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The Africa 2016 Business Forum in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt



The Africa 2016 Business Forum was held in the Egyptian Sinai resort city of Sharm el Sheikh from February 20-21, 2016. Under the auspices of the African Union commission, the business summit was organized by the Egyptian ministries of investment, trade and industry, international cooperation and foreign affairs. The summit was attended by African leaders and more than 1,200 prominent businessmen. Present at the summit were Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, President Buhari of Nigeria and Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, of Sudan were among others at the Africa 2016: Business for Africa, Egypt and the World conference.

Opening the two-day forum, Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi told attendees that "achieving development is one of the main

challenges facing Africans, which requires developing the mechanisms of joint action." The Africa 2016 Business Forum, El-Sisi said aims at pushing forward trade and investment in the continent to strengthen Africa's place in the world economy. He said, "It not only aims to present investment opportunities that Africa offers to the international business community... but aims to pave the way for active decisions, communication and cooperation."

Egypt's El-Sisi said was looking forward to the future establishment of the African Free Trade that aims to create free trade zones for goods in the short term and the hope of introducing services and intra-continent investor opportunities at a later stage. In June 2015, Egypt hosted Africa's three major Regional Economic Committees (RECs) during a tripartite summit in Sharm El-Sheikh where a free trade agreement across all three RECs was launched. The Continental Free Trade Area brings together the 26 African countries that are members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC). Touching upon the prospect of pushing the African trade movement with international markets, El-Sisi said, "I call on my African brother leaders and our partners in development to put together the first building

blocks to launch several projects and developmental initiatives in a frame that ensures a needed balance between the legitimate aspirations of the sons of the continent for a better tomorrow and the aspirations of our partners in development to incentives and rewards that open new horizons for more investments and capital flows," El-Sisi said.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn told the Forum that the event reaffirmed Egypt's involvement in Africa's Renaissance and its commitment to strengthen partnership and cross-border private sector engagement. The Prime Minister said the forum would serve to showcase the economic prospects of our continent and help both public and private sectors to better understand these potentials and make the best out of it." Taking note of the summit's bold initiative at strengthening inter-Africa trade relationships and promoting peace and security, The Prime Minister said, "Development, no doubt, needs clear policies and strategies that can fit into our own specific conditions, concerted efforts and genuine partnerships among nations and institutions and a favorable political, economic and social environment in order to attract international capital." "Over the last few years" the Prime Minister added, "we have laid a strong foundation for our economic and social development. We have put in place many of the necessary and critical factors so vital for development, including growing power generation; major construction of roads and railways; a large, trained and enthusiastic workforce; complimentary legal frameworks and a sustainable peaceful environment. All this is helping to open up significant opportunities for the participation of foreign investment."

On the margins of the Africa 2016 Business Forum, Prime Minister Hailemariam met with El-Sisi and Sudanese President Omar al Bashir. The

trilateral meeting was aimed at addressing their common vision of promoting inter-regional partnerships and enhancing economic cooperation among the three countries. The three countries have also agreed to form a Joint Investment Fund to bankroll the implementation of various developments. As a key player of the intra-African trade, investment, peace and security in its region and beyond, Ethiopia had shown its usual commitment not only for being part of the business summit but also securing a business deal out of the summit; a five-year contract to export environmentally friendly alternative solid fuel to an Ethiopian company. Speaking about how important the deal was, Hisham El-Khazindar, co-founder of Qalaa Holdings noted, "Within the context of our continent and within the context of using waste and developing solid waste solutions, this is really very important milestone with ECARU (The Egyptian Company for Solid Waste Recycling- part of Qalaa Holdings) getting out of Egypt and going into Ethiopia." The company had also signed a five-year memorandum of understanding with Ethiopia's East African Mining to establish a new joint venture. Egypt's cable maker firm, Elsewedy Electric Group announced that it would establish the Egyptian industrial zone in Ethiopia within the upcoming two years in a bid to attract Egyptian investors to establish their projects in the country.

Ethiopia's industrialization drive sets example for Africa, says UNIDO

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has highly praised Ethiopia for what it called a shining job of materializing the vision of industrialization in Africa.

