

# Happy Easter Capital

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## Ethiopia, Djibouti establish technical committee to review port use agreements

By Muluken Yewondwossen

A technical committee was established by Ethiopia and Djibouti to examine agreements pertaining to port use that were signed twenty years ago. During the most recent meeting between the chief logistics delegations of the two countries, the multimodal issue was high on the agenda.

The two sides reviewed a range of topics during the most recent Ethio-Djibouti Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) meeting, which took place in Djibouti a week ago.

The results of the agreements made at the 16th Joint Ministerial Meeting, which took place in Addis Ababa in October of last year, were also assessed by the delegation headed by Alemu Sime, Minister of Logistics and Transport on

the Ethiopian side.

The logistics sector, in which the two countries cooperate, is one of the primary subjects that will be discussed during the ministerial conference, according to sources who spoke with Capital a week ago.

Prior to the joint meeting, experts predicted that

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## Irrigation Ministry highlights contractors' inadequate capability

By our staff reporter

The Ministry of Irrigation and Lowland (MoIL) has revealed that contractors' inadequate capability is having an impact on the way projects are carried out. It is considering altering the trajectory of furrow irrigation.

Aysha Mohammed, the Minister of MoIL, acknowledged the concerns expressed by lawmakers about the poor performance of projects completed within the allotted time in the nine-month performance report for the 2023/24 budget year in parliament. She stated that the majority of the issues raised by parliamentarians and the Standing Committee on Water, Irrigation, and Lowland Development Affairs are legitimate and should be addressed by the ministry, as well as other pertinent government agencies.

Regarding her report and in response to members' concerns, she stated that the nation does not have a large enough pool of players to manage irrigation projects. She said that there aren't enough local contractors in the industry to execute projects on schedule and that their capacity is insufficient. State-owned contractors have contracts, according to Aysha, "and we have also considered including new players in the sector." She highlighted the extremely low interest in managing projects.

She went on to say, "We don't want to give more projects to public enterprises since concerns about project execution performance have been raised regarding them." She expressed her dissatisfaction that the ministry has not received enough bidders and that there is a lack of enthusiasm in taking on projects. She said, "We are extending an invitation to global developers to collaborate on irrigation infrastructure developments."

Regarding modernization and technology-based initiatives, the minister stated that the majority of

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## INEPTITUDE IS COSTLY

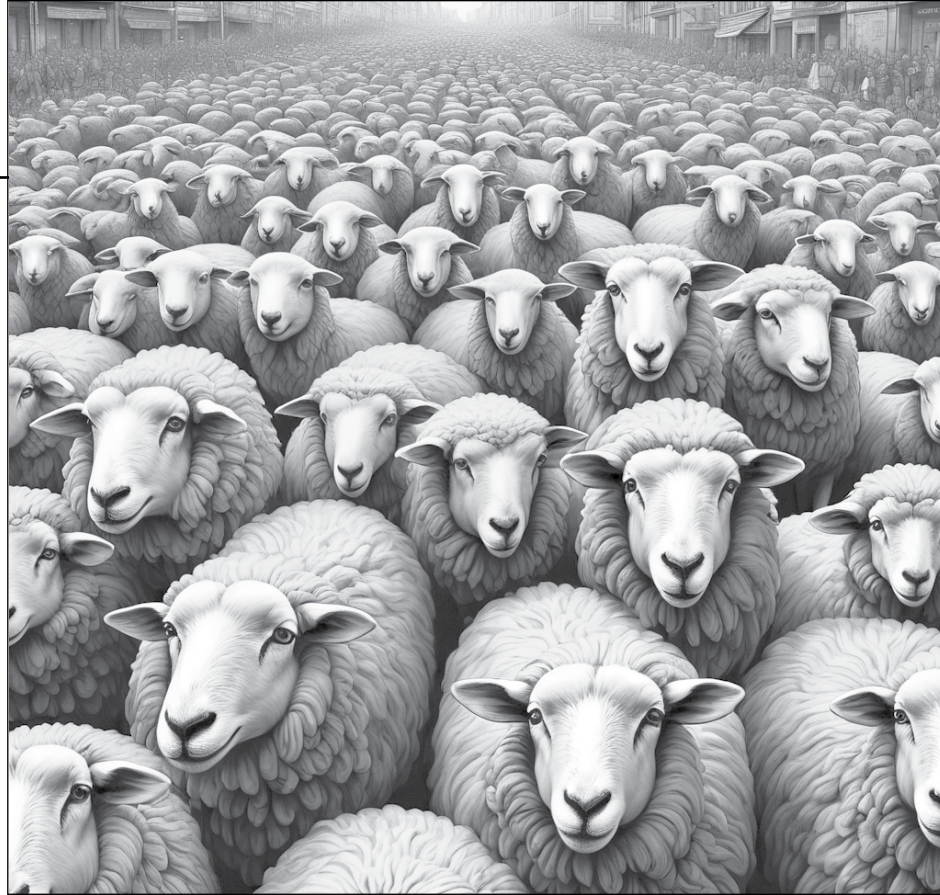
It is only when things start to go decidedly wrong, citizens begin to ask pertinent questions about their predicaments. In good times important issues relevant to their (citizens) general wellbeing tend to be relegated to the back burner, so to speak. To be sure, most of the global citizenry is without much of a foresight about the bigger pictures of collective existence. The average sheeple doesn't seem to have the penchant for insightful observation, be it about the past nor the present. Hence, the sheeple is destined to regard many eventual encounters as complete surprises. It is only those competently engaged that can potentially forecast (relatively accurately) the outlines of pending developments. It is because of this failure, mostly on the account of the incompetency of the power that be, repetitive social chaos continue to haunt collective humanity!

In this regard, the inability to see/foresee the demise of the prevailing world order is bound to have serious ramifications. Recognized or not, the current world system, which has been around for about half a millennium has entered its final disintegrating/bifurcation phase. Outcomes will not be pleasant, however much the global status quo pushes its regular numbing palliative narratives. To alleviate some of the major problems associated with the impending collapse, collective humanity must take firm stand against tendencies to bring back or preserve remnants of the old system. Humanity should thrive to institute a global regime that is more egalitarian, more democratic and more resiliently sustainable. Neglecting such a comprehensively economic, social and ethical agenda will open space for more of the same, like the rigidly hierarchical, hence polarizing social reality of the past, continuous past to be more precise. To this end, we must, from the outset, dispel many of the common misconceptions that pervade all cultures and societies. For instance, we should insist that institutions of orientations or more precisely, 'institutions of indoctrination' must change their ways. It should be very clear that passing the advertised road signs (credential-ism) doesn't make one an enlightened person. What it does is make her an educated person, educated to serve the system and not to challenge it!

The main purpose of mass education in the modern world system is to massively produce functionaries to serve man-made capital, directly or indirectly! These days, even the so-called pure scientific researchers are effectively directed to serve the interests of monopoly capital. Recent findings indicate many (about half) of the research publications are neither here nor there! Plenty of them are conducted with a view to find something that can be readily converted into profit. It might come as surprise to many a sheeple, but (these days) scientific efforts are not necessarily geared to help deepen knowledge! Those research directions without much potential to make money can hardly secure funding/grants, even that of taxpayer's. Open inquiries with potential to interrogate/disprove some of the false claims of paid scientists (scientists on the pay) at the service of profiteers, are visibly discouraged! So given such a scenario one would be naïve to expect enlightened discourse (on all and sundry) within the realm of establishment institutions, wherever they might be! Many of the obvious problems of countries stem from such inability to foresee new developments (while discarding old ones) that would inevitably impact their short/long term strategies.

Moreover, incompetence, because it lacks confidence, congregates and swiftly sets up a united front against enlightening knowledge it deems beyond its conceptual grasp. This is how ineptitude managed to run bureaucracies roughshod, all over the world, for ages. For political survival, ineptitude has to make sure excellence is consistently undermined so that it can shine supreme and reign unchallenged! Psychopathic politicians and their affiliated private operators do not thrive because they are confidently competent; no, no, no, they thrive because they are parasites, unashamedly taking undeserved advantages of the hard work of compassionate souls, who unselfishly and persistently try to serve society as a whole. The born incompetents operate without much analysis and foresight. If anything, their proven capacity is to make conditions worse than they were/are. Don't get us wrong; we have nothing against proven idiots who want to flaunt their wares, after all, the whole charade can be quite entertaining. Just look at Ethiopia's parasitic elites that are good for nothing, except impostering and grand corruptions! Be that as it may, problems start when these clowns, adorned with phony credentials (compliment of cash or the system's need to have useful idiots, etc.) are enabled to run our collective lives, directly/indirectly. That is when the sheeple draws the line, but these dimwits, as expected, are failing to recognize the boiling wrath!

Africa's leadership (not only political), to a large extent, belongs to this mediocre genre. No wonder our continent wallows in a frighteningly fantastic ignorance!



■ By Timur Fomenko

COMMENT

# THE US AND THE UK ARE PUSHING FOR TOTAL WAR ON ALL FRONTS

*The Iran-Israel clash has served as a catalyst for renewed escalation by Western leaders, and World War III cannot be ruled out*

The events of recent weeks have produced a sudden jolt in Western politics. From a lethargy that was starting to creep into US and western discourse over the Ukraine war, Iran's attack on Israel suddenly seemed to have had the effect of awakening Ronald Reagan from his grave and leading to a surge of neo-conservatism on steroids, on both sides of the Atlantic.

US House Speaker Mike Johnson did a complete 180-degree U-turn and proclaimed himself a "Reagan Republican" passing a series of aid bills for astronomical overseas spending that he had otherwise blocked for months, as he denounced an "axis of evil." Along with that, a proposed TikTok ban bill came out of nowhere too and was quickly signed into law.

Then the UK decided to devote its largest ever aid package to Ukraine, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warning of an "axis of authoritarian states" and amplifying ideologically combative rhetoric. At the same time, it was then revealed Biden had sent 300km long range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine despite having pledged not to do so for years, fearing escalation. Finally, EU President Ursula von der Leyen has suddenly dramatically increased economic warfare on China, pushing the European Commission to open probes on scores of Chinese exports. Where exactly did all this come from?

It's almost as if the US and its allies seized upon the tensions between Iran and Israel in order to "whitewash" their slate and double down on a series of objectives they are otherwise losing public support for, including the war in Ukraine, but also Israel's invasion of Gaza. One has to wonder if the Israeli attack on the Iranian compound in Damascus, which provoked Tehran's response, was deliberately staged, coordinated and planned for this purpose. It served the mutually convenient goal of letting both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Western governments off the hook for whatever opposition they had otherwise faced.

It should be abundantly clear now that the current powers that be, in London and Washington, have absolutely no intent of letting up on the wars they have provoked, while also pushing for a potential third one with China, and seem indifferent to the consequences, even if for example, the Israel-Gaza war is shattering the West's claims of moral superiority. In each case, the stakes are very high, Western foreign policy at large has taken on a very zero-sum and ideological character which bemoans the loss of

hegemony, and seeks to uphold it at all costs. It is reactionary to the extent it does not have a vision for improving the world, but wants to take back the world to the way it was. It is a sense of entitlement and privilege that wants to suppress an emerging multipolarity.

Because of this, it has become impossible for Western leaders to ever consider the concept of compromise in these respective theaters, and they refuse under any circumstances to make concessions which could be deemed strategic. This has produced a position where the only outcome they are willing to accept in Ukraine is what they deem "the defeat of Putin," and have been subtly escalating ever since, edging ever closer to the point where a "proxy war" becomes a direct one for all intents and purposes. NATO military advisors are already on the ground, and Ukrainian attacks are being guided by NATO intelligence or even coordinated by British admirals.

The media in the West, especially in Britain (there is more dissent in the US) are effectively in war mode. The BBC amplifies non-stop Ukraine propaganda, pushing any claim that will help Kiev irrespective of its empirical worth or evidence, and all voices of dissent have been shut down. It seems evident that the decision may have been made to risk a full-on war with Russia, rather than to consider any negotiation scenario. Thus, the shockwaves from the Iran-Israel saga have been used to pursue a new and sudden round of escalation on every front, which can have only been bolstered by the prospective elections looming in both the US and UK.

Because of this, it is fair to say that the world faces a more dangerous and uncertain outlook than at any point since the end of World War II. This current crop of Western leaders are not pursuing a more restrained and calculated mindset, as seen for most of the Cold War, but an aggressive and evangelistic one that does not prefer stability but affirms hegemony as an absolute right, thus more resembling a pre-1914 world. Because of this, we should draw the conclusion that Western leaders are not truly seeking to avoid war, but are prepared to embrace it if necessary. The British military establishment and the media have long been making noises about conscription. In the US, if Joe Biden wins re-election, we can assume that he will unapologetically escalate on every single front. World War III is no longer a dramatized specter of farfetched panic, but an actual possibility that should not be ruled out.

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PHOTO: Anteneh Akiliu



## 40% of Ethiopia's population lacks documentation

By our staff reporter

Yodahe Arayaselasie, the CEO of the National ID Program, has revealed a startling statistic: 40 percent of Ethiopia's population lacks proper documentation. Being undocumented means exclusion from the formal economy, as these individuals lack the necessary identification data to access banking and SIM card services.

In response to this issue, a recent agreement has been brokered to facilitate the registration of these undocumented individuals through digital technology. In collaboration with 32 banks across the country, approximately 31 million birr has been pooled to acquire 6,000 digital registration kits at a total cost of 1 billion birr, aimed at bridging the gap for the undocumented community.

Abie Sano, the president of the Ethiopian Bankers Association (EBA), revealed that an international open tender was conducted for the procurement of the

Biometric Registration kit materials. Out of five digital ID suppliers, Lamino Engineering PLC emerged victorious.

Under the agreement, Lamino will provide the registration materials, benefiting 40 million citizens through 11,000 bank branches nationwide in the first phase. This initiative is set to span five years, allowing 32 banks to procure 6,000 registration materials at a cost exceeding 1 billion birr.

The National Bank and the National Identification Office mandated all Ethiopian banks to implement the National ID program in fiscal year 2024, requiring financial institutions to enroll customers in the digital ID system.

Currently, over 4.6 million citizens have registered for the National Digital ID, and the recent agreement between the Banks Association and Lamino is expected to expedite the digital ID registration process significantly.



## HAPPY EASTER

to all Christians celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

This feast holds great significance as it encourages virtuous activities, patience, foresight, and putting others before ourselves.

Let's celebrate the feast by reflecting on these facts. Have a wonderful holiday!



## EuroCham highlights high cost of tax complaint filings

By our staff reporter

The European Chamber in Ethiopia (EuroCham) has unveiled its policy paper for the fourth time, aimed at improving tax administration in the country. One notable provision in the policy is the requirement for companies to deposit 50 percent of the tax amount in dispute when filing an appeal with the Federal Appeals Commission.

Under the current system, taxpayers must submit a deposit equal to half of the original tax amount to appeal to the Commission. However, EuroCham's policy proposes that companies must deposit 50 percent of their tax liabilities to lodge complaints with the Ethiopian Federal Appeals Commission, seeking resolution for their tax concerns.

Expressing concern, the document suggests that this requirement may jeopardize the sustainability of businesses. Survey results indicate that the business community advocates for reducing the deposit amount to 20 percent.

Bahru Temeseng, Director of EuroCham in Ethiopia, warned that failure to meet deposit obligations could lead to business closures, especially when claims exceed



available cash and capital reserves.

Moreover, the policy highlights discrepancies in tax audit outcomes, with cases approved in one round often rejected in subsequent rounds within the same tax office. Temeseng emphasized the challenges faced by both taxpayers

and auditors in preparing tax reports and conducting audits.

The policy document proposes recommendations to enhance Ethiopia's tax administration system, emphasizing the need for fair and transparent tax management processes. Among the top

recommendations is the reduction of the required deposit amount for tax complaints.

Established in 2012, EuroCham represents the European business community in Ethiopia. With 180 members, it operates as an independent association holding an investment license in Ethiopia.

### National Bank of Ethiopia Results of Treasury Bills Auction

	28 DAYS	91 DAYS	182 DAYS	364 DAYS	TOTAL
Maturity Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	45273	45336	45427	45609	0
Amount Offered (ETB Millions)	7190.25	17010	26315	5432.54	55947.79
Bids Received (ETB Millions)	3860	6000	8790	8237.54	26887.54
Total Amount Accepted (ETB Millions)	3860	6000	8790	8237.54	26887.54
Competitive Bids	3860	6000	8790	5485	24135

### Auction No: 938<sup>th</sup>/23 Held on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Source: National Bank of Ethiopia

	28 DAYS	91 DAYS	182 DAYS	364 DAYS	TOTAL
Non Competitive Bids	0	0	0	2752.54	2752.54
Cut Off Price (Per Birr 100)	99.25	97.65	95.1	90.6	382.6
Cut Off Yield (Annual in %)	9.851	9.653	10.333	10.404	40.241
Weighted Average Price (Per Birr 100)	99.309	97.7	95.605	91.636	384.25
Weighted Average Yield (Annual in %)	9.066	9.442	9.219	9.153	36.88

PHOTO: Anteneh Akiliu





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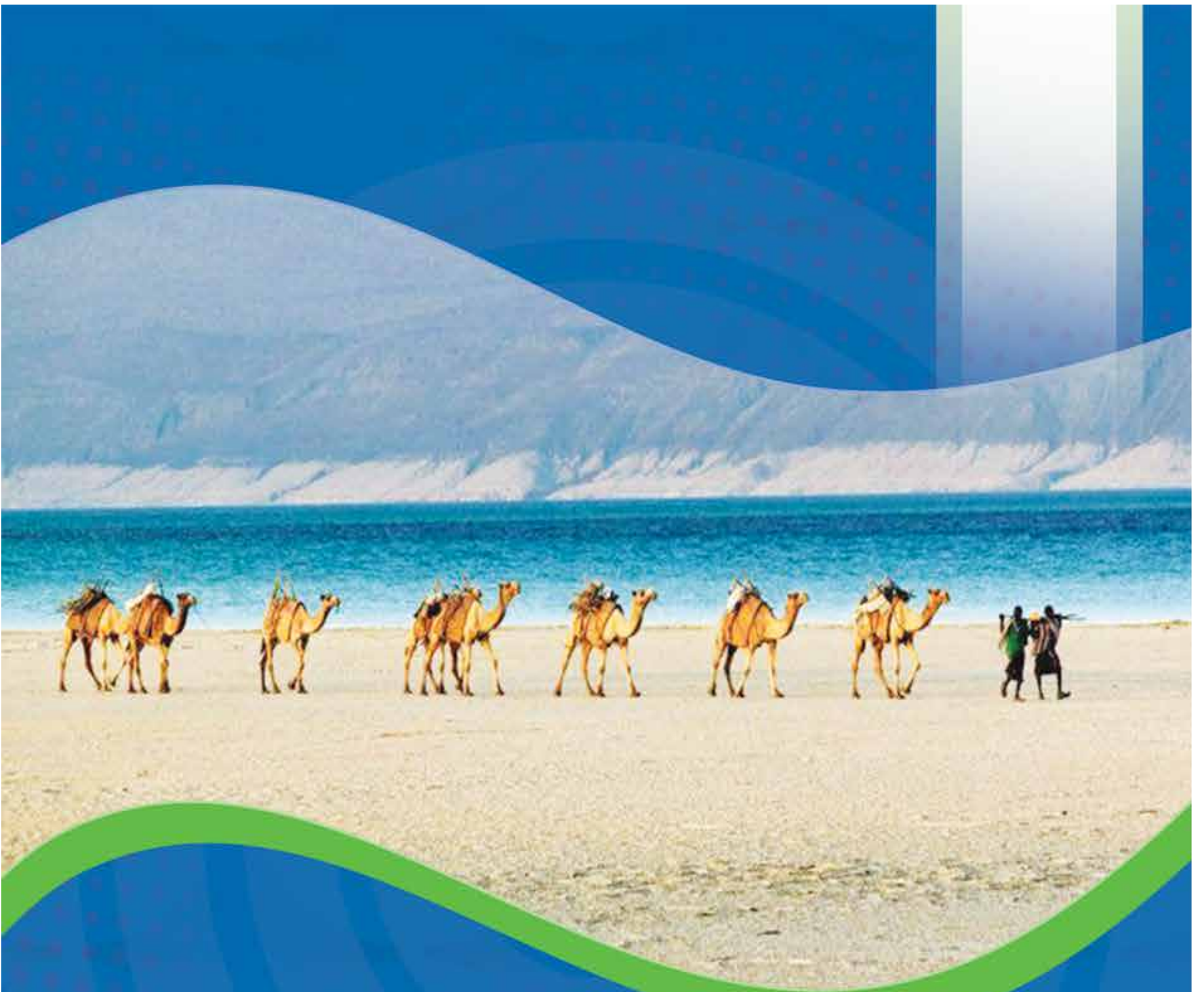


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**INSURANCE: GROSS PROFIT IN MILLION ETB AS OF JUNE 30, 2023**

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**Ethiopia, Djibouti establish . . .**

*Continued from page 1*

modernization and the entry of new companies into the logistics industry would be among the issues brought up.

The government is putting many measures into place as part of its aim to modernize the logistics sector over the next ten years, and one of those is permitting competition in some of the key business sectors within the sector.

Sector pundits stated that at the most recent meeting, the two sides formed a committee to review the long-standing agreements that the two countries had signed on various occasions.

The Djiboutian side was led by Hassan Humad Ibrahim, Minister of Infrastructure and Equipment. According to sources, there have been a number of dynamic developments in the logistics industry in the past several years that call for improvements.

They stated that the committee will assess the 'Ethio-Djibouti Utilization of Port of Djibouti and Services to Cargo in Transit Agreement,' which was signed in April 2002 between the two countries, in accordance with the JMC agreement.

Additionally, it assesses the customs protocols that have been signed on various occasions. The most significant agreement reached by the JMC at its most recent meeting was to update the multimodal agreement that the two countries had inked.

Sector experts noted that, prior to the government's recent opening of the industry to competition, Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL) was thought to be the only operator in the field when the multimodal agreement was inked in 2006.

Based on it, ESL, the state-owned vessel operators, and three other multimodal operators were approved by the Ministry of Transport and Logistics (MoTL), marking a key milestone.

In compliance with the ruling, Tikur Abay Transport, Panafric Global, and Cosmos Multimodal Operation have decided to engage in the multimodal market as non-vessel operating common carriers (NVOCC). According to sources, the multimodal issue was a highly anticipated element on the agenda for the most recent JMC meeting because the Djiboutian side expressed concern over the recent developments in Ethiopia.

The Djibouti Ports and Free Zones Authority (DPFZA) revealed that NVOCCs are not permitted to operate as multimodal operators in Djibouti, which concerns newly selected companies looking to involve themselves in the business, even though the MoTL had approved the new operators to start the process of setting up their business.

The notice letter, signed by Aboubaker Omar Hadi, Chairman of DPFZA, was copied to Djibouti Customs, the Association of Forwarders of Djibouti, the Association of Shipping Agents, and Djibouti Port Community Systems.

It stated that a bill of lading (BL) issued by NVOCCs is not acknowledged within Djibouti Ports and Corridors because of their legal status.

Furthermore, the letter explained that NVOCCs are unable to ensure that supply chain expenses throughout the corridor will be fully paid, which presents problems with responsibility, traceability, and security.

It added that the only officially recognized documentation for goods transport activities in Djibouti's ports, free zones, and corridors is the BL provided by multimodal transport operators, specifically shipping firms, in compliance with our legislation and standards.

"Therefore, it is imperative for all entities involved in maritime transport and logistics activities to adhere to these guidelines in order to avoid any

operational disruption in Djibouti's ports, free zones, and corridors," the letter further disclosed.

According to the bilateral agreement negotiated between the two countries in 2006, ESL is operating in Djibouti as an NVOCC; nevertheless, the most recent decision made by the Djiboutian authorities has become an obstacle for the new firms.

Experts in the area said they expected the two countries to work out a diplomatic solution to end the issue smoothly.

"If the Djiboutian stance is not reversed, the new multimodal players would not be able to utilize their license," an industry analyst told Capital.

At the JMC, topics such as the two countries' political, economic, infrastructural, and logistical cooperation are frequently discussed.

Djibouti, which has well-developed port facilities and infrastructure networks connecting with Ethiopia, is the nearest facility for the central parts of Ethiopia.

According to sources, the midterm meeting set agenda items for the forthcoming bilateral conference, which is expected to be headed by the senior diplomats of the two nations and take place in Djibouti in July 2024.

Alemu headed the Ethiopian team, which also included Aynalem Nigusie, the Minister of Revenue, Debele Kabeta, Commissioner of the Customs Commission, Abdulber of Ethiopian Maritime Affairs (EMA), and Berisso Amallo, CEO of ESL.

Capital's attempt to obtain further information from EMA was unsuccessful.

**Irrigation Ministry highlights . . .**

*Continued from page 1*

irrigation development projects are now supported by furrow irrigation systems, with the exception of relatively few sugar projects.

There are improvements that need to be made to enhance this system. The proposal for cost sharing states, "The formation of an irrigation fund is another area that will be an instrument to mobilize resources for the implementation of technology-based irrigation." Aysha says that the next strategy pertaining to agriculture and rural development will incorporate these innovative methods. Their design work takes into account the fact that the next infrastructures should be supported by modern technologies.

She said that a project program to modernize and restore irrigation infrastructure is being developed with the World Bank to enhance both current and future irrigation infrastructure. "While the cost would be very high, existing projects will also be reviewed in the new scheme," she stated.

Members of parliament and the standing committee that oversees the industry voiced their concerns throughout the session regarding the extremely subpar performance of projects managed by MoIL. The chair of the standing committee for water, irrigation, and lowland development affairs, Fetiya Ahmed, stated that the ministry is unable to implement all of the recommendations made by the standing committee.

She said that when it comes to supporting the population in the lowland region, there is also a lack of collaboration with other partners. She suggested that in order to address the issues MoIL confronts, the government should become involved.

MoIL has identified a number of challenges that impact the progress of certain projects, including inadequate funding, security concerns, rising costs, inadequate project management by contractors, and several other difficulties.



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I-CIP <b>228.89</b> ↑ 1.16%	Colombian Milds <b>251.34</b> ↑ 1.08%	Other Milds <b>248.22</b> ↑ 1.08%	Brazilian Naturals <b>226.17</b> ↑ 1.29%	Robusta <b>212.47</b> ↑ 1.13%
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\*1lb=0.45kg

# Sub-Saharan Africa faces challenging external conditions, according to UNCTAD Report

## Lower Economic Growth and Trade Disruptions in 2024 to Impact Development

By our staff reporter

Sub-Saharan Africa, a region with immense potential for economic growth and development, is grappling with adverse country-specific situations compounded by challenging external conditions, as highlighted in the latest Trade and Development Report Update released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The report underscores the difficulties faced by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, as they strive to navigate through a complex economic landscape. Despite efforts to stimulate growth and attract investment, the region continues to confront various hurdles that impede its progress.

The external environment poses significant challenges to Sub-Saharan Africa's economic prospects. Global trade disruptions, lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and uncertainties in international markets have hampered the region's ability to fully recover and realize its growth potential. These factors have resulted in a contraction of merchandise trade in 2023, further complicating the region's economic landscape.

Moreover, Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced significant net outflows and costly market access in terms of sovereign debt. Developing countries in the region have faced substantial challenges in managing their debt burdens, draining valuable public resources. The report emphasizes the need for innovative and sustainable solutions to

address these debt-related issues and ensure long-term economic stability.

Despite these challenges, the report also acknowledges that certain countries within Sub-Saharan Africa have demonstrated resilience and achieved positive growth. These countries have implemented robust economic policies, attracted foreign investment, and harnessed their natural resources effectively, contributing to the region's overall progress.

However, it is crucial for Sub-Saharan African countries to address the underlying issues that hinder sustained growth. The report emphasizes the importance of structural reforms, diversification of economies, investment in infrastructure, and fostering an enabling business environment to stimulate private sector growth. Additionally, promoting regional

integration and enhancing intra-African trade can unlock new opportunities for economic expansion and resilience.

The UNCTAD report recognizes the efforts made by governments and stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa to overcome these challenges. It calls for continued commitment and collaboration among policymakers, businesses, and international partners to support the region's development agenda.

As Sub-Saharan Africa navigates through these formidable obstacles, there is a growing recognition that inclusive and sustainable growth is crucial for addressing poverty, reducing inequalities, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. By implementing strategic measures and fostering a conducive environment for investment and innovation, Sub-Saharan Africa can unlock its immense potential and embark on a path of sustainable and inclusive development.

The UNCTAD report serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, economists, and stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa, providing insights and recommendations that can guide efforts to overcome current challenges and build a prosperous future for the region.

# Ethiopia's Tamirt Expo to generate over 3 billion birr in market links

The upcoming Tamirt Expo in Ethiopia is set to create significant market opportunities, with expectations of generating over 3 billion birr in market connectivity. The Ministry of Industry has announced that more than 200 industries will participate in the event, which will span five consecutive

days starting from May 9, 2024. Tarekegn Bululta, the Minister of State for Industry, stated that manufacturers involved in various sectors such as leather and leather products, textile and garment, wood, construction, automobile and machinery, electronics, and electrical industries will be actively participating in

the program. Anticipating a large turnout, the minister mentioned that more than 50,000 visitors are expected to attend, including embassy officials, foreigners, technical and vocational students, as well as higher education institution students. Additionally, a photo exhibition showcasing the

manufacturing industry's history will be presented as part of the event. The development of the exhibition and bazaar has involved 16 industries, and discussions on topics such as finance, strategy, and infrastructure are scheduled to take place throughout the five-day event.

# Ethiopian workers struggle with inadequate pay, calls for government action

By our staff reporter

The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) has highlighted the challenges faced by Ethiopian workers, citing their inability to meet basic living expenses with their current salaries. Despite repeated appeals to the government, these concerns have yet to be addressed.

In a recent statement, CETU emphasized the urgent need for government intervention, particularly in reducing income tax to alleviate the financial burden on workers. The union urged the government to prioritize this issue and take decisive action following collaborative discussions.

While legislation such as the Labor Affairs Act mandates the establishment of a wage board to set minimum wage

standards, CETU noted that practical implementation has been lacking due to the absence of regulatory enactment by the Council of Ministers.

Additionally, CETU emphasized the importance of enforcing laws related to occupational safety and health in the workplace. They highlighted instances where employers neglect these regulations, leading to serious injuries and fatalities among workers. Urgent action is required to ensure compliance with these laws and safeguard the well-being of employees.

As Ethiopia commemorated the 135th International Workers' Day, CETU reiterated its commitment to advocating for the rights and livelihoods of workers, emphasizing the collective role in fostering peace and prosperity within the nation.

# Addis Chamber expresses interest in Parliament Membership, AU representation

By our staff reporter

The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (Addis Chamber) has expressed its desire to join the Ethiopian People's Representative Council and the African Union. Mesenbet Shenkute, President of the Addis Chamber, highlighted the international nature of the chamber's activities and its involvement in African issues and the domestic private sector, emphasizing the importance of representation in these key bodies to better support the sector. Shenkute pointed to the positive example set by Kenyan parliament members in supporting their country's manufacturing association, citing

collaborative efforts during the Ethio-Kenya trade and investment mission held in Addis Ababa. The Addis Chamber advocates for government policy changes to facilitate business operations but acknowledges the need for further engagement. The involvement of Kenyan parliament members in supporting the manufacturing sector underscores the potential benefits of similar collaboration in Ethiopia. The Addis Chamber aims to secure parliamentary and AU seats to strengthen economic diplomacy between Ethiopia and Kenya and enhance bilateral cooperation. Despite existing agreements, economic and trade relations between the two countries require further development to realize their full potential.



