

Opening speech

By

H.E. Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister

of Finance and Economic

Development

on the Occasion of African

Regional Meeting on Sustainable

Development Goals; Ministerial

Segment

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**Madam/Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellency, Mr. Carlos Lopez, Executive Secretary, United
Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
Honourable Ministers
Excellencies Chief Executives and Representatives of
Regional Economic Communities;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is my pleasure on behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and, indeed, on my behalf to welcome you to Addis Ababa to attend this important meeting hosted by the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa. I wish also to express my gratitude for the invitation to this meeting whose focus is “Africa Sustainable Development Goals “

Let me start with appreciation to the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank for jointly organizing this meeting.

Our appreciation also goes to the member states of the African Union, Chief Executives and representatives of Regional Economic Communities, representatives of the core diplomatic corpus and other participants of this gathering.

**Chairperson,
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

As you all know Africa has made significant progress in economic growth since the beginning of the century; and yet the continent is lagging behind towards achieving the MDG goals and extreme poverty. Making inclusive and sustainable development the focus of Post -2015 development initiatives is justified by the extent and depth of poverty in the continent and also by the fact that such extreme poverty slows down all manner of social and economic progress.

In this regard, it is important to consider Sustainable Development that complement rather than substitute to the MDG's and linking sustainable development to any development goals that become part of the post 2015 development agenda. This would promote coherence in policymaking and synergistic implementation of internationally agreed goals. It would also minimize the pressure on the limited institutional capacities of many African countries that would otherwise be struggling with overlapping of agendas that appear to be unrelated, distinct or separate.

Thus, it is imperative that the two processes are carried out in close collaboration and synergy. The Sustainable Development Goals should also encompass all dimensions of sustainable development so as to ensure greater convergence among the issues captured by the MDGs, Post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, post -2015 Development Agenda's should consider the impacts of climate change on Africa and take in to account proper responses accordingly. Our continent, which contributes a negligible amount of greenhouse gas emissions (less than 4 per cent), is likely to experience higher temperature increases, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, and increased climate variability due to its proximity to the equator.

The impacts of climate change have far-reaching implications for economic and social development, particularly high for the poor who tend to live in environments that are most susceptible to droughts, floods and other extreme weather conditions. Consequently, climate change could severely undermine our growth and development prospects, thereby slowing progress towards sustainable development.

Nonetheless, the response to climate change provides an opportunity to pursue a sustainable development path by

catalyzing a shift towards clean development and green, low-carbon economies.

This calls for African countries to consider in creating more coherent and integrated planning and decision making processes at the national, sub national and local levels in dealing with sustainable development, including coordinating and enabling the effective integration of the dimensions of sustainable development.

These bodies should integrate, consolidate and ensure the mainstreaming of sustainable development at the highest level of decision-making organs of governments, the private sector and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Chairperson,

Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you may be aware, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, with the objective of achieving accelerated and inclusive growth; and also addressing poverty issues in the country, has been implementing the Growth and Transformation Plan, known as GTP, during the period 2010/11-2014/15.

The Growth and Transformation Plan sets out an ambitious agenda to position the country on the path of achieving its middle income vision by the 2025.

The GTP recognizes that sustainable development in Ethiopia can only be achieved if development is pursued in the social, economic and environment areas in a balanced manner and ensuring that benefits accrued are equitably shared among the citizens of the country.

The GTP explicitly recognizes that environment is a vital and important pillar of sustainable development, and states that building a 'Green Economy' and ongoing implementation of environmental laws are among the key strategic directions pursued during the GTP period.

In the last three years of GTP implementation, the GDP has grown on average by about 10 percent per annum. Economic growth which has been registered in these years is rapid, broad-based and effective in accelerating sustainable development and in reducing poverty. It is also very high compared to the average GDP growth rate of 7 % required to achieve the MDGs target of reducing poverty by half by 2014/15. It is also to be noted that this remarkable growth performance has been achieved amidst global economic challenges.

It is now my pleasure and singular honor to declare this meeting officially opened.

I thank you for your attention.