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Ethiopian News

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Meles Foundation launched

The Meles Foundation, established in honour of Ethiopia's late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, was inaugurated on 6th April at the African Union in the presence of high-level dignitaries including Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and former First Lady Azeb Mesfin.

The Meles Foundation will serve as a memorial centre to the late PM's great contribution towards peace, socio-economic development and his lead role in climate change negotiations and environmental protection.

VIP guests included President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, President Omar Hassan Al Bashir of Sudan, Prime Minister of Somalia, Abdi Farah Shirdon, AU Chairperson Dr Dlamini Zuma, former president of Nigeria Olesegun Obasanjo, the Foreign Ministers of Rwanda and the Seychelles, diplomats and other high-profile government officials.

In his opening address, Prime Minister Hailemariam remembered the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi as an "exemplary leader in his unique leadership skills and flawless performance as chief of the executive. The establishment of the Foundation is deemed necessary as a thorough study of his life and works and their implementation thus far is important to ensure the continuity of the renaissance of Ethiopia."

Former First Lady, Azeb Mesfin, noted that the Foundation will assist researchers interested in studying Meles' academic works, through scholarships, which will help ensure the full implementation of his vision.

In a series of memorable speeches, African leaders remembered Meles as an outstanding leader, committed to the development of his country and of Africa, and his success in putting Africa on the world map.

Reflections on the life and works of the visionary leader were presented to the meeting by Professor Andreas Eshete, renowned scholar Alex De Waal and other dignitaries.

The Meles Foundation, will serve as a memorial of the late PM's great contribution to socio-economic issues, climate change and his efforts at ensuring the peace and security of the continent, among other things. It will house an international standard library, where Meles' works will be displayed, and will serve as a research centre to advance and maintain his legacy for future generations.

A total of $3.8 million was pledged by Ethiopia's neighbours in support of the foundation: Djibouti $500,000, Uganda $300,000, Sudan $2,000,000 and South Sudan $1,000,000.

PM Hailemariam meets UK Parliamentarians

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn held talks with a delegation of UK MPs, led by Sir Malcolm Bruce, the Chairperson of the International Development Committee, during their week-long official visit to Ethiopia in March.

Ethiopia's keen desire is to strengthen relations with the UK in trade and investment, the PM said. Ethiopia appreciates the UK's support for Ethiopia's efforts to become a middle income country.

Sir Malcolm said the delegation had noted the proper utilisation of UK assistance during their visits to various regions of the country. He commended Ethiopia's encouraging activities in human rights protection and good governance. Ethiopia is the top recipient of UK assistance.

The delegation held discussions with government officials and visited development activities in safe water provision and education, in Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz states.

The Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, Abadula Gemeda, called on Britain to further strengthen on-going support to Ethiopia saying that Britain's contribution is very effective in helping Ethiopia reduce poverty.

Ethiopia has registered encouraging results in building educational facilities, training health professionals and building a democratic system, Abadula said, adding that efforts are also underway to ensure the quality of education.

Members of the delegation said they had witnessed improvements in various sectors, in particular in construction of educational and health facilities.

Delegation member Sir Tony Cunningham said "What is encouraging is that Ethiopia is moving in the right direction. The message from the people I met is that aid works and is working, and they are grateful for it."

Government unveils Human Rights Action Plan

Ethiopia unveiled its first Human Rights Action Plan with the aim of ensuring effective respect of human rights in the country.

The draft Plan, which was unveiled for discussion with stakeholders including the UN, civil society and development partners, includes nearly 60 recommendations for filling gaps in various sectors, including education, health and culture.

The full report can be downloaded on the UNDP website.

Free medical services for child delivery

The Ministry of Health has announced that all mothers delivering children in all government health centres and hospitals are to be exempt from any kind of fees related to medical facilities and services, including delivery by caesarean section.

The introduction of the free service will have a positive effect in encouraging the practice of hospital delivery and lessen the financial burden on women. It will also have a positive role in supporting Ethiopia's efforts to meet the MDGs.

The implementation of the directive will begin first in the regional states and then extend to Addis Ababa.

