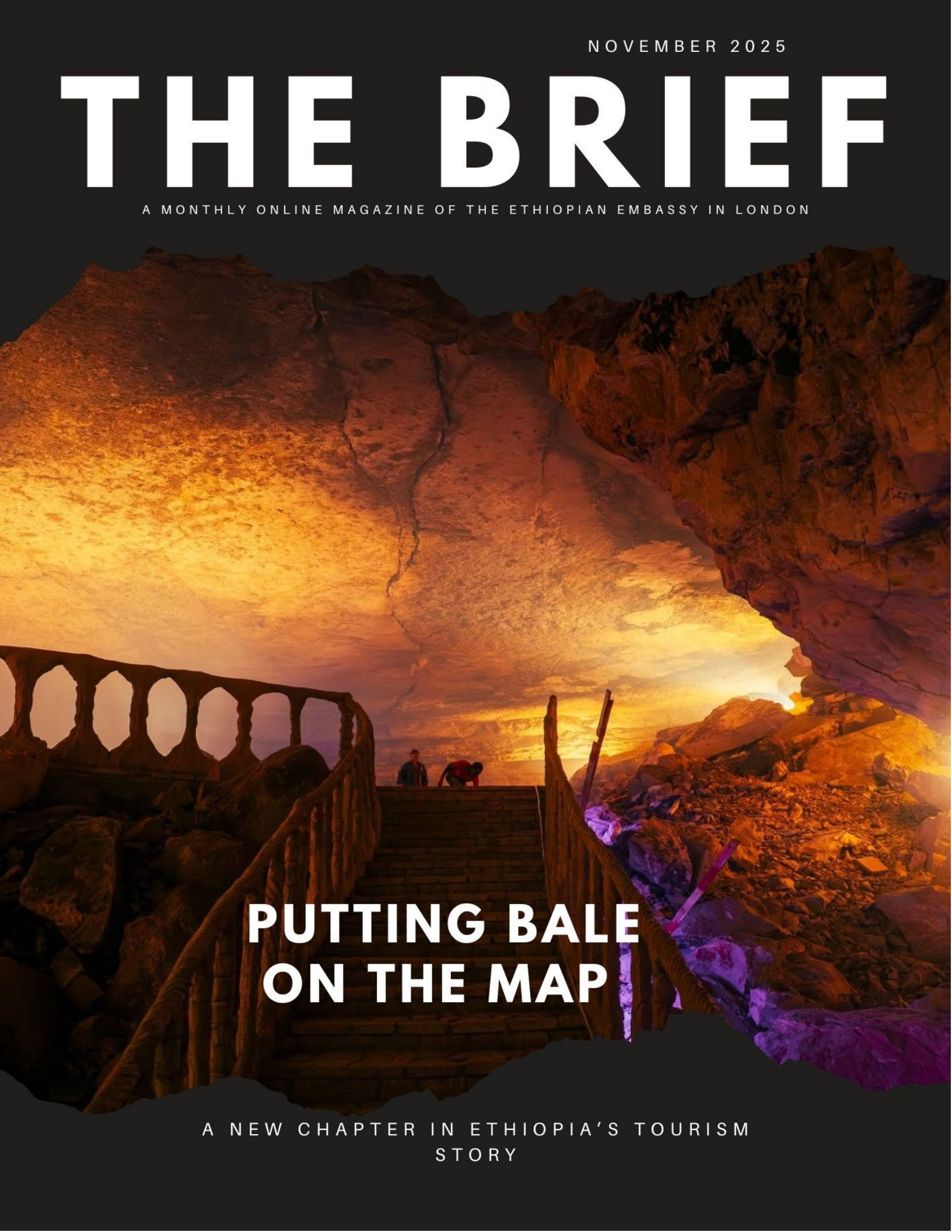


NOVEMBER 2025

THE BRIEF

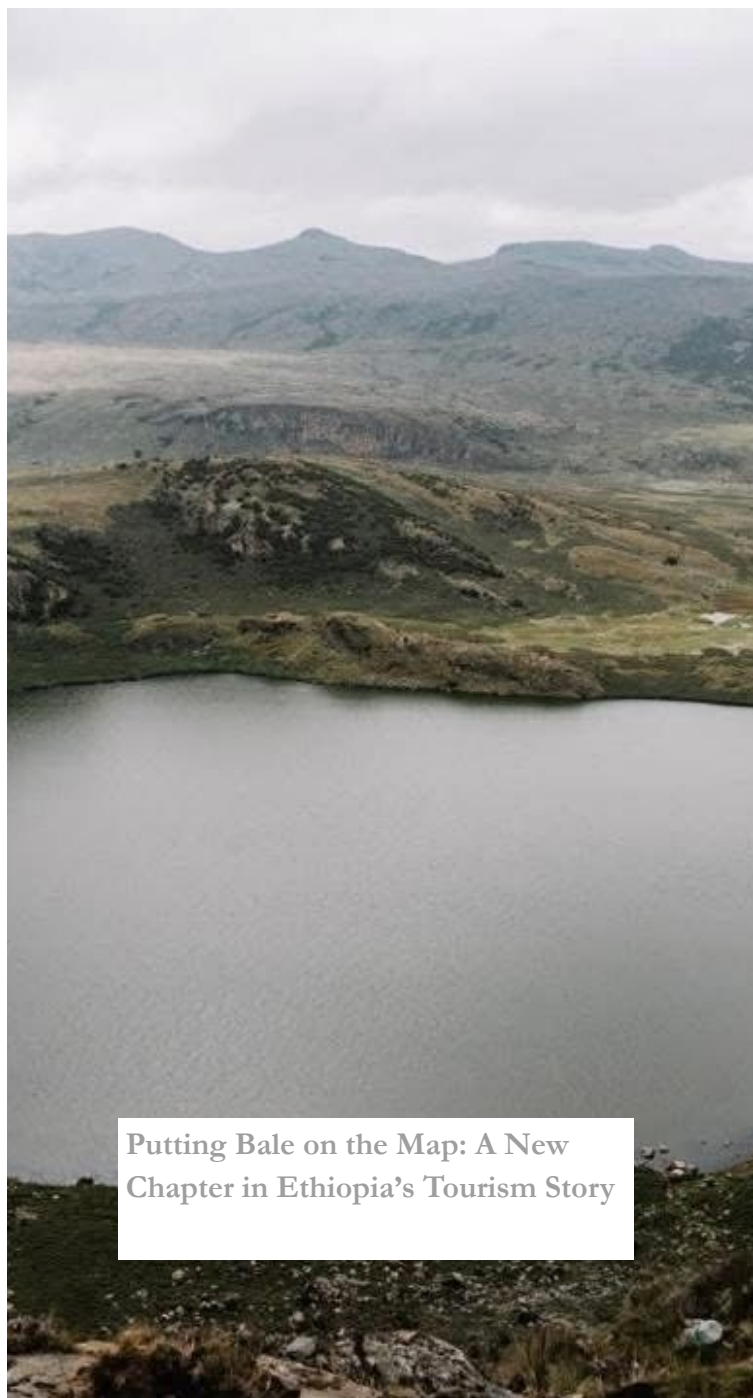
A MONTHLY ONLINE MAGAZINE OF THE ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY IN LONDON



PUTTING BALE ON THE MAP

A NEW CHAPTER IN ETHIOPIA'S TOURISM
STORY

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Balancing National Unity, Red Sea Access, And Democratic Continuity



Photo: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addresses members of the House of People's Representatives on October 28, 2025.

In a wide-ranging address to Parliament during the 6th Round, 5th Year, 2nd Regular Session of the House of People's Representatives, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to peace, security, and inclusive national progress. Speaking before lawmakers in an atmosphere of attentiveness and resolve, the Premier outlined Ethiopia's efforts toward consolidating peace, advancing national dialogue, ensuring justice, and safeguarding national interests while preparing for the next general election.

Commitment to Peace and Reconciliation

Prime Minister Abiy began by underscoring the government's practical steps toward lasting peace. "Armed rebellion is outdated," he declared, emphasizing that resorting to violence serves external agendas rather than national progress. He reiterated the government's readiness to work with any group or individual willing to renounce force and engage peacefully.

