



Ethiopian News

December 2014 - January 2015 Issue

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www.twitter.com/EthioEmbassyUK



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www.youtube.com/user/EthioEmbassyUK



Message from the Ambassador



As we embark on a new year, I would like to reflect on our work over the past twelve months, which has largely been devoted to investment and tourism promotion.

In January, Ethiopia’s Minister of Education, H.E. Shiferaw Shigute made his debut London visit as

education minister for the annual Education World Forum.

In February, Ethiopia’s Foreign Minister, H.E. Dr Tedros Adhanom participated at the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, where he announced an Elephant Protection Initiative for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan.

On 6th March we launched our Facebook page, shortly followed by Twitter. Also in March, Ethiopia learnt it will host the 4th World Coffee Conference and the 116th Session of the International Coffee Council in Addis Ababa in 2016. It will be the first

time these events will be held in Africa. Ethiopians residing in the UK also marked International Women's Day in ***"Equality for Women is Progress for All"***.

In May, Ethiopians, parliamentarians, government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and other invited guests joined us in celebrating the 23rd anniversary of Ethiopia's National Day – Ginbot 20 - which marks the emergence of a new democratic order.

In June Diaspora Ethiopians residing in the UK raised £33,200 (1,095,600 Birr) by selling bonds for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the second bond-selling event organized at the Embassy. Last year marked the third anniversary of the launch of the GERD on 12th April, so far, more than £130,620 (4.3 million Birr) has been raised by the UK diaspora.

In July, at the first ever Girl Summit, a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Demeke Mekonnen committed Ethiopia to ending FGM and child marriage by 2025, increasing the budget to achieve this target. In October, our annual parliamentary dinner helped further cement Ethio-UK relations and in November, more than 400 people joined us in celebrating Ethiopia during World Travel Market week.

For investment promotion the Embassy took part in events at DIAGEO, CityUK, Standard Chartered, among others. And finally, the 9th Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day was colourfully celebrated in London at the end of November.

We began 2015 with joyful Christmas celebrations which in our calendar are held on 7th January.

On behalf of everyone at the Embassy, I would like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2014 and we look forward to keeping you informed on Ethiopia's progress in 2015.

Ethiopia issues its first Sovereign Bond

In early December 2014, Ethiopia entered the international financial market with the issuance of its first ever sovereign bond worth \$1 billion. Following a week-long investor road-show, with the sovereign bond unveiled in London, with the Minister for Finance and Economic Development,

Sofian Ahmed, accompanied by other high ranking officials, the bond was oversubscribed by more than \$1 billion!

Even though Ethiopia is new to the bond market, high interest was shown from international investors - Ethiopia attracted \$2.6 billion subscription for the one billion dollar bond it submitted.

Minister Sofian said "the trust in Ethiopia's sovereign bond is proof to the success of government's development policy" adding that "the sale of the bond signifies that Ethiopia is no more considered as an aid recipient, rather it is becoming an economic partner."

The bond has a maturity of 10 years and a 6.625% interest rate. Proceeds from the sale will be used to finance major development projects including expanding power production, industrial zones and sugar factories.

Ethiopia's debut in the bond market signifies the focus the Government is giving to access to capital markets as opposed to the more traditional bilateral and multilateral finance options. It is timely as the financing of major projects in the Growth and Transformation Plan have been facing challenges.

US investors bought 50% of the bond, UK investors took 35% with the remaining 14% taken by European investors and 1% from other countries. Major fund-managing global companies bought 96% of the bond.

For a detailed analysis, please read the 5th December issue of A Week in the Horn: <http://goo.gl/PGWCvN>

Ethiopia achieves MDG-1 hunger target



Ethiopia was among thirteen countries recognised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on 30th November 2014 "for outstanding progress in fighting hunger", an achievement which

includes reaching international targets ahead of the end-of-2015 deadline.

By reaching the Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG-1) target - to halve the proportion of hungry people by 2015, Ethiopia has decreased the prevalence of undernourishment from 74.8% in 1990-92, to 35% in 2012-14.

Receiving the award on behalf of the government at a ceremony at FAO headquarters, H.E. Tefera Derbew, Ethiopia's Minister for Agriculture, extended his appreciation to all who contributed to the target.



The FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva said, "You have overcome major challenges in difficult global economic conditions and policy environments. You have demonstrated the will and mobilized the means." Progress in eradicating worldwide hunger over the next ten years "is gaining momentum", but much more needs to be done - 805 million people still suffer from chronic undernourishment - he said, urging countries to accelerate progress.

We need to "improve the quality and efficiency of food systems, promote rural development, increase productivity, raise rural incomes, improve access to food, and strengthen social protection."

Last year's UN State of Food Insecurity in the World report, identified key factors for success in reducing hunger. In several countries, including Ethiopia, meeting goals was attributed to economic growth and policies put in place by governments over the last two decades.

To date, 63 developing countries have reached the MDG-1 target, and six more are on track to reach it by 2015.

PM Hailemariam meets German chancellor

H.E. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met for talks in December in Berlin while the Prime Minister was on an official visit to Germany, leading a delegation that included Foreign Minister, Dr Tedros Adhanom, Government Communication Affairs Minister Redwan Hussein and other senior officials.

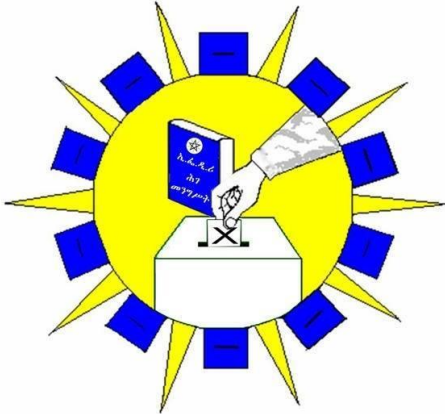


The two heads of state exchanged views on a range of subjects and agreed to expand practical cooperation on global, regional, and bilateral issues. At a joint news conference with the Chancellor, PM Hailemariam vowed to expand and deepen cooperation between both nations.



Chancellor Merkel vowed that Germany would devise a comprehensive package to make its companies competitive enough to tap into ever growing opportunities in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Election 2015



Ethiopia's upcoming election will take place on Sunday 24th May. This will be Ethiopia's fifth national election. Elections are held every 5 years.

