



Ethiopian News

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Ethiopia is top UK aid recipient

Britain has chosen Ethiopia as its largest recipient of development aid for the next four years and several other donor governments are ramping up assistance as Ethiopia sets ambitious goals to double its gross national product and become food self-sufficient at both national and family level and fully achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In a news conference on 1st March at the British Embassy in Addis Ababa, Dr Howard Tayler, Country Representative for the Department for International Development (DFID) said the UK will increase aid significantly to Ethiopia to help meet the needs of the country's poorest people and address underlying causes of poverty.

Ethiopia will receive \$2 billion in British development assistance in a four-year period. Mr. Taylor said that the decision to boost assistance was based on need as well as evidence that Ethiopia has made major strides in recent years.

"Working with the Ethiopian government and other partners, UK aid will deliver real results in Ethiopia, including helping more than 1.2 million people each year to get enough food to avoid hunger: enabling over two million children go to school by 2015."

The fund will be used for providing basic health care to 7.5 million people, giving 800,000 people access to safe drinking water in 2012 and giving two

million couples access to family planning and protecting one million children from malaria.

Ensuring access for millions of people to vital services in the country is the other purpose of the increase in aid, he said

UK aid to Ethiopia will help to address the underlying cause of poverty and fragility through new support for wealth creation, peace and security, increasing accountability and transparency, and tackling the effects of climate change.

Howard Taylor said that recent studies show that Ethiopia receives far less aid than it needs – half as much per capita compared to other African countries.

World Bank approves \$407 million for Ethiopian services

The World Bank has approved \$407 million in aid for Ethiopian local administration to improve public services.

The funds, \$246.6 million of which is a grant, will be used by districts to improve education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, and rural roads. Ethiopia will also contribute \$523 million to the Protection of Basic Services programme that runs until July 2012, while other donors, such as the U.S. and the European Union, have given \$131.7 million.



Ethiopia has made considerable progress in its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Primary school enrolment increased to 97% from 68.5% in the five years to 2010, child immunisation rate rose to 82% from 70%, while rural access to drinking water increased to 65.8% from 46%. Budget transparency and accountability have also improved, according to the World Bank.

In related news, the World Bank has also pledged to invest \$8 billion annually in agriculture to increase food production, aimed at addressing the recent global food price hikes.

The World Bank's Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFRP) is helping some 40 million people in need through \$1.5 billion in support. To date, over 40 countries are receiving or will receive assistance for the most vulnerable people.

For the longer term, the World Bank Group is boosting its spending on agriculture to \$8 billion a year from \$4.1 billion in 2008.

The new Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) set up by the World Bank in April 2010, at the request of the G20, to support country-led agriculture and food security plans and help promote investments in smallholder farmers.

OFID targets sustainable development in five African countries

The OPEC fund for International Development (OFID) has signed loan agreements totalling \$69.6 million to finance projects in five African countries. Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Niger and Sierra Leone will benefit from investment in energy, education, health, transport, water and agriculture.

Ethiopia will receive \$20 million to pursue an Energy Access Project which will establish a sustainable programme for expanding the population's access to electricity and improving the quality and adequacy of electricity supply. The project will also

reduce environmental degradation and improve energy end-use efficiency.

All projects will be co-financed by the concerned governments and a number of international institutions, including the African Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the International Development Association, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and la Banque Ouest-Africaine de Developpement.

Burundi signs landmark agreement on Nile water use

On 28th February, Burundi joined five Nile Basin upstream states by signing an agreement concerning the management of water from the Nile River, paving the way for the ratification of the accord.

Last year, after a decade of talks, four Nile Basin nations signed a deal that allowed upstream countries to implement irrigation and hydropower projects without first seeking Egypt's approval.

For decades, Egypt held veto rights over all upstream projects, following powers granted by a 1929 colonial-era treaty with Britain. Egypt's subsequent 1959 deal with Sudan gave the two downstream countries more than 90% control of the Nile waters.

The Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) was earlier signed by Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, and Kenya signed later in May. Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo have not signed, although Congo plans to sign the accord at an unspecified future date.

A sixth signatory was needed for the CFA to come into force and once it has been ratified by the six national legislatures, a Nile Basin Commission will be created. The CFA states that the commission will resolve the issue of water security in its first six months of operations.

