

# Newsletter

Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels



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# POLITICAL AFFAIRS

## Ethiopia parties hope to wow voters ahead of polls



As Ethiopia gears up for its fifth National and Regional elections next month, 58 political parties are vying for the hearts and minds of the country's 36.8 million registered voters. National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) Deputy Chairman Addisu Gebregziabher said that rival parties had already begun reaching out to voters nationwide. "They are communicating their ideologies, politics and action plans to voters via multilingual radio and television, as well as newspapers. The parties were provided with a total of 600 hours of airtime on television and 700 columns space in newspapers on an equal basis, free of charge. All government, private and community media houses are involved. As per the law, a campaigning and election administration budget of 30 million birr was earmarked by the government for the parties". Eligible voters, who will cast ballots on May 24 at 45,000 polling stations across the nation, will elect members of Ethiopia's

547-seat federal parliament (House of Peoples' Representatives) for a five-year term.

Regional states and two charter cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, are also set to elect council members. According to NEBE, all parties combined have fielded 5,819 candidates for the federal parliament and regional councils

The NEBE is closely following up on the electoral propaganda used by all parties to ensure they are abiding by the rules. "Some parties properly utilized their airtime and print space, while others failed to make use of it," according to NEBE. "Some had injected hate messages into their campaigns, but were corrected," he added. Main parties plan to hold mass rallies and campaign tours in the weeks ahead.

Azaria Samuel, a 38-year-old public servant that he had watched recorded TV debates and some of the parties' election advertisements. "Debates were frank, free and enlightening. This is good. But this is a one-time show that comes once in five years," he added. "Frank discussions and criticism before a national audience should become a permanent feature of our democracy."

The fifth general elections since the overthrow in 1991 of the Marxist Derg will be conducted on 24 May in more than 45,000 polling stations. Over 35 million electorates have registered to cast vote. General elections are generally held every five years, according to Ethiopia's Constitution.

## 45,000 observers for the May 2015 elections

A coalition of Ethiopian civil associations is getting ready to deploy 45,000 observers for Ethiopia's general and parliamentary elections which are scheduled to take place in May. The associations are in the process of crafting a system whereby domestic observers would monitor the elections with acceptable credibility. He said the coalition is offering training and preparing different manuals in tune with its own code of conduct in a bid to strengthen its execution capacity.

More than 600 individuals are taking part in the

training which aims at building the observing capacity of the observers during the process and on the actual day of the election. The coalition's 45,000 observers are to be deployed at all polling stations across the country, and will operate with extreme neutrality. With regards to the pre-election process so far, the coalition believes in the existence of a fair play that would ensure a peaceful and fair election environment.

Source: APA News

## Ethiopia's election campaign's televised debates continue

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) has been continuing to feature its series of televised political debates between political parties in the run-up to Ethiopia's 2015 national elections next month on May 24. So far, five such debates have been held. The debates, following the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia's regulations as well as Code of Conduct for the Mass Media, have proved an effective platform for the political parties to show their aspirations, policies and programs on an equal footing with the view of attracting voters and raising the awareness of the electorate. The televised debates have also enabled voters to access comprehensive information from the political platforms displayed by the competing political parties since the debates began on March 13. They will certainly encourage voters to participate and allow them make more informed decisions in the general election.

The debates have so far covered the Multi Party System and Building Democracy; Federalism; Agricultural and Rural Policy; and Urban Development and Industrial Policy, and Good Governance and the Rule of Law and Infrastructure. The parties still have to debate on the remaining three agreed subjects: National Security; Foreign Policy; and Education and Health. The debates have produced the reality of a competitive campaign by enhancing public awareness of the relevant political platforms and position of the parties.

Last weekend, the debate on Infrastructure brought

together the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), Semayawi (Blue Party), the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK), the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and the All Oromo People's Democratic Party (AOPDP)..

Workineh Gebeyehu, Minister of Transport, speaking for the EPRDF said the remarkable achievements in infrastructure development sector, people-centered and broad-based economic development and the continued and practical implementation of sound policies and strategies, were what persuaded people to vote for the EPRDF in the last four elections. Infrastructure development and strategic public enterprises were closely interlinked with the provision of basic services, economic growth, and social development, he said, and the EPRDF which was determined to benefit and better the lives of the rural and urban populations, would not sell key public enterprises to investors. Equally important was the Government's determination to destroy rent-seeking, corruption and project delays, to ensure the provision of basic services, sustain economic growth and expand social development. Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael, Information and Communication Technology Minister and Coordinator of the Economic Cluster with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister, claimed that the Government's huge investment in infrastructure development was a central factor benefitting the country. He said opposition parties' calls to



privatize state-owned infrastructure enterprises or strategic sectors were misleading. This would not serve the demands and needs of the people nor guarantee broad-based and pro-poor economic and social development. Selling public enterprises to investors will give no benefit to the people; the EPRDF's infrastructure development agenda was paying off in the creation of economic and social interconnectivity.