Campaigning will begin on 14 February, ending on 21 May. The final result will be announced on 22 June.

Participating political parties selected their election logos from 24th November to 9th December 2014 while candidate registration started on 25th December 25 and will last until 4th February.

Polling stations commenced duties on 8th January and registration of around 33 million people began on 9th January with 3.5 million people registering in the first three days. 45,000 voter registration stations will provide services until February 19.

Elections for election observers were held across the nation with commendable participation by the general public. An observer training programme will help them discharge their mandate effectively.

...political parties - allocation of funds

On 2nd January the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) and political parties held talks on the allocation of funds to political parties for use in their campaign for the May elections. Professor Merga Bekana, Chairperson of the NEBE, stressed that allocation of funds would be based on global best practice standards.

Addis Ababa braces itself for first metro in Sub-Saharan Africa

The \$475 million Addis Ababa Light Railway, similar to London Docklands Light Railway, will launch in early February.



Track laying is almost complete and the commissioning period will take another three months before the first passengers can board.

The light railway consists of two lines running for 32km with underground and over ground sections, 39 stations, and two operators - the Ethiopian Railways Corporation and Shenzhen Metro.

Ten trams were delivered last month. The three-section, 70% low-floor cars have an entrance height of 350mm and a steel and aluminium body for strength and lightness. Designed to operate in pairs at speeds of 70 km/h the trams are being assembled in Addis Ababa and will be ready for test runs this month.



250 Ethiopian students are in China receiving training on how to operate the trams and 140 students who are enrolled in Railway Engineering, graduating next year from Addis Ababa University, will bridge the project's administration gap.

It will be the first urban metro rail scheme to be built in a sub-Saharan country outside of South Africa.

Ethiopia is also building a rail link to neighbouring Djibouti and plans to complete 5,000 km of railway lines by 2020 and treble the size of the road network by next year to 150,000km.

Bombardier wins first rail contract in Ethiopia

Rail technology leader, Bombardier Transportation, has won a contract to deliver the signalling for Ethiopia's new 400km Awash-Weldia line. Awarded by Turkish construction company Yapi Merkezi, which is delivering the project's design and construction, the order is worth about €36 million (£28 million).

The new link is part of a programme to extend the country's rail network. The signalling system, based on the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), a global, standardised, state-of-the-art signalling system, will ensure the new railway's high utilisation and inter-operability with other lines and new vehicles.

Peter Cedervall, President, Division Rail Control Solutions at Bombardier said, "Bombardier is proud to be selected to supply the signalling technology for this important part of the Ethiopian infrastructure investment programme. We are happy to once again work with our esteemed partner Yapi Merkezi and further strengthen our relations with the Ethiopian railway industry."

Gilgel Gibe III Hydro project 90% complete

90% of the Gibe III hydropower project, on the Omo River in south-western Ethiopia, is complete. Ten turbine units will each begin generating 187mw later this year.

During an official visit to the project in December, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, the First Lady, Ministers and other Ugandan high-level

officials visited the dam were briefed by Engineer Ms Azeb Asnake, Project Manager and Director General of Ethiopian Electricity Corporation. President Museveni said Ethiopia's use of its natural resources for sustainable development should be emulated by countries.

Ethiopia's first ever Waste-To-Energy facility, the 50mw Repi project in Addis Ababa, is 58% complete; the 153mw Adama II wind power project is 82% complete and the 51 MW Adama I wind power project, completed two years ago, is now fully operational.

AORA Solar, Ethiopia to realise CRGE vision

AORA Solar, a leading developer of solar-biogas hybrid power technology, has with Ethiopia announced its plan to construct an initial pilot of AORA's Tulip™ solar-hybrid power plant.



The project is tied to Ethiopia's **Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy**, under which the country aims to enhance access to affordable, environmentally-friendly renewable energy. The goal is to provide adequate uninterrupted power to help achieve middle-income status by 2025 within a green economy.

"We are transforming our Green Economy Strategy into action and are pleased to partner with AORA to help achieve our vision," said H.E. Mr Alemayehu Tegenu, Ethiopia's Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy. "AORA's unique solar-hybrid technology is well-suited to provide energy and heat, to support local economic development in off-grid rural locations in Ethiopia."

Construction of the pilot plant will begin by mid-2015. Following the trial, the Ministry intends to

deploy AORA installations to off-grid communities in selected areas of the country to support rural economic development. The Tulip technology requires less land per kWh to generate power and heat than other systems. Each Tulip station is small and modular, producing 100kW of electricity and 170kW of heat, occupying less than 3,500 square meters (0.86 acres).

AORA's technology runs not only on solar radiation, but also on almost any gaseous or liquid fuel, including biogas, biodiesel and natural gas. This enables a variety of operational modes – from solar-only mode, to hybrid-mode, where fuel helps generate full power when sunlight is insufficient, to fuel-only mode during night hours or heavily overcast periods. This guarantees an uninterrupted and stable power supply 24 hours a day in all weather conditions.

"We are pleased to partner with the Ministry and look forward to bringing our technology to Ethiopia to provide affordable access to power," said Zev Rosenzweig, CEO of AORA, "which will have significant social and economic impact, helping to provide power to schools and medical facilities, refrigeration for food processing and post-harvest storage, groundwater pumping and much more.

Ethiopia sends 187 health professionals to West Africa; the Africa against Ebola campaign launched

187 Ethiopian health worker volunteers travelled to West Africa in December to join the fight against the deadly Ebola outbreak.



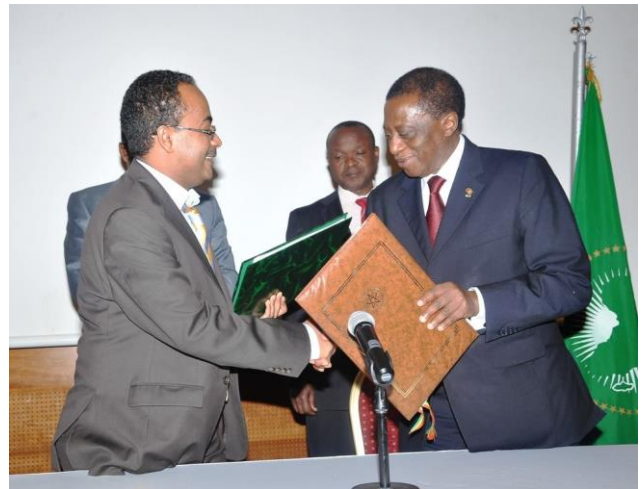
Back in October, Ethiopia pledged to send up to 200 health workers for the AU's "Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa" initiative, launched by the AU Commission's Peace and Security Council.

