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Ethiopia to stop sugar import this year

The Ethiopian Sugar Corporation announced that this year it will halt the bulk import of sugar after eight of the ten sugar factory projects, which had incepted at the beginning of the first Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPI), start production.

(22.12.2016 - WIC)

The country with a population of 10kg sugar per capita is used to import 2mln metric tons of sugar each year from foreign market with a cost worth about 130 million dollars but thanks to the grand sugar projects this trend will be, according to the Corporation, changed for the better.

Despite repeated blame raised against projects, the corporation said that the tempo has

significantly changed to expedite the construction pace of projects with spinning over challenges and suggesting possible remedial solutions.

Corporate Communication head, Gashaw Aychiluhim, told Walta Information Center that over 7million metric tons of sugar is expected to be reaped this year and beat up the volume of domestic consumption.

Arjo-Dedesa, Tendaho, Kuraz one, Kuraz Two, Kesem, Metahara, Fincha and Wonji are big projects, which have started production in full swing.

According to him, lack of finance, poor implementation capacity and infrastructures were reasons for sluggish construction progress.

He said that the Corporation has managed to generate finance by itself, adopting experience from foreign and domestic firms exemplary for better contract and finance management, and implementation to speed up the construction of the on-going projects.

Last year, the drought has hit hard the sugarcane farms, he said, however, this year the farms are recovering and became a confidence to boost production.

The corporation is working to improve the capacity of local construction firms, which involved in project sub-contract to materialize the timely completion of the 10 sugar projects, according to him.

Tigray to provide land for 7, 000 housing associations

The Tigray Regional State Housing Development and Administration Agency said it has started to provide land for about 7 thousand associations located in 110 towns.

(22.12.2016 - WIC)

CEO of the Agency, Gerezgiher Abraha, told WIC that his office, in collaboration with Urban Development Bureau, is providing the association with land and financial support.

The scheme is scheduled to be expanded for more people taking their

demands into account, he noted.

In the major 12 towns in the regions, about 1400 square meters of plot is to be provided per head.

A single association constitutes 20 members and each member shall receive a house with full facilities founded upon 70 square meters, he said.

In the first level 25 emerging towns the width of the plots is increased to 140 square meters and those in the 73 second level emerging towns even can get 200 square meters wide plots, he added.

The association members are expected to deposit 50 percent of cost for the house in a closed account, if they are financially capable. If not, they can save the 20 percent and fill the remaining gap in collaboration with credit and saving associations in the region.

Side by side with this scheme, the necessary preparation to sustain the condominium construction that is commenced at national level is underway, he underscored.

Ethiopia's hydropower dams creating regional economic integration: Minister

The hydropower dams which Ethiopia has been building on transboundary rivers have been creating regional economic integration by ensuring fair utilization of water, said Dr Engineer Sileshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity.

(22.12.2016 - FBC)

This was revealed today at a meeting organized to review the role Grand

Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) office and mass media on the dam and other issues.

The Minister said that mass media have carried out successful activities towards informing the public about the agreement reached among the riparian countries on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Most media have been providing correct

information to the people; however, "some media are busy in spreading distorted information," he said.

During the meeting, discussions were held on topics focused on the agreement being reached between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt as well as on fair utilization of transboundary rivers.

Ethiopia Bought 9 Billion Birr Worth Fertilizers

Ethiopia procured 11.4 million quintals of fertilizers at an out lay of 9 billion Birr. Such was disclosed by Ethiopian Agricultural Works Corporation and according to the Corporation the procurement is made for the 2016/2017 crop production season.

(22.12.2016 - 2Merkato)

Out of the total 11.4 million quintals, importation for more than 81.6 percent has been started, the Corporation explained.

The fertilizers were bought directly from the producers for a lower price, enabling the Corporation to distribute the fertilizers for farmers

at a cheaper price, the Corporation furthered.