Highlighting examples within his administration,

the Prime Minister noted that several current government figures were once in opposition — some even engaged in armed resistance — but are now contributing to national development. "This is evidence that Ethiopia's peace project is inclusive and forward-looking," he said.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the Transitional Justice mechanism, a framework designed to redress past injustices while offering pathways for disarmament, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. Alongside this, he emphasized the ongoing National Dialogue, describing it as an essential platform for Ethiopians to resolve long-standing grievances through peaceful and participatory means. While some actors at home and abroad have declined to participate, Prime Minister Abiy urged all Ethiopians to engage, calling their absence "shortsighted at a time when unity is vital."

Message to Tigray: Peace Through Development

Turning to the situation in Tigray, the Prime Minister reiterated his government's clear stance against

“
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renewed conflict. “We do not want further fighting in the Tigray region. We want to develop the country together,” he said.

Prime Minister Abiy warned that attempts to challenge the constitutional order through force would not succeed and expressed concern that resources intended for reconstruction in Tigray were being diverted from development to insurgency. “Tigray needs development, not destruction,” he stated. The federal government, he added, remains committed to implementing the Pretoria Peace Agreement. **Safeguarding National Interests: Red Sea and Nile**

When the discussion turned to Ethiopia’s maritime aspirations, the chamber’s tone shifted. As Prime Minister Abiy spoke of Ethiopia’s historical and legal right to sea access, members of Parliament responded with warm applause, signaling broad support for what he described as an “inevitable strategic national interest.”

He reaffirmed that Ethiopia’s loss of sea access decades ago was not based on any legitimate agreement, revealing that government investigations found no official documentation sanctioning it. “Our loss of sea access was neither legal nor just,” he said, emphasizing that Ethiopia’s pursuit of access to the Red Sea will remain peaceful and respectful of regional stability.

The Prime Minister announced that he had formally appealed to the international community to help mediate talks with Eritrea on the matter, emphasizing that the goal is mutual benefit, not confrontation. He detailed Ethiopia’s past efforts to work amicably with Asmara, including the construction of road networks connecting the two nations, the expansion of electric grids intended to supply power to Eritrea, and the vibrant border trade that flourished during the rapprochement period. “Despite

these gestures of cooperation,” he noted, “our goodwill failed to impress the Eritrean government.”

Addressing domestic skepticism, Prime Minister Abiy firmly rejected claims that the Red Sea agenda was raised to distract the public from internal issues. “Any Ethiopian who says this issue is a diversion is echoing the narratives of anti-Ethiopian elements,” he said. He recalled that during Eritrea’s three-decade struggle for independence, some Ethiopian opposition groups had framed the Eritrean cause as a “decolonization question” — a stance, he argued, that was often used to secure logistical support from Eritrean guerrillas. “Those who now question Ethiopia’s legitimate quest for sea access are continuing that same misguided narrative,” he said, asserting that Ethiopia’s current policy stems purely from national interest and sovereignty.

“As Ethiopia grows,” Prime Minister Abiy added, “it will serve as a source of prosperity for the entire region. What we seek is shared growth and mutual progress.”

On the Nile River, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Ethiopia’s right to fair and equitable use of its waters, stressing that the river’s resources are sufficient for all riparian nations. “Ethiopia will neither plan nor act in a way that harms any party,” he said, calling for cooperation with Egypt and Sudan. “Our brothers and sisters downstream must understand that our prosperity is interconnected.”

A Vision for Democratic Continuity

Looking ahead, Prime Minister Abiy assured Parliament of the government’s readiness to hold the upcoming 7th National Election as scheduled. He described it as a milestone in Ethiopia’s democratic journey. “The government has both the capacity and the readiness to ensure that this will be the most organized and credible election in our history,” he said. The Prime Minister encouraged all political parties to begin their preparations, underscoring that a plurality of voices is essential for a resilient democracy.

A Message of Peace and Purpose

Closing his address, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called upon Ethiopians to prioritize dialogue over division, peace over confrontation, and unity over fragmentation. “Ethiopia cannot exist in isolation,” he said. “Our future depends on our ability to solve our challenges together — through reason, justice, and shared vision.”