Second anniversary of Renaissance Dam celebrated; official website launched

On 2nd April Ethiopia celebrated the second anniversary of the launch of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, H.E. Ato Demeke Mekonnen, stated on the occasion that the Dam embodies the rebirth of the ancient history and civilization of Ethiopia, and attests the on-going development in the country.

The Minister, who is also President of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation in the Construction of the Dam, said that the construction work demonstrated that Ethiopians are capable of accomplishing even what seems impossible.

So far, a quarter of the required 80 billion birr has been secured for construction of the Dam, he said, adding that the public have carried out soil and water conservation activities, which helps to prevent silt from entering the dam.

The Water and Energy Minister, Alemayehu Tegenu, said the project is well underway and on schedule. The construction of the Dam indicates Ethiopia's efforts to contribute to the fight against global climate change, he said.

The Dam is in the Benshangul-Gumuz State and will be the largest hydroelectric plant in Africa, with a generating capacity of 6,000 MW. Ethiopia will cover the entire cost of construction through government and public participation through the purchase of bonds. The dam is 18% complete.

The late Premier Meles Zenawi laid the foundation stone on 2nd April 2011.

The Office of the National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam launched an official website on 13th March - **www.hidasse.gov.et**. It enables citizens to access updates on the Dam, while also providing a forum for discussion and feedback.

Gibe III could go operational next year

The Gibe III hydroelectric power plant, which has 1,870 mw installed power generation capacity, could start generating power next year.

The dam, situated along the lower course of the Omo River, 155 km downstream of Gilgel Gibe II Powerhouse, is currently 69.4 per cent complete.

"We will undertake dry commissioning [testing without using water] of the dam this year," Azeb Asnake, Gibe III project manager said in an interview. "We expect the dam to start generating power next year when the water reaches a certain level".

Preparation works have been carried out such as design and construction of over 150 km of access

roads and river diversion by digging three tunnels. Major activities of the project, including concrete filling of the dam, has already begun.

On completion, Gibe III will be the tallest Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) dam in the world, at a height of 246 metres. RCC is a cost- and time-efficient method of constructing concrete dams. Gibe III is the first RCC dam in Ethiopia.

It will accommodate 10 generating units and will create a reservoir with total storage capacity of 15bn cubic metres - second only to the artificial lake (70bn cubic metres) of the on-going Renaissance Dam project.

Construction of the dam was launched in 2006 and on completion it will play a significant role in boosting Ethiopia's economic growth and the government's developmental endeavours, mainly through export. Kenya is set to benefit from the dam - a 1,000 km high-voltage power line is being built from the dam to Kenya. In July 2012, the World Bank approved a $689 million loan for the transmission line project.

When the power transmission line is completed Ethiopia plans to sell 400MW of hydro-power to Kenya by 2016. Ethiopia is currently exporting 35 MW and 100 MW of electricity to Djibouti and Sudan, respectively.

By the end of the GTP period (2015) Ethiopia expects its power generating capacity to reach 10,000 MW, from the current 2,000MW. Gibe III could nearly double the current output when it goes operational in 2014 with an annual energy production capacity of 6,500GWh.

Nile Basin Initiative launches $15.3m project

A new project, the **Nile Cooperation for Results (NCORE)**, aimed at facilitating cooperative water resource management and development in the Nile Basin, was launched on 16th March at the Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat in Entebbe, Uganda.

The Project has been developed by the NBI to strengthen the knowledge-based analysis of trans-boundary options for sustainable basin-wide co-operative planning, management and development of Member States' water resources.

The project, which will run over two years, is funded by the Nile Basin Trust Fund ($13.8 million) and the Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) Trust Fund ($1.5 million), both administered by the World Bank.
The project is the first phase of the 5-year Nile Basin Climate Resilient Growth Programme (NBCRG) supported by a number of donors and a constituent part of NBI's 5-year Strategic Plan for the period 2012-2016.

Ethiopia to achieve water, sanitation targets

Results registered during the past couple of years indicate that Ethiopia is on track to achieve the water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) said Water and Energy Minister Alemayehu Tegenu.