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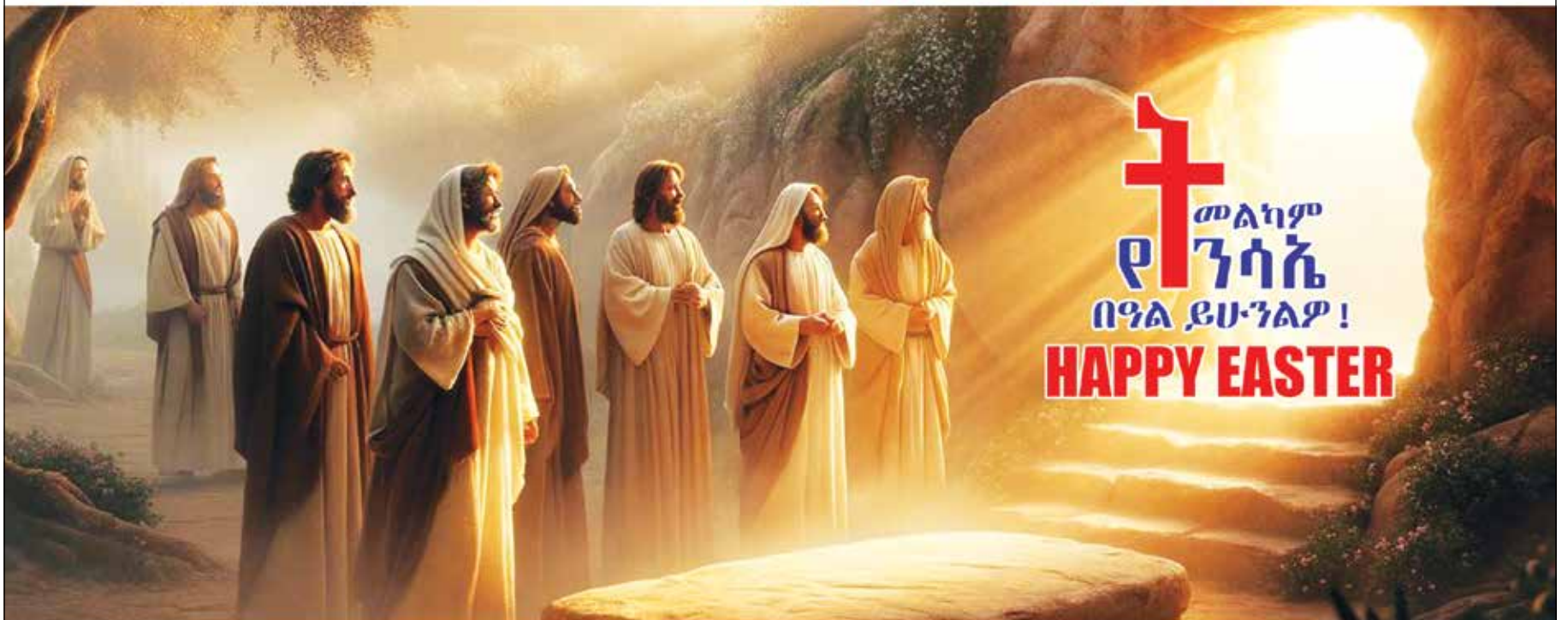
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## BANKS ASSET IN BILLION ETB AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

<b>Dashen Bank:</b> 145 (25%) ↑	<b>Dejub Bank:</b> 19 (34%) ↑	<b>Bunna Bank:</b> 46.4 (36%) ↑	<b>Enat Bank:</b> 22.8 (32.5%) ↑	<b>Gedaa Bank:</b> 2.7 (307%) ↑
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# African nations call for urgent reform of global financial system amid G20 debt program concerns

By our staff reporter

Many African countries are said to find the G20 Common Framework debt restructuring program unappealing due to its conflicting restructuring goals. Lobby organizations demand that the global financial system be urgently reformed.

According to a recent statement from a lobby group for indebted nations, the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and partners, debt relief beneficiary countries fared poorly in terms of development when compared to non-debt relief countries. This was cited as the failure of various relief initiatives.

The cost of debt servicing continues to consume a significant amount of public resources with attendant ramifications for public investment, economic growth, and sustainable development, a statement issued in connection with a joint meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank revealed.

The AFRODAD and partners are demanding an urgent reform of the global financial system as Spring Meetings by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank held Washington DC from 17-19 April 2024.

It said that the debt crisis is no longer a risk but a reality in many African countries, with almost half of the continent's countries in debt distress or high risk of debt distress.

According to the statement in 2024, Africa's total debt stands at USD 1.13 trillion, representing a 374 percent increase in public debt from the year 2000 to 2024.

The cost of debt servicing continues to consume a significant amount of public resources with attendant ramifications for public investment, economic growth, and sustainable development.

It added that around 30 million people in Africa were pushed into extreme poverty in 2021, and the trend continued upwards in 2022 and 2023.

Debt to GDP ratio averages 198 percent in Sudan and over 100 percent in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Zambia.

The mounting debt trends are clear evidence that debt relief initiatives like the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiatives (HIPC/MDR), the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), the 2021 Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) issuance, and currently the G20 Common Framework (CF) have failed, as they created room for more borrowing while beneficiary countries performed poorly in development terms compared to non-debt relief countries.

According to the statement issued on Thursday, April 18, regarding the G20 CF's shortcomings in offering outright debt cancellation, the exclusion of middle-income economies, such as Egypt and Tunisia, even though the debt sustainability analysis shows distress.

It added that being skewed to bilateral debt, despite 40 percent of Africa's debt being owed to private creditors,

the associated risk of credit downgrade and struggle to bring creditors with contradicting objectives in the restructuring process make it difficult for the G20 CF to attract many African countries and to restructure successfully. "Therefore, there is a pressing need to change direction and strategy towards providing structural solutions to the problem of recurrent indebtedness on the continent," it added.

Countries like Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Zambia applied for G20 restructuring, but they continue to struggle with a slow process that has negatively affected their credit rating and has not given them a sustainable solution to their debt situation.

Zambia reached a restructuring agreement with its official creditors, "which is commendable but while debt relief or restructuring is necessary to create fiscal space, solutions for the long term should focus on structural policy reforms linked to the concerns on the

financial architecture."

Moreover, Ghana, which defaulted on its debt obligations in December 2022 and had approached the G20 for restructuring, just saw the process halted on 15 April 2024 as the IMF indicated that the deal would not fit its sustainability parameters.

As the Spring Meetings take place, AFRODAD and other Civil Society Organizations are calling for a governance restructuring of the IMF and World Bank to end the debilitating financial commitments of Africa's low-income countries and developing ones.

"This is the time to emphasize a bold move towards structural solutions. This is the time for Africa to vehemently push back against the IMF World Bank policies that do not prioritize people and against creditors who lend irresponsibly with no respect for the duty of care to the borrower," the statement issued by the lobby group said.

If the IMF and World Bank are truly

concerned about improving African lives, they must first acknowledge that they are at the heart of increasing debt, economic dependency, and poverty on the continent and therefore welcome their restructuring to become fit for purpose.

"I join the call for international collaboration to build a development-oriented debt architecture that is more just and equitable and affords developing countries and affected communities the fiscal space to invest in their country's growth and sustainable development," Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

"The debt crisis is a development crisis, and unless we do something very urgent to fix the global financial architecture, we are going to see a regression in the progress that has been made towards Agenda 2063 and the people, especially the vulnerable ones including women and girls, who will be hit even harder," Jason Braganza, AFRODAD's Executive Director.

## AI Everything Expo by GITEX AFRICA 2024 centres world's attention on continent's booming US\$17 billion AI phenomenon



By our staff reporter

The AI mania that's transforming business, government and society globally is also igniting waves of innovation across Africa, with the shape-shifting tech's existential prospects powering a cross-continental investment surge at the AI Everything Expo by GITEX AFRICA in Marrakech, Morocco at the end of this month.

Africa's epic AI opportunity is already disrupting digital advancements in diverse sectors from finance and agriculture, to healthcare and mobility, all fuelling a booming AI market that, according to analysts Statista, will grow 30 percent annually over the next six years to value USD 17 billion by 2030.

This massive AI rush combined with a rapidly growing population of 1.5 billion people – of which 70 percent are under the age of 30 – creates a potent recipe of AI acceleration, but highlights gaps in

talent development, venture allocation, policy and infrastructure.

These crucial challenges and opportunities will be addressed when the world's AI cognoscenti and pivotal power players of its widespread deployment unite to fast-track the continent's next big tech shift at the AI Everything Expo by GITEX AFRICA, the year's largest and most progressive platform for AI exploration and deep tech innovation.

Taking place from 29-31 May 2024 in Marrakech, Africa's powerhouse tech showcase will feature the world's tech titans spearheading the AI gold rush, including Microsoft, IBM, Huawei, Nvidia, and Google, along with hundreds of AI ambitious start-ups from across the globe with grand visions to change Africa via AI-infused products and services.

According to the continental event organiser Microsoft, who is GITEX AFRICA's official AI Partner, is leading the way in the AI investment race, having

partnerships with the world's hottest makers of AI models, including the UAE's G42, a global leader in visionary AI.

Microsoft's recent USD 1.5 billion strategic investment in G42 to accelerate AI development in growing economies such as Africa will be welcomed by big tech executives, government leaders, investors and tech entrepreneurs alike at GITEX AFRICA 2024, which will also feature Presight, G42's big data analytics company powered by generative AI.

Lillian Barnard, President of Microsoft Africa, said AI can unlock a continent "brimming with investment opportunity."

"The AI-powered innovation we're seeing today is poised to reinvent every aspect of society from healthcare to financial services, manufacturing and beyond. If Africa is to benefit from the paradigm shift currently sweeping the globe, we must make the promise of AI real for people and organisations across the continent – and do so responsibly. GITEX provides us with a platform to come together and work towards fulfilling that commitment."

Adel Alsharji, the COO of Presight, added that Africa is the second-fastest growing region globally in AI adoption.

"Africa's AI journey is gaining momentum, and this progress highlights the continent's readiness to explore and harness the potential of AI for driving economic growth and addressing local challenges," said Alsharji.

The AI Everything Expo will gather the brightest minds and most innovative thinkers in the field of AI at the AI Everything Conference, one of 10 powerful conference stages at GITEX AFRICA, the continent's largest tech and start-up show.



## OUTSTANDING DEPOSIT IN BILLION ETB AS OF JUNE 30, 2023

Bunna Bank:

36.6

(34.6%)

Commercial Bank of Ethiopia:

1,054

(18.3%)

Dashen Bank:

115

(26%)

Debub Bank Ethiopia:

14.2

(30%)

## Airbus reports 9% increase in sales despite challenges

By our staff reporter

The European multinational aircraft company Airbus SE reported a 9% increase in sales for the first quarter of this year, despite a number of obstacles. In its statement covering financial results for the first quarter (Q1) ended 31 March 2024, Airbus stated that geopolitical and supply chain tensions continue.

“We delivered first-quarter 2024 results against the backdrop of an operating environment that shows no sign of improvement. In that context, we delivered 142 commercial aircraft,” said Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury. “We started 2024 with solid order intake across our businesses. The strong momentum on widebody aircraft underpins our decision to increase the production rate for the A350 to 12 aircraft a month in 2028. Our ramp-up plans are continuing, supported by investments in our production system while relying on our core pillars of safety, quality, integrity, compliance, and security.”

According to the report sent to Capital, gross commercial aircraft orders totaled 170 (Q1 2023: 156 aircraft) with the same number of net orders due to no cancellations (Q1 2023 net orders: 142 aircraft). The order backlog amounted to 8,626 commercial aircraft at the end of March 2024. Airbus Helicopters registered 63 net orders (Q1 2023: 39 units), mainly in the light and medium segments. Airbus Defence and Space’s order intake by value was 2 billion euros (Q1 2023: 2.5 billion euros).

Consolidated revenues increased 9 percent year-on-year to 12.8 billion euros from 11.8 billion euros in Q1 2023. A total of 142 commercial aircraft were delivered, an increase from 127 aircraft in the same period last year. According to the quarterly report, revenues generated by Airbus’ commercial aircraft activities increased 13 percent, mainly reflecting the higher number of deliveries. Airbus Helicopters’ deliveries totaled 50 units, a decrease compared with the preceding year’s same period of 71 units.

“Its revenues decreased 9 percent, reflecting the lower volume of deliveries, partially offset by services,” it added. According to the report, revenues at Airbus Defence and Space increased 4 percent mainly driven by the Air Power business, partly offset by a less favorable phasing in Space Systems.

It stated that consolidated earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) Adjusted – an alternative performance measure and key indicator capturing the underlying business margin by excluding material charges or profits caused by movements in provisions related to programs, restructuring, or foreign exchange impacts as well as capital gains/losses from the disposal and acquisition of businesses – was 577 million euros (Q1 2023: 773 million euros).

“It includes the planned impact linked to the increased Airbus Employee Share Ownership Plan, which saw record participation among employees, and resulted in a year-on-year expense increase of slightly above 0.1 billion euros,” it added. EBIT Adjusted related to Airbus’ commercial aircraft activities decreased to 507 million euros from 580 million euros of last year’s same period, “with the positive impact from higher deliveries being offset by a slightly

less favorable hedge rate as well as investments for preparing the future.”

The A220 ramp-up continues towards a monthly production rate of 14 aircraft in 2026, with a focus on the program’s industrial maturity and financial performance. On the A320 Family program, the Company is making progress towards the rate of 75 aircraft

per month in 2026. Entry-into-service of the A321XLR continues to be expected in Q3 2024. On widebody aircraft, the Company has decided to increase the production rate for the A350 to 12 aircraft a month in 2028 and continues to target rate 4 for the A330 in 2024.

Airbus Helicopters’ EBIT Adjusted decreased to 71 million euros from 156

million euros in Q1 2023, reflecting a particularly strong first quarter in 2023 and reflecting the lower deliveries. EBIT Adjusted at Airbus Defence and Space decreased to -9 million euros (Q1 2023: 36 million euros), mainly reflecting the lower volume and profitability of Space Systems, notably linked to the Estimates at Completion updates performed in the second half of 2023.

## CBE, MasterCard forge partnership to advance cashless society

The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) and MasterCard have inked a five-year Memorandum of Understanding aimed at propelling efforts towards a cashless society in the coming years.

The agreement, signed on May 2, 2024, at the CBE headquarters, marks a significant step towards expanding card banking services domestically and internationally. Additionally, it is poised to facilitate the introduction of new card services.

With this five-year collaboration, both parties are poised to play a pivotal role in advancing the nation’s journey towards a cashless economy. The focus will be on addressing the evolving needs of the bank’s clientele while introducing cutting-edge services that align with global standards.

MasterCard, an esteemed international payment facilitator operating in over 210 countries, has a longstanding partnership with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, marking this agreement as a continuation of their fruitful collaboration.



## FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES FACING LICENSING DELAYS

By our staff reporter

More than 100 foreign employment agencies have applied for business licenses, yet they have voiced complaints about not receiving qualification licenses, with reasons for the delay remaining unclear.

Ethiopia has entered into agreements with various foreign governments to safeguard the rights and obligations of its citizens working abroad. Despite this, numerous organizations have lodged grievances with the authorities, alleging repeated attempts to obtain qualifications through the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) for legal licensing to operate as foreign employment and employer liaison agencies.

According to the complainants, applicants

were required to fulfill the criteria outlined in the Act, which mandated obtaining a license for overseas employment and engaging with employers. Despite persistent requests over the past three months, the government has not provided a satisfactory response to address their concerns.

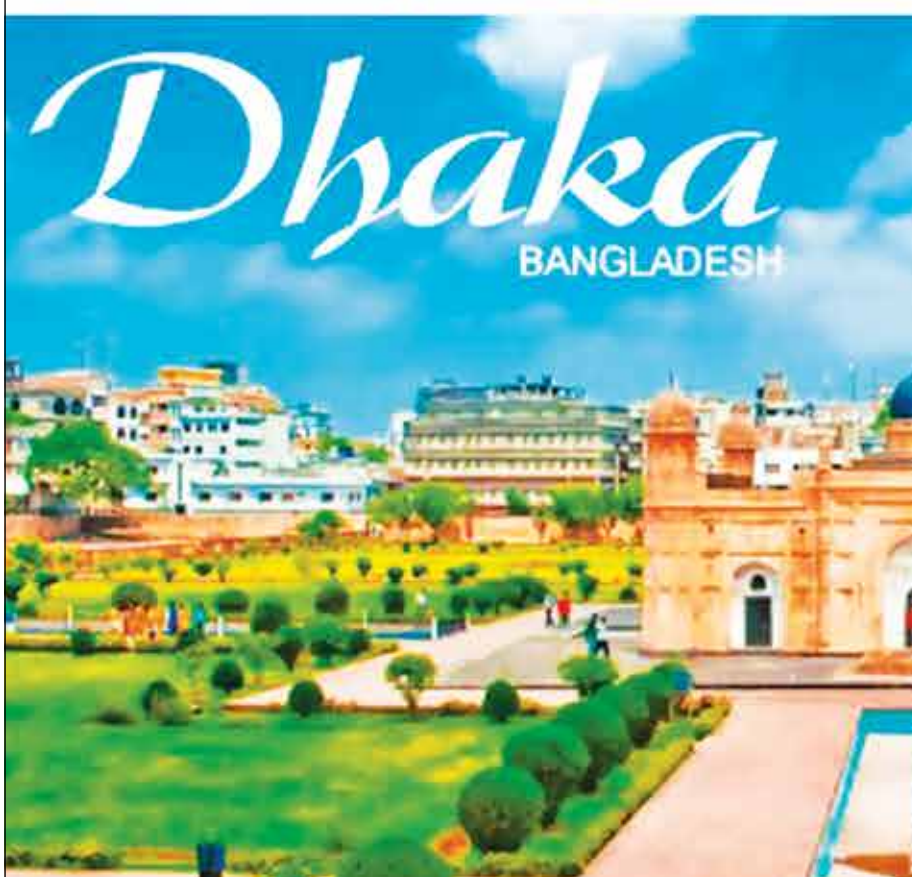
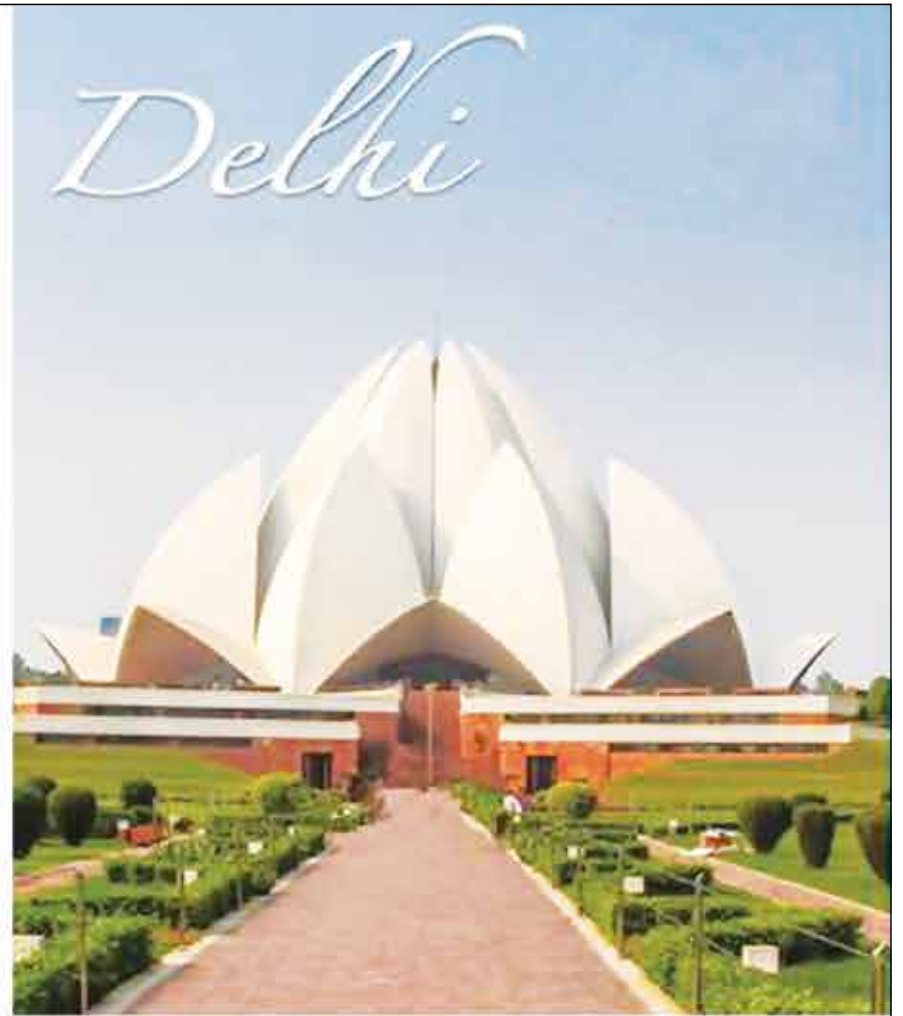
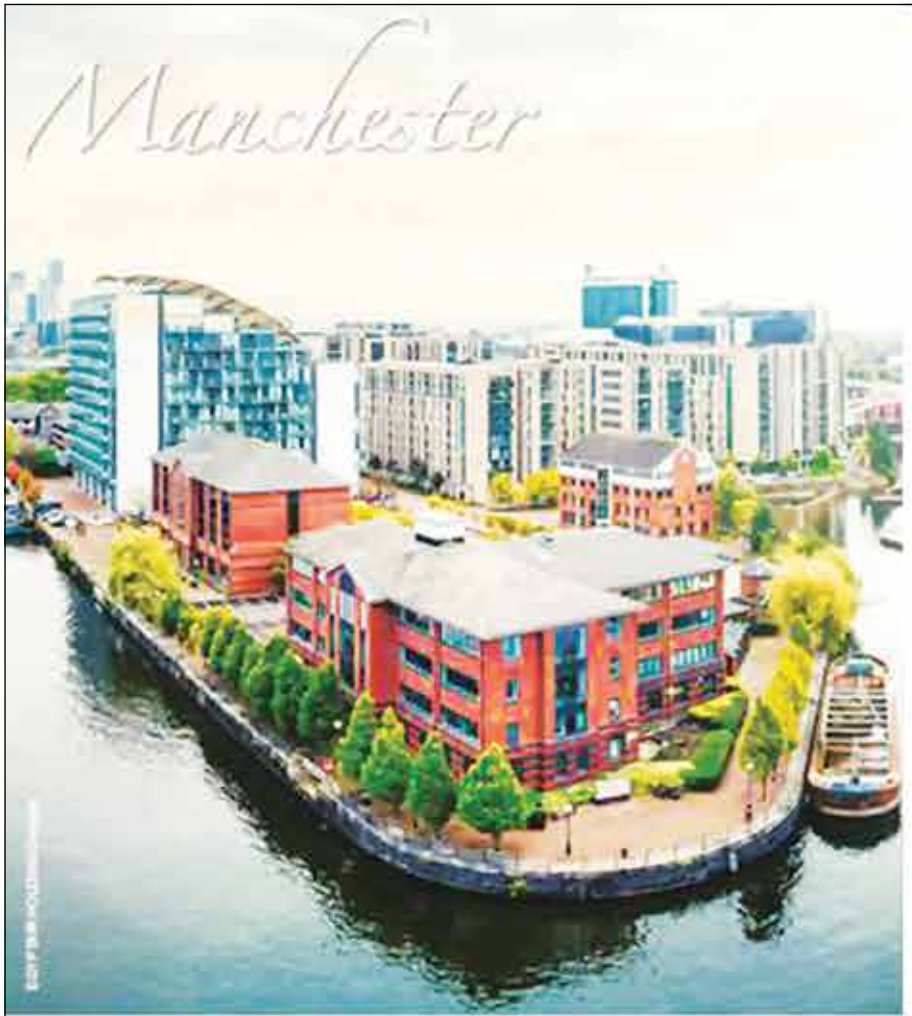
Foreign nationals granted work permits in authorized fields and organizations necessitated the establishment of a stringent monitoring system under the Minister’s jurisdiction. However, agencies claim to be facilitating illegal migration to foreign countries, including Addis Ababa, bypassing the regulatory process.

Although the trade and licensing of foreign employment and labor liaison agencies were officially prohibited

since September, agencies holding prior permits claim to have met all qualification criteria outlined by the ministry. These criteria include possessing a lease agreement for a 40 square meter office space and a starting capital of 1 million ETB. Additionally, any employer must secure a new work permit for foreign nationals employed under the Minister’s authority.

While applicants have undergone the necessary procedures to operate within the sector, they have incurred substantial losses due to delays in qualification certification. Efforts to contact Tekle tesfu, head of the licensing desk at the ministry overseeing foreign employment agencies, have been unsuccessful, despite tesfu being directly involved in addressing the issue.





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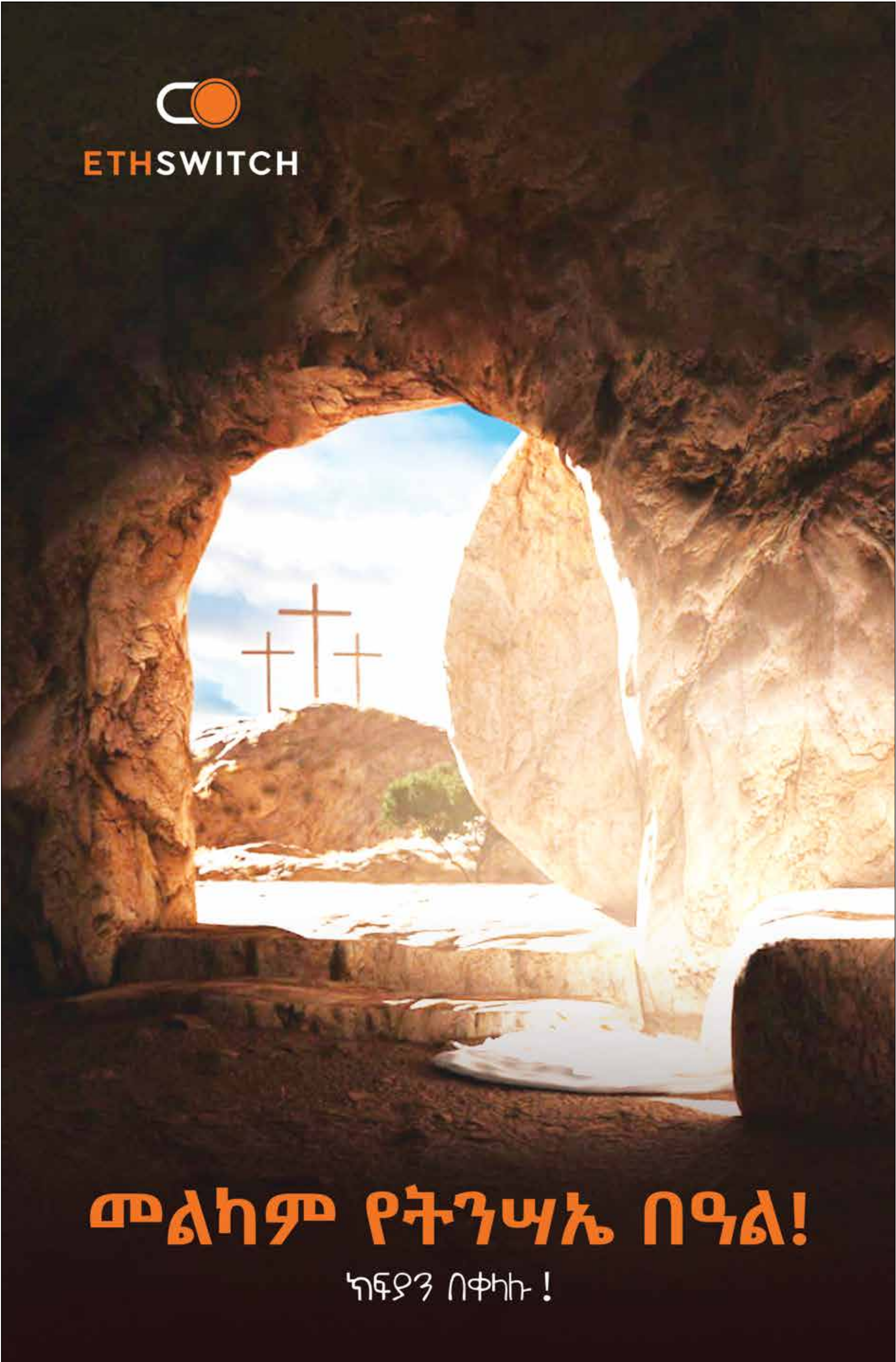
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# New report highlights urgent need to address aviation contrails' climate impact

By our staff reporter

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) called for urgent action to deepen the understanding on the formation and climate impact of aviation contrails to develop effective mitigation measures. The newly released IATA report Aviation Contrails and their Climate Effect: Tackling Uncertainties and Enabling Solutions calls for a strengthening of collaboration between research and technological innovation, coupled with policy frameworks to address aviation's non-CO2 emissions through more atmospheric data.

The report, which was developed through collaboration between industry, governments, universities, and research institutions, sheds light on the significant impact of contrails on global warming and outlines potential measures to minimize their effects.

Contrails, the visible trails left behind by aircraft in the sky, have long been recognized as a contributor to climate change alongside carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. When formed in ice-supersaturated regions, contrails can transform into cirrus clouds, which both reflect incoming solar radiation during the day and trap outgoing heat. These persistent contrails have a warming effect on the climate, with variations depending on factors such as time of day, season, and geographical location.

The report acknowledges the complexity of contrail science and highlights the existing gaps in understanding the formation, persistence, and climate impact of contrails. Despite extensive research, predicting individual contrail formation and assessing their precise climate impact remains challenging due to uncertainties and limitations in data collection and atmospheric modeling.

To address these challenges, the aviation community is actively engaged in researching ways to minimize the warming impacts of contrails. The report emphasizes the importance of strengthening the synergy between research, technological innovation, and enabling policy frameworks to effectively reduce aviation's climate footprint.

The report highlights various initiatives and trials aimed at reducing contrail formation. Collaboration among meteorologists, climate researchers, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers has provided valuable

insights into contrail formation. However, it has also underscored the need for enhanced data collection and addressing air traffic network complexities. Trials involving modified flight paths and alternative fuels have shown potential in mitigating contrail formation but are limited by the variability of atmospheric conditions and the localized nature of contrail occurrences.

Technological advances, particularly in the development of humidity sensors on aircraft, are proposed as critical for improving contrail prediction and avoidance strategies. While the current sensor technology on commercial aircraft lacks the required sensitivity and response time, ongoing research aims to develop more accurate and robust solutions. By installing sensors on a limited number of aircraft, it would be

possible to collect high-resolution, real-time data on atmospheric conditions, thereby improving numerical weather prediction models.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for short, medium, and long-term approaches to address the climate impact of contrails. In the immediate term (2024-2030), reducing CO2 emissions takes precedence over uncertainties in contrail detection and climate impact. Mid-term actions (2030-2040) include establishing standards for data transmission, continuous model validation, and encouraging aircraft manufacturers to incorporate provisions for meteorological observations. Longer-term actions (2040-2050) focus on increasing the world fleet providing data and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the non-CO2 effects of

alternative fuels.

The aviation industry and its stakeholders are committed to addressing non-CO2 emissions and mitigating their impact on climate change. The report emphasizes the need for ongoing research, experimentation, and collaboration to bridge the existing knowledge gaps and implement effective measures. By strengthening the synergy between technological innovation and regulatory frameworks, the aviation community aims to reduce its climate footprint while advancing scientific understanding and technological capabilities.

As the urgency to combat climate change grows, the aviation industry stands ready to play its part in minimizing the environmental impact of contrails and ensuring a sustainable future for air travel.

## Ethiopia drafts national e-commerce strategy to boost trade and export revenue



By our staff reporter

The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration has drafted a national e-commerce strategy aimed at boosting trade and export revenue. Developed with assistance from the Tony Blair Institute, the strategy is expected to be implemented at the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year.

Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tirunch

highlighted that enhancing Ethiopia's commercial competitiveness globally is a key objective of the e-commerce plan. He emphasized the potential for business expansion in the digital economy and e-commerce, stating that e-commerce will further open up the economy to foreign players and contribute to sector growth through a legally mandated structure.

The strategy outlines three flagship initiatives: the establishment of an

Ethiopian e-commerce platform, a regulatory sandbox, and rural e-commerce. It aims to ensure sector development through a conducive regulatory framework, increased private sector involvement, and enhanced export earnings.

The plan revolves around eight pillars, including the legal and regulatory framework, enabling systems, infrastructure, digital platforms, and talent development. Additionally, it recognizes the importance of transportation, logistics, delivery services, access to financing, and national identification for e-commerce growth.

The strategy proposes improvements in regulatory domains such as consumer protection, tax, and customs systems. It anticipates that e-commerce will lead to job creation, service sector diversification, and increased private sector activity. Simplifying the traditional method of exporting commodities is also on the agenda to boost export revenues.

During stakeholder engagement sessions, experts suggested prioritizing main export commodities for the e-commerce plan, citing the success of Ethiopian coffee exports through e-commerce as an example.

The Council of Ministers expects to review the strategy before the fiscal year concludes.

## AIR CARGO CONTINUES DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH IN AFRICA

By our staff reporter

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has reported a fourth consecutive month of robust growth in global air cargo demand, with Africa witnessing significant expansion in March 2024.

According to the latest data released by IATA, total demand for air cargo, measured in cargo tonne-kilometers (CTKs), surged by 10.3% compared to March 2023 levels. This marks the fourth consecutive month of double-digit year-on-year growth, signaling a positive trajectory for the air cargo industry.

In contrast, capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometers (ACTKs), increased by 7.3% compared to the same period last year, reflecting the industry's efforts to meet the rising demand for air freight services.

Willie Walsh, Director General of IATA, commented on the latest figures, stating, "Air cargo demand grew by 10.3% over the previous March, contributing to a strong first quarter performance. With global cross-border trade and industrial production continuing to show a moderate upward trend, 2024 is shaping up to be a solid year for air cargo."

Key factors influencing the operating

environment include the moderate increase in global cross-border trade and industrial production, as well as fluctuations in inflation rates across different regions.

