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THE BRIEF

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DIALOGUE LIGHTS
THE WAY FORWARD

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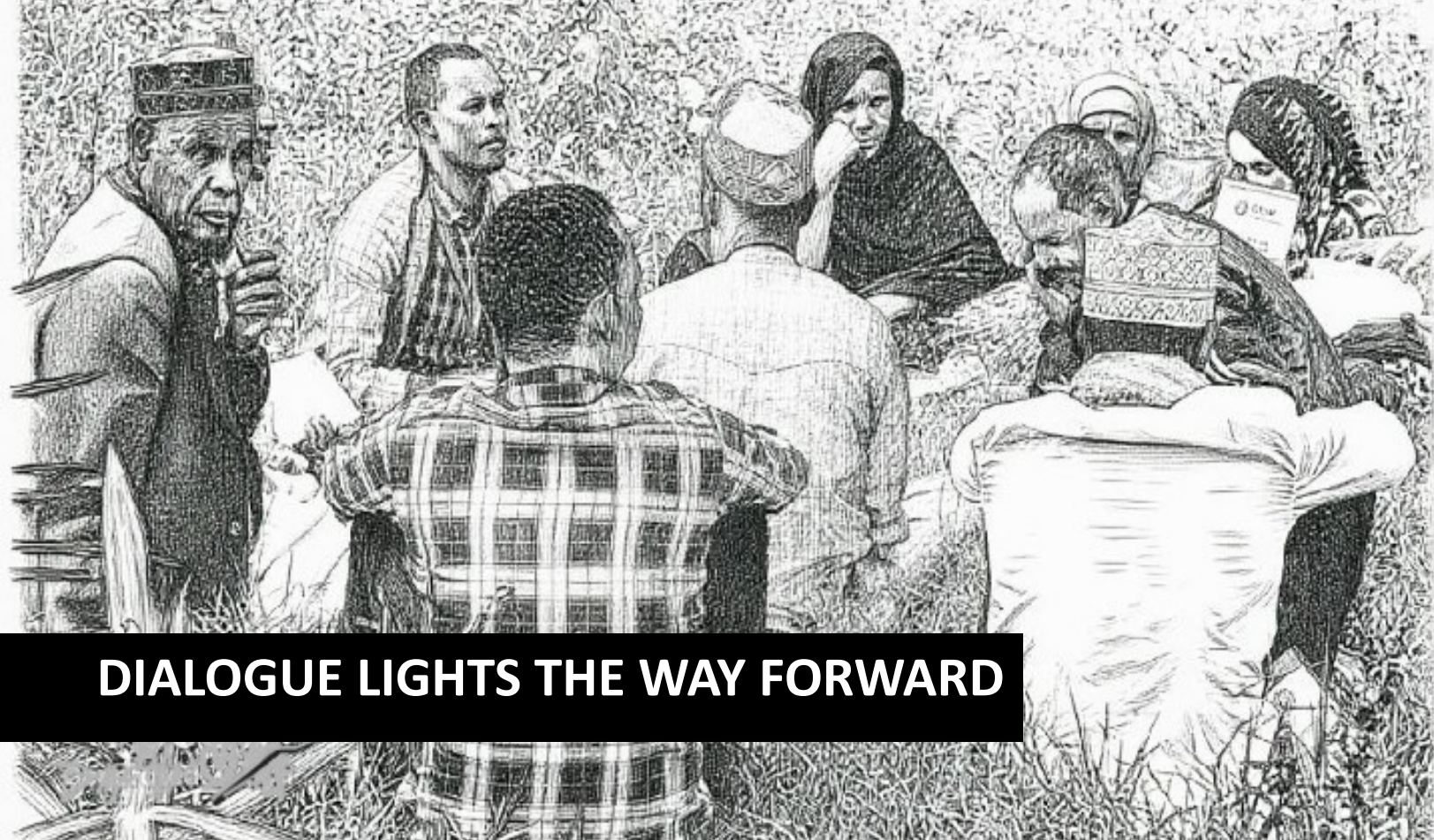
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DIALOGUE LIGHTS THE WAY FORWARD

Pencil sketch of the Dialogue Commission's agenda-gathering in the Somali Region.



By H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen

On October 11, 2025, the Ethiopian Dialogue Commission will convene a vital forum for Ethiopians living in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland as well as The Republic of Ireland. This gathering is

not just another meeting; it marks a critical phase in a broad, ongoing effort to engage the Ethiopian diaspora across the globe — including in South Africa, the United States, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, Sweden, and beyond.

