

**27 May 2011**

**Welcome Statement at the National Day Reception**

**Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
the Victory of the Ethiopian People over Tyranny  
on 28 May 1991 that ushered in the Federal  
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Ambassador**

**of the FDRE to the PRC**

**Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
Beijing**

Excellencies Guests of Honor, Mr. Cheng Guoping, Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, and Mr. Nolana Ta Ama, Ambassador of the Republic of Togo and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in China,

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I seize this opportunity to welcome you all and to extend a further word of welcome to everyone here this evening as we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 'Ginbot 20' or 28 May, the National Day of Ethiopia.

I am so glad that so many friends have been able to join us this evening. We are delighted to have you all here to participate and share this special event with us. Thank you for coming. That many of you travel long distances to join us proves your commitment to our friendship and the esteem you all feel for Ethiopia.



Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout our nation and where ever our missions and or the Ethiopian diaspora are present across all the continents, Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia are gathering in private and public places on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May every year since 1991 to mark the National Day of Ethiopia.

Twenty years ago, exactly on this special Day, the protracted political and military struggle of the heroic people of Ethiopia led by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) dismantled one of the most cruel tyrant regimes of our era, a regime that unleashed a senseless war against the Ethiopian people and committed war crimes, crime against humanity and genocide.

The victory of the Ethiopian people over the Dergue regime on this special Day did not end up in bringing a mere change of government in our motherland.

The victory on this special Day has brought in an end to tyrannies perpetrated by successive predatory regimes.

The victory on this great Day of the heroic struggle of nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia for equality and justice; for respect to their human and political rights; and for good governance, development and peace has finally dawned on Ethiopia.

Ladies and Gentlemen, however Ethiopia still suffers from two conflicting images. On one hand, it is a country with ancient civilization and glorious past. Ethiopia has its own script or alphabet for thousands of years. Ethiopia is a symbol of independence and pride of Africans and the African diaspora. On the other, Ethiopia's name is synonymous with famine, poverty and war since its recent past. Changing the latter face of our country for good remains to be the major challenge lying ahead of the Ethiopian People and leadership. Poverty is our enemy number one. That is why the entire people of Ethiopia and their leadership have built a national consensus to fight poverty tooth and nail and to transform the country into a prosperous, democratic and modern nation.

The victory of 28 May 1991 ushered in a New Ethiopia, the constitutionally enshrined Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the basis of unity in diversity.

The New Ethiopia is constituted on the basis of equality, mutual respect, common desire and interest of all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia as well as of religions and faiths in the country.

The hard won victory of the Ethiopian People on this illustrious Day has brought about a fundamental transformation in the political-economy of the country.

Today, Ethiopia is in a dynamic process of transformation.

The building of institutions of democracy, good governance and the rule of law is further deepening and gaining strength.

Ethiopia's economy is among the top 10 fastest growing economies in the world. Its GDP has been growing at an average growth rate of 11.5% annually for the last seven consecutive years. By sustaining this growth rate as a baseline, Ethiopia's Gross National Income, GNI currently which is the fifth largest economy in Sub-Sahara Africa is expected to double in the coming five years. Ethiopia is also among countries that are performing well and hopeful to achieving the MDGs by 2015.

In this regard, I wish to pay tribute to our brothers and sisters in Africa and to our friends and partners outside the continent for their solidarity and support. A friend in need is a friend in deed. Without your partnership our pace of transformation would have been more challenging and difficult.

Our friendship of cooperation and partnership with China in the development of infrastructure, transfer of technology and capacity building is second to none. I wish to express the satisfaction of my Government to our Chinese friends and look forward to seeing more robust and enhanced cooperation and friendship between our two countries in the months and years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen, now I would like to extend our gratitude and many thanks to all the role players that have made our celebration a success.

I wish to recognize Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Shipping Lines and the Ethiopian Community in China for their all round support and unreserved participation. Thank you for making us proud.

My special thanks to our distinguished friend, Mr. Qi Xiaoxia, President of Beijing Qianyuanfeng Technology for honoring us with the participation of Chinese folkloric artists in our event. We thank him and his group for their unique contribution and for promoting Africa-China cultural friendship.

In this regard, I would like to thank in advance the Chinese and Ethiopian cultural groups for their entertainment. I congratulate them for promoting people-to-people relations between Ethiopia and China through music and cultural values.

May I also thank the management and staff of Hilton Hotel, the diplomats and local staff in our Embassy for their invaluable role for organizing this great event.

I would like once again to thank all of you for coming and gracing us by your presence.

To conclude, I invite you all to join me in a toast:

- To eternal friendship between Ethiopia and China!
- To the good health of all of you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen! Enjoy your evening! and let us dance as if no one is watching!

ለጤናችን !! ጋምቤ !! Cheers!!