



# Ethiopian News

November 2019

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ethiopia's Chief Justice on UK working visit.....3

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt Water Ministers Meet in Addis Ababa.....6

10 million young people to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.....7

Ethiopia to launch first satellite in December.....8

Scientists find a place on Earth where there is no life...in Ethiopia! .....9

Ethiopia's Freweini Mebrahtu makes CNN Heroes of the Year Top 10.....10

Ethiopia to join Alibaba-led Electronic World Trade Platform.....11

Ethiopia among Rough Guides 'Best Countries to Visit' in 2020.....12

Wall paintings in ancient Tigray Churches undergo major survey.....16

Team Ethiopia at the 2019 World Athletics Awards.....19

Azmari Bet featuring Yezina Negash.....21

Scottish teacher, 70, quit her job to run a restaurant in Ethiopia.....23

## CONNECT WITH US



@EthioEmbassyUK

# Sidama Referendum:

## Peaceful Democratic Exercise Ushers in Ethiopia's 10<sup>th</sup> Regional State





# Editorial

## Peaceful Referendum in Sidama, a sign of things to come in 2020!

On 20<sup>th</sup> November, Sidama residents gathered peacefully to vote on whether there should be a new Sidama Regional State, within Ethiopia's federal system, or whether Sidama should remain as part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). They voted overwhelmingly – over 98% - in favour of change, so Sidama has officially become Ethiopia's 10<sup>th</sup> regional state.

The referendum saw over 2.3 million people peacefully exercise their democratic right with an overwhelming 99.86% of residents turning out to cast their vote. Hawassa, which will become the new region's capital, is also expected to remain the seat of the SNNPR state government for the foreseeable future.

After voting was concluded and tallies taken, the results of the ballot were posted at each polling station on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> November. On 21<sup>st</sup> November, the results of all the polling stations were transported to 15 coordination offices and the National Electoral Board (NEBE) announced the result on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, prompting jubilant celebrations in the region.

The Board, which deployed more than 6,000 officials across 1,692 polling stations, commended the peaceful way that the voting was carried out. People had queued from 6am in an orderly way and some sang to express their excitement. The result seemed clear even at the early stages. "The voting process ended completely peacefully with no security incidents reported to us or the security forces," said Soleyana Shimeles, spokeswoman for the Electoral Board.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed congratulated Sidama voters, tweeting that the country's differences should be resolved at the ballot box, adding the vote was "an expression of the democratisation path Ethiopia has set out on." Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew highlighted the success of the

referendum and said Ethiopia was preparing to conduct free and fair national elections in 2020.

**“Making the upcoming election free, fair and credible will be the culmination of the democratic reform that the current Government has championed.”**

The vote will boost the federal arrangement, which is designed to facilitate the self-governance of the various peoples, nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. The new Sidama regional government will be able to make decisions on local taxes, education, security and land administration. Now the vote is concluded the necessary constitutional process can be implemented, which will include amending the constitution to include the 10<sup>th</sup> state.

The successful conclusion of the Sidama vote augers well for national elections scheduled to take place in May 2020. The government and opposition are preparing for next May's election, with some parties merging to make more of an impact.

PM Abiy and his party colleagues have, this month, unified the constituent parties that make up the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), forming a new party called the **Prosperity Party**. In addition to this the Prime Minister has also invited other parties to join the Prosperity Party to ensure Ethiopia, as a whole, is reflected in its politics. PM Abiy said the new party will realize a genuine federal system by including those who have not been represented in politics so far and unite the country. He tweeted that the merger is a "crucial step in harnessing our energy to work toward a shared vision. The Prosperity Party is committed to strengthening and applying a true Federal system which recognizes the diversity and contributions of all Ethiopians."

## Ethiopia's Chief Justice on UK working visit

The Honourable Ms Meaza Ashenafi, the President of the Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia, led a delegation of senior Ethiopian judges on a first working visit to the United Kingdom in mid-November.



Meaza Ashenafi is Ethiopia's first female Supreme Court President

The Chief Justice and her Delegation were visiting the United Kingdom for a series of meetings and consultations with the country's senior judiciary and justice-sector institutions as part of efforts to strengthen cooperation in the rule of law and advance judicial reform in Ethiopia.

Accompanying the Chief Justice of Ethiopia were the Honourable Mr Fuad Kiyar, President of the Federal First Instance Court, the Honourable Ms Ruta Gebretsadik Alemayehu, Civil Bench Judge at the Federal Supreme Court, the Honourable Mr Mulusew Dires Fentie, Commercial Bench Judge at the Federal High Court and Ms Abigeya Getachew Wolde, Reform Coordinator/Legal Assistant in the Office of the Chief Justice.

During their week of engagements, the Delegation met senior judges and legal professionals from the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, the Royal Courts of Justice, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) and the Administrative Court of England and Wales. The Delegation were also able to observe legal proceedings in these courts as part of the experience-gathering component of the trip.

On the margins of the visit, the Honourable Chief Justice delivered the keynote address for the **International Rule of Law Lecture 2019** hosted by the General Council of the Bar on championing judicial independence during democratic transition.



Later in the week, the Chief Justice sat on a panel hosted at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on "Women in the Law". Eminent personalities at the Women in Law event included Lady Arden of Heswall - Supreme Court Justice; Baroness Helena Kennedy QC - Barrister and Member of the House of Lords; and Professor, writer and broadcaster, Afua Hirsch.



The "Women in Law" panel

The Delegation concluded their working visit with a roundtable discussion held at the Ethiopian Embassy in London with UK legal professionals of Ethiopian descent. The Chief Justice and her colleagues briefed participants on the state of judicial reforms currently being undertaken in Ethiopia, before encouraging Ethiopian lawyers abroad to contribute their share to the success of these reforms. Honourable Meaza remarked that, though challenges still remain, the judiciary is now

free of undue political pressure from the Executive – a landmark in Ethiopia’s history. The briefing was followed by a lively question and answer segment, which saw legal professionals from the Diaspora, specialising in various areas of the law, able to raise questions about the state of the judiciary and legal sector in Ethiopia.

## Women and Children First (UK) celebrate successful completion of their project in Ethiopia

As part of the Embassy’s ongoing mission to promote exemplary Ethio-UK relations, and support the work of British charities in Ethiopia, on 21<sup>st</sup> November, we celebrated the successful completion of Women and Children First (UK)’s project in Malga District, for maternal and new-born health.

