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# Government preparing new vehicle ownership tax

By Eyasu Zekarias

Ethiopia is preparing to establish a formal revenue-sharing system for a new motor vehicle ownership tax that is expected to take effect in the 2027/28 budget year, according to a document obtained by Capital.

The Council of Ministers is expected to submit the proposal to the House of Federation by the end of December 2026. If approved, the plan will create a legal framework for sharing revenue from the new tax between the federal government and regional states in line with constitutional requirements.

The vehicle ownership tax is part of a broader government effort to strengthen domestic revenue collection and raise the country's tax-


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# National Dialogue: A pivotal moment for Ethiopia

Ethiopia's National Dialogue commences at a critical juncture, as the nation can no longer afford the pitfalls of political stagnation, institutional instability, or persistent cycles of mistrust. With 4,000 representatives convened to address the country's most sensitive issues, this is far more than a mere conference. It represents a rare opportunity to reframe the political discourse and establish a framework capable of unifying the country for years to come.

This opportunity must not be squandered. Handled with genuine intent, the dialogue could emerge as one of the most significant national undertakings in Ethiopia's modern history. Conversely, if mismanaged, it risks becoming yet another costly exercise yielding only speeches, photo opportunities, and unfulfilled promises—a scenario Ethiopia has experienced all too often.

Central to the discussions is the constitution itself. For years, the nation's supreme law has served simultaneously as a foundation of governance and a source of profound political contention. While some view it as a safeguard for federal coexistence and self-rule, others perceive it as a document that has, at times, exacerbated divisions by fostering competing political identities rather than a shared national future. This inherent tension cannot be overlooked; it demands honest confrontation, free from rhetoric or apprehension.

The fundamental question is not whether Ethiopia should have a constitution—it unequivocally should. Rather, the crucial inquiry is whether the current constitutional framework possesses the strength to ensure national stability, political inclusivity, and long-term institutional continuity. The dialogue offers Ethiopians a chance to meticulously examine this question, particularly the provisions concerning amendments, federal-regional relations, and the delicate balance between collective citizenship and self-determination.

This balance is paramount. Ethiopia is a nation rich in diverse peoples, languages, faiths, and historical narratives. This diversity is a formidable strength, but only if managed through a political system that safeguards identity without allowing it to become a weapon. The challenge lies in constructing a framework where local identity and national belonging mutually reinforce each other, rather than competing. If the dialogue fails to guide Ethiopia toward achieving this balance, the country will remain ensnared in familiar conflicts.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has articulated that the purpose of this consultation is to ensure that future constitutional changes arise from broad and inclusive consensus, rather than being dictated by the interests of a single political era. This principle is sound. A constitution should not be treated as a temporary instrument for the government of the day. It must be sufficiently stable to endure shifting political currents and broad enough to command genuine legitimacy. If Ethiopia can firmly establish this principle now, it will have forged something far more valuable than a policy document; it will have cultivated a political culture.

The National Dialogue Commission has outlined eight key agenda areas, encompassing critical issues from nation-building and electoral systems to corruption, governance, religious affairs, and peace-building. This comprehensive agenda is a significant strength, demonstrating Ethiopia's recognition that its challenges are interconnected. Political instability impacts the economy, weak institutions erode public trust, and poor governance undermines peace. A national settlement cannot succeed if these issues are addressed in isolation.

However, the dialogue's success hinges not just on its agenda, but on the credibility of the process itself. Ethiopians will assess its legitimacy based on the authenticity of participation, the fairness with which diverse voices are heard, and whether those in power genuinely consider the final recommendations. The public has witnessed numerous consultative forums that, despite appearing inclusive, ultimately served narrow interests. This time, the process must genuinely differentiate itself.

This requires that the representatives in the dialogue rise above group politics, advocating for the nation as a whole rather than solely for their own factions. Furthermore, the broader public must be convinced that this exercise holds real significance. A dialogue that yields no tangible outcomes will swiftly lose legitimacy. Conversely, a process perceived as sincere, transparent, and nationally owned could usher in a more stable political era.

A deeper test lies in Ethiopia's ability to replace confrontation with consultation as a national practice. As the chief commissioner observed, differing opinions are not the issue; the problem arises when these differences are resolved through force instead of discussion. This is a lesson Ethiopia has learned at a steep cost. Dialogue is not a sign of weakness; rather, it represents the most mature form of political strength when a nation is divided and exhausted.

The stakes are immense. If Ethiopia effectively leverages this moment, it could establish a constitutional and political settlement that future generations will respect. This could lead to a more inclusive state, a more coherent federal compact, and a more enduring sense of common citizenship. Conversely, if the process becomes superficial, exclusionary, or manipulated, it will fail the country and exacerbate public cynicism.

Ethiopia must embrace this opportunity with seriousness, patience, and honesty. The nation does not require another temporary solution; it needs a political foundation robust enough to last. The National Dialogue can provide this if its leaders, delegates, and citizens approach it as a national duty rather than a mere procedural event. The cost of failure would be substantial; the reward for success could be historic.


By Theódros Tadesse A.

COMMENT

# The clock and the canopy

In July 2026, after a series of bureaucratic delays that pushed its schedule to October, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission hosted the Ethiopian National Dialogue Forum, a massive gathering of more than 4,000 delegates from 1,200 districts convened in cooled conference rooms to tackle some of the country's most intractable political problems. On paper alone, in the logistical organization of 55 structured speaking sessions and more than 1,100 side events, the forum seems a remarkable feat, an operation of crushing scale. Yet behind closed doors, a more subdued struggle is taking place. It is not one of guns and munitions, but of visions: a direct clash between two entirely distinct conceptions of time, of truth, and of the very act of restoring a fractured nation.

On one side is the state-building playbook: highly bureaucratic, document-oriented, legally driven, and strictly time-bound, all packaged rigidly by Proclamation 1265/2021. It is a world of lawyers and legal prose. On the other side is the time-honored, relational, social-linguistic matrix of Ethiopia's oral customary laws, the projection of the shadow of the sacred sycamore tree. In this world, peace has nothing to do with signing documents and voting for policies; it is something slow and deliberate, a laborious effort to repair damaged relationships.

The real test of this dialogue becomes a huge translation challenge. As much as the Commission may want to reenact and incorporate the revitalizing, holistic spiritualities of reconciliation embodied by the ancestors, it must still translate such ancestral accords into the closed, bureaucratized box of a modern state. How Ethiopia manages this polarization will probably decide whether the summit results in a real, long-lasting social contract or instead another magnificently crafted and never-implemented government report.

To see where the gears are grinding, one must look at the form the process takes. The Commission is institutionally independent of government, outside the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Its design is straightforward and sequential: collect themes emerging from the ground up, discuss them regionally, distill the results into a concise rundown of topics to be discussed nationally, and, just before the forum in July, organize these into eight thematic pillars, including national identity; structure and authority of the federal government; religious pluralism; human rights; and reconciliation after conflict.

The challenge is that centuries of history, misery, and grievance cannot be neatly frozen into bullet points and then euphemistically "rationalized" for voting by delegates in timed sessions. Yet as the massive bureaucratic machine moved out of the capital into the highland plains, riverine valleys, and pastoral hilltops, it repeatedly came face to face with vastly different indigenous justice systems, entire worlds of their own, tuned to a very different note. For many Ethiopians, peace is not a bargain settled by rival political elites. It is the re-establishment of cosmic and social harmony.

Take, for example, the Oromo Gadaa system, which has governed community life for centuries. At its core is the Abbaa Gadaa, a traditional orator who presides over arenas where conflicts are arbitrated. Under the Oda, or sacred fig, tree, elders sit and speak, but there is no majority vote producing winners and losers. Rather, the participants keep talking for weeks, sometimes until they reach absolute consensus. Together with them is the Hadha Siiqqe, an institution of mediating women who, with spiritual and moral authority, step between the factions and, in one motion, freeze the conflict and set in motion the slow mechanics of reconciliation.

The Sidama model is conceptualized in much the same way. Invoked by a council of elders called the Cimeessa, the Afini is a deeply patient, restorative process that actively discourages participation by the wealthy or powerful and elevates compromise above all else. Idle assemblies are held where people speak their minds, they say, no matter how much it costs in respect. The community then works carefully to persuade the offender to admit guilt. Once shame is fully understood, the elders decide how much compensation will repair the damage, almost always in cattle. Finally, through a cycle of nourishment and prayer, forgiveness is delivered, first through sacred speech and then during a communal meal.

You find these same Indian Ocean concepts tucked away in every corner. Foresters in the Abar and Aften forests settle land and water conflicts through the Moabalo. In the Shabei plain, the Ogaden nomads use the Heer system, an oral pact that clans uphold for restitution, so that blood-feud rituals can end forever. In the north, the Afar and the Amhara turn to the

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# National dialogue opens debate on constitutional reform

By Eyasu Zekarias

The National Dialogue Conference opened on July 15, 2026, bringing together 4,000 representatives from across the country in a historic effort to lay the groundwork for possible constitutional reform.

The conference is expected to examine some of the most sensitive questions in the country's political life, including federalism, citizenship and the constitutional amendment process. For years, the constitution has been at the center of political debate, with competing views over whether it has strengthened unity or deepened division.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the consultation is intended to ensure that any future constitutional changes are based on broad national consensus rather than the interests of successive political groups. He said the goal is to create a more stable constitutional order that cannot be easily altered or replaced.

A major focus of the dialogue is the balance between the right to self-determination and the responsibilities of shared national citizenship. Participants are also expected to review the definition of nations, nationalities and peoples under Article 39, Sub-Article 5, with the aim of aligning regional identities with a broader national framework.

The Prime Minister said past constitutional processes were often shaped by limited perspectives, and said the current assembly is meant to create a "social contract that future generations will honor." He added that if the current generation of representatives can reach consensus, future constitutional changes should also pass through a similarly inclusive process.

The National Dialogue Conference is the result of consultations led by the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission, which brought together representatives from more than 1,200 districts, as well as civil society groups, religious institutions, youth, women and marginalized communities.

The commission has outlined eight main agenda areas for discussion over at least three weeks. These include nation-building, government structure and electoral systems, federal cities, religious affairs, institutional building, social and economic issues, corruption and good governance, and peace-building.

Opening the conference, Chief Commissioner Mesfin Araya said Ethiopia has long faced difficult questions about politics, systems and competing opinions. He said differences of opinion are not a problem in themselves, but become dangerous when they are addressed through conflict instead of dialogue.

"We have reached this historic conference through careful, participatory and scientific preparations carried out by the commission since its inception," he said, adding that the process of identifying participants, gathering agendas and raising public awareness had strengthened the conference's credibility.

The dialogue is expected to tackle core national questions ranging from the supreme law to identity and citizenship. Its success will depend on whether representatives can move beyond narrow interests and help build a broader national consensus.

In his closing appeal, the chief commissioner urged participants and the wider public to engage sincerely in the process "for the sake of the country's peace and for the next generation."



# Central bank replaces lending cap with targeted reserve policy

By Muluken Yewondwossen

The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) has lifted its three-year-old credit cap, acknowledging its increasing ineffectiveness after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that 20 of Ethiopia's 28 banks had already surpassed their annual lending growth limits by the third quarter of the 2025/26 fiscal year.

The central bank is replacing the quantitative lending restriction with a targeted reserve requirement framework. This signals a shift toward an interest rate-based monetary policy, aiming to guide bank lending toward productive sectors using indirect policy instruments rather than administrative controls.

The NBE Board of Directors, chaired by Prime Minister's Economic Advisor Girma Biru (Amb), approved the decision following a recommendation from the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

This policy change marks a significant and earlier-than-expected shift in the NBE's monetary policy framework. Although the central bank had previously indicated the credit growth cap would remain until the end of 2026, economists largely welcomed its removal, arguing that it had constrained lending to productive sectors, particularly manufacturing.

However, experts cautioned that the new framework's effectiveness hinges on the implementation of the targeted reserve requirement and its success in encouraging productive-sector lending without creating new distortions.

Some also warned that commercial banks might remain reluctant to expand private-sector lending if uncertainty surrounding the new reserve requirement leads them to continue channeling excess liquidity into government securities instead of extending loans to businesses.

Worku Lemma, a former senior banking executive with extensive experience in Ethiopia's financial sector, praised the removal of the lending cap as a positive step toward strengthening financial stability and supporting macroeconomic growth.

He stated, "Lifting the lending cap is a good move. It is also part of the IMF's recommendation, although the Fund advocated for a gradual removal."

According to Worku, the credit cap had restricted financing for critical long-term development sectors, including manufacturing and related industries, thus limiting their contribution to economic growth.

At the same time, Worku noted that the MPC's decision to raise the National Bank Rate (NBR) from 15 percent to 16 percent is likely to further increase commercial lending rates, raising borrowing costs for businesses where loan rates already exceed 20 percent.

Worku also questioned the practical implementation of the targeted reserve requirement, noting that the central bank has not yet provided sufficient operational guidance.

He explained, "Unlike the general reserve requirement or the overall lending cap, this mechanism will be applied individually to each bank. It remains unclear how it will work in practice and whether it will effectively influence lending behavior."

He emphasized that the NBE should issue detailed implementation guidelines to ensure transparency and predictability.

Under the new framework, the central bank announced it would impose additional reserve requirements on individual banks after regularly assessing their loan-to-deposit ratios whenever credit expansion is deemed to pose inflationary risks.

This policy builds on the reserve requirement directive issued in December 2025, which increased the minimum reserve ratio from seven percent to ten percent by June 30, 2026.

During Monday's MPC press conference, NBE Governor Eyob Tekalign reported that the loan-to-deposit ratio of private banks had fallen to 72.7 percent from 90.3 percent in the 2022/23 fiscal year, reflecting improved liquidity management across the banking sector.

Despite welcoming the lending cap's removal, Worku maintained that a tight monetary policy remains appropriate given persistent inflationary pressures, external economic shocks, and geopolitical uncertainties.

Banking expert and economist Eshetu Fantaye, with over three decades of financial sector experience, shared a similar assessment.

He argued that while Ethiopia should maintain its anti-inflationary stance, it ought to learn from other East African central banks that utilize market-based monetary instruments and targeted incentives to encourage lending to productive sectors.

"Every one of Ethiopia's East African peers manages inflation through price-based tools, and each has developed incentive mechanisms to channel credit toward productive sectors without administrative rationing. Even Rwanda, facing inflation pressures comparable to Ethiopia's, has chosen rate hikes and guarantee schemes over credit ceilings," Eshetu wrote in a recent research paper.

Speaking to Capital, he elaborated that central banks across the region encourage lending to agriculture, manufacturing, and export-oriented industries by offering regulatory incentives instead of imposing blanket lending restrictions.

"They encourage banks to utilize their reserve capacity if they extend loans to priority sectors. Such policy instruments are more effective in controlling inflation, including imported inflation, while simultaneously stimulating economic growth through job creation, import substitution, exports, and higher tax revenues," he said.

Eshetu also questioned whether the removal of the lending cap alone would significantly increase private-sector credit, given the government's plans to finance a substantial share of its budget through domestic borrowing.

Under the recently approved 2026/27 federal budget, the government intends to cover approximately 330 billion birr of its financing gap through Treasury bills and other domestic debt instruments.

He contended that directing these financial resources toward productive sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, exports, and small-scale industries would generate stronger economic growth, employment opportunities, and tax revenues than financing recurrent government expenditure.

Overall, Eshetu recommended that the central bank create a policy environment that enables productive sectors—particularly manufacturing, which has been constrained by the lending cap over the past three years—to access adequate financing.

However, he cautioned that banks might continue favoring government securities if uncertainty surrounding the targeted reserve requirement leads them to avoid the risk of having additional funds locked up as mandatory reserves.

Governor Eyob, meanwhile, maintained that removing the credit cap would significantly improve manufacturers' access to finance and support lending to other productive sectors.

Several analysts also noted that Ethiopia had previously experimented with similar policy tools nearly two decades ago, suggesting that the new reserve-based framework could again be used to encourage banks to expand lending to productive sectors while preserving overall monetary discipline.

