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Special Issue

# ETHIOPIA

## In Focus

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Ethiopian Millennium  
**2000**

*To be Celebrated on 12 September 2007*

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# EDITORIAL

## CELEBRATE THE MILLENNIUM IN ETHIOPIA

*Ethiopia uses a slightly revised version of the Julian calendar which is 7 to 8 years behind the Gregorian and the Ethiopian Millennium will arrive on 12 September 2007 seven years after most of the world marked the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, as the countdown to the year 2000 according to the Ethiopian calendar is drawing very near, Ethiopia is getting ready to welcome the new Millennium. This is indeed a unique occasion not only for Ethiopia but also for Africa since it is the only African country that has its own calendar. Taking cognizance of this fact, the 8th Ordinary Session of the African Union "Called on Member States of the African Union, the Commission of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities to extend their support towards the successful celebration of this unique African occasion-the Ethiopian Millennium".*

*This an historic event has a far-reaching and symbolic significance to the country and it will be celebrated with the cardinal objective of rededicating the Ethiopian people to the national goal of eradicating poverty and broadening the frontiers of democratic governance. This is indeed the only means through which the country can change its shattered image in the eyes of the world once and for all. Accordingly, a series of events have been organized to celebrate this unique Ethiopian millennium through out the year under the overall theme entitled "Committed to make a difference". On the eve of 12 September 2007, a grand opening ceremony heralding the start of the millennium celebration will be held in the capital city -Addis Ababa-as well as in other regional capitals with a high energy music extravaganza displaying Ethiopia's rich and diverse culture.*

*Ethiopia is referred to as 'the Cradle of Mankind' where "**Lucy**", the world's oldest known almost complete hominid skeleton, more than 3.3 million years old, was archeologically discovered. Recently, archeologists have also found the skeleton of a three year-old girl, "**Selam**", who died 3.3 million years ago (150 thousand years older than Lucy) in Afar, Eastern Ethiopia. In this connection, a memorable tour is organized to the home of **Lucy** and **Selam** where visitors are able to sign "The Cradle of Mankind's Guest Book" and receive a certificate to confirm their presence at the world-famous archaeological site during this momentous occasion.*

*Other significant events include a site designed to provide visitors with a bird's eye view of what an "Ethiopian village" looks like as well as a pick and choose area which represents the "Taste of Ethiopia" bringing together different Ethiopian cuisines under one umbrella. On the other hand, Seminars, workshops, symposiums and panel discussions as well as a variety of bazaars, fairs and exhibitions will also be conducted reflecting the country's ancient history, diverse culture, magnificent music and unique art. These and any more other events are in the menu to welcome the millennium with great vigor and enthusiasm.*

*All Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia at home and from around the world will come together to celebrate this big event. This occasion undoubtedly affords a good opportunity to foreign tourists to visit the country and Ethiopian Airlines has already started booking those coming from abroad to take part in the celebration. Finally, Ethiopia is offering to the world another chance to celebrate a Millennium and, therefore, all those interested are called upon to join in the celebration of this unique and indigenous Millennium.*

## II. SPECIAL

### Celebrating 16 Years of Peace, Stability, Democracy and Development

On 28 May 2007, the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of peace, stability, democracy and development in Ethiopia will be celebrated. This day marks the opening of a new chapter in the political history of the country. Since the demise of the Dictatorial



Mengistu regime that ruled the country with an iron fist, the EPRDF government has embarked on the path of democratization in a clear break from the past. The government embraced democracy as a means to resolve the longstanding conflict that ravaged the country for decades as well as to extricate the people out of poverty and underdevelopment. The constitution that came into effect in 1995 laid the foundation for democracy in Ethiopia by recognizing the fundamental rights of the people. In line with the constitution, various efforts have also been made to create the necessary conditions for the people to exercise their rights. As a

result, in the last 16 years, the people have been enjoying greater freedom and participation in the political affairs of the country and the democratization process is steadily gaining momentum.

