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THE BRIEF



ETHIOPIA'S
NEXT CHAPTER



THE BRIEF

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On behalf of the Ethiopian Embassy in London, I have the honour to extend sincere congratulations to the Ethiopian people on the peaceful conduct of the 7th General Election. Your patience, dignity, and civic responsibility reflect the strength of Ethiopia's democratic spirit.

I also express sincere gratitude to all stakeholders, including election officials, security institutions, political parties, and observers. Special appreciation goes to the African Union, IGAD, and international partners whose engagement supported transparency, confidence, and a peaceful process.

This election reflects a growing culture of participation and institutional maturity. It demonstrates that democracy is strengthened not only through voting, but through trust, discipline, and shared national commitment.

As noted by observer missions, Ethiopia's electoral process was conducted within its legal framework and with enormous public participation. This provides a foundation for continued democratic consolidation.

I invite readers to engage with my article, "Ethiopia's Next Chapter," which reflects on the country's trajectory and the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead.

H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen



Four Stamps, One Story



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed unveils stamps and presents a traditional Ethiopian-style portrait of António Guterres (above); Ethiopian delegation during UN Charter negotiations, San Francisco, 1945 (below).

Eighty years after helping found the United Nations, Ethiopia chose an unusual way to tell its story. Not through a speech or a declaration, but through four postage stamps that serve as a lasting memorial and help preserve that story for future generations.

On their own, they are commemorative objects. Taken together, they form an argument. Ethiopia is not simply marking an anniversary. It is reminding the world that its relationship with the United Nations runs through every defining moment of the institution's history, and that this continuity carries political meaning today.

The first chapter begins in San Francisco in 1945.

One of the stamps recalls Ethiopia's signing of the United Nations Charter at the founding conference. The moment came at a time when the world was still reckoning with the ruins of war and the collapse of the League of Nations order that had failed to prevent aggression against Ethiopia itself.

That earlier failure is not incidental to this story. It is its founda-

tion. Ethiopia entered the United Nations not as a distant observer of global order-building, but as a country that had experienced what the failure of collective security looked like in practice.

During the anniversary commemoration, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed referred to Ethiopia's role as a founding member of the United Nations and its contribution to shaping the principles that would guide the postwar international system. Sovereignty, equality, development, and human rights were not abstract ideals in this framing. They were the language of a system Ethiopia helped construct after surviving the breakdown of its predecessor.

The argument embedded in the stamp is therefore not historical decoration. It is legitimacy built through origin.

The second chapter shifts from founding moment to operational proof.

The image of Ethiopian peacekeepers preparing for deployment to the Congo in 1960 (today's Democratic Republic of the Congo) captures a different form of participation in the international system. Here, Ethiopia is not shaping principles but sustaining them in practice, through one of the earliest and most difficult United Nations peacekeeping missions.

That tradition did not begin in the Congo. It stretches back to





Emperor Haile Selassie (left) addresses the Security Council during its first meeting in Africa; Soviet representative Yakov Malik and U.S. representative George Bush (right) are seen during the meeting, Addis Ababa, 1972.

the Korean War in the 1950s, when Ethiopian forces served under the United Nations flag as part of the Kagnew Battalion.

Since then, more than 100,000 Ethiopian troops and personnel have participated in peace support operations under the United Nations, the African Union, and regional organizations.

This continuity matters because it transforms the idea of contribution into something measurable. Ethiopia is not only a founding voice in the system. It is one of its long-term operational pillars. The image, then, is not about a single deployment. It is about accumulated presence in the enforcement of international peace.

The third chapter brings the story back to Addis Ababa, where geography becomes argument.

The stamp depicting the first United Nations Security Council meeting held on African soil at Africa Hall in 1972 represents more than a diplomatic milestone. It signals Africa's gradual entry into the spaces where global decisions are made, even if not yet as an equal participant in their design.

Africa Hall, now home to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, sits in a city that also hosts the African Union.