According to Fana Broadcasting Corporate, Ethiopian Agricultural Work Corporation was established a year ago after merging 5 enterprises.

Premier urges for engagement of Japanese investors in development of Industrial Parks

Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn called on Japanese government to encourage investors to engage in Ethiopia, especially in the development of industrial parks.

(22.12.2016 - EBC)

The Premier made the remark while conferring with Special Envoy to Japanese Prime Minister, Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura here on

Thursday on bilateral and regional issues

Hailemariam said that encouraging Japanese investors to engage in the industrial sector is an important step for Japanese investors to benefit from the fast economic growth of the country.

The Premier has also promised to support Japanese investors who wish to invest in the sector, according to a high

level official who attended the meeting.

Happy with the results gained so far through kaizen, the Japanese government will continue to support Ethiopia for a better achievement, Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura told reporters following the discussions.

He said the two countries have agreed to work closely in the UN Security Council to end the crisis in South Sudan.

USAID grants 22 million birr to expands Farm Service Center Network in Ethiopia

The U.S. Agency for International Development joined the Ethiopia Agricultural Transformation Agency, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources to award grants to 10 private entrepreneurs and 10 farmers' cooperative unions that will help them to establish farm service centers.

(22.12.2016 - EBC)

Each recipient will receive a grant worth \$50,000 to establish a center in their area—seven are in Oromia, six in Amhara, four in SNNP, and three in Tigray. Together with the six farm service centers already opened with U.S. assistance in the Oromia region, this will bring the total number of centers to 26.

Farm service centers are one-stop shops where smallholder farmers can get advice, receive training and purchase quality, reasonably-priced,

region-appropriate seeds, fertilizers and other supplies to increase production.

"The farm service centers serve as a model for expanding farm supply and service networks in Ethiopia and other nations of Africa," said USAID Mission Director Leslie Reed. "Based on our past success, it is easy to see how the model will improve smallholders' productivity, food security and income by nurturing the development of sustainable, private-sector driven agricultural supplies and services."

Gizachew Sisay, project team leader, noted, "The grant award is one mechanism to encourage private investment into the agriculture sector."

He further indicated, "The fact that grantees are also expected to contribute at least 50 percent of the cost of establishing the farm service centers is a

key element of effective public-private partnership in driving agricultural growth."

The 20 new grants, totaling ETB 22 million (\$1 million), are being awarded through the Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Services Project, which has been implemented by the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency since 2015 in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources with technical support from Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA).

The three-year project provides grants and training to rural entrepreneurs, both men and women, to create Ethiopian-owned retail farm supply and service centers.

The Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Services Project follows USAID's successful

Commercial Farm Services Program, implemented by CNFA from 2012 to 2014, which established six locally-owned, private retail and farm service businesses in the Oromia Region. The existing farm service centers already

serve more than 30,000 farmers, have leveraged more than \$3.2 in new private sector investments, and created more than 50 jobs.

Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security

initiative. Through Feed the Future, USAID is helping vulnerable households increase economic activities and become more food secure.

State Minister Hirut Zemene confers with Japanese delegation

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hirut Zemene has conferred yesterday with a Japanese delegation led by Yoshifumi Okamura, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Japan.

(22.12.2016 - EBC)

During the discussion, Hirut noted that Ethiopia highly values the role played by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in promoting

structural economic transformation.

The State Minister recalling the historic ties of the two countries applauded Japan's support in the realm of policy dialogue aiming at promoting structural economic transformation in the country.

Yoshifumi Okamura, accompanied by MShinichi Saida, Ambassador of

Japan to Ethiopia and Masahiko Kiya, Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, noted that Japan is keen to deepen its relations with Ethiopia in all-rounded ways.

The talks covered issues of regional peace and security as well as ways of strengthening Ethio-Japanese ties for further growth and common benefit.