Welcoming guests, Head of Public Diplomacy, Mr Mekonnen Amare, congratulated the charity for their commendable work. In the four years that the project has been running in the Malga District in Ethiopia, more than 100 lives have been saved and thousands more are benefiting from the project.



Head of Public Diplomacy, Mr Mekonnen Amare

“The Ethiopian government has invested heavily in the health sector to improve maternal and new-born health. More than 40,000 health extension workers have been deployed across the country to provide crucial health services for mothers and

children. And remarkable results have been achieved in reducing under-5 and maternal mortality rates but there’s still more work to be done,” Mr Amare said.

CEO of the charity, Dr Mikey Rosato, highlighted their work in Ethiopia, and guests also heard inspirational stories on how women have been empowered to survive and thrive, and the impact of the project on the lives of thousands.



Women and Children First (UK) CEO Dr Mikey Rosato

Encouraging others to support the work of the charity, award-winning Ethio-British singer/songwriter Izzy Bizu, performed an acoustic set.

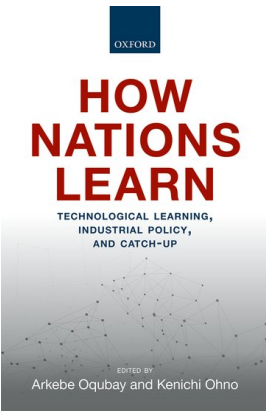


Guests were treated to authentic Ethiopian hospitality, food and culture courtesy of Habesha Village.

To learn more about Women and Children First, visit [www.womenandchildrenfirst.org.uk/malga](http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.org.uk/malga)

# EMBASSY NEWS IN BRIEF

On 20<sup>th</sup> November, Ambassador Fesseha attended a lecture at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) based on Dr Arkebe Oqubay's new book, *How Nations Learn*.



Co-edited with Kenichi Ohno, a celebrated Japanese economist, the book aims to generate interest and debate among policymakers, researchers and practitioners on the complexities of technological learning, industrial policy and the problems of catching-up for developing nations.

Rejecting both the 'one-size-fits-all' approach and the agnosticism that all nations are unique and different, the book uses historical as well as firm-, industry- and country-level evidence and experiences to identify the sources and drivers of successful learning and catch-up and the lessons for developing countries.

The following day, on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, saw the launch of Dr Arkebe Oqubay's most recent volume, *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



Co-edited with Justin Yifu Lin, the former Chief Economist at the World Bank, the book focuses on evolving China-Africa relations and institutional and policy frameworks for promoting cooperation, while considering the impacts of China on Africa's industrialization and structural transformation.



Dr Arkebe Oqubay is a Senior Minister, and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy Ahmed.

On 27<sup>th</sup> November, Ambassador Fesseha briefed an audience of students and academics at the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at the SOAS University of London, on Ethiopia's current foreign policy priorities and strategic position in the Horn of Africa.



Following his briefing, the Ambassador was able to respond to a variety of questions from students and staff on the domestic reform process, rapprochement with Eritrea, multilateral engagements at the African Union, the position on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam negotiations, Ethiopia's role in Sudan and South Sudan mediation efforts and relations with Gulf countries. In a meeting with the University's leadership ahead of the briefing, the status of the University's planned partnerships with counterpart institutions in Ethiopia was also discussed.

### EPRDF merges to form new “Prosperity Party”

Following a meeting by the Executive Committee of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a majority of the party’s Council approved the merger of the coalition into a new single party called “Prosperity Party.”

In a statement on his social media page, Prime Minister Abiy said: "The unanimous decision made by the EPRDF council to merge the Party and adopt the executive committee approved programme is a crucial step in harnessing our energy to work toward a shared vision. Through the new Prosperity Party, we are committed to strengthening and applying a true Federal system that recognizes the diversity and contributions of all who comprise Ethiopia."

The new Prosperity Party will have a president and vice president.

### Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt Water Ministers Meet in Addis Ababa

Water Ministers from Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt held discussions in Addis Ababa on the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

The meeting set out to consult on outstanding issues over the filling and operation of the dam and took into account the results acquired from previously held Ministerial consultative meetings.

The United States of America and the World Bank attended the meeting as observers.

The next meeting will be held in Cairo, Egypt, in December where technical consultations on all controversial issues will continue.

During the Washington meetings earlier in November, the foreign ministers of the three countries reaffirmed their joint commitment to reach a comprehensive, cooperative, adaptive, sustainable and mutually beneficial agreement on the filling and operation of the GERD and to

establish a clear process for fulfilling that commitment in accordance with the 2015 Declaration of Principles.

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers noted their agreement to hold four technical governmental meetings at the level of water ministers. The ministers agreed that the World Bank and the United States would support and attend the meetings as observers. The ministers also agreed to work toward completion of an agreement by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020, and would attend two meetings in Washington, D.C. on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, to assess and support progress. If an agreement is not reached by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the foreign ministers agreed that Article 10 of the 2015 Declaration of Principles would be invoked.



Foreign Ministers from Ethiopia (Gedu Andargachew) Egypt (Sameh Hassan Shoukry) and Sudan (Asma Mohamed Abdalla) with President Trump

The foreign ministers reaffirmed the significance of the Nile to the development of the people of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, the importance of transboundary cooperation, and their shared interest in concluding an agreement.

### ...Construction of GERD’s Saddle Dam Completed

The construction of the saddle dam of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been completed, according to the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy.

The completion of the 50m high and 5.2km long concrete faced rockfill dam (CRFD) is an important milestone for the project, said Dr Seleshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy.

The construction of the GERD project has now reached over 68%. Works on the two turbines that could begin producing electricity in 2020 is also nearing completion.

Ethiopia envisages finalising the project, which is being built in Benishangul Gumuz regional state on the Abay (Nile) river in 2023. At the end of the works, it will be the largest dam in Africa.

## 10 million young people to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030

Over 10 million young people are expected to access dignified and fulfilling work opportunities in Ethiopia by 2030.

This follows the launch of an initiative, **Young Africa Works in Ethiopia**, by the Mastercard Foundation that will seek to create employment opportunities for the youth in partnership with Ethiopia's **Jobs Creation Commission (JCC)**. Mastercard Foundation has committed an initial \$300 million to the initiative.



