

The Ethiopian Messenger



"The vital principles of a country's foreign policy do not change with changes of a regime...whoever comes to rule, try to stay true to those principles"

H.E. Ambassador Grum Abay p.4

Ethiopia-Belgium

Educational cooperation between Belgium and Ethiopia :learn more about VLIR-UOS, the Belgian organization that supports partnerships between universities.

p. 8

Current issues

Ethiopia's actions to fight COVID-19: from economy to politics, several measures have been taken in order to curb the pandemic.

p.10

Investment

The House of People's Representative of Ethiopia approved a new draft Investment Proclamation that envisions to attract more foreign direct investment.

p.12



Aksum: Land of Queen Sheba

መልዕክተ ኢትዮጵያ በዚህ ዕትም አንዲተለመደው በሀገራችን እንዲሁም በኤምባሲያችን ባለፉት ሶስት ወራት የተካሄዱ አንኳር ጉዳዮች ዙሪያ የተለያዩ ጽሁፎችን ይዞ መጥታለች።

በቅድሚያ ክቡር አምባሳደር ግራም አባይ ቪቶ ከተባለ ጋዜጣ ጋር በተለያዩ ጉዳዮች ዙሪያ ያደረጉት ቃለ መጠይቅ ቀርቧል።

በመቀጠል በሀገራችን እና ቤልጅጅም መካከል እያደገ ስለመጣው የከፍተኛ የትምህርት ተቋማት ጉድጓት በተመለከተ የሚዳሰስ ጽሁፍ ይኖራል።

በሶስተኛነት በሀገራችን የኮቪድ-19 ወረርሺኝ እያስከተለ ስላለው ጉዳት እና ወረርሺኙን ለመመከት እንዲሁም የከፋ ጉዳት እንዳያመጣ መንግስት እያደረገ ስላለው ሁለንዳቀፍ ጥረት የሚገልጽ ጽሁፍ ቀርቧል።

ከዚህ በተጨማሪም በሀገራችን ስራ ላይ በዋለው አዲስ የኢንቨስትመንት አዋጅ፣ ኤምባሲያችን በቤልጅጅም እና ላክሰምበርግ ላይ የሀገራችንን የቲሪስት መዳረሻዎችን ለማስተዋወቅ የተሳተፈባቸው ኤክስፖርት በተመለከተ እና በመጨረሻም የዳያስፖራው ማህበረሰብ በሀገር ልማት ላይ እያደረገ ስላለው አስተዋጽኦ የተመለከተ ጽሁፍ በዚህ ዕትም ተካቷል።

መልካም ንባብ!

የአርትዖት ኮሚቴ

The 16th issue of the Ethiopian Messenger will cover Ethiopia's actions to fight the COVID-19 pandemic but will also focus on the embassy's activities at the beginning of 2020.

Our first article is an interview of H.E. Ambassador Grum Abay by a Leuven student's magazine called VETO.

We then have an article on EU-Ethio academic cooperation through VLIR-UOS, an organization that supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders, and higher educational institutions in the developing countries .

Then follows an article on foreign direct investment (FDI), as Ethiopia is taking actions to further open the economy and attract more FDI.

Finally, an article that deals with tourism promotion: the embassy , in collaboration with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association and the Ethiopian Airlines regional office to Benelux, participated in two of the biggest holiday fairs in Belgium ad Luxembourg.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of the Ethiopian Messenger.

The Editorial Team

Content

H.E. Ambassador Grum Abay's interview with VETO magazine	4
VLIR-UOS leading the Ethio-Belgium Academic Cooperation	8
Ethiopia's efforts to fighting the novel corona virus COVID-19	10
The revised Ethiopian Investment Proclamation: key changes for FDI	12
The embassy takes part in two holiday fairs in Belgium & Luxembourg	14
በኢትዮጵያ ዳያስፖራ ትረስት ፈንድ በገንዘብ የተደገፉ ፕሮጀክቶች እና የበጎ ፈቃድ አገልግሎት	16

H.E. Ambassador Grum Abay's interview with VETO magazine

After delivering a lecture at the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven) on Ethiopia's socio-economic development and peace, H.E. Ambassador Grum Abay, Special Envoy, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Belgium, Luxembourg and the E.U. institutions sat down with a journalist from VETO, an independent student magazine, and discussed various issues. Here is an excerpt from the interview.



Question: - How do you stay loyal to a regime which has known three very different ideological paradigms?

Grum Abay: 'It all starts with the responsibilities of a civil servant. A civil servant is a person who is employed or positioned to serve the government of the time. Each regime has its own foreign policy. If I am to be the person to implement that foreign policy, I will have to remain true to two things.'

'One, I have to accept the fact that that specific government has become my country's government at that time. There is nobody else. So as long as history has given the opportunity to that government to rule my country, I will serve that government. But not in the sense that I will blindly follow whatever is done by that government. My job is to advise, to indicate better ways of implementing the foreign policy of that government. But the decision is theirs. Period.'

'A second thing is, I personally never have been engaged in any political activity or belonged to political parties within Ethiopia. I'm a free person politically speaking. That gives me the opportunity to be myself. My own person. But, an Ethiopian also. Me, as an Ethiopian diplomat, I should know how to pursue the interests of my country.'

'The vital principles of a country's foreign policy do not change with changes of a regime. Territorial integrity, the security of your country. The economic wellbeing of your country, such goals never change. The strategic importance, this doesn't change. Whoever comes to rule in Ethiopia, these things never change. You try to stay true to those principles.'

Question: -And what if a regime calls upon policies that go against these vital interests of the people? What do you do?

Answer: -'Then you leave. Period. I mean it is as simple as that. But you have to understand also that if you leave, you're giving the detractors in that government a chance to cause more damage. By staying, you are actually making sure that they're not making more of a mess. So, it's better to stay and fight, instead of leaving.'

Question: -How is it possible that Meles Zenawi, the PM from 1995-2012, was loved by the people, despite the many infractions on human rights during his reign?

Answer: - 'Meles Zenawi was, in my own personal opinion, a very intellectually astute person. He had a very great intellect. And, I think he was also one of the greatest political strategists that Ethiopia has ever seen. That's not easy. For a country like Ethiopia with more than seventy various ethnic



groups, different types of political goals, needs, aspirations, it's not easy."So you have to know how to navigate these various interests, how to coalesce them without jeopardizing on the one hand, the stability of the country, at the same time the continued economic development of the country. It's not easy.'