At a 15th December farewell dinner for the volunteers, Health Minister Dr Kesete-Berhan Admassu expressed his appreciation. The country is now the largest volunteer contributing African country in the fight against Ebola. He likened the

health volunteers to the Ethiopian Peacekeepers deployed in other African countries.



"I volunteered because I want to make whatever little contribution I can in the fight against Ebola. They are our sisters and brothers taking the brunt of the virus," Dr Aklilu Hailu



A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the African Union (AU) and the Ethiopian government on future cooperation. Mr Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chair of the AU, appreciated Ethiopia's unwavering support for Africa, as did Liberian Ambassador to Ethiopia Vivienne T. Wreh.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Demeke, noted Ethiopia's contribution to many African causes and said it had helped counter Ebola since its outbreak.

On 20th December, Ethiopia, in collaboration with the AU, launched the **Africa against Ebola** SMS campaign. Since 22nd December, Ethiopians can

contribute 5 Birr by texting “Stop Ebola” to 7979. The funds raised will be used for the training and deployment of further health personnel.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, expressed her gratitude to the Ethiopian Government and the private sector for joining the SMS campaign. “We are especially grateful because they have also sent a lot of their young women and men to the front line to work with their brothers and sisters in the three countries. Ethiopia has the biggest contingent on the ground, just above Nigeria...this will encourage our partners outside Africa when they see we are taking a lead, sending our young women and men, raising funds on our own continent, not just sitting here and doing nothing waiting for people from outside to help and we hope that with this, we are able to make a difference in the fight against Ebola.”

DONATE 5 BIRR

SMS “STOP EBOLA”

TO 7979 NOW

#AfricaAgainstEbola



Mr Andualem Admassie, Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Telecom said, “If we don’t come together in coordinating and addressing the epidemic, it will not just be limited to the three countries but all of Africa. Each and every African has to do what they can to reverse the effects of Ebola”.

Mr Eyob Tolina, representing the Ethiopian private sector, urged the business community to continue their pledges to the Africa Against Ebola campaign.

Ethiopians living longer

The latest Global Burden of Disease Study by *The Lancet* indicates that Ethiopia has achieved remarkable progress in life expectancy in the last two decades.

The change in life expectancy between 1990 and 2013 is +16 years for Ethiopia, an exceptional gain. Progress in reducing child mortality is exemplary.

People around the world live an average six years longer today than they did in 1990 while global life expectancy at birth rose by 5.8 years for men and 6.6 for women between 1990 and 2013.

First IGAD International Scientific Conference opens in Addis Ababa

On 3rd December, Dr Kesete-Berhan Admasu, Ethiopia’s Minister of Health, and Engineer Mahboub Maalim, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, officially opened the first IGAD International Scientific Conference on Health.

Held under the theme, "Innovative approaches for equitable access to health services among pastoralist communities and cross border mobile populations," the four-day event showcased research findings and best practice in health among migrant populations and mapped out new directions and policy for accelerated sustainable delivery of health services, and enhanced cooperation with a wide range of partners.

Participants discussed innovative approaches for equitable access to reproductive health, HIV/Aids services among pastoralists and cross-border mobile populations, and assessment of health policies and practices.

Opening the Conference, the Health Minister said IGAD has played a complementary role in making social development a core issue for Member States.

He praised IGAD for supporting health and other services for pastoralists since its inception, along with development partners. The Minister said the

Conference will lay the foundations for reflecting on past achievements and challenges and consolidating closer partnerships on health.

He urged IGAD and Member States to focus on helping under-served communities and on diseases that are targeted for elimination, to save more lives in the region. Sustainability in health development cannot be achieved without ownership of health policies and programmes.

Engineer Mahboub Maalim noted that health is part and parcel of IGAD's regional development agenda and helps promote peace and stability. He said the Conference was an opportunity to consolidate existing partnerships and forge new ones.

The conference, organized by IGAD in association with Ethiopia's Ministry of Health and international partners, brought together Ministers of Health from IGAD Member States and was attended by more than 300 health policy experts, decision makers and practitioners.

World Aids Day marked in Gambella



Ethiopia's Gambella region hosted the 2014 national World AIDS Day under the theme "Let no one die of HIV/AIDS". A mass HIV testing campaign was held, part of a multi-country HIV testing campaign across Africa.

A total of 3,383 people were tested for HIV in Gambella Stadium – **the highest turnout in Africa**. Of these, 82 people – or 2.4% – tested positive and have since been linked to health facilities for follow up.

The Guinness World record is held by Argentina, which conducted 3,733 free HIV tests in 8 hours in Rosario city to mark World AIDS Day 2012.

State Health Minister Dr Kesetebirhan Admassu said significant progress has been made but, "continued efforts are needed to achieve an AIDS-free generation in Ethiopia."

800,000 Ethiopians have been infected with HIV since the outbreak of the disease in the 1980s. Ethiopia was one of 25 countries that reduced new

HIV infections by 90% from 135,000 in 2001 to 15,100 in 2013. During the same period, new HIV infections in children dropped by 57%.

Addis Ababa's Archbishop among new Cardinals appointed by Pope Francis

Archbishop Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, C.M., of Addis Ababa was among 15 new Cardinals appointed by Pope Francis on 4th January.



The Pope said, "On February 14 next I will have the joy of holding a Conistory, during which I will name 15 new Cardinals who, coming from 14 countries from every continent, manifest the indissoluble links between the Church of Rome and particular Churches present in the world.

"On Sunday February 15 I will preside at a solemn con-celebration with the new Cardinals. On February 12 and 13 I will hold a Consistory with all the Cardinals to reflect on the orientations and proposals for the reform of the Roman Curia."

