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ETHIOPIA 2025



CONNECTING
NATIONS
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PROSPERITY

Building a New Model for Coffee Farming in Ethiopia

Rooted in the birthplace of coffee, Ethiopia, Kerchanshe Group is redefining the country's agriculture with large-scale coffee production, mechanized farming, and growing exports in both coffee and meat.

Israel Degefa is a man deeply rooted in the land. As CEO of Kerchanshe Group, he carries a legacy shaped by generations who farmed through Ethiopia's imperial era, socialist upheaval, and capitalist reform. "My grandmother built a livelihood in agriculture during the imperial period, but the socialist government took everything," he says. "My parents started over after it ended."

Today, Degefa oversees a sprawling agribusiness empire that has earned US\$1.2 billion for Ethiopia over the past decade through green coffee exports alone. Kerchanshe Group is a name now synonymous with agricultural ambition and, more importantly, execution. "We've invested in five different farm areas, totaling 3,500 hectares of coffee production," he explains. "We've managed to produce over 62 bags per hectare." That productivity leap is the product of investment, mechanization, and vision, all of which Israel feels Ethiopia is finally ready to support. "The current government has introduced major policy reforms in agriculture, improving access to capital, land lease terms, and regulations," he says. This, he believes, opens the door for both local entrepreneurs and global investors.

Degefa's bet is on coffee and meat. While coffee is Ethiopia's pride and Kerchanshe's cornerstone, meat is its next frontier. The group acquired one of the country's largest animal farms, once developed by a foreign investor, and is now reviving it for export. "We're exporting these two products across the globe," he says. The firm is also aligning with national policy to further develop the agriculture sector and expand into agro-processing.



ISRAEL DEGEFA,
CEO OF
KERCHANSHE
GROUP

But the company is not just following policy. In many ways, it's shaping it. When Ethiopia's prime minister visited one of Kerchanshe's farms, he acknowledged what Israel already knew: that mechanization is the way forward. "We are pioneers in coffee mechanization farming in Ethiopia," he says. "We brought machinery and technologies from Brazil and Israel, and we've been using that to maximize our productivity."

Kerschanshe's approach of drawing on global knowledge and grounding it in local practice has earned the company recognition both in Ethiopia and throughout Africa. In February 2025, Degefa was named African Leadership Magazine Person of the Year for his transformative leadership and contributions to the coffee industry, particularly his pioneering role in introducing shade-free coffee farming in Ethiopia. The award, presented in

Morocco, recognized Kerchanshe's supply chain achievements and its role in revitalizing Ethiopia's coffee industry.

Still, Degefa's sights are set on more than accolades as he prepares to list the company on the capital market. With a paid-up capital of US\$5 billion, the group intends to reach US\$20 billion within five years. "We aim to be one of Africa's leading companies in five years and publicly listed," he says.

The American market is also on his radar, a space where Ethiopia's coffee has traditionally struggled due to distance and logistics. "Africa is a bit farther from the U.S. compared to other coffee-producing countries like Brazil and Colombia," he notes. "But I believe with the right effort, that distance can be bridged."

When asked where opportunity lives, Israel Degefa points to the soil. With its climate, altitude, water resources, and vast untapped land, Israel calls Ethiopia "a holy land for agricultural business."



Innovation and Integrity at Every Step.



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JEMAL AHMED,
CEO OF MIDROC

A Conglomerate Rewiring Ethiopia's Economy

MIDROC Investment Group, one of Ethiopia's largest conglomerates, is powering the nation's industrial rise, spanning agriculture, mining, and construction, while advancing self-sufficiency in tea, poultry, and tire manufacturing.



owned by **Ethiopian-Saudi billionaire**, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali Al-Amoudi, MIDROC Investment Group is one of Ethiopia's largest and most diversified conglomerates. The group operates a six-cluster empire in sectors that span agriculture and agro-industry, mining, manufacturing, commerce, construction and real estate, and hospitality. "Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Ali Al-Amoudi has a special heart for Ethiopia and is a pioneer in many investments in the country," says Jemal Ahmed, CEO of MIDROC Investment Group and an investor himself.

When Ethiopia began transitioning to a market economy in the 1990s, MIDROC stepped in to revive the country's failing state enterprises. The job, in essence, was nation-building through business. "Al-Amoudi invested in poorly performing public companies not for quick returns, but to save jobs and rebuild productivity," says Ahmed.