Dr. Debretsion Gebremichael, pointing out that the Government's efforts to provide access to Information and Communication Technology services was gaining momentum, noted that there were now more than 30 million mobile telephone subscribers. He said ICT infrastructure has shown massive expansion, and the Government had delivered connectivity and specialized IT applications to schools, and woreda, Zonal, Regional and Federal institutions as well as interconnected and high performance networks to higher learning institutions and universities. The Minister noted that the Government had increased energy generation capacity from 370 MW in 1991 to over 2000 MW in 2015 and this would rise to 4000 MW shortly, meeting power demands from citizens, businesses and industries. He said the number of towns and urban areas with access to electricity now reached 6000 and more than 50 electricity transmission stations were now under construction to ensure more reliable service and prevent power outages. The Minister also said the expansion of access to safe drinking water, by increasing water supply access by over 70%, was a remarkable achievement. He added that the Government had increased the country's total road coverage from 18,000 kilometers in 1991 to over 100,000 kilometers this year

Ato Wondwosen Teshome (EDP) said the infrastructure development projects had to exhibit quality standards, sustainability and be free of corruption in addition to improving the living standards of the people. Such projects should also pave the way for the integration of the various regions of the country. He said to people's dismay, the EPRDF had failed to address project delays, inadequate access to drinking water, poor standards and corruption in the infrastructure development projects. He also emphasized that projects need to be linked to human development. If the EDP won the election, he said, it would direct the infrastructure development sector in such a way as to effectively address those problems and improve people's lives.

Ato Amdom Gebre-Sellasie (MEDREK) claimed that the ongoing infrastructure projects were enmeshed in pervasive corruption and suffered from lack of longevity and poor quality as well as the absence of public engagement and consultation. The concentration of development projects in the capital, Addis Ababa, had come at the expense of the political, social and economic problems in other regional states. Rural-urban migration to Addis Ababa was surging and demonstrated the inequitable development. If MEDREK won, he said, it would make infrastructure projects the dynamo for balanced and fair development for all regions of the country. Ato Luelseged Degefu, (Semayawi), argued that the Government's infrastructure projects had no synergy and integration and allowed no space for public discussion and criticism. He argued that state-owned infrastructure enterprises needed to be sold to investors in order to improve people's lives. He said the EPRDF had failed to implement infrastructure projects as planned, pointing out that the plans to construct 2,395 kilometers of railway within five years had not even begun, though 70% of the Addis Ababa to Djibouti railway has been completed and it is expected to start operations next year.

The previous weekend the subject of the debate was Good Governance and the Rule of Law and the debate included representatives from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the New Generation Party (NGP), the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), Semayawi Party (Blue Party), the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK).

Ato Abay Tsehay, Policy Study and Research Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office, representing the ruling party, EPRDF, asserted that the EPRDF had produced remarkable achievements in the area of good governance and promotion of the supremacy of the rule of law during the last 24 years. He said this success was apparent in all sectors. He argued that the policies formulated and implemented by the EPRDF did not have limitations but the performance in implementing the policies had displayed both strength and weakness. Aster Mamo, Minister of Civil Service with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinator of the Good Governance and Reform Cluster, representing the EPRDF, claimed the party had taken reform measures in all areas of national affairs with full participation of the people. This had resulted in tangible outcomes including the change

from a centralized unitary state to an ethnic-based decentralized federal state. It had also produced a move from a command economy to a market-based economy as well as the institutionalization of a multiparty electoral system. She emphasized that civil service reform had been undertaken in order to furtherance the capability for an effective and efficient delivery of public services.

Ato Woldie Dana (NGP) said that the failure of the ruling party's performance in the area of good governance manifested itself in the inadequacy of clean water supplies and frequent power outages as well as problems with the telephone service. He emphasized that the NGP would comprehensively address the numerous problems related to delivery of basic public services. He said it would improve governance not least in setting the scene for improved service delivery, formulation of sound policies, effective implementation of projects and programs, and the resolution of other problems facing the civil service. Ato Wasihun Tesfaye (EDP) claimed that any evaluation of the ruling party's performance in ensuring transparency, accountability and participatory democracy could produce nothing less than a verdict of poor governance. He detailed the EDP's views with regard to the ways and means to enable civil servants to function effectively and productively in the absence of any political influence or pressure. He added that the civil service should be guided by qualifications and performance instead of by the political choice of the ruling party as at present.