Speaking during World Water Day 2013 celebrations on 22nd March, the Minister said Ethiopia is striving towards 70% safe water service coverage, up from the present 61.6%.

Under the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), prime attention has been given to increasing the coverage to 100% in both rural and urban areas by the end of the GTP period (2015).

World Water Day is held annually on 22nd March with the aim of focusing attention on the importance of sustainable management of freshwater resources.

An estimated 148 states share a basin with one or several countries, which is a potential source of conflict, as actions upstream have impacts on downstream countries. The Danube, for example, is shared by 19 countries, and the Nile River by 11.

With more than 260 trans-boundary rivers across the world, most countries are utilizing the rivers based on the principle of mutual benefits. Ethiopia, the Minister said, has played a key role in coordinating the upper Nile riparian countries to ensure sustainable socio-economic benefits.

UNICEF representative, Shadrack Omol, said 85% of the world population lives in the driest half of the planet. 783 million people do not have access to clean water and almost 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation.

The situation for Ethiopia's population is slightly better, Omol said, as more than half of the households (54 per cent) have access to an improved source of drinking water.

The Growth and Transformation Plan will help to achieve the MDGs in the sector by 2015, Omol said.

Over 12m gain access to safe drinking water

Over 12 million people have gained access to safe drinking water during the first two and a half years of the Growth and Transformations Plan (GTP), the Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) announced.

Photo courtesy of charity: water

Ethiopia's 5-year GTP aims to provide safe drinking water for about 18.2 million people. In order to attain the set target, 42,226 water amenities, including hand pumps, deep and medium water wells and ponds will be constructed. So far, 24,320 water facilities have been built.

Ethiopia's GTP will provide 15 litres of safe drinking water per person per day within a 1.5 km rural dwelling radius and 20 litres of water within 0.5 km urban dwelling radius.

Activities are underway to raise potable water coverage at national level to 98.5 per cent by the end of the GTP period, the Ministry said.

Food security situation improves in East Africa

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says the food security situation in East African countries improved in 2012.

FAO sub-regional Coordinator for Eastern Africa Dr. Modibo Traore, who is also FAO Representative to Ethiopia, the African Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, said the overall decrease of about 50 per cent in the percentage of undernourished in the sub-region is mainly driven by Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda.

Efforts have been deployed by FAO to help solve issues and improve food security, Dr. Traore said.

Agriculture State Minister Prof. Tekalign Mammo said Ethiopia has been striving to boost agricultural production over the last few years. The agriculture sector is expected to double agricultural output by the end of 2015 from its 2010 levels through the GTP, the Minister said.

Ethiopia will continue to implement strategy in the priority areas of climate resilient green economy, sustainable land management, agricultural intensification/growth, nutrition and food security.

The country has consistently managed to dedicate more than 10 per cent of GDP to agriculture in line with the targets set by the Maputo Declaration for the realization of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme.

He also stressed the need for the FAO and other development partners to continue support to Eastern Africa so agricultural growth and development can be realised.

Assistant FAO Director-General/Regional Representative for Africa, Maria Helena Semedo said that in the last decade, Africa has been home to six of the world's ten fastest growing economies.

Integrated agricultural and socio-economic interventions, including innovative small-holder agriculture-based social protection programmes are key to strengthening resilience and boosting household food security and nutritional outcomes, the Director said.

Rural Economy and Agriculture Department representative with the AU, Dr. Abebe Hailemichael, said that on-going basin development and activities to build a green economy will help Ethiopia ensure food security in short period of time.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Ethiopia's first industrial zone to open

The Ministry of Trade and Industry has announced that Ethiopia will spend $49m on its first industrial hub for export-oriented manufacturers in a bid to deliver faster economic growth.

The hub, in Addis Ababa, is set to open before the end of the fiscal year, according to reports by Bloomberg, and a South Korean garment-maker is already among companies in talks with the government about establishing operations.

The Bole Lemi Industrial Zone, is designed to help companies such as agro-processors, pharmaceutical companies and textile manufacturers produce and sell value-added goods and boost revenue from exports. The government will offer tax incentives for industries based there.

