

Meles :China-Africa Cooperation Enhances Trade

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi says the China -Africa political cooperation contributes to enhance trade ties.

Speaking at the opening of the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), co-chair of the summit, Meles said creating enabling environment for trade is the responsibility of respective governments.

He said China is instrumental in initiating African businessmen for development and it has shown Africa that it is possible to bring about sustainable development.



Meles remembered China's support to Africans during the fight for independence.

"Our main challenge now is not to fight colonialism, but fighting poverty and backwardness and achieving economic independence," said Meles.

"Africa needs the support of its friends to overcome this challenge."

Ethiopian delegation led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and its Chinese counterpart led by President Hu Jintao of China held talks on bilateral cooperation between the two countries

Presenting the Beijing Declaration.

President Hu Jintao said on the occasion that China would provide support to Ethiopia in its effort to expand the telecommunications industry.

Meles said China is ready to provide loan and assistance to back other sectors.

The amount and types of products which Ethiopia exports to China, have been steadily increasing, bringing significant growth to the volume of trade between the two sisterly nations .

The number of Chinese entrepreneurs investing in Ethiopia has also been rising.

Ethiopia has been working with China as a co-chair to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) over the past three years.

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Since Ethiopia was elected to host the Forum's Ministerial conference in 2003, it is the first African country to chair the forum jointly with China.

The China-Africa Cooperation Forum was established in 2000 with the initiative of the Chinese government in a bid to stepping up the long-standing multi-dimensional relations between China and Africa.

Close to 50 African heads of state and government were in attendance at FOCAC summit

Girma Urges Indians to Invest in Ethiopia

Minister of Trade and Industry, Girma Birru, called for Indian investment in textile, leather, agriculture processing, construction and small scale industries.

During talks with Indian investors in New Delhi, India, Girma assured entrepreneurs that the government of Ethiopia gives protection and incentives for foreign investors engaged in various sectors.



Ato Girma Birru (File)

Among others, the minister ensured business with Ethiopia would be unrestricted on repatriation of profits, interest payments and exemption from import duty for plant machinery, equipment and raw material.

He said close to 184 Indian companies are engaged in the fields of health care, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture and floriculture, a number of which have gone operational with some others engaged in the first phase of project implementation

Trade with India has increased steadily over the past few years and stands at 83 million dollars in 2005-2006, exceeding the performance of the previous year by 27 percent.

Ethiopia Appeals for Speciality Coffee Trade mark

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Ethiopia's coordinated effort with all stake holders - group that includes coffee cooperatives - to trademark speciality coffees - Sidamo, Harar and Yirgacheffe.



Ambassador Solomon Abebe, General Director of Press, Information and Documentation Directorate, told MoFA Newsletter that trade mark securing would enable Ethiopian coffee sector -including the farmers and cooperatives- to earn more of the value of coffee brands, increase its negotiation power through control of names and ultimately draw a greater share of the retail price .

He said a humble rise in export price generates 88 mill. Dollars annually as additional revenue for the country's coffee sector.

Ambassador Solomon Abebe

Trade marking its coffee names and securing extra few cents per pound in the global market would bring about a significant difference in improving the lives of the Ethiopian farmers, he noted.

The Ethiopian Government has asked the global coffee giant Starbucks to conclude due agreement with Ethiopia, the sole authority which has natural right over these names belonging to the country's famous coffee growing regions. However, the company has not yet responded to Ethiopia's request.

Well Designed Policies Spur Export Growth

Ethiopia could register a high level of growth in the export sector owing to effective and well designed government policies and strategies as well as its support to those engaged in export sector.

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Head of the Export Promotion Agency, Aberra Geyessa, during a day-long briefing to the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that in 2005 - 2006 fiscal year Ethiopia earned one billion dollars from the export sector which registered a 23% growth compared to the previous year.



Briefing underway

Aberra said government focus on the sector has brought about an increase in the country's revenue from time to time.

"Efforts to diversify our export items and to multiply their destinations have contributed to the success", he said. Aberra also took note of the commendable role played by Ethiopian missions abroad in fostering the export trade.

China, Germany, Japan and Switzerland stand among the first destinations of Ethiopian export items such as sesame, hides, coffee, textile, fruits and cereals, among others.

National Consensus Forum - UK Promotes Image

The Ethiopian National Consensus Forum - UK is engaged in Ethiopian Millennium Celebration activities here and abroad to promote Ethiopia's image.



Mulugeta Asrate, Deputy Director General of the Secretariat Office for the Millennium celebration, told MoFA Newsletter that the National consensus plays historic role in bridging the gap amongst Ethiopians in the celebration of the new millennium.

He said the Ethiopian National Consensus Forum has been engaged in organizing conferences, forums and seminars on Ethiopia in London.

Mulugeta Asrate, Former Deputy Chairman of the Ethiopian National Consensus Forum

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The Forum has been providing first hand information about the prevalent situation in Ethiopia.

The National Consensus Forum initiates the Ethiopian Diaspora to work together for their country regardless of their political differences.

Role of Ethiopian Missions Said Immense

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism says Ethiopian embassies located in different corners of the world have immense responsibility in promoting the country's tourism potentials as well as attracting investments to the sector.

The Ministry told MoFA Newsletter that Ethiopian missions abroad could play a significant role in the development of the sector and that they are duty-bound to provide information about the investment potentials in the tourism sector for tour operators, business organizations and individuals in host countries.

According to the Ministry, embassies have the responsibility to garner support from host countries to extend their assistance for the development of the tourism sector in Ethiopia.

The embassies are also expected to ensure the implementation of culture and tourism agreements Ethiopia has signed with different countries.

Ethiopian Embassies have also the responsibility to refute unrealistic travel advices and make these advices parallel with the reality of the country through a close cooperative work with the Foreign Ministries of the host countries.

The Ministry said Ethiopia is endowed with natural, cultural and historical tourist attractions among which, UNESCO has registered eight as world heritages.

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According to the Ministry, a higher tourist flow has been witnessed in recent years compared with the previous ones due to the conducive environment created in the country to promote the tourist sector. The number of tourists who visited Ethiopia in 2005 reached 227,000 while in the year 1993 only 93,072 tourists visited the country.

Awareness-raising activities are underway to strengthen customer handling and tourist treatment activities in the country's tourist attraction areas.

Customs Secures Over 1.8 Billion Birr

The Ethiopian Customs Authority collected revenue of 1.874 billion birr from tax and non-tax sources in the first quarter of the current fiscal year.

Public and International Relations Acting Head with the Authority, Gebre-Medhin Gebre-Yohannes told MoFA Newsletter the first quarter's revenue rose by 300.9 million birr or 19 percent compared to the same period, the previous fiscal year.

He said customs has seized 11.9 million birr worth of contraband goods while being smuggled to and out of the country.

Customs has put the imported goods and their documents under its close scrutiny and has eventually earned 13.832 million birr.

In its effort to implement the government policy that encourages investment through tax exemption, customs has freed investment items and other goods from the payment of taxes to the tune of 829 million birr.

Customs' success in achieving 95.5 percent of its plan for revenue collection was attributed to the extension of office working hours to 16 in the Addis Ababa Lagar Customs and the Addis Ababa Airport customs offices and the effective implementation of the civil service reform programs.