



Ethiopian News

June - July 2009

G8-Africa Session at the G8 L'Aquila Summit

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the Chair of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee of NEPAD, participated in the G8-Africa Session at the G8 Summit held in L'Aquila, Italy, along with the Heads of State and Government of G8 countries, the President of the European Commission, the Heads of State and Government of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa as well as Angola, the Chair of the African Union and the President of the African Union Commission.



The G8 and African partners agreed on the importance of continuing to reinforce their partnership, based on mutual accountability and respect, for common good.

Leaders agreed that the economic and financial crisis is hitting hardest the poorest and jeopardising progress made in the health, the eradication of hunger and poverty. They also underscored the need to act swiftly to restore growth and implement adequate measures to protect the most vulnerable. G8 countries reiterated their commitments, including those made in Gleneagles and more recently at the G20 London Summit, to support African efforts towards promoting development, good governance and achieving the MDGs.

Also discussed was the impact of climate change on Africa. Leaders agreed on the need to ensure that the specific concerns of developing countries are adequately addressed in the agreement to be reached at the UN conference in Copenhagen.



PM Meles with U.S. President Barack Obama during a round table meeting at the G8 summit

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said the \$20 billion pledge by the Summit would assist African countries to effectively implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and also help fight the world food crisis.

13th Summit of the African Union

The 13th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Summit was held in the Ouagadougou Conference Centre, Sirte, Libya, from 1 – 3 July, 2009.

Apart from discussing the theme of the Summit: ***“Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security”***, the AU's 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly Heads of State and Government also considered the

Report of the AU Peace and Security Council on its activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, including the Report of the Panel of the Wise on strengthening the roles of the African Union in the prevention, management and resolution of election disputes and violent conflicts in Africa. It also considered the transformation of the African Union Commission into an African Union Authority.



The Summit which deliberated extensively on all conflict situation in the continent, adopted a historic decision concerning the conflict in Somalia. This decision was made in line with previous IGAD Ministerial and African Union Peace and Security Council communiqués. It called for sanctions against all foreign actors, both within and outside the region, especially Eritrea, that are providing support to the armed groups engaged in destabilisation activities in Somalia, attaches against the TFG, the civilian population and AMISOM, as well as against the Somali individuals and entities working towards undermining the peace and reconciliation efforts and regional stability. This is the first time that the Assembly is calling for sanctions against a fellow Member State of the AU.

During the debate, all countries of the Horn of Africa region underlined the fact that with thousands of foreign extremist militants supported by Eritrea taking a critical role in the fighting in Somalia, the conflict has become part of a war waged by Al Qaeda carrying much wider sinister agenda. It is this collusion with and support for these groups by Eritrea that led the Summit to condemn Eritrea and to call for sanctions against it.

Another issue raised was the ongoing border crisis between Eritrea and Djibouti. In this regard, the summit urged Eritrea to urgently and fully comply with the repeated demands of the AU and the UN Security Council.

The Heads of State also considered the Reports of the Chairperson of NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, of the Chairperson of the Committee of Ten on the UN Reforms and the Report of the Commission on the new African Union Flag.

Transformation of the AUC into an Authority

During the 12th Ordinary Session of the AU held in February 2009 in Addis Ababa, the Union had decided to transform the African Union Commission (AUC) into an Authority. It was also decided that the Executive Council should convene an extraordinary meeting to study the functions and size of the Authority, the functions of the Secretaries of the Authority and the financial implications of establishing such an authority.

The Council met last April in Tripoli, Libya to consider these matters and came up with conclusions on how to transform the Commission into an Authority. The main debate during the deliberations of the Council revolved around the question of whether the Authority was of an intergovernmental nature. In the end, the Council agreed that the African Union is a Union of independent and sovereign States and that it is an inter-governmental body and thus all its Organs, including the Authority, would, in essence, be one of coordination and harmonization of policies in various sectors. The Authority would also represent member states in international forums if and when mandated by them. These Conclusions were submitted to the Summit.

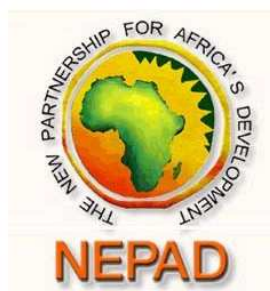
Some amendments to the Conclusions of the Council were submitted for the consideration of the 13th Summit. These amendments, in effect,

would hinder the need for AU's organs such as the PSC and the Executive Council, practically rendering the Authority an independent organ free from the guidance of the Executive Council and the Assembly.