Tough times for S. Sudanese as festive season approaches

The South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has lost about 80% of its value, nearly 12 months since the Central Bank floated the exchange rate against the U.S dollar, as most South Sudanese families anticipate tough times during this festive season.

(20.12.2016 - Sudan Tribune)

“My children want new clothes, but I am not sure of what they will eat tomorrow. It is not about new cloths now,” Mary Yar, a mother of three, told Sudan Tribune Friday.

A resident of Lologo, a Juba suburb, Yar moved to the South Sudan capital in 2014, after conflict displaced her from Bor in Jonglei state.

For her children, however, Christmas is a season for new clothes.

“I would buy each of them a pair of shoe, trousers and everything they required but now, I have

to use any money on what they will eat,” narrates the mother of three. Yar does not have a permanent job. At the moment, she works in a restaurant as a waitress, earning a daily wage of 100 SSP (about \$1).

Yar is among the millions of South Sudanese calling off luxurious celebrations during this festive season. Millions of South Sudanese have, as a result of war, been displaced from their homes and face severe food shortages. Government has not paid its workers for months and this, for instance, saw teachers strike in Jonglei state.

Presently, one U.S dollar trades between 90 and 100 SSP in the parallel market.

There is scarcity of hard currency in South Sudan, a landlocked country that depends on imports of food and medical among others from neighboring countries.

On Wednesday, South Sudan President Salva Kiir duly acknowledged the hard situation in the country, saying he too felt the pain most families faced, but offered no remedies to the situation.

“I was planning to spend my Christmas in Nairobi but have to think twice,” John Moro, a resident of Juba told Sudan Tribune on Friday.

Moro said he earns about 3,000 SSP, a substantially good pay in a nation where most civil servants are paid less than 1,000 SSP monthly.

“Juba is now very expensive and very hot,” explains Moro.

A meal, in most Juba restaurants, now costs SSP 100 or more, but prices are higher in hotels due to the deteriorating economic situation.

“If I was to spend my Christmas or New Year day with friends in a good

restaurant, it will cost me three months pay," stressed Moro.

The festive seasons, which are meant to host friends, buy new cloths and make trips to the countryside, would pass unnoticed.

Some Christian Churches organ street marches on the eve of Christmas and children, like Yar's, want to attend when dressed in new attires.

"My prayer is tranquility in the country. If there is

peace, I may choose to leave in the country and my children will be happy and enjoy celebrations without fear of hunger or failure to buy new cloths," said Yar.



Les vingt-deux ambassadeurs de Djibouti reçus par le Président

Les ambassadeurs de la République de Djibouti, en conférence à l'IED depuis quelques jours, ont été reçus hier au palais de la République par le chef de l'Etat. La rencontre, qui s'inscrit dans le cadre de cette deuxième conférence des ambassadeurs, a permis au chef de l'Etat, de dire à ces hommes et à ces femmes ce qu'il pense de leur métier et ce qu'il attend d'eux pour qu'ils puissent efficacement défendre à l'International les choix politiques et économiques de son gouvernement. Le Président s'est engagé à les doter des moyens nécessaires à leurs missions si importantes pour le pays.

(23.12.2016 - La Nation)

La conférence des Ambassadeurs, commencée samedi dernier, occupe presque toutes les journées des diplomates djiboutiens, et

du premier d'entre eux, le ministre des Affaires étrangères Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. Hier en fin de matinée, les vingt-cinq ambassadeurs de Djibouti ont été reçus au palais de la République par celui qui les a accrédités aux quatre coins du monde pour y représenter et agir au nom du pays : le président Ismaïl Omar Guelleh. Le chef de l'Etat a chaleureusement accueilli ces hommes et ces femmes qui remplissent leurs missions avec cœur et conscience. Certains d'entre eux ont occupé des fonctions au sein du gouvernement au cours des dix dernières années. D'autres, issus du MAECI, sont des diplomates de carrière. Tous se caractérisent par une haute idée de l'Etat et de leurs responsabilités. Accompagnés du ministre des Affaires étrangères, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, leur « patron », les ambassadeurs ont été plutôt bien accueillis par le Président qui connaît

personnellement certains d'entre eux.