Why is this moment so important? The Ethiopian Dialogue Commission's work represents a foundational step toward a democratic and inclusive Ethiopia. Dialogue rooted in respect, civility, and openness is not merely a lofty ideal; it is the bedrock upon which Ethiopia's future rests. For the Ethiopian diaspora, this is a unique opportunity — a chance to lend voice, insight, and commitment to a process that is as much about healing as it is about shaping policy and governance.

The Ethiopian diaspora has stood with the nation to support its development endeavours, including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and also through some of its most difficult chapters — offering support, advocacy, and solidarity in times of crisis. That



sense of responsibility and connection must now extend into this next chapter. Meaningful participation in the national dialogue is more than symbolic; it is a chance to deepen your bond with your country, set forth your aspirations, and help build the democratic Ethiopia we all envision. If we believe that the future is made today through the contributions of all of us, then this is the moment to act.

Let us also be honest with ourselves: opportunities like this — where Ethiopians, across identities and political leanings, are invited to sit together, raise their voices, confront challenges, and seek solutions collectively — have rarely, if ever, existed in our modern history. For a country that has too often seen its problems decided by force or through elite bargains, the very act of public dialogue is itself revolutionary. It must not be taken lightly, nor passed over casually. It is indeed a progress for all of us to reach at a stage of appreciating the need to have a national dialogue than minimizing the idea as being a mere family exercise.

This truth is deeply felt by those who are already participating. In recent forums abroad, several participants shared that they had travelled long distances — from remote towns to city centers — and left urgent matters behind at home in order to be part of the discussion. One participant said simply, “I came because my children’s future depends on the Ethiopia we shape today.” These stories of quiet sacrifice reflect not only personal commitment, but a growing understanding that this moment is consequential — that the cost of missing it could be too high.

Reflecting on 2017 Ethiopian Calendar, the Dialogue Commission made meaningful strides. We all have heard, with a sense of hope, how Ethiopians from across the country — and from every corner of the globe — came together to voice their concerns and hopes. Whether in different regions in Ethiopia, or in diaspora gatherings from Toronto to Johannesburg, a powerful truth became evident: we may come from different places and histories, but we are bound by a shared longing for peace, dignity, and self-determination. That unity of purpose is what gives this process its strength — and its legitimacy.

The tangible outcome of these efforts is the National Dialogue Assembly, planned for 2018. The Commission will oversee the selection of over 4,500 rep-

“What comes next is up to all of us. Let us seize this opportunity to build an Ethiopia that belongs to all its people — a nation united through dialogue, respect, and shared vision.”

representatives from all walks of Ethiopian life — women, soldiers, persons with disabilities, pastoralists, farmers, professionals, diaspora representatives and political voices alike — to take part in a historic assembly aimed at forging consensus on our national path forward. The Commission is working closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure that all regions, including Tigray, are meaningfully included in this national process.

So, what should Ethiopians and the diaspora expect in the year ahead? First, the final stage of diaspora agenda collection — including the UK forum — will be completed. Second, political actors who have not yet participated, or who stepped away, will be encouraged to rejoin the process. Third, the agreed-upon agendas will be presented to the Ethiopian public, and the assembly will begin the difficult but necessary work of debate, consensus-building, and recommendation.

Understandably, there are questions. Some ask whether the government’s interests are too tightly linked to this process. Others debate the composition and credibility of the commissioners.. Democracy is not the absence of disagreement, but the willingness to engage despite it. To use such pretexts as a reason to withdraw from dialogue is not a principled stance; it is a self-defeating one. We cannot demand a better process while refusing to be part of shaping it.

Equally concerning is the rising tone of intimidation — sometimes among diaspora circles — toward those who choose to participate in the dialogue. This is not the Ethiopia we want to build. For communities who live in countries where democratic norms are mature and protected, threatening or shaming fellow Ethiopians for

engaging in dialogue is not only hypocritical, but it also undermines the very values we claim to support. If we are to model democratic behaviour, let us start by respecting each other’s choices — especially when they reflect a commitment to peace.

And we must ask ourselves: what happens if we don’t engage? The answer is not abstract. We have seen it, again and again, in Ethiopia’s long history — when dialogue is absent, violence fills the vacuum. The refusal to talk has led to lost generations, fractured communities, broken institutions, and untold human cost. We know the price of silence, because we have paid it. Let us not pay it again.

The journey ahead is neither quick nor simple, but it is necessary. It calls for patience, open-mindedness, and a willingness to embrace difficult conversations. The Ethiopian Dialogue Commission’s ongoing outreach is an invitation to every Ethiopian — at home and abroad — to begin healing through dialogue.

In these pivotal moments, the diaspora’s voice is more vital than ever. By participating in the upcoming forums and the broader dialogue, Ethiopians abroad can help steer their homeland toward peace, democracy, and unity.