In March, Asia-Pacific airlines experienced the most significant year-on-year demand growth for air cargo at 14.3%, driven by strong performance on the Asia-Europe and intra-Asia routes. Meanwhile, North American carriers saw the weakest demand growth at 0.9%, with capacity decreasing by -1.9% year-on-year.

European carriers witnessed a notable year-on-year demand growth of 10.0% for air cargo in March, with intra-

European air cargo experiencing a substantial increase of 24.7% year-on-year. Middle Eastern carriers recorded the strongest growth among all regions at 19.9%, with the Middle East-Europe market leading the way.

Latin American carriers and African airlines also reported positive growth, with demand increasing by 9.2% and 14.2% year-on-year, respectively. However, African airlines experienced a slight contraction compared to the previous month on the Africa-Asia route.

Despite the challenges posed by fluctuating demand and capacity, the air cargo industry in Africa continues to demonstrate resilience and growth potential, contributing to the region's economic development and global trade facilitation.

As the global air cargo market remains dynamic, stakeholders are closely monitoring industry trends and implementing strategic measures to capitalize on emerging opportunities and address evolving challenges in the months ahead.



# Big 5 Construct returns for 2nd edition, boosting construction sector growth

By our staff reporter

Big 5 Construct Ethiopia, the premier event for the construction industry, is set to return for its second edition, reaffirming the continued growth and potential in Ethiopia's construction sector. The event, which is endorsed by Ethiopia's Ministry for Urban and Infrastructure, aims to connect 150 local and international exhibitors with over 9,000 construction professionals and potential buyers.

Ethiopia's economy has been experiencing significant growth driven by investments, manufacturing, industrial development, and exports, with a particular focus on the construction sector, which is valued at \$41 billion, according to ABiQ. To capitalize on the opportunities generated by these sectors, the second edition of Big 5 Construct Ethiopia will take place at the Millennium Hall in Addis Ababa from May 30 to June 1, 2024.

"Ethiopia is currently witnessing major construction and infrastructure projects, indicating a vibrant built environment. Big 5 Construct Ethiopia aims to bring together the entire construction value chain, showcasing the expertise of regional and international companies and tapping into the diverse opportunities available in the country," said Ben



Greenish, Senior Vice President - Construction at dmg events.

The event caters to a wide range of professionals in the industry, including contractors, developers, consultants, architects, project managers, civil engineers, designers, urban planners, sustainability engineers, and procurement managers. With over 9,000 attendees expected this year, Big 5 Construct Ethiopia provides a platform for networking, business facilitation, and support for the industry as it aligns with Ethiopia's ambitious Vision 2025 goals.

Endorsed by Ethiopia's Ministry for Urban and Infrastructure, the event will feature 150 exhibitors from 19 countries. Among the exhibitors are prominent industry players such as Jotun Paints, a specialist in paint and coatings; EJOT

from Germany, a fastener manufacturer; Bostik, a France-based manufacturer and distributor of sealants; Araib Factory for Industry, a plastics manufacturer from Saudi Arabia, and Roofings Middle East, a leading fabricator of pre-engineered steel buildings and cladding products from the UAE.

Tariq Al-Qanni, Director of Operations at Dar Al-Handash Consultants, a consulting firm specializing in engineering, architecture, planning, and project management, and the Gold Sponsor of Big 5 Construct Ethiopia, expressed their excitement about participating in the event and sharing their expertise and experience in implementing digital technologies and innovative design and construction practices.

The event will also feature country

pavilions showcasing the latest construction trends from Ethiopia, Italy, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Additionally, attendees can benefit from 22 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)-certified industry talks, covering topics such as sustainability, project management, technology, engineering, architecture, design, and the introduction of infrastructure as a new theme.

Big 5 Construct Ethiopia is supported by the Ethiopia Construction Works Corporation (ECWC). Engineer Yonas Ayalew, Chief Executive Officer of ECWC, emphasized the significance of the event in bringing together exhibitors and visitors from around the globe to share experiences, expand marketing networks, and promote the value chain of the construction industry.

Other associations supporting the event include the Ethiopian Association of Civil Engineers, Chartered Institute of Building, and the Project Management Institute Ethiopia.

"Events like Big 5 Construct Ethiopia attract global enterprises to our shores, offering not just products and services but a shared vision to shape the future of Ethiopia's construction sector through business growth," concluded Greenish.

## WHO warns of impending NCD crisis in Africa by 2030

By our staff reporter

The World Health Organization (WHO) has sounded the alarm, predicting that Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) will emerge as the leading cause of mortality in Africa by 2030 if immediate measures are not taken by member states. Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, issued this warning virtually at the inaugural International Conference on PEN-Plus in Africa (ICPPA 2024) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which commenced on April 23 and concludes on April 25.

The primary objective of the ICPPA 2024 is to address the escalating burden of NCDs across Africa. The conference, jointly hosted by the WHO Regional Office for Africa, Helmsley Charitable Trust, and the United Republic of Tanzania, brings together experts and stakeholders to devise strategies for combating severe NCDs prevalent on the continent.

In addressing the urgent need to tackle the NCD crisis, Dr. Impouma Benido, Director, Communicable and Noncommunicable Cluster at WHO emphasized the pressing challenges faced globally and in Africa.

"In many African regions, inadequate healthcare infrastructure and limited access hinder early detection and consistent treatment of NCDs. Financial limitations, shortage of healthcare professionals, and inadequate medical facilities pose significant hurdles to effective NCD management. Factors such as poverty, education, and employment greatly influence NCD risk and management, necessitating collaborative efforts across sectors. And Weak regulatory frameworks, insufficient funding, and poor governance contribute to fragmented efforts in combating NCDs," he outlined the problems.

In response to these challenges, Dr. Benido said the pivotal role of technology

in overcoming barriers to NCD management. "Telemedicine and Mobile Health (mHealth): These tools facilitate virtual consultations, remote monitoring, and health education, extending healthcare access to remote areas. Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI): These technologies enhance disease surveillance, trend identification, and personalized treatment. Electronic Health Records (EHRs): EHRs enable seamless information sharing among healthcare providers, improving care coordination and reducing errors. And Health Apps and Wearables: These tools engage patients in

self-monitoring and promote adherence to treatment and healthy behaviors."

Moreover, Dr. Benido underscored the crucial role of government policies in alleviating the NCD burden: Policies that limit access to tobacco, alcohol, and sugary foods, including taxation, have proven effective in reducing NCD risk factors. Awareness-raising initiatives on NCD prevention and healthier lifestyles are essential. Ensuring access to basic healthcare services, including NCD treatment, through UHC bridges equity gaps, and Strengthening primary care systems allows for early detection and

consistent management of NCDs.

Dr. Benido highlighted success stories in combating NCDs, including WHO-supported initiatives in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Rwanda. These programs have decentralized NCD care, trained community health workers, and improved access to essential services, setting a precedent for effective NCD management in Africa.

As the ICPPA 2024 progresses, stakeholders are urged to collaborate and prioritize NCD prevention and management to avert the looming crisis and secure a healthier future for Africa.

## CEO of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation engages with Ethiopian partners and stakeholders



By our staff reporter

Mark Suzman, CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently concluded a successful visit to Ethiopia from April 22 to April 26, 2024. During his time in the country, he actively engaged with Foundation partners and grantees, focusing on addressing health challenges and promoting economic opportunities for the Ethiopian people. This visit underscored the Gates Foundation's

commitment to close collaboration with communities and leaders in Africa to advance solutions that accelerate progress and improve lives.

Throughout his visit, Suzman met with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the Foundation's work in Ethiopia. His itinerary included discussions with high-level policymakers as well as individuals benefiting from the Foundation's initiatives.

The CEO began his trip by connecting with the entire staff of the Foundation's country office in the ILRI campus. This provided him with valuable insights into the research being conducted by the Country Office to develop Ethiopian solutions for local challenges. He then delved into an in-depth examination of the Ethiopian Integrated Health Program (EIHP) and its implementation progress. Suzman also had an enlightening conversation with Amina Mohammed, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, highlighting the shared commitments of both organizations

towards the Ethiopian people.

Suzman also traveled to the Sidamo region to engage with a different set of stakeholders and participated in a roundtable discussion on gender transformative outcomes in agriculture with Dr. Sofiya Kassa, State Minister of Agricultural Investment and Inputs, and other executives from the Ministry of Agriculture. He also attended the Ministry of Health Technical Leadership Panel, engaging with representatives from the federal Ministry of Health, Oromia Regional Health Bureau, and Somali Regional Health Bureau.

Suzman had also a one-on-one meeting with Mamo Mihretu, Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, to gain a better understanding of the Ethiopian financial landscape and its interaction with the Foundation's initiatives. He also met with Yodahe Zemichael, Executive Director of the National ID Program, to learn more about the newly proposed government initiative and its interplay with the Foundation's work.





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# Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

## EU Restricts Visas for Ethiopians, Citing Lack of Government Deportation Cooperation

The European Union is tightening visa rules for people from Ethiopia in response to what it says is a lack of cooperation from the Ethiopian government with the repatriation of those who have entered Europe illegally. As a result of the changes, the EU said the visa processing time for Ethiopian nationals will triple, from 15 to 45 days, and that waiving requirements for certain paperwork will no longer be allowed. Ethiopian officials and diplomats will need to pay to obtain travel visas, the EU said. Multiple entry visas will no longer be allowed.

(VOA)

## African Farmers Look to the Past and the Future to Address Climate Change

In Zimbabwe, where the El Nino phenomenon has worsened a drought, small-scale farmer James Tshuma has lost hope of harvesting anything from his fields...But a patch of green vegetables is thriving in a small garden the 65-year-old Tshuma is keeping

alive with homemade organic manure and fertilizer...In conflict-prone Somalia in East Africa, greenhouses are changing the way some people live, with shoppers filling up carts with locally produced vegetables and traditionally nomadic pastoralists under pressure to settle down and grow crops...In Kenya, a new climate-smart bean variety is bringing hope to farmers in a region that had recorded reduced rainfall in six consecutive rainy seasons.

(AP)

## African Leaders Seek Record World Bank Financing to Combat Climate Change

African leaders on Monday called for rich countries to commit record contributions to a low-interest World Bank facility for developing nations that they rely on to help fund their development and combat climate change. Donors will make their cash pledges to the International Development Association (IDA), a World Bank institution that offers loans with low interest rates and long tenures, at a conference to be held in Japan in December...African economies [are] facing a "deepening development and debt crisis that threatens our economic stability, and urgent climate emergencies that demand immediate and collective action for our planet's survival," [Kenya's President William Ruto] said.

(Reuters)

## Dozens Dead after Dam Bursts amid Torrential Rain in Kenya

At least 45 people died when a makeshift dam burst its banks near a southern town in Kenya's Rift valley in the early hours of Monday, police said, as torrential rains and floods hit the country. The disaster raises the total death toll over the March-May wet season in Kenya to more than 100, as heavier-than-usual rainfall pounds east Africa, compounded by El Niño weather pattern...Residents said the dam burst in the dead of night, sending water gushing down a hill and engulfing everything in its path... The disaster occurred at Old Kijabe dam, a hillside barrier formed naturally over decades after railway construction work by Kenya's former British colonial rulers.

(AFP)

## Threat of 'Large-Scale Massacre' in Sudan's Darfur Is Imminent, US Official Says

A senior U.S. official warned Monday that more than 2 million people in El Fasher, in Sudan's western Darfur region, are under imminent threat of a "large-scale massacre" from a paramilitary

group's attack and urged the international community to pressure the warring parties to de-escalate. "There are already credible reports that the RSF and its allied militias have razed multiple villages west of El Fasher," U.N. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters at the United Nations. "And as we speak, the RSF is planning an imminent attack on El Fasher." The RSF is the Arab-dominated Rapid Support Forces, the paramilitary group that is made up of elements of the Janjaweed fighters who carried out a genocide in Darfur in the early 2000s.

(VOA)

### Term of the Day

## PREFERENCE SHARES

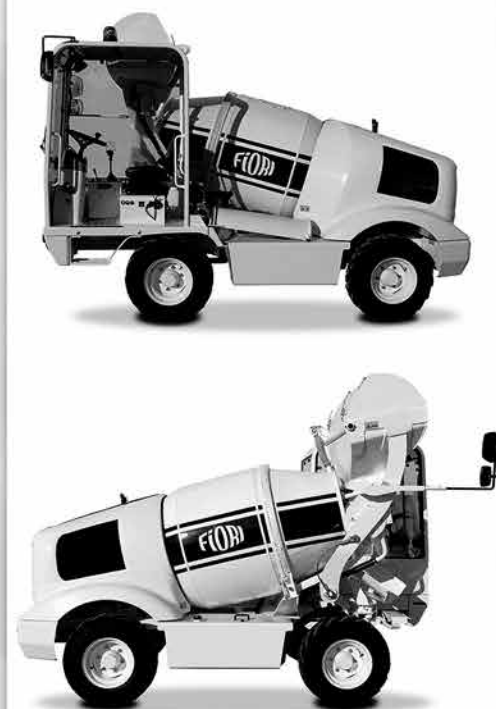
### » Definition

Preference shares, more commonly referred to as preferred stock, are shares of a company's stock with dividends that are paid out to shareholders before common stock dividends are issued. If the company enters bankruptcy, preferred stockholders are entitled to be paid from company assets before common stockholders.

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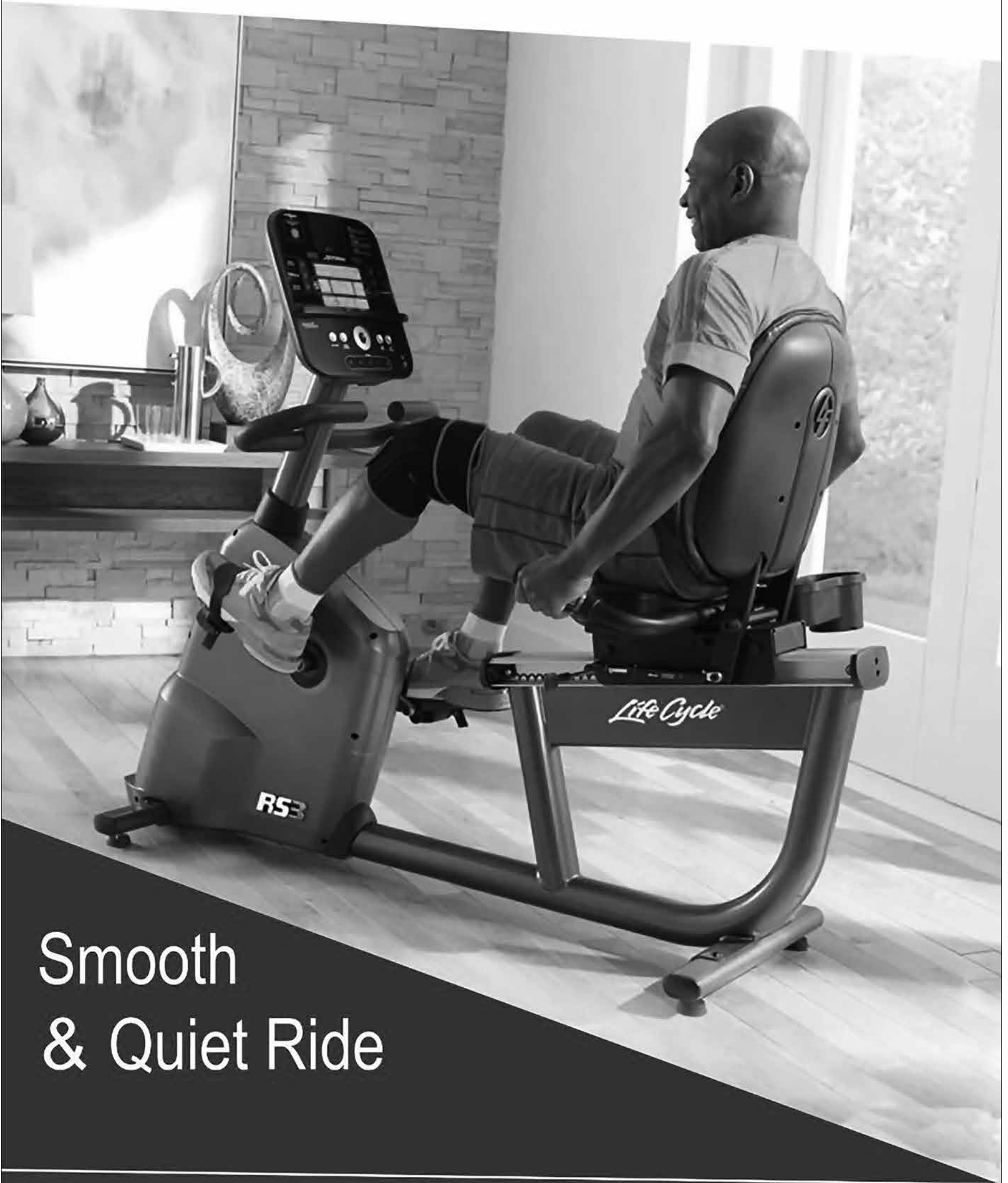
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# HUMAN NATURE THROUGH A CAPITALIST LENS

■ Alazar Kebede

What's most remarkable about the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few corporate players in each industry is how little public angst it has generated, at least in the United States, over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While the labor unions' struggles against corporate power were bitterly fought, they never attracted a majority of the workforce to their cause. Although there have also been occasional populist uprisings challenging the unbridled corporate control exercised over the economic life of society, the most recent being the Occupy Movement, with its rallying cry of the 99 percent versus the 1 percent, such outbursts have generally been few and far between and led to only mild regulatory reforms that did little to curb the concentration of power.

To some extent, the criticism was muted because these large, vertically integrated corporate enterprises succeeded in bringing ever-cheaper products and services to the market, spawned millions of jobs, and improved the standard of living of working people throughout the industrial world. There is, however, an additional and more subtle factor at play that has proven to be every bit as effective in dampening potential public opposition. The First and Second Industrial Revolutions brought with them an all-encompassing world view that legitimized the economic system by suggesting that its workings are a reflection of the way nature itself is organized and, therefore, unimpeachable.

The practice of legitimizing economic paradigms by creating grand cosmological narratives to accompany them is an age-old practice. Contemporary historians point to St. Thomas Aquinas's description of creation as a "Great Chain of Being" during the feudal era as a good example of the process of framing a cosmology that legitimizes the existing social order. Aquinas argued that the proper workings of nature depend on a labyrinth of obligations among God's creatures. While each creature differs in intellect and capabilities, the diversity and inequality is essential to the orderly functioning of the overall system. If all creatures were equal, St. Thomas Aquinas reasoned, than they could not act for the advantage of others. By making each creature different, God established a hierarchy of obligations in nature that, if faithfully carried out, allowed the "Creation" to flourish.

St. Thomas Aquinas's description of God's creation bears a striking resemblance to the way feudal society was set up: everyone's individual survival depended on them faithfully performing their duties within a rigidly defined social hierarchy. Serfs, knights, lords, and the pope were all unequal in degree and kind but obligated to serve others by the feudal bonds of fealty. The performance of their duties according to their place on the hierarchy paid homage to the perfection of God's creation.

The late historian Robert Hoyt of the University of Minnesota summed up the mirror relationship between the organization of feudal society and the Great Chain of Being "the basic idea that the created universe was a hierarchy, in which all created beings were assigned a proper rank and station, was congenial with the feudal notion of status within the feudal hierarchy, where every member had his proper rank with its attendant rights and duties."

The cosmology of the Protestant Reformation that accompanied the soft proto-industrial revolution of the late medieval era performed a similar legitimizing role. Martin Luther launched a frontal attack on the Church's notion of the Great Chain of Being, arguing that it legitimized the corrupt hierarchal rule of the Pope and the Papal Administration over the lives of the faithful. The Protestant theologian replaced the Church's feudal cosmology with a worldview centered on the

personal relationship of each believer with Christ. The democratization of worship fit well with the new communication/energy matrix that was empowering the new burgher class.

Martin Luther accused the Pope of being the Antichrist and warned that the Catholic Church was neither God's chosen emissary on Earth nor the anointed intermediary by which the faithful could communicate with the Lord. Nor could Church leaders legitimately claim the power to intercede with God on behalf of their parishioners and assure salvation in the next world.

Instead, Martin Luther called for the priesthood of all believers. He argued that each man and woman stands alone before God. Armed with the Bible, every Christian had a personal responsibility to interpret the word of God, without relying on Church authority to decipher the meaning of the text and assume the role of gatekeeper to heaven. Martin Luther's admonition spawned the first mass-literacy campaign in world history, as converts to Protestantism quickly learned to read in order to interpret God's word in the Bible.

Martin Luther also changed the rules for salvation. The Church had long taught that performing good works along with receiving the Church's sacraments would help secure a place in heaven for believers. Martin Luther, by contrast, argued that one can't win a place in heaven by racking up good works on Earth. Rather, according to Martin Luther, one's ultimate fate is sealed at the very get-go, that every individual is either elected to salvation or damned at birth by God. But then the question is: how does one live with the terrible anxiety of not knowing what awaits him? Luther's answer was that accepting one's calling in life and performing one's role fully and without a lapse might be a sign that one had been elected to salvation.

John Calvin went a step further, calling on his followers to continuously work at improving their lot in life as a sign of possible election. By contending that each individual was duty-bound to improve his or her calling, Protestant theologians unwittingly lent theological support to the new spirit of entrepreneurialism. Implicit was the assumption that bettering one's economic lot was a reflection of one's proper relationship with God and the natural order.

Although neither Martin Luther nor John Calvin had any intention of despiritualizing the faithful and creating "homo economicus", eventually the idea of improving one's calling became indistinguishable from improving one's economic fortunes. The new emphasis on diligence, hard work, and frugality metamorphosed over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into the more economically laden term of being "more productive." Self-worth became less about being of good character in the eyes of God and more about being productive in the new market exchange economy.

In time, the idea of each person standing alone with their Lord began to take a back seat to the notion of each person standing alone in the marketplace. Self-worth was now to be measured by self-interest, which, in turn, was measured by the accumulation of property and wealth by cunning dealings in the new market economy. Max Weber referred to this process that created the new man and woman of the market as "the Protestant work ethic."

The new commercial zeal spilled over, bringing increasing numbers of Catholics and others into the market fold. Where previously one's place on the rungs of the Great Chain of Being that made up God's creation had defined one's life journey in the feudal era, the new autonomous individual of the soft market economy came to define his journey by the amassing of private property in the marketplace.

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congenial with the  
feudal notion of status  
within the feudal  
hierarchy, where every  
member had his proper  
rank with its attendant  
rights and duties.”  
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# THE COSTS OF UNSAFE FOOD

Two weeks ago, I picked up a friend from the airport who came to visit for 10 days. All was well, and we enjoyed spending time together, visiting friends and dining out. Until one evening she was struck by food poisoning and she became very ill indeed in a very short period of time. We went to a clinic where she was given an IV treatment to rehydrate her and after some lab test she was given medication to deal with the cause. Until the evening of departure however, she remained ill and very weak indeed. As a result, a large part of her visit was spoilt, and a considerable amount of money was spent on medical costs. Now, this is the experience of only one person, and imagine the medical and economic costs caused by unsafe food at a larger scale, also in the perspective of the current high incidence of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD).

A large proportion of these costs could be avoided by adopting preventive measures that improve how food is handled. The economic cost of unsafe food varies according to the level of economic development. It is important to recognize the need for effective investment, a better understanding of the cost of reducing unsafe food, and the achievable impact on the country's food security, public health, and economy. Any food safety standards that are developed and implemented have associated costs for governments, industry and consumers. Nonetheless, the economic benefit and public health cost reduction resulting from reliable food safety systems outweigh the cost of food safety investment. Government not only needs to invest in food safety, but also invest strategically. This means investing in foundational knowledge, human resources, and infrastructure; realizing synergies among investments in food safety, human health, and environmental protection; and using public investment to leverage private investment. A transparent and constructive dynamic between food safety authorities and the food industry is fundamental in enabling public confidence in the food supply. The assurance of reliable and effective enforcement of regulation is fundamental to building a credible system. However, it is important to seek a productive balance between enforcement and facilitation and support to value chain actors to meet requirements to achieve their full potential. The public sector needs to put in place a set of enabling policies and provide public goods that create the enabling environment to foster private sector investment. The public sector can also support clustering of agribusinesses within specific geographic areas (e.g. technology parks) with assured infrastructure and access to output and input markets. Investment flows into value chains in which small-holder producers and processors are involved (e.g. as raw material suppliers) can be stimulated by improving coordination in the chain through strengthening groups that bring these actors together, while also building their technical and managerial capacity to meet market requirements.

In previous decades, government and donor investments in food safety in low and middle-income countries often focused on exports and formal sector food production and retail. This was driven by the economic benefits of export and the belief that modernization of the food system would improve productivity and deliver safer food and more benefits to workers. While both export sectors and formal food businesses remain key to many

countries' development strategies, recent years have seen increasing evidence of the huge health and economic burdens falling on domestic consumers who primarily access food, especially perishable, higher-nutrient produce, from informal outlets and distribution channels. A broad-based food safety strategy is needed which gives balanced attention to trade and domestic matters, and, for the latter, covering food safety risks in formal and informal markets. Food safety has complex bidirectional linkages with nutrition, livelihoods and equity. For example, unsafe food is associated with stunting and malnutrition and predisposes people to gastro-intestinal illness and affects the most vulnerable people who have limited food choices and often rely on informal markets. Concerns about food safety may push people away from fresh produce and towards low-nutrient, highly processed foods, with adverse long-term health consequences. In low and middle-income countries, hundreds of millions of people, many of them women, depend on food production, processing, and retail for their livelihoods. Wherever possible, food safety interventions should act to secure rather than threaten these livelihoods.

The image of Ethiopia has changed much over the past few decades, from a country struck by drought and starvation, to a country with substantial economic growth and capable to deal with the challenges of climate change and related risks. We receive more visitors than ever before, including tourists but even more delegates from organizations and foreign countries that come and attend international meetings in the capital of the Africa Union. We don't want that image to be weakened by illness, food waste and rejects because of unsafe food production and consumption.

Source and for more background reading:

<https://www.who.int/food-safety/international-food-safety-conference/background-documents/ton.haverkort@gmail.com>



## Entrepreneur PROFILE:

### RESUME

**Name:** Solomon Amera

**Education:** Diploma

**Company name:** Solo Printing & Advertising

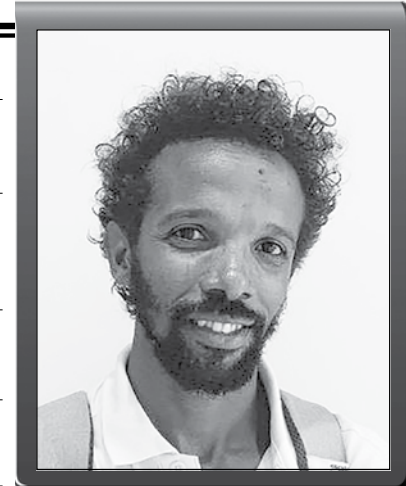
**Title:** Owner

**Founded in:** 2006 E.C

**What it does:** Printing & Signage works

**Hq:** Addis Ababa

**Number of Employees:** 7



**STARTUP CAPITAL**

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**CURRENT CAPITAL**

Growing

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### PERSONAL

**Reason for starting the Business:** I love creative works

**Biggest perk of ownership:** Not being dependent on anyone

**Biggest strength:** Providing a good quality product

**Biggest challenge:** Finance

**Plan:** To build the biggest company

**First career:** Employee in a photo printing shop

**Most interested in meeting:** Business influencers

**Most admired person:** Mihiret Debebe

**Stress reducer:** Focusing on the other things that I received from God

**Favorite past time:** Helping others

**Favorite book:** "Yemidrebedaw Eregna"

**Favorite destination:** Malta

**Favorite automobile:** Mercedes Benz

## EXCHANGE RATE

May 5, 2024

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	56.9239	58.0624
POUND STERLING	68.1921	69.5559
SWISS FRANC	59.5882	60.78
SWIDISH KNORER	4.7008	4.7948
NORWEGIAN KRONE	4.6771	4.7706
DANISH KNORER	7.4048	7.5529
DJIBOUTI FRANC	0.3188	0.3252
INDIAN RUPEE	0.6822	0.6958
KENYAN SHILLING	0.4201	0.4285
JAPANESE YEN	0.3283	0.3349
CANADIAN DOLLAR	37.6195	38.3719





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## አድራሻ

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## I N T E R V I E W

# Unlocking the advantages of Polymer Banknotes



**A**s the world continues to evolve, so too does the way we handle currency. In an interview with Capital's Groum Abate, Andrew Bonnell, the Director of Business Development at CCL Secure, sheds light on the innovative concept of polymer banknotes and their significant impact on various aspects of the economy and the environment. Andrew Bonnell began his experience in the security industry overseeing General Motor's Brand Protection Strategy for the Asia Pacific region while based in Shanghai. Andrew has lived and worked in China, South East Asia, the Middle East & Africa, Europe and North America, and progressed from brand protection strategy, to security technologies for high security printing and documents, into the arena of banknote substrates and security features. Excerpts;





**The savings from circulation polymer banknotes in place of cotton paper banknotes can be used to fund public needs e.g. schools, healthcare, infrastructure. Saving are mainly achieved through the much longer life of polymer banknotes. Polymer banknotes are proven to last 3 to 5 times longer than cotton paper banknotes**

**Capital: What is a polymer banknote?**

**Andrew Bonnell:** Polymer banknotes were developed to address key shortcomings Central Banks were experiencing with traditional cotton-paper notes. Polymer notes are produced with bi-axially oriented polypropylene material. The first polymer banknote was issued in Australia in 1988.

Central Banks are necessarily risk adverse and many do not move to new technologies without assessing the certainty of the benefits. The benefits of polymer have been proven in circulation in all environments resulting in over 40 countries around the world replacing a paper banknotes with polymer.

The increasing replacement of cotton paper substrates by polymer is due to the advantages polymer notes offers over cotton-paper banknotes. Polymer banknotes are more difficult to counterfeit, far more durable, cleaner and greener.

**Capital: What are the environmental benefits of using polymer banknotes compared to paper banknotes?**

**Andrew:** Some people are surprised to hear that polymer banknotes have a significantly reduced impact on the environment in circulation and are 100% recyclable at their useful life! As all banknotes are in a closed loop system no banknotes enter the waste stream. The Central Bank collects all unfit cotton paper and polymer banknotes back at their Cash centres for shredding.

After they shred cotton paper banknotes, Banks commonly decide on one of two disposal options for traditional cotton-paper banknotes: send these notes to be buried as landfill, or incinerate. Both options are very harmful to the environment.

In contrast, unfit polymer banknotes are recycled into polymer pellets and reused in the production of various plastic goods including buckets, trays, industrial components and furniture. For example, the Banco Central de Chile uses its end of life polymer notes to produce plastic wood. The plastic wood has offered the country many advantages. It doesn't rot, splinter or oxidize.

The Central Banks in Canada, Mexico and the UK engaged independent experts to conduct Lifecycle Assessment studies for their banknotes. The experts all found that polymer banknotes performed significantly better than cotton paper banknotes in all environmental impact areas categories in all 3 countries. Due to their longer life polymer banknotes are more environmentally friendly than cotton paper banknotes – recycling further increases these environmental benefits

**Capital: How does the durability of polymer banknotes contribute to cost savings for a country?**

**Andrew:** The increased longevity that polymer notes provide means less production (about 75% less) and far less transportation requirements. There are generally about 75% less reprint orders, less unfit notes being

transported for checking during circulation and less processing of unfit notes. This longer life saves the country costs to supply banknotes, with the added benefit of much lower impact on the environment.

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has estimates savings of over one Billion Australian Dollars in currency costs because of the change from cotton paper to polymer banknotes. The RBA circulates polymer banknotes and attributed the savings to polymer banknotes durability. Similar results are found in every major Bank that has issued polymer banknotes and undertaken the cost benefit analysis.

**Capital: In what ways are polymer banknotes more secure than paper banknotes?**

**Andrew:** The banknote design can incorporate a combination of unique substrate security features and traditional printed features making it difficult, time consuming and costly to counterfeit, yet easy for the public and retailers to quickly authenticate.

Generally the first thing people will notice when looking at a polymer banknote is a transparent area, which is called a window. The foundation of polymer banknotes, before any inks are added, is a robust transparent film. This window is intrinsic to a polymer banknote and is one of the major differences between polymer and cotton paper banknotes. Paper notes do not have any intrinsic windows although due to the success of polymer there have been some attempts to copy insert a window in a paper substrate. The clear window on a polymer banknote adds a level of complexity that is difficult to counterfeit. The transparency of the window results in the security features applied in the window being prominent and visible on both sides of the polymer banknote. This effectively doubles the challenge for a counterfeiter trying to copy the banknote.

Additionally, there are many security features that are available on polymer banknotes that are not possible on paper notes.

