu highlighted the risk-weighted capital adequacy ratio and stress testing as potential future requirements from the National Bank of Ethiopia.

Regulatory signals indicate that banks

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must raise their risk-weighted capital adequacy ratio to at least 11 percent by year-end. Through stress testing, the National Bank will evaluate banks' ability to withstand market risks under various scenarios without resorting to mergers and acquisitions.

"Therefore, I do not think surpassing the 5 billion birr capital adequacy threshold is a reason to relax," the professor warned.

According to Professor Alemayehu Geda's analysis, approximately nine recently established third-tier banks have not yet met the capital requirement. However, once the National Bank implements the risk-weighted capital adequacy ratio and stress tests, an

additional four banks, currently believed to have met the requirements, could also become vulnerable. This means at least 13 banks could face significant challenges under the new framework, increasing pressure for them to merge.

The professor specifically urged the National Bank to prioritize institutions offering interest-free, or Islamic, banking services. He noted that conventional banks have diverse merger options. However, due to their religious and ideological structure, Islamic banks cannot merge with conventional banking windows. Consequently, he argued they might be left without alternatives unless a distinct regulatory framework is developed for them.

Africa's SDG financing gap reaches \$1.3 trillion

By our staff reporter

Africa faces a staggering \$1.3 trillion financing gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a deficit that, coupled with a looming sovereign debt crisis, severely impedes the continent's structural growth, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) announced.

Hanan Morsy, PhD, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, highlighted that over 25 African countries are currently in, or at high risk of, debt distress. In 2025 alone, African governments are projected to spend over \$100 billion on public debt servicing. This amount significantly surpasses the annual budgets many of these nations allocate to critical social sectors like health and

education.

Compounding this economic strain is the inequitable distribution of global climate funds. Despite Africa contributing less than 4 percent to global greenhouse gas emissions, it receives a mere 3.6 percent of global climate finance. To rectify this imbalance, the ECA proposed four crucial policy reforms: establishing a debt architecture conducive to development, reducing the cost of capital, improving climate finance, and strengthening domestic resource mobilization.

These pressing financial realities were central to discussions at the inaugural Africa Development Impact Forum (ADIF), which commenced Thursday at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa.

Organized by the ECA, this high-level forum convened hundreds of researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and members of the Young Economists Network from universities across Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, and Tunisia.

Morsy urged the young participants to champion the reform of the global financial architecture, stating, "You are not just stakeholders in Africa's future; you are its authors." Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the ECA, echoed this call for structural change, emphasizing the need to view Africa's youth population as a significant economic opportunity, with a strong focus on job creation.

"If Africa's biggest challenge is job creation, its biggest opportunity is also job creation itself. What we need now is execution," Gatete stressed.

The forum's emphasis on execution was particularly evident during the "Hack the Job Challenge," a policy and strategy hackathon competition held in the morning.

According to ECA data, nine innovators from Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Togo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented scalable job-creation solutions in 5-minute pitches to a panel of six expert judges from the ECA, UNDP, ILO, UNESCO, UN Women, and PEMANDU Associates.



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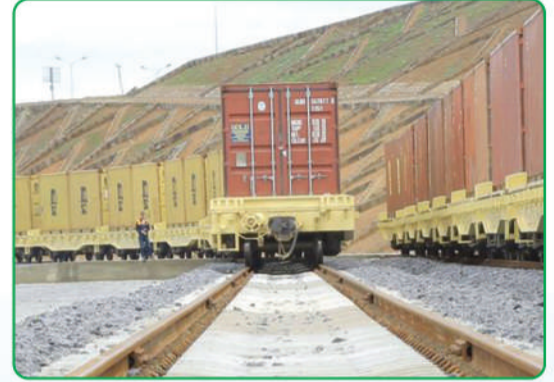
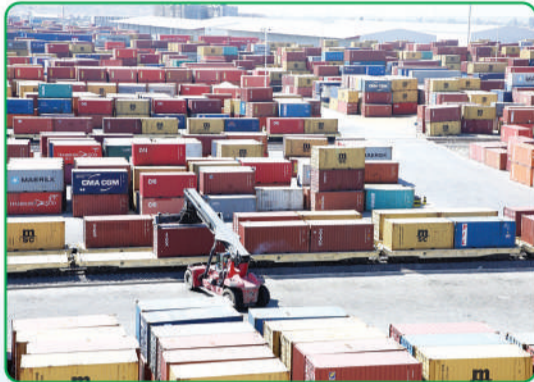
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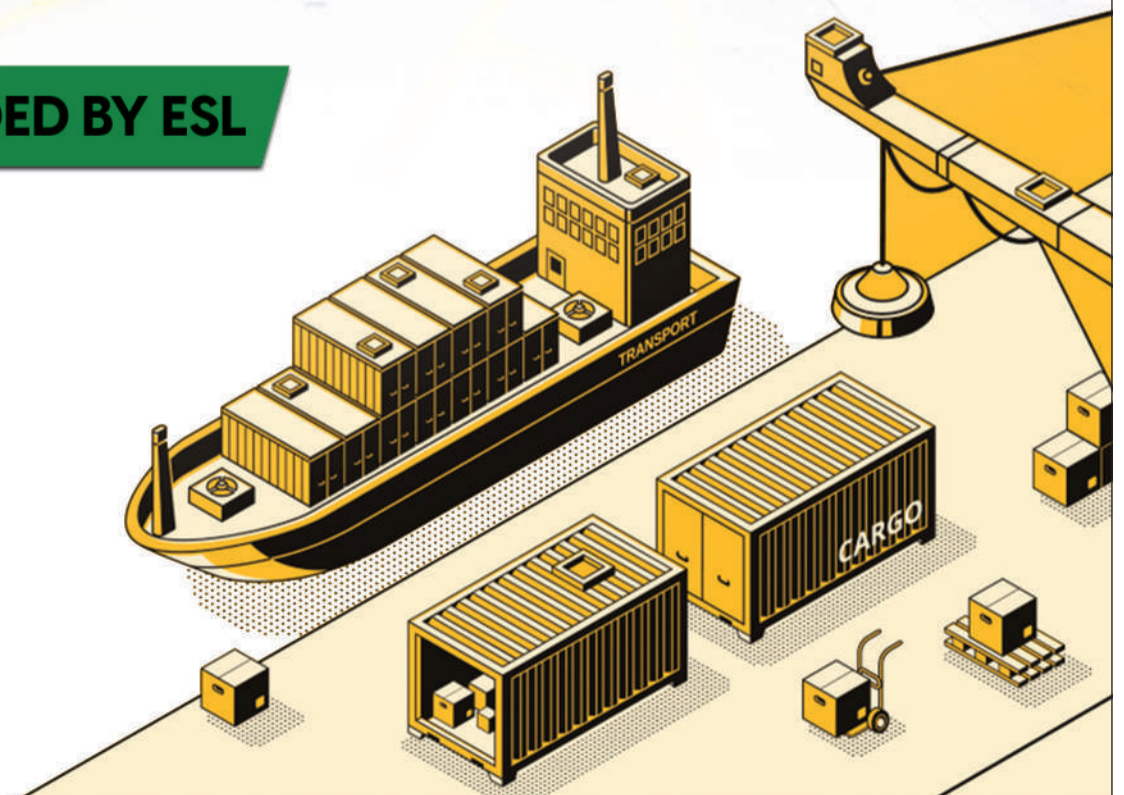


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ESL resumes fuel imports . . .

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— which was the sole importer until last year — relied on its own arrangements to bring in this strategic commodity, despite Ethiopia owning two medium-sized tanker vessels a few years ago.

"There was a perception that ESL lacked the capacity to handle oil imports," stated Demissew Benti, head of the Market Department at ESL. "This latest development is part of our effort to correct that misunderstanding and establish a new operational precedent."

Lensa Geremew, head of the Chartering Division within ESL's Commercial Directorate, confirmed the successful execution of a fuel import from Nigeria. She highlighted that conflict and travel restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz — a critical waterway through which approximately 20 percent of the world's oil supply and a significant portion of Ethiopia's fuel imports transit — had created substantial supply challenges.

"In response to favorable conditions created by the government, the company was able to import 120,000 metric tons of aviation fuel and diesel fuel for the first time in four decades," she said.

ESL officials added that vessel operators successfully transported the petroleum products, helping to alleviate global fuel shortages resulting from shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz following the conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, which began on February 28.

The liquid cargo originated from the Dangote Terminal in Nigeria and was delivered in three voyages via the vessels MV Kokolight, MT Mostar,



Demissew Benti, head of the Market Department at ESL.



Aliko Dangote.

and MT Explorer.

Through these chartered ships, ESL transported 80,000 metric tons of jet fuel and 40,000 metric tons of diesel fuel to the Horizon Oil Terminal in Djibouti, a key hub for Ethiopian fuel imports.

Jet fuel imports have been a priority since the Hormuz crisis began. Experts note that the primary challenge with

aviation fuel is not only the substantial demand from Ethiopian Airlines but also the country's insufficient storage infrastructure for jet fuel, unlike that for diesel and gasoline.

Owned by Dangote Industries, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in Lagos State's Lekki Free Zone began operations in 2024. It currently processes about 650,000 barrels of

crude oil per day, with plans to double this capacity soon.

Ethiopia, a nation that does not produce oil, spends at least a quarter of its total goods-import budget on oil. For the 2024/25 budget year, oil imports were estimated at USD 3.7 billion and are expected to increase by 8.9 percent by the end of the current budget year, which concludes in less than three weeks.

The ongoing situation in the Strait of Hormuz is projected to further escalate import costs. According to Finance Minister Ahmed Shide, who presented the figures to parliament this week during his budget speech, the central bank anticipates fuel imports could reach up to USD 6 billion in the upcoming budget year. This increase is primarily due to price hikes linked to the regional conflict.

Ahmed announced a proposed capital injection for the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE) for the upcoming budget year, starting July 8. Until last year, EPSE was the sole importer of this strategic commodity.

The minister stated that this proposed capital, amounting to 116.4 billion birr, will be disbursed from central government coffers as part of the recurrent budget throughout the year.

In parallel, the government has liberalized the oil import sector, allowing private entities to participate. A week ago, the National Bank of Ethiopia issued a directive permitting foreign direct investors, the diplomatic community, and international non-governmental organizations to import fuel using their own foreign currency.

This move aims to reduce the foreign currency allocated for oil imports and exclude entities that should not benefit from oil subsidies. Ethiopia hosts numerous international organizations and embassies, making it a continental hub.

The government has acknowledged that its oil subsidy historically covered parties that should not have been included. Under the four-year macroeconomic reform program launched in July 2024, the oil sector is expected to become a source of profit for EPSE and generate tax revenue for the government.

Consequently, the subsidy has been revised to target specific communities. However, experts note that the excise and value-added taxes, which were scheduled for imposition last December, have not been fully applied.

Although the government initially aimed for a 100 billion birr fuel subsidy for the 2025/26 budget year (ending July 7), Trade and Regional Integration Minister Kassahun Gofe reported in a late-March social media post that the actual subsidy for that year was 272 billion birr.

For the coming budget year, the government has proposed a 20 billion birr subsidy for the sector, a significant reduction from the previous year's figure, reflecting a planned gradual decrease in subsidies.

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soltransit@gmail.com



Red Fox opens Ethiopia's first beneficial insect facility

By Muluken Yewondwossen

Red Fox Ethiopia PLC, a well-established flower farm operating under the global floriculture brand Dümme Orange, has inaugurated Ethiopia's first dedicated facility for producing beneficial insects. This marks a significant shift toward biological pest control within the horticulture sector.

The 50-million-birr facility, located at the company's production site 98 kilometers southeast of Addis Ababa, will produce predatory mites, specifically *Swirskii* and *Californicus* mites. These mites are natural enemies of harmful pests that damage ornamental crops. Rather than relying on synthetic chemical pesticides, the farm will now breed and release these natural predators directly into its greenhouses, a practice known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

While Red Fox Ethiopia has utilized biological control methods for a decade, this is the first time the company has produced these agents in-house.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony on Tuesday, Yordanos Jemal, General Manager of Red Fox Ethiopia PLC, explained that importing beneficial insects had incurred significant foreign currency costs and resulted in losses due to transport from Europe.

She added, "The company has joined the Horti Footprint Chain Programme, which aims to help the entire ornamental horticulture supply chain become climate-positive by 2030."

The new facility offers multiple benefits: it reduces reliance on chemical pesticides, protects the health of farm workers and surrounding communities, and lowers the risk of pesticide residue on export flowers, thereby helping Ethiopia comply with international market standards. Yordanos also noted that domestic production eliminates the need for air-freighted imports, reducing the industry's CO₂ footprint.

"This facility is proof that nature, when respected and utilized wisely, is the most powerful tool we have," she stated. "We are proud to lead this transformation in Ethiopia and invite the sector to follow."

The inauguration was attended by Sofia Kassa, State Minister of



the Ministry of Agriculture, and Christine Pirenne, Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Diriba Kuma (Amb.), Director General of the Ethiopian Agriculture Authority (EAA), commended the initiative for supporting Ethiopia's national

goals for green agriculture and environmental sustainability. However, he also cautioned about increasing regulatory pressure from export destinations.

"Globally, the market is moving away from chemical pesticides," Diriba said. "My advice to the

horticulture and floriculture industries is to take a bold step toward transitioning to biological pest management systems—not only to comply with EU standards but also to ensure the sustainability of the industry and the environment."

Tewodros Zewdie, Executive Director of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association, hailed the inauguration as a significant development for the sector. He urged research institutions to collaborate with farms, noting that the authority is currently drafting a legal framework to govern biological pest control and ensure the competitiveness of Ethiopian horticulture.

Established in 2003, Red Fox Ethiopia generates over €10 million in annual export earnings and has grown to become the largest farm within the Dümme Orange network. Spanning 100 hectares, including 40 hectares of high-tech greenhouses, the facility annually exports over 120 million cuttings, stems, and tubers.

Dümme Orange, the parent company headquartered in the Netherlands, is one of the world's leading breeders and producers of ornamental plants.

Siket Bank, ECX partner to modernize warehouse receipt lending

By our staff reporter

Siket Bank and the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) have forged a landmark strategic partnership to fully integrate their financial and information ecosystems. This collaboration aims to enhance the efficiency of agricultural commodity trading and expand access to credit for farmers and traders.

A key aspect of this partnership involves the direct electronic integration of the ECX Data Center with Siket Bank's "Tier 3" Data Center gateway. This integration will establish a secure and efficient financial settlement system.

Siket Bank, which recently transitioned from a microfinance institution to a full commercial bank authorized by the National Bank of Ethiopia, leverages the modern "T24" core banking system.

Damte Alemayehu, President of Siket Bank, stated that the bank

will install primary and backup data transmission lines to ensure permanent and seamless information exchange under the new agreement. This will allow electronic account instructions or fund transfer requests from the ECX trading system to be directly and instantly routed into Siket Bank's core banking system, with immediate digital confirmation of task completion sent back to the ECX.

A vital component of the agreement is the strengthening of Warehouse Receipt financing. The ECX issues reliable warehouse receipts that confirm the ownership, quantity, quality, and grade of agricultural products stored in various warehouses.

According to Damte, Siket Bank will accept these electronic warehouse receipts as loan collateral. This will enable producers, traders, and cooperatives to easily access working capital loans without needing traditional collateral such as

property.

To date, the ECX has facilitated 1.74 billion Birr in loans to product owners pledging their goods. The inclusion of Siket Bank is expected to significantly boost this performance and provide rapid liquidity for participants in the agricultural trade value chain.

At the signing ceremony, Mergia Bayissa, CEO of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, emphasized the reliability of the institution's payment system. He highlighted that this agreement marks a significant milestone, bringing the number of banks collaborating with the ECX in payment partnerships to 27.

"Over the past 18 years, the total amount of money deposited by buyers into exchange purchasing accounts and paid out to sellers has exceeded 430 billion Birr," Mergia stated. "This has ensured that sellers receive their proper payments without any disruption the day after selling their products."

He added that by fully transitioning its trading system to an Online Trading Platform, the ECX successfully traded 96,423 metric tons of diverse commodities worth 38.3 billion Birr between April 2025 and June 7, 2026, entirely without default.

Siket Bank President Damte expressed his bank's full readiness and high optimism for comprehensive implementation of the agreement. He noted that the bank's rapid financial growth—with total assets reaching 24 billion Birr, capital at 10 billion Birr, over 795,000 clients, and a branch network of 163—positions it to become a strong competitor in the export financing sector.

"This partnership will provide our customers with a fast, efficient, and modern trading ecosystem," Damte said. "We will work with dedication to increase our borrowing customer base through the warehouse receipt lending service and contribute our share to the country's economic growth."

Applying green taxonomy principles: The new standard for banks

By our staff reporter

The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) Governor, Eyob Tekalign, announced a fundamental transformation in the criteria used to measure the success of financial institutions. He noted that the financial sector remains central to Ethiopia's macroeconomic reform journey, which aims to build a private sector-led, sustainable, and robust economy.