From peacebuilding and justice to diplomacy and democratic governance, the Prime Minister’s message was clear: Ethiopia’s path forward is one of dialogue, development, and enduring stability — a vision that seeks not only national harmony but also regional cooperation and mutual growth. ■

AFRICA'S EMERGING INVEST- MENT FRONTIER

A new era of economic reform and investment opportunities in Ethiopia



By H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen

I attended the Eastern Africa Association's Annual Lecture & Conference, as well as the Ethiopia Investment Summit at AFSIC in London in October 2025, alongside key financial institutions and development partners, to showcase Ethiopia's rapidly evolving investment landscape. The discussions made one point abundantly clear: Ethiopia is no longer an aspirational market—it is emerging as a hub for profitable, large-scale investment.

Ethiopia's economy has grown with remarkable resilience. In the 2017 (Ethiopian Calendar) fiscal year, GDP expanded by 9.2%, with agriculture rising 7.3%, industry 13%, and services 7.5%. Looking ahead, government projections suggest growth of 10.2% in E.C. 2018, supported by major projects such as the completed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, new fertilizer plants, and nascent gas extraction initiatives. The economy is diversified: agriculture contributes 31.3% of GDP, industry 30.2%, and services 39.6%—a broad foundation that de-risks investment and opens multiple pathways for returns.

Financial reforms have accelerated this transformation. Ethiopia now has its first fully operational Securities Exchange, enabling structured investment in equities and bonds linked to high-return projects. Reports from Ethiopia's Council of Ministers on the economic performance of the first quarter of the 2018 Ethiopian fiscal year (July–September 2025) show that digital finance is booming, with transactions surpassing 6.5

trillion birr — a clear sign of both the scale and sophistication of the country's digital economy. Lending surged, with loan disbursement up 113% year-on-year, demonstrating the capacity to fund expansion across sectors. These reforms make projects like the Bishoftu Airport expansion not just strategic national assets but commercially viable ventures.

Infrastructure development complements financial modernization. National corridor projects, covering hundreds of hectares, have delivered modern roads, logistics networks, green spaces, and urban amenities—stimulating local economic activity and improving labour mobility. These advancements provide additional momentum for Ethiopia's growing hospitality sector, creating a foundation for world-class hotels, resorts, and tourism experiences to flourish. Industrial parks and Special Economic Zones now host multinational manufacturers, enabling profitable returns through export-oriented production, technology transfer, and scale efficiencies.

Ethiopia's growing connectivity extends beyond its national borders. In addition to exporting electricity to neighbouring countries, the nation recently marked a major milestone by dispatching its first shipment of goods under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement. Agricultural products, including meat and fruits, are now reaching markets in Somalia, Kenya, and South Africa, signalling Ethiopia's readiness to leverage a unified continental market of 1.4 billion

people. This integration demonstrates how domestic growth and strategic continental engagement together enhance opportunities for investors seeking both regional and international reach.

The numbers underscore the opportunity. Industrial capacity utilization has reached 65%, cement production rose to 9.1 million tons, gold output surged to nearly 39 tons, and export earnings exceeded \$8.3 billion—a 115% jump over the previous year. Strategic projects such as the Bishoftu Airport, with a prime location and rising demand, are poised to benefit directly from this momentum, attracting international capital and delivering strong, risk-adjusted returns.

Ethiopia offers a rare convergence of reform, opportunity, and strategic positioning. By integrating capital market development, industrial expansion, infrastructure modernization, and continental trade access, the government has created an environment where investment is both secure and highly profitable.

For international investors, this is not a peripheral opportunity—it is a chance to participate at the ground level in Africa’s most dynamic emerging economy, leveraging domestic growth and continental integration.

In Ethiopia, the doors are open, the groundwork is solid, and the potential for shared prosperity has never been greater.

Mark your calendars for April 2–3, 2026, in Addis Ababa, and join the Invest in Ethiopia 2026 Forum. Be part of the nation’s journey toward sustainable growth, connect with key decision-makers, and explore opportunities to invest in Africa’s emerging frontier. ■

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



SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 2 - 3, 2026

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Ethiopia and the European Union

A Renewed Chapter in the Second Global Gateway Forum



By H.E. Eshete Tilahun

*Ethiopian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium
and the European Union*

In an era defined by shifting geopolitics and accelerating technological change, partnerships built on trust and shared values have never been more vital. For Ethiopia and the European Union, five decades of collaboration have laid the groundwork for a renewed and strategic alliance—one that looks beyond traditional development assistance toward a future of mutual investment, innovation, and sustainability.