A notable example of polymer banknotes counterfeit resilience is Canada. At the end of 2022, the counterfeiting rate was 6 parts per million (ppm), well below the performance of the prior cotton paper banknotes- 45 ppm in 2009 - and their target of 30 ppm. There are similar successes in Australia, England and New Zealand.

**Capital: Can you explain why polymer banknotes last at least three times longer than paper banknotes?**

**Andrew:** As mentioned the core of every polymer banknote is a biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP) transparent film. This BOPP is a robust film with excellent printing and handling properties.

Polypropylene is a long lasting extremely tough polymer with excellent resistance to oils, chemicals and rough handling conditions. It is suitable in all climatic conditions. Polymer banknotes circulate successfully in some of the coldest, hottest, driest and most humid regions in the world.

Polypropylene is used to manufacture numerous long life products including car parts, clothing, housewares and toys.

**Capital: How do the cost savings from using polymer banknotes translate into significant financial benefits for a country?**

**Andrew:** The savings from circulation polymer banknotes in place of cotton paper banknotes can be used to fund public needs e.g. schools, healthcare, infrastructure. Saving are mainly achieved through the much longer life of polymer banknotes. Polymer banknotes are proven to last 3 to 5 times longer than cotton paper banknotes. Most Central Banks reduce their banknote procurement costs by well over 50% over the life of a banknote series when circulating polymer banknotes compared to cotton paper banknotes. In addition to the reduction in the costs of procurement over the circulation life of polymer banknotes there is significant reduction in the costs of handing banknotes in circulation. This is primarily because polymer notes stay in good condition and as a result are not returned to commercial and Central Banks as frequently.

If counterfeiting has been a problem in a country the reduction in counterfeiting from polymer banknotes will also have an impact on reducing costs as managing a counterfeit problem can be very expensive for a Central Bank

**Capital: Are there any potential drawbacks or disadvantages to switching to polymer banknotes? If so, what are they?**

**Andrew:** In some countries unfit polymer banknotes

process slightly slower than unfit paper notes (if both are fit then the processing speed is the same for both). However, due to polymer's durability, there are far less polymer banknotes (generally about 75% less) that need to be processed that the overall efficiency is actually much better than traditional paper banknotes.

ATM's and cash handling machines that accept and dispense banknotes must be adapted in some way for any new series whether on cotton paper or polymer. All ATMs are now suited to both paper and polymer and many countries circulate both banknote substrates. Hardware modifications like tray size are required if the banknote size changes whether paper or polymer. Beyond that software changes to money-handling equipment are required anytime the banknote design is updated it doesn't matter if it's printed on paper or polymer, modifications will be necessary regardless.

**Capital: How do polymer banknotes contribute to reducing the need for frequent note purchases?**

**Andrew:** Basically polymer banknotes don't wear out as quickly. In all environments from the extreme cold of Canada to the extreme heat of Mexico, Egypt, Papua New Guinea and Mozambique - polymer banknotes last at least 3-5 longer than their paper counterparts.

**Capital: Can you provide examples of countries that have successfully transitioned to using polymer banknotes and the benefits they have experienced?**

**Andrew:** Over 40 countries have successfully converted to polymer including Australia, Canada, Mozambique, England, Romania, Papua New Guinea, Brunei, and Mexico. Not all banks publicise all their available data for security reasons. All banks that have converted to large scale circulation of polymer banknotes and that measure data on cost savings, counterfeiting and the environment have achieved significant gains.

**Banks that publically report include:**

- Cost savings: Costa Rica, Australia, the UK
- Counterfeits: England, NZ and Canada reported significant reductions in counterfeit activities thanks to their polymer banknotes notes.
- Recycling: Mexico, Chile, Australia and Egypt found tremendous success with their polymer recycling initiatives.
- Public Acceptance: Banks that measure and report public acceptance generally find that the public prefer polymer banknotes to paper once they have experienced polymer banknotes. Reasons include cleanliness, banknotes not becoming limp and the technically advanced appearance.

There are many, many more examples in different parts of the world.

CCL Secure supplied over 90% of the polymer banknotes that have circulated worldwide.

**Capital: What are some of the long-term implications of adopting polymer banknotes, both economically and environmentally?**

**Andrew:** Simply put - the benefits to the country are significant cost savings, better counterfeit protection, cleaner notes in better condition in circulation, and environmental gains . Good Governance - saving the Public purse - and ALL the savings are in foreign currency - good for IMF relations as well!

**Capital: How do polymer banknotes enhance security measures compared to paper banknotes?**

**Andrew:** In addition to the increased security provided by the windows the fact that polymer banknotes stay in good condition for much longer and do not soil is a barrier to counterfeiting. Its relatively common for counterfeiters to soil paper banknotes to camouflage counterfeit security features in countries where soiled notes circulate. This practice is not feasible with polymer banknotes

**Capital: Have you ever tried to talk to authorities in Ethiopia about the use of Polymer banknotes? If so, what was their reaction?**

**Andrew:** We've had some preliminary talk with members of the National Bank of Ethiopia, and the early signs look promising. Though it may be a bit premature to expect any changes any time soon, the Bank members we talked to appreciate the benefits the NBE can expect from a switch to polymer banknotes, which again include savings in the procurement of cash that may be allocated to other areas in Ethiopia at the discretion of the Bank (be it in education, healthcare, etc. or other development projects). The Bank is professional and we are certain that once they have assessed the benefits they will act in the best interests of Ethiopia.





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# TEMESGEN TUMATO TO RELEASE CAPTIVATING SINGLE 'DES ALEGN'

# EBNE HAKIM

Ethiopian music scene is about to witness the release of a mesmerizing single as up-and-coming artist Temesgen Tumato prepares to unveil his latest creation, "Des Alegn." Hailing from the picturesque town of Yirgalem Sidama, Temesgen Tumato, born in 1995, has already carved a niche for himself by skillfully blending tradition, spirituality, and modern influences in his musical narrative.

Temesgen's dynamic and captivating voice, nurtured within the heart of the church community, sets him apart as a force to be reckoned with. From his early days contributing to the church choir to transformative experiences at the Beza Youth Centre, Temesgen's musical journey has been nothing short of extraordinary. His dedication to artistic expression is evident through his involvement with the Beza Youth Centre and the Sidama Culture and Tourism Bureau.

"Des Alegn" is not just another song for Temesgen Tumato; it is a creation where he poured his soul into every lyric and melody. This masterpiece stands as a testament to his diverse talents. Inspired by the historic peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the song carries a powerful message of unity and hope. Temesgen's ability to infuse spirituality and familial influences into his music elevates "Des Alegn" beyond



a mere composition, transforming it into a profound journey through tradition, emotion, and the indomitable human spirit. The masterful arrangement by Muzikawi brings the essence of the composition to life, creating a harmonious blend that resonates deeply with listeners.

With his energetic voice, a harmonious fusion of traditional and modern sounds, and a profound spiritual depth, Temesgen Tumato's music transcends genres. The highly anticipated release of "Des Alegn" is scheduled for April 19, 2024, and will be available on the Muzikawi YouTube channel and all major digital streaming platforms. This promises to give the powerful and emotive creation a global reach, captivating audiences far and wide.

ALTERNATIVE R&B/  
POP ETHIOPIAN  
TALENT SIGNS WITH  
SONY MUSIC AFRICA,  
ANNOUNCES DEBUT EP 'BRANA',

Ethiopian singer-songwriter Ebne Hakim (ዕብነ አኪዎ) announces his debut EP "Branā" (ብራና), to be released on May 17th and unveils "Branā (Intro)", accompanied with a visualizer shot in Addis Ababa. This comes with the announcement of his signing with Sony Music Entertainment Africa.

"Branā (Intro)" serves as a prelude to his upcoming EP, "Branā", following the release of the emotional song "Gela" last March HERE. The spoken word introductory track in Amharic further reveals Ebne Hakim's captivating soundscape, blending Ethiopian musical heritage with contemporary sounds spanning Alternative R&B, Pop, Funk, Soul, and Electronic – which he describes as Ethio-Fusion.

Born and raised in Ethiopia, Mikiyas Mengistu's adopted the moniker Ebne Hakim, as he began sharing his poetry anonymously, finding freedom in the creative expression this anonymity afforded him. With profound passion and belief in the power of music as a universal language for emotions, his transition from poetry to music was seamless.

Ebne Hakim's artistry was shaped between the bustling streets of Addis Ababa, the pulse of deep-rooted traditions, and the diverse range of musical influences within his family. The visionary talent has crafted a universe that captures the essence of the fascinating and immensely rich culture of Ethiopia, while embracing a global outlook, and merging aspects of both tradition and modernity.

Powered by his hypnotic melodies and vocals, Ebne Hakim's music is a reflection of his journey, transforming personal experiences into a universal narrative, and singing stories that speak to the hearts and souls.

"Branā (Intro)" offers a cryptic glimpse into the soul-baring tale of "Branā," where the character Ebne Hakim, a masterful student in literature returns home to a broken promise, finding his first love marrying another. As his protective facade crumbles, he seeks acceptance in unsavory parts of the city, compromising his morals, to eventually find peace, resilience, and balance.

"Branā" explores the path of self-discovery, the intricacies of human emotions and the dualities of life – encompassing love and heartbreak, sins and virtues, ideals and reality, the past and the new.

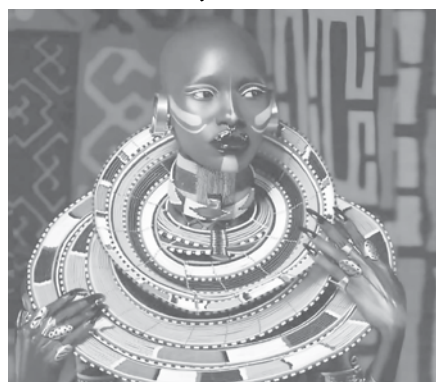
## AFRICA CELEBRATES 2024: UNITING CONTINENTS THROUGH CULTURE, BUSINESS, AND EMPOWERMENT

Legendary Gold Limited from Nigeria and Mayalz Events Company from Ethiopia have joined forces once again to unveil Africa's biggest Pan African event of Arts, Culture, Heritage, Tech & Business – Africa Celebrates 2024.

In collaboration with the African Union, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and several embassies, the event is set to mark its fourth edition with a spectacular showcase of Africa's diversity and potential.

Since its inauguration in 2021, Africa Celebrates has witnessed remarkable growth, expanding its reach and impact with each passing year. What began as a modest gathering of 18 African countries has evolved into a continent-wide celebration, with 38 African countries and 11 countries from outside Africa participating in the previous year. Lexy Mojo-Eyes, President/CEO of Legendary Gold Limited and the driving force behind the event, expressed excitement for this year's festivities, which are poised to be the most ambitious yet.

At its core, Africa Celebrates aims to celebrate Africa's unity in diversity while promoting economic, social, and political integration across the continent. Through a vibrant tapestry of art, culture, heritage, trade, investment, science, and



technology, the event seeks to catalyze Africa's journey towards prosperity and self-reliance. Central to this mission is the promotion of intra-African trade and the empowerment of women and youths to drive wealth creation and sustainable development.

Over the course of five consecutive days, Africa Celebrates 2024 will play host to a diverse array of activities designed to engage, inspire, and empower attendees from all walks of life. From business forums and training workshops to cultural presentations and empowerment summits, the event promises something for everyone. The official opening ceremony, to be held at the iconic Nelson Mandela Hall of the African Union, will set the stage for the days ahead with

keynote addresses, panel sessions, and high-level discussions.

Among the event's highlights is the Africa Talks Business and Investment Forum, which aims to connect African entrepreneurs, business leaders, and SMEs to facilitate trade and investment within the continent. Similarly, the Pan Africa Women Empowerment Summit will provide a platform for women leaders to share insights, foster entrepreneurship, and drive economic development.

The Africa Fashion Business Summit will bring together stakeholders from across the fashion industry to explore opportunities for collaboration and growth. Meanwhile, the Diaspora Africa Konnect event will serve as a bridge between African diaspora communities and continental players, facilitating dialogue and collaboration on shared challenges and opportunities.

The Afro Film Alliance will showcase the transformative power of African storytelling, while a focus on climate change and sustainability will galvanize African youths to take action for a more environmentally conscious future. Additionally, forums dedicated to innovation and technology will explore cutting-edge advancements and their potential to drive progress across the

continent.

As the official airline for Africa Celebrates, Ethiopian Airlines will play a pivotal role in facilitating travel and connectivity throughout the event. Meanwhile, activities curated to showcase the importance of sports and lifestyle in nation-building will underscore the integral role these elements play in African society.

For the first time, a continental forum for African traditional leaders will be convened, highlighting the importance of preserving Africa's rich cultural heritage and traditions. With the support of partners like the Forum of Africa Traditional Authorities (FATA), Africa Celebrates 2024 aims to foster unity, collaboration, and development among royal leaders across the continent.

As Africa continues its journey towards unity, prosperity, and self-determination, Africa Celebrates stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration, showcasing the continent's boundless potential and resilience. In a world of challenges and opportunities, Africa Celebrates invites the world to join in celebrating Africa's past, present, and future, while charting a course towards a brighter tomorrow.

(The SUN)



# 'ETHIOPIA AT THE CROSSROADS' AT PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM SURVEYS 2,000 YEARS OF ART

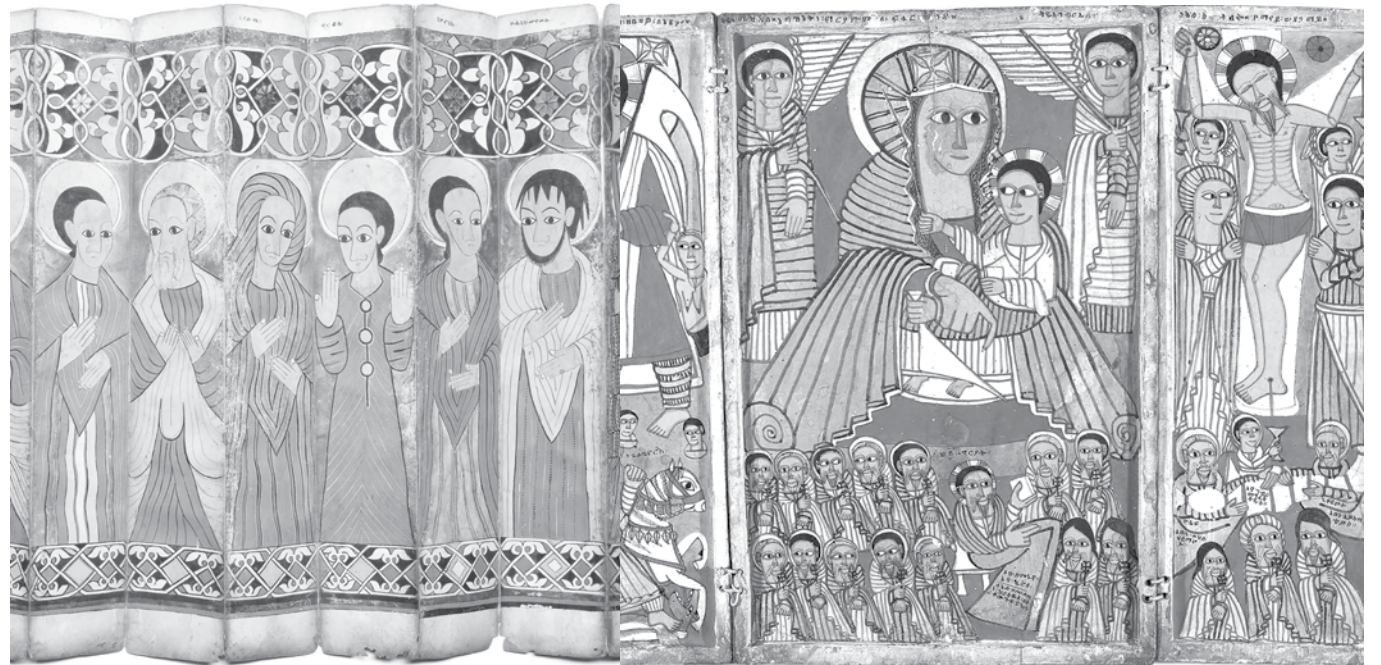
There's only one country that can claim to be the birthplace of humanity. This country today is home to over 75 ethnicities, and is the only African nation to resist colonial rule. This country is Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest nations and served as a crossroads of diverse cultures and religions in the ancient world. This long and rich history is now on display in Salem at the Peabody Essex Museum. The "Ethiopia at the Crossroads" exhibition, on display through July 7, is part of a traveling exhibition that originated at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and will end at the Toledo Museum of Art.

The exhibition includes more than 200 objects spanning 2,000 years in five galleries. The objects range from processional crosses and ancient manuscripts to Haile Selassie's royal cloak and contemporary collages. The Queen of Sheba is featured, along with art from Ethiopian Jews, Muslims and spiritualists.

Jesus, Mary and patron saints are prominently displayed with brown skin in religious iconography. These icons are Christian art created in an African nation whose monarch, King Ezana of Aksum, willingly adopted the religion in the fourth century, without force via colonialism and violence.

Not only can viewers see art from Ethiopia, they can also delight their senses in other ways. Scratch-and-sniff cards with scents of berbere spices, frankincense and manuscripts are available to inhale while viewing artifacts. Sounds of Ge'ez, an ancient Ethiopic language, and music from an Orthodox church service can be heard throughout the galleries from educational videos covering these topics



and more.

The show is the first of its kind in America to put Ethiopia and its visual history in a global context. Pieces from Italy, Crete, Armenia and Coptic Egypt are shown in conversation with pieces from ancient and contemporary Ethiopia by artists like Julie Mehretu and Aïda Muluneh. Medieval and modern objects reference the themes of faith and revolution. What's old is new.

Over Zoom last week, Christine Sciacca, the creator of the "Ethiopia" exhibition and curator at the Walters Art Museum, joked that she got her current position because she pitched the idea for "Ethiopia" in her interview eight years ago. COVID-19 lockdowns delayed the exhibition. Sciacca is proud to see her vision come to life, but it wasn't without the help of the Ethiopian community in the D.C. area — the largest Ethiopian diasporic community outside Africa.

"I had my advisory committees," she said. "They were community members, academics and college students. There were nurses, teachers and Orthodox priests who were sharing their lived experience with me."

Sciacca also used design input from community members. They wanted the exhibit to include the colors of the Ethiopian flag and lots of light, since Ethiopia represents light to them.

At Peabody Essex, curators Lydia Peabody and Karen Kramer also heeded the suggestions of community members. In the exhibition, they use colors of the flag as accents against light, cream-colored walls and shadows of church windows above the art. At times the gallery is too light, causing some of the medieval manuscripts to fade into the background.

One artist's work that doesn't get

overlooked is interdisciplinary artist Helina Metaferia. Metaferia was born in D.C. to Ethiopian immigrant parents. On a phone call last week, Metaferia explained her personal connection to the exhibition. She interned at the Walters years ago and worked with the Ethiopian art collection. Sciacca came across Metaferia's notes while compiling pieces from the Walters collection. The artist's father, Dr. Getachew Metaferia, was on the academic advisory committee for the exhibit.

"We have a very unique history that is reflected in the artwork. Hopefully people get to walk away with a more nuanced understanding of Ethiopian culture," she said. "I hope there are more [exhibitions] because I think that other artists deserve to have this opportunity, and curators deserve to have this response."

*(The Bay State Banner)*

## H O T M U S I C T A B L E

### HOTTEST ARTISTS

APRIL 25 - MAY 01, 2024

### HOTTEST TRACKS

RANK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Dawit Tsige	66	19	85
2	Tewodros "Teddy Afro" Kassahun	71	6	77
3	Neway Debebe	60	2	62
4	Rophnan	40	13	53
5	Veronica Adane	37	14	51
6	Michael Belayneh	44	2	46
6	Fikeraddis Nekatebeb	38	8	46
7	Gosaye Tesfaye	35	7	42
8	Mastewal Eyayu	31	10	41
9	Abinet Agonafer	31	7	38
10	Esubalew Yetayew (Yeshi)	24	13	37

RANK	TRACK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Zelesegna	Tewodros "Teddy Afro" Kassahun	35	0	35
2	Demama	Dawit Tsige	22	7	29
3	Enaney	Veronica Adane	24	3	27
4	Bantelay	Hana Girma	17	7	24
5	Yene Amel	Leul Sisay	7	11	18
5	Qimemun	Nhatty Man	12	6	18
5	Kome Limerkish	Tilahun Gessese	14	4	18
6	Meta Meta	Teamir Gizaw	10	5	15
6	Gelagay	Yohana	7	8	15
7	SHEGIYE	Rophnan	7	6	13
7	Betam Enji Betam	Mesay Tefera	9	4	13
8	Mamesegegnaye	Nhatty Man	5	7	12
8	Etittu	Dawit Tsige	11	1	12
9	Yegle Nesh	Dawit Tsige	3	8	11
9	Hodye	Zemenu Nega	3	8	11
9	Mar Eske Tuafe	Tewodros "Teddy Afro" Kassahun	7	4	11
9	Alew Mesenko	Lij Michael	5	6	11
9	Fiqir Bemetenu	Girma Tefera kassa	6	5	11
10	Sew Mamaru	Melat Kelemework	9	1	10
10	Sew Meseretu	Ephrem Tameru	9	1	10
10	YehagerKasma	Kuku Fkeraddis Zeritu Sayat Rahel	6	4	10

THIS DATA IS GATHERED BY A 24/7 AUTOMATED RECORDING & ANALYZING ALL SYSTEM FROM 35 TV & RADIO STATIONS. THERE WERE MORETHAN 3,014 TOTAL MUSIC PLAYS ACROSS THE BROADCAST MEDIUM FOR THIS WEEK. BROUGHT TO YOU BY - OMNIMEDIA ETHIOPIA



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## Happy Easter!



Baankiin Siinqee Hordoftoota Amantaa Kiristaanaa hundaan бага аyyaana du'aa ka'uu Gooftaa Iyyasuus Kiristoos nagaan geessan jechaa, аyyaanichi kan nagaan fi jaalalaa akka isiniif ta'u hawwa!

### Ayyaana Gaarii!

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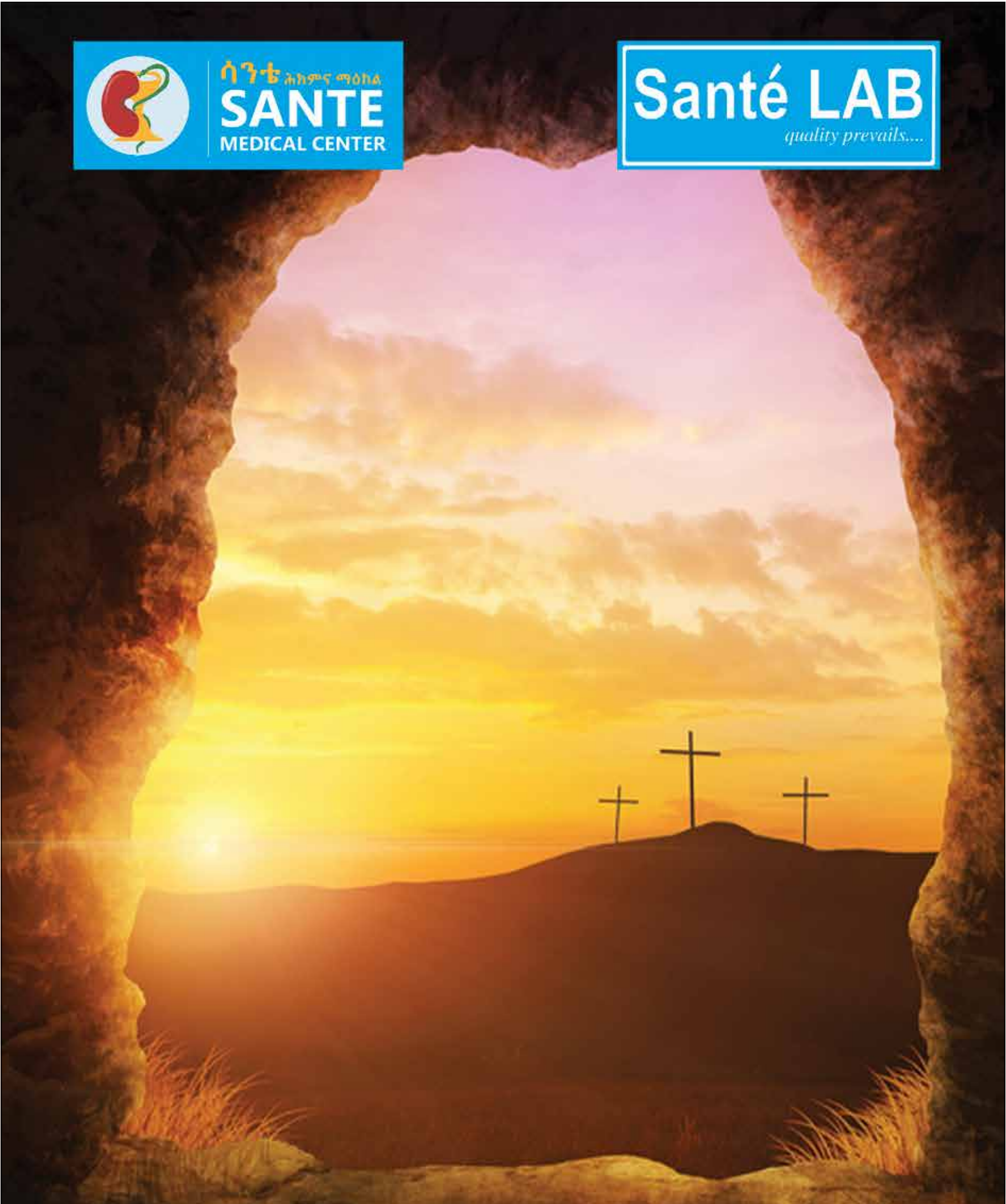
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# Spotlight

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

## Unilever Ethiopia appoints George Owusu-Ansah as new general manager

Unilever Ethiopia announced the appointment of George Owusu-Ansah as its new General Manager, effective from April 1, 2024. George's appointment to lead our Ethiopia business reflects his very impressive career track record in general management and a variety of roles. He has had previous career stints in Malawi, China, Singapore, Kenya, and Nigeria serving in different leadership roles.

George brings to Ethiopia a wealth of over 30 years' experience in Supply Chain, Customer Development, Procurement and General Management. He is passionate about talent development, business growth and been a force for impacting the communities we serve positively.

"Accelerating growth in Ethiopia involves collaborating closely with our winning team on the ground. Additionally, nurturing young talent to manage not only the business within Ethiopia but compute globally will be my top priority," remarked George.

## COP28 President addresses historic first Board meeting for the Loss and Damage Fund

COP28 President Dr. Sultan Al Jaber addressed the 'First Meeting of the Board of the Fund for responding to loss and damage' and urged Parties to "build on progress" and deliver "lasting, positive, socio-economic impact" to help the most vulnerable to climate change.

During his address, Dr. Al Jaber said that while delivering an agreement to operationalize the Fund at COP28 was a "huge breakthrough for climate progress" more needs to be done.

The COP28 President said: "Let's make sure we build on that progress with a fully functioning fund. A Fund that is endorsed at COP29 in Baku, a Fund that is disbursing funds soon after and a Fund that delivers lasting, positive, socio-economic impact for decades to come."

Loss and damage was first put on the COP agenda in 1991 and that "while it took over three decades to establish this Fund, climate change has not stood still. Every region of the world is now vulnerable... the impacts of climate change are a clear and present danger to lives and livelihoods everywhere."

## Access to innovative HIV treatment

Ten years after the signing of ground-breaking licensing agreements between ViiV Healthcare and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), as well as ViiV's direct agreements with Aurobindo Pharma, more than 1 billion packs of generic dolutegravir (DTG) based medicines have reached 24 million people living with HIV in 128 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), transforming the HIV landscape in those areas of the world. This means that as of 2023, over 90% of people on antiretroviral treatment in these countries are estimated to be on DTG-based regimens.

Thanks to this decade-long partnership, WHO-recommended treatment can be developed, produced, and when approved, supplied by 15 generic manufacturers to all low-income, least developed, lower-middle-income and sub-Saharan African countries, as well as some upper middle-income countries, addressing the needs of regions with the highest HIV burdens.

Charles Gore, Executive Director, Medicines Patent Pool said, "As we reflect on a decade of collaboration with ViiV Healthcare, we are proud to see that public health-oriented voluntary licensing has had tangible impact in the lives of the people we serve, enabling access to affordable versions of innovative HIV treatments in LMICs."

### WAITING EASTER



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

### TAKING A BREAK



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

### CHEERS



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

## Niyel: an unwavering commitment to vaccination in Africa

Every April, Africa observes African Vaccination Week, a crucial occasion for raising awareness about the significance of vaccination and highlighting its indispensable role in safeguarding public health. The theme for this year, 2024, "Humanly Possible," serves as a reminder to leaders and communities alike of the imperative to maintain the progress achieved and to bolster funding towards vaccination efforts, thereby averting the resurgence of preventable diseases.

Over the past 50 years, vaccines have saved nearly 154 million lives, equating to over 3 million lives per year or six lives every minute for five decades. During the same period, vaccination has reduced infant mortality by 40%, according to WHO figures.

"Vaccination is one of the most effective, safest, and accessible public health interventions globally," stated Dr. Rachel Tanou during the launch ceremony of the Here Zaka CSO activities series, on the sidelines of the 2024 African Vaccination Week. "It has saved millions of lives and eradicated devastating diseases such as smallpox. Vaccines not only protect individuals but also entire communities by fostering herd immunity, which prevents diseases from spreading."

## Dubai launches global blueprint for artificial intelligence

Dubai has launched a blueprint for Artificial Intelligence (AI), a yearly plan that will focus on harnessing the technology's potential to improve quality of life around the world.

The plan begins with the appointment of a CEO for AI in each government entity, and will be followed by the establishment of an AI and WEB3 Incubator, which will develop into the largest global hub for AI and technology companies. The hub will attract innovators, startups and AI leaders from around the world and support of development of their ideas into successful enterprises or real-world applications.

The plan also includes the introduction of AI Week into schools and colleges to help integrate AI applications into the educational system. This will enable students to develop skills that align with future market needs such as coding, and introduce them to the latest tools and best practices in this field.

## Africa's bold transformational agenda requires real commitment and urgency

At the conclusion of IDA (International Development Association) for Africa Heads of State Summit, hosted by President William Ruto in Kenya, Nairobi, The ONE Campaign responds to a meeting that offered a bold ambition, Heads of State and non-state actors and delivered a critical and aspirational call for the biggest replenishment of all time.

Serah Makka, ONE's Executive Director for Africa said "President Ruto and other African Heads of State deserve the recognition and acknowledgement for setting the agenda and demand that finally reflects the scale of the Africa's fiscal challenges and succeeded in highlighting the partnership needed to build an inclusive society and see the realization of Africa's developmental goals."

"A strong demand signal from Africa the required leadership for an ambitious IDA to provide concessional funding for low- and middle-income countries. The scale of the funding required for Africa to reach the SDGs is significant and in the trillions of dollars. But we need to start from somewhere. IDA is a great place to start.



## IATA Releases Comprehensive Comparative Review of Aviation Net Zero Roadmaps

In a significant step towards understanding the diverse pathways to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has collaborated with several leading organizations to release the "Aviation Net Zero CO2 Transition Pathways Comparative Review." This collaborative effort includes contributions from the Air Transportation Systems Laboratory at University College London, the Air Transport Action Group, the International Council on Clean Transportation, and the Mission Possible Partnership.

This groundbreaking report is the first to compile and compare 14 leading net zero CO2 transition roadmaps for the aviation sector. It serves as a comprehensive resource for airlines, policymakers, and stakeholders, providing crucial insights into the similarities and differences between each roadmap, and outlining various visions for achieving a carbon-neutral future.

Key findings of the review highlight the variability in the potential pathways to net zero emissions by 2050, which largely depend on assumptions made about the advancement and adoption of decarbonization technologies.

## Infinix Mobile celebrates emerging talent

Infinix Mobile, a global leader in mobile technology, proudly announces the successful conclusion of the week-long student talent contest in partnership with the renowned Addis Ababa University (AAU) Culture Center. The event, which showcased the remarkable abilities of young student artists and performers, exemplifying Infinix's commitment to empowering youth worldwide.

The talent contest, held over the past week, featured students competing in singing, poetry, and theater categories. Participants from diverse backgrounds demonstrated their creativity, passion, and dedication, making it a celebration of artistic expression and cultural diversity. The AAU Culture Center provided an ideal platform for these emerging talents to shine and connect with a wider audience.

The closing event, held at the Addis Ababa University Culture Center auditorium, was attended by esteemed guests, including senior representatives from the university, local influencers, celebrities, and thousands of enthusiastic students.

The winners of each category were awarded the sleek and powerful Infinix HOT 40 Pro smartphones. These cutting-edge devices symbolize not only victory but also the promise of limitless possibilities. Our distinguished guest of honor personally handed over the HOT 40 phones, inspiring the winners to continue pursuing their passions.

