



**LEGALINK**

INTERNATIONAL BUT PERSONAL

THE INTERVIEWS  
SERIES

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# Mekonnen Shiferaw

— MEKONNEN & LAW OFFICE





## About

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### **Which practice areas are the most in demand in your firm?**

My firm predominantly handles insurance litigation, including third party claims and recovery files. We do, sparingly, defend recovery claim submitted by beneficiaries of bond instruments.

As Ethiopian economy is witnessing a remarkable economic growth, the demand for quality legal service that caters for prospective investors needs is also growing in tandem. As such, my office provides first-rate legal advisory service in areas like Ethiopian Investment law, commercial law, registration requirement, tax laws and regulatory framework. Once foreign investors decide to invest in Ethiopia, we help them with the incorporation process of the new company or subsidiary or in the opening of branch office of already incorporated company.

Intellectual property law is another area in which my firm is specialized. This service, inter alia, includes registration and renewal of intellectual property right, drafting and registration of licensing agreement of trademarks, negotiation and registration of technology transfer agreement.

As we are lawyers providing service to multinational as well as local companies,

we usually prepare drafts of contracts and other legal documents for them.

Although the above practice areas are the notable ones, my firm also receives and handles construction contract cases as well as cases of different natures that are handled before arbitration tribunals and courts.

### **You became member of Legalink two years ago. Did you already have the opportunity to work with another Legalink member?**

Unfortunately, up until now I have not had the opportunity to receive any referral or otherwise had a working relationship with other Legalink members.

I am hopeful that with respect to the recent and future Ethiopian economical changes this scenario will significantly change.

### **Where do you think Legalink should be heading?**

I am convinced that Legalink is fully committed to broaden its outreach by accepting new members from countries where it is not yet represented and thereby creating a platform that promotes understanding of legal systems and practices from different parts of the work. As Legalink broadens its membership coverage, it should be used as a springboard for the development and improvement of private international law, leading to safer investments, increased trade and commerce.

I would like to see Legalink blossom into an international forum from which its members frequently receive referrals and enhance their international stature.

The conferences I have already attended were splendid, eye-openers, well-prepared and delivered by individuals who have a wealth of experience and expertise in the areas of their presentation. I could say the conferences were inch perfect in this regard.

**How is your firm /practice areas affected by recent economic changes/political changes?**

It is of record that the world economy is in a state of on-and-off crisis in recent past. Despite an unprecedented economic growth that took place in Ethiopia for the last 10 years in successive manner, the economy has been beset by recurring foreign exchange crunch that sometimes led to stand still trade. As we are working with big companies involved in international trade, we sometimes had to endure

under-engagement during the recess period. But this does not necessary mean that the volume of work and revenue generated there have been significantly reduced as we have a number of clients from whom we receive a steady number of cases.

In the face of the above, my firm is aware its success depends on provision of prudent, efficient and high quality service to its clients.

Thank you very much!