In the final analysis, the debate was concluded by agreeing to have altogether ten portfolios including the president, the deputy president and eight secretaries.

NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee

The 21st Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) opened on 30th June at the Ouagadougou Conference Centre in Sirte, Libya.



The Summit was chaired by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Chairperson of the HSGIC, in the presence of the current Chairperson of the African Union, Mouammar Ghaddafi, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr Jean Ping, and the Heads of States of the HSGIC Member States.



The two main agenda items considered by the Summit were integration of NEPAD into African Union structures and processes and Africa's engagement with external partners.

In his opening remarks, PM Meles indicated that now is the time to define the coordination mechanism for the integration of NEPAD into the structures and procedures of the AU. He said that Africa should take ownership of the process and that a final decision should be taken concerning the integration of NEPAD into the Union. To that end, a Secretariat should be set up to address the challenges and mobilize partnerships for project implementation. PM Meles stressed the need to strengthen NEPAD mechanisms in order to guarantee a bright future for Africa.

Mouammar Gaddafi briefly traced the history of NEPAD adding that problems would be solved once NEPAD was integrated into the AU structures.

He deplored the fact that the development partners did not honour their commitments to NEPAD, which had led to the problems now facing the programme.

In his opening address, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, reaffirmed his desire to see the HSGIC Committee take the decision to create a new NEPAD entity. Mr. Ping briefed the Assembly on the recommendations of the AU Commission for NEPAD integration, on the basis of an Experts' Report.

These recommendations include the creation of a "NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Authority" or a Development Agency of the African Union. With regard to the legal framework, Mr Ping stated that the Commission Report "recommends that the new entity be created by a Protocol or a Decision of the Assembly".

As concerns the mandate of the new entity, the Chairperson of the Commission said that it

would be “a technical body of the African Union translating the Union development vision, policies and strategies of socio-economic development of the African Union into continental and regional projects, while the AU Commission will supervise the formulation of AU policies and strategic frameworks”.

Excerpts from an interview with PM Meles Zenawi

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi attended a press conference with local and international media on 26th June. Issues covered included the current instability in Somalia (troops will be deployed only if there “is a clear and present danger to Ethiopia's national security”), and Ethiopia's ongoing support (in common with the UN, the AU, the EU and IGAD) for the Transitional Federal Government of President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed of Somalia, Eritrea's support for the extremists in Somalia, the hydro-electric dams that are soon to go operational, the economic growth rate and the IMF, the recent export performance, the measures that have been taken in the coffee sector, and discussion of his reasons for seeking to leave office.

A full transcript of the interview can be found on our website at www.ethioembassy.org.uk

Meles named Rwanda hero

On 4th July, as Rwanda marked the 15th anniversary of the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) - Liberation Day - one of the highlights of the celebration was the conferring of medals to three eminent personalities in recognition of their contribution towards liberating the country and stopping the genocide.

In a colourful ceremony in Kigali, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was awarded two medals by Rwandan President, Paul Kagame, in recognition of the liberation struggle of the country and for his campaign against genocide.

It was the first time in the country's history that such honours went to non-Rwandans.



The Rwandan President applauded the courage Ethiopia displayed at the forefront of the struggle for the liberation and dignity of the African people.

He added, “In 1994, as genocide ravaged our country, Ethiopia did not hesitate to send us its brave soldiers to contribute to establishing peace...In 1998, you offered steadfast support to the establishment of the OAU Panel of Eminent Persons that investigated and documented the genocide of the Tutsi of Rwanda. In doing this, you contributed to a work that will throughout history serve as a lesson to the world's citizens, of our responsibility to protect one another as members of one global family.”

Similar awards were also conferred on President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and posthumously, on former Tanzanian President the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Mama Maria Nyerere, Julius Nyerere's widow, received the award on behalf of the family and the people of Tanzania.

President urges East African countries to welcome geothermal development

President Girma Woldegiorgis urged East African countries to attach prime attention to developing geothermal resources so that the ever increasing energy demands can be met.

The president made the remark at the opening of a three-day "Decision Makers Workshop on Geothermal Energy" on 8th June.

President Girma said Africa has not benefited from geothermal energy in any meaningful way, though the energy is used worldwide for electricity generation and direct use applications. The president said priorities should therefore be given to developing such renewable and environmentally friendly energy resources, which are readily available in East Africa.