What comes next is up to all of us. Let us seize this opportunity to build an Ethiopia that belongs to all its people — a nation united through dialogue, respect, and shared vision. ■

This article was authored by H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

PRESIDENT TAYE CALLS FOR MULTILATERAL REFORM AND AFRICAN EMPOWERMENT



*President
Taye
Atskessilasie at 80th
UN General
Assembly*

The Brief, October 1, 2025

In his address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

Taye Atskessilasie Amde called for urgent reforms to the global system, emphasizing that the United Nations must evolve to meet the needs of a changing world.

Speaking on behalf of Ethiopia—one of the U.N.'s founding members—the president highlighted both the organization's accomplishments and its ongoing shortcomings. He acknowledged the U.N.'s pivotal role in decolonization, conflict prevention, and

managing global health crises, but stressed that “these achievements should not obscure the outstanding need for reform and revitalization.”

President Taye's remarks focused on what he described as the “inequitable representation of states” in the U.N.'s political, security, and financial structures. He criticized the lack of impartiality and the selective nature of the U.N.'s actions, warning that these issues threaten the effectiveness of international cooperation. “The emerging controversy over the fundamentals of the international system,” he said, “risks undermining the very foundations of

global peace.”

A Call for African Leadership

A key component of the president's speech was his call for greater agency and representation for African nations. President Taye emphasized Africa's growing role in global development, pointing to the continent's economic progress, climate leadership, and rising domestic revenues. Yet he also acknowledged that global challenges continue to limit Africa's ability to achieve its full potential.

“The global crises continue to impact Africa's capabilities to deliver





**No
country
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for growth
due to geo-
graphic
challenges**

on development aspirations,” President Taye said. He urged the international community to lift “coercive measures and trade restrictions” that disproportionately affect African nations and called for debt cancellation and restructuring to ease the continent’s financial burdens.

light to 60 million Ethiopians who currently lack access to any form of clean energy,” President Taye stated. He added that the project will also create jobs, improve water access, and strengthen regional connectivity.

While the dam has been a subject of discussion among neighbouring countries, President Taye emphasized the importance of fostering cooperation within the Nile River Basin. He stressed that the dam should be viewed as a “platform for cooperation” rather than a source of conflict.

The president also reiterated Africa’s longstanding push for greater representation on the U.N. Security Council. “There is no shortcut or half solution to this longstanding pursuit for justice,” he said, a reference to Africa’s demand for a permanent seat on the council.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

Among the most significant developments in Ethiopia in recent years is the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). In his speech, President Taye marked the milestone of the dam’s inauguration, noting its installed capacity of over 5,000 megawatts.

The dam, which has been a source of contention with downstream countries, is positioned as a symbol of Ethiopia’s commitment to sustainable development. “The Renaissance Dam brings

Maritime Security and Regional Cooperation

In addition to his remarks on development, President Taye addressed Ethiopia’s increasing interest in regional maritime security. The president emphasized the importance of access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, underscoring that no country should be denied opportunities for growth due to geographic challenges.

“The high seas are a common heritage of mankind,” he said, calling for greater collaboration between states to ensure equal security and development for all nations along these vital maritime routes. Ethiopia, a landlocked country, is actively seeking to strengthen its ties with its neighbours in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

A Vision for Global Cooperation

Despite the challenges he outlined, President Taye ended his speech on a note of optimism. He expressed confidence that “the spirit, genius, and competence of humanity” would ultimately prevail over “the current atmosphere of rivalry and hopelessness.”

Ethiopia, he reaffirmed, remains firmly committed to upholding the U.N. Charter and to contributing to “the maintenance of collective security and sustainable development.” The president’s words reflected Ethiopia’s ongoing commitment to multilateralism and its determination to play an active role in shaping global affairs. ■

ATOMS FOR GROWTH

Ethiopia's Expanding Energy Horizon



By H.E. Ambassador Genet Teshome

In the heart of Moscow this September, where the world's foremost scientific and policy minds gathered for World Atomic Week, Ethiopia took a prominent seat at the table of nations shaping the future of energy. Representing a country on the move, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed delivered a message that resonated with clarity and purpose: Ethiopia is ready to embrace nuclear energy as a cornerstone of its development journey.

Standing before global leaders and nuclear experts, Prime Minister Abiy spoke not only of ambition but of action. "Ethiopia stands at a pivotal moment," he declared. "Our youths are vibrant, our cities are modernizing, our industries are growing... yet our ambitions are higher." Those ambitions now include harnessing peaceful nuclear power to meet the country's rapidly growing energy demands and accelerate national transformation.