For years, Ethiopia had two government-owned tea estates that were losing money, even as the country continued to import tea from Kenya. It was an unsustainable paradox with fertile land growing under capacity while hard currency flowed out for imports. That changed when MIDROC took over. Instead of expanding the land, MIDROC focused on revitalizing what was already there. "We invested in the existing estates, improved productivity, and introduced an outgrower model, increasing the capacity of local farmers to grow tea and supply it to the company," recalls Ahmed. "Today, Ethiopia not only meets its own national demand but also exports 20% of its tea production. This kind of production increment came through privatization."

MIDROC's six clusters operate with a distinct mission, yet all share a common thread in long-term value creation. "We are the leading poultry farm operator in Ethiopia," says Ahmed. "We have mega projects in every sector." As part of a government initiative dubbed "Bounty of the Basket," MIDROC has taken the lead in helping Ethiopia become self-sufficient in poultry by establishing one of the continent's few grandparent-stock hatcheries, reducing reliance on imports. "In mining, we're focused on gold, granite, and limestone. We've discovered major gold deposits and are expanding exploration and development," Ahmed says.

Meanwhile, the group's construction arm is reshaping Addis Abeba. "We are building the Mahmadya Village, a US\$1 billion integrated development modeled after developments in Dubai." The village, like much of MIDROC's portfolio, signals Ethiopia's ambition to step out of the shadows and take the lead.

MIDROC's impact extends beyond balance sheets. "We are Ethiopia's largest private employer, leading 45 companies and over 74,000 employees. Indirectly, we support hundreds of thousands more," Ahmed notes. Young entrepreneurs are central to that



"MIDROC Investment Group, renowned for allocating 10% of its profits to support social and community initiatives, is set to build a feeding center in Awash City, located in the Afar region."

ecosystem. MIDROC has set up hundreds of Pepsi kiosks in Addis Abeba, run by youth organized through local governments. "A large young population can be a curse or a source of prosperity," he says. "We choose the latter."

In the hospitality sector, the firm's portfolio includes the Sheraton Luxury Collection, an iconic landmark in Addis Abeba. "We've launched new projects across Ethiopia, including in Bahir Dar, Hawassa, and Jimma, and have also signed an agreement with Marriott," says Ahmed. In 2026, the company also has plans to launch a pharmaceutical plant to manufacture antibiotics locally. "Beyond profit, we measure success by the impact we create - how many jobs we've sustained and how many communities we've helped," he says.

MIDROC's commitment to social impact is equally far-reaching. The group has established four feeding centers—soon to be five with a new one under construction in Awash City—serving daily meals to over 6,000 people in need. It has also built five nine-story apartment blocks housing 165 households each for the homeless, and invested over 100 million ETB (US\$739,790) in flour and bread factories across eleven cities—just a few among many projects uplifting communities across Ethiopia.

Nani Building, Near Ghion Hotel, Stadium,
Addis Abeba Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 115 549 791/95 - Fax: +251 115 549 764
migpr@midrocinvestmentgroup.com
www.midrocinvestmentgroup.com





**BUZUAYEHU
TADELE BIZENU,
CHAIRMAN OF
EAST AFRICAN HOLDING**

An African Industrial Champion in the Making

With a proven track record across seven strategic sectors and a legacy of resilience through complex economic regimes, East African Holding stands as a trusted gateway for global investors to Ethiopia's high-growth economy.



Founded in 1891 as a mule-caravan trading enterprise, East African Holding (EAH) has grown into one of Ethiopia's most dynamic industrial conglomerates, with operations spanning cement, FMCG, agriculture, real estate, logistics, mining, and renewable energy. Today, the group employs more than 10,000 people and is preparing its fourth generation of leaders through a structured succession plan, ensuring the family legacy endures for decades to come.

Leadership Legacy

"I have the privilege of leading East African Holding as the third-generation steward of a century-old family enterprise," says Chairman Buzuayehu Tadele Bizenu. EAH's story began with Chairman Bizenu's grandfather's mule-caravan trade, traversing the route between Addis Abeba and Southern Ethiopia. His father and uncle later expanded that humble venture into coffee plantations, grain milling, washed coffee processing, dry coffee hulling, water mills, and real estate. During Ethiopia's communist regime, Bizenu shouldered the responsibility of preserving and rebuilding the family legacy, a sacrifice that proved to be a blessing, as it laid the foundation for what would eventually become EAH.

"With Ethiopia's economy opening, our goal is to expand beyond national borders and become a global player."