The enduring Ethiopia–EU partnership traces its formal roots to the 1975 Lomé Convention, which established a structured framework for cooperation. Over the years, this relationship has evolved in both depth and ambition. The 2016 Joint Declaration Towards Strategic Engagement elevated the partnership to a new level, creating a platform for dialogue on trade, peace and security, and sustainable development. Today, that partnership finds new expression through the European Union’s Global Gateway initiative, a transformative framework designed to channel investments into green growth, digital transformation, and resilient infrastructure.

The Second Global Gateway Forum, held in Brussels on October 9–10, 2025, marked a defining moment in this evolving relationship. Convened under the theme “Partnerships in a Geopolitical Era: Time for a New Strategic Conversation,”

the Forum brought together heads of state and government, leaders of international institutions, and private sector representatives to translate shared vision into tangible action. For Ethiopia, the Forum represented both a reaffirmation of long-standing cooperation and an opportunity to chart a forward-looking agenda for the years to come.

President Taye Atske-Selassie, who led the Ethiopian delegation, defined the Forum as “a milestone in our enduring partnership with the European Union.” On the sidelines of the event, Ethiopia and the European Union signed the Global Gateway Partnership Commitment, symbolizing a renewed strategic cooperation. The signing with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen coincided with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two sides—an occasion that celebrated history while turning resolutely toward the future.

The Global Gateway initiative, which mobilizes up to €300 billion in investments through the Team Europe approach, embodies a comprehensive vision for sustainable connectivity. Its key priorities—green transition and clean energy, digital innovation, and sustainable infrastructure—are closely aligned with Ethiopia’s national development strategies, including the Home-Grown Economic Reform Programme and the Digital Ethiopia 2030 Strategy.

In his keynote address at the opening of the Forum, President Taye identified three important areas for future collaboration with the European Union: establishing a joint Africa–EU technology and innovation platform to foster research and digital advancement; launching a value chain integration initiative to strengthen industrial linkages and regional competitiveness; and investing in future-ready skills development to prepare Africa’s youth for an increasingly digital economy. These initiatives, he emphasized, are designed to “deliver tangible benefits to citizens in both Ethiopia and the European Union, fostering a virtuous cycle of investment, trade, and shared prosperity.”

On regional issues of shared interest, President Taye accentuated that the effectiveness of development routes depends on the stability of their gateways to the world. He noted that the security of the Red Sea corridor is not only a matter of national interest for Ethiopia but also a necessity for regional economic stability and the smooth flow of global



Photo: President Taye Atske Selassie, along with other leaders, participated in the Global Gateway Forum 2025.

trade. He called for a collaborative security framework that brings together regional stakeholders and key international partners to safeguard shared strategic interests.

Energy cooperation remains a cornerstone this partnership to deliver up to expectations. The inauguration of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a domestically financed project generating over 5,000 megawatts, stands as a testament to Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable energy and regional integration. The contribution the GERD to renewable power and cross-border electricity trade resonates strongly with the Global Gateway's vision of green and resilient infrastructure.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative provides another striking example of this shared agenda. As President Taye noted in his interview with *Diplomatic World*, the initiative "demonstrates that African countries can lead the way in building a greener, more resilient, and food-secure future." By planting billions of trees—including fruit-bearing and high-value species such as coffee and avocado—Ethiopia has not only advanced climate resilience but also strengthened local food systems and rural livelihoods. The program embodies the spirit of people-centered investment that lies at the heart of both Ethiopia's and the EU's sustainable development priorities.

Beyond energy and environment, the Global Gateway partnership also extends to digitalization, agri-food systems, transport, and human development. The European Union recently announced a €105 million grant package for Ethiopia

focused on land governance, nature preservation, migration management, and women's economic empowerment. The package further reinforces Ethiopia's resilience programs for refugees and host communities—an area where the country continues to play a leading role in the Horn of Africa.

Bilateral discussions in Brussels underscored the breadth of the renewed engagement. President Taye met with European Commission leaders, including Ursula von der Leyen and High Representative Kaja Kallas, to deepen cooperation in trade, investment, and peace and security. The EU expressed strong support for Ethiopia's ongoing macroeconomic reforms and its efforts to promote stability and regional connectivity.

