



Ethiopian News

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Nile meeting agrees on most points

The 17th annual Nile Basin Initiatives (NBI) Ministerial Councils meeting, held in Alexandria, Egypt (27th-28th July 2009), reached agreement on most points of the NBI package on fair and equitable use of transboundary rivers.

At a news conference on 8th August, Ethiopia's Water and Resources Minister, Asfaw Dingamo, said that the meeting was successful in protecting Ethiopia's interests.

Though seven riparian countries of NBI agreed on all of the 39 articles of the package, Egypt and Sudan objected to one of the articles - on security of water. The questions raised by Egypt and Sudan, which were aimed at acquiring special privileges on the Nile River, failed to raise support from other members.



The package has been designed to benefit all riparian countries by using water resources in an equitable and fair manner.

The upper basin Nile countries have given six months for Egypt and Sudan to reach an agreement on the article, or to come up with an alternative idea. If the two countries fail to reach agreement in the stated time, the implementation of the whole package will begin as it will be approved by a majority vote.

The NBI is a partnership initiated and led by the riparian states of the Nile River through the council of ministers of water affairs of the Nile Basin States.

Political parties to receive funding

Senior leaders of 59 national and regional political parties have taken part in discussions with Ethiopia's National Electoral Board (NEBE) on draft regulation for state financial support to political parties and on the formula for distribution of such financial support.

NEBE board chairman, Merga Bekana, said that the discussions also focussed on how political parties could qualify for financial support, the timetable for allocation and other matters, including responsibility, accountability and auditing systems within political parties.

The board stressed that financial support will be fairly distributed among parties who have registered to take part in general elections. 10% of the available financial assistance will be distributed to all parties, with a view to encouraging parties that currently hold few seats in the federal and regional parliaments.

The regulation was prepared based on the experience of over 100 countries and taking into account national laws and prevailing conditions. The draft regulation will be endorsed after comments given by participants have been incorporated.

Ethiopian peace force in Sudan honoured with UN medals

Ethiopian peacekeepers deployed in the Sudanese region of Darfur received UN

medals in recognition of their service and duty to the Sudan peace-keeping mission.

The Ministry of Defence said its peace force has built a permanent residential camp. The troops also provide transport services, conduct security patrols to enhance security and encourage confidence within the local population, conduct escorts for humanitarian convoys and accomplish other peacekeeping related operations.

Ethiopia's Ministry of Defence said that the Ethiopian Infantry Battalion to UNAMID, was honoured with medals for its significant contributions in bringing relative peace and stability, in a short period of time in western Darfur. Military officials from UNAMID applauded the Ethiopian forces for their diligent conduct.

Ethiopia's current contribution to the Darfur peace keeping mission consists of an infantry battalion and an engineering unit, as well as multi-role reconnaissance and transport companies deployed in Graidia South Darfur, El Geneina and Kulbus in West Darfur. Additional Ethiopian troops are expected to be deployed in the mission area at the end of August 2009.

Commission carrying out diagnostic survey on level of corruption in Ethiopia

The Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC), in collaboration with the World Bank, is conducting a diagnostic survey on the level of corruption in Ethiopia.

FEACC Commissioner, Ali Suliman, said that the survey is underway in institutions with large budgets and those where working systems tend to be exposed to corruption.

The survey on half of the institutions has already been finalised and is nearing completion on the remaining institutions.

The first round of the survey was undertaken in the construction sector. The findings obtained from the survey are at odds with researchers' predictions. According to the findings, the construction sector, which is highly exposed to corruption in most parts of the world, experiences minimum corruption in Ethiopia.

The second in-depth round on the sector is to be finalised soon. Similar surveys are underway on the human resource administration, education, health, land administration and telecom sectors. Findings on the study will be printed and distributed to pertinent local and international bodies.

Ethiopia secures \$151 million from horticulture

The Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency has announced that Ethiopia has secured \$151 million from exporting horticulture products in the past fiscal year.