It was the site of the 1963 founding meeting of the Organisation of African Unity, predecessor of the African Union. Few places concentrate as much of Africa's diplomatic infrastructure as Addis Ababa. The city itself has become part of the argument about Africa's role in global governance.

That argument was made explicit during the commemorations. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said Africa must have "a strong voice in decisions that affect its future," adding that broader representation would strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of the international system.

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres reinforced that position. "We stand firmly with the people of Ethiopia and the people of Africa in their calls for a just representation across the institutions of global governance," he said, adding that reform of the Security Council must address "the historical injustice against Africa by making its permanent representation a priority."

The significance of these remarks is not rhetorical alignment. It is convergence on a long unresolved question. Who has the authority to define global order in a system designed in 1945.

The final chapter is the emblem itself, the United Nations at eighty. Unlike the other

stamps, it does not point backward to a single moment. It points forward to a system under pressure. The postwar institutions that once symbolized stability now operate in a world shaped by fragmented conflicts, contested norms, and uneven power distribution.

Yet the message from Addis Ababa was not one of institutional fatigue. It was a claim of continued relevance. "Africa is ready to contribute, to take on greater responsibility, and to help build a stronger and a more credible global order," Prime Minister Abiy said.

Read together, the four stamps are not commemorative images. They are sequential evidence in a single argument. Ethiopia is not asking to be included in the story of the United Nations. It is asserting that it has already been present at every major stage of that story, and that this continuity matters as the system enters its next phase.

In miniature form, they trace a line from foundation to participation to regional anchoring to reform. The claim they make is understated in design but expansive in implication. International institutions, the story suggests, are not sustained by memory alone. They are sustained by those who have remained inside them long enough to shape their direction. ■

ETHIOPIA'S NEXT CHAPTER

By H.E. Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen

For much of the past decade, Ethiopia has occupied an unusual place in the international imagination. It has been, at once, a story of extraordinary ambition and profound challenge; of rapid economic transformation and conflict; of a country seeking to redefine itself while carrying the weight of a long and complicated history.

That duality has not disappeared. But it is often flattened in external commentary that struggles to hold both realities at once.

Since 2018, Africa's second most populous country has moved through one of the most ambitious periods of change in its modern history. Economic reforms have opened sectors once tightly controlled. Digital systems have expanded across public administration. Infrastructure investment has accelerated. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has been completed, marking a milestone in national development. New projects in energy, agriculture, aviation, and manufacturing reflect a state attempting to reposition itself economically at scale.

The changes are visible. Addis Ababa has been transformed by new roads, public spaces, parks, and urban renewal projects. Similar developments can be seen across cities such as Hawassa, Adama, Jimma, Jijjiga, Bahir Dar and Arba Minch. International financial institutions project some of the fastest growth rates in Africa for the Ethiopian economy.

These achievements do not erase the country's challenges. Ethiopia continues to face insecurity in some



areas. However, the country has a clear understanding of its history and has developed a roadmap to help address these challenges and advance its long-term development goals.

For generations, political transitions in Ethiopia were often accompanied by attempts to seize power through force. New leaders were expected to spend years confronting rivals who viewed periods of transition as opportunities to overthrow the government. The years following 2018 unfolded against this backdrop.

Various armed actors concluded that the political opening created an opportunity to pursue their objectives militarily rather than politically. What followed was not simply a struggle between government and opposition. It was also a contest between competing ideas about how power should be acquired and exercised.

One of the defining ambitions of the current era has been the effort to move political competition away from the battlefield and into institutions. The results remain incomplete, but the direction is significant. The National Dialogue initiative represents perhaps the most important attempt in modern Ethiopian history to create a national platform for addressing

long-standing political and constitutional disagreements through discussion rather than force.