(l-r) Dr Ephrem Lemango, JCC Commissioner, Reeta Roy, CEO and President of Mastercard Foundation and Alemayehu Konde, Mastercard Foundation Country Head, Ethiopia

Young Africa Works in Ethiopia is aligned with the Ethiopian government's plan to create new jobs to spur economic growth and was designed in partnership with the government, the private sector, academic institutions, and young people.

Mastercard Foundation will work with JCC to create programmes to catalyse growth in tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and ICT. Programmes will support entrepreneurs and small and medium-

sized businesses to achieve greater productivity and expand income-generating opportunities.

"Ethiopia's prosperity will be achieved when we individually achieve our full potential first. Creating jobs for all, particularly youth and women, is about giving people hope, dignity and the means to build this prosperous future," said JCC Commissioner Dr Ephrem T. Lemango.

The cumulative value of the first phase of partnerships is over \$119 million and it will create more than 1.4 million Young Africa Works work opportunities within Ethiopia's goal of 10 million work opportunities by 2030.

Reeta Roy, Mastercard Foundation President and CEO, said:

**"Through my travels across Ethiopia, I'm inspired by the creativity and dynamism of young entrepreneurs and how their innovations are bringing about meaningful change in their communities."**

"Young Africa Works will support them by providing access to finance, business development support and skills development so they can further scale their businesses to create more jobs for young Ethiopians," she added.

Learning from its work in 34 countries on the continent, including Ethiopia, over the past decade, the Foundation will deepen its engagement in 10 African countries.

Ethiopia is a priority country because of the government's commitment to reforming the policy and regulatory environment to encourage the development of the private sector and attract foreign investment.

Since 2009, the Mastercard Foundation has committed more than \$62 million to advance financial inclusion, education, and youth livelihoods.

## Twitter CEO, Jack Dorsey, in Ethiopia



Twitter CEO and co-founder, Jack Dorsey, visited Ethiopia in November as part of a month-long trip to Africa. He began his tour of the continent in Lagos, Nigeria, on 7<sup>th</sup> November, then visited Ghana and South Africa.



Jack with young entrepreneurs at blueMoon Ethiopia, Ethiopia's first youth AgriTech Incubator

During his stay in Addis Ababa, he spent a lot of time with budding Ethiopian entrepreneurs, including Ethiopia's 'Tech Queen' Betelhem Dessie, Project Manager at iCog Labs, Noel Daniel, cofounder at Africa Tech Next, Samrawit, CEO of Ride Ethiopia, an Uber-style app, Addis Ababa University Institute of Technology students, and more!

Suggesting a move to Africa for at least three months next year, he tweeted:

"Sad to be leaving the continent...for now. Africa will define the future (especially the bitcoin one!). Not sure where yet, but I'll be living here for 3-6 months mid 2020. Grateful I was able to experience a small part."

You can follow his trip via his social media at <https://twitter.com/jack>.

## Ethiopia to launch first satellite in December

According to the Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute (ESSTI), Ethiopia will launch its first ever satellite into space on 17<sup>th</sup> December.



The Multi-Spectral Remote Sensing Satellite ET-RSS1 will be launched in partnership with China, said Dr Getahun Mekuria, Minister of Innovation and Technology. He said the satellite will be launched at 6:21am local time.



Dr Getahun speaking to reporters

The Satellite, to be launched from China, will have its command and control centre in Ethiopia at the Entoto Space Observatory facility on the outskirts of Addis Ababa.

Once launched into space, the satellite will provide all the necessary data on changes in climate and weather-related phenomena that will be used for agriculture, forestry and natural resource conservation activities.

During his visit to China Academy of Space Technology in April, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inspected the satellite.



# Only in Ethiopia! Scientists find a place on Earth where there is no life

Living beings, especially microorganisms, have a surprising ability to adapt to the most extreme environments on our planet, but there are still places where they cannot live. European researchers have confirmed the absence of microbial life in hot, saline, hyperacid ponds in the Dallol geothermal field in Danakil Depression, Ethiopia.



At the Danakil Depression, daily temperatures in winter can exceed 45°C and there are abundant hypersaline and hyperacid pools, with pH values that are even negative.

A recent study, published this year, pointed out that certain microorganisms can develop in this multi-extreme environment (simultaneously very hot, saline and acid), which has led its authors to present this place as an example of the limits that life can support, and even to propose it as a terrestrial analogue of early Mars.

However, now a French-Spanish team of scientists led by biologist Purificación Lopez Garcia of the

French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) has published an article in *Nature Ecology & Evolution* that concludes otherwise. According to these researchers, there is no life in Dallol's multi-extreme ponds.

"After analysing many more samples than in previous works, with adequate controls so as not to contaminate them and a well-calibrated methodology, we have verified that there's no microbial life in these salty, hot and hyperacid pools or in the adjacent magnesium-rich brine lakes," stresses López García.

"What does exist is a great diversity of halophilic archaea (primitive salt-loving microorganisms) in the desert and the saline canyons around the hydrothermal site," the biologist explains, "but neither are in the hyperacid and hypersaline pools themselves, nor in the so-called Black and Yellow lakes of Dallol, where magnesium abounds. And all this despite the fact that microbial dispersion in this area, due to the wind and to human visitors, is intense."

"In addition, our study presents evidence that there are places on the Earth's surface, such as the Dallol pools, which are sterile even though they contain liquid water," stresses Lopez Garcia. This means that the presence of liquid water on a planet, which is often used as a habitability criterion, does not directly imply that it has life. "We would not expect to find life forms in similar environments on other planets, at least not based on a biochemistry similar to terrestrial biochemistry," points out Lopez Garcia.

Both the French-Spanish group, in which researchers from the Geological and Mining Institute of Spain and the Autonomous University of Madrid participate, and other international teams continue to investigate the extreme environment of Dallol, where completely sterile pools could alternate with others with slightly better biophysical conditions that allow the presence of archaea and other extremophilic microorganisms. In any case, this is an exceptional environment to continue studying the limits of life.

# Ethiopia's Freweini Mebrahtu makes CNN Heroes of the Year Top 10

CNN has named Freweini Mebrahtu, an Ethiopian chemical engineer, a Top 10 finalist for their Hero of the Year award for working to change the cultural stigma around menstruation in Ethiopia by educating students and producing reusable pads that help girls stay in school.