Ato Yidnekachew Kebede, (Semayawi), argued that the country's political architecture was faced with the absence of alternative media and of an independent judiciary. He claimed that the EPRDF had not addressed the problems which prevented

the effective operation of the civil service and reiterated the necessity to give emphasis to the promotion of an independent and capable civil service. Ato Birhanu Berhe, representing MEDREK, stressed that the formulation and implementation of any effective national policies and strategies necessitated a national consensus. He said that if MEDREK won the upcoming election, it would put an end to the 1 to 5 groups which are organized within the civil service to discuss working practices and issues of productivity. It would also provide policies that would create key enabling conditions for every citizen to proactively participate in national affairs while also ensuring good governance.

Ato Diressa Terefe, Director of Capacity Building and Mass Media at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, told the Ethiopian News Agency last week that the political parties were now showing an ability to utilize the free airtime and space allotted to them more effectively. Overall, they were using more than 70 per cent of the time allotted. This was a marked change from previous national elections. Ato Demisewu Benti, Head of Public Relations at the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, said the Board welcomed the improvement displayed by the political parties in using the free air time allocated and hoped this positive momentum would be sustained for the remained of the election campaign. He reiterated that the election campaign activities of the political parties should be practiced in accordance with and abide by the Proclamation on the Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

Source: MFA

## Commemoration Ceremony held at Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels



A ceremony was held at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels on Saturday 25th of April 2015 in order to commemorate the innocent Ethiopian victims of ISIS in Libya. Several dozens diaspora members coming from Brussels, Belgium, and the Netherlands gathered to attend the event and pay a tribute to the victims.

At the beginning of the ceremony, religious leaders representing the Orthodox, Protestant and Muslim communities made strong statements condemning the massacre. They all assured that this dramatic event will not in any way create divisions between the Muslim and Christian Ethiopians. These communities have a long tradition of living together in Ethiopia, and the only consequence of this murder will be to strengthen the unity between communities, religions and peoples. The religious leaders further assured that they were committed to help the victims and families, and appreciated the popular demonstration held in Addis Ababa in support to the victims.

This crime, they also said, is an attempt to prevent the country of progressing on the path to economic development and well-being for all. Therefore, the religious representatives said they were committed to provide their support to help the government stabilize the country, fight terrorism, and put an end to the activities of human smugglers. Similarly, they called the government to continue promoting sustainable economic development, jobs for the youth, and to further cooperation with neighboring countries to effectively fight terrorism.

In his statement, H.E. Ambassador Teshome Toga shared his deepest condolences on behalf of himself and of the Embassy staff. He affirmed that this massacre missed his target, as it will not succeed to divide Ethiopian Christians and Muslims. The Ambassador also emphasized that the Government is more committed than ever to fight against terrorism. As a matter of fact, Ethiopia has long been targeted by terrorism. But, instead of surrendering, it provided a strong and adequate answer to secure the country and progress towards more social





Orthodox, Muslim and Protestant representatives addressed the participants during the ceremony



Ambassador Teshome Toga addressing the participants.

justice and economic development. Today, the way forward goes also through providing more jobs and opportunities for young people and continuing to boost the economic development of the country.

Afterwards, several members of the Ethiopian

community living in the Benelux shared their condolences and expressed their solidarity with the families of the victims. Lastly, all the participants of the ceremony lit candle for a moment of inner silence and remembrance of those innocent countrymen who disappeared so suddenly.