Some political actors, however, continue to view politics as a zero-sum contest in which compromise is impossible and victory must be absolute. This is particularly evident among sections of the old TPLF leadership, whose political outlook was shaped during a very different period of Ethiopian history. Similar calculations have emerged elsewhere in the country. The persistence of such actions reflects the unwillingness of some actors to abandon older assumptions about power.

Another criticism frequently directed at Ethiopia concerns the concentration of authority within the federal government. Yet one important development in this regard is often overlooked.

For perhaps the first time in Ethiopia's modern history, opposition figures have been brought into senior positions within the executive branch. Among the most notable examples, Professor Berhanu Nega, leader of EZEMA, serves as Minister of Education. Dr. Belete Molla, leader of ABEN, serves as Minister of Innovation and Technology. Other figures with opposition backgrounds also hold senior public positions across government, at both the federal and regional levels.

Another notable measure was the meaningful inclusion of regions that had long played a peripheral role in federal decision-making before Prime Minister Abiy assumed power in 2018. Regions such as Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Somali, Gambella, and Harari are now more central to the federal system and national decision-making, unlike in the past when they were largely represented through affiliate parties.

Historically, Ethiopian governments tended to exclude political rivals from meaningful participation in state institutions. The inclusion of opposition

leaders in cabinet positions does not resolve every political disagreement, but it represents a notable departure from a long-established tradition of exclusion.

None of this suggests Ethiopia has completed its democratic journey. It has not. Significant questions remain about security, political competition, and national reconciliation.

Yet reducing the country to a narrative of perpetual crisis misses a larger reality.

Ethiopia is attempting to manage economic reform, political transition, institutional change, and national integration simultaneously. Few countries undertake such a task under ideal circumstances. Fewer still attempt it while confronting multiple armed challenges.

There is an old saying that bad news sells. There is some truth in it. But when taken too far, deliberately or otherwise, it risks distorting understanding rather than enriching it. Every nation deserves to be seen in full. Ethiopia's problems should be examined honestly. So should its progress.

The question facing the country today is not whether challenges remain. They do.

The more important question is whether the foundations laid over the past eight years can be consolidated into something durable and whether the roadmap for addressing the country's peace and security challenges can be effectively implemented following the June 1, 2026 General Elections. With these foundations firmly in place and the roadmap moving forward, Ethiopia is well positioned to emerge not simply as one of Africa's leading nations, but as one of its defining success stories of the twenty-first century. That possibility, perhaps more than any headline, is what makes the years ahead promising and worth watching. ■

The author of this article is H.E. Biruk Mekonnen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

TRUST, SHOCK AND DEVELOPMENT

Inside London's Global Partnerships Conference on Ethiopia's reforms and a changing world order

London, on a grey conference morning, carried the familiar rhythm of international policy gatherings. Inside the halls of the Global Partnerships Conference, however, the tone was less routine. Policymakers, development leaders, investors, and diplomats converged on 19–20 May 2026 in London around a shared recognition that the rules shaping global development cooperation are under strain and in transition.

The conversations, spread across plenaries and roundtables, circled a central idea. The world is entering a period defined less by stability and more by interconnected shocks. Climate pressures, geopolitical fragmentation, debt vulnerabilities, and supply chain disruptions are no longer episodic disturbances. They are structural features of the global system.

Against this backdrop, Ethiopia's presence at the conference offered a case study in how national reform agendas are being tested and reshaped in real time.

At the centre of the discussions was Ethiopia's Minister of Finance, Ahmed Shide, who repeatedly returned to a theme that resonated across sessions. Economic reform, he suggested, is not sustained by design alone but by something more precarious and more essential.

"Successful economic reforms are sustained not by policy design alone, but by public trust, political commitment and effective implementation," he said, underscoring the human and institutional foundations that determine whether reform survives beyond its announcement.

That emphasis on trust and execution ran through his interventions. Reflecting on Ethiopia's ongoing macroeconomic reforms, he noted that progress had been achieved in difficult conditions shaped by inflationary pressure, debt challenges, and global uncertainty. Early signals, he said, included moderating inflation, improved foreign exchange management, stronger reserves, and growing export performance.

