



Ethiopian News

January 2020

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Deputy Prime Minister Demeke invites UK companies to invest in Ethiopia





Editorial

Ethiopia's New Education Development Roadmap: Charting a Course to a Brighter Future

As covered in previous editions of this newsletter, over the last few years, Ethiopia has embarked on an ambitious reform process to ensure the sustainability of its economic growth and development. Among these reforms, education has been a foremost priority for the Government since the coming to power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018. Though the concept of reforming the education sector had been a topic of discussion prior to his ascent, these reforms were initiated in earnest just over a year ago in 2018. As a starting point for the reforms, the Government accepted that previous attempts at educational reform had yielded mixed results.

Previously, the Government had pursued successive sectoral development programmes which helped facilitate greater educational access for the country's children and young people through the rapid expansion of infrastructure. As a result, in a fifteen-year span, impressive gains were made in the construction of new primary and secondary schools, universities and TVET institutes. However, when delving further into the data, the team tasked with developing the country's new educational development roadmap found that the rapid expansion of infrastructure had not led to the expected improvements in learning outcomes for pupils. Evidence of this deficit was clear when comparing performance data from Ethiopian pupils with their counterparts in other low and middle-income countries. Moreover, this attainment gap left a question mark over the country's ambitions to rapidly industrialise – plans, which were ultimately predicated on the ready availability of skilled graduate-labour to fuel a dynamic manufacturing sector.

Before the introduction of a new roadmap, the Government carried out a comprehensive systematic analysis of the existing education system. Taking achievements made under previous education regimes as a foundation, it found that remaining challenges in governance, curriculum

and standardization, equity and accessibility, capacity, teaching and facilities needed addressing.

Accordingly, a team comprised of 36 principal researchers, 73 assistant researchers and 11 regional coordinators was formed by the Government and tasked with preparing a new Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap. The authors of the new roadmap presented their findings in a series of public consultations, which brought together representatives from 844 institutions; 17 government ministries; 600,000 participants from the education sector; and 3.5 million members of the public. The resulting roadmap called for the implementation of 357 recommendations at all levels of the educational sector to overcome the challenges identified in the preliminary research.

According to its authors, the Roadmap was prepared with the purpose of fostering holistic development in all citizens; equipping citizens with confidence and competence; promoting critical thinking; producing competent professionals to compete effectively with their counterparts in the global marketplace; spurring entrepreneurship and innovation within a framework of social responsibility; and building a citizenry with strong ethical and moral values based on the pursuit of justice, peace and unity in diversity. More specifically, the Roadmap recommends a fundamental shift in the way that education is administered and practiced in the country, calling for an educational system founded on indigenous knowledge that is supportive to national development goals and encouraging of civic engagement.

Though the Roadmap is still in its infancy relative to its ambitions and implementation, the course it charts spells welcome news for an educational sector in need of reform, and a nation desperate to unleash the untapped potential of its best and brightest.

Ethiopia at the Education World Forum

A delegation led by H.E. Hirut Woldemariam, Ethiopia's Minister of Science and Higher Education, and outgoing Minister of Education, Dr Tilaye Gete, attended the Education World Forum in London, where they presented the Ethiopian Education and Training Roadmap.

In January each year, the Education World Forum brings together delegates representing over two-thirds of the world's population to debate future education policy. The event comprises three days of insight and inspiration from pioneers, policy makers and experts, with many sessions given by education ministers themselves as part of an honest assessment of education's common issues and challenges.

The 2020 Theme was *One generation – what does it take to transform education?*

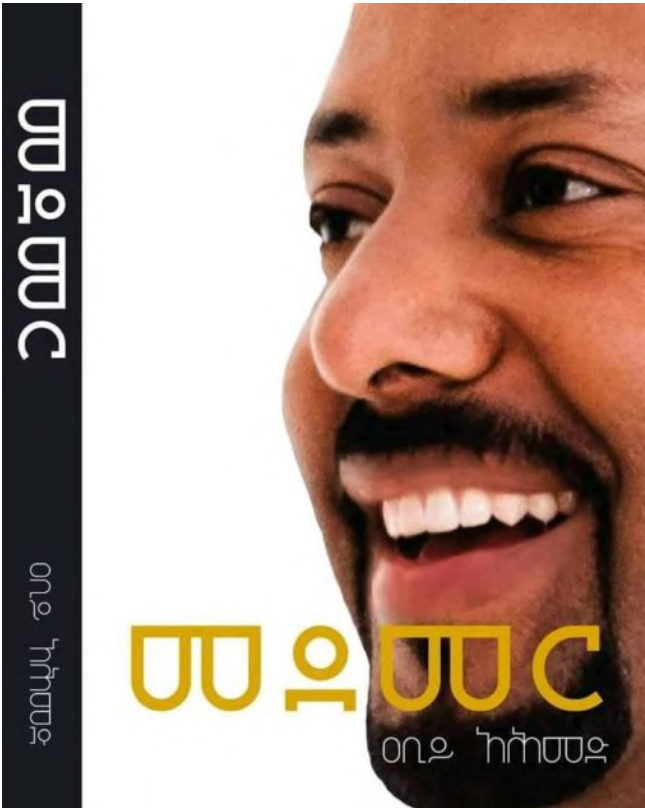


H.E. Professor Hirut addresses the Education World Forum

In her presentation to the Forum, H.E Professor Hirut highlighted the Ethiopian Education and Training Roadmap (see editorial) and government's commitment to leading education reform.