# ECONOMY

## Interview: Ethiopia is open for business

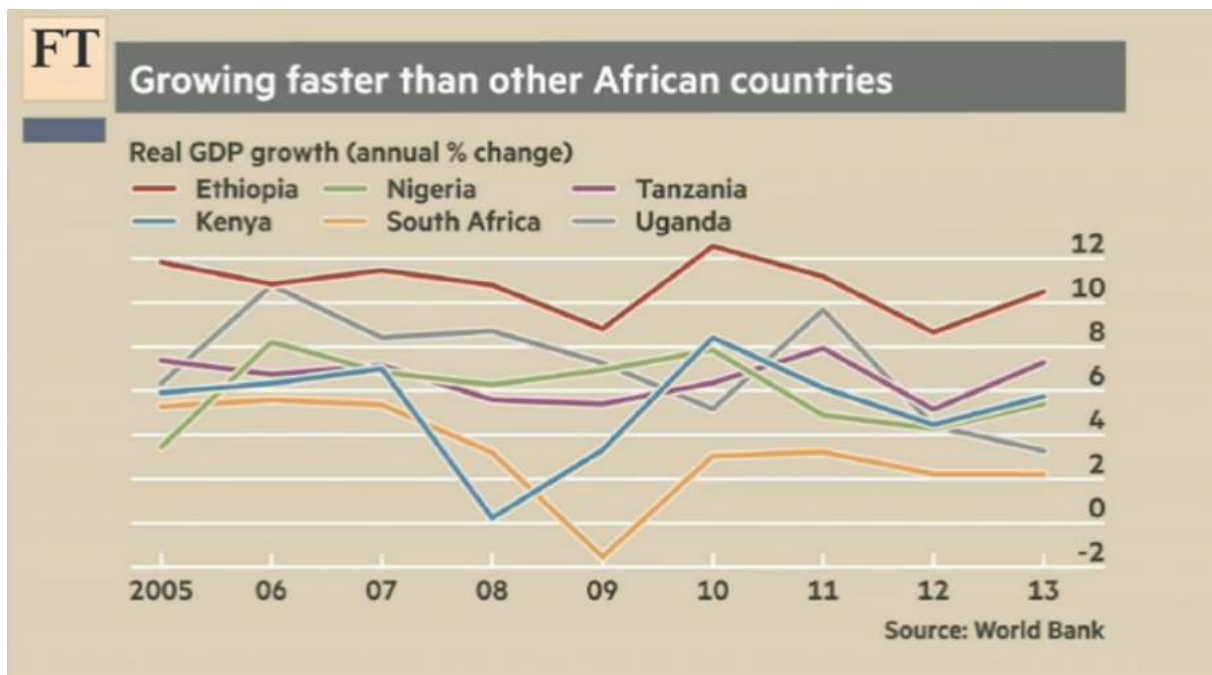
Ethiopia is the place to invest now, says the economist Zemedenh Negatu. Interviewed by Financial Times Market, the Ernst & Young partner explained that Ethiopia enjoyed several advantages such as cheap, qualified and abundant labour, cheap electricity and a rising purchase power. This explains why the total FDI amount increased by ten times between 2008 and 2013, from USD 100 million to USD 1 billion.

During the last ten years, the Ethiopian economy has been growing at 10.5 percent on average,

which is higher than any non-oil producing economy in Africa. This growth has been driven by investments in infrastructure, transformation of the agricultural production process and the development of the industry, and is expected to continue during the next decades.

Watch the complete interview here:

<http://ethio.be/1DEzNqN>



Ethiopia's growth between 2005 and 2013 (picture: Financial Times)



## Ethiopia expecting this financial year to be a record for FDI

The Ethiopian Investment Agency said that the Government expects this year to be a record for foreign direct investment, up 25 percent from last year's USD 1.2 billion to reach a record USD 1.5 billion, with successful efforts to attract overseas manufacturing companies. The figures do not include plans by China's Huajian, the world's biggest shoemaker, for an additional planned USD 2 billion to build its own industrial park and expand its existing Ethiopian workforce to 30,000 in the next few years.

Seven year's ago, the FDI was no more than a little over USD 100 million, but recent years have seen the relocation of factories, attracted by low wages, cheap power and supportive government policies. Industrial zones have been set up to provide production facilities for textiles, leather and garments. China is providing the largest number of investments, although by value, the biggest investors are Turkey and India.

The country is now also seeing investment from Europe and the US, it was noted. Ethiopia

is continuing to make huge investments in electrical power, railways and industrial parks, providing substantial support for investors including tax breaks. Power and labor costs are low, security and political stability is good and the state-owned Ethiopian Airlines runs the biggest global network of any African airline. Accountants Ernst and Young in Addis Ababa forecasts FDI will average USD 1.5 billion each year for the next three years at least and predicts the country will rank among Africa's top four manufacturing hubs by 2025. Ernst and Young said there had been a big surge in deals since 2011, from the US and Europe as well as China, Turkey and India. It said that "Ethiopia is fast becoming the 'must-visit' destination for virtually all private equity funds with an emerging market focus." There are now more than half a dozen private equity firms operating in Ethiopia. Recent arrivals include Europe's Unilever currently building a factory and India's largest paint-maker, Asian Paints, entered the market through the acquisition of a local manufacturer last month.

