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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
VOLUME XVIII

AAU CONNECT

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENNEDY MEMORIAL LIBRARY



MAJOR EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

- Freshers's Week Sep 16, 2026 to Sep 20, 2026
- Africa Water Security Conference (AWS-2026) Sep 21, 2026
- Launch of the U.S.–Africa Economic and Policy Dialogue Center.

AUGUST, 2026

Message from the President



Dear Addis Ababa University Community,

As we approach the start of the 2026/27 academic year (2019 E.C.), Addis Ababa University is entering the final stages of preparation to welcome our students back to campus this September. August is a particularly important month in our academic calendar, a time to consolidate our efforts, complete essential preparations, and ensure that our academic community is ready for another year of learning, discovery, and achievement.

Over the past months, the University has worked diligently to strengthen its academic programs, improve institutional facilities, enhance student support services, and advance its research and innovation agenda. These efforts reflect our continued commitment to providing an enabling environment in which students can thrive, academics can excel, and research can generate meaningful contributions to society. As a university aspiring to become a leading research institution in Africa, we recognize that academic excellence begins with thoughtful preparation, institutional responsibility, and a shared commitment to our mission.

As we prepare to welcome both returning and newly admitted students, our responsibility extends beyond ensuring that classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and student facilities are ready. We must also foster a university environment that values intellectual curiosity, inclusivity, innovation, academic integrity, and a strong sense of belonging. Every student who joins our community should have the opportunity, resources, and encouragement to realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to the University's academic life.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all members of the AAU community whose dedication and hard work are making the new academic year possible. I look forward to welcoming our students back to campus in September and to another year of academic excellence, impactful research, and meaningful engagement.

Samuel Kifle (Ph.D)
President
Addis Ababa University

Generations of Knowledge: The Enduring Legacy of the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library and the Ethiopia–U.S. Partnership

> From its establishment in 1966 to its vision for a digitally transformed future, the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library has been more than a center of learning. It is a living testament to the power of education to build institutions, shape generations, and sustain friendships across borders.



There are places within a university that become inseparable from its identity. They are not defined merely by their walls, collections, or architecture, but by the generations who pass through them, the ideas they encounter, and the knowledge they carry beyond their doors. At Addis Ababa University, the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library is one such place.

For six decades, the library has been a witness to Ethiopia's changing academic landscape. Generations of students have walked its halls in pursuit of knowledge, researchers have drawn on its resources to advance scholarship, and academics have relied on its collections to teach, question, and discover. In the process, the library has become deeply woven into the intellectual history of Addis Ababa University and the wider story of higher education in Ethiopia.

Yet the story of the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library extends beyond the University and the country it serves. Established in 1966, it also represents an important chapter in the longstanding relationship between Ethiopia and the United States, a partnership in which higher education, academic exchange, and the pursuit of knowledge have played a defining role.

Sixty years after its establishment, the library's anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect not only on the institution it has become, but also on the enduring value of the partnership that helped shape its beginnings and continues to support its future.

A PARTNERSHIP ROOTED IN THE POWER OF EDUCATION

The establishment of the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library came at a significant moment in Ethiopia's development of modern higher education. As the country expanded its academic institutions and invested in building its intellectual capacity, international cooperation became an important part of that journey.

Cooperation between Ethiopia and the United States in higher education dates back to the 1950s, reflecting a shared recognition that universities are central to national development.

The J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library emerged from this broader history of academic cooperation. Named in memory of U.S. President John F. Kennedy, the library embodies a relationship that has endured through changing political, social, and educational landscapes. Its establishment represented more than the creation of a university facility. It reflected the role that international partnerships can play in building institutions whose impact extends across generations.

The library's six-decade journey is, in many ways, a reflection of the University's own transformation: from an institution serving the educational needs of its time to a leading center of higher learning and research with national, continental, and international ambitions.



WHERE GENERATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SCHOLARS BEGAN THEIR JOURNEY

The history of a university library is ultimately a history of the people who use it. Behind every collection, reading space, and academic resource are countless individual journeys of discovery and achievement.

The library's contribution is also reflected in the diverse paths taken by those who have studied within its walls. This generational significance was underscored by H.E. Kora Tushune, State Minister of Education, during the 60th anniversary celebration. Describing the library as more than a physical structure, he emphasized its place in Ethiopia's intellectual and educational heritage. "Generations of Ethiopians have passed through these halls to become scholars, scientists, public servants, leaders, and nation-builders," he remarked.

His observation captures an important dimension of the library's contribution. Its legacy cannot be measured solely by the number of books in its collections or the physical space it occupies. It is also reflected in the knowledge it has helped cultivate, the academic communities it has supported, and the generations of Ethiopians whose education has been shaped by access to learning.

The 60th anniversary celebration brought together academic and government leadership, as well as representatives of the United States, highlighting the library's importance as both a national academic institution and a symbol of international friendship.