The IMF's Fifth Review of Ethiopia's reform program, released on the same day as the MPC statement, concluded that the credit cap had become increasingly ineffective, with 20 of the country's 28 banks already exceeding their lending limits by March 2026.

The Fund welcomed Ethiopia's continued transition toward an interest-rate-based monetary policy framework but cautioned against replacing one form of administrative intervention with another.

"Staff advised against a possible new law requiring banks to allocate a portion of their credit to the manufacturing sector, which is not consistent with market determination of lending rates and credit decisions, and could weaken credit quality," the IMF stated.

The Fund added that fostering a competitive, market-oriented financial sector requires removing direct monetary controls and quantitative lending limits to strengthen monetary policy transmission.

Echoing that position, the Monetary Policy Committee stressed that removing the lending cap does not represent a relaxation of monetary policy.

"The removal of the credit cap is the result of a successful transition to an interest-rate-based policy framework with full implementation of indirect monetary policy instruments. It is not a change in NBE's monetary policy stance. The NBE will continue to maintain a tight monetary policy stance by effectively using all available indirect monetary policy instruments," the committee affirmed.

The central bank now faces the challenge of demonstrating that its new targeted reserve requirement can simultaneously contain inflation and encourage greater lending to Ethiopia's productive sectors without undermining market-based credit allocation.


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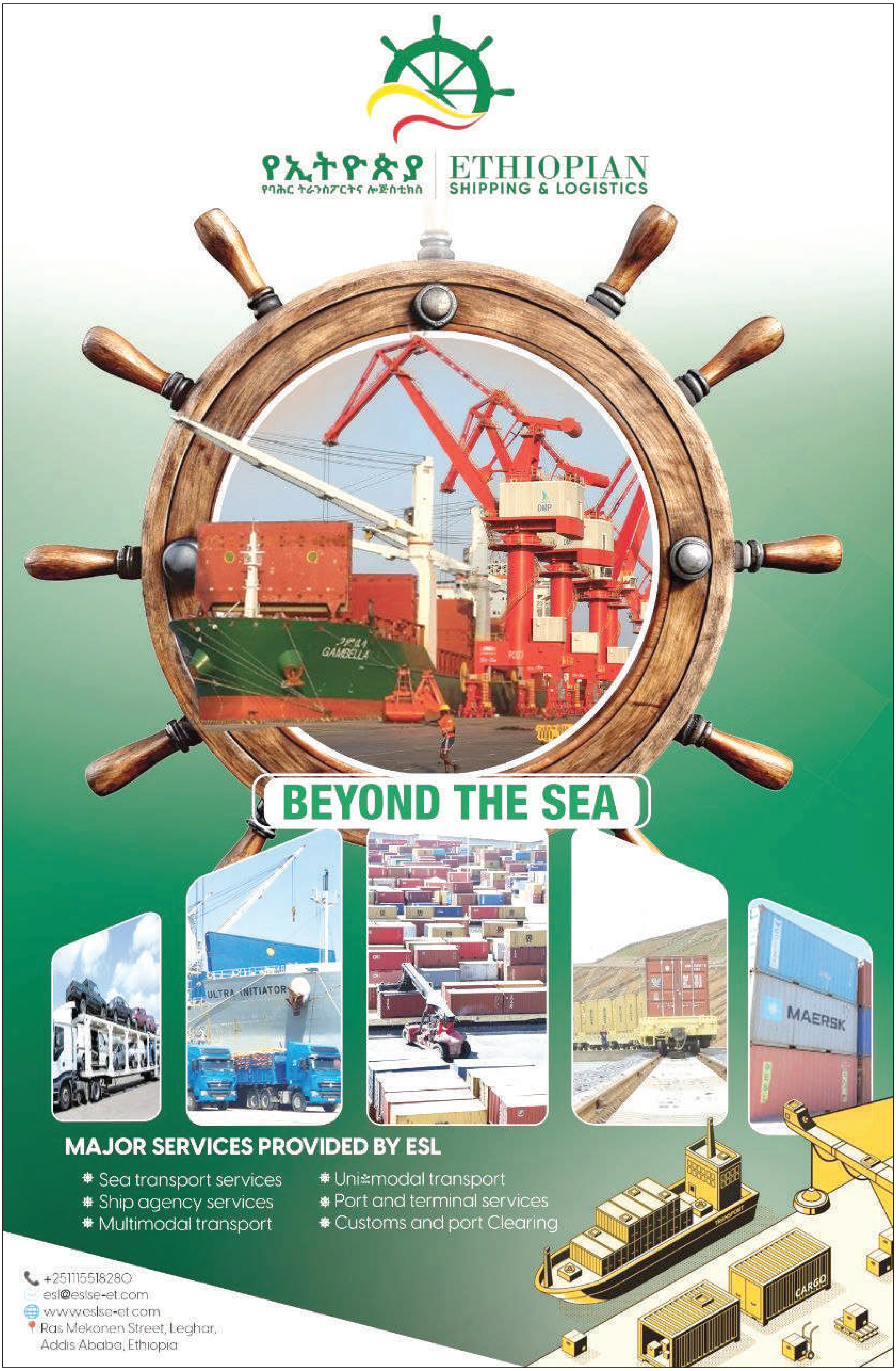
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# Ethiopia seeks farm boost through Italian machinery deal

By Eyasu Zekarias

Ethiopia is deepening cooperation with Italy to expand access to modern agricultural machinery in a move officials say could help improve productivity and support the country's drive toward food self-sufficiency.

The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, together with the Embassy of Italy and the Italian Trade Agency, has launched a partnership aimed at linking Ethiopian importers with leading Italian manufacturers ahead of EIMA International 2026, a major agricultural machinery exhibition set for November in Bologna.

At a press conference in Addis Ababa, officials said the initiative is intended to help close Ethiopia's mechanization gap, which continues to limit output in a sector that remains central to the economy. Agriculture accounts for more than one-third of GDP and more than half of export earnings, but much of the work is still carried out with traditional methods.

Kenenisa Lemi, secretary general of the chamber, said agricultural modernization is a key priority under Ethiopia's homegrown economic reform agenda. He said reaching food self-sufficiency will require greater private-sector investment in high-efficiency technology for farms.

Ethiopia has about 60 million hectares of arable land, but low mechanization continues to hold back production. Officials say improved access to tractors, harvesting equipment, irrigation systems and precision farming tools could help farmers raise yields and cope better with climate-related pressures.

EIMA International 2026 will be organized by FederUnacoma, the Italian federation of agricultural machinery manufacturers, under the theme "Design Agriculture Future." The event is expected to feature more than 1,800 exhibitors across 375,000 square meters of exhibition space.

Fabio Ricci, deputy director general of FederUnacoma, said the exhibition will showcase technologies that can help farmers manage climate change, soil degradation and high input costs through better resource use and higher efficiency.

## Government preparing new . . .

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to-GDP ratio. Officials expect the measure to contribute about 0.1 percent of GDP in its first year and around 0.2 percent in the second year.

State Minister of Finance Semerita Sewasew said earlier this month that Ethiopia has made notable progress in improving tax collection capacity. Speaking at an African regional consultation in early July, she said the country's tax-to-GDP ratio had risen from 6.2 percent to 8.2 percent over the past two years and was projected to reach 10.8 percent in the current budget year.

The proposed tax comes as the federal government looks for new ways to finance rising public spending. The 2026/27 budget was approved at 2.339 trillion birr, with more than 1.61 trillion birr expected from domestic revenue. Of that amount, tax revenue is projected to account for 1.49 trillion birr.

The revenue-sharing proposal is grounded in Ethiopia's constitutional framework, which recognizes federal, regional and shared sources of revenue. The system is intended to support regional autonomy while also ensuring fiscal responsibility and transparency in public finance.

Legal and policy experts note, however, that the absence of detailed rules governing shared revenue sources has long created uncertainty over how such income should be divided. The new proposal is expected to address some of those gaps, especially as the government prepares to begin collecting a tax that could become a significant source of income over time.

The International Monetary Fund has estimated that the vehicle ownership tax could bring in about 0.1 percent of GDP in the first year, rising to 0.2 percent in the second year. But analysts say the tax's impact will depend heavily on how it is designed and implemented.

The plan faces questions over fairness and affordability, particularly because Ethiopia has a limited vehicle fleet. Data cited from CleanTechnica in 2024 put the number of registered vehicles in the country at about 1.2 million, a figure that suggests the new levy could place a heavy burden on vehicle owners if not carefully structured.

Economist Aschalew Tefera said the reform is necessary to strengthen government revenue and support fiscal balance, but warned that its effects on the wider economy need close attention. He said many vehicle owners are not wealthy investors, but ordinary citizens who rely on their cars for transport services and daily income.

According to Aschalew, adding a new ownership tax could raise operating costs for low-income drivers and worsen inflationary pressure. He said policymakers should consider the ability to pay and make a clear distinction between vehicles used for business and those used for personal use.

Policy analysts have raised similar concerns, arguing that a tax system linked to vehicle ownership, property, excise and VAT risks shifting the burden toward middle- and lower-income households. They warn that families with modest assets are often easier to tax than wealthier households that can use more complex financial arrangements to reduce exposure.

The pressure on households is already high. Ethiopia's general inflation rate stood at 13.4 percent year on year in May 2026, while month-on-month inflation rose by 1.7 percent, according to the Ethiopian Statistics Service.

The government now has several months to finalize the legal and administrative groundwork before the tax is introduced. That includes approval by the House of Federation, setting up collection systems, defining the revenue-sharing formula and preparing public awareness and compliance measures.

How the proposal is ultimately shaped may determine not only how much revenue it raises, but also how fairly the new tax is perceived by the public.

## The clock and the . . .

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Shimbaln, where dynastic elders, respected in their communities, use personal authority to bargain forgiveness and accommodation. None of these traditional fixes seeks instant solutions, top-down treatment, or punitive measures that dismantle the community fabric in the name of speedy state administration.

Historically, peace processes have broken down when such realities have been ignored. The most renowned transitions — whether in Poland in 1989 or South Africa in the early 1990s — were elite-driven negotiations that helped forestall crises. In both cases, negotiators managed to overhaul constitutional rules and avoid civil war. But because of their focus on elite bargains, they often neglected the psychological and relational scars borne by ordinary people.

Worse still, when formal peace processes become utterly disconnected from local realities, the consequences can be disastrous. The Yemeni national dialogue held in the early 2010s was highly praised by the international community for its structure and inclusion of women and youth. However, since the formal negotiations in Sana'a were entirely disconnected from the tribal arrangements that controlled ground security, the agreements collapsed and the country descended into civil war. The same logic applies to Colombia, where the government and FARC militants spent years negotiating a technically polished peace accord in Havana, only for it to be rejected by Colombian voters in a referendum. It was a vivid reminder that an agreement lacking popular ownership has no weight.

Ethiopia will therefore have to navigate a complex path to avoid these mistakes. The National Dialogue Commission will have to strike a difficult middle ground: it cannot adopt a structure modeled entirely on international templates from South Africa or Europe, nor can it neglect the administration of a modern state. It must forge a hybrid peace architecture.

The launch of the National Dialogue Forum in July 2026 has brought those tensions to a boiling point, particularly with ongoing security crises and political boycotts complicating the formal process. On the eve of the forum, the Tigray Regional State officially foreswore participation, calling it an isolated and unacceptable exercise and citing the federal government's failure to fully implement the Pretoria Peace Agreement. Meanwhile, other opposition figures warned of dire consequences if a way cannot be found to incorporate armed groups fighting in the Oromia and Amhara regional states into the dialogue.

In these intense battlegrounds, the state machinery, formal and bureaucratic, is brought to a grinding halt at checkpoints and through political gridlock. Where the state cannot enter, traditional elders and religious authorities can step ahead of it. Because they have personal, cross-cutting ties that cut across ethnic and political lines, they are equipped to fill the gap, broker local ceasefires, facilitate safe passage for negotiators, and safeguard the prospect of dialogue when the state is locked out.

In fact, on some of the most productive and unheralded occasions so far, commissioners have achieved breakthroughs precisely when they, as government officials, have allowed themselves to act as mediators. In a number of regional consultations where discussions of difficult topics such as internal borders or historical injustices began to spiral out of control, the commission simply set aside the conference hall's formal rules. Instead, it spoke with people in informal circles and allowed local elders, and sometimes traditional diviners, to use conventional consensus-building tactics to calm the antagonists. At that point, the commission, like its great-grandfather the honorable mediator, became an otherworldly receptacle for ancestral wisdom.

In the end, this dialogue will not be judged by how swiftly it can absorb its 4,000 delegates, or by the weight of the final report it puts before Parliament this fall. It will be judged by the degree of consensus it generates and the level of trust it engenders among ordinary citizens. If it merely becomes a technical, top-down, exclusionary exercise that leaves out important regional constituencies, it will produce nothing more than a handsome tome that can gather dust on a shelf while life goes on as usual. But by incorporating its traditional customary fabric into the state's sacred tapestry, Ethiopia has a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the world a new model of building peace, one that underscores that a modern state cannot merely rely on designing institutions; it must be rooted in the civic foundations of the cultures of its people.

# Addis Ababa prepares for COP32 as Ethiopia eyes bigger climate role

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia is stepping up preparations to host the 32nd United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP32, in November 2027, in what officials say will be a major opportunity to position Addis Ababa as a hub for global climate diplomacy.

The country was unanimously selected by the Africa Group of Negotiators and formally recognized at COP30 in Brazil, paving the way for Ethiopia to take on one of the most significant roles in international climate negotiations. Dr. Gedion Timothewos, Minister of Foreign Affairs and COP32 President-Designate, is leading the national committee overseeing the conference's planning, logistics and policy coordination.

The government says the hosting is a reflection of Ethiopia's growing climate profile, built on initiatives such as the Green Legacy campaign and investments in renewable energy. But officials also acknowledge that the road to 2027 will be challenging, especially at a time of global instability, political tensions and energy crises.

Former COP21 President Laurent Fabius, who recently visited Addis Ababa, described the current international situation as a "dangerous paradox." He said the world now faces mounting pressure to act on climate change while political will for tough measures continues to weaken in many countries.

Fabius said the priority should no longer be limited to announcing new commitments, but to ensuring that existing promises are actually implemented. He warned that climate diplomacy is becoming more difficult as countries are pulled in different political and economic directions, making consensus harder to achieve.

With about 50,000 delegates expected to attend COP32, Ethiopia sees the summit as a chance to reshape international perceptions of Africa's role in the climate conversation. Officials want to show that the continent is not only suffering the effects of climate change, but also generating practical solutions that can be scaled globally.

The country's strategy is expected to focus on turning climate pledges into real financing, strengthening fairness in the global green transition, and accelerating projects such as methane reduction, large-scale reforestation and clean cooking technologies.

Fabius said these are areas where meaningful progress can be made relatively quickly if governments, financiers and the private sector work together. He also stressed the importance of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which deals with carbon markets and international cooperation on emissions reduction.

According to Fabius, climate diplomacy has become inseparable from broader international relations, making the role of Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry especially important in the run-up to the conference. He said technical issues such as finance, mitigation and private-sector participation are common to all COP meetings, but the political context today is far more difficult than it was in 2015 when the Paris Agreement was adopted.

Even so, Fabius said climate conferences remain essential despite their imperfections. He argued that they provide a necessary platform for accountability and for keeping global attention on climate action, equity and adaptation financing.

# MatterMiner launches localized legal practice platform for African markets

By our staff reporter

Mkenga Na Namwaka, Incorporated has announced the commercial availability of MatterMiner, a legal practice management platform designed for law firms that want enterprise-grade tools adapted to local jurisdictions, languages, workflows and operating models.

The company said the initial rollout will begin in Africa, with early focus on Commonwealth jurisdictions, Ethiopia and selected Francophone markets.

The platform is intended to solve long-standing operational problems in law firms, including lost billable time, missed deadlines, fragmented manual systems, billing and trust-accounting complexity, limited visibility across matters and growing security and compliance demands. MatterMiner combines practice-management functions with guided implementation, allowing firms to move away from disconnected tools and toward a more integrated system for legal work.