The prevalence of peace and stability has allowed the country to direct all its efforts towards development endeavors. The government has adopted market-oriented policies with the aim of restructuring the economy. It has also given paramount importance to the development of the private sector so that it can serve as an engine in driving the country's economy. In this regard, the government has implemented policies which encourage foreign trade and investment. Particularly, various liberalization measures have been taken to reinvigorate the external sector. In this relation, efforts have been made to diversify export which led to the emergence of new commodities like cut flower, oil seeds, cereals, live animals and meat products. This has enhanced the performance of the sector and significantly augmented the country's foreign exchange earnings. According to available data for the year 2005/2006, the amount of foreign currency obtained from export has reached \$ 1 billion for the first time in the country's history.

On the other hand, an investment code has been enacted to promote both domestic and foreign investment. As a result, many domestic and foreign entrepreneurs are investing in different sectors such as the agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing,



construction, mining and others. According to available data from the National Bank of Ethiopia, 19, 363 investment projects with a capital of Birr 229.3 billion received license during the period 1992/93-2005/06. Out of the total investment projects approved during this period, foreign investment projects constitute 10.9% with a capital of 26.8%. Particularly, the flow of both domestic and foreign investment has shown dramatic increase in recent years, which is a clear testimony to the prevalence of a favorable climate for investment in the country. In the year 2005/2006 alone, 5, 859 investment projects with a capital of over Birr 80 billion received license, which is the highest figure registered in the last 16 years. The number of foreign investment projects stood at 753 showing 21.1% increase from the year 2004/2005.

The government has also been undertaking a number of infrastructure development projects in the energy, road, telecommunication and others sectors. In this regard, tremendous improvement has been made in terms of the country's infrastructure thereby fostering trade and investment. Therefore, all these measures combined together have enabled the country to achieve remarkable economic progress. The country has registered 11.9%, 10.5% and 9.6% economic growth in the last three consecutive fiscal years. In the year 2006/2007, the economy is also estimated to grow by 10.5%.

There is no doubt that the country needs to sustain this course in order to make significant inroads in terms of alleviating poverty. Cognizant of this fact, the Government has adopted a development strategy which seeks to address the country's poverty thereby ensuring accelerated and sustained development. This is also the overarching principle for Ethiopia's relation with the outside world. Hence, Ethiopia's foreign policy is geared towards creating a conducive external environment for the ongoing democratization and development endeavors inside the country.

It is in this perspective that Ethiopia has cemented its bilateral ties with China in the last 16 years. The high level exchange of visits between the leadership of the

two countries has played a vital role in this regard. The two countries have also been working closely for the strengthening of ties between Africa and China in the spirit of Africa-China strategic partnership. Ethiopia hosted the Second China-Africa Cooperation Forum Ministerial Conference in 2003 and Co-Chaired the forum together with China for the last six years. This greatly contributed in creating better understanding and close friendship between the two countries.



Ethiopia and China have expanded their cooperation in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. They have also signed a number of bilateral agreements to give concrete shape to their cooperation in those fields. Particularly, it is worthy to mention the exemplary economic cooperation between the two countries. China has provided financial assistance to Ethiopia in the form of grant and soft loan, which has been utilized for the implementation of various development projects. China has also relieved most of the debts owed by Ethiopia as part of its pledge to cancel the debt of least developed African countries within the framework of the China-Africa cooperation Forum.



Ethiopian and Chinese Investors signing a Joint Venture Agreement

The number of Chinese investors in Ethiopia has grown over time, which is attributed to the prevalence of a favorable investment climate in the country together with measures being taken by the Chinese government to encourage Chinese enterprises to invest in Africa. Currently, there are more than 250 Chinese investors investing in Ethiopia with a capital of around RMB 3.1 billion. They are engaged in different sectors such as manufacturing, construction, mining and other service sectors. Particularly, with the increasing number of Chinese citizens who came to Ethiopia for various reasons, Chinese restaurants and bars are mushrooming in Addis Ababa.