The visit marked a significant milestone in Ethiopia-Russia relations, rooted in over a century of mutual respect and cooperation. On the sidelines of the forum, Prime Minister Abiy held a bilateral meeting with President Vladimir Putin, during which the two leaders reaffirmed their countries' longstanding friendship and signed a Joint Action Plan for the development of Ethiopia's first civilian nuclear power plant.

President Putin welcomed the Ethiopian delegation warmly, describing Ethiopia as "a long-standing and reliable partner in Africa" — a sentiment mirrored by Prime Minister Abiy, who expressed gratitude for the hospitality and emphasized the deep historical and cultural ties the two countries share.

Those ties date back to 1898, when formal diplomatic relations were first established. Over the years, the partnership has flourished across education, health, defense, and technology — and now, with this new collaboration in nuclear energy, it reaches a new strategic dimension.

In his speech at the Atomic Week opening, Prime Minister Abiy outlined Ethiopia's vision for a modern, inclusive energy future. While the country has already made remarkable progress through hydropower, wind, and solar — led by the landmark Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) — he noted that additional sources are necessary to ensure energy security, sustainability, and scalability.

"Nuclear technology is that possibility," he stated. "It provides reliable low-emission power, strengthens food security, equips doctors, optimizes water management, and empowers our scientists to innovate."

Indeed, Ethiopia views its peaceful nuclear program not only as a means to power cities and industries, but as a catalyst for national development. It is an investment in human capital, scientific innovation, and long-term sustainability. The nucle-



PHOTO: Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed meets with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin.

an initiative is already underway, with a roadmap jointly developed with the Russian Federation that includes infrastructure development, personnel training, and regulatory frameworks.

The two countries' cooperation in this sector is part of a broader vision of technological partnership. During the forum, Rosatom Director General Alexei Likhachev and Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Gedion Timotheos formally exchanged the signed action plan, solidifying the next phase of collaboration. Plans are also in motion to establish a nuclear science and technology center in Ethiopia, further deepening scientific cooperation between Addis Ababa and Moscow.

Prime Minister Abiy emphasized that Ethiopia's nuclear journey will be grounded in responsibility and international best practices. The country is working closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure the highest safety standards and is committed to building strong local capacity through education and technical training.

"For us, nuclear power is a strategic step in becoming an active participant in artificial intelligence, in industry, and in innovation," he said.

The forum also provided an opportunity for broader

diplomatic engagement. Prime Minister Abiy met with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, discussing potential areas of cooperation on both bilateral and global issues.

Yet it is the Ethiopian-Russian relationship that stood out as a shining example of how science diplomacy can strengthen development partnerships. Russia, celebrating 80 years of its nuclear industry, brings decades of expertise and experience. Ethiopia brings vision, resolve, and a youthful, growing population ready to power the continent's next era.

As Prime Minister Abiy returned home, his visit to Moscow marked a turning point in Ethiopia's journey—from a nation of energy potential to one of energy leadership, with nuclear power as a cornerstone of that transformation. From the waters of the Nile to the controlled power of the atom, Ethiopia's pursuit of clean, modern energy continues — guided by cooperation, science, and the promise of a brighter tomorrow. ■

This article was authored by H.E. Ambassador Genet Teshome, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Russian Federation.

GERD AND THE PROMISE OF PAN-AFRICAN PROSPERITY

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was never just a national project. From the start, it was imagined as a continental statement — one built on African resources, African resolve, and African ambition.

That vision came into sharper focus this past week, when Ethiopia officially marked the launch of GERD in the presence of leaders from across Africa, the Caribbean, and beyond. It was a celebration not only of engineering, but of solidarity — a moment that gave physical form to the ideals of Pan-Africanism and South-South cooperation.

When Ethiopia first broke ground on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) more than a decade ago, it did so without financial support from global banks or the backing of financial powers. Faced with indifference and doubt, Ethiopians turned inward, rallied together, and looked to each other.

From civil servants to shopkeepers, farmers to university students, millions of Ethiopians contributed what they could. Some gave a month's salary. Others bought bonds in small amounts. In the end, a nation financed its dream with its own hands, hearts, and hard-earned birr.

Today, GERD stands as the largest hydropower project in Africa and one of the few major infrastructural achievements in the Global South built without external debt. But to describe GERD only in terms of megawatts and machinery is to miss its greater meaning. The dam is, in the words of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, “a symbol of resilience of the past and hope for the future.”

It is also a symbol of trust — in ourselves, in our



continent, and in the principle that African problems are best addressed through African solutions.

A Pan-African Project

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam may be built on Ethiopian soil, but it is rooted in Pan-African ideals. When Ethiopia invited the African Union — and only the African Union — to mediate negotiations with downstream countries, it did so with deep conviction in

the AU's legitimacy and moral authority.

