

**Speech by H.E. Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water and Energy  
At Hydropower for Sustainable Development 2011,  
31<sup>st</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, UN-ECA Conference Hall,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**H.E Ato Meles zenawi, Prime Minister  
of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,  
H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson, Africa Union Commission,  
H.E. Dr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary UN-Economic  
commission for Africa,  
Excellencies Ministers,  
Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic corps,  
Distinguished Invited Guest,  
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you all to Addis Ababa for this very important international conference on hydropower for sustainable development.

Generation of hydropower has the potential to bring enormous benefits to the Region, especially for Ethiopia. As a local source of clean and safe electricity, hydropower, when harnessed in a sustainable way, is a tremendous asset for developing countries. Africa is fortunate to possess a great potential, but often lacks the means to develop this resource.

Hydropower is probably the cleanest and most efficient energy source that exists. Additionally, it is in most cases economical in comparison with other renewable energy resources. The untapped hydropower resources worldwide which are likely to be realistically developed have been estimated to be of the order of 6,000 Terawatt hours (Twh) per annum. If prepared, constructed, operated and managed well, global electricity production from hydropower could be three times its present level; thus, hydropower alone could produce half of the electricity consumed at present.

The key factor hampering economic, social and health development in Africa is its very severe lack of energy. It is worth noting here some 2.5 billion of the world's population does not have access to electricity at present. In the case of Africa, this is even more poignant, with some 90 % of the population of countries such as DRC with huge hydropower potential of more than 100,000 MW lacking access to modern energy services. In the case of Ethiopia, only 2000 MW has been realized of the 45,000 MW potential. My Government is fully committed to improve this situation with a program to add up to 8000 MW with the next 5 years.

Sustainable Development is fundamentally about achieving apparently competing objectives, which are however all valuable for society: economic development, natural resources conservation and social wellbeing. There have been debates around hydropower development. I warmly welcome the initiative to come to a reasonable and widely accepted consensus on the sustainable and responsible use

of hydropower. With regard to this, I congratulate the International Hydropower Association for its work on the development of the hydropower sustainability guidelines.

**H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During this conference, I hope we can have a constructive dialogue on the development of hydropower, and especially on how we can stimulate investment in order to deliver sustainable water and energy services. It is my government's expectation that this conference will lay a platform to reinforce cooperation for development of regional hydropower potential, in a rational and equitable manner. Only when we look at a basin as a whole, can we use our common resources in an efficient and optimum application. Through strong collaboration, the infrastructure can be located and operated in such a way as to bring benefits to all.

The wide spectrum of stakeholders present surely provides all necessary incentives for a constructive debate and a clear set of recommendations. I sincerely hope that Ethiopia will provide a stimulating location for our dialogue. In particular, I look forward to opinions on the possibility of furthering education in the field of sustainable hydropower through the potential creation of a centre of excellence in the country. With regard to that, I am pleased to see the participation of numerous academic institutions that may have innovative ideas and inputs on this.

It is now my honour to invite our Guest of Honour, H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, to deliver his opening speech and officially open the Conference.

**I thank you!**