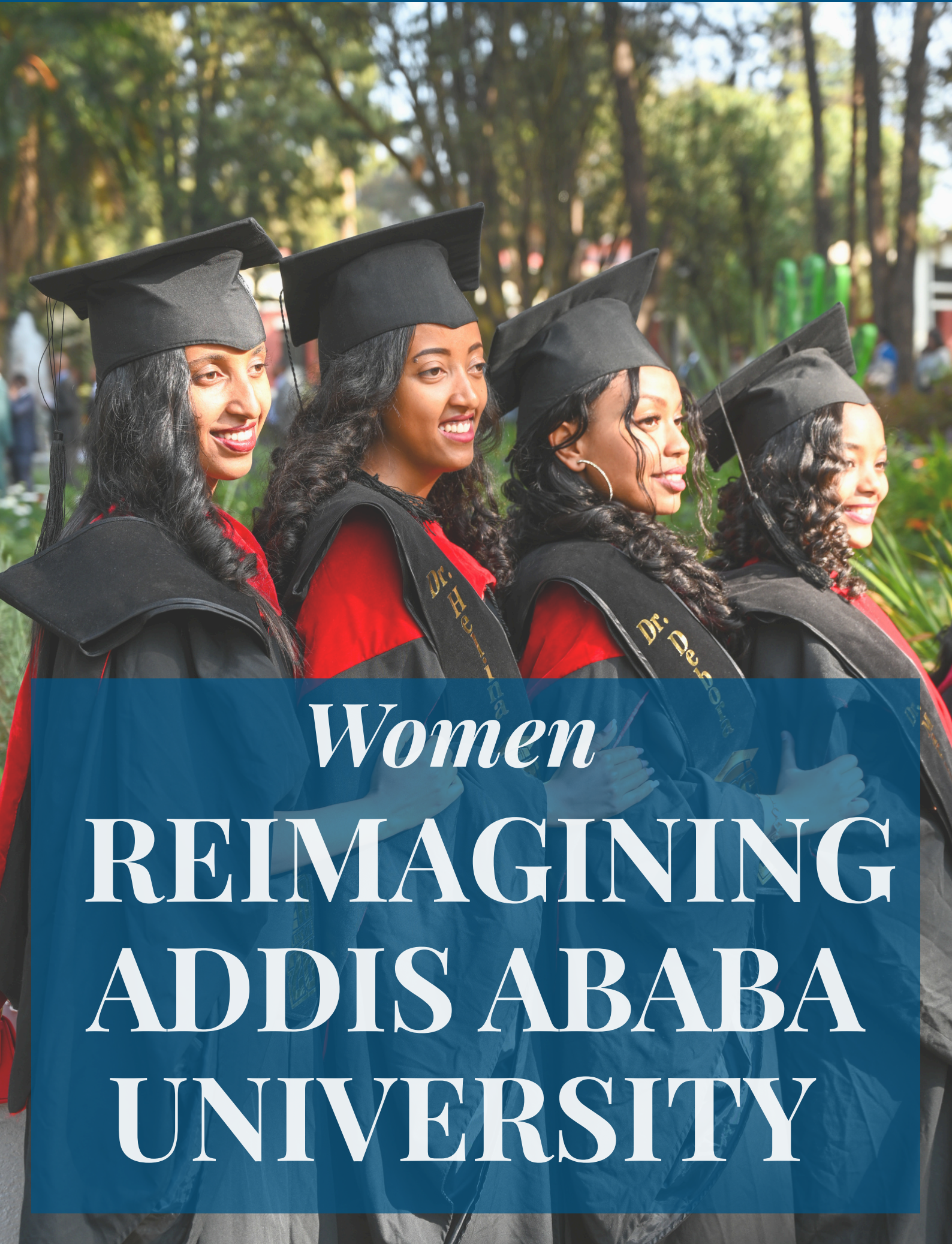




Women
**REIMAGINING
ADDIS ABABA
UNIVERSITY**



MAJOR EVENTS IN APRIL

**International Conference: IPORA
(Interdisciplinary Policy-Oriented Research
on Africa)**

Apr 1, 2026

**Panel Discussion: 60 Years on Canada
Ethiopia Relations**

Apr 15, 2026

**Embassy of Sweden, Nordic Africa Institute
and AAU Academic celebration**

Apr 14 - 17, 2026

Message from the President

Dear Members of the AAU Community,

As we observe Women's Month at Addis Ababa University, I am pleased to join our academic community in recognizing and celebrating the invaluable contributions of women who continue to shape the present and future of our institution.

