

Newsletter

Embassy of Ethiopia, Brussels



29 May 2015
Weekly Issue N° 38



A view of the Simien Mountains, Ethiopia

Content

POLITICAL ISSUES **2**

- Preliminary results of the fifth national elections in Ethiopia 2
- Statement by the African Union Election Observation Mission on the fifth Ethiopian national elections 2
- The Ethiopian 2015 national election: an exemplary with an emphatic finish 3

ECONOMY **5**

- World Bank says Ethiopia's economy to grow 10.5% in the next fiscal year 5
- ERA receives credit approval from World Bank Group for USD 370 Million 5

NEWS FROM THE EMBASSY **7**

- Visit to the Heineken Factory 7
- General assembly of the Belgo-Ethiopian Association 8
- Ethiopian evening at KU Leuven University's Group T 9

POLITICAL ISSUES

Preliminary results of the fifth national elections in Ethiopia

So far, the preliminary results reported by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) have confirmed 80.8 percent of the parliamentary seats has gone to EPRDF. In a press conference NEBE delivered on 27 May 2015, Chairperson of the NEBE, Professor Merga Bekana said that based on the temporary results collected so far from different election regions across the nation the ruling party, EPDRF, has won 80.8 percent of the number of seats for the House of Representatives. EPRDF also won 79.4 percent of the seats for the regional councils. According to the temporary report, EPDRF has got 442 seats from the total 547 seats of the house of the representative in the fifth general election. It also won 1,508 seats for the regional councils.

NEBE carried out preparations to successfully achieve the fifth general election process, said Professor Merga. The election was peaceful, calm

and a wonderful public participation has been observed. Professor Merga expressed his gratitude to all the stakeholders which greatly contributed to the election process, in particular to the voters, the competing political parties, the police and security forces, the Ethiopian broadcasting authority and all the media outlets.

NEBE was devoted to make the fifth general election fair, democratic and impartial through supporting competing political parties from the beginning to the end of the election process, Professor Merga further stated, enabling the people to give the vote to the party of their choice.

Ethiopian people voted in 45,795 polling stations across the nation. The final results of the election will be announced on 23 June 2015.

Source: Walta Information Center

Statement by the African Union Election Observation Mission on the fifth Ethiopian national elections

The African Union Observation Mission for the 2015 Ethiopian Election held a press conference to issue its preliminary observation on Sunday's election on 26 May 2015. The Head of the Mission, Hifikepunye Pohamba, former president of Namibia said: "The African Union Election Observation Mission concludes that the parliamentary elections were calm, peaceful, and credible as they provided an opportunity for the Ethiopian people to express their choices at the polls." Mr. Pohamba said the 59 members of the AU Mission from 23 African countries had visited a total of 356 polling stations.

The observers said no major incidents occurred and that they could vouch for the secrecy of the vote in 95 percent of the polling stations they had visited. The Mission felt the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) had adequately prepared the election on May 24. It said the preparation stages of the election, which included voter registration, civic observer and voter elections, candidates' registration and oversight of the campaigning, showed that the NEBE had made "incremental democratic improvement' over time. The Mission said the Election Day had taken place in a peaceful and calm atmosphere and it confirmed that the

Election Day activities such as the opening of polling stations, voting processes, ballot and election material distribution, observation at the polling stations, and the closing and counting processes had been carried out without reports of any major incidents. Despite some opposition claims of violations including ballot box theft, the Mission called the process credible with the exception of a few irregularities: some polling station officials had violated the rules by failing to display empty ballot boxes before the official start of the election; and that a few voting centers had opened ahead of time, though this was due to requests from voters. As well as reviewing the Ethiopian political landscape and

the pre-election process, and highlighting some observations on Election Day itself, the Mission offered conclusions and recommendations to the Government, the Electoral Board, the Political Parties and the media to strengthen the electoral process in the future. Overall, the AU Mission concluded that the elections had been calm, peaceful, and credible and had provided an opportunity for the Ethiopian People to express their choices at the poll. The Mission congratulated the Government, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia for holding the Election for the fifth time.

Source: MFA

The Ethiopian 2015 national election: an exemplery with an emphatic finish

The Ethiopia 2015 National Election explicitly and unequivocally demonstrated a successful transition to a democratic electoral system through ballot vote whereby people can choose their leaders in a peaceful, competitive and free contest. They also showed their political maturity by effectively and practically implementing their citizenship rights and responsibilities. The Ethiopian people once again demonstrated to the whole world that there is no turning back but to move forward following the right track. Further, they made it clear that they want to keep precious things such as peace, stability and sustainable development undamaged.

