



Ethiopian News

May 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Prime Minister Launches National Green Development Programme.....2

Fallen UN Peacekeepers remembered in London.....4

Reading University first in the UK to raise African Union Flag.....5

Chef Yohanis’s debut cookbook shortlisted for Guild of Food Writers Award.....7

Rita Pankhurst, life-long friend of Ethiopia, laid to rest.....11

UN member states commend Ethiopia’s ‘improved’ rights situation.....13

Ethiopia launches first ‘One-Stop-Shop’ providing essential services to refugees.....15

Online investment service platform launched.....17

Prime Minister Abiy leads efforts to save Axum obelisk.....20

International registration for Great Ethiopian Run, the biggest road race in Africa, opens.....21

Discovery in Ethiopian volcano shows how life could have thrived on Mars.....24

Prime Minister Abiy’s Message to Ethiopian Youth and Children in the Diaspora.....26

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GREENING ETHIOPIA one seedling at a time

New 4-billion tree-planting programme launched in bid to curb deforestation





Editorial



Prime Minister Launches National Green Development Programme

A significant day in recent history - Sunday 26th May 2019 - saw Ethiopia once again leading by example in the global fight against climate change and environmental degradation. It was on this day that Prime Minister Abiy, at a gathering of National Agricultural Transformation leaders at a conference in Adama, announced the launch of the National Green Development Programme – an initiative which will see Ethiopians plant four billion trees across the length and breadth of the nation.

This ambitious afforestation programme, launched to coincide with the start of the rainy season, is rooted in the country's world-leading Climate Resilient Green Economic plan (CRGE), which

envisions Ethiopia's transformation as a carbon-neutral middle-income country by 2025. The programme also compliments the *"Beautifying Sheger"* and *"Together for a Clean Ethiopia"* initiatives currently being spearheaded by the Government.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the **four billion trees programme is set to mobilise national reforestation at 40 trees per head**, going some way towards mitigating the recurring impacts of climate change in the country, namely drought. When planted, the trees are expected to cover over a million hectares of land with forest.

Since the launch, the Prime Minister, himself has walked the talk - committing to planting seedlings with all guests who grace his offices at the Jubilee Palace. This has seen officials including the Somali President and Rwandan Foreign Minister, as well as members of Sudan's Transitional Military Council, planting seedlings following discussions with the Prime Minister.



Prime Minister Abiy and the Head of the Sudanese Transitional Military Council, General Abdul Fattah Burhan plant seedlings within the Office of the Prime Minister's compound.

In a further bid to promote the programme and expand on its far-reaching impacts, the Prime Minister's Office organised a public discussion forum on 6th June under the theme, "**Cleaning and Greening Ethiopia**". Discussants at the Forum included: Engineer Sileshi Bekele (Ph.D), Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity; Dr Amir Aman (M.D), Minister of Health; Mrs Meskerem Tamiru, Chief Advisor to the Mayor of Addis Ababa and President of the Association of Ethiopian Architects; and Dr Mehret Debebe, a prominent psychiatrist and personal development professional.

Engineer Sileshi focused his remarks on the mutually reinforcing relationship between afforestation programmes and climate resilience in the face of a changing climate.

Similarly, Dr Amin highlighted the significant public health benefits tree planting and cleaning can have within society, particularly in preventing the transmission of diseases and bolstering early childhood development.



The "Cleaning and Greening Ethiopia" public discussion

Mrs Meskerem pointed to the complementarity which exists between the "Beautifying Sheger" project and the Prime Minister's greening programme, explaining that the project will support the preservation of a safe and healthy environment for future residents of Addis Ababa.

Finally, Dr Mehret emphasised the critical role surroundings can play in influencing the mindset and contentment of human beings. He went on to explain that environmental stress in our surroundings can translate into personal stress, thereby acting as an obstacle to our ability to live dignified lives.

Together with the Prime Minister's earlier call on young people to engage in volunteerism in service of their local communities, the four billion trees programme is expected to act to further connect people with their environment.

In pursuing the 40 trees per person planted in Ethiopia, our country will once again lead on climate change, for the sake of the 7.7 billion people who call our planet home. One seedling at a time, 4 billion trees will rise.

Fallen UN Peacekeepers remembered in London

Deputy Head of Mission, Ababi Demissie, was among guests from more than 100 Embassies that took part in a moving ceremony on 23rd May to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeeping, at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London.

The annual event, organised by the United Nations Association-UK, is one of the largest gatherings of diplomats worldwide to mark Peacekeepers' Day.



On behalf of the people and government of Ethiopia, Mr Demissie laid a wreath in honour of United Nations Peacekeepers from Ethiopia and around the world, who have lost their lives in the name of peace since 1948.

The ceremony marked the mid-point of a day-long conference on UN Peacekeeping held at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) that brought together experts and practitioners for a day of discussion.

Entitled *"The Thin Blue Line"* this year's special focus was placed on the less military aspects of peacekeeping with panels on UN Policing, on the politics of peacekeeping and whether the UN should "take sides," and two insightful lectures from Ambassador Ellen Loej (a former UN Security Council Ambassador and twice Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of a UN peacekeeping mission) and Professor Paul D. Williams (an academic introducing his book on the African Union Peacekeeping Mission to Somalia - AMISOM).

Ethiopian men and women have played an important role in United Nations' efforts to advance worldwide peace - Ethiopia's participation in UN-authorized operations dates back to 1951, as part of the UN multinational force in the Korean War.



Ethiopia is currently the largest troop contributor to UN Peacekeeping with over 7,000 uniformed personnel, with the vast majority serving in missions within the Horn of Africa: the AU-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), UN Interim Security Force for Abyei and UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Reading University first in the UK to raise African Union Flag

On 24th May H.E Ambassador Fesseha Shawel joined students from the African Development Society at the University of Reading in their commemoration of Africa Day.

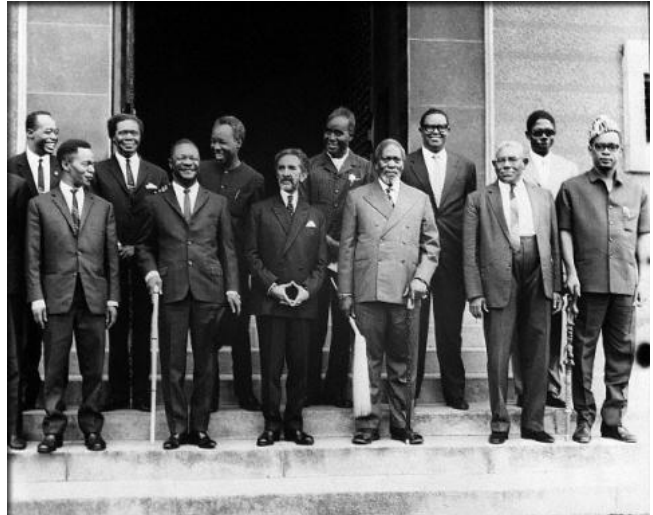
On the occasion, Ambassador Fesseha and the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Robert Van de Noort, raised the African Union flag on campus - making Reading the first university in the United Kingdom to do so.



In his remarks, Ambassador Fesseha encouraged students to engage further with their mother continent, emphasising the important role educated young people will play in Africa's future growth and prosperity.

The students thanked the Ambassador for attending and congratulated Ethiopia on the exemplary role Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is playing in the pursuit of African unity.

Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now known as the African Union) on 25th May 1963.



Founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), 1963

This year's theme was *"Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa"*.

The celebrations in Addis Ababa featured the inauguration of the African Union Memorial Wall in honour of the contributions of Africa's fallen heroes and heroines to peace and unity on the continent.



The memorial wall will immortalize the names of these giants of pan-Africanism so future generations can honour them.