A central feature of the platform is what the company calls hyper-localisation. MatterMiner is being built to reflect the realities of each market, including billing expectations, tax requirements, trust-accounting workflows and implementation patterns. It will launch with native French, Swahili and Amharic versions, and the company said it plans to expand language support to cover the official language of every market it enters.

Salimatou Diallo, managing partner of ADNA Law, said law firms need technology that reflects how legal work is actually done locally. She said the platform's focus on jurisdictional fit is important because a single global template cannot serve every legal market.

The platform is aimed at equity and managing partners, operations leaders, finance teams and IT stakeholders at established and growing law firms. Its features include matter management, AI-assisted time tracking, billing with VAT and tax workflow support, trust-accounting workflow support, calendar and deadline management, reporting and analytics for firm leadership, and localised user experiences for multilingual teams.

Mkenga Na Namwaka is incorporated and headquartered in the United States, with operating teams based in the markets MatterMiner serves. The company said the structure is designed for a globally distributed business, combining US-based corporate, legal and commercial infrastructure with in-market teams that understand local jurisdictions, languages and workflows. Its initial operating footprint is in East Africa.

"MatterMiner was born from more than a decade of legal-technology delivery, where we saw law firms repeatedly struggle to manage matters, billing, deadlines and trust responsibilities across multiple markets," said Elsante Mnzava, founder and owner of Mkenga Na Namwaka. "We are commencing in Africa with Commonwealth jurisdictions, Ethiopia and select Francophone markets because these jurisdictions share core operational pressures while demanding highly localised workflow, tax and language structures."

Artificial intelligence is also central to MatterMiner's roadmap, but the company said it will not be treated as a marketing slogan. Instead, AI will be used to automate tasks, support workflows and gradually reshape how legal teams organize and deliver work. The company said its approach will be customer-led, task-focused and grounded in the security and governance requirements of legal practice.

"AI in legal work must respect how law firms actually operate," Mnzava said. "Lawyers and legal teams bring the judgment, strategy, creativity and accountability that client work requires. MatterMiner's focus is to make agents useful inside that reality by helping firms reduce friction around repetitive tasks and multi-step workflows while keeping firm knowledge, permissions, security, auditability and governance at the center of the experience."

MatterMiner's AI agent, Nangasu, reflects that approach. The company also said its roadmap includes planned support for the Model Context Protocol, which would allow authorized, firm-approved agents to interact with the platform through governed and permission-aware interfaces.

The company said MatterMiner is now available through guided onboarding and demo-led deployment. To ease adoption, founding customers will receive free concierge onboarding and standard data migration. Pricing and packaging are designed around the economic realities of the markets it serves, with an entry-level package that still includes many features typically associated with higher-tier global legal software.

# Rural Ethiopia still left in the dark as reliable electricity lags

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia has expanded its national power grid in recent years, but a new Afrobarometer dispatch shows that most citizens still do not have reliable electricity, with rural communities bearing the heaviest burden.

The survey, released on July 14, 2026, found that only 43 percent of Ethiopians were connected to the national electricity grid in 2023, while just 26 percent had electricity that worked most or all of the time.

Rural residents were far less likely than urban dwellers to have access to the grid or a dependable power supply, underscoring a wide urban-rural gap in service delivery.

According to the report, only 20 percent of rural Ethiopians were connected to the grid, compared with 88 percent of urban residents. When reliability is taken into account, just 9 percent of rural residents could count on electricity most or all of the time, versus 59 percent in urban areas. The findings suggest that access remains uneven even where the grid is present.

Afrobarometer said electricity ranks among the most important concerns facing the country. Twenty percent of respondents listed power supply among their top three national priorities, placing it fourth behind economic management, water supply and roads or infrastructure. Nearly two-thirds of citizens, 64 percent, said the government was performing badly on electricity provision.

The survey also found that dissatisfaction was highest in rural areas, among poorer citizens and among those with lower levels of education. Rural respondents were much more likely than urban residents to say the government was handling electricity badly, reflecting long-standing gaps in access and reliability outside major towns and cities.

The report said Ethiopia's electricity challenge persists despite the country's significant renewable energy potential and major investments in hydropower, including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. While the country has made progress in expanding its grid, experts cited in the report said weak financing, maintenance problems and state control over generation have slowed broader access and service quality.

Afrobarometer's findings suggest that improving generation capacity alone will not be enough. The report argues that electricity access must reach households more consistently, especially in rural areas where the shortage is most severe and where lack of power limits economic opportunities, business growth and household welfare.

The survey was conducted between May 25 and June 22, 2023, among 2,400 adult Ethiopians. Afrobarometer said the sample has a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

The organization concluded that electricity remains a major service-delivery issue and a key test of government performance. It said Ethiopia's electrification gains will only matter if they translate into reliable power for households across the country, particularly those in rural communities.


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# Letter to the Editor

## Official Response and Press Statement of Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor (AKGC) Regarding Reports on the Welmel Irrigation Project and the Chelchel Dam and Irrigation Development Project

***Addis Ababa, Ethiopia***
***16 July 2026***

Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor (AKGC) has taken note of the recent media reports, initially published by Capital newspaper and subsequently circulated through various media outlets and social media platforms, concerning the Federal Auditor General's performance audit findings on the Welmel Irrigation Project and the Chelchel Dam and Appurtenant Structures Construction Project.

Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor fully supports the principles of transparency, accountability, and the constitutional and legal mandates of both government institutions and the media. However, we are deeply concerned that certain media reports were published without seeking or incorporating the company's response, presenting only one side of the matter and drawing conclusions without reflecting the contractor's position.

Furthermore, AKGC has not yet been officially provided with the complete performance audit report. Accordingly, upon receipt of the full audit report together with all supporting evidence, the company reserves its right to submit a comprehensive technical and legal response addressing all findings and observations contained therein.

Without prejudice to that right, and based on the information currently available through the published news reports, AKGC wishes to provide the following preliminary clarifications regarding the principal issues raised.

Price Adjustment

With respect to the allegation that repeated contract amendments were made in violation of contractual provisions prohibiting price adjustment in both projects, the company wishes to clarify the following:

Chelchel Dam and Appurtenant Structures Construction Project

The allegation is factually incorrect. The Chelchel project contract agreement allows price adjustment. Consequently, the audit conclusion appears to have been reached without adequate consideration of the actual terms and conditions of the construction contract agreement, and the conclusion reached in this regard is therefore not supported by the contractual documents.

Welmel Irrigation Project

While the original Welmel contract contained a provision stating that price adjustment was not applicable, the unprecedented escalation in the prices of construction materials, fuel, machinery, transportation, and other essential inputs during project implementation created extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.

In response to these nationwide economic conditions, the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Public Procurement and Property Authority (PPPA) issued directions and approvals permitting contract amendments to address the effects of exceptional inflation. Acting upon these government directives, the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands, as the employer, formally amended the contract to allow the implementation of a price adjustment mechanism.

Accordingly, the contract amendment was implemented strictly in accordance with the directives issued by the competent government authorities and was carried out through the legally prescribed contractual procedures. Therefore, the price adjustment was lawful, properly authorized, and fully compliant with applicable government policies and contractual amendment procedures. It should not be interpreted as an unauthorized or unlawful modification initiated by the contractor.

Regarding the allegation that improper variation orders were executed, AKGC wishes to clarify that variation orders are a standard contractual mechanism implemented for legitimate engineering and contractual reasons. Such variation orders are not initiated unilaterally by the contractor.

The variation works executed under both projects resulted from:

- Approved design revisions. The contractor's responsibility is limited to construction works, while the design is prepared and approved by the employer and the consultant. The contractor merely executes the works in accordance with the approved design.
- Changes in quantities of work.
- Unforeseen subsurface and geological conditions encountered during construction.
- Additional rock excavation requirements where the original contract primarily provided for earth excavation.
- Additional engineering works formally instructed and approved by the employer, the engineer, and the Public Procurement and Property Authority (PPPA).

Accordingly, all variation orders were processed through the contractual approval procedures and therefore cannot be characterized as illegal or unauthorized activities.

With respect to the increase in the contract price, AKGC emphasizes that all contract price adjustments resulted solely from approved variation orders, legally executed contract amendments, and officially authorized price adjustment mechanisms implemented to address extraordinary economic circumstances.

These adjustments were processed in accordance with the applicable contractual provisions and relevant government directives. A clear example is the Welmel Irrigation Project. At the time the contract was signed, the price of diesel fuel was ETB 20.91 per litre. By the time the project was completed, the diesel price had increased to ETB 107.93 per litre, representing an increase of approximately 416.16 percent, or more than five times the original price.

This unprecedented inflation had a substantial impact on construction costs. Recognizing these extraordinary economic conditions, the government authorized the implementation of price adjustment through directives issued by the PPPA and subsequent contract amendment instructions issued by the Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands.

Accordingly, the contract price adjustments were implemented lawfully and in full compliance with government policy and contractual procedures.

Regarding the allegation that the projects experienced unjustified delays due to poor contractor performance, AKGC categorically rejects this assertion.

The extensions of time resulted from circumstances beyond the contractor's control, including:

- Design revisions;
- Approved variation works;
- Unforeseen geological and subsurface conditions;
- Exceptional inflation and market instability;
- Shortages of construction materials and fuel;
- Delays in obtaining administrative approvals; and
- Decisions and instructions issued by the employer.

Under the conditions of contract, these events constitute legitimate grounds for extension of time (EOT). The employer formally granted the corresponding extensions of time, and the contractor completed the works within the approved revised completion periods. Consequently, no delay damages (liquidated damages) were applicable under the contract.

With particular reference to the Welmel Irrigation Project, AKGC successfully completed and handed over the project within the approved contractual completion period while maintaining the required quality standards and without excessive cost escalation. The company is recognized as one of Ethiopia's leading water works contractors, and the project stands among the few irrigation projects completed successfully under such challenging national economic conditions.

Therefore, the media reports suggesting that project progress remained limited or that delays resulted from contractor incapacity do not accurately reflect the actual contractual performance or the project's successful completion.

Regarding the allegation that more than ETB 132 million was spent on the procurement of three luxury vehicles outside the contract, AKGC wishes to clarify that this assertion is inaccurate and does not reflect the contractual arrangements.

The vehicles were procured exclusively to facilitate day-to-day project supervision, inspection, monitoring, and technical support for the employer's engineers and consultants. Their procurement was carried out in accordance with approved contract amendments and formed part of the employer's project supervision requirements. This practice is standard in large civil engineering and infrastructure projects, both in Ethiopia and internationally.

The contractual arrangement operates as follows:

- The vehicles are registered under the project (Code-3 registration) and are dedicated exclusively to project supervision and monitoring by the employer and the engineer.
- Following project completion and handover, ownership of the vehicles is formally transferred to the employer. The vehicles are re-registered as government property (Code-4 registration) and become permanent assets of the government.

This practice is widely adopted in major infrastructure projects implemented by Ethiopian public institutions such as the Ethiopian Roads Administration (ERA), Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP), and the Ministry of Water and Energy. Similarly, internationally financed projects administered under FIDIC conditions of contract, including those financed by the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB), routinely require contractors to provide vehicles and other facilities for the employer and the engineer as part of the contractual obligations. Accordingly, the vehicles in question were lawfully procured, formally handed over, and are currently owned and utilized by the employer for official project supervision purposes.

Therefore, contrary to certain media reports, the vehicles are neither owned by AKGC nor retained for the company's private benefit. They are government assets acquired and transferred in accordance with the contract and applicable legal procedures.

The audit report states that the additional 10 percent paid in connection with the procurement of light vehicles constituted profit or an undue financial benefit to the contractor. This conclusion is inaccurate and does not reflect the actual contractual and administrative arrangements. The additional 10 percent was not paid as contractor profit. Rather, it represents the standard cost required to facilitate the complete procurement and transfer process of the vehicles to the employer. These costs include, but are not limited to:

- Insurance premiums;
- Import clearance and customs documentation;
- Vehicle registration;
- Ownership transfer procedures;
- Administrative processing costs; and
- Other statutory and logistical expenses necessary to legally deliver the vehicles to the employer.

Accordingly, characterizing this amount as an unlawful profit or financial advantage obtained by the contractor is technically and contractually incorrect. It merely represents the legitimate administrative and implementation costs associated with the lawful procurement, delivery, registration, and transfer of ownership of the vehicles to the employer.

The audit report further alleges that the procurement of seven field vehicles valued at approximately ETB 75 million was processed through a fraudulent Interim Payment Certificate (IPC), falsely presented as completed construction work, thereby generating an additional ETB 6 million in profit and service charges for the contractor. This allegation is factually incorrect. With respect to the Welmel Irrigation Project executed by Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor, only two field vehicles were procured for the employer's project supervision activities. These vehicles are currently in the possession and use of the employer and were delivered in accordance with the approved contractual requirements.

Furthermore, Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor has not received any unlawful financial benefit, profit, or unauthorized payment from the procurement of any vehicles or other assets. All payments related to vehicle procurement were processed through the contractual procedures approved by the employer, the engineer, and the relevant government authorities in accordance with the applicable procurement and contract administration procedures.

Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor firmly believes that any assessment of the Welmel and Chelchel irrigation projects must clearly distinguish the respective responsibilities of the following parties:

- The employer;
- Consultants and designers;
- Regulatory authorities;
- Supervising engineers;
- Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor (the contractor); and
- Other contractors implementing separate projects with similar project names in the surrounding areas.

Therefore, attributing all project-related deficiencies to the contractor without conducting a comprehensive review of the contractual documents, technical records, engineering approvals, and supporting evidence is neither technically justified nor legally appropriate.

Our company remains fully committed to cooperating with any lawful, impartial, and evidence-based investigation and stands ready to provide all relevant contractual, technical, financial, and administrative documentation to the competent authorities whenever requested.

Our company is deeply concerned that serious allegations capable of damaging its professional reputation have been published and widely circulated without first seeking the company's official position or reviewing the complete contractual and supporting documentation.

While Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor fully supports freedom of expression and freedom of the press, these rights must always be exercised together with the professional obligations of accuracy, fairness, verification, impartiality, and responsible journalism.

Publishing incomplete, misleading, or unverified information that harms the reputation of individuals or institutions may give rise to legal liability under the laws of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Accordingly, the company respectfully calls upon:

- All media organizations;
- Journalists and publishers responsible for the reports; and
- Any public officials or institutions that disseminated incomplete or inaccurate information,

to review the supporting contractual and technical documents and provide appropriate clarification, correction, or balanced coverage.

Should inaccurate statements continue to be published without correction, or should the company's documentary evidence continue to be disregarded, Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor reserves all rights available under Ethiopian law, including the right to seek appropriate legal remedies and compensation for any damages arising from defamatory or misleading publications. The company therefore respectfully requests that a fair, impartial, and evidence-based review be undertaken so that the facts are properly established and any necessary corrective measures are implemented.

For more than 38 years, Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor has been one of Ethiopia's leading indigenous construction companies, successfully delivering major national infrastructure projects that have significantly contributed to the country's economic and social development. The company continues to pursue its vision of becoming one of the leading contractors in East Africa by maintaining the highest standards of engineering excellence, quality construction, contractual compliance, integrity, and professional ethics.

Accordingly, the company categorically rejects any allegation suggesting that it independently initiated unauthorized contractual amendments or obtained improper financial benefits from works implemented under government directives, approved contract amendments, engineer's instructions, employer approvals, or legally established public procurement procedures.

The company firmly believes that an independent and comprehensive review of all project documents, contractual records, technical approvals, and supporting evidence will clearly demonstrate that Alemayehu Ketema General Contractor fulfilled its contractual obligations in full compliance with applicable laws, contractual provisions, and Government of Ethiopia directives.

***Sincerely,***

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***Dear editors***

First of all, I believe the National Bank of Ethiopia made the right decision. In my opinion, the problems at Lion (Anbesa) Bank are not new — they have existed for many years. My question has always been: why did it take the National Bank so long to intervene?

Strong financial performance should never be used to justify weak corporate governance or non-compliance with regulatory requirements. If there are credible concerns regarding foreign exchange transactions, lending practices, non-performing loans, governance failures, or violations of National Bank directives, they deserve a thorough, independent, and transparent investigation.