Similar zones are being considered in five other locations including, Kombolcha and Dire Dawa, according to the Minister, Mekonnen Manyazewal.

The government wants to attract private investment, with plans to convert its investment agency into a "one-stop service" for new companies to register. It is also introducing measures to speed the clearance of exports and imports at the border, he said.

The full report can be found online on Bloomberg's website.

Heineken to build Ethiopia's biggest brewery

Heineken has announced plans to build a new $156m brewery in Kilinto, Addis Ababa - the largest in Ethiopia with the capacity to produce up to 1.5m hectolitres of Harar, Bedele and Heineken brand beers.

As part of its expansion into Africa, Heineken acquired 18% of the Ethiopian beer market through its acquisition of the Bedele and Harar breweries in 2011, at a cost of $85million and $78 million respectively.

Heineken is not the only international brewer expanding in Ethiopia. The UK's Diageo last year snapped up Meta Abo Brewery, maker of the country's number two beer brand Meta, in a $225m all cash deal.

Ethiopia is Africa's second most populated country with approximately 85m people and population growth of 2.5 per cent per annum. It is also one of the fastest growing non-oil economies in Africa with a stable political environment and growing personal incomes.

First women-initiated bank launched

Enat Bank, the first women's bank in Ethiopia, was officially launched on 5th March in Addis Ababa, in the presence of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, with First Lady Roman Tesfaye, with founding members of Enat Bank

Initiated by eleven Ethiopian women and with about 7,400 shareholders, the bank has been set to serve all with a focus on women.

Meaza Ashenafi, Chairperson of Bank Board of Directors, said that 64% of the shareholders are women.

The Bank was launched with an initial capital of 120 million Birr, to be raised to 500 million Birr in two years time.

The bank launched its services with two branches in the Bole and Bambi areas of Addis Ababa and aims to be one of the biggest banks in Ethiopia. Other branches, in different parts of the country, are also in the pipeline and so is mobile banking, with its potential to reach millions of Ethiopians.

Speaking at the launch, Mekonnen Manyazewal, Ethiopian's Minister of Trade, said the bank would contribute to development activities in the country.

The bank provides services uniquely in a manner that encourages a savings culture with loan services that promote investment in the country.

IFC launches programme to ease business

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is to cooperate with the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade (MoT) and Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority (ERCA) to help improve the country's investment and trade environment.

The Ministry of Trade will launch an electronic business licensing and trade registration system shortly, while the Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority will consider revising its laws.

The IFC conducted assessments for one year to analyze the market and policy failures and constraints that potentially hinder Ethiopia's ability to develop, grow and build the private sector, taking into consideration the government's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). A three-year Ethiopian Investment Climate Programme, designed in collaboration with the government and private sector stakeholders, was launched on 8th March in Addis Ababa.

The three organisations signed a partnership agreement to assist the Ethiopian government in its effort to improve the business climate by streamlining and simplifying high priority regulations, processes and practices constraining the private sector, and to address investment climate issues that hinder development.

The project is estimated to cost $10m which will be shared among IFC partners, donors and the Government of Ethiopia. IFC will also provide technical support, share knowledge, and bring best practices, and build government capacity.

Historic railway line to be replaced

In an effort to boost Ethiopia's commercial exports, the old French-built railway that connected Addis Ababa to the Red Sea port of Djibouti, is now being replaced by a Chinese-built electrified railway.

The construction of the railway is a key component of the GTP: a series of eight rail corridors totalling 4,744 kilometres (2,948 miles), creating a series of key trade routes to neighbouring Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and, crucially, to Djibouti's port.

Two Chinese companies are contracted to build the $2.8 billion line by 2016, and Turkish and Brazilian companies will construct other segments of the nation-wide rail network.

The project will create 5,000 local jobs, and allow Ethiopia to boost exports of key commodities such as coffee and sesame. Ethiopian workers will also be trained by engineers from the Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation.