Ethiopian Community Discuss Medemer in London

A London-exclusive event titled *“Medemer: an indigenous Ethiopian political ideology”* was held at the Embassy on 18th January. Targeting the Ethiopian diaspora, the event focused on the tenets of *Medemer* based on a book by Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy Ahmed.



Dr Namera Mamo, an advisor to the Prime Minister, opened the discussion by providing a brief summary of the main contents of the book. He explained that the starting point for the *medemer* ideology was to offer a fresh, Ethiopian-centric approach to the country's politics, citing the miscalculations of successive administrations over the past half-century who prescribed foreign ideological solutions to our domestic political, social and economic challenges. He emphasised “medemer” as a renewed Ethiopian political ideology that emanates from Ethiopia's socio-

political context and taps into the country's rich historical and cultural values – as the way forward.



The audience also presented their reflections on the book in relation to the ideology's philosophical and anthropological foundations and highlighted the positive role of *medemer* in promoting peace, sustainable development and prosperity.

In the question and answer segment, the audience lauded the efforts of the Prime Minister in offering this fresh, home-grown framework and appreciated the book's mission to build on the country's long-established values and traditions. Participants also raised questions on the operationalisation of the ideology across civil service institutions, whether plans were in place for regular public consultations and the need to conduct broader research and analysis in subsequent editions of the book.



Lead panelist Dr Nemera G. Mamo, Economic Advisor at the Prime Minister's Office

Dr Mamo concluded by addressing the questions raised, confirming that an English version of *Medemer* was in production and that this edition would only be the beginning of further work on the idea.

He also highlighted the critical role *medemer* will play in the future prosperity of Ethiopia, noting the comprehensive reforms currently being undertaken across various sectors.

Finally, he underlined the Prime Minister's belief in the constructive role that Ethiopian communities abroad can play in the advancement of *medemer*, while urging those present to play their parts in support of the current reform process.

Full coverage of the event is available on our YouTube page: <http://bit.ly/MedemerUK>.

Copies of the book are still available on sale at the Embassy. Please contact the Reception on 020 7589 7212 for further information.

Embassy hosts Maaza Mengiste's UK launch of *The Shadow King*

On 28th January, the Embassy hosted the UK launch of acclaimed Ethio-American author, Maaza Mengiste's second novel, *The Shadow King*, in the presence of Ambassador Fesseha and guests.



Set during Italy's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, the novel explores female power and casts light on the women soldiers written out of African and European history.



With the threat of Mussolini's army looming, the recently orphaned Hirut longs to do more than care for the wounded and bury the dead. When Ethiopia loses hope, it is Hirut who offers a plan to maintain morale, and soon inspires other women to take up arms.

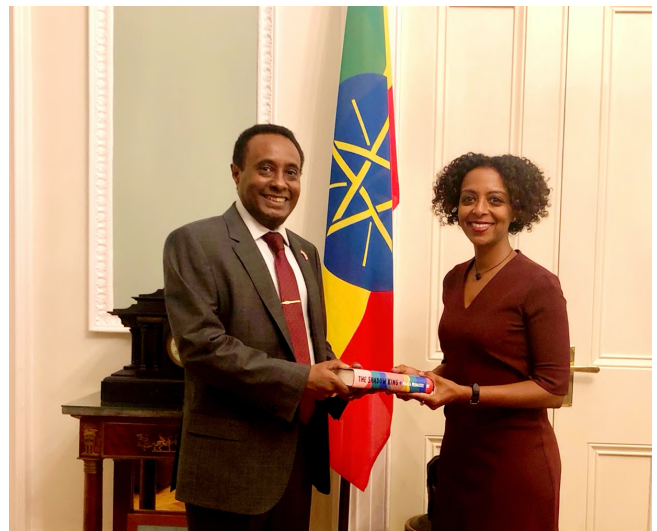
Speaking at the launch, Maaza said it took her ten years to research and write the novel, and in the process learnt Italian.

When asked why she focused on women she said that that wasn't her plan, initially. Her research changed everything when she started finding hints and old photographs of Ethiopian women who had been enlisted into the army.

The event concluded with Maaza reading an excerpt from the novel, followed by a Q+A session, where the audience asked about her inspiration, her favourite character in the novel, and future projects.