Ethiopia supplied 1.3 million cut flowers to foreign markets during the period. The revenue obtained showed a \$26 million increase from that of the preceding year. More than 46,000 tonnes of vegetables, fruit and other horticulture products were supplied to various countries.

Ethiopia is directly and indirectly supplying horticulture products to about 40 countries. Holland remains the foremost buyer of Ethiopian horticulture products.

Efforts exerted by the agency to expand the return that Ethiopia is obtaining from the sector is bearing fruit. Ethiopia will begin directly supplying its horticulture products to the Russian market shortly. Moreover, the agency is trying to identify new countries - Hong Kong, Japan and Dubai are among the countries identified by the study as potential markets.

Demand for Ethiopian horticulture products is growing and is securing increased revenue . Ethiopia is currently developing horticulture products on an additional 2,000 hectares of land in SNNP, Amhara and Oromia states.

EIPO working to get Limu, Nekemte coffee trademarks

The Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) is working to register Limu and Nekemte fine coffee brands in various countries.



EIPO is promoting Ethiopian organic coffee varieties to enable the country to gain more economic benefit from the sector. Efforts to register Yirgacheffe, Harar and Sidamo fine coffee brands were successful in 29 of 36 target countries including America, Canada and Japan.



Capacity-building works aimed at improving Ethiopian coffee brands have also been undertaken. EIPO, in connection with this year's **World Intellectual Property Day**, has organised training and workshops that inform coffee exporters and other stakeholders of the global coffee market and ways of enabling the country to earn a good income from the sector.

Ethiopia expects \$500m revenue from leather

The Ethiopian government expects to increase the foreign currency it reaps from the export of leather and leather products to \$500 million from the existing \$100 million within five years.

The Minister of State for Trade and Industry said that the government considers the leather sector as an engine of economic growth. The government has positioned the leather industry as a priority sector in terms of export earning. Ethiopia has an immense livestock potential for the development of the leather industry.

The government has sought to improve the development and promotion of leather. The Ethiopian Leather and Leather Products Technology Institute (LLPTI) has been established, with support from the Italian government and UNIDO.

Over 16,000km new roads constructed

More than 16,000km of roads have been constructed across Ethiopia during the just concluded Ethiopian budget year.

The Ethiopian Road Authority (ERA) said that over 9.1 billion Birr was spent on the execution of the projects, which includes upgrading of highways, renovation and construction of tributary roads. Fourteen of the road projects have already been finalised while 21 new projects have entered the construction phase. The new roads make a valuable contribution to accelerating national economic growth.

Ministry signs MOU to develop geothermal power in South Ethiopia

The Ministry of Mines and Energy (MoME) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a Japanese company, Marubeni Corporation, for survey work for the Aluto-Langano Geothermal Power Development project in South Ethiopia.

MoME minister, Alemayehu Tegenu said at the signing ceremony that Ethiopia has an overall estimated 5,000MW geothermal resource potential. Ten potential areas have already been identified, Aluto-Langano being one of them. Aluto-Langano has the capacity to generate an estimated 7.5MW of electricity.

The MoU would lay the foundations for stronger, better and sustainable cooperation in the sector between Ethiopia and Japan. Marubeni Corporation's East Africa General Manager, Hisao Ikegai, said Ethiopia has very rich potential in geothermal underground power, in various locations within the Great Rift Valley region, from which neighbouring Kenya is already generating more than 300MW of energy.

Ethiopia has been seeking to develop its sources of energy in all sectors so as to meet the growing demand for energy following the double-digit successive economic growth of the past six years.

EEPCo sign power grid installation accord

The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCo) and TBEA, a Chinese company, have signed an agreement for providing the installation of power grids amounting to nearly \$120 million. A 1,000MW plus capacity power grid will be installed on the Gilgel Gibe III - Wolayita-Addis Ababa route. The power grid will transport electric power from Gilgel Gibe to the central distribution centre in Addis Ababa. The installation of the transmission lines is expected to take 20 months.