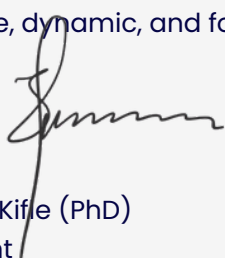
This month's AAU Connect theme, "Women Reimagining Addis Ababa University," reflects a powerful reality: women are not only participating in the life of the university, but are actively redefining its values, priorities, and direction. Across all our campuses, women are contributing as scholars, educators, researchers, administrators, and students, each playing a vital role in advancing academic excellence and institutional transformation.

At AAU, we recognize that meaningful progress in higher education is inseparable from gender equity. Over the years, we have taken important steps to expand opportunities for women in leadership, research, and academic engagement. These efforts include strengthening institutional support systems, expanding mentorship opportunities, and promoting inclusive participation across disciplines. However, we also acknowledge that sustained work remains necessary to ensure full and equal representation at all levels of the university.

The presence and impact of women at AAU are evident in every faculty and department. From groundbreaking research to dedicated teaching and committed service, women continue to enrich our academic environment and inspire future generations. Their contributions are not only advancing knowledge but also reshaping institutional culture in ways that promote inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation.

On this occasion, I extend my deep appreciation to all women of Addis Ababa University, students, faculty members, researchers, and professional staff. Your dedication, resilience, and leadership are essential to the progress of this institution.

As we move forward, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to building a university where women are fully empowered to lead, innovate, and thrive. Together, we can continue to reimagine AAU as a more equitable, dynamic, and forward-looking institution.



Samuel Kifle (PhD)
President
Addis Ababa University (AAU)



WOMEN REIMAGINING ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

Addis Ababa University marked Women's Month with a series of events, dialogues, and recognitions highlighting the transformative role of women in reshaping the academic, research, and institutional landscape of the university.

Throughout the month, AAU hosted panel discussions, exhibitions, and interactive forums that brought together students, faculty members, researchers, and administrative staff. These gatherings provided a platform for reflection on progress made in advancing gender equity, while also identifying areas that require continued attention and institutional strengthening.

Women at AAU are increasingly central to the university's mission of teaching, research, and community engagement. In classrooms, laboratories, and field research environments, women scholars are contributing to knowledge production and innovation across diverse disciplines, including science and technology, health sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Their work continues to enhance AAU's academic reputation and societal impact.

The celebrations also placed strong emphasis on student experiences. Female students from various colleges shared their academic journeys, highlighting both achievements and challenges. Many spoke about the importance of mentorship, academic support systems, and institutional initiatives aimed at expanding access and participation, particularly in fields where women have historically been underrepresented.

Despite encouraging progress, discussions throughout the month also underscored persistent structural challenges. These include limited representation of women in senior academic and leadership positions, uneven access to research opportunities, and broader institutional and societal barriers that affect career progression. Participants consistently called for stronger, more sustained efforts to address these gaps through policy implementation, capacity building, and institutional accountability.

A recurring theme across all events was the idea of transformation through participation. Rather than being passive beneficiaries of change, women at AAU were recognized as active contributors to reshaping the university's identity and future direction. Their leadership in research projects, academic governance, student mentorship, and community engagement continues to influence institutional development in meaningful ways.

The month also featured recognition of outstanding women whose contributions have significantly impacted the university community. Honorees were acknowledged for excellence in teaching, research innovation, leadership, and service. Their achievements serve as both inspiration and evidence of the growing impact of women across all spheres of AAU life.

