



# Ethiopian News

September 2011 Issue

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## Ethiopia to achieve MDGs by 2015 – World Bank

According to a World Bank report, only four African countries are likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, and Ethiopia is one of them.

The four countries: Ethiopia, Cape Verde, Ghana and Malawi – will likely achieve most of the MDGs by 2015 or soon thereafter. The report attributed this to the accelerated growth and progress on social indicators.

It observed that conditions were improving in Africa as maternal mortality had declined by 26% between 1990 and 2009.

“Child mortality rates are also declining, the rate of HIV infection is stabilising, primary education school completion rate is rising faster than anywhere else in the world and the percentage of people living in extreme poverty falling,” the report said.

The report also pointed out that in 2010, the foreign direct investment flow to Africa surpassed those received by India, with international capital inflow rising to 4.6% of Gross Domestic Product. According to the report, remittances have reached an estimated \$21.5 billion.

## Horn of Africa mini-Summit pledges more than \$200 million

At least \$218 million in new aid for the Horn of Africa was pledged at a United Nations mini-Summit held on 24<sup>th</sup> September to raise awareness about the region's humanitarian crisis and tackle the root causes of its recurring drought-related food shortages.

The day-long meeting brought together officials from more than 60 nations, with representatives from 13 countries offering extra funding.

About \$500 million is still needed to meet the overall \$2.48 billion humanitarian appeal for the Horn of Africa.



Hailmariam Desalegn (right), Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, addresses the ministerial-level Mini-Summit on the Humanitarian Response in the Horn of Africa. Next to Mr. Desalegn is Raila Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya

Keynote speakers at the summit included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Omar Guellah of Djibouti, Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga, Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali of Somalia, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn, and representatives of other Member States and aid organizations involved in the humanitarian response.

Thanking the governments who made pledges today, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said it was vital to keep the crisis in the spotlight given the scale of the suffering.

An estimated 13 million people in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti are facing severe food shortages as a result of the prolonged drought. Famine has been formally declared in six areas of Somalia.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the countries of the region and international donors to take a long-term view.

“Addressing underlying risk factors is among the keys to ensuring this crisis does not strike again,” he said.

He noted that successful programmes in Ethiopia and Kenya have helped ensure that, despite the worst drought in six decades, there is no famine. “This is a profound achievement that can be replicated some day in Somalia. We will see drought again – with increasing frequency. But drought need not become famine.”

Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga said that “the current drought and famine is partly the consequence of unmitigated impacts of climate change in our midst...adaption to climate change, therefore, needs to be a central theme in all future strategies and actions.”

Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn echoed that, saying “The impact of climate change on pastoral areas is more

pronounced, as can be seen from the exceptionally harsh drought this year. It is clear now that pastoralism as way of life is fast becoming unviable and addressing the root cause of the problem must start from such a realization.”

Meanwhile, at the the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly on 26<sup>th</sup> September, Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, delivered Ethiopia’s policy statement, emphasizing the challenges that a globalized world had presented to Africa over the last few years, making it even more difficult for developing countries to move along the path to development. There was now a need to redouble efforts to make sure that the Millennium Development Goals would be met, he said.



Ethiopia is on track for almost all targets and has committed itself to even more ambitious targets in line with its five-year Growth and Transformation Plan. Ethiopia is confident of achieving this but the Deputy PM underlined that the global economic situation remained a source of concern.

On the sidelines of the General Assembly in New York, the Deputy PM also held a series of bilateral discussions with the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Norway, Australia, Russia, Hungary, Bosnia Herzegovina, Sudan and Ireland, exchanging views on a wide range of bilateral,

regional, continental and global issues of common interest and concern.

He signed an Agreement on Technical and Economic Cooperation with his Indonesian counterpart to strengthen the bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries and also signed a multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.

The statement and other news features from the UN are available on demand. Send an email to [info@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:info@ethioembassy.org.uk)

### International development leaders commend Ethiopia's Health Extension Programme

The heads of the UK and US governments' aid programmes say Ethiopia's Health Extension Programme offers "game changing" lessons in the fight international poverty.

At a high profile event on 21<sup>st</sup> September, during the UN General Assembly in New York, Raj Shah, head of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Andrew Mitchell, UK Secretary of State for International Development, highlighted the Health Extension Programme as bringing about a significant step towards achieving the MDGs.

UK Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, said: "This project is making a real difference toward reducing poverty. We want to hold it up to the world, so others can learn from these successes. It demonstrates that development buys results – it shows that through innovations we can deliver inspirational change to people's lives."