First unit of Gilgel Gibe II to start production

The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCo) is planning to open the first unit of the newly constructed Gilgel Gibe II hydro-power station in the first week of September.

The 420MW Gibe II hydro-power project was launched in June 2004 with an outlay of 5.2 billion Birr. The power project lies on a mountain and gorge in the Sokoru locality, between the Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS).

The idea of the project is to take the water that comes out of Gibe I dam and take it to Gibe II power house through a 25.8km long tunnel. The Gibe II would use water that comes from Gibe I so there is no need to build another dam. The water that comes out of the tunnel would run down a hill in two big pipes into a power house where there are four turbines, each with a capacity to generate 105MW.

It is believed that Gibe II will meet the power deficit once it starts running at full capacity.

Kenya and Sudan to import Power from Ethiopia

Sudan's national electric agency is set to buy power from Ethiopia early next year after grid installation was completed in mid-July.



Mr Saddiq Haroun, manager of the Ethiopia-Sudan power linkage project, said that a 157km power grid installation was laid from the Gedarf region of Sudan to Ethiopia's western border.

The entire project will cost \$35 million and India's export bank is to provide \$25 million as a loan to the Sudanese government. The power grid consists of 400 towers which have a capacity of carrying 220KV.

Ethiopia is set to generate 4,000MW of electricity in the coming year, which is double the current national consumption. It has various agreements to export hydroelectric power - 200MW to Djibouti, 500MW to Kenya and 200MW to Sudan.

Ethiopia is currently building five more big hydroelectric dams including Gilgel Gibe III.

Ethiopia building the longest bridge, across the Blue Nile

The Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) said that the construction of the longest ever bridge in Ethiopia, which crosses the Blue Nile River, is well underway at a cost of over 440 million Birr.

The 365-metre bridge is part of the 136km Assosa-Sherkole-Guba Road Construction Project, launched in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State, western Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian government and the International Redevelopment Agency (IDA) are covering the cost of the construction. The new road will directly interconnect Assosa town to Metekel Zone in the most direct way.

The road project has so far created jobs for over 400 people.

Project Chief Engineer, Zheng Jaigue, said that about 60% of the road construction has already been completed. The project will be completed in 2010.

Ethiopian Airlines becomes first African carrier to order Boeing 777-200LR

Ethiopian Airlines has placed an order for five Boeing 777-200LRs, valued at \$1.3 billion, making Ethiopian Airlines the first African carrier to order the ultra-long-range model.



Boeing 777-200LR

Ethiopian Airlines also signed a memorandum of understanding with Airbus to acquire twelve A350-900s valued at \$2.9 billion, starting in 2017.

The order is one of the largest ever by an African airline, and comes amid a broad slump in business from Airbus and Boeing. This order is made in line with Ethiopian's fast growth strategy, in which it is predicted that the fleet size would significantly increase in the next ten to fifteen years.

Ethiopian, widely regarded as one of the best-run airlines in Africa, plans to use the 777s on routes to Asia and North America from its high-altitude base in Addis Ababa.

The airline has developed a strong regional network to position Addis Ababa as a base to feed long-haul traffic into Africa, competing with fast-growing Middle East carriers such as Emirates Airlines.

Net profits rose 9% to 515 million Birr (\$41.1 million) in the six months to 31st December 2008,

with operating revenue up 55% at 6.7 million Birr. It carried 1.5 million passengers during the period, with freight more than doubling to 55,000 tonnes.

Authority licenses four aviation companies

The Ethiopian Civil Aviation Society (CAA) granted operation licenses to four private airlines with a registered capital of 80 million Birr in the 2008-2009 budget year.

Amibara Agricultural Development Plc is licensed for pesticide spray and domestic cargo flight services. Teddy Air Transport, Tewodros Engineering Business Plc and AberdAir Aviation are licensed for non-schedule passenger and cargo flight services.