Ahead of the launch, Ambassador Fesseha held a private audience with Maaza where he congratulated her on her latest achievement and applauded her for her narrating Ethiopia's history from a different angle.



Maaza Mengiste presents Ambassador Fesseha with a signed copy of the book

The Shadow King is now available in bookshops and online stores nationwide.

Full coverage of the event will be up on our YouTube channel as well as our social media pages soon.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube for the latest updates from the Embassy and Ethiopia: [@EthioEmbassyUK](https://www.instagram.com/EthioEmbassyUK).

LOCAL NEWS

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt Conclude GERD Negotiation

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt have concluded negotiations held on the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

The Foreign and Water Affairs Ministers of the three countries and their delegations, consisting of legal and water technical experts, took part in the talks.



File Photo: The delegations with President Trump in November 2019

The four-day negotiation held in Washington D.C. was also attended by the United States Department of Treasury and the World Bank, as observers.

The countries have reached a general understanding on the rules and guidelines concerning mitigation measures during drought, prolonged drought and prolonged periods of dry years.

The outstanding issues will be resolved at subsequent negotiations and documents detailing rules and guidelines on filling and operation will be prepared.

Documents to be signed by the end of February 2020 will be further deliberated by a legal team supported by a technical team.

The three countries reaffirmed the importance of transboundary cooperation in the development of the Blue Nile to improve the lives of the people of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the scope of the negotiations is limited to the filling and operation of the dam.

The Government of Ethiopia is committed to maintaining the rights of the Ethiopian people to use the waters of the Nile for the benefit of current and future generations, it said.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, financed by the people of Ethiopia, is a demonstration of self-reliance and cooperation, the Ministry added.

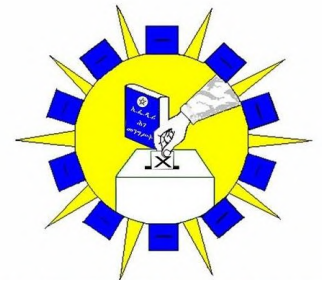
Elections to be held in August

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia has proposed holding the 2020 election on 16th August.

A draft schedule has also been released saying voter registration should take place for a month from 7th April.

Candidate registration is proposed to take place from 21st April to 4th May, with 7th June scheduled for announcement of the list of candidates, and campaigning scheduled for 5th May to 11th August.

The NEBE also proposed 16th-17th August for announcement of the election results.



Three new ministers appointed

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appointed the following three ministers, effective 15th January 2020.

Dr Getahun Mekuria, is now the Minister of Education, replacing Dr Tilaye Gete. Before his appointment as Education Minister, Dr Getahun was Minister of Innovation and Technology.

Melaku Alebel is now Minister of Trade and Industry, while Dr Abrham Belay is Minister of Innovation and Technology.

We have lift-off! Ethiopia's first satellite launched into space

On 20th December, Ethiopia's first-ever earth observatory satellite was launched into space.

The Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS-1), which will be used to gather data for agricultural, mining and environmental protection, was sent into space from Taiyuan space base in northern China.



Ethiopian officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen and former Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Chinese officials and scores of Ethiopians watched the live broadcast of the launch from a command and control centre set up at the Entoto Observatory and Research Centre on the outskirts of Addis Ababa.

This will be a foundation for our historic journey to prosperity,' Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen said in a speech at the launch.



Deputy Prime Minister Demeke speaking at the launching ceremony

Stating the importance of building global competitiveness in technology, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke said, the launching of the satellite is the first step to Ethiopia's progress towards this goal.

In a congratulatory message, Prime Minister Abiy said, "Ethiopia has joined the effort to seek knowledge and information from space."

According to experts, the satellite would contribute a lot in gathering beneficial information, and alleviate Ethiopia's dependency on other countries for information.



First images taken by ETRSS-1

The construction of the satellite took three years, with Ethiopian and Chinese engineers working together. The launch makes Ethiopia the eleventh African country to have a satellite in space.

Ethiopia also plans to launch a communication satellite for telecommunications and broadcasting services in the future.

Power supply to quadruple in new 10-year roadmap

The Government of Ethiopia has designed a 10-year roadmap that could help raise the country's power supply by almost fourfold.

Although Ethiopia has the potential to generate 40,000-50,000MW energy from hydropower, its current total installed capacity stands at 4,400 MW.



According to Dr Frehiwot Woldehanna, State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, the roadmap targets increasing the country's installed capacity to nearly 20,000MW.

The roadmap aspires to generating 14,000MW from hydropower, 1,700MW from solar, 900MW from geothermal and about 2,000MW from wind energy.

It also aims to increase total power transmission lines to 34,000km from the current 20,000km and the number of power substations from 202 to 256.

Ethiopia passes gun control law

On 9th January, the House of People's Representatives (HPR) of Ethiopia approved the revised Firearm Administration and Control proclamation, as part of efforts to maintain peace and security in the country.