At the event, the Ethiopian Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom, showed a short film produced by the Ministry of Health highlighting the work of Health Extension Professionals in the field.

Dr. Tedros also announced the preliminary results of the Ethiopian Demographic and Health

Survey (EDHS) 2011 which showed very positive achievements, particularly in family planning and child health, and proved that this innovative programme has changed people's lives.

Contraceptive prevalence of 29% for 2011 marks a doubling from 15% 2005. Furthermore, the 2011 EDHS shows considerably lower levels of infant and under-five mortality than those reported in the 2005 EDHS: infant mortality has decreased by 23%, from 77 to 59 deaths per 1,000 births, while under-five mortality has decreased by 28% from 123 to 88 per 1,000 births.

These remarkable gains are a testimony to the success of the Health Extension Programme, showing Ethiopia's potential to reach the MDGs.

As the international community counts down to 2015, the US and UK are determined to inspire action by celebrating successes and innovations across the MDGs. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, Andrew Mitchell and Raj Shah hosted an event - *MDG Countdown: Successes and Innovations* which highlighted and celebrated the successes of countries which are achieving progress in each MDG. The event looked at what has worked and why, how it could work elsewhere and at scale.

Ethiopia's top achievement was MDG6 which seeks to Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. This highlighted the innovative Health Extension Programme, which tackles the shortage of healthcare providers in rural areas and improves quality.

The programme is having a real impact on the health of communities - a 73% reduction in malaria cases, and a 62% decrease in deaths of children under 5 in the villages the programme reaches. In 2010, 1.5 million more children were vaccinated against killer diseases, as compared to 2005. An estimated 1.4 million more women are using contraceptives in 2010 than in 2005. More than 35 million insecticide-treated bed-

nets for malaria prevention have been distributed. Ethiopia is on the way to achieving MDG6.

### **Ethiopia attends Norwegian-African Business Summit**

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Norwegian-African Business Association (NABA) successfully hosted the first Norwegian-African Business Summit in Oslo.

The Summit brought together a wide range of speakers and participants, including African and Norwegian Government ministers, delegates from more than 20 African Embassies and many members of the Norwegian Business community, some with many years of experience of doing business in Africa and some with a plan or a hope to expand into new markets.

The meeting focused on strengthening business contacts between the two sides.

The Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry, H.E. Mr. Trond Giske, opened the summit remarking upon the many common features between Norway and Africa: both rich in raw materials, and both being among the world's fastest growing economies. This, he said, should be a good starting point for development and growth through investments and business.



The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs H.E. Mrs. Ingrid Fiskaa, elaborated on Norway-Africa relations and the way forward. Mrs. Fiskaa noted that Norway will be engaged in Africa in climate prone agriculture development, afforestation and will support the African position in the global climate negotiations.

More than 20 African high-level officials and diplomats, representatives from the Eastern African Association and UNECA attended the meeting. The Embassy of Ethiopia in the UK, which is accredited to Scandinavian countries, participated at the summit.

Following opening remarks by Norwegian government representatives, a roundtable discussion and presentation on the experience of Norwegian companies engaged in Africa, one-to-one business meetings between Norwegian companies and African officials, diplomats and companies were held.



(l-r) HE Mr. Jens-Petter Kjemprud, former ambassador to Ethiopia, Mrs. Hirut Zemene, Trade and Investment Counsellor from the Embassy and Managing Director of NABA, Mr. Eivind Fjeldstad

The Trade and Investment Department of the Embassy engaged in one-to-one discussions with Norwegian officials and businesses and 19 companies expressed their interest in the mining, energy and health sectors. In addition, contacts were made for future cooperation with



the Ministry of Environment & International Development, the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (NORFUND) and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the event the Embassy explored possibilities of linking up with NABA to help strengthen business to business relations between Ethiopia and Norway.



NABA, a subsidiary of the International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI), was established to promote business opportunities on the

African continent and serve as a bridge between Norwegian and African business communities. NABA works to increase more efficient and less risky trade between Norway and Africa.

### Celebrating Ethiopian roses at Covent Garden

New Covent Garden Flower Market celebrated the world's favourite flower in style at 'Celebrating the Rose', a special event for professional florists and businesses on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

Ethiopian roses, provided by the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association, were showcased by representatives from the Ethiopian Embassy together with representatives of Golden Rose Agro Farms Ltd (GRAF) - a prominent investor in the sector. GRAF, Ethiopia's first highland rose farm, is rooted in sustainable development and social corporate responsibility, consistently pioneering the Ethiopian floriculture industry since 1999.



