

PRESS STATEMENT

Ethiopians Celebrate Nations and Nationalities Day in London

3rd December 2012

Ethiopians from all walks of life celebrated the 7th Nations, Nationalities and People's Day in London on 2nd December 2012 in the presence of H.E. Shiferaw Shigute, President of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's State (SNNPS).



Organized in collaboration with the London-based **Ethiopian National Consensus Forum**, the event brought together Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin, irrespective of creed and political orientation, with a single focus on economic growth and Ethiopia's Renaissance.



Addressing the gathering, H.E. Ato Shiferaw said the people of Ethiopia, now empowered with Constitutional provisions, are masters of their destiny and determined to fully implement development plans with an objective of beating poverty, with a heightened sense of ownership and unity.

Ethiopia is on the right track to build on the momentum of the unprecedented growth trajectory in areas of agriculture, industrial development, trade and investment and infrastructure, strategies set in motion by Ethiopia's visionary leader, the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

H.E. Ato Shiferaw said development and construction of infrastructure, the Renaissance Dam, irrigation schemes, capacity building in manufacturing and industry are

among the major undertakings boding well for Ethiopia's bid to join the middle-level income group of nations in the coming decade or so. Ethiopia is one of the ten fast growing economies in the world.

Our celebrations today, he noted, mark a new chapter in Ethiopian history that guarantees the sovereignty of the people as the ultimate custodians of power, opening the way for prosperity and social justice to meet the need of the Ethiopian peoples for a better life.

Citing the significant role of Diaspora Ethiopians in building peace, democracy and development, he urged fellow compatriots to redouble their efforts to engage in trade and investment, image building and the purchase of Renaissance Dam bonds.



In introductory remarks earlier, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK and the Scandinavian countries, said that while observing this historic day we shall reiterate our pledges to carry on with Ethiopia's Renaissance with further commitment and resilience.

Appreciating active involvement and engagement on the part of Diaspora Ethiopians in all development initiatives, he underlined the importance of fostering progress and gains made in a number of sectors including agriculture, industry, communications, health and education, using the consensus and unity of Ethiopians as a launch-pad to realize a prosperous and viable nation.

As all of us are well aware of the urgency to produce more energy to feed the growing economy, the ambassador said, the call for the purchase of the GERD bond could not be more emphasized at this juncture in time.



Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Ethiopian National Consensus Forum (ENCF), Mulatu Tadesse, called on members and all Ethiopians to join hands for the successful implementation of the transformation plan to see a new and prosperous Ethiopia come about through hard work by duty-bound compatriots.

The ENCF, he promised, will use all resources at its disposal to lead and encourage members in their participation in all fields of endeavour to beat poverty and ensure sustainable development.

A minute of silence was observed in memory of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi at the start of the event.

Seven candles were lit and a ceremonial cake was also cut during the celebration.

Shows depicting the diverse cultures of nations and nationalities, poems, traditional songs and dances were staged to the delight of the audience.

Present on the occasion were, over 300 guests including members and representatives of the various development associations, religious leaders, partners and friends of Ethiopia.



In a related development, the newly organized South Ethiopia Diaspora Association was launched in the presence of HE the President and members and supporters of the Southern Peoples Diaspora Association.



Discussions were also held with the over 150 participants following an elaborate presentation on development endeavours and progress made by the high-level delegation led by H.E. Shiferaw Shigute, President of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's State, on issues pertaining to investment, housing projects and other development schemes in the region.



In a fund-raiser following the discussions which also focused on trade and investment opportunities for active engagement by the Diaspora they held on 1st December, members of the association in addition to the 40,000 pound bond they bought earlier had secured an additional 333,500 birr (£11,500) - from the sale of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam bonds, and pledges made in support of the construction of the dam bringing the total to 51,500 pounds. Those present expressed commitment to the success of the project.

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