The law prohibits import, export, possession, storage, use, trading, manufacturing, repair or disposal of firearms without a valid licence.

It also forbids altering in whole or in part, destroying or making unrecognizable in any other way, the serial number of a firearm given by the manufacturer or supervising institution.

Addressing the parliament during the passage of the bill, lawmaker Tesfaye Daba said, "There is a significant number of guns in our society since the previous government and the law will help us to formalise ownership."

The new law, aimed at restricting gun ownership, also provides for each region to stipulate a legal age for gun ownership while limiting the number of firearms an individual can own to one. According to the new legislation, violations could bring up to three years in prison.

Those involved in arms trafficking would face prison terms of eight to 20 years.

Gender equality in the military

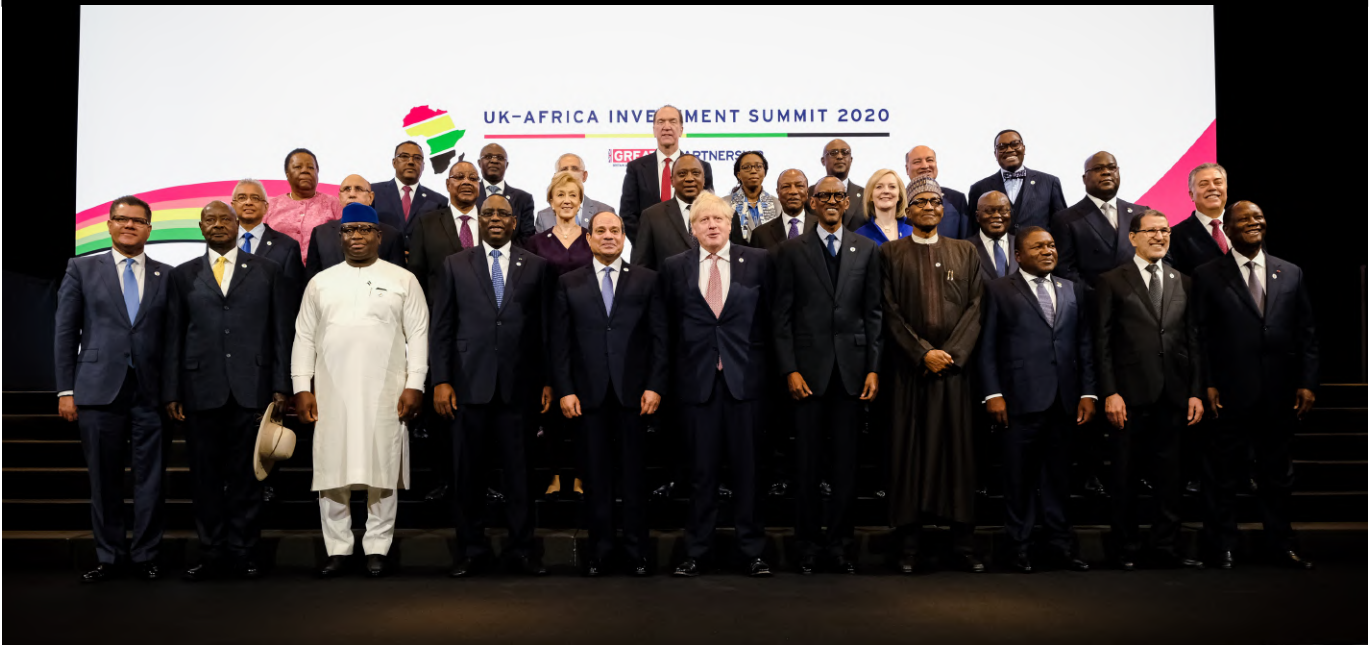
On 18th January, a total of 65 military officers, including 5 women, were promoted to ranks ranging from Brigadier General to Lieutenant General.



President Sahle-Work Zewde awarded the ranks to the officers, nominated by Prime Minister Abiy, who is also Commander-in-Chief of the Ethiopian Armed Forces.

Marking an unprecedented step in Ethiopian military history, the Prime Minister said that "more women were promoted today to maintain gender equality in the military."

TRADE AND INVESTMENT



Ethiopia at the UK-Africa Summit in London

On 20th January, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hosted the first-ever UK-Africa Investment Summit in London, which brought together leaders from 21 African countries, the UK government, British and African business leaders, institutional investors, international organisations financial institutions and civil society.

The Ethiopian delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Mr Demeke Mekonnen, and Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, H.E. Mr Fesseha Shawel. Representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ethiopian Investment Commission and the Trade sections at the Ethiopian Embassy in London and the British Embassy in Addis Ababa, also formed part of the delegation.

Taking place just days before the UK leaves the European Union, the Summit laid the foundations for new lasting partnerships between the UK and African countries based on trade, investment, shared values and mutual interest.

Home to eight of the world's 15 fastest-growing economies, there is huge demand in Africa for clean, sustainable and innovative investment.