UK charity raises more than £60,000 for Ethiopian school

On 16th May, Ambassador Fesseha was among more than 200 guests, mainly parents from Northwood Schools, that attended the Northwood African Education Foundation (NAEF) Fundraising Gala in aid of St. George's School in Gondar, Ethiopia.



Ambassador Fesseha with founders of the charity, Sir Malcolm and Lady Colquhoun (left) and Evrim Maitlin, director of the Charity

More than £60,000 was raised on the night, which will be used to expand the School in Ethiopia. 30 sponsors were also signed up on the night, who have committed to educating 30 pupils at St. George's at £360 per annum.



St. George's School in Azezo Village in Gondar, northern Ethiopia, opened its doors to its first 100 pupils in March 2014, providing a mixed Western and Ethiopian curriculum. Today, they have 350 pupils from Kindergarten (age 4/5) through to Grade 5 (age 10/11) and is becoming recognised

across Gondar for delivering exceptional academic results. Each year, 50 more children are enrolled.

In addition to its pupils, St. George's has benefited the families of these children, and their wider communities through the improved education, as well as providing local employment.

Long-term, NAEF aims to extend the facilities at St George's to offer secondary education with Technical Vocational Training, and to create social enterprise and micro-financing opportunities within the community.

For more information, visit: www.naef.uk.com.

Embassy hosts London Book Launch of Vintage Addis Ababa

The London launch of the acclaimed photography book, *Vintage Addis Ababa*, took place at the Ethiopian Embassy in London on 30th May, in the presence of Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Mr Fesseha Shawel Gebre, one of the book's editors, Philip Schütz, and more than a hundred guests. The launch also included a pop-up exhibition.

The photography book was officially launched in Addis Ababa on 17th November 2018 at the Alliance Ethio-Française and has already sold more than 700 copies worldwide.



Philip Schütz presents Ambassador Fesseha a copy of the book

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Fesseha Shawel Gebre, welcomed guests to the launch, applauding the editors for the exemplary work they have done documenting Addis Ababa's history. The book is

especially important for the younger generation as it exposes many shared memories, including my self's, as well as the country, he added.

Launched in July 2017, Vintage Addis Ababa, is a documentary and fine art project that crowdsourced old photographs from the public – from wedding photographs to studio portraits and family photos – to tell the stories of everyday people in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa between the 1940s and 1980s.



The concept is the brainchild of Addis Ababa-based photographers, Philip Schütz, Wongel Abebe and Nafkot Gebeyeh, and aims to recount history from a more intimate and personal perspective. Through the digitisation and preservation of old photographs, the project has garnered fresh interest in the story of the Ethiopian capital, allowing Ethiopians today, to revisit the story of the city through new eyes and foreigners to get to know the everyday Ethiopia of yesterday.



The wedding of Martha Taffesse and Milkias Shamebo in 1984

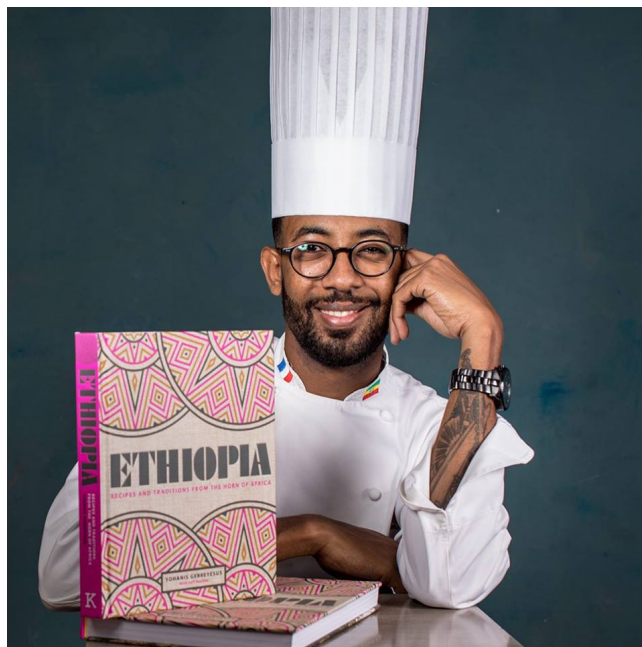
The period in which many of the photos were taken was a fascinating time in Ethiopian history. Addis Ababa, the nation's capital, was the location of

important political events - from the first conference for the Organization of African Unity in 1963, to the 1974 coup which overthrew the monarchy. But at the same time, people still lived the everyday experience - a fashion show at the Hilton, a moment in a photo studio at Merkato, a concert at Yared School of Music, house parties, a wedding at Kidest Selassie, a graduation photo outside Addis Ababa University, street scenes at Piazza, private and intimate moments at home.

For further information and to purchase the book, visit the Vintage Addis Ababa website at www.vintageaddis.com. Full coverage of the book launch can be found on the Embassy's YouTube page at <http://bit.ly/VAA-UKLaunch>.

Chef Yohanis's debut cookbook shortlisted for Guild of Food Writers Award

"Ethiopia: Recipes and traditions from the Horn of Africa", by renowned Ethiopian chef, Yohanis Gebreyesus, has been shortlisted for the 2019 Guild of Food Writers - International or Regional Cookbook Award.



In his stunning debut cookbook that launched in the UK last year, Chef Yohanis takes the reader on a journey through all the essential dishes of Ethiopia, along the way telling wondrous stories.



There are recipes for *Doro Wat*, chicken slowly stewed with berbere spice; *Yeassa Alichia*, curried fish stew; and *Siga Tibs*, flash-fried beef cubes. The cuisine also boasts a wealth of vegetarian dishes. Among these are *Gomen*, minced collard greens with ginger and garlic; *Azifa*, green lentil salad; and *Key Shir*, marinated beet and potato salad. The

book then explains the intricacies and variations of Injera, the foundational sourdough flatbread made from the *teff* grain (which is gluten free and more nutritious than wheat).

Complete with photography of stunning landscapes and vibrant artisans by Peter Cassidy, this volume demonstrates why Ethiopian food should be considered as one of the world's greatest, most singular and most enchanting cuisines.

The Guild of Food Writers Awards, the UK's biggest food book, writing and media awards, recognises outstanding achievement in areas where food writers work and have influence. They are awarded annually and are the only awards judged entirely by professional food writers, editors and broadcasters. The Guild Awards were inaugurated in 1996 and reflect the Guild's commitment to encouraging new and established food writers.

Winners of the 2019 Awards will be announced on 27th June 2019.

Chef Yohanis will be hosting a **book signing and tasting event** at the Embassy on **Saturday 29th June from 12.00pm**. For further information, visit <http://bit.ly/ChefYohanisUKTour>.

Ethiopia: Recipes and traditions from the Horn of Africa is available at <http://bit.ly/ChefYohanis>.

Event Type: Open For Public

Date: Saturday 29th June 2019

Time: 12 PM

Location:




Cuisine from the Land of Origins

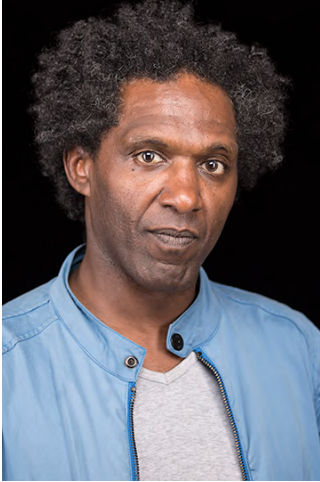
ZARA YA'ECOB (THE FIRST ETHIOPIAN PHILOSOPHER, DURING ATSE SUSUNIOS DYNASTY, 17TH CENTURY) WROTE 'NATURE ORDERS US TO EAT FINE AND TASTY FOOD...' WHILE HIS DISCIPLE WOLDE-HIWOT TRANSCRIBED 'CHOOSE THE BEST MEALS, PREPARE THEM CAREFULLY, SKILLFULLY AND CLEANLY. GOD GAVE YOU THE WISDOM TO PREPARE MEALS THAT ARE TASTY ENOUGH TO FEED YOUR SOUL.'

