

# A FIRST LADY'S BOUQUET

By Groum Abate

Khadra Mohammed, First Lady of Djibouti, has received the 20 hectares of land in the Sebeta area for a flower farm, on Tuesday July 22, 2008 from Alemu Sime, Investment Bureau Head of the Oromia Regional State.

The First Lady received the plot on behalf of her son Ayinashe Omar Guelleh, whom it was learnt, plans to engage in the booming flower sector. Floriculture already earns Ethiopia over 150 million dollars annually.

The Ethiopian government is keen to encourage investors, offering them a five-year tax holiday and duty-free import of machinery.

The area, 30 minutes south of Addis Ababa with green hills and lush valleys, is ideal for cultivating the country's fastest growing export - flowers.

Ethiopia exports more than 80 million stems a month to 40 countries. 70% percent is to the Netherlands, from where they are sent around the world. It also exports to Germany, Britain, Russia and, in smaller amounts, to the United States and the Middle East.



Djibouti's First Lady and entourage visiting flower farm in Sebeta. Alemu Sime, Investment Commission Head of Oromia Regional State hosting the Djiboutian First Lady.

Five years ago, Ethiopia made just \$159,000 from exports of cut flowers, cuttings and summer flowers. Last year that had grown to \$63.5 million and this year it is expected to hit \$166 million.

Last week, President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti obtained 10,000 hectares of land around Bale, Oromia Regional State for investing

in the agriculture sector. The multi-million dollar investment is expected to commence in the coming few weeks. The plot is mainly slated for growing wheat.

The president also visited the 10,000 meter square plot on Babogaya Lake in Bishoftu (Debre Zeit) town 45 kilometers south east of Addis Ababa and received a title

deed for the plot to construct his vacation home.

Khadra, during the ceremony on Tuesday July 22, 2008 also visited the plot, which her son is going to invest.

The title deed for a 20 hectare flower farm was also presented to the first lady last week on Friday

July 18, 2008 during the ceremony that also presented President Guelleh with his title deed for both sites in Bishoftu and Bale.

Warda A. Graham, owner of Wajag Gas and Alemayehu Ketema a businessman prominent in the construction sector facilitated the investment opportunity.

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