Eyob and Asfaw Alemu, CEO of Dashen Bank, extensively outlined the future direction of the financial sector during their speeches at the grand event celebrating Dashen

Bank's 30th anniversary.

According to the regulatory perspectives shared, previous metrics for bank success—primarily branch expansion and deposit volume—will no longer suffice. Instead, financial institutions will be evaluated based on their achievements in digital transformation, innovation, and their ability to provide accessible financing to productive sectors, women, youth, and rural communities.

Eyob emphasized that implementing green economy frameworks (Green Taxonomy) and adhering to green finance principles to combat climate change will become the primary

benchmark for banks moving forward. The governor highlighted that Ethiopia now requires a banking system that acts as a true partner for national development, respects green finance principles, and can compete effectively at both African and global levels. He urged domestic banks to recognize that with the entry of foreign banks into the domestic market, their competition is no longer just among themselves but with international institutions.

Consequently, they must aggressively enhance their capital, innovation, and human resource capabilities.

Asfaw Alemu, Dashen Bank's

CEO, elaborated on his bank's high standards in technology and digital transformation. He stated that the "Dashen digital application center," inaugurated on the eve of the 30th anniversary, proves the bank has successfully delivered a modern and comprehensive digital ecosystem.

He expressed national pride that the platform was entirely developed by local Ethiopian youth, which significantly saves foreign currency and creates job opportunities for educated citizens.

Summarizing Dashen Bank's 30-year journey, Asfaw underlined that the next 10 years will be vastly different from the past three decades,

demanding immense professionalism and an unwavering focus on digital quality.

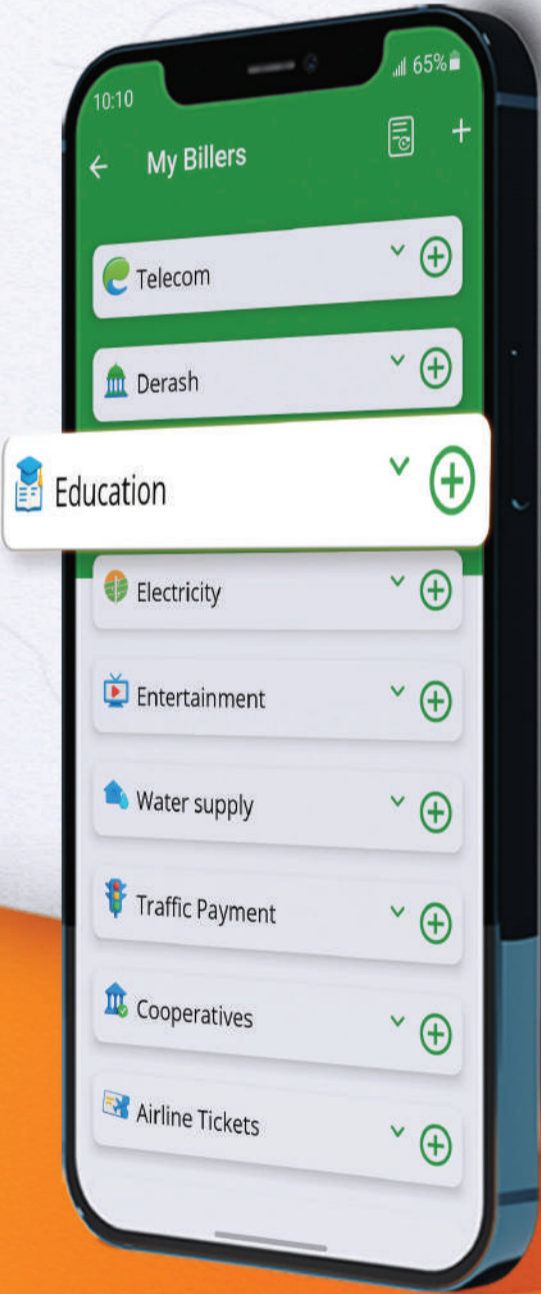
He noted that the bank's community fully recognizes this shifting landscape. He also highlighted that Dashen Bank has consistently fulfilled its corporate social responsibility by supporting healthcare, education, charity, and aiding citizens affected by natural and man-made disasters. He concluded with a message of gratitude to the National Bank leadership, the Board of Directors, esteemed customers, and the bank's dedicated employees who made this success possible.



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Sanitary pad price cuts fail to materialize; NGOs demand strict government controls

By Eyasu Zekarias

Civil society organizations and development partners are urging the Ethiopian government to establish strict market regulation and accountability mechanisms, as the intended retail price reductions for women's menstrual hygiene products have not been properly implemented for consumers.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) say that despite previous fiscal reform measures aimed at reducing the economic burden on women, structural bottlenecks, weak supply-chain monitoring and low awareness continue to disrupt the process, leaving millions of women and girls still facing difficulties.

Speaking to Capital on the issue, Tolessa Olana, Prevention, Africa Union Liaison and Advocacy Manager (PAULAM) at AHF Ethiopia, said the lack of access to menstrual health products has become a major barrier to gender equality, health, education and economic productivity in Ethiopia.

According to a comprehensive draft policy document presented in 2025, titled "Zero Tax on MHH Products & Quality Access: Advancing Menstrual Equity in Ethiopia," a detailed roadmap has been outlined to remove structural barriers facing Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) products.

The draft document, collaboratively

prepared by the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Education (MoE) and more than 10 partners, including AHF, UNICEF and others, along with local manufacturers of reusable sanitary pads, shows that only about 30 percent of women in Ethiopia currently have access to modern menstrual hygiene products.

The consequences of this shortage are severe: one in 10 adolescent girl misses regular school days because of menstruation, while many women are forced to cope with reduced productivity or absenteeism in the workplace.

Although the government has previously adjusted import tariffs, a maximum Value Added Tax (VAT) of 15 percent still applies to disposable pads and other MHH products. The problem is compounded by a 10 percent import duty on finished products and high taxes on raw materials used in production.

Tolessa Olana said that despite high-level policy discussions with importers, retailers and social marketing actors, no tangible impact has been seen at the community level. He noted that although extensive discussions have been held with manufacturers, importers, distributors and social marketing networks, awareness of the tax exemptions remains low.

Furthermore, because the market is

not continuously monitored and strictly regulated, it is difficult to verify whether tax relief is actually benefiting consumers or simply increasing profit margins for middle-tier traders in the supply chain.

Citing broad macroeconomic data, Tolessa said Ethiopia's main challenge is not a lack of research or studies, but implementation bottlenecks. Recent studies also indicate that high inflation on basic commodities is worsening the situation.

Due to these high costs, many low-income and rural residents are forced to use unhygienic alternatives such as rags and leaves, significantly increasing their long-term vulnerability to reproductive and urinary tract infections (UTIs). This issue was reflected last week during the celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Day on June 12 at the Adama Special Economic Zone, held under the theme: "Let's Jointly Ensure a Country Comfortable for Menstrual Hygiene and Services."

Speaking at the event, Fatuma Seyid, Executive for Women and Social Affairs Mainstreaming at the Ministry of Health, said the main objective of marking Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day annually is to create favorable conditions so that women and adolescent girls can maintain their hygiene, dignity and safety during menstruation.

While the annual observance has brought a significant shift in awareness among communities, leaders and girls themselves, she noted that gaps remain. Due to persistent lack of awareness, menstruation is often treated as a minor illness in workplaces, preventing women from receiving sick leave, and there is still a lack of coordinated systems across sectors.

The Ministry of Health further noted that the soaring price of products, exacerbated by the current high cost of living, together with limited access outside urban centers, is forcing many girls to miss school and work. To address the price and accessibility challenges, the ministry said it is working with various stakeholders and ministries on potential duty-free exemptions and other policy reforms.

Data suggests that the domestic crisis has been further aggravated by the decline in international humanitarian funding. Historically, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) helped bridge the supply gap by purchasing and distributing sanitary kits through donor-funded emergency aid and education support initiatives.

However, over the past two years, severe funding shortages have forced several major aid organizations to scale down their operations or close their offices entirely. As donor countries prioritize domestic economic concerns

or redirect funding elsewhere, the financial safety net that previously protected millions of Ethiopian students from product shortages has weakened significantly.

At the same time, local manufacturers trying to fill the supply gap face severe operational hurdles. Companies seeking to import raw materials for domestic production are hit by complex tax structures, high import duties and regulatory delays at customs points.

This drives up production costs, forcing local factories to pass the burden on to consumers. Civil society groups argue that menstrual hygiene should no longer be viewed narrowly as a health or tax issue, but rather as a core pillar of national educational infrastructure.

Organizations such as AHF are calling on the Ministry of Education and regional health bureaus to establish a permanent, dedicated budget line to distribute free sanitary products across all public schools, similar to the administrative and financial frameworks used for national school feeding programs.

Despite current administrative delays, partner organizations remain optimistic that the federal government will take decisive institutional action to implement retail price caps, streamline incentives for local manufacturing and protect the educational rights of female students across the country.

Public Service Transport Service Enterprise to fully take over vehicle license plate production

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ethiopian government has officially announced that the Public Service Transport Service Enterprise will fully take over responsibility for manufacturing and distributing the country's newly unveiled digital vehicle license plates. This transfer of responsibility will take place once the current international supply contract is completed and the system moves from its initial implementation phase into regular operation.

The announcement was made during the official launch of the country's first standardized national vehicle identification system, which meets international standards.

According to Zegeye Belayneh, Director-General of the Addis Ababa City Driver and Vehicle Licensing and Control Authority, the new system will fully replace the old license plate system currently in use, which suffers from numerous flaws.

Transport authorities explained that although the initial rollout followed an international framework — involving the large-scale manufacturing of 4 million modern plates by a specialized company in China due to a lack of immediate domestic production capacity — the long-term strategy calls for complete national control. To ensure economic sustainability, the government-backed Public Service Transport Service Enterprise has been officially mandated to handle all subsequent manufacturing and logistics operations.

Zegeye explained that the conventional plates currently in use suffer from structural flaws: they degrade quickly, lack uniformity, are prone to physical damage and are highly susceptible to forgery and illegal duplication. Officials emphasized that such counterfeit plate activity has repeatedly endangered public safety and security while enabling illicit operations.

However, following the license plate reform, the release of the new price list — which covers both front and

rear plates and includes Value Added Tax (VAT) — has sparked intense opposition and concern among vehicle owners and service providers. Critics argue that the newly released tariff represents a major price increase compared with previous plate issuance costs, imposing a heavy economic burden that overshadows the benefits of the lifetime smart license plates.

According to the official tariff list, the price for private, commercial, diplomatic and aid organization vehicles running on fuel is set at 56,000 Birr, while those running on electricity or gas are priced at 44,500 Birr. For cross-border freight transport vehicles, the fee is 28,500 Birr for fuel-powered

vehicles and 15,200 Birr for electric or gas-powered vehicles. Public taxis are charged 11,700 Birr for fuel-powered vehicles and 9,400 Birr for electric or gas vehicles. For buses, government vehicles, vehicles for persons with disabilities and bajajs, the cost is 9,400 Birr for fuel-powered vehicles and 7,100 Birr for electric or gas vehicles. Motorcycles are priced at 4,700 Birr for fuel-powered models and 3,550 Birr for electric or gas models.

Even as public criticism grows, economic analysts say the government's pricing strategy sends a clear signal to the automotive market and represents a strategic move to accelerate the transition away from

fossil fuels. By offering discounts of up to 46 percent for electric and gas-powered vehicles, policymakers are using the price gap to encourage consumers to adopt electric vehicles.

Nevertheless, public taxi drivers and transport associations have warned that the added cost could trigger inflation, affecting public transport fares and logistics expenses. During a recent press conference, the authority did not provide a detailed response to the pricing concerns.

Officials also said that, to manage the large volume of demand without overloading administrative channels, the government has introduced a strict phased implementation plan beginning

with a pilot program across 11 key branches in Addis Ababa. The first phase targets newly registered vehicles. More than 1,000 major construction companies, commercial enterprises and transport organizations — some managing fleets of hundreds of vehicles — are already registered and waiting to receive the new plates.

Before the rollout, the authority acknowledged that minor delays were caused by structural adjustments to the system and technological upgrades. As a result, the ministry said transitioning existing vehicles, categorized under Code 1, 2, 3 and so on, into the new system is expected to take three to six months.

Africa's HIV response at a crossroads as funding cuts threaten gains

By our staff reporter

Africa is facing a critical moment in its HIV response, with recent funding disruptions threatening to slow or reverse hard-won gains across the continent. For years, sub-Saharan Africa has led the global decline in new infections, but UNAIDS says prevention programmes, community services and support for vulnerable groups are now under serious strain. The report shows that sub-Saharan Africa still accounts for about half of all new HIV infections worldwide, even though the region has also recorded the steepest long-term decline. Since 2010, new infections in the region have fallen by 59 percent, but UNAIDS warns that this progress is fragile if funding cuts continue. One of the biggest concerns

is prevention. HIV prevention programmes across sub-Saharan Africa were sharply reduced in 2025, with enrolment in pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, dropping by 38 percent in reporting countries. Funding for condom programming and other prevention support also fell steeply in some donor-backed programmes. UNAIDS says this is especially worrying because prevention services in Africa have long depended heavily on external assistance.

Women and girls remain among the most affected. In sub-Saharan Africa, women account for six in every 10 new HIV infections. Adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 remain at particularly high risk, with infection rates three to four times higher than those of their male peers in the region. The report says this

shows the epidemic remains deeply shaped by gender inequality, poverty and unequal access to services.

Children are also still being affected. UNAIDS estimates that 94,000 children acquired HIV in 2025, the vast majority in sub-Saharan Africa. Although treatment coverage has improved over time, the report says gaps in prevention of mother-to-child transmission and broader service delivery continue to put children at risk.

Community-led organisations are another major concern. UNAIDS says these groups are vital to reaching people who might otherwise be left out of the health system, including people living with HIV, key populations and young women. But many of these organisations are now facing funding shortages, even though they

provide counselling, outreach, testing support and help reduce stigma in communities.

The report argues that Africa's HIV response must now shift toward stronger domestic financing, more efficient use of resources and better integration of HIV services into national health systems. It also calls for greater protection of community-led programmes, which it says are essential for sustaining progress.

UNAIDS says ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 is still possible, but only if countries act quickly to protect prevention, treatment and community systems. For Africa, the message is clear: progress has been real, but without renewed investment and political commitment, the gains of the past two decades could begin to slip away.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE: EVENT & CONFERENCE ORGANIZER FOR CHRISTIAN BLIND MISSION (CBM) PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT – ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Background

CBM is organizing the Partnership Summit to be held from 9– 13 November 2026 (including arrival, event and departure) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Summit will bring together key partners, stakeholders, and participants globally. To ensure a high-quality event, CBM seeks the services of a professional Conference and Event Organizer to manage the full cycle of planning and execution.

Scope of Work / TORs

The Conference and Event Organizer will be responsible for the coordination of overall design, planning, and successful delivery of the Summit in close liaison with CBM. The anticipated number of participants from different countries is approximately 160 -200. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Planning & Coordination

- Ensure that selected event venue in Addis Ababa is adequate and appropriate for the number of participants and meets overall international conference standards including but not limited to available facilities, safety and security, accessibility etc.
- Visit event venue and use a Gant Chart/Work plan to develop detailed plans for key deliverables that will lead to overall success of the event.
- Develop a space layout plan aligned with Summit objectives.
- Manage registration processes during the conference for all participants.
- Coordinate special event sessions such as receptions, panel discussions, and exhibitions.
- Work closely with the hotel management and CBM to oversee event logistics, safety and security measures, protocol management, and accessibility requirements.
- Manage and coordinate airport transfers & Local transport (within Addis Ababa)
- Oversee the printing of conference materials (if needed) in collaboration with the Country Office Team
- Work closely with CBM Ethiopia Country Office to ensure availability of adequate number of Sign Language Interpreters, Sighted Guides and simultaneous language interpreters.

2. Program Development

- Facilitate speaker identification (Keynote speaker), acquisition, and confirmation (final approval rests with CBM)
- Coordinate local speaker logistics (travel, briefing, session prep)
- Work with the hotel management in ensuring that facilities for language translation in the agreed languages are available (simultaneous language interpreters)
- Manage delegate support including communication, travel guidance, accommodation coordination, and local transport.
- Facilitate session flow and transitions
- Provide or coordinate professional moderators (if required)
- Note: Strategic content and themes remain the responsibility of CBM

3. Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop and manage communication workflows with speakers, partners, and participants.
- Produce event-related content as required including rapporteurs
- Work closely with CBM Ethiopia County Office to ensure correct CBM branding and visibility including setting up of exhibition booths
- Undertake press coordination and management during the entire summit

4. Event Leadership

- Lead onsite event execution, managing all teams and activities.
- In collaboration with the CBM Ethiopia Country Director, serve as the main point of contact before, during, and after the event.

