

# **Speech by H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede at The Royal Society Pfizer African Academies Reception**

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2012  
Embassy of the FDR of Ethiopia**

Professor Martyn Poliakoff, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society  
Participants of the African Academies programme  
Scientists and Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to welcome you all to the Ethiopian Embassy and I hope you will have a pleasant time that will give you a taste and an understanding of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has embarked upon an agriculture-led industrialization development policy at the centre of which lies the political and economic transformation of Ethiopia. The policy has positioned the country on a sustainable economic growth and development trajectory.

Over the past decade, agriculture was crucial in generating capital, new jobs, supply of food and more significantly paving the way for industrialization. No one fails to notice the construction boom and infrastructure expansion that is fast changing the way business is conducted and transactions effected in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has become a potential investment destination for companies from Europe, America and other emerging economies.

The growth and development process that we have witnessed in Ethiopia in the past 10 years can be sustained only through effective and multifaceted resource mobilisation measures, at the centre of which lies capacity building in which the human resource development programme remains a key component.

Ethiopia, as a country with a vision of joining the middle income group of nations by 2025, has drawn up a Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan to carry forward the important strategic directions pursued in the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP).

During the GTP period, focus will be on agricultural and rural development, industry, infrastructure, good governance and democratization as well as social and human development. All sectors are embraced in the plan which has won national consensus. It focuses on agriculture as the leading growth sector, while simultaneously emphasizing a higher rate of growth for the industrial sector, which in due course will assume the leadership.

The GTP and its implementation calls for increased skill and capacity development, which in turn needs to foster institutional capacity to spur technology transfer and innovation. That is why Ethiopia has adopted a strategy to enrol 70 per cent of new entrants to universities in the domains of science and technology, which are crucial for the realization of the national drive to achieve faster economic growth, benefiting the public at all levels.

By the end of the GTP period – by 2015 - public higher learning institutes will admit up to 467,000 students, of which 326,000 (70%) will join science and technology streams.

I hope this will give everyone an indication of how much Ethiopia is focused on the expansion of science and technology to propel growth in the various sectors of the economy.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for joining us at this event and urge the Royal Society and partners to support government efforts to improve the quality and broaden the scope and fields of research in the natural sciences, technology and medicine that underpin the huge task of capacity building in Ethiopia.

I would like to thank you for choosing the Ethiopian Embassy as your host for this evening's reception.