Bizenu assumed leadership at a time when Ethiopia's socialist system imposed immense challenges on private enterprise. Navigating restrictions and state monopolies demanded resilience, adaptability, and long-term vision. Over the decades, that perseverance transformed EAH into one of Ethiopia's most diversified industrial conglomerates, today playing a pivotal role in driving the nation's economic development.

Strategic Partnerships

Guided by a long-term vision rooted in resilience and innovation, East African Holding has forged strategic alliances with global and regional leaders. These partnerships have broadened its FMCG portfolio, accelerated the transfer of technical expertise, and strengthened its influence across Ethiopia's industrial and consumer sectors.

Industrial Ecosystem Builder

EAH pioneered Ethiopia's first private tea estate in 1995 and introduced the country's first industrial park model in 1997 with the East African Industrial Park in Dukem. This plug-and-play hub now anchors regional manufacturing, providing infrastructure, jobs, and a platform for local and foreign investors.



East African Agri Business (tea plantation)



Industrial Park



Lemi National Cement Plant

Flagship Project: Lemi National Cement Plant

In partnership with West China Cement, EAH constructed Africa's largest single-line cement plant, a US\$600 million facility completed in a record 20 months in 2024. With a daily production capacity of 15,000 tons, the Lemi plant has helped stabilize Ethiopia's cement prices while unlocking strong export potential. Together with the Dire Dawa plant, EAH now controls 45% of the country's cement market through these two strategically located facilities.

Invasion to Innovation - Green Energy

In 2014, a business trip revealed how bush plants could be harnessed as fuel for heavy industries. That insight sparked a bold idea: Ethiopia's invasive *Prosopis juliflora*, locally known as Evil Tree, could be transformed from a national burden into a sustainable energy source. EAH led feasibility studies in the Afar and Somali regions, confirming its potential as an alternative to coal in cement production. Supported by EU funding, the pilot project was launched in 2017, positioning *Prosopis juliflora* biomass as a renewable substitute that reduces carbon emissions, lowers foreign currency dependency, and restores farmland for local livelihoods.

EAH has emerged as a pioneer in Ethiopia's green energy transition, leading the way in harnessing biomass as a renewable alternative to coal in its cement operations. By reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels, the company not only lowers carbon emissions but also strengthens energy security and cost efficiency. This shift represents more than an operational improvement. It underscores EAH's commitment to aligning industrial growth with environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

Recognition and Impact

EAH has been honored multiple times with the Platinum Taxpayer Award and recognized as an African Hidden Champion by the AfDB, KfW, and the African Foresight Group for its role in strengthening domestic value chains and its potential to emerge as a global leader.

At the heart of this success lies transparency, its core value and the "godfather" of their achievements. Governance is non-negotiable, and the company's commitment to integrity has earned the respect of public and private stakeholders alike. Partners such

as the IFC have acknowledged EAH's adherence to world-class standards, reinforcing trust across its ecosystem.

This culture of accountability is not just a principle; it is their main recipe for success. By combining transparency with disciplined execution, it has built a legacy that continues to attract investment, inspire confidence, and pave the way for long-term growth.

BTFF Feeding Program

At the heart of East African Holding's philosophy is a belief that industrial growth must be matched with social investment. Through the Buzuayehu Tadele Family Foundation (BTFF), the company provides daily meals to more than 3,294 students across Ethiopia and 530 residents in Addis Ababa, reaching nearly 4,000 beneficiaries nationwide. Each year, the program also equips over 2,000 students with school supplies, ensuring that access to education is not limited by hunger or poverty. Beyond classrooms, the foundation extends its support through low-cost housing initiatives and scholarships, building pathways for long-term empowerment.

A new initiative, "Share Your Meal with Your Neighbour," reflects EAH's vision of scaling compassion into a national movement. First piloted near Villa Africa, a private retreat space established by East African Holding to facilitate high-level dialogue and long-term planning, the program aspires to mobilize communities across the country in the fight against food insecurity. By embedding dignity and care into its development agenda, East African Holding is redefining what it means to be a champion of both industry and society.

The Next Chapter: Regional and Global Expansion

"Following the opening of Ethiopia's economy and the liberalization of the financial sector, our long-term ambition has always been to evolve into a regional and global player," says Chairman

Bizenu. "We are working hand in hand with our partners to seize these opportunities and ensure that our growth story extends far beyond Ethiopia's borders," says Bizenu.

Why Ethiopia? Why Now?