Freweini's belief that no girl should miss school because of a period is resonating on a global scale in a big way.

Freweini designed and patented a reusable menstrual pad and founded the Mariam Seba Sanitary Products factory where these are manufactured. For her work and efforts towards period equity in Ethiopia, she has been named a 2019 CNN Hero.

Freweini is also showing others in Ethiopia how to run a successful business. With the help of Dignity Period, she is paying women premium wages, providing free childcare and maternity leave. All of it while changing lives by dispelling the menstruation taboo.

CNN Heroes is a year-long initiative that honours everyday people for their selfless, creative efforts to help others. In its 12 years, CNN Heroes has received more than 85,000 nominations from more than 100 countries. Since 2007, the campaign has profiled more than 300 CNN Heroes. They're working in more than 80 countries around the world, helping millions of people.

Each Top 10 CNN Hero will be awarded \$10,000 and the 'CNN Hero of the Year' will receive an additional \$100,000. The honorees will also receive free capacity-building training from the Annenberg Foundation, a leading supporter of non-profits worldwide. They will participate in a customized version of the Annenberg Alchemy programme in Los Angeles, CA, which offers leadership development to help strengthen organizations for long-term success.

CNN has partnered with GoFundMe Charity™ to enable people to donate to this year's honorees and learn more about their stories. Supporters can make online donations to the Top 10 CNN Heroes' non-profit organizations directly from [CNNHeroes.com](http://CNNHeroes.com).

## Freweini needs your vote!

You can vote for her daily at [CNNHeroes.com](http://CNNHeroes.com) by logging in via email or Facebook. The winner will be announced on 8<sup>th</sup> December.



To learn more about Freweini's work, visit <http://bit.ly/FreweiniMebrahtuxCNNHeroes2019>

### Ethiopia Attracts \$700 million FDI in First Quarter

In its report to the Parliament's Trade and Industry Standing Committee, the Ethiopian Investment Commission says Ethiopia has attracted \$700 million foreign direct investments (FDI) during the first quarter of this fiscal year, achieving 70% of its plan. Investment came from close to 100 new foreign companies, operating in a range of sectors.

Investment Commissioner, Abebe Abebayehu, stated the achievement has shown a 13% increase compared to the same period last budget year.

### Ethiopia to join Alibaba-led eWTP

Ethiopia has signed three agreements with Alibaba Group to join the Electronic World Trade Platform, an Alibaba-led initiative that aims to lower barriers to global trade for small and medium-sized enterprises through e-commerce.

The signing of the agreement came following the visit of Chairman of Alibaba Group, Jack Ma, who arrived in Addis Ababa on 24<sup>th</sup> November.



The eWTP hub, the second in Africa after Rwanda, will serve as a gateway for Ethiopian products to global markets, as well as offer support in smart logistics, fulfilment and talent training.

"Today's signing of the Ethiopia eWTP Hub is an important step in the development of a digital economy in Ethiopia," said Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopia's Minister of Innovation and Technology. "This engagement will greatly contribute to trade facilitation and open markets to SMEs not only in Ethiopia but in the wider region."

Speaking during the ceremony, Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma said that Ethiopia needed the four "Es" in order to connect its economy with global markets: education, e-government, e-frastructure and entrepreneurs. Education is critical for any uptick in economic strength, he said, while governance handled online is more efficient and more transparent. In addition, larger and faster internet networks were essential for business today, and entrepreneurship was a driving force for job creation in any economy.

"Today is the beginning of the digital period for Ethiopia, we need to cultivate entrepreneurship, we need to cultivate the sprint [sic] of innovation, driving for speed, results and efficiency," Ma said.

"Africa never lacks talents – Ethiopia has 30 million young people," Ma said, adding that the continent wasn't short on resources or opportunity, either. "What we lack is a group of pioneers that can explore the future and believes in the future."

"We will help more entrepreneurs in Africa. We will help more internet development and the digital economy in Africa," he said.

Prime Minister Abiy said the platform would contribute a lot to the country by introducing new working practices, increasing the involvement of the private sector and providing market information. Moreover, it would also assist Ethiopia's target of becoming one of the top five African economies within 10 years and for the efficient and transparent delivery of customs services.

Since it was first proposed by Ma in 2016, the eWTP has been recognized by the G20, and was adopted by China, Malaysia, Rwanda and Belgium. Alibaba expects that trade between the hubs will increase as the number of eWTP hubs increases. The goal is to allow all businesses – both big international companies and SMEs – to participate in cross-border commerce. As part of the partnership, Alibaba Business School will offer digital training, providing a range of specialised programmes for Ethiopian entrepreneurs, business leaders and university lecturers.



## Ethiopia among Rough Guides Best Countries to Visit in 2020



In their latest list of **best places to travel in 2020**, travel publisher and tailor-made trip provider, *Rough Guides*, has placed Ethiopia among the **'4 Best Countries to Visit.'**

(Epiphany) festival. At this time, thousands of white-clad worshippers descend into the crevices and attend a jubilant mass baptism."

### ... 'Utterly unique' country

"Ethiopia is utterly unique. The only country to cling onto its independence during the nineteenth-century Scramble for Africa, its culture and traditions have remained virtually intact. What's more, its history goes as far back as the beginning of human existence. Its age-old structures, fiery cuisine, Amharic language and high-altitude wildlife occur nowhere else in the world. Despite this, Ethiopia receives a fraction of the visitors compared to nearby Kenya and Uganda. And now's the time to rectify that."

"First on the list of extraordinary sights are the 900-year-old sunken churches of Lalibela. Carved into rock trenches, the churches have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the 1970s. Still very much in use, they're best visited in January for the Timkat



The iconic Bete Giorgis (St George's) rock-hewn church in Lalibela

"To the west lies Gondar, lauded as the Camelot of Africa for its magnificent trove of seventeenth-century stone castles. While to the southeast, you'll find the eerie hyenas of Harar. Trek into the Simien mountains and you'll have the chance to spot the rare Ethiopian wolf, and the shaggy gelada monkeys that have made a home on the high northern plateaux."

To explore Rough Guides 2020 bucket list, visit their website at <http://bit.ly/RG2020Travel>.