“Africa is the future, and the UK has a huge and active role to play in that future... we are, and we will be, a partner, your partner through thick and thin.”

~ Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom



Opening the Summit, Prime Minister Boris Johnson called for the UK to be the ‘investment partner of choice’ for African countries. He went on to confirm that this would form part of the Government’s drive

to ensure the continent's growing demand for investment is met by UK expertise and innovation.

Recalling his visits to the Continent during his tenure as Foreign Minister, he noted the special and historic links that exist between Africa and the UK. He looked back fondly on his time in Ethiopia, entertaining attendees with the story of how he unwisely challenged Ethiopian running distance legend, Haile Gebrselassie, to a run in the hills above Addis Ababa.

In his closing remarks at the Summit, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke expressed his deep appreciation and thanks to the UK government for organising this "important and timely summit", adding that he was confident that it would further expand the special relationship between the UK and Africa and create more opportunities for growth.



The Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted the series of political, economic and social reforms that have taken place in Ethiopia since 2018, and encouraged participants to join hands with the people of Ethiopia and Africa and invest in the young continent.

With particular focus on the Economy, the Deputy Prime Minister said:

"Our priorities are to strengthen the role of the private sector in the economy, achieve sustained economic growth through export-led industrialisation, and make Ethiopia an African beacon of prosperity by 2030.

"We have also revised our investment laws to ensure that the domestic market is business-friendly, and opened up key sectors that were

previously closed to foreign investment. These include; the telecommunications sector, aviation, energy, logistics, financing leasing and others.

"We want to create an attractive investment environment, empower the private sector, build our production capacity and create dynamic and competitive Ethiopian enterprises.

"We want UK businesses to be among the first to take advantage of these changes."

Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister invited UK Government and businesses to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will see the establishment of a single continental market for goods and services, covering over fifty countries, with a combined GDP of over \$2.3 trillion and a population of 1.2 billion people.

"I ask you to walk with us in this new journey – in encouraging your businesses to invest in Africa, in facilitating our integration into the global economy and in sharing with us the lessons from your own experiences...I invite you to join hands with the people of Ethiopia and Africa."

~ Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen

International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma, announced a new landmark infrastructure partnership venture that will see the UK partnering with five African countries, including Ethiopia, to mobilise private sector investment in quality, environmentally friendly infrastructure projects.

With reforms underway, a stable and democratic government, improving infrastructure and one of the fastest growing economies in the world, Ethiopia is fast becoming a prime investment destination for UK businesses.

Ethiopia is ready and open for business!

...Highlights on the margins of the UK-Africa Summit

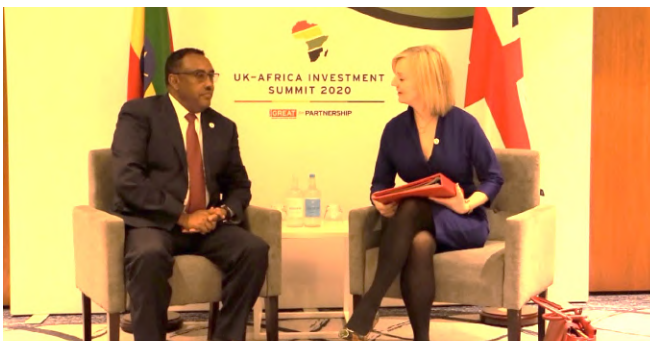
On the side-lines of the UK-Africa Investment Summit, the Deputy Prime Minister met and held discussions with representatives of the UK government including International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma, International Trade Secretary, Elizabeth Truss and Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Andrew Stephenson.



Deputy Prime Minister Demeke with International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma.

Discussions focused on Ethiopia's recently launched **Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda**, how to strengthen the trade and investment ties between Ethiopia and the United Kingdom after Brexit, and the upcoming Ethiopian elections.

In discussions with the International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, the Deputy Prime Minister briefed her on the status of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the progress of Ethiopia's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).



Deputy Prime Minister Demeke with International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss.

His Excellency also informed her of Ethiopia's desire to grow its exports through greater investment in agro-processing and the wider

manufacturing sector, as well as highlighting the exciting opportunities for UK investors in mining. Noting Brexit, the Secretary of State expressed the UK Government's commitment to strengthening the trade and investment ties between the two countries and highlighted their interest in signing a trade agreement with Ethiopia in the near future.

In addition to engagements with UK Government officials, the Delegation also engaged in meetings with prominent UK businesses interested in investing in the pharmaceutical, agro-processing, telecommunications and renewable energy sectors in Ethiopia.

Marking the conclusion of the Summit, Deputy Prime Minister Demeke attended a reception at Buckingham Palace hosted by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

The reception was also attended by The Earl and Countess of Wessex, the Princess Royal, African Heads of State and Government and a number of British and African Business leaders.



Deputy Prime Minister Demeke with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Buckingham Palace

According to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Prince William expressed an interest in visiting Ethiopia in discussions held at the reception.