Chef Yohanis' Book Signing Event
🇬🇧 LONDON U.K

THANKS TO MY PARTNERS



Ethio-British poet and playwright, Lemn Sissay, wins PEN Pinter prize



Poet, performer playwright, artist and broadcaster Lemn Sissay MBE has been awarded the PEN Pinter Prize 2019.

Lemn Sissay was chosen by this year's judges: writer, translator and chair of *English PEN* Maureen Freely; culture correspondent at *The Economist* Fiammetta Rocco and author Niven Govinden.

The PEN Pinter Prize was established in 2009 by the charity English PEN, which defends freedom of expression and celebrates literature, in memory of Nobel-Laureate playwright Harold Pinter.

The prize is awarded annually to a writer of outstanding literary merit resident in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland or the Commonwealth who, in the words of Harold Pinter's Nobel Prize in Literature speech, casts an 'unflinching, unswerving' gaze upon the world and shows a 'fierce intellectual determination ... to define the real truth of our lives and our societies'.

Former winners of the prize include *Half of a Yellow Sun* author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Margaret Atwood, Sir Salman Rushdie, Sir Tom Stoppard and Dame Carol Ann Duffy.

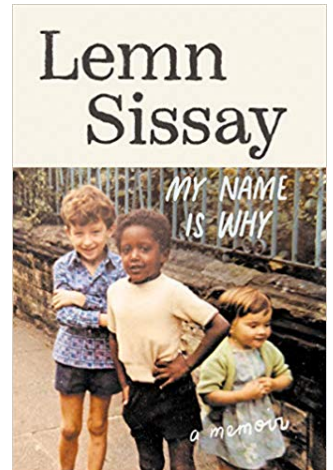
Maureen Freely said: "In his every work, Lemn Sissay returns to the underworld he inhabited as an unclaimed child. From his sorrows, he forges beautiful words and a thousand reasons to live and love. On the page and on the stage, online or at the Foundling Museum, this is an Orpheus who never stops singing."

Lemn Sissay said: "I met Harold Pinter when I was thirty-six. We were on stage at The Royal Court. I was too intimidated or self-conscious to speak to him. And so, I will now. Thank you. What I like about this award is that it is from a great writer and a great organisation. I accept it as a sign that I should continue. All I have is what I leave behind. All I am is what I do."

Lemn Sissay will receive the award at a public ceremony at the British Library on 10th October, where he will deliver an address.

Lemn Sissay was awarded an MBE for services to literature by the Queen and is currently Chancellor of Manchester University. He was the first poet commissioned to write for the London Olympics and poet of the FA Cup.

Lemn's memoir, *My Name is Why*, will be published by Canongate Books on 29th August 2019.



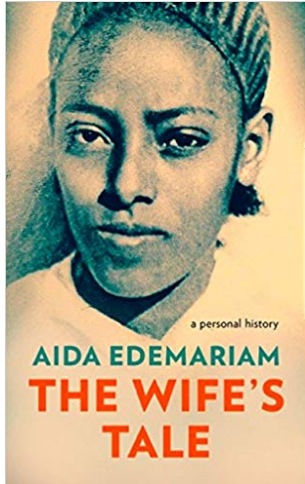
Aida Edemariam wins Ondaatje Prize for vivid biography of her Ethiopian grandmother

Aida Edemariam's *The Wife's Tale*, a biography of her grandmother who was born in northern Ethiopia more than 100 years ago, has won the £10,000 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize.

The annual Prize is awarded for a distinguished work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, evoking the spirit of a place.



Aida, a journalist for one of the UK's leading paper, *The Guardian*, beat titles including Sarah Moss' *Ghost Wall*, and Adam Weymouth's *Kings of the Yukon*, to this year's prize.



Telling the story of the life of her paternal grandmother, Yetemegnu, *The Wife's Tale: A Personal History* draws from research and Aida's interviews with Yetemegnu.

The story moves from Yetemegnu's birth to her marriage to a cleric and poet two decades older than her, through fascist occupation, the rise and fall of ruler Haile Selassie, revolution and civil war. She died in 2013 at the age of 97.

"I have always loved this prize, its generous inclusion of all forms of writing, its assertion that place is not incidental, mere background or local colour, but the thing itself. I am beyond honoured and grateful to have been awarded it for *The Wife's Tale*," Aida said.

The 2019 judges Sabrina Mahfouz, Michèle Roberts and Ian Thomson commented:

"Aida Edemariam mixes memoir, oral history, fiction and snatches of prayer to compose this beautiful, complicated, sensual account of her grandmother's life. Her original form and newly-minted language create a strong, delicate structure embodying her grandmother's spirit and will to survive," Michèle Roberts said.

"Lyrical, loving storytelling of a family history at an epic time in Ethiopia's own history. The writing pulses spectacularly with heart and soul, vividly depicting one inimitable woman centred within the swirling winds of politics, religion, patriotism and change." - Sabrina Mahfouz

"Aida Edemariam's is an outstanding and highly unusual memoir, that absorbs the reader from start to finish. I was moved by the book's strong poetic voice and the marvellous quality of the writing throughout."- Ian Thomson

The Wife's Tale: A Personal History is available at <http://bit.ly/AidaEdemariam>.

NEWS IN BRIEF

On 23rd May Ambassador Fesseha was guest speaker at the Westminster Africa Business Group Luncheon held at Parliament, where he briefed attendees on the major developments in Ethiopia, especially in investment, and the reforms that have taken place over the last year under Prime Minister Abiy. The Lunch was hosted by Laurence Robertson MP, in his capacity as Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ethiopia and Djibouti.

Later that day the Ambassador paid a courtesy call on Tim Loughton MP, where they exchanged views on the century-old Ethio-UK relations and how to enhance them especially in peace and security, trade and investment, among others.



...Powered by Teff

The Embassy's Business Diplomacy Department visited *Lovegrass Ethiopia* - an award-winning Ethiopian brand based in London and Addis Ababa that produces and distributes gluten free, healthy foods made from the Ethiopian super grain - *Teff*.



Discussions with founder, Yonas Alemu, focussed on branding, and how to increase the import of Ethiopian products to the European market, especially the United Kingdom.

For more information about *Lovegrass*, visit: www.thelovegrass.com.

Rita Pankhurst, life-long friend of Ethiopia, laid to rest

The academic and activist Rita Pankhurst passed away on 30th May at her home in Addis Ababa, aged 92.

Her funeral was held on 4th June in Kiddist Selassie Menbere Tsebaot Church cemetery, Trinity Cathedral, where Rita's late husband Richard Pankhurst OBE (1927-2017), and her mother-in-law Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960), are also buried.



In recognition of their life-long support for Ethiopia, Richard, Rita and Sylvia were awarded honorary citizenship of Ethiopia and are buried at the Cathedral site as it is reserved for prominent Ethiopian patriots and important figures who have contributed greatly to Ethiopia.

Rita Eldon came to Ethiopia in 1956 and married historian Richard Pankhurst a year later. Richard was a notable historian who for 70 years helped shape Ethiopian historiography with publications and articles on almost every aspect of Ethiopia's past.

A formidable scholar and activist in her own right, Rita worked as a librarian in the National Library of Ethiopia from 1956 to 1962 before becoming Director of the University Library of the then Haile Selassie I University, from 1964 to 1975. As librarian she was largely responsible for providing the basis for the education of the students of what

was then the country's only University for many years. Most of those now in government, business and academia owe much to her efforts as librarian and to her support for numerous voluntary and non-government organizations, including her notable advocacy for women's rights. She published a number of articles on the role of women in Ethiopia.