# Ethiopia celebrated at WTM

Ethiopia participated at the 40<sup>th</sup> World Travel Market (WTM), which took place from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November at ExCeL in London. WTM is the largest business-to-business travel event in the UK and attracts a 50,000-strong crowd of travel industry professionals, government ministers, tourist boards, buyers, media and influencers.

Ethiopia was represented this year by Tourism Ethiopia (the tourism promotion arm of the government), the Ethiopian Embassy, Ethiopian Airlines and 20 of the country's best tour operators. The event posed an important opportunity to showcase Ethiopia's tourism potential, meet with trade in the UK market, maintain key industry relationships and build important new ones.

Proceedings kicked off on 4<sup>th</sup> November with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, which marked the official opening of the Ethiopian Stand, by H.E. Mr Fesseha Shawel Gebre, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mr Tewolde Gebremariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group and Mr Michael Yohannes, UK Area Manager of Ethiopian Airlines.



Ambassador Fesseha (centre), with Ethiopian Airlines CEO Mr Tewolde Gebremariam and UK Area Manager Michael Yohannes, officially open the Ethiopian pavilion at World Travel Market London

On the second day, which was open to the public, a networking reception was held at the stand to celebrate Ethiopia's participation.

This year, the stand attracted hundreds of visitors, who were treated, every day, to coffee from the Land of Origins, and on the second day, Ethiopian wine and Habesha beer was served at the reception. Visitors also had the opportunity to enter a prize draw, courtesy of Ethiopian Airlines, and win a return flight to Ethiopia and a two-night stay at their brand new 5-star hotel, Skylight.



Coffee ceremony at the Ethiopian stand

Wrapping up the three-day event, Ethiopian Airlines was announced winner of the *Selling Travel Agents Choice Awards* for "Airline to Africa", adding to their haul of accolades.



Ethiopian Airlines UK with their award

Mr Negussie Eshetu Aredo, Director of Marketing at Tourism Ethiopia, who was also present at WTM, held meetings with travel trade professionals and journalists.

Ahead of World Travel Market, our Business Diplomacy Department attended the International Tourism and Investment Conference which focused on investment opportunities in Sustainable Tourism in Africa, Island Nations, and emerging markets.

### ...UK an important tourism partner

The UK remains a key inbound market for Ethiopian tourism, with the number of arrivals to the country on the rise year on year. The rise in tourism numbers is partly driven by the very strong performance of Ethiopian Airlines, the leading airline in Africa, the wealth of cultural and historical tourist attractions and the development of Addis Ababa as a dynamic and growing regional hub. A number of new UK-based tour operators are also adding Ethiopia to their portfolio.

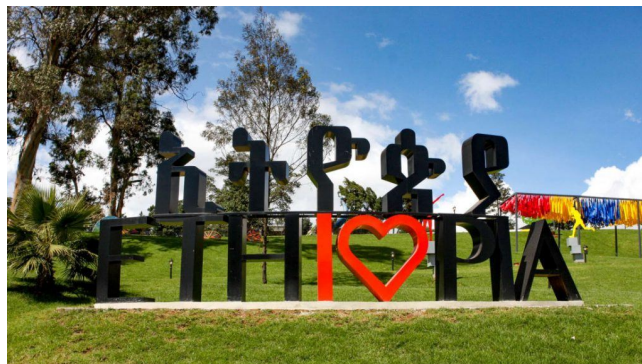
According to the latest annual review by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), **Ethiopia's Travel and Tourism economy grew by 48.6% in 2018 – the largest growth of any country in the world.** The research showed that this was primarily driven by leisure travellers: 79% of spending was generated by leisure visitors and 21% from business travellers.

The research also shows that the sector is strongly weighted towards international travel: 77% of spending came from international travellers and 23% from domestic.

Ethiopia is endowed with historical places, natural beauty, colourful and diverse cultural activities and endemic wild animals which are of great interest to international tourists.

Ethiopia's famous rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, for example, are among ***Rough Guides 100 Best Places on Earth*** to visit in 2020.

New experiences are also opening up. On 11<sup>th</sup> October, Unity Park opened its doors to the public – locals, and tourists – for the first time in more than a century.



Unity Park's 40-acre compound is home to Menelik Palace, which was established in 1887 by Emperor Menelik II.

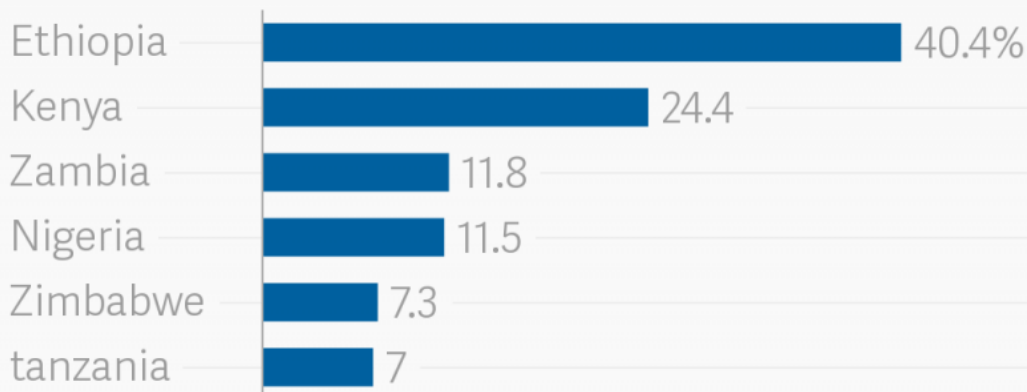
Latest figures also show that with the introduction of the e-Visa service back in June 2017, Ethiopia has opened its doors to foreign visitors wider than ever before. The e-Visa service has redefined visitors' travel experience, easing entry into the country with digitised service accessible from any part of the world.

On behalf of Tourism Ethiopia and Ethiopian Airlines, we invite you to visit Ethiopia and discover its infinite possibilities! For some travel inspiration, visit [www.ethiopia.travel](http://www.ethiopia.travel).

Watch video highlights of WTM, on our YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK](http://www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK).

## Ethiopia is growing visitor bookings to Africa faster

Year-on-year growth (Nov. 2018 - Jan. 2019)



# Radisson Hotel Group Announces Its Fourth Hotel in Ethiopia

Radisson Hotel Group has announced the signing of the **Radisson Hotel Bahir Dar**. Located to the North East of Addis Ababa, this will be the first Radisson branded hotel and the Group's fourth hotel in the country.