5. Expected Deliverables

The Event Organizer will be required to deliver the following measurable outputs:

Pre-Event Deliverables

- Detailed Event Workplan (with timelines and milestones) – within 3 weeks of contract signing
- Approved Event Concept & Design (layout, branding, participant flow)
- Registration System (live and functional, with tracking dashboard)
- Confirmed speaker list and draft agenda (at least 4 weeks prior to the event)

During Event Deliverables

- Fully executed Summit program with no major disruption
- Daily coordination reports (brief summaries of progress/issues)
- Maintain operational and convenient real-time participant support desks

Post-Event Deliverables

- Produce final Event Report (within 10 working days), including but not limited to:
 - Attendance statistics
 - Session summaries (rapporteur output)
 - Media coverage and communications report
 - Financial reconciliation report
- All event materials (presentations, recordings, photos, etc.)

6. Budget & Cost Structure

While bidders are expected to propose detailed budgets, the following guidance applies:

Indicative Budget Framework

- Proposals should clearly state whether costs are:
 - Inclusive or exclusive applicable taxes (VAT, withholding, etc.)
- Provide a transparent cost breakdown, including:
 - o Event management fees (professional fees)
 - o General administration cost
 - Fees for Assistants or any third party
 - Venue and logistics coordination
 - Printing and branding materials (to be discussed after contracting with CBM)
 - Communication & media coverage (indicative budget for CBM's consideration)

Note: CBM reserves the right to negotiate within a defined budget ceiling (to be agreed during contracting stage with the successful bidder).

Skills & Requirements

- Minimum 3–5 years' experience in large-scale conference planning.
- Strong project management and leadership skills.
- Experience working with international development organizations.
- Excellent organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work under pressure and manage multiple tasks.
- Strong budget development and management capabilities.

How to Apply

Interested firms or individuals should submit a technical and financial proposal to CBM detailing their methodology, reference experience, and proposed fees.

Please apply exclusively online through info.ethiopia@cbm.org; negede.moges@cbm.org by 24th of June 2026.

Your contact person: Negede Moges, Tel. Mobile: +251 929 38 31 69/ +251 911 428943

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

IFC Partners with MIDROC Ethiopia to expand hospitality

IFC is partnering with MIDROC Ethiopia PLC (MEP), the hospitality arm of MIDROC Investment Group (MIG), Ethiopia's largest private sector conglomerate - to expand premium hospitality capacity in Ethiopia. The investment is expected to support over 9,400 direct and indirect jobs, strengthen tourism flows, and open pathways to formal employment for young people and women, who continue to find opportunity and advancement through the sector.

The partnership supports the World Bank Group (WBG)'s Country Partnership Framework (FY18–22, extended to FY26) for Ethiopia, which identifies tourism as a major source of the country's economic growth. It also aligns with the WBG Gender Strategy (FY24–30) by accelerating gender equality through formal employment generation and workplace inclusivity.

IFC is providing MEP with an US\$80million long term loan to support the refurbishment of the Sheraton Addis (Luxury Collection) and the development of a new Sheraton hotel in Addis Ababa (the Project).

Seychelles, Eritrea adopt first WHO prequalified 4th generation HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B integrated test

Seychelles and Eritrea have taken a notable step in maternal and child health by adopting Abbott's integrated Determine™ Antenatal Care (ANC) Panel to help advance the triple elimination of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus (HBV). The move offers a practical model for countries seeking to meet World Health Organization targets through faster, simpler screening during pregnancy.

The approach is especially important in Africa, where preventable infections continue to contribute to infant mortality and missed antenatal testing remains common. In sub-Saharan Africa, many pregnant women attend only one antenatal visit despite WHO guidance recommending eight, limiting the chance to detect and treat infections early.

The health burden is significant. An estimated 1.3 million women with HIV become pregnant each year worldwide, while about 1 million pregnant women are diagnosed with syphilis. Chronic HBV also remains widespread, with 71.4 million women of childbearing age living with the infection in 2021.

Ethiopia and China sign five-year deal to add Chinese to national schools

Ethiopia and China have signed a five year agreement to incorporate the Chinese language into Ethiopia's national education system.

The agreement was formalized by Ethiopia's State Minister of Education, Professor Kindeya Gebrehiwot, and China's Ambassador to Ethiopia, Qin Hai, during a ceremony in Addis Ababa.

It marks the latest step in the countries' growing educational and cultural cooperation. China is already one of Ethiopia's largest trade and investment partners, and their partnership has recently expanded into education, technology, and people to people exchanges.

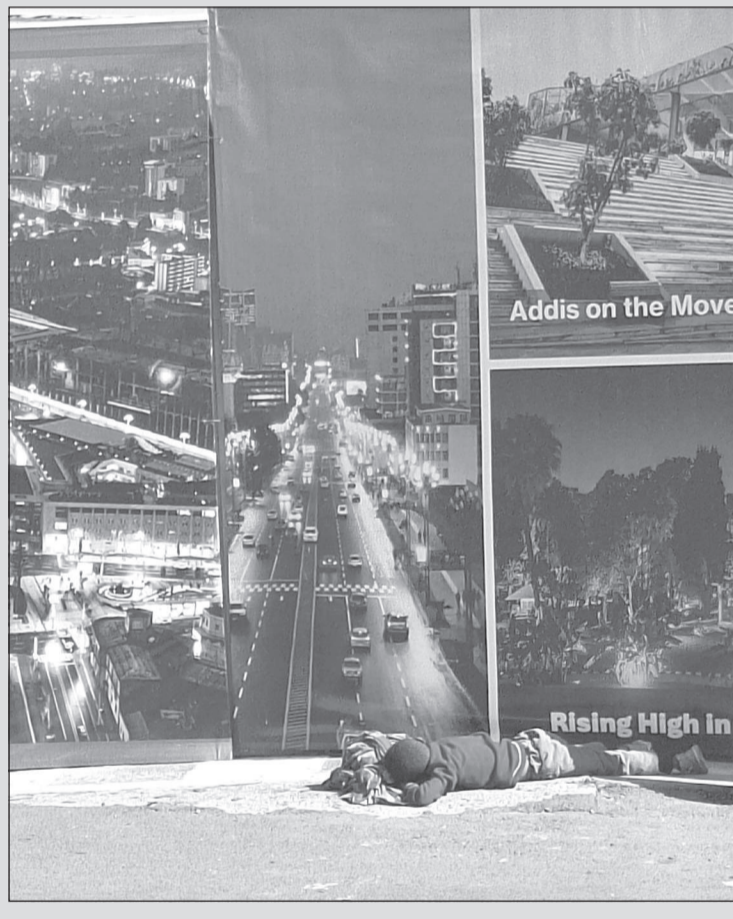
Under the new agreement, Chinese will be officially integrated into Ethiopia's national education framework.

This builds on earlier efforts, including Chinese supported language and vocational training, as well as Confucius Institutes and classrooms already operating across Ethiopian institutions. Several Ethiopian universities have also shown strong interest in introducing Chinese courses to meet student and job market demand.

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Study confirms mosquito nets cut malaria—but effectiveness threatened

A major analysis of 25 studies across Africa and Asia finds that insecticide-treated nets cut malaria cases by up to 68% — but highlights challenges that threaten to undermine their long-term impact.

The study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Infectious Diseases*, confirms that insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) continue to provide strong protection against malaria — but reveals that their effectiveness varies considerably between regions and communities.

These findings suggest that the performance of this relatively simple, low-cost intervention is under pressure — particularly in areas where insecticide resistance is already established.

The researchers warn that without locally adapted control strategies that combine ITNs with other mosquito control measures, progress made over recent decades could be at risk.

“While this study reinforces that ITNs remain one of the most powerful weapons we have against malaria, it is also a warning that we cannot afford to become complacent,” says Dr Gbeminiyi Olorin, a doctoral researcher at James Cook University, Australia, and a veterinary public health clinician and researcher in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Jos, Nigeria.

ECA launches Africa Development Impact Forum to bridge the gap between ideas and impact

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) opens the inaugural Africa Development Impact Forum (ADIF), a bold new platform designed to move Africa beyond dialogue and into measurable, scalable action on the continent's most pressing development challenges.

Taking place on 11–12 June 2026 at the United Nations Conference Center in Addis Ababa, the inaugural edition of ADIF brings together researchers, policymakers, investors, development partners, and industry leaders under the theme: Best Practices and Innovative Solutions for Job Creation in Africa.

Africa is not short of ideas, research, or policy frameworks. What has been missing is the system that turns them into results. Promising innovations remain isolated. Pilot programs go unscaled. Applied research sits disconnected from the decisions that shape people's lives. ADIF is designed to change that. Spearheaded by ECA, ADIF is a direct response to the structural inertia that has stalled Africa's transformation for too long. It operates on a three-stage model that begins before the forum opens and continues long after it closes: a pre-forum Call-to-Action Challenge that co-develops problem statements and mobilizes ideas; a Policy and Strategy Hackathon during the forum that tests and refines actionable solutions; and a post-forum Implementation Clock that tracks, supports, and scales proven models.

Dubai Chamber of Commerce organises 1,460 B2B meetings during trade missions to Africa

Dubai Chamber of Commerce, one of the three chambers operating under the umbrella of Dubai Chambers, has successfully concluded a series of trade missions to Africa, organising a total of 1,460 bilateral business meetings in Ghana, Ethiopia, and South Africa.

The missions brought together companies from Dubai with potential partners across the continent, with the participation of 45 Dubai-based companies operating across diverse sectors. The meetings were designed to support the international growth of companies operating in Dubai, unlock new business opportunities, and strengthen trade and investment partnerships with African business communities.

The chamber organised 276 bilateral business meetings in Ghana, 510 meetings in Ethiopia, and 674 meetings in South Africa. As part of the missions, Dubai Chamber of Commerce also hosted business forums in each market, attracting a total of 1,721 participants including senior officials, business leaders, and representatives of local companies.

Rapid Support Forces Drone Attacks Kill Five in El Obeid

Five people were killed, and 12 others injured on Wednesday in drone attacks carried out by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) targeting civil sites in North Kordofan State, the Sudan Doctors Network said. El Obeid has become a hub for advanced military operations for the army, targeting areas in South and West Kordofan as well as the Darfur region. The city has faced recurring drone attacks by the RSF, which have killed numerous civilians and caused extensive damage to markets and public facilities, including schools and hospitals. The Sudan Doctors Network said in a statement that one drone targeted the Dalil cemetery during a funeral procession, killing four people and injuring seven others. According to the network, another attack struck a fuel station inside the city, leaving five people with critical injuries. The statement noted growing fears that the casualty toll could rise, given the continued targeting of civilian areas and public facilities inside the city in recent days.

(Sudan Tribune)

Olusegun Obasanjo, International Envoys Arrive in Mekelle for Talks on Pretoria Agreement, Regional Security

Former Nigerian President and African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo, has arrived in Mekelle alongside representatives

from Australia and the United Kingdom for discussions with TPLF Chairman Debretsion Gebremichael. According to information obtained from the Tigray President Office Page, the envoys arrived in Mekelle on 11 June and are expected to hold talks focused on two key issues: preventing a return to war and assessing the implementation of the Pretoria peace agreement. The discussions will also review the current political and security situation in the region amid growing concerns over tensions in Tigray and recent allegations of military mobilization. The visit comes at a time when political divisions within Tigray and Ethiopia remain unresolved and concerns have been raised by regional and international actors over the need to preserve the gains made since the signing of the Pretoria Agreement in November 2022.

(Addis Standard)

South Sudanese Man Abducted in Nairobi, Family Fears Rendition to Juba

The wife of a South Sudanese national reported missing in Kenya said on Wednesday that her husband was abducted by armed men in Nairobi, raising fears that he could be forcibly returned to South Sudan, where she believes his life may be at risk. ... [S]he said she received a call from a relative informing her that a report had been filed at Nairobi's Kilimani Police Station alleging that Gaddafi had been abducted at gunpoint. ... Kenyan

activist and presidential aspirant Boniface Mwangi told Radio Tamazuj that Gaddafi had approached him in April claiming his life was in danger. ... Mwangi said Gaddafi alleged that money had been siphoned from South Sudan through a company called CapitalPay and that he had spoken to journalists and police about the matter. ... Human rights groups and United Nations investigators have documented several cases involving South Sudanese activists, opposition figures and government critics who were deported, abducted or forcibly returned from Kenya over the past decade.

(Radio Tamazuj)

East African Ministers to Unveil Budgets amid Iran Fuel Shock, Debt Strains

Finance ministers in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania will present their 2026/27 budgets to their parliaments on Thursday, with investors focused on how they will shield their economies from cost shocks linked to the Iran war while keeping debt in check. East Africa is seen as highly vulnerable to the trade turmoil arising from conflict given its reliance on fuel and fertiliser imports - concerns which prompted the African Development Bank to cut the region's growth forecast for this year by half a percentage point. ... In Kenya, the biggest economy in the region, markets will be watching to see how Finance Minister John Mbadi

balances high debt repayments, slowing growth, a temporary cut in petroleum taxes and a wide fiscal deficit. ... In neighbouring Uganda, analysts cautioned that the Iran war shock on fuel prices could strain government spending plans. ... In Tanzania, which said it expected the economy to grow at a faster rate of 6.3% this year from 5.9% last year, the government said the Iran war could present opportunities. "There is an opportunity to provide the services for transshipment of ships that have not been able to deliver parcels to the ports in the Middle East," Planning Minister Kitila Mkumbo told parliament ahead of the budget.

(Reuters)

Term of the Day
INVISIBLE HAND

Definition

The invisible hand refers to the unintended social benefits and self-regulation of the marketplace that result from individuals pursuing their own interests in a free economy.

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INTERVIEW

ACCION EYES DEEPER FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN ETHIOPIA

In this interview with *Capital's* Groum Abate, Raliat Sunmonu, Vice President for Middle East and Africa at Accion Advisory, discusses the organization's push to expand inclusive finance in Ethiopia through partnerships with banks, fintechs and other local actors. She highlights efforts to support women-led MSMEs, refugees and smallholder farmers, while also pointing to the policy and infrastructure changes needed to make digital finance more accessible, responsible and commercially sustainable. Excerpts;



Capital: What is Accion's core mission in Ethiopia, and how does it fit into the broader goal of financial inclusion in East Africa?

Raliat Sunmonu: Accion's work in Ethiopia is linked to our broader mission of creating a fair and inclusive economy globally, where all customers have access to meaningful, affordable financial and other services. In Ethiopia, this means building on the great strides the country has made in the last decade or so in building a stronger digital financial services ecosystem to collaborate with local partners in accelerating the delivery of services to long-underserved customers like micro and small businesses, young women, and forcibly displaced persons. Working with a variety of local partners – such as banks, fintechs, and digital platforms – we tailor proven solutions and methodologies to the Ethiopian contexts and customer realities and deepen the capabilities of these service providers to see and serve these customers sustainably. Through our work, we aim to build lasting economic resilience of excluded or underserved customers who will help power the country's economic future for decades to come.

Capital: How has Accion tailored its approach to Ethiopia's specific context—such as its large MSME sector, refugees, and digital finance landscape?

Raliat Sunmonu: Our model in Ethiopia replicates Accion's successful approach elsewhere—rooted in deep understanding of the market, co-creation and strategic partnerships with local service providers, and enabling systems-level changes through meaningful engagement with the ecosystem. In Ethiopia, where access to formal finance for microenterprises remains a significant challenge, Accion is bypassing traditional barriers by helping financial service providers (FSPs) transition to digital-first, embedded models. Rather than offering financial services as standalone products, we integrate them directly into the "business as usual" workflows of marginalized groups, including refugees and smallholder farmers. For instance, in our work with refugee-led nano-retail businesses and urban micro-retailers in Addis Ababa, we utilize "closed-loop" inventory solutions. This approach provides entrepreneurs with essential stock and supplies through a digital ecosystem rather than traditional cash disbursements, significantly easing the burden of capital management for women

business owners. By utilizing alternative data, such as order patterns and transaction histories on B2B platforms, to build tailored profiles, we enable FSPs to provide essential financial tools to "thin-file" customers who often lack the documentation to meet rigid traditional requirements. Ultimately, this modality leverages existing supply chains to deliver more accessible, lower-cost financial solutions that are designed to meet the specific economic realities of the Ethiopian market.

Capital: Can you describe the innovation hub partnership between Accion, Dashen Bank, and Mastercard and what it aims to achieve for Ethiopian MSMEs, especially women owned businesses?

Raliat Sunmonu: The innovation hub partnership between Dashen Bank, Accion, and Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth is a collaborative initiative designed to expand digital financial services for Ethiopia's MSMEs, with a strong emphasis on supporting women-owned businesses. Dashen is one of Ethiopia's leading financial institutions, with a track record of innovation and service delivery. The innovation hub aims to deepen the Bank's innovation DNA and build new capabilities and commercially-viable solutions and services

that address the needs of micro and small businesses, without sacrificing the Bank's profitability and leadership in Ethiopia's financial services sector.