Moreover, the trade volume between Ethiopia and China has shown dramatic increase in recent years. According to data for the year 2006, total trade between the two countries has surpassed \$500 million. Even though the trade balance is in favor of China, Ethiopia's export has shown significant growth in terms of variety and quantity. Ethiopia exports primary commodities to China including sesame seeds, hides and skins, tantalum, natural gum and coffee. It is benefiting from the Special Preferential Treatment (SPT) granted by China to 25 African countries within the context of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, which gives duty free access to the Chinese market.

On the other hand, Ethiopia and China are cooperating in the field of culture and tourism. The two countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to facilitate organized group travel by Chinese citizens to



Ethiopia. With its many historical and natural attractions, Ethiopia is no doubt an attractive destination for Chinese outbound tourists whose number is growing rapidly. The two countries are also cooperating in the technical field and china is supporting Ethiopia in terms of capacity building by providing short and long term training to Ethiopian students. Young Chinese volunteers are also serving in the different government institutions in Ethiopia. Therefore, the last 16 years have indeed witnessed marked progress in the relation between Ethiopia and China and there is a bright prospect for a more strengthened cooperation between the two countries in the years ahead.

**Ethio-China Trade Statistics 2006**

Unit: 10,000 USD

Month	Singular Month			Accumulative					
	Ex&Im	Export	Import	Ex&Im		Export		Import	
				Value	Growth	Value	Growth	Value	Growth
July				31662	62.3%	20239	35.9%	11423	147.6%
Aug	4242	3272	971	35905	62.1%	23511	39.6%	12394	133.8%
Sep	3452	3065	386	39356	55.5%	26576	37.0%	12780	116.2%
Oct	3459	3268	191	42815	51.7%	29844	35.9%	12971	107.1%
Nov	6148	6078	70	48963	56.0%	35922	48.9%	13041	79.6%
Dec	7315	7174	141	56278	52.2%	43096	51.7%	13182	53.8%

- Note: 1. "Growth" indicates comparison with the same period of 2005.  
 2. "Export" refers to China export to Ethiopia.  
 3. "Import" refers to China import from Ethiopia

Source: Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China

## III. PRESS BRIEF

### I. POLITICAL and DIPLOMATIC

#### Ethiopia rebel attack won't deter Chinese-PM Meles

A rebel attack on an oil facility in Ethiopia that killed nine Chinese workers and 64 locals has not dented Beijing's investment in the Horn of Africa nation, the Ethiopian leader said. "The Chinese have made it abundantly clear that they are not going to be scared away," Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told Reuters. "On the contrary, they are increasing their investment in our country."

Chinese personnel returned quickly to the exploration project they run in the remote south-eastern Ogaden area after the attack, he said. "We have immediately after the incident taken effective measures to ensure it does not happen again." The pre-dawn raid in late April was one of the Ogaden National Liberation Front's (ONLF) highest profile operations. The attack highlighted the perils of Beijing's growing investment push in Africa, which it regards as a crucial source of raw materials for its booming economy. In Ethiopia, the Chinese are mainly involved in the construction business.

Meles's government wants more foreign investment and he said the attack should not have a lasting impact. "I would understand that some foreign investors might be a bit worried about going to the place where the massacre took place," he said. "But I do not think it will have any long-term impact. There have been no such incidents in the main economic centres of the country. And here in Addis, I would argue that it is probably one of the safest cities on earth."

Meles confirmed Ethiopia was seeking membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and was "reasonably optimistic" of acceptance. "I hope it will be a speedy process. It can take many years, but I very much hope that this will not be one of those very protracted processes. They tell me that two to three years would be a reasonably expeditious process," he said. Economists say Ethiopia may come under pressure first to open its financial sector to foreign investors and relinquish state control of telecommunications. Meles said: "I do not think they should be obstacles. As you know, we are a least developed country, and least developed countries benefit from what is called a special and differential treatment (in the WTO)."