H.E. Ervin Jose Massinga, Ambassador of the United States to Ethiopia, reaffirmed the library's significance within the broader relationship between the two countries, describing it as one of the most visible symbols of their enduring partnership.

"The J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library remains one of the most visible symbols of the enduring partnership between Ethiopia and the United States," Ambassador Massinga said.

He highlighted the library's continuing role as a vibrant academic resource serving thousands of students and reaffirmed the U.S. government's commitment to its preservation. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has placed the library under the Ambassador's primary responsibility for cultural preservation, further underscoring the institution's historical importance and the value of continued cooperation with Addis Ababa University. The support extended toward the library's renovation represents a tangible expression of this commitment.

THE LIBRARY IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

While the library's history is rooted in the academic traditions of the past six decades, its future will be shaped by the changing demands of higher education and the possibilities offered by new technologies.

The contemporary university library is no longer defined exclusively by its physical collections. Digital resources, electronic databases, research support services, collaborative learning environments, and emerging technologies are transforming how knowledge is accessed, produced, preserved, and shared.



For the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library, this transformation presents an opportunity to build on its distinguished history while responding to the evolving needs of students, faculty members, and researchers. Its strategic vision is to integrate its historical legacy with modern library services, digital technologies, enhanced research support, and innovative learning spaces.

This vision aligns with Addis Ababa University's broader commitment to digital transformation, academic excellence, and the development of a world-class research and learning environment. As access to digital knowledge becomes increasingly important to academic participation and international research collaboration, the library has an important role to play in connecting the University's academic community to wider networks of knowledge.

Six Decades of Friendship, A Future of Possibilities

At the anniversary celebration, Dr. Jeilu Oumer, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Addis Ababa University, reaffirmed the library's central role in the University's academic journey. He highlighted its six-decade contribution to scholarship, research, knowledge exchange, and cultural preservation, recognizing the generations of students and academics whose work has been supported by the institution. Sixty years after its establishment, the J.F. Kennedy Memorial Library stands at the intersection of history and possibility.

AAU Office of Research Administration Reviews Progress of Thematic Research Grant Projects



The Office of Research Administration (ORA) at Addis Ababa University (AAU) has successfully concluded a three-day roundtable discussion to review the annual progress of AAU's thematic research grant projects. Held on July 29, July 30, and August 3, 2026, the discussions brought together more than 120 Principal Investigators (PIs) from across the University's colleges, schools, and research institutes.

The forum served as an important platform for researchers and ORA officials to assess the implementation of thematic research projects, share experiences, address common challenges, and identify practical strategies for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of AAU's flagship research funding initiative.

Opening the event, Prof. Fekadu Gashaw, Director of the Office of Research Administration, underscored the importance of sustained engagement with researchers to ensure the successful implementation of thematic research projects and maximize their contribution to the University's research priorities and Ethiopia's national development agenda..

He noted that the annual review reflects ORA's commitment to strengthening research governance, providing timely institutional support, and fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and research excellence across the University.

During the interactive sessions, Principal Investigators presented updates on their respective projects, highlighting major accomplishments, implementation challenges, expected research outputs, and lessons that could benefit other grant recipients. Participants also outlined the support required from ORA to improve project execution and research outcomes.

In response, ORA outlined ongoing support mechanisms and proposed additional measures to facilitate smoother project implementation and improve research productivity.

The annual progress review reaffirmed Addis Ababa University's commitment to advancing a vibrant research ecosystem through continuous dialogue, evidence-based monitoring, and responsive institutional support. The Office of Research Administration reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with researchers to ensure that thematic research projects produce high-quality scientific outputs, innovative solutions, and meaningful contributions to national development and the University's strategic vision.



Addis Ababa University Achieves GFGP Platinum Certification, Strengthening Its Global Research Credibility



Addis Ababa University (AAU) has achieved a major milestone in institutional governance and research administration by receiving the Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) Platinum Tier Certificate of Compliance—the highest level of recognition under the GFGP standard.

The certification recognizes AAU's compliance with internationally benchmarked practices in financial management, procurement, human resources, governance, and research grant administration, further strengthening the University's capacity to manage complex research grants and international partnerships.

The certification follows a rigorous assessment process supported by the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA) and conducted by the African Academy of Sciences (AAS). The institutional transformation leading to the certification was significantly supported by the Research and Excellence in African Capacity to Control and Treat CANcer (REACCT-CAN) program, a regional initiative led by AAU to advance cancer research, training, and institutional capacity across Africa.



Speaking at the official certificate handover ceremony, AAU Vice President for Research and Innovation, Prof. Worash Getaneh, described the achievement as a significant milestone in the University's efforts to strengthen research governance and institutional excellence.