In addition to formal programs, informal dialogues and storytelling sessions provided space for personal reflection and shared experiences. These conversations revealed common themes of perseverance, ambition, and commitment to academic excellence, while also highlighting the importance of supportive environments in enabling women to succeed.

As Addis Ababa University continues to expand its academic and research profile, gender equity remains a key institutional priority. Ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening mentorship, increasing representation, and supporting career development are part of broader efforts to build a more inclusive academic environment.

Ultimately, this month's theme of AAU Connect "Women Reimagining Addis Ababa University" captures both the progress achieved and the vision ahead. It recognizes that the transformation of the university is not a distant goal, but an ongoing process shaped by the contributions, leadership, and creativity of its women.



All Top Honors Awarded to Female Graduates as AAU Produces 263 Medical Professionals

The College of Health Sciences (CHS) at Addis Ababa University (AAU) has graduated 263 health professionals in Medicine, Anesthesia, and Dental Medicine during a ceremony held at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) Hall.

Among the graduates, 145 were male and 118 female, marking another milestone in the university's continued contribution to strengthening Ethiopia's healthcare workforce.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Mekdes Daba, Minister of Health, commended Addis Ababa University for producing professionals who serve in leading roles both in Ethiopia and internationally. She noted that the achievements of AAU graduates reflect the institution's strong academic reputation and impact.

"The certificate you have received today is not the end of your education but the beginning of your service," she said, encouraging graduates to dedicate their knowledge and skills to the well-being of society. "I have faith that you will have great hopes for Ethiopia."

In his presidential message, Dr. Samuel Kifle, President of Addis Ababa University, highlighted the university's longstanding contribution to national development. He stated that over the past 75 years, AAU has produced nearly 300,000 graduates who have played significant roles in Ethiopia's scientific, social, and political spheres.

He further emphasized that the College of Health Sciences has produced highly respected professionals recognized across Africa and globally, making it a source of pride for the university.

Welcoming participants at the ceremony, Dr. Rahel Argaw, Chief Executive Director of the College of Health Sciences, underscored that medicine is a rapidly evolving field driven by technological advancement, research, and innovations in patient care. She encouraged the graduates to remain committed to lifelong learning and to prepare themselves for future challenges through dedication and hard work.

The ceremony also recognized outstanding academic performers. All gold medal recipients were female, demonstrating exceptional academic excellence:

- Meron Legesse – School of Dental Medicine (CGPA: 3.95)
- Etseubdenk Getu – School of Medicine (CGPA: 3.93)
- Tsion Yilma – School of Medicine (CGPA: 3.93)
- Rukeya Yiha – School of Anesthesia (CGPA: 3.80)

The event was attended by university senior officials, faculty members, and families of the graduates. The Addis Ababa University Cultural Center enriched the celebration with a musical performance.





CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN'S VOICES: A MILESTONE IN ETHIOPIA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS EQUITY

Addis Ababa University (AAU) recently commemorated the 50th anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8, with a significant gathering that included representatives from various organizations such as the Office of Addis Ababa City Administration for Children, Women and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration. The celebration was held under the theme, "The 50 Years Women's Voice Dynamism towards a Developed Ethiopia."

In his opening remarks, Samuel Kifle (PhD), President of AAU, emphasized the pivotal role Ethiopian women have played in shaping the nation's socio-economic and political landscape over the past fifty years. He acknowledged their contributions to historical milestones, including the struggle for independence and the significant victory at Adwa 130 years ago.

Despite these achievements, Dr. Samuel lamented that gender disparities persist, particularly in democratic and human rights spheres. He cited international research highlighting wage inequality between men and women occupying similar roles, underscoring systemic gender biases that continue to hamper progress.

Dr. Samuel also noted recent affirmative actions over the past three to four decades aimed at elevating women's representation in various sectors, including education, health, and leadership. He highlighted milestones such as the appointment of Ethiopia's first female state president, president of the Supreme Court, President of the Electoral Board, and mayor of Addis Ababa City.

