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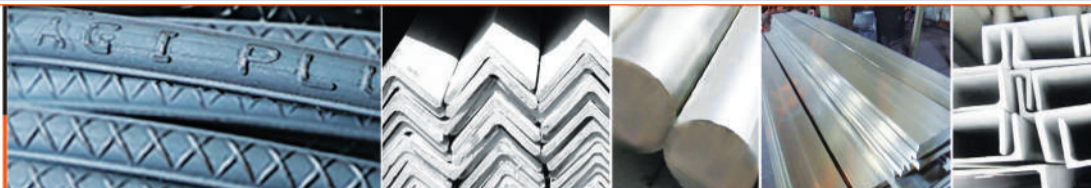
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## United Capital makes history as Ethiopia's first foreign investment bank

By Eysau Zekarias

The Ethiopian Capital Market Authority has granted Nigeria's United Capital Group the country's first foreign investment banking licence, marking a historic milestone for Ethiopia's emerging capital market.

The licence, issued on 5 June 2026, followed

months of regulatory review and legal vetting involving the Capital Market Authority, the Ethiopian Investment Commission and other relevant government institutions, according to ECMA Director General Hana Tehelku, who spoke exclusively to Capital.

United Capital will operate through a wholly owned local subsidiary, United Capital

Financial Services PLC, making it the first foreign investment bank licensed to establish a base in Addis Ababa. The company said it has brought in more than \$1.5 million in capital to fund its investment banking operations in Ethiopia.

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# Africa can break the debt trap by trading more with itself

Africa's debt crisis will not be solved by borrowing alone, nor by waiting for rescue from outside the continent. The more durable answer is to grow the continent's own markets, strengthen production, and expand intra-African trade so that African economies can generate more of the revenue they need at home.

For decades, many African countries have relied on external financing to cover budget gaps, fund infrastructure, and stabilize currencies. That model has left governments vulnerable to exchange-rate shocks, rising global interest rates, and sudden changes in investor sentiment. When debt service rises, social spending, development programs, and public investment are usually the first to suffer. The result is a cycle in which countries borrow to survive, then borrow again to repay the last round.

Breaking that cycle requires a shift in strategy. Africa must stop treating itself mainly as a collection of small national markets and start behaving like one large economic space. The African Continental Free Trade Area is the clearest path toward that goal. If it is implemented seriously, it can create scale, deepen industrialization, and keep more value within the continent. But trade agreements alone are not enough. Governments must remove the practical barriers that still make it easier to trade with Europe, Asia, or the Gulf than with a neighboring African country.

The first barrier is infrastructure. Goods cannot move cheaply across Africa if roads are poor, rail links are weak, ports are congested, and border posts remain slow and unpredictable. A trader in Kigali should not face more difficulty shipping to Nairobi than to Rotterdam. The same applies to a manufacturer in Accra trying to sell in Abidjan or a farmer in Ethiopia trying to access regional markets. Better logistics is not a luxury; it is the foundation of trade-led growth.

The second barrier is regulation. African businesses still face a patchwork of customs rules, product standards, permit systems, and payment procedures. These frictions raise costs and discourage cross-border commerce. Governments should harmonize standards, simplify customs procedures, and digitize clearance systems so that goods can move faster and more transparently. Regional trade should not depend on political speeches; it should depend on predictable systems that firms can trust.

The third barrier is finance. African trade needs African money. One reason intra-African trade remains underdeveloped is that many transactions are still settled in foreign currencies, exposing firms to exchange-rate risk and higher costs. Regional payment systems, local-currency settlement arrangements, and stronger correspondent banking links can reduce those burdens. If an importer in Uganda can pay a supplier in Tanzania more easily in regional currency, trade becomes simpler and cheaper. That is how markets deepen.

Africa also needs to build more regional value chains. Too many countries export raw materials and import finished goods at a premium. That pattern drains foreign exchange and leaves economies exposed to price swings. Instead, countries should specialize within the continent: one producing inputs, another processing them, another assembling finished goods, and others providing logistics and services. This is how trade becomes a ladder out of debt rather than another reason to borrow.

At the same time, governments must support small and medium-sized enterprises, which are the backbone of any meaningful regional trade system. Large firms can navigate high compliance costs and distant markets, but smaller businesses often cannot. If Africa wants trade to reduce debt pressure, SMEs need access to trade finance, market information, insurance, and export support. Without them, intra-African trade will remain a policy slogan rather than an economic engine.

There is also a political dimension. African leaders must resist the temptation to measure success by how much external financing they attract. The better measure is how much domestic wealth they mobilize and how much regional trade they enable. A continent that consumes what it produces, processes more of what it exports, and circulates capital within its own markets will be less dependent on lenders and more resilient in a volatile world.

Debt will not disappear overnight. Many countries will still need external financing for some time. But the terms of dependence can change. If Africa trades more with itself, it will earn more in local value, build more industrial capacity, and reduce the foreign exchange drain that makes debt so dangerous. Intra-African trade is not just a commercial agenda. It is a debt strategy, a development strategy, and a sovereignty strategy.

The continent's future will not be secured by borrowing its way forward. It will be secured by building an economy that can stand on its own feet, with African goods, African markets, and African confidence at the center.



By Hippolyte Fofack

COMMENT

## How Africa can escape the debt trap

The narrative that Africa faces a persistent debt crisis has become entrenched. In fact, despite representing nearly one-fifth of the world's population, the continent accounts for less than 3% of global sovereign debt. By contrast, the European Union and the United States account for a much larger share (nearly 16% and more than 34%, respectively). Moreover, Africa's average debt-to-GDP ratio, at 67%, is markedly lower than those of Europe (88.5%), the US (122.6%), and Japan (236.7%).

Nonetheless, many countries on the least-indebted and most capital-starved continent remain stuck in a debt trap. On May 12–13, Senegal will host an international conference to address the country's escalating debt crisis and, crucially, one of its main drivers: the structural asymmetries embedded in the global financial system. This flawed architecture has obstructed Africa's access to affordable, long-term capital and prevented the continent from diversifying its sources of economic growth and trade, transforming debt from a manageable development instrument into a self-perpetuating cycle of vulnerability.

In particular, the shift toward costly, short-term, market-based borrowing amid declining concessional lending has trapped African countries in cycles of indebtedness and external dependence. Constrained by fragmented monetary landscapes and underdeveloped domestic financial markets, African countries are forced to borrow in foreign currencies, mainly the US dollar. This leads to currency mismatches and exposes these countries to disorderly capital outflows and exchange-rate and interest-rate risks, especially monetary-policy shifts by the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks.

The balance-of-payments constraint associated with dollar funding creates a negative feedback loop. Exogenous economic shocks trigger capital flight to safe havens, sudden stops in financial inflows, and currency depreciation, all of which exacerbate the debt burden. Policymakers enact fiscal austerity, leading to a further slowdown in economic growth and revenues that make it even harder to service debt in the future.

Credit-ratings agencies such as S&P, Fitch, and Moody's deepen the debt trap by assigning most African countries lower ratings, which substantially elevate their borrowing costs and limit their market access. Sovereign bonds issued by African countries typically yield 8–15%, in sharp contrast to yields of 1–5% in Europe and North America. These spreads impose high macroeconomic costs. According to the United Nations Development Programme, credit-ratings agencies' subjective evaluations have cost African countries an estimated \$74.5 billion.

These additional costs help create a debt overhang. Interest payments now account for more than 20% of government revenue in several African countries—including around 40% in Nigeria and over 70% in Egypt—thereby imposing significant opportunity costs on development. Resources that could be allocated to infrastructure, industrial policy, human-capital development, and technological upgrading are instead redirected to debt servicing.

In short, Africa is paying so much not because of the amount of debt it has accumulated, but because of how that debt is structured and perceived. For African countries, it costs more to borrow less, setting unrealistic return-on-investment expectations that further undermine debt sustainability. As a result, a growing number of African countries have pursued rollovers and refinancing options, such as issuing new eurobonds, to settle maturing obligations—falling deeper into the debt trap.

This has accelerated the shift in recent decades from long-term concessional loans to short-term commercial debt. Private creditors now hold more than 40% of Africa's external public debt, up from 17% in 2000. Loans with shorter maturities compress repayment timelines, increase refinancing risks, and are misaligned with Africa's long-term development objectives. They also raise the risk of maturity clustering. This year, for example, African countries face a record \$90 billion debt wall driven by maturing eurobonds. Difficult tradeoffs will likely be necessary.

At the same time, Africa faces other economic constraints. The continent loses more than \$50 billion annually in illicit financial outflows through trade misinvoicing, abusive transfer pricing, and tax avoidance. The global financial system enables these leakages with secrecy jurisdictions and limited multilateral cooperation on international taxation.

Moreover, the erosion of human capital and a chronic infrastructure deficit in an austerity-prone operating environment leave many African economies vulnerable to commodity shocks that drive external liabilities higher. When balance-of-payments crises invariably materialize, African governments are compelled to borrow in foreign currencies and implement adjustment programs that prioritize short-term fiscal consolidation over long-term development. (These programs' procyclical austerity measures can help stabilize public finances but often weaken state capacity and lower potential economic growth). Over time, this leads to repeated cycles of borrowing, crisis, and adjustment—the very definition of a debt trap.

To break the cycle of dependency and accelerate development, policymakers must redesign the global financial architecture. Aligning debt maturities with longer-term development objectives requires improving access to concessional financing, which can be achieved by strengthening development-finance institutions' capital base. At the regional level, policymakers must fast-track monetary integration and the development of deeper domestic capital markets to support long-term borrowing in local currencies and address structural mismatches between currency denomination and revenue generation.

It is also crucial to reform credit-ratings agencies' methodologies to achieve parity in access to affordable development finance, and to reduce the incidence of procyclical policies. This will not only rebuild these institutions' credibility but also foster economic growth and sustainable development. Lastly, the international community should regard fiscal consolidation and debt sustainability as being in service of a broader goal: to promote Africa's economic development.

Africa is not heavily indebted; it is a victim of deep-seated inequalities, underpinned by an international financial architecture that prevents structural economic transformation and perpetuates debt crises. If the world is to harness Africa's demographic dividends and unlock its growth potential, both of which are essential to maintaining financial stability worldwide, the institutions, rules, and norms of global governance must become more balanced and development-oriented.

*Hippolyte Fofack, a former chief economist at the African Export-Import Bank, is Parker Fellow at the Sustainable Development Solutions Network at Columbia University, a research associate at Harvard University's Center for African Studies, a distinguished fellow at the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils, and a fellow at the African Academy of Sciences.*

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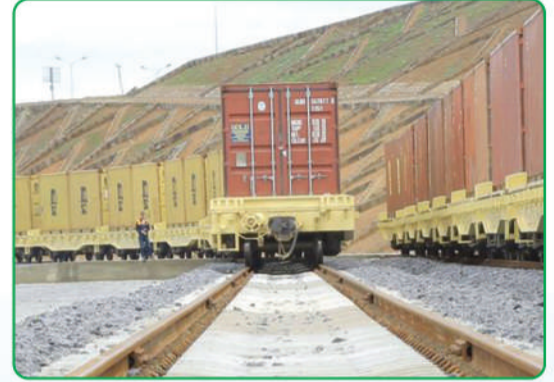
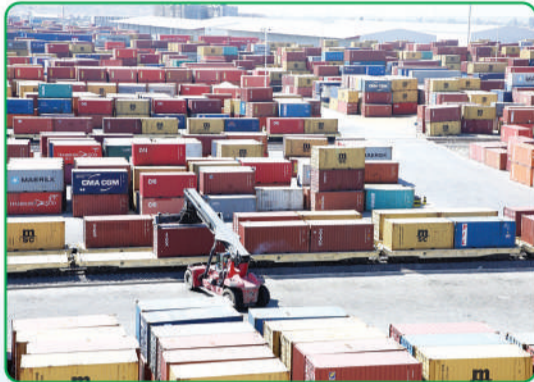
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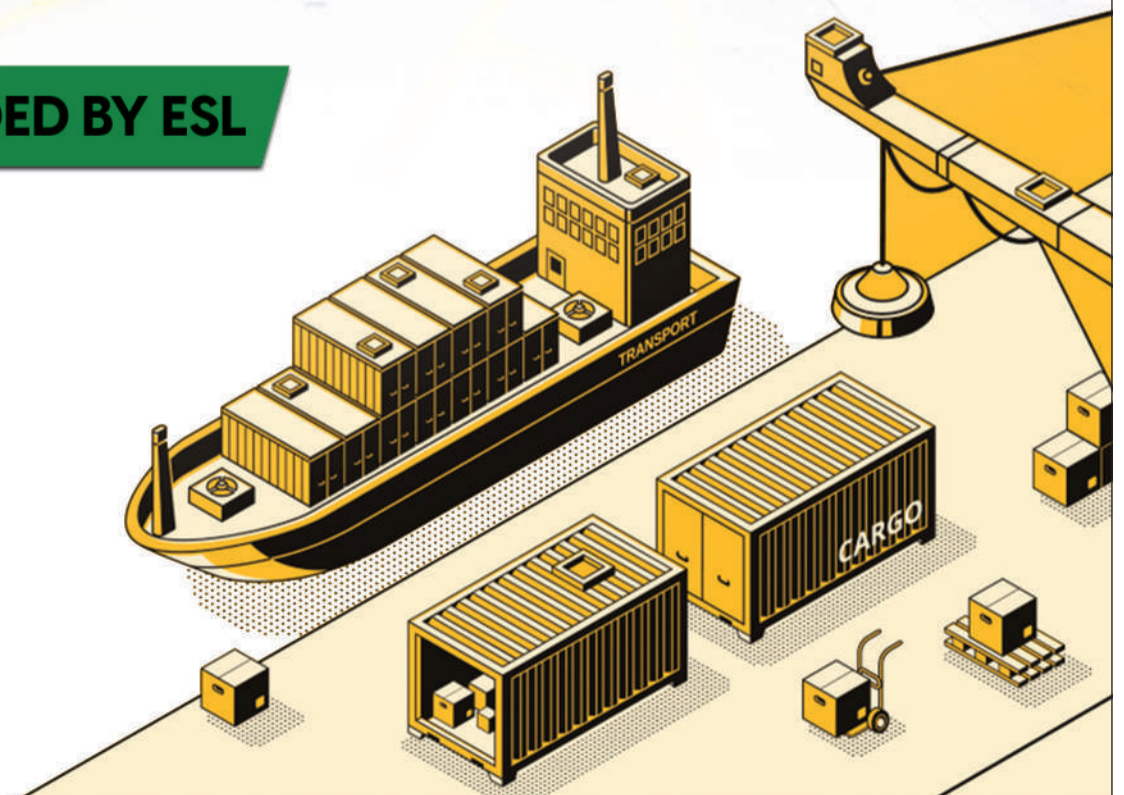


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# IMF brings forward \$200 million in support

By Muluken Yewondwossen

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that it is rephasing the disbursement schedule for its ongoing support under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF). Originally set at 7.5 percent, the support will now increase to nearly 14 percent of the approved \$3.4 billion, effective July 2024.