Après les mots de bienvenue, vint pour le Président le moment de s'adresser solennellement à ces vingt hommes et à ces deux femmes qui constituent à l'international les visages de sa diplomatie. Le chef de l'Etat a d'abord évoqué cette conférence des ambassadeurs, deuxième du genre en dix ans, dont il a affirmé approuver la tenue. Il a même estimé qu'elle devait se tenir de façon régulière. Annuellement ? Le chef de l'Etat ne l'a pas précisé mais telle était sans doute sa pensée.

« Cette conférence nous donne l'occasion de redéfinir nos priorités et nos objectifs stratégiques en matière de politique étrangère et ceux-ci doivent être ambitieux compte tenu des nombreuses attentes de nos concitoyens, mais aussi en adéquation avec

nos atouts et besoins », a-t-il dit en outre avant d'ajouter que leur mission requerrait « un degré élevé de conscience professionnelle, d'aptitude et de disponibilité constante dans la pratique ».

Le chef de l'Etat a fait observer que si, malgré sa petite taille, notre pays fait aujourd'hui partie de ceux dont la voix compte sur la scène internationale, cela était dû à la « tradition d'excellence de notre diplomatie, entretenue par des générations d'hommes et de femmes engagés au service de l'Etat et de la Nation ». Le chef de l'Etat a toutefois reconnu qu'il s'agissait là d'un travail exigeant, qui nécessite de maîtriser tous les secteurs, « aussi pointus et techniques soient-ils, et cela dans un contexte de compétition effrénée, où l'économie, le commerce et l'investissement restent au cœur d'une action diplomatique qui se veut prospective et axée sur le résultat ».

Le chef de l'Etat a par conséquent estimé qu'il leur fallait « s'informer et bien s'informer auprès des départements concernés et surtout, s'informer à temps ». Il a exhorté le MAECI mais aussi les autres ministères « à informer régulièrement les Ambassadeurs et Consuls et à les associer à toutes les missions auprès des pays et Organisations relevant de leur juridiction afin de leur permettre de mieux remplir leur mission ». Cette injonction présidentielle permettra de corriger un « oubli » trop fréquent de la part des ministères concernés qui effectuent des missions à l'étranger parfois en oubliant d'en informer l'ambassadeur couvrant la zone concernée. Voilà qui devrait les aider à être moins distraits. Le chef de l'Etat a insisté sur la nécessité de faire en sorte que notre diplomatie soit réellement et efficacement au service du développement économique du pays.

« Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, a-t-il dit, la diplomatie, instrument régalien par excellence, va de pair avec le développement économique et social d'une Nation. Le contexte national, régional et international, en perpétuel changement, exige une relecture attentive et régulière des enjeux afin de mieux comprendre nos options, nos atouts et nos contraintes ».

Le président a aussi évoqué la culture arabo-africaine des Djiboutiens et la nécessité de faire la promotion de cette singularité et des paysages si particuliers du pays, de sa géologie, etc., afin que le tourisme djiboutien, déjà en bonne voie, puisse jouer un rôle plus important dans le développement du pays. Par ailleurs, il a demandé à ses représentants dans ce vaste monde à prêter une oreille attentive à leurs concitoyens expatriés, à les aider, à recueillir leurs doléances. Il a ajouté que tout cela avait un coût et

que l'Etat, conscient des difficultés qu'ils rencontrent dans leurs pays d'accréditation, était là pour les aider, ce qui a été noté avec entrain par

les chefs de nos missions diplomatiques.

Les recommandations qui seront issues de la conférence en cours sont

attendues au Palais par le chef de l'Etat qui entend mettre tout en œuvre pour faciliter la tâche à ses ambassadeurs.