

UN Ethiopia

NEWSLETTER

April 2025

The UN in Ethiopia has identified four interconnected outcomes that will guide its development cooperation over the next five years:

- All people in Ethiopia enjoy the rights and capabilities to realize their potential in equality and with dignity.
- All people in Ethiopia live in a cohesive, just, inclusive and democratic society.
- All people in Ethiopia benefit from an inclusive, resilient and sustainable economy.
- All people in Ethiopia live in a society resilient to environmental risks and adapted to climate change.



A mother's endurance through natural disaster: Efra's remarkable recovery through livelihood assistance



In Ethiopia's Somali region, recurrent droughts and erratic rainfall patterns have led to significant displacement and

economic hardship. In 2024 alone, the loss of livestock forced thousands of people to leave their homes in search of livelihoods. For

pastoralist communities, the loss of livestock is not just an economic setback, it disrupts their entire way of life.

In Goljano town, Efra Sherif, a mother of three, faced the devastating impact of four consecutive years of drought. "I lost my herd, which provided milk and sustained our livelihood," she recalls. Just as she struggled to recover, severe flooding hit the Somali region, wiping out the remaining livestock and grain supplies. With no means of survival, Efra was uncertain about her future.

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PEACE



Fostering action to prevent violence against women and girls

SASA! An innovative community mobilization approach



For Memhir Biruk Bekele, a preacher and spiritual leader at St. Mary's Church in Adama, under the East Oromia Diocese of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, mediating and reconciling perpetrators of violence with survivors or their families was once part of his religious service—just as it was for many other faith leaders.

Recognizing his societal influence and respected position, he was selected to participate in the SASA! program, supported by UN Women and implemented by the Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) across three districts of Adama in Oromia Region.



SASA!, which also means "Now" in Kiswahili, is an innovative and tested community mobilization approach developed by RaisingVoices in Kampala, Uganda. It aims to address the root causes of power imbalance between women and men, with the goal of preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and HIV/AIDS by transforming harmful social norms

"I now know I cannot let a person who committed violence go, without dealt with by law, apart from preaching this is punishable by faith, I boldly say it is also punishable by law and such person should be handed to the police," said Memhir Biruk.



Through SASA!, Memhir Biruk received training and communication materials to teach about VAWG in religious settings. He uses every opportunity—including personal interactions and sermons—to speak out against violence and challenge harmful norms.

"It wasn't easy to talk about VAWG in the church," Memhir Biruk said. "People have their own beliefs and traditions. It's hard to change those, even with new information. Some faith leaders still mediate and release perpetrators. I use every chance I get to challenge those wrong practices."

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Women First Run: For Women, Every Right

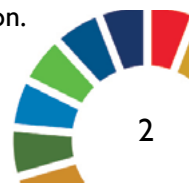


The United Nations in Ethiopia joined the Women First Run to celebrate the power and resilience of women and call for gender equality for every woman and girl.

The event, organized by the Great Ethiopia Run in connection with the International Women's Day, brought together more than 16,000 women and girls.

This year, the UN partnered with the GER to promote the theme "For Every Woman, Every Right" and mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

[Full story](#)



ILO awards youth through business plan competition

The International Labour Organization (ILO), through the PROSPECTS partnership, announced 60 outstanding enterprises led by 181 young refugee and host community entrepreneurs as winners of its integrated Business Plan Competition (BPC) in the North Gondar Zone of the Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia.

After successful completion of 1st BPC in Ethiopia's Somali region, this competition aims to further enhance economic inclusion and improve the livelihoods of refugees and host communities.

Launched in August 2024 in partnership with Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Ethiopia and with financial support from the Government of the Netherlands, the competition serves as a platform for aspiring youth entrepreneurs to develop business ideas that can be transformed into sustainable businesses.

"We believe that inclusive labour



"Through this Business Plan Competition, our aim is not only to provide financial and technical support but to facilitate access to and participation of refugees and host communities in local economic opportunities that support business activity and social cohesion."

markets that enable people to participate in self-employment initiatives through entrepreneurship are key to self-reliance, resilience and restoration of dignity—especially for refugees and the communities that host them," said Stephen Opio, Chief Technical Advisor for the ILO PROSPECTS Programme in Ethiopia and Sudan.