The achievement was spearheaded by the REACCT-CAN project team, under the leadership of Dr. Adamu Addissie of the College of Health Sciences, in collaboration with AAU's Budget and Finance, Human Resource, and Procurement offices.

The certification is expected to further enhance AAU's position as a credible and trusted partner for international research organizations and funding institutions. By demonstrating compliance with internationally recognized grant management standards, the University can facilitate due diligence processes and strengthen its competitiveness in securing major international research grants.

The strengthened institutional systems will also support the effective implementation of major scientific and health research programs, including initiatives focused on cancer research, prevention and treatment, and broader public health priorities.

The achievement comes at a significant time as AAU continues to expand its research, innovation, and international engagement agenda. The GFGP Platinum certification provides further evidence of the University's commitment to institutional accountability, research excellence, and responsible stewardship of research resources.

With this milestone, Addis Ababa University is strengthening its position as a leading African institution capable of hosting and managing high-value international research partnerships and contributing to scientific solutions to pressing health and development challenges across the continent.







Addis Ababa University Explores Partnership Opportunities with China's Dezhou University

Addis Ababa University (AAU) has held discussions with a delegation from Dezhou University of China to explore potential areas of collaboration in education, research, and technology development.

Dezhou University, which is recognized for its strong focus on automotive education and industry-oriented training, visited AAU to initiate dialogue on possible joint programs and cooperative activities between the two institutions.

The discussions centered on opportunities for collaboration in the automotive sector, particularly in research, training, and capacity building. The two universities also explored prospects for cooperation related to an electric vehicle maintenance center that Dezhou University plans to establish in Ethiopia.

Speaking during the meeting, Professor Matiwos Ensermu, Head of the Office of the President of Addis Ababa University, highlighted the wide-ranging reforms AAU has undertaken since attaining autonomous university status. He noted that these reforms have created new opportunities for strategic partnerships and innovation-driven collaboration.

Professor Matiwos emphasized the potential for cooperation with AAU's College of Technology and Built Environment in areas such as joint research, student and staff exchange and training, technology transfer, and collaborative engagement with the University's startup ecosystem. He added that these initiatives could serve as a foundation for a long-term partnership between the two institutions.

Dezhou University President Wei Rongqing, for his part, commended Ethiopia's growing adoption of electric vehicles and expressed confidence in the prospects for collaboration with Addis Ababa University. He noted that AAU's position as one of Ethiopia's leading higher education institutions provides a strong basis for meaningful academic and technological cooperation.

President Wei further stated that Dezhou University is prepared to share its expertise and experience in automotive engineering and electric vehicle technologies, while contributing to the development of skilled professionals capable of supporting the sector's growth in Ethiopia.

As part of their visit, the Dezhou University delegation toured the College of Technology and Built Environment to gain firsthand insight into the College's academic programs, facilities, and ongoing activities, laying the groundwork for future collaboration between the two universities.

AAU CLINCHES AFRICAN REGIONAL TITLE AT FDI MOOT, ADVANCES TO GLOBAL FINALS IN SHENZHEN

Addis Ababa University (AAU) has emerged as the champion of the African Regional Round of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Moot, securing a place in the Global Finals scheduled to take place in Shenzhen, China, in October 2026. Held online from July 31 to August 2, 2026, the African Regional Round brought together 14 teams from across Africa, representing countries including Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, and others. Following a series of highly competitive rounds, the AAU FDI Moot Team advanced to the semifinals and finals, ultimately claiming the African Regional Championship.



The achievement is particularly significant as it marks AAU's first-ever participation in the FDI Moot. Despite competing against experienced teams from leading institutions across the continent, the AAU team demonstrated consistent performance, strong legal analysis, and effective advocacy throughout the competition.



The team's organizers attributed the victory to rigorous preparation, sustained practice, teamwork, and the ability to perform under pressure. Throughout the competition, participants were challenged to address complex legal arguments and procedural issues related to investor-state dispute settlement.

The FDI Moot is an international competition that simulates investor-state arbitration proceedings. It provides law students with an opportunity to develop practical skills in legal research, written submissions, oral advocacy, and the application of international investment law. The competition also exposes participants to issues involving the relationship between states' regulatory powers and their obligations toward foreign investors under international law.

By winning the African Regional Round, AAU has secured its place among the teams that will compete in the FDI Moot Global Finals, which will be held in Shenzhen, China, from October 23 to 27, 2026.

The AAU team was coached and led by Mr. Bereket Delessa, a legal expert and alumnus of AAU School of Law. Following the regional victory, Mr. Delessa expressed confidence in the team's ability to build on its achievement and make a strong showing at the global finals.

AAU's regional victory represents a significant achievement for the University's legal education and student development efforts. It also highlights the growing capacity of AAU law students to compete successfully in international academic and professional platforms.

As the team prepares for the Global Finals in Shenzhen, the AAU FDI Moot Team will continue its intensive preparation, building on the experience and momentum gained during the African Regional Round and representing Addis Ababa University and Ethiopia on the international stage.

