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## **SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION OF RUSSIA WITH ETHIOPIA IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION<sup>1</sup>**

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*Purpose:* the author aims to develop recommendations for enhancing economic cooperation between the Russian Federation and Ethiopia in the conditions of international competition for this African market. *Discussion:* the author assesses the potential of the Ethiopian economy, the current state of cooperation between local business and foreign partners. In addition, the level and prospects for expansion of trade and investment cooperation between Russia and the African state under consideration have been defined. *Results:* the author concludes that there is a significant potential for the development of Russian-Ethiopian export-import operations, as well as for an increase in the scale of the presence of domestic business in Ethiopia. To give an additional impetus to the deepening of economic ties, it is necessary, first of all, to return to the implementation of the Medium-Term Program for the Development of Cooperation, to eliminate or minimize trade barriers, to ratify a number of previously concluded agreements, and to further develop the legal framework.

**Keywords:** Africa, Ethiopia, Russia, strategy, economic development, potential, international competition, foreign economic relations, trade, investment, infrastructure, renewable energy.

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### **1. Introduction**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been undergoing active development over the past decade: there has been an active GDP growth, a significant influx of foreign investment, and a diversification of the national economy.

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Russian-Ethiopian relations are also steadily expanding. Political contacts are regular, cultural and humanitarian cooperation is at a fairly high level, but the potential of economic cooperation is far from being fully realized, as the Ethiopian side has repeatedly stated, in particular, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia G.Andargachew during his visit to Russia in September 2019 [6, 9].

Taking into account the prospects for the development of the Ethiopian economy, the positive transformations taking place here, the favorable geographical position of the state on the continent, and the particularly friendly relations between Russia and this African country that developed during the existence of the USSR, representatives of Russian business, in our opinion, need to take a look at this market in a new way. It is especially important to do so now, at a time of increased international competition for Ethiopia. It is this country that can become a reference point for the expansion of Russian business in Eastern Africa, while, for example, Nigeria – in the West of the continent [1].

## **2. Discussion**

The key trading partners of Ethiopia in 2018 were China, USA, India and Japan. Same year, Russia increased the volume of exports to Ethiopia by USD 24.2 million, compared with the previous period, to USD 85.6 million, but it only ranked 25th in terms of sales to this African country [7]. In turn, Ethiopian exports to the Russian Federation fell by USD 3.7 million, compared with the previous period, to USD 24.0 million [18].

In total, in 2018 the Russian-Ethiopian trade turnover amounted to USD 109.6 million. It is worth noting that between 2010 and 2018, the average volume of export-import operations amounted to USD 112.2 million [Calculated by: 3, 18]. Thus, the volume of trade below a given level, as, for example, in 2018, is a negative factor in relations between our countries. It should also be noted that in 2018, exports of Russian products were carried out only from four regions of Russia, in particular: Moscow (39.3%), Tula region (18.5%), Rostov region (16.6%) and Belgorod region (15.8%) [7].

From the point of view of Russian exporters, the products with the highest potential for export are: aircrafts, spacecrafts, and their parts; nuclear reactors, boilers, equipment and mechanical devices; electrical machines and equipment, their parts; ferrous metals; means of land transport, except for railway or tram rolling stock; garments; pharmaceuticals; plastics and products thereof; ferrous metal products; cereals. Ethiopian import of these 10 product groups alone is estimated at USD 6.9 billion annually [Calculated by: 11]. Thus, the potential of Russian exports to the African country under consideration is huge.

At the same time, when assessing the feasibility of entering Ethiopia, Russian companies should take into account, in particular, tariff barriers.

Thus, in relation to non-primary non-energy products, the average applicable tariff is 17.9% (average weighted tariff is 16.9%). The high value-added products (for instance, after advanced processing) are subject to a rate of

18.7% (19.4%), the medium value-added goods (primary processing) – 17.8% (8.9%), the low value-added products – 15.2% (5.0%).

Significantly lower tariffs are applied to raw materials exports – 8.6% (5.0%), even lower – to non-raw energy exports – 4.7% (5.0%) [17].

All these measures directly affect the structure of Russian trade to Ethiopia. Thus, in 2018, compared to 2017, there was a 42.5% drop in sales of high value-added products. On the contrary, the export volume of medium value-added goods grew by 2.2% – a slight increase, however, at least there was no negative dynamics. And the sale of low value-added goods grew significantly-by 64.0% [7].

It should be noted that Ethiopia's neighboring states apply lower rates in relation to Russian exports. For example, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda [17].

In addition, non-tariff barriers, in particular consumption taxes, are used in respect to Russian goods. When selling products of animal and vegetable origin, pre-shipment inspection is carried out [12].

It is clear that such trade policy of the Ethiopian partners, unfortunately, to some extent impedes the development of export-import operations.

Project and investment cooperation between Russia and Ethiopia is not developing actively enough, this is especially acute against the background of intensive expansion in this country of companies from China, India, the Middle East and the EU [6].