However, he called attention to the need for ongoing efforts to enhance women's representation, particularly in higher educational and managerial positions. Despite the near 50% enrolment of female undergraduates at AAU, participation in graduate programs remains disproportionately low.

H.E. Yasmin Wohabrebbi, State Minister at the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, praised the significance of March 8 as a symbol of knowledge and social change. She asserted that the achievements of women in fields such as science and policy framing underscore the idea that knowledge transcends gender. The Minister urged female professionals to take on mentoring roles, actively shaping the next generation and addressing entrenched societal norms that hinder progress.

Professor Alemayehu Gebremariam, Director for Diversity, Inclusivity, and Fairness at AAU, provided an insightful analysis of women's representation in government roles. He noted historical challenges limiting female participation, particularly during Ethiopia's monarchy. He attributed the progress made since the 1950s and 1960s, in part, to the students' national movement and women's active involvement in the struggle for independence. Dr. Bezawit Ketema from AAU's College of Health Sciences emphasized the transformational role of female educators. She pointed out the dual responsibility of women in academia—not only as educators but as leaders shaping future generations. Dr. Bezawit called for a focused dialogue on the challenges faced by women in education and the strategies required to cultivate more female leaders in Ethiopia.

The event served not only as a celebration of achievements but also as a rallying voice for continued advocacy and action to address gender disparities across all sectors of society. As participants reflected on the past fifty years, there was a palpable sense of urgency to ensure that the voices of women remain at the forefront of Ethiopia's ongoing journey toward equity and national development.



AAU Health Researchers Mark International Women's Day with Call for Action on Gender Equality

The Women's Health Research Working Group (WHRWG) at Addis Ababa University commemorated International Women's Day on March 6, 2026, at the College of Health Sciences. The event was held under the global theme, "Rights, Justice, Action for All Women and Girls."

Speaking at the event, Wro. Mehrete Kirstos Tameru, Executive for Women and Social Affairs Mainstreaming Implementation at the Ministry of Education Ethiopia, highlighted ongoing national efforts to increase the participation of women in education and research. She noted that significant progress has been made over the past decade, particularly in advancing women's roles in health leadership, research, and education.

Professor Worash Getaneh, Vice President for Research and Innovation at AAU, emphasized that inclusiveness and solidarity are core institutional values. He stated that the university is actively working to institutionalize gender equality across its three pillars—education, research, and community service.

Dr. Rahel Argaw, Chief Executive Director of the College of Health Sciences, commended the working group for its contributions and underscored the importance of conducting coordinated, action-oriented research to address women's health challenges.

Dr. Meselech Assegid, Chairperson of WHRWG, presented the group's key milestones since its establishment, highlighting its role in strengthening research capacity and supporting female academics.

The event brought together university leadership, female researchers, students, and invited guests to promote gender equality and recognize the critical contributions of women in the research landscape. Awards and certificates were presented to outstanding participants, and research findings were shared during the program.

Established in July 2016, the Women's Health Research Working Group aims to enhance local capacity for high-quality, impactful research by empowering and mentoring early-career female faculty members.





Addis Ababa University Expands Institutional Structures to Strengthen Women's Participation

Addis Ababa University has announced plans to expand its institutional frameworks to enhance the participation and inclusion of women across the university.

The announcement was made during the celebration of International Women's Day, organized by the Directorate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The event, held on campus, marked the 50th anniversary of the day's observance in Ethiopia and the 115th globally.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Tekalign Ayalewu, Chief Director for Good Governance and Inclusiveness, described International Women's Day as a significant occasion that honors the struggles and achievements of women who have fought for equality and rights.

"This day commemorates the enduring efforts of women who have worked tirelessly to secure dignity, opportunity, and justice," he said.

