

Honorable Hassan Sheik Mohamud , President of the Federal Republic of Somalia

Honorable Ismail Omar Ghele, President of the Republic of Djibouti

Ministers,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, on behalf of the People and Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and of myself, I would like to extend to your Excellency Hassan Sheik Mohamud my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. I should also congratulate the great people of Somalia for not only conducting this election with calm and maturity but also for arriving at this chapter of peace and democracy with persistence and unmatched resilience. Unfettered by decades of war and chaos, you have come back with vigour and hope. The civility with which the other presidential contenders have accepted the result of the election is a hopeful indication that Somalia is finally closing the old chapter of war-lordism and chaos. Ethiopia is hopeful that with the spirit you have now exhibited and with the characteristic entrepreneurship of the Somali people, your great country will assume its rightful place in the community of nations.

Excellencies,

Ethiopia has all along been on the side of the Somali people in your long journey in search of peace and reconciliation. In this arduous march, we have celebrated together on what few successes achieved and comforted each other in times of crisis and deadlocks. We have fought together against forces of evil

and buried our sons in the same grave yard. Our relationship goes beyond politics: It is embedded in strong people to people relations. During the last two trying decades, Ethiopia has been second home to our Somali brothers and sisters. We have and continue to live in the same neighborhoods; go to the same mosques; attend the same schools; undertake joint businesses and many Somalis even have found their partners in life in Ethiopia. Ours is a brotherhood that has defied odds and so for all the right reasons.

Needless to say, it is incumbent on our two governments to build on the positive values of relationship we have managed to establish and elevate it on to solid political and people to people level and use it to further strengthen and deepen our relationship. There is no going back. Our history is already cemented by blood; our future hinges on our common hopes and aspirations. After all, we have both been at the receiving end of naked terrorism in the hands of those who still are desperately trying to sabotage your march towards stability and lasting peace.

Excellencies,

Ladies & gentlemen,

Our great leader, who for the better part of his life labored tirelessly to bring peace to Somalia, is not with us today. I wish he had lived to see this happy moment when the Somali people and the world is celebrating the inauguration of a Somali President legitimately elected by its people. This certainly is a

moment for the arrival of which *he dreamed and longed for a long time*. In the last 21 years of his leadership, resolving the Somali crisis had always been at the center of his foreign policy agenda. Somalia always came to his mind on all regional and international forums and he made sure that Somalia got the international attention it needed after years of indifference by the international community. Prime Minister Meles had relentlessly worked towards the realization of this day, and continued to do so to the last days of his life.

The last foreign dignitary he met was former president Sheik Sharif who, true to his promise, has graciously accepted the result of the election. He met him a day before he went abroad for medication. He was in agony but spared time to talk about peace in Somalia. For our great leader, Ethiopia's progress was as much about its peoples' commitment to fighting poverty as the prevalence of peace and stability in all its neighbours. He was consistent in his belief that those who put the interests of peoples at the forefront of their agendas would ultimately prevail. We are consoled that his dream of seeing Somalia at peace with itself and marching on the path of tranquility and development has finally reached a point where it realistically appears to be within reach.

It is my hope and expectation that Somalia's political actors would make good on their solemn promise to their people that they will part ways with the country's sordid past. It is no small comfort, therefore, that the Somalis' quest for lasting peace and stability is already paying dividends. It is altogether fitting that all of you here today renew your commitments to stand firm and resolute against all the forces of division and extremism that have wrought havoc and unparalleled misery on millions of Somalis.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the great people of Somalia and the President elect that my government will continue to uphold the spirit of

fraternity our great leader has established with your great nation and as usual will support you in all spheres in the course of your arduous task to rebuild your country.

Excellency,

Ladies & gentlemen

We understand that you have a long way to go to bring your nation to the level of your peoples' expectation. But I can assure you that the destination is reachable, whatever the odds. You have the good will of your people, your neighbours and the international community at large. Make use of this political capital and be careful not to squander it.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like once again to extend my best wishes for your personal wellbeing and for the peace and prosperity of the brotherly people of Somalia.

Thank you

Speech By H.E Ato Hailemariam Desalegn, PM of the
FDRE on the Occasion of the swearing in ceremony of
president elect , Hassan Sheik Mohamud, President of
the Federal Republic of Somalia

Somalia

Mogadishu

September, 2012

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