UNICEF Ethiopia Appoints young rap star as its New National Ambassador

UNICEF Ethiopia appointed young rap star, Abalone Melese, a citizen of Norway of Ethiopian origin, as its new National Ambassador.

Speaking of her new title as a UNICEF National Ambassador Abalone said, "Working with UNICEF as a National Ambassador will allow me to help defend the rights of children, including the right to education, health, nutrition, water, and sanitation, protection and participation and ensure compliance

with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, because that's what UNICEF is about."



A UNICEF Representative said, "Abelone is a role model for her peers, especially girls. Her candid personality coupled with her strong presence in the public domain sends powerful messages that reach the hearts and minds of children and youth all over the world. We are confident that she will make a positive contribution especially in the area of child rights, maternal health and girl's empowerment during her ambassadorship."

Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu among Most Influential Africans of 2014

Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, Founder and CEO of SoleRebels, one of the fastest-growing African shoe brands, was included in New African Magazine's annual list of 'Most Influential Africans'.



"Africa is on the move. In every march and movement, there are always a few figures who lead the line and who stick their heads above the parapet before anyone else – these can be trendsetters, visionaries, heroes, and at times even rabble-

rousers whose actions make or break the continent. Wielding influence comes in diverse forms and this collection portrays just that."



On receiving the news, Bethlehem said, "I am deeply honoured to be named on this list of incredible personalities."

Ethiopian voted "Best Airline to Africa" by Premier Traveler magazine

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest and most profitable airline in Africa, was voted the "Best Airline to Africa" by one of the most prominent travel magazines in the United States, Premier Traveler, at a December ceremony in Los Angeles.



CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group, Tewolde Gebremariam, commented: "We are honoured that Premier Traveler Magazine's readers in the U.S. have selected us as the best airline for travel to Africa. I wish to thank them for this vote of confidence, which once again reaffirms the quality of the service and product we offer. We currently offer the best connectivity options for the travelling



public between Africa and the US, thanks to our daily flights from Washington D.C. using the ultra-modern B777s and B787s, and our extensive African network covering 49 destinations with daily and more flights.

In June 2015, we will add Los Angeles as our second point in the U.S. Our flights connecting Addis Ababa, Dublin and Los Angeles will be operated with the B787s, which offer unmatched on-board comfort. It will be the only direct service connecting Africa with Ireland and the West Coast of the United States."

Ethiopian is not shy of awards and holds the **Best Airline in Africa 2014** award given by Passenger Choice Awards, the African Airlines Association's **African Airline of the Year (2014) award** and is the **Best Foreign Airline of the Year from Africa 2014**.

The airline operates the youngest fleet on the continent and serves 84 international destinations across 5 continents with over 200 daily departures.

Ethiopian Airlines to connect Japan and Africa

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest airline in Africa, will launch new services to Tokyo Narita International Airport from April 20, 2015, in partnership with fellow Star Alliance member, All Nippon Airways, Japan's leading airline. The thrice weekly flight, the only direct connection between Africa and Japan, will be operated through Hong Kong with the ultra-modern Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, which offers customers the best on-board comfort with the biggest windows in the sky, high ceilings, less noise than any aircraft with a lesser carbon footprint, and higher cabin humidity, ideal for long-haul travel.

The CEO of the Airline said: "As the only direct service between Africa and Japan, our flights to Narita will give our customers the best possible connectivity options and will be critical role in enabling greater people-to-people, investment, trade and tourism ties between a rising Africa, the second fastest growing region in the world, and a highly industrialized Japan, the third largest economy in the world."

Japan is the world's third largest economy with growing investment, trade and tourism ties with Africa. Ethiopian flights to Tokyo will enable the strengthening of investment, trade, tourism and people-to-people ties between Africa and Japan.



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

...launches SMS-based flight status information and cargo shipment tracking service

Last November, Ethiopian Airlines began an SMS system and cargo tracking, making it easier for customers to check flight status and cargo shipment information.



The new service, part of a big project called "Mobility", will facilitate online booking, ticket purchase, check-in and seat selection on mobiles.

Visit the Ethiopian website for the SMS Guidelines.

\$68.5 million invested in three new runways

The Ethiopian Airports Enterprise has signed a \$68.5 million contract with three local firms for the construction of three airport runways, to be built in three major regional cities to equip them for larger jets such as the B737.

The construction is a part of the government's efforts to boost trade and tourism ties across the

country for the next Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP), which is set to start in late 2015.

The projects will take around two years to complete, then airport terminals will be built.

TRADE & INVESTMENT

FDI inflows on the rise

The Ethiopian Investment Commission has announced a significant increase in Foreign Direct Investment in Ethiopia, with 983 projects, with a combined capital of 296 billion birr, registering in the last four years.

1, 535 projects have been implemented in the last 5 years, surpassing the target of 1,512. 864 projects with a registered capital of 46.75 billion birr have reached the production phase.

The investment projects have created about 40,000 permanent and temporary jobs.

More than \$1 billion earned from the export sector

The Trade Ministry said \$1.16 billion was earned from the export sector in the first five months of this Ethiopian fiscal year (8th July), a 10.67% increase on the same period last year.

Exports included agricultural, manufacturing and mining products. Agricultural products generated over \$861.8 million – a 20% increase on last year. Pulses and oilseeds also showed a 31% and 23.62% increase respectively. Coffee was also a big hit - 64,228 tons was exported, up from the predicted 62,560 tons.

Ethiopia envisages earning \$5 billion from the export trade this budget year. During 2013/14, exports, to 124 countries, accounted for \$3.25 billion of national earnings.

Coffee exports expected to reach record high

Ethiopian coffee exports for 2014/15 are expected to reach a record high. Drought and disease has hit crops in Latin America, especially Brazil, the world's biggest coffee producer, says the International Coffee Organization.

From July to October 2014, Ethiopia, Africa's largest coffee producer, exported 54,000 tons of coffee worth \$231.9 million, compared with the \$172.5 million earned from 51,000 tons over the same period last year.

The Chairperson of the Ethiopian Coffee Exporters' Association, Hussein Agraw, said he expected coffee exports to rise to 235,000 tons by the end of 2014/2015, earning \$862 million. Total coffee production in Ethiopia amounted to 450,000 tonnes during 2013/14 period, and a similar output is expected for 2014/15.