Africa's top coffee producer and sub-Saharan Africa's second most populous nation, Ethiopia was on track for its projected economic growth rate of near 10 percent this 2006-07 year, compared with 9 percent last year, Meles said. "We expect to maintain the momentum next year too. Our hope and expectation is that it will be a double-digit growth rate. It is still agriculture leading the growth. But industry and services are also picking up." Inflation—a big problem for Ethiopia's 79 million people — was "unfortunately still too high for our taste", said Meles, with an expected 10-12 percent rate this year, after 12 percent in 2005-06. "But I hope it will be lower next year," he said. The most vulnerable group, the urban poor, were being helped by measures including food subsidies, said Meles, who receives generally high marks from analysts and diplomats for his pro-poor policies. (16 May 2007)

#### Ethiopia, Kuwait sign economic, cultural, tourism cooperation agreements



Ethiopia and Kuwait have signed agreements in the economic, cultural and tourism sectors as well as one providing for the establishment of a Joint Commission. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi after his two-day official visit to the Gulf country said the discussions between Ethiopia and Kuwait

centered on issues of the economy. "They were fruitful." The relation between Ethiopia and Kuwait, though long-standing, has not been as strong. Prime Minister Meles's visit came about upon the invitation extended to him by the government of Kuwait, and the aim was to cement their bilateral friendship.

Meles held talks with the Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Prime Minister Sheikh Naser Mohammed Al Sabah and other senior officials. They exchanged views on ways of creating market in Kuwait for Ethiopian exports and facilitating air transport service, ETV reporter who traveled along with the Ethiopian delegation said. Upon the conclusion of his visit Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was seen off at the Kuwaiti airport by Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al Sabah. (15 May 2007)

### Ethiopia Seeking Somalia Pullout

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has said he wants to withdraw Ethiopian troops from neighboring Somalia. One of the AU leaders says it would be a “catastrophe” if Ethiopia pulled out before the AU troops arrived. Meles Zenawi told the BBC that he hoped African Union peacekeepers would deploy soon to relieve Ethiopian troops. “Things have improved significantly in Mogadishu, making it possible for peacekeeping troops to do their job,” Meles said. “I very much hope and expect that those African countries that have promised to send troops will do so.” Meles said the “organized resistance” of the terrorists had now been “broken”.

AU Commission chief Alpha Oumar Konare said Ethiopia must wait for the AU forces. “If Ethiopia withdrew from Somalia today, it would be a catastrophe,” he said. He said Ethiopia had done the job of the AU. US Africa envoy, Jendayi Frazer on her part said Ethiopian withdrawal before the AU troops arrived would lead to a security vacuum. So far, Uganda has sent 1,700 peacekeepers but the AU says another 6,300 troops are needed. Nigeria, Burundi and Ghana have all promised to contribute to the AU force. (16 May 2007)

### Sudan Considers Ethiopia Its Strategic Partner

Sudanese Defense Minister says the multifarious cooperation between the governments of Ethiopia and Sudan has been growing. After talks with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on Monday, the Sudanese Defense Minister, Lieutenant General Abdelrahim Mohamamed Hussein told journalists that cooperation between the governments and peoples of the two countries in economic, political and social sectors, among others, was increasing.

Ethiopia is a strategic partner to Sudan, he said. Sharing a common border that runs 1,700 km, the two countries have been working closely for mutual benefits. He said discussions with the Prime Minister focused on the Ethio-Sudan bilateral cooperation as part of the ongoing consultations. General Abdelrahim has also delivered a message sent by Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Beshir. Asked about the situation in Darfur, the General said conditions are improving and the Abuja agreement was being implemented. (15 May 2007)

### Ambassador Hailekiros presented his credential to Malaysia

Ambassador designate of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Malaysia, H.E. Amb. Hailekiros

Gessesse, presented his credential to His Majesty King Yang Dipertuan the 13th on 27 March 2007. During the discussion, His majesty King Dipertuan expressed Malaysia’s desire to strengthen its relation with Ethiopia. On his part, the Ambassador said that he will exert unreserved efforts to further strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries in trade, investment, culture and tourism as well as technical cooperation.

During his stay in Malaysia, the Ambassador met with relevant authorities and exchanged views on ways and means of cementing the bilateral ties between Ethiopia and Malaysia. The Ambassador explained the rapid economic growth registered in Ethiopia for the last four consecutive years. He also mentioned the prevalence of an enabling investment environment in the Country and added that there are ample opportunities for Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in Ethiopia.