This is not merely a diplomatic stance. It reflects Ethiopia's long-standing belief that cooperation, not coercion, must guide our shared use of natural resources. We understand, intimately, that rivers do not respect borders. But we also believe that development must not be denied, nor must it come at the expense of others.

In the words of Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, "Our challenge is not to deny the needs of any one of us, but to find the ways to balance — in the spirit of fairness and mutual respect."

Kenya's President William Ruto echoed the sentiment: "This is not just a dam. It is a Pan-African statement." He is right. GERD exemplifies the kind of transformative, African-led infrastructure project envisioned by Agenda 2063, the African Union's blueprint for continental development.

It also aligns with the AU's Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), which seeks to unlock Africa's immense potential through cross-border integration and green investment.

Green Growth, Shared Power

GERD is not just about power in the electrical sense. It is about empowerment.

With a capacity of more than 5,000 megawatts, GERD is set to be the largest hydropower plant on the continent — poised to uplift Ethiopia's industrial sector, expand rural access, and export power to neighbours. Already, Ethiopia has begun supplying clean energy to Sudan, Kenya, and Djibouti, and talks are underway to export electricity to Tanzania, among others. As President Salva Kiir of South Sudan said: "Together, we can turn our challenges into opportunities for peace, stability, and growth."

The project also strengthens Ethiopia's com-

mitment to climate-resilient growth. Hosting the 2nd African Climate Summit in Addis Ababa in September, Ethiopia underscored its resolve to lead on the continent's green transition. GERD is proof that our climate goals are more than words — they are engineering realities.

A Bridge Across Oceans

As Ethiopia celebrated GERD's inauguration, another historic summit was unfolding nearby: the 2nd Africa-CARICOM Summit, also held in Addis Ababa. Leaders from the Caribbean and Africa — two regions connected by pain, struggle, and resilience — came together to chart a future of shared prosperity, political solidarity, and reparatory justice.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley delivered one of the most moving tributes to GERD, calling it "the Adwa engineering feat." Her words touched on more than scale — they invoked the spiritual legacy of Ethiopia's 1896 victory against colonial invasion. That triumph, she reminded us, inspired generations across the African diaspora.

"When the international world said this project would not happen... the people stood tall," she said. "\$5 billion later, this speaks not just to prosperity but to what remains possible for all people of African origin."

In that moment, GERD was no longer just Ethiopia's. It became a collective symbol — a shared source of pride across continents and communities, from Kingston to Nairobi, from Bridgetown to Bamako.

The People's Dam

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is not merely a government achievement. It is a people's victory.

It is the woman who gave her gold earrings. The teacher who donated part of his pension. The diaspora who sent what they could from every corner of the globe. GERD is powered





PHOTO: Officials and dignitaries attend the inauguration ceremony of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

not just by turbines, but by a nation's will to rise.

In Ethiopia, we call this spirit "*Medemer*" — a philosophy of synergy, of adding together. It is the ethos Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has promoted at home and abroad, a belief that when we combine our efforts with intention and dignity, the sum becomes greater than its parts.

It is this same spirit that guides our diplomacy, our energy policy, and our relationship with the wider African and Black global community.

Looking Forward, Together

As Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United Kingdom, I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand how narratives about Africa are changing. Where once we were seen only as recipients of aid, today we are recognized — and recognize ourselves — as agents of growth, innovation, and global relevance.

GERD is not a conclusion. It is a beginning.

A beginning of equitable energy access. Of African-

led financing. Of regional cooperation that does not demand we compromise our dignity. Of a new solidarity between Africa and the diaspora.

To the people of Ethiopia: your endurance, sacrifice, and unity built this dam. And it is you who will carry its light forward.

To our African and Caribbean brothers and sisters: GERD is a gift we hope to share. It flows from our river, but it belongs to all who believe in progress shaped not by dominance, but by mutual uplift.

As Prime Minister Mottley so eloquently put it, "Let us go forward in love, in unity — one aim, one purpose, one destiny." ■

This article was authored by H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and was originally published on *The Voice* newspaper's website.

THE SECOND AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT (ACS2)

8-10 SEPTEMBER, 2025 | ADDIS ABABA



PHOTO: Delegates enter the 2nd Africa Climate Summit at the newly built Addis International Convention Center

Ethiopia Steps Up for COP32 After Climate Summit Success

In a continent often framed by climate vulnerability, a different story emerged this month from Ethiopia. At the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), hosted in Addis Ababa from September 8 to 10, African leaders, scientists, financiers, and civil society stakeholders converged to issue a powerful message: Africa is no longer simply a casualty of the climate crisis — it intends to shape its solutions, set its terms, and claim its place in the global climate economy.

