

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9th June 2011, LONDON

Ethiopian Investment, Trade and Tourism Forum in London

The Ethiopian Investment, Trade and Tourism Forum, the first of its kind in the UK, opened in London today in the presence of Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, His Excellency Hailemariam Dessalegn, and Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Africa, His Excellency Henry Bellingham, MP, investors, entrepreneurs, invited guests and members of the Ethiopian community in the UK.



In a key-note address at the Forum, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Desalegn said the organization of such a Forum, when the Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan is picking up, could be an opportune moment to join the bandwagon and speed up further the momentum of Ethiopian development by engaging in investment, trade and tourism for mutual benefit.

The DPM and FM arrived here on June 8, 2011, leading a high level government delegation comprising Tefera Deribew, Minister of

Agriculture; Driba Kuma, Minister of Transport; Abdurahman Sheikh Mohammed, Minister of Trade; Amin Abdulkadir, Minister of Culture and Tourism; Sinkenesh Ejigu, Minister of Mines; Alemayehu Tegenu, Minister of Water and Energy; Abi W/Meskel, Head of the Ethiopian Investment Agency; Bereket Simon, Head of Government Communications Office with a rank Minister and a number of other senior government officials.

“Ethiopia,” the Deputy Premier said, “has drawn up foreign policy focused squarely on tackling economic backwardness, desperate poverty, lack of good governance and democracy. That is why economic diplomacy is at the centre of our foreign policy, as a nation seeking rapid economic development together with the objective of advancing democracy.”

The Ethiopian Government has set in motion a development strategy which made it possible for the nation to achieve, over the past seven years or so, an annual growth rate of about 11 per cent. “Quite an unprecedented feat in the history of the ancient African nation,” he added.

In yet another grand scheme - the Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) - the Ethiopian Government envisages doubling agricultural production and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and sustaining the rate to raise it to about 14.9 per cent, in the best case scenario.

Between now and 2015, the GTP will lay the foundation for the industrial sector to take the lead in the economy. Expansion of micro and small enterprises alongside export-led industries will be central in this regard.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the role of the private sector is central in the GTP which embraces massive infrastructure development, or social overhead capital schemes, including railway, highways, telecommunications and hydropower and windpower to propel the economy in the desired direction.

Ethiopia has now laid the foundations for the construction of the Renaissance Dam, which will generate 5250MW of power and will go a long way to addressing the surge in energy demand following the liberalization of the economy. He said the Ethiopian peoples are in the process of mobilizing 4.7 billion dollars to finance the massive project underlining their ownership and support of this huge undertaking that will make Ethiopia a net exporter of energy in the near future. Indeed, energy is a key component for a major economic transformation and this will be an asset for Ethiopia, an emerging investment destination in Africa.

Ethiopia has put in place legal and institutional frameworks and incentives for priority sectors, such as duty free schemes, tax holidays, bank loans and export incentives that will promote and enhance the flow of FDI to the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister assured investors and stakeholders all the support needed all the way through their journey to be a development partner to Ethiopia where all opportunities for entrepreneurship are open to exploration.

UK Minister for Africa, Henry Bellingham MP, on his part highlighted the excellent relationship the UK has with Ethiopia, and outlined the intention to double trade with Ethiopia by 2015 from £200 million to £400 million.

The UK Government would like to see business partnership with the emerging Africa thrive by boosting support to British businesses interested in making the economic link between the private sectors of the nations. He added that Britain would be not just reactive but proactive especially in key sectors like mining and education.



He said opportunities are absolutely huge and urged British companies to exploit to the full the enabling investment environment in Ethiopia. He congratulated Ethiopia on its economic success and assured participants that Britain would intensify bilateral relations and trade which is at the heart of British foreign policy.

Major focus on our part, the Minister said, will be intensifying private sector involvement in emerging economies like Ethiopia, forging sustainable partnership that will lead to development and economic prosperity.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam met and held talks and consultations with his British counterpart, Secretary of State, William Hague on bilateral and regional issues. Both parties focused on how best to reinforce existing ties and cooperation on matters of mutual interest.

Ato Hailemariam also discussed bilateral issues and British development assistance to Ethiopia with Stephen O'Brien MP, Secretary of State for Department for International Development (DFID).



Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK, Ambassador Berhanu Kebede told participants at the Forum that Ethiopia has become one of Africa's investment destinations and urged businesses and companies to explore opportunities to engage in agriculture, agro-processing, energy, infrastructure, tourism and mining.

He cited exemplary British companies like Nyota, Diageo as well as Pittards which established itself in Ethiopia four decades ago and remains a pioneer of excellence.

The day-long Forum discussed major economic sectors in four sessions with particular focus on investment in mining, energy, agriculture and agro-processing, tourism and infrastructure.

Introducing the programme, Baroness Lynda Chalker, Chairperson of Africa Matters noted that Ethiopia is making positive steps to growth. She encouraged British companies into joint ventures with Ethiopian partners.

Earlier in the day, Ethiopia and the UK signed an agreement on avoidance of double taxation.



Ambassador Berhanu Kebede and the UK Minister for Africa Henry Bellingham MP signed the accord representing the two sides in the presence of the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, as well as high level government officials.

Speakers and sessions' chairpersons at the Forum included Lawrence Robertson MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ethiopia; Myles Wickstead CBE, former British Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti; Richard Chase, CEO of Nyota Minerals; Reginald Hankey, CEO of Pittards Plc; John Small, CEO of the Eastern African Association; Keith Bowers, Adviser Ethiopian Film Initiative; and Atam Sandhu, Chief Executive of Developing Market Associations.

Presentations were also made by Ethiopian based companies. Among them were Zemedeneh Negatu, Managing Partner of Ernst & Young, Ethiopia Office; Tewodros Ashenafi, Chairman and CEO of Southwest

Energy; Demissie Assefa, CEO of Goh Capital Partners; Tony Hickey, CEO of Ethiopian Quadrants and Dr. Eleni Gebre Medhin, Head of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange.



Present at the Forum at Savoy Place, London were over 300 investors, businesses, government and private agencies, government officials, invited guests and members of the Ethiopian Diaspora.

On June 8, 2011, a pre-event dinner, for sponsors and speakers, was hosted at the Waldorf Hotel in the presence of H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn and members of the high level Ethiopian delegation.

Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

London

9th June, 2011