The company is building the line from Mieso to the Djibouti border at a cost of $1.2 billion, of which 70 percent is financed by the Export-Import Bank of China and 30 percent by the Ethiopian government. Another Chinese company will build the Addis Ababa to Mieso segment.

The new electric train will launch Ethiopia into a modern era of rail transport. It will be one of the first electric trains in East Africa and will run at a speed of 120km/h and will be both easier and cheaper to maintain, as it will be mechanised and rely on locally-produced hydropower to run.

$80m secured from the leather industry; $1.7bn from export trade over 7 months

The export of leather and leather products over the past eight months secured $80m revenue, surpassing last year's revenue by $2.5 million.

The Ethiopian Leather Industry Development Institute said $66.02m was secured from processed leather, $11.49m from footwear, $2.07m from gloves and the balance from leather products.

Efforts are underway to improve market systems in the sector and to register improved results in technology transfer, so as to supply quality products to the external market.

According to the Ministry of Trade, Ethiopia secured $1.7bn from export trade over the past 7 months, exceeding last year's amount by 7.2%.

Gold and coffee account for the lion's share of the revenue. Khat, oilseeds, grains, cattle and flowers have also contributed significantly.

Foreign currency obtained from export of leather and leather products, textile and garments, fruit and vegetables, as well as spices facilitates the realisation of the Growth and Transformation Plan. The Ministry envisages collecting a total of $5bn from export trade in the current budget year.

By pushing the export economy, the government can boost efforts to make Ethiopia a middle-income status country by 2025.

$17.7m secured from Valentine's Day flowers

Ethiopia secured more than $17.7 million from exporting 210.8 million flower stems for Valentine's Day in February – exceeding last year's revenue and quantity where $17.4 million was earned from the sale of 195.6 million stems.

Over 120 local and foreign companies are engaged in the horticulture sector, of which 85 cultivate different varieties of flowers.

The sector has created job opportunities for more that 50,000 Ethiopians, of whom 70% are women.

Exports have increased due to the high demand for Ethiopian flowers around the world. Of high quality and produced in environmentally-friendly conditions, the flowers mainly go to the Netherlands. Other major recipients include Germany, Norway, Italy, UAE, Saudi Arabia, UK, Japan, Italy, France, Lebanon and the USA.

TOURISM

Ethiopia's lost heritage being restored

Ethiopia is battling to bring back more than three thousand artefacts scattered around the globe, a substantial part of its historic heritage.

According to Wolde Darsema from the **Heritage Authority**, thousands of items, ranging from the monumental to the miniscule, are to be found in museums or in private hands in, for instance, the UK, France, Israel, the Vatican, Germany and Italy.

The Authority said that in addition to the more obvious and better known items in museums it is working to bring back artefacts in the hands of individuals through diplomatic channels and is also trying to purchase articles or persuade people to present them as a gift.

Efforts so far have managed to recover the Axum Obelisk, the gold Lalibela cross and a handful of other historic items.

Wolde Darsema said that the task of recovering many of these items was particularly difficult as many are in private hands, and museums remain reluctant to part with items however obtained.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is cooperating with the Heritage Authority and is working to obtain the return of various artefacts through bilateral channels, said spokesperson Ambassador Dina.

Help for World-Heritage churches

A tender was released by the **Ethiopian Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage** (ARCCH) to help preserve eleven monolithic World-Heritage listed churches.

The rock-hewn churches of Lalibela in northern Ethiopia were constructed between the 10th and 13th centuries and are a place of pilgrimage for Ethiopians and tourists alike. They boast a high level of architectural detail, particularly on the windows and doors. The proposed project involves creating steel shelters for the churches, which are carved out of volcanic rock.

More eco-friendly tourism in Central Rift Valley

Two new community-based tourism destinations were inaugurated in Lephis and Ziway in the Oromia Region, through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) **Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Alliance** (ESTA) project, with funding from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The sites will benefit the local community. The attractions and activities include traditional *tukuls* (round huts), the Lephis Waterfall, bird-watching, Tulu Gudo Island, viewing handcrafts made by area artisans and enjoying fresh local grilled fish.

