

Millennium Instrument to Change Image

A number of Ethiopian Diaspora members are coming to their country of origin and engaging themselves in different development activities. A number of Ethiopians and Ethiopian Community Associations are also providing assistance to Ethiopians who go abroad for various reasons. One of such associations supporting Ethiopians abroad is the Ethiopian Community Services and Development Council based in Washington. In this edition the programme director of the Council, Ato Dawit Belayneh, will talk to us.

Newsletter: - When was the Ethiopian Community Services and Development Council established and what are its objectives?

Dawit: - The Ethiopian Community Services and Development Council was established in Washington D.C. in 2002. The council is non-profit, non-political and community based organization. And it is established to serve Ethiopian and other immigrants residing in Washington D.C. area.



Ato Dawit Belayneh

Newsletter: - What initiated you to establish such an association?

Dawit: - Yes, Ethiopians who come to the US encounter a host of problems due to lack of information. Because of this, they fail to get access to immigration, legal, health and other services. Therefore, it helped to bridge that gap. Since its establishment in 2002, it has provided assistance for more than 10,000 Ethiopian in Washington D.C.

Diaspora Forum

Newsletter: - Are you working together with the Ethiopian Mission in Washington?

Dawit: - Yes, we have been working with the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington.

Newsletter: - Any observations regarding the development activities in Ethiopia?

Dawit: - You can see a lot of progress in Ethiopia. Telecommunications, road construction and other infrastructural developments are being widely carried out in the country. Generally, the development activities in Ethiopia are really fascinating and promising.

Newsletter: - What do you say about efforts by the government to encourage the Ethiopian Diaspora to invest in their homeland.

Dawit: - To my understanding, a lot of people like to invest in Ethiopia. The government's effort to overcome bureaucratic bottlenecks is commendable. But still, I believe more should be done on the part of the government to attract investors, particularly from among the Diaspora. The government gives a variety of incentives for Ethiopians in the Diaspora to come to their country and invest, but multitudes of them are not aware of the incentives and the potential of investment. So, I believe the government and Ethiopian Missions should work more in this area, more vigorous public relation exercise is needed.

Newsletter: - What is expected from the Ethiopian Diaspora in the new millennium?

Dawit: - In the new millennium, we have to work hard to improve the livelihood of the people. We should stand in unison to change the image of Ethiopia. Ethiopians in the Diaspora may have different political orientations. They should use their political differences for constructive not for destructive ends. So, we have to step up development endeavours and show something for our efforts in the new millennium.