The Ethiopian stand with representatives from Golden Rose Agro Farms Ltd, (right) and Embassy Staff (left). The flower designs were created by The Fresh Flower Company

The event gave florists the chance to talk roses with growers and FITA importers and included demonstrations by internationally acclaimed designers Claire Cowling and Neill Strain. The event made it possible to promote Ethiopian horticulture and to source new buyers from among the wholesalers at the market.



The horticulture sector in Ethiopia has shown very dramatic growth, even surpassing most African nations that had an established operation long before Ethiopia started growing flowers. It demonstrates how conducive the investment environment is for foreign and local investors. Ethiopia is blessed with a favourable climate and vast quantities of land and water and of labour resources, which together make it a deeply attractive investment hub. The sector is one of the top five foreign exchange earners and reaches many European countries, Japan and

Russia. Land acreage is expanding every year where new floriculture enterprises are opening.

Flower exports benefit from Ethiopian Airline Cargo Sector's efficient service which flies to the UK six times a week with a seven-hour flight.

Ethiopia is now the second largest flower exporter in Africa.

### **Ethiopia aims to become leading sugar exporter by building 10 new sugar plants**

Ethiopia's state-owned Sugar Corp. has started building ten new factories and is inviting private investment contributions as part of a plan to become one of the world's 10 biggest sugar exporters, says a Bloomberg report.

The project will cost about \$4.6 billion and involves constructing plants and establishing farms in four different regions.

Abay Tsehaye, director general of Sugar Corp., said that the reason the sugar industry is prioritised is because Ethiopia has vast potential in terms of climate and soil and water resources, which favour sugar production. Foreign investment is being sought to develop other projects on 5 million hectares of land that have been set aside for sugar production.

Under the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan, Ethiopia plans to expand agriculture and boost savings to fund investment, by transferring 3.3 million hectares of land to investors by mid-2015.

Ethiopia plans to become self-sufficient in sugar by the end of 2013 and increase production almost eightfold to 2.3 million tonnes by mid-2015, leaving a surplus for export of 1.25 million tonnes.

### **Cement production to be boosted to 27 million tonnes**

With a view to increasing Ethiopia's total cement production to 27 million tonnes over the coming five years, the construction of 37 cement factories is underway across the country, at a cost of over 60 billion Birr.

Thirty-four of the cement factories will be new builds while the existing ones will be expanded. 12 of the new factories have already begun production and construction while the remaining are in the offing, says the Ministry of Industry.

Ethiopia currently produces 4.75 million tonnes of cement and envisages exporting cement on top of meeting local demand.

### **\$18 million earned from textile exports**

Ethiopia's revenue from textile exports over the last two months hit \$18.5 million dollars, up from 11.6 million the same period the previous year.

Yarn and thread, garments, clothes and woven materials are some of the products that contributed to the increase in revenue, with clothes contributing 78% of the total.

Late in July, Ethiopia announced that it had earned \$62.2 million from the export of textiles in the fiscal year to 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011, achieving 73.1% of its projection.



The Ministry of Industry endorsed a proposal by the Ethiopian Textile and Garment Manufacturers Association to lift excise tax and to lower customs duty tax on imported textiles. The proposal was made following a study by the association of textile producers in collaboration with concerned government bodies.

### **Manufacturing, industrial product export generates over \$207 million**

More than \$207 million was obtained from the export of manufacturing and industrial products in the just concluded budget year, including textiles, leather and leather products, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals – a 75.4% increase compared to the previous budget year.

More than \$21.8 million has already been secured from the sector in the first month of this budget year (July), showing a rise of more than \$3.5 million as compared to the same period the previous year.

### **Ethiopia unveils new hydro project over the Nile**

Ethiopia has unveiled a hydro-electric power project over the Nile River Basin. The Beka-Abo multi-purpose power project which will generate 2,100MW of electricity is part of Ethiopia's plan to significantly contribute to efforts to meet local demand and to become a major electricity supplier to neighbouring countries.

The project will be set up at the Nile Bridge, about 2km from the Nile River around Bure-Nekemt road, 260km North West of Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia has already started supplying power to Djibouti and is preparing to sell electricity to Sudan early next year, with Yemen and Egypt to perhaps follow.