## Building resilience in Africa's civil aviation

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) hosted a webinar in Addis Ababa on April 28 to discuss the resilience of the African Civil Aviation Industry during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aviation is crucial for effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). However, strong collaboration among stakeholders of the aviation industry is essential to optimise the benefits of AfCFTA, said Robert Lisinge, Acting Director of the Private Sector Development and Finance Division of ECA.

The event assessed the effectiveness of strategies for the survival and recovery of the aviation industry initiated by various organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. "It is crucial to undertake an in-depth review of strategies and policies initiated during the pandemic, to determine the extent to which they contributed to build the resilience of the aviation industry, and identify lessons learned from implementing the strategies" said Lisinge.

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union was held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, in 2023.

### CAPTURING THE MOMENT



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

### ADDIS' TRAFFIC

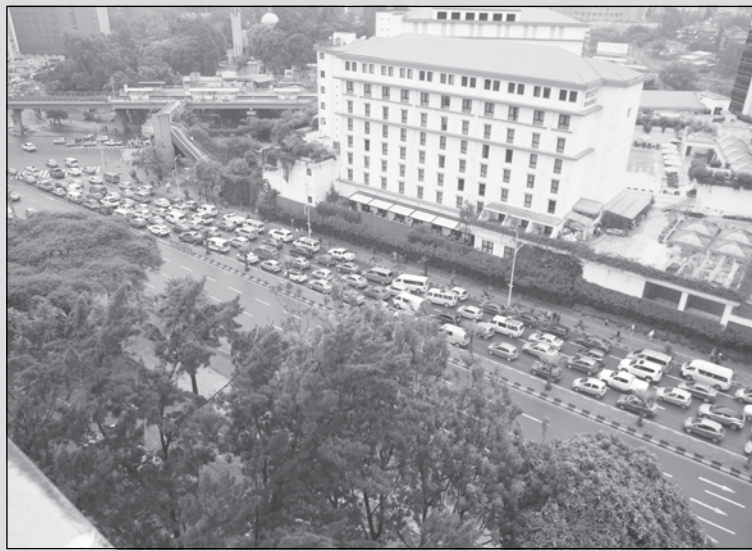


PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

### WATCHING FOOTBALL



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

### WAITING FOR CUSTOMERS



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

## USAID announces \$35 million project for health and nutrition

USAID Deputy Mission Director Eleanor TanPiengco and Minister of Health Dr. Mekdes Daba inaugurated the USAID Lowlands Health Activity, a five-year, \$35 million initiative aimed at improving health and nutrition outcomes for mothers and children in the pastoral regions of Ethiopia. This project, to be implemented by EngenderHealth Inc., along with a consortium of international and local partners, will span 35 districts across the Somali, Afar, Southern Ethiopia, and Oromia regions.

Since 2017, USAID has supported maternal and child health in pastoralist regions through the Transform Health in Developing Regions project, which has advanced key health indicators, such as skilled birth attendance and immunization coverage. The Lowlands Health Activity will offer services to marginalized populations such as primary healthcare, access to quality services, the adoption of healthy behaviors, and health facilities that provide essential reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, adolescent, and nutrition services. The project directly supports the achievements of USAID's and Ethiopia's Health Sector Transformation goal, aimed to prevent maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

## Global Passenger Demand Surges by 13.8% in March 2024, IATA Reports

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released the latest data on global passenger demand for March 2024, indicating a remarkable surge in travel activity. The report highlights the following key findings:

Passenger demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), soared by an impressive 13.8% in March 2024 compared to the same period last year. This substantial growth is a testament to the increasing appetite for air travel worldwide.

In tandem with rising demand, total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), witnessed a substantial 12.3% year-on-year increase. This expansion in capacity has been instrumental in accommodating the growing number of passengers seeking to fly.

The load factor, a crucial indicator of airline efficiency, reached 82.0% in March 2024, marking a notable improvement of 1.0 percentage point compared to March 2023. The higher load factor signifies a more optimal utilization of available seats and reflects the industry's efforts to enhance operational efficiency.

## Inclusive, comprehensive, and credible transitional justice process to realize sustainable peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia

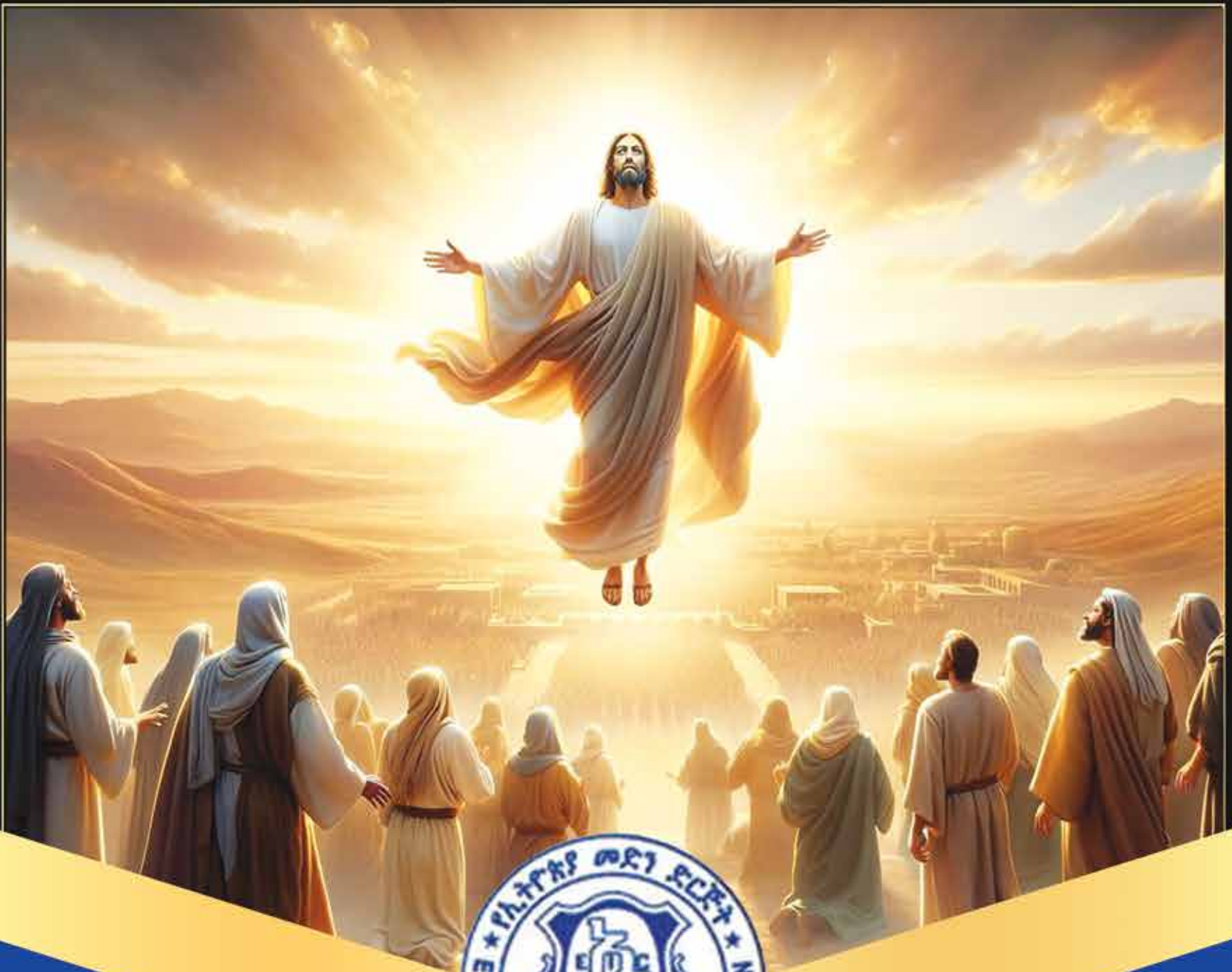
The effective implementation of Ethiopia's transitional justice policy aims to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation. If successful, it has the potential to strengthen human rights protections and the rule of law.

To discuss Ethiopia's ongoing transitional justice process, the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia brought U.S. transitional justice expert Professor Matiangai Sirleaf from the University of Maryland's School of Law to Ethiopia April 21 to 27.

During her weeklong visit, Professor Sirleaf conducted lectures, workshops, and discussions in Addis Ababa and Mekelle with a range of civil society, academic, and other stakeholders on the promise and pitfalls of transitional justice processes and the potential role they can play in building sustainable peace and reconciliation as well as the challenges they face facilitating these objectives.

Professor Sirleaf said of the visit, "Transitional justice as a field seeks to reckon with legacies of widespread or systematic human rights abuses. My interest in transitional justice is informed by experiences during the Liberian civil war. My work in the field is motivated not only as an academic, or as a practitioner, but as someone with lived experience. In my scholarship on African transitional justice processes, I have argued for the need to formulate effective and contextually appropriate responses to mass violence. The consultation in Ethiopia underscored that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach will not work."





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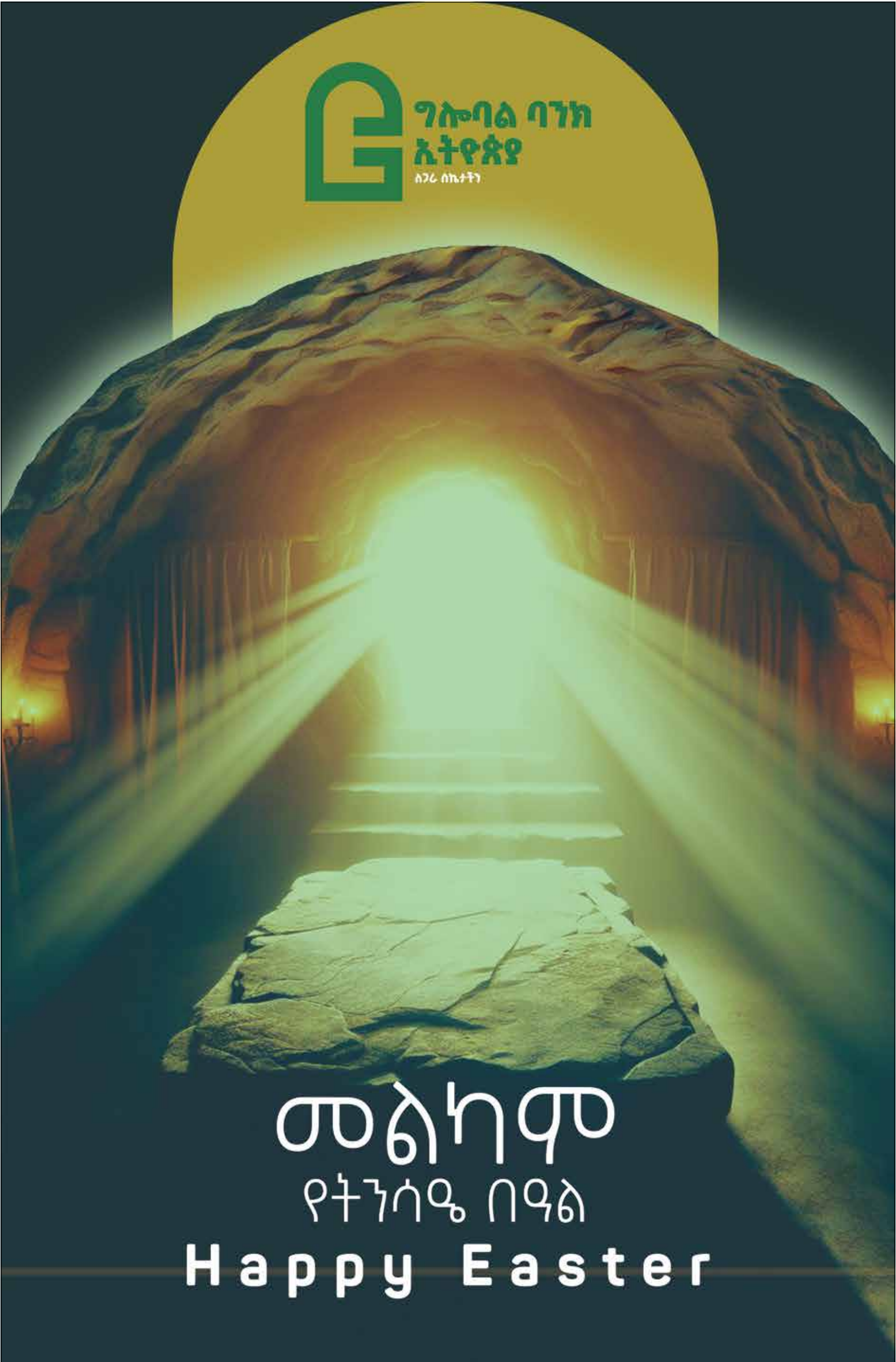
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➤ We welcome submittals regarding news/information pertinent to the CFTA and relegated issues.

A section designed to promote Africa's Continental Free Trade Area using News, messages, events and commentaries. It's a joint initiative by the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Capital.

## Aviation Experts Identify Barriers to Intra-African Trade, AfCFTA Implementation

At the 2024 MRO Africa Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from April 23-25, aviation experts brainstormed on the challenges facing air travel in Africa, how to boost trade and tourism on the continent.

The stakeholders acknowledged that air transport as catalyst for economic development is the bedrock that would buoy and enhance trade and tourism; when there is free movement of people across nations with liberalised inter-state movement.

The stakeholders posited that the full implementation of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can be realised when there is easy movement of people in Africa without the hindrances of state boundaries, which means that there should be visa waivers or visa on arrival protocol among Africans and this would be possible through collaboration, partnerships and legislation by states.

Secretary General of African Airlines Association (AFRAA), Mr. Abdelrahmane Berthe, said the future of aviation in Africa remained bright because there are so many things to do, the level of traffic is still very small and only a few African citizens can afford air travel today.

"So, we need to create an environment to develop the traffic, the affordability of fares. That is why the single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) is important, also the African Continental Free Trade Area. If there is no activity between countries, it is difficult for an airline to open a route. And also, we are seeing still some visa restrictions between African countries. This also should be solved. And I think African airlines also are not cooperating much. We have commercial agreement. This is something which needs to be changed," he said.

The AFRAA Secretary General said Nigeria remained a big market, which should position itself well to fully exploit its potential in air travel, recognizing the fact that it has the highest number of indigenous travellers in Africa.

"Nigeria is a big market. We have some member airlines from Nigeria. So today if you look at the continent, in aviation, we have activities in east, southern regions, and western/central sub-region weak. Only Nigeria has a strong domestic market and intercontinental market. I hope to see Nigeria having an airline, which will also cover the continent like the Ethiopian Airlines is doing today. You see the Ethiopian Airlines global operation out of Africa and within Africa. So Nigeria has the potential and I really hope that from the Western Central region, we can have a hub in Nigeria to connect Africa as well, this will be important," Berthe said.

On aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), he said MRO remained very important, noting that there are two critical elements regarding the cost of

operation, the fuel and maintenance.

"We know that in Africa, fuel costs are very, very high. Now we are seeing also maintenance becoming high cost because of the supply chain and the logistics, restrictions and also customs sometimes in some countries. So these challenges are making it difficult to develop MRO activities in the continent. However, if we see that we expect the traffic to double by 2042, it means that we have more aircraft in operation, more aircraft means more maintenance, so we really need also to have MRO facilities," he said.

Berthe said aircraft financing had been a big challenge for Africa airlines, especially small, upstart carriers. However, he disclosed that AFRAA and African Development Bank were collaborating to create a platform that could facilitate easy access to funding by African airlines.

"AFRAA is discussing with African Development Bank to see how they can support the project. You know, it's simple. If you want money to buy a house, the bank will see if you can service the loan for the time. It is the same thing. So they need to really look at the management, the business plan of the airline, to get confidence that the airlines can operate the

aircraft and fund the loan. There are some discussions around it. It is a very critical question. And we hope that we will find a solution as soon as possible. Because you are right, because if I said we will have more aircraft in operation, how do we get this aircraft? We need finance," he said.

On the barriers to free movement and the realization of common airspace for Africa, which is the Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD), the AFRAA Secretary General said that even the countries that have signed to SAATM and are also signatories to YD are still engaging in protectionism, not allowing other African airlines to freely operate into their airspace.

"We have today 38 seats signed to a Single African Air Transport Market last month. But all of them have not complied, maybe 10, some will sign, they will continue to deny even third or fourth traffic rights. I am just not talking about fifth freedom traffic rights. This is a concern for us. So far we have been trying to do advocacy, but even advocacy is not working very well. Today there are two things we are working on; to put in place what we call the dispute settlement mechanism at the AU level which will authorise an airline or a state to go in dispute against a state who

is denying a traffic right. If you sign and you are denying, you can be taken to the court and also there will be some sanctions around it. In parallel to that, it is also important to reach the high-level political decisions leaders, because so far we are talking to ministers, is not working very well. So now we feel as stakeholders, we need to package something and go higher at the level of prime minister or even head of state. If the instructions come from the head of state, we hope that state will really implement it," he further said.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines, Ato Mesfin Tasew, decried a situation where some countries and airlines are unwilling to work with their fellow African airlines, but rather, prefer to work with European carriers, harping on fear of domination by another African carrier.

He said what would enhance the growth of African airlines and increase the market share of the regional carriers is African airlines working together. He cited example with Ethiopian Airlines partnership with Asky and recalled how Ethiopian helped establish Asky and today it is the best airline in West Africa, operating to 29 cities in West and Central Africa.

## WOMEN URGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AFCFTA

The Namibian High Commissioner to Ghana, Ambassador Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, has called on women entrepreneurs in Africa to leverage opportunities in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to export their products beyond the borders of their countries.

She further encouraged women to be more innovative, efficient and produce products that are of good quality so as to be competitive under the AfCFTA. AfCFTA is an ambitious undertaking that brings together 1.3 billion people in 55 African countries to create the world's largest free trade area as measured by the number of participating member States.

Its objective is the creation of an integrated market for the trade in goods and services and the free movement of people and capital. She made the call at the 4th Women in Trade Conference organised by the Women in Africa Network in Accra last Thursday.

### Networking

Ambassador Ashipala-Musavyi further encouraged networking among businesses across the continent, especially among women. She underscored the critical

role of women in promoting sustainable livelihoods and called for more partners to support to help them to develop their entrepreneurial skills to increase production.

Touching on the AfCFTA protocol, she said "It's a platform for us to learn from each other. It speaks to Africa's unity because no one country can basically succeed on her own. So we need to network and to learn from each other. We are facing challenges in trade, common challenges and we need to learn from one other".

The High Commissioner also emphasised that "If we do not network, if Ghanaian women for example do not go to Namibia and see what is in Namibia, and our women don't come here (Ghana), we are not going to be successful in trading.

So we need to get out of our comfort zones, learn about the continent, what it is that the continent has to offer and harness our strength and see how we can move the continent forward".

She also called for a regional sensitisation of the protocol to enhance cross border trade.

### AfCFTA protocol

The Director for Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination at the AfCFTA

Secretariat, Prudence Sebahizi, who spoke on behalf of the Secretary General of AfCFTA, Wamkele Mene, underscored the importance of the AfCFTA protocol.

He said the protocol bridges the gap between African markets. "This protocol is very important, it is one of eight protocols that are part of the AfCFTA legal instruments but I can say it is the most important one.

So when we talk about the AfCFTA it is about the markets of Africans, trade for Africans, by Africans and we have seen that the private sector — more than 90 per cent business in Africa — is owned by Small and midsize enterprises (SMEs), and those SMEs are made of women and the youth in a particular," he stated.

For his part, the Group Executive Director of the AfCFTA Policy Network (APN), Louis Yaw Afful, called for concerted efforts to integrate more women into the formal sector to maximise the benefit of the AfCFTA.

"The assessment is simple. Women have not been performing well in terms of formal trade, and the informal sector, yes they are doing well but they need to be given some kind of holistic support in the area of capacity building, training, in the area of financial solution, in the area of expanding more women in not just trade, but related manufacturing."

"And so for now most governments are yet to have a concrete policy on women in trade that has not yet happened and I think that we are getting to that spectrum", he explained.



# CFTA now



**PACCI is the lead business organization with members in over 50 countries of the continent representing the interests of businesses and industry associations of every size and sector. PACCI operates as Africa's voice of business, advocating for pro-business policies that create jobs, growth and prosperity.**

# White Paper on immigration fails Africa's free trade aspirations

**A**rguably no issue gets countries riled up more than immigration. Most of the threats to the global order over the past decade or so have been the emergence of leaders who endorse a sort of protectionism and "securing the borders".

Immigration is a hot topic in the world and on the African continent, because it is inextricably linked to other aspects of the current economic era, such as globalisation, multiculturalism and diversity.

The Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on Investment is very clear about its stance on immigration. Article 7 (2) stipulates that state parties must "facilitate the granting of visas and permits to foreign workers, employees and consultants as designated by the investor". As a signatory to the AfCFTA, South Africa is also bound to implement this requirement.

If South Africa is intent on fulfilling the provisions of the AfCFTA, then the department of home affairs must relax, rather than retract, its visa requirements for people from other countries, particularly African countries.

White Paper chills immigration prospects  
The department has been tinkering with changing the immigration policy of South Africa over the past two years. A White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection was tabled in late 2023 for public comments. In it, the department presented a case of South Africa requiring tighter border controls, as well as more stringent requirements for acquiring visas and permits.

The White Paper did not please everybody, and many civil society organisations were not happy with the contents of the paper. They have a point.

South Africa does not need to make it harder for people to live in the country. In fact, the opposite is true: South Africa needs to make it easier for people especially those from other African countries to live in the country.

## Critical skills

The department's White Paper stipulates that visas will be primarily given to immigrants who can address the occupations on the critical skills list.

For instance, we do not have enough geologists, according to the list. If trained geologists from Rwanda want to work in South Africa, they are more likely to get the critical skills visa, because they address a gap in the market.

This sounds feasible, but the situation is not that simple.

We need to ask questions about the reliability of the critical skills list, and whether this is the best way to evaluate who enters the country, and who does not.

Governments are terrible at being at the forefront of anything, much less workforce trends across multiple industries. The structure of government makes it difficult for it to determine trends and act on them timeously. How often does the critical skills list get updated? If it is updated fairly consistently, can the department compile the information in a relatively short period to constantly update the list? Is the backlog at the department something to take into account?

All of these questions lead to an important conclusion: the department (or any other department, for that matter) will inevitably fail in upholding stringent immigration policies.

If this is the department's solution to the immigration crisis, then we are unlikely to see any real change. The critical skills list is attempting to solve the symptom (unskilled immigrants coming to the country seeking better opportunities) and not the disease (the government ratifying the AfCFTA while not adhering to the spirit of the agreement).

The AfCFTA is not radical; it seeks to have African countries trade goods and services with one another. The AfCFTA is radical, because it seeks to encourage cooperation of all kinds between African countries. This kind of cooperation should also include us being able to freely move throughout the continent, no visa needed.

## Free trade and free movement

Some may conflate "relaxing visa regulations" with an open border policy. That is not the case. Instead, relaxing visa regulations with trade partners means taking a page from the European Union playbook free movement for African Union member states. It stands to reason that AfCFTA was conceptualised, in part, to create stronger links between African countries. Why must free movement on the African continent be limited to goods and services?

Not only would this be beneficial to other African countries because South Africans travel to their destination cities, boosting their tourism prospects but South Africa would also benefit from a tourist boom. Free trade should go hand in hand with free movement, not least of all because the latter may improve the former.

Research that is most relevant to the provisions of the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment shows that immigrants can boost trade from their home country to the country in which they reside. Immigrants know their home country's language, regulations, market opportunities and informal institutions. They can use this information to help negotiate trade deals that benefit the country in which they now stay.

As a relatively influential country in the continent, South Africa is in a unique position to radically alter Africa's prospects for the better. All the country has to do is to resist the temptation of protectionism and isolation. It is only by heeding the call of the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, and relaxing immigration policies for other African countries, that South Africa can reap the rewards of a united Africa.

## AFCFTA: REGIONAL REGULATORS ADVISED ON HUMAN CAPITAL DEVT

**A**s the implementation of Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement gradually takes shape, members of Organisation of African Insurance Supervisory Authorities (OAISA), have been reminded of the need to developing human resources and creating a platform for standardisation of insurance laws, and supervisory structures.

Giving the advice at the General Assembly meeting of the group in Abuja, the Commissioner for Insurance, Mr. Sunday Thomas, said the step was more pertinent than ever, especially in light of the ongoing implementation of the trade agreement.

He said "AfCFTA presents an immense

opportunities for trade and economic integration across our continent. As insurance regulators, it is imperative that we work collaboratively to ensure that our regulatory frameworks align with the objectives of the AfCFTA in facilitating seamless trade." Welcoming the members, he expressed delight to see such a gathering of esteemed colleagues and industry experts dedicated to the advancement of the insurance sector in Africa.

"OAISA stands as a beacon of regulatory excellence, entrusted with the formidable task of developing, harmonising insurance regulations and ensuring effective supervision of the insurance sector on the continent. "Our missions are aimed not only to foster a fair, secure,

and stable insurance market but also to play a pivotal role in bolstering regional financial stability," he added.

He pointed out that the Nigerian insurance industry's efforts in the development of the market was an all-inclusive one. He said it included creation of avenues, deepening of insurance penetration; increasing access to insurance products via digital platforms, and increasing visibility of insurance.

"Consequently, the Commission in its effort to open up the market across the geo-political zones where insurance penetration is perceived to be very low has implemented various market developmental initiatives to lift the insurance sector.

## Trade minister meets head of African trade bloc

**T**rade Minister Cheong In-kyo has met Wamkele Mene, the secretary general of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in Seoul and they discussed ways to expand economic ties, officials said.

The AfCFTA, the largest trade bloc in Africa, officially came into force in January 2021.

During the meeting, Cheong said the launch of the AfCFTA is significant considering the growing protectionism

around the globe, Seoul's trade ministry said.

The upcoming summit between Korea and African nations, set to be held in Seoul in June, will pave the way for the country's efforts to seek a mutually beneficial,

sustainable and long-term relationship with Africa, Cheong said.

Cheong also asked Mene to support Korea's push to clinch economic partnership agreements with Morocco, Kenya and Tanzania.





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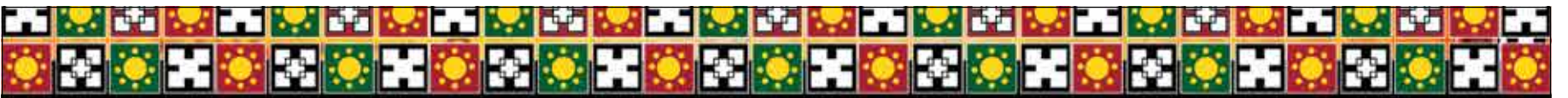
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PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

# EASTER MARKET PRICES SKYROCKET: CONSUMERS FEEL THE PINCH OF RISING COSTS



■ By Eyasu Zekarias

When it comes to the holiday season in Ethiopia, the market bustle is one of the most unique aspects of the festival. The market is indeed different, and the sheep, chicken, and ox, along with the

butter and other spices needed to flavor them, all have the power to brighten the holiday and make the market warm. Everyone is going to the market a few days in advance to ensure they don't have to visit the grocery store. Consequently, there is a surprising buzz in the markets,

with marketplaces that have never been visited by many people now attracting visitors. However, the price increases that are always observed during the annual festivals have tested the consumer society a lot.

As a result, during this year's Easter,





consumers complained to the capital that they could not afford the price of cattle, sheep, and goats because they had reached their ceiling. There are many reasons for the increase in the price of meat in the country, and many do not believe it is justified. Many people have complained that the country, once known for its abundance of cattle, has now become a nation where cattle are unaffordable. Some argue that the instability in the country over the past three years is the reason for the skyrocketing prices, while others attribute it to the government's lack of attention.

The Passover, especially celebrated by Christians, comes after long fasting months, where special attention is paid to food, including lamb, chicken, and meat. Akaqi Slaughterhouse, the New Market, and the Mulberry Market are among the places where the usual shoppers and traders are not lost, and where all the holiday shopping takes place every year. While everyone trades at their capacity in these markets, this year's Easter holiday shopping has seen a significant increase in prices compared to other holidays.

Consumers such as Teshome Jared and Alemu Belete went to the Aqaqi abattoir market early in the morning to buy a slaughter bull for baskets, but the price did not sit well with them. In the past, a medium-sized bull cost an average of

up to \$40,000, but this year the price has risen to \$150,000, according to the capital. They said the price had risen, and they returned home without making the transaction. Another consumer, Abayneh, was seen arguing with the trader about the price of the slaughter bull in the new market, which has seen a significant increase this year, especially with a 25% increase in the price of slaughter bulls.

According to a market survey conducted in the area of the Media Millet Market regarding the Passover holiday, a kilo of onions is being sold for 55 to 70 Birr, while a kilo of garlic is being sold for 240 to 270 Birr. On the other hand, Habesha chicken is being sold for between 1,200 and 1,700 Birr, while chicken, also known as feral or regional, is being sold for between 1,000 and 1,600 Birr. Similarly, Habesha age is being sold from 12 Birr to fifty cents to 13 Birr, while feral age is being sold from 11 Birr to fifty cents to 12 Birr. Local butter, known as Sheno Lega, is being sold for between 790 Birr and 1,000 Birr. Medium butter is being sold for 800 Birr. Additionally, cheese, which most people use as a bait, is being sold for between 450 Birr and 600 Birr.

On the other hand, most traders in the New Market area are offering a variety of products and edible ingredients because Passover is different from other festivals. Livestock such as goats and sheep are

also being sold. A medium sheep is sold for between 7,000 and 10,000 Birr, while a large sheep is priced between 15,000 and 20,000 Birr. A small sheep is priced from 5,000 Birr. On the other hand, a lamb or a small goat is sold for between 10,000 and 15,000 Birr, while a medium one is between 8,000 and 13,000 Birr. A large goat is estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000 Birr.

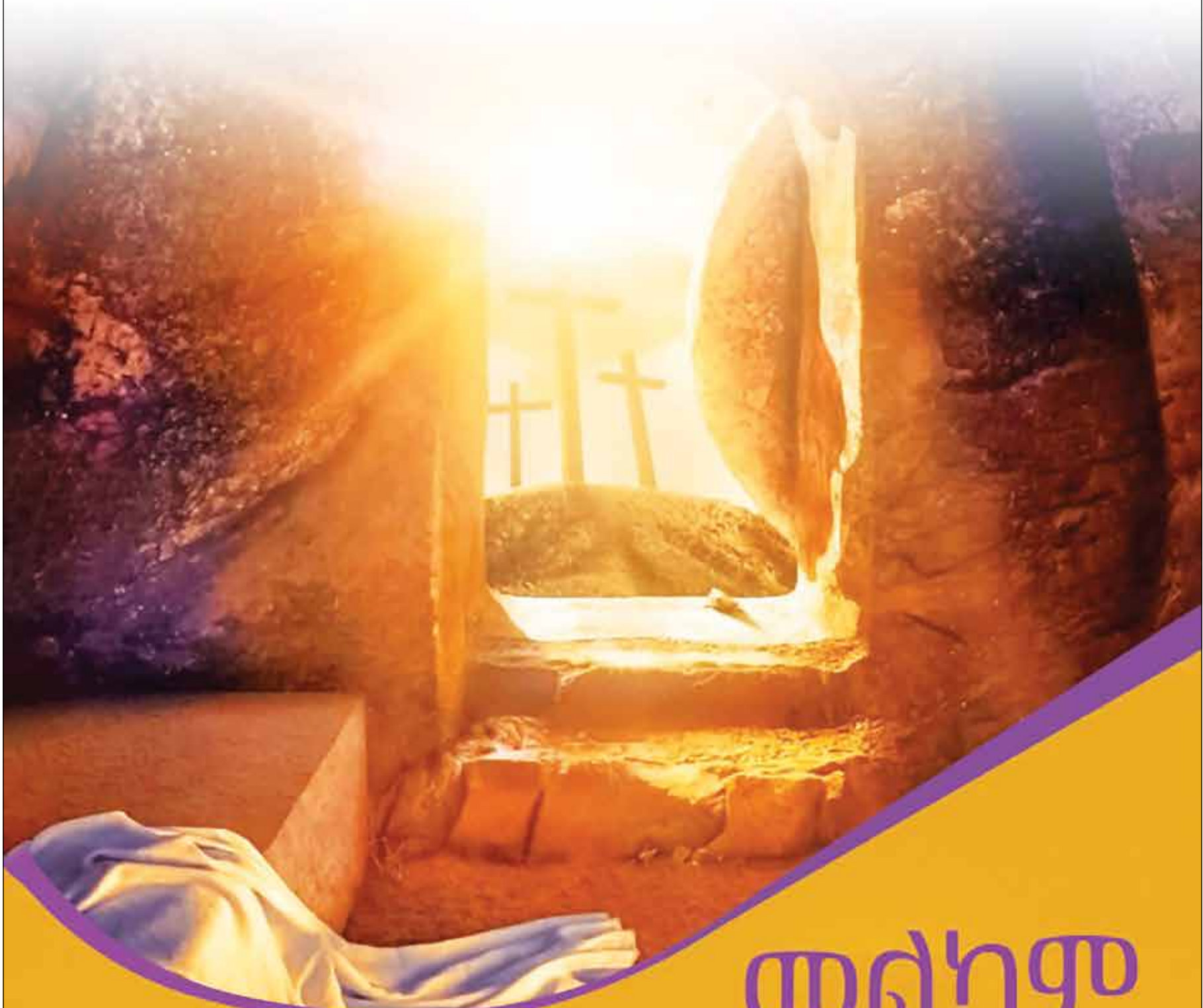
The traders in these markets told the capital that they could not import goats and sheep in large quantities due to the blockade of roads in the northern part, and that most of them were cattle brought in three months ago. The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration has sent a total of 130,237 export livestock to Yemen, Oman, Djibouti, Somalia, Libya, and Saudi Arabia in six months of the current fiscal year. Ethiopia, which has not received the revenue it deserves annually from the sector due to illicit trade, reported revenue of \$9.2 million from livestock exported to the six markets, but it was lower than planned. One of the lowest prices in the market is the low price of goods. Chicken, eggs, butter, cheese, and various agricultural industry products have seen low prices. The Addis Ababa Export Traders Association said that 250 more manpower has been prepared, and 37 meat distribution trucks are ready to quickly distribute the slaughtered meat to the export houses.







