



Ethiopia

Ethiopia is in northeast Africa, in an area known as the Horn of Africa. It is landlocked and bordered by Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country, after Nigeria.

Ethiopia is a country of natural contrasts, with tropical forests to the south and deserts to the east. It has some of Africa's highest mountains, but also some of the lowest points above sea level. The Great Rift Valley divides Ethiopia's central mountain range and the Blue Nile rises in Lake Tana in the northwest of the country. Ethiopia's main climate is tropical monsoon, with regional variations.

Ethiopia is almost unique in Africa in that, apart from a five year occupation by Italy during the Mussolini years, it has never been colonized. Under Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was a feudal empire until 1974, when a military junta took power. This regime was marked by coups and brutality until 1991, when it was overthrown by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which committed itself to multi-party democracy; in 1995 Ethiopia's first multiparty elections were held.

In 2005, accusations of vote rigging during Ethiopia's third parliamentary elections led to an outbreak of violence and the controversial imprisonment of opposition leaders. The EPRDF was re-elected for a fourth term in May 2010.

Development in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, but there has been significant progress in reducing poverty. According to the UN, in the past five years Ethiopia has registered the fastest change in human development in the world.

It is on track to meet six of the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and has had consistently high economic growth in recent years, the highest of any non oil producing economy in Africa. In the last four years, the percentage of children enrolled in primary school increased from 68 per cent to 83 per cent, with equal numbers of boys and girls now attending school.

However, challenges remain: average life expectancy is 56 years and much of the rural population is at risk of hunger and food insecurity every year. Ethiopia's economy is based on agriculture, which is adversely affected by land degradation and frequent drought. In 2011 poor rainfall caused a famine in the Horn of Africa region. Population density and the impact of the global economic downturn are adding further pressure to the livelihoods of vulnerable people in Ethiopia.

Irish Aid's poverty reduction work in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been an Irish Aid partner country since 1994. In 2010, Irish Aid's bilateral support to Ethiopia was €37.17 million.

A priority for Irish Aid's work with the Government in Ethiopia is to improve agricultural practices to reduce hunger, make farming more profitable for small farmers, and to support agricultural research. Ireland also contributes to the development of improved social services. In 2010 Irish Aid contributed significantly to the *Productive Safety Net Programme*, which provides some of the most vulnerable people in Ethiopia with regular cash or food in return for vital work on projects such as land improvement.

Ireland supports the Government's effort to help communities affected by climate change and provides assistance for Ethiopian non-governmental organisations and charities. In 2011 Ireland contributed €10 million to support victims of the Horn of Africa famine. In the northern area of Tigray, where Irish Aid has a regional programme, Ireland has contributed to improving crop productivity and road construction.

Comparison table

Source: UNDP, 2011 ¹	Ireland	Ethiopia
UNDP Human Development Index Rank (of 187 countries)	7	174
Population	4.5 million	84.7 million
GNI (Gross National Income) per capita	US \$29,332	US \$971
Life expectancy from birth	80 years	59 years
Number of doctors per 100,00 people²	310	< 5
HIV prevalence³ (15-49 years)	0.2%	2.1%

¹UNDP Human Development Report 2011 (November 2011)

²UNDP Human Development Report 2010 (November 2010)

³UNDP Human Development Report 2010 (November 2010)

Facts about Ethiopia Did you know...?

Full name:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Head of State:	President Girma Woldegiorgis
Capital:	Addis Ababa
Area:	1,104,300 sq km
Major languages:	Amharic (official), English (official), Arabic (official) Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali
Major religions:	Christianity, Islam, traditional beliefs
Monetary unit:	Birr
Main exports:	Coffee, leather products, oilseeds, beeswax, sugarcane

Find out more

www.irishaid.ie - Learn more here about Irish Aid's work in Ethiopia

www.et.undp.org – the United Nations Development Programme in Ethiopia

www.concern.net and www.trocaire.org – Both Concern and Trocaire work in Ethiopia and have background information about the country on their websites



Irish Aid is the Government's programme of assistance to developing countries, and is administered through the Development Cooperation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

You can visit the

**Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre,
27 - 31 Upper O'Connell Street,
Dublin 1.
Phone number: 01 854 69 20**

Organised visits to the Centre, including workshops, are available for school and college groups by arrangement.

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