On 5<sup>th</sup> October, the 230-kV Ethio-Djibouti electric power interconnection project was inaugurated.

The transmission line, costing 1.5 billion Birr, will enable Djibouti to import 35-megawatt of electricity from Ethiopia. Ethiopia in return will obtain up to \$1.5 million a month from the export.

The power interconnection project was inaugurated in the presence of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismael Omar Guelleh.

In his speech at the inaugural ceremony, Prime Minister Meles said that in addition to the existing railway interconnection, Ethiopia and Djibouti are building strong road and telecom infrastructure.

He said that in addition to the current infrastructure, agreement has been reached to connect Port Djibouti and Tajura Port (to be built soon) by constructing two modern railways.

Appreciating the remarkable work done so far by the two nations, the premier underlined the need to further strengthen the existing bilateral cooperation and economic ties.

The power transmission line is the first of its kind to have an Optical Ground Wire which can also be used for telecom services.

The transmission line will also help supply up to 12 Ethiopian border towns with electricity.







Power interconnection infrastructure work is currently being undertaken between Ethiopia and Kenya with the support of African Development Bank, which has provided over \$300 million for the project.

In April, Ethiopia launched Africa's largest dam, over the Nile River. The Renaissance Dam is expected to generate 5,250MW of electricity once completed. The project will cost \$5 billion and will be fully funded by the government and also through bonds bought by Ethiopians both in-country and abroad.

Three more hydro electric power projects are being built in various parts of the country as part of the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan to generate 10,000MW of electricity. Ethiopia aims to produce 20,000MW of power within the next 10 years as part of a plan to spend \$12 billion over 25 years to raise its power generating capability.

Ethiopia has an estimated hydropower potential of around 45,000MW.

In related developments, the month of September also saw Ethiopia sign agreements worth \$300 million with ten international companies that will help in the upgrading of its power projects on the Nile River and also provide consultancy work.

The agreement also includes construction and upgrading of power transmission systems and engineering work for the Renaissance Dam. The agreement will enable Ethiopia to build an additional 17,000km transmission line and construct around 17 new substations in addition to the existing 22 that will be upgraded.

### **Geologists map New Ocean in Ethiopia's Afar region**

British geologists have discovered a giant underground reservoir of molten rock under the deserts of Ethiopia's Afar region.

After a recent surge in volcanic activity and earthquakes plus the appearance of giant cracks in the rocky surface, the Afar region was targeted. Tectonic plates in the area are pulling apart and gradually creating a new ocean.

The scientists have now mapped the colossal underground lake of magma that lies up to 32km below the earth's surface.

"We estimate that there is 3,000 cubic kilometres of molten rock under Afar - enough to cover all of London ... with around a kilometre of rock," said Kathy Whaler, professor of geophysics at Edinburgh University.

The reservoir is under such pressure that it has forced tongues of molten rock up towards the surface, producing eruptions and earthquakes.

In 2005, a 25-foot (7.6m) wide tongue of lava spread 40 miles (64km) under Afar in 10 days and solidified, and many more followed.

Afar lies in east Africa's Great Rift Valley at a point where three tectonic plates are pulling apart from each other. Such movement creates gaps, or rifts, in the Earth's crust, which allows molten rock to well up from deep below.

There are thousands of miles of these rifts around the world but almost all lie deep below the ocean. East Africa and Iceland are the only places where they emerge on land.

Much of Afar is already below sea level but is protected from flooding by a barrier of low hills in Eritrea. Geologists believe the protective barrier will be overcome in about one million years, allowing the Red Sea to inundate the whole area.

Whaler, who presented her preliminary results to the UK's Royal Society, said, "Over geological time parts of southern Ethiopia and Somalia will split off and form a new island that moves out into the Indian Ocean."



### Dan-Kira up for BEFFTA UK awards

UK-based International Ethiopian dance group Dan-Kira, has been nominated to receive a BEFFTA (Black Entertainment Film Fashion Television and Arts) award for their contribution to dance.



They have been nominated in two dance categories: **Best Dance Act** and **Best Dance Choreographer**.

Dan-Kira, formed in 2007 by Daniel Seyoum and Duggie Teddy, 'hitting the ground with feet rhythmically' in Ethiopia. The group is a global entertainment company that provides the highest quality East African traditional performances and have set up East African music and theatre events in the UK and all over the world giving short courses for people interested in learning East African dance.