Over the years, a number of allegations have been raised, including:

- Foreign exchange transactions that remained unresolved for years, resulting in substantial outstanding provisions.
- Weaknesses in export and import financing and compliance with foreign exchange regulations.
- Loan management practices that allegedly caused significant financial losses to the bank.
- A large volume of non-performing loans, including loans reportedly issued without adequate collateral.
- Governance decisions that, if proven, may have undermined the interests of shareholders, depositors, and the government.

If these allegations are substantiated through a proper investigation, then simply nullifying a board election is not enough. Those responsible — regardless of their position — should be held accountable under the law, and any losses resulting from unlawful conduct should be recovered.

There are also serious questions surrounding the recent sale of shares to some of the so-called major shareholders. Can a bank legally provide loans to customers who then use those funds — directly or indirectly — to purchase shares in the same bank? If such practices are prohibited under National Bank regulations, they would raise serious governance and conflict-of-interest concerns. According to information I have received, this may have occurred at Lion Bank. If that information is accurate, it should be investigated thoroughly by the National Bank of Ethiopia and other relevant authorities. The public, shareholders, and depositors deserve full transparency, and anyone found to have violated the law should be held accountable.

The Ethiopian banking sector depends on public trust. That trust can only be maintained through transparency, accountability, good corporate governance, and the equal enforcement of the law. No individual, regardless of their position or influence, should be above regulatory oversight.

Finally, one word of advice: please do not politicize this matter or attempt to portray regulatory action as being driven by political interests. The focus should remain on the facts. Allow the relevant authorities to conduct their investigation independently and reach their conclusions based on the evidence. Ultimately, the truth should prevail, and accountability should follow wherever the evidence leads.

***From a Concerned Whistleblower***

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***Dear Editors***

Request for Correction of Article Dated July 12, 2026

We are writing to you regarding the article published in your newspaper on July 12, 2026, titled "NBE Gives Green Light to Sudanese Expert as Amana Insurance President."

Upon review, we have identified certain inaccuracies. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the following points be corrected to ensure that your readers receive accurate information:

1. Licensing timeline: The article quotes Mr. Abduselam Kemal as stating that the company expects to receive its operational license within "10 to 15 days, or at most within a month." This statement was premature and inaccurate. We have been informed by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) that the licensing process is ongoing and subject to full compliance with all regulatory requirements, with no definitive timeline having been set. We kindly request that this statement be corrected.
2. Capital requirement: The article states that the company's paid-up capital is "below the new 400 million birr minimum capital requirement." To clarify, the figure of ETB 260.4 million represents the subscribed capital. While this meets the initial minimum requirement, the organizers are actively planning to meet the NBE's new ETB 400 million capital requirement over the grace period provided under Directive No. SIB/57/2022.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you make the necessary corrections at your earliest convenience. We are confident that this will rectify any misinformation.

***Regards***


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# Spotlight

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

**PHOTO:** Anteneh Aklilu

## IFAD annual report: Investment at the first mile drives food security, economic growth and global stability

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)'s ongoing investments reached 92 million people worldwide, raising incomes, production and market access, according to the Fund's 2025 Annual Report launched today.

"Investment in rural development is one of the most effective and strategic responses to the challenges facing the world today," said Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD. "When rural people are empowered, the benefits reach far beyond rural communities, strengthening economies, reducing vulnerabilities, and creating opportunities."

The report details IFAD's investments and impacts at the "first mile" of food systems, where small-scale producers, rural entrepreneurs and local enterprises form the backbone of resilient economies and produce one-third of the food that feeds the world.

According to the report, IFAD's global investment portfolio reached US$8,46 billion across 83 countries and more than 170 programmes in 2025. Ongoing IFAD programmes have created nearly 390,000 jobs, constructed 7,300 km of rural roads, and brought 1.9 million hectares of land under climate-resilient management, among other key results.

## IATA Guidance Supports Clearer and More Consistent In-Cabin Pet Travel

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released new operational guidance to support airlines in managing in-cabin pet travel at every stage of the journey from booking to check-in, boarding, the on-board experience, and arrival.

It follows IATA's recently launched Guidance on Traveling with Service Dogs, reflecting a broader effort to improve consistency in the transport of dogs by air.

"A pet is a much-loved member of the family. People traveling with their pets need clear guidance on what to expect at every step of the journey. That's important because well-prepared travelers and industry-wide best practices enable airlines to deliver a safe, consistent, and efficient experience for those traveling with their pets," said Brendan Sullivan, IATA's Global Head of Cargo.

ECA highlights urgent need to transform informal work into sustainable livelihoods for Africa's youth

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Offices for Eastern and Central Africa, convened a side event on the margins of the 2026 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), bringing together policymakers, development partners, academics, youth representatives and United Nations agencies to discuss pathways for transforming informal work into sustainable livelihoods for young people across Africa.

Held under the theme "From Informal Work to Sustainable Livelihoods: Youth Pathways in Fragile Cities in Africa," the event focused on solutions to address youth unemployment, skills gaps, limited access to finance, inclusive urban development, entrepreneurship and partnerships for scalable impact

At the opening of the event, Claver Gatete, the Executive Secretary of ECA underscored the importance of harmonizing and standardizing education systems, professional qualifications and skills certification across Africa to facilitate labour mobility and enable young people to access employment opportunities beyond national borders.

Participants emphasized that greater regional integration of qualifications would help unlock the continent's human capital potential and support the aspirations of Agenda 2063. They also highlighted the urgent need to expand young people's access to finance, business development services and entrepreneurial support ecosystems.

### HEAVY LOAD ACCIDENT

### CROSSING AN URBAN STREAM

### WAITING THEIR TURN

## German Federal Foreign Office State Secretary visits Addis Ababa to strengthen ties with Ethiopia and the African Union

State Secretary Dr. Géza Andreas von Geyr of the German Federal Foreign Office concluded a two-day official visit to Ethiopia and the African Union on 13 and 14 July.

After his meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Gedion Timothewos, State Secretary Dr. von Geyr stated: "Ethiopia is a key partner for us in Africa, and we want to strengthen and further develop our relations in all areas. We are pleased that Ethiopia shares this view. My productive conversation with the Foreign Minister was marked by strong alignment on key issues, signaling a firm foundation for our partnership moving forward." Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen cooperation in areas such as foreign investments, green energy, and qualified legal labor migration. He also emphasized Germany's readiness to closely collaborate with Ethiopia as the host of COP32, reinforcing the shared commitment to climate action.

## Africa Wants to Make Its Critical Minerals a Lever for Industrialisation and Economic Transformation

African ministers, representatives from continental institutions, the private sector, and development partners have called for Africa's critical minerals to drive a new era of economic transformation, industrialisation and job creation – especially for young people and women, through value addition, regional value chains and beneficiation.

They made the call at the Ministerial Forum on Critical Minerals, Value Chains, and Beneficiation, held in Abidjan on Friday, 10 July 2026.

In a statement released at the end of the Forum organised by the African Development Bank Group, participants emphasised that the continent must extract more value from its abundant mineral resources by developing regional value chains, local processing capacities, and competitive industries, rather than continuing to primarily export raw materials.

Africa holds about 30% of the world's most critical mineral deposits, including cobalt, lithium, graphite, rare earths, platinum group metals, copper, manganese, and nickel. Yet, the continent continues to export raw and unprocessed minerals, capturing only a negligible share of the total economic value of its own resources.

## Ethiopia's landmark budget allocations signal sustained commitment to reducing tobacco use

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids applauds the Ethiopian government for two new actions that signal the country's continued commitment to driving down rates of tobacco use and saving lives. For the first time, Ethiopia and its capital city of Addis Ababa have adopted budgets with dedicated funding for tobacco control. These funds are a milestone in sustainable financing for public health and can help support a healthy future for all Ethiopians.

These crucial investments in tobacco control bring further momentum to important progress already made in Ethiopia, including one of the strongest tobacco control laws in Africa and recent surveys showing progress in reducing tobacco use. Now, for the first time, the country's federal budget includes a dedicated tobacco control line of over 23 million Ethiopian birr (approximately $150,000) for the Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFDA). In addition, the Addis Ababa city government has dedicated around 120 million birr (approximately $750,000) to strengthen tobacco control in the capital, with resources channeled to the city's health regulatory authority and its 11 sub-cities.

These historic investments show what is possible when Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control back their commitment to public health with meaningful action. Now, the focus must turn to ensuring these funds are fully disbursed and used effectively to strengthen tobacco control policies. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids stands ready to support these important efforts.

# Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

## As War Fears Grow in Ethiopia, Women Soldiers Recount the Sexual Violence They Experienced

As the fear of war returns to northern Ethiopia, with the regional authorities urging former Tigray Defence Force (TDF) fighters to re-enlist, women who served are speaking out about the sexual abuse they experienced at the hands of their own commanders during the 2020-2022 conflict. Much of the focus on rights violations during the war has centred on the atrocities perpetrated by Ethiopian forces, and their Eritrean and Amhara allies, as they moved to crush a rebellion by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party, and the TDF militia that had emerged to defend their homeland. ... The New Humanitarian spoke to roughly two dozen TDF veterans to discuss the extent of sexual violence during the 2020-2022 conflict, and how the abuse was largely ignored by a high command that believed admitting such crimes would undermine the war effort. ... The abuse was especially galling as so many women had joined the TDF for protection from wartime sexual violence. Women comprised an estimated 30% of the TDF, making it one of the most gender inclusive armed forces in the world, yet despite their numbers, they found themselves in a "hostile environment", acknowledged Rahwa, a high-ranking female TDF member.

*(The New Humanitarian)*

## Maternal Mortality Doubles in Ebola Outbreak Zone as Mothers Avoid Hospitals

The number of women dying in childbirth has doubled in the region at the centre of the Ebola outbreak as expectant mothers avoid hospitals, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has said. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates. In Ituri province, the epicentre of the current outbreak of Ebola, 3.1 mothers died on average a week before the outbreak. Since the start of the outbreak in May, the rate has doubled to 6.2 women. The UNFPA has said that 63,700 pregnant women are due to give birth in the DRC in the midst of this outbreak, and doctors on the frontline warn that a strained healthcare system combined with fear of the disease is causing women to give birth at home. It is not just mothers who are avoiding hospitals. "We are having a lot of community deaths," Marie Belizaire, the WHO incident manager in Bunia said. "It means that the community is self medicating. They are not going to clinical care, they are not accessing the health system."

*(Telegraph)*

## Kenyan Forces Kill 11 Suspected Al-Shabaab Militants in Border Raid

Kenyan security forces killed at least 11 suspected Al-Shabaab militants during an intelligence-led operation near the Kenya-Somalia border on Sunday, police said. The operation was carried out by the elite Special Operations Group with aerial support after intelligence indicated that about 30 suspected militants had gathered at a makeshift camp in Mandera County to plan an attack on villages along the border, according to security officials. ... Security forces recovered three PKM machine guns, about 409 rounds of ammunition, and several documents believed to belong to Al-Shabaab. Among the documents were what authorities described as receipts for mandatory religious taxes allegedly collected by the militant group. Officials said the records could provide valuable intelligence into how Al-Shabaab finances its operations and administers areas under its control through taxation and checkpoint collections. The operation was aimed at disrupting the planned attack before it could be carried out and preventing another cross-border assault in Kenya's northeastern region, police said. The raid is part of an intensified campaign by Kenyan security agencies targeting militant networks operating along the porous Kenya-Somalia border, where authorities have stepped up intelligence-led operations to prevent attacks.

*(Garowe Online)*

## AFRICOM Links Security, Economic Development and Innovation in Africa Strategy Shift

The African Chiefs of Defense Conference (ACHOD) 2026 has concluded in Luanda, Angola, but U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) said the security priorities discussed during the summit will remain central to its engagement with African partners in the coming months and years. Held from 1 July, the conference brought together African and U.S. defense officials to discuss a range of regional security challenges. This year's agenda placed new emphasis on the link between defense and economic development, exploring how partnerships, industry, and innovation can support security solutions both on and beyond the battlefield. A new feature of this year's conference was a dedicated discussion on defense economics, including an industry roundtable that brought together senior U.S. officials and African and American private-sector leaders to address barriers to defense-industrial cooperation. ... Participants identified capital risk, bureaucratic hurdles, limited defense budgets, and competition as key obstacles, while highlighting the U.S.-backed Lobito Corridor railway linking Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a model for combining infrastructure investment with regional stability.

*(Addis Standard)*

## Term of the Day

### UNINSURABLE PROPERTY

**Definition**

Uninsurable property is a home that is not eligible for insurance because it needs extensive repairs. An uninsurable property is typically ineligible for a mortgage. Uninsurable property may refer to any real estate or other personal property that an insurer decides not to cover.

# Climate change isn't taking food off your table

By Bjorn Lomborg

No morning ritual is safe from climate alarm. The journal Nature just declared that coffee is "critically threatened by climate change" and described scientists racing to save your espresso from "extinction." The New York Times blames sky-high coffee prices on climate-driven supply crunches in Brazil and Vietnam. And your olive oil? CNN and Bloomberg wail about a seemingly permanent "crisis," with Mediterranean droughts foretelling a future in which an everyday staple vanishes for good.

The message is unmistakable: Global warming is coming for your family's dinner table, and only sweeping climate policy can save it. The message is also wrong. Cut through the hype, and food is not only more plentiful, but its inflation-adjusted cost is near historic lows relative to any time since 1900.

Start with coffee, supposedly on its deathbed. This year, global coffee production is expected to set yet another record — more than double the world's output of 50 years ago. Crops on the brink of extinction don't deliver record harvests. And despite recent price bumps, the real price of coffee has trended downward since 1960. Adjusted for inflation, coffee this century has cost on average half of what it cost in the last century.

How do outlets like the New York Times get it so wrong? By inexcusably ignoring inflation — comparing coffee prices from the 1970s, expressed in the dollars of that day, with prices expressed in today's dollars. By that standard, everything is at a record high, always.

Even Nature's own reporting on coffee undercuts its ominous headline detailing "how scientists are fighting to save it from extinction." Ethiopia keeps more than 12,000 arabica plants in living gene banks for breeding heat- and drought-tolerant varieties. "I believe we have enough gene pool to fight climate change," the Ethiopian plant geneticist leading the effort says. Farmers in hotter regions are already switching to hardier coffee species that professional tasters can't distinguish from fine arabica. That isn't extinction. It is what agriculture has always been: adaptation and improvement.

The supposed olive-oil crisis collapses under the same scrutiny. According to United Nations' food statistics, global olive-oil production has tripled since 1961 and doubled since 1990. Last year and this year, together with the exceptional 2018 harvest, mark all-time high record highs for production of olive oil. Meanwhile, inflation-adjusted prices have not increased and have even slightly declined since 1990. Again, better farming and expanded cultivation outweigh any climate effect.

Food scare stories follow a formula: Take an isolated weather event, attribute it to global warming, skip inflation adjustment and ignore the long-term data. Natural year-to-year swings driven by economics, trade policy and subsidies get repackaged as apocalyptic trends. Rarely mentioned: Much of the real price pressure on food comes from fertilizer and transport costs—inflated, ironically, by climate policies that raise fossil fuel energy bills for the essentials of farming.

Never mentioned: the ways climate change helps crops. Carbon dioxide is plant food, which is why commercial growers pump extra $CO_2$ into greenhouses to produce more tomatoes. NASA satellites show that the planet has been greening for four decades, meaning the world has added additional leaves with an area equivalent to that of at least two times the Amazon rainforest.

Climate change will, on balance, hurt agriculture. But its impact is dwarfed by rising productivity. One highly cited study in Nature finds that without any climate change, global food-calorie production will increase 51% between 2010 and 2050. With extreme, unrealistic warming, it still increases by 49%. Across all models and scenarios, the difference in calories available per person amounts to one-tenth of 1%.

That's because humanity keeps getting better at growing food. Cereal production has more than quintupled over the past century while real food prices have more than halved. The Green Revolution of the 1960s turned famine-prone nations into exporters through the widespread adoption of high-yield crop varieties, alongside expanded use of chemical fertilizers and improved irrigation. India, once written off as a basket case dependent on food aid, quadrupled its rice production between 1961 and 2023 and is today the world's largest rice exporter. Daily calorie availability per person has climbed from less than 2,200 in 1961 to more than 2,900 now. Global undernourishment has plummeted from roughly one in four people in the developing world in the early 1990s to fewer than 10% today.

