



Drought, not famine in Ethiopia – irresponsible reporting on the current drought situation

Some media reports have carried exaggerated pieces about the drought that currently affects pockets of the country. On 23rd October, the Ambassador, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, gave an interview to BBC World Service to clarify the situation.

The current situation is under control and measures are in place to cope with shortfalls. The situation is nothing like that of the 1984 famine and comparisons with it are inaccurate, hugely misleading and deeply damaging to Ethiopia's efforts to build up its economy through tourism, investment and trade.

Ethiopia would like to see more accurate and less alarmist reporting of the situation, more considered reporting and significantly less exaggeration. There is a serious challenge but there is no reason to believe the situation will turn into "a catastrophe".

Infrastructure development has rocketed in the past twenty years. Over 100,000km of road has been built in the past 20 years, making it easier to deliver food to areas where there are shortages and facilitating trade and investment. Food security and food self-sufficiency form one of the most important elements of Ethiopia's Agriculture-Led Industrial Development Strategy.

Of a population of 78 million the number of people needing emergency food aid is 6.2 million people. Those who benefit on a regular basis from the Safety Net Scheme, a food-for-work scheme that supports and encourages diversification from total reliance on subsistence farming, is 7.5 million. These 7.5 million people *are not emergency cases* and therefore the figure should not be collated with the 6.2 million needing emergency food aid.

In recent times in Ethiopia, there have been increasing droughts and also unusual flooding. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mitiku Kasa, recently said that the growth in the number of those needing food assistance has been a bitter disappointment but is not entirely a surprise in this, an El-Nino year, when drought often precedes flooding. In addition, as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction said recently, "Africa, and in particular the Horn of Africa suffers more and more from the impact of climate-induced hazards."

Political parties agree on 2010 election code

Ethiopia's ruling party and three opposition parties have agreed to an electoral code for next year's elections. The agreement was signed on 30th October after the code of conduct was negotiated over two months under the observation of Western diplomats in Addis Ababa.

The four parties which took part are The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the All Ethiopian Unity Organisation (AEUO), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) and the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP).

The new code includes the setting up of a cross-party body to investigate claims of violence and illegal detentions and to intervene if necessary. It also contains rules on campaigning, corruption and the use of party symbols. Speaking at the signing ceremony, PM Meles Zenawi said that the document would oblige opposition parties to contest peacefully and legally and enable the ruling party to facilitate fair competition. He added that the parties have also designed an implementation strategy.

This agreement is a new chapter for the democratisation of Ethiopia and it is an

achievement gained through a give-and-take principal among political parties.

AEUO Chairperson, Eng. Hailu Shawel at the signing said that the series of consultation among parties enabled them to negotiate in common understanding, adding that parties should allow the public to make history. CUDP president, Ayele Chamisso urged the public to exercise the right to vote and to fight against anti-democratic forces.

Ethiopia's election campaign will kick off on 8th December and voting will begin on 23rd May 2010. Results will be declared on 21st June 2010.

Climate change panel set to ensure Africa's needs

The African High-level Experts Panel on Climate Change has called on developed countries to reverse the adverse effects of global warming that occur in Africa.

Despite Africa bearing no historical responsibility for global warming, the continent remains most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, the panel said.

Africa will negotiate actively and strategically in the upcoming international climate change conference to be held in December in Copenhagen.

The panel discussed Africa's standing position for Copenhagen; Africa will seek a fair and equitable outcome in the negotiations and requires significant international support in terms of financial assistance, capacity building and technology development and transfer to address the ill-effects of global warming. The panel urged the media to give a voice to the African continent on issues related to climate change.

During the G20 Summit held in Pittsburgh in September, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said that

consensus had been reached on ways to use the \$20 billion pledge made by the previous summit in Italy.

PM Meles stressed the importance of allocating new resources for Africa to overcome the impact of climate change.

Leaders reviewed the progress made since the Washington and London summits and discussed further actions to assure a sustainable recovery from the global financial and economic crisis.