Question: 'He came up with this idea of a Developmental state. What is developmental state?'

Answer: -It basically means: A poor country like Ethiopia first has to develop its economy. In developing its economy, the government or the state will interfere in those major strategic economic sectors, to build a critical mass that could serve as a basis for industrialization, improved output in agriculture, avail the necessary infrastructure. The basis for investment. The basis for energy generation. In a nutshell, the developmental state means that the government will be the major investor in the economy for a certain period of time, but paving the way for the private sector to take over in the economy of the country.

'Through public investments, it will be creating the conditions for an economic environment conducive for the economy to continue to grow. Also creating jobs for the youth. We failed in creating jobs for the youth. The economy had grown in leaps and bounds. But we were not in a position, for all the investments that the government made, all the investment that we had from outside, we were not able to create the jobs that were needed for the multitude of young people, that were seeking jobs.'

'That on top of the absence of political liberties. Actions that were against respect for human rights. Other actions, corrupt actions within governmental institutions and state apparatus, political and religious persecutions. On top of the economic problems, on top of the jobless youth; You add this and it became a powder cake. It became a Tinderbox. It became explosive.'

'So we knew that whatever the developmental state project has provided Ethiopia with, it has ended now, because it was not able to produce what it was supposed to produce at the end of the day, both politically speaking and economically speaking. That is why now we are in a reform mode, in trying to maintain what we have had through the developmental state system and build on that, minus its excesses.'

Question: -How was it possible for Ahmed Abiy, in the meantime Nobel Prize Winner for Peace, to appear so sudden at the forefront?

Answer: - 'Because Ethiopia could no longer move forward through the old ways of doing things. Abiy Ahmed is a new generation politician. He's young, he's only 43. All other Ethiopian politicians are more or less in or around their seventies. They are from yesterday. They might not be in a position to understand today's problems. The problem is these old politicians kept yesterday's problems and brought them to be today's problems. And it fell on Abiy Ahmed to resolve this.'

'Abiy is trying to do his best in the sense that he understands Ethiopian problems as a member of the younger generation. That's why he has the courage to introduce new reforms. While the older generation could not have the courage, because they also have their own problems and instigated these problems. You can't be the person who started the problems and be the person to solve it. It's either one or the other'

Question: -Yet, we have had in 2018-19 under Abiy also one of the largest internal displacements in the south of Ethiopia.

Answer: - But is that his problem? I don't know. Such problems existed before his time. What I'm saying is that, Abiy has introduced both political and economic reforms. What do I mean by political reforms? I mean: you open up the political space for every type of political opinion to be aired in Ethiopia. Nobody's opinion gets banned, except political opinions that impinge and widen intentionally differences in religion and ethnicity in Ethiopia and on the sovereignty of Ethiopia. Apart from that you can say, you can write, whatever you want obviously under the laws of the country. This is new for Ethiopians. Do you love dogs?
Journalist: - Yes, I do (laughs).

Answer: -'You have your dog chained for a day and in the evening, you let it out. It will run, run because it's happy. Because it's been chained the whole day. It's just like that. All those political parties that have been curtailed from functioning, all of a sudden they found themselves to be free.'

'Some, they really do not know how to use correctly their new freedoms and they abuse it. Others, they are scared to use it because they still don't know how. The first one is extreme, the latter a negative one. And it's uprooting the people. Because political liberalization, unfortunately, brought with it unwanted results.'

'You have a room that was closed for ten years, the windows and the doors were shut. You open it: bad smell comes out because there wasn't any air inside. You open the political space: some bad politics comes out.'

'It's the same thing and bad politics means people who do not know how to use their new freedoms in a correct way. That means that political mobilization along ethnic lines, this ethnic group says, you are not from my ethnic group so you have to leave my place, my land, that's something new for Ethiopia and this should not be continued and it will not be continued, because even though we might come from various ethnic groups, we all are Ethiopians. Lately, we have returned all those who were uprooted back to their original places. We have returned all of them.'

Secondly, in the past few months, I am personally witnessing the decrease in political violence in Ethiopia, and that's why when I say the upcoming August 2020 elections, will be a test for Ethiopia's new political paradigm.'

Question: -So you are actually saying that it's a process that takes time to get used to the democratic system? It will take time, no matter what.

Answer: -We will continue with the policy, yes. Because other alternatives, we've seen them! They did not work.

Question: -Human Rights Watch is saying that arrests are getting arbitrary again.

Answer: -'Yes, Amnesty International has been writing that, International Crisis Group has been writing that, Human rights watch is doing the same. Yes. Well you know. One has to see things in context, you cannot expect - and this is my personal opinion - that a country like Ethiopia that used to use its anti-terrorism law to imprison journalists, to persecute and harass political opponents, changes instantly.'

'The anti-terrorism law meant harshest penalties. That law was promulgated for terrorists, but in Ethiopia we were considering political opponents as terrorists. They were taken to jail, to court, based on the anti-terrorism law. Not on the Penal code of Ethiopia. That was drastic!'

'So, now, political activities as I said earlier, some of them are extremist. In the sense that they really don't know how to moderate their enthusiasm of new found political freedoms. They go overboard. And that means, they step on somebody's toes. That means in that case you have to use the law. But using the law takes time.'

'Because we have been re-introducing new human rights respect mechanisms. You have to renew the institutions, you have to renew the courts. That takes time. And sometimes bad habits, stay long. These, in my view, are episodes here and there. But then, regarding the receiving end, I mean, those who have been imprisoned, probably might use the reasons for their imprisonment as something political.'

'Let me tell you, political party members, opposition party members, when arrested they say: we are arrested because we are political opponents. It takes two to tango. All I'm saying is: there are certain things that we have to handle better.'

Question: -One of the parties with whom Ethiopia is struggling is the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Actually, you are saying that Ethiopia doesn't know yet how to deal with such extreme parties.