In its fifth review report, published midweek, the IMF disclosed that it has submitted \$468 million for final approval by its Executive Board. These funds represent continued support for the macroeconomic reform program that Ethiopia initiated in the previous budget year.

During her latest press briefing, Julie Kozack, Director of the IMF's Communications Department, explained that the rephasing of disbursements will bring forward \$200 million under the program to help Ethiopia address the immediate economic impact of the war in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. It is worth recalling that the IMF previously noted that the regional conflict has affected Ethiopia in key areas, including strategic commodity imports such as fuel, as well as significant volumes of exports and remittances.

In the fifth review, published Advertisement

on Wednesday, June 3, the IMF commended the economic reform program that the Ethiopian government has been implementing since last budget year. The IMF said the authorities continue to make progress in advancing their Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda, achieving favorable macroeconomic outcomes up until the onset of the Middle

East conflict.

"Output indicators, exports, reserves, and government revenue all continued to improve through early 2026, alongside a decline in inflation. The war in the Middle East was a significant external shock that disrupted trade, causing temporary fuel shortages and sharp increases in the prices of imported fuel and fertilizer.

Even so, economic activity appears robust, with only modest impacts so far on output growth and consumer price inflation," said Álvaro Piris, who led the IMF team that stayed in Ethiopia from May 6 to 20.

However, the Fund appears to have adjusted its previous stance on lifting the credit cap. Piris noted that maintaining

strong policy implementation will be essential to consolidate macroeconomic stability.

"A tight monetary policy stance remains warranted to anchor inflation expectations. Further efforts to enhance the functioning and transparency of the foreign exchange market will be important to support external adjustment," he added.

## United Capital makes . . .

*Continued from page 1*

Hana said the licence reflects Ethiopia's efforts to build a robust and globally competitive capital market while opening the door to foreign expertise and capital inflows. She said the regulator carried out extensive due diligence, including verification of the company's regulatory standing with Nigerian authorities before approving the application.

According to the Authority, United Capital may eventually operate under up to four licence categories, including investment banking and collective investment scheme management.

The entry of the Nigerian firm is expected to signal confidence in Ethiopia's nascent capital

market and encourage other foreign institutions to consider entry. While D & T Management Consulting, a Deloitte subsidiary, was previously licensed as a securities investment adviser, United Capital is the first foreign institution to receive an investment banking licence.

United Capital Group CEO Peter Ashade praised the Ethiopian government and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for reforms aimed at opening and modernizing the financial services sector. He also said the company received strong support from the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority during the licensing process.

"We are honored to be the first foreign institution licensed

to provide financial services in Ethiopia," Ashade told Capital. He said the move was a milestone for both Nigeria and Ethiopia and reflected growing pan-African financial cooperation.

Ashade said United Capital intends to contribute to the growth of Ethiopia's capital market by supporting human capital development, capacity building and the training of local professionals.

Hana said the greatest contribution expected from the company is not only financial capital, but also human capital and technical expertise. She said United Capital will be required to hire, train and empower Ethiopians so that its presence

can help develop a broader pool of domestic investment bankers, analysts and compliance specialists.

United Capital's Africa Director, Ejikeme Okoli, said the firm's experience across Africa positions it to help accelerate the development of Ethiopia's financial markets. He said the company sees Ethiopia as part of a broader pan-African strategy that already includes operations in several countries across the continent.

The Authority also said it is working with the Nigerian Securities and Exchange Commission on regulatory benchmarking and capacity-building initiatives.



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# Africa sees risk and opportunity as global fragmentation deepens

By our staff reporter

Africa is set to play a central role in the next phase of global economic fragmentation, with new risks in trade, borrowing and regulation also opening the door to long-term growth if governments move quickly, according to a World Economic Forum report.

The report says emerging and developing economies are facing rising pressure from trade shocks, higher borrowing costs and diverging global rules, but argues that Africa's demographics, natural resources and regional integration efforts give the continent a strong chance to benefit from the realignment of global supply chains.

African economies are especially exposed because many are small, open and heavily dependent on foreign capital, commodity exports and external trade. The report notes that recent global policy changes have already weakened development assistance, reduced investment flows, raised debt-service burdens and increased tariff pressure on the continent.

It also says African countries continue to pay more to borrow than similarly placed economies elsewhere, while weak market depth and limited data make sovereign risk appear higher than it may be in reality. That combination,

the report warns, makes the continent more vulnerable to external shocks.

At the same time, the report highlights Africa's structural advantages, including rapid population growth, urbanization, strategic minerals, renewable-energy potential and manufacturing prospects. It says the African Continental Free Trade Area

could lift GDP by a cumulative \$1.4 trillion between 2021 and 2045 if fully implemented.

The report also points to the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System as a key step toward reducing dependence on foreign currencies for regional trade. It says deeper regional integration, stronger capital markets and better data could

help African economies capture more value from shifting global supply chains.

To turn that potential into results, the report recommends faster implementation of AfCFTA protocols, broader use of PAPSS, improved credit-rating data and greater African participation in global ratings agencies. It also calls for more investable projects,

stronger infrastructure pipelines and deeper domestic capital markets to mobilize local savings.

For African policymakers, the message is clear: fragmentation carries real costs, but coordinated regional action can help the continent build resilience and position itself for growth.

## Federal Police uncover counterfeit tissue network, seek more time to probe suspect

By our staff reporter

The Federal Police Crime Investigation Bureau says it has uncovered a large-scale counterfeit distribution network that allegedly harmed market stability, reduced tax revenue and put public health at risk through the sale of substandard products.

Investigators appearing before the Federal First Instance Court, Arada Division First-Instance Criminal Bench, requested a 14-day remand extension to continue their probe into the main suspect, Seyid Mohammednur Umer. Police said the case involves trademark infringement and

a wider criminal network that was targeting both the economy and consumers.

According to court documents, the alleged operation ran counter to the government's recent macroeconomic reforms, which are aimed at stabilizing markets, curbing inflation and improving consumer welfare. Police said the network also deprived the state of significant tax revenue and distorted fair competition in the market.

In their application to the court, investigators said the suspect had used the "VIVA" tissue trademark, registered under International Class 16 by Pure Wood Pulp & Paper Packaging PLC with

the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Authority, without the owner's consent.

Police said they received tip-offs indicating that the suspect had been illegally copying Viva Tissue packaging since 2024 and flooding the market with counterfeit products. They said the alleged operation was not limited to Addis Ababa, but extended to regional towns through a covert network of representatives and accomplices.

Beyond the economic damage, police warned that the counterfeit tissue posed serious health risks to consumers. They said the fake product was reportedly made from substandard waste

materials and hazardous chemical additives, unlike the genuine product, which is manufactured under quality controls.

Police told the court that the suspect could destroy evidence, alter facts or intimidate witnesses if released while the investigation continues. They therefore asked for more time to collect testimonial and documentary evidence.

However, during the court session on 5 June 2026, the bench granted a seven-day remand extension instead of the 14 days requested. The case was adjourned to 11 June 2026 for a progress update on the investigation.

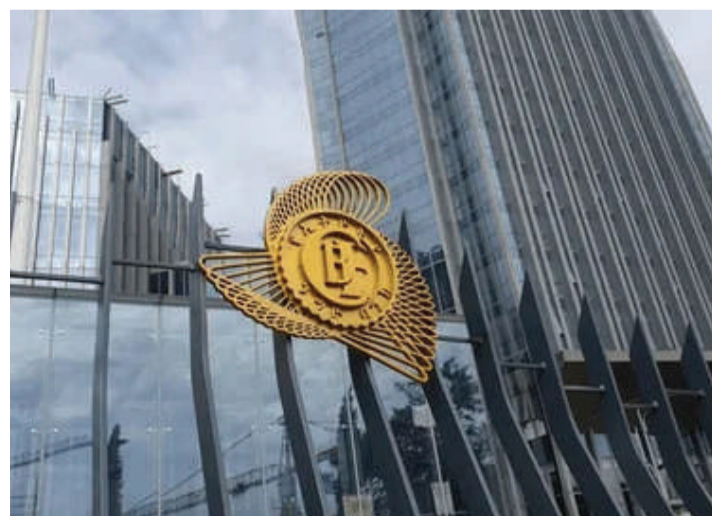
## CBE reports 15 trillion birr in digital transactions, launches co-branded Visa card with Ethiopian Airlines

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia says its digital banking channels processed 15 trillion birr in transactions over the past 11 months, with digital platforms now accounting for 78 percent of the bank's total transaction activity.

The announcement came during the launch of a new co-branded Visa prepaid card developed with Ethiopian Airlines and Visa International, a partnership the bank says builds on 25 years of cooperation. The card was unveiled on 4 June 2026 at the Skylight Hotel.

The new product links overseas spending to Ethiopian Airlines' ShebaMiles loyalty program, allowing cardholders to earn



miles on foreign purchases. Under the scheme, customers will receive one mile for every \$4 spent through point-of-sale terminals or e-commerce platforms abroad.

Bank officials said the card is designed to make international payments easier for Ethiopian travelers while creating a direct connection between spending and travel rewards.

ShebaMiles members previously accumulated points mainly through flights, but the new card extends that benefit to shopping and other eligible purchases abroad.

Bilen Hailemichael, director of merchant and agent management at CBE's digital banking division, said the bank now has 11 million active mobile banking users, 18 million customers registered on the CBE Birr mobile money service, 157,000 registered merchants and 457,000 internet banking users.

Despite maintaining a large physical network of 1,917 branches, 3,949 ATMs and 4,400 point-of-sale terminals, the bank said its growth is increasingly being driven by digital services. CBE also says

it serves more than 46 million customers overall and has 16 million domestic cardholders.

Ephrem Mekuria, executive vice president for corporate services at CBE, said the bank is working to meet customer needs by introducing innovative digital products and services.

Lemma Yadecha, chief commercial officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group, said the new card reflects a strategic partnership between two of Ethiopia's leading brands. He said the airline sees the product as an important tool for serving its more than 1.5 million ShebaMiles members worldwide by combining aviation, banking and international payment services.



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# EthSwitch records 1 million daily EthioPay-IPS transactions, wins African financial inclusion award

By our staff reporter

EthSwitch, Ethiopia's national payment switch, has recorded more than 1 million EthioPay-IPS transactions in a single day, with the value of transactions exceeding 5 billion birr, in what the company described as a major milestone for the country's digital payments system.

The achievement comes as EthSwitch and global payment software company BPC received The Asian Banker's "Best Financial Inclusion Technology Initiative in Africa for 2026" award, recognizing their role in expanding interoperable instant payments and broadening access to digital financial services in Ethiopia.

EthSwitch said the milestone reflects the rapid uptake of interoperable digital payments and the growing use of EthioPay-IPS across the country's financial ecosystem. The platform is designed to strengthen national payment infrastructure by enabling faster, more affordable and more accessible transactions for banks, microfinance institutions, businesses and consumers.

Yilebes Addis, chief executive officer of EthSwitch, said the 1 million daily transaction mark demonstrates the practical value of interoperable instant payments for financial institutions, businesses and citizens. He said the award from The Asian Banker makes the achievement even more meaningful

and reinforces the company's commitment to advancing inclusive digital finance in Ethiopia.

He also thanked BPC and development partners including BMGF, ADFI and AfricaNenda for their support in building the system. Powered by BPC's SmartVista platform, EthioPay-IPS supports account-to-account and wallet-to-wallet transfers, QR payments, request-to-pay services, alias-based payments and recurring payments. The platform also enables real-time transfers, interoperable QR payments, e-mandates, bulk payments and trade-related transactions.

According to the company, the system is helping financial

institutions offer payment services that are faster and more secure while improving interoperability across the financial sector. It also supports online and in-app commerce by linking financial institutions, businesses and payment networks with immediate settlement.

Customers can use cards, bank accounts, digital wallets, QR codes and payment links within a single interoperable system, while also making payments for utilities, taxes and government services.

The Asian Banker said the EthSwitch-BPC infrastructure shows how shared technology can reduce fragmentation, broaden access to digital financial services and support more inclusive

participation in the formal economy.

Dahlak Yigezu, country manager for Ethiopia at BPC, said the company was proud to celebrate the milestone with EthSwitch and to share in the recognition from The Asian Banker. He said the national switch is helping build resilient, future-ready payments infrastructure as Ethiopia's digital economy continues to expand.

EthSwitch, which is owned by the National Bank of Ethiopia, public and private banks, microfinance institutions, payment institutions and payment service operators, said its mission is to make payments simple and affordable and its vision is to become Africa's best-in-class payment network by 2035.

# UNCTAD warns Africa could face a costly oil shock from Hormuz disruptions

By our staff reporter

Africa is among the regions most exposed to the fallout from disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development warning that higher oil prices could deepen inflation, strain budgets and hit vulnerable economies hard. The warning is especially relevant for African least developed countries and small island developing states that depend heavily on imported fuel.

UNCTAD said 65 of 75 vulnerable economies it examined are net importers of oil, and 983 million people live in those economies. More than 30 percent of them live below the extreme poverty line of 3 dollars a day, making any increase in fuel costs a direct threat to already fragile household budgets.

The report said vulnerable economies mainly import refined oil products rather than crude, because many lack sufficient refining capacity. In 2024, refined products accounted for 97.8 percent of net oil imports in the group of oil-importing vulnerable economies, leaving them highly exposed to price spikes.

UNCTAD warned that a 50 percent rise in oil prices could raise the annual oil import bill of vulnerable economies by 20.4 billion dollars, including 16.1 billion dollars for least developed countries and 4.3 billion dollars for small island developing states. For countries already struggling with debt, food insecurity and weak fiscal buffers, that bill would force hard trade-offs between fuel subsidies, public services and long-term investment.