The task now is to finish the job. Innovation should extend to under-researched crops like sorghum, cassava and millet — staples for two billion people in the developing world that have been largely ignored by commercial breeders. Investment in biotech, precision agriculture and drought-resistant crop varieties will do far more for the world's poor — and for your grocery bill—than any emissions target. We can keep feeding more people, better, by doubling down on what actually works: innovation.

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

*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:** Ermias Woldesenbet

**Education:** Degree in IT

**Company name:** Bakos Coffee

**Title:** Owner and Manager

**Founded in:** 2023

**What it does:** café service

**Hq:** Addis Ababa

**Number of Employees:** 17

**STARTUP CAPITAL**
*100,000 BIRR*

**CURRENT CAPITAL**
*Growing*

### BIG PICTURE

**Reason for starting the Business:** Passion

**Biggest perk of ownership:** I have built myself up through it

**Biggest strength:** Overcoming many problems without losing hope

**Biggest challenge:** Inflation

**Plan:** To export coffee

**First career:** Cement trading

### PERSONAL

**Most interested in meeting:** Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

**Most admired person:** My friend Henok

**Stress reducer:** Prayer

**Favorite pastime:** Doing sports

**Favorite book:** Any book that builds the mind

**Favorite destination:** USA

**Favorite automobile:** Audi

## DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

July. 11, 2026

የኢትዮጵያ ንግድ ባንክ
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

| CURRENCY | BUYING | SELLING |
|---|---|---|
| US DOLLAR | 158.63 | 161.80 |
| POUND STERLING | 208.52 | 212.69 |
| EURO | 181.36 | 184.99 |
| SWISS FRANK | 192.92 | 196.78 |
| SWEDISH KRONER | 16.08 | 16.40 |
| CHINESE YUAN | 22.91 | 23.36 |
| UAE DIRHAM | 43.19 | 44.05 |
| JAPANIS YEN | 0.95 | 0.97 |

# INTERVIEW

# ETHIOPIA'S CONSERVATION MILESTONE

***As Ethiopia marks the 60th anniversary of its Wildlife Conservation Authority, global attention is turning to Addis Ababa, where one of Africa's most respected wildlife experts will help frame the conversation on the future of conservation on the continent. Dr. Laurie Marker, founder and executive director of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, will travel to Addis Ababa on July 20 to take part in a panel discussion and join the anniversary celebration at the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum.***

***Dr. Marker is widely known for her decades-long commitment to protecting cheetahs, one of Africa's most endangered species. Through research, community-based conservation, anti-wildlife trafficking work and the use of modern technologies, she has helped shape some of the most important conservation models now being applied across Africa. Her work has also emphasized a central truth in wildlife protection: conservation cannot succeed if it is separated from the people who share land, water and livelihoods with wildlife.***

***Ethiopia's role in that conversation is especially significant. With its rich ecosystems, unique landscapes and endemic species, the country remains one of Africa's most important conservation frontiers. From highland habitats to lowland rangelands, Ethiopia's biodiversity is not only a national asset, but part of the ecological foundation of the wider Horn of Africa. That makes the country's conservation anniversary more than a symbolic milestone. It is also a reminder of the long-term commitment required to protect Africa's natural heritage in the face of climate change, habitat loss and growing pressure on natural resources.***

***In this interview, Dr. Marker reflects on Ethiopia's conservation journey, the importance of working with communities, the promise of technology, and the lessons African countries can learn from successful conservation models around the world. Her message is clear: conservation is not simply about saving animals. It is about protecting ecosystems, supporting rural livelihoods and ensuring that future generations inherit a living natural environment. Excerpts;***

**Capital: What does Ethiopia's 60th anniversary of wildlife conservation mean to you, and why is this milestone important for the continent?**

**Laurie Marker:** Having worked across eastern and southern Africa for over five decades, I've always viewed Ethiopia as one of the continent's conservation anchors, a country whose landscapes and wildlife influence the future of biodiversity far beyond its borders.

Ethiopia's 60th anniversary of wildlife conservation is a celebration of commitment. For sixty years, wildlife professionals, researchers, communities and government have worked to protect one of Africa's richest natural heritages.

For Africa, this anniversary demonstrates that conservation is a long-term investment. Strong institutions that endure political change, drought and increasing pressure on natural resources are essential for protecting biodiversity. Wildlife conservation isn't simply about saving animals. It's about securing the ecological future of our continent.

**Capital: How do you see Ethiopia's conservation strategy evolving as it moves toward a more integrated model that connects biodiversity, local communities and scientific innovation?**

**Laurie Marker:** The future of conservation is integration. Wildlife cannot be managed separately from people, agriculture, livestock, water or climate change.

Ethiopia has the opportunity to build a model where protected areas are connected by healthy working landscapes that support both wildlife and communities. Modern science, from genetics and satellite imagery, to AI and wildlife monitoring, can guide better decisions, but technology should complement, not replace, local knowledge.

The strongest conservation

strategies combine science, government leadership and community stewardship.

**Capital: Ethiopia is home to some of Africa's most unique ecosystems and endemic species. Why is the country so critical to the future of wildlife conservation in Africa?**

**Laurie Marker:** Ethiopia is one of Africa's biological treasures. Its highlands, forests, wetlands and arid landscapes support remarkable species such as the Ethiopian wolf, cheetah, Walia ibex and gelada. Because Ethiopia sits at the crossroads of several ecological regions, conserving its landscapes also protects wider ecological processes across the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Protecting Ethiopia's biodiversity isn't just important for Ethiopia, it's important for Africa and for the world.

**Capital: From your experience, what is the strongest link between wildlife protection and**

# INTERVIEW

local community livelihoods?

**Laurie Marker:** The strongest link is coexistence. People living alongside wildlife experience both its benefits and its costs. Conservation succeeds only when communities receive real benefits while having practical tools to reduce conflict.

Through CCF's work in Namibia, we found that helping farmers protect their livestock through our Future Farmers of Africa programme dramatically changed attitudes toward predators like the cheetah. When communities thrive, wildlife also benefits.

**Capital: How can conservation create real economic value for communities through sustainable development and ecotourism?**

**Laurie Marker:** Conservation creates lasting value when local people become partners in the economy rather than spectators.

Ecotourism generates employment, supports local businesses and creates incentives to protect wildlife and healthy ecosystems. But communities must also receive ownership opportunities, training and a fair share of the benefits.

Habitat restoration, sustainable agriculture and nature-based enterprises can improve livelihoods while restoring biodiversity.

Healthy ecosystems are productive economies.

**Capital: What lessons can Ethiopia and other African countries learn from successful conservation models used elsewhere in the world?**

**Laurie Marker:** The most important lesson is that conservation models should be adapted, not copied.

Successful programmes share common principles: strong science, community participation, clear government policies and fair distribution of benefits.

Namibia's communal conservancies, for example, have shown how communities can become active wildlife managers while benefiting from conservation. At CCF, we have adapted this model and are now helping to develop conservancy approaches in Somaliland and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa.

Ultimately, investing in people is just as important as investing in wildlife.

**Capital: You have spent decades working on cheetah conservation. What are the biggest threats facing cheetahs today, and how should governments respond?**

**Laurie Marker:** The greatest threats facing cheetahs are habitat loss and fragmentation. Most cheetahs live outside protected areas, where they increasingly come into conflict with people.

Illegal wildlife trafficking, declining prey populations, genetic vulnerability and climate change add further pressure. In the Horn of Africa, the illegal pet trade continues to remove cubs from the wild, with most dying before reaching adulthood.

Governments must protect connected landscapes, strengthen law enforcement, support conflict mitigation and work closely with local communities.

**Capital: How important is community-based conservation in protecting endangered species like the cheetah?**

**Laurie Marker:** Community conservation is essential. Cheetahs move across farms, rangelands and community areas, so conservation cannot depend on protected areas alone.

Communities need practical tools such as improved livestock management, livestock guarding dogs, early-warning systems and locally managed conservancies. When people become conservation partners rather than bystanders, wildlife has a future.

**Capital: What role do anti-wildlife trafficking efforts play in modern conservation, and where are the biggest gaps?**

**Laurie Marker:** Wildlife trafficking is one of today's greatest conservation challenges. It threatens biodiversity while supporting organised criminal networks.

For cheetahs, the illegal pet trade is especially devastating. For every cub that reaches a buyer, four or five usually die during capture or transport, and most surviving cubs live only a year or two because they receive inadequate care.

The greatest gaps remain cross-border cooperation, intelligence sharing, specialised law enforcement and reducing consumer demand.

Stopping trafficking requires governments, communities and international partners to work together.

**Capital: How are new technologies, including AI, changing the way conservation work is done on the ground?**

**Laurie Marker:** Technology is transforming conservation. At CCF, we use satellite collars, camera traps, genetics, drones and remote sensing to better understand wildlife and reduce conflict. AI is helping us analyse enormous amounts of data, detect patterns more quickly and improve early-warning systems for farmers. Technology will never replace experienced field biologists or local knowledge, but it is becoming one of conservation's most powerful tools.

**Capital: How can African governments, researchers and communities work together more effectively to protect biodiversity at scale?**

**Laurie Marker:** Protecting biodiversity requires genuine partnership. Governments provide leadership and policy, scientists provide evidence, and communities provide daily stewardship of the land. None can succeed alone. Africa needs stronger regional collaboration, shared monitoring systems and greater investment in young conservation professionals. The future of African conservation will depend less on individual organisations and more on how well we work together across borders, disciplines and communities.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**General**

The premises shall be designed and approved for commercial office use, be in good structural and operational condition, comply with all applicable laws and building regulations of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and meet internationally accepted standards for safety, security, accessibility and functionality.

To the greatest extent possible, the proposed premises should satisfy the minimum requirements set out below.

| **Building Related Specifications** | |
|---|---|
| Building type | Modern commercial office building or office complex suitable for international organizations. Stand-alone building preferred. |
| Office Area | Approximately 1,650 m² of usable office space (or equivalent), capable of accommodating approximately 134 workstations, management offices, meeting rooms, conference facilities, reception, archives, storage rooms, ICT/server room, training room, and staff welfare facilities. |
| Building Layout | Flexible floor layout allowing open-plan offices and enclosed offices with minimal structural modifications. |
| Floors | Single or multi-storey building with adequate passenger lifts where applicable. |
| Structural Condition | Building shall be structurally sound, well maintained, weatherproof and free from water leakage or significant defects. |
| Roof | Weatherproof roof with no water leakage. |
| Flooring | High-quality office flooring suitable for commercial office use and capable of supporting office furniture and ICT equipment. |
| Ceiling Height | Minimum clear ceiling height of approximately 2.7 metres. |
| Ventilation / Air Conditioning | Fully air-conditioned office space or suitable HVAC system with adequate ventilation. |
| Lighting | Adequate internal and external lighting throughout the premises. |
| Reception Area | Dedicated reception and visitor waiting area. |
| Meeting Facilities | Meeting rooms of various sizes together with at least one conference/training room. |
| ICT Facilities | Dedicated secure server room, telecommunications room, structured cabling, fibre optic internet availability and sufficient electrical capacity for ICT infrastructure. Available roof space for installing VSAT antenna. |
| Archive / Storage | Dedicated archive and secure storage rooms. |
| Sanitary Facilities | Adequate male, female and accessible toilets proportional to occupancy, together with kitchen/pantry facilities. |
| Accessibility | Accessible for persons with disabilities, including ramps, lifts (where applicable), accessible toilets and barrier-free access. |
| Parking | Secure on-site parking for approximately 20-25 vehicles, including official UNHCR fleet vehicles, staff and visitors. |
| Utilities | Reliable commercial electricity supply with backup generator, adequate water supply, sewer connection and telecommunications infrastructure. |
| Fire Protection | Fire detection and alarm system, portable fire extinguishers, emergency exits and evacuation routes compliant with applicable fire safety regulations. |
| Security Features | Secure perimeter wall or fencing, controlled vehicle and pedestrian access, guard house, CCTV capability, security lighting and access control system. |
| Building Management | Professionally managed building with regular maintenance arrangements. |

**Installations/ modifications**

UNHCR Representation in Ethiopia may require minor non-structural modifications to the selected office premises to support its operational requirements. Such modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Installation of office partitions and workstations;
- ICT and telecommunications infrastructure, including structured cabling, fibre optic connectivity, server room equipment and wireless access points;
- Access control systems, CCTV cameras, security screening equipment and other security installations;
- Electrical upgrades, including UPS systems, generator connections and additional power outlets;
- Installation of meeting room facilities, audio-visual equipment and signage;
- Installation of shelving, archive systems and storage facilities;
- Minor alterations to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities; and
- Other office-related improvements necessary for UNHCR operations.
- Establishing a safe room.
- Minor alterations to have various vehicle and pedestrian emergency exits

Any modifications shall be subject to the prior written approval of the Landlord and shall not affect the structural integrity of the building.

Unless otherwise agreed in the Lease Agreement, permanent improvements funded by UNHCR shall remain part of the premises upon termination of the lease without compensation, while movable equipment and fixtures installed by UNHCR may be removed at the end of the lease, provided that any damage resulting from such removal is repaired by UNHCR.

The successful Landlord shall permit UNHCR and its authorized contractors reasonable access to the premises to undertake the agreed installations and modifications in accordance with the terms of the Lease Agreement.

**Periodic Repair/Maintenance**

The Landlord shall be responsible for the periodic repair, preventive maintenance and replacement of all structural and building components resulting from normal wear and tear throughout the lease period.

This shall include, but not be limited to:

- Structural elements of the building;
- Roofs, exterior walls and windows;
- Internal and external painting, plastering and finishing works, as required;
- Plumbing, drainage, sewerage and water supply systems;
- Electrical installations and main distribution systems serving the building;
- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, where provided;
- Passenger lifts and other building service installations;
- Fire detection, alarm and firefighting systems;
- Common areas, corridors, staircases and sanitary facilities;
- Parking areas, access roads, pavements and landscaping within the compound;
- Perimeter walls, gates, fencing and external lighting; and
- Any other building infrastructure necessary to maintain the premises in a safe, secure and fully operational condition.

The Landlord shall ensure that the premises remain in good operational condition throughout the lease period and comply with all applicable building, fire safety, occupational health and safety, and environmental regulations.

Routine cleaning, housekeeping, and day-to-day maintenance of the leased office space shall be the responsibility of UNHCR, while repairs arising from structural defects, normal wear and tear, or failure of building systems shall remain the responsibility of the Landlord, unless otherwise agreed in the Lease Agreement.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**General**

The proposed premises should be suitable to accommodate the operational requirements of the UNHCR Country Office in Addis Ababa, comprising approximately 134 personnel, together with meeting facilities, support services, secure parking, and associated office infrastructure. The premises should comply with applicable Ethiopian building regulations and generally meet the following requirements.

**Estate agent fees**

Where a property is submitted through a real estate agent, any commission, brokerage fees or other agency charges shall be borne solely by the Landlord. UNHCR will not be responsible for the payment of any brokerage, commission or agency fees.

**Commercial Offer**

This Expression of Interest (EOI) is conducted solely for market assessment purposes.

Interested parties are not required to submit financial proposals at this stage. Shortlisted property owners and/or authorized real estate agents may subsequently be invited to participate in a formal competitive procurement process, during which detailed commercial proposals, including rental rates and other financial information, will be requested.

**Site Information**

Interested parties are requested to complete the attached Property Information Form (Annex 1) for each property proposed and attach clear colour photographs of the exterior, interior office spaces, common areas, compound, parking facilities and any other significant features of the premises. Interested parties must ensure that the proposed properties are minimum 20 meters away from public parking area.

Properties that substantially meet UNHCR's operational, technical, security and commercial requirements may be shortlisted for site inspections by the UNHCR Multi-Functional Team (MFT) as part of the market assessment process.