The 6,700-kilometer Nile River is a confluence of the White Nile, whose source is Lake Victoria in East Africa, and the Blue Nile that springs from the Ethiopian Highlands. According to NBI, River Nile's average discharge is about 300 million cubic metres per day and Ethiopia is the source of about 85% of the water that flows into Sudan and Egypt.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to receive prestigious award

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) will present Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus with the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Humanitarian Award for his efforts to improve the health of Ethiopians by addressing specific diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. This award recognises the outstanding humanitarian efforts and achievements that have improved the health of humankind.



Dr. Tedros has served as Ethiopia's Minister of Health for the past five years. Under his leadership the country has improved the health of Ethiopians by addressing specific diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS and by improving the structure and capacity for health services, with a special emphasis on maternal care.

Dr. Tedros made malaria elimination his first priority as minister of public health. His efforts included a universal bed-net coverage programme for the entire country. As a result 20 million bed nets were distributed to protect 50 million people at risk of malaria by 2007. "This was one of the

most ambitious and successful efforts in public health history," said John B. Hardman, MD, president and CEO of the Carter Centre.

Minister Tedros has also worked to improve both the quality and access of health care for rural populations in Ethiopia. He supported the campaign to recruit and train 30,000 health extension workers, all local women, who live and work in the rural villages of Ethiopia. The workers provide basic health services, make referrals and conduct community health education. Their work is essential in eliminating malaria and improving general hygiene.

In addition to malaria, Minister Tedros has been supportive in the control and elimination of other tropical diseases. He has been instrumental in the Guinea Worm Eradication Programme and the Trachoma Control Programme. He has also done significant work in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and control. Under his leadership the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among 15 to 49 year olds dropped from 6.6% in 2002 to 2.3% in 2009. Access to antiretroviral therapy has been expanded from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of people during this timeframe.

Minister Tedros has co-authored numerous articles on malaria in prominent scientific publications. He also contributed to a 1999 study describing malaria incidence among children living near dams in northern Ethiopia. His contribution in this area earned him the distinction of "Young Investigator of the Year" from the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

The 2011 Annual Awards Dinner will be held on 22nd March.



A quarter million pound lifeline to prevent Africa’s first recorded bird extinction

The Liben Lark with a population of possibly fewer than 100 birds, is widely tipped to become mainland Africa’s first recorded bird extinction, unless urgent action is taken to prevent its demise from the only area it now inhabits: a single grassy plain in southern Ethiopia.



Classified as Critically Endangered, the highest level of threat, this globally threatened bird has now been thrown a lifeline thanks to funds raised by the British Birdwatching Fair held at Rutland Water last August. Birdfair organisers Martin Davies (from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - RSPB) and Tim Appleton (from Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust - LRWT) presented a £242,000 (US\$395,000) cheque

to Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International’s Chief Executive, at a special reception on 4th March hosted by Ethiopia’s UK Ambassador, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, at the Ethiopian Embassy in London.

These funds will be used by the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, the BirdLife Partner in the country, to work with local communities to reduce the impact of over-grazing livestock and prevent conversion of the land to arable farming. Helping the grasslands recover will benefit both the lark and the pastoralists living there.

Ethiopia’s wildlife riches are phenomenal but conservation should take centre stage as there are 22 species of bird facing extinction. Conservationists hope that the proceeds from the 2010 British Birdwatching Fair will help turn the tide and save the Liben Lark and a range of other highly threatened species.

A huge mural (16ft x 4ft) portraying all the endemic and threatened birds of Ethiopia, which was painted by more than 40 wildlife artists at the 2010 Fair, was put on display at the Embassy Reception. It will soon be heading out to Ethiopia where it will go on permanent display in Addis Ababa to help raise awareness of these bird species and their plight.



Assorted artists painting the mural

Martin Davies, of the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) – one of the fair’s co-founders and key organisers – said: “Ethiopia has a remarkable natural heritage and is hugely rich in species found nowhere else in the world. Over 840 species of bird have been recorded in Ethiopia, 17 of which are unique to this country and 29 others nearly so. We hope that the proceeds from this year’s event will help the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society and BirdLife International to take the urgent steps needed to secure the future of this country’s unique birds. We also hope that the event will help raise the international profile of this wonderful country, so rich in wildlife.”

“Once again Birdfair have delivered a huge boost for conservation. This money will be used to secure a future for Southern Ethiopia's incredible birds,” said Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International's Chief Executive.