## The wine sector in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is known for its rich cultural heritage steeped in century's old history and mystical legends. But very few know of a long-held wine-making tradition in Ethiopia. The wine-making tradition has over the last few years been gaining much traction and is now a gradually expanding industry that is meant to place Ethiopia firmly onto the wine-making countries list.

Traditionally, Ethiopia has been making a local wine called tedj, a type of honey-wine flavored with gersho leaves, that are similar to hops. However, this ancient wine-making tradition is gradually being taken over by a much modern form of wine-making, and nowadays standard high-quality wines are produced in the country. Ethiopia is now growing its own grapes and producing its own signature wine. Due to the

proximity to the equator, it is even possible to make two harvests per year. Currently, there are two wineries in the country, with a combined production of almost 12 million bottles of wine per year.

Awash winery is by far the oldest winery in Ethiopia. The winery has been in existence for about 70 years now. Awash Winery boasts more than 117 hectares of a wine estate that sits on a mountain plateau rising to 1,200 meters above sea level. It was acquired in 2013 by Blue Nile company, which has the plan to expand the production by constructing a second distillery.

Currently, Awash Winery has an annual production of about 10 million bottles, most of which is exclusively consumed by the Ethiopian market. According to Awash, the local demand for quality wine is at an all-time high. In 2016,

the company will be able to export wine in addition to meeting the local demand.

Castel Winery on its part is a new player in the Ethiopian wine-making industry. The winery

competes with South Africa, currently the continent's largest wine producer.

Castel Winery has a total annual production of about 1.2 million bottles of Ethiopian Rift



is located in the town of Ziway some 160 km south of Addis Ababa. Castel's vineyards were established in 2007 as a partnership between the Ethiopian Government and the Castel Group, which is today one of the largest wine and beer producer in the world. The wine estate is spread across some 120 hectares with the grapes having been planted between 2007 and 2009. The winery started bottling its vintage wine in 2014, with the goal of producing a quality wine meeting international standards.

Castel's vineyards are located about 1,600 meters above sea level with an annual rainfall of about 650 mm and average temperature of 25 degrees celsius year round. The region has sandy soils, which according to Castel Winery are good conditions for the development of quality wines and could in a few years' time

Valley Wine. Plans are to increase production to 3 million bottles per year by 2016. Exports destinations for this production include the US and Europe. Castel Winery could benefit from the AGOA program supporting free access to US market, and from EU's Everything But Arm program, which provides a duty and quota-free access to the European markets.

The Castel vineyard boast exclusively planted with international grape varieties that include 55 hectares of Syrah, 38 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon, 14 hectares of Merlot and 12 hectares of Chardonnay. In the collection is an additional 42 hectares of Sangiovese that was planted in the 1980s by the Ethiopian government.

Most of the 750,000 wines planted in these

vineyards were imported from Bordeaux (France). Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were chosen for the reds that make up the biggest of Castel Winery's Rift Valley Wines production while Chardonnay grapes were chosen for the white wines.

Some regional states in Ethiopia have also

provided investment incentives for this sector, in order to further support the development of wineries. Taking advantage of the growing local demand, the export incentives and the favorable climate, the wine sector in Ethiopia is rapidly expanding.

## AGENDA & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Matchmaking session: Spices, Herbs & Aromatics sector

Within the framework of the Agri-Business Support Facility (ABSF), part of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations, the Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) will receive an incoming delegation of Ethiopian stakeholders from the spices, herbs and aromatics sector in the week of May 18th 2015. They will participate

in a weeklong program of cPlease find the list of participants via this link:  
<http://ethio.be/1z1uCWp>

If you have any questions, please contact Daphne Willems at [daphne.willems@nabc.nl](mailto:daphne.willems@nabc.nl) or 070 3043618.

### Diaspora registration online

From now on, the website of the Embassy provides the possibility for Ethiopians living in the Benelux to register themselves, update

their contact details or indicate that they have left the Benelux. To proceed, please click here and indicate your contact details:

<http://ethio.be/1Q2QeWV>

### Book of Condolence

Following the brutal murder of innocent Ethiopians by ISIS in Libya, an online book of condolence was opened on the Embassy's website. Please click on the link below to add

your message on condolence.

<http://ethio.be/1HUwYYJ>

## ABOUT THE EMBASSY

**Working Hours:** 9:00 – 13:00 & 14:00 – 17:00

**Consular Service:** Monday – Friday 09:00 – 13:00

**Legalization and Power of Attorney:** Monday – Thursday 9:00 – 13:00

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