Several African countries would be hit especially hard. UNCTAD's table shows that among least developed countries, Mauritania could see an import bill increase equal to 7.3 percent

of GDP, while Gambia would face 6.3 percent and Burkina Faso 5.0 percent. Liberia, Zambia, Lesotho and Mali also rank high on the list of economies with large import bill increases.

The report also flags African states that rely heavily on oil sourced from the Hormuz region. Uganda sources 61.5 percent

of its oil imports from the area, Mauritius 58.3 percent, the United Republic of Tanzania 56.0 percent and Zambia 44.7 percent. Other African economies listed include Mauritania, Mozambique, Malawi, Senegal, Cabo Verde, Togo and Benin.

UNCTAD said the consequences would extend beyond higher fuel

bills. Rising oil prices push up freight and transport costs, feed broader inflation and can weaken exchange rates and growth. For governments with limited fiscal room, the shock can also widen current account deficits and increase pressure on public finances.

The agency said the situation

shows how geopolitical disruptions in one corridor can quickly become a development crisis for the world's poorest economies. In its warning, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that when the Strait of Hormuz is strangled, the world's poorest and most vulnerable cannot breathe.

# NBE allows embassies, foreign investors to import fuel under Franco-Valuta scheme

By Eyasu Zekarias

The National Bank of Ethiopia has introduced a new directive allowing embassies, international organizations and foreign direct investors to import fuel using their own foreign currency, in a move aimed at easing pressure on the country's strained foreign exchange system.

The directive, signed by National Bank Governor Eyob Tekalign and effective as of 29 May 2026, permits eligible institutions to bring in refined petroleum products under the Franco-Valuta system, which allows imports without drawing foreign currency from Ethiopia's domestic banking system.

Officials and industry experts say the new framework is designed to help stabilize the macroeconomy by reducing pressure on foreign currency reserves while keeping imported fuel out of the domestic retail market. Under the directive, fuel imported through Franco-Valuta cannot be sold to the public, transferred to third parties or mixed with ordinary commercial fuel supplies.

For more than five decades, the state-owned Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise was the sole legal importer of refined petroleum products. It was responsible for assessing national demand, negotiating purchases, managing tenders and overseeing strategic fuel depots. Fuel distributors and gas stations have traditionally bought from the state enterprise rather than importing independently.

That centralized system helped the government control fuel supply and retail prices, but it also left Ethiopia highly exposed to external shocks. Fuel is the country's largest import item, costing an estimated \$4.2 billion a year and accounting for roughly a quarter of total imports.

The latest directive comes as fuel markets have been hit by international disruptions, including conflict in the Middle East and pressure on strategic shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. For landlocked Ethiopia, the problem has been compounded by a chronic shortage of foreign currency, making it difficult to finance timely fuel purchases.

In recent months, the government has been forced to provide billions of birr in fuel subsidies, but that approach has proved increasingly difficult to sustain. Authorities have also introduced a quota system that prioritizes fuel for defense, public transport and key manufacturers, while ordinary motorists in Addis Ababa have often faced long waits at filling stations.

The new Franco-Valuta directive is intended to provide an additional channel for fuel supply without putting further strain on the banking system. Franco-Valuta is a mechanism that allows eligible importers to pay with foreign currency held abroad rather than requesting hard currency from Ethiopian banks.

The National Bank said previous regulations had allowed some Franco-Valuta practices but lacked a clear legal framework. It said that gap had contributed to customs misclassification, distorted reporting, capital control violations and illicit financial flows.

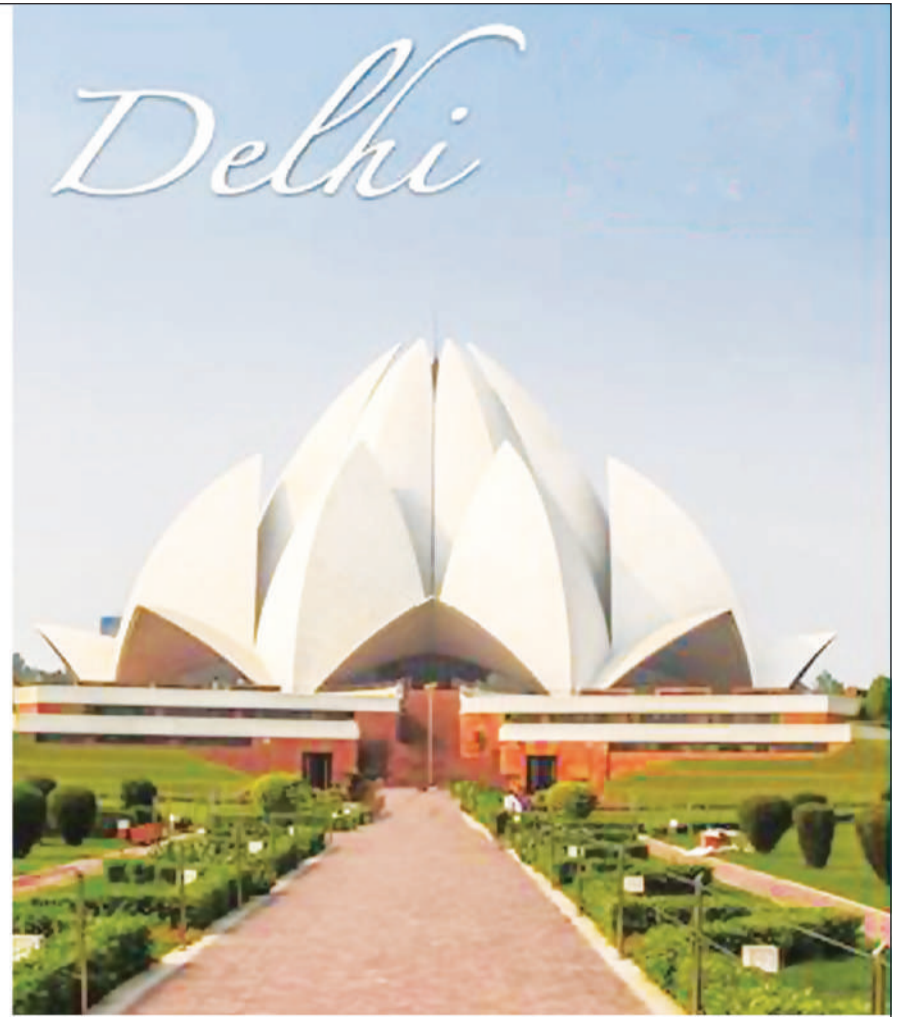
Under the new rules, fuel imported for the own use of embassies, international

organizations and foreign investors has now been explicitly added to the list of goods that may be brought in through Franco-Valuta. However, the bank stressed that the arrangement does not open the general fuel market to private traders.

To clear fuel through customs, importers must present a supporting letter from the relevant government institution confirming their fuel needs, along with a valid diplomatic or investment license. The directive does not set a specific dollar ceiling for fuel imports, saying volumes will be determined by the issuing institution's assessment of need.

The bank has also established a digital monitoring system to track every shipment from customs to the point of use. The Ethiopian Customs Commission will be required to register each Franco-Valuta shipment in the central bank's new monitoring platform.

According to the directive, any false declaration, diversion of fuel or attempt to bypass the system will trigger administrative and legal penalties.



# INTERVIEW

## UAE EYES DEEPER TRADE AND INVESTMENT TIES WITH AFRICA

**I**n this written interview with *Capital*, **Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade**, outlines the steady expansion of UAE-Africa economic relations and the growing importance of Ethiopia within that partnership. He points to logistics, infrastructure, clean energy, agriculture and long-term regulatory certainty as the main pillars behind the continued momentum. The minister also highlights major UAE-backed investments already underway in Ethiopia, arguing that the relationship is now deeper, more diversified and more resilient than ever before. **Excerpts:**



**Capital:** UAE-Africa trade has shown strong resilience in recent years despite global market disruptions.

What are the main factors behind this continued momentum?

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** The main factor is sustained investment in logistics, infrastructure, and trade facilitation across the continent. DP World now operates six African ports, each with major capacity expansion and modernization projects, while AD Ports Group has expanded its footprint into Guinea, Egypt, and Angola. In parallel, the UAE has been the continent's largest source of new FDI, investing US\$110 billion

across Africa between 2019 and 2024, with US\$72 billion directed toward renewable energy alone. When trade relationships are supported by this scale of physical infrastructure and capital commitment, they develop a strong degree of resilience.

**Capital:** How would you assess the current state of UAE-Africa trade and investment relations, and where do you see the biggest opportunities for further growth? And for Ethiopia specifically, what role do you see the UAE playing in supporting trade flows, investment, and broader economic cooperation?

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** The state of UAE-Africa relations is



the strongest it has ever been. Ethiopia is a powerful illustration: bilateral non-oil trade surged threefold to US\$6.2 billion in 2025. AMEA Power is investing US\$620 million in the Aysha-1 wind project in Ethiopia's Somali region, the largest wind farm in the Horn of Africa, generating 1,400 GWh annually. Eagle Hills is developing La Gare, a US\$2 billion mixed-use project in Addis Ababa that will deliver over 4,000 residences. Dubai International Chamber maintains a representative office in Addis Ababa. The opportunities in Ethiopia are substantial: clean energy, agriculture, logistics, real estate, and manufacturing.

**Capital:** Supply chain stability has become a major concern globally.

How has the UAE worked to ensure continuity and reliability across its trade corridors with Africa?

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** The UAE has invested in a distributed logistics model: multiple ports, multiple modes, and multiple corridors, ensuring no single chokepoint can significantly disrupt connectivity. Our position on the Strait of Hormuz has been clear at every level of government – it is a natural passage governed by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and its weaponization cannot stand. We have activated east-coast ports at Fujairah and Khor Fakkan, which sit outside the Strait, while utilizing Etihad Rail's 900km freight network alongside overland Green

# INTERVIEW

Corridors with regional partners. DP World's six-port African network further supports the resilience of these trade corridors.

**Capital: Beyond trade in goods, UAE investments are expanding across sectors such as logistics, energy, agriculture, finance, and infrastructure. Which sectors do you see as most strategic for the next phase of UAE–Africa cooperation?**

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** Clean energy is arguably the most transformative sector for the next phase of UAE–Africa cooperation. At COP28, the UAE announced an AED 4.5 billion initiative targeting 15GW of clean energy capacity across Africa by 2030. In Ethiopia, AMEA Power's US\$620 million Aysha-1 wind project is set to become the largest wind farm in the Horn of Africa. Logistics and port infrastructure also remain central to long-term economic integration: DP World has invested more than US\$6 billion in African ports since 2010, with a further US\$3 billion planned. Digital infrastructure is another emerging frontier: G42 and Microsoft are partnering on a US\$1 billion geothermal-powered data centre project in Kenya that will help position East Africa as a growing technology hub.

**Capital: Many African economies are looking for long-term, predictable partners. How is the UAE positioning itself as a reliable and forward-looking economic partner on the continent?**

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** The UAE is positioning itself as a reliable and forward-looking partner through long-term investments and partnerships designed to create lasting economic value. Our investments in Ethiopia reflect that approach: AMEA Power's wind farm will deliver sustainable energy for decades, while Eagle Hills' La Gare project is helping reshape Addis Ababa's urban landscape through long-term infrastructure and real estate development. DP World's port concessions across Africa are similarly structured around multi-decade commitments. The UAE's non-oil trade exceeded US\$1 trillion in



2025, up 27% year on year, reflecting an economic model built for sustained growth. Dubai International Chamber also maintains offices across Africa, including in Addis Ababa, providing on-the-ground support that makes partnerships tangible and operational.

**Capital: What policy or regulatory reforms would help deepen UAE–Africa investment ties and make the business environment even more attractive for both sides?**

**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** Expanding our network of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements is one priority. We have already concluded 10 agreements with nations across Africa and, once fully implemented, they will help enhance mutual trade flows, reduce barriers to trade, harmonize customs procedures and create platforms for investment and SME collaboration. More broadly, stronger and more predictable regulatory frameworks will be essential to deepening investment ties — not only for attracting FDI, but also for mobilizing domestic capital within African markets. Institutional trust is critical if private-

sector investors are to deploy capital at scale.

**Capital: Looking ahead, what is your vision for the future of UAE–Africa trade relations over the next five to ten years, and what milestones would you like to see achieved?**

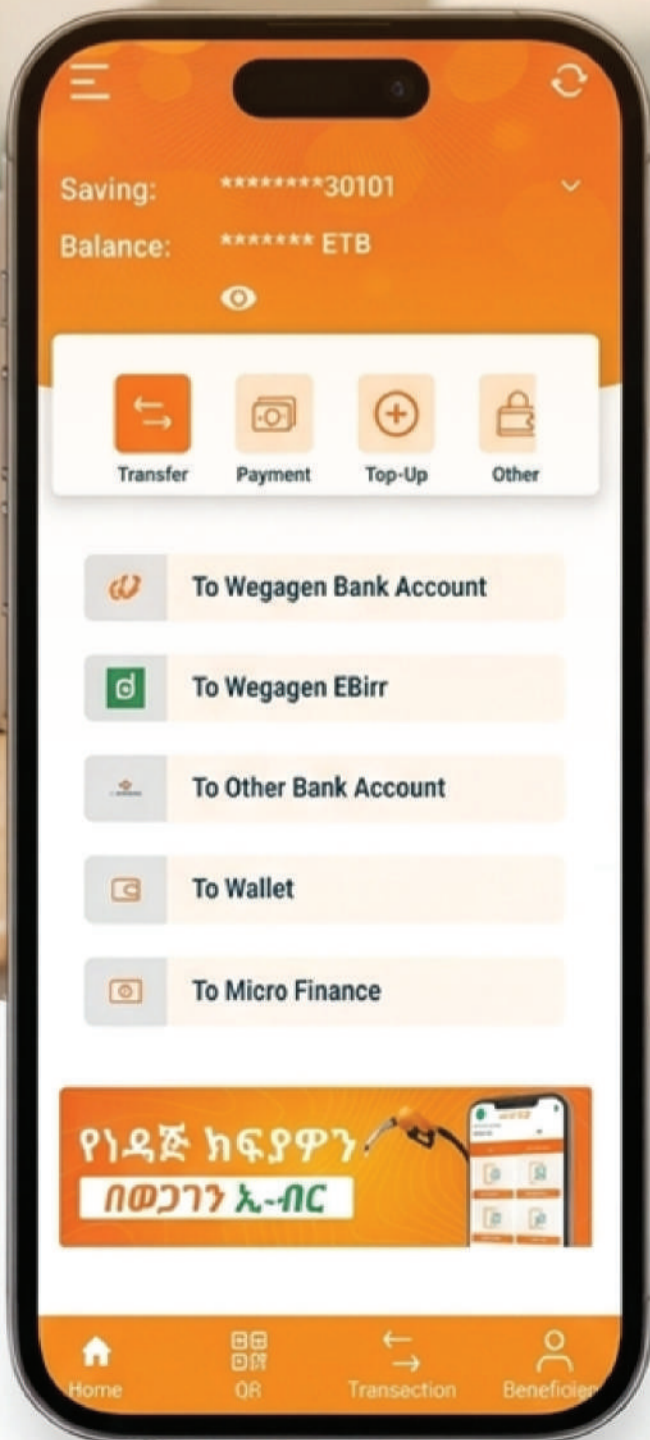
**Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi:** Africa is a continent of extraordinary importance to the global economy, with two-thirds of the world's arable land, a growing middle class, and resources that can support the global energy transition. Over the next decade, we want to see UAE investment continue to flow into the energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and digital sectors that create jobs and build industrial capacity. Ethiopia's trajectory clearly illustrates this potential: bilateral trade has grown from US\$784 million in 2019 to US\$6.2 billion in 2025. Looking ahead, we hope to see landmark projects such as AMEA Power's Aysha wind farm and Eagle Hills' La Gare fully realized, while continuing to expand investment into sectors that support Ethiopia's long-term economic growth and industrial development.