"Through this Business Plan Competition, our aim is not only to provide financial and technical support but to facilitate access to and participation of refugees and host communities in local economic opportunities that support business activity and social cohesion."

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Ethiopia launches first national anti-trafficking hotline to protect vulnerable individuals



Ethiopia's Ministry of Justice, with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), has launched the country's first national anti-trafficking hotline.

The hotline, accessible through the short code 8797, is a toll-free

service available nationwide in four languages: Amharic, Afan Oromo, English and Tigrigna. The hotline provides vital information on safe migration, the risks of irregular migration including trafficking in persons, as well as mental health and psychosocial support, access to free

legal aid, and referrals for victims.

High-level government officials, including the State Minister of the Ministry of Justice, IOM's Chief of Mission, representatives from international organizations and the diplomatic community, civil society, survivor-led organizations, and media houses attended the launch ceremony. The event featured a musical performance and a short play by a survivor organization, a presentation on the hotline's establishment and future plans, and a panel discussion with prominent hotline operators and counter-trafficking experts.

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PROSPERITY

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Hotline

From the courtroom to community shelters: Maria Munir's fight against gender-based violence

Maria Munir, a lawyer in her 60s, is one of Ethiopia's pioneering women's rights advocates. She has spent most of her life fighting violence against women and girls and promoting gender equality. Maria is the founder and Executive Director of the Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD), UN Women Ethiopia's key implementing partner.

Established in 2005, AWSAD provides shelter and comprehensive essential services to survivors of sexual violence, including counseling, medical care, legal aid, and skills training to help them reintegrate into society.

While serving as a judge at the Federal High Court, Maria witnessed the challenges women faced in accessing justice. This experience led her and fellow female lawyers to establish the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) in 1995. "I became a strong advocate for women's rights through

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the provision of legal aid to ensure equal access to justice and to push for law reforms that protect women's rights," Maria said.

AWSAD also provides multisectoral training for service providers at both institutional and community levels, helping ensure that gender issues are well understood and mainstreamed

into violence prevention and response services.

Maria is often seen with survivors at AWSAD, engaging in art and craft activities—an important part of the healing process.

[Full story](#)

Innovative projects for livelihood transformation

"My life was once filled with misery and hunger, and I witnessed many deaths in my neighborhood. But now, thanks to this irrigation project, I'm seeing a complete transformation in my community," says Kin Johead, a 40-year-old mother of five and a beneficiary of WFP's Cillan Irrigation Project in Ethiopia's Somali region. Kin is determined to do everything she can to ensure the project's continued success.

In the arid Somali Region, where droughts and food insecurity are persistent challenges, the World Food Programme (WFP) has launched two groundbreaking irrigation projects that are already improving food security and changing lives.

Cillan, a desert-like lowland in the Shebelle zone, suffers from severe water scarcity, affecting both the community and their livestock—central to their livelihoods, economy,



and culture.

"Like many in the Somali Region, the Cillan community has endured the devastating effects of climate change. Located in Ethiopia's arid and semi-arid lands, they face recurring droughts and occasional floods," explains Peter

Weke, Programme Officer at WFP's Gode sub-office.

[Full story](#)

Bridging the gap



Tesfaye has spent his career transforming the household latrines in his home village in Bushera, Misrak Bedawecho woreda (district). He often upgrades his customers' mud floors that absorb urine and attract flies into a cleaner, more hygienic space with a durable concrete floor and a SATO Pan.

Tesfaye isn't just a mason; he is a pioneer. In 2015, he received specialized training in manufacturing and installing concrete slabs. With this new skill and a vision for a healthier village, he launched Lakilina Sanitation

Enterprise with his friends. Their goal was to provide better sanitation solutions and generate income.

Over the years, the enterprise flourished, selling and installing more than 7,000 concrete slabs in 10 years. However, the high cost and weight of the slabs made transportation difficult, limiting access for remote households. Then, plastic latrine products entered the market, revolutionizing sanitation solutions. These lightweight, affordable slabs made latrine upgrades accessible to even the most remote communities. In the past year, Tesfaye and his team

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installed over 1,000 SATO Pans.