The number of aviation companies in Ethiopia has reached twenty and their registered capital stands at 958 million Birr.

International airport inaugurated at Humera

An international airport, constructed in Humera, at a cost of over 182 million Birr was officially inaugurated on 26th July 2009.

Situated in North West Ethiopia, Humera International Airport was officially opened for flights after three years of construction.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Transport and Communications State Minister, Diriba Kuma, said that the airport would help Ethiopia transport its agricultural products from the area to international markets as fast as possible.

The construction of the airport was aimed at helping the agriculture sector in the region where maize, sesame and other oilseeds have been widely produced. The airport would also help Ethiopia to facilitate its communications with border countries in the area.

The construction was carried out by the Ethiopian Airports Enterprise, a government institution responsible for construction and administration of airports across Ethiopia.

John Barnes Captains Ethiopia Campaign

England football legend, John Barnes, is spearheading Wash & Go's 'Score Ethiopia' campaign – a partnership between the shampoo brand and education based charity Link Ethiopia.



The campaign is aimed at raising funds and awareness to aid the development and delivery of educational and football facilities as well as water amenities for the town of Lalibela in Ethiopia.



As part the campaign, Barnes visited all the English Premier League clubs to collect signed shirts from football's top flight. The signed shirts have been auctioned off and the total raised added to last year's fundraising total for the materials to commence building work on water amenities, schools and football facilities.

Another arm of the campaign has been asking young football fanatics across the UK to lend a helping hand by designing a unique football kit for their school team to be exchanged with one designed by a school in Ethiopia. On July 21st, John Barnes delighted schoolchildren in Pontefract with a rare visit. After beating thousands of other competition hopefuls across Yorkshire with his football strip design, 11 year

old Jordan Eccles, was crowned champion. His Ethiopian counterpart Habtamu Tilahun Abrham was also present when they exchanged each other's designs.

Global Fund grants \$133m to health ministry

The Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (Global Fund) has made a grant of \$133 million to Ethiopia's Ministry of Health to support the country's efforts to fight malaria.

The fund, an independent public-private partnership first proposed by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan back in 2001, and officially formed in 2002, aims to support Ethiopia's malaria prevention and build the capacity of the health sector for the coming two years as part of the Global Fund's Round 8 Grant.



Over the past few years, the ministry, along with its development partners has registered substantial results in reducing the morbidity rate instigated by malaria.

\$97.3 million of the grant will be used to support malaria related activities and the remaining \$35.7 million will be spent on cross-cutting health system related activities. The funding from this grant will build on the impressive results achieved to date in the control of malaria in Ethiopia and complement the efforts of the government and partners to achieve key goals.

In Ethiopia, two grants worth \$214.5 million from the Global Fund and additional support from other donors have helped the government implement an aggressive strategy of malaria control.

Until recently, Ethiopia was lagging behind many African countries combating malaria. In 2004 however, the government set an

ambitious new target to have all households in high-risk areas owning at least two long-lasting mosquito nets by 2008.

Ethiopia had exceeded this target by March 2008 after delivering 20.5 million bed nets, representing a three-fold increase and achieving 95% coverage in endemic areas. Along with expanded access to effective treatment, this scale-up has fuelled significant reductions in malaria incidence and mortality, with a 60% reduction in malaria cases and a 50% reduction in child deaths from malaria registered between 2004 and 2006.

Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Health, was elected chair of the Global Fund on 6th July 2009 for a two-year appointment.

Education

UNICEF hails Ethiopia's efforts to boost girls' school enrolment

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said the attention given by the government to increase girls' school enrolment would significantly contribute to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the education sector.

UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia, Ted Chaiban, said the activities carried out have significantly narrowed the school enrolment gap between boys and girls. UNICEF is undertaking activities that will enhance children's enrolment in school, as well as sustain quality of education. The government is making commendable efforts to enrol all school-age children in school and to expand basic alternative education.