Richard and Rita Pankhurst. © V. Irene Cockroft

Richard and Rita were ardent campaigners for justice concerning cultural artefacts taken from Ethiopia. During summer visits to London they both attended demonstrations, most notably outside the Italian embassy where, on several occasions, they called for the return of the Axum obelisk, taken by Mussolini's troops during the Italian occupation in the 1930s. The obelisk was finally returned to Axum in 2005.

Living in England in 1976, Rita was director of the Library Services of the City of London Polytechnic, until she returned to Ethiopia in 1987. Rita was instrumental in acquiring the Fawcett Library which contained women's suffrage campaign records. The Fawcett collection served as the nucleus for the internationally renowned Women's Library, now in the custodianship of the London School of Economics.

After her return to Ethiopia in 1987, Rita edited academic books and university theses and was active in the civic life of Addis Ababa as well as devoting much energy to her advocacy for women's rights, and to voluntary work, including the United World Colleges-Ethiopia, the Society of Friends of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, the Ethiopian Gemini Trust and other bodies.

Rita leaves daughter Helen, son Alula, and grandchildren.

May Her Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

PM Abiy's *Beautifying Sheger* dinner raises vital funds for capital

More than 200 people attended a fundraising dinner hosted by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, to raise funds to revitalise rivers and develop riversides in the capital, Addis Ababa.



Each dinner guest paid \$173,000 (£136,000) to dine at the Menelik palace.



Prime Minister Abiy welcoming guests

The three-year project initiated by the Prime Minister, estimated to cost \$1 billion, aims to "lift the image" of the bustling city where modern buildings have shot up and greenery is scarce. The project will also create many jobs and create riverside economies, increase urban tourism, and provide the city's residents with areas of respite.

"The rapid growth and expansion of the city over the past few years has not adequately utilised the natural resources and beautiful topography that the city is endowed with," according to a promotional video of the project.

Currently green cover is only 0.3 square metres per capita in Addis Ababa. **The project hopes to raise this to seven square metres per capita - in line with average green coverage in Africa.**

The project, which runs along an area of 56 square kilometres (21 square miles), envisions parks, bicycle paths and walkways along the rivers of the capital, the planting of trees and the development of urban farms.

Those present at the dinner will have a plaque with their name on it placed along the project route and will have a private photo-op with the Prime Minister. The pictures will be compiled into "an album of individuals who changed the face of Addis Ababa."

UN member states commend Ethiopia's 'improved' rights situation

UN member states have commended Ethiopia for the improvement of its human rights situation through political reform measures and steps to widen civil society and democratic space, and for the release of political prisoners previously charged as terrorists.

At the 33rd Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group held in Geneva on 14th May, a unique process, which involves a review of the human rights records of all United Nations Member States, Ethiopia's reform initiatives were saluted.

The member states also praised the country for achieving gender parity in government positions, for the implementation of the Growth and Transformation Plan II (2016-2020) targeted at poverty reduction, and for the National Action Plan 2016-2020.

The Member States recommend that Ethiopia strengthen the capacity of the judiciary, ombudsperson and the national human rights commission and step up efforts to combat human trafficking and to improve food security.

They also recommend that Ethiopia ensure equitable, free and transparent elections scheduled for May 2020; continue to take steps to promote religious dialogue and prevent discrimination based on religion; and promote inter-communal reconciliation.

Speaking on the occasion, Ethiopia's Deputy Attorney General Dr Gedion Timothewos said the Government of Ethiopia has taken concrete measures over the past years to advance human rights, despite recent tensions and communal clashes.

"Those who have been charged and convicted under the anti-terrorism law, including journalists, bloggers and dissidents from political opposition groups, were granted pardon by the government," he said.

The Deputy Attorney General further said the Government of Ethiopia has repealed and replaced the former Charities and Societies (CSOs) law to better respect freedom of association and the work

of civil society organizations and to promote the rule of law and democracy.



A national reconciliation commission has been set up to promote inter-communal understanding, reconciliation and harmony, and the government is endeavouring to provide socio-economic services, including health care, education and housing to the most needy, he noted.

The Deputy Attorney General said the proportion of public spending in poor areas in Ethiopia has increased by 2/3 over the past decade, including in the education and road -building sectors.

Representatives of the UN member states further recommend that Ethiopia ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to abolish the death penalty, to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and to improve prison conditions.

...UK welcomes reforms

In a statement, the UK government said it recognises progress in Ethiopia.

“We welcome the opening of political and media space, the release of political prisoners and journalists, reform of the Civil Society law and commitment to further legal reform.”

“However, continuing high levels of displacement of people in Ethiopia resulting from ongoing ethnic conflicts is concerning. We hope the internal borders commission will be supported to fulfil its mandate.”

The Elders welcome Ethiopia’s political reforms

A delegation of Elders, led by Mary Robinson, Chair and former President of Ireland, visited Ethiopia in May for their annual bi-annual board meeting where they held meetings with government officials including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Sahle-Work Zewde.



The Elders with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

Founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007, The Elders is a UK-based international non-governmental organisation of global leaders working together for peace and human rights.

In a statement following their visit, the Elders said they “welcomed the wide-ranging reforms in Ethiopia introduced by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and called on all leaders in the country to uphold the rule of law, foster a sense of national unity and defend the rights of refugees and displaced people.”

They also praised Ethiopia for its progress on promoting women’s leadership, including the appointment of women to half of all Cabinet posts, including the Minister of Peace, and the important role played by President Sahle-Work Zewde.

The Elders also recognised the critical role Ethiopia can play in helping to resolve regional conflicts and tensions, including in neighbouring Sudan and South Sudan, as well as how best the country can deal with its high population of refugees and internally displaced people.

Elders Chair Mary Robinson said:

“It has been a privilege to visit Ethiopia at this time of remarkable change.”

“We have greatly valued our conversations with Prime Minister Abiy and President Zewde, and admire their vision of drawing on Ethiopia’s rich history to guide its united future. We urge all political stakeholders to work together to develop a national settlement that respects the rights of all communities.”

As part of their visit, some Elders travelled to a refugee camp in Gambella in western Ethiopia to meet refugees from South Sudan. They commended Ethiopia’s new Refugee Law which offers more opportunities for work and integration.

Other Elders visited a health centre in Addis Ababa to meet community health workers and welcomed the Ethiopian Government’s commitment to delivering free primary healthcare services.



Graça Machel and Ricardo Lagos, with Nane Annan and Health Extension Workers at Feres Meda health centre, Addis Ababa

The Elders also held talks with senior representatives of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on conflicts driving mass displacement across the Horn of Africa. They supported the notion of “African solutions to African problems” and highlighted the risks to peace and stability posed by outside powers using African countries as venues for proxy wars.

Lakhdar Brahimi, Elder and former Algerian Foreign Minister, said:

“These are dramatic times for Ethiopia and the region, which could herald a truly progressive transformation. Young people who have taken to the streets to demand their rights must be heard by leaders. We as Elders stand in solidarity with all who seek a peaceful, inclusive future for their countries and will do what we can to support their vision.”

Ethiopia launches first 'One-Stop-Shop' providing essential services to refugees, host communities

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, together with UNICEF, Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA) and the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) launched a centre where refugees in Bambasi Camp, in the western Ethiopian Region of Benishangul-Gumuz, can access services such as the registration of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths and receive protection referrals and civil documentation.

These services will also be available to people from the local communities surrounding the camp.

The launch of the UNHCR centre, also known as a One-Stop-Shop, marks the beginning of a process that will lead to a government-owned digitalised and harmonised model for refugees assistance that will also serve local communities.



Refugees being registered at the one-stop-shop in Bambasi refugee camp. ©UNHCR/Helle Degn

The initiative is in line with the Global Compact on Refugees which promotes the provision of common services and infrastructure for both refugees and local communities.