USAID Ethiopia Agricultural Officer Cullen Hughes said, "For tourism to be successful and sustainable, both the land and communities in the destination must be healthy and productive. The project's holistic development approach has created the ideal environment for tourism growth and provides visitors with an authentic experience of Ethiopia."

The launch also highlighted the USAID-pioneered Travellers' Philanthropy Programme, where tourists can participate directly in local conservation efforts by buying solar stoves for local families or planting trees to assist with land rehabilitation.

Ziway and Lephis are part of a network of six community conservation areas, the first of its kind in Ethiopia. The two new sites create ecotourism opportunities and will also attract other business and benefit 40,000 local community members.

Lephis Waterfall (photo by Lizzie Weber)

The ESTA project is a 5-year, $7m initiative that promotes biodiversity conservation through sustainable tourism. To date, 34 associations have been created to support sustainable livelihood generation and biodiversity conservation in the Central and Southern Rift Valleys in Ethiopia.

SPORTS

Ethiopian makes history in Tour de Taiwan win

Tsgabu Girmay made cycling history with the **first ever Ethiopian international victory** by winning stage 5 of the Tour de Taiwan - this was the 21-year-old's first pro season win.

Tsgabu of Team MTN-Qhubeka said "This is really great, I am so happy not just for me but also for African cycling and for Ethiopia."

Team principal, Douglas Ryder commented on the victory saying, "I am just so happy and amazed that all we have been working on the last few years is coming together now. The work we started 5 years ago with the World Cycling Centre Africa run by JP van Zyl, sourcing the best talent across the African continent, resulting in the first Ethiopian, Tsgabu, winning his first professional race today and the first for Ethiopia.

"Songezo Jim performed so well too in Milan Sanremo becoming the first South African rider of colour to ride in a WorldTour event. This shows the potential of the African continent and more riders are coming through our WCC Africa feeder team and Qhubeka Academy team. Our sponsors believed in this project years ago and what an impact it is making in world cycling today."

Team MTN-Qhubeka also moved up to second overall in the team classification. Stage 6 will see the race take place over 131km in New Taipei City.

Gebrselassie after 6th Manchester win; Tirunesh out of London Marathon

Long-distance legend, Haile Gebrselassie, will chase a fifth successive – and sixth in total – title on 26th May at the Bupa **Great Manchester Run**.

The two-time Olympic 10,000m champion, dubbed the 'Emperor', will celebrate his 40th birthday next month.

He said: "I love running; it is part of my life and part of my daily routine. As long as I enjoy it so much I will keep running and I don't know how and when this will finish. And how could I resist the opportunity to return to Manchester?"

Haile won his first Manchester run in 2005 and since returning has won on a further four consecutive outings. In 2012 he posted a then world-leading mark for the year of 27:39.

He added: "I like to run a 10km in May, it fits well in my schedule. Manchester is always a good race, I always feel very welcome."

Meanwhile, 10,000m Olympic champion Tirunesh Dibaba has been forced to postpone her marathon debut because of injury. The 27-year-old, who defended her Olympic title at London 2012, was due to run in her first competitive marathon in London on 21st April, but a recurrence of a lower leg problem has ruled her out of the race. She hopes to run next year.

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

The Mirror on Lalibella

MIRROR.CO.UK, the online edition of The Daily Mirror, Britain's brightest tabloid newspaper, has featured Ethiopia as a prime travel destination.

In articles which appeared online on 30th March and 1st April, Chris Granet, says Ethiopia "is rich in culture and natural wonders and beginning to realise its potential as a tourist destination".

He travels to Lalibella to witness proceedings in the churches during the Easter period.

"Not only was I in one of the most astonishing cultural sites in the world, but also in one of the most sacred places in Christendom during Easter."

He describes Ethiopia as "a land far from the stereotypes ... it was somewhere that was certainly defying my expectations… The last of my assumptions about Ethiopia were pleasantly swept away."

