



Ethiopian Embassy News

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Beyond the rhetoric: Ethiopia is taking unprecedented steps to ensure gender parity at the upper echelon of power

The House of Peoples' Representative of Ethiopia unanimously approved, perhaps, the first gender-balanced cabinet in Africa as part of the ongoing political reform process being spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. This recent parliamentary decision propelled the East African power hub to join a growing list of countries with gender-balanced



cabinets. The appointment of record– high 50 percent female ministers to lead various ministries at this defining moment is yet another milestone in the series of sweeping political and economic changes being undertaken to strengthen peace and stability in the country.

Upon presenting his nominees to the parliament, H.E. Prime Minister Abiy underscored the fact that the women ministers will disprove the old cliché that women can't lead high - profile government institutions. He also noted with satisfaction that the decision would inspire other women to work hard and contribute their share in bringing socio-economic development and peace in Ethiopia. H.E Muferiyat Kemil, former House Speaker and Minister of Women Affairs has become minister of the newly established Ministry of Peace which, according to the Prime Minister is mandated to ensure the prevalence of peace and stability in the country where "lack of peace" has become "the main problem." Another woman, former Minister of construction H.E Aisha Mohamed became the first Minister of the Ethiopian Defense

Ministry which was previously considered to be men's purview.

The appointment of women to the highest ministerial portfolios in equal number with their male counter-parts came as a complete surprise to Ethiopians and those who closely follow up Ethiopian politics. Though women and girls constitute half of the total population of Ethiopia, they have historically been suffering from various gender-based discrimination and violence, including harmful traditional practices.



The Ethiopian Parliament has also appointed Ambassador Sahle-Work Zewde as the country's first female president days after the first-ever gender-balanced cabinet had been approved. Ambassador Sahle-Work Zewde, the most seasoned diplomat, was sworn in to the position after, position after her predecessor, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, unexpectedly resigned from his duty. Her appointment was warmly welcomed by those who believe that Ethiopia will benefit significantly from her extensive knowledge and years of experience in the diplomatic

service and multilateral system. During her inaugural address to Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representative, the new president indicated that Peace would be her utmost priority. Sahle-Work said, "When there is no peace in the country, mothers will be frustrated. Therefore, we need to work on peace for the sake of our mothers." The new president also mentioned that she is determined to ensure gender equality in the country. "If you thought I spoke a lot about women already," She said, "know that I am just getting started."



In yet another unprecedented move to empower women, the Ethiopian parliament, on Thursday, October 25, 2018, unanimously approved the appointment of Meaza Ashenafi as the first female president of the Federal Supreme Court. Meaza is an ardent women's rights activist who founded the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association and played a critical role in the establishment of Enat bank, the first women's bank in Ethiopia. She had also served as a judge of the Ethiopia's federal high court from 1989 to 1992 and then as an adviser to a commission that was mandated to

draft the 1995 constitution of the FDRE. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, while presenting his nominee to the parliament said: "I have made the nomination with the firm belief that she has the capacity required, with her vast international experience in mind."

Ethiopian women are taking stock of the progress that has been made to ensure their equal participation in all spheres of life and asking to what extent the much talked - about reforms have been implemented. It goes without saying that Ethiopian women have made significant strides in the political arena over the past few years. However, in a highly patriarchal society such as Ethiopia, there is a long way to go in terms of ensuring gender equality.

Embassy Paid Tribute to Ethiopia's Cultural Ambassadors

The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Washington DC paid tribute, on Saturday November 03, 2018, to Ethiopian restaurant owners, tour operators and art centers that are operating in the DMV area at a colorful even organized in Washington DC. The event, which was the first of its kinds, was organized with the view to officially recognize the remarkable contributions of the Ethiopian Diasporas who have been working hard in the promotion of Ethiopian unique Cultural Values, including tasteful culinary and foods.

Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Kassa Tekeleberhane stated that members of the



Ethiopian Diaspora community are playing a pivotal role in the civic, cultural and economic life of the United States. "We are gathered here today" Ambassador Kassa Said, "to celebrate the success of Ethiopian owned restaurants, Artists, and Tour operators, not only in their respective businesses, but also in promoting Ethiopian tourism and cultural values across the US and beyond." Ambassador Kassa assured the gathering that the embassy is determined to forge a strong partnership with the "Ethiopian Tourism and Cultural Ambassadors" who, while doing their businesses, have been building the beautiful image of Ethiopia.