Convened under the theme “Accelerating Global Climate Solutions: Financing for Africa’s Resilient and Green Development,” the summit marked a significant departure from the optics of dependence that have long defined Africa’s climate diplomacy. At the heart of the event was the formal adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration, a continent-wide call to action that centers African-led initiatives, demands equitable climate

finance, and sets forth a unified position ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30, to be held November 10–21, 2025, in Belém, Brazil).

Ethiopia’s Moment

The motivation for Ethiopia to take on this big responsibility within the continent came from the conviction that the narrative on climate in Africa needs to change. Too often, Africans are not in the room where the key decisions about the continent’s future are made. When those decisions are made, they are too often made for us, not with us.

Thus, for Ethiopia, the Second Africa Climate Summit in Addis Ababa was about changing that reality. It was about ensuring Africa speaks with one voice, sets its own priorities, and shapes global solutions that work not only for Africa, but for the entire world. ➡

THE SECOND AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT [ACS2]

8-10 SEPTEMBER, 2025 | ADDIS ABABA



PHOTO: Stage performance during the opening of the 2nd Africa Climate Summit in Addis Ababa.

For host nation Ethiopia, the summit was more than a diplomatic event — it was a demonstration of capability, vision, and strategic intent. Ethiopia not only organized the logistical demands of a 25,000-person international summit — with delegates from over 50 nations, 240 official side events, and 43 exhibitions — but also used the platform to propose bold, African-owned climate instruments. This scale of participation demonstrated that Africa is united, engaged, and ready to lead.

The convenings were not just the voice of governments but the voice of a continent. “The success of the summit is proof that Ethiopia can convene, lead, and deliver,” said Dr. Fitsum Assefa, who coordinated national preparations as Minister of Planning and Development. “We showed what it means for a country to believe in African solutions.”

Indeed, few nations embody the summit’s ethos more directly than Ethiopia. Its Green Legacy Initiative, now in its seventh year, has planted more than 48 billion seedlings and earned recognition as a model for nature-based climate strategies. The recently inaugurated Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, set to generate over 5,000 megawatts of renewable energy, underscores Ethiopia’s bet on clean infrastructure as a pillar of development. These and other homegrown efforts — including climate-smart agriculture and clean cooking programs — were presented not as development projects, but as blueprints for global emulation.

From Aid to Investment

Central to the summit’s outcome was a decisive push to shift the financing narrative. Prime Minister Abiy used his keynote address — delivered on the summit’s opening day — to announce the Africa Climate Innovation Compact, an ambitious platform aiming to mobilize \$50 billion annually to fund 1,000 African climate solutions by 2030. This effort, he emphasized, will be led by African institutions and innovators — in partnership with the global community, but never at its mercy.

That sentiment reverberated across summit halls. A joint framework signed by the African Development Bank, Africa50, Afreximbank, and the Africa Finance Corporation committed to unlocking \$100 billion under the Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative, focused on leveraging the continent’s renewable energy and mineral wealth. Meanwhile, the long-awaited African Climate Change Fund was operationalized to channel green bonds and concessional finance tailored to African conditions.

There was also a sharpened tone toward the Global North. African leaders reiterated that adaptation finance is a legal obligation, not charity, and pressed for structural reform of multilateral development banks to reduce borrowing costs and expand African representation.

“Climate justice must move from rhetoric to architecture,” read one line from the Addis Ababa Declaration. “Africa cannot build a green future on the foundation of unsustainable debt.” ■

AFRICA–CARICOM SUMMIT

A Reconnection for Reparatory Justice and Global African Solidarity

By H.E. Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla Negash

From September 6–7, 2025, Addis Ababa hosted the Second Africa–CARICOM Summit and became the beating heart of Pan-African diplomacy, the first in-person gathering of African and Caribbean heads of state and government under the theme: “Transcontinental Partnership in Pursuit of Reparatory Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations.” This landmark summit marked a powerful affirmation of global Black solidarity, a strategic realignment of Africa and its diaspora, and the formal launch of a joint global movement for reparatory justice.

The summit was graciously hosted by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia and co-chaired by João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and Chairperson of the African Union and Prime Minister Terrance Drew of Saint Kitts and Nevis, current first vice Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The gathering brought together numerous Heads of State, Ministers, and High-Level delegations from across Africa and the Caribbean, culminating years of diplomatic engagement and solidarity-building between the two regions.

Ethiopia: At the Heart of Reconnection and Justice

Ethiopia’s role as host was deeply symbolic and strategically vital. As the seat of the African Union and the site of the continent’s most iconic anti-colonial victory at Adwa, Ethiopia stood as a beacon of Black resistance, sovereignty, and unity. The country has long held a revered place in the Pan-African imagination, from the revolutionary thought of Marcus Garvey to the spiritual homeland embraced by the Rastafarian movement.