EHJ 2026 FEATURES ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY'S DR. TSEHAY ADEME ON ETHIOPIAN GEʿEZ TEXTS AND THE RECEPTION OF JOEL

Addis Ababa University continues to underscore its growing influence in global scholarly exchange, with Dr. Tsehay Ademe Belay, an Addis Ababa University scholar, poised to present research on Ethiopian biblical, Geʿez, and manuscript traditions at the EHJ International Scholarly Online Conference in 2026.

The EHJ International Scholarly Online Conference brings together international researchers spanning biblical studies, archaeology, Hebrew and Semitic studies, Jewish studies, early Christianity, manuscript studies, textual criticism, history, theology, and digital humanities. Through its structured research tracks, the conference aims to highlight work with meaningful implications for international understanding across history, archaeology, religion, technology, and cultural scholarship.

Dr. Tsehay Ademe's conference presentation is scheduled for November 6, 2026. According to the event program, his work will focus on how Ethiopian manuscript traditions shape biblical interpretation, textual transmission, and biblical philology.

His upcoming talk will connect Ethiopian manuscript traditions and their role in the reception and transmission of biblical texts, particularly examining the continuity between Ethiopic (Geʿez) textual witnesses and wider textual lineages.

Dr. Tsehay's recent doctoral research at Addis Ababa University centred on the Ethiopic Book of Joel. His 2025 dissertation, titled "The Ethiopic Book of Joel: A Critical Edition, Annotated Translation and Its Reception," examined Geʿez manuscript witnesses from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. The study also considered how these witnesses relate to Greek and Hebrew textual traditions, offering a comparative perspective on textual history and interpretive development.

Building on this foundation, Dr. Tsehay's EHJ 2026 presentation will address questions of textual transmission, interpretation, and reception within Ethiopian biblical and manuscript traditions, placing the Geʿez textual world within a broader scholarly conversation on how sacred texts evolve across time and communities.

The conference program identifies Dr. Tsehay Ademe with the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University, highlighting the university's academic engagement in research that bridges philology, manuscript analysis, and theological interpretation.

EHJ 2026 is organized by the Institute for Hebrew Language and Literature, Belgrade, in association with the European Hebrew Journal, a Diamond Open Access scholarly journal. The conference is set to feature 38 confirmed international speakers, with Dr. Tsehay Ademe among them.

The focus of Dr. Tsehay's work, the Book of Joel, is a short prophetic text in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Often studied in sections, Joel addresses a period of crisis and emphasizes God's call to repentance. Its major themes include God's day/judgment and the hope of restoration, making it a particularly significant text for philological and interpretive study.

With Dr. Tsehay Ademe's upcoming presentation, Addis Ababa University is again positioned at the forefront of international scholarship, demonstrating how Ethiopian manuscript traditions continue to offer valuable insights into the history, meaning, and transmission of biblical texts.

AAU LAUNCHES WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP TO ADVANCE AI-ERA HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA



Addis Ababa University (AAU), in collaboration with UNESCO-ICHEI, has launched the Women Leading Project Workshop, bringing together higher education stakeholders to promote women's leadership and participation in the rapidly evolving era of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging digital technologies.

Organized by AAU's E-Learning Unit Coordination Office, the workshop is being conducted under the theme, "Women Leading Change in Africa: Future Higher Education Professionals and Leadership in the Intelligence Era." The initiative seeks to strengthen women's competencies in digital literacy, AI-related skills, and leadership, while fostering inclusive and future-oriented higher education systems across Africa.

Opening the workshop, Dr. Jeilu Oumer, Academic Vice President of AAU, underscored the transformative opportunities and challenges presented by the AI era. He noted that while female participation in undergraduate education is approaching parity with that of men, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in graduate studies and academic leadership positions.

Dr. Jeilu further highlighted the persistent gender gap in academic staffing, leadership roles, research engagement, senior academic ranks, and professorships, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to address these disparities.

"The training aims not only to facilitate the exchange of knowledge but also to reaffirm our commitment to a future in which women stand at the forefront of higher education leadership," he said. "Empowering women professionals is a strategic imperative for fostering innovation, resilience, and sustainable development."

Speaking at the event, Dr. Temtim Assefa, Head of AAU's E-Learning Unit Coordination Office, stated that the workshop is designed to enhance women's digital literacy and strengthen their participation in leadership roles within higher education institutions. He noted that women currently account for only about 20 percent of AAU's academic staff, a gap influenced by cultural and other systemic challenges.

According to Dr. Temtim, the training program covers a range of topics, including AI-powered tools for teaching and leadership, cybersecurity, digital publishing for professional visibility and growth, and AI-driven instructional design for the development and delivery of online and virtual courses.