During the 2015 National Election, the Ethiopian people from coast to coast demonstrated to the whole world that, the hard fought peace, security and stability are pre-requisites for free, fair and democratic election with no hidden agendas, no disturbance, no chaos; instead, by conducting peaceful, free, fair and exemplary democratic fifth national election. They showed that they have equal voice and opportunity to choose their leaders not infected or influenced by capital, wealth, and status and by engaging themselves (with over 80% and high number of youth participation) in a peaceful, free, transparent democratic manner.

During this democratic election, the Electoral Board remained impartial and non-partisan and has been regarded as such by the public at large. The Electoral Board created a conducive and enabling

environment for participation and for an educated citizenry. Also in order to establish the credibility of the electoral process, all parties worked very hard to make the electoral process peaceful, democratic and successful.

Generally, elections are the cornerstone for creating a democratic political system. In the past decade, it has become a common phenomenon in the developing world to raise concerns on whether multi-party elections can possibly be held in a free and fair atmosphere or whether any ruling party can genuinely foment an enabling environment for peaceful, orderly and transparent elections. However, within the context of Ethiopia, the recently concluded fifth National Election has been declared free and fair by independent international observation missions such as the delegation from the African Union and other various independent observers such as the Coalition of the Ethiopian Civic society.

The media, this time around refrained from being biased and used accuracy, fairness, balance and impartiality expected from professional journalists. As a result, most media outlets vis-à-vis the Ethiopian election process have by and large been a blend of informed opinion and presented substantive and concrete evidences to corroborate the veracity of their account.

The government of Ethiopia created an unprecedented conducive environment for a free

and fair election further enhancing the process of democratization and in order to strengthen and optimize the ongoing economic and political reforms in Ethiopia and ensure continuity of the prevailing enabling environment for development.

The main stakeholders: The Ethiopia people honored the Rule of Law that decrees that Law shall govern us according to the will of the People, the Rule of Law is worthy of our highest aspirations and dedicated efforts as a united people, the rule of law that brings hope for peace, hope for justice, and hope for a day when right will always conquer might; hope for a day when truth will always overcome deceit and hope for a day when love will truly be the highest law of our land.

Contesting political parties by and large have thoroughly prepared themselves for the challenge from their political opponents; as a result, all candidates were obliged to respect the rule of the game which is a fundamental standard and symbol of a civilized society. They took time to do their homework in that regard and chose their best candidates in order to represent their parties to serve the public at large with dignity, honor and humility. They understood the laws of the land and were able to respect and be governed by the constitution of the land. Further, they represented their respective parties in a political debate for their respective parties. Further, most of the contesting parties have shown unprecedented wisdom and maturity in their participation and in pursuing of their programs for which they should be commended. However, few of them were observed still pursuing hate politics, squabbling among themselves and acting as fault-finders without presenting any sound policy alternatives. Thus, they should be encouraged to come out of their quagmire and develop themselves in future elections.

Monitoring also played an important role in conducting a peaceful and democratic election by instilling domestic and international legitimacy. Monitoring also helped to avoid any violence that may happen during the electoral process by giving necessary technical assistance and technical expertise for training local monitors that can strengthen domestic electoral institutions that eventually helped maintain peace, tolerance and stability.

The presence of election monitors also served to prevent shenanigans and give parties greater confidence that the vote was free and fair. The key

to achieving this outcome was the presence of monitors who are seen by all sides as neutral. When we talk about monitors, we tend to focus solely on international monitors and more often than not forget the role of indigenous knowledge and capacities of conflict resolution mechanisms. Here, the role of the elderly vis-à-vis ways and means of resolving disputes and conflicts is instrumental; therefore, it must be given priority even over the so called international monitors. Since indigenous elders possess a proven track record of being non-partisan and since they are neutral and respected by any party as well as the society at large, their role within the electoral process can be of a significant importance and thus, their involvement is not only important but indeed at times indispensable; therefore, they must get the due attention.

At this critical time, political parties on both sides of the political divide are required to exercise considerable restraint, tolerance and willingness to compromise. The parties are legally and morally bound to refrain from any action or activity that may adversely influence the situation on the ground. Therefore, they should cease activities that could further antagonize public sentiments or fuel the flames of discord

Generally, the Ethiopian people showed that they are fed up with conflicts and wars and languages of violence. Instead, they are busy focusing on poverty reduction and venture of development and they have an uphill battle to conquer that. They are thus keeping their eyes on the prize and the prize is peace; because, without peace, nothing can be achieved; therefore, it is important that governmental and non-governmental organizations alike build confidence on the democratic process flourishing in Ethiopia and continue their cooperation and collaboration in order to further reinforce peace, stability and good governance in the country.