Yet the argument he advanced was not about short term in-



dicators. It was about durability. Reforms, he stressed, become meaningful when they are nationally owned, carefully sequenced, supported by institutional coordination, and communicated in ways that maintain public confidence.

This focus on ownership and systems echoed across the conference floor, where a broader critique of the global development architecture emerged. Ahmed Shide argued that current institutions were designed for a more predictable era and are struggling

to respond to fast moving, overlapping crises. In his framing, resilience, sovereignty, and shared prosperity are no longer separate objectives but interconnected necessities.

“Resilience, sovereignty and shared prosperity are intrinsically linked,” he said, calling for a shift from reactive crisis response toward anticipatory systems that can prevent shocks from escalating into systemic disruption.

Among his proposals was a stronger emphasis on country led development, investment in early warning systems, and a re-thinking of how technology is deployed so that it expands opportunity rather than deepening inequality. He also stressed that humanitarian assistance should reinforce national systems rather than operate parallel to them, an argument rooted in strengthening long term institutional capacity.

Across parallel sessions, other voices added texture to this evolving conversation.

Baroness Jenny Chapman, UK Minister of State for Development and Africa, highlighted the need to move away from top-down development models and toward frameworks that place country leadership at the centre. Leslie Maasdorp, Chief Executive Officer of British International Investment, pointed to the importance of private capital in driving long term transformation across emerging markets, including Ethiopia, particularly in infrastructure and energy sectors.

Within these exchanges, Ethiopia appeared less as a single narrative and more as part of a wider debate about how development cooperation must adapt to changing global realities.

That debate became more tangible in a series of discussions focused on investment and structural reform. In one session, Ethiopia’s capital market reforms were referenced as part of a broader effort to expand financial depth and attract long-term investment, including the establishment of the country’s first public stock exchange. The reference was brief, but indicative of a wider shift toward a more diversified economic architecture. Hanna Tehelku, CEO of the Ethiopian Securities Exchange, contributed further context, outlining the reforms and their role in deepening market infrastructure and investor participation.

Alongside these thematic discussions, bilateral engagements on the margins of the conference reflected the practical dimensions of diplomacy and development. Meetings between Ethiopian officials and counterparts from the United Kingdom, international financial institutions, and development finance organisa-

tions focused on investment pipelines, infrastructure financing, and long-term cooperation frameworks. Projects such as large-scale airport development and renewable energy expansion featured among areas of interest, signalling the scale of ambition shaping Ethiopia’s engagement with global partners.

A separate but related thread running through the conference concerned the growing vulnerability of global supply chains. One discussion focused on the impact of rising fuel and fertilizer costs linked to geopolitical tensions, including disruptions affecting maritime routes and energy markets. For import dependent economies, these pressures translate directly into agricultural and fiscal stress, reinforcing the urgency of resilience focused policy.

Within this broader context, Ethiopia’s reform agenda was repeatedly framed as an attempt to navigate multiple transitions at once. Macroeconomic stabilisation, digital transformation, renewable energy expansion, and institutional reform are being pursued in parallel with efforts to strengthen food systems and manage external shocks.

What gave the discussions their coherence was not consensus but convergence around a set of shared concerns: How can countries maintain reform momentum

under global volatility? How should development finance evolve to reflect new risk realities? And what does genuine partnership look like in a fragmented world?

There were no simple answers offered in London. Instead, there was a growing recognition that the old separation between domestic policy and global systems no longer holds. National reform agendas are now shaped as much by external shocks as by internal choices.

In that sense, Ethiopia’s participation in the conference functioned as more than representation. It became part of a wider reflection on how countries build resilience when uncertainty is the defining condition rather than the exception.

As the sessions closed and delegates filtered out into the city, one idea lingered across conversations. Reform is no longer a linear process measured only in policy milestones or economic indicators. It is a continuous negotiation between trust, institutions, and an increasingly unpredictable global environment.