...Pre-Summit Manufacturing Forum

In the lead up to the UK-Africa Summit, a Manufacturing Investment Forum was also held on 16th and 17th January, with representatives of the Ethiopian Investment Commission and the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency taking part.



Led by the Deputy Investment Commissioner, Mr Anteneh Alemu, the team successfully promoted the opportunities in manufacturing offered by Ethiopia to over 30 UK businesses.

Additionally, Senior Director of Agribusiness and Markets Vertical at ATA, Mr Mirafe Gebriel, participated in a panel discussion on agro-processing, presenting Ethiopia's vast investment potential in the area.

The Full transcript of DPM Demeke's speech is available on our website at: <http://bit.ly/DPMDemekeAISspeech>.

Full event coverage, including exclusive interviews with the delegation can be found on our YouTube page at: <http://bit.ly/EthiopiaUK-AIS> (English) and <http://bit.ly/EthiopiaUK-AIS-AM> (Amharic).

Economy to grow by 10.8%

According to the National Bank of Ethiopia annual report, the economy is set to grow by 10.8% in the financial year ending in July 2020 due to the reforms implemented since Prime Minister Abiy came into office in 2018.

"The proper implementation of the recently launched Home Grown Economic Reform Program is expected to contribute towards developing a modern, vibrant, competitive and sound financial system," the report notes.

The reforms have renewed interest from investors and attracted billions of dollars in financial support from lenders such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Electronic Single Window project launched to facilitate ease of doing business

As part of the Home-Grown Economic Agenda, Ethiopia launched the electronic single window (eSW) project, a one-stop service system, in a ceremony held at the Prime Minister's office.

The Prime Minister said the new system would facilitate ease of doing business in Ethiopia.

"We can't achieve prosperity if we are incapable of coming up with new ideas and creating a favourable environment for the private sector," the Prime Minister said.

Adanech Abebe, Minister of Revenues, said many countries use the system to increase their trade competitiveness.

"The system would help to facilitate trade as well as provide efficient and fast services to clients," she said.



Prime Minister Abiy at the launch of the electronic single window project

The project connects 16 regulatory agencies and enables traders to process all documentation relating to import and export through a single electronic submission.

By creating a paperless environment, eliminating uncoordinated, multiple physical inspections, and repetitive documentary submission, it will reduce clearance time from 44 days, to 13 days and eventually to 3 days.

The eSW will also improve transparency and reduce corruption by minimizing the opportunities for physical interaction.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Ethiopian Airlines to build new \$5 billion airport

Ethiopian Airlines has announced plans to build Africa's largest airport.

According to the Airline's Chief Executive Officer, Tewolde Gebremariam, the new \$5 billion airport, which will cover an area of 35 square km, will be built in Bishoftu, a town 39 km south east of Addis Ababa, and have the capacity to handle 100 million passengers a year. He said construction will start in the next six months.

Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport has a passenger capacity of about 19 million passengers annually, and this new airport will reduce congestion at Bole.

... Addis Ababa becomes the gateway to Africa

Last year in January, Ethiopia overtook Dubai as the transfer hub for long-haul travel to Africa.



Addis Ababa at night

The findings from Spanish travel consultancy ForwardKeys showed that the number of long-haul transfers to Africa via Addis Ababa Bole International Airport has grown in volume by 85% for five years in a row, between 2013 and 2017. Transfers via Dubai over the same period rose by 31%.

At the time of the research, Addis Ababa's traffic growth was 18%, while Dubai stood at 3%, meaning that Addis Ababa Bole Airport surpassed Dubai as the lead gateway to Africa.

SPORTS

Road cycling in Ethiopia

Road cycling in Ethiopia has taken a big step forward in recent months after the staging of the first edition of the **Ethio Mountain Challenge**, a road cycling event hosted by Ethiopia's World Tour rider Tsgabu Grmay.



15 international and local cyclists took part in the 3-day stage race which was won by Haftab Wolde, with British cyclists Richard Gregory and John-Paul Fanning in 2nd and 3rd respectively.



A documentary about the event was broadcast on Endurance Sports TV. Watch it online at <http://bit.ly/EthioMountainChallenge>.

Tsgabu's new cycling team of young teenage riders also participated in the event.

The second edition of the event is planned for November 2020. Further information can be found at <http://bit.ly/EthioMountainChallenge2020>.

London are you ready? The Ethiopians are coming!



Team Ethiopia are set to return to London streets for the 2020 Virgin Money London Marathon on Sunday 26th April.

Leading the pack will be long distance legend, Kenenisa Bekele, who will go head to head with Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge, in what will be one of the most eagerly anticipated races in marathon history. "The gladiatorial match-up the whole world has been waiting for – Eliud Kipchoge versus Kenenisa Bekele – is ON," London Marathon said in a press release.