Ethiopia stands at a defining moment in its economic journey. With high-growth, underpenetrated sectors such as agro-processing, renewable energy, real estate, logistics, and manufacturing for regional export, the country offers fertile ground for investment. Its scale, abundant human capital, and strategic market access create a rare opportunity for forward-looking investors. Backed by East African Holding's proven track record and reputation for trust and execution, partners can enter with confidence and capture the rewards of being early movers in one of Africa's most dynamic markets.

Closing Call

Bizenu concludes, "Ethiopia is no longer just a frontier market; it is the next global growth story. The time to invest is not tomorrow, but today."



"The Lemi National Cement Plant, built for US\$600 million, is a benchmark for industrial excellence in Africa."



SAMUEL TAFESSE,
PRESIDENT OF
SUNSHINE INVESTMENT
GROUP

From Roads to Skylines, Building for a Growing Ethiopia

Focused on Ethiopia's core development needs, Sunshine Investment Group delivers major road networks, high-rise housing, and internationally branded hotels, while employing over 6,000 people across its operations.



Samuel Tafesse, one of Ethiopia's self-made millionaires, knew the weight of struggle long before he knew the taste of success. From working as a parking attendant to selling goods on the street, his early jobs weren't the kind that turned heads. Today, his name carries a far different association, including self-made millionaire, visionary entrepreneur, and President of Sunshine Investment Group, one of Ethiopia's most dynamic business empires. A self-taught contractor, Tafesse established Sunshine Construction in 1984 with a capital of only US\$13 to his name. His business group now employs over 6,000 people and has a positive impact on tens of thousands more.

Over nearly four decades, Sunshine Construction, a subsidiary of Sunshine Investment Group, has delivered thousands of kilometers of road projects connecting rural communities to economic opportunities. "We're currently overseeing over 200 kilometers of road projects, and we plan to take on additional major road developments," says Tafesse.

The group's reach extends beyond infrastructure into real estate, hospitality, and social impact. "Our real estate arm has built and delivered more than 5,000 homes," he says, helping to address a critical housing shortage in a rapidly urbanizing country. "We recently completed around 1,000 houses for relocated families and plan to develop another 500 as part of a real estate project in the city."

Sunshine is partnering with Ethiopian Airlines on a real estate project to support the airline's workforce. "We're constructing eight G+20 buildings-2,500 units for the airline. The project is progressing well and remains on track for delivery within two years." From residential developments to high-rise office towers, Tafesse's ventures have helped shape Addis Abeba's skyline.

Sunshine's entry into hospitality has been equally transformative. A second Marriott property is under construction. The group's hospitality footprint also includes partnerships with Hilton, expanding high-quality accommodation options both in Addis Abeba and across the regions.

"Our plan for the next five to ten years is to continue taking on major projects, such as airport developments, affordable housing, or large-scale infrastructure like dams," says Tafesse.

"With 35 years of experience in the construction industry, we are dedicated to contributing to Ethiopia's infrastructure development while playing an active role in fostering growth and positive change within our sector."

His vision extends far beyond business. Deeply shaped by his own experience of hardship, he has long believed in giving back. Nearly two decades ago, he launched a philanthropic foundation dedicated to education. Four schools, built in underserved areas of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and the Southern Nations regions, now provide free education, from grade one through twelve, to hundreds of students each year. These children receive not only schooling, but also uniforms and a small stipend to support their families. Many of the graduates find employment within the Sunshine group, creating a virtuous cycle of opportunity.

Tafesse has also led the construction of a large elder care home in Addis Abeba, entirely funded and built by Sunshine. The facility provides shelter and care for some of the city's most vulnerable elderly residents. "Why wait for foreigners to come and help?" he says. "This is our responsibility." Sunshine's workforce of 6,000 supports, directly and indirectly, over 30,000 people. The group provides low-income housing for government workers and offers free homes as long-service awards to employees who have dedicated themselves to the company for over 15 years.

As Ethiopia continues to open its doors to global investment, Tafesse is optimistic about the future. He sees opportunity not just in construction and real estate but also across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality. "The

market is here," he says. "We have the population and the demand. We welcome anyone ready to come, work, and grow with us."

Sunshine Investment Group has earned a reputation for reliability by focusing on projects that meet real needs in Ethiopia. From roads that link communities to hotels serving a growing tourism sector and homes offering stability for working families, the company's work reflects the persistence that took Samuel Tafesse from working-class roots to success.

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia
P.O.Box 107
www.sunshineinvestmentgroup.net