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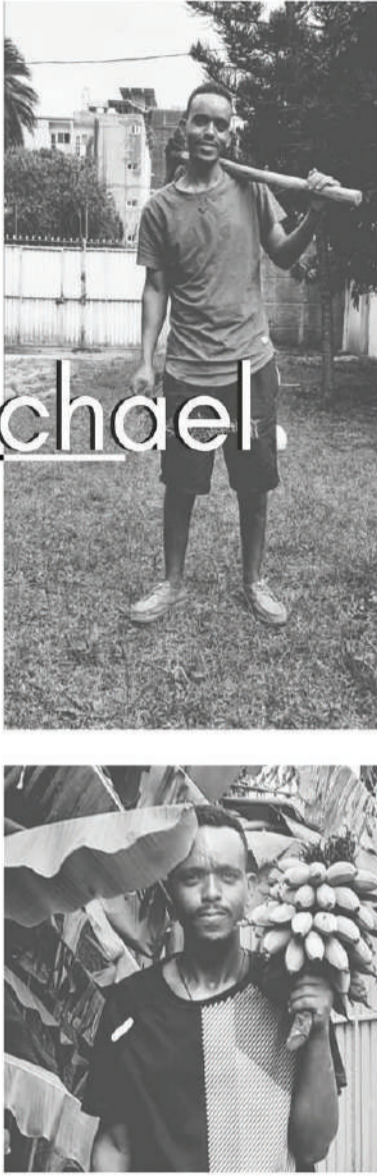



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**Announcement to All Shareholders of Hibret Insurance S.C.**

Dear Valued Shareholders,


As you are aware, the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority (ECMA), pursuant to the Capital Market Proclamation No. 1248/2021, has issued the "Dematerialization of Publicly Offered Securities Directive No. 1047/2025" (Directive to convert securities into electronic form).

In accordance with the provisions of this Directive, it is legally mandated that all paper-based securities (share) certificates and ownership registries within eligible share company must be dematerialized, migrated to the Central Securities Depository (CSD) established under the National Bank of Ethiopia, and replaced by an Electronic Book-Entry System.

Accordingly, we respectfully request you to update and submit your information including your Digital ID Number (FAN), any change of address (new address, country, region, city, sub-city, wereda, kebele, and house number), email address, and phone number. If the shareholder is a legal entity (corporate body), please provide the Tax Identification Number (TIN) along with the full details and credentials of the authorized representative.

You are kindly requested to present these documents on or before June 13, 2026 G.C., either in person at the Hibret Insurance S.C. Head Office or at the nearest Hibret Insurance branch to your location.

**Hibret Insurance S.C.**



**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

S.N	Position	Minimum Qualification	Minimum Experience	Skills Required	Req
1	Marketing Executives <b>(Chemicals)</b>	Graduation in Chemistry	1 Year	Good in communication (writing and verbal) in English and Amharic or any other local language, Computer proficiency (MS Word, Excel & Outlook) are must and also should be familiar with digital print and television marketing.  Familiarity to soap and detergent chemicals, breweries, leather and industry will be advantage to candidates.	5
2	Marketing Executives <b>(Fertilizers)</b>	Graduation in Agri Science/ Agronomy/ Soil Science or a related field from Govt University is preferred.  Certified Crop Advisor or related diploma will be advantageous.	1 Year	Strong sales acumen and excellent communication skills are essential. The ability to build and maintain longterm relationships with clients is crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty.	5
3	Sales Officer <b>(Fertilizers)</b>	Post-Graduation in Commerce/Marketing with Graduation in Agri Science/ Agronomy/ Soil Science or a related field from Govt University is preferred.	5-7 Years	Strong leadership skills to lead a team of 10 executives with strong sales acumen and excellent communication skills are essential.	1

Additional Requirements for all posts:

- (1) Honest & Efficient
- (2) Ability to work independently and be self-motivated
- (3) Preferred Age Group 25-30 years for all positions. Female Candidates are encouraged to apply for all these posts.

Interested applicants should submit their non-returnable application, CV, Credentials at following address up to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026:

**Allied Chemicals S.C.**  
**Allied Tower, Abem Wossen Road, Near Sunshine Real Estate, Meri Luke, Addis Ababa Ph. 0116591953**  
**Email: regassabekana@alliedinds.com**

# From Growth to Stewardship: Ethiopia's Moment to Lead on Climate and Waste

By Asiya Muhammed, MRSB

Today, as the world observes World Environment Day under the theme "Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future," signals the Earth is sending and to send meaningful ones back. The campaign's hashtag, #NowForClimate, is not merely a rallying cry for distant nations. It is a direct challenge to every growing economy, including Ethiopia.

Ethiopia stands at a crossroads, with one of the fastest-growing economies on the continent. Several investments in industrial parks, manufacturing, and urban infrastructure, combined with an ambitious national development agenda, shows that country is in a phase of strong momentum. But momentum, if unguided, leaves a trail in the form of solid waste, liquid effluent, hazardous by-products, and plastic pollution is one that no amount of economic progress can excuse.

Estimates show that Ethiopia's plastic imports grew several folds over the years with per capita plastic consumption increase sharply over the same period. Right from the drainage systems, riverbeds, to open land shows evidences that the waste management infrastructure has not kept pace with requirement. Recent ban on single-use plastic bags was a great step for curtailing the problem, but implementation of this rule remains uneven, and the ban addresses only one dimension of a far broader challenge.

From an engineering standpoint, the gap between Ethiopia's industrial growth and its waste management infrastructure is not a matter of will it is a matter of systems. Factories produce. Cities consume. But without collection networks, treatment facilities, materials recovery systems, and legally enforceable producer responsibility frameworks, the outputs of growth accumulate as environmental liability. That liability is not abstract. It contaminates groundwater, degrades agricultural land, clogs urban infrastructure, and as the science increasingly confirms enters our food and our bodies as microplastics.

The good news is that nature itself offers the blueprint for solutions, which is precisely what this year's World Environment Day theme invites us to consider. Circular economic principles designing waste out of systems from the start are not merely aspirational concepts from wealthier nations. They are engineering realities that can be adapted to Ethiopia's context. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes which have already tried in several countries like Kenya and Egypt, needs the manufacturers and importers to take financial and operational accountability for the end-of-life of their products. Engineered landfill cells with leachate capture protect soil and water. Wastewater treatment at the industrial park level is not a luxury; it is a necessity for sustainable operation.

Ethiopia's evolving plastic and waste management policies provide a framework for addressing pollution due to plastic, but its implementation remains another challenge. What the country needs right now is engineered infrastructure to match its waste requirements. Industrial parks require dedicated effluent and hazardous waste treatment systems built into their design, not as an additional capital investment. Secondary cities receiving investment and population growth need a road map with estimated growth in volume over next ten years and plan township accordingly. Environmental Impact Assessments must carry enforceable waste management conditions, and those conditions must be verified by qualified engineers not left as paper commitments.

There is a direct impact of this challenge on the climatic conditions as well. Unmanaged waste in open sites generates methane, a greenhouse gas which is more potent than carbon dioxide over a twenty-year horizon. Proper infrastructure for composting, anaerobic digestion, controlled landfill can convert that liability into an asset, generating energy and reducing emissions simultaneously.

On this World Environment Day, as signals rise from melting glaciers and rising seas, Ethiopia has an opportunity to send a signal of its own: that it will not replicate the environmental errors of earlier industrialising nations, that growth here will be paired from the outset with the infrastructure needed to contain its consequences. The engineering capacity exists. The policy direction, however imperfect, is being established. Now what remains is commitment to close the gap between the two to ensure that every industrial investment, every new residential development, and every expanding city is matched by corresponding investment in the systems that manage what those places produce and discard.

Nature does not negotiate with our development plans. But it does, as this year's theme reminds us, offer a model of circularity, of no waste, of every output becoming an input. The question for Ethiopia, today and in the years ahead, is whether we choose to build in its image.

*Asiya Muhammed Kochuveettil is currently associated with Mc Clelland Engineers Pvt Ltd., a leading manufacturer of engineered incineration systems for efficient disposal of wastes. Their systems are recognized for their compliance with international emission standards, energy recovery capabilities, and robust construction, offering reliable and environmentally responsible waste treatment to industries worldwide.*

*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:** Rahel Nigussie  
**Education:** 10  
**Company name:** Rich Coffee  
**Title:** Owner  
**Founded in:** 2013  
**What it does:** Coffee and Tea services  
**Hq:** Addis Ababa  
**Number of Employees:** 6



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### PERSONAL

**Reason for starting the Business:** My passion for the work  
**Biggest perk of ownership:** Working toward my goal and making it a reality  
**Biggest strength:** By not giving up and being able to focus only on the future  
**Biggest challenge:** The veranda/street-side work I used to do was very difficult  
**Plan:** Establishing my own coffee house  
**First career:** Housemaid in Beirut

**Most interested in meeting:** Ethio Telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamru  
**Most admired person:** Teddy Afro  
**Stress reducer:** Talking with my husband  
**Favorite pastime:** Helping and supporting my family  
**Favorite book:** The Bible  
**Favorite destination:** Jerusalem  
**Favorite automobile:** Range Rover

## DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

June. 6, 2026



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 Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	154.20	157.29
POUND STERLING	203.24	207.30
EURO	180.27	183.87
SWISS FRANK	193.61	197.49
SWEDISH KRONER	16.35	16.67
CHINESE YUAN	22.37	22.82
UAE DIRHAM	41.98	42.82
JAPANIS YEN	0.94	0.96

## Ethiopia's First State-Owned Enterprise Listing on the ESX Puts National Wealth in the Hands of Everyday Citizens

Ethiopia has marked a significant transition in its financial landscape. With the official listing of Ethio telecom on the Main Market of the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) under the ticker symbol TELE, ordinary citizens now have the opportunity to directly own shares in one of the nation's most valuable enterprises.

With **45,366** retail shareholders verified and **10.1** million shares digitized, the company's retail base is now cleared to begin secondary trading. This transition, valued at **3.04** billion ETB, represents more than just a regulatory shift; it marks a structural change where everyday citizens are no longer just customers of a state utility, but active co-owners of one of the nation's most valuable economic assets.

### Bridging Local Practice with International Standards in Dematerialization

In mature financial markets, the physical exchange of paper stock certificates has long been replaced by digital records through a process known as dematerialization. For Ethiopia, establishing a modern capital market from scratch required adopting these international standards immediately, ensuring that citizen-investors have secure, transparent, and verifiable proof of their ownership.

Ethio telecom's preparation involved working with the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority (ECMA) and registering the allotted shares with the Central Securities Depository (CSD). According to market analysts, dematerialization is essential for protecting retail investors, minimizing settlement risks, reducing transactional costs, and preventing the disputes often associated with physical certificates.

Data from the World Federation of Exchanges indicates that countries implementing centralized digital depositories observe significant reductions in transaction processing times and systemic settlement risks. By verifying **95.8** percent of the initial **47,377** buyers through rigorous "Know Your Customer" (KYC) protocols, the initiative aligned itself with global regulatory standards designed to protect public assets. Similar transitions in other emerging markets, such as **Kenya's Safaricom IPO in 2008**, demonstrated that a clean, digitized shareholder registry is a prerequisite for sustaining domestic public confidence on a secondary exchange.

### Catalyzing the National Digital Ecosystem through Citizen Agency

The secondary trading of Ethio telecom shares is expected to act as a catalyst for the broader digital economy, placing financial tools directly into the hands of the public. A functional securities exchange relies on a robust digital infrastructure to process real-time transactions, manage registries, and distribute financial information to its new base of citizen-owners.

By requiring shareholders to utilize licensed investment banks and brokerage firms to open trading accounts, the initiative encourages a rapid upgrade in the country's digital financial services. Furthermore, Ethio telecom's implementation of online tools such as its dedicated **Investor Relations Portal** and digitized support channels exemplifies how the corporate sector can support the goals of the "**Digital Ethiopia 2030**" strategy. The integration of capital markets with digital banking and mobile payment systems is likely to create a more interconnected, tech-driven financial ecosystem where citizens can manage their portfolios with convenience.

### Expanding Financial Inclusion through Digitized Retail Equity

Historically, participation in high-value corporate equity in Ethiopia was largely limited to institutional players or wealthy individuals. The sale of a **10** percent stake in Ethio telecom to ordinary citizens represents a deliberate shift toward retail-driven financial inclusion, democratizing access to wealth generation.

With over **45,000** citizens now holding digitized shares, the project introduces a broad segment of the population to equity investments for the first time. To trade these shares, citizens must engage with brokerage firms, a process that can naturally encourage financial literacy and familiarize the public with concepts of risk, return, and portfolio diversification.

