Addis Ababa, February 1 (WIC) -Ethiopia officially inaugurated the registration of the Sheka forest by UNESCO as Global Biosphere Reserve this week.
UNESCO has added the Sheka forest to its global list of 599 Biosphere Reserves in 117 countries last year in Paris.

SNNP State Chief Shiferaw Shigute lauded the contribution of the traditional forest conservation practice of the local community at the inauguration ceremony held in Sheka Zone.
The inauguration ceremony is aimed at promoting the culture of the Shekicho community and their tradition of natural resource conservation.

“The local people should be appreciated for their wise forest conservation which is recognized by UNESCO. Most importantly, the local people need to be more beneficiary from the forest. In this regard, the government has been working with the people to ensure that the forest generates more income for the local people,” Shiferaw said.

State Chief Shiferaw called upon the Sheka people to uphold and strengthen the traditional forest conservation so as to ensure sustainable environment protection and maintain friendly ecosystem.

“We are pleased with UNESCO's adoption of our natural forest as a biosphere reserve,” Sheka Zone Administrator Befkadu Dillo, said.
Science and Technology State Minister Mahmuda Ahmed Ga'as on his part said Sheka Biosphere Reserve would contribute greatly in tackling climate change and to preserve

biodiversity.

The designation of the forest by UNESCO, therefore, has immense contribution in sustaining and creating healthy ecosystem in the country, he indicated.
The forest of Sheka is important in protecting watersheds that have local and international significance in the Nile and Omo-Gibe or Lake Turkana Basins, he said.
According to him, other people are expected to emulate from the traditional forest conservation practice of the Sheka people.

Sheka forest is one of the few forests in Ethiopia that is rich in biodiversity and has an irreplaceable value in terms of providing a healthy ecosystem for the entire area.
MELKA-Ethiopia, an NGO working on creating sustainable relationship with nature, has played its due role in the nomination process of Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve based on the local administration demand. (EPA)