The one-stop-shop is the first of 27 such facilities to be established throughout Ethiopia to support the integration of services for refugees with national systems, as enshrined in Ethiopia's new refugee law that was adopted in January of this year.

Mr Amdework Yehualawork, the Head of the ARRA Zonal Office in Assosa, said:

“By providing services to refugees and their host communities in one centre, the One-Stop-Shops represents a good start in the ongoing drive to integrate services used by refugees and their hosts, leading to eventual inclusion of the two communities in line with the new refugee law.”

“The One-Stop-Shop and the services provided in it will facilitate the government's out-of-camp policy which foresees a significant number of refugees living and working outside of refugee camps,” says Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia. “Refugees, including those in Bambasi Camp, having obtained nationally recognised proof of registration and refugee ID cards at the One-Stop-Shop, will have the means to access basic services provided by the government throughout the country.”

“The opening of this centre is important for refugee children in Ethiopia who will now realise their right to a birth certificate,” says UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia Adele Khodr. “A birth certificate is an important identity document that can protect a child from violations such as child marriage and child labour. We expect more children to have their births registered and to realise their right to a legal identity.”

Ethiopia hosts more than 900,000 refugees and is currently working to include refugees in national

systems. These One-Stop-Shops are expected to speed up the issuance of legal identity documents for refugees and local communities, thus realising the fundamental rights of refugees and Ethiopian citizens to own valid identity documents, register their civil events, and access a range of complementary services.

The vital events registration system in Ethiopia was launched in October 2017.

Initiative to boost women's participation in science, technology launched

The Ministry of Innovation and Technology launched a new initiative aimed at boosting women's participation in technology-related entrepreneurship.

Women and Youth Division Director at the Ministry, Elisabeth Gebreselassie, said during the launch event that the Ethiopian government is committed to boosting women's participation in line with ever-transforming technological advancement around the world.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed recently stressed his government's ambition to make the information, communication and technology sector a "key anchor" of Ethiopia's economic development endeavours.

Ethiopia given naming rights to some celestial bodies

In celebration of the hard work and significant contributions of Ethiopians to the field of Astronomy, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) has assigned Ethiopia (through the Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute (ESSTI) and Ethiopian Space Science Society (ESSS)) the naming rights to some celestial bodies which include a star (HD16175) and a planet (HD16175b).

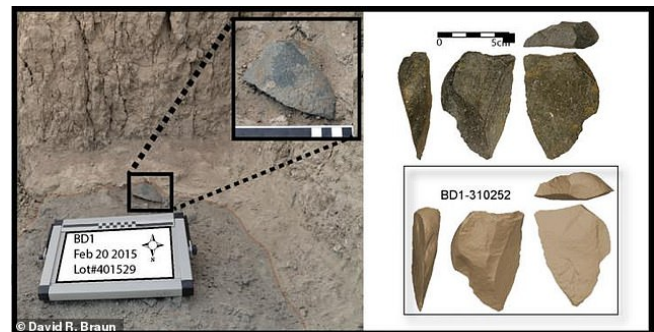
ESSTI Director General, Dr Solomon Belay stated "Ethiopians have made great strides in the field of astrophysics, and this opportunity has increased our acceptance of science in the international arena with a great impact on the nation's pride. We are providing more opportunities for young people who

are interested in space science, and the government is paying more attention to the sector."

An associate professor with ESSTI, Dr Getaneh, said the star (HD16175) is in Andromeda constellation and is 4.8 times greater than the Sun. The Director General of the Institute said they will ask the public to submit names for the celestial bodies.

World's oldest stone tools found in Ethiopia

Stone tools dating back 2.6 million years have been discovered in north-eastern Ethiopia.



The tools were dug up at a new archaeological site known as Bokol Dora 1 or BD 1, in the Afar region by a team of international and local scientists. The find, which was close to the 2013 discovery of the oldest fossil attributed to our genus *Homo*, shows that the origins of stone tool production are older than 2.58 million years ago.

Analysis by the researchers of early stone age sites, suggests that stone tools may have been invented many times in many ways before becoming an essential part of the human lineage.

The fossil, a jaw bone, dates to about 2.78 million years ago, some 200,000 years before the then oldest flaked stone tools. The Ledi-Geraru team has been working for the last five years to find out if there is a connection between the origins of our genus and the origins of systematic stone tool manufacture.

The research, "*Earliest known Oldowan artifacts at >2.58 Ma from Ledi-Geraru, Ethiopia, highlight early technological diversity*," is published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Online investment service platform launched

In a bid to provide efficient and reliable services to investors, the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has launched an online service platform where investors can apply for new investment licences and renew their investment permits.

Services include applications for tax holidays and duty-free incentive support for eligible projects.

For further information, visit:
www.investethiopia.gov.et.

Historic African free trade agreement enters into force

On 30th May African leaders celebrated the entry into force of a continental free trade agreement that creates the world's largest trading market of 1.2 billion people.



The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA) is expected to take advantage of a booming young population, boost intra-African trade and reduce the reliance of many African economies on volatile commodity prices.

Experts say, though full implementation will take years, it will boost trade in Africa and strengthen the continent's position in global trade as countries commit to removing tariffs on 90% of goods.

The African Union says if all countries signed up, it would become the largest free trade area since the formation of the World Trade Organization.

A commemorative article outlining what has been achieved since the Agreement was signed Kigali last year, and what is expected as the African Union moves to launch of the operational phase of the continental market in July, is available online at <http://bit.ly/AfCFTA-1>.

Ethiopia to host next World Economic Forum on Africa

Ethiopia is set to host the next World Economic Forum on Africa scheduled for 2020.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President of the World Economic Forum, Børge Brende, signed the agreement that sets Addis Ababa as the next host of the flagship event in September 2020. The Forum is expected to attract over a thousand participants.



The agreement was made during follow-up talks to their meeting in Davos, Switzerland, earlier this year, where the Prime Minister was in attendance.

Africa Hotel Investment Forum to be held in Addis Ababa

The 2019 Africa Hotel Investment Forum will take place at the Sheraton Addis Ababa, from 23rd – 25th September.

The Forum, organised by Bench Events, is the premier hotel investment conference in Africa, attracting many prominent international hotel owners, investors, financiers, management companies and their advisers.

Jonathan Worsley, chairman of Bench Events, said: *"The spirit of AHIF 2019 can be summed up in seven words: We have the money; let's do deals."*

“The market is maturing; more funding than ever is available and investment strategies are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

“As all the key players will be in Addis, it will be the place to talk business, to reinforce top-level relationships and to announce agreements.”

For further information, visit www.ahif.com.

...Ethiopia ranked fourth in hotel development in Africa

The latest W Hospitality Group report has ranked Ethiopia fourth in hotel development in Africa, based on an annual survey.

The report says: “Ethiopia has seen another increase in pipeline deals, up from 31 hotels in 2018, signed by international chains such as Accor Group and Hilton Hotels & Resorts, and by regional chains such as Aha and Latitude. Best Western Hotels and IHG Hotels each signed two hotels in 2018...The majority of these deals, 27 hotels with 84% of total rooms, are in Addis Ababa.”

...Accor to open seven hotels in Ethiopia by 2020

Accor SA, a French multinational hospitality company, will open 60 new hotels in 14 countries in Africa in the next four years, its Chief Executive Officer for the Middle East & Africa Mark Willis said.



In Ethiopia, seven hotels will be opened by 2020.

Africa has sustained unprecedented rates of economic growth, driven chiefly by sturdy domestic demand, better macroeconomic management and improving political stability.

Key markets in Accor’s growth plan include Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa. Accor currently has 143 hotels in Africa, 63 of them south of the Sahara, and will promote its Movenpick luxury brand, Willis said.