'There's a culture in Ethiopia - Ethiopia is a very old country - especially in the highlands, on the countryside or the rural areas; when a boy reaches the age of fourteen or thereby, you know what his father gives him? His father gives him a rifle. What does that mean? That means don't waste your time by dialoguing. Just blow the enemy away.'

'Now, if that's the mentality, can you imagine how it will be when it comes to political discourse. Meaning: we are still yet in the learning stage of political dialoguing between us. In the Ethiopian political landscape, it is a win or lose game up to now. It was difficult for opposing parties to live together. Either of them had to be eliminated, in most cases, physically. That was the political landscape.'

'So now, whatever we see, whether with the OLF or with others, it happens. On one hand, as I said earlier it is something of a political maturity that each political party should have in the way that they are carrying out their political activities not to the detriment of the country itself. But some of them are acting to the detriment of the country as a whole.'

'On the other side, you cannot continue to use force, to subdue every political opposition that comes your way. So, what I see, whether the OLF or the other, it is something that is temporary; it's something provisional. It's something that's going to calm down.'

We've only started with these reforms two years ago. And as I said: everything has come out now. And it is not something that might not be mellowing down in a short period of time. Mind you, the Ethiopian state is a powerful state. I mean, we can immediately clamp down on everybody, but that would be doing the same old thing that we were doing and that did not come up with the needed results'

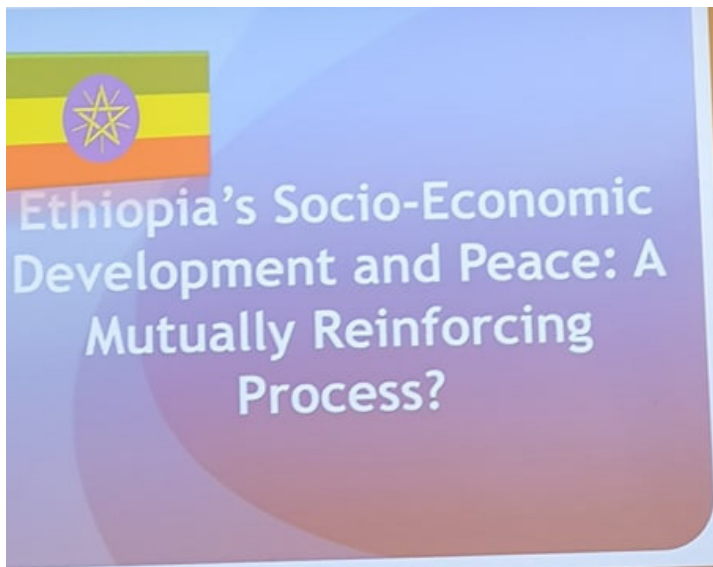
By 2063, we Africans would like to see a better Africa in every aspects of development, political, security, economic, sustainable development

Question: -How does Ethiopia want to play a role as the motor of Africa, now that the African Union (AU) seems to be working more closely together than previously?

Answer: -'Well, the African Union has a strategy called "Agenda 2063". That means by 2063, we Africans would like to see a better Africa in every aspects of development, political, security, economic, sustainable development. Social emancipation and gender equality. And now, the new agenda of climate change and clean energy.'

'We, as Ethiopia, as a founding member of the AU, we'll play our part, especially in the Horn of Africa region where we belong with regards to the maintenance of peace and security and economic integration there. If we have in the Horn of Africa region, political stability, peace and security established to a certain extent, economic integration established together with East Africa among the member states of the Horn of Africa region, which consists of more than 400 million people market in that area alone. Can you imagine if economic integration works, what kind of a market that will be?'

'Even now, in Ethiopia there are more than 100 million people. The Ethiopian domestic market is big. Why are the Chinese and others coming? They see the market. They see the possibility of a growing consumer market. People have money now; they can buy. That's why economic integration, peace and security, political stability are critically important for the Horn of Africa and at the same time for the African Union, to attain its 2063 goals at the end of the day. So Ethiopia will commit to do its part as it has always done.'



Question: -Do African leaders look at Abiy as a catalyst figure?

Answer: -They like him. Many of them look at him as their younger brother. Because most of them are much older (laughs).

Question: -How do you as an experienced diplomat and ambassador to the EU look to the recent summit between the EU- and AU-commissions?

Answer: -“The European Union would like to have a continental partnership with the African Union. The European Union, as a continental Union would like to continue its engagement with African countries not leaving behind bilateral relations, but a continent to continent relation with Africa. Because the AU is becoming a much more active organisation, especially in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, while honestly, it’s a bit lagging behind in the economic part of it. Because at the end of the day, money is important, and the AU doesn’t have money.’

‘But in the peace and security area it is becoming more and more of an international partner, both for the UN and for the EU. African soldiers are actually the ones keeping and maintaining peace and security inside Africa, even though financially they are supported to a large extent by the EU and the UN. The flesh and blood is African flesh and blood. Those who die are African soldiers. The peace and security area is one of the areas in which I think will continue to be a very prominent subject between the EU and the AU. And then, obviously for the African side, it’s the economic integration, investment and job creation.’

Question: -But there are also departments in which you differ, take for example the sensitive subject of migration.

Answer: -“The migration issue, we look at it from a different perspective. The European Union, because of its member states’ positions with regard to migration, is forced as a Commission and as a Union to look at the migration issue with such a big importance. But, when it comes to Africa, how many Europeans understand that it’s only 6% of Africans illegally emigrating to Europe? 6% percent. I personally don’t understand why it’s a big deal in our engagement between the EU and the AU. Because, it’s 6%.’

‘There’s much more migration within Africa itself. Much more. The figures show clearly that it should not be a major issue in our dealings with Europe. Because we are not the ones that are contributing for 70% or more of migrants here. Those are other countries. We should not be made to focus on something that we are not contributing to for a huge percentage of the problem.’

Question: -What would you advise KU Leuven students who want to study in Ethiopia?

Answer: - ‘Enjoy their time. I mean the Ethiopians are - and I keep repeating this - we are a very old people you know? For us, a guest is a guest. Europe has lost that tradition. The West has become selfish, in many ways. It’s only you, it’s your life, it’s your car, it’s your house. It’s you. But what about your neighbor?’

‘We have a saying: “When your neighbor’s house is burning, you better help him by dowsing it with water.” Because tomorrow your house will be burning and if you haven’t helped him, he will not help you. Ethiopia is more of community. It’s a mentality an idea of ‘we are all one people’.’

