

BUSINESS INFORMER

United Bank reports 133.5 million birr profit before tax

By Dereje Berhanu

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia - United Bank SC announced that its profit at the end of the fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2009 reached 133 million birr. The bank chairman Mr. Getachew Ayele said, "The bank has attained a profit before tax of birr 133.5 million during the year 2008/2009 showing an increase of birr 7.7 million over the previous fiscal year performance."

Also, according to Getachew: "This year was different from the preceding year...inflation

pressures have subsided globally as output gaps have widened and food and fuel prices have dropped. Crude oil price remained below 70 USD per barrel and most commodity prices have fallen significantly year over year."

According to the bank's annual report, the just ended fiscal year 2008/09 was characterized by, among other things, world economic turmoil which led to a global recession that has wreaked havoc on the domestic economy as well. Domestically, the turmoil effect was reflected in an elevated inflationary

situation as well as the foreign exchange scarcity that affected foreign trade activities and level-headed GDP growth.

According to the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, the rate of inflation at the end of June 2009 had soared to 36.4%. As compared with the same period last fiscal year, it had increased by 11.1 percentage points. The major contributors were of course the steady rise in the prices of food and non-food items.

Total deposits balance as of June 30, 2009 stood at 3.62 billion birr, showing an increase of

1.17 billion birr or 48 percent as compared with the preceding fiscal year.

International banking operations generated an income of 146 million birr, which accounted for 42.3 percent of the Bank's total income in the fiscal year 2008/09. As compared with the previous year's performance, gross revenue from this line of activities grew by 43.5 million birr or 42.4 %.

United Bank has established correspondent banking relationships with Banque Indosuez De Mer Rouge, Djibouti, which increases the total number to

eight renowned international banks and the number of accounts of the bank to twelve.

Total assets of the bank as of June 30, 2009 reached 4.65 billion birr. Total capital of the bank which is comprised of paid-up capital, legal reserve, retained earnings and premium on share capital, stood at 519.97 million birr, an increase of 52.1 million birr. The number of shareholders reached 2,471 as of June 30, 2009. The Board of Directors recommended a declaration of pro rata dividend of 22% on full paid shares for the just ended fiscal year.

Ethiopia earmarks additional plots for horticulture sector

By Dereje Berhanu

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia - The Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency (EHDA) has announced that it is preparing lands around Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, and Mekele towns. EHDA Director General Mr. Halleselassie Tekeba said, "The government is preparing land in the three towns in a 200 km radius including cluster lands and out-growers. The agency will also open a horticultural institute after two months."

The prepared land around Addis Ababa consists of 50,000 clustered hectares and 40,000 hectares for out-growers. In the city of Bahir Dar, it consists of 1,000 hectares of cluster lands and 20,000 for out-growers. Finally, in Mekele, 1,000 hectares will be for cluster lands and 10,000 for out-growers. According to Halleselassie, the government will help the sector to be more competitive in the global market.

In other news, on November 21st 2009, a fruit and vegetable export crops field day was prepared by USAID and Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA) at Omega Farm in Sebeta town 30 km from Addis Ababa.

USAID-AITEP lead client, Omega Farm, is engaged in the production of a variety of vegetables including peas, chilies, and beans for the international market. The farm is also a member of Aurora Fresh, an international marketing organization supplying fresh produce to global markets.

The fruits and vegetable export crops field day was aimed at introducing improved farm technology and agronomic practices, enhancing market promotions and creating new sales opportunities, and establishing improved linkages between the public and private sector organizations responsible for horticulture development. More than 60 inter-

national and local companies showcased their products and services. The companies present included those engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of agrochemicals, irrigation systems, fertilizer, biological controls, packaging, seeds and nursery, machinery and equipments, and freight and logistics. Hundreds of participants including commercial farms, smallholder farmers, research institutes, NGOs, sector associations, international and local agricultural input suppliers attended the field day.

The Ethiopian horticulture industry has witnessed significant investment and expansion of the floriculture and ornamental sub-sector over the last few years. A key strategic priority is to facilitate strong growth and investment in a competitive and sustainable fruit and vegetable export sub-sector during the next few years.

Eskom gets billions from Africa

By agencies

CAPE TOWN, South Africa - The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a €1.86bn loan for Eskom to finance a power project that will significantly boost South Africa and the southern African region's energy capacity.