The Radisson Hotel Bahir Dar will be located on the shores of Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest lake, which has been nominated an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, just 8km from the International Airport. Bahir Dar is home to some of the world's oldest monasteries and churches, and the hotel will sit just 25km from *Tis Abay (Blue Nile Falls)*, one of Ethiopia's best-known tourist attractions.

Tourists are drawn to Bahir Dar from around the world, not only for the serene Lake Tana, but also the city's great location, to rest and relax overnight, as travellers make their way to other popular destinations such as Gondar, the Simien Mountains and Lalibela.



Tis Abay

Elie Younes, Executive Vice President & Chief Development Officer, Radisson Hotel Group, said: "Africa remains the most exciting continent for growth and evolution. According to WTTC, Ethiopia experienced the 'highest tourism growth in the world' in recent years, with over 45% increase. Such growth justifies more hotel developments in the country, and we are pleased to introduce our fourth hotel in the market."



Dr Hirut Kasew (right), Minister of Culture & Tourism shakes hands with Simone Kuhn, Development Manager, sub-Saharan Africa, Radisson Hotel Group

Owner of the hotel, Tilksew Gedamu Ayele, CEO of Picolo Abay International Business Plc, said: "We are proud to be partnering with Radisson Hotel Group to open Bahir Dar's first hotel with a top international brand in the city. The hotel will be crafted for relaxation and rest, given its great accessibility and prime location on the shores of Lake Tana. Together we are capitalizing on the Northern Historic Route of Ethiopia to offer guests a memorable place to sleep and eat good food, along the famous trail which includes the Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana, Lalibela, the breath-taking Simien Mountains and Aksum. We look forward to a long relationship with Radisson Hotel Group and to developing more projects and together to lift up the city of Bahir Dar and the Amhara region."

The fully renovated, converted 125-room hotel will comprise of a variety of room types, restaurants, bars, gym and spa.

Bahir Dar is set to become a key MICE destination and the Radisson Hotel Bahir Dar will be crafted to become the ideal choice for international travellers and locals looking for event spaces.

# Wall paintings in ancient Tigray Churches undergo major survey

*British charity the Ethiopian Heritage Fund (EHF) has just returned from the start of their two-year project to survey paintings in the ancient churches of Tigray.*

Set up in 2005, with the aim of conserving treasures in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido churches, over the years it has worked on manuscripts, including the two 6<sup>th</sup>-century Garima Gospels that are kept in a monastery in Northern Tigray, and on icons and a silver inlaid tray.

EHF aims to increase knowledge of these important objects in Ethiopia and internationally and it participates in educational projects in Ethiopian institutions, and actively engages in outreach through publications and participation at conferences.

A recent focus has been wall paintings. The painted churches of Tigray have long been a hidden wonder of Ethiopia, many of which are carved into dramatic sandstone massifs high above the plains and valleys.

In 2013, the EHF embarked on a preliminary survey, to assess the condition and original technology of their paintings. Carried out by wall painting experts from the Courtauld Institute, the survey was the first to provide scientific knowledge of the traditions of Tigray's wall paintings, through examination, research and analysis at multiple sites. It also provided a basis for understanding the major risks that threaten their preservation. The EHF has since undertaken conservation at a number of churches in the region.

EHF discovered that wall paintings in remote locations are being lost at an alarming rate. Natural deterioration is one reason for this and, in some churches, leaking roofs result in destruction of paintings. But there are other threats, too. With growing populations, local communities may build a new larger church closer to their village, abandoning ancient painted churches to the elements. There are also examples of paintings being obliterated by whitewashing and cement plastering.

The need for a comprehensive survey of Tigray's wall paintings is therefore urgent. In 2019, with generous funding from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung,

the EHF and local heritage bodies began establishing a full record and database that will serve as a tool for future monitoring, conservation and protection measures. It will also promote awareness among scholars, local heritage bodies and visitors. Through EHF's education programmes and the transfer of skills they aim to empower local heritage professionals.



Stephen Rickerby carrying out conservation treatment in one of the painted churches. Photo: EHF

The EHF is also keen to extend the number of currently visited churches, both to reduce pressure on vulnerable popular sites and to contribute to the economic development of remote communities. As tourism grows in this area, too many people are visiting too few sites. Painted church interiors, which are generally quite small, are exposed to a number of dangers, from environmental deterioration to physical damage. We hope that through our various conservation endeavours, we will help to ensure that this unique heritage survives.

For more information, please visit at [www.ethiopianheritagefund.org](http://www.ethiopianheritagefund.org) and [www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de](http://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de). EHF's mission has also recently been featured in the *Observer* and in a BBC interview, for which links are provided below:

*Cliff face challenge to rescue Ethiopian church paintings* - <http://bit.ly/EHFxObserver>  
*Preserving and promoting Ethiopia's Christian heritage* - <http://bit.ly/EHFxBBCNews>





## **Aregawi and Yehualaw crowned champions at the 2019 Great Ethiopian Run**

*Race organisers making plans to celebrate the race's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year*

18-year old Berihu Aregawi and 20-year old Yalemzerf Yehualaw were the men's and women's winners respectively at the 2019 Total Great Ethiopian Run 10km – Africa's biggest road race - staged in Addis Ababa on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Aregawi, the bronze medallist at the 2018 World Junior 10,000 Championships edged out Andamlak Belihu in the final few metres of the race with both athletes given the same finishing time of 28 minutes 22.18 seconds, one of the fastest winning times in the race's 19-year history.



Men's podium



Women's podium

By contrast, 20-year old Yalemzerf Yehualaw, who four weeks ago recorded a PB of 66:01 when taking the runner-up spot behind Tsegay Gemechu in the 2019 Delhi Half Marathon, was the clear winner of the women's race, coming home in a time of 31:54.00, 26 seconds ahead of Tsige Gebreselama in 2<sup>nd</sup> and Alem Negussie in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The race itself had its typical carnival atmosphere as over 38,500 participants completed the 10km route. In place of the normal warm-up routine, runners enjoyed a dance routine which had been widely shared on social media.

### ...more international participants taking part

Around 450 runners from outside Ethiopia took part this year, one of the highest numbers of overseas participants for the race.