The Ambassador also underscored the need to foster increased trade ties between Ethiopia and Malaysia. On the other hand, he expounded on the efforts being made in terms of human resource development and stressed the desire to further strengthen the existing cooperation in the technical field.



## II. ECONOMIC

### Ethiopian Delegation attended the ADB Meeting

A high level Ethiopian delegation led by H.E. Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, attended the annual Board of Governors meeting of the African Development Bank (ADB) held in Shanghai from 16-17 May 2007. This is for the first time that the Board of Governor of the ADB held its meeting in Asia. The meeting is considered as another significant African related event hosted by China after the Beijing Summit of the China- Africa Cooperation Forum was held in November 2006.

The theme of the meeting was “Africa and Asia: Part-



ners for Development”, focusing on infrastructure development, regional integration and poverty reduction. The meeting was attended by Finance Ministers and Governors of the Central Bank of Member States, representative of the World Bank and the IMF and other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

### Ethiopia, World Bank sign 100 million USD grant accord

The government of Ethiopia and the World Bank (WB) signed 100 million US dollars worth grant agreement. Some 65 million US dollars of the stated sum would be granted as a loan while the balance is to be secured in the form of aid, the press release circulated at the signing ceremony said.

As per the agreement, the sum will be used to finance the urban water supply and sanitation project aiming at expanding access to pure water supply and sanitation services in Addis Ababa City as well as Jimma, Gonder, Mekele, and Awassa towns in a sustainable manner. State Minister of MoFED, Mekonnen Manyazewal and WB Country Director for Ethiopia and the Sudan, Ishac Diwan signed the agreement.

Signing the agreement, the minister said safe water supply is one of the key issues to be addressed in the five-year development strategic plan of the nation. The bank has remained one of the major development partners of Ethiopia, he said, the bank has made a total 595 million dollars financial assistance to the nation during the current budget year alone. Diwan on his part said the WB would continue assisting on-going development endeavors in Ethiopia. The bank has been supporting and encouraging developing countries with a view to helping them meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the regional director said. (16 May 2007)

### Ambassador gave interview to Africa-Invest.Net

The Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to China, H.E. Ato Hailekiros Gessesse gave interview to Africa-Invest.Net, a website which promotes Sino-African economic and trade cooperation. In his interview, the Ambassador explained the vast investment opportunities in Ethiopia particularly in the agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing construction, mining and service sectors.

He also underscored the prevalence of a favorable investment Climate in Ethiopia and stated that the investment code provides a number of incentives including tax holidays, duty exemption, free remittance of funds and

retention of foreign exchange earnings.

In addition, the Ambassador mentioned that Ethiopia is benefiting from different market access opportunities granted by the United States, the European Union and China, among others. Since Ethiopia is a member of COMESA, he also said that investors can export their products duty free to the member States.

The Ambassador talked about the ever increasing economic cooperation between Ethiopia and China. In this regard, he said that the number of Chinese investors investing in Ethiopia has shown dramatic increase within a short period of time and encouraged more Chinese investors to go and invest in Ethiopia.

## III. SOCIAL and CULTURAL

### ATA Meeting Said Would Help to Promote Tourist Attractions of Ethiopia

Minister of Culture and Tourism said the African Travel Association (ATA) meeting held in Addis Ababa [from 6-11 May 2007] would help to promote the immense tourist attractions of Ethiopia to the rest of the world. Speaking at a press conference held on Wednesday, the Minister Ambassador Mohamud Dirir said ATA is playing the leading role in promoting the vast tourism resources of Africa. He said the meeting has enabled Ethiopia to share its experience with other countries on the working systems of tourism and tour operators.