The participation of Ethiopia in the Global Gateway Forum thus marked more than a diplomatic milestone—it signalled a strategic convergence of interests. For the European Union, Ethiopia stands as a dependable partner in promoting stability, resilience, and prosperity in the Horn of Africa. For Ethiopia, the Global Gateway provides a powerful instrument to accelerate transformation through sustainable investment, technology transfer, and green innovation.

As the global landscape continues to evolve, the Ethiopia-EU partnership remains anchored in shared purpose. It is a relationship built on trust, inspired by history and now revitalized by a forward-looking vision of sustainable development and inclusive growth. The new Global Gateway partnership is not merely an agreement; rather it is a statement of mutual confidence in a future defined by collaboration, innovation, and shared progress. ■

ETHIOPIA'S MEGA PROJECTS HERALD A NEW ERA OF OPPORTUNITY

Ethiopia is rewriting its economic playbook. Across the nation, a series of transformative mega projects is reshaping energy, agriculture, and infrastructure, signalling a future of industrial strength, regional influence, and unprecedented opportunities for investors.

At the heart of this transformation is the Koysha Hydroelectric Project. It can generate up to 1,800 megawatts (MW) of electricity at full power — roughly the strength of turning on 18 million 100-watt lightbulbs at once. Over a year, it's expected to produce about 6,344 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of energy. That's enough electricity to power millions of Ethiopian homes every year. Beyond electricity, Koysha is fostering local industry, transferring advanced construction and engineering knowledge, and even opening doors

to tourism in the surrounding mountains, with lodges and recreational facilities planned. Standing 128 meters tall, the dam is already 70 percent complete, symbolizing Ethiopia's ambitious leap into large-scale renewable energy.

Energy expansion does not stop at hydropower. Ethiopia has a confirmed 21 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and significant crude oil reserves. The Ogaden LNG Project in Calub, whose first phase was inaugurated on October 2, 2025, will eventually produce 1.33 billion liters annually while generating 1,000 megawatts of electricity. Nearby, the Gode Oil Refinery will refine 3.5 million tons of crude oil each year, cutting reliance on imports and conserving foreign exchange. Together, these energy projects, worth roughly \$10 billion, mark a decisive step toward self- ➔



The Koysha Hydroelectric Project



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, along with Aliko Dangote and other dignitaries, lays the foundation for the urea fertilizer plant and Gode oil refinery in the Somali region.

sufficiency and industrialization.

The agricultural revolution in Ethiopia continues to gain momentum. The Dangote-backed Gode Urea Fertilizer Plant, a \$3 billion venture, is set to be built over a three-year period following its launch in October 2025 and will eventually produce three million tons of fertilizer annually, effectively doubling domestic agricultural productivity. A dedicated 108+ kilometer gas pipeline ensures continuous operation, while an on-site bagging unit streamlines packaging and distribution. The project will draw on local natural-gas feedstock from the Calub fields and will include ammonia production, storage, and power facilities.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia is staking its claim as a continental aviation hub with the Bishoftu Mega Airport. The \$10 billion facility is designed to handle over 100 million passengers per year, strengthening Ethiopian Airlines' role as Africa's largest carrier and connecting the nation to global markets. Analysts predict that the airport will catalyze trade, tourism, and investment, turning Ethiopia into a gateway for intra-African commerce.

What sets these projects apart is the role of

public-private partnerships. Unlike past initiatives that were predominantly government-led, these ventures leverage private capital and expertise. International partners such as Dangote Group and Golden Concord Group have committed billions, ensuring faster project completion and global-standard operational practices. For investors, the scale, security, and strategic importance of these projects make Ethiopia an exceptionally attractive destination.

Collectively, these initiatives—spanning energy, agriculture, and aviation—represent a sweeping economic strategy. Tens of billions of dollars in investment are mobilized, thousands of jobs are being created, and the foundations for long-term industrial growth are being laid. The implications extend far beyond infrastructure: they signal a nation increasingly open to global trade, resilient in energy and food supply, and committed to sustainable growth.