He said that one of the challenges to exploring and developing geothermal potential is that it needs huge investment; he therefore urged development partners and international organizations to proactively engage in addressing the investment shortage.

Minister of Mines and Energy Alemayehu Tegenu, on his part said "Ethiopia's potential from renewable resources is about 60,000 MW. Of this about 5000 MW electricity is from geothermal sources."

He added that the government has designed a 15-year geothermal resource exploration and development strategy. Geothermal power provides the second indigenous alternative energy resource in the country after hydropower. However, so far only a little has been done with regards to development of the resource.

It was indicated at the workshop that the East Africa region has the capacity to produce 15,000 MW of geothermal energy.

Ministers and experts drawn from ten East African countries, as well as representatives of international organization and partners, attended the workshop across the nation.

Ethiopia to chair UNAIDS executive board

Ethiopia will be chairing the Executive Board of the United Nations AIDS Program (UNAIDS)

for one year, taking over the chair from the United States.



The Ministry of Health said that Ethiopia was elected chair of the board during the assembly of the UNAIDS Executive Board, held in Geneva from 15th to 16th June, owing to Ethiopia's commitment to expanding health services across the nation.

Implementing a sound health policy and recognition of the efficiency and competence of the executive body in the health sector, both contributed to the electing of Ethiopia as chairman of the board.

Ethiopia has managed to reduce the HIV/AIDS expansion rate to 2% from 7% previously. It also distributed more than 21 million bed-nets, in 10,000 localities over the last six years, to prevent malaria.

Family planning service coverage in Ethiopia has reached over 51%, and more than 30,000 health extension workers have been trained and deployed across the nation.

Ethiopia envisages constructing 15,000 health posts across the country by 2015. So far, Ethiopia has constructed 12,182 health posts.

UN reports says Ethiopia to maintain robust growth in 2009, 2010

Ethiopia, and four other East African countries, is projected to maintain moderately robust growth in 2009 and 2010, says United Nations report.

The 2009 **African Economic Outlook**, co-produced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African

Development Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, said that Ethiopia will have healthy economic growth in 2009 and 2010.

The report states that Ethiopia had one of the fastest growing economies in East Africa in 2008. The country's growth will be sustainable since "the demand for its major agricultural and horticultural exports is less sensitive to the effects of the crisis." The other East African countries mentioned in the report were Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The report finds that the region is gravely affected by the global economic downturn. Following half a decade of above 5 per cent economic growth, the continent can expect only 2.8 per cent in 2009, less than half of the 5.7 per cent expected before the crisis.

Ethiopia plans new rail system

The Ethiopian government has confirmed its plans to build an extensive railway system. The plan involves the construction of 5,000km of track, mainly for carrying freight. This would be a standard gauge railway, electrified to take advantage of the abundant, cheap electricity expected to be produced by ambitious new hydro-electric schemes soon to come into operation.

At the moment, Ethiopia has only one railway – the historic gauge line from Addis Ababa to Djibouti. A major project is currently underway to restore it, with European Union support. Almost a third of the track is being re-laid, using heavier weight rails.

A spectacular stretch of the line, near the town of Metahara, where the track runs on a narrow causeway across a volcanic lake, has already been completed.

The railway's general manager, To'om Terie, said he expects a volume of about 10 trains a day and a comfortable operating profit.

When the work is finished, in perhaps 18 months time, the system will still be narrow gauge, but will be much safer and more robust, able to take heavier trains at faster speeds.

Ethiopian Commodity Exchange to update its IT system

The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) has begun the project for the development of software to introduce the Short Message System (SMS) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR).

The project is financed by the World Bank which has dedicated about \$7 million to setting up the ECX while supporting and modernising its operations.

This project, the latest information dissemination system, is part of the Bank's funded projects. The World Bank is also involved in ECX's bid to have about 200 Price Tickers (electronic display boards), in major market places across the country. The Price Tickers provide farmers and traders with real-time prices of commodities as transacted at the central exchange place. ECX has already installed about 12 Price Tickers in major towns.

The next project the bank will be financing is the development of new IT systems. These systems require the procurement of a extensive software and hardware to render the current home-made IT system more sophisticated, so it can support futures trading, whereas currently it supports only real-time trading prices.