Ethiopia is developing industrial parks across the country which includes the Bole Leme and Hawasa industrial parks that can contribute

heavily in job creation and accelerating economic transformation, stated Jean Bakole, Representative to AU and Regional Director of UNIDO.

Talking exclusively, the director said Ethiopia has taken great strides in the development of industrial parks and industrial zones establishment.

Recognizing the commendable role played by Ethiopia in the region, Jean Bakole said the economic transformation of the country which focuses on industrialization should be supported.

The special emphasis on Industrial Parks, including Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks in the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) is exemplary, according to the director.

He also recognized Ethiopia's current chairmanship of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and its status as the first pilot country for the UNIDO supported Program for Country Partnership.

Bakole also recognized substantial roles of investors from China, Turkey, Japan, India and other countries in the development of Industrial Parks in Ethiopia.

He stressed on the need for crafting a strong regional integration policy among African nations which could function on a range of sectors.

"Right now we are doing about the 2063 Development Agenda for Africa which is good but the framework has to be consolidated through concrete and bankable projects which can create more jobs at a country level but also a regional level", he stated.

On his part, Principal Policy Advisor to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) Joseph Atta- Mensah said Ethiopia has played a great role in the integration agenda of Africa.

"The key question we have to understand when talking about structural transformation, we have to ask ourselves what is the root cause of conflict and how this conflict can be stopped", Atta-Mensah said while stressing on the valuable role of peace and stability for a successful development agenda. (ENA)

COMESA members report advances in technology, infrastructure dev't



Members of the Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA) have reported advancements in the development and expansion of science and technology and infrastructure in the region.

COMESA, the largest regional economic organization in Africa, with 19 member states has reported advancements in information technology, aviation, expansion of ports and marine transport.

The COMESA region is putting more effort on the expansion of roads, railways, air and marine transport which is bringing remarkable change in infrastructure development, said Ambassador Dr Kipyego Cheluget COMESA Assistant Secretary General.

The Assistant Secretary General disclosed that emphasis has been attached to realize Africa's integration through economic and social linkages.

Railways linking Ethiopia with Djibouti and Kenya with Uganda have been cited as good

examples in the drive towards integration. Addis Ababa's Light Rail Transit Project was also mentioned as the first in the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

Part of the integration agenda is the Cape Town-Cairo asphalt road which passes through Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The participants also noted that Africa is increasingly tapping into its diverse energy potential with more plans to ensure access.

The 9th technical committee meeting will make thorough deliberation on sustaining advancements gained so far and report on addressing problems in developing infrastructures to the COMESA Council of Ministers.

As a member of COMESA, Ethiopia is also heavily investing on power generation, road and

air transport and other infrastructures that connect it with countries in the Eastern Africa, said Dessalegn Ambaw, State Minister of Transport.

The official also revealed government plans of building 15 thousand kilometers of roads in the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP2) period.

He recalled the completion of the 756 kilometers Ethio-Djibuti railroad and efforts in promoting green development which includes the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and other geothermal, wind and solar energy production schemes.

Some 326 billion dollars has already been put aside for mega projects that connect COMESA member countries.

Business and Economy

International Trade Fair Opens

An international trade fair in which 202 companies from 16 different countries are taking part opened at the Addis Exhibition Center.

Speaking at the opening of the fair, Minister of Trade Yacob Yala said the government is committed to support companies which endeavor to enhance competitiveness.

He added that the ministry has been working hard to identify elements that determine the competitiveness of micro and macro domestic firms.

The minister revealed that activities have also been intensified to improve the business climate, adopt policy and regulatory bottlenecks that add cost of doing business in the private sector.

The government has also institutionalized the Public-Private Consultative Forum to engage the private sector and address challenges facing business and investment in the country, Yacob stated.

According to the minister, Ethiopia is committed and working hard to create economic integration in the continent.

Secretary General of Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, Getachew Regassa said on his part local companies should participate in business-to-business (B2B) meetings actively.

According to him, 202 companies are participating in the trade fair and local companies should seize the opportunity to create B2B network with foreign companies.

Of the total companies participating in the exhibition, 71 are local, it was learned.

Among the companies include those based in Kenya, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, India, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, China, and Djibouti.