The innovation hub is developing tailored digital banking products and services that help small businesses transition from cash-based operations into the formal digital economy. Accion is supporting the Bank to leverage new approaches and partnerships, using alternative data sources to create more inclusive credit-scoring models that better reflect the realities of MSMEs, especially women-led enterprises that may not have traditional collateral or documented credit histories. By combining technology, research, and strategic partnerships, the initiative seeks to improve financial inclusion, increase access to working capital, and strengthen the resilience and growth potential of Ethiopian small businesses. More broadly, the Accion-Dashen Bank partnership reflects one example in a long-term effort by both parties to build a more inclusive digital financial ecosystem in Ethiopia, where MSMEs, and particularly women-owned businesses, can participate more fully in economic growth and the digital economy.

Capital: How are you working

with fintechs like Kifiya to use alternative data and digital platforms to reach underserved groups, including women and refugees?

Raliat Sunmonu: Building on 65 years of global experience in unlocking inclusive growth, Accion provides our Ethiopian fintech partners, such as Kifiya, with a deep pool of technical expertise in digital transformation, gender-inclusive digital financial services and credit risk management. Rather than simply delivering high-level reports, we apply a 'hands-on' advisory approach to help partners identify opportunities to better see and serve groups like small-scale women entrepreneurs, sustainably. Our proprietary tools help partners embed new capabilities in areas such as responsible financial product design and customer engagement strategies, and provide capacity-building support to customers to enable appropriate usage and long-term adoption of partner solutions. A critical component of our partnership is our focus on women-intentionality; we work internally with partners like Kifiya to ensure their products, messaging, and delivery channels are purposefully designed to overcome the unique barriers women face, and help them measure the impact of such

INTERVIEW

approaches on their business and social goals.

Capital: What measurable impact has Accion seen so far in expanding access to finance for smallholder farmers, women entrepreneurs, and urban shopkeepers in Ethiopia?

Raliat Sunmonu: Accion measures impact across several dimensions including end customer impact, reflected in metrics such as improved trust and confidence in utilizing financial services, and increased revenue and sales. Our impact in Ethiopia is defined by its success in proving that traditionally "unbankable" segments can be successfully integrated into the formal economy through intentional product design. By launching and scaling targeted pilots, so far, we have demonstrated clear pathways to financial inclusion for three distinct groups:

- **Smallholder Farmers:** In the Sidama region, we have provided vegetable farmers, who often lack formal documentation and financial visibility, with the digital tools and visibility needed to secure essential inputs and inventory.

- **Refugee Entrepreneurs:** In the camps of Gambella, we have established a proven use case for "closed-loop" financing, enabling refugees to build sustainable livelihoods through inventory-based credit rather than traditional cash loans.

- **Urban Shopkeepers:** Across Addis Ababa, we have empowered small Sque owners by creating digital footprints for their businesses, allowing these essential community pillars to move from the shadows into the formal financial ecosystem.

Beyond individual success stories, our measurable impact lies in the creation of a replicable blueprint for alternative credit assessment. We have successfully helped move these marginalized groups from invisibility to digital visibility, showing the broader financial sector that with the right data-driven approach, smallholder farmers and micro-entrepreneurs are not just bankable, but essential drivers of Ethiopia's economic future.

Capital: How do you evaluate whether these digital finance products are actually improving livelihoods, rather than just increasing credit access?

Raliat Sunmonu: Accion measures the impact of financial services on individuals' and households' financial health through tangible social and economic shifts in a user's life. We do this through our own product impact assessments as well as in collaboration with independent research organizations and third parties. There are real, tangible examples from Accion's work that demonstrate how digital financial services can contribute to the financial health of individuals

and their households. One example is the 2025 60 Decibels MFI Index Report, which looks at the experience of almost 25,000 microfinance customers from 39 countries and 89 institutions, including several Accion portfolio companies. The report shows that Accion's MFI partners generally perform strongly on business impact, quality of life, and resilience, with resilience gains especially pronounced for women. Another example: in 2018 Accion and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, initiated a program to support the digital enablement of micro and small businesses globally. During the first four years, we supported 56 institutions (9 financial service providers and 47 fintechs) to reach over 4 million microentrepreneurs through digitally-enabled financial and other services. Our findings show that nearly 80 percent of digital finance users interviewed across five countries reported an increase in their capacity to manage financial challenges, such as repaying their loans on time or accessing credit for their needs. Globally, women-owned micro and small businesses also reported significant improvements in their financial health over a 12-month period, with more than 70 percent reporting that the digital products delivered through the program contributed to this improvement. Digitalization can significantly improve the cost, relevance, and variety of financial services available to low-income customers, helping to build resilience to climate events and other economic shocks.

Capital: How are you specifically supporting women led MSMEs in Ethiopia, and what are the main barriers they still face in accessing finance and markets?

Raliat Sunmonu: In Ethiopia, women-led MSMEs still face systemic hurdles, most notably a significant collateral gap and a lack of formal financial footprints, with only 39% of women holding formal bank accounts compared to 55% of men. These challenges are exacerbated by weak digital infrastructure and cultural norms, particularly in more rural areas outside of major cities. Accion takes a holistic approach to mainstreaming gender-intentional practices in financial services: identifying opportunities and business models that are women-friendly and working with a variety of service providers – from traditional banks to digital platforms – to re-engineer how they see and serve women; creating content and strategies that help women build trust, agency and capabilities required for using financial services and plugging in to the formal economy, and building clear, repeatable cases that serve as "demonstrable models" that other players in the industry



can replicate or scale, thereby crowding in the needed investment, innovation and capacity needed to drive the inclusive finance sector.

Capital: What role does your work with refugees in Ethiopia play in integrating them into the local economy and financial system?

Raliat Sunmonu: Accion's work with refugees in Ethiopia (and elsewhere) aims at nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of forcibly displaced communities and supporting them as they strive to become economic contributors instead of passive aid recipients. In Ethiopia, we worked with urban refugees in Addis Ababa, and in the Jewi and Tierkidi settlement camps in the Gambela region; beginning by providing refugee women with essential business training — covering everything from launching door-to-door retail ventures to scaling existing micro-enterprises like traditional tea and coffee houses. To bridge the financial gap, we have pioneered an innovative "closed-loop" credit model in partnership with global FMCG giant Unilever, a leading fintech, and local commercial

banks. Under this system, entrepreneurs receive essential inventory and raw materials — such as flour or tea — on credit, allowing them to manage their cash flow effectively without the need for upfront capital. These transactions are facilitated by local banks that ensure distributors are paid on time, while refugees repay their credit through a network of tailored cash-in/cash-out agents specifically onboarded near the camps. This model not only builds a vital financial footprint for "thin-file" individuals but also fosters a sustainable entrepreneurial mentality, with many participants becoming repeat users who consistently expand their businesses and strengthen their local economies.

Capital: In your view, what kind of policy and regulatory changes are needed in Ethiopia to make digital finance solutions more inclusive and responsible?

Raliat Sunmonu: There has been significant — and accelerated — progress since the first national financial inclusion strategy (NFIS) was introduced a decade ago, along with enabling

regulations and initiatives. We've seen access to formal financial services more than double, digital financial services bringing new entrants, and the proliferation of innovative services driving improved benefits for customers from rural farmers to micro-retailers; all spurred by digital infrastructure building blocks like the digital ID (Fayda), smartphone penetration, and interoperable payment systems. Despite these leaps, persistent inclusion gaps remain, and the next phase of financial inclusion initiatives need to focus on addressing these:

- **Low-income households, rural populations, and women** continue to be disproportionately disadvantaged when it comes to access and usage of digital financial services, due to systemic barriers including low literacy, weak digital infrastructure and a lack of national identification.

- Whilst peer-to-peer digital payments and mobile money use is increasing—particularly in urban areas, digital payment adoption is still generally low often due to affordability issues on the part of the customer, and a dearth of strong, commercially viable use cases for B2B and B2C payments.

- **Continued strengthening of the market infrastructure to deepen capital mobilization and catalyze investments in key sectors and resources.**

Capital: How does Accion engage with Ethiopian regulators, banks, and fintechs to shape a more inclusive financial inclusion ecosystem?

Raliat Sunmonu: We work with service providers such as banks and fintechs to identify and capitalize on opportunities to deliver more inclusive financial services to customer segments that have been typically un- or under-served. We develop, integrate, and expand the distribution of useful services leveraging technology. Through our pilots, research, and demonstration models, we help build proof points for regulators and other stakeholders to support the rollout of meaningful policies and strategies. We also use convenings — both regional and global as Financial Inclusion Week and the Responsible Finance Forum, to bring together regulators and other stakeholders to discuss topical issues and exchange practical, meaningful insights relevant to their markets.

Capital: What are the next phase priorities for you in Ethiopia over the next three to five years?

Raliat Sunmonu: We've built a strong foundation over the last few years of great partnerships, engagements, and end customer impact. We look forward to continuing to be a part of Ethiopia's impressive economic development journey, in even bigger and more impactful ways



Save the Children

INVITATION TO TENDER

For Statutory Audit Services

Tender Reference - SCI-ET-2026-017

Save the Children believes every child deserves a better future. In Ethiopia and around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn, and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children, every day and in times of crisis, to transform their lives and the future we share.

Save the Children Ethiopia Country Office invites qualified and licensed audit firms for the provision of statutory audit services in accordance with Ethiopian regulations and international standards.

Mandatory Requirements

- Valid business license and audit license in Ethiopia
- Professional certification (CPA, CA, or equivalent)
- Valid TIN, VAT, and Tax Clearance Certificates
- Proven experience with INGOs, donor-funded projects, or NGOs in statutory audits

The detailed criteria are included in the bid document. Thus, interested companies are invited to get the tender document from Save the Children Ethiopia Country Office, **close to Meskel Square, near the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sunshine Building, 6th floor. Google map address: 9°00'35.2"N 38°45'53.1"E**

Tender document

- Potential bidders may obtain tender documents against payment of a non-refundable amount of ETB 100 from SCI office in Addis Ababa Country office starting from **June 15, 2026, up to July 2, 2026, during working hours.**

Bid Submission

- Tenders must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in the tender document on or before **July 6, 2026, at 3:00 PM.**

SCI reserves the right to accept or reject this bid, in partial, or in its entirety.

	Company Name NATIONAL ALCOHOL & LIQUOR FACTORY ብሔራዊ አልኮልና አረቄ ፋብሪካ	Document No O F / N A L F / PA/016
Revision 0	Document /Title: የጨረታ ማስታወቂያ Invitation Bid	Page No: Page 1 of 1

Re-Floating of Bid (second announcement)

Invitation for International competitive Bidding (ICB) Tender No.NALF 006/2026

1. National Alcohol & Liquor factory (NALF), a state-owned Enterprise supervise by Ethiopia Investment Holdings(EIH) invites all interested, eligible and qualified international ERP solution providers for the supply, implementation, configuration, integration, data migration, testing, go-live, and post-go-live support of fully integrated Enterprise Resource planning (ERP) system.
2. A complete set of bid document can be obtained against payment of non-refundable fee of Birr 700 /seven hundred / from the main cashier at Mekanissa head office.
3. The bid must be accompanied by a bid security birr 300,000 (Three hundred birr) or equivalent (1,950 USD) in the form of bank guarantee, irrevocable letter of credit (counter –guaranteed by bank in Ethiopia if issued abroad) and CPO. The Bid security shall remain valid for at least 28 days beyond the bid validity period.
4. Bidder's requests for clarification may be submitted up to fifteen (10) days prior to the bid submission deadline.
5. Technical and financial bids must be submitted in separate sealed envelopes enclosed within one outer envelope clearly marked with the tender reference and addressed to NALF.
6. The bid bond will be sealed in separate envelop and marked bid bond.
7. The closing date is **July 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM** and the bid will be opened at the same date at **10:20 AM** in the presence of the bidders or their legal representatives at Mekanissa head office 7th floor meeting hall No.710.
8. National Alcohol & Liquor factory reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

National Alcohol & Liquor Factory
P.O.Box:- 3516 Fax:- 0115-513299 Tel:- 0115-516999
Addis Ababa



INVITATION FOR BID

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is one of the world's leading humanitarian and development organizations, operating in over 40 countries to deliver relief, rehabilitation, and post-crisis recovery services. Since initiating operations in Ethiopia in 2000 in response to severe drought, the IRC has implemented integrated emergency and development programs across six regions of Ethiopia. Its programming spans health, water and sanitation, economic recovery, women's protection and empowerment, education, child protection, and multi-sectoral responses.

IRC invites the sealed bids from all eligible and qualified bidders, technically competent, and having valid licenses for the current Ethiopian FY **2018 EC/2026 GC** to provide the below goods.

Procurement of two years Master Purchase agreement to supply HDPE Pipe and HDPE fitting & GI Fittings.

The Complete set of bidding documents in English for the HDPE Pipe and HDPE fittings & Gi Fittings procurement above can be obtained from **June 15, 2026, to June 30, 2026**, during working hour from the **IRC Addis Ababa office located at:**

International Rescue Committee, Addis Ababa Office

SETS building 7th floor

Jackros to Salitemihret Road, Around Robera Coffee

Tel: 0116 63 83 02, 0116 636 735/6/7

Fax:0116 62 00 19

Addis Ababa Office

Late bids cannot be accepted. Tender will be closed on June 30, 2026, at 10:30 AM and will be opened in the presence of interested bidders or their representative on June 30, 2026, at 11:00 AM.

The prospective vendor shall present with their company name and sign to acknowledge receipt of the bid documents.

IRC shall not be bound to accept the lowest-priced bid or any bid submitted, and any form of canvassing will lead to automatic disqualification.

IRC Ethiopia country Program reserves, at its sole discretion, the right to select or reject either totally or partially any or all proposals made in the context of the request for proposa

Yarada Qwanqa: When youth slang becomes a secret code

By Gzachew Wolde

Language serves as both a tool for connection and a weapon for exclusion. Globally, younger generations in urban centers deliberately transform official language into a rapidly evolving, coded vernacular. This serves to signal modernity to insiders while simultaneously excluding outsiders such as parents, newcomers, and other authority figures.

In Ethiopia, this phenomenon manifests as Yarada Qwanqa, an urban argot originating in Addis Ababa and spreading to other cities. Like youth slang worldwide, Yarada Qwanqa relies on sound-play, inventive word formation, borrowing, and deliberate mixing to establish social boundaries, protect privacy, and assert cultural independence.

The younger generation intentionally weaponizes their vernacular—a creative adaptation of official language—to produce a secret code or an in-group language. This is specifically designed to exclude outsiders, often strangers or older individuals in urban environments. This youth slang, often referred to as a "modern version" or secret code, is deployed by young people in urban areas to confuse or exclude newcomers and older generations, a practice not limited to a single country.

This linguistic practice creates social boundaries, signals group membership, and protects confidentiality from authority figures. Such vernaculars typically operate within clusters of individuals familiar with these modified versions, which are created by reversing sounds, changing letter patterns, borrowing from other languages, or inventing entirely new terms.

These vernaculars are primarily used by Generation Z and Generation Alpha, especially within urban subcultures and online communities. Gen Z generally refers to individuals born between roughly 1997 and 2012, while Gen Alpha encompasses those born between approximately 2010 and 2024. Gen Alpha, the children of Millennials and younger siblings of Gen Z, consider themselves "Arada"—too modern—compared to those who speak formal language.

Gen Alpha is also known as the "iPad Kids" or the first generation to grow up entirely in the 21st century. Unlike Gen Z, who remember a time before smartphones, Gen Alpha has had access to touchscreens, voice assistants, and gaming tools since birth.

Their media consumption is vertical, fast, and algorithmic, shaped by platforms like TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels. They prefer visual content over text, and their slang is often baffling to older generations. While Gen Z had to learn technology, Gen Alpha simply exists within it.

By 2029, Gen Alpha is projected to be the largest generation on Earth, numbering over 2 billion people. They are likely to be the first generation to experience AI tutors and drone deliveries as part of their everyday lives, stepping into a future that was once a distant promise.

The vernacular language used by these groups is often confusing or unintelligible to older generations. Teenagers commonly create slang their parents don't understand to foster independence and peer connection. This inexplicable Yarada version serves as a form of resistance against outside influence, particularly from those who attempt to marginalize these groups by rigidly protecting formal cultural spaces. Nevertheless, new slang constantly emerges, penetrating formality with exclusive styles to stay ahead of outsiders who try to learn it. Socially, the creation of unique generational language is a long-standing pattern. However, today's youth are more consciously weaponizing vernacular as a secret code. For instance, in earlier times in Ethiopia, words like Geriba, Fara, and Shewaye were used to label someone as not modern or outdated. These were later replaced by terms like Geja and many other new, intentionally unintelligible words conveying the same message to adults. This demonstrates the evolving nature of vernaculars over time.