To read the full article, ***An Ethiopian Easter: Unexpected wonders of Lalibela and Addis Ababa***, can be found online on: http://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/travel/easter-ethiopia-sacred-lalibela-capital-1791867

Ethiopia could be shoemaker to the world

Huajian Group, a leading Chinese shoemaker, has announced that in 10 years it wants Ethiopia to be a global hub for the shoe industry, supplying the African, European and American markets and providing jobs for more than 100,000 local workers.

Last year the company signed a memorandum of understanding with the China-Africa Development Fund to jointly invest $2bn over a decade in creating a light-manufacturing special economic zone in Ethiopia.

The company has already leased 300ha of land in Lebu, on the outskirts Addis, where it plans to build a shoe city, with accommodation for 200,000 people and factory space for other manufacturers of footwear, handbags, accessories and components.

Huajian has a modest outfit in Dukem, about 40km south of Addis Ababa. It employs 1,600 Ethiopians, all high school graduates or above, and ships more than $1m worth of shoes each month to the US and the UK for Guess, Naturaliser and Clarks.

The company aims to double exports by the end of this year and quadruple them next year - impressive for a business that only started trading in January last year.

The full article by Elissa Jobson can be found on the Business Day Live website: http://www.bdlive.co.za/africa/africanbusiness/2013/04/04/ethiopia-could-be-shoemaker-to-the-world

Mining to be Ethiopian economic backbone

In an interview with Mining Weekly Online, Ethiopia's Minister of Mines, Sinkinesh Ejigu says that Ethiopia is "fast-tracking our development, aiming to become a country of middle-income earners…we are seeking [mining sector] development partners, and want to work with them to deliver mutual benefits and profits."

"Ethiopia is rapidly changing and has recorded constant growth over the past several years. This is having a noticeable impact."

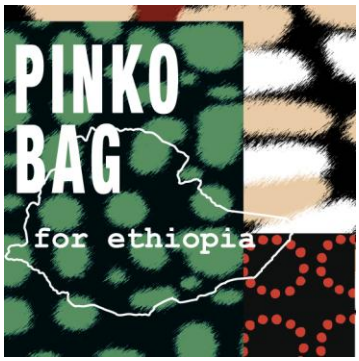
Currently with 135 companies working under 245 licences, the potential in mining is vast as Ethiopia's mineral base is varied. In 2011/12 alone, the mining sector contributed $654 million. Tax breaks have been introduced and cost recoveries made available to facilitate the entrance of mining companies into Ethiopia, the Minister said. "We are asking for the private sector to stand by its obligations, while we in government will play our part. With mutual understanding, the outlook is positive."

"The Ministry and government want the mining sector to be a backbone of Ethiopian industry," she added. "We don't want to go back to the days of a command economy. Partnerships are the way forward and the private sector is the engine for our development. Working together, we can make history in Ethiopia."

The full article can be found online on: http://www.miningweekly.com/article/ethiopia-mining-to-be-economic-backbone-as-allana-outlines-progress-2013-07

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pinko Bags for Ethiopia



Italian fashion and bag designer, Pinko in collaboration with Fashion for Development (F4D), has launched a series of bags with 'an Ethiopian flare', for its signature cotton Pinko Bags.

F4D is a global awareness campaign which implements creative strategies for sustainable economic growth and independence for communities worldwide.

More than a hundred women in Addis Ababa, about 65 of whom were recruited and trained especially for the project, produced the eco-friendly, 100% cotton Pinko Bag for Ethiopia collection.

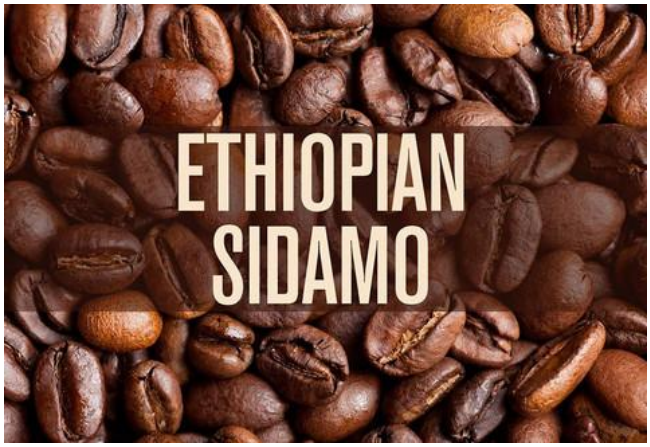
The bags retail at around £65 and can be found at Pinko Stores in Brompton Road, Kings Road or South Molton Street, or online at http://www.pinko.it/en-GB/Etiopia