Despite his success, Tesfaye faced another hurdle: he did not have a dedicated space to showcase his products. "I always dreamed of owning a shop where people could see, learn, and buy better latrine solutions," he said. Recognizing his dedication, the Make a Splash phase three (MaS III) project, a global partnership between UNICEF and LIXIL, provided financial assistance to help him build his dream shop.

[Full story](#)

Boosting healthcare delivery through strengthening supply chain



UNOPS Ethiopia has handed over a fleet of vital equipment to the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service (EPSS), marking a major milestone in the country's efforts to ensure reliable distribution of medical supplies to health facilities nationwide. This procurement, conducted

on behalf of EPSS, represents a significant step forward in its mission to strengthen the distribution of healthcare supplies to health facilities nationwide.

The newly delivered equipment includes a wide array of vehicles and

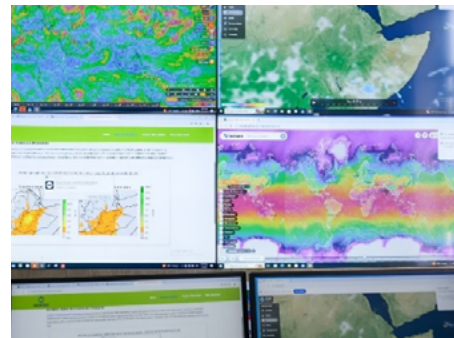
With these resources, the Ethiopian Pharmaceutical Supply Service (EPSS) will be able to expand its reach, delivering critical medical supplies more efficiently, even to the most remote corners of the country.

tools essential for logistics and cold chain management: two refrigerator trucks, 16 land cruisers, 10 refrigerated euro cargo trucks, 10 mini-vans, 4 Trakker mini-vans with cargo boxes, 19 motorcycles, 18 generators, cold chain equipment, spare parts and accessories, a forklift, and even a floor cleaning machine.

Each item is equipped with modern safety features and eco-conscious technology—designed not just to do the job, but to do it well and sustainably. With these resources, EPSS will be able to expand its reach, delivering critical medical supplies more efficiently, even to the most remote corners of the country.

[Full story](#)

Building resilience through hydrological early warnings: Ethiopia and WMO advance climate action



World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is supporting Ethiopia's path to climate resilience through early warning systems.

Ethiopia is increasingly vulnerable to the growing threat of climate extremes. From devastating floods to prolonged droughts, these events are straining water resources, disrupting communities, and threatening key sectors like agriculture, energy, and infrastructure. In response, the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI), with the support of the

World Meteorological Organization (WMO), is taking strategic steps to strengthen hydrological early warning systems as part of a broader push for climate resilience.

Under the umbrella of the Water at the Heart of Climate Action (WHCA) project, implemented across five Nile Basin countries and aligned with the Early Warnings for All global initiative, WMO is working closely with Ethiopia to improve the tools, systems, and technical capabilities required for timely,

accurate, and actionable flood and drought forecasts.

In April 2025, a series of technical workshops held in Addis Ababa marked a significant leap forward. These workshops, organized by EMI and WMO, brought together national experts, regional partners, and global stakeholders to co-design systems that reflect both local priorities and global best practices.

[Full story](#)

In Ethiopia's drought prone regions, early action is saving lives and building resilient future

It is a sunny morning in Dollow village, community members file into the townhall, where local authorities, regional disaster risk management Bureau and WFP staff are waiting to speak with them. small town in Ethiopia's Somali region, a region still recovering from the 2020-2022 drought—the worst in the Horn of Africa's recent history.

This is a critical meeting where early warning messages are delivered to local communities. The message for this session: there will be below normal rains in this season, protect your livestock and livelihoods, stock up on food and fodder, and prepare for what is to come.

Habiba Abdulahi joins her neighbours to listen to the early warning messages. "In the meeting, we heard that the rain may not come," says



Habiba. "We knew they were right because there is no moisture in the air." She recalls the previous droughts where communities endured extreme hardships and lost their livestock and means of

livelihoods.