From Adwa to Addis, the arc of African resistance and renewal has always pointed toward freedom and dignity. The summit was not merely a gathering of lead-

ers, but it was a reunion of peoples, a reconnection of distant continents, and a step towards a shared justice. It marked a pivotal moment when Africa and its diaspora chose to move beyond calls for justice and instead build it together.

For the Caribbean leaders and communities, Ethiopia represented the spiritual and strategic nexus of Pan-Africanism. In Addis Ababa, that sentiment transformed into actionable partnership formalizing shared political, economic, cultural, and historical initiatives that will shape the decades ahead.

Days for Reconnection

The summit opened on September 6, 2025 with a meeting of Health Ministers, who discussed shared public health priorities, pandemic preparedness, and long-term collaboration in health systems, pharmaceutical production, and medical research. On September 7, 2025 the summit of Heads of State officially commenced and featured three closed plenary sessions, each focused on advancing reparations, strengthening economic and political ties, and expanding cultural and educational linkages. The summit proceeded with determination and unity. It has concluded with a momentous achievement: the unanimous adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration, a comprehensive political roadmap for reparatory justice and transcontinental solidarity.

The Addis Ababa Declaration: A Roadmap for Reparatory Justice

The central legacy of the Summit was the groundbreaking adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration on “Transcontinental Partnership in Pursuit of Reparatory Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations.” This unprecedented document commits both the African Union and CARICOM to coordinated global action on reparatory justice, laying out a visionary and structured approach to historical redress and future development. ➡



PHOTO: Leaders and officials from Africa and the Caribbean attend the AU–CARICOM Summit.

The declaration recognizes the transatlantic slave trade, chattel enslavement, colonialism, apartheid, and genocide as crimes against humanity that demand compensation, restitution, and accountability under international law. It calls for the establishment of a Global Reparations Fund, to be based in Africa and financed by the governments, monarchies, corporations, and institutions responsible for historical atrocities and exploitation.

Operational mechanisms were emphasized throughout the declaration. These include the full activation of the African-Caribbean Joint Mechanism on Reparative Justice and the African Union Committee of Experts on Reparations. A historic initiative within the declaration is the designation of 2026 to 2036 as the Decade of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent, building on the AU’s 2025 Theme of the Year.

The document further reinforces the demand for the full restitution of stolen cultural property, sacred religious artifacts, ancestral archives, and human remains. It calls for a unified African position on the restitution of cultural heritage and urges renewed efforts to recover these treasures from European museums and private collections. Annual conferences on reparations are to be instituted, rotating between Africa and the Caribbean, to ensure sustained political and diplomatic momentum.

The declaration also underscores the importance of collaboration with multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and UNESCO, and with global civil society. It highlights the need for joint legal frameworks, research, and documentation of claims. The CARICOM Ten-Point Plan for Reparatory Justice was

elevated as a reference document, ensuring that reparations are framed as a developmental agenda.

Crucially, the declaration commits to extending the partnership beyond CARICOM, embracing the African diaspora in Latin America, North America, and Europe ensuring a global, united front in the reparatory justice movement.

A Powerful Gesture at the Renaissance Dam

A highlight of the summit was the participation of the Prime Minister of Barbados and other Caribbean dignitaries in the inauguration ceremony of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Standing alongside with Ethiopian and African officials, Prime Minister Mia Mottley delivered an impassioned message not only to Ethiopia but to the entire African continent and its global diaspora. She hailed the dam as a symbol of sovereignty, resilience, and African innovation, calling it “a monument to sovereignty, self-determination, and African ingenuity.”

Her remarks echoed throughout the summit, reinforcing the central idea that reparatory justice is not merely about redressing the past, but it is also about building sovereign and dignified futures for African peoples everywhere.

Shashemene: Reconnecting with a Spiritual Homeland

On September 8, 2025 the CARICOM delegation visited the town of Shashemene, gifted to descendants of the African diaspora in the mid-20th century from Emperor Haile Selassie. This emotionally filled visit served as a spiritual and cultural capstone to the summit. It was more than ceremonial, but a return to home. The journey reaffirmed the deep emotional, historical, and

cultural ties that bind Africa and the Caribbean.

The visit reminded all participants that Pan-Africanism is not only a political project, but also a personal and spiritual calling, rooted in centuries of struggle and hope.

From Symbolism to Strategy

Beyond symbolism, the Second Africa-CARICOM Summit also delivered substantive policy directions aimed at long-term cooperation. Trade and investment emerged as key priorities, with the leaders vowing to reverse the dismally low current trade volume exists between the two continents. Proposals were made to establish direct air and maritime links, simplify regulatory procedures for businesses, and promote joint ventures across agriculture, finance, tourism, and infrastructure.

