RAFU in Ethiopia: Africa's food sovereignty, Russian Education Day in Addis Ababa, and a meeting with the African Union

12.12.2025

As part of the International Conference on Food Sovereignty in Africa, held in Addis Ababa and organized by Rossotrudnichestvo with the support of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, Russian universities and research institutes presented a set of educational and technological initiatives aimed at supporting the continent’s agricultural sector. The event brought together more than 250 participants from 15 countries across the continent.



At the opening of the conference, the head of Rossotrudnichestvo, Yevgeny Primakov, delivered a welcoming speech.

«We need to move from a certain political awareness of Africa’s importance to us to pragmatic, practical projects that support the sovereignty of African countries. We have decided that we need to create a platform like this for our companies, for the corporate sector, and for their partners in African countries,» Primakov said.



The RAFU Project Office organized and moderated the session «Contribution of Russian Universities and Scientific Organizations to Ensuring Food Security in Africa.» Representatives of universities and scientific organizations that are members of RAFU participated in the session in person, including Moscow State University, People's Friendship University of Russia, Saint Petersburg Polytechnic University, Rosbiotech, the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg State Agrarian University, and Nizhny Novgorod State University.

«The continent has everything it needs not only to feed itself, but also to contribute to global food security. In the next 10-20 years, African countries will be able to move from growing crops for their own consumption to building up their export potential. This potential must be turned into reality. And here, we, Russia's leading universities, are ready to share our technologies and expertise,» said Maxim Zalivsky, head of the RAFU project office.



Irina Abramova, Director of the Institute of African Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, presented current projects and spoke about the Clean Water initiative, which aims to ensure access to water for agriculture.



During the visit, a delegation from RAFU universities, led by the consortium coordinator Peter the Great Polytechnic University, held a Russian Education Day and an educational exhibition at the Russian House in Addis Ababa, timed to coincide with the birthday of Russian scientist M.V. Lomonosov. The event became an important communication platform, strengthening educational and scientific ties between the countries. The exhibition was attended by St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Russian University of Biotechnology (ROSBIOTECH), St. Petersburg State Agrarian University, Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, and Patrice Lumumba People's Friendship University of Russia.





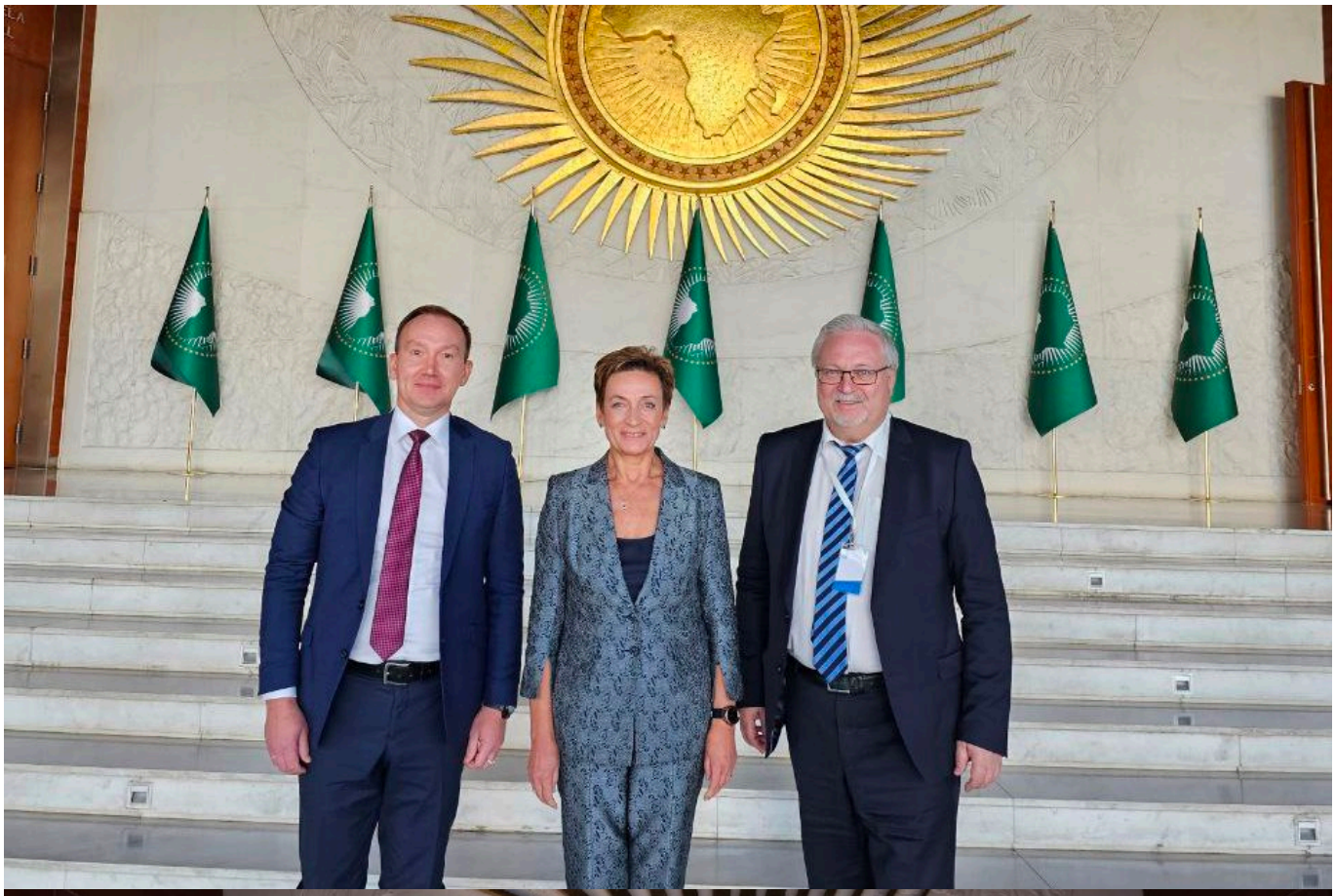
Guests at the event—students, schoolchildren, and parents—learned in detail about educational programs ranging from engineering and agriculture to biotechnology and veterinary medicine, and received answers to questions about entrance exams, tuition fees, scholarships, and international career opportunities. Ethiopian students also learned about opportunities to enroll at the Polytechnic University under the Russian Federation Government quota, as well as through the Open Doors: Russian Scholarship project international competition, and found out more about the main educational programs and pre-university training programs.





A visit was also made to Ethiopia’s largest university, Addis Ababa University. Maksim Zalivsky, director of the RAFU project office, met with Samuel Kifle, president of the university. Preliminary agreements were reached regarding the university’s membership in RAFU, as well as the

development of one or more short-term educational modules for the RAFU 2026 multidisciplinary summer university at their premises.





With the support of the Russian Embassy in Ethiopia, a meeting was organized with the Director of the

Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation of the African Union at the organization’s headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Russian delegation included Irina Abramova, Director of the Institute of African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Maxim Zalivsky, Head of the RAFU Project Office, and Andrei Panyukhov, Deputy Director of the Department for Partnership with Africa of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Following negotiations and a presentation on RAFU’s activities, an agreement was reached to begin work on preparing a memorandum of cooperation between RAFU and Pan-African University, as well as on developing joint projects on the RAFU platform in the field of higher education, particularly in the following areas: agriculture, energy, IT technologies and artificial intelligence, space research, and medicine.



In addition, following the visit, two regional universities in Ethiopia — Wollo University and Injibaar University — joined RAFU.

The conference and accompanying events became part of the RAU’s systematic work to strengthen scientific, educational, and technological partnerships with African countries.