The question that remained was not whether systems will change, but how quickly they can adapt to a world that already has. ■

Successful economic reforms are sustained not by policy design alone, but by public trust, political commitment, and effective implementation.

ETHIOPIA AND BELGIUM

120 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

By H.E. Ambassador Eshete Tilahun



FROM LIMITED CONTACT TO FORMAL AGREEMENT

Early contacts between Ethiopia and Belgium emerged within the broader context of nineteenth-century European diplomatic expansion and Ethiopian government diplomacy. Belgian presence in the wider region, particularly through consular arrangements linked to Alexandria, formed part of the background to these early interactions. Structured bilateral relations, however, remained limited until the beginning of the twentieth century.

A decisive shift came on 6 September 1906, when Ethiopia and Belgium signed a trade agreement in Addis Ababa between Emperor Menelik II and Belgian representatives. This agreement is widely regarded as the formal beginning of modern bilateral relations.

The treaty opened commercial channels that included trade in arms and ammunition. Belgian-manufactured rifles became widely known in Ethiopia as “Beljigie” rifles. In Amharic usage, the term “ቤልጂየ ተኳሽ” entered everyday vocabulary as a proud designation for a skilled marksman, while the expression “አንድ ጎራሽ” (“single-shot rifle”) reflected the ways in which foreign military technology was absorbed into local linguistic and cultural practice.

These are not incidental details. They reflect a broader pattern in early Ethiopia–Europe engagement, where imported technologies were not simply adopted but reinterpreted and localized within Ethiopian social memory.