Four influencers, two from the UK and two from Italy, also travelled to Ethiopia as race guests and gave extensive coverage of the race and Ethiopia on social media.



All four extended their trips to see more of the country and will be sharing the wider Ethiopia experience in their blog posts and videos that will come out in December and January, to tie in with the peak holiday booking season.

**“The funny thing is that it was more like a street party than a run, such an awesome atmosphere!”**

Jordan Simons (@TheLifeOfJord)



Scott Tisson (@IntrepidEscape) shows off his Great Ethiopian Run medal



Photo: The Crowded Planet (@MargheNick)

**“The highlight of our time in Addis for the Great Ethiopian Run? Meeting Haile Gebrselassie, the greatest long-distance runner of all times!”**

Margerita from The Crowded Planet (@MargheNick)

In October, following a public vote, the Great Ethiopian Run won the “Best International Running Event” award of The Challenge Awards - dubbed ‘the Oscars of the endurance industry’.

Race organisers are already making plans to celebrate the race's 20<sup>th</sup> edition on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Please email [richard@ethiopianrun.org](mailto:richard@ethiopianrun.org) if you require details of how to register for the race.





## Team Ethiopia at the 2019 World Athletics Awards

Ethiopia's distance running legend, Derartu Tulu and Selemon Barega were named Woman of the Year and Male Rising Star at the World Athletics Awards 2019, held at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.



Derartu Tulu, currently serves as Acting President of the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (since November 2018) and was the first Ethiopian woman to win an Olympic gold after she won the 10,000m at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and then again at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Derartu is also a Council member of the African Athletics Confederation and vice president of the East Africa Athletics Region.

Selemon Barega was the silver medallist in the 5000m at the World Championships in Doha, and finished fifth in the senior race at the World Cross Country Championships Aarhus 2019. The 19-year old has also produced world U20 leads at both the 5000m and 10,000m with 12:53.04 and 26:49.46, respectively.



Selemon Barega receives the Male Rising Star Award from retired Moroccan athlete Hicham El Guerrouj

Ethiopia's Samuel Tefera was also presented with a plaque for breaking the men's indoor 1500m record earlier this year at the Muller Birmingham Indoor Grand Prix.



Samuel Tefera, third left, with his world record plaque

The 19-years-old, who won the World indoor gold last year, beat Hicham El Guerrouj's 22-year-old 1500m world indoor record of 3:31.18 by 0.14 seconds.

### Lelisa Desisa wins Best Marathon Runner award

Ethiopian distance runner, Lelisa Desisa, was recognised as the 2019 'Best Marathon Runner' award by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), at a ceremony held in Athens, the birthplace of the marathon, on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Lelisa was chosen by the AIMS athletes' nomination committee based on his performance over the past 12 months.



### “This is a proud moment in my career.”

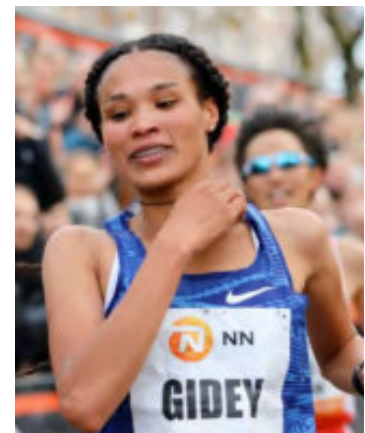
In 2018, Lelisa won the New York City Marathon before becoming the World Champion in the Marathon, winning at the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Doha (IAAF Doha 2019), recording a time of 2:10:40.

The female recipient of the award was Kenya's Ruth Chepngetich.

### Letesenbet Gidey Breaks 15k World Record

Letesenbet Gidey won the NN Zevenheuvelenloop in Nijmegen, Netherlands, in a new 15km world record, crossing the finish in a dazzling time of 44:20.

The rising Ethiopian star crushed the previous world record set by Joyciline Jepkosgei of Kenya, during the Prague half marathon of 2017. The world record stood at 45:37.



With this win Gidey cements her status on the running scene after taking home the world silver medal in the 10,000m in Doha. The 15km is rarely run and is not contested at the World Championships or the Olympics.

## EVENTS

### Azmari Bet featuring Yezina Negash



Following two successful performances this year, Azmari Bet returns to London.

Celebrate Ethiopia's rich culture in an evening of comedy, drama and live traditional Ethiopian music with Azmari legend, Yezina Negash, who will be exclusively performing her new songs "Enamesgnatchew" and her classic hits "Gedamu" "Tir Tir". She will be joined by Yemekir Sisay, Baby Masinko on the *Masinko* and Girum Begashaw on the *Kebero*.

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Venue: Habesha Lounge (formerly Dahlak)  
256-258 Brixton Road  
London, SW9 6AQ

Tickets: <http://bit.ly/AzmariBetXYezinaNegash>

### MOMENT “አንዳፍታ” by Wendimagegn Belete

Stitching together fragments from historic and contemporary Ethiopian culture, Wendimagegn Belete creates vibrant, textural collage paintings that explore the concept of epigenetic inheritance, of memories that transfer over generations and permeate our present.

For his latest solo exhibition, the artist presents a dynamic new body of work entitled አንዳፍታ (an Amharic word translated into English as 'moment') that fuses together artistic mediums, historic materials, and personal and collective experiences into a single throbbing pulse.



Taking place at Kristin Hjellegjerde's newest gallery space in Bermondsey, the exhibition also announces the official opening of Melior Place as the gallery's main location.

Born in Ethiopia and based in Oslo, Belete's practise is preoccupied with cultural heritage and identity. His process begins with the collection of source materials such as photographs from newspaper articles, letters, recorded conversations and various

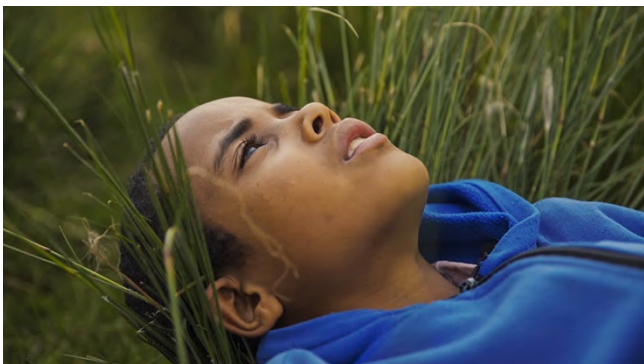
textiles - most significantly, traditional Ethiopian ceremonial garments, which the artist finds both aesthetically and symbolically interesting with regards to their continued presence in contemporary life. Fragments of these sources are then reassembled and stitched together to create a rich and complex visual landscape infused with the artist's own personal memories and perspectives. Whilst varying in origin, most of the materials are in some way engaged with Ethiopia's history, and more specifically, with Italy's violent, albeit unsuccessful attempts to colonise the country. 'Most of the time the colonial history has been narrated in a sad way, but I want to colourise it,' says Belete.