The World Bank Global Findex database highlights that deep financial inclusion requires moving beyond basic transaction accounts into wealth-generating investment pathways. By leveraging digital platforms, emerging economies can bypass intermediate phases of financial development, similar to how India's introduction of digitized accounts in the late **1990s** catalyzed a significant expansion of retail investor participation.

However, observers note that the long-term success of this financial inclusion drive relies heavily on continuous public education. For many

retail investors, navigating brokerage accounts and understanding market fluctuations will be entirely new experiences. The role of licensed intermediaries and educational portals will be critical in ensuring that first-time investors can confidently navigate secondary trading.

### Fostering Ownership and the Realities of Public Wealth Creation

From an economic standpoint, privatization through public share offerings is often viewed as a tool for broader wealth distribution. Rather than selling state assets directly to single large conglomerates or foreign entities, the Ethiopian government's retail-first allocation allowed citizens to directly buy into one of the country's most profitable enterprises. This model provides a pathway for ordinary citizens to benefit from national economic growth through capital appreciation and future dividend payouts.

The psychological impact of this transition introduces a powerful shift in public perception, as holding a tangible stake allows citizens to transition from passive consumers to active stakeholders driven by a clear sentiment of ownership. Hence, the listing goes beyond capital accumulation to cultivate a shared-interest model of active economic stewardship.

For Ethiopia, this means that the **45,366 verified shareholders** are now self-directed custodians of a key national economic driver. This alignment can foster civic engagement, as citizens who hold a direct stake in national enterprises have a natural interest in advocating for transparent corporate governance and stable economic policies.

The practical test of this shared-interest model will occur during the upcoming budget year, when Ethio telecom convenes its first **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** as a listed company. Here, everyday citizens will have the opportunity to review audited financial reports, engage with corporate leadership, and participate in decisions regarding dividend distributions.

### Navigating the Complexities of Secondary Market Development

While the readiness of **95.8 percent** of shareholders to trade is a notable administrative milestone, the transition also highlights the operational complexities of building an early-stage capital market.

Approximately **1,646** shareholders remain unverified due to incomplete National ID information. Ethio telecom has issued a call for these individuals to complete their **KYC** requirements, highlighting the ongoing challenge of standardized identification in developing economies. Furthermore, **248** foreign nationals who purchased shares were found to be ineligible under current regulatory frameworks, representing **105,000** shares. The company announced that it will audit and refund these transactions to maintain strict compliance with current laws.

These adjustments, while minor in comparison to the total volume of verified shares, emphasize the precise boundary lines regulators must maintain to protect retail investors and ensure market integrity. According to researchers at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), rigorous adherence to regulatory compliance in the early phases of stock exchange development is vital for mitigating systemic market volatility and protecting citizen-investors from market manipulation.

### A Balanced Path Forward for Regional Financial Integration

The listing of Ethio telecom shares on the ESX is a significant step toward financial modernization. It provides a practical reference point for how other state-owned enterprises in Ethiopia might eventually transition to public ownership and trading.

For the regional business community, the progress of this initiative will be watched closely as an indicator of Ethiopia's capacity to manage liquid capital markets. If managed with regulatory transparency and consistent public engagement, this transition could successfully establish a sustainable model for citizen-led investment and collective wealth growth in the region.

### Managing Market Volatility and Fostering Long-Term Investor Trust

While the landmark listing is a major milestone, the transition may also introduce operational challenges. These include low trading activity from long-term holders and panic selling caused by limited experience with market volatility. To address these challenges, global precedents suggest that the Ethiopian financial ecosystem must proactively introduce institutional market-makers to sustain liquidity, establish robust investor protection frameworks, and simplify corporate financial disclosures. If supported by strong regulation, investor education, and transparent market practices, Ethiopia's emerging capital market could become a model for inclusive economic participation and sustainable national wealth creation.

# 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](mailto:spotlight@capitalethiopia.com) and we will publish it.

PHOTO: Anteneh Aklilu

## ITC, Equity group partner to unlock trade finance for coffee, leather and creative industries in East Africa

(Nairobi/Geneva) – The International Trade Centre (ITC) and Equity Group Holdings PLC signed a memorandum of understanding to drive inclusive, commercially viable economic development across East Africa, starting with Kenya. The agreement targets three high-potential sectors: coffee, leather and creative industries, with an explicit mandate to scale.

The deal pairs ITC's global trade development expertise with Equity Group's pan-African financial infrastructure and its Africa Recovery and Resilience Plan (ARRP), a six-pillar regional growth strategy spanning food and agriculture, manufacturing, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), technology and social impact investments.

Equity Group operates banking subsidiaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton said: "We know that access to finance is critical for small businesses – but it has to be matched with the right skills to use it effectively. That's why we're partnering with Equity Bank – to ensure small businesses across East Africa can tap both financing and trade expertise to move up the value chain and compete in global markets, from leather to the creative industries."

## IATA-ICAO deepen cooperation on boosting sustainable aviation fuels

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) announced enhanced cooperation at ICAO Aviation Climate Week today to advance transparency and integrity in tracking progress and accelerating the development and deployment of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF).

Close collaboration between industry and states, underpinned by robust systems and high-quality data, will aim to enable transparent and credible tracking of aviation cleaner energies and their contribution towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050, in alignment with the respective IATA and ICAO ambitions and commitments.

Both organizations agreed to explore how SAF registries and the data they collect can support the implementation of the ICAO Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) Monitoring and Reporting (LMR) methodology, as well as the consideration of fuel accounting systems for international aviation.

"Credible tracking is necessary to know the emissions reductions delivered by SAF. The data collected by the CADO SAF Registry, among others, has the potential to meet this need. By working with ICAO to strengthen how progress on SAF use is measured and reported, we can accelerate deployment, build trust across stakeholders, and put aviation on track for net zero by 2050. This will set a great example for individual states to work with industry to make the most of the SAF data that is being accumulated," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

## African island states seek stronger credit ratings for climate and blue economy finance

Experts, policymakers, and financial practitioners from across African Island States will gather in Mombasa on 12–13 June 2026 for a high-level workshop to enhance sovereign credit ratings and unlock access to sustainable climate and blue economy financing.

Jointly organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Island States Coordination Committee (AISCC) under the theme "Unlocking pathways to resilience: reframing risk and enhancing credit ratings for sustainable financing in African Island States", the workshop will provide a platform to strengthen capacities in credit rating analysis, resource mobilization, and climate finance integration. It will be organized as a side event to Our Ocean Conference, scheduled for 16–18 June.

African Island States face a unique combination of structural constraints, including small domestic markets, geographic isolation, and heightened exposure to external shocks and climate risks. These factors significantly influence sovereign credit ratings. These, in turn, determine the cost of borrowing and access to global capital markets and innovative financing instruments such as climate and blue bonds.

## FOOTBALL FANS



## LOCAL HAIRSTYLIST



## FLOODING THE STREETS



## Kenya loses \$92 million in AfDB shares after missing critical payment

Kenya has forfeited African Development Bank (AfDB) shares worth approximately \$92 million after failing to make its annual subscription payment. This development comes at a time when Kenya's borrowing from the bank has risen significantly, raising concerns that the loss will severely weaken its clout and influence in the bank's governance and decision-making processes.

According to the bank's official disclosures, the Kenyan National Treasury failed to complete an annual subscription of roughly \$10 million. As a result, the country's ownership stake fell to 1.034% at the end of 2025, down from 1.16% a year earlier. Consequently, Kenya lost 6,715 shares, which other member states can now absorb.

Because member states are only required to pay a small fraction of a holding's value upfront—with the remainder held as a callable commitment—missing this relatively small payment cost Kenya a disproportionately large block of shares.

## Africa Financial Summit 2026 chooses Luanda to continue its mission of integrating African finance

The Africa Financial Summit – AFIS, the leading platform for African finance, announces that its annual summit will be held on November 3 and 4, 2026, in Luanda, Angola. For the first time, the summit will take place in Southern Africa, confirming its pan-African reach and its ambition to connect all of the continent's financial ecosystems.

Created in 2021 by Jeune Afrique Media Group and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), AFIS has quickly established itself as one of the main platforms for dialogue between leaders of Africa's financial industry, regulators, and public decision-makers.

The summit brings together more than 1,250 participants each year and combines high-level strategic sessions, technical workshops, bilateral meetings, and networking spaces designed to foster the conclusion of partnerships and transactions.

## SADC launches landmark initiative to build sustainable energy transition mineral value chains

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has many of the sought after critical energy transition minerals. Now a five-year regional project is working to retain the mineral wealth locally while promoting livelihoods and driving industrialization.

The SADC region holds vast reserves of cobalt, lithium, manganese, nickel, and platinum group metals which have for many years been exported raw or semi processed, denying full developmental benefits to countries. A landmark initiative, the project, Fostering Environmentally and Socially Responsible, Decarbonized, Inclusive and Transformative Value Chains for Energy Transition Minerals in the SADC Region launched today in Lusaka is aimed at changing that.

The project, supported financially by Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI) and led by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with regional stakeholders, will be implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It will support the building of value chains that are environmentally responsible, inclusive and transformative. The project runs from March 2026 to February 2031.

# Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

## Heavy Gunfire in Somali Capital as Row over Election Delay Escalates

Government forces and opposition fighters have exchanged heavy gunfire in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, as a row over delays to elections has escalated. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's term in office ended on 15 May but was extended by a year. The opposition said this was unconstitutional and called for protests on Thursday. Gunfire was reported in several neighbourhoods of the capital and persisted throughout the night, according to accounts by residents. Police said they were conducting a "large-scale security operation" against "heavily armed militias who launched mortar attacks" in some areas. Following the expiry of the president's term, the federal government and the opposition started talks but did not reach an agreement. ... Somalia last held a one-person, one-vote election in 1969 and has been ravaged by civil war for more than 30 years. Former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire said he had been attacked by government forces while he and other leaders were preparing for Thursday's "peaceful" demonstrations. ... "This attack is a grave assault on the constitutional rights of Somali citizens and a deliberate attempt to suppress peaceful assembly," he added. The number of casualties is not yet known and the president has not commented. In a statement on X, former President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed said the violence would not halt the planned demonstrations. "If the President and his soldiers think that we are afraid or that we will flee, we are not going to run away," he said.

(BBC)

## Democratic Bloc Rejects Dialogue with Tasis Alliance as Addis Talks Open

Leaders of Sudan's Democratic Bloc reaffirmed on Wednesday their organisation's refusal to engage in any political dialogue with the RSF-led "Tasis" alliance, as exploratory talks between Sudanese civilian and political forces opened in the Ethiopian capital under the auspices of the Quintet mechanism. Mubarak Ardol, assistant to the Democratic Bloc's chairman, told a press conference held just before the meeting convened that the delegation attending represents the Bloc officially and received formal notification from the organisation's leadership. He said the Bloc remains committed to dialogue as the only way out of the crisis, describing the current moment as an appropriate opportunity despite differences in positions. "The Bloc's position on the Tasis alliance is well known, particularly given the violations committed in Sudan because of it," Ardol said, closing the door on any engagement with the RSF-affiliated political body. ... [Sally Zaki, another assistant to the Bloc's chairman] reaffirmed the Bloc's categorical rejection of sitting with any "parallel government" working to divide Sudan. She said 11 organisations within the Bloc are represented at the meeting.

(Sudan Tribune)

## Moderna Partners with Global Health Coalition to Develop Bundibugyo Ebola Vaccine

Moderna said on Monday it has partnered with a global health coalition to develop a potential vaccine against Bundibugyo ebolavirus, the strain linked to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The deal comes as health authorities worldwide race to identify medical options to help contain the outbreak, which has recorded more than 900 suspected cases and over 220 suspected deaths. Under the agreement, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations has committed up to \$50 million to support preclinical development and early clinical testing of Moderna's investigational BDBV vaccine candidate. CEPI said it would also initially invest up to \$8.6 million for a shot developed by the University of Oxford and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, and an initial \$3.2 million for a vaccine developed by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. ... Separately, global vaccine alliance Gavi on Monday committed up to \$50 million, including up to \$40 million to accelerate vaccine access and \$10 million to support outbreak response. The Pandemic Fund last week announced up to \$220.6 million in grants to address critical response gaps in the Ebola outbreak.

(Reuters)

## Over 2,400 Displaced from Kordofan Conflict Zones in Days, IOM Reports

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported on Sunday that more than 2,400 people have been displaced from conflict-affected areas in North and South

Kordofan states over the past several days, as violence escalates across the region. The UN agency said 160 people fled the village of Al-Murra in West Bara locality of North Kordofan following a deterioration in security conditions, with displaced persons seeking refuge in other areas within the state. The situation remains tense and highly volatile, IOM said. A further 2,245 people were displaced from the cities of Kadugli and Dilling and villages around Habila in South Kordofan between 28 and 30 May due to insecurity, with those affected fleeing to North Kordofan, White Nile, and Khartoum states. RSF elements have been carrying out attacks on villages in West Bara since Thursday using heavy weapons, and have been implicated in serious violations against civilians.

(Sudan Tribune)

## Term of the Day INSIDER TRADING

### Definition

Insider trading is the practice of buying or selling a company's securities based on material, nonpublic information—has long been a contentious issue in financial markets. While the term often evokes images of corporate executives secretly profiting from inside knowledge, the reality is more complex. Some forms of insider transactions are perfectly legal, while others can result in severe criminal penalties.

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## Request for Quotation

For

### Establishment of LTA (Long Term Agreement) for the Provision of Annual Maintenance for Fire Extinguisher – Procurement Reference No. UNDP-ETH-00732

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) kindly request you to submit your bid for the provision of the below services:

#### Establishment of LTA (Long Term Agreement) for Provision of Annual Maintenance for Fire Extinguisher – Procurement Reference No. UNDP-ETH-00732

<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/302528>

or

[https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=45995](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=45995)

in line with the TOR and RFQ enclosed hereafter.

When preparing your quotation, please be guided by the RFQ Instructions and Data. Please note that quotations must be submitted directly in the system responding to the questions and uploading required documents, by the date and time indicated in the online portal. It is your responsibility to ensure that your quotation is submitted before the deadline. Quotations received after the submission deadline outside the online portal, for whatever reason, will not be considered for evaluation.