The "modern language," literally "youth language," is an urban argot used by Gen Z and Alpha in Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian cities to communicate secretly and exclude outsiders. This mirrors a global pattern: while every generation

creates slang, today's youth more consciously utilize vernacular as a secret code.

This new dialect or slang emerges constantly to maintain exclusivity and stay ahead of outsiders who try to learn it, reflecting a global youth trend. The deliberately coded vernacular used by urban Gen Z and Gen Alpha signals clear messages to group members, protecting secrets. However, it often faces resistance from those who insist on adhering to formal cultural norms.

Nonetheless, such linguistic innovation emerges universally. It is not limited to Ethiopia; it is a global urban youth singularity, accelerated today by social media, algorithms, and digital-native identity. The transformation of older Ethiopian terms like "Geriba" and "Fara" into "Geja" perfectly illustrates how language evolves to maintain generational boundaries over time.

What makes this global phenomenon particularly visible today is the speed at which it evolves, accelerated by algorithmic platforms, meme culture, and the digital-native instincts of Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

In Ethiopia, this takes the specific form of stylishness in various urban and suburban areas, including Addis Ababa, where most of the jargon originates before spreading to other cities. Just as teenagers in London, Lagos, or Los Angeles remix language to create social distance from grownups, Ethiopian youth deploy terms like "Geja"—a newer, more opaque replacement for earlier generational markers like "Geriba" or "Fara"—to label someone as outdated or out of touch. The underlying message remains the same: "you do not belong here." But the vocabulary shifts rapidly to make it more opaque to adults, keeping them at least one step behind.

This reflects that the new version is not merely slang; it is a deliberate, living code or weaponized vernacular that protects confidentiality, reinforces group identity, and quietly resists the formal cultural spaces controlled by older generations.

Simply put, from Ethiopian streets to global TikTok, youth consistently build linguistic walls. Yet, time forces those walls to yield to new ones. The deliberate weaponization of vernacular by younger generations is neither a new phenomenon nor a fleeting trend.

Youth have consistently built linguistic barriers to carve out autonomy, protect secrecy, and assert cultural relevance against adult generations. What distinguishes Gen Z and Gen Alpha today is not the intent—which has always been about exclusion and in-group signaling—but the speed and scale at which their language evolves.

Where past decades saw gradual shifts in slang (e.g., from "Geriba/Fara" to "Geja" and even to "yemairf"), today's digital-native youth, raised on vertical videos, AI, and algorithm-driven content, can mutate and replace entire vocabularies in weeks, not years.

"Yarada lij" stands as Ethiopia's powerful utilizer of this encrypted pattern. It is not mere youthful mischief but a deliberate, useful living code and a form of quiet resistance against formal cultural spaces held by previous generations. Deploying terms that are intentionally unintelligible to outsiders, urban Ethiopian youth mirror their peers in London, Los Angeles, Brazil, and Johannesburg, proving that the desire for generational independence transcends borders.

However, history shows no linguistic wall stands forever. Today's secret slang becomes tomorrow's outdated cliché. In the times to come, new words will replace them. Time forces all such walls to crack, allowing new injections to move in. Ultimately, the persistence of this pattern reveals a deeper truth: language is not merely a tool for communication but a battlefield between emerging and longstanding clichés. Thus, as long as there are generations, secret codes will continue to evolve, adapt, and remain one step ahead.

The writer can be reached via gzachewwolde@gmail.com

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: Selamawit Gebremariam

Education: Diploma in Art

Company name: S&T Nail & Beauty Salon

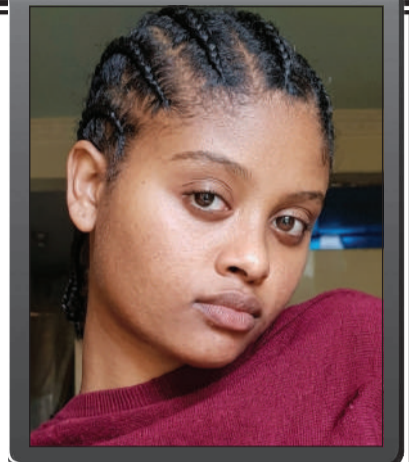
Title: Founder

Founded in: 2025

What it does: Providing professional nail care, extensions, artistry, and manicures/pedicures

Hq: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Number of Employees: 2



STARTUP CAPITAL

50,000 BIRR

CURRENT CAPITAL

Growing

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the Business:

A passion for beauty culture and the growing demand for professional nail artistry

Biggest perk of ownership:

Creative freedom and the joy of making clients feel confident and beautiful

Biggest strength: Attention to detail, creativity

Biggest challenge: High cost of

beauty products

Plan: To expand into a well-known

beauty academy

First career: None

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: Aster

Aweke

Most admired person: Zinash

Tayachew

Stress reducer: Listening to relaxing

music and sketching new nail designs

Favorite pastime: Exploring new

beauty trends

Favorite book: "The Power of Positive

Thinking" by Norman Vincent Peale

Favorite destination: USA

Favorite automobile: Range Rover

Evoque

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

June. 12, 2026



የኢትዮጵያ ንግድ ባንክ
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	154.60	157.70
POUND STERLING	202.96	207.02
EURO	179.19	182.77
SWISS FRANK	192.30	196.14
SWEDISH KRONER	16.05	16.37
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Ethiopia can lead Africa's digital economy



By Ervin Massinga

During my recent visit to the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute, I came away impressed. Director General Dr. Worku Gachena and his team are doing remarkable work applying AI across multiple sectors. What I saw demonstrates strong national potential in emerging technologies that can transform key sectors and power Ethiopia's economy forward as a 21st-century leader, a goal discussed by Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos (PhD) in recent meetings with key U.S. government leaders in Washington, D.C. Now that the recent elections are settled, I look forward to working with the new government leadership team in Ethiopia on our shared economic growth agenda. There is no more important or potentially fruitful avenue than technology.

Yet our discussion surfaced a critical challenge: As Ethiopia builds its AI capabilities, its innovators need access to the cloud-based tools and global partnerships that power this technological revolution. Harnessing data flows is core to the modern economy, making it essential that Ethiopia establish a regulatory architecture that allows the market to thrive. Executives from many well-known U.S. based technology companies have echoed this assessment in recent conversations.

Ethiopia Can Maintain Data Protection While Unleashing Economic Growth Ethiopia has every reason to be proud of its digital progress. The results are tangible: hundreds of digitalized public services, thousands of digital firms creating jobs, and e-payment platforms like TeleBirr processing billions of transactions. However, as Ethiopia continues its growth and implements its Digital Ethiopia 2030 Strategy and its National Entrepreneurship Development Policy, a question emerges: How can Ethiopian entrepreneurs compete globally if domestic regulatory frameworks limit access to cloud-based platforms their international competitors use?

Effective, modern data protection does not hinder economic growth; it unleashes it. Trusted cross-border data flows are vital for economic growth and security. They empower small businesses to access global markets and create jobs while enabling collaboration to counter cyber threats. Conversely, burdensome restrictions on data storage and usage significantly affect digital services, electronic commerce, and the ability for digital tools to function globally.

Data localization mandates can fragment the digital ecosystem, weaken cybersecurity, reduce resilience, and increase risk of fraud. The policies also increase compliance costs – especially for small and medium-sized enterprises – while stifling innovation and competitiveness.

The United States believes Ethiopia can also engage global markets, maintain robust data protections, and lead Africa's new digital economy. We see a unique opportunity for Ethiopia to meet the moment by embracing the regulatory changes needed to truly empower the digital economy. Global Data Standards Can Accelerate Ethiopia's Growth

The Ethiopian government's vision is clear: Digitally driven prosperity will be powered by entrepreneurs who create jobs, deliver solutions, and generate wealth. They will build smart cities, improve rural healthcare,

enhance educational outcomes, and increase national prosperity. Yet innovation – especially in AI – requires international connectivity and access to cloud computing platforms.

The United States has a strong legal framework for data privacy and protection and does not generally restrict cross-border data transfers, an approach which has allowed U.S. companies and the U.S. economy to be the most innovative and successful in the world. Another critical aspect of that success is cooperating with other countries to reduce barriers to the critical data flows which underpin global trade, investment, and innovation, while also ensuring strong trust.

To that end, the United States encourages Ethiopia to join the Global Cross Border Privacy Rules (CBPR) Forum. There are currently 14 participating jurisdictions, including Mauritius and Nigeria, and the network

of interested powers is growing. Ethiopia's participation would enable the country to be a continental leader and have a seat at the table to contribute to shaping a scalable, interoperable, and internationally trusted data transfer framework. It would also benefit the people of Ethiopia by aligning its approach to data protection with international standards that boost digital trust and accelerate foreign investment in its tech sector. The Global CBPR system provides a voluntary, but enforceable data privacy certification based on internationally recognized data privacy principles that are reflected in laws around the world, making it a strong and efficient basis upon which to establish interoperability between domestic frameworks. The Forum's members and associates support over \$4.4 trillion in trade and investment. The United States welcomes Ethiopia's participation in the Global CBPR

Forum to facilitate trusted cross-border data flows – balancing consumer personal data protection while spurring economic growth that supports millions of Ethiopian entrepreneurs embracing the digital economy.

The U.S. Is Ready to Support Ethiopia's Digital Leadership Ethiopia's regulatory choices will influence the entire continent. This is an opportunity to refine frameworks that position Ethiopia as one of Africa's digital leaders while maintaining robust protections. Enabling secure cross-border data flows would attract investment in high-value sectors, allow Ethiopian startups to scale regionally and globally, and bring advanced cloud-based technologies to rural communities. It would unlock the full potential of Ethiopia's businesses, digital firms, and the AI Institute's groundbreaking work.

The United States stands ready to support Ethiopia through technical

assistance, private sector engagement, and regulatory expertise as Ethiopia refines its digital governance framework. A coordinated global approach to data policy is essential to drive innovation and economic growth while safeguarding freedom and civil liberties.

Ethiopia has built an impressive digital foundation. The United States wants to help ensure that foundation supports the entrepreneurs and innovators who will power Ethiopia's prosperity – giving them the tools to compete globally while maintaining the protections Ethiopians rightly deserve.

Ervin Massinga is United States Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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Fear And The Madman Theory In Business Leadership

Alazar Kebede

The concept of the "Madman Theory" occupies a controversial position in strategic thinking. Popularised during the administration of U.S. President Richard Nixon, the theory suggests that leaders can achieve strategic advantage by convincing opponents that they are irrational, unpredictable, or willing to take extreme actions. In international relations, the objective is deterrence in which adversaries become cautious because they cannot confidently predict the leader's next move. While the theory emerged in geopolitics, its underlying logic has increasingly appeared in discussions of business leadership and management. The question is whether strategic unpredictability can be an effective managerial tool or whether it ultimately undermines organisational performance and human relationships within firms.

Supporters of applying aspects of the Madman Theory to business argue that unpredictability can create competitive advantages. Modern markets are characterised by uncertainty, rapid technological change, and intense competition. In such environments, leaders who consistently follow predictable patterns may become vulnerable to competitors capable of anticipating their decisions. Strategic ambiguity can therefore prevent rivals from accurately forecasting organisational actions. Literatures written about Steve Jobs indicated that companies such as Apple under Steve Jobs often cultivated an aura of secrecy and unpredictability regarding product launches, generating both competitive uncertainty and public anticipation.

From a negotiation perspective, controlled unpredictability may strengthen bargaining power. Negotiation scholars have long recognised that parties who appear less constrained by conventional expectations can sometimes secure more favourable outcomes. A manager who signals willingness to reject a seemingly attractive deal may force suppliers, investors, or competitors to reconsider their assumptions. The perceived possibility of unconventional action can alter the calculations of other stakeholders.

However, translating the Madman Theory from geopolitics to organisational management encounters significant limitations.

States and businesses operate under fundamentally different conditions. International adversaries often interact episodically and may prioritise deterrence over cooperation. By contrast, organisations depend heavily on long-term relationships among employees, customers, investors, and suppliers. Trust, rather than fear, serves as the primary foundation of sustainable business success.

Leadership research consistently identifies predictability, consistency, and trustworthiness as essential characteristics of effective leaders. Employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment and engagement when they understand organisational expectations and perceive decision-making processes as fair. A leader who deliberately cultivates an image of irrationality risks generating confusion rather than strategic advantage. Workers may become reluctant to innovate, communicate openly, or take calculated risks if they fear arbitrary managerial reactions.

The human consequences of such leadership styles deserve particular attention. Organisations are social systems composed of individuals seeking psychological safety, recognition, and meaningful participation. The growing body of research on psychological safety demonstrates that employees perform more effectively when they feel comfortable expressing ideas, admitting mistakes, and challenging assumptions without fear of disproportionate consequences. A management approach inspired by the Madman Theory can directly undermine these conditions.

For example, if employees perceive a chief executive as intentionally unpredictable, they may devote increasing energy to interpreting the leader's moods and intentions rather than focusing on productive work. Decision-making becomes politicised as individuals attempt to anticipate personal reactions instead of evaluating objective evidence. Organisational learning suffers because employees may conceal problems or avoid communicating unwelcome information. In extreme cases, a culture of uncertainty can lead to stress, burnout, and declining morale.

Recent discussions surrounding charismatic and disruptive business

leaders further illustrate this dilemma. Some executives have cultivated reputations for unconventional behaviour, abrupt strategic shifts, or provocative public communication. While such approaches may generate media attention and occasionally disrupt established industries, they also create governance challenges. Investors often value visionary leadership, but they simultaneously seek confidence that strategic decisions are based on rational analysis rather than impulsive behaviour. Financial markets generally reward firms that combine innovation with credible governance structures.

The distinction between strategic unpredictability and genuine instability is therefore crucial. Effective leaders may occasionally employ surprise as a tactical instrument. Unexpected product announcements, unconventional market entries, or disruptive business models can prevent competitors from reacting effectively. Yet these actions differ fundamentally from cultivating a reputation for irrationality. Strategic surprise is typically grounded in careful planning and clear objectives. Organisational instability, by contrast, emerges when stakeholders cannot distinguish between calculated strategy and erratic behaviour.

Moreover, the ethical implications of applying the Madman Theory to management should not be ignored. Leadership carries responsibilities extending beyond competitive performance. Managers influence employee wellbeing, organisational culture, and broader stakeholder interests. Deliberately manipulating perceptions through displays of irrationality raises questions regarding authenticity and integrity. Modern leadership theories increasingly emphasise transparency, emotional intelligence, and ethical responsibility. These principles appear largely incompatible with a leadership philosophy based on calculated perceptions of instability.

Nevertheless, dismissing the Madman Theory entirely may overlook valuable insights regarding strategic flexibility. The theory highlights an important reality in which excessive predictability can create vulnerabilities. Organisations should avoid becoming so transparent that competitors can easily anticipate every

strategic move. Leaders benefit from maintaining a degree of uncertainty regarding future initiatives, acquisitions, or innovation pathways. The challenge lies in balancing external strategic ambiguity with internal organisational stability.

This distinction is especially relevant in the contemporary business environment. Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and geopolitical uncertainty require leaders capable of adapting rapidly to changing circumstances. Flexibility should not be confused with inconsistency. Employees generally accept strategic adjustments when leaders communicate the rationale clearly and demonstrate commitment to organisational values. Problems arise when unpredictability becomes a defining feature of leadership identity rather than an occasional strategic tool. Ultimately, the Madman Theory offers a provocative lens through which to examine leadership and management. While elements of strategic unpredictability may occasionally provide competitive advantages, the broader philosophy is ill-suited to organisations that depend on trust, collaboration, and human engagement. Businesses succeed not because employees fear irrational leaders but because they trust competent ones. The most effective managers are neither entirely predictable nor deliberately erratic. Instead, they combine strategic flexibility with behavioural consistency, enabling organisations to remain adaptable while preserving the confidence of those who make success possible.

In an era increasingly defined by uncertainty, the lesson for business leaders is clear. Competitive advantage may occasionally require surprising rivals, but organisational excellence requires reassuring employees. The difference between these objectives may determine whether unpredictability becomes a source of innovation or a pathway to organisational decline.

To know more on this, a 2007 published book entitled "The Nixon Doctrine and the End of the Cold War" by Jeremi Suri is a must-read piece.

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Society

BEYOND BORDERS

Afrophobia, broken trust and Africa's unfulfilled promise

■ By Thebe Ikalafeng

I still remember the silence.

It was in the midst of the xenophobic attacks on fellow Africans which started 11 April 2015 and were flooding global screens. I was travelling to Ghana, the first sub-Saharan nation to gain independence, whose liberation and leadership under pan-African luminary Kwame Nkrumah had inspired South Africa's own freedom movement. South Africa's liberation movement, the ANC had kept offices here in exile and Oliver Tambo had walked Ghana's streets freely. I have been through these borders umpteenth times. This time, as I approached the immigration officer and handed him my South African passport, he paused, looked up and asked:

"Why are you doing this to us after everything we did for your freedom?"