Ethiopia is not just building dams or airports; it is building an economic future. For investors and citizens alike, the message is clear: the doors are open, the groundwork is solid, and the potential for shared prosperity has never been greater. ■

PUTTING BALE ON THE MAP

A New Chapter in Ethiopia's Tourism Story

The morning mist in Bale lifts slowly, unveiling wide grasslands brushed with gold. Somewhere beyond the horizon, the peaks of the Bale Mountains cut into the sky, their ridges softened by cloud. Shepherds move quietly across the Gaysay plains, and the air hums with the call of Ibises rising from the marsh. This is Bale — once remote, now awakening.

Four hundred kilometers southeast of Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia's Oromia Region, Bale has long lived in the shadow of the country's better-known attractions. But that anonymity is fading fast. The government has placed this sprawling landscape — of forests, waterfalls, and hidden caves — at the center of a national effort to make tourism one of Ethiopia's great economic pillars.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed captured the ambition succinctly after his recent visit: "Day one in the Bale Zone has shown us the powerful nexus between natural wonders and development progress. The Bale Mountains National Park continues to be one of the cornerstones of our tourism pillar." Today, that "nexus" is visible everywhere you turn.

One Park, Many Worlds

The Bale Mountains National Park stretches across more than 2,000 square kilometers — a place so varied locals call it "One Park, Many Worlds." In one direction rise the frost-tipped slopes of Tulu Dimtu, Ethiopia's second-highest peak at 4,377 meters; in another, the ancient Harennna Forest, thick with wild coffee, moss-draped trees, and the scent of rain.

Here, the rare Ethiopian wolf prowls the Sanetti Plateau, while Mountain Nyala drift silently through the high grass. It is an ecological wonderland — and one that the government is determined to preserve even as it opens its gates to the world.

At the park's entrance, the Dinsho Lodge



Photo: Sof Omar Cave showcasing its newly built infrastructure.

is nearing completion. Its stone walls and timber beams overlook the wetlands where the Weib River begins its journey underground. “Our shared task,” said Prime Minister Abiy, “is to uncover, nurture, and build upon these treasures so that the next generation may carry the mantle forward.”

Nearby, the freshly paved Robe–Goro–Sof Omar–Ginir Junction Road — 29 kilometers of smooth asphalt and five bridges — now links the park to central Ethiopia, making travel to Bale’s wonders a journey of hours, not days.

Where the River Disappears: Sof Omar Cave

In Bale, the land itself tells stories. Beneath its surface runs one of the world’s most extraordinary cave systems — Sof Omar, a labyrinth of echoing chambers carved by the Weib River over millennia and named after the revered 11th-century Muslim sheikh, Sheikh Sof Omar Ahmed, who is said to have taken refuge there. For centuries, it’s been a place of prayer and legend. Now, it’s becoming a symbol of Ethiopia’s tourism revival.

Perched above the valley, the Sof Omar Luxury Lodge is almost complete — a blend of stone, wood, and light designed to blend into the cliffs. “This project,” the Prime Minister wrote, “will elevate visitors’ experiences ... and advance our Ten-Year Strategic Plan by position-

ing tourism as a key driver of economic growth.”

A new flood-control project will keep the cave accessible year-round, while the Sof Omar Cave Development Project introduces walkways and lighting that respect the site’s natural rhythm. During the “Sof Omar Dialogue,” held in the cool twilight of the cave itself, senior leaders spoke of discovery — not only of place but of purpose.

Prime Minister Abiy also reflected on the importance of the Sof Omar Caves, noting their immense historical, cultural, and scientific significance. “When I first visited Sof Omar, I was both amazed and saddened. We have immense natural and historical wealth, but much of it has been forgotten. Reviving these treasures requires deep investment—but the value extends far beyond money,” he remarked. He called for greater scientific and archaeological research into Ethiopia’s heritage sites, emphasizing their potential to enrich national identity and promote sustainable tourism.

Getachew Reda, the Prime Minister’s Advisor on Horn Africa Affairs, called Bale “not a mere geographical landscape, but also history,” a lesson in how to turn challenges into opportunities.

Lieutenant General Tsadkan Gebretinsae agreed, adding that “economic progress, as witnessed in Bale, is a fundamental pillar for building a more resilient political system.”