He also acknowledged the longstanding support of UNESCO-ICHEI in advancing AAU's digital transformation efforts through various capacity-building initiatives, including training in online course design and certification programs that have contributed to enhancing the university's international visibility.

Looking ahead, Dr. Temtim indicated that the initiative is expected to transition to an online delivery model, enabling broader participation and creating opportunities for women professionals who may face challenges attending in-person training programs.

The workshop reflects AAU's continued commitment to advancing gender equity, digital transformation, and leadership development as part of its broader efforts to prepare higher education institutions for the opportunities and demands of the intelligence era.

AAU'S COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND AGRICULTURE HOLDS STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION WORKSHOP ON CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION



Addis Ababa, August 20, 2026 – The College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture (CVMA) of Addis Ababa University (AAU) is conducting a Stakeholder Validation Workshop as part of the university-wide Curriculum Transformation and Innovative Learning (CTIL-2026) initiative, a major academic reform program aimed at enhancing the quality, relevance, and responsiveness of academic offerings.

The workshop focuses on the validation of two undergraduate programs, twelve existing master's programs, and three new multidisciplinary master's programs developed under the curriculum transformation process.

The event has brought together key stakeholders and partners from government institutions, non-governmental organizations, private-sector organizations, and various academic units within and outside CVMA. Their participation is intended to ensure that the revised curricula align with current professional demands, national development priorities, and emerging global trends.

Participants were welcomed by Dr. Hika Waktole, Executive Dean of CVMA, while Prof. Hagos Ashenafi, representing Dr. Jeilu Oumer, Academic Vice President of Addis Ababa University, delivered the official opening remarks.

In his message, Prof. Hagos emphasized that the workshop represents a significant milestone in the collective effort to strengthen the relevance, quality, responsiveness, and future orientation of the university's academic programs. He noted that the validation exercise extends beyond the review of curriculum documents and serves as an important platform for assessing whether academic programs effectively address the evolving needs of students, professional sectors, communities, and national development goals within a rapidly changing global environment.

The workshop also highlighted the extensive commitment required to reach the stakeholder validation stage, including sustained engagement, teamwork, dedicated follow-up, and strong leadership.

Participants acknowledged the College of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture for its achievement, noting that it is the first college within Addis Ababa University to advance to this important stage of the CTIL-2026 curriculum transformation process.

The stakeholder validation workshop is expected to generate valuable feedback that will further strengthen the curricula and support AAU's broader efforts to modernize teaching and learning while producing graduates equipped to address contemporary challenges and opportunities.



Addis Ababa University to Launch East Africa's First Fully Online MBA Program

Addis Ababa University (AAU) has conducted a consultative workshop to launch of a fully online Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, marking a significant milestone in the University's digital transformation agenda and its commitment to expanding access to high-quality, technology-enabled postgraduate education.

Dr. Jeilu Oumer, Academic Vice President of AAU, during a consultation meeting held at Eshetu Chole Hall on August 6, 2026 noted that the new program is designed to provide flexible, learner-centered education that responds to the evolving demands of today's business environment while strengthening the University's leadership in digital higher education.

The online MBA is being developed under the Strengthening Digital Learning for Higher Education project through a partnership involving the Ministry of Education, the Mastercard Foundation, Arizona State University, and Shashone Company.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Jeilu highlighted digitalization as one of AAU's strategic priorities. He explained that the University has already revised curricula, introduced digital learning components across academic programs, and integrated artificial intelligence (AI) and information technology into teaching and learning

He added that all first-year undergraduate courses are currently delivered through a blended learning model that combines online and face-to-face instruction, with examinations also administered digitally.

Describing the initiative as a flagship project, Dr. Jeilu said the fully online MBA will serve as a model for expanding digital education across the University. Developed from the ground up by the Department of Management under the College of Business and Economics, the program is designed to address current market demands while equipping graduates with the professional competencies and practical skills sought by industry.

Concluding the consultation, Dr. Jeilu expressed appreciation to the Department of Management, the College of Business and Economics, the University's E-Learning Office, Information Technology teams, and international partners for their technical, financial, and institutional support in making the program a reality.

