

**Speech delivered to the  
House of Peoples' Representatives  
by  
H.E Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn at his  
inauguration as the Prime Minister of the Federal  
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

**September 21, 2012**

**Honorable peoples of Ethiopia**

**Honorable speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives,**

**Honorable members of the House of Peoples' Representatives,**

**Invited guests, members of the Diplomatic corps,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

First and foremost, I must express my heartfelt gratitude for the honor bestowed upon me by the House of Peoples' Representatives for this further opportunity to serve the peoples of Ethiopia following the decision of the ruling party last week.

It is indeed an exceptional honor. I am standing here before you today at a time when Ethiopia under the wise and farsighted leadership of our late great leader Meles Zenawi has turned the corner to become one of three fastest growing economies in the world" from the gloomy specter of utter disintegration that the country faced 21 years ago. Thanks to the unrestrained self sacrifice of our great leader, as well as the immense efforts of the peoples of Ethiopia, despondency has finally given way to hope; darkness to brightness. More importantly, we have proven that victory over poverty and backwardness is within reach after all.

My responsibility now therefore is one of ensuring the continuity of the process that this party has initiated on the basis of collective leadership, to ensure the continued implementation of existing policies and strategies; to further enhance and strengthen the far reaching results we have already achieved in the areas of economic development and democratization; to successfully carry out the aims and ambitions of a great and notable leader.

He was not just a brilliant generator of ideas: he was, par excellence, the embodiment of selflessness and self-sacrifice; a true man of the people and a rare example of hard work and dedication. He was indeed a man of great moral stature and exceptional heroism, someone who relentlessly championed the cause of the poor not just in Ethiopia but in the entire world. He led his party and his people in their successful fight against poverty and backbreaking ignorance.

My responsibility and the first order of business for the entire leadership of this party is therefore to contribute to the further consolidation of these results. We will do this while sticking to the path that has already been laid down by the party under Prime Minister Meles' leadership. In a word, my responsibility above all is one of ensuring the continuity of these policies and of honoring his legacy.

### **Eternal glory to our great leader!**

The efforts to modernize agricultural practices and improve productivity have already started to prove their caliber. They have raised living standards for millions in the rural areas which support the livelihood of the majority of Ethiopia's population. We will continue to further consolidate these gains by working towards changes in attitude as well as developing and expanding skills through the extension of practical adult education and the introduction of more advanced agricultural procedures.

In addition to increasing crop production, there will be intensive efforts to introduce sustainable agricultural development including the expansion of irrigation. Agricultural development is the central element of our Growth and Transformation Plan and the most significant driver of economic growth. We will continue to strengthen our support to increase agricultural productivity at household levels. We will also take measures to further enhance the role as well as share of the private sector in the expansion of commercial agriculture,

to increase its share in the overall national economy. Studies will be made of existing processes to identify ways to address obstructions that might impede progress in this area.

Ethiopia, of course, is home to the largest number of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Africa. It is with this fact in mind that the Government has in the last few years been implementing a number of measures to start to change their lives. Among these have been actions to enable the settlement of pastoralists in villages where they can have better access to water and other amenities with relative ease. We will continue to strengthen our efforts to introduce modern methods of animal husbandry and other agricultural practices in pastoralist and semi-pastoralist areas.

This will also provide for the opportunity for pastoralists to engage in crop production and other non-traditional agricultural practices. It will allow the regions in which pastoralists predominate to benefit equally from the economic growth and development being registered across the whole nation.

Demographics clearly show that Ethiopia has a very substantial youth population. This can play an unrivalled role in the nation's efforts to ensure economic growth. We need to expand the education and training regimen to which they have been exposed. Efforts will be made to hone their entrepreneurial skills, to harmonize the support they get from government and from family. This will go a long way to ensure that the youth of the country will indeed provide the solid basis on which our future prosperity and development will depend.

All our students - and their teachers - should bear in mind that the future of our nation will essentially be determined by the extent in which we have made strides in the adoption and expansion of science and technology. We should therefore exert maximum efforts to reorient the focus of curricula on mathematics and science.

We must make real and sincere efforts to further strengthen the all-round participation of women who are half of our population, of course - in development and democratization. We will enact measures to ensure their participation will have a very real and central impact. Mother and child health protections should also be strengthened to enable the fullest possible participation of women in these processes.

Similarly, we should not lose sight of the need to make sure people with special needs are also provided with the necessary support to participate in the overall development and democratization of the country. This will guarantee that they also benefit properly. The government will continue to provide necessary support to the fullest extent possible.

Our universities, research centers and professional associations should play pivotal role in policy research and studies to augment our overall efforts to build a democratic culture. We should also build on our successful engagement with our intellectuals and researchers to encourage their participation in the development endeavors of the nation. Emphasis should be given to encouraging problem-solving studies and researches that are firmly grounded in the reality of the country. These can make significant contributions in meeting the challenges we will have to face as our growth becomes faster and stronger.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our vision is for Ethiopia to become a middle income economy within a decade. The industrial sector in general and the manufacturing sub-sector in particular will be pivotal in ensuring the necessary growth of a middle class to help achieve this aim. The government will continue to support foreign direct investment in these areas. At the same time, special emphasis should be given to nurturing domestic private sector involvement. We will continue to hold public-private consultation forums to encourage the development of the private

sector and its involvement in development. We will effectively addressing the various bottlenecks that had stifled vibrant participation by the private sector in industry and manufacturing. We should support and encourage the private sector to produce exports of internationally competitive products, so increasing generation of foreign exchange.