Ethiopia gets grant to spur renewable investments

The Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), managed by the African Development Bank, approved a \$995,000 grant to support the roll out of a sustainable procurement framework for Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in Ethiopia.

The SEFA grant will encourage private investment in hydropower projects through Ethiopia’s Renewable Energy Programme.

It will strengthen the government’s capacity to undertake bankability and technical analysis, including feasibility assessments of projects in the hydro priority pipeline. The grant also provides for environmental and social impact assessments, resettlement action plans, and preparation of bidding documents for hydro projects.



File photo: Ashegoda Wind Farm

“A well-structured procurement framework is crucial in mobilizing the investments necessary to achieve universal energy access in Africa. The SEFA programme will boost private IPPs participation, and spur investments into the Ethiopian hydro power sector,” said Wale Shonibare, the Bank’s acting Vice President for Power, Energy, Climate Change and Green Growth.

The programme also complements the assistance provided by the Bank’s Institutional IPP/PPP Support Project, as well as the Bank-financed “Mekele-Dallol and Semera-Afdera Power Supply for Industrial Development and Access Scale-up Project”, Shonibare added.

Ethiopia has vast but untapped renewable energy potential. Under a long-term development strategy, the government has outlined a National Electrification Programme (NEP) for universal access by 2025 through a 65% on-grid, and 35% off grid combination. The goal is to transform the country into a regional energy hub by 2030.

The Ethiopia Renewable Energy Programme is in line with the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) 2015/16–2019/20. It also aligns with the Bank's Energy Sector Policy (2012), the New Deal on Energy for Africa, especially focusing on "Renewable Energy" and "Early Stage Project Finance".

Reykjavik Geothermal to begin exploration worth \$4.4 billion

Reykjavik Geothermal (RG), a power developer backed by hedge fund billionaire Paul Tudor Jones II, will commence a \$4.4 billion project to bring volcanic energy to Ethiopia.

Preparations are underway to start exploration drilling in September for two 500-megawatt plants in Corbetti and Tulu Moye, south of the capital Addis Ababa. At full-scale, each project will become the largest independent power producer in Africa.

Gunnar Orn Gunnarsson, RG's chief operating officer, said "All the results from the surface exploration work indicate that we are developing projects in a huge caldera, huge active volcanoes which can sustain at least 1,000 megawatts or more."

The projects would become a vital cog in Ethiopia's drive to become a middle-income country by 2025. Currently, its installed electricity capacity of 4,200 megawatts only provides power for 40% of its 105 million people.

Isuzu Motors to open a vehicle assembly plant in Ethiopia

In another major boost to Ethiopia's automotive industry, Japanese vehicle manufacturer, Isuzu Motors Ltd., said it has finalised preparations to open a vehicle assembly plant in Ethiopia in August 2019.

Company General Manager Mr Taro Kunifusa said: "We want to engage in other sectors to take advantage of Ethiopia's huge market potential."

.....Ethiopia's untapped automotive sector attracts investors

Ethiopia produces around 10,000 commercial and other vehicles a year for its home market. It imported more than 40,000 cars in 2017.

Assemblers in the country include Chinese brands Geely, FAW and BYD, as well as Lifan.

In February, Hyundai Motor Co opened a 10,000-a-year \$17.5 million vehicle capacity assembly plant in Addis Ababa - its first factory in East Africa.

Volkswagen also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop an automotive industry in Ethiopia.



File Photo: Thomas Schaefer, Head of Volkswagen Sub-Saharan Africa signing the MoU with Abebe Abebayehu, Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment Commission in Addis Ababa. With them are the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the Ethiopian Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide

Fitch Solutions recently noted that Ethiopia's automotive sector remains largely untapped. Its attractiveness as an investment destination is continuously improving and will continue to attract investment, especially into the automotive sector.

As economic liberalisation efforts kick in, Ethiopia's automotive sector is well poised to become a regional powerhouse in the East African region over the coming decade, with the manufacturing sector standing to benefit the most owing to the vast growth potential in this untapped market, and the positive government efforts aimed at promoting the sector.

TRAVEL, TOURISM AND SPORTS

Prime Minister Abiy leads efforts to save Axum obelisk

As part of a visit to northern Tigray Region, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held a series of meetings with stakeholders over a wide range of issues, among them, the rehabilitation of the historic Axum obelisks.



Accompanied by Vice President of the region, Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, the Prime Minister reviewed the current status of the obelisks and held discussions with Axum city community members.

The PM also addressed key queries raised regarding budgetary allocations, water shortages, infrastructure requirements, peace and security and other issues," his office said.

...Land of the Queen of Sheba

The oldest continuously-inhabited city in sub-Saharan Africa, Axum was founded more than 3,000 years ago in the days of the Queen of Sheba. It served as capital of the Axumite Kingdom, which was the dominant trade entity in the Horn of Africa for over a millennium, stretching from the Sudanese Nile across the Red Sea to Yemen.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1980, Axum today is replete with towering obelisks, ruined palaces, engraved tablets and other ancient artefacts dating back to its glory days.

Simien Mountains National Park gets UNESCO boost

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Secretariat has released an initial emergency assistance budget for Simien Mountains National Park as part of efforts to rehabilitate the park, in northern Ethiopia.

Last month, more than 10,000 hectares of the Park's forest resources were destroyed by wild fire, which was brought under control with the support of fire fighting helicopters from neighbouring Kenya and experienced firefighters from Israel.

The initial assistance is for the recruitment of international and local experts, who will benchmark best practices from around the world to help assess the current situation and make recommendations on future actions to protect the Park.

Simien National Park is Ethiopia's premier trekking and walking destination. It was inscribed as a Natural World Heritage Site in 1979, when UNESCO lauded it as "one of the world's most spectacular landscapes, with jagged mountain peaks, deep valleys and sharp precipices dropping 1,500m".



Gelada Baboons in the Simien Mountains

In addition to the splendid scenery and hiking opportunities, the Afromontane meadows and moorlands of the upper Simiens also form one of Ethiopia's most important biodiversity hotspots, populated by an alluring wealth of endemic plants and animals including the Walia Ibex, Gelada Baboon and Ethiopian Wolf.

International registration for Great Ethiopian Run, the biggest road race in Africa, opens



International Registration for the 2019 TOTAL Great Ethiopian Run opened on 6th June. 45,000 participants are expected to take part in this year's race on **Sunday 17th November**.



For the past 17 years the race, which starts and finishes in Meskel Square, has been the **biggest road**

race in Africa. It is also one of the liveliest and most colourful races in the world and is often referred to as **Ethiopia's biggest street party**.

For the past three years the race has used a wave start to accommodate greater numbers of runners. The same wave start will be in operation again this year.

Through its fundraising campaign the event raises money for local and international charities, with many international runners coming to the race to visit and support local projects. More than 600 international participants took part in the race last year with many staying for several days to tour Ethiopia.

You can find out more about participating in the race by visiting the Race's website at <http://bit.ly/GER-2019>.

International participants can register for the race as individuals at www.q-buster.co.uk.

If you are interested in organising a group to join the race, the Great Ethiopian Run organisers can help you. Email richard@ethiopianrun.org.

New cycling tour company launched



Ethiopia's world-class cyclist and reigning national time-trial champion, Tsgabu Grmay, has launched a new cycling tour company based in Ethiopia offering tours for international cycling enthusiasts.

Ethio-Cycling Holidays brings together a strong team of current and former cyclists hoping to introduce more cyclists to the fantastic opportunities for road cycling in Ethiopia.

"Opening this cycling company has been one of my long-held dreams," said Tsgabu speaking from his home town of Mekelle, the starting point for many of the tours.

"Over the past two years we have worked hard to get everything in place to be able to give tourists a great experience and fantastic support on their rides. With more and more people looking for new places to ride, this is the perfect time for us to launch."