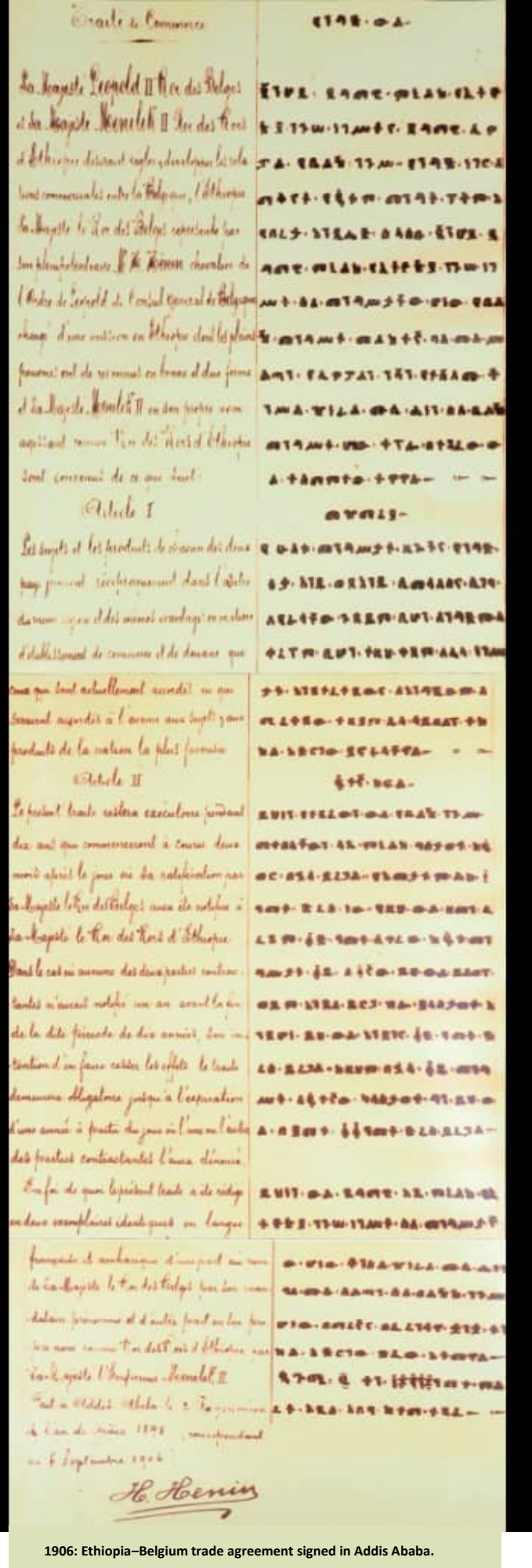
DIPLOMACY, TRAVEL, AND THE EUROPEAN STAGE

By the early twentieth century, engagement extended beyond trade into diplomatic circulation. Ethiopian delegations travelled to Europe, including a mission in 1919 led by *Dejazmach* Wolde Gabriel, which visited Belgium in the aftermath of the First World War as part of Ethiopia’s broader outreach to Allied powers.

In 1924, Ras Tafari Makonnen, later Emperor Haile Selassie I, visited Belgium during his European tour. He met King Albert I and observed Belgian institutions. The visit reflected a consistent Ethiopian diplomatic strategy of the period: engagement with

Some friendships are written in history books, others in the hearts of people. The bonds between Ethiopia and Belgium are both. For 120 years, the two countries have stood alongside one another through commerce and war, cultural exchange, and moments of solidarity. On 28 May 2026, diplomats, scholars, and friends from both countries gathered in Brussels to mark the long journey of relations between Belgium and Ethiopia, with exhibitions and stories reflecting a deep and enduring connection in both institutional and human memory.

The photo exhibition titled *Images of Friendship: 120* and a presentation, *A Tale of Two Lions*, were launched to inaugurate a year-long commemoration by the Embassy of Ethiopia to the BENELUX and EU institutions. The objective is to honour a relationship of more than a century marked by mutual respect, common interests, and shared determination across generations.



1906: Ethiopia–Belgium trade agreement signed in Addis Ababa.

European powers without surrendering sovereignty.

SOVEREIGNTY UNDER PRESSURE

The most consequential rupture in Ethiopia's modern international history came with Italy's invasion in 1935 and the crisis that followed at the League of Nations.

Within that forum, Belgian diplomat Henri Rolin emerged as a notable voice opposing the weakening of collective measures against Italy. His resignation in protest against instructions limiting his position has been remembered in Ethiopian diplomatic narratives as an instance of principled dissent at a moment when the international system failed to prevent aggression.

During the Second World War, Belgian and Congolese forces later participated in Allied operations in East Africa against fascist forces. Their involvement in campaigns such as Saïo forms part of the wider regional theatre of war in which Ethiopia's liberation was embedded in global conflict rather than bilateral design.

POST-WAR RAPPROCHEMENT & SYMBOLIC DIPLOMACY

After 1945, Ethiopia–Belgium relations returned to structured diplomatic engagement. High-level visits and symbolic exchanges marked this phase. Emperor Haile Selassie visited Belgium in 1959. In 1972, King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola visited Ethiopia, including iconic sites, such as Lalibela. These visits reflected a period in which diplomacy increasingly incorporated heritage and cultural recognition alongside political engagement.

Yet bilateral relations remained sensitive to Ethiopia's domestic political transformations. During the Derg period, cooperation narrowed significantly and was largely confined to humanitarian channels within broader European frameworks such as the European Economic Community. Even so, diplomatic relations were maintained, preserving institutional continuity across political rupture.

REBUILDING AND DIVERSIFICATION AFTER 1991

Following 1991, relations expanded into a broader and more structured partnership encompassing development cooperation, education, trade, and institutional collaboration.

Education emerged as one of the most significant pillars. Belgian and Ethiopian universities engaged in more than ninety joint projects supported by frameworks such as VLIR-UOS and ARES. These collaborations span public health, environmental science, and sustainable development, and have supported training opportunities for thousands of Ethiopian students and researchers.