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# Society

## Overcoming the Political Crisis Engulfing Ethiopia

By Eden Tafese-work

Ethiopia, a country of rich history and diverse population, has been perennially mired in one political crisis after another for the better part of the last several decades, but more so over the past five-and-half years since the political ascent of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph. D) came to power. These crises have posed varying levels of threats to its stability and constrained its development. The root causes of the dire situation Ethiopia has always found itself in are complex, stemming from historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and competition for political power and resources. Though the challenges engendered by the air of doom and gloom are testing, now is not the time to lose commitment. Given the country came out of foreign aggressors in its history, it's a moment to take a pause and emerge with an optimistic way out of its current anomalies. As such, it should not be impossible the current generation of Ethiopians to extricate their beloved nation from the quagmire it is currently. This said, understanding the nature of the political crisis engulfing the country and exploring long-term solutions are crucial to enable it move towards peace, unity, and sustainable development.

The political crisis in Ethiopia can be traced back to decades of historical grievances and ethnic tensions. The country is ethnically diverse, with close to 76 recognized ethnic groups. This diversity has, at times, precipitated tensions and competition for resources and representation. The federal system created in the 1990s following the adoption of the 1994 constitution aimed to address these challenges. Unfortunately, it has also inadvertently deepened ethnic divisions. The rise of ethno-nationalism and exclusionary politics has further exacerbated these divisions, culminating in the ongoing political crisis. The increased competition for political power between the elites of different ethnic groups and the undemocratic tendencies of governments that have been in office, however, are arguably the major factor that is at the root of the political upheaval afflicting Ethiopia.

Power mongering is the gravest of challenges in contemporary Ethiopian politics. While it goes without saying that the ultimate goal of all political actors is to assume power, their action must at all times be guided by the principle that they exercise such power in the best interest of citizens and

endeavor to occupy office in a peaceful and democratic manner. This requires of government leaders to stop paying lip service to the ideals the public aspires for and start to deliver on their pledges. Let alone at a time when a breakdown in law and order in considerable parts of the country has forced the declaration of a state of emergency, even during times of relative stability failure to heed public opinion has dire consequences. Although this generation may be cognizant of the fact that its ancestors triumphed over adversities with farsightedness, it is imperative if we are to pause for a moment and reflect on where we are, how we got there and what are possible ways out of our anomalies. Shouldn't differences be resolved through civilized dialogues that beget win-win outcomes instead of resorting to violent means in order to function as a cohesive polity. Such are genuine queries to look into moving forward. The country needs to take a pause for a moment and reflect on these queries with the hope to finding an answer on which a broad consensus has been reached.

While Ethiopians are to collectively blame for the woeful state their country's political environment, the responsibility primarily rests on successive rulers' poor track record when it comes to enabling citizens enjoy basic freedoms and liberties including freedom of thought, opinion and expression; the right to assemble and demonstrate; as well as the right to protection against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The heavy-handed response to the mostly peaceful venting of frustration has not helped matters either. Although the administration of Prime Minister Abiy was lauded at the outset of its term for undertaking a host of measures that promised to usher in profound political reforms that citizens had always yearned for, the backslide witnessed resulting from the unprecedented level of internecine strife perpetrated by non-state actors has repeatedly brought the country to the edge of the precipice.

As Ethiopia continues to face the prospect of unending political instability, it's incumbent on all stakeholders—the government, political parties, religious institutions, civil society organizations, and the media, among others—to undertake courageous steps to avert the specter of a collapse even if they may be unpalatable to some. To address the challenges of the political crisis in the

**While Ethiopians are to collectively blame for the woeful state their country's political environment, the responsibility primarily rests on successive rulers' poor track record when it comes to enabling citizens enjoy basic freedoms and liberties**

The more arduous task that is fraught with pitfalls is achieving lasting solutions, a mission that requires a multifaceted approach. First and foremost, it is of the essence to foster national unity and bridge the deep divisions between the elites of ethnic groups. A comprehensive review of the federal system, addressing its shortcomings and potential reforms, should be undertaken with the aim of promoting equality, inclusivity, and effective governance. This needs to be complemented by investment in education, economic development, and infrastructure to reduce inequality and create opportunities for all Ethiopians, thereby mitigating the underlying tensions that fuel the political crisis. Finally, strengthening democracy, promoting press freedom, and ensuring an independent judiciary are critical components for building a resilient political system that respects human rights is of crucial importance. No doubt erecting a robust and vibrant civic space is also necessary as it is critical both to democracy and human rights regimes

Resolving the political crisis engulfing Ethiopia requires a deep understanding of its underlying causes and a commitment to long-term solutions. By addressing historical grievances, promoting national unity, and investing in inclusive development, Ethiopia can move towards a more stable and prosperous future. International support and collaboration will play a crucial role in assisting Ethiopia on its path to reconciliation and sustainable peace, ensuring a brighter future for all its citizens.

*Eden Tafese-work (Ph.D) is Project Officer, EID-Women Steering Committee. She can be reached via [edentafese-work@gmail.com](mailto:edentafese-work@gmail.com)*



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United Nations



Nations Unies

**Posting Title:**.....Property Management Assistant  
**Department/ Office:**..... Economic Commission for Africa  
**Location:**..... Addis Ababa  
**Posting Period:**.....30 April 2024 - 12 May 2024  
**Job Opening number:**..... 24-Economic Commission for Africa-233502-Individual Contractor

## **United Nations Core Values: Integrity, Professionalism, Respect for Diversity**

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Under the direct supervision of the Chief of Property Management Unit and the oversee of the Chief of Section, the incumbent will be responsible for the following duties:

- ▶ Participates in periodic physical verification and counting of equipment to ensure accuracy of serial and decal numbers, stock descriptions, net total on hand and exact location of property, to be in compliance with the Umoja process of inventory counting and controlling.
- ▶ Assists in conducting and assists in preparing or retrieving and disseminating monthly, yearly, and ad hoc reports as required, including those on acquisition and surplus (damaged/obsolete) property and provision of monthly stock item balance reports to custodians.
- ▶ Ensures all property equipment are bar-coded, decaled and tagged as per UN property management guidelines.
- ▶ Assists in the assignment and installation of equipment to offices and staff
- ▶ Assists in preparing monthly, yearly and ad hoc reports of UN property as required, including those on acquisition and surplus (damaged/obsolete)
- ▶ Provides support for Assets Management regarding the acquisition and reconciling of IPSAS property items for year-end reporting.
- ▶ Assist in the write-off/disposal exercise, gathering documentation, ensures compliance with the IPSAS useful life guideline; ensures items for disposal are blocked (in Umoja), stored effectively before physical disposal.
- ▶ Assists in managing and maintaining a comprehensive electronic database of non expendable property for multiple departments as well as the updated record of Property Records Custodians.
- ▶ Ensure appropriate update of equipment record,
- ▶ Analyses and suggests improvement to the efficient operation of Inventory Control activities,
- ▶ Provide support in arranging furniture and equipment maintenance (with service contractors and/or FMS?)
- ▶ Provides support in compilation of data for UNECA tangible property insurance,
- ▶ Maintains a comprehensive electronic database of non-expendable UNECA property for multiple departments as well as updating records of Property Custodians.
- ▶ Designs and develops spreadsheet reports and databases using various software platforms in accordance with instructions received from supervisor.
- ▶ Regular update of equipment records for acquisitions, goods issue, transfers, and disposals.
- ▶ Drafts routine correspondence for signature by supervisor when requested and register and file incoming correspondence.
- ▶ Provides training and supervision to outsourced staff in performing physical verification and physical count tasks.
- ▶ Updates and enriches the equipment record as necessary.

- ▶ Keeps abreast of developments, analyzes, and suggests improvement to the efficient operation of PP&E activities.
- ▶ Maintains a proper and up to date paper and electronic filing system.
- ▶ Performs other duties required.

### **Work Location**

Addis Ababa

### **Expected duration**

6 month

### **Result of Service**

The Individual Contractors are expected to assist the Unit on a full range of Property Management issues, and be involve in the day-to-day activity, providing support to the sub unit Supervisors and Chief of the Unit.

### **Qualifications/special skills**

High School Diploma is required. Degree in the field of Procurement/Business Administration/Accounting is desired. Additional training in the area of IPSAS & Umoja on property Management and logistics front is desired.

A minimum of six (6) years of progressively responsible experience in the field of Supply Chain Management, business administration/ accounting or IT is required.

Experience in Inventory/warehouse and Property Management is desired.

### **Language**

English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For the post advertised, fluency in oral and written English is required. Excellent English writing ability is a must. Knowledge of French or another official United Nations language is desired.

### **United Nations Considerations**

The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. (Charter of the United Nations - Chapter 3, article 8). The United Nations Secretariat is a non-smoking environment.

As per UN policy, Consultants and Individual Contractors may not apply for or be appointed to any position in the Professional or above categories and for positions at the FS-6 and FS-7 levels in the Field Service category within six months of the end of their current or most recent service. This restriction does not apply to associate experts (Junior Professional Officers) appointed under the Staff Rules.

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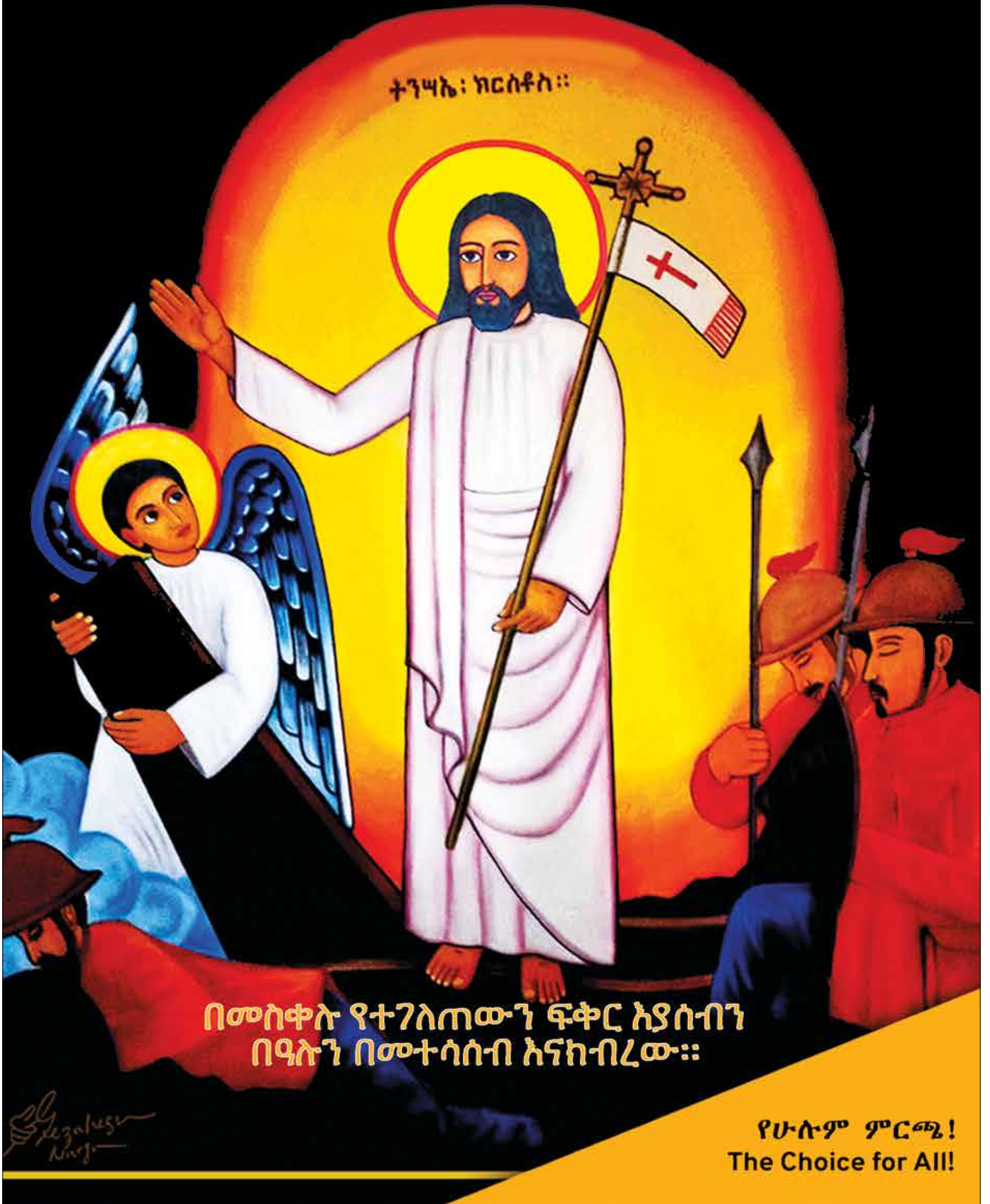
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# LAYING FOUNDATION FOR DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEMS

*The Africa Agriculture Status Report says digital technologies will address inefficiency, exclusivity, and unsustainability*

By: Douglas Okwach

A new report has charted the future for Africa's food systems — use of digital technologies.

According to the 2023 Africa Agriculture Status Report, "Empowering Africa's Food Systems for the Future," digital technologies will be key in addressing the three persistent problems in Africa's agricultural industry: inefficiency, exclusivity, and unsustainability.

The report is by AGRA (Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa) — an Africa-led organisation that seeks to catalyze agriculture transformation on the continent through innovation.

There is already evidence that Africa's agriculture is on the way to becoming more efficient, inclusive and sustainable, the report observes.

But, in spite of the technological gains, food insecurity is worsening in Africa as chronic undernourishment increases and numerous countries face acute food shortage triggered by a combination of factors, including the Ukraine crisis and climate change.

The report itself aptly captures this situation. In 2022, for instance, the prevalence of under-nutrition in Africa was 19.7 per cent, a slight increase from 2021, the report shows.

In 2022, the prevalence of hunger also rose across Africa with hunger increasing from 22.2 per cent to 22.5 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, which translates into 9 million more people experiencing hunger compared to 2021, adds the report.

Citing the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAF), Market Data Insight for Actionable Strategy (FSIN), and Oxfam International, the

report says the prevalence of under-nutrition in North Africa rose from 6.9 per cent to 7.5 per cent with nearly 2 million more people facing hunger in 2022.

The nature of food systems in the region, it notes, is characterized by underdeveloped markets and is driven primarily by smallholder farmers who operate on small and fragmented farms.

#### How can this be?

Experts from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) pointed to underdeveloped markets and the struggles of "smallholder farmers who operate on small and fragmented farms."

The good news is these experts already see evidence of digitalization's positive impact on the efficiency, inclusiveness and sustainability of African agribusinesses.

The launch of this report before some 5,400 delegates from over 90 countries gathered for the 2023 Africa Food Systems Forum, themed "Recover, Regenerate, Act" in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, offered some hope to Africa.

It took place against the backdrop of extreme weather events, recurring crop disease, inadequate infrastructure and policies, risk averse investors and ongoing conflicts, which have disrupted food and energy markets.

Forum participants acknowledged the continent's current status, but they refused to accept it as the status quo.

Instead, they resolved to "harness Africa's potential" by engaging youth in sustainable food production; adopting regenerative farming methods at local levels; collaborating across borders, sharing good practices and pooling

resources to lift up smallholder farmers.

They also agreed to improve soil health, grow more nutritious crops, and include women and marginalized communities in all these efforts.

To support all these, countries are to pursue innovative financing strategies and embrace "digital technologies, e-commerce and innovative market platforms."

#### Examples:

- Côte d'Ivoire launched its "Digital Solutions Program for e-Agriculture," and the World Bank helped to support the country's online agricultural platform that shares good farming practices with remote producers.

- Kenya worked with UNDP to create a digital literacy program where farmers are learning how to access agricultural data, weather forecasts and market data through their smartphones.

- Rwanda has begun digitalizing parts of its agriculture sector, such as advisory services for farmers. The government also developed the E-Soko platform, which publishes market data online so that farmers can get fair prices for their produce.

- Still in Rwanda, the Bank of Kigali digitalized the supply chain management of the government's subsidy program in cooperation with the Rwanda Agriculture Board.

- South Africa has focused on precision agriculture, which incorporates drones, artificial intelligence, and remote sensors to monitor crop conditions, all to increase crop yields and use resources more efficiently.

- Legume planters in Tanzania, rice growers in Nigeria and farmers in Ghana and

Niger have all leveraged information and communications technologies to improve their livelihoods and transition to more sustainable techniques.

Digitalization supports larger goals and aspirations

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its report, *Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives*, defines digitalization as "the use of digital technologies and data as well as interconnection that results in new or changes to existing activities" in, say, food systems.

Digital technologies and related products and services can transform production, management, and governance systems.

By "going digital," Africa can align its food systems with SDG 2: Zero Hunger, to achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Digitalization also resonates with the African Union Agenda 2063, which aspires to "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development ... underpinned by science, technology and innovation," with "healthy and well-nourished citizens" and "modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production."

Electricity to power agricultural change

To power digital transformation, the continent requires cheap, adequate and reliable energy. Africa's energy paradox scarcity amid plenty poses a different challenge to digitalizing its food systems.

In its African Economic Outlook 2022, the African Development Bank reported that, to deliver electricity to the nearly 1.3 billion Africans, some 645 million of whom are off the grid, the continent needs investments of \$32-\$40 billion annually in the energy value chain.

Without universal access to electricity, the rollout of digital innovations in agriculture across Africa has been uneven. Even so, many countries are making progress.

In the 2023 Africa Agriculture Status Report, the IFPRI experts pointed out some success stories, where smallholder farmers were already accessing real-time pricing information, conducting secure financial transactions and linking to other members of their value chain.

## REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

Call for QuickBooks Software Providers  
RFQ No: PR-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2024-0050

USAID CATALYZE Ethiopia: MS4G is designed to benefit the Ethiopian people, build community resilience, and strengthen rural-urban linkages, in the areas of food security and WASH. MS4G invests in developing strong relationships with private sector players, co-investing in inclusive business models, advisory services, digital solutions, and marketbased initiatives that increase the resilience and sustainability of Ethiopian enterprises and employment for women and youth.

CATALYZE MS4G uses a market systems approach to address key food security and WASH sub-system areas and the impact of economic shocks, including COVID-19 and political instability by stimulating adoption, adaptation, broad expansion, and responsive institutionalization and scaling of approaches and business models to transform the lives of Ethiopians.

#### Company Information

Palladium is a global leader in the design, development and delivery of Positive Impact the intentional creation of enduring social and economic value. We work with corporations, governments, foundations, investors, communities and civil society to formulate strategies and implement solutions that generate lasting social, environmental and financial benefits.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this RFQ is to select a service provider who will provide QuickBooks software. The chosen service provider will install and configure the software on three-finance staff computers; provide training which will take a maximum of two days; set up

company files; and configure access privileges to the finance team as an administrator and user.

#### Type of Contract

Palladium intends to issue a Fixed Unit Price contract of agreement or Purchase Order.

#### Anticipated Contract Period of Performance

The period of performance is expected to commence on June 01, 2024, and be completed by June 30, 2024.

#### Important notes for interested bidders:

1. This RFQ was released on April 30, 2024, on the **2merkato.com** website. Interested bidders can access the RFQ using the following link: <https://tender.2merkato.com/tenders/6630f2dbc966c84bf68bf40a>
2. Bidders can also request for RFQ by email to **ethiopiams4g.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com**
3. Questions or clarifications can be forwarded electronically to: **ethiopiaMS4G.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com** or call phone number **+251 118 220 830** no later than **May 08, 2023at 5pm.**
4. Proposal submission:
  - a. Electronically (e-mailed) to: **ethiopiams4g.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com** with the RFQ number "PR-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2024-0050" in the subject lines.
  - b. Submission Due Date/RFQ Closing Date: **May 20, 2024.**
  - c. Late bid submissions will not be considered.

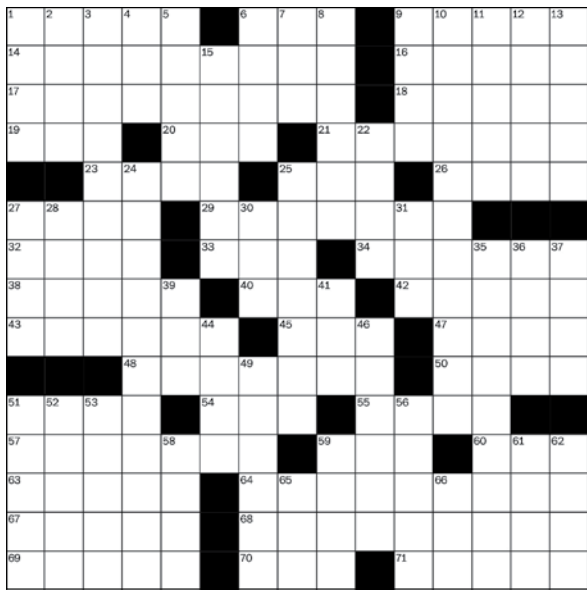
Issuance of this RFQ does not constitute an award commitment on the part of USAID CATALYZE MS4G, nor does it commit USAID CATALYZE MS4G to pay for any costs incurred in preparing and submitting an application. Further,

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- 6 Geocaching device
- 9 Did a face-plant
- 14 "This really matters to me"
- 16 First name in country
- 17 Keep on keeping on
- 18 Like a misty pond after dark
- 19 Genre that includes dubstep
- 20 Dudes
- 21 Vegetable in a yellow pod
- 23 "So true!"
- 25 Color of rambutan skin
- 26 Contributes
- 27 Deli jarful
- 29 "The Chimpanzees I Love" author Jane
- 32 Showbiz "grand slam"
- 33 "Xanadu" band
- 34 Classic Chevy
- 38 Gas in some lasers

### DOWN

- 40 List-ending abbr.
- 42 Shelter made of compressed snow
- 43 Pacific Palisades location
- 45 Take legal action
- 47 Lie adjacent to
- 48 Shelter dogs
- 50 Fail to see
- 51 Branch of Islam
- 54 Short flight
- 55 Subsequently
- 57 Keep under wraps
- 59 Kung \_tofu
- 60 "Lookie here!"
- 63 Reversed
- 64 Tipping point
- 67 For the time \_
- 68 Bankrupt company's transaction
- 69 Opposites attract, e.g.
- 70 Tedious routine
- 71 Squelched

### DOWN

- 1 Like a yellow papaya
- 2 Scored on a serve
- 3 Spiritual path of action
- 4 Hectic hosp. areas
- 5 Note with a low grade, perhaps
- 6 Narrow valley
- 7 " \_ favor"
- 8 Slow-boiled
- 9 "Don't live life without it" card co.
- 10 Event for minor leaguers?
- 11 Blundered
- 12 Poem that inspired Pat Barker's "the Women of Troy"
- 13 Freezing temps
- 15 Get payback for
- 22 Very little
- 24 Sport with pit stops, in Britain
- 25 Digs out, or what can be found in four long Down answers?
- 27 Dim sum, e.g.
- 28 City southeast of New Delhi
- 30 Fútbol cheer
- 31 Necklace shipped with ice packs
- 35 Lab animal with white fur
- 36 Markers
- 37 Becomes inedible
- 39 Maiden name indicator
- 41 Billiards stick
- 44 "the Prisoner's Wife" author Bandele
- 46 Sprawling property
- 49 Shirt feature
- 51 Reef explorer's gear
- 52 Made sharper
- 53 28-Down's country
- 56 Podcast moderators
- 58 Slight lead
- 59 Soft "Look over here!"
- 61 Divine circle
- 62 Clive of "Monsieur Spade"
- 65 Sun Devils sch.
- 66 Airport org. that approves some locks

**Solution: see below**



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPES

**Aries**  
 Ambitious plans grounded in reality will be the best use of your time and energy now. Someone you work closely with could be difficult for you to be around. Do your best to not make this a personal conflict. Remember that in a time of profound change, upsets can be opportunities in disguise. The time can bring events that boost your self-confidence. Find ways to better organize any duty or assignment.

**Cancer**  
 Now your people skills support work goals, and you can have a good time in the process. This can help ease stress when you still may be feeling that things aren't entirely under your control. These are excellent days to build teams or improve customer relations. Anything beautiful or harmonious should be especially easy to sell. Even though you may not have everything you want, do your best with the resources you do have.

**Libra**  
 You can easily take charge now. Do your best to get as much done as possible. If you're in a management position, this is a good time for team meetings, performance reviews, and setting ambitious goals. Many will be coping with big challenges that require both adaptability and a willingness to surrender what is no longer useful. Associates can give you a fresh perspective. Budgets and financial matters should be carefully watched.

**Capricorn**  
 Do your best to stay organized early now. There are likely to be many distractions, calls, and texts demanding your time and attention. This remains a time when you'll find support for your interests, but reality will demand patience and occasional revisions. Marketing, travel, and training to expand your business can see you shine. You'll experience an easier flow of communication. If possible, delay sales presentations until later.

**Taurus**  
 The energy at this time demands a practical approach and sense of humor. It may be very important to eliminate distracting fantasies and test new ideas carefully. Someone you need to work with may be evasive. Misunderstandings are possible. Be sure everyone is making the same assumptions. Make sure you aren't being too bossy or demanding. This is a time when charm is vital for the best results. An office flirtation may not mean what you think.

**Leo**  
 Expect some stress or stubborn resistance to your plans now. Everything may just take longer than expected. An easygoing attitude will help you get what you want. Work could demand extra hours or a detailed review of events. Your powerful emotions may be difficult to hide. This is an excellent time to upgrade your technology. These are good days for research and development, as well as using teamwork to solve problems in innovative ways.

**Scorpio**  
 The stars are in your corner now! Expect good relations with customers and co-workers alike. This is a powerful time to indulge your imagination and follow your intuition. This is a positive time for a short holiday or vacation. Any new plan or project will need to be carefully considered. These are excellent days for contracts and other legal matters. This is also a positive time for technology upgrades. A work-based flirtation could cause a misunderstanding.

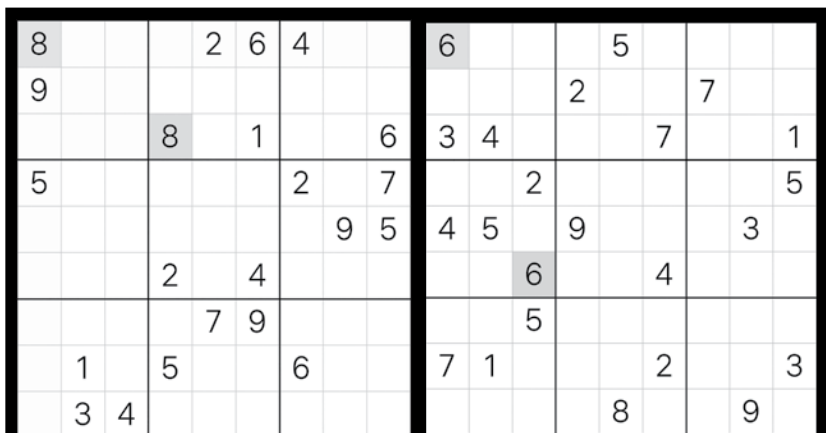
**Aquarius**  
 You have a wonderful opportunity to speak up for what you need now. While resources may be limited, you can still do your best knowing that you're building for a better future. Interoffice gossip should be avoided if you don't want unnecessary drama. You may find things take longer or people have differences of opinion. To be most effective, keep things simple and try to adapt to changing demands.

**Gemini**  
 You are more in tune with the times than many of your co-workers. Patiently do your best and be careful about little details to keep any organization running smoothly. Avoid being too critical of yourself or others. Perfection is a goal and not a reason to make yourself wrong. This is a good time for practical talks and reviewing your procedures. Be flexible in the face of sudden changes. Listen to the advice of people you respect.

**Virgo**  
 This is a powerful time to combine ambitious plans with good customer service. Teamwork and training sessions can help you develop useful friendships. Don't hesitate to network with people you don't know well. Pay attention to details. This is also a good time to organize your workspace. Carefully consider any expansion or sudden change. Things will take longer than you expect. Do a cost/benefit analysis if you're considering a break.

**Sagittarius**  
 This is an expansive time for building networks that support your career interests. There may be an event that has a powerful emotional impact. Talk to someone you trust in order to have the best perspective. These are ideal days for team projects. If your workspace is becoming cluttered, take the time to simplify it. Be sure you're getting enough sleep. Your physical well-being will improve your attitude and productivity more than you might think.

**Pisces**  
 Get as much done as possible now. Do your best to complete outstanding assignments even if you have to ask for help. You can also earn points if you step up to help co-workers. You can be especially effective working in or leading a group. Your ability to do several things at once will be a real asset. If you've been having trouble with a manager, things should begin to thaw now. Put on a happy face instead.