My blood froze and my follicles pierced through my bald scalp. Only shame, and the painful awareness that my country, once celebrated as Africa's moral beacon, was now associated with Africans attacking fellow Africans. It happened again in 2017. In 2019. And in April 2026, with two Nigerian nationals dead, 130 citizens repatriated, and six African governments issuing formal travel warnings to South Africa. Ghana petitioned the African Union to place the crisis on the agenda of its June summit in El Alamein, Egypt, and authorised the emergency repatriation of 300 of its citizens. What had always been Africa's wound was now formally on the continental agenda.

THIS IS NOT XENOPHOBIA

Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, said it plainly in her 7 May 2026 call with her South African counterpart, Ronald Lamola: "We will not stand by and watch the systematic harassment and humiliation of our nationals resident in South Africa." That what is happening should more accurately be called *Afrophobia*, not *xenophobia*. The distinction matters. This is Africa turning on itself. Tribalism at a continental scale, and passports replacing ethnic markers.

But the pattern is not new and not uniquely South African. Ghana expelled 200,000 Nigerian migrants in 1969 under its Aliens Compliance Order. Facing economic collapse, Nigeria expelled two million undocumented workers, more than half of them Ghanaian in 1983. In Côte d'Ivoire, the concept of *ivoirité*, a codified definition of citizenship designed to exclude immigrants from political life, culminated in civil war. In Kenya, following its Somalia incursion against al-Shabaab, Somali migrants and Kenyan citizens of Somali origin alike were rounded up, subjected to mass police raids, and collectivised as a security threat. And in 1994, in just three months, approximately one million Tutsis in Rwanda were slaughtered by their own countrymen on the basis of tribalism and manufactured fear.

History is unambiguous: It never works.

Nigeria's expulsions did not create jobs. Ghana's deportations did not generate prosperity. The real crisis is always deeper: A failure of governance and the failure of leadership to convert political freedom into economic dignity.

THE LAST FRONTIER — AND ITS BROKEN PROMISE

There is no question that citizens of many nationals of countries that achieved independence decades before South Africa watched as their governments failed to deliver on their promises and looked

south. For millions of them, post-apartheid South Africa became the last frontier of opportunity -- a country whose freedom had been realised through continental solidarity, whose constitution was among the most progressive on earth, and whose economy was the continent's largest. Pretoria today hosts over 130 resident embassies and high commissions -- more than any other African city -- a footprint that reflects that collective investment.

But South Africa built the conditions for its own migration crisis. Western and Asian nations received generous visa arrangements while African neighbours faced barriers that forced many into an alternate illegal route into South Africa. Home Affairs became, in the words of the Special Investigating Unit's February 2026 findings, 'a marketplace where permits and visas were sold to the highest bidder.' With its porous and poorly manned borders and some corrupt officials, the state did not merely fail to manage migration, it actively facilitated the irregularity it was mandated to prevent.

But here is the truth: The rage targeting African migrants does not touch the underlying commanding heights of the South African economy, which remain, thirty years after liberation, stubbornly untransformed. White South Africans, 7.3 percent of the population, still own approximately 72 percent of agricultural land and economy -- a direct consequence of the 1913 Natives Land Act. The result is the most unequal society in the world by Gini coefficient.

The Somali shopkeeper does not own the malls. The Mozambican miner does not own the mines. The Zimbabwean waiter does not own the restaurant. The Malawian farmworker does not hold the JSE stock exchange equity. In fact, the African migrant is not the architect of South Africa's structural inequality -- he is, in many respects, its fellow victim. Just like the black South African.

"THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN" One of the defining slogans of South Africa's liberation struggle was a promise and a demand: "the people shall govern." In the absence of a state that actually governs; that manages borders, enforces laws, delivers services, holds officials to account, a dangerous inversion has taken hold. Those who loot a migrant's shop or redistribute a business's keys at an official's instruction -- as was the case in Estcourt in April 2026 when the mayor confiscated the keys of Ghanaian shopkeepers and handed their businesses to locals -- believe they are not violating the promise of liberation. They believe they are fulfilling it.

In July 2025, a one-year-old Malawian boy died after being denied treatment at two Alexandra clinics because his family lacked South African identity documents. What makes things worse is that often, opportunistic politicians have found in the migrant a convenient scapegoat, a manufactured crisis that keeps citizens looking sideways at each other rather than upward at those responsible. It has become easier to blame the foreign shopkeeper for unemployment than to account for the billions looted through state capture, collapsed public health system or ineffective economic policies.

This is *Afrophobia* at its worst and tribalism in its most cynical form.

But an honest account also demands a balance perspective. Some foreign nationals have committed serious crimes on South African

soil: the SABC robbery of journalist Vuyo Mvoko by undocumented Zimbabweans, the Hillbrow drug and prostitution rings linked to foreign, allegedly Nigerian, syndicates; the young Nigerian model Chidimma Adetshina identity-theft case; the Lesotho and Mozambican 'zama zama' [illegal] miners; the deaths of children from contaminated Somali and Ethiopian spaza shops' alleged expired or counterfeit food. These are real grievances. But the crimes of a few do not define the millions who came in search of a better life. The legitimate grievance is with the state that corrupted its own systems.

But redirecting it at the nearest African face has never, in any country, at any point in history, solved the problem it claims to address.

I have travelled to every country and island surrounding Africa. In each one I have had to abide by the rules: No photos allowed of the statue in Juba or John Garang, the icons of the struggle in South Sudan; held up for three hours in Comoros by immigration police because the hotel I stated on my arrival forms didn't match what they knew [it had long changed its name but the officials weren't aware and thought I was making it up]; being held up at Carbo Verde immigration because I had three South African passports on hand [a valid passport and expired others with visas for the different countries I was transiting on this journey] because 'it's illegal to have more than one travel document here' [I got off because they all had the same personal information and I was not a local citizen] or detained for 12 hours in transit in Morocco because I arrived 24 hours before my visa was valid. The laws are the laws, irrespective of how I felt about their triviality. Every visitor or citizen must abide by them, and every official and citizen must apply them without fear or favour and with equal humanity in South Africa and everywhere.

ADEBTNOTTAUGHT, A PROMISE NOT KEPT

South Africa entered a specific moral contract at liberation. Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Botswana, and Mozambique hosted ANC camps, absorbed SADF bombs, led divestment campaigns, and sheltered operatives along their borders. Africa did not merely sympathise with South Africa's struggle. It paid for it in blood, in economies disrupted, in soil violated. The late Kenneth Kaunda once reminded me over dinner at his residence that he was constantly challenged in his parliament for the support he gave South Africa at the expense of his own country's citizens. Yet most South African learners or graduates today cannot tell you which country hosted the ANC headquarters in exile. That is the consequence of a failure to use education as a vehicle for the solidarity consciousness on which liberation was built. Unemployed and young South Africans, shaped by economic despair and a collapsed public service, reach for the nearest explanation of their dire circumstances. But it's the wrong target. The wrong enemy. The wrong answer.

WHAT KIND OF AFRICA ARE WE BUILDING?

When the AU convenes in El Alamein in June, the agenda cannot just be about South Africa's crisis. Migration remains one of the continent's most debilitating crises and emergency, with millions displaced by conflict, drought, and state failure. The migration crises dire circumstances of the affected in parts of Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Mali, Ethiopia, Rwanda and the DRC,

among others, like South Africa's problem, demand urgent continental leadership and attention. The summit should not merely focus its energies on censuring South Africa. It should produce a continent-wide migration framework that addresses root causes and holds every member state accountable. The continental body cannot merely be a bystander or rely on outsiders to resolve its most urgent crisis if we are to achieve the 2063 ideals of a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa.

Among the causes for the continent's migration crisis, there's another legitimate question: The reality of an external hand in Africa's instability. The continent's history of manufactured conflict and deliberate destabilisation is well documented. When Africans are pitted against each other, someone else's interests are served.

And on its part, South Africa must honestly deal with the root cause of its economic inequality time bomb, and not just shuffle economic transformation blueprints which have only lined the pockets of a few political associated elites and corrupt as the Madlanga Commission and others have shown, and worse still, protected and enriched the previously empowered minority.

Everyone must be held accountable and equal under its laws.

Before there were borders, before there were passports, before there were immigration departments, there was African hospitality and humanity. The understanding that a stranger at the threshold is not a threat to be expelled, but a human being to be received.

Afrophobia is not in our culture. It is not African. And it is emphatically not South African. This is a country freed by the continent whose own people were once the refugees, the exiles, the strangers at other nations' thresholds. When we attack a fellow African, we are not expressing South African identity. We are betraying it.

The purpose of freedom was never merely to replace rulers. It was to reclaim our story and land, to improve lives, restore harmony, and set the continent on the path to civilisational flourishing -- an Africa where African life is sacred. Including the lives of those who crossed their borders so that ours might one day be free.

What we cannot afford is the failure that Kofi Annan, the first African UN General Secretary, observed after the Rwandan genocide: "When Rwanda needed us most, we turned away." Africa cannot turn away from Africa again.

Thebe Ikalafeng is a Hall of Fame marketer and named one of the 100 Most Influential Africans by New African Magazine. He is the Founder and Chairman of Brand Africa,

Chancellor of Sol Plaatje University, Professor of Practice at the University of Johannesburg Business School, and the best-selling author of The Traveller: Crossing Borders and Connecting Africa and Rooted and Rising: Reclaiming Our Borders and Redefining our Global Influence. He has been to every country in Africa and every continent in the world.

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KITFO TO KICKFLIPS: HOW THE BAY'S OLDEST ETHIOPIAN RESTAURANT SUPPORTS ADDIS ABABA SKATERS

In Addis Ababa—the sprawling metro capital of Ethiopia, located in the altitudinous highlands of East Africa, nearly 9000 miles away from Oakland—a skate revolution is afoot.

Earlier this year, French Canadian skater Mike Boisvert (known online as The Skate Nomad) traversed the African city and documented its youthful scene, ultimately declaring it “the next skate heaven” of the continent. The 20-minute long video includes scenes of intergenerational Ethiopian skaters thrashing their way around Addis Ababa, as Boisvert gains insight by interviewing skatepark builders, rippers, and local heroes.

At one point, a young skater named Yonas runs onto the middle of a bustling multi-lane avenue while cars honk; he calmly tells the camera “this is how we skate here, no rules,” before grabbing onto the back of a moving car and rolling off with traffic.

Ethiopia’s skating paradise is vibrant, communal, and burgeoning, a relatively niche subculture pulsating with energy as it grows into something larger, something the public eye can no longer avoid. Aside from a bit of disorganized chaos and the relatively unfamiliar backdrop—part contemporary, part vintage, part African fauna and landscaping—you’d think it was all happening in California. That is, Ethiopian skaters present a poetic reflection of West Coast skate culture on an internationalized scale in both style and energy.

For Daniel Aderaw Yeshiwas, a Bay Area-raised Ethiopian American, it’s a portal into showcasing Ethiopia’s rich, multitudinous textures in a



different format.

Yeshiwas’ parents immigrated to Dublin in the East Bay from Ethiopia in the 1970s. In Oakland, his mother grew involved with the earliest iterations of Café Colucci—considered to be among the first and most definitive Ethiopian eateries in the state after formally opening its doors in 1991. Nowadays, Yeshiwas continues his involvement with the restaurant as a general manager, while also operating his own business, Brundo Spice Co., from inside the café, where he offers Ethiopian heirloom spices that are grown and directly sourced from Modjo, Ethiopia.

Recently, Café Colucci teamed up with Ethiopia Skate—a non-profit grassroots collective of Ethiopian skaters that launched in 2013 to promote skateboarding in the



country.

Together, they released a collaborative t-shirt that celebrates the evolving lineages of Ethiopian culture, streetwear fashion, foodways, and, of course, skating. The shirt, which is available online and at Café Colucci’s Oakland storefront, was designed by Los Angeles-based Ethiopian American artist and designer Addis Daniel of Mandala Studios, with all proceeds going directly overseas to support the Ethiopian skate crew’s mission.

The slick tee features a woman dressed in traditional Ethiopian clothing who is carrying a plate of vegan Ethiopian food while kick-pushing her way forward on a board. In the background, there’s Ethiopian text in a cartoonish font. It’s part of Yeshiwas’ commitment to Ethiopia Skate, who he flew

out to Ethiopia to meet, coinciding with a cameo from internet streamer and rapper, DDG.

Yeshiwas noted the overlap between today’s Ethiopian skaters and the Bay Area community that shaped him decades ago. It’s part of his larger ethos to capture and bring some of that energy to Oakland in small, flavorful doses.

“For myself, food has always been a vehicle of how to export portions of Ethiopian culture to California. It’s rich, and it resonates here in the Bay Area. People dig it,” Yeshiwas says. “But I’ve always wanted to take that base of people who have an interest in our food and deepen the connection with what else goes on in Ethiopian society.

“Food is an early entry point. It’s storytelling, it’s placemaking, it’s setting, it’s events being thrown, and it represents the larger diaspora. So it made sense to bring in skating as a larger part of that narrative with ties to California as well. It interests people in the same way our food does, and from there then they can learn more about it on their own.”

As a millennial growing up in the Bay, Yeshiwas couldn’t escape Northern California’s regional skate scene and gravitational pull. San Francisco is, after all, the home of iconic skate brand and magazine Thrasher, founded in 1981, whose eternal motto, “Skate and Destroy” has incited millions of renegade skaters, aspiring rippers, and halfway posers worldwide to, at minimum, scrape their elbows and knees on concrete while attempting to imitate a timeless cover photo. Back in those days, Yeshiwas rocked a pair of Osiris D3s and would hit the occasional kickflip at the skate park. “I grew up skating, and I was never any good but I could get around,” he admits,

ultimately more of a hobbyist than a future pro. For many, including Yeshiwas, skating is simply a way to become fluent in friendships, experimentation, and joy. Ethiopia Skate is providing one dimension of that for East Africans, and even has an educational component. Beyond the Board, that offers academic classes, vocational training, and entrepreneurial workshops.

Ethiopia is a heavily youth-driven nation, with the median age hovering between 19 and 20, and nearly 40% of the population below 15. Skating, therefore, is an especially crucial outlet for developing a sense of place, identity, and values among Ethiopian youth—with the vast majority of the country’s citizens being concentrated in Addis Ababa, which boasts over 6 million inhabitants, placing it among the continent’s most populous regions. It’s no surprise that skate parks are beginning to flourish there.

“It’s cool how many people are attached to the skate movement over there,” Yeshiwas says. “It’s a movement based on identity and culture, and feels very Ethiopian. It’s a country of young people, and the people are skating and speaking in Ethiopian, with the freedom of it all. They’re free to express themselves [through skating], and that’s a big part of California culture as well.”

That magnetism can be felt inside Café Colucci, where in the near future, Yeshiwas hopes to bring in a few of Ethiopia Skate’s representatives to screen documentaries they’ve filmed in person. Until then, between kift to kickflips, there will be plenty to share and enjoy at the open table, as Ethiopian tradition has always generously dictated.



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PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Publication date: 14th June 2026

Country: Ethiopia

Project Executing Agency:

Organization for Welfare Development in Acton

Project title:

Regional Migration Fund supporting Migrants, Refugees and Host Communities ("RMF")

Tender title:

Request for Proposals for Consulting Services for **Design and Supervision firm for the construction of a Community Development Centre (CDC) in Tog-Wejale city administration, Somali region, Ethiopia**

Tender number:

RfP No: IGAD-RMF/OWDA/CS-001/2026

KfW/BMZ reference number:

BMZ No. 2017 67 961

Type of notice:

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The Regional Migration Fund supporting Migrants, Refugees and Host Communities ("RMF") Project is in the process of constructing community development center in Tog-Wejale city administration Somali regional state, in The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

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OWDA Jigjiga and Addis Ababa Offices.

Ethiopia

Tel: 0257 752085.

Or Email: owdaprocurement@owdaeth.org.

The tendering period will run from **June 14th up to 6th of July, 2026**

The deadline for collecting tender documents is **June 14th Up to 4th of July, 2026**, at 4:30 PM, while the deadline for submission of bids is **July 6th, 2026** at 10:00 AM.

Bids will be opened at the OWDA Jigjiga Office on **July 7th, 2026**, at 3:00 PM, in the presence of bidders or their representatives who wish to attend.

The Organization for Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, in whole or in part.

Note: Tender documents may be submitted either physically to the OWDA offices in Jigjiga and Addis Ababa or electronically via email by interested applicants.

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The Tender Process is subject to KfW's „Guidelines for the Procurement of Consulting Services, Works, Plant, Goods and Non-Consulting Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries“, see

<https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/International-financing/KfW-Development-Bank/Publications-Videos/Publication-series/Guidelines-and-contracts/>



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)

External Auditor for July 2025 to 2026 June Organizational Audit

Sirad Institute for research and Development (SIRAD) is a women-led national humanitarian and development organization registered in Ethiopia and recognized for its strong governance, professional management, and commitment to accountability. The organization implements integrated humanitarian and development programmes that promote dignity, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Guided by a clear vision, mission, and core values, SIRAD operates with integrity, transparency, and excellence, ensuring that all resources are managed responsibly and in line with national regulations and internationally accepted standards.