‘Selfish tendencies, individualistic tendencies, of course they’re cropping up now, with money coming in, but basically, especially when you go to a farmer’s house in the countryside and he knows that you are a guest, or a passer-by and you ask if you can stay at his house for the night, he will leave his bed for you. And he will sleep on the floor. He will leave his bed for you!’

‘But you know, they can just enjoy the country, people are nice (laughs).’ ■

Ethio-Belgium

VLIR-UOS leading the Ethio-Belgium Academic Cooperation

The Belgium government mainly implements its educational cooperation with developing countries under the Flemish Interuniversity umbrella organization for development cooperation called VLIR-UOS (Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR)-University Cooperation for Development (UOS)).



Ethiopia and Belgium have a long history of diplomatic relations dating back to 1906 when the Government of Belgium first opened its Embassy in Addis Ababa. During the Emperor Haileselassie I regime (Pre-1974), the two countries had enjoyed close relationship and cooperation. Beginning from 1929 until the occupation of Ethiopia by the invading Italian force, the imperial guard of the palace known as “Kibur Zebegna” were trained by the Belgians. Furthermore, Belgium soldiers had participated along with the Britons, in driving out the Italian occupying force out of Ethiopia. In the post-occupation period, the two countries had re-established their engagement and exchanged visits at the level of heads of state. However, during the period of the military government in Ethiopia (1974-91), the relations between the two countries had stagnated.

It was in 1991, after the downfall of the military government and with the coming into power of the new government in Ethiopia that the two countries' relations were restored in its previous path. In November 1997 the first Foreign Minister of Ethiopia under the new government, H.E. Seyoum Mesfin, paid an official visit to Belgium. During this visit, the two governments reached an understanding on multiple issues that aimed at improving the relations between them. In this regard, the inclusion of Ethiopia under Belgium's Development partner countries list had been a milestone achievement. In the following years, Ethiopia had benefited a lot under this scheme. However, following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the government of Belgium in 2006 reformed its development cooperation policy and since then Ethiopia has been excluded from the scheme. Afterwards, the main route of cooperation between the two countries became through academic partnership.

The Belgium government mainly implements its educational cooperation with developing countries under the Flemish Interuniversity umbrella organization for development cooperation called VLIR-UOS (Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR) – University Cooperation for Development (UOS)).

VLIR-UOS, established in 1998 under the umbrella of the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), mainly supports academic partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders region, and higher educational institutions in the developing countries looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges. The Council operates with a budget of around 32 million Euro annually, raising funds mainly from the Belgian Federal Government and Ministry for Development Cooperation.

VLIR-UOS facilitates cooperation among five Universities and thirteen University Colleges located in Flanders region with various higher educational institutions located in 21 countries around the world. Since 2003, Ethiopia has become among the top beneficiaries of the program. VLIR-UOS's program in Ethiopia primarily operates in collaboration with the 1st and 2nd generation public universities, and thus so far, it has able to establish a partnership with ten universities which includes Jimma University (JU), Arba Minch University (AMU), Mekelle University (MU), Bahir Dar University (BDU), Debrezeit Veterinary School (AAU), Ambo University (AU), Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU), Dire Dawa University (DDU), Haramaya University (HU) and Wolaita Sodo University (WSU).

The VLIR-UOS cooperation framework includes the provision of scholarship scheme and implementation of inter-university projects that are formulated to develop the capacity of teaching, research, institutional management and community service of partner countries' universities. Its country strategy for Ethiopia focuses on food security and agriculture, environment and water, economic and social development, and Health. In this regard, various Universities in Ethiopia have received substantial donations to undertake scientific researches that aspire to solve community problems.

Various Projects funded by VLIR-UOS (2003-2020)

Type of project	Budget (€)	Number of Projects
IUC	18 264 999	4
Networks	1 040 000	1
TEAM	4 194 968	14
SI	849 868	14
RIP	498 330	5
JOINT	342 940	3
Crosscutting	965 833	31
ICT Infrastructure	99 709	1
Total	26 356 647	73

1

Source: VLIR-UOS

¹ Abbreviations: IUC=Institutional University Cooperation; SI=South Initiatives; RIP=Research Initiatives Program

Since 2003, VLIR-OUS has spent over EUR 39 million in cooperation programs with Ethiopia, including 4 long-term Institutional University Cooperation programs (IUC) with Jimma University, Mekelle University, Arba Minch University, and Bahir Dar University. Currently, it is implementing two IUC programs with AMU and BDU and a national network involving 4 Ethiopian universities.

Furthermore, in the past eighteen years, VLIR-OUS has granted scholarships to 1070 Ethiopian students pursuing their study at different levels. By doing so, it has channeled more than 18 million Euros, making Ethiopia the top recipient of VLIR-OUS's funding among African Countries included in the scheme.

The country strategy devised by VLIR-OUS is in line with Ethiopia's national strategy. Hence, it has been contributing immensely in the road towards meeting the country's development objectives outlined under the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP - 2005/06-2009/10) and its successor Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) I and II, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. The current phase of the academic cooperation will phase out by the end of 2021. After that, it is expected to be renewed for another five years, perhaps adding up new educational institutions and areas of cooperation along the way. ■

Current issues

Ethiopia's efforts to fighting the novel corona virus COVID-19

Even though COVID-19 is primarily a health crisis, it has also obviously impacted everything in our lives, from politico-economic into social matters. This requires building preventive capacities and extraordinary measures in all spheres.



Dr. Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health

It has been now months since the Novel Corona Virus aka COVID-19 has been declared as global pandemic by the World Health Organization. As any other country, Ethiopia has also been affected by the pandemic and is trying its level best to mitigate not just its immediate health crisis but also its political, economic, and social ramifications. To date (May 24th), 582 Ethiopians have been diagnosed with Covid-19 since the first case was reported on March 12th of 2020. Five deaths have so far been registered due to Covid-19. And 152 people have so far recovered from the disease.

Following this, Ethiopia has embarked up on various measures to contain the spread of the virus and these measures include social distancing measures such as the closure of schools and universities across the country, banning of social gatherings and the decision for most government employees to work from home. The government has also declared a nationwide state of emergency for five months.