Tsgabu has also announced plans to support young Ethiopian cyclists through the new company. "We have to look to the future. I have had so many great opportunities to help me progress in the sport, and

now I want to share my experiences with other young Ethiopian riders and give opportunities to them." 30% of the company's profits will go towards this work.

Tsgabu has joined forces with two former Olympians to launch the company. One of those is British Olympic distance runner, Richard Nerurkar, who has spent many years working in Ethiopia and has spent much of the past two years cycling the routes that will be used for the tours. The other is Ethiopian Olympic cyclist Alemayehu Sitotaw, who like Tsgabu, has won many national cycling titles, and has retained close connections with Ethiopia's cycling community since retiring from competition thirty years ago.

Opportunities for road cycling in Ethiopia have opened up with the construction of new roads which pass through spectacular mountain scenery. "Even though it can be a bit hard cycling on the hills here, the roads and scenery are fantastic," says Tsgabu about the roads in Tigray, where he typically prepares for his European races.

For information: www.ethiocyclingholidays.com

Addis Ababa to host FIFA Congress in 2020

FIFA's next Congress will be held at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa in May 2020 - the fourth time it will be held in Africa in 70 years.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino made the announcement at the conclusion of Fifa's 69th congress in Paris, on the eve of the kick-off of the Women's World Cup.

The Congress meets every year, where statutes can be amended, office bearers are elected and members can be accepted or expelled.

...President Sahle-Work calls for more investment in women



Ethiopia's first female President, H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, has called for more investment to promote women and girls' participation in sport.

The President made the call at the inaugural FIFA Women's Football Convention 2019 in Paris, following the invitation from FIFA to attend as keynote speaker at the opening of the eighth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup.

"Women's football is young but growing. It does not enjoy the same investment as men's football...We should invest more in women. I am confident that what we invest in women will pay off 100-fold, because women are capable," she said.

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

Ambassador Fesseha's DIPLOMAT Magazine Interview

Ambassador Fesseha is featured in the May/June 2019 edition of DIPLOMAT Magazine.



In interview with editor Venetia van Kuffeler, the Ambassador discusses his career in diplomacy and his thoughts on relations with the United Kingdom.

"Diplomatic relations with the UK go back over 400 years. We have been through good and bad times, but relations are excellent now. We must get these to a higher level," he says. One of Ambassador Fesseha's priorities is to have PM Abiy visit the UK and meet with top officials, and the highest UK officials visit Ethiopia...Likewise, he plans to encourage many UK businesspeople and tourists to visit Ethiopia, and vice versa.

The Ambassador vows to safeguard the rights of the 40,000 plus Ethiopians living in the UK. "I must check that they are assimilating well, so they contribute to their family, region and country."

Read more at http://bit.ly/AmbFesseha_DM19

Four Africa city destinations you should visit right now



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Country known for: Being one of only two African countries that was never colonized; having one of the world's oldest alphabets; using a calendar that is about seven years and three months behind the usual one (i.e., it's 2012 there).

"Though Ethiopian Food is familiar to a lot of people, on the streets of Addis it's all about the coffee...you won't have to look very far to find a coffee ceremony.



They're set up on street corners and in malls; there's even one near the arrival gates at the airport! After coffee, it's time for a culture fix. There are many museums in Addis worth visiting, but if there's only time for one, it should be the National Museum, where the famous Lucy skeleton is held, and where Emperor Haile Selassie's throne can be seen...There are jazz bars nearby, and when the sun goes down, many of the bars and cafes turn into makeshift dance clubs, with music from across the continent and beyond."

Read more at <http://bit.ly/Visit Addis>

The beautiful corner of Ethiopia few tourists reach

The Telegraph At the Koraro cave in the Gheralta Mountains, *faranjis* (or foreigners) rarely travel this far. Illuminated by leaping flames, an inscription in the rock face sheds light on the human history of this sandy-floored overhang where our dome tents have been pitched for the night.

An assault course of sheer cliffs and soaring spires forming a ridge line across northern Ethiopia, Tigray's mountains are a honeycomb of hideouts; soft sandstone easily carved by wind and human hands.

Precipitous and celestial, their frescoed caverns survived multiple political and religious struggles; 121 still perform a religious function, making them the largest collection of rock-hewn churches in the


world. Yet surprisingly none in Tigray have been awarded UNESCO status, even though an application was submitted last year, and few people outside Ethiopia even know they exist.

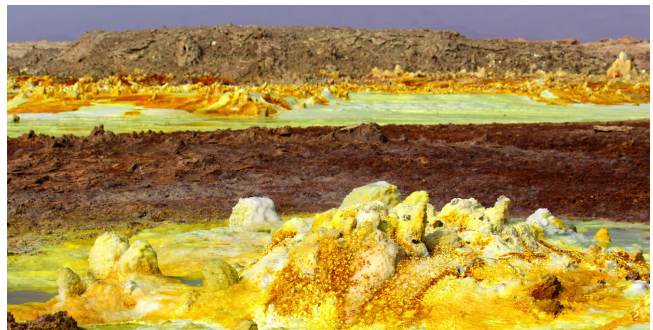


Twenty-eight churches lie in the Gheralta Mountains, one of three designated sacred landscapes where tourism started less than two decades ago. Only a handful can be reached by road and access to many involves challenging climbs, meaning the only option is to hike and camp, joining the dots with epic scenery and serendipitous community encounters.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/VisitETH10>.

Discovery in Ethiopian volcano shows how life could have thrived on Mars

 **INDEPENDENT** Ultra-small microbes found for the first time in an Ethiopian volcano show how life could have once thrived on Mars.



Researchers found a strain of bacteria living in temperatures of 89C and extreme acidity of pH 0.25 – conditions similar to those found on the red planet when it first formed.

Samples were collected from around Dallol volcano and Danakil Depression in northern Ethiopia, which is one of the hottest and most inhospitable places on Earth.

The team collected thin layers of salt deposits and transported them to Spain where they were analysed using electron microscopy, chemical analysis and DNA sequencing. The team found tiny, spherical structures within the salt samples were tiny microbes (Nanohaloarchaeles) living in compact colonies. Each microbe was 20 times smaller than the average bacteria.

“Deep investigation of the characteristics of this amazing site will improve our understanding of the limits of life on Earth and inform our search for life on Mars and elsewhere in the universe,” said Dr Barbara Cavalazzi, from the University of Bologna.

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

The Most Important Young Galleries in the World



Founded in 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by Mesai Haileleul and Rakeb Sile, Addis Fine Art is Ethiopia's first international and most exciting young gallery.



Portrait of Mesai Haileleul and Rakeb Sile courtesy of Addis Fine Art.

After attending the 1-54 African Art Fair in London, Rakeb Sile wondered why there weren't more Ethiopian artists who were globally known. She discovered Mesai Haileleul, a gallery owner who had been in Los Angeles for 30 years selling Ethiopian art, and had not returned to his home country in decades.

Sile went to L.A. to find him and lured him back to Africa, convincing him to dive into the local art

market. The two opened a gallery in Addis Ababa and it has quickly become the go-to place for Ethiopian art, especially after opening a sister space in London to connect local artists with collectors in European markets.

Rakeb and Mesai plan to expand the size of the gallery in Addis Ababa to present more important and exciting artists. Their international platform will move to London's Cromwell Place in South Kensington, where they will focus on artists in the diaspora, bringing local and diaspora narratives together.

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

Breakfast around the world: How different countries start the day



When it comes to breakfast foods across the globe, there are as many ways to enjoy the first meal of the day as there are to say "good morning."

Ethiopia: Genfo

When you're having qurs (that's "breakfast" in Amharic, Ethiopia's official language), chances are you'll be eating porridge. While there are many varieties and names for hot grain cereals served throughout the country, savory genfo is one of the most popular.