In line with its commitment to institutional excellence and financial accountability, SIRAD for Integrated Development (SIRAD) hereby invites qualified, licensed, and reputable external audit firms to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) to conduct the 2025 and 2026 Organizational External Audit.

SIRAD for Institute for Research and Development (SIRAD)

Jigjiga Office, **Kebele 10**, Ayedega Road 10014 House ,
Jigjiga, Ethiopia:

Submission

Interested audit firms are invited to submit their

Interested applicant to submit via below emails

Sirdevelopment2022@gmail.com or muhumed9601@gmail.com

OR via **P.O. Box: 1B01cL**, Jigjiga, Ethiopia

Submission Deadline: June 11th, 2026

Further Information: please visit our website : <https://siradinstitute.dev>

Tel:- +251 252 783 968

SIRAD welcomes Expressions of Interest from audit firms that uphold the highest standards of **professionalism, independence, and ethical practice.**

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: EQUITY STAKE IN BEER GARDEN INN HOTEL & APARTMENTS

Due to the planned retirement of the founder, a rare opportunity has arisen to acquire a 25% equity stake in the Beer Garden Inn Hotel & Apartments. This offering represents a substantial shareholding in one of Ethiopia's most established and reputable hospitality brands. Strategically located in the heart of Addis Ababa (Bole, near Edna Mall), the business is well-positioned for continued growth. The company welcomes inquiries from strategic investors interested in capitalising on ongoing expansion projects and driving future value. Qualified institutional and private investors are invited to contact the shareholder directly via the details below:

Mr. Mario Delicio

+27 82 420 1010

Mario@dematechsa.com



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

This notice is placed by UNECA. The accuracy, reliability and completeness of the contents of furnished information is the responsibility of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. You are therefore requested to direct all queries regarding this EOI to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa using the fax number or e-mail address provided below.

Title of the EOI:

Long-Term Agreement for Event Branding Design, Production, Fabrication, Installation and Related Services

Date of this EOI: 12 June 2026

Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: 25 June 2026

EOI Number: EOIUNECA24480

Beneficiary Country/Territory: Ethiopia

Commodity/Service category: Professional Services

Address EOI response by fax or e-mail to the Attention of: Mr. Demissew Ashagre / Mrs. Rachael Chironga

Fax Number: N/A

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

UNSPSC Code: 82000000

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 Event Branding Design, Production, Fabrication, Installation and Related Services (2026–2029)

The selected vendor(s) will support conferences, summits, and official events at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa and external venues. Services include large-format printing, 3D fabrication, exhibition stands, signage, digital displays, installation, and on-site support.

Interested firms must be legally registered and licensed to provide the services, hold valid accreditation, and demonstrate relevant experience. Applicants should have quality services that support high-level conferences, ministerial meetings, summits, exhibitions, and other official events organized at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa and external venues.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS / INFORMATION (IF ANY)

Please note that the UNECA is precluded from entering into contract with a firm that is not fully registered with UNGM. Those interested in responding to this invitation but not currently fully registered as vendors with UNGM, are encouraged to register before submission of the bid. Further details may be obtained by visiting <https://www.ungm.org/Vendor/Registration>. In order to be eligible for UN Registration, please make sure to declare in writing the Prerequisite for Eligibility criteria itemized from A-F as contained in EOI instruction attached.

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 **25 June 2026**.

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

NOTE

Information on tendering for the UN Procurement System is available free of charge at the following address: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice>

Only the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) has been authorised to collect a nominal fee from vendors that wish to receive automatically Procurement Notices or Requests for Expression Of Interest. Vendors interested in this Tender Alert Service are invited to subscribe on <http://www.ungm.org/>

- **Vendors interested in participating in the planned solicitation process should submit the Vendor Response Form of this EOI electronically (through the link available on the next page) before the closing date set forth above.**

VENDOR RESPONSE

NOTICE

- Companies can only participate in solicitations of the UN Secretariat after completing their registration (free of charge) at the United Nations Global Marketplace (<http://www.ungm.org/>).
- As you express interest in the planned solicitation by submitting this response form, please verify that your company is registered under its **full legal** name on the United Nations Global Marketplace (<http://www.ungm.org/>) and that your application has been submitted to the **UN Secretariat**.
- While companies can participate in solicitations after completion of registration at Basic Level, we strongly recommend all companies register at least **at Level 1** under the United Nations Secretariat prior to participating in any solicitation.
- Companies are reminded of the restrictions of employment of former UN personnel that were involved in the procurement process during their last three years of service as per <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=ST%2FSGB%2F2006%2F15&Language=F&DeviceType>
=Mobile, including (a) employing those personnel for one year after separation of service and (b) allowing those personnel to communicate with, or appear before, active UN personnel for matters related to the procurement process for two years after separation of service. Violation of the provisions of ST/SGB/2006/15 may lead to suspension of the registration of the company as a UN vendor.

PLEASE NOTE: You should express your interest to this EOI electronically at <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/303896> .

In case you have difficulties submitting your interest electronically, please contact demissew.sahle@un.org; rachael.chironga@un.org directly for instructions.



ስቲሊ ኦር ኤም ኦይ ኃላ/የተ/የግ/ማ
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 - Marketing Office : +251(0) 116-67-77-88 / +251 957-10-10-10/+251 911-21-55-47
- ✉ E-mail: info@steelyrmiplc.com
 - marketing@steelyrmipic.com
- 🌐 Web Site:www.steelyrmiplc.com P.O.Box: 10742 (A.A Ethiopia)
- 📍 Address: Addis Ababa, Gurd Shola, Century Mall (HO)



Operational reforms Addis Ababa cannot delay

By Gzachew Wolde

Addis Ababa's public transport system, despite expansions to meet growing demand, continues to fail commuters during peak hours, particularly in the early morning and late evening. This results in daily struggles for those traveling to and from work.

Long queues for public buses are a common sight on major roads, at newly built facilities, and at various terminals. Commuters often face significant delays, with what should be a 30-minute journey stretching to 1.5–3 hours due to traffic jams and congestion. While the average wait time is usually 15 minutes, during rush hour, it can extend to 30 minutes or more for taxis and buses. Despite new terminals and parking, queues persist. Once on board, passengers are often packed beyond the vehicle's capacity and may experience harsh or disrespectful treatment from "Weyalas" (driver-assistants/conductors). These Weyalas, who collect fares, announce destinations, and manage passengers, frequently employ aggressive tactics during peak hours, including shouting, pushing, rushing passengers, overcharging, or even refusing service. They are often observed hanging out of windows, urging passengers to squeeze together to make room for more travelers, treating them as numbers rather than individuals.

There is little to no accountability for Weyalas or drivers who mistreat passengers. This lack of oversight and an ineffective complaints system exacerbates the problem. Weyalas' commission-based earnings, tied to the number of passengers and speed of vehicle filling, create a profit incentive for overcrowding, rushing, and aggressive behavior during peak hours.

Mismanaged routes, inconsistent service, and competition between drivers contribute to a high-pressure environment where Weyalas prioritize speed over passenger dignity. While the city has invested heavily in terminals, shelters, parking lots, and corridor development, these efforts are undermined by an insufficient number of vehicles to meet demand and a lack of strict enforcement of passenger capacity limits.

These persistent problems highlight that infrastructure investments alone cannot restore reliable and dignified service. There is an urgent need for operational regulation and control to streamline the public transport system. This includes establishing clear service standards, actively enforcing capacity limits, implementing structured oversight of Weyala conduct, and creating a user-centered complaints mechanism.

The current situation, with vehicles overloaded beyond capacity, is not just uncomfortable but also poses serious safety and security risks, exposing travelers to pickpockets. Minibuses, nominally carrying 12 passengers, and buses, nominally holding 100, are regularly packed far beyond their official capacities. A 2018 World Bank report identified overcrowding, harassment, and poor infrastructure as major safety concerns, particularly for women, who are disproportionately affected by verbal and physical abuse during peak hours.

Addis Ababa urgently requires effective monitoring of Weyala behavior and a functional complaints system for passenger mistreatment. Without reliable scheduling, dedicated bus lanes,

and robust oversight, the challenges of overcrowding, aggression, and unfair pricing will continue to plague the city's public transport system.

Despite obvious safety risks, there are currently no enforced passenger capacity limits, leading to dangerously packed vehicles and no consequences for drivers. Most problematic incidents occur during rush hours when overcrowding is at its worst.

Without monitoring, accountability, and enforcement, the cycle continues: Weyalas overcrowd vehicles to maximize commission, commuters face discomfort and pickpockets, and there is no way to report or stop the abuse. While infrastructure investments (terminals, parking, electric buses) are useful, they will not solve the problem unless governance and enforcement catch up with the physical improvements.

Long queues at bus stops, terminals, and along main roads have become a familiar sight in many cities, especially in rapidly urbanizing regions. This phenomenon points to several interconnected issues, primarily a high demand exceeding supply. In many growing cities, public bus systems have not kept pace with population growth and rising car ownership costs, pushing more people onto buses without a proportional increase in fleet size or frequency.

Newly built terminals and facilities are aesthetically pleasing and well-designed. However, even in these systems, service faces challenges with high concentrations of travelers during peak hours (e.g., 7–9 AM and 5–7 PM), leading to long queues. Without real-time dispatching or express services, these long lines become routine.

Route optimization, real-time monitoring, fair fare-and-commission redesign, dedicated lanes, and a formal passenger grievance system can collectively reduce queuing, prevent dangerous overcrowding, and curb abusive Weyala behavior.

For millions of Addis Ababa residents, travel is a daily ordeal that damages dignity, safety, and productivity. The built infrastructure is a necessary step, but without governance reforms and accountability for Weyalas, people will continue to suffer. Thus, effective measures are urgently needed.

Operational reforms aimed at making public transport safe, reliable, and respectful for everyone, especially women and low-income commuters who currently bear the greatest burden, are not only essential but urgent.

Generally, long queues are more than an inconvenience. They signal lost time, reduce system attractiveness, and often indicate a lack of priority measures to curb

the problem. The increasing demand for transportation has pushed the system to its limits, revealing critical issues that undermine the quality and safety of travel. It is obvious that Addis Ababa has made significant investments to expand and modernize its public transport infrastructure, yet many everyday commuters still face persistent difficulties due to insufficient operational reform to curb routine traffic challenges.

Addis Ababa stands at a critical crossroads. The city has demonstrated commendable foresight and commitment by investing heavily in modern terminals, shelters, parking facilities, and corridor development. These physical improvements have reshaped the city's landscape and created the potential for a world-class public transport system. However, the daily reality for millions of commuters—endless queues, dangerous overcrowding, abusive conduct by Weyalas, and commute times that stretch two to three hours longer than necessary—proves unequivocally that infrastructure alone is not enough.

The core problem is not a lack of buses, terminals, or stops. It is a lack of sufficient oversight and operational discipline. The existing incentive structure, where Weyalas earn commissions based on passenger volume and speed, actively rewards overcrowding,

aggression, and disrespect.

Without enforceable capacity limits, a functional complaints mechanism, real-time monitoring, or dedicated bus lanes, the cycle of abuse and inefficiency will continue regardless of how many new terminals are built.

While infrastructure investments (terminals, parking, electric buses) are useful, the dysfunction and disorder in public transport demand government attention. Currently, there is no accountability. Passengers have nowhere to report abuse, overcharging, or refusal of service. Effective regulation and a system of rule of law are needed to solve the problem. Unless effective governance and enforcement catch up with the current challenging realities, the problem will persist.

Such disproportionate harassment on commuters, who endure daily humiliation, is not a minor inconvenience; it is a systemic challenge that damages safety, productivity, and human dignity. Therefore, urgent operational reform to curb this problem is imperative.

You can reach the writer via gzachewwolde@gmail.com

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.

The Espresso crisis: Can coffee stay affordable by 2050?

By Sintayehu Girma Aytaged

In an increasingly interconnected world, climate change has emerged as one of the few truly global threats that no single country can confront alone. Alongside terrorism and nuclear weapons, it now stands as a defining challenge of our time. But unlike those risks, climate change is already reshaping everyday life in visible ways, including the future of coffee, one of the world's most popular and culturally significant commodities.

The outlook for coffee is becoming increasingly troubling. Environmental projections suggest that up to half of the land currently used for coffee cultivation could become unsuitable for production by 2050. That warning should matter far beyond coffee drinkers and traders. It points to a broader crisis in agriculture, trade and food security that will affect producers, consumers and exporting countries alike.

The world's two largest coffee producers, Brazil and Vietnam, illustrate the scale of the danger. Brazil, which supplies about one-third of the global market, could lose much of its coffee-growing capacity if temperatures continue to rise and rainfall patterns become more erratic. According to recent analyses, most of its highly suitable coffee land may no longer remain viable in the coming decades. Vietnam faces a similarly severe future, with a major share of its coffee-producing land also expected to decline in suitability. For two countries that anchor global supply,

this is not a minor disruption. It is a structural threat.

The problem is not only about land. It is also about the widening gap between supply and demand. Global coffee consumption has already begun to outpace supply, with the International Coffee Organization reporting a significant deficit. That imbalance is likely to deepen as the world population grows and consumer demand expands across Africa, Asia and other emerging markets. In practical terms, more people will want coffee at the same time that fewer regions will be able to produce it efficiently.

This is why the concern about coffee becoming a luxury product is no longer exaggerated. If production continues to shrink while global demand rises, prices will inevitably move upward. Over time, coffee could become less of a daily household staple and more of a premium product reserved for consumers with greater purchasing power. The shift may not happen overnight, but the direction is already visible.

For Ethiopia, this challenge carries both risk and opportunity. As the birthplace of Arabica coffee, the country occupies a unique place in the global coffee story. Coffee is not only a major export commodity; it is also a source of livelihood for millions of farmers and a central part of Ethiopia's economic identity. Climate change therefore threatens more than agricultural output. It threatens a national asset.

Ethiopia must respond with urgency and strategy. The first priority is

agricultural adaptation. Coffee cultivation will need to move gradually into higher-altitude and cooler areas that are more resilient to rising temperatures. This is not simply a technical adjustment; it requires long-term planning, land management, research and support for farmers who may need to shift cultivation patterns. Without such planning, the country risks losing both productivity and competitiveness.

The second priority is technology. Ethiopia can no longer rely only on traditional farming methods if it hopes to remain a major coffee exporter in a changing climate. Investment in modern agricultural tools, digital monitoring, better forecasting systems and climate-smart practices will be essential. Artificial intelligence can play a role across the value chain, from crop planning and early warning systems to traceability, logistics and global marketing. Technology will not replace farmers, but it can help them produce more efficiently and adapt more effectively.

The third priority is branding. Ethiopian coffee already enjoys a strong reputation, but it can be positioned more powerfully in global markets. Exporters should move beyond raw commodity sales and promote Ethiopian coffee as a premium, high-quality and healthy product with a distinct origin story. That strategy should target younger consumers, expanding African markets and premium global buyers who value authenticity, sustainability and flavor. In a tighter

market, branding will matter more than ever.

The wider lesson is clear. Climate change is not a distant environmental issue; it is a direct economic threat. Coffee offers a useful example because it connects farming, trade, employment, foreign exchange and consumer culture in one chain. When climate disruption hits coffee, it hits all of these areas at once.

Ethiopia has time to prepare, but not much. The choices made today will determine whether coffee remains a driver of growth or becomes another casualty of global warming. If the country acts early, invests wisely and positions itself strategically, it can protect its coffee sector and strengthen its place in a changing global market.

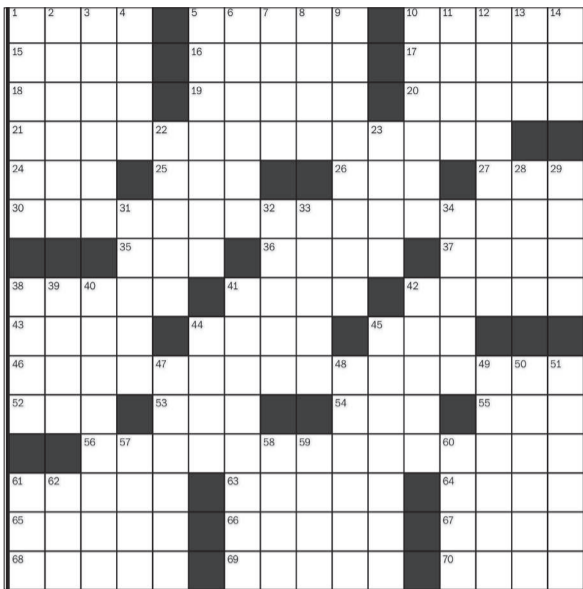
Coffee may still be part of everyday life in 2050, but its price, accessibility and meaning may look very different. The task now is to ensure that Ethiopia is not only a witness to that transformation, but a country that adapts and leads through it.