The major work of the government and the people in this regard is making sure people are safe. This has been done with a rigorous focus on preventive activities and the expansion of testing.

Even though COVID-19 is primarily a health crisis, it has also obviously impacted everything in our lives, from politico-economic into social matters. This requires building preventive capacities and extraordinary measures in all spheres. In political matters, the government has declared a state of emergency across the country. Moreover, Ethiopia has closed its land borders for the time being. People who enter the country through the air space are required to be quarantined for 14 days.

Meanwhile the upcoming national elections have been postponed because the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) decided that it was impossible to conduct free and fair elections under these circumstances. Wide-ranging political consultations are being made among political actors so as to address concurrent constitutional and political challenges. These discussions and the resultant interpretations of the constitution by the House of Federation will decide when and how the upcoming national elections will be conducted.

On the economic front, the COVID-19 is expected to impact Ethiopia in significant ways. According to the Ministry of

Finance, Ethiopia's service and manufacturing sectors are expected to feel the implications first.

The horticulture industry whose major market is Europe has also significantly been affected by COVID-19. This sector employs more than 100, 000 people in Ethiopia and the impacts of this could not be overstated. Generally, export is expected also to be affected even though the impacts have not been visible yet.

Moreover, according to Ethiopia's Job Creation Commissioner, a very conservative estimate of around 700,000 jobs and a medium level estimate of around 1.4 million jobs and a worst case scenario of more than 2 million jobs are expected to be lost due to COVID-19 in Ethiopia. This could have tremendous impact on the society and the economy.

Having suspended its flights to more than 80 destinations, the Ethiopian Airlines has reported more than half a billion-dollar losses in revenue only in the last few months. Despite this, the Airlines is engaged in activities that helps itself emerge competitive during these very difficult times but is also helping contribute its fair share in the fight against COVID-19 in Africa. The Airlines is at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic in Africa by distributing medical supplies made available by the Jack Ma foundation at the initiative of H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, to dozens of African countries. The Airlines is also diversifying its activities into cargo transport in order to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

In addition to what has been done at home by the people and the government of Ethiopia, Ethiopian citizens abroad, the diaspora

and global development partners have also pledged to support Ethiopia's efforts to mitigate the adverse negative effects of the pandemic. So far, more than 2.5 million Euros has been collected in aid from Ethiopian diaspora and Ethiopian diplomats posted abroad. Moreover, various countries have pledged support for Ethiopia's anti-COVID-19 efforts.

According to recent estimate by the World Health Organization (WHO), it could take about to 4 to 5 years to control the pandemic at the global level. This means the public has always to remain vigilant in implementing the guidelines recommended by authority. Nevertheless, the fight to ease and ultimately stop the spread of the virus would be the prime agenda of governments.

Notwithstanding the efforts of each nation, the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 for many countries, particularly for developing countries which have already been grappling with the structural economic problems are expected to be enormous. Lessening these impacts requires a strong solidarity among the global communities. To this effect, leaders of countries and institutions from different corners have been making calls for collective efforts and measures. Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed, in his part, has taken the initiative in calling for the cancellation and suspension of debts owed by developing countries on various multilateral forums as well as through publishing robust opinions on globally acclaimed medias. ■

The revised Ethiopian investment proclamation: key changes for FDI

The new proclamation envisions to further opening the economy and attracting more foreign direct investment (FDI) to the country. It aims to produce an economic framework that fast-tracks the global competitiveness of the national economy; increases export performance; generates more and better employment opportunities and facilitates a sustainable and entwined linkage among various economic sectors.



Ethiopia has been attracting high amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in recent years. According to the UNCTAD world investment report(2019), Ethiopia was the 5th top FDI inflow country in Africa and almost half of the flows into the East African region were absorbed by Ethiopia. The existing suitable development policies, the government's special attention to attract FDI, competitive and trainable labor force are among the major factors that enabled the country to become successful in attracting FDI. Moreover, having 100 plus million population, the second in Africa, and with the growing purchasing power of its population, Ethiopia clearly positions itself to offer a huge potential market opportunities to investors and widens the country's potential to become a preferred investment destination in the region. As one of the largest recipients of FDI in Africa, Ethiopia has attracted several global brands highlighting competitive investment opportunities.

Nevertheless, the inflow of FDI hitherto to the country does not commensurate with the country's potential for investment. Hence, it become imperative for Ethiopia to take further actions to raise the level of FDI inflow to the maximum of its potential. In this regard, the government of Ethiopia has taken recently various measures to improve and enhance FDI inflow to the country. Firstly, the government has unveiled what it describes as a "Homegrown Economic Reform" agenda that aimed at unlocking the country's development potential. The newly introduced initiative, among other things, outlined macroeconomic, structural and sectoral reforms that are said to pave the way for job creation, poverty reduction, and inclusive growth. The measures taken in liberalizing the economy, removing structural or regulatory constraints are believed to encourage increased level of participation of the private sector, boost competition,

and increase investment. Secondly, the government has also revised its investment law to align the investment legal regime with recent changes in the economic policy of the country

New Investment Law

Over the past few years several reasons and substantive issues necessitated the revision of the Ethiopian investment legal regime have been identified. Among them, the need to catch up with global and local changing context, to modernize the investment regulatory and administrative framework to attract FDI in this competitive world, and to ease doing business through introducing modern ways of service delivery and to align investment legal regime with recent changes in economic policy of the country were major ones. In light of the above, the existing Investment Proclamation No. 769/2012 has been overhauled and revised. The new one, Investment Proclamation No.1180/2020, was approved by the House of People's Representative of Ethiopia on January 30, 2020.

Key change of the new proclamation for FDI

As aforementioned, the revised proclamation aims to produce an economic framework that fast-tracks the global competitiveness of the national economy; increases export performance; generates more and better employment opportunities and facilitates a sustainable and entwined linkage among various economic sectors. Core changes in the new investment law that have major significances regarding the investment attraction are highlighted as follows.