[Full story](#)

Modern leather facilities to boost jobs, quality, and sustainability in Ethiopia



UNIDO, EU, and Ethiopia's Ministry of Industry launched leather facilities and labs to boost value chain, job creation, and women's empowerment under LISEC project.

UNIDO in partnership with the European Union and Ministry of Industry has recently inaugurated and handed over footwear and leather goods manufacturing facility, leather industry satellite laboratory in Mojo and modern slaughtering machines for abattoirs in Adama, Addis Ababa and Mojo cities to upgrade leather upstream value chain and employment creation.

Funded by the European Union (EU), the project known as "Leather Initiative for Sustainable Employment Creation – LISEC" was implemented by UNIDO focusing on improving

the leather value chain development including better collection and processing of raw hides and skins, capacity building of tanneries for production quality and global competitiveness, inclusive investment in youth jobs creation through establishing common manufacturing facility and skills training as well as promoting occupational safety and health and women empowerment in the leather industry.

Decent jobs

To unlock the employment potential of the leather sector, the project

established a modern footwear and leather goods facility, fitted with state-of-the-art machines and tools as well as supplied by inputs. Over 72 (70% women) unemployed youth and women joined a dynamic group of youth-led small and medium manufacturing cluster and cooperative and received leather products, footwear and leather goods manufacturing skills – from professional trainers before they fully engaged in the production process.

[Full story](#)

PROSPERITY

The breaking point: What happens when HIV services stop

In April 2025, silence fell over Bahir Dar. Once a lifeline for people living with HIV, key populations, and young people—as the US funding pause began to bite. Funding cuts disrupted services. A few held on without salaries but eventually, even they stopped showing up. Confused and anxious clients arrived to find the gates closed. Some waited. Others turned away.

The crisis quickly spread from Bahir Dar, where key population programmes came to a halt. Outreach workers, who had built trust door by door, were laid off. Fear took hold. Clients asked for

"I often find myself overwhelmed with stress," said a woman from a women led association. "If the medicine and other services stop coming, where will I go? I simply don't have the financial means to afford the treatment I need."

extra medication, unsure whether services would return. Peer support groups vanished, and with them, protection against stigma and transmission.

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afford the treatment I need."

The data collated by the women-led association of people living with HIV is stark. For two months, no new clients have been enrolled in PrEP, the prevention prophylaxis taken orally that protects from HIV infection.

[Full story](#)

PEOPLE



Thirst for change: The fight for access to safe water

Rehabilitation of water infrastructure is transforming the lives of communities.



The girls' schooling also suffered due to this daily trek for water. Tiru Wolde, a 23-year-old student from Tsagibji, knows the sacrifices too well. "I used to wake at 3 am to fetch water. Sometimes I missed classes and even exams," she said. The impact of the water crisis was felt in every part of life. Mothers like Bayush Tamene would watch helplessly as their children fell sick with diarrhoea and waterborne diseases.

For as long as Amaru Wuldu can remember, girls in her villages woke up before dawn to strap an empty jerrycan to their backs and set out towards the river, a journey that often took hours. Those who owned donkeys could load them up with water containers; those who didn't bore the weight themselves.

For 25-year-old Amaru and thousands of women and girls living in the mountainous Abergele and Tsagibji woredas of Amhara region in northern Ethiopia, access to safe water has never been taken for granted. The rivers that snake through the valleys were their lifeline—and their greatest source of hardship.

A daily struggle for schoolgirls. Fetching water was not just exhausting; it was dangerous. Girls often walked in groups, accompanied by boys from their villages, hoping their presence would deter would-be attackers. But once the sun rose, the boys would leave, and the girls stayed

behind, vulnerable.

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When Amaru was pregnant she would only drink bottled water, an expensive decision.

For Ayalew Kassaye, a father and member of a local water committee, the reality was stark.

Mikun Health Center in Tsagibji, provides healthcare services for three kebeles, serving 16,410 people. Nirak Health Center in Abegele serves 21,090 people across six

kebeles.

Then came the conflict

Even before conflict erupted in northern Ethiopia, access to safe water was limited. In Abergele, just 30% of people had access to piped water. In Tsagibji, many relied on shallow ponds, which are unprotected and exposed to contamination.

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UN in Ethiopia



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