During the occasion, Ato Reta Alemu, Deputy Head of the Mission, presented an illustrious presentation on the role and importance of culinary diplomacy in promoting the image of a country. He underscored the fact that culinary diplomacy, which is broadly defined as "the use of food and cuisine" as an instrument to create cross-cultural understanding in the hopes of improving interactions and cooperation, needs to be seriously taken and thoroughly expounded in the Ethiopian context. Ato Reta noted that

more than 700 Ethiopian restaurants are believed to be in the business of serving quintessential Ethiopian cuisine across the United States. According to the DCM, these restaurants have, for far too long, been playing an indispensable role in popularizing the authentic traditions of Ethiopia.



On their part, participants extended their gratitude to the embassy for organizing such an event and recognizing the role which they said was "undermined" before. The legendary Ethiopian artist and the founder of 'Taitu Art Center' Alemtsehay Wodajo noted that her center has, for a long time, been working tirelessly to promote Ethiopian art in collaboration with volunteer restaurant owners in the United States. However, Alemtsehay said "It is a pity that the government of Ethiopia in general and the embassy in Washington DC, in particular, had not been willing to work with our center." She finally expressed her appreciation to the Embassy for recognizing their role and her willingness to work with the embassy hand in glove in promoting Ethiopia's rich culture. Other participants have also expressed their keenness to step up efforts aimed at changing the attitude of their customers towards



Ethiopia. At the conclusion of the event, Ambassador Kassa Tekeleberhane handed out certificates of appreciation to Ethiopia's tourism and cultural ambassadors in recognition of their steadfast commitment and success in the business.

**Celebrate International Coffee Day at
the Land of Origins**

**INTERNATIONAL
COFFEE EVENT IN
ETHIOPIA – THE LAND
OF ORIGINS**

**SAVE THE
DATE
DECEMBER
4-5, 2018**

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Hear from Industry Insiders | Network with Coffee Industry Professionals | Learn latest Global Trends | Take a trip to Kafa Region, the Birthplace of Coffee

Ethiopia, the birthplace of Coffee Arabica, is the largest coffee producer in Africa and ranks 5th in the world, next to Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia and Indonesia. It produces some 430,000 metric tons of coffee per year, half of which is consumed domestically.

Ethiopian coffees are internationally recognized for their superior quality, intense flavor and aroma. Among the different coffee varieties: Harrar, Sidama, Yirgacheffee, Limmu and Nekempti (Lekempti) are best known in global markets. Coffee has always been Ethiopia's most important export commodity.



most important export commodity. It accounts for nearly one-third of the country's total exports. In 2016/17, Ethiopia exported 232,000 metric tons of coffee valued at 897 million dollars. The major coffee export destinations are Germany, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Japan; the US being the third largest market for the country.

**Homecoming Diasporas grew
exponentially**

Following the peaceful transfer of power within the Ethiopian ruling party seven months ago,

a good number of Ethiopian Diasporas have been returning home after decades of nostalgic separation from their country. In this regard, the messages of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that have been reverberated since assuming premiership has been instrumental in persuading many Diasporas to go back home and make a sense of their country they departed from for various reasons.



It is evident that the Ethiopian Diasporas in the United States, although certainly not a homogenous community, love their country in spite of their political persuasions that have seemingly been antagonistic because of the prevailing socio-economic and political situations that were the making of previous successive regimes. However, after the historic July 2018 visit of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to the United States, the relationship between Ethiopia and its Diaspora communities residing in America has significantly changed for better. The call by the Prime Minister for the diasporas to engage with their country and contribute their share was heeded thus many have already

returned home with hope and determination. This unprecedented trend has manifested itself, not only in terms of the number of Diasporas turning home, but also seen in the sharp increase of remittance and investment ventures by them in this fiscal year. A sizable number of the Diaspora community has also expressed interest to participate in various housing schemes.



On the other hand, it is to be recalled that the Diaspora community was trying to influence US policy towards Ethiopia on issues of democracy and human rights, through public demonstrations, candlelight vigils, letter writing, emailing, telephone calls, and faxing to government officials, especially to members of Congress and prominent US citizens, including government officials. Though, the role that the Ethiopian Diaspora plays in pressuring the US government and influencing its policy towards Ethiopia has recently changed. These communities have

stopped to demanding their representatives to put pressure on Ethiopian politics.



On its part, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia has announced the establishment of an Ethiopian Diaspora Agency recently with the view to engage and mobilize Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin in the development of their country. The new agency is expected to create a favorable environment that helps Ethiopians residing overseas to contribute to the development of the country and benefit themselves. The Ethiopian Diaspora Agency will also work to ensure the protection of the rights and dignity of Ethiopians in the Diaspora. The agency will have offices in all Ethiopian embassies, as well as at all levels of government administrations. Currently, the country receives over \$4 billion in remittance from its citizens every year, which is one billion more than it is earning from the export of goods.