Quotations must be submitted directly in NextGenERP supplier portal following this link:

<http://supplier.quantum.partneragencies.org> using the profile you may have in the portal.

Follow the instructions in the user guide to search for the tender using Negotiation ID in this document.

In case you have never registered before, you can register a profile using the registration link shared via the procurement notice and following the instructions in guides available in UNDP website:

<https://www.undp.org/procurement/business/resources-for-bidders>.

Do not create a new profile if you already have one. Use the forgotten password feature in case you do not remember the password or the username from previous registration.

Thank you and we look forward to receiving your quotations.

UNDP looks forward to receiving your Proposal and thanks you in advance for your interest in UNDP procurement opportunities.



## DIPLOMATIC CAR FOR SALE

### Toyota Landcruiser J9 (2001)

The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany is selling a used car to the highest bidder.

Year of Manufacture: 2001

Mileage: 238.000 km

Diesel 3000 cc, Manual Transmission, Leather seats, Sunroof, Four additional new tires (Wrangler), Five seats, back bench foldable and splitable.

### Imported to Ethiopia in 2015

This beautiful car is technically in an excellent condition and has been regularly serviced.

The car can be inspected on **12<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 9.00 am to 10.30 am** at the German Embassy, Yeka Kifle Ketema (Khebena), Woreda 03, Addis Ababa.

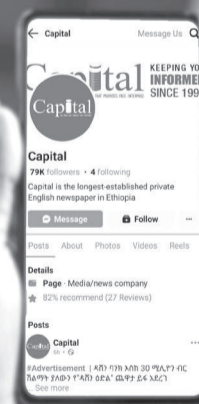
The car will be sold to the highest bidder.

Minimum bid: 2,800,000 ETB

Only written offers will be accepted, indicating your name, contact details and subject "Bid for Toyota Landcruiser J9"

Deadline for bidding is **17<sup>th</sup> June 2026**.

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## Expression of Interest (EOI)

### Construction of Office Premise in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

#### EOI-001/2026

#### BACKGROUND

This Expressions of interests (EOI) seeks to invite registered competent Grade-1 construction companies based in Ethiopia with proven capacity to undertake the construction of high value office facility with diverse components over a plot area of 10,000 square meter with a gross lettable area of 7,000 square meters. The facilities include main office building, external build-up facilities, concrete fenced boundary wall, under & overground parking lots, security reception, guard posts, warehouse and other functional facilities.

The contractor must have a track record of construction of modern office building, should have both financial and technical capacity for undertaking projects of such magnitude.

The estimated duration of the construction will be 22-24 months.

#### MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PRE QUALIFICATION

1. Evidence of valid GC1/BC1 Business registration and license to operate in Ethiopia
2. Demonstrate financial stability and available credit line of up to 6.5 million USD or ETB Equivalent

#### SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

To be considered as a potential bidder, interested contractors should submit their Expression of Interest including the following information. Additional verification of any information submitted may be requested. Physical due diligence will be conducted as a part of the EOI evaluation

No	Items to be submitted
1	Company registration: Copy of company's registration required by law and issued by authorized agency: This document is mandatory for administrative compliance and starting with technical
2	Litigation: Information regarding any litigation, current or during the last five years, in which the Bidder was/is involved, the parties concerned, and the disputed amounts and awards
3	Financial Capacity and Bank reference: 15 pts 3.1 Demonstrate financial stability and available credit line of up to 6.5 million USD or ETB Equivalent. Provide a letter of authorization for UNICEF to request financial confirmation from bidder's bank. 3.2 The bidder should have a minimum annual turnover of \$6.5 Million or ETB 1 billion in any of the last five years for One (1) Lot. For Bidders who are interested in up to two lot, their minimum annual turnover will be prorated over the last Five (5) years accordingly. The bidders should provide financial standing of the Potential
4	Company Profile: 10 pts Submit company profile, showing company owned assets, equipment and other resources. Include any customer service benchmarks, indicators and workflows adopted by the organization. Demonstrated evidence of 15 years' experience in large scale construction in Ethiopia. Construction and completion of a facility in Addis Ababa that have received Leed or Edge Certificate will be an asset.
5	Key personnel: 20pts Submit CVs of company employed Key Personnel and short-term specialized key personnel. CVs should show the qualification, competence and experience of the key personnel who will possibly be assigned to the project. Company employed key personnel must have had a minimum of 2 years' employment with the company, and short-term specialized key personnel must be specified. Bidders can submit as many relevant key personnel as possible, however the below list of key personnel are required, and must possess relevant experiences for the stipulated number of years: 1. Team Lead (Project Manager) No-1, 4pts- 15 years with MSc in Civil engineering/construction management/project management or other relevant fields in the construction sector 2. Structural Engineer No -1, 2pts- 10 years with MSC in Civil/Structural Engineering/ and has robust experience in structural designs and review. 3. Resident Engineer No 1, 2.5pts- 15 years with MSc in Civil engineering/construction management or other relevant fields in the construction sector 4. General Forman No-2, 2pts- 15 years with Bsc in Civil Engineering or 17yrs with diploma in construction 5. Mechanical Engineer, No-1, 1.5pts- 10 years of electromechanical work and with Bsc in Mechical engineering 6. Sanitary Engineer with fire water safety experience, No-1, 1.5pts - 10 years with Bsc in Sanitary/water/engineering 7. Electrical Engineer with fire alarm safety experience No-1, 1.5pts- 15 Years with electrical engineering 8. HVAC Technician No-1, 1pt- 15 years 9. ICT Technician No-1, 1pt- 10 years 10. Solar PV Technician No-1, 1pt- 10 years 11. Land Surveyor No-1, 1pt- 10 years and advanced diploma in topographical surveying 12. Health and Safety Engineer No-1, 1pt - 8 years with BSc Degree in Civil Engineering/Construction Management with demonstrated evidence of training and experience in safety and health related matter in construction works Note: Please specify key personnels that are full-time employees of the company and personnels that will be hired on short-term just for the project
6	Reference list and value of project implemented in last five years: 15 pts Include list of five (5) relevant projects of similar scope, Nature, complexity and completion period with values ranging between 15 to 25 million USD, that you have initiated and completed within the last five years. Specific considerations will be given to high-rise luxury commercial or office buildings initiated and completed by or before January 2026. Projects that have achieved LEED or Edge certifications will be an asset. Include names of project, kind of executed works, location of works, name, telephone number and email of client, value of executed work (use USD or local currency) and duration of executing work (from, month/year - to, month/year), indicated the project status (Completed/ongoing), role of the (Prime/ sub-contractor)
7	Reference list and value of ongoing projects contracted by bidder: 15pts Include list of five (5) relevant ongoing projects, including locations of projects, name of clients, value of contracted works (use USD or local currency) and deadline for construction works. (from, month/year-to month/year), and current progress status, role of the (Prime/ sub-contractor)
8	A detailed list of equipment. The Bidder should provide proper, legible, and acceptable evidence for ownership of equipment. Ownership certificates/ receipts/etc. should be attached. In case the contractor is leasing any equipment, the lease agreement must be submitted as well. 15pts
9	Physical Due Diligence:10pts UNICEF will physically visit bidders' offices and/or equipment yard to ascertain establishment and resources capacities.

#### SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Interested companies are encouraged to visit our website link <https://web.inform.unicef.org/x/MMAasncq> to view this advert and download/print the Supplier Profile Form.

The Expression of Interest and accompanying documents must be received by UNICEF not later than 0800hrs on 22 June 2026. Suppliers are required to submit the EOI by email to

**ETH-Tenderconstruction@unicef.org.**

Large email files should be split into multiple emails, with each attachment not exceeding 5 MB When submitting the EOI, please quote the EOI reference number EOI- 001/2026

Any queries about this EOI should be submitted to e-mail: **eth-supplyQAconstruction@unicef.org**

#### SPECIAL NOTES

1. The EOI does not constitute a solicitation. A bid or proposal is not required at this stage; we only seek your expression of interest to participate in a potential future tender.
2. A response to this request for Expression of Interest does not automatically ensure that you will be selected to participate in the tender.
3. UNICEF reserves the rights to change or cancel the requirement at any time during the EOI or tender process. UNICEF also reserves the rights to require compliance with additional conditions as and when issuing the final tender document.
4. UNICEF reserves the rights to reject any/all EOI's without assigning any reasons whatsoever.



Embassy  
of the Republic of Poland  
in Addis Ababa

## TOYOTA LAND CRUISER V8 – DUTY FREE CAR FOR SALE



### Toyota Landcruiser V8 GX

Fuel used	Diesel
Engine capacity in cm3	4461 cm <sup>3</sup>
Year of manufacture	2008
Gearbox	Manual
Number of gears	5
Color	Silver
Millage	172 496 km
Starting price	40 000,00 USD
Possible payment methods	Bank transfer

- The tender, together with the required documents, must be submitted in a sealed envelope.
- The envelope must be addressed:  
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Addis Ababa  
Dej. Belay Zeleke Road, Gulele sub-City, Kebele 08, House No 583, P.O. Box 27207/1000 Addis Ababa
- The envelope should bear the inscription: "Bid in the tender for the sale of a vehicle"
- Offers should be submitted on Monday - Friday between 9:00 to 14:30, no later than 12th June 2026.
- The condition of participation in the tender is a deposit of 10% of the starting price of the sold vehicle to the Embassy bank account only (details of the account can be found at <https://www.gov.pl/web/ethiopia/news>)
- The submitted offer is confirmed by immediate payment of a deposit paid to USD account of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Addis Ababa in the amount of 10% of the starting price, i.e 4 000, 00 USD (four thousand USD).
- Failure to put the deposit is a reason for automatic disqualification of the bid.
- The deposit must be paid before the deadline for submission of offers, bank transfer is the only acceptable payment method.
- The deposit submitted by the bidders whose offers were not selected or were rejected, will be returned by the seller within 14 days from the date of selection or rejection of the offer, respectively.
- The viewing of the tender car in Embassy of Poland from 5-12 June 2026 (9:00 – 14:30). Please contact +251 11 157 41 89 or +251 11 157 41 90 or write to Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Addis Ababa [secretariat.addisababa@msz.gov.pl](mailto:secretariat.addisababa@msz.gov.pl) to make an appointment.
- More information available at <https://www.gov.pl/web/ethiopia/news>.



## United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

### REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

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

**Title of the EOI:**

PROVISION OF NIGER LEVEL 2 FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE FIT OUT PILOT PROJECT at UNECA, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**Date of this EOI:** 03 June 2026

**Closing Date for Receipt of EOI:** 18 June 2026

**EOI Number:** EOIUNECA24457

**E-mail address:** [mamod@un.org](mailto:mamod@un.org)

**Address EOI response by fax for the Attention of:** Daniel Mamo

**Fax Number:**

**UNSPSC Code:** 72000000,72101500,72121103

#### DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has a requirement for qualified Contractors to provide construction services at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The works include the upgrade of an existing floor at Niger Building (part of the UNECA Headquarters' Buildings), the targeted floor is at level 2, which approximately spreads over an area of 1470 square meters.

This requirement is to complete remaining works that stand at approx. 35% of the total requirement which had been carried out by a previous Contractor including materials onsite. The completed works along with available materials on site will only be provided at the time of award to the successful bidder

#### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS / INFORMATION (IF ANY)

Companies expressing interest should note that this Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) serves as pre-qualification of the companies that will be invited to participate in the tender process. Interested firms will be invited to the tender by "Request for Proposal -RFP" at later stage and the detail requirement will be further specified in the RFP document.

UNECA reserves the right to change or cancel the requirements at any time during the EOI/ or solicitation process. Thus, submitting a reply to this EOI does not automatically guarantee that your company will be considered for receipt of the solicitation when issued. The RFP and any subsequent commitment to contract will be issued in accordance with UN rules and regulations.

UNECA is precluded from entering into contract with a vendor that is not registered with United Nations Global Market Place(UNGM). Thus, only those vendors who are registered or provisionally registered or have started their registration process in UNGM will be eligible to receive the solicitation document RFP.

Those interested in responding to this EOI but not currently registered as vendors with UNGM, are encouraged to register before submission date for closing of the EOI in the United Nations Global Market Place (UNGM). 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.

The successful bidder will be required to register in UNGM at Level 2 before the Contract award.

Women-owned businesses and businesses owned by persons with disabilities are encouraged to participate.

Those interested vendors who fulfill the above requirements are required to express their interest in this EOI electronically. In case you have difficulties submitting your interest electronically, please contact: [mamod@un.org](mailto:mamod@un.org)/ (copy to Rachael Chironga <[rachael.chironga@un.org](mailto:rachael.chironga@un.org)>) on or before the closing date of 18 June 2026.

- **Vendors interested in participating in the planned solicitation process should submit the vendor Response Form of this EOI electronically through the link (at <https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org/Depts.ptd/files/pdf/eoi24457.pdf> the closing date set for the above.**

# Prosperity gospel, false prophets and the money scam

■ Alazar Kebede

Religion has historically functioned as a source of moral guidance, spiritual meaning, and social cohesion. Across centuries, faith institutions have offered comfort to the poor, challenged injustice, and shaped ethical values within society. Yet religion has also repeatedly been exploited by individuals who weaponise belief for personal gain. In contemporary Christianity, the rise of the Prosperity Gospel and the emergence of self-styled “Prophets” have transformed sections of the Church into highly profitable enterprises where faith is increasingly commercialised. Behind promises of miracles, healing, and financial breakthrough lies an uncomfortable reality. For many false prophets, religion has become one of the most successful money-making scams of the modern era.

The Prosperity Gospel is built upon a simple but powerful theological claim in which God rewards faithful believers with material wealth, good health, and personal success. Poverty and suffering, by contrast, are often portrayed as signs of weak faith, spiritual failure, or demonic attack. Popularised through Pentecostal and charismatic movements, this doctrine has gained enormous influence in the United States, Africa, Latin America, and beyond. The current trend in Ethiopia is indeed alarming. Its appeal is particularly strong in economically fragile societies where unemployment, inequality, corruption, and social insecurity leave millions desperate for hope.

At first glance, the prosperity message appears empowering. It encourages optimism, discipline, ambition, and belief in the possibility of transformation. For many struggling individuals, hearing that their circumstances can change through faith provides psychological relief and emotional motivation. However, beneath the rhetoric of empowerment lies a deeply problematic theology that often turns religion into a transactional marketplace.