Ethiopian Police get more human rights training

With next year's general election in the offing, Ethiopia's law enforcement officials and police have attended four days of training on human rights and principles of law.

The training, given within the framework of the Democratic Institutions Programme (DIP), was given by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The training was aimed at enhancing the capacity of professionals from police and prison institutions and was open to both officers in service and pre-service trainees.

UN lauds Ethiopia's peace effort in Horn region

The United Nations (UN) has commended the constructive role Ethiopia is playing in the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Horn of Africa.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Representative, Fidele Sarassoro, said that Ethiopia's role in bringing about enduring peace, security and stability amid challenges in the region is indispensable. "Ethiopia is very active in mediating a number of conflicts in the Horn of Africa."

Ethiopia contributes troops to maintain peace and security in other African countries and its diplomatic efforts is recognised by the international community.

Mr Sarassoro said Ethiopia has been contributing to peace efforts regardless of the challenges from conflicts related to the scarcity of resources, ethnic and border disputes. He called for the international community to prioritise the issue of peace and security in the Horn.

Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, expressed Ethiopia's desire to scale up its role in UN peacekeeping missions. Ethiopia is one of the top troop-contributing nations and will remain committed to the success of the missions.

Progress on 4th Road Sector Programme

The Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) has started preparations for the next level of the Road Sector Development Programme (RSDP IV) and regional authorities have been asked to submit their expectations for the programme.

RSDP IV will take place over five years from the year 2011. ERA has been the principle driver for the development and implementation of this multi-year programme.

The RSDP I was launched in 1997 and the third will be completed by the end of this fiscal year. RSDP I, which expended 7.3 billion Birr, resulted in the rehabilitation of 2,709km of federal roads and the construction of 6,000km of new regional roads.

RSDP II had a budget of 18.1 billion Birr. This money was spent on the rehabilitation of 988km, upgrading of 628km, and heavy maintenance of 4,198km of asphalt and gravel roads. The regional authorities also constructed 4,523km of rural roads and 57,764km of community roads.



The ongoing RSDP III was allocated a budget of \$3.9bn and focuses on the expansion of major road networks through rehabilitation, upgrading and new construction, including 5,994km of federal roads, 5,730km of regional roads and 27,584km of community roads.

Ethiopia's road network measured 24,970km before RSDP I, and grew to 44,359km by September 2008.

The RSDP is supported financially by the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Saudi Fund and the governments of Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland and China.

Ethiopia to build Africa International Trade Centre

Construction of a modern African International Trade Centre is underway in Addis Ababa. The first of its kind on the continent, it will enhance business and economic interaction among Africans.

The project is owned by the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (AACCSA) and will cost about \$23 million.

The trade centre will bring together all African countries and provide an opportunity for them to sell their products to the rest of the continent.

Construction of the centre will start soon and is expected to be accomplished in three distinct phases over about three years.

Apart from providing a forum for trade, the centre will also have a training, research and information

department which will provide African business people with information on business and investment opportunities across the continent.

Mineral exploration sector on the rise

The number of investors engaging in the mineral exploration sector has increased with 81 local and foreign companies currently involved in 161 projects, the Minister of Mines, Alemayehu Tegenu, has announced. Foreign currency earnings from the sector have increased. In 2008, Ethiopia secured \$105m from the sector and more than 48m Birr in royalty fees from investors. The sector has made a great contribution to the economic development of the country and the government welcomes new investors keen to exploit mineral resources. Current investors cited the favourable investment climate in Ethiopia as an incentive.

Geothermal resource suitable for investment

Mines and Energy Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu has said investors are encouraged to benefit from Ethiopia's untapped geothermal resource.

Ethiopia has a significant geothermal resource concentrated along the Great Rift Valley. The electrical energy potential is estimated to be over 5,000MW. So far, only 7MW has been exploited around the Aluto-Langano area where expansion work is being carried out. Geothermal resources are largely untouched and are the area with the best investment opportunities. The Minister said there are sites with 200MW capacity ready for private investment along the Rift Valley.