The 20th International Trade Fair will remain open for a week.(ENA)

General Electric expects revenue for the region to increase two-fold under the company's expansion

General Electric Company is looking to expand its business in African countries i.e. Ethiopia and Mozambique. Jay Ireland, president at GE Africa, expects revenue and headcount to double following the expansion, which will require investments in power, transportation, and healthcare segment.

At the Bloomberg Africa Business and Economic Summit, held in Cape Town, Mr. Ireland discussed opportunities in the oil and gas sector in Mozambique, and aviation in Ethiopia, along with opportunities in rail and healthcare sector in both. He expects revenue to double within five years. "We're very optimistic about Ethiopia, we're also optimistic about Mozambique, and expanding our footprint in both of those countries," he reasoned.

In 2014, GE had announced plans to invest \$2 billion in Africa by 2018. The number has already increased more than threefold i.e. from 800 to 2600 at present. Mr. Ireland expects it to further rise to 5,000 employees. "That would be the goal, which would be double from where we are today," he said.

General Electric's current move did not come as a surprise since the company is focused on its long term strategy to expand industrial operations. The conglomerate wishes to expand operations in

every major country, which boasts of demand for industrial segments, including transportation, healthcare, oil and gas, power, or aviation. With the current expansion, the company expects to earn revenue from international industrial operations.

As part of its strategy, the company also reduced the size of its GE Capital financial unit last year. Going forward, it plans to further sell its assets this year. However, it has not yet announced any deal requiring sale of assets since the start of fiscal year 2016. Analysts expect it to sell \$100 billion worth of assets this year.

GE's strategy seems to have positively affected its stock price. It swelled after the announcement in April last year. Over the last 12 months, the stock has surged 14.84%. GE stock closed down 0.92% at \$28.95.

Ethiopia set to host 2016 Pan-African Executives Summit



Business leaders from 35 countries across Africa and the globe are set to gather in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the 2016 Pan-African "Executive" Summit, one of Africa's most 'unique and high impact conference'.

Out of the 110 plus guests, 90% are Executives and experienced investors Africa who are expanding partnerships, co-investors and with investments including in Ethiopia, according to the organizers of the summit that will take place at

the Sheraton Addis Hotel from March 15-16, 2016.

The summit is known for its unique track record of delivering tangible results with more advanced, effective, direct executive and investor engagement," said Lisa Lambie - Managing Partner, Satatt Holdings and President of the summit.

The key business areas of the 2016 includes, Power & Renewable Energy; Agribusiness, Husbandry & Aquaculture; Real Estate & Hospitality; Consumer Goods & Manufacturing; Healthcare; Education; Tourism; Technology, Impact Investing & Entrepreneurship, the organizers said.

Participants from the Middle East Investment Partners from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon,

Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Turkey, among others are set for the summit, according to the organizers.

The two days summit includes events such as Ethiopia Investment Segments for Investors and Executives including Investor Deal Forum. The summit deals with investment capital segments most relevant to Ethiopia and Africa's evolving investment landscape in 2016. These includes Family Office & Direct Investing, Angel Investing & Venture Capital, Private Equity, Mezzanine, Pension & Sovereign Wealth Funds, the organizers said.

Tourism and Culture

US investment in Ethiopia reached 4 bln USD



The United States investment in Ethiopia has reached four billion USD. Engagement of several US companies and Ethiopians in the Diaspora are contributing to the growth, Girma Biru, Ethiopian Ambassador to the U.S said.

Corbetti Geothermal Company, KKR & Co. L.P Horticulture, Blackstone, Major apparel manufacturers, GE manufacture and Coca Cola

are few of the US companies currently investing in Ethiopia.

Pursuant to President Obama's visit to Ethiopia, Corbetti Geothermal Company has signed a power purchase agreement with the Ethiopian Electric Power Enterprise.

The geothermal plant with a capacity to generate 1,000 MW power, will be Africa's largest geothermal facility.

In addition to investment trade ties have also been increasing mainly because of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). He noted that AGOA played a significant role for Africa's economic growth as a whole and for Ethiopia in particular.

"AGOA is the US gift for Africa it significantly enhances market access to US markets," he added.