15 million people are involved in coffee production, mostly on smallholder farms in the misty forested highlands in the west/southwest.

CULTURE & TOURISM

UK tour operators' roundtable

To express its appreciation for the role that UK tour operators play in promoting Ethiopian tourist destinations, the Embassy is organizing a roundtable discussion with tour operators engaged in promoting Ethiopia on 16th February.

The aim is to discuss the challenges and opportunities of Ethiopia's tourism sector.

Stakeholders will be able to air the problems that they have encountered in promoting Ethiopia and map out a common strategy on how to resolve the problems and thereby contribute to the realisation of Ethiopia's tourism sector strategy, whose objective is to make Ethiopia one of the top five



tourism destinations on the African continent by 2020.

Ethiopian Airlines’ regional manager, Mr Michael Yared, will also participate in the round-table discussion to respond to any air transport related queries.

For enquiries, please email Angela at angela@ethioembassy.org.uk

Wanderlust and Curious Animal magazines place Ethiopia in 'hot list' of places to travel in 2015

Last year, Ethiopia topped the list in Rough Guide’s top 10 countries for travel in 2014. This year, Ethiopia also got a few mentions for travel in 2015.

Wanderlust

Wanderlust, one of the UK's leading travel magazine said, "Few people realise that Ethiopia is rich in untouched

historical and natural gems – but quick, they're catching on! According to the Association of Independent Tour Operators, Ethiopia's visitor numbers are growing 10% year-on-year. Ethiopia has countless unique treasures: among them, eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the craggy beauty of the Simien Mountains, and millennia-old history that lives on in its architecture and culture.



A couple of little-known facts to whet your appetite: Christianity has been practised here for over 2,000 years, making Ethiopia unique. You can witness this history first-hand, in the ancient rock churches of Lalibela, and St George's Cathedral in Addis Ababa. It's also the source of the Blue Nile: an unassuming spring at Gish Abbay, in the north, which trickles

into Lake Tana – the humble beginnings of one of the world's mightiest rivers."



Similarly in Curious Animal's adventure travel hot list, Ethiopia is among the 10 most exciting adventure travel destinations.

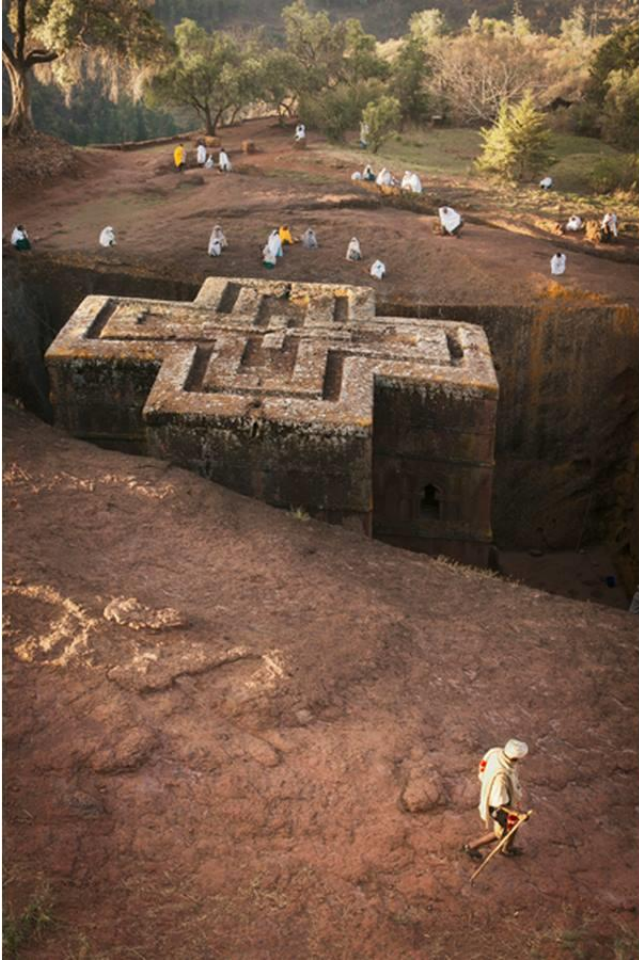


"...there's been a real word-of-mouth buzz about Ethiopia in recent years among adventure travellers... Several big travel companies are increasing the number of trips they offer. All of which means change is underway, making 2015 a good time to see what the fuss is all about while Ethiopia still feels relatively 'undiscovered'... The high altitude capital Addis Ababa will instantly eliminate any preconceptions of Ethiopia, while history buffs will want to visit the rock-cut churches of the holy city of Lalibela. The Simien Mountains in the Ethiopian Highlands, or the 'Roof of Africa', are good for adventurous trekking, dramatic landscapes and a chance to see Gelada Baboons, Ethiopian Wolves and other wildlife... New areas are emerging, including the little known region of Tigray in the north, with churches in the cliff-faces and rocky outcrops, and the remote volcanic deserts of the Danakil Depression, home to the nomadic Afar people, where it's possible to hike up to the lava lake at the top of Erta Ale."

The Irish Independent's Nicola Brady also thinks Ethiopia is one of the top 10 destinations for 2015, at number 7, here's why: "The launch of the new LA-Dublin-Addis Ababa route from Ethiopian Airlines means that two great new destinations are now just a direct flight away. Ethiopia makes for a rewarding, challenging and moving holiday... meet the remote tribes of the Omo Valley, explore Addis Ababa and spot wildlife on Lake Chamo."