Dr. Tekalign also highlighted this year's theme, "Give to Gen," which promotes a culture of generosity and mutual support, encouraging both individuals and institutions to invest in the advancement of future generations. He emphasized that expanding women's access to education and leadership opportunities is essential for achieving balanced and sustainable national development.

He further noted that the university is actively working to realize this vision by strengthening institutional structures under the Directorate of Good Governance and Inclusiveness to ensure women's full and meaningful participation in all aspects of university life.

In a related address, Professor Alemayehu Teklemariam, Director of the Directorate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, delivered welcoming remarks and outlined ongoing reforms. He explained that, as part of the university's broader institutional transformation, efforts are underway to enhance support systems for female students.

These initiatives include improving campus safety, expanding academic support services, and fostering a more inclusive and enabling learning environment.

The celebration brought together university leaders, invited guests, and students. Senior female officials shared their professional journeys and personal experiences, offering inspiration through their leadership and resilience.

The event also featured cultural performances and artistic presentations reflecting the significance of the day, adding a vibrant dimension to the celebration.





AAU and JICA Strengthen Academic Partnership Through Sustainable Peacebuilding Forum

An academic forum on sustainable peacebuilding was convened at Addis Ababa University in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), bringing together scholars, diplomats, and students for an engaging exchange of knowledge and experience. Organized by the university's Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), the forum highlighted Japan's experience and best practices in sustainable peacebuilding. The event created a platform for academic dialogue and shared learning on approaches to building resilient and peaceful societies.

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In his opening remarks, Addis Ababa University President Dr. Samuel Kifle underscored the strong and strategic partnership between the University and JICA. He noted that the existing cooperation agreement between the two institutions plays a pivotal role in advancing academic excellence, research collaboration, and institutional transformation. The President further emphasized that the forum marks an important milestone in deepening the knowledge-based partnership between the University and JICA.

Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Shibata Hironori, reflected on the longstanding and robust bilateral relations between Japan and Ethiopia. He reaffirmed Japan's continued commitment to supporting Ethiopia's peacebuilding initiatives and broader economic development efforts.

The academic session featured a presentation by Professor Hideaki Shimoda of the University of Tokyo, who shared insights into Japan's sustainable peacebuilding process and the significant social and economic transformations achieved through its initiatives. His presentation was followed by a vibrant discussion session, encouraging critical reflection and scholarly engagement.

The forum brought together invited guests, faculty members, and students, fostering meaningful dialogue on strategies for promoting sustainable peace and strengthening international academic cooperation.





AAU Launches Forum to Strengthen Industry Collaboration

The College of Natural and Computational Sciences at Addis Ababa University hosted its first Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Forum, underscoring the university's commitment to bridging gaps between academia and industry.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Bikila Workneh, Executive Dean of the College, emphasized that the forum marks a significant step in advancing collaboration with Ethiopia's industrial sector. He noted that the initiative aligns with the college's five-year strategic plan, which seeks to extend the university's impact beyond teaching and research by fostering partnerships that directly benefit society.

Dr. Bikila highlighted the importance of enhancing short training programs and tailoring student research to meet industry needs. He explained that future training initiatives will be designed to strengthen the industrial sector by equipping professionals with relevant skills and knowledge.

"Addis Ababa University represents the advancement of the nation. Both private and public entities should collaborate to benefit from the research and studies carried out here," Dr. Bikila stated. The forum also featured remarks from Dr. Debebe Worku, Director of the Food and Beverage Research and Development Center under the Ministry of Industry. He stressed that the platform will play a vital role in addressing professional and skill deficiencies in the industrial sector by fostering collaboration among key stakeholders.

The successful launch of the forum signals Addis Ababa University's growing role as a hub for knowledge exchange, innovation, and industry-driven development.

Addis Ababa University Pledges Support to Strengthen Resilient Education Systems

Addis Ababa University has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening resilient education systems during the presentation of a regional study covering Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia.

The research, coordinated by the College of Education and Language Studies, highlights the need for education systems that can withstand crises and adapt to future challenges.