Today, Gazprom is active in the country. In 2014 the company signed an agreement with the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, according to which the Russian conglomerate plans to develop the country's gas industry [4]. Along with it, there is an agreement signed in 2013 between Inter RAO and the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity, the document supposes the restoration and construction of energy facilities. However, work on this agreement has not yet begun [10]. Negotiations on the construction by ROSATOM of a nuclear power plant on the territory of Ethiopia are in the final stage. A corresponding intergovernmental agreement should be signed in the very near future [13]. Companies such as GPB Global Resources, KAMAZ, Russian Railways and UAZ are interested in working in Ethiopia [19].

In turn, the Ethiopian side has repeatedly expressed interest in the participation of representatives of Russian business in the implementation of projects in the country [6]. Thus, along with Chinese and American business structures, the government of Ethiopia invited representatives of Russian business to join the construction of eight solar energy facilities, the total capacity of which is expected to be 1 GW, and the capital costs of the construction – USD 1 billion [5]. In addition, to the list of promising sectors, in the development of which domestic companies could participate, Ethiopian partners include, in particular: biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, tourism [4].

It should be noted that in the short and medium term, privatization of

Ethiopian state property is expected. Russian companies may be interested to consider Ethio-Telecom, sugar industry, energy, railway infrastructure, and Ethiopian Airlines as targets for investing funds [8]. In addition, the interaction of Russian companies with the Government of Ethiopia in the format of public-private partnership may be promising. It is obvious that the African side is also interested in this: it is referring to successful international practices that have proven the effectiveness of PPP for solving socially important problems [2].

As for the legal framework, it is worth noting the Medium-Term Program for the Development of trade, economic, industrial and scientific-technical cooperation approved by the Governments of two states in 2003, which could have given an additional impetus to the development of the whole complex of economic ties [16].

This document provides, in particular, the construction of infrastructure and oil pipelines, the setup and modernization of industrial and energy facilities, including the renewables, the creation of assembly plants for cars, buses, road-building equipment, the sale of pharmaceutical products to Ethiopia [16]. Despite the agreement of the parties to deepen financial cooperation in order to expand bilateral trade, according to our information, these projects have not yet been implemented.

In addition, between the two countries there are Agreements on the promotion and mutual protection of investment, signed in 2000, and on the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income and capital as of 1999. However, both of them for some reasons have not entered into force [14, 15].

### **3. Conclusion**

It is obvious that at present the volumes of trade and investment cooperation remain at a rather low level. At the same time, despite the increasing international competition in the Ethiopian market, Russian business structures are gradually expanding their presence in this African country.

Diversification of export-import operations appears to be one of the most priority tasks. Both the nomenclature and geography of exports from the Russian Federation could be developed. In particular, it makes sense to actively involve companies from Russian regions in cooperation with Ethiopian partners.

In addition, it is necessary to revive the work on the implementation of the Medium-Term Program for the Development of Cooperation. This, in particular, could stimulate the investment flows and participation of the Russian business in large-scale projects in key sectors of Ethiopia's economy. It is advisable to more actively attract business associations to deepen cooperation, that is also provided for by the mentioned program.

In order to expand trade relations, it is certainly necessary to resolve all issues related to non-tariff restrictions as soon as possible, while working with Addis Ababa to minimize tariff barriers.

In order to strengthen economic cooperation, in our opinion, the parties should ratify agreements on the protection of investments and on the avoidance of double taxation. The conclusion of an Agreement on visa-free entry for citizens of the two countries with general civil passports (for business and tourist purposes) would also be useful for expansion of trade and investment cooperation.

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# НЕКОТОРЫЕ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ ПО РАЗВИТИЮ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА РОССИИ С ЭФИОПИЕЙ В УСЛОВИЯХ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ КОНКУРЕНЦИИ<sup>1</sup>

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*Цель:* автор ставит цель выработать рекомендации по наращиванию экономического сотрудничества Российской Федерации с Эфиопией в условиях международной конкуренции за этот африканский рынок. *Обсуждение:* автором дана оценка потенциалу экономики Эфиопии, состоянию сотрудничества местного бизнеса с зарубежными партнерами. Помимо этого, определен текущий уровень и очерчены перспективы расширения торгово-инвестиционного взаимодействия России с рассматриваемым африканским государством. *Результаты:* автор приходит к выводу, что имеется существенный потенциал для развития российско-эфиопских экспортно-импортных операций, а также увеличения масштабов присутствия отечественного бизнеса в Эфиопии. Для придания дополнительного импульса углублению экономических связей необходимо, прежде всего, вернуться к реализации Среднесрочной программы развития сотрудничества, устранить или минимизировать торговые ограничения, ратифицировать ряд заключенных ранее соглашений, а также развивать договорно-правовую базу.

**Ключевые слова:** Африка, Эфиопия, Россия, стратегия, экономическое развитие, потенциал, международная конкуренция, внешнеэкономические связи, торговля, инвестиции, инфраструктура, энергетика, ВИЭ, ТЭК.

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