The Forest That Breathes

South of the mountains, the Hareenna Forest breathes like a living cathedral — mist rising



Photo: Fireside discussion with senior former and current Ethiopian leaders inside Sof Omar Cave.



through the canopy, birds flashing between beams of light. At its heart lies Rira Falls, where the government is developing an eco-lodge and a slender suspension bridge across the gorge.

It is here that Ethiopia's commitment to sustainable tourism is most tangible. Ethiopia's efforts in developing its tourism sector align with the vision set by the IGAD Sustainable Tourism 10-year Strategy, which aims to promote regional economic growth and drive investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure. "By fully appreciating and developing upon past, present, and future resources, Ethiopia can sustain its development," said Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD.

The Meaning of Development

At the close of the Sof Omar Dialogue, Prime Minister Abiy's words echoed through the cave's natural dome:

"Peace cannot be sustained without development. By unlocking the unique potential of each region, Ethiopia can become a more beautiful and prosperous nation."

That sentiment resonated with those who had seen Bale years ago. Oromia's Regional President Shime-

lis Abdisa recalled, "When I first came here, people were living from safety-net programs. Today, hope has returned. The progress in Bale has erased past regrets."

Indeed, where there were once rough trails, there are now smooth roads; where visitors brought tents, lodges are rising; where isolation prevailed, connection is taking root.

An Invitation Written in Light

For travellers who crave authenticity over artifice, Bale offers something rare: wilderness with warmth, solitude with story. Hike up Tulu Dimtu and watch the sunrise spill across the Sanetti Plateau. Sip forest-grown coffee as mist curls through the Harenna Forest. Step into the Sof Omar Cave and listen to the underground river whisper through the dark.

Bale is Ethiopia's open invitation — to see a land that is not just changing but rediscovering itself.

As the Prime Minister said, "When we see through the eyes of abundance, we recognize that Ethiopia is a land of plenty — and enough for all."

In the light of Bale, that abundance feels undeniable. ■

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Name of Diplomats	Title in the Embassy	Email	Phone Number
H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen Demissie	Head of Mission	london.embassy@mfa.gov.et	02078383887
H.E. Ambassador Lelisa Birhanu Geleta	Deputy Head of Mission	deputy.head@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383878
Mr. Mesfin Demessie Gebeyhu	Minister Plenipotentiary (Public Diplomacy Head)	public.head@ethioembassy.org.uk	02038159251
Mr. Dawit Abraha Wondaya	Third Secretary (Public Diplomacy Section)	public.officer@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383884
Mr. Gislla Sahlemikael Desta	Minister (Political Section Head)	political.head@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383871
Mrs. Samrawit G/Meskel W/Medhin	Second Secretary (Political Section)	political.officer@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383874
Mr. Mintesnot Rufael Fersha	Third Secretary (Political Section)	political.diplomacy@ethioembassy.org.uk	07349795577
Mr. Bekabil Lisanework Insermu	Counselor II (Business Section)	businesshead@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383870
Mrs. Sophia Abdulmalik Hussen	Third Secretary (Business Section)	business@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383896
Mrs. Mistre Dereje Gebreslasse	Third Secretary (Business Section)	business.officer@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383886
Mr. Tesfaye Beshah Wube	Minister Counselor (Finance Head)	finance@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383876
Mrs. Hana Birhanu Yadeta	Minister Counselor (Finance Section)	finance.officer@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383881
Mr. Nebiyu Solomon Tesfamichael	Minister Counselor (Diaspora Affairs Section Head)	diaspora.head@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383872
Mr. Dagnachew Worku Debela	Second Secretary (Diaspora Affairs Section)	diaspora.officer@ethioembassy.org.uk	02038466682
Mr. Gezahegn Mekonnen Mersah	Counselor I (Consular Affairs Head)	ca@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383889
Mr. Menwuyelet Melaku Folla	Third Secretary (Consular Affairs Section)	ca@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383898
Mrs. Haimanot Abeje Negatu	Consular Attache	ca@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383877
Mrs. Edom Negussie Alemu	Minister Counselor II (Human Resources Admin.)	hradmin@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383875
Mr. Bereket Getachew Altaye	ICT (System Administration)	ict@ethioembassy.org.uk	02038159250
Mrs. Hewan Alemayehu Gebrewold	Executive Secretary	exec.secretary@ethioembassy.org.uk	02078383887



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