

Distinguished House of Speaker

Distinguished House of People's Representatives,

Distinguished Ethiopian People

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, allow me to express how humbled and honored I am to be standing before you on this occasion.

Today is a historic day. We bear witness to peaceful transfer of power. I would like to therefore begin by expressing a particular appreciation to His Excellency Ato Hailemariam Desalegn, who has been part of the solution to ease the political instability that was evident in the past few years and ensure peaceful reconciliation.

Ethiopia is an ancient civilization and has gone through a long and arduous political journey. There are times we have missed occasions to embark on an inclusive political chapter. We should not squander this window of opportunity at this critical moment in time.

Ethiopia's womb is fertile. There is a heightened sense of patriotism and steadfast conviction to bring back our national dignity and glory. Ethiopian people are toiling tirelessly to maintain peace and justice for the people, and gain access to all citizens without any discrimination. Ethiopians both at home and abroad do not refrain from voicing opinions about justice and equality and for the reign of the rule of law.

Now is the moment to look back and make amends with the past, assess our current stance, and look to the future

For over the past two decades, EPRDF has built a constitutional democratic system that transformed our political discourse. Today our situation presents us with opportunities and threats. Today, we are in the midst of uncertain

times. Although there have been achievements, there are also formidable challenges. We need to address existing inequities that led to recent unrests. It is in our nature as Ethiopians to be resilient and pursue our aspirations with steadfast resolve by turning existing challenges into opportunities. By learning from our mistakes, we are focused in developing a better country for all of us just like our ancestors.

Go to Ogden, Metema, Adwa, Maichew and Ogden, they died for our liberty, they made sacrifices for us, We are blessed and have beautiful country. We are a great nation with a strong sense of identity. Our sovereignty remains today and an exemplary struggle for other peoples especially in the African continent.

Our identity is interwoven and intermingled together

Go to ogaden, you will find the remains of the Amhara soldier while defending his motherland. Go to Metema, you will find the blood of the Tigre shed while pushing back on foreign invaders. I urge you to go to Adwa, you will find the remains of the Oromo. You will be sure to find the remains of Sidama, Wolayta, the Harrari and Gambela, the Afar and the Gamut mixed in the battle field of Badme. We are born Ethiopians; we die as Ethiopians as our body becomes part of the earth.

Ethiopia our country – Ethiopia is our home

Out of many, we are one. We will leverage our diversity which at times manifests in the form of difference of opinion. And in nations, differences are assets, not liabilities. We are a budding democracy and It is in our differences that we often come up with the most groundbreaking solutions to existing problems. Ethiopia is our home and the only one we got. We need to find more issues that unites us than divides us.

We Ethiopians need democracy, freedom and liberty and we are entitled to it

Democracy is not a foreign concept to us. We have had democratic systems enshrined in our traditional systems for millennia. I believe our democratization process will be smoother than it would otherwise be because of traditional democratic approaches we have had such as the Gada system which gave us a head start in the democratization process.

Democracy can not be realized in the absence of rights - be it civil or economic rights. Right of people to express opinions, rights of people to organize themselves and engage in effective dialogue and participate in the governance system is inherent in our humanity, and it is not for any government to bestow them upon people as it sees fit. All governments can do is recognize the efforts made by people and our progressive constitution has done just that to a certain extent. Our role as government is to ensure that the constitution has life beyond print.

What we need to understand is that democratization as a process demands being open to different views. We will continue to respect the rights of citizens, the right to question, criticize and hold its public servants to accountability. We all need to have a platform to voice our concerns. At the same time, I still would to stress the fact that our democratic rights should not be realized at the expense of the rights of others. People should be respectful and voice their concern in a respectful and non-violent manner.

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Distinguished House of People's Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Democracy is both a means and an end. It complements the pursuit of peace and prosperity. And, peace, is not the absence of conflict. Rather it is the active pursuit of finding common grounds to differences. We must actively seek peace within our borders and outside. Horn of Africa is a complex region to be a part of. On the one hand, that complexity poses challenges as the region has many actors with diverse interests. On the other hand, this same complexity presents us with huge opportunities for cooperation since the area is home to people that are connected by blood, culture, language. We are fully committed to reconcile with our Eritrean brothers and sisters and extend an invitation to the Eritrean government to start dialogue and establish rapport.