Reducing of restrictions on capital requirement. It lessens restrictions and broadens the scope for the joint ventures with domestic investors. Accordingly, the minimum capital required for a foreign investor jointly investing with a domestic investor reduced to be \$150,000. For an investors who are engaging in architectural or engineering works or related technical consultancy services, technical testing and analysis or in publishing works the required minimum capital shall be \$100,000, and if the investment on the aforementioned sectors is made jointly with a domestic investor the minimum capital is further reduced to \$50,000. The minimum capital requirement shall not apply to a foreign investor re-investing his profits or dividends generated from his existing enterprise in any investment area open for foreign investors.



Widening of the areas of investment. Regarding the area of investment, the previous proclamation followed the hybrid approach of “negative” and “positive” listing. This means the areas that are restricted to foreign investment and the areas that are permitted for foreign investors are all expressly listed in the law. It was proven such kind of approach is restrictive in enabling the active participation of other sectors such as services and information technology. Whereas the new proclamation provides three categories of investment areas such as areas exclusively reserved for joint investment with government, areas exclusively reserved for domestic investors and areas exclusively reserved for joint investment with domestic investors. Details of the sectors eligible for the above list will be provided by regulation. Investment areas restricted from foreign investors participation will also be exhaustively provided by regulation with the implication that all other areas will be permitted areas of investment for foreign investors.

In addition to the existing priority sectors, particularly agriculture and manufacturing industries the new proclamation opens wide opportunities for investment in service sectors like tourism, logistics and ICT. Therefore, the law provides a framework for foreign investors to participate in the aviation, energy, logistics, and telecommunication sectors.

Ease of doing business. Modernizing and providing competitive service delivery to attract more Foreign Direct Investment is also one of the intentions of the new proclamation. For the realization of this initiative, the Ethiopian Investment Commission has launched an online service platform where investors can apply for a new investment license and renew business permits online. The platform aims at providing efficient and reliable investment for investors regardless of geographical locations and allows them to access and register their investment licenses online.

Establishment of a new high council to guide on investment issues. In addition to the existing investment administration organs, the new proclamation introduces new bodies such as Investment advisory committee and the Interregional council. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and will be empowered to establish an oversight system that enables the evaluation of workflow between the federal and regional states. It will also render decisions on fundamental grievances and significant misunderstandings submitted by investors. An elaborate grievance handling rules alternative and predictable timelines for resolution of investment disputes are provided under the new Proclamation.

Empowerment of the Investment Commission. To avoid the long bureaucratic process and create an efficient administrative framework, The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has been granted broad mandates in the new proclamation. Accordingly, EIC is mandated to give approval of the acquisition or buying of shares of existing enterprises and facilitate visas for investors and their families coming to Ethiopia.

Finally, the New Proclamation provides general framework and rules on FDI and delegates detailed provisions on sector listing, investment administration, one-stop-shop services, technology transfer agreements, and other matters which will be governed by the regulation. The new investment proclamation is available online at www.eic.gov.et ■

Culture and Tourism

The embassy takes part in two biggest holiday fairs in Belgium and Luxembourg

In February, the embassy of Ethiopia in Brussels participated in the Brussels Holiday fair and the Lux Tourism fair. The Embassy collaborated with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association (ETOA) and the Ethiopian Airlines regional office to Benelux. Belgium being one of the major origins of tourists to Ethiopia, participating in these events has been a good occasion to showcase Ethiopia's major tourist destinations to the visitors.



Mr. Gebremichael Gebretsadik, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy, inaugurating the booth.

Aimed at promoting Ethiopia's tourism in Belgium and Luxembourg, the Embassy of Ethiopia in Brussels took part in the biggest annual tourism fairs of the two countries – Brussels Holiday Fair and Lux Tourism Fair. The Brussels Holiday Fair is a B to C (business to customer) event for tourism promotion, which usually takes place during the first week of February, every year; and it is visited by 100,000 visitors, on average. The Luxembourg Tourism fair, aimed at connecting tourism companies with potential tourists, takes place during the 3rd week of January and attracts more than 30,000 visitors on average, every year.

« Salon des Vacances 2020 » in Brussels

The “Salon des Vacances 2020” tourism fair in Brussels, for its 62nd edition took place from 6th to 9th February at the Heysel Exhibition Centre (Brussels Expo). It is the most important tourism fair in Belgium targeted at the public/end users. Gathering more than 200 exhibitors and

800 sub-exhibitors, this fair annually attracts more than 100,000 visitors. However, this year it attracted a relatively smaller number i.e. 94,045 visitors due to storm Ciara that hit Brussels on the last day of the fair, according to the data obtained from FISA Operations, the organizer. Giving the fact that Belgium is one of the major origins of tourists to Ethiopia, participating in this event has been a good occasion to showcase Ethiopia's major tourist destinations for the visitors.

The Embassy took part in the fair in collaboration with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association (ETOA) and the Ethiopian Airlines regional office to Benelux. For a better representation of Ethiopia during this important event, the Embassy has done a well-planned preparation in coordination with the stakeholders. Three Ethiopian tour operators (Numondo tour and travel, Tema Tour, and Kibran tour and travel), under the umbrella of ETOA, also participated and had effective B to C sessions with the

potential tourists. The Ethiopian airlines on its part, as one of the major service providers for the tourists visiting Ethiopia, also played an important role in promoting the destinations, providing its offers, and introducing its attractive flight packages as well.

Among Ethiopia's tourism attractions, 13 have been inscribed by UNESCO as tangible and intangible heritages of the world



The Ethiopian booth at the Brussels Holiday Fair.

This year, the Ethiopian booth was designed in the form of Lalibela, a renowned tourist destination in Ethiopia, and was built in a more attractive way decorated with beautiful printed and digital pictures of tourist attraction sites in the country. A video display and a cultural coffee ceremony were also part of the gadgets. Counting the unique Ethiopian cultural coffee ceremony in the show, attracted the attention of many visitors, and offered them additional opportunity to enjoy freshly-brewed Ethiopian coffee and to know more about the country as well as its tourist destinations.

“Vakanz Luxemburg 2020”

As part of its mission, the Embassy also carries out tourism promotion activities in Luxembourg annually. The 29th edition of the VAKANZ Luxembourg 2020, the biggest event for tourism promotion in Luxembourg, was held from 17-19 January 2020 in Luxembourg City. As it has been done for years, the Embassy and the Ethiopian airlines co-participated in the fair which was visited by more than 30,000 visitors and attended by 200 exhibitors. Ethiopia's booth was arranged to exhibit Ethiopia's historical, cultural, and natural tourist attractions and provide information and explanations for the visitors.