In many prosperity churches, faith operates according to economic logic. Congregants are instructed to “sow seeds” by giving money to the church or prophet with the expectation that God will multiply their offering in return. Donations are framed not merely as acts of generosity but as spiritual investments guaranteed to produce divine profit. The more one gives, believers are told, the greater the blessing. In this system, God becomes less a moral or spiritual figure and more a supernatural financier dispensing rewards to paying customers.

The consequences are alarming. Vulnerable individuals often donate beyond their financial capacity because they fear missing divine favour or delaying their miracle. Some believers surrender savings, salaries, pensions, or property in pursuit of promised breakthroughs that never materialise. Meanwhile, many prosperity preachers accumulate extraordinary wealth through tithes, offerings, television ministries, books, conferences, and branded religious merchandise. Luxury cars, private jets, designer clothing, and multimillion-dollar mansions are frequently displayed as visible proof of God’s blessing.

The contradiction is striking. Religious leaders who preach sacrifice, humility, and devotion often live lifestyles indistinguishable from corporate elites or entertainment celebrities. Yet followers are encouraged to interpret this wealth not as exploitation but as evidence of spiritual authority. The prophet’s success becomes the product being sold. “If you follow me,” the message implies, “you too can access divine prosperity.”

This is where the issue of “False Prophecy” becomes central. Historically, False Prophets have been defined not merely by inaccurate predictions but by their manipulation of people for power, influence, or wealth. In many contemporary prosperity

movements, charismatic leaders cultivate unquestionable authority by presenting themselves as uniquely chosen by God. Through dramatic miracles, emotional performances, prophetic declarations, and carefully managed media personas, they create environments where scepticism is discouraged and obedience is rewarded.

Critically, many so-called miracles are difficult to verify. Reports of staged healings, fake testimonies, paid actors, and manufactured prophecies have emerged across different countries and ministries. Someone with ample time and patience, can easily witness such practice in one of the very many so-called Prosperity Protestant Churches here in Addis Ababa. Some prophets sell “anointed” products such as miracle water, holy oil, stickers, wristbands, or private consultations (Gust House Prayer time in hotel rooms) for substantial fees. Others promise supernatural cures for illness, infertility, unemployment, overseas visas, or financial hardship. Such practices exploit desperation while masking commercial transactions in spiritual language.

The rise of Celebrity Prophets cannot be separated from broader economic and cultural conditions. Contemporary society increasingly celebrates wealth, visibility, and entrepreneurial success. Social media platforms reward spectacle and emotional engagement, while neoliberal economic systems encourage individuals to treat

themselves as personal brands. Prosperity Prophets operate effectively within this environment because they merge religion with entertainment, marketing, and aspirational consumer culture.

In many ways, the Prosperity Gospel mirrors capitalism itself. Success is individualised, failure is personalised, and systemic inequality is ignored. Rather than challenging poverty as a structural issue linked to corruption, exploitation, or unequal economic systems, prosperity theology often places responsibility entirely on the individual believer’s faith. If blessings do not arrive, the problem is rarely the prophet or the system; it is supposedly the believer’s lack of faith.

This narrative is particularly dangerous because it shifts attention away from social justice. Instead of confronting political corruption, unemployment, or inequality, prosperity preaching frequently encourages passive spiritual dependence. Congregants are taught to wait for miracles rather than demand institutional accountability or economic reform. Religion becomes an escape from material hardship rather than a force for social transformation.

The irony is that many core Christian teachings directly challenge this obsession with wealth. The biblical tradition repeatedly warns against greed, exploitation, and the worship of money. Jesus Christ criticised religious hypocrisy and condemned those who turned sacred spaces into centres of commerce. His teachings

consistently prioritised compassion, humility, and care for the poor over material accumulation. Early Christian communities emphasised communal sharing and solidarity, not conspicuous consumption.

This does not mean religious institutions should reject money altogether. Churches require financial resources to operate, support communities, and sustain charitable work. The ethical issue emerges when spiritual authority becomes a mechanism for financial manipulation or personal enrichment. Accountability, transparency, and ethical leadership are therefore essential within religious institutions. Without them, faith communities become vulnerable to exploitation disguised as divine revelation.

Supporters of prosperity theology often argue that critics focus excessively on abuses while ignoring positive outcomes. Many prosperity churches provide emotional support, social belonging, and practical assistance to members. Some genuinely encourage entrepreneurship, education, and personal discipline. For individuals living in contexts of hopelessness, the language of possibility can be transformative.

Yet positive intentions cannot excuse systemic exploitation. When religion promises guaranteed wealth in exchange for money, it risks becoming indistinguishable from a commercial scam. The danger lies not only in financial loss but in spiritual disillusionment. Many believers who

invest emotionally and financially in false promises are left devastated when miracles fail to occur. Some lose faith entirely, while others remain trapped in cycles of guilt, shame, and dependency.

Ultimately, the prosperity gospel reveals a profound crisis within modern religious culture. It reflects societies where success is measured primarily by wealth and visibility, and where spirituality itself can be commodified for profit. False prophets thrive because they offer certainty in uncertain times, hope in desperate circumstances, and emotional spectacle in an increasingly anxious world.

However, religion loses moral credibility when it becomes a business model built upon the exploitation of vulnerable people. Faith should challenge greed, not sanctify it. It should comfort the oppressed, not enrich the powerful at their expense. The true danger of false prophets is not merely that they deceive individuals, but that they distort the ethical foundations of religion itself.

In an era where prophets increasingly resemble corporate executives and churches operate like commercial brands, believers must ask difficult questions about accountability, truth, and power. The challenge facing modern Christianity is not whether wealth and faith can coexist, but whether religion can resist becoming another marketplace where salvation is bought, miracles are sold, and desperation is transformed into profit.

## Why Ethiopia should stop calling road crashes “Accidents”

■ By Mesay Shemsu Nasir

The night of May 30, 2026 was an important night for football fans across the globe. English Premiership champions Arsenal battled French League One Champions Paris Saint Germain for the UEFA Champions League final. This match had a particularly high anticipation in Addis Ababa where there is a large Arsenal fan base.

The week of May 24 was filled with promotions by bars offering different types of amenities and comfort from which people can watch the game. Around late afternoon on Saturday the 30th, the town’s bars were filled with spectators – devoted fans praying for an Arsenal victory, and rivals eagerly wishing for their downfall. Some Arsenal fans would have you believe the latter account for every football fan outside Arsenal fans – a sentiment that, while statistically unverified, certainly felt true in the electric atmosphere of the city.

I had elected to watch the game at home with family. The game was fantastic, food for the eyes really. When the game ended, I had to take some relatives who were watching the game with me to their home. It was inevitable that the roads would be chaotic after such a football night. I expected jams and intoxicated pedestrians.

The trip from my home to my relatives’ and back took around thirty minutes. In those thirty minutes, however, I witnessed three traffic “accidents”. The first one was on my way forth, when I noticed, two cars had collided front-to-rear; the front of the rear vehicle had been damaged extensively. The two drivers bickered near a traffic police officer who was studying the different sides of the cars and their vicinities, while another policeman sporting a rifle watched with slight amusement in his face.

I stumbled upon the second “accident” on my way back; this one featured a

car that had slammed head-on into a bridge barrier. The damage to the front of this car was much bigger; the windshield and window mirrors showed breakage and cracks, while the airbags had popped out. I lamented that a night of an exciting football game had ended this way for someone.

By this time, I had thought I’d seen the end of it. Alas! A third one; and quite the shock it was! A man laid flat on his belly in the middle of one lane; he had no visible wounds at first glance, but I could see he was unable to move from the waist down. He waved his hands and spoke with what I could detect from a distance was a very angry tone to police officers and a number of passersby surrounding him. Sitting in the ensuing jam, I heard more people joining the crowd speak of a hit-and-run.

These tragic scenes are playing out daily across Ethiopia, framed by the public and media alike as unavoidable “accidents.” But modern traffic science tells a completely different story—one of predictable chains of events that we have the power to break.

Luckily, I got home safe. However, I couldn’t stop thinking about what I saw. At least three families will now be affected; their lives altered in proportion to the injuries inflicted upon their loved ones. What troubled me most was not only the crashes themselves, but how predictably they would be discussed the next morning. I thought – Tomorrow there would be news on how many traffic “accidents” occurred the night before; the audience would be told how big a hazard traffic “accidents” have become and then it will be another ordinary day. No details on the victims, no in-depth look at the commonalities and differences between the events that led to a serious injury and significant property damage.

The narrative and the level of seriousness with which “traffic accidents” are treated in the media

space had long remained unchanged. True – there are a number of road and traffic related programs, particularly on the radio; true – print media dedicate articles to road traffic safety whenever there is a story every now and then. But the contents of media work covering road safety need to change fundamentally to reflect the gold standard in the science of road traffic safety today which is underpinned the pioneering works of public health experts like William Haddon and embedded in successful road safety strategies such as Sweden’s Vision Zero.

The term “accident” can unintentionally reinforce the idea that crashes are unavoidable acts of chance rather than preventable events shaped by human and systemic factors. However, this is very much removed from what the study of “accidents” in general and road traffic safety in particular tell us.

Indeed, science does not deny there could be random, or probabilistic components to crashes. However, science tells us that “accidents” are caused by a number of systemic faults, which come together like a chain of events to lead to a crash. Take any one of the three tragic events that I described earlier and think about how speeding, driving distracted by the use of mobile phones, alcohol consumption, the rainy evening that impeded quick braking, and poorly lit street sections could have contributed to the crashes. Thus, one may conclude that the combination of any of these factors may have formed the chain of events that led from safety to tragedy.

Hence, reducing the prevalence of these systemic risk factors can significantly reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes. This is indeed the beautiful part of this “chain-of-events model” to conceptualize crashes; because the chain can be broken by addressing individual risk factors in it. Globally, road traffic crashes claim

around 1.2 million lives in a year per WHO’s global road safety status report of 2023. Ethiopia’s share of fatalities is well above twenty thousand in the same report, though official government statistics lower this number to around four thousand.

A big part of mitigating this national tragedy is changing the narrative on road traffic safety. It is imperative that the media space embraces the terminology of crashes instead of accidents. In this regard, I am not giving a dogmatic prescription for the local media – I’m not a linguist. What I argue for, rather, is the use of proper wording that indicates the intentionality embedded in traffic safety problems – the intentional speeding, the intentional delay or dodging of annual vehicle inspections, the intentional corruption in driver-licensing procedures, the intentional alcohol consumption, the underinvestment in capacitating the traffic police force, and so forth.

All of the above systemic ills make us party to the daily tragedy on Ethiopia’s roads. The media can play a pivotal role in changing societal understanding of crashes, thereby instilling in society a much-needed attitude of agency over matters of traffic safety.

Small shifts in vocabulary can serve as seeds of change towards a wider media strategy to communicate road traffic safety issues in a scientifically honest and societally helpful manner.

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# Society

## Invest in Ethiopian cities startup ecosystems for a transformational and sustainable private sector led economy

### Government versus Private Sector Led Economies

By Migwi Nduku

State led command and mixed economies are characterized by government owning major means of production. The state allocates resources via direct investments. The government directly controls prices be it for inputs, goods, services, Foreign Exchange (FX) or interest rates. They feature dominance of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and substantial corporate shareholding ownership in strategic markets. Government has direct management of macroeconomic outputs. They have highly centralized long run national plans, active strategic industrial policies and state interventions through subsidies.

The World Bank's 2023 Business of the State (BOS) report showed Ethiopia had at least one traditional SOE in slightly over 40% of all economic sectors and at least one BOS firm in 50% of all sectors. The World Bank contends that traditional State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) firms focus on central government and majority ownership while Business of State (BOS) BOS is any firm with at least a 10% public sector ownership stake. The World Bank highlights that that complex, indirect, subnational, and minority state ownerships are very prevalent globally more so after Covid19 pandemic with these types of enterprises generating half of all BOS related revenues.

Private sector led market economies on the other hand has the market forces of demand and supply allocating resources, managing production, and determining prices. Individual households and businesses own the means of production, make investment decisions, and operate based on profit maximization motives. Government roles in these economies is limited to providing public goods and services (for instance national defense, protecting lives and property, maintaining law and order, infrastructure (roads, railways, bridges, airports, seaports, energy, ICT, water, sanitation), regulating markets, market infrastructures and institutions, preventing monopolies and market dominance.

Ethiopia is widely acknowledged to be in the midst of transitioning from a government led economy hinged on mega state infrastructure into a private sector led economy anchored on the ingenuity and resilience of her entrepreneurs. The late Meles Zenawi Asres (9 May 1955 – 20 August 2012) who served as Ethiopia's President between 28 May 1991 and 22 August 1995 and Prime Minister between 23 August 1995 and 20 August 2012 architected the 1991 to 2018 Ethiopian government "developmental state" model. This was heavily influenced by the successes of China, East Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) and Tiger Cub (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) model. The results were outstanding from heavy direct investments to modernize the economy via railways, roads, dams, industrial parks, monopolies (telecommunications, banking, aviation, logistics, and power) and a double digit GDP growth of around 10% in the period 2005 - 2019.

Heavy public borrowing led to macroeconomic imbalances. Output gap between the economy's actual GDP and its long run potential full employment GDP. Divergence between national savings and national investments. Aggregate demand

outpaced aggregate supply causing high inflation which further created economic uncertainty, severely eroded purchasing power, disproportionately impacted lower-income households, and distorted interest rates. Labour market supply of workers outpaced demand by job creators (government enterprises and MSMEs) leading to high unemployment.

Fiscal deficits from government expenditure outpacing tax revenues (PAYE, corporate income tax, VAT, excise tax, customs and duties), SOEs dividends and appropriations in aid (A-in-A) fees led to public debt borrowings "crowding out" the private sector from credit markets. The external sector current account deficit imbalances emanated from goods and services imports exceeding exports. The current account deficits signified high dependency on foreign capital to finance domestic consumption and investments, heavy burden of repaying principal and interest on the foreign currency debt and made the local currency vulnerable to excessive depreciation.

Ethiopia from 2018 onwards started embarking on reforms which will culminate into a dynamic private sector led economy. The Home-Grown Economic Reform (HGER) agenda was launched in 2019 to address major economic and structural imbalances (GDP output gap, savings investment gap, inflation from aggregate supply versus aggregate demand imbalances, fiscal deficit from government revenues lagging expenditure and public debt "crowding out" the private sector from credit and current account deficit from imports exceeding exports occasioning foreign debt pressures and Ethiopian Birr depreciation. Phase II of the HGER is hinged on pillars across macroeconomic and financial sector stability, promoting private sector-led growth, expanding trade and investment, unlocking productive potential, and strengthening institutions.