A civilized society is obedient to law and order. Candidates in a civilized society accept graciously the decisions of the electoral Board or the supreme court of the land when winning or losing during elections. A civilized society does not want to hamper stability and development. A civilized society always strives for peace and maintains tolerance. Further, a civilized society does not rush to violence and destruction. It opts for construction

and development endeavors instead.

In spite of the concerted negative media campaign against the national election by certain international media ill-wishers with hidden agendas, the Ethiopian people have managed to successfully conduct and conclude the 2005 National Election in a completely peaceful atmosphere. There might have been some minor problems here and there, but for the most part, the election was absolutely democratic free

and fair. Therefore, the Ethiopian people, the Government in place, the Contesting Parties and the Electoral Board deserve to be congratulated for a job well done.

Yohannes By Gebresellasie (Ph.d) Addis Ababa

Source: Aiga Forum

ECONOMY

World Bank says Ethiopia's economy to grow 10.5% in the next fiscal year

The World Bank said Ethiopia's economy was expected to grow by 9.5 percent this fiscal year ending in June before accelerating to 10.5 percent for 2015-2016, adding that it expected inflation to remain in single digits during this period. Lars Christian Moller, the World Bank's lead economist and program leader for Ethiopia, said on 22 May 2015 that falling oil prices should help quicken Ethiopia's growth in 2015-2016. "If lower oil prices are passed on to consumer in the form of lower fuel prices, it

gives additional disposable income to consumers", he said. Furthermore, the service and agriculture sectors are likely to drive growth, along with the booming construction sector. Growth has eased slightly in 2014-2015 due to slightly disappointing rains. Annual inflation is likely to remain in single digits, in line with the government target, averaging 7.2 percent this fiscal year, rising to 8.2 percent in the next fiscal year, it was further stated.

Source: MFA

ERA receives credit approval from World Bank Group for USD 370 Million

The agreement to finance the 57 km long expressway section has a 38-year maturity date and a six year grace period.

Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) got credit approval from the World Bank Group for USD 370 million for the construction of a section of the Modjo-Awassa expressway in the next fiscal year. The highly concessional agreement, with a maturity date of 38 years and a grace period of six years will finance the

57 km long Batu Ziway-Arsi Negele section of the expressway. The Modjo-Awassa expressway is 203 km long and is divided into four sections. The Mojo-Meki section and Meki-Ziway section are in the process of auction for construction. The Mojo-Meki section, also 57 km, was financed by a loan from the African Development Bank, the 37 km Meki-Ziway section by Korea EXIM Bank, and the last section Arsi Negele to Hawassa, which is 52 km, will be financed by the China EXIM Bank. In the last 17 years, 180



billion Br has been disbursed for road projects in the country, Bekele Sisay deputy general director of ERA told Fortune. The new and more modern road is necessitated by the increasing traffic flow on the route, which currently stands at 3,000 trucks a day, and is projected to reach 10,000 trucks, said Samson Wondemu, communication director at the ERA. The new expressway will be the second after the 86 km long Addis Abeba-Adama expressway, which opened to traffic on 14 September 2014. It was constructed at a cost of USD 612 million by the China Communications Construction Co.. There is also another ongoing expressway project from Dire Dawa to Djibouti, which is costing around USD 300 million, availed by the government of Ethiopia and the China EXIM Bank. The contractor is CGC Overseas Construction Group. The area of the current road network in Ethiopia is 105,000 km while the targeted one in GTP I was 136,000 km. The World Bank confirmed ERA's report of June 2014 while approving the credit that the road coverage in Ethiopia had reached 70 percent, increasing from 26,555 km to 99,522 km since the Road Sector Development Programme started in 1997. According to Bekele, ERA's target in the next GTP period is to double the current 105,000 km road network.

Source: All Africa



NEWS FROM THE EMBASSY

Visit to the Heineken Factory

H.E. Ambassador Teshome Toga visited a Heineken production facility in the Netherlands on 22 May 2015. At this occasion, Ambassador Teshome encouraged the group to continue investing in Ethiopia.