## Sudoku

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

### Word search

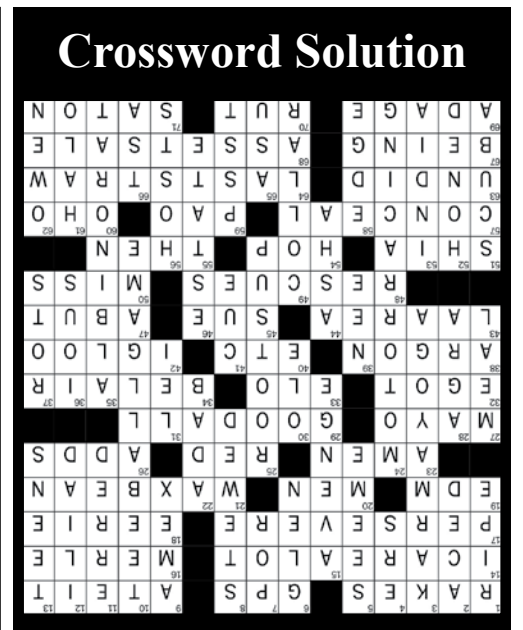
L	O	P	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	A	G	C	D
K	G	O	H	D	E	R	H	C	L	O	G	A	E
N	E	M	S	O	Y	I	D	L	O	B	M	N	S
U	B	O	A	O	I	V	O	U	T	A	O	D	C
L	Y	N	D	M	L	I	F	E	H	T	U	Y	R
P	R	O	R	C	L	A	I	M	E	T	S	L	A
R	R	P	E	H	S	L	A	A	L	L	E	A	B
E	O	O	D	E	K	P	E	H	L	E	T	N	B
K	S	L	L	C	N	U	N	J	O	S	R	D	L
S	A	Y	A	K	L	R	A	O	L	H	A	R	E
R	I	D	B	E	I	S	G	N	D	I	P	L	E
I	E	N	N	R	A	U	N	G	P	A	N	K	
S	C	H	E	S	S	I	E	B	O	G	G	L	E
K	N	H	T	S	L	T	J	O	R	A	G	U	O

TRIVIAL PURSUIT LIFE OTHELLO BATTLESHIP SORRY

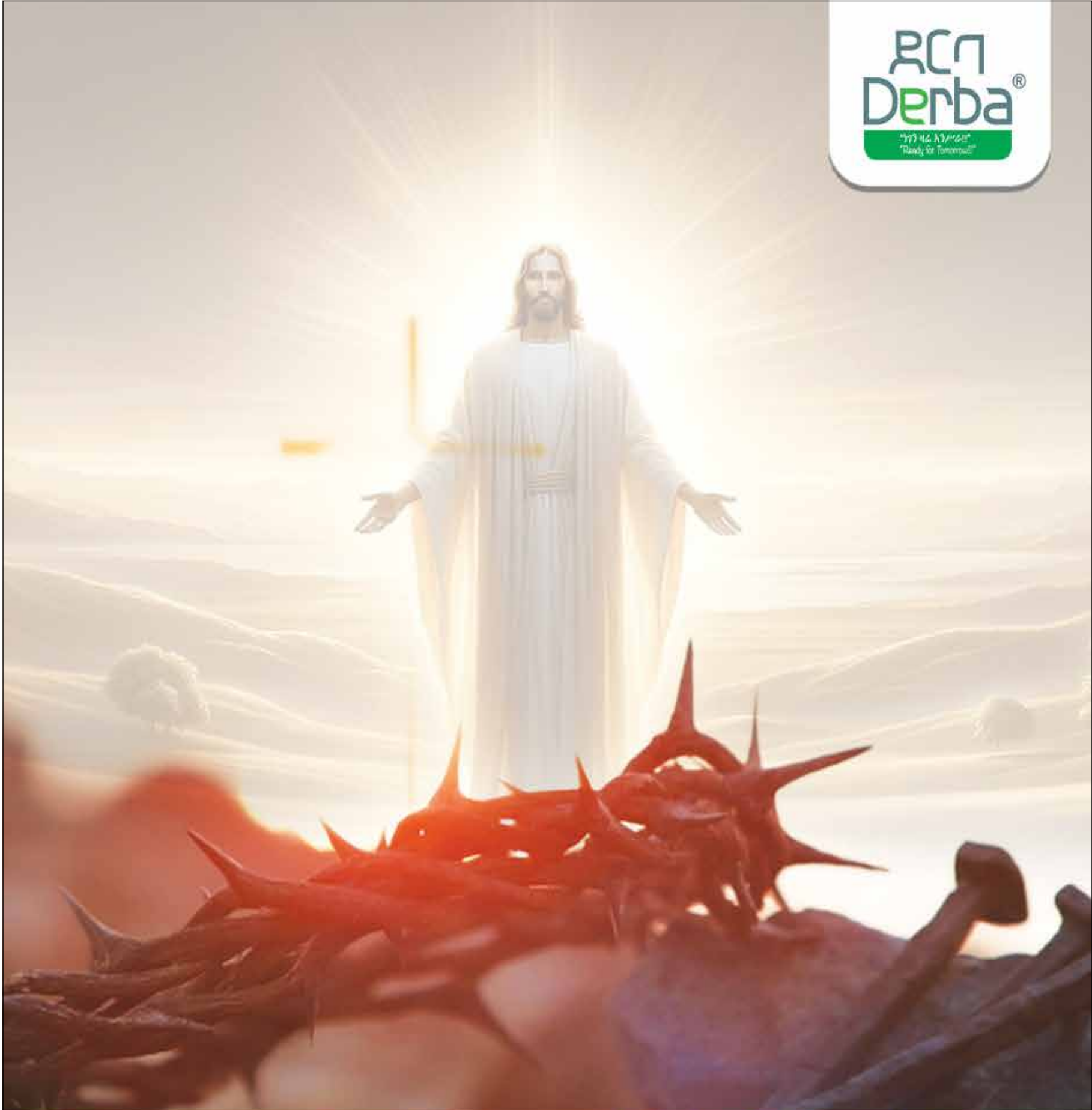
MOUSETRAP BALDERDASH KERPLUNK CHESS JENGA

CHECKERS BOGGLE SCRABBLE CANDY LAND MAHJONG

MONOPOLY OPERATION CLUE RISK DOOM







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**Few of the milestones during the 15 years journey of MME:**

- MME as an elite auto-company has been working hard by modernizing all the facilities, and keep on providing "a peace of mind driving".
- Could bring the most beloved choice to the auto market.
- Could establish the modern Hyundai-Marathon Motor Vehicle Assembly Plant, which assembled 14 models so far, and job opportunity created to several young Ethiopians.
- MME as a pioneer assembled the first historic Electric Vehicle, Hyundai Ioniq in 2020 followed by mass assembly of EV including Hyundai KONA and launching of the first Electric vehicle charging station as a pioneer in 2021.
- Our company has been awarded Gold for four years in a row by Ethiopian Ministry of Revenue/Customs Commission for being a loyal high tax payer.
- MME is made to join Authorized Economic Operator by Ethiopian Customs Commission for its compliance of internal system requirements of the customs commission.
- MME since its inception takes Corporate Social Responsibility as one of its forefront tasks and strongly believes that giving back to the society is a blessing.
- Training to Fresh Graduates; MME frequently selects graduates of universities, colleges, and TVET graduates by offering short-term training to strengthen the capabilities, filling the gap between skilled and trained humans in the auto industry, which reached 7th round.





# GOVERNMENTS MUST SHAPE AI'S FUTURE

*As with social media, the incentives around AI are aligned for rent extraction, where large companies, acting as intermediaries, amass profits at others' expense. Governments urgently need to step in to ensure that the technology is being designed and brought to market in ways that will serve the common good.*

By Mariana Mazzucato and Fausto Gernone

Last December, the European Union set a global precedent by finalizing the Artificial Intelligence Act, one of the world's most comprehensive sets of AI rules. Europe's landmark legislation could signal a broader trend toward more responsive AI policies. But while regulation is necessary, it is insufficient. Beyond imposing restrictions on private AI companies, governments must assume an active role in AI development by designing systems and shaping markets for the common good.

To be sure, AI models are evolving rapidly. When EU regulators released the first draft of the AI Act in April 2021, they hailed it as "future-proof," only to be left scrambling to update the text in response to the release of ChatGPT a year and a half later. But regulatory efforts are not in vain. For example, the law's ban on AI in biometric policing will likely remain pertinent, regardless of advances in the technology. Moreover, the risk frameworks contained in the AI Act will help policymakers guard against some of the technology's most dangerous uses. While AI will develop faster than policy, the law's fundamental principles will not need to change – though more flexible regulatory tools will be needed to tweak and update rules. But thinking of the state as only a regulator misses the larger point. Innovation is not just some serendipitous market phenomenon. It has a direction that depends on the conditions in which it emerges, and public policymakers can influence these conditions. The rise of a dominant technological design or business model is the result of a power struggle between various actors – corporations, governmental bodies, academic institutions – with conflicting interests and divergent priorities. Reflecting this struggle, the resulting technology may be more or less centralized, more or less proprietary, and so forth. The markets that form around new technologies follow the same pattern, with important distributive implications. As the software pioneer Mitch Kapor puts it, "Architecture is politics." More than regulation, a technology's design and surrounding infrastructure dictate who can do what with it, and who benefits. For governments, ensuring that transformational innovations produce inclusive and sustainable growth is less about fixing markets, and more about shaping and co-creating them. When governments contribute to innovation through bold, strategic, mission-oriented investments, they can create new markets and crowd-in the private sector.

In the case of AI, the task of directing innovation is currently dominated by large private corporations, leading to an infrastructure that serves insiders' interests and exacerbates economic inequality. This reflects a longstanding problem. Some of the technology firms that have benefited the most from public support – such as Apple and Google – have also been among those accused of using their international operations to avoid paying taxes. These unbalanced, parasitic relationships between big firms and the state now risk being further entrenched by AI, which promises to reward capital while reducing the returns to labor. The companies developing generative AI are already at the center of debates about extractive behaviors, owing to their unfettered use of copyrighted text, audio, and images to train their models. By centralizing value within their own services, they will reduce value flows to the artists whom they rely on. As with social media, the incentives are aligned for rent extraction, whereby dominant intermediaries amass profits at others' expense. Today's dominant platforms, such as Amazon and Google, exploited their position as gatekeepers by using their algorithms to extract ever larger fees ("algorithmic attention rents") for access to users. Once Google and Amazon became one big "payola" scheme, information quality deteriorated, and value was extracted from the ecosystem of websites, producers, and app developers the platforms relied on. Today's AI systems could take a similar route: value extraction, insidious monetization, and deteriorating information quality. Governing generative AI models for the common good will require mutually beneficial partnerships, oriented around shared goals and the creation of public, rather than only private, value. This will not be possible with redistributive and regulatory states that act only

after the fact; we need entrepreneurial states capable of establishing pre-distributive structures that will share risks and rewards *ex ante*. Policymakers should focus on understanding how platforms, algorithms, and generative AI create and extract value, so that they can create the conditions – such as equitable design rules – for a digital economy that rewards value creation.

## Mind Your History

The internet is a good example of a technology that has been designed around principles of openness and neutrality. Consider the principle of "end-to-end," which ensures that the internet operates like a neutral network responsible for data delivery. While the content being delivered from computer to computer may be private, the code is managed publicly. And while the physical infrastructure needed to access the internet is private, the original design ensured that, once online, the resources for innovation on the network are freely available.

This design choice, coordinated through the early work of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (among other organizations), became a guiding principle for the development of the internet, allowing for flexibility and extraordinary innovation in the public and private sector. By envisioning and shaping new domains, the state can establish markets and direct growth, rather than just incentivizing or stabilizing it. It is hard to imagine that private enterprises developing the internet in the absence of government involvement would have adhered to equally inclusive principles. Consider the history of telephone technology. The government's role was predominantly regulatory, leaving innovation largely in the hands of private monopolies. Centralization not only hampered the pace of innovation but also limited the broader societal benefits that could have emerged. For example, in 1955, AT&T persuaded the Federal Communications Commission to ban a device designed to reduce noise on telephone receivers, claiming exclusive rights to network enhancements. The same kind of monopolistic control could have relegated the internet to being merely a niche instrument for a select group of researchers, rather than the universally accessible and transformative technology it has become. Likewise, the transformation of GPS from a military tool to a universally beneficial technology highlights the need to govern innovation for the common good. Initially designed by the US Department of Defense to coordinate military assets, public access to GPS signals was deliberately degraded on national-security grounds. But as civilian use surpassed that of the military, the US government, under President Bill Clinton, made GPS more responsive to civil and commercial users worldwide. That move not only democratized access to precise geolocation technology; it also spurred a wave

of innovation across many sectors, including navigation, logistics, and location-based services. A policy shift toward maximizing public benefit had a far-reaching, transformational impact on technological innovation. But this example also shows that governing for the common good is a conscious choice that requires continuous investment, high coordination, and a capacity to deliver. To apply this choice to AI innovation, we will need inclusive, mission-oriented governance structures with the means to co-invest with partners that recognize the potential of government-led innovation. To coordinate inter-sectoral responses to ambitious objectives, policymakers should attach conditions to public funding so that risks and rewards are shared more equitably. That means clear goals to which businesses are held accountable; high labor, social, and environmental standards; and profit sharing with the public. Conditionality can, and should, require Big Tech to be more open and transparent. We must insist on nothing less if we are serious about the idea of stakeholder capitalism. Ultimately, addressing the perils of AI demands that governments extend their role beyond regulation. Yes, different governments have different capacities, and some are highly dependent on the broader global political economy of AI. The best strategy for the United States may not be the best one for the United Kingdom, the EU, or any other country. But everyone should avoid the fallacy of presuming that governing AI for the common good is in conflict with creating a robust and competitive AI industry. On the contrary, innovation flourishes when access to opportunities is open and the rewards are broadly shared.

*Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London, is Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, Chair of the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health For All, and a co-chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water. She is the author of The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy (Penguin Books, 2019), Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism (Penguin Books, 2022), and, most recently, The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens Our Businesses, Infantilizes Our Governments and Warps Our Economies (Penguin Press, 2023). A tenth anniversary edition of her book The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths was published by Penguin in September.*

*Fausto Gernone, a PhD student at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, is on a research visit at the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley.*

## AI HOLDS THE KEY TO RESILIENT CITIES

*Cities will play a central role in how the world addresses climate change, and if there is one factor that could give policymakers much-needed support, it is artificial intelligence. But access to technology and the skills required to use it effectively are proving to be major obstacles to implementation.*

By Justina Nixon-Saintil

The cities that some 4.4 billion people call home are increasingly at risk of catastrophic climate-driven events. Rising sea levels and flooding threaten coastal megacities like New York City and Jakarta, and extreme heat waves, like those that afflict cities across South Asia and the Middle East each year, are projected to become more frequent and severe.

While our built environments and infrastructure are being tested by unpredictable weather and changing populations, many urban communities are facing heightened climate-related health and economic risks. Dangers such as air pollution and natural disasters can be especially acute in developing countries, where they threaten to drive more people into poverty. At the same time, cities contribute disproportionately to the broader



# What a Climate-Aligned IMF Would Look Like

*During her first five-year term as managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva won the argument that climate change is central to the institution's mandate. Now, she will have to show that she can align all its operations with the broader sustainable development agenda.*

By Mohamed Nasheed and Rakesh Mohan

Last week, the board of the International Monetary Fund approved current Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva for another five-year term. It is a welcome development that comes at a critical moment. Her second term will finish just before the end of this “make-or-break” decade for reining in climate change and delivering on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Georgieva has made significant progress in aligning the IMF with these goals. She was instrumental in the IMF's decision to acknowledge climate change as a critical macro issue under its institutional mandate. Under her leadership, the IMF launched its first-ever climate-change strategy; created the Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), its primary climate-finance instrument; and fostered global dialogue on the issue through its flagship publications and research. But now even bolder leadership is needed. As the only multilateral institution charged with maintaining global financial and fiscal stability, the IMF's role is critical for addressing climate change. Georgieva can build on the progress made in her first term by doing four things: committing the IMF to align with the Paris agreement; ensuring that it has ample financial firepower; elevating the voices of climate-vulnerable emerging-market and developing

economies (EMDEs); and mobilizing international support for climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. The first task is the most important. All the IMF's programs – not just those that are explicitly climate focused, like the RST – need to start promoting low-carbon development. Critically, that means avoiding scenarios that lock in fossil-fuel-intensive growth paths that will leave countries stranded in a net-zero future. All the IMF's work must be consistent with models of inclusive growth and development, including those where value is generated from natural capital and biodiversity. Equally, the IMF's surveillance efforts (which involve all countries, not just borrowers) should help governments identify how best to achieve their development and climate goals.

But aligning IMF financing and operations with the Paris goals will not be enough. With governments negotiating a new climate-finance goal this year, the IMF should help policymakers identify potential sources of financing and better understand the macroeconomic dimensions of the issue. This will require fresh thinking, because the evidence shows that carbon pricing will not be enough to generate the resources needed to support the net-zero transition. Robust analytics from the IMF can help to foster a global consensus on how best to generate international and domestic public finance – whether through taxation, revenue from carbon border

reporting. Nor will AI's urban applications stop there. The technology has the potential to optimize public transportation and traffic planning to achieve more sustainable urban transit. It could help to identify the best locations for expanding much-needed green space, while also preserving urban biodiversity and natural resources. Governments, public-service providers, and nonprofits alike have growing opportunities to access and explore AI tools, such as through requests for proposals and pro-bono programs, like those offered by IBM. However, recent research shows that while 69% of cities are already exploring or testing the uses of generative AI, only 2% are implementing it. As IBM's Chief Impact Officer, I know that access to technology and the skills required to use it effectively can be major obstacles to implementation. The need for greater access becomes all the more urgent when one considers the unequal distribution of climate-driven threats. Within our cities, problems like air pollution and a lack of access to clean energy disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable residents. These are the communities that have the most to gain from AI. We all have a responsibility to make AI solutions support vulnerable populations. That means providing equal access to climate tools, supporting training in AI and related skills, and creating programs designed to respond to the specific needs of historically marginalized urban populations. Upskilling, especially, will play a key role in accelerating vulnerable communities' adoption of climate-mitigation and adaptation tools. The private sector can do its part by forming partnerships with public agencies and working closely with organizations that are already engaged in supporting vulnerable communities. By embracing AI and putting it to work in the fight against climate change, we can help make our cities safer, more adaptable, and more sustainable. The technology to give people the tools to anticipate, address, and recover from climate-driven events is here. But it is up to all of us – communities, governments, and companies – to put it to the best possible use.

*Justina Nixon-Saintil is Vice President and Chief Impact Officer at IBM.*

adjustment mechanisms, or other channels. Second, Georgieva must ensure that the IMF itself has ample financing firepower. As she has previously warned, the world is increasingly prone to a wide range of shocks, many of which would have profound macroeconomic consequences. In this fraught new setting, the IMF's operations and balance sheet must be calibrated against what member states need to remain resilient. While the IMF Board approved a 50% increase in member states quotas (contributions) last December, that is far below the 267% increase required to meet the gross external financing needs of the most vulnerable members.

Similarly, the transition to net-zero will radically alter the economic terrain for many countries, especially those that have long relied on exporting or taxing fossil fuels. The IMF should track these trends and prepare to support countries that need help pursuing an orderly, low-carbon transition. Third, Georgieva has a special responsibility to ensure that climate-vulnerable economies are involved in the IMF's decision-making. These economies are more likely to seek IMF help, so it is all the more important that they have a say in how the IMF works. Yet, as of October 2022, the Vulnerable Group of 20 (V20) commands only around 5% of the voting power at the IMF, despite being home to 17% of the world's population. One major V20 demand is to “make debt work for the climate.” That means revising the IMF's debt-sustainability model to incorporate urgent investment and spending needs, and to determine what it will take for each country to meet them. Implicit in this approach is a move away from conventional austerity-based measures, and toward strategies focused more on resource mobilization. To be sure, the recent addition of a third African chair on the IMF Executive Board was a welcome development. But at the end of the day, last year's 16th General Review of Quotas was a missed opportunity to rebalance voting power. Given that the IMF has never had a non-European managing director, it will take fundamental governance reforms to convince climate-vulnerable economies that it truly represents their interests. To that end, Georgieva should offer her support for ongoing efforts to recognize the V20 as an official inter-governmental group at the IMF. Finally, since Georgieva cannot undertake these efforts alone, the IMF Board must support her in hiring and funding additional staff from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. Additional resources would allow the IMF to scale up its direct country engagement and ensure that national policies are tailored to local contexts. Coordination with other international institutions is also essential. The World Bank, for example, can help leverage the RST's limited resources to mobilize more money, especially toward resiliency programs like Climate Prosperity Plans. In her first term, Georgieva won the argument that climate change is central to the IMF's mandate. Now, she will have to show that the institution can rise to the challenge posed by the climate crisis at this “now or never” juncture.

*Mohamed Nasheed, a former president of the Maldives, is Founder and Secretary-General of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.*

*Rakesh Mohan, a former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, is a member of the Economic Advisory Panel to the World Bank President Ajay Banga, President Emeritus of the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, and a member of the Task Force on Climate, Development, and the International Monetary Fund.*

challenges we face today. Cities already account for an estimated 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions and 78% of energy consumption, and these figures could grow in an urbanizing world. According to UN-Habitat, the share of people living in urban areas is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. Clearly, cities will play a central role in how the world addresses climate change. One factor that could give cities much-needed support and unlock opportunities for building greater resilience is artificial intelligence. If developed and deployed responsibly and ethically, AI could potentially accelerate urban climate solutions, enable science-based and sustainable development, and deliver innovation at an unprecedented pace, allowing us to put the most vulnerable communities first.

But the first step is to improve our understanding of AI's many potential applications as a tool for resilient cities. For example, the challenge of handling vast amounts of data is a major obstacle to modeling future climate scenarios accurately and making informed planning decisions. Fortunately, through the power of AI, foundation models and geospatial analytics could help us visualize our cities in a new way. Consider the metropolitan areas facing severe and changing weather patterns. With real-time and historical climate data and AI-powered predictive capabilities, governments could introduce new tools for disaster response and readiness. Everyone, from ordinary citizens to those tasked with protecting and maintaining critical infrastructure, could be better informed and prepared.

AI also has the potential to help make city operations more sustainable at every level, thus reducing cities' outside emissions and environmental impact. Intelligent software applications could integrate AI to analyze buildings' energy usage, water consumption, and waste management, providing insights that allow communities and organizations to make more responsible decisions about sustainability. Moreover, with the addition of connected devices to drive in-depth data collection, safety measures such as urban infrastructure maintenance could be more effective and efficient than ever before. Think of all the bridges and roadways threatened by unprecedented weather events. When combined with AI, the uses of data extend far beyond basic monitoring and



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# START-UPS POWERING UP AFRICA'S SOLAR ENERGY ECOSYSTEM

*They are increasingly offering advanced energy solutions to the majority of people across Africa facing blackouts, brownouts and poor electricity supply*

By: Finbarr Toesland

Often referred to as the “Sun continent,” Africa receives more hours of bright sunlight than any other continent. But even with 60 per cent of the world’s solar resources, Africa has only one per cent of solar generation capacity, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Due to energy production and infrastructure challenges, many African countries regularly deal with blackouts, brownouts and poor electricity supply. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit the global economy hard, and commodity prices surged after the invasion of Ukraine, making energy even more difficult for poorer Africans to buy.

Increasingly, start-ups rather than established corporations are offering access to advanced solar energy solutions to the majority of people across Africa. By harnessing the sun’s power and transitioning to clean energy, Africans can expect major economic and social developments across the continent.

Solar energy brightens other industries

Headquartered in Nairobi, SunCulture has raised over \$40 million to equip rural farmers with solar-powered irrigation systems. Instead of counting on rainfall or revving up diesel or petrol pumps, farmers can now rely on solar-powered systems that are cheaper, use renewable energy and need minimal maintenance.

Once the company installs a solar panel on top of a farmer’s house and connects it to a battery-powered water pump, the irrigation system can cover up to three acres.

Annual capital investment in renewables in emerging markets needs to reach \$1 trillion per year if the world is to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050... “Now the missing piece is continued investment from both public and private financiers.

“Solar is particularly attractive because of its positive environmental impact, job creation potential, and economic development potential,” said Mikayla Czajkowski, chief of staff at SunCulture.

“African nations have immense potential to benefit from utilizing solar energy—especially in remote and under-served regions where energy access is limited – and facilitates a reduction in the continent’s carbon footprint, making a valuable contribution to global efforts to combat climate change,” Ms. Czajkowski added.

In an impact survey of SunCulture’s customers, measurement company 60 Decibels [a US-based organisation that offers customized assessments] found that SunCulture brought about significant improvements: 89 per cent of smallholder farmers experienced a boost in their quality of life, 90 per cent increased their production, and 87 per cent enhanced their earnings.

Ambitious start-ups

From GridX Africa, a firm that offers off-grid solar power to farms, safari lodges for tourists and construction projects in Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania, to the pay-as-you-go solar company Bboxx and the Egypt-based solar power developer and electricity distributor KarmSolar, Africa has no shortage of original solar energy start-ups.

While the ambitions of these solar businesses are laudable, achieving high levels of growth is not easy.

Emily McAteer, founder and chief executive officer, of Odyssey Energy Solutions spent more than a decade working to finance and build distributed solar projects across Africa and India.

African nations have immense potential to benefit from utilizing solar energy.

Her firm provides technology and finance solutions for distributed renewable energy businesses. At every stage of project development, she hit key bottlenecks that make it hard for solar companies like hers to scale.

By offering tools for solar developers to aggregate and pitch portfolios of projects to financiers, firms can access capital more effectively. To procure equipment more effectively, Odyssey streamlined the procurement process by negotiating directly with original equipment manufacturers for better prices and warranties and by working with developers for supply chain support.

“Operations and maintenance, especially in remote areas, can be a big hurdle,” Ms. McAteer said. “We offer hardware and software that sits on top of solar assets so that operators and investors can get deep insight into performance and optimize performance of their systems.”

Global initiatives need catalytic capital

More than 500 million people living in Africa have no access to electricity, according to the IEA

Africa Energy Outlook 2022. Governments and non-governmental organizations have launched many high-profile schemes to boost the solar energy sector in African countries, with mixed success. The continent needs a global response to address a challenge of this immense scale.

Launched in 2012, the US-Africa Clean Energy Finance (US-ACEF) initiative attempted to offset the costs of the early-stage development of clean energy projects, in a bid to draw investment to these ventures.

Solar is particularly attractive because of its positive environmental and economic impacts.

For Ms. McAteer, the US-ACEF model proved effective. Now innovators need higher levels of catalytic capital to continue scaling so that they can meet the UN Sustainable Development Goal 7, “Ensuring access to Clean and Affordable Energy.”

“Annual capital investment in renewables in emerging markets needs to reach \$1 trillion per year if the world is to achieve the goal

of net-zero emissions by 2050. US-ACEF set the model for how the industry can achieve that,” Ms. McAteer said. “Now the missing piece is continued investment from both public and private financiers.”

Innovation underway across Africa

So far, the US-ACEF has supported 32 projects, with country-specific investments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

Nijhad Jamal, managing partner of Equator, an early-stage venture capital firm focusing on climate technology in sub-Saharan Africa, agrees that Africa’s solar energy sector has benefited greatly from US-ACEF.

“There is a lot more impact to come from US-ACEF with projects like the Health Electrification Alliance, which aims to electrify over 10,000 health facilities in Africa,” Mr. Jamal said. “Most of the US-ACEF projects emphasize sustainability. In our opinion, this will have a lasting impact on the solar energy sector.”

## In Turning the Tide Against Female Genital Mutilation, Survivors Can Be Effective Agents of Change

By: Wisal Ahmed

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has been observed on 6 February each year since its establishment by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012. The Day is aimed at garnering political will, action, mobilization and investment to meet Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3 on eliminating FGM. Only seven years remain to achieve this target.

In the final push towards ending FGM, we need to dig deep to cross the finish line. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that progress needs to be increased at least tenfold. The adoption by the General Assembly in 2022 of resolution 77/195, calling for the intensification of global efforts for the elimination of FGM, and in 2023 of resolution 78/188 on the girl child, urging States and other entities to ensure holistic support for girls who are at risk of or who have experienced FGM, are solid political commitments. More work is needed, however, to convert resolution into action, and to scale up movements and interventions to abandon this practice.

Fortunately, we have the “know-how” and other tools needed to end FGM. Community engagement approaches, media tools, health education and involvement of influential members of society are positively linked with attitudinal changes towards abandonment of the practice. Millions of women and girls, boys and men, religious and cultural leaders, and health workers have been engaging in and leading abandonment efforts in their communities. Such efforts have yielded results over the last 30 years: almost all countries where FGM

was prevalent have outlawed this harmful practice. Today, one third of girls (0-14 years of age) undergo FGM compared to half before. But we cannot rest: this year alone, nearly 4.4 million girls remain at risk.

The 200 million girls and women who have been subjected to FGM should not be forgotten in the pursuit of elimination, as their daughters are more likely to undergo the practice and need special attention. FGM survivors can be effective agents of change, as they have personal knowledge of the experience and of the obstacles to change, as well as the cultural and social awareness required to implement appropriate interventions within their communities.

During a visit to Ethiopia in October 2023, I met Shakira, a woman of 53 years of age, whose life story embodies the fierce courage and dedication required to challenge deeply entrenched cultural practices. Shakira experienced first-hand the dire repercussions of FGM, enduring severe complications with each of her five childbirths. Resolved to shield her daughters from the same trauma, she stood up to her husband’s wishes to have their daughter undergo FGM. Her act of defiance led to her family being shunned by their community.

Shakira’s resistance was not in vain, as her actions—combined with awareness-raising efforts by local partners supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation—have sparked a gradual but profound transformation. Her activism has not only led to a paradigm shift within her own village but has extended to surrounding regions, making her a formidable figure in the battle

against FGM.

The Joint Programme has supported FGM survivors, prioritizing investments in survivor-led initiatives centred around empowerment, agency and access to essential services. As of last year, the Joint Programme supported more than 11,000 organizations, of which 83 per cent were grass-roots organizations partnering with coalitions and survivor-led movements advocating for changes in policies and laws, and championing changes in social and gender norms.

This year’s global campaign on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation focuses on the voices, stories and initiatives of survivors in leading the #EndFGM movement, urging the global community to strengthen investment in such movements. We pay tribute to survivors like Shakira, a woman whose strength and advocacy have become a source of inspiration and change in her community in Ethiopia. We also recognize and celebrate survivors of FGM who have demonstrated leadership to end the practice within their own families and communities, and at the national and global levels.

What is a female genital mutilation?

Female genital mutilation involves partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury for non-medical reasons. It is a human rights violation that endangers the physical and mental health of women and girls and limits their potential to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. It places them at an increased risk of serious pain, bleeding and infections and the likelihood of other health complications later in life, including risks during childbirth, which can imperil the lives of their newborns.



# THIS IS THE BIGGEST ILLUSION ABOUT THE UKRAINE WAR THE WEST REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE

■ By Tarik Cyril Amar

We are living through a remarkable Western anticlimax. The US has finally, after half a year of domestic wrangling, passed another large funding package of \$61 billion for Ukraine. This money had been presented as decisive: either it would come through or Kiev would be unable to hold its crumbling frontlines against Russia and would lose the war soon, as Ukrainian President Zelensky himself warned.

That was the minimum sales pitch. The more aggressive hard sell went further, claiming that once the money would be added to a fresh mobilization drive in Ukraine, its re-armed and replenished forces would not only resist Russian pressure but turn the tables and, in the end, perhaps in 2025, win the war.

Both these sales pitches were very unrealistic, as marketing often is. Now that the funding is on its way, reality is reasserting itself. There is no surprise that Russian advances are continuing, while the Ukrainian position keeps deteriorating, as the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian military, General Syrsky, is admitting.

Of course, those who choose to believe that the additional money will make a substantial difference can argue that, at this point, whatever aid will eventually reach Kiev's troops on the ground has yet to arrive. Yet there are signs that civilian and military officials with inside knowledge of Ukraine's situation know that its problems are more profound, and that money will not fix them. That is the most plausible explanation for how rapidly these officials have started lowering expectations.

The most striking examples come from some Ukrainian officers on the frontlines, who under the cover of anonymity, have spoken to the Swiss magazine *Blick*. Their statements are so bleakly sensational that a major Ukrainian news site has reproduced them – *Strana.ua*, which has a record of challenging the official messages of the Zelensky regime.

These Ukrainian officers predict that Ukraine will lose the war this year. One of them, serving on the frontline in the strategically critical town of Chasov Yar, foresees that the Donbass region – that is, most of the country's east – will come under full Russian control by October. At that point, he surmises, Kiev will have to negotiate with Moscow. While he still uses the popular euphemism of a “freeze” and avoids terms such as “capitulation,” under such circumstances these negotiations would clearly amount to a form of surrender. The British magazine *The Economist* also quoted a commander in Chasov Yar as stating that he and other officers expect the city to fall to Russian forces, despite the

promised injection of Western aid.

In general, the officers interviewed by *Blick* list three reasons why a Ukrainian defeat has become inevitable: First, an irredeemable lack of manpower, since, as they put it, the new mobilization “will not save us.” That is plausible, because Ukrainian units are heavily depleted, as Ukrainian commanders have acknowledged. Any mobilization is about trying to fill gaping holes, not about expanding the forces.

In addition, those Ukrainians willing to fight have already been recruited and quite a few unwilling ones as well: for a long time, Kiev has had to rely on manhunts to scrape together enough “cannon fodder.” This problem is only getting worse. And, finally, those mobilized now also need to be trained. Their lack of consent and motivation will make that hard, while there is not enough time for it in the first place.

Secondly, the Ukrainian officers believe that most of the fresh aid will arrive too late. That fear is well-founded, too, considering the underlying weakness of Western arms industries. This is reflected in the fact that less than 14 out of the 61 billion dollars are really earmarked for supplies to be delivered this year. Much of the rest will restock US arsenals.

The West is capable of releasing some systems and ammunition quickly, which is hyped in the mainstream media, for instance *The Economist*, as “just in time.” Yet, in a large-scale war of attrition, the real challenge is scale. It is clear that the West cannot provide in sufficient quantities, now and for the foreseeable future. That is why even President Vladimir Zelensky, after a meeting with NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg, publicly stated that he sees no “positive” developments regarding timely support for Ukraine's military. He cautioned that although money has been allocated, it is one thing “to have funds” and “as important to see what we can get” with them.

The third reason why the Ukrainian officers speaking to *Blick* believe that Kiev will lose is their own commander-in-chief, Syrsky. They still call him the “butcher,” a nickname he originally earned by his ruthless – and useless – wasting of troops during the battle of Artyomovsk (Bakhmut). Serving under him, the frontline fighters say, has a “paralyzing” effect – on them, not on the Russians. One officer even went as far as to speak of a “genocide of our best soldiers.” Even though Syrsky is a bad commander-in-chief, that is hyperbole. But it is indicative of the low morale of some Ukrainian frontline troops that they use such terms with respect to their own leadership.

In the West as well, we see signals of caution: Parts of the commentariat have started reframing the \$61 billion. It is no

longer the make-or-break lifesaver of the West's war effort but simply insufficient. Hugo Dixon, a Reuters columnist, for instance, argues that the aid package can only be the beginning of a longer and, again, much more expensive effort.

Biden administration officials – anonymous just like the skeptical Ukrainian officers – have also publicly doubted that the new aid package will be enough for Ukraine to win.

The key question is what are all these signals about? Are they really meant to lower expectations, preparing, in essence, an exit – at least for the US, if not necessarily the EU – from the Ukraine proxy war fiasco? Or are we witnessing a campaign to prepare the Western public for even longer and deeper engagement? Is Washington preparing to get up from the table and walk or is it doubling down on a very bad and extremely risky game?