Kenenisa, who is the current world record holder for both the 5,000m and 10,000m, finished just two seconds outside Kipchoge's world record at last September's BMW Berlin Marathon.

Ever since that incredible run from Bekele, there has been a worldwide clamour for the two men to race each other again over 26.2 miles.

Hugh Brasher, Event Director of the Virgin Money London Marathon, said: "This is a match-up of two of the greatest athletes the world has ever seen and two men who already have their names in the record books. We are thrilled we have been able to make it happen in London.

"It is truly fitting that this match-up between two legends of the sport takes place at this year's Virgin Money London Marathon. It is the head to head the world is waiting to see."

Kenenisa, whose best finish in the London Marathon was second in 2017, said:

"I am thrilled to be returning to London. I feel like I have unfinished business here and I would love to win this beautiful race."

"I am looking forward to racing against Eliud once again. We have had many great battles over the years on the track, roads and cross-country. He is a special athlete who proved that again with his magnificent achievements last year."

"I feel like my win in Berlin proved that I am still capable of winning the biggest races in the world and in world-class times. I am really looking forward to what I can do in London."

Joining Kenenisa are Ethiopian duo Mosinet Geremew and Mule Wasihun, who pushed the Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge to the limit at the 2019 race.



Geremew and Wasihun with Eliud Kipchoge at the 2019 London Marathon

27-year-old Geremew ran the fifth fastest time in history of 2:02:55 to take second place in last year's race, and then had to settle for second again in his next marathon, the 2019 World Championships in Doha last October.

Wasihun's time in finishing third at last year's Virgin Money London Marathon (2:03:16) was the 11th fastest marathon the world has ever seen.

Shura Kitata, who was fourth last year and second in 2018, has also been confirmed, ensuring that it looks likely to be a year when it is the Ethiopians who will be the biggest threat to Kipchoge winning an historic fifth London Marathon title.

...Ethiopians dominate Dubai Marathon

In what has become tradition, Team Ethiopia was, once again, dominant at the 2020 Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon on 24th January.

In the women's race, Worknesh Degefa made it a Dubai double with victory, while in the men's race, debutant Olika Adugna won a dramatic sprint to the finish.

Worknesh, the winner in Dubai in 2017, produced the top performance of the day clocking a fast time of 2:19:38 leading from start to finish. Finishing the podium, fellow Ethiopians, Guteni Shone and Bedatu Hirpa took second and third in 2:20:11 and 2:21:55 respectively.



Winning podium at the Dubai Marathon

The men's race had a spectacularly close finish with Olika the surprise winner in 2:06:15 as the first four runners crossed the line separated by just three seconds.

20-year-old Olika edged out Kenya's Eric Kiptanui who finished second. Fellow Ethiopians Tsedat Abeje and Lencho Tesfaye took third and fourth places, consecutively.

"I felt very good and always believed I could win," said Adugna, who continued a winning streak of male Ethiopian athletes in Dubai that stretches back to 2012. "Of course I'm delighted I was able to do it in my debut race at the distance."

...course record set on borrowed shoes in Mumbai

Derara Hurisa did not feature in any lists of favourites for the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2020 but the Ethiopian, a late addition to the elite field, upset the odds to win in a course record of 2:08:09 on 19th January. Compatriots, Ayele Abshero and Birhanu Teshome finished second and third respectively in 2:08:20 and 2:08:26, with both men also inside the former course record of 2:08:35.



What was unique about Derara's victory was that it came in borrowed racing shoes.

"I mislaid my shoes while travelling from Addis Ababa to Mumbai earlier in the week so I borrowed some shoes from my friend Abraham Girma so I only tried them on for the first time yesterday," Hurisa revealed after the race.

Derara's story can be compared to Ethiopian distance running legend, Abebe Bikila, who is known for winning the marathon at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome barefoot because his new pair of running shoes did not fit well and gave him blisters.

The women's race also had an engaging story to tell with Ethiopia's Amane Beriso coming back after a 15-month injury-induced absence from competition to win the Marathon in 2020 in 2:24:51. Fellow Ethiopian and marathon debutante, Haven Hailu, finished third in 2:28:56."

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

The 10 wonders of the world, as chosen by team Wanderlust

3. Danakil Depression, Ethiopia



There are some corners of the world that travellers just don't see – or can't. Ethiopia's remote Danakil Depression is not only one of the hottest places on Earth (it can top 50°C), until recently, tensions with neighbouring Eritrea made it a no-go area.



Now peace has descended, the planet's most surreal landscape has opened up. Regular tours now visit the area to glimpse an alien land shaped by the divergence of three tectonic plates. Here, glowing green and yellow acid pools gurgle from the cracked earth to form woolly, sulphurous mounds.

Vast salt flats bleach into the horizon and electric-blue lava belches from volcanoes. It's a place like no other. The route in is via Ethiopia's city of Mekelle, then on to the parched northern Afar region (the Depression stretches from here into Eritrea and Djibouti).