Travel Photographer of the Year 2014 winner announced

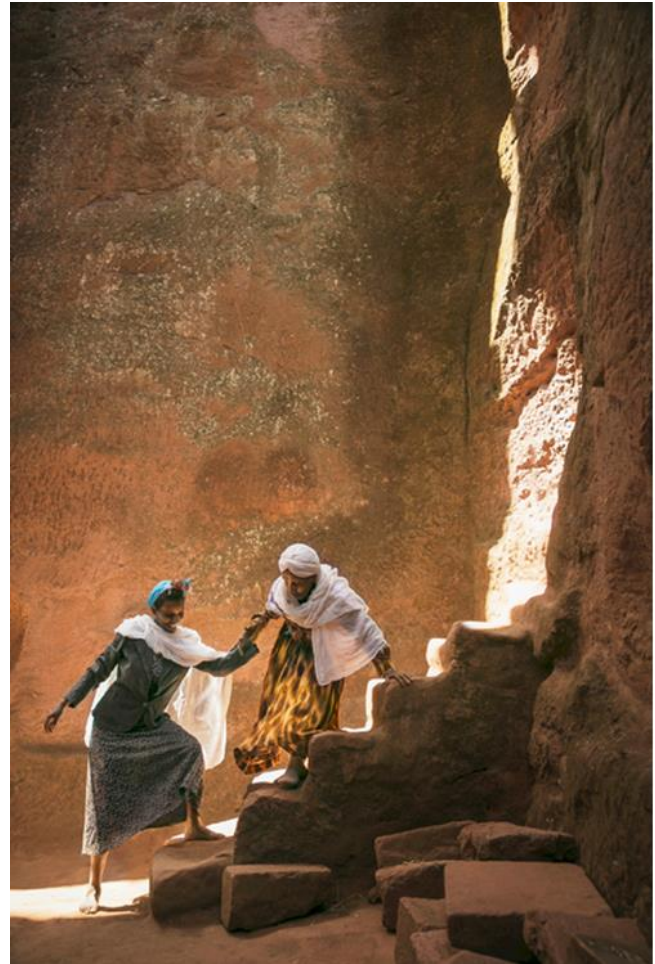
British photographer Philip Lee Harvey was crowned winner of the 2014 edition of the popular **Travel Photographer of the Year 2014 Awards** for his portfolios depicting rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia, and the Himba of Namibia.



WHAT THE JUDGES THOUGHT...

Philip entered a number of high quality portfolios in different categories; the judges felt that these two were the strongest. Lalibela and the Himba have been photographed many times yet, despite our familiarity with these subjects, these elegant images of Lalibela and the beautiful and intimate Himba images have captured the subjects in a striking way.

The two sets of images are shot in different styles. The Lalibela portfolio uses the portrait format to show the depth of the rock-hewn churches and this is complimented by the photographer's angle of view in this difficult lighting.



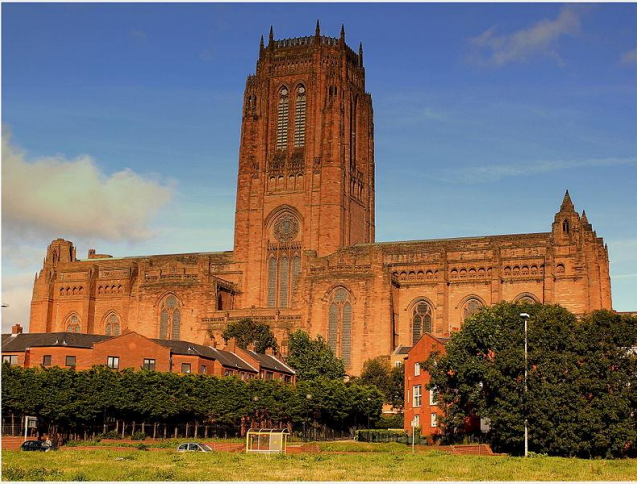
On winning the award, Philip told us:

“Ethiopia is one of the most fascinating countries on the planet. I've never travelled anywhere as interesting as Ethiopia. The people are incredibly hospitable and proud of their beautiful country. I can't wait to return. Taking photographs in Ethiopia is always a pleasure. Lalibela is the most fascinating place I have ever had the privilege to take photographs in.”

The winning images from Travel Photographer of the Year 2014 will be exhibited at London's Royal Geographical Society from 24 July, 2015, with a special individual section for images by Philip Lee Harvey.

Timkat festival comes to Liverpool

Liverpool Cathedral is set to host Ethiopia's world-famous festival, Timkat, on 23rd and 24th January.



The 2,000 year-old tradition signifies the Ethiopian Orthodox celebration of Epiphany, which celebrates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River.



Priests carrying Tabots in a Timkat ceremony

According to an article in the *Liverpool Echo*, thousands of followers will pilgrimage from across the UK to Merseyside to witness this spectacular festival, led by the Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop of Europe, His Holiness Abuna Entons, with dozens of priests and choirs from the UK and Europe.

A spokesperson said: "Merseysiders are warmly encouraged to participate in this awesome display of living history and witness some of the most fascinating, colourful and moving forms of Christian worship in the world.

"We have been participating in cultural and religious festivals, community building and cohesion with others around us for over seven years in Liverpool. We think this is a great opportunity to advertise our city's most beautiful sites."

A similar event will take place in London on 18th and 19th January at the Debre Tsion St Mary Church.

Six further heritage sites for UNESCO listing

Ethiopia is applying to register six additional heritage sites under UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has announced.

The six are Dire Sheikh Hussein mosque, the Sof Omar Caves, Melka Kuntre Archeological Site, Gedeo Mixed Cultural and Natural Landscape, Fiche Chembelal and Harrar Washerah Culture festivals.



Sof Omar Caves

UNESCO has already inscribed the Meskel festival and Konso Cultural Landscape on its list.

Over 783,000 jobs created by the tourism sector

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism says the tourism sector has created 783,638 jobs (out of 886,000) over the last four years, owing to the massive expansion of hotels and tourist sites.

The Ministry is currently offering training for around 1,460,000 people working in the tourism sector, in 110 professions, with a view to producing skilled workers for the sector.

Film Africa screens award-winning Natsanat

Natsanat, a documentary about young Ethiopian women who struggled for freedom against the Derg regime, was screened at this year's Film Africa festival in London. "Natsanat" - 'freedom' in the Ethiopian *Ge'ez* language, is what these women

fought to achieve during the latter part of the twentieth century.

Produced and directed by American filmmaker Cheryl Halpern, *Natsanat* tells the heroic stories of female freedom fighters, literate and illiterate, rural and urban, who challenged cultural norms to take up arms during the 17-year struggle for freedom. Included among the women are Former First Lady Azeb Mesfin and Tsiwahab Tadesse, Netsanet Asfaw and Kidisan Nega Mehanie who were all elected to Parliament.