Over 35,000 students graduate at diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels

Seventeen higher learning institutions across Ethiopia graduated over 35,000 students at diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels on July 26th 2009, upon completion of relevant training in various fields of study.

According to the Ministry of Education, more than 5,000 students graduated at first degree level from the ten newly-established state-owned universities.

Abera Abate, of the Foreign and Public Relations Directorate at Addis Ababa University, said that the universities are striving to produce skilled human power trained to international standards. "The number of students enrolled in higher learning institutions has been markedly increasing year on year, enabling the country to produce skilled manpower in various fields of study."

Ten new universities to open

The Ministry of Education said construction of ten new universities will be launched across the country in the near future.

The new universities will be constructed in Oromia, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Trigray and South Ethiopia Peoples' states.

Preparations have already been finalised to launch construction of the universities and enrol students in 2003 E.C. (2011) academic year. Construction of the universities will create jobs for local people.

Menschen für Menschen building 28 schools

NGO Menschen für Menschen has been constructing 28 schools with a budget of over 180m Birr in all the regional states of Ethiopia.

The Menschen für Menschen Agro-technical Training College graduated its second batch of trainees in applied technical fields with first degrees.

More than half of the schools have already been completed, while the remaining schools are expected to be finalised and go operational by the end of the year. The schools will have the capacity of more than 40,000 students. So far, the organisation has constructed 27 primary and secondary schools in the past year.

In related news, its Founder and Chairman, Dr. Karlheinz Böhm, won the first "Save the World Award" for his relentless humanitarian commitment in Ethiopia, on 24th July 2009 at an award ceremony in Zwentendorf, Austria.



Dr. Böhm was awarded the prize for his involvement in improving the living conditions of Ethiopians for almost 30 years. The award declared MfM had improved the lives of millions of citizens through its integrated rural development activities in the areas of education, health, agro-technology, women in development, infrastructure and clean water provision.



Save the World Awards are presented to exceptional personalities and organisations working toward a sustainable and liveable future for the planet and its people with a goal of providing better, more comprehensive and stronger awareness.

Tourism

New fossils unveiled, Lucy's legacy attracting more tourists

Ethiopian scientists have discovered hominid fossil fragments dating from between 3.5 and 3.8 million years ago in what could fill a crucial gap in the understanding of human evolution.

The find, which included several complete jaws and one partial skeleton, came from the Afar desert at Woranso-Mille, near where the famous fossil skeleton Lucy was found in 1974.

Researchers say the area, about 230km from Addis Ababa, boasts the most continuous record of human evolution.

In related news, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has announced that the "Lucy's Legacy: The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia", exhibition that is displaying Lucy in various American states has contributed to the rise in the number of foreign tourists coming to Ethiopia. More than 383,000 foreign tourists visited Ethiopia this Ethiopian year, 20% of whom were from North America. This number is 25,000 higher than the previous year. Lucy will be transferred and displayed in Asia by 2010 to promote Ethiopia there. These finds have placed Ethiopia in the forefront of paleoanthropology.

10,000 foreign tourists flock to Simien Park

Simien Mountains National Park in North Gondar Zone of Amhara state secured over 1.4 million Birr in income from tourists who visited the park last year.

More than 10,000 foreign tourists who visited the park saw endemic animals such as Walia Ibex and the Ethiopian Wolf (Red Fox). There were 3,188 more visitors than in the previous year.

The increase in tourists is attributed to the attention given by the government and the local people to the development and conservation of the park. The construction of

hotels and other service facilities around the park also contributed to the increase.



The Ethiopian Wolf and Walia Ibex

Located in Northern Ethiopia, the park is surrounded by many mountains including Ras Dashan, the highest mountain in Ethiopia. The park is home to a number of rare species, including more than 50 species of birds. UNESCO designated the park as a World Heritage Site in 1978.