Ladies and Gentlemen

To realize our full potential for the democratization, we will leverage and optimize our resources and engage our partners at home and abroad. We will utilize the window of opportunity to instill national unity, and accelerate the quest for democratization. We intend to use our democratic system to safeguard our unity and ensure peace and security. We will do away with corruption. We will facilitate an environment where everybody can work together in a level playing field.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We will genuinely work with rights groups, opposition political parties and we will contribute towards the blossoming of investigative journalism and free and responsible press. We will utilize every means available to answer many of the question posed by members of the society, including, women the diaspora and each and every one.

Distinguished Ethiopian Youth

The future belongs to you so does the present. You are the generation that Ethiopia has been waiting for. Express your voice in a productive manner. We believe that your question is not only economic and equal benefits, but also democracy and justice. The government commits to deeply strengthen our engagement with you.

Distinguished Ethiopian Women

We believe that the government is working to ensure women play a leading role in the developmental transformation of our country, but we still believe that we have to do more work. So I call on you to continue being instrumental

in building this country. Our government is deeply committed to the full participation and benefit of women more than ever.

We have numerous and critical issues

If you take a step backward and look at the challenges that lay before us, they are forbidding. They are extremely complex and they need equally complex solutions that cannot be delivered by an individual, a party or government alone. We are a nation that has overcome more menacing adversaries. We have to understand that the source of our strength is our unity. We invite all stakeholders to work with us!

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Dear diaspora community members

We can speed up the process of building a better country with the support of the diaspora. We understand your heart is at the right place. I salute your commitment for our country. Our ambassadors across the globe could not possibly represent what our country offers in its entirety. We look forward to your contribution where you are and invite you to also come home and share your wealth of knowledge.

Let's embrace love and forgiveness

We want our country to have justice, freedom and peace and prosperity. Wishful thinking is not enough. We have to work hard to achieve these aspirations. We need to chip away our negative perceptions and rectify our moral compass. We must clear our view of hatred, resentment, and racism.

Much has been sacrificed. Thousands have been killed, displaced and otherwise scarred psychologically. Over the past years, there has been irrevocable damages to the lives of our people and loss of properties. I am deeply sorry that for all who have lost their loved ones.

As a government we have reflected long and hard at what we could have done better. We have identified gaps that should be addressed immediately. We are prepared to better serve our people. In the end we are here to serve you. We need to learn from our mistakes and learn to forgive each other.

Dear Development partners:

We appreciate your steadfast support in the past and rely on your continued support and engagement in our developmental initiatives

Distinguished competing Party Leaders:

We view competing parties outside of EPDRF as a competition and not as opposition not as enemies but friends. I would also like to extend an invitation to those of you who are in the business of non-violence struggle. Let's work together for the advancement of our country. We vow to create a level playing field for fair competition. I call on you to help us make our efforts to create a culture of peaceful dialogue.

Ethiopian Farmers and Pastoralists, Scholars, Business Engines, Different Types of Cities in the City and Towns, Peoples' Elders, From North to South, East to West, Nations, Nationalities and People, Let's All Build a Dignified Democracy! Let's take our country out of poverty! Let's get rid of racism and divisiveness from our country! Let's create a citizen who's educated and argumentative!

Today's day is the 7th basement complex cast of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam, which was launched by all Ethiopians. The finalization of this dam will ensure that we can alleviate and solve the problems of our country. We call upon the spirit to ensure that we continue to live up to the height of our country's prosperity.

I would like to also acknowledge EPRDF and my people who have entrusted me with the responsibility of serving our country.

Special thank you goes out a woman who has prophesized that I will be with you today and instilled this vision in me since I was at a tender age of seven. That special woman is my mom, who has passed away. She has been instrumental in instilling unquenchable thirst for knowledge and sense of civic responsibilities and social welfare. This is the same for all mother who play in all of our children's life.

The contribution of wives could be two-fold, three- fold. One is for themselves, the other is for their husbands and the third is for their children. There are exceptional women who exceed all expectations. I would like to extend a special thank you to my beloved wife Woizero Zenash Tayachew, who has also taken the role of my mother. Nothing gives me more honor than having you by my side so I will simply say **Thank you.**

I would like to also thank friends near and far as you have been a source of strength and motivation. I appreciate all of you for standing by my side.

Today is not only a historic day but a day of renewed spirt and conviction.

I am confident that together we will do everything we can to ensure Ethiopia takes her rightful place in history.

Ethiopia shall flourish, cherished by her children. Long Live Ethiopia.

Thank you.