In an interview with *The Film Reporter*, Cheryl commented that, at screenings, “high school girls said how inspired they were by the capacity of teen aged women to achieve, against all odds.” Cheryl, who chaired America’s Corporation for Public Broadcasting, says she hopes that “the women of “*Natsanat*” will serve as role models for other women who are seeking peace and equality,” adding “It is important to recognize that women can stand up, defend themselves and succeed.” She says audiences all wanted to learn more about these women and their fight for freedom and equality. “That gender equality is included as an Article in Ethiopia’s Constitution is a testament to these women and their leadership.”

Natsanat has been and continues to be screened at international film festivals around the world. The stories of these women fighters have been shared with audiences of all ages and ethnicities on every continent with the exception of Antarctica.

SPORTS

Bekele confirmed for Dubai and London

Three-time Olympic Champion Kenenisa Bekele will debut in Dubai by taking part in the Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon on 23rd January.

The Dubai marathon will be the 32 year-old’s third marathon since he started the distance at the Paris marathon in April last year, registering a course record of 2:05:04. He also took part in the Chicago marathon in October finishing fourth in 2:05:51.

“I have been following the race for some time now and I know Dubai has a very flat course that produces fast times,” he said. “Of course, it is not easy to step up to the marathon distance but I am looking forward to the challenge...Hopefully, I can produce a very quick time and my appearance encourages people of all ages in the UAE to join me in my role as an ambassador for the Dubai Holding Wellness Programme.”



Event Director Peter Connerton believes the appearance of Kenenisa Bekele will fire the crowds in the same manner as fellow Ethiopian great Haile Gebrselassie who competed for three years in Dubai from 2008-2010.

“Like Haile, Kenenisa has made the step up to the marathon distance after winning everything there is to win at both 5,000 and 10,000, indoor, outdoor and cross country,” he said.

The 2015 men’s elite line-up for the London Marathon was released on 8th January. Kenenisa will be making his London Marathon debut on 26th April. Joining him will be the 2012 Dubai Marathon champion Ayele Abshero, Tsegaye Mekonnen, who became the fastest junior in history when he won the Dubai race last January and former Rotterdam Marathon champion, Tilahun Regassa.

DIASPORA NEWS

MOU signed to transfer diaspora skills

Ethiopia’s Ministry of Education and Reconnect, a UK registered charity, have signed a memorandum of understanding to help strengthen tertiary education in Ethiopia through the employment of qualified teachers and the provision of relevant up-to-date learning materials.

Both parties agreed to fully cooperate in identifying the skills shortage among faculty members in higher education and to explore feasibility of employing skilled teachers from the UK diaspora.



(l-r) Mr Michael Stewart, Chairman of Reconnect, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, Mr Demeke Atnafu, Minister Counsellor – Diaspora Affairs and Theodros Abraham, Director of Reconnect

At the signing ceremony, at the Ethiopian Embassy, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede, expressed profound appreciation of Reconnect for its noble initiative. He stressed that the prime focus of the programme would be science and technology and encouraged the recruitment of skilled qualified teachers who would work hand-in-glove for the successful implementation of the programme.

Michael Stewart, Chairman of Reconnect, thanked the Embassy for its support and assistance in securing the MOU with the Ministry of Education, stating that the proposed pilot project presents a unique and realistic prospect for the return of skills to Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Association established in Scotland

Ethiopians and persons of Ethiopian origin residing in Scotland established the Association of Ethiopians in Scotland, in Glasgow on 6th December.

The Association’s aim is to fully integrate Ethiopians into Scottish life and society, and enable them to actively take part in the development activities being undertaken in their country of origin.

Housing Development Programme near final

The Diaspora housing development programme progress review meeting was held on 12th December at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with representatives from the regional Diaspora offices.

The meeting discussed the ongoing preparation of directives by the regional states and the coordination between Diaspora offices at all levels.

State Minister of Foreign Affairs Dewano Kedir said the Diaspora housing development programme will launch soon. Almost all of the regional states have adopted and submitted their Housing programme directives. Model registration procedures are sent from the Ministry’s Diaspora directorate general to all the regions. The Diaspora housing development programme is part of government efforts to engage the Diaspora in development activities.

Commercial Bank to open branches abroad

The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) has announced its plan to open branches in countries hosting big Ethiopian communities.

The bank is currently undertaking a study to open branches in the USA, South Africa, UAE, Djibouti and Saudi Arabia in the first phase of its efforts to encourage the flow of remittances.

Ephrem Mekuria, Communications Director of CBE, said the branches will increase the international competitiveness of CBE and help regularise money transfer as well as combat illicit flows of money. The branches will also increase remittances from Ethiopians and foreign CBE customers.

World Bank data released in 2010 shows that more than \$2 billion is transferred to Ethiopia through informal channels. He told reporters that CBE's only branch abroad in Juba is encouraging.

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

Christmas in Ethiopia: it comes but twice a year

g "If western-style December hijinks aren't enough, why not head for the Ethiopian highlands and join the country's January Christmas celebrations – and take in a trekking holiday while you're at it," writes Felicity Bryan, who had a double Christmas.

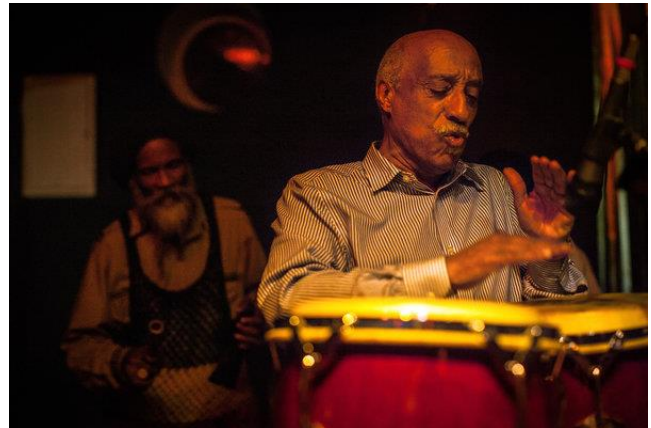


"...the thing that will remain with me above all else was the courtesy and generosity of our hosts. Ethiopians are without doubt some of the most beautiful people in the world. ...In Ethiopia, almost everything is a surprise. There is a different calendar; it is one of only two countries in Africa not to have been colonised; and its Christian religion – which came via the Levant and was established in the fourth century AD – bears strong links to Judaism, which had got there first. And never have I been in a place where there are two such strongly held, parallel views of history: what we know happened and what Ethiopians believe happened – what writer and scholar Karen Armstrong calls logos and mythos – co-exist. And the mythos is more fun. <http://goo.gl/do7Teu>

In Ethiopia's Capital, a Resurgent Jazz Scene

The New York Times

Nowadays jazz concerts take place all over the city, and on nearly every night of the week a clarinet is being played in a mirrored discothèque in an old hotel, or in a smoky one-room club near the airport.