#### Invest Heavily in Ethiopia's Startup Ecosystems in Ethiopian Cities for Rapid Private Sector Development (PSD).

The Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI) by StartupBlink has been updated annually since 2017 and currently ranks the startup ecosystems of 1,473 cities and 118 countries. It levers three sub-scores. The quantity sub score measures the activity level of the ecosystem. This includes the number of startups, the number of investors, the number of co-working spaces, the number of business incubators and accelerators, and the number of startup-related meetups.

The quality sub score assesses the impact and success of the activity in the startups ecosystem. These include private sector startup investment, the number of startup employees, and the number and size of Unicorns and exits above USD\$1Billion. It also covers the traction of startups (traffic, domain authority, and customer base), bigtech research & development (R&D) centers, branches of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and value of exits with a valuation below US\$1B. Other parameters includes the number and size of global startup events and conferences held in the country or city, the presence and impact of Pantheon members and global startup influencers, the number of startups accepted by top global accelerators per ecosystem, as well as the number and market capitalization

of listed companies in technology sectors.

The business environment sub score evaluates how supportive the overall conditions are for startup growth. This includes the diversity index, internet speed, cost of internet, internet freedom, R&D investment, and availability of various technological services (payment portals, ride-sharing apps, cryptocurrency). It further comprises of the level of English proficiency, the country's passport strength, availability of startup or Nomad Visas, corporate tax rate, startup-friendliness of labor laws, and Corruption Perception Index-CPI. The other indicators include the number of peer-reviewed scientific papers published, the sovereign debt credit score, top universities per location and corporate startup activity per location.

The StartupBlink local ecosystem partner is Entrepreneurship Development Institute [Ethiopia]. Ethiopia's startup ecosystem innovators business environment global ranking in 2026 stood at number 120 of 125 nations. The country posted an annual startup ecosystem growth rate of +4.4% as the ecosystem value grossed USD\$1.1 Billion which ranked 84/125. Ethiopia Software and Data industry ranked 99/125.

Addis Ababa startup ecosystem was ranked 422nd in the global top 1,000 cities with its 5.5% annual ecosystem growth rate proving to be inadequate to keep pace with faster growing global peers culminating in its 32 spots annual drop. The city total score stood at 1.044 which constituted a national share of 100%. The Minister for Labor and Skills, H.E Ms. Mufariat Kamil, noted that, "Ethiopia's reform-driven administration has created a supportive legal and policy environment that empowers private businesses to innovate and expand, thereby strengthening entrepreneurship nationwide and beyond. We are witnessing the emergence of a bold generation of innovative entrepreneurs willing to take risks and establish diverse businesses."

The most notable startups ecosystem builders includes the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MINT) which oversees national innovation policy, startup ecosystem strategy, and digital transformation programs including the Next Ethiopian Startup initiative and ICT Park development. The Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) Institute under the Ministry of Labor and Skills delivers entrepreneurship training, business development services (BDS) and access-to-finance programs and it's also the national host of the UNCTAD EMPRETEC program. International Finance Corporation (IFC) through private sector investment, telecom liberalization advisory, digital skills programming, and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) capacity building for the capital market. IceAddis is Ethiopia's first innovation hub and tech startup incubator, providing co-working space, incubation, acceleration programs, and ecosystem advocacy through continental networks such as AfriLabs.

The key startup ecosystem milestones in Ethiopia includes the 2011 launch of IceAddis as the first innovation hub and tech startup incubator. The government set up the Ministry of Innovation and Technology in 2018 to lead national digital transformation and ecosystem growth. Safaricom launched commercial mobile services, ending decades of state telecom monopoly in 2022. Climate

tech startup Kubik closed a record US\$ 5.2 million seed round in 2024 to expand sustainable building material production. Parliament in 2025 passed the Startup Business Proclamation which established a formal legal framework and a national startup fund.

The valuations of leading startups on DealRoom Ethiopia with aspirations to reach the USD\$1bn Unicorn status includes Komari Beverage, an FMCG founded in 2017 valued at \$104—156m which offers lightly sweet fruit-flavored cocktails with zero sugar and carbohydrates that include 5% ABV in apple, lime and pineapple flavors, providing consumers with a high-quality beverage option that fits all occasions. Roha Medical Campus which offers affordable and advanced healthcare services through various hospitals and facilities is valued at \$168—252m. Standard Bank Group was the exclusive financial adviser to M-BIRR which raised €8m (\$9.8m) worth of equity in 2018 from European Investment Bank (EIB). EthioChicken founded in 2010 raised almost USD\$ 3 million in 2017 and is today valued at \$20—30m.

Ride (Hybrid Designs is the dominant ride-hailing mobility and logistics platform in Addis Ababa. Yegara host is a meaningful portal for social participation and self-discovery. Gebeya valued at \$8—12m is a pan-African tech talent and marketplace platform providing software-as-a-service (SaaS) and workforce solutions launched in 2016. Chapa is an Ethiopian financial service and a global data engineering technology-based service provider of payment gateway, payment instrument, and bill aggregator solutions. Dodai is a Japanese e-mobility company focusing on the manufacturing and assembly of electric motorcycles and batteries launched in 2021 valued at \$32—48m. Belcash / HelloCash provides fintech and digital payments. AriefPay provides digital point-of-sale (POS) and mobile payments has an enterprise value of \$14—21m.

#### Call to Action for Transformation of Ethiopia's Startup Ecosystem.

Ethiopia needs to become a startups nation serially churning out transformational USD\$1billion valued Unicorns through interventions including taxpayer funded incubators and accelerators; pervasive university ideathons, hackathons, venture capital funds, spin-ins, spin-outs, spin-offs; and corporate venturing and venture capital funds. Other investments in the startup ecosystem external environment includes Ethiopia's 12 Pillars of the World Economic Forum (WEF's) Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), the 16 Criteria of the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), the Edelman Trust Barometer Performance, the 4 Clusters of the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance – IIAG, the 11 World Bank Topics on Ease of Doing Business Conditions and 7 Pillars of the World Intellectual Property Organization Global Innovation Index.

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## CAPE TOWN, MARRAKECH, AND CAIRO NAMED AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST CITIES FOR ART AND CULTURE IN 2026

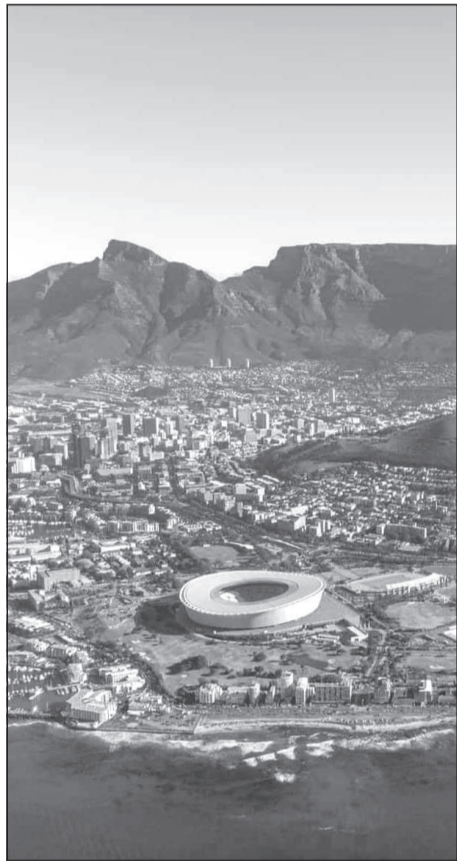
Art and culture are becoming some of the biggest drivers of tourism, identity, and global influence for cities worldwide. From world-class museums and contemporary art fairs to music festivals and creative districts, African cities are increasingly competing not just on economic strength but on cultural appeal.

The latest global rankings of the world's best cities for art and culture in 2026, according to Time Out, highlight three African destinations that continue to shape the continent's creative narrative: Cape Town, Marrakech, and Cairo.

Each year, Time Out identifies the world's leading cultural capitals by surveying thousands of residents about the quality and affordability of their local arts and culture scenes. For the 2026 ranking, more than 24,000 people across over 150 cities were asked to evaluate everything from museums, galleries, and literature to live music, festivals, theatre, comedy, and public celebrations. Below are the African cities that ranked among the world's best destinations for art and culture in 2026.

**1) Cape Town, South Africa**  
Cape Town emerged as Africa's highest-ranked city, placing fifth globally. The South African city has built a reputation as one of the continent's leading cultural capitals, anchored by institutions such as the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) and the Norval Foundation. Its cultural calendar is packed with events, including the Investec Cape Town Art Fair, Africa's largest art fair, and the popular First Thursdays art walk, which transforms the city into an open gallery every month.

New attractions, including immersive digital art experiences, have further strengthened Cape Town's position. Residents gave the city's arts scene an approval rating of 84%, with live

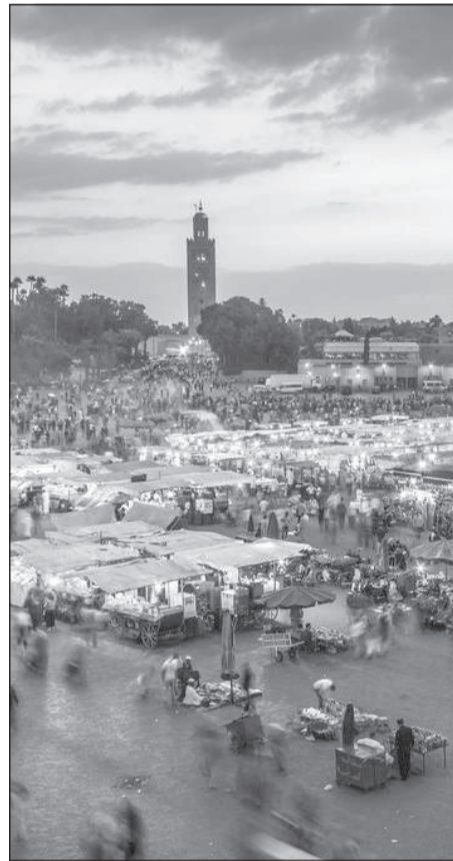


music and festivals ranking among its strongest cultural offerings.

### 2) Marrakech, Morocco

Marrakech ranked 12th globally and second in Africa. The Moroccan city continues to attract artists, collectors, and creatives from around the world with its unique blend of traditional heritage and contemporary expression. Major events

such as the annual 1-54 African Art Fair have helped cement Marrakech's status as a leading cultural hub. The city also boasts a growing network of galleries, foundations, and artist studios that contribute to its vibrant creative ecosystem. Locals praised both the quality and affordability of the city's cultural scene, with museums emerging as one of

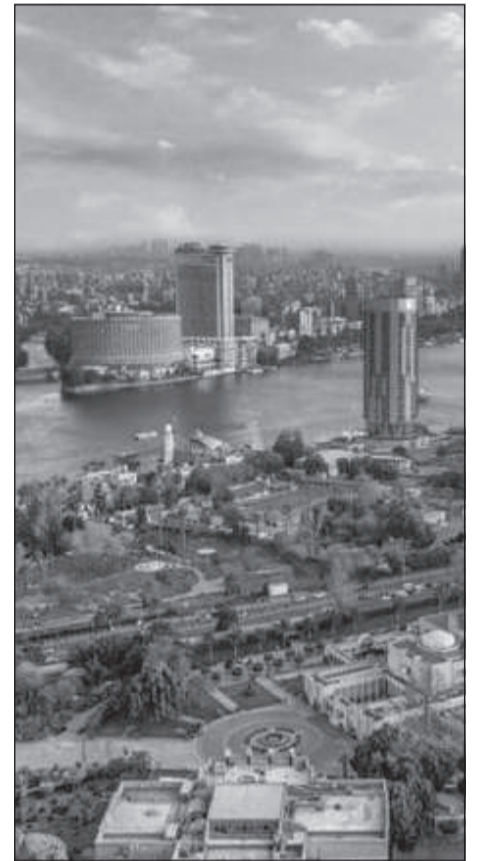


its standout attractions.

### 3) Cairo, Egypt

Cairo secured the 16th position globally and ranked third in Africa. Long regarded as one of the Arab world's cultural powerhouses, the Egyptian capital received renewed international attention following the full public opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum in late 2025.

Home to some of the world's most significant historical collections, Cairo continues to blend ancient heritage with a growing contemporary arts scene. Residents highlighted the city's museums as its greatest cultural asset, while many also noted that cultural experiences remain relatively affordable compared to other major global cities.



## JUA UNVEILS DEBUT ALBUM CHIKKA, A CROSS-BORDER EAST AFRICAN MUSIC PROJECT

Ethiopian music producer and director Guta Wakuma Chimsa has launched CHIKKA, the debut album from JUA, an Ethiopian-Kenyan DJ duo created with Kenyan producer Mr. Lu, in a project aimed at spotlighting East Africa's shared musical roots and modern sound.

According to the press release, the album was developed over two and a half years of research that began in 2023 and traced what the creators describe as a single rhythmic thread running through music

traditions across East Africa under different names. The project brings together voices from seven countries — Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Lesotho and Seychelles — to build a contemporary sound that connects ancestral rhythm with modern production.

The release says the first single, Mass High, will be released on June 1, 2026, ahead of the full album rollout planned for September 2026. JUA says the project is intended to go beyond music and evolve into a broader cultural movement involving

dancers, visual artists and fashion designers.

Guta said the project began with a hunch that East African music shares a deeper common pulse, but grew into a larger exploration after conversations with Kenyan musicians helped guide the research. The team says the result is a new East African sound that bridges heritage and futuristic dance music.

The press release also says CHIKKA is being developed under Misrak Studio, also known as DARAJA, a Nairobi-based East African music innovation hub

founded in 2024. The studio says the project is its first major musical production and is meant to act as a bridge connecting East African creative communities through collaboration and shared history.

JUA describes itself as an Ethiopian-Kenyan DJ-producer duo made up of ISATIRAT and Mr. Lu, while the wider project includes a network of singers and performers from across the region. The release says the duo aims to place East Africa more firmly on the global map through music and related creative industries.



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