Speaking at the event, Academic Vice President Dr. Jeilu Oumer emphasized AAU's ongoing role in supporting the sector through training, research, and innovation. He reiterated the university's commitment to contributing to education reform in collaboration with partners.

Experts at the event stressed that building resilient education systems requires inclusive approaches that address climate change, social protection, and peacebuilding.

The event brought together regional stakeholders, including government representatives and international organizations, to discuss key findings and policy recommendations.



AAU's Tikur Anbesa Hospital Expands Life-Saving Cardiac Care Through Norway Partnership



Tikur Anbesa Specialized Hospital (TASH), under the Addis Ababa University College of Health Sciences, continues to enhance its specialized cardiac services through a longstanding partnership with Haukeland University Hospital. Over the past decade, the collaboration has enabled life-saving treatment for more than 500 patients, focusing on complex heart surgeries and interventional cardiology.

Dr. Nigussie Bogale, an interventional cardiologist and Deputy Coordinator of the Norwegian Cardiac Team, noted that the current medical mission at TASH addresses conditions such as vascular narrowing, valve-related heart diseases, and left-sided heart failure. He emphasized that the program is grounded in scientific excellence, with continuous follow-ups and data-driven evaluations ensuring high standards of patient care.

Dr. Nigussie also highlighted that the collaboration between TASH and its international partners demonstrates how global expertise can effectively support the advancement of healthcare services in Ethiopia through strong institutional partnerships.

Dr. Desalew Mekonnen, a specialist in internal medicine and cardiology at TASH, underscored the academic and training benefits of the initiative. According to him, the program has significantly strengthened the hospital's capacity for clinical research while providing medical students from Addis Ababa University with valuable exposure to advanced cardiac procedures and surgical techniques.

In addition to providing specialized treatment, the team places strong emphasis on patient safety and long-term care by conducting regular health assessments for individuals treated through the program. The partnership continues to play an important role in expanding access to high-level cardiac care while strengthening local medical expertise.





International Social Work Day Celebrated at Addis Ababa University

International Social Work Day was marked with a series of community-focused activities at Addis Ababa University, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Association of Social Work Professionals and the Child Wellbeing Charity Group.

The event brought together members of the university community and featured a blood donation drive as well as organized visits to child support centers. This year's celebration stood out for its emphasis on practical, community-based humanitarian efforts.

Speaking at the event, Communication and Partnership Team Leader of the Ethiopian Association of Social Work Professionals, Asaderew Zerihun, highlighted that social work is inherently action-oriented and rooted in community service. He noted that organizing the celebration around volunteer activities reflects the true essence of the profession.

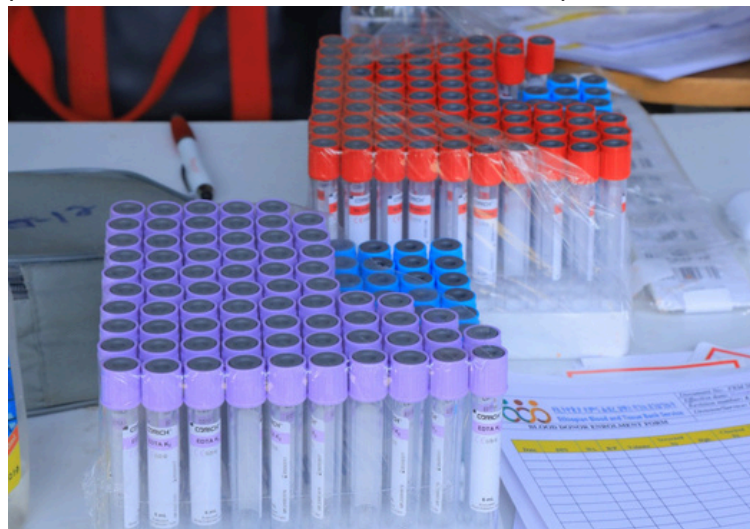
He also emphasized the pioneering role of Addis Ababa University in social work education, stating that the institution continues to produce a large number of trained professionals in the field.

