

Welcoming Remarks  
by  
H.E. Ato Hailemariam Desalegn,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of  
Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia  
at  
a Reception for the Diplomatic  
Community

20 October 2010

Addis Ababa

Excellencies Ambassadors,  
Excellencies Heads of Organizations  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for coming here today. May I extend a very warm welcome and express appreciation to you all for accepting my invitation for this occasion. I felt it is most appropriate for us to meet today in this format which, though a collective event, would also nonetheless give us an opportunity for individual and bilateral encounters and the initiation of friendship. I can assure you this is not intended to be a substitute for a more formal and extended discussions that I intend and look forward to having with you all.

Let me underline one point right from the outset. To me there is no greater priority during my term of office as the Foreign Minister of this great country than doing whatever is humanly possible to ensure that Ethiopia's relations with the countries you represent and the entities you speak for are based on true partnership and friendship rooted in mutual trust and mutual consideration. One other point that I want to add in this same spirit is that I might sometime disagree with you, and make you unhappy as a consequence, but I shall not mislead you. One thing I most cherish in relations among nations is consistency and predictability, which in no way prevents pragmatic adjustment to changing situations, but based on principles.

Excellencies,  
Friends,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not intend today, given the nature of the occasion, to get into substantive issues germane to our region, our continent, or in fact to the world in general. But it would indeed be remiss of me if I failed to refer to how much the period ahead of us is so critical to our region and to African; and, in fact, I might add, to the international community in general. Mentioning just Sudan may convey the message I am trying to express. What happens in Sudan will by no means be limited to the people of the Sudan. What goes on in the Sudan has continental wide implications, for good or ill. Somalia is not yet out of the woods either. The challenge there continues to be daunting. In all this, we need your support and understanding; for us and for our region. No doubt, this is also in your interest. We can no longer compartmentalize in regional terms our problems. This is the approach that I shall be following and this is the philosophy of my party.

On other critical matters for our region and for the world in general, such as climate change and environmental issues, our proactive involvement will be more, not less vigorous.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellencies are aware as much as I am that no country can achieve its external obligations - for its region or for the world - unless it has developed the capacity to ensure its own internal viability in all areas - economic, social and in connection with issues related to governance and the deepening of democracy. I do not need to elaborate on this theme because you already have the opportunity to hear and discuss issues related to our next five year Growth and Transformation Plan.

As you can perceive we have adopted a Herculean task for ourselves. Of course, we are determined to achieve our targets as set out in the Plan. However, I wish to indicate that while the Ethiopian Government assumes the primary responsibility for implementing the Plan, we will also count on your assistance to successfully realize our objectives. Indeed, the partnerships that we have with you becomes even more critical, considering the numerous and arduous task we have to accomplish in order to fully implement our Growth and Transformation Plan. This is also why our diplomatic challenge in the period ahead is going to be so complex and so difficult.

Let me take this opportunity to mention that with respect to regional issues, I am confident that we will work to strengthen IGAD's regional peace and integration initiatives. As you know Ethiopia holds the Chairmanship of IGAD. As such I will spare no effort to work with all of you to promote peace and stability in our sub-region.

No doubt, the presence here in Addis Ababa of the African Union is a great opportunity for us Ethiopians and a gift from Africa for which we shall always be grateful. This fact avails to us the unique opportunity to understand the prevailing situation in the continent as well as the aspirations of our peoples. In order to lift Africa from the quagmire of underdevelopment and set it on the path of prosperity, we, together with our brothers and sisters from Africa, would like to encourage our partners to serve as a bridge between our continent and their respective countries and the organizations they represent. In a nutshell, I would like to urge you to support the African Union's continental endeavours to promote development, peace and security and good governance. That is also why I attach special importance to the presence at this occasion of the Chairperson of the Commission Dr. Jean Ping and Heads of others international organizations.

I thank you