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November – 20<sup>th</sup> December

Venue: Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery Ltd.  
2 Melior Place  
London, SE1 3SZ

Information: <http://bit.ly/WendimagegnBelete>

## London Migration Film Festival presents: Anbessa + Q&A



As part of the London Migration Film Festival, *Anbessa*, a film shot in Ethiopia, will be screened at Curzon Bloomsbury on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

A condominium complex on the outskirts of Addis Ababa promises thousands of people a better way of life. It's being constructed, however, on the farmland of 10-year-old Asalif and his mother.

*Anbessa* is a lyrical documentary that captures one boy taking on modernization on his own terms, revealing a unique and magical perspective on the myth of "progress" that entraps us all.

As they watch the buildings take shape, they are reminded in small and big ways that their country's dream of "progress" is not for them.

To fight back against those casting him out and those threatening his mother's safety, Asalif taps into a fantasy of becoming his hero: the lion ("anbessa" in Amharic). Asalif uses his imagination to battle forces beyond his control.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with Professor Loretta Lees an urban geographer and international expert on gentrification and Laura Hammond, Professor of Development at SOAS whose interests include food security, conflict, forced migration and diasporas.

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Venue: Bertha Dothouse Screen  
Curzon Bloomsbury  
London WC1N 1AW

Time: 6:30 pm

Tickets: <http://bit.ly/LMFFxAnbessa>

## ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

### Ever tried revenge honey? It tastes good



The landscape of northern Ethiopia has been transformed over the last three decades by a greening project that has turned degraded land into forest. This has had a positive impact on water supplies, and on wildlife - including bees.



Justin Rowlett, BBC Chief Environment correspondent

Ethiopia has suffered some of the worst deforestation on Earth. And without trees there is little to protect the light soils of this hilly region from the sun, wind and intense bursts of rain.

But Sarah Tewolde-Berhan [a forest specialist] and her colleagues have found ways to restore woodland in even in the most unpromising areas.



Regreening isn't a new concept, Sarah says, but the community needs to support the project by ensuring that grazing animals are kept out and no-one cuts trees and shrubs for firewood.

**The collaboration has been so successful that they have been able to restore trees to 15,000 sq km of land in Tigray province alone.**

In some places, springs that have been dry for decades have started to run again. Rivers flow for longer in the year. The productivity of nearby farms has increased.

It is then that I spot the row of green hives in the shade of the trees. We walk over to get a closer look. She warns me the bees do occasionally sting. I'm not worried, I say.

At that exact moment I feel a sour burning sensation on the fleshy part of my hand. I look down and see two barbs hanging out of my thumb. There are motes of blood at the point of each. "Ouch!" I yelp. "They've stung me!"

"I'll tell you what," says Sarah, as we make our way back to her office. "My friend collects honey from those hives. Why don't I get you a jar?"

"Revenge honey?" I say. "That'd be great."

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

## **Teacher, 70, who quit her job to run a restaurant in Ethiopia admits her family thinks she's 'crazy'**



A former teacher who quit her teaching job two years before retirement to move to Ethiopia has revealed that her family doesn't understand her lifestyle, but that she can't imagine living any other way.

Appearing on *Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild*, Susan Aitchison, 70, admits she had no idea she would spend 12 years in the African country when she moved there from Glasgow in 2007, aged 58.

Susan first moved to Lalibela, about 415 miles north of the country's capital, Addis Ababa, to help a friend establish a school, and decided to stay on and open her own restaurant.



**'I thought I would be here for two years, but I'm still here 11 and a half years later.'**

Now she runs the restaurant, with 50 staff, on top of regular visits to the school where she teaches and admits to Ben Fogle that her family think she's 'crazy' for throwing herself into such a taxing life.

But she insists she's happy not to be living a 'boring' life in the UK and says she can't envisage herself watching TV and going to coffee mornings like other retirees.

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

Watch Ben Fogle's *New Lives in the Wild* on my5 at <http://bit.ly/BenFogleinETH>

### 3 Places to Travel in 2020

#### TRAVELERS TODAY

Dreaming about places new to us and seeing them in a new light is why we travel in the first place.

Start your new year on a high note by satiating your itch for wanderlust and finding solitude amidst nature, mountains, and on the land of different countries.

#### 1. Ethiopia

The oldest independent country in Africa is a beautiful country blessed with a peerless history, fabulous wildlife. Sophisticated, intrepid travellers are increasingly seeking out the natural riches of Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa, the capital city, has developed tremendously along with the modern world.



Addis Ababa

Lalibela is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is the most visited site in Ethiopia. It is home to 13 rock-hewn churches built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/TTxEthiopia2020>

### Wildlife travel: World's best locations for seeing monkeys in the wild



Fancy going to meet the relatives? Nick Trend selects some of the best wildlife holidays around the world.

#### 10. Baboons in Ethiopia

With their sharp teeth, long hair and red heart-shaped chest markings, gelada baboons graze the grasslands of Ethiopia's Simien Mountains.

Observe the complex interactions of these primates on a tour of the country's scenic landscapes.



Gelada baboon in the Simien Mountains, Ethiopia.

Also expect sightings of the eastern black-and-white colobus monkeys and vervet monkeys in the acacia woodland near Lake Awasa.

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

#### CONNECT WITH US



@EthioEmbassyUK

Published by the Public Diplomacy Department, Embassy of Ethiopia, London SW7 1PZ

To receive a copy by email, please send an email to [press@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:press@ethioembassy.org.uk).

A copy is also available online on our website: [www.ethioembassy.org.uk](http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk).



EMBASSY OF THE  
FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA  
LONDON, UK