**Disclaimer**

This Expression of Interest is issued solely to identify suitable office premises available in the market and does not constitute a solicitation, offer, or commitment by UNHCR to lease any property. UNHCR reserves the right to accept or reject any submission, to shortlist properties at its sole discretion, and to cancel or modify this market survey at any time without incurring any obligation toward participating parties.

**Company details (filled once)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Company name: | |
| Position/Title | |
| Business registration number: | |
| TIN number: | |
| VAT number: | |
| Contact name: | |
| Contact email: | |
| Contact mobile: | |
| Office Address: | |
| Property Owner or Authorized Real Estate Agent | |
| Landlord or Agent: | |

**Property details (filled per property)**

| **Information** | |
|---|---|
| Company/ Real Estate agent name: | |
| Property Owner name: | |
| Property type (Commercial Office Building / Office Complex / Mixed-Use Building): | |
| Year of Construction | |
| Building Condition | |
| **Availability** | |
| Earliest Date Available for Occupancy (DD/MM/YYYY) | |
| **Commercial Information** | |
| Proposed Monthly Rental (ETB/USD) (Indicative only, if requested) | |
| Service Charges (if applicable) | |
| **Location** | |
| Building Name | |
| Street Address | |
| Sub-City | |
| Woreda | |
| Google Maps Link / GPS Coordinates | |
| **Office Premises** | |
| Gross Building Area (m²) | |
| Net Usable Office Area (m²) | |
| Number of Floors | |
| Description of Office Layout | |
| Number of Meeting / Conference Rooms | |
| Reception Area Available (Yes/No) | |
| Server / ICT Room Available (Yes/No) | |
| Archive / Storage Space Available (Yes/No) | |
| **Parking** | |
| Number of Secure Parking Spaces Available | |
| Parking Surface Area (m²), if available | |
| **Building Services and Utilities** | |
| Commercial Electricity Available (Yes/No) | |
| Backup Generator Available (Yes/No) | |
| Water Supply Available (Yes/No) | |
| HVAC / Air Conditioning Available (Yes/No) | |
| Passenger Lift(s) Available (Yes/No) | |
| Fibre Optic Internet Available (Yes/No) | |
| **Safety and Security** | |
| Perimeter Wall/Fence (Yes/No) | |
| Guard House (Yes/No) | |
| CCTV System Installed (Yes/No) | |
| Fire Detection & Alarm System (Yes/No) | |
| Firefighting System Installed (Yes/No) | |
| Accessible for Persons with Disabilities (Yes/No) | |

# Society

# Private property cannot be taken without just compensation

By Zewdu Gebeyehu Tesfaye

For more than five decades, Ethiopia has carried one of its most unresolved urban injustices: the nationalization of private houses under Proclamation No. 47 of 1975. What began as a revolutionary measure under the Derg has remained an open wound for thousands of property owners in Addis Ababa and other cities who say they were never properly compensated for what the state took from them.

The issue is not difficult to understand. If a government takes private property for public use, it must pay just compensation. That is a basic principle of fairness and a cornerstone of any lawful property system. Yet in Ethiopia, many old government houses were not built by the state. They were built by private citizens, then transferred to government ownership under a law that promised compensation but failed to deliver it. Fifty years later, that promise still has not been honored.

That failure matters because property rights are not a minor technical matter. They are tied to dignity, security, inheritance, investment, and trust in government. When people build houses with their own labor and resources, they do so with the expectation that the law will protect what they have created. When the state later takes those homes and keeps collecting rent without settling the original claim, the result is not just legal confusion. It is injustice.

Proclamation No. 47 of 1975 nationalized so-called “extra houses”, Urban buildings and transferred ownership of urban rental properties to the government. It also forced owners to register and hand over those houses within 30 days. The law abolished the private landlord-tenant relationship and replaced it with state control through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing or urban cooperatives. In return, it expressly promised fair compensation.

That compensation was never fully paid.

Instead, the government continued to collect rent from the houses for decades. In effect, it benefited from the very property it had taken while leaving the original owners waiting for payment that never came. That is the heart of the dispute, and it remains unresolved today.

The problem became even more complicated because the law did not clearly define the full size or structure of a dwelling house. As a result, in some cases, part of a private home was classified as an “extra house” and taken by the state. That meant some owners were left living in their own houses together with government tenants or lessors, often for decades and against their will. In practical terms, the state did not only take buildings. It also disrupted households, split property use, and reduced the land available to original owners for their own dwelling purposes.

This is not a small administrative mistake. It is a long-term violation of property rights and personal dignity.

The impact goes beyond ownership papers. Housing is where families live, grow, and pass on wealth. If part of a private home is taken and turned into government property without compensation, the owner loses more than a room. They lose control, privacy, income, and often the ability to use the remaining land properly. That is why many owners have continued to seek justice for decades. Their claim has never been just about money. It has been about restoring what was taken unfairly.

There have been some attempts to correct the problem. Under the EPRDF, extra houses were returned to true owners in Tigray, showing that the injustice could be addressed when political will existed. That was an important step and should have been a model for wider reform. But outside that example, the problem was never fully solved. In many cities, including Addis Ababa, the old ownership dispute was left hanging.

The current Prosperity Party-led government has also not resolved the matter. In some cases, it has made it worse by demolishing older government houses in the name of corridor development without first settling the compensation issue. That approach is deeply troubling. Development is necessary, but development cannot be used to erase legal obligations. A city can be modernized without violating the rights of the people who built its neighborhoods in the first place.

The government’s position appears to rest on the idea that these houses became state property long ago and therefore belong permanently to the state. But that argument ignores the central promise of Proclamation No. 47 of 1975 Article 18(1): compensation. If the state took ownership on the condition that it would pay fair value, and that payment was never made, then the moral and legal debt has not disappeared. Time does not erase an unpaid obligation. It only makes the failure more serious.

This is why the issue must be treated as more than a historical dispute. It is a live question of justice. The government cannot continue collecting rent for decades, demolishing houses in the name of development, and still claim that the original owners have no standing. If compensation was promised and never paid, then the owners still have a legitimate claim.

The solution should begin with recognition. The government should openly acknowledge that many private owners were never fairly compensated for extra houses taken under the 1975 law. It should also acknowledge that some owners were deprived of rooms inside their own dwellings and of the land they were supposed to use for housing. These are not imaginary grievances. They are concrete losses that have affected real people for generations.

Second, the state should restore property where restoration is still possible. In cases where parts of a dwelling were wrongly classified as extra house space, the original owners should be given back what was taken, if it can be returned without causing new injustice. Where that is no longer possible, fair compensation must be paid. That is the basic balance required by law and ethics.

Third, any urban development program, including corridor projects and demolition plans, must begin with a proper compensation framework. It is not enough to say that a structure is old or outdated. If the government is still benefiting from property that was never fully paid for, then it has no moral authority to demolish it as though the debt never existed.

The principle here is simple but powerful: private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation. That principle should apply whether the property is a house (either Normal rectangular block or Villa House), a room, a building or a parcel of urban land. It should apply whether the taking happened yesterday or 50 years ago. And it should apply whether the government is building roads, corridors, or public facilities.

A government that respects the law must also respect the people whose labor, savings, and sacrifice built the homes it now controls. Urban renewal should not mean historical amnesia. Development should not mean dispossession. Modernization should not be built on unpaid debts.

Ethiopia has an opportunity to correct a long-standing wrong. Doing so would not weaken development. It would strengthen legitimacy. It would show that the state can grow cities without erasing the rights of its citizens. It would show that law means something even when decades have passed. If Ethiopia wants a truly modern urban future, it must begin by settling the old one fairly. That starts with a simple commitment: private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation.

***The writer can be reached via zewdu.492@gmail.com***

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

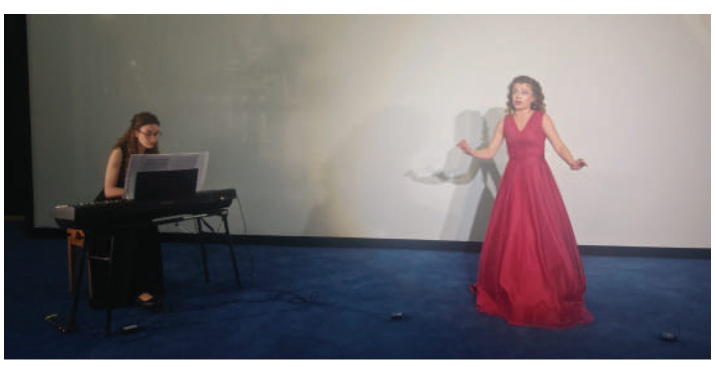
# Art & Culture

## Russian Embassy frames Addis concert as cultural diplomacy and youth talent showcase

The Russian Embassy in Ethiopia used a classical concert in the capital to spotlight cultural diplomacy, youth talent and closer people-to-people ties, with Ambassador Yevgeny Terekhin saying the performance reflected shared respect for culture, education and humanitarian cooperation.

Speaking at the concert in Addis Ababa, the ambassador said the presence of young artists from the Moscow State P.I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory symbolized the enduring value of Russian musical education and the importance of cultural exchange. He said the event was not simply a performance, but part of a broader effort to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen ties between the two countries.

"It is deeply symbolic that today you will witness a performance by three representatives of the Moscow State Conservatory named after the great Russian composer Petr Tchaikovsky," Terekhin said. He described the institution as a flagship of Russian and global musical education and said art should remain a space for open, equitable dialogue rather than political division.



The ambassador said Russia continues to support the preservation of a unified global cultural heritage and the depoliticization of humanitarian ties. He also said Ethiopia's long history of statehood and national identity makes it a natural partner in promoting sovereign cultural development.

The concert, held at Adwa Victory Memorial, featured young laureates and students from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the Yuri Bashmet Academy. The program included works by Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Rachmaninoff, Mozart, Puccini and Mendelssohn, performed by Polina Perovskaya, Daria Tagirova and Daria Poleschuk.

Terekhin said the Russian Federation sees cultural diplomacy as a practical instrument for shaping a more just multipolar world based on mutual understanding among peoples. He noted that Russia's partnership with Ethiopia is rooted in a long history of respect and has gained additional depth through cooperation in culture and education.

He also highlighted the educational value of the project, saying performances by visiting Russian artists can open new opportunities for talented Ethiopian youth interested in specialized study in Russia. He described such exchanges as direct investments in the next generation and in the broader foundation of national identity.

The concert was presented under the international humanitarian project "Rising Stars," which was implemented in Ethiopia under the auspices of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russkiy Mir Foundation. The initiative is aimed at promoting Russian musical culture abroad and building closer ties through the arts.

Organizers said the event drew a strong audience and was received warmly by guests, underscoring the continuing role of classical music in Ethiopia's cultural calendar. The performance also highlighted the growing visibility of international artistic events in Addis Ababa and the use of culture as a bridge between governments and peoples.

## Abere Shiferaw launches "የዕድሜ ገበያ" short story collection

Author Abere Shiferaw launched his new short story collection, የዕድሜ ገበያ (Age Market), in Addis Ababa on Saturday, July 18, 2026 drawing readers and guests to a literary evening marked by storytelling, music and informal discussion.

The launch took place at the Urban Center in Meskel Square, where the event combined the book introduction with coffee, snacks, games and entertainment in a relaxed cultural setting. Organizers described the gathering as an evening meant to celebrate literature while bringing readers closer to the author's new work.

የዕድሜ ገበያ is presented as a collection of short stories that explores deep social realities. The book's title, which translates literally as "Age Market," suggests themes centered on the human experience, social change and the pressures of everyday life.

The launch comes as local literary events continue to play a growing role in promoting Ethiopian writing and creating public spaces for conversation around culture and society. Such gatherings often serve not only as book promotions but also as opportunities to connect authors with readers and to highlight new voices in contemporary literature.

The event poster featured the book cover, the author's portrait and selected text, signaling a work positioned around reflection and social observation. With its mix of literature and community engagement, the launch offered a platform for both creative expression and public conversation.

Abere's new collection enters a literary landscape where short fiction remains an important form for examining social issues in concise and powerful ways. The launch was attended with enthusiasm, according to the announcement, and was presented as a special evening for those interested in books, ideas and artistic exchange.

The new launch also follows the earlier release of Abere Shiferaw's first book, የበርበሬ ዐውሎ ነፋስ (Chili Peppers Cyclone), which was officially unveiled exactly last year in July 2025, at Walya Publishing House.

# The political economy of leverage in making business

Alazar Kebede

In todays business world leverage is a powerful tool that helps companies grow and succeed. Leverage is not about borrowing money to make more money. It is also about having influence over the government getting treatment having the latest technology and being part of important networks. Companies that are good at using these types of leverage are more likely to succeed. To understand how businesses are created and grow we need to look at how the market the government and power relationships work

The traditional way of thinking about business says that leverage is mainly about borrowing money. Companies borrow money to invest grow and make their shareholders happy. Some economists like Modigliani and Miller said that in a market it does not matter if a company borrows money or not.. In the real world things are not perfect. There are taxes people do not have all the information they need. There are rules that companies have to follow. This means that borrowing money can be a factor in determining which companies are successful. Borrowing money can help companies grow quickly. It can also make them unstable if they borrow too much. We saw this happen during the financial crisis in 2008.

If we look at business from an economy perspective we can see that not all companies have the same access to leverage. Big companies have power because the government needs their investments, jobs and taxes. This creates a relationship where big companies can influence government policies to help themselves. For example big companies often lobby the government for tax breaks, subsidies and favorable rules. This is what Lindblom called the " position of business" in capitalist societies. The government is often hesitant to make rules that might scare away investors.

he big technology companies like Google, Amazon and Meta are an example of this. They have a lot of power not because of their money but also because they control a lot of data, digital infrastructure and networks. This makes it hard for other companies to compete with them. They can also influence the rules that are made about things like privacy, competition and taxes. This is an example of how leverage can be used to gain power and influence.

Some people argue that this concentration of leverage is bad for competition and democracy. Piketty said that capitalism naturally leads to a concentration of wealth which gives some people power and influence. When wealth is concentrated companies with a lot of leverage can use it to get more power and influence. This makes it hard for smaller companies and startups to compete. Financial leverage can also create risks. The financial crisis in 2008 showed us what can happen when companies borrow much money.

However leverage is not all bad. If it is regulated properly it can help entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth. When small businesses have access to credit they can invest in technologies create jobs and contribute to the economy. Development economists have long said that access to credit is essential for development. Governments can also use policies to make sure that everyone has access to leverage. Public development banks, credit guarantees and targeted subsidies can help reduce market failures and support industries.

To make this work we need good governance. We need institutions that can balance the need to help businesses grow with the need to prevent them from getting too powerful. We need rules to prevent monopolies regulate finance and make sure that companies are transparent. We also need to regulate the ways that companies try to influence the government. If we can do this leverage can be a tool for creating prosperity that is shared by everyone. The rise of social and governance frameworks shows that people are starting to expect more from businesses. Companies are no longer just judged on how money they make but also on their impact on society and the environment.

In the end leverage is a part of the political economy of business. While financial leverage is still important for companies to grow and compete other types of leverage like influence, technological dominance and institutional power are also crucial. The way that leverage is distributed is a matter of power relationships between companies, the government and society. If we do not regulate leverage it can lead to inequality, undermine competition and threaten democracy.. If we govern it well it can help create innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth. The challenge, for policymakers is to make sure that the benefits of leverage are shared fairly by everyone.

# From economic reform to social reform: Why Ethiopia must now turn its minimum wage promise into action

By Solomon Zena

When members of Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives recently questioned Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed about the rising cost of living and the economic pressures facing households, the discussion returned to one of the country's longest unresolved labour policy questions: when will Ethiopia establish a functioning national minimum wage system?

The Prime Minister's response marked an important moment in that debate. He acknowledged that Ethiopia's economic challenge is not only about inflation but also about declining purchasing power—the growing gap between what people earn and what they need to maintain a decent standard of living.

That distinction is crucial.

For millions of Ethiopian workers, the problem is not simply that prices are rising. The deeper concern is that wages have not kept pace with the increasing cost of food, housing, transport and other essential needs. A person may have employment and a regular income, yet still struggle to afford basic necessities.