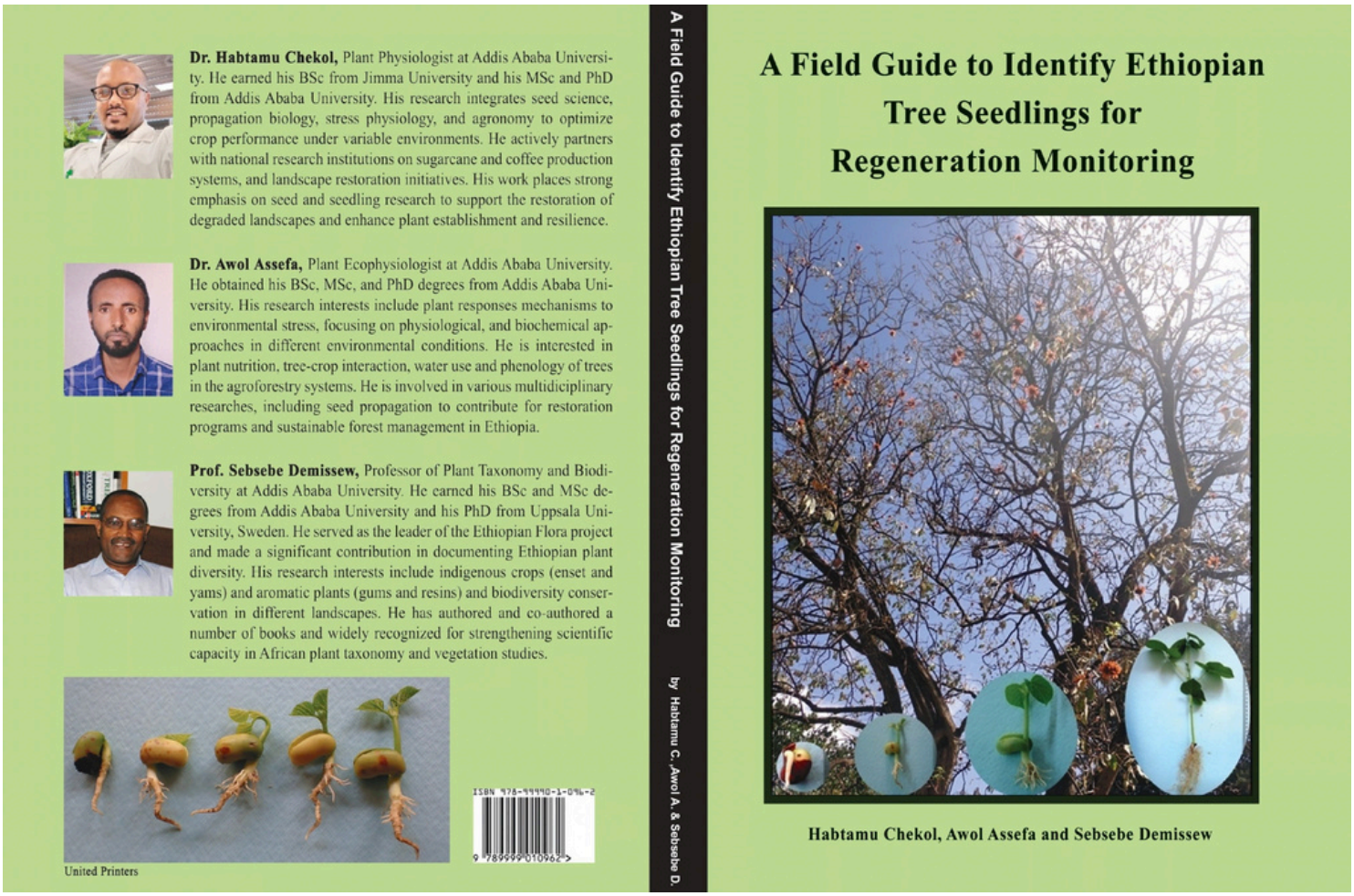
The launch of the fully online MBA also reflects Addis Ababa University's long-term vision of becoming a digitally empowered, research-intensive institution that leverages technology to expand access, improve educational quality, and enhance institutional competitiveness. As part of its strategic transformation agenda, the University is investing in digital infrastructure, e-learning platforms, innovative teaching methodologies, and emerging technologies to create a flexible and inclusive learning environment.

The online MBA represents an important step toward achieving this vision by demonstrating how technology can broaden educational opportunities, foster lifelong learning, and prepare graduates with the digital competencies required in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy.

A Field Guide to Identify Ethiopian Tree Seedlings for Regeneration Monitoring

Due to direct and indirect anthropogenic pressures, tropical deforestation has accelerated to unprecedented levels, imperiling the survival of countless tree species and disrupting ecosystem stability. Addressing this crisis demands concerted efforts in forest regeneration programs, with particular emphasis on tree seedlings, as they constitute the foundational recruitment pool that shapes the composition and resilience of future forests. Accurate identification of tree seedlings is indispensable for effective regeneration monitoring, which, in turn, provides critical insights into the long-term viability of natural forests. In this context, the development of comprehensive seedling description guides and identification tools is paramount, especially in regions like Ethiopia, where deforestation and land degradation pose acute threats to biodiversity. Besides, it also provides an opportunity to serve as a tool for nursery operators or for seedling survival monitoring in plantation programs.

Despite the pivotal role of seedlings in the early life cycle of woody plants, detailed morphological data remain scarce, hindering reliable species identification at this vulnerable stage. The importance of monitoring and documentation combined with the present knowledge gap underscores the urgency of creating specialized guides to facilitate precise and efficient seedling recognition.