The government will also exert maximum effort to speed up the development and expansion of micro and small enterprises which are instrumental for creating job opportunities. In addition, we will exert major efforts to further facilitate housing, railway and road construction projects aimed to resolve the housing and transport challenges we face in our urban centers in general and in Addis Ababa in particular.

Inflation here is largely caused by the worldwide increase in the price of commodities and food, but other factors, including the inefficiency of our trading system, are also relevant. The rate of inflation has recently been falling but more measures need to be taken to bring it down to healthier levels. We hope the better rains we have had this past rainy season will contribute significantly to bringing the levels of inflation down.

Expansion of economic infrastructure is the key to ensuring the growth of the productive sectors of the economy including industry and agriculture. We cannot produce global competitiveness without providing the basic infrastructure for these areas. We will therefore redouble our efforts to speed up the timely completion of the road, railway, hydropower, telecom and transport infrastructure projects envisaged in the Growth and Transformation Plan. Of central interest in this regard, of course, is the construction of the Renaissance Dam. Our great leader gave maximum priority to the realization of this project, and supported by the exceptional dedication being shown by our people, we will do everything in our power to make sure the completion of the dam, and, if possible, ahead of schedule.

We have identified the most formidable impediment standing in the way of the transformation of our economy in general and of the industrial sector in particular as the corrupt practices of the rent seeking political economy. The major sources of corruption are our land and tax administration system, public procurement procedures and the inefficiency of our trading system. We need to address these problems by mobilizing the public at large and the private sector in particular so that they will not stand in the way of our prosperity and development. The government will create an enabling environment for people to play an active role in meeting these challenges.

Good governance issues cannot be addressed without looking at the institutions tasked with the delivery of public services. The reform movement, already underway in public institutions to do away with corrupt practices that have caused discontent among the public, will be further strengthened. Equally, this must be done with full public participation. We will directly engage with the public and make certain that civil servants have a real sense of public service.

The system of justice system has a key role to play in ensuring protection of basic freedoms as well as in establishing a competitive free market system. The police, public prosecutors and the courts will further enhance their ongoing reform programmes in order to meet the demands and expectations of the people. All the efforts currently underway to consolidate the constitutional order should be further strengthened. Equally, we should underline that drastic legal measures will be taken to rein in all the corrupt practices that have caused pain and suffering for our people.

The supervisory measures that this Honorable House has introduced in the past few years, providing support to the executive branch as well as taking remedial steps when necessary, should be further consolidated. The Government will play its full part in this process.

In this context, the government will continue to provide support to the efforts being made to strengthen human rights and democratic institutions in the country, in order to help develop a democratic culture and full respect for human rights. In our continuous efforts to deepen and develop a democratic culture in Ethiopia, we will work together with all our democratic institutions, including the Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Electoral Board as well as legally functioning press and media institutions and opposition political groups that are duly constituted in accordance with relevant laws and engaged in peaceful and democratic struggle to achieve their goals within legal bounds.

We are very ready to work closely with independent civic organizations, professional associations and other mass organizations. They have an indispensable role to play in developing the nascent efforts to build a mature democratic order. They are key institutions that enable people to play the necessary crucial role in development and good governance. We will strive hard for the implementation of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom and equality of religion free of any partisanship and interference. Equally, we will take all necessary measures to deal with any forces that attempt to engage in political and terrorist activity under the guise of religion. Any such illegal activities are totally forbidden under the Constitution.

We will ensure that our foreign relations and national security activities will continue to play their prominent and crucial contribution to our rapid economic development and to the peace we enjoy. Following in the footsteps of our great leader, we will strive to maintain and develop the influential voice in regional, continental and international forums that he developed. We will continue our efforts to provide for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa through our diplomatic efforts to assist the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, and in Somalia. Our defense forces are admired around the world for their immense contributions to peacekeeping in African countries. They are also firmly committed to defend the constitutional order from any internal and external attacks. Their strength and steadfastness has been



further expanded by training in military science. Our National Defence Forces deserve our admiration for discharging their missions successfully at home, in  
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army.

We and our peoples will continue to guard against all forces who try to carry out acts of terror under different guises with either internal or external support. We will prove to all that Ethiopia will remain as a stable and democratic nation within the Horn of Africa.

C i f ' d Y c d ` Y i z a t i o n , a n d t h e b a s i s o f f r e e a n d v o l u n t a r y o r g a n i z a t i o n , r e m a i n s t h e c e n t r a l a s p e c t o f r a p i d a n d s u s t a i n a b l e d e v e l o p m e n t t h a t b e n e f i t s a l l p e o p l e a t a l l l e v e l s . I n c o n c l u s i o n I w o u l d p l e a d w i t h a l l t o i n t e n s i f y t h e i r e f f o r t s n o w t o s u c c e s s f u l l y i m p l e m e n t t h e a i m s a n d v i s i o n o f o u r g r e a t l e a d e r . M a y I e x t e n d m y w i s h e s t o y o u a l l t h a t t h e n e w E t h i o p i a n N e w Y e a r w i l l b e a y e a r i n w h i c h w e w i l l b e s u c c e s s f u l i n a l l e f f o r t s a n d m a k e 2 0 0 5 a y e a r o f e x c e p t i o n a l p r o g r e s s .

**I thank you!**