Unique attractions of Ethiopia

Ethiopia has unique and attractive historical, cultural, religious, and natural tourist attraction sites. Among our rich tourism potential, 13 of them have been inscribed by UNESCO as tangible and intangible heritages of the world. The tangible ones include Aksum, Fasil Ghebbi-Gondar, Harar Jugol-the Fortified Historic Town, Konso Cultural Landscape, Lower Valley of the Awash, Lower Valley of the Omo, Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Tiya, and Simien National Park. On the other hand, the intangible world heritages of Ethiopia are Meskel (celebration of the finding of the true cross of Jesus Christ), the Geda system (an indigenous democratic socio-political system of the Oromo people), and Fichee-chambalaalla (New Year festival of the Sidama people), and Timket festivity (the Ethiopian Epiphany) which was recently added to the UNESCO list of intangible heritage of humanity.

The land of ancient civilization with its own alphabet and calendar, being origin to human beings and coffee and with much more to explore, Ethiopia invites you to visit your origin, taste coffee from its origin, and enjoy the friendly and generous hospitality from the people. ■



The coffee ceremony at the Brussels Holiday Fair.

Diaspora

የዲያስፖራ ተሳትፎ



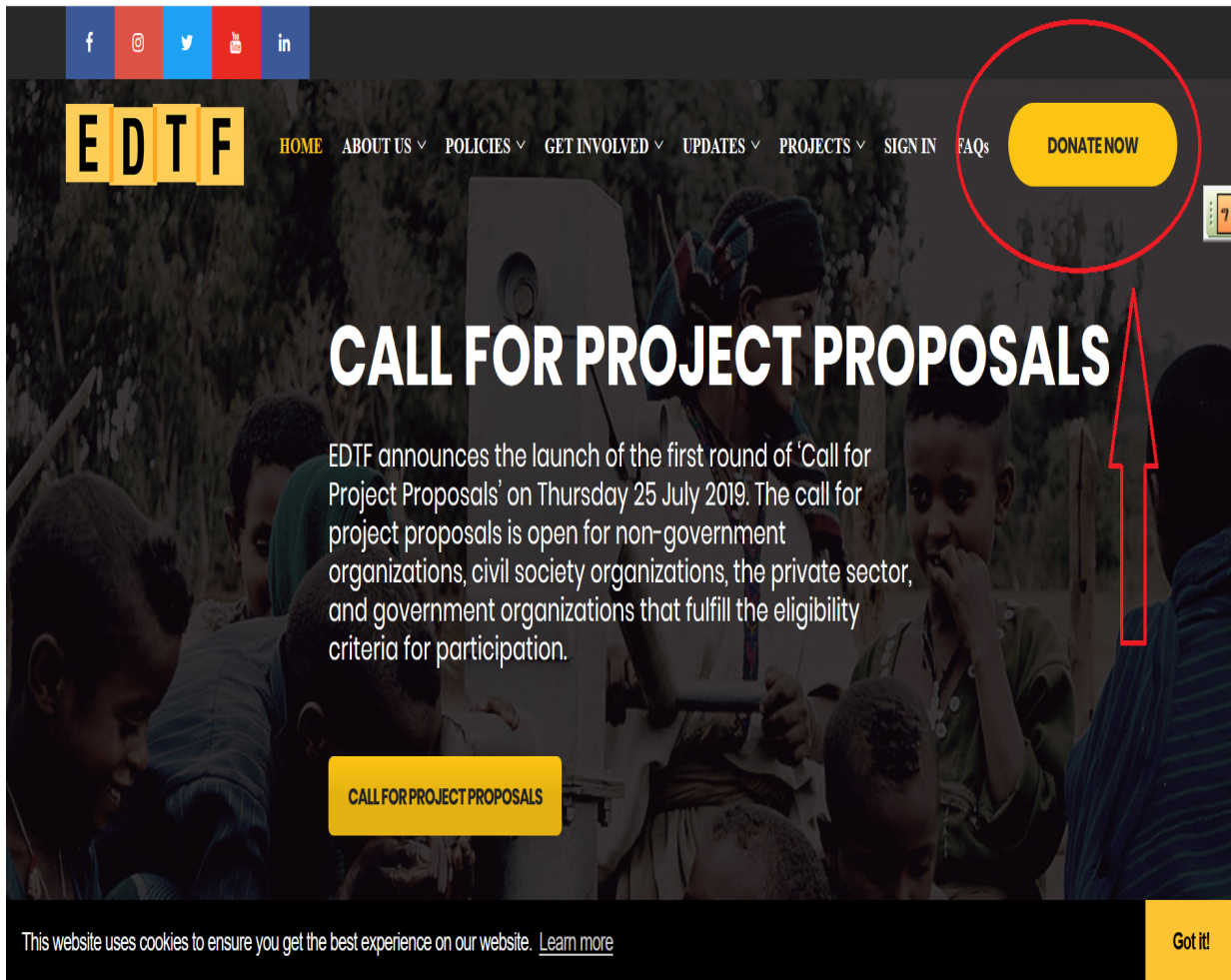
በኢትዮጵያ ዲያስፖራ ትረስት ፈንድ በገንዘብ የተደገፉ ፕሮጀክቶች እና የበጎ ፈቃድ አገልግሎት

የኢትዮጵያ ዲያስፖራ በአገር ልማትና ግንባታ ሂደት ከፍተኛ አስተዋጽኦ ከሚያደርግባቸው ዋና ዋና ዘርፎች መካከል በሬሚታንስ መልኩ የሚያደርገው የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ከፍተኛውን ድርሻ እንደሚይዝ ይታመናል። በመሆኑም ከአንድ ዓመት ተኩል በፊት በኢትዮጵያ የተጀመረውን ለውጥ ተከትሎ በመላው ክፍለ አለማት የሚገኙ ዜጎችን ያሳተፈ በቀን አንድ ዶላር ለወገን ክብር በሚል መሪ ቃል የተጀመረው የትረስት ፈንድ ድጋፍ የገንዘብ መዋጮው እንደቀጠለ ይገኛል ።