According to him, hosting the event within the university provides students with valuable hands-on experience, enabling them to connect academic knowledge with real-world practice.



Students from the university's Department of Social Work who participated in the event said the celebration helped deepen their understanding of practical social work. They added that such initiatives play a significant role in raising public awareness about the importance of community service.

The day was officially commemorated at the university's main campus through the blood donation campaign and a visit to the Zewditu Mesesha Children's Support Center, reinforcing the commitment of social work professionals and students to serve society.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Strengthening Wildlife Research and Ecotourism as a Key Economic Pillar in Ethiopia: The Case of Chelekлека Wetlands

Bezawork Afework Bogale (PhD), Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Behaviour, Addis Ababa University



At Addis Ababa University, Bezawork Afework Bogale is helping reshape how we understand wetlands, wildlife, and their role in Ethiopia's future. Through her research on Chelekлека Wetland in Bishoftu, she is shedding light on a fragile ecosystem with remarkable ecological and economic potential.

Chelekлека Wetland, part of the Ethiopian Rift Valley system, is a seasonal floodplain filled with water during the rainy season and drying out completely during the dry months. While this cycle may seem limiting, Bezawork's research reveals the opposite: it is precisely this dynamic nature that makes the wetland so important for biodiversity.

Chelekлека Wetland, part of the Ethiopian Rift Valley system, is a seasonal flood plain, filled with water during the rainy season and drying out completely during the dry months. While this cycle may seem limiting, Bezawork's research reveals the opposite: it is precisely this dynamic nature that makes the wetland so important for biodiversity.

Her studies have documented an impressive 246 bird species in the area, nearly 28% of all bird species recorded in Ethiopia. Even more striking, about 46% of the bird species found across the Rift Valley ecosystem have been observed within this single wetland.

"This shows just how significant Chelekлека is," her research suggests, not only as a local habitat, but as a key ecological site at the national level.

One of the most important findings of her work is the wetland's role in supporting migratory birds. Around 40% of the species recorded are migratory or seasonal visitors, using Chelekлека as a place to rest, feed, and breed during long journeys. This makes the wetland an essential link in global bird migration routes.

Beyond its diversity, the wetland is also home to Ethiopia's unique birdlife, including endemic and near-endemic species found only in this region. According to Bezawork's research, Chelekлека provides critical spaces for feeding, nesting, and resting, making it indispensable for both resident and migratory birds.

However, her work also highlights growing concerns.

The wetland is under pressure from a range of human activities, including agricultural expansion, irrigation, pollution, and urban encroachment. Changes to natural water flow and runoff from Bishoftu town are further affecting the ecosystem. These challenges, if left unaddressed, could significantly reduce the wetland's ecological value.

Yet, Bezawork's research does not stop at identifying problems, it also points toward solutions.

She emphasizes that with proper conservation and management, Chelekлека Wetland could become a leading site for wildlife research and ecotourism in Ethiopia. Its close proximity to Addis Ababa makes it an ideal destination for birdwatchers, students, and researchers. As she highlights, the site has the potential to serve as a living laboratory, supporting both education and sustainable tourism.

This vision aligns with Ethiopia's broader development priorities, including efforts to build a climate-resilient green economy. By linking conservation with economic opportunity, Bezawork's work demonstrates how protecting natural ecosystems can also support national development.

Through her research, Bezawork Afework Bogale is not only documenting biodiversity, she is helping reimagine how Ethiopia's natural resources can be valued, protected, and sustained for future generations.

In doing so, she represents exactly what this issue of AAU Connect celebrates: women at Addis Ababa University who are reimagining the future through research, leadership, and impact.

MARCH'S ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT – RIGBE GEBREHAWARIA

A Human Rights Leader Advancing Inclusion, Justice, and Dignity



Under her leadership, the Commission conducted extensive human rights research, monitoring, investigation, and advocacy missions across Ethiopia, addressing both systemic and urgent violations. She also led internal inclusiveness reforms that significantly improved the Commission's accessibility for persons with disabilities and contributed to more inclusive laws, policies, and national reform initiatives.

