

Embassy of India

Addis Ababa

India and Ethiopia Initiates Partnership in Spices and Medicinal Plants Sector to Drive Ethiopia's Export Revolution

ADDIS ABABA, January 15, 2026: Building on the momentum of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's recent landmark visit to Ethiopia, the Embassy of India and Mizan Tepi University jointly organized a high-level forum today focused on transforming Ethiopia's agriculture sector into an export powerhouse. The event specifically targeted cooperation in the spices and medicinal plants sector. Agriculture and food security was identified as a key pillar of cooperation during the Prime Minister's historic visit.

This collaboration is taking place at a strategic moment when Ethiopia's ongoing Home Grown Economic Reforms have placed the country on a strong growth trajectory of 7.2% and having recently reached consensus with creditors under G-20 Debt Restructuring Framework. The spices and medicinal plants sector holds potential to become a vital foreign exchange earner for Ethiopia and strengthen rural economy through providing better economic opportunities.

The conference highlighted Ethiopia's "four gold mines of the earth" Turmeric, Ginger, Spices, and Millets which represent the country's natural comparative advantage. Notably, the South Western highlands of Ethiopia produce turmeric with *curcumin* levels that far exceed global averages. Additionally, millets have been rebranded as climate smart "*luxury grains*" for the global health market, continuing an important area of global cooperation initiated during India's G-20 Presidency.

In parallel, discussions showcased India's experience in a "Quality Revolution" to support Ethiopia's shift from raw exports to high value, standards compliant products. Priority areas included adoption of nano-fertilizers and nano-pesticides to improve sustainability and efficiency; replacement of traditional ground-level sun-drying with industrial-scale mechanical curing; and strengthening testing, certification, packaging and traceability, including QR-code labelling, to meet the requirements of premium markets.

During technical presentation by scientist from Indian Spices Research Institute, India's end-to-end approach to build competitive spices value chains from genomics-assisted breeding, development of high-yielding disease-tolerant varieties, to soil-test based "targeted yield" nutrient management and improved intercropping systems such as turmeric with onion and coriander was explained. Practical nursery and production innovations including plug-tray multiplication of black pepper and seed-coating with beneficial microbes (PGPR) to improve germination, vigour and yields were showcased; alongside the need to address export-critical challenges like long breeding cycles, limited genomic information, and strict international norms on pesticide residues and microbial contamination. The presentation further emphasized digital innovation like sensors, drones, online market platforms, smart storage, block-chain enabled logistics and QR code traceability as a route to meet premium market standards, enhance transparency, and accelerate Ethiopia's transition from raw exports to high value products. The forum also deliberated on Ethiopia's strategy to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and position itself as a food-processing hub for East Africa.

Complementing technical cooperation, India reaffirmed support through capacity building under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), enabling Ethiopian professionals and students to access specialized training and advanced education in leading Indian institutions. To institutionalize this partnership, an MoU on agriculture cooperation is under negotiation and is expected to be concluded shortly, with the objective of aligning traditional strengths with global standards.

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