Trips rattle past the active volcanoes of Erta Ale and Dallol, where starry skies and fiery flames illuminate the night and nomadic caravans trade in fresh salt, building flexible lives around the arid climate. It's an unforgettable setting and a haunting insight into our planet's evolution, raw and untamed.

Read more at: <http://bit.ly/WonderlustWonders>.

6 destinations to travel to in April

Exploring the world's extremes, Ethiopia



Ethiopia is one of the few countries in the world hardly touched by Western influences. It's the only country in Africa never to have been fully colonized and it's also the only one to have developed its own alphabet. In addition, Ethiopians follow their own clock (a new day starts at six in the morning rather than midnight) and date (their calendar is almost eight years behind the Gregorian one).

The country is dotted with sites that each add to rich Ethiopian history. Here you'll find more UNESCO Heritage sites than in any other country in Africa. Religion is a huge part of life in Ethiopia and it can be seen and heard all over the country. In fact, Ethiopia was one of the world's first to adopt Christianity.

North of the capital, you'll find the eleven rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, also sometimes referred to as the eighth wonder of the world.



Bete Giyorgis or, as it's called in English, the Church of Saint George, is perhaps the most famous one dating back to the turn of the 13th century

Not only culturally diverse, Ethiopia has some of the world's most unique geographical sites. One of these is the Danakil Depression which resulted from the parting of three tectonic plates. Particularly the hot sulfur springs of Dallol are a point of interest for most visitors to the area.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/AprilTravelET>.

A personal pilgrimage to Ethiopia's holiest sites

Geographical

Redzi Bernard recreates a journey her mother made fifty years earlier, travelling across mountains to reach the wondrous rock-hewn churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia, and discovering a route lost to modern tourism.



"I am in the vibrant market town of Weldiya, preparing to climb high into the North Wollo mountains in a bid to reach Ethiopia's famed holy city of Lalibela. Over the next five days I will cover 170km, crossing mountains at 3,800m and lowlands at 1,800m. For centuries, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians have made this and similar journeys in pilgrimage to the breathtaking complex of 11 churches hewn out of solid rock in the 12th century. But it is not a route that outsiders typically take. At least not any longer."

"In 1968, my mother, a young British graduate volunteering in Addis Ababa, heard about the wonder of Lalibela and set out to see it. The only way to get there was to take a bus to Weldiya and ask in the market for muleteers prepared to take her across the mountains. Her route was a dust track, a mere mule-width in places. For days she forded rivers and navigated stony paths across towering cliff faces. She fell firmly in love with Ethiopia, and stayed for more than a decade."

"The spectacle of seeing these 800-year old monolithic churches still in use as places of worship moves the soul."

"All across the complex is a sea of white against the pink rock as Ethiopian Orthodox Christians wrapped in robes and shawls pray with palms upturned, joining the priests in songs and incantations. Drumbeats reverberate hypnotically around the site and frankincense fills the air. The sense of devotion is enveloping."



Ethiopian Christians still use the ancient churches to this day

"In the years since my mother came here, Lalibela has acquired roads and an airport, opening it up to tourists flying in and out on a circuit of Ethiopia's many historic attractions."

Read more at: <http://bit.ly/PilgrimageToEthiopia>.

Five of the best healthy vegan holidays

**Leader
Live.co.uk**

Anyone attempting Veganuary will know travel is the hardest test. But new resorts and tours are catering to dietary needs...

In the past, even being veggie was a nightmare on holiday, but growing tolerance, education and increased international awareness means many resorts and tours can now cater for different needs.

In fact, some countries, such as Ethiopia, have been subconsciously supporting vegan diets for thousands of years.

Reviving ancient grains in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's cuisine naturally lends itself to a vegan diet; staple flatbread injera is made from super grain *teff* and is both gluten-free and vegan.



Learn how to make the pancake-like sourdough, along with taking part in a traditional coffee ceremony on a tour which visits the northern sector of the country, famous for the 12th century rock churches of Lalibela.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/VeganHols>.

Thomasina Miers' recipe for gluten-free Ethiopian lentil and spinach soup

**The
Guardian**

A spicy, aromatic soup with Ethiopian berbere spices taking centre stage in Thomasina's latest recipe.

We spent a week in Greece last summer, says Thomasina. Our hostess, Maria, had grown up in

Ethiopia, and one night she treated us to an Ethiopian feast.

I loved the spicy, aromatic flavours, whether they were used to marinate meat or to make rich, comforting vegetable and lentil dishes.

The generous use of chilli and other warming spices felt nourishing, and I can't think of a better way to welcome in the New Year.



The star ingredient here is *berbere*, a heady mix of chilli, fenugreek, cardamom, coriander seeds and other spices. It is readily available online and in larger supermarkets, and is seriously good.

Go to <http://bit.ly/EthiopianLentilSoup> for the full recipe.

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