BEFFTA awards is the premier award ceremony that celebrates the achievements of both "the known and the unsung hard working black and



ethnic minority personalities in entertainment, film, fashion, television and arts worldwide under one roof."

The public nominated in June and July while the panel of BEFFTA members carried out their research and nominations until September when they came up with the final list.



Voting for BEFFTA awards is open but will close on 14<sup>th</sup> October. The award ceremony will take place in Black History Month on 22<sup>nd</sup> October at the prestigious Light House.

Dan-Kira will need as many votes as possible in order to win an award.

**VOTE NOW:** <http://www.beffta.com/voting>

### Young Ethiopian to be honoured by British Council

A young Ethiopian woman, Mahlet Berhanu Teferfa, 17, has been selected by the British Council to join the British Council Global Changemakers Network.



Mahlet will be participating in its Global Youth Summit 2011 to be held in London from 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November. She was selected from nearly 2,000 young applicants from all over the world. During the summit, participants will work in issues-based groups (e.g. environment and climate change, social entrepreneurship, education, human rights) to develop plans for joint and individual projects aimed at addressing these issues and raising awareness about them.

Global Changemakers is a British Council funded global youth network of social entrepreneurs and community activists from 113 countries



worldwide. Its mission is to empower youth to catalyse positive social change.

There are currently over 700 Changemakers, more than 200,000 young people involved in Global Changemakers activities each year, and 3.2 million beneficiaries of GCM projects. Since its inception at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in 2007, Global Changemakers has organised and run over 15 regional and global youth workshops across the world.

## Events

### Display captures African way of life

Stunning photographs shot in remote areas of Africa have gone on display in Oxford to mark Black History Month.

The exhibition, Pastoralist Herders East Africa, is the work of North Oxford photographer Adrian Arbib and went on show at Pegasus Theatre, East Oxford, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

The pictures aim to capture the pride and nobility of a way of life that is disappearing, and feature provinces of Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

They will be on show until Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October, during the theatre's opening hours.

Dave Thwaites, the theatre's head of production, said: "It's a great exhibition, with some beautiful and moving photos. I always find it fascinating to see and learn how other people live, especially when their culture and environment are so different to our own.

"I hope people will come to look at the exhibition, either before seeing a show here or purely out of interest to see the photos."

### International Tourism and Travel Fair

The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association is organising an international exhibition of tourism and travel scheduled to take place from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

About 80 companies from 21 countries are expected to participate and the fair will be organised for the purpose of introducing Ethiopian tourist attractions to the international business community.

The UK, India, Germany, Sudan and Turkey are just some of the countries which will be participating.

In addition, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce will also be organising the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Addis Chamber of Commerce International Trade Fair, scheduled to take place from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012, under the theme *Industrialisation for Development and Transformation*. About 200 foreign companies from 25 countries and 300 local companies are expected to participate at the fair.

## Sport

### Team Ethiopia at World Athletics in Daegu and All Africa Games

The 13<sup>th</sup> IAAF World Championships in Athletics was held in Daegu, South Korea from 27<sup>th</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September. Team Ethiopia finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the medals table with one gold medal and four bronzes.

The highlight of Ethiopia's experience came from Ibrahim Jeilan, who on 28<sup>th</sup> August sprinted past Mo Farah to win the men's 10,000 metres world title in 27:13.81. Jeilan, the 2006 World Junior Champion and World Cross Country Championships junior race winner in Edinburgh, was an unexpected winner and Britain's Mo Farah later remarked that he had never heard of

him. Farah took the silver in 27:14.07 and Ethiopia's Imane Merga took the bronze in 27:19.14.



The other bronze medals came from Dejen Gebremeskel in the 5,000 metres, Feyisa Lilesa – Marathon and Meseret Defar – 5,000 metres.



In other news, the 10<sup>th</sup> All Africa Games took place from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September in Maputo, Mozambique. Ethiopia again finished 9<sup>th</sup> on the medals table with 6 gold medals, 10 silver and 12 bronzes.

Ibrahim Jeilan earned another 10,000m gold medal at the All Africa Games, followed by his countryman, Asmeraw Bekele, with the silver.

In the men's 3,000m steeplechase, Ethiopia took all three medals in the form of Birhan Getahun, Roba Gari and Sisay Korme.

In the women's race, Sule Utura and Emebet Anteneh won the 5,000m gold and silver medals respectively. Fantu Migesso picked up the 800m silver medal.

