

# Ethiopians Bid Farewell to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at London Gathering



**September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**

Over a thousand Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia honoured and paid their last respects to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in London as his funeral was taking place in Addis Ababa on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, in the presence of Heads of State and Government, delegations of various countries and grief stricken Ethiopians across the country.



Members of the Ethiopian community were seen streaming to the Ethiopian Embassy from early in the morning to follow the live television transmission of the burial of the Prime Minister, mourning the loss of the great leader and remembering the African giant for his achievements in bringing about peace and development by building a democratic order.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was the architect of a number of development strategies and policies, poverty reduction and alleviation programmes including the Growth

and Transformation Plan which envisages realizing Ethiopia's renaissance that would lead to its joining the community of nations of middle income in the coming decade or so.



Addressing the gathering, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK and the Scandinavian countries, H.E. Berahanu Kebede, paid tribute to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi who dedicated his life for the emancipation and equality of the Ethiopian peoples and under his leadership steered Ethiopia on the path to democracy and development.

The great leader, he said, has put in place a federal democratic order that laid the foundation for peace and an accelerated economic growth essential for the realisation of a viable Ethiopia. Huge projects including the Grand Renaissance Dam initiated by the great leader were highly inspirational in fostering public confidence and self-reliance by tapping into Ethiopia's natural resources to maximise gains made in improving livelihoods.

He noted that the visionary leader was among those African sons at the forefront in firmly upholding and highlighting African issues and was always steadfast in his principled stance for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Prime Minister Meles will be remembered for his wise leadership and for his outstanding legacies of development and democracy.

H.E. Ambassador Berhanu urged all Ethiopians to stand in unison and carry on with development schemes for the realisation of Ethiopia's renaissance, the vision of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

Messages of condolence and tributes were read by representatives of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the Ethiopian Consensus Forum, the Amhara Development Association, the South Ethiopia Peoples Development Association, the Ethiopian Somali Diaspora Forum, the Tigray Development Association and performing artistes.



Prayers and benedictions were given by religious leaders and poems celebrating the achievements of the great leader were read at intervals at the gathering at which refreshments were served by members of the community.



A day earlier on Saturday September 1<sup>st</sup>, a candlelight vigil was held in memory of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in front of the Parliament at Westminster in London, in the presence of hundreds of Ethiopians mourning the visionary leader.

Jointly organised by the various Ethiopian Development Associations and Ethiopian communities residing in London, the event was marked by chants and slogans paying tribute to the late leader widely known for his pro-poor development programmes that have lifted millions out of poverty.



In a speech he gave at the vigil, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede hailed Ethiopia's achievement under the leadership of the Prime Minister and called upon Ethiopians to rededicate for the implementation of the development programmes charted by the great leader.



Fifty-seven candles were lit from a single candle to pay tribute and recognize the extraordinary lifelong contributions and sacrifices by the great leader for Ethiopia's development and later hundreds of candles were lit from those 57 to symbolize readiness on the part of the 80 million Ethiopians to make Meles' vision a reality.

A two minute silence was held during the vigil and prayers and benedictions were given by religious leaders.

**May He Rest in Peace.**

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