

Press release
12 May 2026

Gazanche Primary School Project Launched with Site Handover Ceremony in Gurage Zone, Ethiopia

Gazanchi, Ethiopia – May 12, 2026 – Following the signing of a €4.2 million agreement between UNOPS and the Government of Italy to construct primary schools in underserved regions of Ethiopia, the official project launch and site handover ceremony for Gazanche Primary School took place on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, in Gazanche, Gurage Zone, Central Ethiopia.

Building on the partnership between UNOPS and the Government of Italy, the milestone event marked the transition from planning to on-the-ground implementation. The project directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

The Gazanche Primary School is one of the facilities under this €4.2 million initiative, targeting the Gurage Zone in the Central Ethiopia Region State and the West Shewa Zone in the Oromia Region. Once completed, the project is expected to directly benefit more than 4,000 students and their families, fostering socio-economic development and enabling brighter futures for these historically underserved communities.

The May 12 ceremony featured the formal handover of the site to the local contractor, signaling the start of construction. Senior representatives from UNOPS, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and the Italian Embassy in Ethiopia joined high-level regional administrators, underscoring a strong bilateral commitment to the project.

Speaking at the event, H.E. Ambassador Sem Fabrizi stated: *“Investing in a school means investing in the stability and development of a community. In Gazanche, Italy is supporting more accessible, inclusive and dignified education, responding to the real needs of students and their families. This project is the result of close cooperation with*

Ethiopian authorities and UNOPS, and reflects a concrete commitment to creating opportunities where they are most needed.”

Ms. Worknesh Mekonnen, Director of the UNOPS Horn of Africa Multi-Country Office and Representative to the African Union, added: *“This handover is a tangible demonstration of our shared commitment to reducing disparities and promoting inclusive development. We are creating real opportunities for the next generation.”*

The new school facilities will feature climate-resilient infrastructure, including modern classrooms, libraries, administrative spaces, and WASH facilities to safeguard health and well-being.

The ceremony concluded with a site visit, bringing together government officials, community leaders, and project stakeholders in a shared commitment to quality education for Ethiopia’s youth.

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Notes to the editors

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About respective entities:

AICS: Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) is a key player in the Italian development cooperation system, responsible for the elaboration, development, financing, management, and control of international cooperation initiatives. The Italian Cooperation has a long-standing presence in Ethiopia since 1976, focusing on various areas like humanitarian affairs, migration, refugees, health, education, and environmental protection. Read more: <https://addisabeba.aics.gov.it/home-eng/>

UNOPS: UNOPS offers practical solutions across peace and security, humanitarian and development operations. We help the United Nations, governments, and other partners, such as the European Union and its Member States, manage projects and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement globally. Read more: <https://www.unops.org/ethiopia>