Trade remains anchored in agricultural exports, particularly coffee, with Belgium functioning as an important European market. Antwerp plays a central role in this trade flow, while Ethiopi-



King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola (center) visiting the renowned rock-hewn churches of Lalibela with Emperor Haile Selassie (far right) during their state visit to Ethiopia in 1972.

an Airlines maintains direct connectivity between Addis Ababa and Brussels. Liège has developed into a significant cargo logistics hub, reinforcing the infrastructure of exchange.

CULTURE, RETURN, AND SOFT POWER

Cultural diplomacy has also shaped the contemporary texture of the relationship. In 1999, Belgium returned the *Afro Ayigebe* Cross to Ethiopia, an act widely interpreted as symbolic recognition of cultural and historical patrimony.

Beyond official diplomacy, Ethiopian communities in Belgium have become a visible social presence, contributing to religious life, cuisine, and cultural festivals. In doing so, they extend the relationship beyond state institutions into everyday cultural exchange.

CLIMATE COOPERATION & INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE

In recent years, cooperation has expanded into environmental and climate-related initiatives, including afforestation and wetland restoration projects developed in partnership with Ethiopian universities. These efforts align with Ethiopia's broader environmental restoration priorities and global climate agendas, including cooperation in the context of COP32.

Together, these initiatives point to a relationship that continues to broaden in scope, extending beyond traditional diplomacy into long-term cooperation across multiple sectors.

Ethiopia and Belgium have built a partnership of equals that looks to the future with hope, mutual benefit, and shared ambition, with continued growth in trade, expanding coffee exchange, and deeper cooperation in education, culture, and development. ■

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Food Security

Where wheat meets resilience, Ethiopia's agricultural transformation reflects innovation, adaptation, and national ambition.

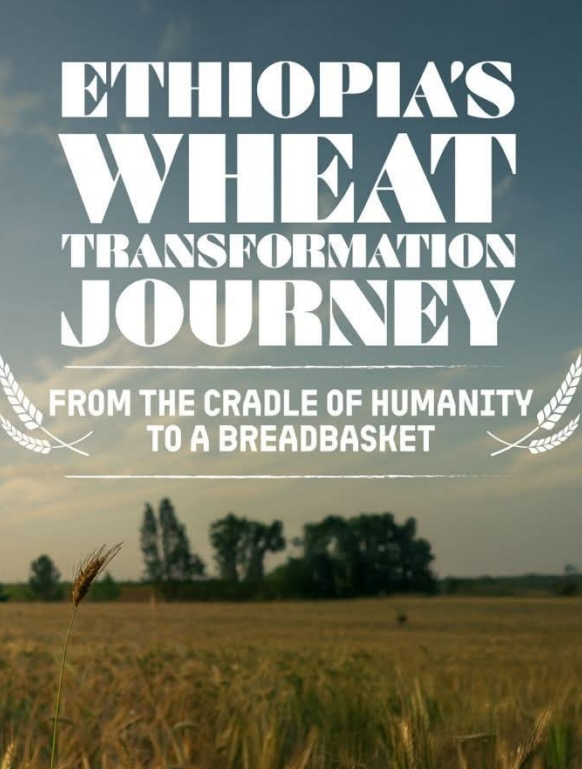
Few people would associate the sun scorched plains of Afar with wheat fields. Yet one of the most compelling stories shared at a recent gathering in London began precisely there.

Hosted by the Embassy of Ethiopia and ODI Global, the event brought together policymakers, researchers, diplomats, and development practitioners to examine Ethiopia's remarkable wheat transformation. What emerged was not simply a discussion about agriculture, but a broader conversation about resilience in an age of climate uncertainty and global disruption.

A documentary screened during the programme used three regional case studies from Afar, Oromia, and Amhara to illustrate the wider changes taking place across Ethiopia's wheat sector. Together, the stories revealed how innovation, infrastructure, and community participation are reshaping agricultural production on a national scale.