Rigbe has played a key role in strengthening Ethiopia's engagement with regional and international human rights mechanisms. She is an expert member of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa. She has spearheaded the submission of human rights reports, including the first-ever complementary report by EHRC to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and she has been a leading advocate for the rights of older persons, actively advancing calls for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Leadership Beyond Public Office

Rigbe's leadership spans civil society and governance. Starting her career at the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD), she has held strategic leadership roles in regional and national CSOs. Beyond institutions, she champions disability rights through art and storytelling, notably the Inclusive Fashion Show and her LinkedIn newsletter, Disabled Voices. A 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow, Rigbe mentors emerging leaders and inspires AAU graduates to pursue justice and inclusion through her work.



A proud Addis Ababa University alumna and woman leader with a disability, Rigbe earned her Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in 2007 and Master of Social Work (MSW) in 2011. Her interdisciplinary training has fueled nearly two decades of leadership advancing human rights.

In March 2026, Rigbe Gebrehawaria received the Outstanding Human Rights Defender Award in recognition of her sustained contributions to human rights protection, advocacy, and institutional reform. She is currently a candidate for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The election is scheduled for June 2026, marking a significant milestone for Ethiopia's engagement with the global human rights system.

Leadership in Institutional Reform: Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Rigbe most recently served as Commissioner for Women, Children, Older Persons, and Disability Rights at the EHRC, heading one of the Commission's most extensive thematic portfolios. In this role, she designed and led strategic interventions, oversaw implementation, managed multidisciplinary teams, and spearheaded thematic human rights reports. A defining achievement of her tenure was establishing and leading EHRC's Department for older Persons and disability rights, institutionalizing sustained attention to these rights within the national human rights system.

SDSN AND AAU DRIVING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND COLLABORATION

PARTNER OF THE MONTH



The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) is a global initiative established under the auspices of the United Nations to mobilize universities, research centers, and partners in advancing practical solutions for sustainable development. Its work focuses on translating research into action and supporting evidence-based policies that address global challenges such as climate change, inequality, education, and sustainable economic growth.

At Addis Ababa University, an important milestone has been reached in strengthening this global partnership through the planned operationalization of the SDSN Africa Center at AAU. Key steps have already been taken, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and continued high-level discussions on how to effectively establish and operationalize the Center within the university. This development marks a significant moment in AAU's growing engagement with global sustainability networks.

Once fully operational, the SDSN Africa Center at AAU is expected to serve as a major regional hub connecting researchers, policymakers, and institutions across Africa. It will support collaborative research, capacity building, and policy engagement aimed at advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in African contexts. The Center is also expected to strengthen AAU's role as a leading academic institution in shaping development-oriented knowledge on the continent.

Beyond its academic and policy relevance, the SDSN partnership also carries strong implications for inclusion and equity. A key focus of SDSN's global agenda is ensuring that sustainable development processes are inclusive, particularly by amplifying the role of women and marginalized groups. In this regard, the Center is expected to contribute to expanding opportunities for women in research, leadership, and policy engagement, while promoting gender-responsive approaches to development challenges.

This focus strongly aligns with the theme of this edition, *"Women Reimagining Addis Ababa University,"* as women at AAU continue to play a central role in advancing research, innovation, and institutional transformation. The SDSN partnership provides an important platform for further strengthening their participation in global knowledge networks and sustainability-driven initiatives.

For Addis Ababa University, the SDSN Africa Center represents more than a partnership, it is a strategic opportunity. It reinforces AAU's position as a regional leader in sustainability research, enhances its international visibility, and creates new pathways for interdisciplinary collaboration. Most importantly, it connects the university's academic work more directly to real-world policy and development challenges.

As the operationalization process moves forward, the SDSN Africa Center is expected to become a key pillar in AAU's efforts to promote sustainable development, inclusive growth, and knowledge-driven solutions for Africa's future.



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