AGOA builds on existing US trade programs by expanding duty-free benefits previously available only under the country's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program.

Duty-free access to the U.S. market under the combined AGOA/GSP program stands at approximately 7,000 product tariff lines, including the roughly 1,800 tariff lines that were added to the GSP pool by the AGOA legislation.

Notably, these newly added "AGOA products" include items such as apparel and footwear, wine, certain motor vehicle components, a variety of agricultural products, chemicals, steel and many others.

President Obama's visit to Ethiopia was an important sign of how much the United States values Ethiopia as a partner, the ambassador added.

U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia M. Haslach on her part said that US will continue to support Ethiopia, which aspired of becoming a middle income status by 2025.

She said that working together with the US Chamber of Commerce and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) will enable Ethiopia access more market opportunities.

Over 100 U.S. companies have so far visited Africa including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa and Angola with the intension of promoting trade ties.

The ambassador noted that given its commitment to trade and investment through the second Growth and Transformation Plan, the U.S government and the business community see Ethiopia as an important partner.

"Ethiopia is at the forefront of Africa's economic development," the Ambassador noted.

providing safety and peace, making the country, one of the world's top adventure destinations. (ENA)

Addis Ababa to Get First Ethiopian Diaspora Funded Grand Mall



A host of Ethiopian Diaspora members have come up with "Ethio-Diaspora Grand Mall" project unique in its nature and fully funded by the Ethiopian Diaspora.

With its world class attributes, the 2.6 billion birr multipurpose mall meets the development needs of Ethiopia and generates substantial profit to the investors, declared Ambassador Tekleab Kebede, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ethio-Diaspora Grand Mall S.C.

The grand project will further turn on trade, investment and tourism opportunities in the country, the chairman claimed.

It was indicated at the project launching event that the mall to be erected on 19.7 hectares of land in Addis Ababa will create jobs for 45 thousand citizens.

The mall will have five main components including grand mall, multiplex, office complex, parking garage and landscape. It will take six years to finalize the project, the chairman said.

The "Ethio-Diaspora Grand Mall" project is an opening door to inspire more Diaspora members to invest in Ethiopia, said the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tedros Adhanom through his representative.

The minister also stated government-led initiatives to attract members of the Ethiopian Diaspora to engage in their country's developmental and image building activities.

However, Dr. Tedros mentioned gaps in Diaspora engagement in nation building, saying so far contributions of Ethiopian Diaspora are not sufficient compared with their huge skill and financial potential.

He called on the Diaspora to engage in joint ventures to utilize ample investment opportunities in their home country. The government is working to create conducive business environment to attract Ethiopian Diaspora, Dr. Tedros added.

Diaspora Policy and the Housing Projects are few of the special treatments accorded to members of the Ethiopian Diaspora, the minister indicated.

Currently, over three thousand Diaspora members have invested more than one billion USD mainly in real estate, hotel and tourism sectors.(ENA)

US Donates 30mln Birr for Conservation Work on Abune Yemrehanna Church



The United States government has donated 30 million birr to implement a Conservation Analysis project at the historical Abune Yemrehanna Kristos Church.

The Minister of Culture and Tourism, Engineer Aysha Mohamed and World Monuments Fund

Representative, Stephen Battle have signed the agreement to facilitate the implementation of the project.

Engineer Aysha on the occasion said the agreement helps in gathering valuable information to identify problems in conserving the church.

Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abune Matias appreciated the support from the U.S. government to the historical church.

The church situated in Wollo, state of Amhara is only 42 kilometers away from Lalibela. It is claimed that King Yemrehanna Kristos built the church in the 12th century (1087-1127).

U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia M. Haslach on her part said due to its long age, she found the church not in a good shape during her visit.

Ambassador Haslach added that since 2000, the U.S. government has been supporting historical heritages in Ethiopia.

World Monuments Fund Representative, Stephen Battle on his part said his organization would work for the proper implementation of the renovation work on the heritage.

Battle said they have also finalized conservation analysis on Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela with further plans to make analysis on other historical churches.

World Monuments Fund has obtained license to undertake conservation analysis to the church through the Memorandum of Understanding reached between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2012, it was learnt.