There is some evidence pointing to a doubling-down: As part of the same package of laws, the US ramped up its effort to seize Russian state funds. In the US itself, there are only a few billion dollars to grab, but there are hundreds of billions in Europe. That is an extreme act that, in the end, will greatly damage America by further undermining the dollar, as both Russia and China are warning. Yet the aim is obvious: to plunder these Russian assets to secure funding for years of future war in Ukraine.

In addition, some Western politicians and experts believe – or at least say – that Ukraine can buy sufficient time to hold out until more Western industrial resources can be made available for the war effort. In such a long-term scenario, they hope, the West and Ukraine could ultimately turn the logic of attritional warfare against Russia and prevail. Again, that as well, is a strategy – or, rather, wishful thinking – reckoning on years of further war. Indeed, if – a big if – President Vladimir Zelensky is to be trusted, Kiev and the Biden administration are in talks about a security agreement to lock in American support and more money for a decade.

Yet the truth is that we cannot know Washington's real plans. We cannot even know if it has definite plans. Perhaps, the Biden administration is merely playing for time to reach the election in November without an outright Russian victory. Maybe there are serious intentions to prolong the proxy war. In a worst case, we cannot rule out that the US is ready to escalate to direct war or let the EU and Britain do so. We do know that we cannot assume that American strategies will be rational or responsible.

But here is another thing we do know, even if all too many Western observers – and planners – seem to habitually

forget it: Russia also has plans, and its actions and capabilities have shown a clear pattern of defying Western and Ukrainian expectations.

It is Russian actions, adaptation, strategies and tactics that have caused the failure of Western arms in Ukraine, such as missiles (the famed but ultimately strategically ineffective HIMARS, ATACMS, Storm Shadows/SCALPS) and tanks and other armored vehicles (for instance, the equally over-sold Leopard IIs, Abrams, Challengers, and Bradleys which have proven tactically ineffective).

Top-notch as well as less advanced air defense systems (Patriot, NASAM, IRIS-T, Hawk) have fared no better. Even these peak products of the West's military-industrial complexes have not been the silver bullets they were supposed to be, as the *Washington Post* has long admitted. They have always been overstretched, incapable of protecting both major cities and military forces. In addition, they are expensive to use and susceptible to being overwhelmed by a mix of simple and technologically advanced drones and missiles – which is precisely what Russia has been doing.

Likewise in the area of mobilization: Ukraine is mobilizing desperately. Russia, as *The Economist* acknowledges, finds it easier – very much against Western expectations as of the fall of 2022 – to refill and expand its forces. “Ukraine is therefore likely,” the British magazine concludes, “to remain on the back foot, unable to mount new offensives.” The same holds, of course, for Moscow's war economy, its ability to maintain international alliances and support notwithstanding Western attempts to isolate it, and last but not least, military strategy and tactics.

Whereas Western commentators and leaders often speak – and, it seems, really think – as if their decisions are the key factor deciding how much longer this war will continue and how it will end, the reality is the other way around: The initiative is Russia's. Those planning for an even longer war – and even those Western critics of Western policies that warn of another “forever war” – are overlooking the obvious: Moscow has a greater say on these matters.

*Tarik Cyril Amar is a historian and expert on international politics. He has a BA in Modern History from Oxford University, an MSc in International History from the LSE, and a PhD in History from Princeton University. He has held scholarships at the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and directed the Center for Urban History in Lviv, Ukraine. Originally from Germany, he has lived in the UK, Ukraine, Poland, the USA, and Turkey.*



# “Taking a leap of faith: Liberalizing of shielded domestic favoured sectors challenges and prospects”

By Birhane Girmai

To control foreign investors' involvement in restricted export, import, wholesale, and retail trade investments, the Ethiopian Investment Board has issued a directive. In addition to strengthening private sector development and curbing long-standing illicit market practices that lower market competition, the directive aims to correct market failure and establish price stability. The directive also stated that protecting these sectors does not result in the desired effect, which is detrimental to the final consumer. Some argue that this is one area that needs reform to remove the current barrier to entry for foreign players, in light of the recent discussions with the IMF.

This move is the gradual opening of sectors to foreign investment, allowing foreign companies to participate in retail trade. This, in general, can involve establishing wholly-owned operations, acquiring existing businesses, or forming joint ventures with local partners. The goal is to attract foreign investment, stimulate economic growth, and provide benefits like increased consumer choice, technological advancements, job creation, and market development. However, the implementation of these policies can be controversial due to concerns about potential negative impacts on local businesses, employment, and cultural aspects of domestic retail markets. Many people, in particular small business players, worry about the impact of such rules, which are clearing away and impacting their businesses or jobs.

Therefore, the goal of this brief article is not to cover every controversy surrounding the topic but rather to highlight the key points pertaining to consumer protection and competition law, the nation's efforts to join regional economic communities (RECs) and multilateral agreements, and lessons from other economies that should be remembered as we implement the law. It's crucial to remember that there is a complicated relationship between the opening up of the aforementioned sectors, the exchange rate regime, and foreign currency reserves. This relationship can be influenced by a number of other factors, including trade policies, macroeconomic conditions, capital flows, and the nation's overall economic development. Every nation has distinct conditions and a different approach to policy, and the interactions and specific results of these elements can differ. Therefore, these variables are not taken into account in this article.

## Consumer protection and competition law

Tesfaye Neway, a law practitioner, asserts that the competition and consumer protection authority does not oversee certain of the declarations that are within its jurisdiction. Two instances that are under the ambit of the Proclamation on Trade Competition and Consumer Protection 813/2006 are communication services and privatization. In contrast, he considers contract law when discussing consumer protection and outlines instances in which government intervention is warranted based on statistics, research, and other analyses. The government should also assist participants in the areas of industry self-regulation and conflict resolution. Accordingly, the current action has had the benefit of allowing foreigners to increase their competitiveness in the home market. This may result in more affordable costs, higher-quality products, and more options for consumers. Although there might be more pressure on domestic merchants to innovate, boost productivity, and offer better services in order to stay competitive.

Allowing foreign investment into the retail sector has the potential to increase capital inflows, foster market expansion, and boost economic growth. International retailers could boost the economy as a whole by opening new locations, investing in infrastructure, and generating employment. Advanced technologies, supply chain management techniques, and best practices are frequently—though not always—brought to the domestic market by foreign businesses. Knowledge transfer and technological pullovers may result from this, helping domestic players and boosting their competitiveness in a relatively limited number of domains.

It's important to keep in mind that opening up particular areas may have complex and situation-specific repercussions. The actual outcomes rely on several factors, including the specific market conditions, regulatory environments, the amount and nature of foreign

investment, and the ability of local companies to adapt to shifting market dynamics. Thus, taking into account the influence of foreign entities on domestic retailers, the introduction of foreign entities may result in conflicting outcomes for domestic traders. According to a research, smaller, less aggressive domestic merchants could have to deal with issues including heightened competitiveness and even market withdrawal. Larger domestic retailers, on the other hand, might be in a better position to work with or even profit from future alliances or partnerships with international retailers. Attorney Daniel Fikadu asserts that pertinent government agencies have to rigorously check the due diligence of these players and list out raw coffee, khat, oilseeds, pulses, hides and skins, forest products, poultry, and livestock as items that are allowed to trade. In the same vein, he cites the capital cap and requirements for each of these things, from cattle, which is exempt from such financial constraints, to coffee traders, who must have a track record of 10 million turnovers. This highlights the problem area, particularly for the export sector, which seeks to address the on-going issues with foreign currency reserves. However, given the financial and other needs, these players must, among other things, make a reasonable judgment based on the current supply chain, market productivity, infrastructure, and political stability in terms of peace and security. They also need to think about the hazards and difficulties that might occur in the future.

The establishment of a framework by the government to monitor these entities is necessary in order to enhance the value of the nation's exports. These items are already on the market, but they need to offer value if they want to make more money considering their track record and stability. Furthermore, as domestic players are unable to compete with these individuals and cannot unfairly take advantage of them, the regulation should also address their monopolistic and cartel tendencies. In addition, the regulation ought to guarantee equitable competition within the market.

The order ought to include comparable enforcement measures as well as institutional capacity to prevent foreign players from bringing inferior goods into Ethiopian markets. Dumping and countervailing measures are essential for maintaining fair competition in the larger market that Ethiopia hopes to enter through regional and multinational agreements.

## Accession to RECS and Multilateralism

The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is intended to be one player in the market, has been in effect since January 1, 2021, despite its difficulties. One of the ratifying nations is Ethiopia. The country has been a part of the Common Market for East Southern Africa (COMESA) for over forty years, yet membership in this economic bloc does not benefit the country. Additionally, there is a move to become a member of the East African Community (EAC), and some foundational work is being done. Ethiopia has been actively pursuing multilateral membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2003. This is a demanding process that requires Ethiopia to have an operational and transparent trade regime. This includes having clear and consistent trade-related laws, regulations, and policies that are applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

Ethiopia must also disclose details about its market access policies, such as tariffs, non-tariff trade barriers, and any other trade-related policies that influence imports and exports. It must exhibit its dedication to progressively lowering trade obstacles and opening up its market. In addition, we need to negotiate a wide range of trade-related problems with current WTO members, such as investment, intellectual property rights, market access for goods and services, agriculture, and other particular areas of concern. To bring its domestic laws and regulations into compliance with WTO norms, the nation may need to enact new legislation. This could entail, among other things, passing new legislation or changing already-existing laws to guarantee compliance with WTO agreements. Occasionally, nations can also need to create new government organizations or bolster current ones.

In light of these demands and RECs that Ethiopia hopes to obtain, I believe that this action is a little premature. The rationale is that, in order to reap the benefits of these arrangements, Ethiopia must have a robust

private sector that engages in negotiations with other parties to get favourable terms, whether at the regional or multilateral level. The private sector and multinational corporations are the main players in the major WTO agreements, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), where the government's role is limited to government procurement. Consequently, there was a prior opening in the telecom sector, and currently, these sectors have dire repercussions for the country's future negotiations as there will be no sector to offer for the system that works in reciprocity in the future.

## Experience from other economies

A department store chain is one of the sectors that are seen to be growing in the wholesale and retail markets. Tesfaye Neway claims that the authority lacks the proactive institutional ability needed to implement competition law, which is necessary for a better result. This is because a study shows that farmers and processors have a large pool of prospective customers among supermarket chains during the early phases of supermarket expansion, when the industry is still somewhat fragmented (weakly concentrated). But as the industry matures, it becomes more consolidated. For instance, this study indicated that in Latin America, four to five chains usually own 75% of the industry, which in turn owns 55% of the retail food market. This business is a “two-edged sword.” On the one hand, it can lower food prices for consumers, create opportunities for farmers and processors to gain access to quality-differentiated food markets, and raise incomes. On the other hand, it can create challenges for small retailers, farmers, and processors who are not equipped to meet the new competition and requirements from supermarkets.

Another study by KJ Cseres' evaluates current regulatory approaches to correct market failures and distribute the benefits of liberalization in recently liberalized network industries. The study finds that the liberalization process has not resulted in expected competitiveness or consumer benefits. Many consumer-related failures were little anticipated, and legislation to protect and assist consumers was either late coming or inadequate. Furthermore, it is indicated that the intersection between general consumer protection and specific consumer issues of sector regulation, incorporating theoretical insights from neoclassical and behavioural economics.

In contrast to what the general public in Indonesia had assumed, this phenomenon has really demonstrated improved economic and lifestyle conditions, leading people to appreciate the hygienic and recreational spaces of department shops, supermarkets, and malls. Nevertheless, it causes fear and mistrust among businesspeople who believe that the existence of old markets would be threatened by those contemporary marketplaces. But, anyhow, it evokes anxiety and distrust among the business people who think those modern marketplaces will become a threat to traditional market existence.

An experience with 500 Nigerian manufacturing SMEs in Lagos State reveals that despite liberalizing trade policies aimed at promoting competition and improving resource efficiency, most struggle to compete due to improper planning and a lack of a favourable investment climate.

Another finding from India reveals that despite controversy surrounding India's distribution sector, political will support reforms. It quantifies the economic impact of removing foreign investment barriers, finding that it benefits the economy, consumers, and foreign producers while hurting the distribution sector.

The experiences of countries post-liberation vary significantly, depending on factors such as market conditions, regulatory frameworks, and strategies implemented by different players. Domestic retailers often face intensified competition from foreign retailers, which can impact their market share, pricing strategies, and profitability. To remain competitive, they may need to adapt their business models, improve operational efficiency, and innovate in areas such as product offerings, customer service, and marketing strategies. Some domestic retailers may explore collaboration or partnerships with foreign retailers to enhance their competitiveness.

For foreign retailers, liberalization provides opportunities to enter new markets, expand their customer base, and capitalize on the growth potential of the domestic economy. They may need to tailor their strategies, product offerings, and marketing approaches to suit local market preferences, cultural norms, and regulatory requirements. Foreigners can also form partnerships with local companies to navigate local market dynamics and build relationships with suppliers and customers.

On the other hand, legal landscapes can lead to a wider range of products and brand availability, increased competition, lower prices, improved affordability, improved product quality, increased innovation, and access to new technologies and services introduced by foreigners. From a market perspective, the expansion of retail operations can generate employment opportunities, but foreign investors may also lead to changes in the labour market, potentially causing job displacement or transitions for domestic players or workers.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there are too many facets and complexities to cover in this little article regarding the Ethiopian Investment Board's recent decision to liberalize the import, export, retail, and wholesale sectors to overseas markets. The directive is prepared for execution, but for the best result, various short- and long-term strategic actions are anticipated.

In the short term, it is best for all parties involved to replicate the entry requirements for foreigners in terms of minimum capital investment requirements considering local players, local requirements, red tape, and bureaucratic procedures. A paradigm of partial liberalization can be used in place of full liberalization in order to rectify unanticipated practices as they arise and learn from them pragmatically. In a similar vein, industries that are accessible to investors shouldn't abuse conventional retailers with monopoly, cartel and price fixing.

Instead of treating these small businesses and hawkers with a laissez-faire attitude, a pro-traditional or pro-small retail policy should be established to support local players in the market. Trade and economic liberalization policies have an adverse effect on small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses in countries like Ethiopia because of their access to finance and knowledge. Treating these parties preferentially is therefore necessary because protectionism goes against the planned policy framework. In addition to the regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms that go along with sector liberalization policies, the efficacy of these policies also hinges on the government's ability to level the playing field for all parties involved. Additionally, different regulatory layers must coordinate and act in concert to address consumer concerns and foster competitive markets.

Improving the involvement of the private sector will have a significant effect in the medium and long run. Improved traditional retail competition mitigates the unfavourable effects of this legislative change. There are some excellent instances of initiatives to modernize traditional retail. Those in East and Southeast Asia, including China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, and Taiwan, are especially captivating. Programs to help this sector are essential because they play a significant role in tackling macroeconomic concerns and gender factors. SMEs are the engines of economic growth, and they should be supported with a special focus on addressing the twin challenges of poverty reduction and unemployment. The responsibilities and expectations placed on SMEs necessitate a robust and dynamic SME sector. The adoption of trade liberalization policies raises concerns about SMEs' capacity to survive the intense rivalry between well-established multinational firms and low-cost imports, necessitating government intervention. To prevent adverse outcomes when accession is completed, opening sectors should also consider regional, continental, and international engagements.

Factors influencing retail, wholesale, import, and export liberalization include infrastructure development, institutional capacity, regulatory frameworks, and overcoming obstacles to seize opportunities. As a result, in order to get the best results, the government and other relevant parties must maintain their focus. The capacity to change and advance in reaction to shifting market circumstances must be continuously nurtured and developed. This will ensure continued success and growth in the long run.

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*Happy Birthday*






# Capital SPORT

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## Ultramarathon Runner Deo Kato avoids Ethiopia in his journey from Cape Town to London

In what can only be described as a marathon of marathons, Deo Kato's quest to run from Cape Town to London hit an unexpected turn as he navigated through Kenya, adapting his route due to security concerns in Ethiopia. Originally planned as a direct crossing through Ethiopia, Kato's journey extended significantly, leading to unforeseen challenges and remarkable encounters across Kenya.

Kato, who embarked on this epic journey to highlight human migration and challenge societal prejudices, found himself rerouting 942km back to take an alternative path to South Sudan. This adjustment not only added significant distance to his journey but also extended his stay in the scenic expanses of Kenya, which turned out to be both challenging and rewarding.

"We spent a long time in this beautiful country, and due to not crossing into Ethiopia as planned, we spent much longer than anticipated," Kato shared on his Strava post. Despite the setbacks, Kenya offered moments of peace and camaraderie. "Finding peace is key for me, and what a place to do just that," he remarked. Kato praised his new driver, Mulundo, for his understanding of running, which allowed him to immerse himself in the serene landscapes and supportive communities along the route.

However, the journey was not without its difficulties. The lack of suitable fuel sources for their camping stove

meant that Kato and his team often had to rely on guesthouses and lodges for meals, which sometimes led to less than ideal dietary conditions, including an unfortunate incident involving maggots. Nonetheless, Kato expressed gratitude for the dietary supplements provided by sponsors, which helped maintain his health through the nutritional challenges.

The warmth of the Kenyan people left a strong impression on Kato, particularly the children who joined him on his runs. "Once I started to move forward again more kiddos joined me, like a ripple effect, as if they had heard about the man who looks like them running. What an incredible boost they gave me," he reflected.

As Kato left Kenya and entered the uncertain terrains of South Sudan, he looked back on his time in Kenya with gratitude, despite the unexpected detour. "We remain grateful for the beautiful memories of Kenya," he said, preparing himself and his followers for the next chapter of his journey in South Sudan.

The ultramarathon runner's experience in Kenya underscores the unpredictable nature of such a massive undertaking, fraught with logistical challenges yet enriched by local encounters that deepen the journey's impact. As Kato continues toward London, his journey highlights the resilience and adaptability required to traverse continents on foot, echoing the migratory challenges faced by many across the globe.



## African women are getting a chance to shine in soccer



Twenty-three-year-old Kevin Opia shares a passion for football with her twin brother Robert.

"He's my biggest role model in this game. I look up to him," she says.

She used to tag along with him and his mates whenever they would go to the local park for a kickabout. "I'd always just kind of watch them, and sometimes even join them if they'd let me."

A primary school teacher helped Opia gain the confidence to step out of her brother's shadow and join a team. "She basically trained me to be the best version I can be within the sport. "I started to see that people saw potential in me." "That made me really excited and really accepted."

Opia was encouraged to focus more on

her education rather than playing sports. "Whereas my brother, he kinda had that persistence to just keep pushing and go after his dreams." "The mum would be happy for her to stay home, watch the kids, while the boys go out and kick the football. "It was just us supporting men, going down to watch our brothers, our uncles playing," she says.

Ms Madua says she was inspired by the heroics of the Matildas at last year's Women's World Cup. She also met up at African restaurants with friends and family to watch Nigeria's impressive run. For years, the annual African Cup NSW has brought the community together, with players representing their home country.

Ms Madua says it has been a struggle to gather enough players to field women's

sides, and when they did, they were often scheduled to play early in the morning.

She's been appointed vice-president of Kama Umoja, a standalone soccer tournament for African women that kicks off in October.

"We've been doing this for so many years and our voices were in the background. "It's one of the first women's cups in NSW for women of colour, solely based just for us."

It's hoped the tournament will create discussions in the community about the benefits of sport. "Having those conversations is going to stem from the

parents first.

"We're able to speak to them in such a way that they understand that their daughters are just as great as the men."

Opia will be representing her home nation South Sudan at Kama Umoja.

She played in the first women's side at the African Cup and says there are now plenty more girls willing to sign up to play. "I want the girls to be in their own zone, in their own empowerment, and just have a great time," she says.

"We're all just trying to come together as one and play that sport that we all love."

## SOUTH AFRICAN BOXER DINGAAN THOBELA, 'THE ROSE OF SOWETO,' DIES AGED 57

South Africans and boxing fans are remembering Dingaana Thobela, a boxing legend who passed away at 57.

Thobela, known as "The Rose of Soweto" where he grew up, died in his Johannesburg apartment after battling an undisclosed illness. He was found by family members who couldn't reach him on the phone.

Thobela had a stellar career, competing from 1990 to 2006 and winning three world titles in two weight divisions. With 40 wins out of 56 fights, including 26 knockouts, he left a lasting mark on the sport.

Tributes poured in for Thobela, with many recalling his incredible speed, skill, and power in the ring. Advocate Ike Thamsanqa



Khumalo reminisced about the memorable moments Thobela gave fans, describing some as comedic.



# JAKE PAUL VS MIKE TYSON

## OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED AS PROFESSIONAL FIGHT

This summer's meeting between YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul and former world champion Mike Tyson has been officially sanctioned as a professional fight.

It means the outcome of the bout, which is scheduled to take place in Texas on 20 July, will appear on both their records.

However the fight will have certain conditions, including that the contest can only be eight, two-minute rounds and 14oz gloves must be worn, rather than 10oz.

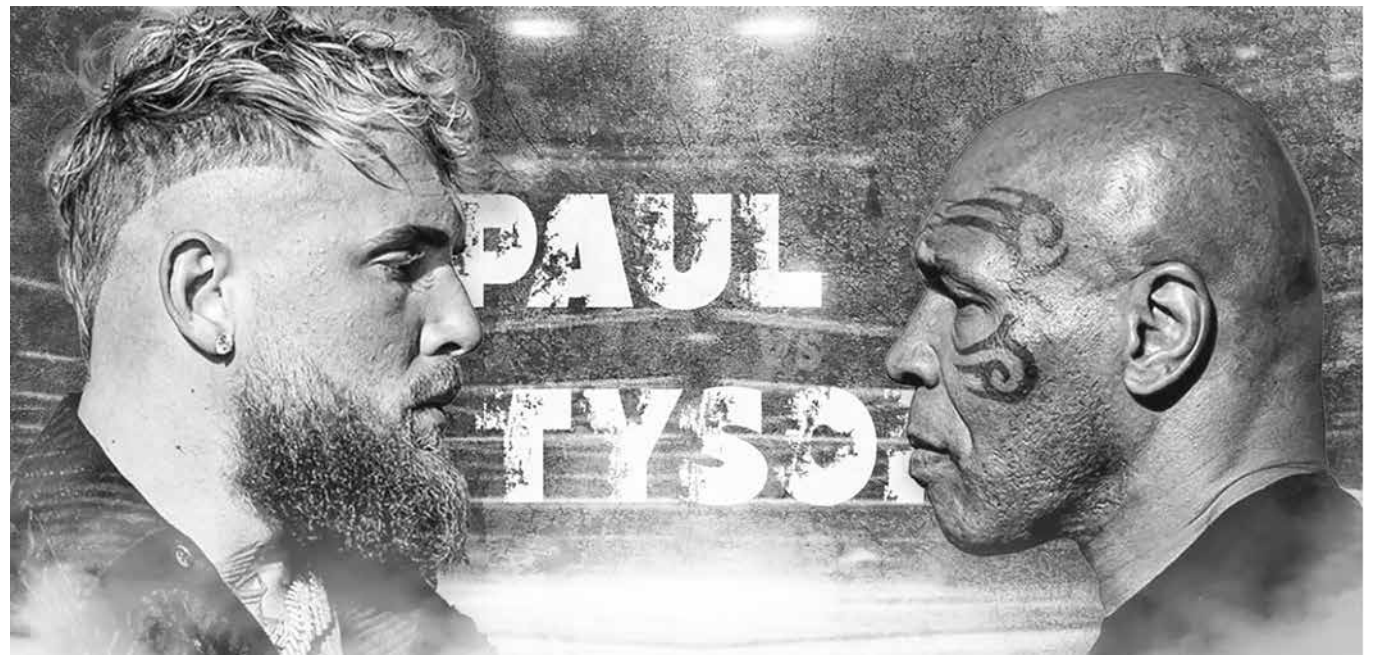
The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation said it has conducted a review of Paul and Tyson, evaluating the records to date of both men as well as their medical history before approving the pro fight with "certain waivers".

"The safety of the contestants competing in the ring or the octagon is always the primary concern," the TDLR said.

Tyson, who will be 58 at the time of the fight and whose professional career ended in 2005, most recently competed in an exhibition bout in 2020 and will turn 58 three weeks before facing Paul.

Paul, meanwhile, beat Ryan Bourland in his 10th professional fight in March.

"Mike Tyson and Jake Paul signed on to fight each other with the desire to do so in a sanctioned professional fight that



would have a definitive outcome," Nakisa Bidarian of MVP Promotions said.

Tyson was the first heavyweight boxer to simultaneously hold the WBA, WBC and IBF titles in 1987 but his reign as unified champion came to a shock end in 1990 as he was beaten by Buster Douglas in one of the biggest upsets in boxing history.

Although he briefly regained the WBA and WBC titles in 1996, he then

suffered back-to-back defeats to Evander Holyfield - the second ending as Tyson was disqualified for biting part of Holyfield's ear off.

Tyson's legal issues have included a rape conviction in 1992, for which he served three years of a six-year prison sentence, and in 1999 he served a third of a 12-month sentence for a road rage assault.

He got back into shape to play his part

in an exhibition bout with fellow former world champion Roy Jones Jr in 2020, and his fight with Paul will take place in Arlington's AT&T Stadium, home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, which has a seating capacity of 80,000.

Paul has won nine of his 10 fights, mostly against ex-UFC fighters, with his solitary defeat coming against British boxer Tommy Fury in February 2023.

# PARIS 2024 OLYMPICS:

## SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEE SUSPENDED FOR DOPING



A third runner on the Refugee Olympic team has been suspended for a positive doping test, with the announcement coming two days before the IOC confirms its selection of athletes for the Paris Games. Anjelina Nadai Lohalith was informed of her alleged use of banned heart medication, trimetazidine, and was provisionally suspended, the athletics integrity unit said. She did not give a timetable for disciplinary proceedings.

Lohalith, who fled war in South Sudan as a child and took refuge in a refugee camp

in Kenya, was on a scholarship from the International Olympic Committee to prepare for her third consecutive Summer Games.

The 31-year-old ran the 1,500m for the Refugee team at the last two Summer Games, first competing in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro and at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

The IOC and UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, have planned a media event on Thursday to finalize the selection of the refugee team for the Paris Olympic Games which will be held from July 26 to August 11.

Lohalith represented the Refugee Team at three World Athletics Championships and was one of 29 members of the Refugee Olympic Team in Tokyo.

The UNHCR said 75 athletes in 14 sports received scholarships to Paris. These athletes come from 12 different countries and now live in 24 host countries.

A scholarship athlete from Morocco, 3,000m steeplechase runner Fouad Idbafdil, was banned for three years in December after testing positive for the endurance hormone EPO.

In March, another 1,500m runner from South Sudan, Dominic Lokolong Atiol, was also provisionally suspended for testing positive for trimetazidine.

The drug, known as TMZ, was also found in high-profile positive tests in 2021 by Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva and 23 Chinese swimmers who were preparing for the Tokyo Olympics.

Valieva's case came to light during the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing, where she helped the Russians win the team gold medal. Valieva was subsequently disqualified, suspended for four years, and the Russians were demoted to bronze swimmers, while the United States were promoted to gold swimmers. The case is ongoing and further appeals are pending.

The Chinese swimming affair was described in detail on April 20 in investigative reports from the New York Times and German broadcaster ARD.

The swimmers were not suspended, and three of them won gold medals in Tokyo, because the World Anti-Doping Agency accepted the explanations and evidence provided by Chinese authorities that the athletes had been contaminated with traces of the drug in a hotel kitchen.



## Ethiopia, Kenya dominate Madrid marathon

Tens of thousands of runners took part in the Madrid Marathon on Sunday (Apr. 28).

Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes were the ones who shone in both the men's and women's races.

Ethiopia's started chasing a win not long after the start of the 42-kilometre course extending his lead consistently.

However, he faltered in the last 7 kilometres suffering from heat stroke and hamstring strain in his left thigh. Putting in a final effort, he won the second race of his career.

Mitku Tafa was closely followed by fellow Ethiopian Fikre Bekele, and Kenyan runner, Douglas Chebii, who came in third.

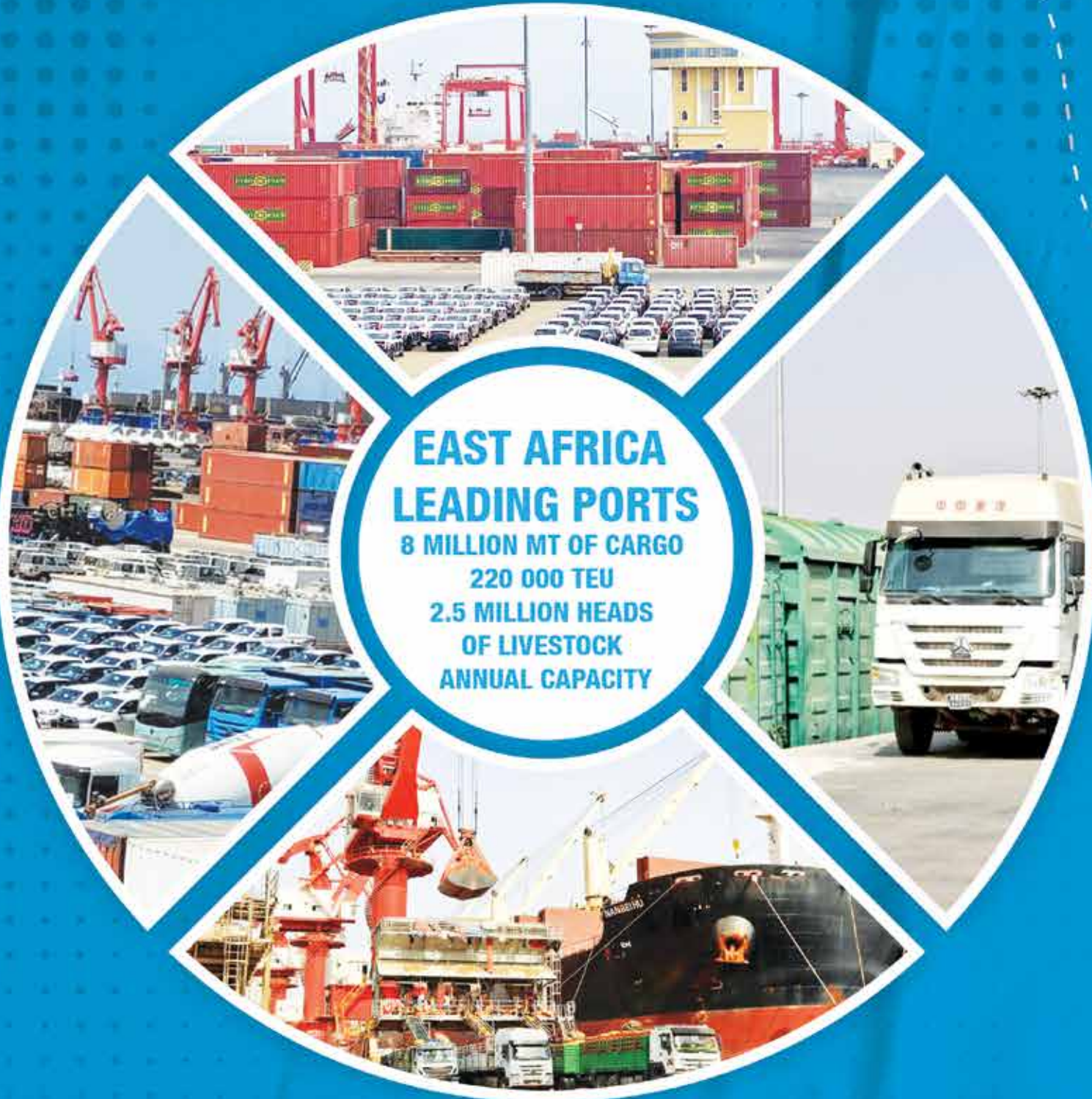
Tafa won the race in 2 hours - 8 minutes and 58 seconds.

The 2023 Nairobi City Marathon champion Naom Jebet secured her first international marathon win in Madrid in the women's race.

The runner was in the solo lead on the final stretch of her win as well, finishing with a time of two hours, 26 minutes and 20 seconds - 44 seconds faster than Ethiopia's Bontu Bekele who finished second.

Fellow Ethiopian Kebene Chala finished in third place.





**EAST AFRICA  
LEADING PORTS**  
 8 MILLION MT OF CARGO  
 220 000 TEU  
 2.5 MILLION HEADS  
 OF LIVESTOCK  
 ANNUAL CAPACITY

**RORO  
TERMINAL**

EXCELLENT  
MARITIME  
CONNECTION

**CONTAINER  
TERMINAL**

BEST  
PERFORMING  
DEEPSEA

**BREAK BULK**

ULTIMATE PORT  
FOR SPECIAL &  
PROJECT CARGO

**DRY BULK**

SPECIALIZED  
INFRASTRUCTURES  
SOLUTION FOR  
PANAMA VESSELS

**DORALEH MULTI-PURPOSE PORT**  
 The Natural Gate of COMESA and Hinterlands