The Ethiopian government is introducing a new demand-side management strategy in the electricity sub-sector. The objective of this strategy is to maintain sustainable national energy supply through improved energy saving, to improve the

economy of customers by reducing the bill for electricity, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to secure finance for new supply development or demand management programmes.

In 2009, Ethiopia distributed country-wide 4.8 million energy-saving lamps free of charge. Efforts are underway to replace all inefficient lamps with energy saving lamps in the near future.

Ethiopia to become leading flower exporter

The managing director of **Karuturi Global** has vowed to make Ethiopia the leading cut flower exporting country in the world. Karuturi Global is engaged in flower farm development on 50 hectares, and has plans to expand into 50 more hectares in December. It will cover the 435 hectares of land it took in Wolliso town with flower farms by 2011, making Ethiopia the leading cut flower exporter in the world.

Currently, 125,000 cut flowers a day are produced from Holeta and Wolliso farms. The volume of export will gradually increase.



The company began exporting cut flowers to the Middle East, Holland and Russia in 2006. Karuturi Global also has palm tree, sugarcane and rice farms in Etang, Gambella State covering 300,000 hectares, and 11,000 hectares of corn and vegetables farms in Bako, Oromia state. The \$350m Gambella project will develop cereals, oilseeds, palm oil, sugar and rice on 100,000 hectares of land within three years.

Leather exports to double in 2009/10

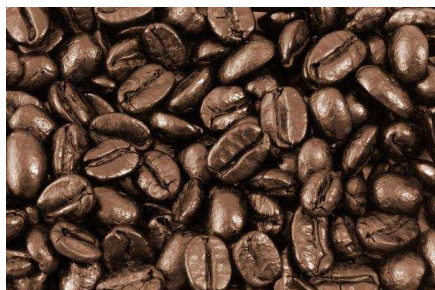
Ethiopia hopes its rapidly-expanding leather industry will generate \$200 million from leather exports in 2009/10 (July-June).

Ethiopia has an estimated 49.6m cattle, 25m sheep, 23m goats and over 600,000 camels, and exported leather goods worth \$101m in 2008/09.

Ethiopia used to export raw hides and skins to the European and Asian markets, but the government supports enterprises that export leather products. Ethiopia's annual export earnings from the sector increased to \$101m in 2008/09, from \$30m in 1999, following training and manpower development for hundreds of employees in 35 tanneries and shoe factories. The Ethiopian Leather and Leather Goods Technology Institute provide technical assistance to 12 privately-owned shoe factories to improve the quality and design of footwear so they are competitive globally. Big buyers of Ethiopian-made shoes are Germany, Italy, China, India and the US.

Speciality coffee to be traded locally

Ethiopia plans to move the trading of its speciality coffee to an Addis Ababa-based commodities exchange instead of selling the beans at auctions overseas. Up to 30% of the country's produce is classified as speciality beans.



CEO of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, Eleni Gebre-Madhin, said that the initiative makes Ethiopia the only country in the world with a

domestic marketing system for discovering and trading speciality coffee at the arrival stage. It benefits the farmers who produce these coffees, rather than just the export end of the chain.

Ethiopia has opened talks on trading premium brands with key players in the global speciality coffee industry. The event was attended by more than 100 participants drawn from the Speciality Coffee Association of America and coffee buyers from Europe and Japan. Ethiopia is Africa's biggest coffee producer with an annual average output of 330,000 tonnes. It expects a bumper harvest, 20-30% above the usual crop this year.

In related news, ECX announced that it is to launch an online trading system next year. The system will come into operation in the second half of 2010 when 20 remote online trading centres are set up all over the country. The trading centres will be fully equipped with the technology and trained staff like the central trading centre. The new system will have 10,000 active traders including ECX members and their clients.