“በቀን አንድ ዶላር ለወገን ክብር” በሚል መርህ አንግቦ በተቋቋመው የኢትዮጵያ ዲያስፖራ ትረስት ፈንድ በበጎ ፈቃድ ላይ የተመሰረተ ተሳትፎ እየተደረገ ሲሆን፤ በዚህ መርህ ግብር እኤአ እስከ ሜይ 20\2020 ድረስ በ93 አገሮች ከ25,855 ሰዎች 6,365,887.00 ዶላር ገንዘብ ተሰጠሰቧል። በዚህም መሠረት በአገር አቀፍ ደረጃ በትምህርት፣ በጤና፣ በንጹህ ውሀ መጠጥ እና በአካል ጉዳተኞች ዙሪያ ለመስራት ፕሮጀክት ፕሮፖዛሎች ቀርበዋል። በነዚህ ዘርፎች ከቀረቡት 22 ፕሮጀክቶች ውስጥ ጠቀሜታቸው ጎላ ላሉት 5 ፕሮጀክቶች የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ለማድረግ የኢትዮጵያ ትረስት ፈንድ ቦርድ ወስኗል። ፕሮጀክቶቹ ተፈጻሚ የሚሆኑባቸው ክልሎችም በአሮሚያ ፣ በትግራይ ፣ በአፋር እና በአዲስ አበባ ጭምር እንደሆኑ ተገልጿል።

የዳያስፖራ ተሳትፎ

<https://www.ethiopiainvestmentfund.org>



በቀጣይም በዚህ ረገድ በሁሉም ዜጋ ተሳትፎ ቢደረግ አገራችን ከውጭ በብድር የምታካሂዳቸውን መካከለኛ ፕሮጀክቶች በራስ አቅም ፋይናንስ ለማድረግ እገዛ ከማድረጉም ባሻገር ለወገን ደራሽ ወገን መሆኑን በተግባር ማሳየት የሚቻልበት ሁኔታም እንዳለ ለመረዳት ይቻላል።

ከዚህም በተጨማሪ ለኮቪድ 19 ወረርሽኝ መከላከያ ድጋፍበአለም ዙሪያ ካሉ ኢትዮጵያውያን እና ትውልደ ኢትዮጵያውያን እኩል እስከ ሜይ 20/2020 ድረስ 1,173,047 ዶላር ተለግሷል።

የዳያስፖራ ተሳትፎ

ከዚህ ጋር ተያይዞ በአገራችን የተከሰተውን የኮረና ቫይረስ ወረርሽኝ ለመከላከል በሚደረገው የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ርብርብ ዙሪያ በቤልጂየም እና ሉክሰምበርግ የሚገኙ ኢትዮጵያውያን እና ትውልደ ኢትዮጵያውያን በድምሩ 16,790.00 ዩሮ የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ያደረጉ ሲሆን፣ ከዚህ ጎን ለጎን በቤልጂየም የሚገኙ ከወቅቱ ጋር ተያይዞ በተለያዩ አካባቢዎች ህጋዊ የመኖሪያ ፍቃድ የሌላቸው ዜጎች ከበሽታው ጋር በተያያዘ ችግር ያጋጠማቸውን ለይቶ የዳያስፖራውን ማህበረሰብ በማስተባበር አስፈላጊውን ድጋፍ ለማድረግ ጊዜያዊ ኮሚቴ ተቋቁሞ ከ4,500.00 ዩሮ በላይ የገንዘብ መዋጮ ተሰባስቧል።

የዳያስፖራውን ማህበራዊ ግንኙነት በማጠናከር ችግሮች በሚያጋጥሙበት ወቅት ደግሞ እርስ በርስ ለመረዳዳት እና ለመደጋገፍ ብሎም የአንድነት እና የኢኮኖሚ ትስስር ለመፍጠር የሚቻልባቸውን የተለያዩ አማራጮች ለይቶ በአጭር፣ በመካከለኛ እና በረጅም ጊዜ ደረጃ በደረጃ ከማህበረሰቡ ጋር በመወያየት ለመፍታት በእንቅስቃሴ ላይ ይገኛል።

በቤልጂየም እና ሉክሰምበርግ የሚገኙ የዳያስፖራ ማህበረሰቦች በአገራቸው ልማት ዙሪያ የሚያደርጉት አስተዋጽኦ ከፍተኛ ድርሻ ስለሚኖረው አቅም በፈቀደ ሁሉ የበጎ ፍቃድ አገልግሎት ለማበርከት የሚቻልባቸው አማራጭ መንገዶችን በመጠቀም ለአገራችን እድገት እና ዜጎችን ከድህነት ለማላቀቅ በሚደረገው ርብርብ የድርሻን ለመወጣት ወሳኝ ምዕራፍ ላይ ተደርጏል።

በመሆኑም የዳያስፖራው ማህበረሰብ የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ከማድረጉም ባሻገር አገሩን እና ወገኑን አቅም በፈቀደ ሁሉ በሙያ እና በእውቀት ሽግግር አስተዋጽኦ ለማድረግ ከሚችልባቸው መንገዶች ውስጥ በትምህርት፣ በጤና ፣ በማህበራዊ አገልግሎት ፣ በዘመናዊ ግብርና፣ በሳይንስ እና የቴክኖሎጂ ሽግግር ዙሪያ ወደ አገር ቤት በመሄድ ስልጠና በመስጠት፣ በወረክሾፕ ወይም የጥናት ሰነዶችን መረጃ በማበርከት በበጎ ፈቃድ አገልግሎት ለመሳተፍ እንዲሁም ለዳያስፖራው የቀረቡ የልማት አማራጮች እና ጠቃሚ መረጃዎችን ለማግኘት ከዚህ በታች የተጠቀሰውን አድራሻ መጠቀም ይቻላል።

www.ethiopianembassy.be

ማሳሰቢያ፣ ቅጹን ከሞሉ በኋላ በኢሜይል አድራሻ diaspora@ethiopianembassy.be \በስልክ ቁጥር

32-27 713 294 ሞባይል 32-484 033 83\ ቢያሳውቁን በአክብሮት እንጠይቃለን።

Fichee-Chambalaalla, new year festival of the Sidama people