"South Africa's energy problem has been a major impediment to Africa's leading economy," AfDB president Donald Kaberuka said in a statement on Thursday.

"The bank is pleased to be associated with this project. We look forward to working with South Africa towards achieving energy security. This operation should be seen in the context of the bank's ongoing efforts to help Africa bridge the infrastructure gap," he said.

The Medupi power plant located in Lephalale, Limpopo Province was expected to be commissioned by February 2012.

Besides Medupi, Eskom was working on a number of renewable energy programmes, including a pilot wind farm in the Western Cape, a 100MW heliostat pre-feasibility, tower-type solar power plant, and a 100MW wind farm feasibility study.

Eskom was also pursuing demand-side energy conservation program aimed at saving 4225MW of electricity.

The total cost of the project was estimated at €1.19bn, and would be financed with 53 percent equity and 47 percent by loans, with the World Bank and the export credit agencies as co-lenders with the AfDB.

MTN Congo launches OnePIN's CallerXchange on Gemalto SIM Cards

By agencies

KINSHASA, DRC - MTN, mobile network operator in Africa and Middle East, has enabled subscribers in Africa to enhance the value of their mobile phonebooks with one-click after phone calls thanks to CallerXchange, OnePIN's social address book service. This peer-to-peer service, deployed to all MTN Congo mobile subscribers via new Gemalto SIM cards, allows users to easily connect and stay connected with friends, family and business associates - enhancing the value of mobile phonebooks.

With CallerXchange, MTN subscribers in Congo can choose to exchange contact information immediately after a phone call or text message with a single click. Once a subscriber completes a basic profile of contact information, he or she is automatically prompted and can choose to send this information to new friends or colleagues the next time they call or SMS a new friend - a highly relevant time to

share social information.

Recipients of a CallerXchange message can easily click to add their friend's contact information directly into their phonebook. CallerXchange automatically ensures that contact information in subscribers' phonebooks is kept up to date, allowing subscribers to keep in touch with friends and colleagues even if their information changes over time.

Working in conjunction with Gemalto, the world leader in digital security, MTN is able to quickly reach a large percentage of its subscriber base in a natural manner, using the SIM card as a universal deployment method. The service has already generated impressive results with over 25% of the install base of subscribers having already begun using the service during the first month of launch. CallerXchange is available to all subscribers as a pre-loaded, value-added service on all MTN SIM cards. The SIM-based service is interoperable across handsets and between operators throughout Africa

and around the world. "Mobile phones are an essential part of people's lives here in Congo, and all over Africa, generally speaking," said Arthur LEKA, Head of Product & Services at MTN in Brazzaville.

"This is a true innovation," added Gandé Dagba, Chief Marketing Officer at MTN Congo. "CallerXchange enriches the value of MTN's service for our subscribers as a core part of their social lives. This is an essential pillar of our strategy and, after 24 months of tremendous growth, enabled us to finally take the leadership in the country and be the preferred mobile operator, by far."

"The launch of CallerXchange will enable millions of African subscribers to transform phone calls to friends into deeper social relationships," said OnePIN CEO and founder Feyzi Celik. "With an enriched MTN phonebook, subscribers will be able to use their mobile phone as a hub for social networking, whether via voice call, SMS, email or instant messaging."

World Currency Exchange Rates

Base currency is United States Dollars - USD Mid-market rates as of

November 2009, 11 18:12:33 UTC (GMT)

	Currency Unit	Units per USD	USD per Unit
DZD	Algeria Dinars	72.1504016112	0.0138599367
AUD	Australia Dollars	1.0764263936	0.928998888
CAD	Canada Dollars	1.0462546806	0.9557902283
CNY	China Yuan Renminbi	6.8269000053	0.1464793683
DKK	Denmark Kroner	4.9704955020	0.2011871854
XCD	East Caribbean Dollars	2.6849999428	0.3724394865
EGP	Egypt Pounds	5.4549999237	0.1833180594
ETB	Ethiopian Birr	12.5768000000	0.0795114814
EUR	Euro	0.6680332176	1.4969315503
INR	India Rupees	46.4150009155	0.0215447588
IRR	Iran Rials	9.908.00000000	0.0001009285
IQD	Iraq Dinars	1,153.5000000000	0.0008669267
ILS	Israel New Shekels	3.7489160833	0.2667437675
JMD	Jamaica Dollars	88.7500000000	0.0112676056