Ethiopia’s UK Ambassador, His Excellency Berhanu Kebede, said: “Ethiopia’s biodiversity resources are under critical threat. Growing human and livestock populations pose the single most serious problem,

resulting in deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, and desertification. To reverse the situation, the government of Ethiopia has promulgated laws and put in place the appropriate institutions. Significant achievements have been made in restoring the fauna and flora of the country; hence the percentage of land covered by forests has grown from three to nine per cent within five years.

“On behalf of my country, I’m delighted that Ethiopia’s unique birds have been chosen as a beneficiary of the British Birdwatching Fair. It is fantastic that British birdwatchers have a passion for conserving Ethiopia’s birds. With four out of ten of Africa’s birds having been seen in Ethiopia, my country has a great deal to offer visiting birdwatchers and we believe that eco-tourism will be vital in helping to protect our unique wildlife and landscapes.”

Another Ethiopian endemic species in trouble is the grandly-named Prince Ruspoli’s Turaco.



This macaw-sized bird with scarlet and navy-blue wings, long tail and green-and-white head was first found among the personal effects of the Prince after he was crushed to death by an

elephant in 1893. As the unfortunate nobleman had not had time to label the specimen, its origins remained a mystery to westerners for half a century before the species was seen in the wild by a Cambridge naturalist in southern Ethiopia.

The other species set to benefit from the proceeds of the Birdfair include the Ethiopian Bush-crow; and the White-tailed Swallow.

UK Government and Gates Foundation to support agricultural research

On 27th February, the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a coordinated effort to reduce hunger and poverty in developing countries by supporting agricultural research projects to help small farmers increase their yields and incomes. DfID and the foundation will work together to identify the projects, and the foundation’s Agricultural Development initiative will manage them.

The collaboration will focus on dealing with the most serious threats to food production in the developing world – such as crop diseases, pests, poor soil quality, and extreme weather – and tackle these threats from multiple angles to develop long-term, sustainable solutions.

Through this new collaboration, Cornell University is receiving \$40 million to continue its work to develop wheat varieties that are resistant to emerging strains of stem rust disease, such as Ug99, which are spreading out of East Africa and threatening the world’s wheat supply.

Since 2008, when the Durable Rust Resistance in Wheat (DRRW) project at Cornell was first funded by the foundation, researchers have distributed new stem rust resistant wheat varieties for testing and evaluation to more than 125 sites in 40 countries. They have strengthened rust screening nurseries in Ethiopia and Kenya and distributed nearly five tonnes of Ug99-resistant seed for planting in seven countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

A second grant of \$3 million is awarded to Diagnostics for All (DFA). DFA will develop inexpensive diagnostic tests that small farmers can use to improve the quality and quantity of milk

produced by their cows and the safety of cereal grains.

DfID is contributing approximately \$32 million over the next five years to this partnership, and the foundation is providing \$70 million.

UN integrates its three offices in Africa to UNOAU

The United Nations officially opened a new office, UNOAU (United Nations Office to the African Union), in Addis Ababa on 22nd February.

UNOAU will now take over all the activities of the three previous offices – the UN Liaison Office, the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team and the United Nations Planning Team for AMISOM (the African Union Mission in Somalia).

The mandate of the UNOAU includes enhancing the partnership between the UN and AU in the areas of peace and security. It also provides coordinated and consistent UN advice to the AU on both long-term capacity building and short-term operational support.

The establishment of the UNOAU was approved by the UN General Assembly in July 2010 which appointed the former Ambassador ASG Zachary Muburi-Muita of Kenya to the UN in New York.

Ethiopian construction and health sector roundtable at British Expertise

On 10th February, in a meeting organised by Dominic James of British Expertise, in cooperation with the Ethiopian Embassy in London, Ambassador Berhanu Kebede addressed members of British Expertise at a roundtable held on Ethiopia's infrastructure and health sectors.

Participants were invited to consider the occasion as an eye opener, which will encourage participation in Ethiopia's infrastructure and health sectors, two of the most important focuses of the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). The Ambassador addressed a range of issues raised

by participants, such as the modality of entry, the security and stability of the region and on securing finance for projects.



Major infrastructure to be built in the coming five years to meet the GTP objectives – railway, hydropower and road sectors – were the focus of the discussion. In the health sector, opportunities for building state-of-the-art hospitals, diagnostic centres and pharmaceuticals were promoted.

Participants expressed interest in studying possible area of cooperation by securing finance for the infrastructure sector, training, in facilitating further similar promotional forums in their representative areas where the Embassy could provide more presentations.