ECX is also setting up a country-wide network of real-time information displays to ensure that updated commodity price information is available and easily accessible. The project is sponsored and funded by the World Bank, and the aim is to end exploitation and to increase legitimacy of the trading process by making accurate data available at all times.

Ethiopian Scientist receives 2009 World Food Prize

The 2009 World Food Prize was awarded to Dr. Gebisa Ejeta of Ethiopia, whose sorghum hybrids resistant to drought and the devastating Striga weed, have dramatically increased the production and availability of one of the world's five principal

grains and enhanced the food supply of hundreds of millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa.



The World Food Prize Foundation handed over the \$250,000 award to Prof. Gebisa at a ceremony organised in the state of Iowa, USA.

Prof. Gebisa said that sorghum is a staple food for 500 million people in Africa. According to Agriculture and Rural Development State Minister, Dr. Abera Deressa, Prof. Gebisa's two drought-tolerant hybrid sorghums distributed across Ethiopia are bringing outstanding results.

Prof. Gebisa received his bachelor degree in plant science in 1973. After graduating from Alemaya College in eastern Ethiopia, he received a Ph.D. in plant breeding and genetics from Purdue University in 1978. He is now a professor of agronomy at Purdue University in Indiana, where today he holds a distinguished professorship.

Prof. Gebisa is the second African scientist to receive this prestigious award.

Holland Car Plc wins Africa's top SMME award

Ethiopian car company, Holland Car plc was declared top small business in Africa at the 3rd Africa Small, Micro and Medium Businesses Awards held at a gala dinner on 15th October.

South Africa's Deputy Minister of Trade & Industry presented the award to Holland Car at a glittering ceremony attended by people from all over the continent and interspersed with African dance.



The Awards are an initiative of the Africa Growth Institute in Cape Town, and will be an annual highlight of the African entrepreneurial development calendar. Businesses that enter the awards are expected to be well established, in good financial shape and enjoy a reputation for quality, integrity and service. They should operate in a socially responsible manner, support community development efforts and create a work environment in which their employees can learn and grow. According to the judges, Holland Car Plc won the overall award because of the company's ability to create and sustain jobs in a challenging environment. The business established itself as a world leader in manufacturing, assembling and distribution of its products.

Association wins 2009 STARS Impact Award

Mums for Mums Association based in Mekelle in Northern Ethiopia has won the 2009 STARS Foundation, Impact Award.



Association Manager, Tebreh Wolde-Gebriel, received the award and \$100,000 at a ceremony held in London on 15th October. The award recognised the Association's achievements in the provision of services to those living with HIV/AIDS since 2001. Through its training centre, it gives young women the skills they need to earn a living,

helping to break the cycle of poverty that puts so many of their children at risk.

The Association offers food, shelter and education services to 3,300 destitute children and door-to-door care and support to 4,500 people living with HIV/AIDS. The STARS Foundation improves the well-being of disadvantaged children around the world by supporting organisations which meet their health, education and protection needs.

Tourism

Ethiopia to participate at the World Travel Market



Ethiopia will be taking part in this year's World Travel Market, following last year's success. The event will take place on the 9th-12th November at ExCel London. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopian Airlines and 23 tour operators will take part in this event presenting a diverse range of destinations and industry sectors to UK and International travel professionals.

World Bank grants \$35 million for tourism

Ethiopia and the World Bank have signed two financing agreements for \$65 million for tourism development and agricultural productivity. \$35m will be used to finance sustainable tourism development projects that will enhance the quality and variety of tourism products and services, which will increase the volume of tourism foreign

exchange earnings and jobs in Axum, Lalibella, Addis Ababa and its surroundings.

New 3-star hotel opens in Addis Ababa

Pacific Hotel, a newly built 3-star hotel, has opened its doors in Addis Ababa. Built with capital of 38 million birr, the five-storey hotel, which took five years to complete, is in the Lamberet area and has 45 rooms which provide panoramic views of the Yeka Mountains.