The most striking example came from Afar, a region traditionally known for pastoralism and harsh climatic conditions. Scientists and agricultural experts explained how detailed studies identified a previously underutilized planting window. As Dr. Mandefro Nigussie of the Agricultural Transformation Institute





explained, “In Afar, research identified a narrow seasonal window where wheat can be successfully cultivated using irrigation and climate adapted varieties.”

Combined with heat tolerant wheat varieties and irrigation, this discovery unlocked new possibilities for cultivation. The result challenges long standing assumptions about where wheat can grow. What was once considered unlikely farmland is now contributing to Ethiopia's food production while creating new opportunities for local communities. The documentary's message was clear. Climate adaptation is not only about responding to environmental pressures. It is also about finding opportunities within them.

The journey continued through Oromia, where the focus shifted from the farm to the road. The documentary highlighted the importance of transport networks, storage facilities, and market connectivity in ensuring that production gains translate into economic benefits. In Amhara, farmers described how improved seeds, mechanisation, agricultural extension services, and cluster farming have increased productivity and strengthened smallholder participation in modern agriculture.

Among them was farmer Muhe Ahmed, whose reflections captured the spirit of the transformation. “After we embraced new technologies, including tractors and improved farming practices, our productivity changed dramatically. Today, we harvest more than 50 quintals of wheat per hectare. Being self-reliant means not waiting for handouts or depending on others. There is dignity in producing for yourself and satisfaction in being able to share your surplus with those who have less.”

His words offered a powerful reminder that agricultural transformation is ultimately measured not only in yields and statistics, but also in confidence, opportunity, and the aspirations of rural communities.

The documentary also featured Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who framed wheat self-sufficiency as part of a broader national aspiration. Food sovereignty, economic resilience, and national confidence, he said, are closely connected, and agricultural transformation remains central to Ethiopia's future development path.

Throughout the programme, one message remained clear. Ethiopia's wheat initiative is about far more than increasing production. It is part of a broader effort to strengthen rural livelihoods, build economic resilience, and advance national development.

Opening the event, ODI Global Chief Executive Dr. Sara Pantuliano reflected on a world increasingly shaped by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions. Countries, she suggested, are moving from an era focused primarily on efficiency to one where resilience is becoming equally important. ►

Against that backdrop, Ethiopia's experience attracted considerable interest.

Ambassador Biruk Mekonnen placed the wheat initiative within a wider development vision that extends beyond agriculture. "Ethiopia's transformation is not only about increasing production," he noted. It is also about strengthening irrigation systems, expanding infrastructure, improving market integration, and building long term economic resilience.

The panel discussion that followed explored the wider implications of Ethiopia's experience. Jodie Keane of ODI Global pointed to the country's efforts as an example of

ment and Development described Ethiopia's progress as evidence that large scale transformation is possible when political commitment and institutional coordination align.

What resonated throughout the discussion was the recognition that Ethiopia's wheat story extends beyond harvests and production figures. It is a story about systems. About connecting science with local knowledge. About linking farms to markets. About turning climate challenges into opportunities for innovation.

As Ethiopia prepares to host COP32, its wheat transformation is drawing increasing international attention. Not because it offers a perfect model, but because it demon-



how nations can strengthen domestic production in response to changing climate and trade dynamics. Edward Davey of the World Resources Institute Europe (WRI Europe) highlighted the importance of balancing agricultural growth with environmental sustainability, while Binyam Yakob Gebreyes of the International Institute for Environ-



strates something many countries are searching for. A practical example of adaptation in action.

Perhaps that is the lasting lesson from the fields of Afar to the discussion rooms of London. Resilience is not built through a single policy or investment. It grows through vision, persistence, and the ability to see possibilities where others see limitations.

In Ethiopia's case, that vision is now producing more than wheat. It is cultivating a powerful example of how nations can build confidence, capability, and opportunity in an increasingly uncertain world. ■

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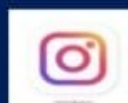
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