Marina Spadafora, the collection's creative director, said she drew inspiration from colourful body-painting traditions in southern Ethiopia's Omo Valley, and cited photographer Hans Silvester's work as a resource. "I've been working on sustainable fashion for years," she said, "and finally here was a chance to use Ethiopian art."

Ethiopian Sidamo, coffee of the month

Elephant Coffee, a café in Neston, Cheshire, have introduced the first of a series of 'guest coffees.' In April, the café will promote Ethiopian Sidamo.

These occasional guest varieties will give customers the opportunity to excite their palate with something different and learn a little about how different countries produce their coffee.



Sidamo, is an Arabica coffee of single origin grown in the Sidamo Province of Ethiopia, famed for its deep, spice and wine or chocolate-like taste and floral aroma. It is grown by a cooperative of small farms on a very high plateau facing the Red Sea.

Sidamo coffee includes Yirgacheffe Coffee and Guji Coffee.

Most Ethiopian coffees are grown without use of agricultural chemicals in benign conditions: under shade and inter-planted with other crops.

If you can't make it to Neston, Ethiopian coffee can now be easily found on most high street retailers in the UK.

Sainsbury's - Taste the Difference Ethiopian Sidamo Fairtrade Coffee

Waitrose - Mocha Sidamo coffee; Union fairtrade Ethiopia Yirgacheffe hand roasted coffee

ASDA – ASDA Extra Special Ethiopian Fairtrade Ground Coffee

LIDL – Melangerie Ethiopian Sidamo

Fairtrade Oromia coffee is also available from Marks & Spencer's in-store Café Revives.

Ethiopia to build state-of-the-art ICT park

In a bid to boost IT services and broadband connectivity in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MoCIT) is investing 5 million Birr in a new ICT Park - on 200 hectares of land behind Bole International Airport.

Construction is scheduled to start soon and already more than 12 local and international companies have registered and taken office space in the park.

The Park will be divided into five zones, which include business, assembly and warehouse, commercial, administration and knowledge Park.

The new park will help boost mobile subscription in the country by 20 million as per the GTP, which also envisions raising the number of internet service subscribers to 3.69 million by 2015.

46 schools go operational

46 of 50 secondary schools launched in South Ethiopia Peoples' State, costing close to 153m Birr, have gone operational, enrolling more than 22,000 additional students. The new schools are equipped with the necessary educational materials costing over 87m Birr. Construction of the remaining schools should be finalised by the end of the current Ethiopian budget year – by June.

25% of Addis Railway Project complete

Over 25% of the 37.4km Addis Ababa Light Rail Project has been completed. Formal works began last year in February, and are scheduled to be completed in 2016.

Design of the Urael area – The Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit will have a total of 41 trains each with a capacity to carry 286 passengers. This will enable the light rail transit to provide transportation service to 15,000 people per hour in one direction and 60,000 in all four directions.

The Ethiopian government, under the auspices of the Ethiopian Railway Corporation, plans to construct 5,000km of rail network in the near future, out of which about 2,300km are planned to be completed by the end of the GTP.

Similarly, the 667km Ethio-Djibouti railway is 13% complete.

Ethiopia's talking monkeys

According to a new study published in the journal ***Current Biology***, the vocal lip-smacking of Gelada baboons which are endemic to Ethiopia's highlands, are surprisingly similar to human speech.

"Our finding provides support for the lip-smacking origins of speech because it shows that this evolutionary pathway is plausible," said lead scientist Prof. Thore Bergman, from the University of Michigan. "It demonstrates that nonhuman primates can vocalize while lip-smacking to produce speech-like sounds."