Events

Mulatu Astatke & The Heliocentrics at London gig



Mulatu Astatke is an innovative multi-talented musician, composer, arranger and founder of Ethio-Jazz and star of the Ethiopiques series. As a vibraphone, conga and percussion player, he has performed at numerous concerts in Ethiopia and abroad, including appearances

at the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC, Lincoln Centre in New York, Beethoven-Haus in Bonn and the Barbican Centre & Koko Club in London. Mulatu will be playing at London's South Bank Centre on 13th November with psych-Afro-jazz collective The Heliocentrics. He'll be joined on stage by Rachid Taha and Vieux Farka Toure, a feisty new African guitar hero, among others.

For tickets and other information log on to: <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/find/music/gigs-contemporary/tickets/rachid-taha-and-vieux-farka-toure-49489>

Sports

Deratu Tulu wins New York City Marathon

Ethiopia's Derartu Tulu won the ING New York City Marathon on 1st November, becoming the first Ethiopian woman ever to win at the New York City Marathon.



Tulu, the two-time Olympic Champion, made a spectacular finish to win her first New York women's title in 2:28:52.



The legendary Tulu is one of the greatest women distance runners in history and the first African woman to win an Olympic gold when she finished first in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. She was also voted the 6th greatest Ethiopian athlete in history. She has excelled in all competitions on the track, road and cross country.

Tulu's victory ended Great Britain's Paula Radcliffe's run of seven straight New York titles including the marathon, NYC Half-Marathon, NYRR New York Mini 10K and Fifth Avenue Mile. Radcliffe came fourth.

The Marathon's 40th running drew a record of 43,741 participants.

Merga wins New Delhi Half Marathon

Deriba Merga of Ethiopia retained his New Delhi Half Marathon title on 1st November in a race joined by thousands of Indian participants.

Merga, who this year won the Houston and Boston Marathons, faced stiff competition from compatriot Eshetu Wendimu and last year's runner-up Wilson Kipsang of Kenya over the 21.1 kilometres (13.1 miles) before winning in 59:54 minutes. Wendimu finished second in 1:00:02, followed by Kipsang with 1:00:04.

In the women's category, Ayelew Wude and compatriot Aberu Kebede finished second and third respectively with times of 1:07:58 and 1:07:59.

The Indian Olympics Association chief Suresh Kalmadi started the race, which included 8,429 participants, including 266 foreigners.

The 2009 Great Ethiopian Run

The 9th Great Ethiopian Run will take place on Sunday 22nd November in Addis Ababa. More than 33,000 participants are expected to run this year. Last year more than 31,000 participants took part in the 2008 race – the biggest race ever on the African continent by participant numbers.



The Run's ambassador is Haile Gebrselassie who has been instrumental in the success of the event-managing organisation known as Great Ethiopian Run, and is credited with the birth of mass-participation running in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Airlines has been sponsoring the event for the last three years and this year has further strengthened its partnership by becoming title

sponsor to help raise funds for charity. In recent years the mass races have been attracting more participants including elite athletes from the country and overseas.

Great Ethiopian Run has staged 50 races in its first 8 years (2001 - 2009).

Feyisa Lelisa 1st Ethiopian to win Dublin Marathon

Ethiopian runner, Feyisa Lelisa, claimed victory at the 30th running of the Dublin City Marathon in a time of 2:09:12. His time was five seconds off the course record. Lelisa is the first ever Ethiopian to have won the Dublin Marathon and in doing so set the second fastest ever time for the course. In the women's race, Tiki Gelana from Ethiopia finished in a time of 2:33:49, coming in at third place. This year's Dublin Marathon is believed to be the biggest ever, with an estimated 12,700 runners taking part.