Ethiopia earns close to 2bn birr from tourism

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism said more than 1.9 billion birr was earned from tourists from May 2008 to May 2009.

The sum was secured from 383,400 tourists, a majority of whom came from North America, Europe and the Middle East. The number of tourists was 25,000 more than the previous year.

Tourist flow to the country is increasing owing to the expansion of infrastructure facilities and prevalence of durable peace in the country. Moreover, Ethiopia's participation in various international tourism conferences and expos as well as construction of hotels by investors contributed to the increase in the number of tourists.

Ethiopia has eight World Heritage sites, while efforts are underway to get two additional sites onto UNESCO's list.

Sport

Dibaba clocks fastest time of the year in 5km

Dibaba marked her return to the track for the first time since May by running the fastest time in

the world this year at the London Grand Prix ahead of the Berlin World Championships. She took control half way through in what was her second 5,000m of the season and came home to break the Crystal Palace stadium record in 14:33:65.



Sentayehu Ejigu, also from Ethiopia was second. She also produced her quickest run of the season.

Dibaba made history at the Beijing Olympics last year when she became the first female athlete to win gold in both the 5,000m and 10,000m.

Ethiopia selects strong team for Berlin World Championships



The Ethiopian Federation have entered their squad of middle- and long-distance runners for the 12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Berlin Germany (15th-23rd August).

Defending World champions Meseret Defar, Tirunesh Dibaba and Kenenisa Bekele and African 10,000m record holder Meselech Melkamu have each been selected for the

5,000m and 10,000m distances, but the team will not declare who will actually run in each race until the championships. Ethiopia is allowed four runners in the men's 10,000m and women's 5,000m and 10,000m, as it has the defending champion in these races, and currently Ethiopia has also selected a reserve for each of these disciplines with the exception of the men's 10,000m where only four athletes have been entered.

FIFA lifts suspension of Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF) has been readmitted to world football after elections for a new leadership were held on 18th July.

Sahlu Gebrewold Gebremariam was voted in as president of the EFF, replacing Dr Ashebir Woldegiorgis, who resigned in May.

Sahlu said that his priority is to heal the rift in the game in the country and to "facilitate a renaissance in Ethiopian football."

News in Brief

Ethiopia, Kenya - \$326.5m for road project

The African Development Bank approved a \$326.5 million loan to fund the second phase of a road project which will link Addis Ababa to Mombasa in Kenya. The project includes the construction of a 438km road and a border post between the two countries. Transport and shipping costs as well as transit times will be cut by the road. The project will promote trade and regional integration.

Increase in safe water in the Somali region

Safe water service coverage increased by 8% in the Somali region during the just ended Ethiopian budget year. The coverage now reaches 40% of the population following the construction of fifty new safe-water units. About 120 water facilities have also been maintained. The government, NGOs and the public spent almost 80m Birr on the construction and maintenance of the facilities. Activities are in progress to increase the coverage to 60%.

University of Leeds awards Honorary Doctorate to Bekele Geleta

The University of Leeds in the United Kingdom awarded Ethiopia's Bekele Geleta with an Honorary Doctorate of Laws.

With the responsibility of organising relief in the wake of crises and natural disasters across the globe, Bekele Geleta is bringing his knowledge of strategy and logistics to his new role as Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The former Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Red Cross, who graduated from the University of Leeds with an MA in Transport Economics in 1974, Bekele is experienced in lobbying presidents, royalty and the general public to raise much-needed aid.

UPDATE – Holyfield vs. Retta exhibition postponed

Former world heavyweight champion, Evander Holyfield's exhibition match in Ethiopia, against Ethiopian-American Sammy Retta, has been postponed until September. The fight, to raise funds for AIDS, was set to take place in Addis Ababa on 26th July, but will now coincide with Ethiopia's New Year celebrations on 11th September.

The fight will rank as one of the highest profile all-American boxing bouts on African soil since the legendary 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" that pitted Muhammad Ali against George Foreman in the former Zaire.

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