The association serves as a bridge for African and American countries to develop tourism. The minister urged the association to attract the ever-increasing Chinese and Indian tourists to Africa. ATA Executive Director, Edward Bergman on his part said that travel and tourism to Africa is a powerful force for economic growth, job creation and cultural preservation, among others, he said. He said the expansion of tourism would enable to promote Africa's image building scheme thereby enhancing economic growth. (10 May 2007)

### Ethiopia participated in COTTM 2007

Ethiopia participated in the China Outbound Tourism and Travel Market (COTTM) exhibition, which was held in Beijing from 14-16 May 2007. This is an annual event dedicated to outbound travel and tourism in China gathering domestic and international travel organizations from all over the world. The exhibition offers a platform for travel professionals to meet potential clients, analyze latest trends, exchange new ideas and establish business partnership.

This year the exhibition attracted over 200 exhibitors from



40 different countries across the world. The Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism together with seven other tour operators (Adika Tour and Travel, World Tour and Travel, Denkenesh Ethiopia Tours, Yemgeta Tour and Travel, Smiling Ethiopia Tours, Ethio Der Tour and Travel and Pathfinder Tour) participated in the exhibition. Ethiopia is one of the 26 African countries which signed ADS Agreement with China. The forum is believed to have created a good opportunity for Ethiopian travel agents to meet with their Chinese counterparts and discuss possible cooperation in the future.

Education ministry plans to raise education coverage to 100 per cent

The Ministry of Education announces plan to raise primary education coverage to 100 per cent at the turn of the new millennium. Public Relations Service Head, Desalegn Samuel said an extensive activity would be carried out to meet the plan during the reported period. He said 1.8 million children would get enrolled in primary schools in 2000 E.C.

Desalegn said tangible progress was made since the issuance of the new education and training policy in 1984 E.C. Significant gains were made in ensuring equal access to education to all citizens to help improve the livelihood of the people and bring about rapid economic development. Special attention would be given to regions in order to achieve the millennium development goal at the turn of the new millennium. (7 May 2007)

Ethiopia will meet MDG potable water goal three years ahead, says minister

Ethiopia could provide potable water for all citizens three years ahead of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Ministry of Water Resources disclosed. Speaking at the opening of a symposium at Arbaminch University, Minister Asfaw Dingamo said potable water

and sanitation coverage in both rural and urban parts of the country is expected to reach 100 percent in 2012. Potable water coverage of the country jumped by 8.13 percent this year from the previous one thus reaching 47.5 percent, he said, adding that if the growth continues with same pace it would be possible to reach 100 percent three years ahead of the MDGs.

To this end, capacity building works are underway and 2,000 water technicians deployed to 200 woredas in the country are rendering technical support, Asfaw said. Half a million hectares of land is being developed through irrigation as per the plan to transform the rain-fed agriculture in the country to irrigation development, the minister further noted. The land that would be cultivated through irrigation in the coming five years would grow to one million thus raising the land cultivated through irrigation to 29 percent, it was pointed out.

The construction of the Omo-Ghibe, Tekeze, Tana Beles, Genale Dawa, Halale Wara Bela, Amenti Neshi hydro-electric power generation plants is also underway. Upon completion, they would raise the power generation capacity of the country from 670 mega watt to 4,000 mega watt, the minister added.

A draft document for the establishment of Basin Authority and instrumental in enhancing water development works along rivers has been submitted to the House of Peoples Representatives and is expected to be endorsed this budget year, according to Asfaw. These kinds of symposia have pivotal role in seeking solutions to water-related problems and thus ensure food security, Asfaw said. Researchers drawn from ten countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, North America are in attendance of the three-day symposium. (8 May 2007)

Ethiopian to resume additional flight to Beijing

Ethiopian Airlines is going to resume additional flight to/from Beijing as of May 2007 to cater for the increasing number of passengers traveling to Africa. This will contribute significantly in further strengthening the ties between Africa and China.

Together with this additional flight, Ethiopian will have a total of 11 flights to China (4 times a week to Beijing, 4 times a week to Guangzhou and 3 times a week to Hong Kong). Ethiopian is the premier African airliner with 28 destinations throughout the continent.



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• The Embassy of Ethiopia in Beijing is also accredited to Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and D.P.R. of Korea

# *Unity in Diversity*