Global challenges such as climate change, digital innovation, and food insecurity were addressed with urgency. Leaders emphasized collaboration on climate resilience, the application of artificial intelligence in agriculture, and joint research on pandemic response mechanisms.

Education, youth empowerment, and culture also received significant attention. The summit called for the expansion of academic exchanges and scholarships, the strengthening of Pan-African universities and research networks, and the establishment of an African-Diaspora Museum Network to celebrate and connect shared histories and identities.

A New Era Begins

As the summit concluded, leaders called for a progress report to be presented jointly by the African Union Commission and the CARICOM Secretariat at the next summit. With the adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration and the symbolic power of Ethiopia as its host, Africa and the Caribbean have entered a new era of strategic cooperation.

As Ethiopia stood proudly at the center of this historic reconnection, the message was loud and clear: the time for talk is over. Now is the time for trans-continental action grounded in justice, sovereignty, and shared purpose. ■

About the Author

H.E. Ambassador Nebiyu Tedla Negash is the Director General of the Public Diplomacy Directorate General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.

Photo Captions

Top to bottom: Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Dr. Gedion Timotheos, State Minister H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Tsegaye, and Chief of Protocol Dr. Aziza Geleta receive dignitaries arriving in Addis Ababa for the AU-CARICOM Summit.



DISCOVER ETHIOPIA'S HIDDEN COFFEE RITUALS

Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee, has long been at the forefront of the global coffee market. In 2017 Ethiopian Calendar, the country made headlines by exporting 470,000 tons of coffee, generating over 2.65 billion USD. The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority has even loftier ambitions, aiming for 600,000 tons in 2018, with a target revenue surpassing 3 billion USD.

While these commercial successes are undeniable, there is another side to Ethiopia's coffee story—one that is rooted deeply in culture, tradition, and meaning. As we celebrate International Coffee Day, let us dive into two fascinating, lesser-known coffee brewing rituals from Ethiopia: *Bune Qela* from Borena and *Chomo* from the Majang community in Gambela.

Bune Qela: A Special Brew of Borena

In the Borena and Guji areas, *Bune Qela* stands apart as a drink that is much more than just coffee. Roasted beans are combined with fresh milk and butter, creating a rich, creamy brew that is unlike anything you might expect from your usual cup.

But *Bune Qela* is not just about flavour; it is a symbol of hospitality, respect, and connection. Served during life's most significant moments—births, conflict resolu-





Artistic Rendering of a Traditional Ethiopian Coffee Ritual

tions, and the *Geda* ceremony—it is a drink that signifies honour. For the Borena people, coffee is revered, and *Bune Qela* represents the community's deep values of respect and togetherness.

When someone embarks on a long journey, they are given *Bune Qela* as a kind of traveling companion, believed to provide strength and protection. This ritual is not just a gesture of hospitality—it is a powerful symbol of connection between the traveler and the community.

And when offered a cup of *Bune Qela*, it is customary for the recipient to return a small portion, a practice that reinforces mutual respect. The remaining coffee is often shared with children, teaching them the importance of reciprocity and community.

Chomo: The Majang Community's Medicinal Brew

In the culturally diverse Gambela region, where the Majang people reside, coffee takes on a medicinal, almost mystical form. *Chomo* is made not from beans, but from roasted coffee leaves, combined with sacred basil, garlic, ginger, coriander, and salt—each ingredient a reflection of the Majang's deep connection to their land and culture.

Unlike traditional coffee, *Chomo* is often unsweetened and served with *mitmita*—a blend of spicy bird's-eye chili, which gives it an unforgettable, bold

flavour. Whether served with or without the chili, this brew is aromatic, intense, and deeply connected to the Majang community's holistic worldview.

To the Majang, *Chomo* is not just a drink but a remedy, believed to carry health benefits. The blend of herbs and spices is seen as a form of natural healing, rooted in generations of wisdom. It is a drink that connects the rituals of coffee with wellness, offering a unique opportunity to sip on both culture and tradition.

Celebrate International Coffee Day with Ethiopian Tradition

This International Coffee Day, take a step beyond your usual cup and experience the richness of Ethiopia's coffee culture. *Bune Qela* and *Chomo* are not just beverages—they are living, breathing traditions that offer a deeper connection to the people, history, and rituals of Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee.

If you are an adventurous coffee drinker, these brews promise more than just a caffeine kick—they offer a journey into the heart of Ethiopia itself. Experience the deep roots of community, respect, and hospitality with every sip, and open yourself up to a new world of flavour and meaning.

So, are you ready to embrace coffee like never before? ■

Should you require any of the embassy's services, find the names and contact details of our dedicated staff members here.

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