UKTI representative, Simon Brown encouraged participants to take part in the Trade Mission to East Africa which is to be held from 20th to 30th March and which will include Ethiopia.

The Embassy promised to facilitate cooperation with lead organisations responsible for the execution of projects in Ethiopia, such as the Ethiopian Railway Corporation, the Ethiopian Roads Authority, the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation and the Ministry of Health.

Over \$1 billion of commodities traded through ECX in 1,000 days

Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) Chief Executive, Dr. Eleni Gabre-Madhin has announced that over a billion dollars worth of commodities were traded through the ECX floor in its first 1,000 days of operation.

The first trading bell was rung by Sir Bob Geldof on 24th April 2008, heralding ECX's operations, and since then ECX has registered impressive results.

"On the first day of trading we traded only 200 tonnes...but now we are trading 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of coffee, and 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of sesame on a daily basis. Roughly around the same time of our 1,000th day in the last weeks of January, we traded a record 5,800 tonnes of sesame alone..." Dr. Eleni said.

She added that daily trading has increased to more than \$9 million.

Currently, ECX has 450 members of whom 250 are full members and another 200 limited members. There are 225 representatives of trade unions on the floor as well. Today, ECX has more than 5,400 clients all over the country.

Ethiopia launches industry extension service package targeting SMEs

In an attempt to replicate success stories from its 'Agriculture Extension Programme', which has been transforming the lives of poor farmers, the Ethiopian government has launched the 'Industry Extension Service' package targeting urban Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions will provide the new service package, which aims to solve all major challenges that SMEs face in the country.

As the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) focuses on laying the ground for the transformation

of the economy from agriculture to industry, giving focus and priority to SMEs is critical.

According to the strategic document, SMEs which are engaged in the manufacturing sector, especially those who produce products for the export market or substitute import items and those who are already clustered will have primary access to Industry Extension Service packages.

The services, which will be provided to the SMEs by TVET institutions among others, included skills training in entrepreneurship, business management, best technology adaptation and transfer, productivity, quality maintenance and product standardisation and certification.

Microfinance institutions in Ethiopia have provided a total of around \$237 million in loans to SMEs in the past five years, creating jobs for one and half million Ethiopians. These institutions are expected to provide a total loan of about \$1.2 billion to SMEs in the coming five years, so that Ethiopia can meet its GTP ambitions.

A new law for horticulture producing and exporting enterprises

Ethiopian lawmakers have approved a new law to impose mandatory Environmental and Social Friendly regulation on the country's horticulture producing and exporting enterprises.



Ethiopia's Council of Ministers approved a Horticulture Development Regulation to curb the

negative impact of the horticultural sectors on the environment.

The regulation, drafted by the Ethiopian Environment Protection Agency (EEPA) and ratified by the council, imposes a restriction on companies engaged in the cultivation of flowers, vegetables and fruits. Those targeted by the new regulation are required to apply for EEPA certification, obliging them to fulfil a set of social and environmental responsibilities.

The certification process, which begins in March, and is expected to create a competitive market, and improve the quality of horticultural products, and will categorise companies into three grades: gold, silver and bronze. The certification also seeks to prevent the use of banned or unregistered chemicals whilst encouraging an environmentally friendly waste disposal system. And in order to be issued a bronze certificate, employers are legally bound to provide employees with appropriate medical services.

For silver, companies are required to fulfil a social and environmentally friendly auditing system, develop efficient utilisation of water sources, establish best practice stock storage and pesticide use.

For the gold category, companies are required to fulfil the requirements of the former two categories and also contribute towards community development and engage in environmental protection schemes.

According to the Horticulture Development Agency, the total number of horticulture producing and exporting enterprises in Ethiopia reached 120 in May 2010. The sector's 55 rose growers generated a total amount of \$170 million, whilst the remaining fruit and vegetable producing companies generated \$314.6 million during the 2009/10 fiscal year.

Ethiopia boosting spice exports to \$50 million

The Ethiopian government has revealed a strategy which will enable it to boost the current \$18.5 million annual export earnings from spices export to \$50 million within five years.

The strategic document states that a total investment of \$7.5 million is needed for the coming five years to improve the quality of Ethiopian spices and assure annual foreign currency earnings of \$50 million as of 2015.