This is why the minimum wage debate must now move beyond discussion. Ethiopia's economic reform agenda needs a social reform component—one that ensures economic transformation also improves the lives of the people whose labour sustains the economy.

For years, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) has advocated for the establishment of a national minimum wage system. This is not a new demand, nor is it merely a trade union aspiration. It is a legal commitment already recognized under Ethiopia's Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019.

The central question facing Ethiopia today is no longer whether workers need wage protection. The question is how the country can introduce a minimum wage system that protects workers, supports employers and contributes to sustainable economic development.

A Legal Framework Waiting to Be Implemented

Ethiopia already has the legal foundation for a minimum wage system.

Article 55 of Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019 provides for the establishment of a tripartite Minimum Wage Board composed of representatives from the government, employers and trade unions. The Board is mandated to determine and periodically revise minimum wages based on economic realities, including productivity, labour market conditions, the cost of living and other relevant social and economic factors.

However, years after the proclamation came into effect, the Board has yet to become fully operational.

The delay has taken place during an exceptionally difficult period. Ethiopia has experienced multiple economic and social challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, internal conflicts, climate-related shocks, global supply disruptions and inflationary pressures. At the same time, the country has embarked on ambitious macroeconomic reforms aimed at strengthening economic stability and growth.

These circumstances explain why some policymakers and businesses have expressed caution.

Concerns that a minimum wage introduced without adequate preparation could increase production costs, affect competitiveness or discourage investment deserve serious consideration. A wage system designed without reliable data, proper consultation and gradual implementation could create unintended consequences, particularly for labour-intensive sectors.

However, postponing action indefinitely also has serious consequences.

The Economic Cost of Leaving Workers Behind

Across Ethiopia's labour market, many workers in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, hospitality, industrial parks and private security continue to face the challenge of surviving on wages that have not matched the rising cost of living.

Consider a young worker in one of Ethiopia's industrial parks. She spends long hours operating machinery that contributes to the country's export ambitions. Yet after paying for transportation, rent, food and household expenses, little remains for savings, healthcare or improving her family's future.

This reality raises a fundamental question: can an economy achieve lasting transformation while a large segment of its workforce struggles to afford a decent life?

Workers are not only beneficiaries of economic growth. They are among its most important contributors. Their productivity, commitment and skills create value for businesses and support national development.

When workers experience declining purchasing power, the consequences extend beyond households. Reduced motivation, financial insecurity and increased economic pressure can affect productivity and social stability.

Economic reform cannot be considered complete if the people who drive economic activity are unable to share in its benefits.

Moving from Debate to Implementation

The Prime Minister's recognition of purchasing power as a central economic concern provides an opportunity to move the minimum wage discussion forward.

A minimum wage system should not be viewed as a barrier to economic growth. If properly designed, it can become an instrument for improving productivity, reducing working poverty and creating a more predictable labour market.

Recent discussions among government institutions, employers, workers and development partners indicate that the debate is becoming more constructive. Policy dialogues supported by institutions including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Ethiopia Office and other partners have brought together key stakeholders to examine how Ethiopia's macroeconomic reforms can be aligned with labour market protection.

One important message emerging from these discussions is that a minimum wage system must be evidence-based and developed through genuine social dialogue.

Employers have raised legitimate concerns about the current economic environment, including inflationary pressures and the ability of businesses to absorb additional labour costs. However, many also recognize that a predictable wage-setting mechanism can provide clarity and contribute to responsible business practices.

The solution is not to choose between workers and businesses. Ethiopia needs a system that recognizes that sustainable economic growth depends on both.

Minimum Wage as an Economic Strategy

The global experience demonstrates that minimum wage systems can function effectively when they are carefully designed.

More than ninety percent of International Labour Organization member States operate some form of minimum wage mechanism. Although models differ from country to country, successful systems generally share common features: evidence-based decision-making, regular review, and meaningful participation of workers and employers.

Ethiopia does not need to copy another country's approach. It needs a system that reflects its own economic realities.

A practical starting point could be phased implementation, beginning with sectors where workers are particularly vulnerable and where reliable labour market information can be developed. Manufacturing, construction, hospitality, agriculture and private security could provide important areas for initial assessment.

Such an approach would allow policymakers to monitor impacts on employment, investment and competitiveness while gradually expanding protection to more workers.

The Global Market Is Also Changing

The importance of wage protection extends beyond domestic concerns.

As Ethiopia seeks greater integration into global markets and aims to attract responsible investment, labour standards are becoming increasingly important. International buyers and investors are paying closer attention to working conditions, responsible supply chains and compliance with internationally recognized labour standards.

A transparent and credible minimum wage system can therefore support Ethiopia's competitiveness.

It can demonstrate that the country is committed not only to attracting investment but also to ensuring that economic growth is built on decent work principles.

Three Immediate Steps

Ethiopia now has an opportunity to transform the minimum wage debate into concrete action.

First, the government should formally establish and adequately support the Minimum Wage Board provided for under Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019.

Second, the Board should undertake comprehensive labour market research, including analysis of living costs, productivity levels, sectoral conditions and wage patterns.

Third, Ethiopia should introduce minimum wage levels gradually, with regular reviews and continuous dialogue among government, employers and workers.

These steps would provide confidence to both workers and businesses while ensuring that wage policy is based on evidence rather than assumptions.

The Time for Action Has Arrived

Economic reforms are ultimately measured not only by growth figures, investment flows or macroeconomic indicators. They are also measured by whether ordinary citizens experience meaningful improvements in their daily lives.

A minimum wage system will not solve all of Ethiopia's economic challenges. It will not eliminate inflation or unemployment overnight. But when designed carefully and implemented through social dialogue, it can become an important tool for reducing working poverty, strengthening productivity and promoting inclusive growth.

The Prime Minister's recent remarks before Parliament have created a valuable policy opportunity. The legal framework already exists. Workers have consistently raised their concerns. Employers increasingly recognize the need for predictable labour market rules. Development partners continue to support evidence-based reforms.

The remaining challenge is implementation.

As Ethiopia advances its economic transformation agenda and strengthens its role within the international labour community, operationalizing the Minimum Wage Board would send a powerful message: economic growth and social justice are not competing goals. They are complementary foundations of sustainable development.

The debate over whether Ethiopia needs a minimum wage is nearing its end.

The next chapter should be about building one responsibly—through evidence, gradual implementation and genuine social dialogue that protects workers, supports businesses and strengthens Ethiopia's economic future.

*Solomon Zena is a Communication Officer at the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU). The views expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily reflect the official position of CETU.*


United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

# REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of the EOI:** **Provision of Interior office Space Fit out / Renovation for User Service Unit (USU) in the Digital Information Technology Management Section (DITMS)** | |
| **Date of this EOI: 15 July 2026** | **Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: 31 July 2026** |
| **EOI Number: EOIUNECA24553** | **E-mail Address: gebreegziabhers@un.org;** |
| **Address EOI response by fax or e-mail to the Attention of: Solomon Gebreegziabher** | |
| **Fax Number:** | |
| **UNSPSC Code: 72000000 - Building and Facility Construction and Maintenance Services**<br>**72153600 - Interior finishing and furnishing and remodeling services** | |

## DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) seeks interested and qualified vendors to design, demolition, supply, installation, and finishing works, including electrical and data line modifications and interior upgrades, to deliver a fully functional office space in accordance with the approved design and UNECA standards.

The general objective of this project is to transform the existing office space into a modern, functional, and visually accessible client service environment that enhances workflow efficiency, improves user experience, and reflects a professional and transparent service delivery setting, addressing the general need for both aesthetic enhancement and functional improvement to meet modern workplace standards.

Scope of Services:

The scope includes partitions, floor finishes, ceiling finishes, light fixtures, power and data lines and points' reconfiguration and window blinds, all of which require upgrading or reworking.

The Commission seeks to enter a 03 (three) months contract with the successful Contractor.

A detailed SCOPE OF WORK (SOW) will be included in the upcoming solicitation documents issued after this EOI closes.

Please note that the UNECA is precluded from entering into a contract with a firm that is not fully registered with UNGM. Firms interested in responding to this invitation but not currently fully registered as vendors with UNGM are encouraged to register before submission of the bid. Further details may be obtained by visiting **https://www.ungm.org/Vendor/Registration.**

There is no need to submitt any document at this point. To see the details of published REOI, kindly use the link below.

**https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org.Depts.ptd/files/pdf/eoi22522.pdf**

**PLEASE NOTE: Electronic expression of interests submitted by suppliers in response to this REOI would be available in this link: https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/307298**

**In case you have difficulties submitting your interest electronically, please contact gebreegziabhers@un.org directly for instructions.**

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

# TENDER NOTICE

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

| # | Tender Subject | Closing Date |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **READVERTISED -REQUEST FOR QUOTATION REF. NO.: UNHCR RFQ 3231**<br>**FOR WATER LINE SYSTEM UPGRADING AND MAINTENANCE AT UNHCR MELKADIDA SUB OFFICE COMPOUND** | **24th July 2026 17:00 Hrs. EAT** |

**Tender Document Request Instructions**

Interested suppliers must request the tender documents for by email only.

Please send your request to **ethmksms@unhcr.org** clearly stating the respective Reference Number in the email subject line.

**Submission of bids** must also be made through **ethmksms@unhcr.org**

Tender documents will be available for collection from Monday , 20th July 2026, during the following working hours:

- **Monday to Thursday: 09:00 -12:00 and 14:00-16:00**

Friday: 09:00 - 14:00

All tender submissions must comply with the requirements stated in the tender documents and must be **typewritten, computer-generated, or in PDF format**. **Submissions received after the deadline (24 July 2026) will not be accepted.**

**SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SERVICES,**

**MELKADIDA, ETHIOPIA**

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

# TENDER NOTICE

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

| SN | Tender Subject | Closing Date |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**<br>**RFP No.: UNHCR RFP 3186,1 - Extension**<br>FOR SOIL TESTING, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION OF FOUNDATIONS FOR EIGHT (8) TWENTY-METRE-HIGH MONOPOLE MASTS IN TSORE AND BAMBASI REFUGEE CAMPS, BENISHANGUL-GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE, INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION FROM SEBETA (SHEGER CITY), ERECTION, INSTALLATION, SOLAR POWER SYSTEMS, AND FINAL RIGGING OF EQUIPMENT ON THE MASTS UNDER A DESIGN-BUILD/TURNKEY MODALITY.<br>UNHCR Assosa Office has scheduled the official mandatory site visit for **21 July 2026.** Prospective bidders who are unable to attend on the scheduled date may undertake the mandatory site visit at any time on or before the tender submission deadline of **27 July 2026.** However, the site visit remains a mandatory requirement under this solicitation. | 27 July 2026, 12:59 PM |
| 2 | **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**<br>**RFP No.: UNHCR RFP 3253**<br>FOR THE PROVISION OF STAFF CANTEEN, CATERING, AND HOSPITALITY SERVICES AT THE UNHCR MELKADIDA SUB-OFFICE, DOLO ADO, SOMALI REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA | 4 August 2026<br>12:59 PM |
| 3 | **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**<br>**RFP No.: UNHCR RFP 3208**<br>FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REFUGEE DIGITAL INNOVATION HUB (DESIGN, SUPPLY, FIT-OUT AND COMMISSIONING) | 4 August 2026<br>12:59 PM |

Interested suppliers are invited to visit the following links:

How to become a supplier | UNHCR – information on supplier registration and eligibility.

UNHCR Supplier Portal – Tender Opportunities:

1) **UNHCR RFP 3186,1 - Negotiations - Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications**
2) **UNHCR RFP 3253 - Negotiations - Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications**
3) **UNHCR RFP 3208 - Negotiations - Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications**

UNHCR encourages companies to also register on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) to receive announcements only. This portal may not be used by vendors for submitting offers.

The above tender opportunities are also advertised through the following platforms:

1. United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM)
2. Capital Newspaper - Sunday English Edition
3. 2Merkato: https://www.2merkato.com

Companies interested in engaging with UNHCR for business opportunities and tender processes are invited to register on the UNHCR Supplier registration portal (https://bit.ly/482Fqam).

# African scientists build Ebola defences

By Rebaona Modutwane, bird Story Agency

As dusk settles over Bunia, the bustling capital of Ituri Province in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, near the borders of Uganda and South Sudan, workers in protective boots move between newly erected structures beside one of the city's largest treatment facilities. Under floodlights and with the sound of hammering, teams continue building additional wards and support areas, expanding the capacity of a hospital that can accommodate around 80 Ebola patients. Plastic-screened corridors and carefully marked doffing zones for personal protective equipment stand as visible reminders of the discipline required to contain one of the world's deadliest diseases.

The scene captures both the urgency of the latest Ebola outbreak in the DRC and a less familiar reality: the response is not beginning from scratch. In a region that has confronted Ebola multiple times, systems, infrastructure and expertise built over years of experience are being mobilised once again. Behind the temporary isolation units, local health authorities, national public health institutions, African scientists, community health workers and international partners are working side by side under African leadership to detect cases, trace contacts and prevent wider transmission. Surveillance teams, laboratory networks and emergency response units that have been strengthened through successive outbreaks are now being activated across the region.

While Ebola remains a serious threat, this outbreak is unfolding at a moment when African governments, researchers and continental institutions are playing an increasingly central role in coordinating the response, demonstrating how local, national and international actors can work together to protect public health and strengthen preparedness for future emergencies.

Early in June, following the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's declaration of the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS), senior African and global health leaders travelled to the Democratic Republic of Congo to support the response. Leading those efforts was Africa CDC Director-General Dr Jean Kaseya, a Congolese public health specialist, who has been working alongside World Health Organization Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and DRC health authorities to coordinate surveillance, preparedness and cross-border response measures. Their presence reflects a broader shift in outbreak management, with African institutions increasingly at the centre of efforts to detect, contain and respond to public health threats.

At a June briefing, the WHO leader was clear: "The only way to beat this outbreak is through close partnership, working together under the leadership of the affected countries in one coordinated effort, guided by a simple principle: one plan, one budget, one team."

According to the World Health Organization, the Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD) outbreak continues to evolve rapidly, with sustained transmission and rising case numbers. As of 9 July, DRC's Ministry of Health reported 1,792 confirmed cases, including 625 related deaths. A total of 764 patients are hospitalised in isolation, and 295 people have recovered. More than 10,000 contacts are being monitored. In neighbouring Uganda, 20 confirmed cases and two deaths have been reported, with authorities linking the outbreak to transmission originating in the DRC.

CDC Africa spokesperson Saran Koly told bird: "The continent is in a different place from where it was during the West African Ebola epidemic. Africa now has a continental public health institution with an emergency mandate. Many Member States have more capable national public health institutes, more experienced responders, better laboratory networks, stronger surveillance capacity, and clearer mechanisms for regional coordination. The lessons from Ebola, COVID-19, and Mpox have shaped how Africa prepares, communicates, and acts," she said.

Koly noted that the current response also emphasised cross-border coordination. "Outbreaks do not respect administrative boundaries. In eastern DRC, movements across communities, provinces, and borders require fast information-sharing, preparedness in neighbouring countries, point-of-entry measures where appropriate, and constant coordination between national authorities and regional partners," she noted.

### A familiar threat, but a different response

In declaring the 17th Ebola outbreak, DRC Health Minister Dr Kamba Mulamba Samuel Roger said the response would be guided by the principle of "one coordination team, one plan and one budget" ("Une seule équipe de coordination, un seul plan et un seul budget"). underscoring the government's determination to ensure that national authorities, African institutions and international partners worked within a single coordinated framework.

The Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, is a rarer form of the virus for which there are currently no approved vaccines or treatments. CAPRISA's executive director Salim Abdool Karim, who visited the DRC in the second week of June as part of the emergency response, explained that standard diagnostics used for the more common Zaire strain do not work, making PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) laboratory testing essential and slowing down diagnosis.

"We're dealing with Bundibugyo Ebola, a non-Zaire strain. Our standard diagnostics don't work against this strain, and while we have vaccines and treatments for Zaire Ebola, they're not effective here," he explained.

Karim described the outbreak as one of the most difficult he has witnessed. He said the challenge was not the skill of healthcare workers, but the harsh conditions they are working under, including conflict, displacement, food shortages and limited access to resources.