In response to these imperatives, three of AAU's top researchers published: A Field Guide to Identify Ethiopian Tree Seedlings for Regeneration Monitoring. This resource is designed to enable the early-stage identification of 46 tree and shrub seedlings of Ethiopia, thereby supporting cost-effective management strategies in regeneration initiatives amid intensifying deforestation and landscape degradation. It is anticipated that this publication will prove invaluable to forest ecologists, researchers, educators, students, and practitioners engaged in nursery practices, plantation and regeneration monitoring and conservation efforts, fostering informed decision-making and sustainable forest stewardship.

AUGUST'S ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

TSEHAY SHIFERAW ENSERMU – CEO OF AWASH BANK

Three decades after graduating from Addis Ababa University, Tsehay Shiferaw Ensermu, CEO of Awash Bank, returned to his alma mater to celebrate a journey shaped by academic foundations, professional dedication, and leadership in Ethiopia's banking sector.



When Tsehay Shiferaw Ensermu graduated from Addis Ababa University (AAU) in 1996 with a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the Faculty of Business and Economics, he embarked on a professional journey that would span nearly three decades and take him to the forefront of Ethiopia's banking industry. Today, as Chief Executive Officer of Awash Bank, he represents a generation of AAU graduates whose academic foundations have translated into leadership and contributions to the country's economic development.

Tsehay's academic journey continued beyond AAU, with a Master's degree from the International Leadership Institute, further strengthening his foundation in leadership and management. Combining his academic background with extensive professional experience, he built a career defined by institutional leadership, innovation, and a sustained commitment to the growth of Ethiopia's financial sector.

Since assuming the leadership of Awash Bank in 2011, Tsehay has guided the institution through a period of significant growth and transformation. Under his leadership, the Bank has expanded its capital base and branch network while strengthening its institutional capacity, customer service, and digital banking capabilities.

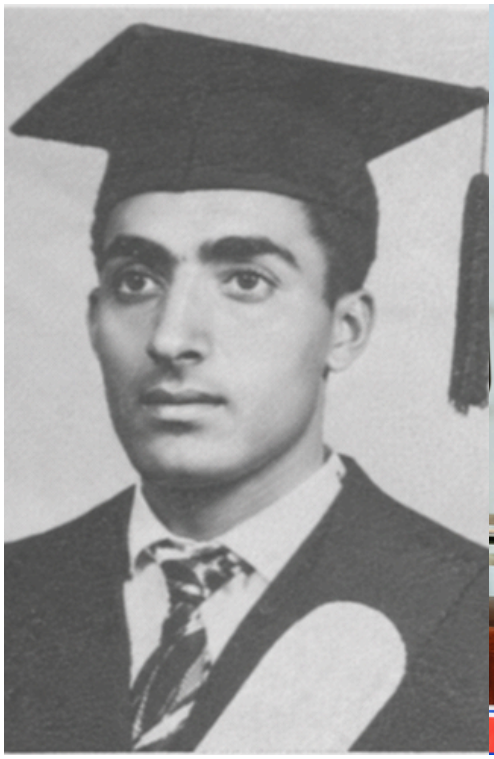
His contributions to the financial sector have also received international recognition. In 2021, he was named among the Top 50 Bank Executives in Africa by Reputation Poll International, becoming the only Ethiopian banking executive featured on that year's list.

Beyond his role at Awash Bank, Tsehay has contributed to the development of Ethiopia's digital financial ecosystem through his service as Chairperson of Premier Switch Solutions (PSS), reflecting his engagement with the broader transformation of financial services in the country.

On September 10, 2026, thirty years after his graduation, Tsehay returned to Addis Ababa University to reunite with fellow members of the Class of 1996 in celebrating their 30th graduation anniversary.

The homecoming was an opportunity to reconnect with former classmates, revisit formative experiences, and reflect on the journeys that began within the University's classrooms. It was also a moment to reaffirm the enduring relationship between alumni and their alma mater, with Tsehay and his fellow graduates expressing their commitment to supporting AAU's continued development.

Tsehay's journey from an economics student at AAU to the leadership of one of Ethiopia's prominent private banks illustrates the lasting value of higher education, professional commitment, and continuous learning. His story is also a reminder that the relationship between a university and its graduates extends well beyond graduation, creating opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and institutional advancement.





FROM KENNEDY MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND BEYOND: A PARTNERSHIP THAT HAS EVOLVED WITH AAU

PARTNER
OF THE MONTH



The story of Addis Ababa University's partnership with the United States Embassy in Ethiopia extends well beyond the Kennedy Memorial Library. While the Library remains an enduring symbol of the relationship, the partnership has grown and evolved alongside AAU, encompassing academic exchange, research, institutional development, and shared efforts to strengthen higher education.

