

Opening Remarks by the State Minister of Industry  
H.E. Ato Tadesse Haile,  
Tenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of  
States Parties in Africa.

African Union Commission Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
22-24 May 2012

- **H.E Mr. HaileMariam Desalegn**  
Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vice Prime Minister
- **Mr. M.Lesile Gumbi**  
Director, International Cooperation and Assistance Division
- **Mr. Mark Albon**  
Head of Implementation Support Branch at Organization for  
The Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.
- **Honorable Guests**
- **Distinguished Course Participants**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Industry and on my own behalf, let me take this opportunity to welcome all the participants from the African Countries, Officials from the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and local participants to the Tenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa.

On behalf of the National Authority of Ethiopia and my own, let me also take this opportunity to thank the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and The African Union (AU) for jointly organizing this important meeting.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Chemical Weapons Convention, the first multi-lateral legal instrument that banned an entire category of weapons of mass destruction has indeed opened a new era in the history of disarmament and non-proliferation, by establishing a verification regime of unprecedented stringency.

To date 188 countries of the world with 98 % of the global population and chemical industry have joined the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Out of 53 African Countries 50 are States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. This in fact can be stated as a remarkable achievement of the Technical Secretariat of OPCW.

The African region, constituting 50 member states out of the total 188 states parties to the convention, is a major stakeholder in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The role of the African region in the implementation of the provisions of Chemical Weapons Convention is critical and this requires a more concerted effort on our part to fulfill our international commitments.

The Governments and peoples of African countries have always cherished and committed themselves to the world's lasting peace and stability and try to seek common development and prosperity for the international community. Through the joint efforts by all the countries, the implementation of the Convention in Africa has got a good start and won gratifying achievements. I believe that with concerted efforts and stronger commitment to the cause, Africa will surely enjoy a brighter prospect.

Besides the priority given by OPCW to Africa in Supporting and fostering international cooperation in areas of peaceful uses of chemistry, the Organization is also delivering significant capacity building supports to the region in areas of National Implementation of the Convention. The concerted effort of the Organization to respond to Africa's specific needs in this regard is highly commendable.

In this connection, I would like to commend the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the support programmes offered to us so far that are directly relevant to our needs and priorities.

As all of you are well aware, the objectives of the courses are to help African States Parties comply with the obligation they have assumed under the convention and to fulfill the objectives set out in the plan of action regarding the implementation of Article VII (National Implementation Measures).

Though Ethiopia possesses no chemical Weapons and has no Chemical industry relevant to the Convention, it has a strong commitment for the universality of the Convention and makes every effort for its full implementation. We believe that the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention can only be fully met, if the convention is implemented properly and comprehensively at a national level.

Ethiopia is among the pioneer states parties to the Convention. Ethiopia signed the Convention on 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1993 and ratified the same on 13<sup>th</sup>

of May 1996. As a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Ethiopia has designated the National Authority for CWC and has adopted a comprehensive national implementing legislation. The National Authority has been working closely with the OPCW and other states parties to encourage regional efforts related to the Convention.

On behalf of the Ethiopian Government, I would like to reaffirm the strong commitment of Ethiopia to the global efforts to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the convention; and particularly to eliminate the threat posed by this category of weapons of mass destruction.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me take this opportunity to provide you with a brief introduction of the Economic Development of Ethiopia. Today the Ethiopian Economy has proved to be one of the emerging economics in Africa.

The Government of Ethiopia over the last decade and half has implemented various bold political and economic reform programmes with the overall objective of creating political and economic stability, good governance, conducive and enabling environment; and finally achieving political and economic transformation.

On the political front, Ethiopia has adopted a new constitution that has granted the Ethiopian people all democratic rights including the rights to speak, write, demonstrate, to be organized, etc. Political power that has been highly centralized with the past regimes has been devolved as part of the

democratization programme. This has resulted in the establishment of Autonomous Regional Governments, which again has laid a strong foundation for political stability, peace and security in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and is committed to the fight against terrorism. The contribution of our peace - keeping troops in various African nations is also a visible manifestation of our commitment for the prevalence of peace and political stability in the African region. We believe that practical cooperation between countries is the most effective means of achieving tangible progress in the counter terrorism efforts.

On the economic front, the Government has demonstrated a high level of commitment to fight poverty and ensure sustainable economic development. Ethiopia is considered to be as one of the Leading African countries that have shown encouraging progress to successfully achieve the millennium development goals in the area of providing access to education, health services, road accessibility, rural electrification, poverty alleviation etc.

As the result of the efforts taken by the government to create conducive and enabling environment for private sector development, the Ethiopian Economy has been steadily growing since 1992. Particularly over the past eight consecutive years, the Ethiopia Economy has registered annual average growth rate of over 10%. Export has also grown by an average of over 25% annually.

Currently Ethiopia has adopted the first Growth and Transformation plan with ambitious targets of achieving an annual GDP growth of 11 % to 14.9%

under the low case and high case scenarios respectively, of which the Industry sector is expected to grow by 20% annually in the next five years. This growth and Transformation plan has evolved from the national Vision that envisages seeing Ethiopia in the rank of middle-income countries by 2025.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In concluding, I firmly believe that this meeting would improve the work of National Authorities for the effective implementation of the convention.

I am informed that 44 delegates from 37 African countries and 2 delegates: one from U.S.A and the other from African Union are present in this meeting.

Dear participants; your active participation in this meeting fully embodies the attention and support of the international community including African nations for the CWC. In the next three days, delegates of various African countries and the experts from the OPCW Technical Secretariat will exchange views and hold discussions on effective running of the National authorities, national implementation legislation and regulation and effective control of the trade in scheduled chemicals which are believed to be important contributions to peace and stability of our continent.

I wish you every success in your deliberations and pleasant and productive time during your stay in Addis Ababa.

With these remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen it is now my pleasure to declare this Regional meeting officially open and hope that you

participants of this meeting would apply the knowledge you acquired to enhance the Convention's Implementation in your respective countries.

I thank you,