Without effective vaccines or treatments, Karim said the response depends heavily on three public health measures: early case detection, isolation and infection control, and contact tracing.

"When I was there, they were literally building individual isolation wards because the hospitals didn't have enough space to safely isolate patients."

He also stressed the importance of safe and dignified burials, as Ebola victims remain highly infectious after death. However, he warned that these protocols often clash with cultural burial traditions, making community trust and education critical to the response.

"Communities are upset when they are handed a sealed black bag and told they cannot open it. They want to see their loved one, to touch them, to perform rituals." Among the changes being investigated are body bags with transparent areas for the faces.

### The rise of Africa CDC

Despite these challenges, Karim said one of the biggest differences in this outbreak is the strong leadership of African institutions. He described the response as "Africa-led," with one unified response system jointly led by the WHO and Africa CDC.

Working with national health authorities, the Africa CDC supports disease surveillance, information sharing and risk assessment across borders, helping countries detect and respond to outbreaks more quickly. Drawing on lessons from Ebola, COVID-19 and Mpox, Africa CDC has emphasised the importance of maintaining essential public health measures while minimising unnecessary disruptions to trade, travel and economic activity.

"African leadership gives the response legitimacy," said Koly. "It brings decisions closer to the realities of communities, health workers, and governments on the ground. It also builds public confidence, because people can see that the response sits within their own institutions and is accountable to their own realities."

### What cooperation looks like on the ground

While continental institutions coordinate the broader response, Africa CDC says the success of the effort ultimately depends on people working closest to affected communities. Koly highlighted the role of frontline health workers, community leaders, surveillance teams, local authorities and logistics personnel who continue to operate under challenging conditions to contain the outbreak.

Community health workers are often the first to engage with families, address concerns and help communities understand public health measures. "They know the fears, the rumours, the histories, and the daily realities," said Koly.

Their role is especially important in building trust: "Trust is operational," she said, because it influences whether people report symptoms, seek treatment and cooperate with response teams.

### From dependence to ownership

During a high-level virtual meeting of African heads of state, government leaders and international partners convened by Burundian President and African Union Chairperson Évariste Ndayishimiye to coordinate the response to the Ebola outbreak, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking in his capacity as the African Union Champion for Pandemic Preparedness, Prevention and Response, announced that South Africa would increase its contribution to the response effort to US$13.5 million, reaffirming the country's commitment to supporting affected countries and strengthening Africa's collective capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

"Africa is no longer waiting passively for others to act," said Ramaphosa, adding: "This contribution is a demonstration of our confidence in Africa CDC as the Public Health Agency of Africa and in the importance of collective continental action."

Tedros told the high-level preparatory gathering in May that the challenge was significant: "We are facing and extremely serious and difficult outbreak. It will get worse before it gets better. But we know this virus and we know how to stop it. We have stopped every previous Ebola outbreak and we will stop this one too," he said.

The question, he said, was speed: "How many more lives will be lost before we do. WHO is fully committed to working under the leadership of the government of the DRC and Uganda and side by side with Africa CDC and all our partners. We will not rest until we bring this outbreak under control."

### Challenges remain

Despite this, health leaders know that there are still funding gaps, pressure on health workers, a need for vaccines and the lingering risk of regional spread.

"Africa is more prepared than it was a decade ago. The continent has stronger institutions, more experienced responders, better coordination platforms, and a clearer political commitment to health security. Africa CDC's work with Member States reflects that shift," said Koly. "The warning is equally clear. Preparedness still needs faster financing, more reliable supply chains, more local manufacturing, better-equipped health systems, stronger data systems, and sustained investment in the health workforce and community health structures."

Looking ahead, Karim – whose organisation is supporting the work through data analysis and epidemiological modelling that will help predict how the virus is spreading and what resources will be needed - says the outbreak offers three key lessons for Africa: be prepared, engage communities, and stand together.

"Africa is responding with stronger institutions, deeper technical experience, and a clearer political understanding that health security is part of sovereignty. The response is being led by the Government of DRC, supported by African expertise, continental coordination, and partners who understand the urgency of aligning behind national and regional priorities," Koly noted.

"This outbreak is testing the continent. It is also showing what Africa can build when leadership, science, solidarity, and community action move in the same direction."

*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.*

# Africa's Fourth Industrial Decade: From political mandate to industrial transformation

By Fatou Haidara and Francisca Tatchouop Belobe

The United Nations General Assembly's proclamation of the Fourth Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA IV) is far more than a symbolic milestone.

Amid shifting geopolitical, economic, and technological landscapes, it reflects growing international recognition that Africa's sustainable industrial transformation is vital - not only for the continent's future, but also for global prosperity.

Backed by more than 140 co-sponsors and endorsed by 176 Member States, as well as the African Union Executive Council, IDDA IV is the most politically anchored Decade yet. This is especially significant at a time when international development cooperation and multilateralism are under strain.

The proclamation underscores that industrialization is crucial to Africa's productive transformation, economic diversification, decent job creation, poverty reduction, and long-term growth. It also calls on the international community to support Africa's industrialization efforts as a contribution to the realization of Agenda 2063.

Building on its predecessor, IDDA IV sets an integrated transformation agenda, which aligns Africa's structural realities to the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly evolving global economy.

The Third Industrial Development Decade elevated Africa's industrialization on the global political agenda, mobilized over 700 joint initiatives with development partners and financial institutions, and strengthened industrial policy support across African Member States.

These achievements are a strong foundation to build on. Yet significant structural barriers - infrastructure and energy deficits, limited productive capacity, low technology absorption, and insufficient access to finance - still need to be addressed.

Africa enters the Fourth Industrial Development Decade against a backdrop of volatility and change, but also unprecedented opportunities.

### Opportunities

Despite recurring global and regional shocks, the continent has remained resilient. The African Development Bank's 2026 Economic Outlook notes that real GDP growth reached 4.4 per cent in 2025, making Africa among the fastest growing regions of the world.

With nearly 12 million young people entering the labour force each year, Africa's youthful population is a major driver of its future prosperity.

At the same time, global supply chains are being reconfigured, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is creating the world's largest emerging integrated market, opening the door to regional trade integration, value chains and economies of scale.

Digital technologies are reshaping manufacturing systems worldwide, providing Africa with an opportunity to leapfrog traditional industrial pathways. The digital transition is driving innovation in agro-processing and climate-smart agricultural technologies. It is also fueling global demand for critical minerals, which resource-endowed African countries can leverage by building local value addition.

In parallel, Africa's growing middle class, urbanization and shifting consumer preferences are expanding markets, from processed foods to pharmaceuticals. Continuing regional integration under the AfCFTA is further adding momentum.

The convergence of these trends creates a historic window of opportunity for Africa, which may not return in the same form.

With IDDA IV proclaimed, the mandate is set; the urgent task now is delivery.

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are committed to steering this process together as the two institutions entrusted by the UN General Assembly to lead the Decade's implementation.

The immediate priority for the next 18 months is to develop a collaborative Programme of Action. This framework will translate the Decade's mandate into targeted investments, secure financing platforms, and measurable results across national and regional corridors.

IDDA IV is not standalone. It aligns with major continental frameworks and initiatives, including the AfCFTA, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), and the New African Financial Architecture for Development (NAFAD), while convening the different actors needed to advance Africa's industrialization.

UNIDO, as the UN's specialized agency for industrial development, brings technical and policy expertise, field presence, and proven operational models to implement IDDA IV on the ground, including through its Programmes for Country Partnership.

The AUC, with its continent-wide political mandate and strong coordination capacity, can align trade, infrastructure, finance, and industry to drive delivery.

This effort will be coordinated with the African Union Development Agency – Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA -NEPAD), the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank Group, Afreximbank, regional economic communities, development partners, and private sector stakeholders.

However, to succeed, IDDA IV needs adequate and sustained financing. It requires building an industrial investment ecosystem and making private sector engagement a core pillar of delivery.

Governments and international organizations can create an enabling environment, coordinate partnerships and support policy reforms. But it is the private sector that builds factories, creates jobs, and links economies to regional and global value chains.

The next phase will therefore focus on mobilizing public and private capital, structuring bankable projects capable of attracting institutional investors, and using blended finance mechanisms to de-risk investments in emerging markets.

IDDA IV is not merely another international decade. It is the opportunity to redefine Africa's role in the global economy, shifting from raw material exporter to a producer of value-added goods, and a driver of industrial innovation and sustainable growth.

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*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.*

# Capital SPORT

## Senegal sack manager Thiaw in wake of World Cup exit

Senegal have sacked manager Pape Thiaw in the aftermath of the country's exit at the last-32 stage of the 2026 World Cup.
The Teranga Lions, who had been managed by Thiaw since December 2024, were beaten by France and Norway in their opening two group games.
They thrashed Iraq 5-0 to qualify for the knockout stages by taking the final spot of the best-placed teams to finish third in their group.
Senegal led Belgium 2-0 in their last-32 tie but conceded two late goals and a penalty in extra time as they were dramatically beaten 3-2.
Following the exit, midfielder Pape Gueye said he would be "taking a break" from playing for Senegal while the current management remained in charge.
The Senegal Football Federation (FSF) said, external that "after a thorough evaluation of the sporting results and prospects of the national team" it had dismissed Thiaw "in the best interests of Senegalese football".
Senegal had come into the 2026 World Cup after appealing against a decision by the Confederation of African Football (Caf) to strip them of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations title following a controversy in which Thiaw had been a main protagonist.
Thiaw ushered his team off the field when Morocco were awarded a stoppage-time penalty in the Afcon final in January.
The players eventually returned after a delay of about 17 minutes before Brahim Diaz's penalty was saved and Gueye scored an extra-time winner.
However, Morocco were declared the winners of the tournament in March when Caf overturned the result of the final following Senegal's walk-off.
Senegal have lodged an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport and hope to regain the title.

## Inaugural Adama Bike Race revives Ethiopia's cycling heritage as 'Jewel of the Rift Valley' expands sporting ambitions

Known as the 'Jewel of the Rift Valley', Adama is strengthening its reputation as one of Ethiopia's emerging sports destinations after hosting the inaugural Adama Bike Race, an event that combined elite competition with a broader mission to revive the country's cycling culture, promote healthy living and position the city as a hub for sport tourism.
The race was organised by Adama City Administration, in partnership with the Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, the Oromia Tourism Commission, Victory Event Production (VEP), the Ethiopian Cycling Federation, the Oromia Cycling Federation and other partners.
Broadcast live on Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN), the event showcased Adama's newly developed green corridors, modern public spaces and the recently inaugurated City Arena, giving the inaugural race national visibility while highlighting the city's growing ambitions as a sporting destination.
The event follows other major sporting initiatives hosted by Adama, including a recent rally competition, reflecting the city's ambition to build a wider calendar of sporting events.
Located in Oromia—a region known for producing many of Ethiopia's world-renowned athletes—Adama is increasingly investing in sport as part of its wider urban development strategy.
In the elite men's 70-kilometre race, Fuad Shamil of Shaggar City Cycling Club claimed victory ahead of Solomon Alemu of Addis Ababa City Cycling Club, while Yabsira Kassahun, also representing Shaggar City, finished third.
Elite women's racing over 40 kilometres was also held, alongside a 10-kilometre community ride that attracted approximately 190 recreational cyclists. Around 120 elite riders representing four regional states and two city administrations competed in the inaugural event.
For organisers, however, the significance of the race extended beyond the podium.
Until recent decades, bicycles were a familiar part of daily life in Adama. As the city expanded and motorised transport became dominant, that cycling culture gradually faded. City leaders say the Adama Bike Race is designed to reconnect residents with that heritage while encouraging a new generation to embrace cycling as a sport, a healthy lifestyle choice and a practical means of transport.
"This cycling race demonstrates that by keeping our cities clean, attractive and well developed, they can become destinations for sports tourism. It also shows that cities can create opportunities for young people while generating income for the country." Hailu Jalde, Mayor of Adama, said the event supports efforts to create cleaner, greener and more liveable cities while encouraging active lifestyles and sustainable mobility.
He added that the race demonstrates how improved urban environments can create opportunities for both young people and the wider economy through sport tourism.
Officials from the Oromia Cycling Federation described the event as an an important step in strengthening cycling across the region and increasing public participation in the sport.
"This programme was organised to strengthen cycling in Oromia and help the public better understand and embrace the sport through events like this." said Biruk Teshome, Head of the Oromia Cycling Federation Office.
For participants, the race offered a unique opportunity to compete through Adama's expanding network of landscaped corridors and recreational spaces—urban developments that local authorities hope will support future national and international sporting events.
Organisers intend for the Adama Bike Race to become an annual fixture on Ethiopia's sporting calendar, contributing to the revival of competitive cycling while supporting tourism, healthy living and sustainable urban mobility.

*(SportsAfrica)*

# Infantino opens door to 64-team World Cup

Plans for a 64-team men's World Cup are set to be assessed after the 2026 tournament, with Fifa boss Gianni Infantino saying the event needs to be "for the whole world".
The proposal for an expanded tournament was put forward last year, and Infantino says the success of the expanded 48-team tournament means Fifa should look at how a 64-team World Cup could work.
"These are all issues that we will be examining after the World Cup," Infantino told Swiss broadcaster Blue Sport, external when asked if the tournament could grow to 64 teams.
"When organising a World Cup, it's important to organise it for the whole world - not just Europe and South America, but effectively the entire world. Every nation should be allowed to dream of participating in the World Cup.
"You can see that the quality of the teams is extremely high, and it's getting higher and higher, all over the world. If you don't give smaller countries a chance to participate in the World Cup, they'll lack the incentive to keep improving."
Infantino said that the first 48-team World Cup has been "a huge success", citing the progression of nine out of 10 African teams to the knockout stages.
"At the last World Cup, there were only five teams from Africa," he said. "That just goes to show how important it is to include all teams - to give them this opportunity to participate."


The Fifa council approved the expansion of the World Cup from 32 to 48 teams in 2017.
An official proposal to boost the 2030 World Cup to 64 teams was put forward by South American governing body Conmebol in April 2025, but no decision has been reached.
The 2030 edition will be mainly co-hosted by Spain, Portugal and Morocco, with the three opening matches to be hosted by Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay to celebrate the centenary of the competition. Uruguay hosted the first World Cup, in 1930.
Uefa president Aleksander Ceferin is among those to have dismissed the 64-team proposal, with the Slovenian saying it is a "bad idea" for both the tournament itself and the qualifying process.
Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa agreed, saying further expansion would bring "chaos".
Victor Montagliani, president of the governing body for football in North and Central America and the Caribbean (Concacaf), said the suggestion "doesn't feel right" and he believes the expansion would damage "the broader football ecosystem".
However, Andrew Giuliani, executive director of the White House's World Cup task force, said the United States could consider making a bid to host the 2038 World Cup and would be able to "handle it" if expanded to 64 teams.
Fifa's official position has always been it will discuss expansion ideas with stakeholders and it is duty bound to consider any proposals from council members.
The Fifa council would make the ultimate decision, but there are no signs it is something expected to happen imminently.
Expansion would pose challenges for hosts
When Infantino was first elected in 2016, part of his manifesto was to increase the size of the World Cup from 32 teams to 40.
In less than a year, that rose to 48 and was approved by the Fifa council, effective from the 2026 finals.
Since then, speculation has never gone away that Fifa would like to go further and faster.
Going up to 48 teams for the 2022 finals was discussed, but it was accepted that Qatar would not be able to host a tournament of that size on its own.
And this is the issue – the bigger the World Cup becomes, the more challenging it is to host.
This year it is in three countries across a vast area. In 2030, matches will be played in six countries – Morocco, Portugal, Spain, plus Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay as centenary hosts.
Just how Saudi Arabia would be able to cope with a 64-team tournament, featuring 128 games, in 2034 is unknown.
Yet it is a great vote winner for Infantino on two counts.
Firstly, it gives more countries the chance to play at a World Cup. Indeed, a 64-team World Cup would see almost a third of the 211 Fifa-affiliated countries qualify.
A bigger World Cup also means more revenue to be distributed to the member associations.

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