The SMS and IVR services are to be launched in October 2009, at which point they will be expected to enable the ECX to provide continuously updated information on the daily market prices at the commodity exchange and the international market as well. The service will also include additional advanced features (functions) such as providing business reports, headlines, international prices and messages to registered fax lines.

Second largest flower farm in Ethiopia inaugurated

The second largest flower farm, near Woliso town, Oromia State, which is owned by Indian company, Surya Blossoms, was officially inaugurated on 21st June.

The farm, which is a sister company of Karuturi Global Company, has already started exporting its products.

The flower farm will benefit Ethiopia by creating jobs and earning foreign currency. The company has also constructed facilities for local communities besides creating jobs.

Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, Gurjit Sing, said that despite the global crisis, Indian investment projects have been flourishing in Ethiopia, especially in the last eighteen months and are expected to double shortly.

Euro Cable Plc. launches production of electric cables in Ethiopia

Euro Cable Plc., the first private cable factory in Ethiopia, has launched production of all kinds of electric cables for the first time in the country.

The General Manager of the factory said that in addition to supporting efforts to expand electricity in Ethiopia, the domestic production of electricity cables would facilitate housing development in Ethiopia.

The factory was established with over 70 million Birr capital in a joint venture with Demes Kablo San.Tic.Ltd.Sti, a Turkish company.

The establishment of the factory would play an important role in reducing Ethiopia's foreign currency expenditure because electricity cables were imported from abroad. The locally produced cables would save 40% of foreign currency expenditure. In addition to transferring technologies to the country, the joint venture

would also facilitate ways to export the product to other countries.

The factory has devised a plan to produce and supply large-size cables for the telecommunication corporation. Moreover, it has also finalised preparations to produce cables for TV antenna, satellite dishes and telephone installation works.

When fully operational, the factory will have the capacity to produce six metric tonnes of electricity cables in a month and create jobs for over 120 people.

Holland Car Plc to offer three new models

Holland Car Plc, the first car assembly company in Ethiopia, says it has finalised preparations to offer three new models for the coming Ethiopian New Year.

The company, which has so far assembled Docc and Abay cars, will offer the three models at competitive prices. One of the new cars will be the Abay Executive, which will be the modernised version of the previous one. The other two will also have Ethiopian names.

Strengthening agricultural investment vital

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) has said that strengthening agricultural investment, focusing on marketable crops is vital to ensuring speedy economic development.

According to the State Minister of MoARD, Dr. Abera Deressa, close to 9,000 investors, engaged in agriculture activities, have contributed to successive economic growth. Investors are engaged in the production of cotton, sesame, coffee and tea, fruit and vegetables as well as grazing land development.

Ethiopia on track to meet health MDGs

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has said that Ethiopia is on track to meet the MDGs target in the health sector ahead of the set time (2015).

Public Relations Directorate Director with the Ministry, Ahmed Imano, said that the ministry is working aggressively to attain the national goal to eradicate poverty through scaling up achievements made in the health sector. The ministry is registering remarkable results in preventing TB, malaria, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, while the efforts being made to prevent diseases have proved to be highly successful.

He attributed the success to the realisation of health extension programme that has 16 health packages as well as the deployment of close to 30,000 female health extension workers in each kebele across the country.

The ministry has recruited enough trainees to train close to 5,000 female nurses, with a view to preventing communicable diseases in urban areas.

The ministry is also building more health facilities since the existing health stations and hospitals in the country are not sufficient to provide efficient service for everyone. The ministry, in collaboration with the Clinton Foundation, set standards for 40 hospitals on the basis of the service they provided to the public.

Ethiopia's efforts in fighting HIV/AIDS exemplary: UNDP

UNDP Global Administrator, Helen Clark, has said that Ethiopia's prevention and control of HIV/AIDS set an example for other African countries. Clark made the remark on 19th June while visiting the Mekedem-Ethiopia National Association (MENA), an association of HIV-positive people.

MENA General Manager, Mengistu Zemene, said that MENA is a pioneering association in

providing comprehensive care and support to its members and in offering a series of awareness-raising exercises to the public on HIV/AIDS. It was established in 1996 by three individuals, has more than 800 members and six affiliate offices in three regional states.

"I want to acknowledge that Ethiopia is on track to achieve the MDGs in the fight against HIV/AIDS and it is a model that many countries would be interested in," she said.

UN agencies are committed to supporting activities on prevention and control of spread of the virus since fighting HIV, malaria and tuberculosis are key issues in meeting the MDGs.