2010 World Cup trophy to be displayed in Ethiopia

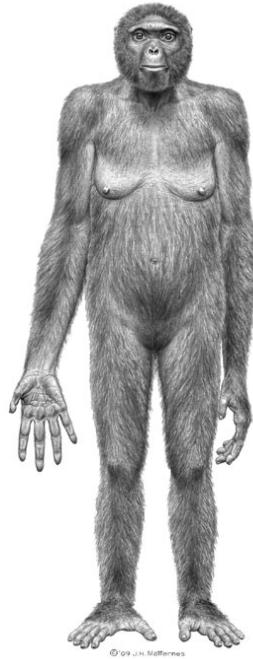
The 2010 World Cup trophy will be on display at the Millennium Hall, Addis Ababa, from 17th to 19th November, courtesy of the Coca Cola East Africa Bottling Company. Thousands of fans are expected to visit and enjoy the rare close-up of the trophy. FIFA and The Coca Cola Company are taking the trophy to 86 countries during a 225-day journey. The trophy will travel 134,017 km and visit every nation in Africa.

News in Brief

Scientists unearth oldest human remains in Ethiopia

A group of scientists have found a 4.4 million-year-old human ancestor in Ethiopia's remote Afar region. The uncovered remnant of a female, named "Ardi" is said to be the closest founding to the 'missing link' common ancestor of humans and chimps,

thought to have lived five to seven million years ago.



The discovery of the skeleton has allowed scientists to retrace the first evolutionary steps of our ancestors, after they split away from those of modern chimpanzees. Ardi lived a million years before the famous Lucy, the previous earliest skeleton of a hominid who was also found in Ethiopia's Afar region, and was of the more human-like genus Australopithecus.

The research, in the form of 11 detailed papers and more general summaries, appeared in the Science Journal's 2nd October 2009, special issue.

Gilgel Gibe II commences 105MW trial generation

Gilgel Gibe II, the largest hydroelectric power station project in Ethiopia's history started its trial generation of 105MW on 22nd October with its second turbine starting a test trial on 5th November. It will eventually generate 420MW.

Tekeze Hydropower Plant, which is expected to curb the severe shortage of electricity in the country, is going to be officially opened on 8th November. The dam has four turbines each with a capacity of generating 75mw. When fully operational, it is expected to add 300mw of much needed power to the national grid,

increasing generating capacity to a total of 1,170mw.

The current power demand in Ethiopia is 1600mw. The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation said it is always seeking alternative energy sources to bridge the gap between electric power supply and demand.

Ethiopian cobbler creating “African Nike”

Ethiopian shoemaker, Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, sees her eco-friendly “SoleRebels” brand of footwear, made of recycled tyres and traditional Ethiopian woven fabric, as Africa’s answer to Nike.



Launched in 2005, the SoleRebels brand features trainers, sandals and other trendy open shoes which are sold in the US and Europe and provides livelihoods to at least 75 suppliers. The shoes are wholly handmade and the workshop can produce up to 500 pairs of sandals, or 200 pairs of shoes -- priced between 15 and 30 dollars -- daily, exclusively for export. The first fully World-Fairtrade-Organisation-accredited company in Ethiopia, SoleRebels adheres to the Fairtrade tenets of gender equity, healthy working conditions, fair wages, and sustainable production practices.

Ethiopia's State-run TV to expand coverage

The Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) is to construct 34 new TV transmitter stations in all parts of the country within the coming few months to expand its broadcasting capacity. About 18 are to be constructed by Kality Construction, with the remainder by Defence Construction. Construction should begin in four months.

National Flag Day celebrated

National Flag Day was celebrated across the country on 5th October. The celebration is aimed at consolidating national unity among Ethiopia’s many nationalities, “who co-exist in mutual respect, common interest, equality and progress.”

International conference on population

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Addis Ababa from 26th to 28th October. More than 300 representatives of African governments, civil society organisations, experts on gender, human rights, maternal health, population issues and sustainable development attended the conference. Delegates recommitted to resolving challenges. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the ICPD, which adopted in 1994 a 20-year Programme of Action (PoA) with a broad mandate on inter-relationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The conference is jointly organised by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union and the UN Population Fund.

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