Ethiopia, whose annual export earnings from spices was around \$4 million six years ago, has exported a total of \$18.5 million worth of spices during the 2009/10 fiscal year.

According to the Ministry of Trade, Ethiopia has already secured a total of \$12 million within the first six months of 2010/11 fiscal year from spice exports.

Global production of spices per annum is estimated to reach 15 million metric tonnes. Ethiopia has the potential to be among the top producers, replacing the former top spice exporters such as India, which are now becoming net importers as a result of their economic growth.

Ethiopian Cargo wins “African Cargo Airline of the Year” award

Ethiopian Cargo won the “The African Cargo of the Year” award at the Air Cargo Africa 2011 Conference held in Nairobi on 24th February.

The award was organised by Stat Times International for excellence in Air Cargo in Africa. According to the Stat Times, Ethiopian Airlines Cargo won the nominees of its readers worldwide for the “Stat Times International Award for Excellence in Air Cargo” in the category of African Cargo Airline of the Year.



Ethiopian Airlines Cargo is the second largest revenue source (next to passenger) which is 15% of total revenue of the airlines. It launched its first cargo charter operations in Nairobi in 1946. Since then the airline has been transporting goods ranging from industrial products to perishables. It operates over 40 cargo destinations spread across Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East via its major hub in Addis Ababa.

Sport

Gebremeskel wins 3,000m despite losing shoe

Ethiopian Dejen Gebremeskel outran favoured British runner Mo Farah despite wearing just one shoe to win the men’s 3,000 metres at the Boston New Balance Indoor Grand Prix on 5th February.

Gebremeskel finished in a time of 7:35.37 to hold off Farah, who clocked 7:35.81. The Ethiopian lost his right shoe in the first lap of the fifteen-lap race but pressed on with a finishing burst with one foot shod only in a sock.



After the race, 21-year old Gebremeskel said, “It’s really hard to run in one shoe.”

Tokyo victory for Mekonnen

Hailu Mekonnen of Ethiopia won the Tokyo Marathon on 27th February in a time of 2 hours, 7 minutes, 35 seconds. His time was 11 seconds off the race record set by Switzerland’s Viktor Rothlin in 2008.



Hailu crosses the finish line to win the Tokyo competing in a marathon in Japan for the first time.



Marathon world-record holder, Haile Gebreselassie, withdrew from the race on the 24th after sustaining a knee injury in training and it was unclear whether he will run the half-marathon in Vienna on 17th April as planned.

Kenyan Paul Biwott and Japan’s Yuki Kawaguchi came second and third with times of 2:08:17 and 2:08:37 respectively.

The 5th edition of the Tokyo Marathon had a total of 33,535 participants.

News in Brief

Battle of Adwa celebrated colourfully across the nation

The 115th anniversary of the Victory of the Battle of Adwa, where gallant Ethiopians defeated the fascist Italian army under the leadership of Emperor Menelik II, was celebrated colourfully on 2nd March across the nation.



Tapestry of the Battle of Adwa

The occasion, also known as an “African Freedom Day” has been celebrated annually since the resounding victory of Adwa in 1896.

In the capital Addis Ababa, the day was celebrated in flamboyant fashion in the presence of thousands

of city residents, war veterans and government officials.

The city of Adwa is located in the northern part of Ethiopia in the Tigray regional state. The decisive battle was fought on 1st March 1896.

Ethiopia striving to ensure WTO membership

The Ministry of Trade said Ethiopia is working to ensure World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership.

Director for Trade Relations and Negotiations with the Ministry said that Ethiopia has produced all the necessary documents as part of the preparation for WTO accession.

Currently, 153 countries are members of the WTO. Ethiopia will soon start to negotiate in a second round with the WTO. Ethiopia formally requested WTO accession in 2003 but started the negotiations two years ago.

Ethiopia to host AU’s golden jubilee

African nations have made a decision that the 50th anniversary of the African Union, which was originally established in 1961 as the “Organisation of African Unity”, will be celebrated in Ethiopia. The fact that Ethiopia has also successfully hosted the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit also contributed to the country’s election to host the grand event.

New fossil evidence shows ‘Lucy’ walked on two feet with human ancestors over 3 million years go

A single 3.2 million-year-old bone discovered in Hadar, Ethiopia has led scientists to the conclusion that ‘Lucy’ or Australopithecus walked on two legs just like *Homo Sapiens*. Its shape indicates that *Australopithecus Afarensis* had permanently arched feet.

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