Sintayehu Girma Aytaged is competency and human resource administration executive officer with expertise in the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute and can be reached via sintayehugirma57@gmail.com

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Entertainment

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Urban haze
5. Urban network
10. Parts of some locks
15. Boring outcome?
16. Go up to
17. Yamaha woodwinds
18. SNAP benefits org.
19. San Antonio site
20. Take part financially
21. Apparel worn between December 22 and January 19?
24. Wine cocktail also called blanc-cassis
25. Mortgage agcy.
26. Pair of
27. Bill fig.
30. Unappreciative of St. Louis's hockey team?
35. Dearie
36. Expressions of discovery
37. Bi- quadrupled
38. "Four Quartets" poet
41. Writer Harte or wrestler Hart

DOWN

42. Lets go
43. SoCal emer. force
44. Puts away
45. French street
46. Starts a top-to-bottom demolition of an old facade?
52. Drink suffix
53. Biblical suffix
54. Private aid gp.
55. Largest U.S. union
56. Shakespearean "Listen up!," or an apt title for this puzzle?
61. Longtime college football coach Nick
63. Vintage violin
64. Smack
65. Scoundrel
66. Almanac info
67. Cover, in a way
68. Alpine song
69. Put away
70. Big Apple resident, for short

DOWN

1. "I'm sorta disappointed"
2. Pompeii art form
3. Experienced sort
4. Locker contents
5. Try to access, as the back of a closet
6. Borrowed
7. Hebrew month after Shevat
8. Curse
9. "Enough!"
10. Rub shoulders (with)
11. Be next to
12. Kikkoman condiment
13. Louvre Pyramid architect
14. Protected fig.
22. "Alternatively ..."
23. Causes to gasp, perhaps
28. Ration (out)
29. General ___ chicken
31. Friend of TV's Mary Richards
32. Brooks of country music
33. "Lord, what fools ___ mortals be!"
34. Cinema icon born in Rome
38. Site of Napoleon's exile
39. Tallow kin

40. Guilty expression
41. Traction providers
42. Hullabaloo
44. Cornerstone abbr.
45. Appealingly unconventional
47. Place to keep toys?
48. Benjamins
49. "Not exactly, but close"
50. "Developed With Dermatologists" lotion brand
51. Spring holiday
57. Icicle spot
58. Give out
59. Nonsense word similar to "blah"
60. Jessica Mendoza's network
61. Cloud's place
62. "That's ___-brainer!"

Solution: see below



GARFIELD



WEEKLY HOROSCOPES



Aries

Monday is a powerful day. You may set a goal that helps you outshine any competition. Be cautious about making assumptions. Things may not be as they appear. It's best to be sure everyone is on the same page. Thursday and Friday are upbeat days. Make a resolution to be happy and see how much this influences the people around you. The weekend can bring surprising news that may change your career plans.



Cancer

Knowing what to expect can help you cope. Unsettled situations could give you a case of the nerves. Talk about any problems as they come up rather than imagine the worst of yourself or others. Look at what you're doing and find ways to be more effective. It's positive for talking things out with friends on the job. The end of the week can be a stressful time at work. Take a short holiday if possible.



Libra

There could be challenges to the usual way you do things. Try to take these as opportunities to identify potential areas for improvement. Carrying resentment around won't help your best interests. Tuesday is a great day for talking to friends on the job and finding helpful support for your assignments. Midweek is a good time to rethink what you're doing. Maybe you can make necessary adjustments. The weekend is lucky for taking a risk.



Capricorn

Monday can be a powerful day in terms of your relationships with women. Don't make any assumptions. You might be unusually emotional or unrealistic in your assessment of a person or situation. Delay major decisions until later in the week. Decide if you want to continue to confront a difficult person or challenge by yourself. Work toward shared goals by building team morale at the end of the week.



Taurus

You can be disturbed by people who keep changing things for no good reason. Be patient. It's possible you may be overreacting. Midweek will bring support for a more methodical and detail-oriented approach. Don't be afraid to compromise a little. The energy this week encourages allowing people to be more flexible and try new things. The end of the week is a good time to finish outstanding assignments.



Leo

Partnerships and diplomacy could be a major focus of attention this week. You may be plotting to change the balance of power. Be cautious about someone's thoughtless comment or bad attitude causing you to react when you should keep your cool. Your energy is strong. If you're willing to put in long hours, you can improve your reputation for leadership. Do all you can to improve morale. A positive attitude can bring benefits for all.



Scorpio

Be outgoing and expect to discover all sorts of fortunate contacts. Be as friendly and social as possible. Choose negotiation over insisting your way is best midweek. You'll be most effective in team situations or making presentations to large groups. The energy for innovation is strong this week. Make plans and network with people you admire at the end of the week. Multiple points of view can be very helpful for any career question.



Aquarius

The energy is high and you may want to break with tradition. Do some especially nice things for yourself in order to improve your attitude in general. Pay attention to little details. Critical people shouldn't be allowed to upset you. Midweek can see your imagination working overtime. This can be especially useful in creative careers. Be especially kind to co-workers. The weekend is a good time for a short holiday.



Gemini

The week begins on a high-energy day. You will be at your best in any "meet and greet" situation. This is a great time for imaginative approaches. You can shine making presentations to customers. Midweek can bring a romantic attraction to everyone's attention. Don't be a gossip. Friday is a better day for being diplomatic than arguing to make a point. Friends can give you helpful career advice.



Virgo

You may be influenced by other people's attitudes early this week. Unsettled or hidden problems could cause you unnecessary worry. This may demand more patience than usual, especially when it comes to jumping to conclusions. Things may not be what they seem. You have such high standards that this can undermine your own effectiveness. You may be feeling you don't measure up. The weekend is an ideal time for a short holiday.



Sagittarius

The energy this week demands dedication and continued focus on what you want to achieve. The beginning of the week is positive for a detailed analysis of your situation. Make financial considerations a priority. Don't let any natural reserve stop you from being your most magnetic and appealing. People who feel your sincere interest are more likely to support your goals. If you're working at the week's end, be very clear about who's in charge of what.



Pisces

Time spent on group efforts will be the most satisfying this week. You can confidently take the lead in any area where you have skills. Careful preparation is important midweek. Slow down, organize paperwork, and make lists. You can build morale and help your co-workers by talking over lunch. Stubborn situations can be frustrating. Do your best not to obsess. Texts and other forms of communication will fly at week's end, so stay organized.



Sudoku

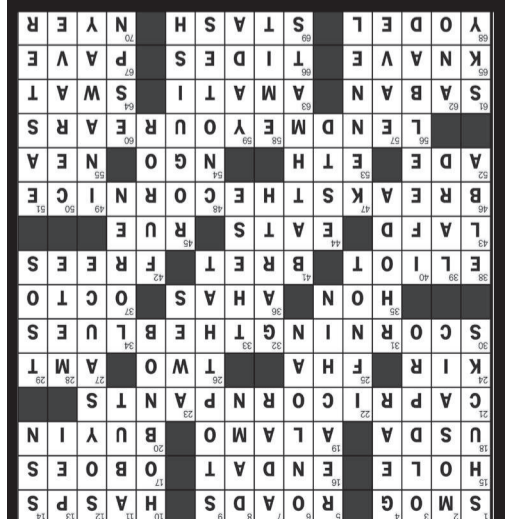
The game is easy, the rules are simple. All you have to do is make sure you fill every 3x3 box every row and every column, without repetition, using the number 1-9.

Word search



- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| COMPETITION
JUSTIN
FINKLE
UNCLE KELBO
HARPER | BEAKERMAN
SUB STATION
HAND
RUSSO
WIZARDS | JERRY
DISNEY
WAVERLY
ALEX
MAX | WIZTECH
FAMILY
THERESA
LAIR
ZEKE |
|--|--|---|--|

Crossword Solution



Capital SPORT

Between Qatar and the US World Cup, four years and a culture of hypocrisy

The issue is not that Qatar was scrutinised. The issue is that similar scrutiny has largely vanished when comparable questions emerged in the US
By Mihir Vasavda

Four years ago, much of the Western football world discovered its conscience. Ahead of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, federations from Norway, Denmark, and Germany — and many more — questioned the host's human rights record. Armbands were designed. Statements were issued. Football, we were told, was about values as much as goals. The tournament became a referendum on Qatar itself.

Fast forward to 2026, and the contrast is impossible to ignore.

Days before kick-off, Somali referee Omar Artan — selected by FIFA and due to become the first from his country to officiate at a men's World Cup — was denied entry into the United States despite holding a valid visa. FIFA confirmed that he would miss the tournament entirely because all referees are required to operate from the World Cup's central training base in the US. Artan is not some obscure official caught in bureaucratic crossfire. He is one of Africa's most respected referees, having worked the Africa Cup of Nations, and was named Africa's best male referee last year. Yet, his World Cup dream ended not on a football field, but at an immigration desk.

The reaction? Muted.

What if it wasn't America?

Former tennis great Martina Navratilova was among the few prominent sporting voices to publicly question the episode. But compared to the moral outrage directed at Qatar before 2022, the silence has been deafening. Imagine, for a moment, if Qatar had denied entry to a referee because of his nationality, religion, or sexual orientation on the eve of the World Cup. The condemnation would have been immediate and relentless. Editorial boards, politicians, and sporting bodies would have demanded answers. But when the host nation is the United States, the standards suddenly appear more flexible.

The Artan affair is not an isolated incident.

Iran, one of the qualified teams, has spent the build-up navigating a maze of restrictions. FIFA regulations ordinarily guarantee each federation a share of tickets for distribution among supporters, yet Iran says that allocation has effectively been withdrawn. Journalists, officials, and ticket-holding fans from other countries, too, have complained about visa troubles. Last weekend, Iraq striker Aymen Hussein was questioned for nearly seven hours, and his phone was checked when the team arrived in Chicago. The team's photographer was held for more than 10 hours and was denied entry.

This comes against the backdrop of broader American travel restrictions that affect citizens from several nations. Security concerns and the Ebola outbreak are cited as other reasons for the strict procedures. Nevertheless, the contrast with another episode from global sport is striking.

Olympic Committee — universal values, selectively applied

In 2019, when India denied visas to Pakistani shooters ahead of a shooting World Cup in New Delhi following the Pulwama terror attack, the reaction from the Olympic movement was swift and severe. The International Olympic Committee suspended discussions on future events in India and advised international federations



against awarding Olympic qualification competitions to the country until guarantees were provided. The message was clear: Host nations cannot selectively exclude eligible participants. That principle appears considerably harder to enforce when the host is the world's most powerful country. Qatar was scrutinised partly because scrutiny came at little geopolitical cost.

The US occupies a different place in world sport. FIFA's commercial future is deeply tied to the North American market. Broadcasters, sponsors and governing bodies all understand where influence resides. Criticising Doha carried few consequences. Criticising Washington is another matter altogether. That does not mean every criticism of Qatar was wrong. Many were justified.

Nor does it mean the United States should be held to an impossible standard. Every host nation faces legitimate security concerns and immigration challenges.

But consistency matters.

The issue is not that Qatar was scrutinised. The issue is that similar scrutiny has largely vanished when comparable questions emerged

elsewhere.

It's not just about football

The implications extend beyond football. In just two years, Los Angeles will host the 2028 Olympics, likely during the final months of Donald Trump's presidency. Athletes, coaches, officials, and journalists from countries currently facing travel restrictions will all need access. The International Olympics Committee's charter promises universality. Ensuring that the promise survives contact with immigration policy may become one of the biggest administrative challenges of the Games. Previous World Cups have shown how quickly controversy fades when the first whistle blows, and the tournament produces its own drama. Great goals, underdog stories, and unforgettable matches have a way of pushing politics into the background.

That may happen again. But long after the final is played, the memory of this World Cup may not simply be about football. It may also be remembered for exposing a truth about global sport: That principles are often applied unevenly, outrage is frequently selective, and morality sometimes depends on who holds the power.

That, more than any result on the field, is what makes 2026 feel like the World Cup of hypocrisy.

The writer is Deputy Associate Editor at The Indian Express and can be reached via mihir.vasavda@expressindia.com

The hypocrisy takes to the pitch

By Guntur Cobobi

The 2026 Fifa World Cup, staged across the United States, Canada and Mexico, kicked off yesterday, and once again the world will be brought into a fairy tale: that football rises far above any taint of politics.

Yet the preparations of the principal host, the United States, have already been clouded by quarrels over visas, ticket prices and the heat of American-Iranian sentiment, fed by a conflict still unresolved between the two.

One of Africa's top referees — Somalia's Omar Artan, named CAF Best Male Referee of 2025 — was denied entry and sent home. Iranian players were permitted to enter the United States only one day before each of their matches, while several members of the support staff were refused visas altogether.

The supporter ticket allocation for Iran was revoked days before the tournament began, and players and staff from nations deemed suspect were screened as though they were terrorists, sent home if they failed to clear it, their dreamed-of stage dissolving before them. It is something the tournament has scarcely seen in its history.

And so the most anticipated tournament on earth is no longer defined by who will lift the trophy, but by who is allowed to play and who is forced to go home.

What is alarming is that this logic does not stop in the halls of diplomacy. It seeps into the institutions meant to be neutral.

Fifa, founded in Paris in 1904 and now

headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, as a non-profit association under Article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code, ends up merely reflecting the same hypocrisy back into a game beloved by billions.

The irony runs deeper still: Fifa is not even a subject of international law but a non-governmental body, and yet it has bound itself to the highest human rights standards through its own statutes.

Wars, Punishments & Double Standards In early 2022, Fifa expelled Russia from all competition within days of the invasion of Ukraine. When Russia fought back through appeal, the Court of Arbitration for Sport ultimately dismissed the challenge in its ruling, CAS 2022/A/8871, handed down in November 2022.

Fifa invoked force majeure, neutrality and the integrity of competition. Russia countered that the decision was steeped in Western political interest and disregarded the rights of its players, but the CAS Appeals Arbitration Division rejected the petition outright.

Let us take Fifa's reasoning at face value, then test its sincerity with a single question. Why, a year later, did the Israeli federation stroll into the 2023 Under-20 World Cup — held before the Gaza war began — amid a decades-long occupation that has repeatedly restricted Palestinian players from even reaching their own matches? There is a documented record of Israel denying exit permits to Palestinian footballers for AFC qualifying fixtures, with Fifa awarding walkovers against Palestine rather than sanctioning the cause of the disruption. And yet not a single sanction followed against Israel.

One federation was destroyed because of its country's war; another was handed the red carpet; and the United States, never far from involvement in the world's conflicts, was anointed principal host of 2026. This is not coincidence. It is pattern.

Fifa's own statutes swear to respect internationally recognised human rights and to forbid discrimination in any form. So the question stands exposed. Are those articles living law, or merely an ethical ornament draped over decisions the powerful settled from the start?

Indonesia and the Betrayal of the Game This is where the mask falls most plainly. Indonesia, a nation that had prepared for years to host the 2023 Under-20 World Cup, was stripped of the honour mere weeks before the draw, and the tournament was moved to Argentina.

The immediate trigger was the refusal by Bali's governor to host the Israeli team — a decision the central government under President Jokowi did not endorse; Mr Jokowi had publicly affirmed that Indonesia would welcome all participating teams, including Israel. Yet Fifa acted against the host federation as a whole.

Consider the absurdity. A federation whose country is at war was allowed to compete, while a country whose regional official objected to a team's participation was punished. Fifa demands perfect neutrality from the weak, while the organisation itself has never been neutral towards the strong. What is more, the pressure that hastened Russia's expulsion came precisely from Western associations

such as Poland, Sweden and the Czech Republic, which refused to play, even though they were the ones who first breached the duty of neutrality under the statutes.

Do not misread this as a defence of any one side in a war. The suffering in Ukraine is real, and the suffering in Palestine is just as real, and precisely because both are real, both demand the same measure. Therein lies the rot of the double standard: it does not diminish one suffering, it betrays them all at once, for it teaches that the worth of a life depends on the flag that shelters it. International law answered this logic long ago through jus cogens ("compelling law"), the peremptory norm that places human dignity and equality above every interest and that no power may violate.

On the eve of 2026, the most the West could offer is consistency, not hypocrisy. Apply the same rule to Russia and to Israel, to Indonesia and to America, to those who hold power and to those who have no voice. For on the day football bows only to the strong, it ceases to be the most honest game on earth and becomes instead the truest mirror of the injustice that bore it. The maxim warned us long ago: *politiae legibus, non leges politiae adoptandae* — politics must bow to the law, not the law to politics.

Guntur Cobobi is a football lover and a researcher at the Center for Global and Melanesian Studies, Universitas Khairun, Indonesia.



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ADDIS ABABA Representative Office

Tel: (+251) 11 55 33 744
Fax: (+251) 11 55 34 659
Email: port.office.addis@gmail.com