Genfo is made by mixing barley flour with boiling water until a thick, sticky dough forms, then shaped into a mound with a well in the centre. The well is then filled with clarified butter blended with berbere, the complex spice blend, and dollops of yogurt are often spooned around the edges of the genfo.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/VisitETH1>.

Prime Minister Abiy's Message to Ethiopian Youth and Children in the Diaspora

Dear Ethiopian Youth and Children in the Diaspora,

I am writing this letter to you as an eternal reminder that this country is your home and that you will always be a part of Ethiopia. On my various bilateral-centred travels around the world, I have seen the hope that you embrace for your country, and the type of humane society that you hope Ethiopians would live in. You understand 'Medemer' and always have sought ways to be unified as one. Your sensitivity to the needs of others and the immediate action you take to help is at the core of **Ethiopia - the New Horizon of Hope**. A place of mystical wonders, cultures, rich traditions with a colourful mosaic of people whose faiths are as strong as her people.

Today, Ethiopia is experiencing a resurrection of hope. Hope that you have fought for from a distance. Hope that you and your parents, near and far, have prayed for. Hope that you held on to even when at times it seemed impossible. You held an enduring love and an unwavering faith in the possibilities of Ethiopia being a great nation. You never lost sight of the light that leads to hope. As such, you dressed up and flaunted your Ethiopian identity at your school's international day celebration; you hosted Ethiopia day and, proactively engaged in policies of your host nations that may concern the betterment of Ethiopia. You proudly held up Ethiopia's flag wherever you could and defended your country's glorious history. It is my wish you continue sharing in your various spheres of influence all that makes Ethiopia great.

It is also my wish that you seize the current prevailing opportunities and good will to contribute to your country when it needs you most. Alongside our greatness, we also shoulder as a country, many challenges and responsibilities that requires our concerted efforts as Ethiopians. As you know the rainy season in Ethiopia is upon us and schools are closed. Similarly, where most of you reside, the summer break is also ahead of you. I hope during the period you will take time to think about your country and the ways in which you can act in its favour. Many of the pleasures and conveniences you enjoy in the respective countries you live in have all been built on solid foundation. The roads you drive on, the playgrounds and parks you play in, the libraries in which you study – those that came before you planted these seeds, watered them and nurtured them until they bloomed.

As Ethiopian youth and children in the Diaspora, Ethiopia also belongs to you as the next caretaker generation. While my administration and I work tirelessly to build a democratic country, I welcome you to come home during the rainy season and to take part in the new experiences, be a part of the tangible and sustainable developments being made in every corner and direction, teach us to do things differently and better with your immeasurable knowledge, and to simply enjoy the various tourism attractions and destinations Ethiopia, your home country, has to offer.

While the needs are plenty and the opportunities to contribute even greater, I call upon you to at least engage in the following five things during the Ethiopian rainy season and your respective summer breaks:

1. Do not lose hope in your country. Focus your energy and drive on the seedlings of hope for they will soon flourish into reality with our collective efforts. Believe that we have the capacity to change; to act and to make history. Let not temporary obstacles be a defining factor.

2. Be a vehicle for knowledge transfer to Ethiopia. Introduce novel ways of doing things. Collect books, computers, medical equipment and other technologies where you are so that you may change the lives of your brothers and sisters here that need you. Develop digital libraries and enable students in Ethiopia to have free access to resources. Come and volunteer to teach skills and courses in schools here.
3. More importantly, you must organize yourselves to collect catalogues of books and other print materials in as many languages as possible for the newly announced library that is to be constructed in Addis Ababa to ensure Ethiopia's next-generation leaders, doctors, scientist, educators and interest of all fields do not leave Ethiopia to research any topic of interest, whether it is for graduate, undergraduate, masters or PhD programmes.
4. Come and volunteer your time in various establishments throughout the country and share your knowledge and skills of modern and innovative service delivery. Ethiopia calls on the diaspora community to serve your home country through various types of volunteer activities such as the #EveryDayWeCleanEthiopia cleaning and cleansing initiative and the four billion tree- planting project.
5. Organize various youth discussion platforms in which you can share ideas on current challenges in the country and opportunities for overcoming them. Present study papers and discuss among yourselves; generate ideas and solutions and share them with us.

I have paid and continue to pay keen attention to your economic abilities and contributions. We must work together to narrate the story of the present and set in stone the guiding principles for the future. With the rapid changes, Ethiopia's societal needs are insurmountable and evident. The resources that are at the disposal of the diaspora community are immeasurable. Our collective efforts are paramount in stabilizing the paradigm shift and one of the key ways to do so is through philanthropic endeavours and volunteerism.

Similarly, I want to remind us all about **the most important sector that the Ethiopian diaspora can make a meaningful contribution to, which will have an almost immediate impact - the tourism sector.** Ethiopia boasts a total of nine UNESCO Heritage sites with eight of the nine sites being cultural sites with one natural site. While tourism has lagged in the past, Ethiopia has introduced many reforms making tourism one of the key priority sectors for investment. It is no secret; tourism has compounded impact. Tourism contributes to local small and medium scale businesses, generates profits at every level of the sector, creates sustainable jobs. Ethiopia will benefit from the tax revenues generated and income across all regions will increase. Tourism, by far, creates the most direct effect within the sector specially in lodging, restaurants, transportation, museums and retail.

Here is where the diaspora community support is important for tourism, by being the ambassadors of all things Ethiopia, encouraging global destination management agencies to turn their face towards Ethiopia and even, chaperoning groups to visit Ethiopia. It goes without saying that the diaspora holds many of the pertinent keys that will accelerate the growth and sustainable development of this country.

While Ethiopia was built to be a great nation, I write this letter to affirm that you are needed in strengthening the pillars of Ethiopia as part of the elaborate mosaic of diverse people that comprise it. Greatness is only achieved when Medemer is our collective cause; a strong, unified Ethiopia that is filled with endless possibilities for her children today, tomorrow and generations to come.

Welcome home to Ethiopia.

Abiy Ahmed Ali
Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Commercial Bank to Offer Interest-Free Mortgages to Diaspora

The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) has announced that it has started offering interest-free mortgage loans to non-resident Ethiopians, and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin.



The programme was designed to cater to Ethiopian Diaspora Muslims and others from the diaspora who want interest free banking services.

The loan is meant to be used for the purchase or construction of residential homes and is expected to be re-paid in 20 years.

Borrowers are expected to deposit at least 20% of the mortgage amount in advance in British Pounds, US Dollars or Euros.

Emebet Melese, Vice President of Quality Assurance, said that the interest free mortgage loan for the diaspora would be implemented separately from the other diaspora-related banking services.

Once a person deposits the initial payment at CBE branches in Ethiopia or at Ethiopian Embassies abroad, the bank will entertain the request, she said.

Quarterly mortgage payments are also expected to be in foreign currencies.

Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund Forms Board of Directors

The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) has formed a Board of Directors comprising 11 persons drawn from the Ethiopian Diaspora, Civil Society and the Ethiopian Government.



ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA TRUST FUND

According to the PM's Office, the Board of Directors is the apex governance body which will provide overall leadership and set the strategic direction, policy, oversight, and accountability of the Fund.

The Board will comprise of:

- 5 members of the Ethiopian Diaspora from different parts of the globe recommended by the EDTF Advisory Council;
- 3 members from Civil Society representing women, youth and the Ethiopian public; and
- 3 members from the Ethiopian Government

The first EDTF Board of Directors includes **Sirgut Yadeta from London, who will be representing the diaspora in Europe**. Sirgut currently works as the Editorial Lead at Lloyds Bank Group. The government representatives include: Selamawit Dawit, Director General, Ethiopian Diaspora Agency; Hirut Zemene, State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Bilen Mamo, Advisor, Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation.

The Board will select its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson as well as relevant committee members required to discharge its duties soon.

A full list of the Board is available on our website.

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