At the heart of this engagement is a commitment to academic exchange. Through the Fulbright Program, U.S. scholars have contributed to teaching and research at AAU, while AAU faculty have benefited from opportunities for advanced training and academic exchange at universities across the United States. The reciprocal nature of these exchanges has supported teaching and research, encouraged cross-cultural engagement, and strengthened institutional connections.

The partnership has also increasingly extended beyond individual academic exchanges to institutional transformation. More recently, the relationship has extended into institutional development. As AAU has advanced its transition toward greater autonomy, the U.S. Embassy has engaged with the University and supported the sharing of its experience and lessons with other Ethiopian universities preparing for similar reforms. This evolution reflects the changing role of international partnerships in higher education. Rather than remaining focused on a single program or facility, the AAU–U.S. Embassy relationship has developed across multiple dimensions of the University's mission: teaching, research, academic mobility, institutional capacity, and knowledge exchange.

Another important dimension has been the partnership's contribution to strengthening the wider higher education ecosystem. The Embassy's engagement with AAU has not been limited to activities benefiting the University alone. Through initiatives related to institutional leadership, journalism education, academic exchange, and the sharing of AAU's experience with other Ethiopian universities, the relationship has helped position the University as a platform for knowledge exchange across the sector. This aligns closely with the Embassy's recognition of AAU as an institution that combines academic rigor with practical relevance and contributes to national higher education development.

Taken together, these examples show a partnership that has continually adapted to AAU's evolving priorities. From academic exchange and curriculum development to institutional transformation and knowledge sharing, the relationship reflects a shared commitment to strengthening higher education and expanding opportunities for scholars, students, and institutions.

From the Kennedy Memorial Library to today's broader academic and institutional collaboration, the partnership demonstrates how enduring relationships can adapt to new priorities while continuing to create opportunities for scholars, students, and institutions on both sides.



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- **Alazar Demissie**

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- **Solomon Assefa**

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- **Yosef Ayto**

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- **Aman Tesfahunagen**

Graphics Design

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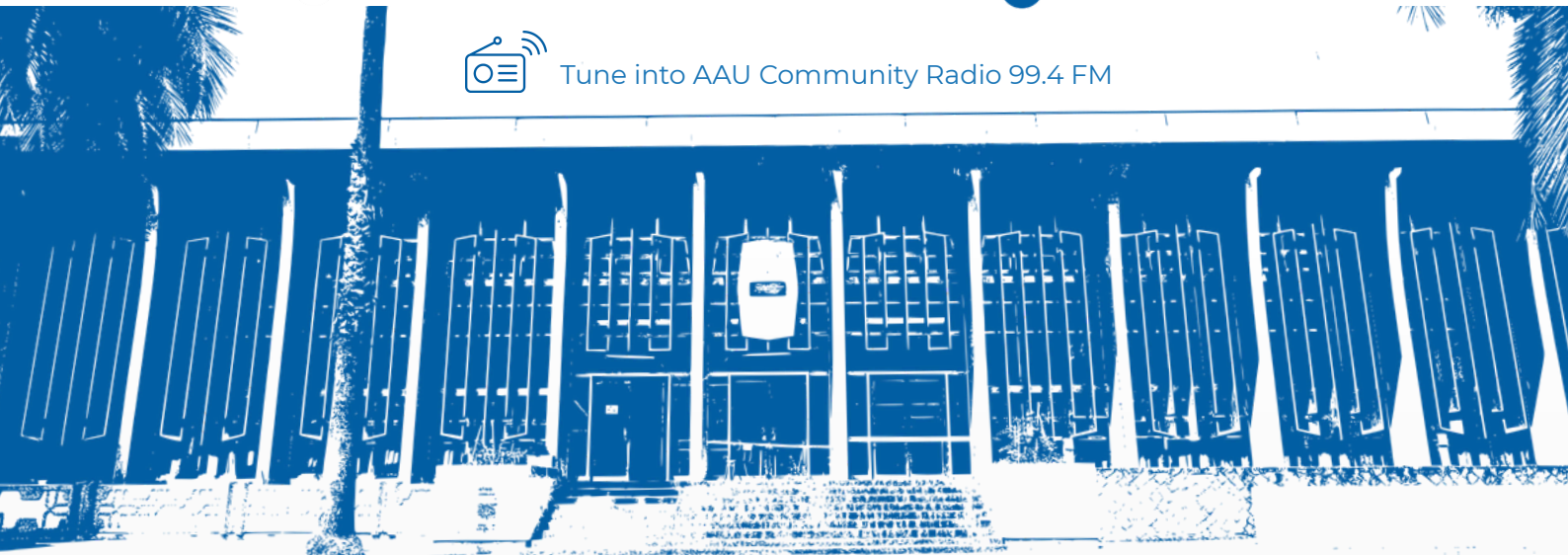
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