This visit was organized in a context of increasing international investments in the Ethiopian beer

sector. Heineken has already invested near to 300 million euros in Ethiopia. A new factory opened near Addis Ababa on 15 January 2015, employing over 800 local staffs and buying barley supply from 6,000 farmers. Heineken owns 57 breweries and plants in Africa and is selling beer in the majority of African countries.



General assembly of the Belgo-Ethiopian Association

The Belgo-Ethiopian Association held its yearly General assembly on 20 May 2015 at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels. During the meeting, last year's activities and projects were presented and evaluated by the members, among these the successful event "GUZO – Journey in Ethiopia" organized on 1 February 2014 and featuring the Ethiopian pianist Samuel Yirga. This event contributed to the image building of Ethiopia in Belgium. Another successful event supported by the Association was the theater play "Going Home" that was staged at the Brussels Théâtre National in February 2015. Ambitious plans for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Association and for the promotion of the cultural and touristic value of Ethiopia were also discussed

(more about this soon).

During the meeting, the Embassy expressed its gratitude towards the members of the Association for their commitment to enhance the people to people relations between Ethiopia and Belgium at the cultural, economical and social levels and to contribute building a better image of Ethiopia in Belgium. The members of the Association thanked the Embassy for hosting the meeting and for supporting their organization.

Founded in 1996, the Belgo-Ethiopian Association aims to "build bridges between Belgium and Ethiopia". Find out more here:

<http://www.belgoethiopian.be>



Ethiopian evening at KU Leuven University's Group T

"Are you the next 'Change Maker' in Ethiopia?" Students, scholars and diplomats gathered around this exciting question at the Group T campus of the Leuven University on 26 May 2015. The event was the occasion to highlight the rich cooperation of the Group T with Ethiopian universities and to disclose a new project in the field of health engineering.

The first speaker of the evening was Mr. Tesfaye Negassa, Minister Counselor I at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels. In his statement, he gave an overview of the profound economic, social and political transformations taking place in Ethiopia since 1991. In this regard, he emphasized the impressive growth of the country in terms of infrastructure, energy, education, health and democratic transformation under the auspice of federalism.

Karel Claes, a journalist and entrepreneur now active in the network "Entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs" then shared his experience about successful projects

involving young Ethiopians who have set up business projects in their country after graduating at Group T. These projects include the Desa Plants PLC company producing cuttings of ornamental plants. Started in 2007, the company is already employing 800 people, a number set to be doubled soon. Professor Wim Dewulf, Mechanical Engineering Technology Cluster, and Luc Severi, WorldLoop's Project Manager, further shared glimpses of collaboration processes between universities, international organizations and companies in the field of electronic waste treatment and eco-friendly techniques.

Finally, the launching of a new ambitious health project for Ethiopian students was announced by Group T Professor Luc Janssen: a complete training in Health Care engineering will soon be offered at Group T. This study program comprising a Bachelor and a Masters program will extend the rich offer of Group T in the different fields of health engineering, thereby offering the chance to Ethiopian medical



Mr Tesfaye Negassa, Minister Counselor I at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels addressing the guests

engineers to get a thorough professional training.

KU Leuven Group T offers the study program curriculum in Engineering Technology entirely in English parallel with the Dutch study program. It has established a strong collaboration with Ethiopian universities such as Addis Ababa Science

and Technology University, Dire Dawa, Aksum, Wollo and Wellaga universities in the fields of engineering, sciences and enterprise. The university college has enrolled more than 30 Master students since it established collaboration with Ethiopian universities. This year, Group-T has accepted eight Ethiopian students in engineering programs.



From left to right: Mr Wim Polet, Head of International Office; Mr. Luc Janssens, Professor and Researcher at Campus Group T – KU Leuven; Mr Robel Admassu, Second Secretary at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels; Prof. Dr. Koen Eneman, Head of Campus Group T - KU Leuven; Mr. Tesfaye Negassa, Minister Counselor I at the Ethiopian Embassy in Brussels; Mr. Karel Claes, Board Member at 'Entrepreneurs for Entrepreneurs'; Mr. Wim Dewulf, Head of the Mechanical Engineering Cluster of KU Leuven Faculty of Engineering Technology and the Sustainable Engineering Research Group of Campus Group T; and Mr Luc Severi Project Manager at WorldLoop

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

Ethiopian Embassy, Avenue de Tervuren, 62, 1040 Etterbeek, Belgium
+32 2 771 32 94 info@ethiopianembassy.be www.ethiopianembassy.be