Ethiopian and Kenyan athletes dominated the men's and women's half marathons. In the women's event, Mare Dibaba and Mamitu Daska took the gold and silver medals, running the 21 kilometre distance in times of 1:10:47 and 1:10:52. In the men's half marathon, Ethiopian athletes Lelisa Benti and Bekana Tolesa took the

gold and bronze, in times of 1:04:31 and 1:04:51. The silver medal went to Kenyan Kenneth Kipkemoi in 1:04:44.



Similarly, Ethiopian teenage sensation, Mohamed Aman, upset World Champion and World record holder David Rudisha in the 800m to highlight the 2011 edition of the Notturna di Milano International Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September, ending Rudisha's 26 win streak in the 800m.

The 17-year old beat Rudisha in 1:43:50 to the Kenyan's 1:43:57, producing the second fastest ever time for a youth athlete behind his own 1:43.37 in the Rieti IAAF World Challenge. Aman overtook Rudisha coming off the bend and took a slight lead in the final straight. Rudisha made a desperate attempt to overtake Aman but the youngster held his ground.

### Meskel celebrations in Ethiopia

Millions of followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church celebrated Meskel, the discovery of the True Cross by Empress Eleni on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

The *Meskel* celebration includes the burning of a large bonfire, *Demera*, which takes place on the eve of Meskel, based on the belief that Empress Eleni had a revelation in a dream. She was told that she should make a bonfire and that the smoke would show her where the True Cross was buried. So she ordered the people of Jerusalem to bring wood and make a huge pile. After adding frankincense to it, the bonfire was lit and the smoke rose high up to the sky and returned to the ground, on the exact spot where the Cross had been buried.





In Addis Ababa, the main centre of the festivities, thousands of people including Ethiopian Christians, diplomats and tourists gathered at Meskel Square, where the celebration took place on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

Priests and deacons, Sunday school students dressed in traditional Ethiopian plain white clothes added colour to the event by singing hymns. Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abune Paulos, lit the bonfire together with Mayor of the City of Addis Ababa, Kuma Demeksa. Abune Paulos urged followers of the religion to strive for further development. Kuma on his part called upon all Ethiopians to rally behind the government for the successful implementation of the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

The festival dates back thousands of years and is celebrated with yellow Meskel daisies placed on top of huge bonfires that are lit up in the evening in front of the gatherings. The festivities also mark the end of the three-month long rainy season and the return of summer to Ethiopia.

The True Cross is buried at the Gishen Mariam Monastery in Wollo region, home to a voluminous book which records the story of the True Cross of Christ and how it was acquired. This is one of Ethiopia's main tourist attractions.

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## GRAND RENAISSANCE DAM

EXPRESSION OF ETHIOPIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE BENEFIT OF  
ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE NILE BASIN



### **PM lauds nation's role in raising nearly 7 billion Birr for the Renaissance Dam**

*Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said that the people of Ethiopia, the ultimate owners of national development endeavours, deserve outstanding honour and recognition. He called on the public to register more gains in the area of development and to keep the momentum for further public mobilisation and unity the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam has inspired.*

*On 11<sup>th</sup> September, the Ethiopian Government organised a recognition evening on the eve of the Ethiopian New Year, to express gratitude to those who contributed to the success of the fundraising efforts for the construction of the Renaissance Dam. The event, which aimed at boosting the inspiration that gripped the nation over the past seven months following the launch of the construction of the dam.*

*On the occasion, held at Millennium Hall, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi called on the public to continue its support. "I call on the public to strive for further developmental victories by ensuring the sustainability of the public mobilization and unity witnessed at this particular moment," Meles said.*

*"The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a tangible manifestation of Ethiopians' robust commitment to development."*

*Chairperson of the National Committee for construction of the Renaissance Dam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hailemariam Dessalegn, announced at the event that nearly 7 billion birr has been collected so far from various sections of society.*

*The evening saw companies and individuals who contributed at least \$100,000 getting the silver award, those who bought bonds worth more than \$400,000 received a golden award while those who contributed between \$500,000 and a million received a platinum award.*

*Ethiopian-born business tycoon Sheikh Mohammed Alamoudi received a special award after he pledged to buy bonds worth 1.5 billion Birr.*

*Ethiopia plans to offer more bonds to finance the dam. The country isn't raising funds from foreigners in a bid to demonstrate its economic resurgence, Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) Minister Bereket Simon said. A "significant" portion of funding will also come from the government's development budget.*

*For more details about the bonds, please log on to our website: [www.ethioembassy.org.uk](http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk)*