

The creation of the Italian railways in 1905 proved to be an important landmark in Italy's national unification process. The new railway system was directly conducive to the **economic, social and cultural growth** of Italy. Today, one century down the line, other "developing" countries find themselves in any identical position as they turn to face the challenge of extending and enhancing their infrastructure (including railway infrastructure) in order to bring to fruition their development, industrialisation and unification projects.

**Italferr** and **ERC** (Ethiopian Railways Corporation) have been collaborating on an international basis since 2014. This public enterprise goes back to 2007 and came into being with a view to create national railway infrastructure by implementing freight and passenger transportation services. The object was to connect outlying towns to the main cities and Ethiopia itself, which is landlocked, to the major ports of its neighbouring nations. Ethiopia's five-year "**Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)**" aims to buttress a rapid, widespread and well-distributed economic growth process, whilst achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). The latter is a long-term objective which is set to eradicate poverty, bring about a structural overhaul in the economy and lay the foundations for bringing about conditions of average income for the period 2020-25. During the workshop, a special spotlight will be put on the advisory services provided by the HR Department which helped to define **ERC's organisational model** (from defining the macro-structure to rightsizing the workforce) and which set up **training sessions** to cover the various aspects of the railway system. These advisory services were spread over a period of years and enabled Italferr to transfer its technical and managerial know-how and put the Client in the position of carrying out the operational management and maintenance activities on the new railway lines, thus guaranteeing the *operational excellence* of the "Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane". It will be a tremendous opportunity to compare notes and learn from each other. A time to give an account of a triumph in which Italferr had an important hand in accomplishing a formidable development, mobility and logistics project which never neglected to place Ethiopia's culture, surrounds and geography at the centre of the all the activities.