Mulatu Astatke, seen as the father of Ethio-jazz, performs at African Jazz Village, which opened in late 2013

"I think we Ethiopians love our own thing more than other things...We respect and love other cultures, but we love our own music, our own food, dance and clothes the most."

<http://goo.gl/2CmcMM>

Ethiopian food will rule the world...so wash your hands and get set



"Even though it may not be for everyone, Ethiopian food is set to take over the world...in a manner of speaking...Despite being a huge continent with a massive variety of different food, African cuisine tends not to feature very often."

"Nigerian restaurants do crop up occasionally, but it is Ethiopian food that will ultimately become the most widely recognised and loved African cuisine... Ethiopian food, like Indian food, is extremely diverse in taste because of the unusual and unique spice blends it uses..."



...In addition the cuisine is suited to a huge variety of food brackets, from vegans and vegetarians to the wheat-intolerant and carnivores. With ingredients that are already causing a frenzy in supermarkets and a strong food culture that sees generations cooking the unique Ethiopian flavours in their new homes, Ethiopian food is set for world domination."

<http://goo.gl/9VQOMG>

Ethiopian food comes Haile recommended



Food historian Gillian Riley discovers the unique culinary heritage of Africa's oldest independent country.



"...the great kingdom of Ethiopia, with its unparalleled wealth, its powerful rulers, magnificent scenery and amazing natural resources, was renowned for its jewels and rare perfumes. A sophisticated cuisine evolved to match this splendour, and even now, despite the tangled politics of its recent past, a search for Ethiopian food is for us an insight into a strange and wonderful history.

This cuisine is so far beneath the radar of 'fine dining' that it's hard to locate all the places nearby where it can be sampled, but once you know what to look for, there is much to enjoy."

<http://goo.gl/oOgTZB>

5 Reasons to Visit Addis Ababa Now

Here's 'five reasons to visit Addis Ababa now' according to Jenny Millar.



Fodor's "...compared to other cities in the region, Addis (as everyone calls it) is very safe...In recent years, the city has become a hub for diplomatic missions (making it a great place to secure visas for onward travel to other African countries); upscale hotels, restaurants, and a forthcoming light rail are sprouting up... Speaking of what's charming, below are five reasons to visit Addis now."

1. A taste of Ethiopian food and culture
2. Terrific coffee
3. Excellent markets and shopping
4. A hopping jazz scene
5. "13 months of sunshine"

<http://goo.gl/YP9tS6>

5 Reasons to Visit Ethiopia this winter



"One of the biggest draws to visit Ethiopia during the winter is that it's actually summer/dry season there...The land is lush, flowers are in full bloom and


everyone is in sunny spirits. It's a great break from the harsh winter most Americans and Europeans endure during this time of year. If you make it to the outskirts of the country, you will also see amazing species of birds and fauna."



1. Christmas in Addis Ababa
2. Diaspora Season
3. The weather
4. Lake Tana
5. Kulibi

<http://goo.gl/9XJdgg>

15 of the world's most colorful landscapes

 Mother Nature is not afraid to go technicolor for the right effect. These eye-catching landscapes are among the world's most vivid. It's no easy feat to reach many of these spots, but they're all worth a closer look.




The Dallol hydro-thermal field is northeast of the Erta Ale Range in one of the lowest and hottest areas of the desolate #DanakilDepression in Ethiopia. The Dallol craters are the Earth's lowest known sub-

aerial volcanic vents. Salty hot springs featuring a rich palette of colors dot the area. There are hot yellow sulphur fields among the white salt beds.

<http://goo.gl/JckN30>

25 top travel photos from 2014

 2014 was bursting with gorgeous travel photography. We've selected 25 standout images from the series as a thank you to our community.



The landscape of the Danakil Depression in Northern Ethiopia is one of the harshest on Earth, with wastelands of salt and sweltering temperatures of more than 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

<http://goo.gl/an4Vjj>

EVENTS

Third International Conference on Financing for Development

The third International Conference on Financing for Development will be held in Addis Ababa from 13th to 16th July 2015.

The Conference will result in an inter-governmentally negotiated and agreed outcome, which will support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

The scope of the Conference is set out in General Assembly resolutions 68/204 and 68/279, and will focus on:



1. assessing the progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration, identifying obstacles and constraints encountered in the achievement of the goals and objectives agreed therein, and initiatives to overcome constraints;
2. addressing new and emerging issues, including in the context of the recent multilateral efforts to promote international development cooperation, taking into account:
 - the current evolving development cooperation landscape;
 - the interrelationship of all sources of development finance;
 - the synergies between financing objectives across the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
 - the need to support the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015;
3. re-invigorating and strengthening the financing for development follow-up process.

The inter-governmental preparatory process will include informal hearings with civil society and the business sector throughout January 2015.

The conference will gather high-level political representatives, including Heads of State and Government, and Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, as well as all relevant institutional stakeholders.

***NOTICE – CHANGE OF CONSULAR SERVICE AND
VISA FEES***

NOTICE:

**NEW CONSULAR SERVICE FEES
APPLY AS OF 15TH DEC. 2014**

- VISAS • PASSPORTS • ID CARDS •

The Embassy would like to inform readers of a new directive, the Immigration Service Payment Tariff No. 1/2014, indicating the change of fees for visas and other services to Ethiopia.

The new directive entered into force here at the Embassy as of 12th December 2014.

Full details of the new fees can be found on our website on: <http://goo.gl/qQFo0A>. Please check before you apply.

Consular Office Telephone: 020 7838 3897/98



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Published by the Press Office, Embassy of Ethiopia, London SW7 1PZ

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