Ethiopian Airlines wins the 2009 Airline of the Year Award

Ethiopian Airlines was named the 'Airline of the Year 2009' at the Africa Business Awards organised by the London-based African Business and the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC). The award was presented to Ethiopian Airlines at the ceremony held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, in London on 6th July 2009.



African Business Awards 2009

According to the judging panel, Ethiopian Airlines were chosen from a pool of nominees based on "solid financial results coupled with distinctive customer service, punctuality and innovative products and services for consumers, especially in opening new routes."

After receiving the award, Mr Yeneneh Tekelyes, Director for Advertising and Promotions of Ethiopian Airlines said, "while we rejoice for winning the award, the recognition of our overall excellence among

other African airlines motivates and encourages us to provide and deliver even more products and better services”



Mr Yeneneh Tekelyes (left) receiving the award from Hon Hage Geingob, Minister of Trade and Industry of Namibia

Ethiopian Airlines is one of the largest and fastest growing airlines in Africa and provides dependable services to 34 cities in Africa and to a total of 55 destinations worldwide.



In August 2008, it won the 2008 Corporate Achievement Award of Aviation and Allied Business for setting the pace towards the development and growth of the African aviation industry. It is also the first African carrier to win the 2008 Brussels Airport Company Award in recognition of its distinguished long haul operations witnessed through the introduction of new routes, new products, and close cooperation with Brussels Airport in marketing activities. Ethiopian Airlines was also the winner of the 2008 Best Airline in Africa Award at the African Travel Awards in Lagos, Nigeria, for its excellent network and convenient connections in Africa.

Solar electrification of Ethiopian village wins global green energy award

On 11th June, the world’s leading green energy prize awarded £20,000 and the Ashden Award for electrification of rural areas to the Solar Energy Foundation (SEF). HRH the Prince of Wales presented the award to Samson Tsegaye, the representative of SEF, for setting up the biggest solar energy programme in Ethiopia.



The SEF scheme has installed over 2,000 small solar systems in two villages that are off the electricity grid, bringing electricity to these communities for the first time. A further 8,500 units are due to be installed elsewhere in the country by the end of the year.



HRH The Prince of Wales with Samson Tsegaye of Solar Energy Foundation, Ethiopia

The judges commended SEF “for bringing modern solar energy technology to deliver light and power to remote Ethiopian villages.” Villagers pay a low monthly fee (about \$1). This amount covers the maintenance and repairs to keep it running.

The foundation was established in 2006 by Dr Harald Schützeichel, who had previously set up

and run a solar business in Germany. It has developed high quality solar-home-systems and solar lanterns for the 10,000-plus villagers living in Rema and Rema ena Dire villages in Ethiopia's northern highlands.



The Ambassador with Samson Tsegaye at the Ashden Awards (Solar system in the background)

Working closely with local government bodies and also the Disaster Prevention & Preparedness Agency of Ethiopia, SEF provides not just technology, but also maintenance and a financial structure that means each household can have its own solar-home-system.

To maintain the systems and enable the programme to grow, the Foundation has set up an International Solar School in Rema for local young people, with rigorous six-month training programmes in technical and business skills. Thirty graduates have completed the course and some are now working in four new solar centres which have been set up in other areas of Ethiopia.

Tourism

World Bank approves first ever credit for tourism project to Ethiopia

The World Bank's board of executive directors has approved the International Development Assistance (IDA) \$35 million equivalent credit for sustainable tourism development projects in Ethiopia. The credit scheme is the first ever

sustainable tourism development project in sub-Saharan Africa. The credit is provided on standard IDA terms, which is a 40-year period of maturity with a 10-year grace period. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism over a period of five years. The bank said that the initiative to develop the sector was guided by the vision that tourism should be sustainably developed and utilised for economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction, whilst preserving and enhancing social, cultural and environmental assets.

The proposed project will unleash the unique potential of the Ethiopia's tourism sector through product improvement, market development and capabilities enhancement.

Both the private sector and communities will partner with the government to enhance the sector's overall competitiveness so as to foster employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and improved living standards for Ethiopians.

The Ethiopian tourism sector, which accounts for about 10% of foreign currency earnings, represents the third largest export earner and has significant growth potential.

The World Bank says that this requires important investment in the preservation of cultural assets, the development of infrastructure and tourism facilities, skills enhancement, institutional development and community engagement.

