

**OPENING REMARK BY H.E ZERIHUN KEBEDE (PhD)
STATE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROFILE
(Validation Workshop)**

Date: 15 September 2011

Venue: Inter Continental Hotel

*Addis Ababa
Ethiopia*

**Mr. George Okutho,
Director, ILO Country Office for Ethiopia and Somalia;**

Ato Tadele Yimer President of the Ethiopian Employers Federation;

Ato Kasahun Follo, President of the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions;

Dear participants;

It is a great pleasure for me to be among you to make an opening remark for this two-day stakeholders' **validation workshop** concerning the *Decent Work Country Profile for Ethiopia*.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Decent Work is a strategy for economic and social progress, central to reduce poverty, and a means to achieve equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, translation of the decent work concept into an operational framework requires attention to its four interconnected pillars, namely employment; fundamental principles and rights at work; social dialogue; and Social protection.

In fact, Decent Work as defined and promoted by ILO has all its relevance today and more particularly at this time of international crisis that every country is facing although the degree may vary from one country to another. The present financial crisis and the serious slowdown in the economic activities bring new challenges that we must fully take into consideration. We have to ensure that we develop policy responses to this global economic turmoil. It also means placing Decent Work at the center of these policies.

Dear Participants,

Let me assure all of you, particularly representatives from Trade Unions and Employers Organizations that Decent Work has been and will be at the heart of our national economic and social development strategies. In fact, in the recent past and presently,

much emphasis has been and is being laid, particularly in the country's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) on the creation of productive and decent employment, which has been considered central to efforts made towards poverty reduction as a means of achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. As a developmental state, this is, in fact, what we have been doing and will continue to do so.

In addition to the policy measures taken by the government on the economic and social fronts, other measures have also been undertaken in the World of Work in order to fulfill our obligations with respect to the Decent Work Agenda.

As a member state of the ILO, we are not only limited to the ratification and domestication of the **ILO Fundamental and other Conventions**, but also ensured that necessary measures are taken with a view to making all our Labour Laws in compliance with these fundamental conventions - which are of direct relevance to Decent Work principles.

In this regard, our government's commitment to promote effective collective bargaining and strengthen dialogue with social partners has been translated in the adoption of our national labor law of 377/2003.

Dear Participants,

As you all well aware, Ethiopia is registering significant progress in the sphere of socio-economic development and in building democratic culture and good governance to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens. These endeavors of the Ethiopian government should be reflected in this Decent Work Country Profile. Furthermore, as this profile is ours, it needs to be supported with current and reliable national data and the interpretations and conclusions made should

reflect the existing realities in the country. Therefore, it is the duty of the participants of this workshop to critically review each thematic issue along with the statistical data for their relevance and interpretations to echo the prevailing situations.

Having said this, let me reiterate that the initiative taken by the ILO to collaborate with us to facilitate the process of developing Decent Work Country Profile for Ethiopia is timely and important towards taking stock of the progress and also identifying possible challenges and policies required to improve the same.

Henceforth, this two-day national stakeholders' validation workshop is organized to critically review the draft Decent Work Country Profile for Ethiopia and come-up with constructive and concrete comments and suggestions that would enrich the same.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and thank the ILO for its all kinds of supports for producing the Decent Work Country Profile for Ethiopia which wouldn't have been materialized otherwise.

I would also like to thank the National Steering Committee (NSC) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) who are responsible for the Decent Work Country Profile for Ethiopia; the ILO experts at all levels for their professional inputs, and all institutions and individuals involved in providing the necessary data and information required for the profile that have given shape for the present report.

On this note, I would like to conclude by wishing all participants fruitful deliberations and interactions.

I have now the pleasure to declare this workshop open.

Thank you for your attention.