Education

Arbaminch University to launch four new postgraduate studies

Arbaminch University, once of the State-owned higher learning institutions, has announced plans to launch four postgraduate programs for the coming academic year.

The postgraduate programmes will be in Numerical Analysis, Botanical Science, Geotechnical Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering.

The university has also established a library and a laboratory for postgraduate students that provide around-the-clock services to trainees. The new graduate studies will be enrolling 40 students every year, boosting the postgraduate intake of the university to more than 200 students at a time.

The university also launched postgraduate programs in six fields of study in March 2009, raising its postgraduate programs to 12.

Events

4th Africa Conference on Sexual Health

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Africa Regional Office, in conjunction with the Africa Federation for Sexual Health and Rights, the regional representative body of the World Association for Sexual Health, will host the 4th Africa Conference on Sexual and Health Rights from 8th to 12th February, 2010 in Addis Ababa.

The conference will run under the theme *Sexuality and HIV & AIDS*.

The conference will be examining the inter-relationship between sexuality and HIV and AIDS in Africa. The conference will provide an opportunity for discourse on sexuality in Africa and how this might lead to new insights in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Ethiopia's first private health sector exhibition held in Addis Ababa

Some 200 representatives of private health clinics, hospitals, medical supply companies and financial institutions participated at the first ever private health sector exhibition in Ethiopia.

The exhibition provided a unique opportunity for the private health sector to meet and share information in support of the growth of a high quality, affordable private health sector responsive to the needs of the people.

The exhibition under the theme of *Strengthening and Growing Private Practices in the fight Against HIV/AIDS*, was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s **Banking on Health Project** which is funded by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

A variety of commercial representatives and exhibitors participated at the exhibition, including medical equipment suppliers, pharmaceutical suppliers and distributors, insurance companies, professional associations, medical schools, literature and book suppliers, and banks interested in lending to private health providers.

All-African Leather Fair to be held in Addis

The Ethiopian Leather Industries Association (ELIA) is organising the 3rd All-African Leather Fair (AALF) 2010, which will take place in Addis Ababa from 20th to 22nd January, 2010.



It will bring together tanners, footwear and other leather goods manufacturers, equipment and technology suppliers, chemical and inputs suppliers, manpower training institutions, trade promotion organisations, etc. from all over the world. African companies and organisations are expected to constitute the largest attendance.

News in Brief

First English FM station on air

Ethiopia's first FM radio station broadcasting in the English language began a six-day pre-test broadcast on 29th May.

The station, run by Paconet Media Plc., incorporated in January 2008 with an initial capital of 3 million birr, originally planned to begin broadcasting on 1st September, 2008. Paconet Media Plc was licensed by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority in March 2008 to start the radio station on FM ban 105.3. AfroFM plans to officially inaugurate its radio station within the coming months.

The station now airs mainly infotainment, with a mix of local and international news from 6.00am to midnight, but plans to eventually broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The station plans to work with other local media organisations on content development.

The foundation of this radio station is based on the owner's belief that the international community in Addis Ababa have no way of knowing what is happening in the city because there is no media providing them with continuous information in English. The target audience is made up of emerging foreign investors and the Diaspora in Addis Ababa.

AU Commission to counter human trafficking

On 16th June the African Union Commission launched an initiative against trafficking in human beings. The AU.COMMIT Campaign, launched at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, is aimed at African populations on the continent and in the Diaspora.

The theme of the initiative is *"Let's prevent trafficking, protect victims of trafficking and prosecute those involved in trafficking"*.

The AU.COMMIT Campaign coincides with the Day of the African Child (DAC), observed every 16th June all over the continent. The launch will ensure human trafficking is a priority on the continent.

Ethiopians saddened by the death of Michael Jackson

It was with great shock and sorrow that the Government and people of Ethiopia learnt of the untimely death of the music legend, Michael Jackson. He will be remembered by the Ethiopian people for his compassionate contribution to the Live Aid campaign, which raised awareness of the tragic famine that occurred in Ethiopia between 1984 and 1985. His contribution was immortalised by the song *"We are the World"*, which was co-authored by him.



Michael Jackson will continue to have a special place in the hearts of Ethiopians for his unforgettable humanitarian work during a very difficult time for the Ethiopian people. On this sad occasion, the people and Government of Ethiopia wish to express their condolences to the bereaved family and fans of the late Michael Jackson.

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