



Excellencies, Fellow Panelist Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by saying thank you for inviting me to this auspicious panel and giving me the opportunity to reflect on the nexus between peace building, employment and decent pay from the perspective of my Government and the Ministry of Peace.

I am proud that my colleagues and I at the Ministry are part of the reform process unfolding in Ethiopia today. One of the pillars of this reform has been the promotion of social cohesion through a comprehensive homegrown peace building strategy that aims to ensure peace in a multifaceted manner. This includes addressing the need to ensure peace at the individual, family, community, institutional and national levels.

I note that a comprehensive peace demands a strong response to structural and historically rooted impediments, one of which is the challenge of unemployment in our society and issues that arise from its impacts. .

Ethiopia is blessed with a vibrant youth population that retains a tremendous potential to forge national harmony, strong economy and a brighter future for the country. We are cognizant that, the reform process in Ethiopia is largely inspired by visionary leadership and youth aspirations. Serving the interests of this important segment of our society is the utmost priority of my Government. In this context, we are working towards



fostering political and economic freedoms that are critical to nurture a creative and industrious society.

We are promoting job creation programs as part and parcel of our overall objectives. More importantly, it is the Government of Ethiopia's direction to mainstream job creation in all political, economic, social and strategic programs. It is also paramount that the jobs we intent to promote and create are rooted in homegrown economic directions, backed by environmentally sustainable policies and wages befitting to the dignity of workers.

The Government of Ethiopia also realizes that job creation is more than funding vocational and technical training programs. It is rather anchored in the nation and peace building process. Expanding job opportunities, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship are parts of my Government's strategy to address the issue of unemployment and sustaining peace and stability in the country.

Hence, my Ministry has activated a flagship program entitled the National Voluntary Community Service Program, with the aim of upholding national unity, strengthening social cohesion and building the entrepreneurial skills as well as employability of participants. The program is built around provision of robust training packages and aims at attracting unemployed university and vocational school graduates and dropouts. In addition, we



also have crafted a modality to link the trained youth volunteers with the private sector following the completion of their service.

In the context of COVID-19, the Government of Ethiopia prides itself in the work of the people and the bureaucracy's effort in mobilizing the social capital of our country in fighting against the pandemic. Communities responded by waiving rents to their tenants, hotel owners committed to keep their staff on payroll, and families responded overwhelmingly to Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed's call referred to as 'ማዕድ ማጋራት' - sharing food with those severely impacted by the pandemic. More importantly, we have witnessed an army of youth volunteers who organized social feeding programs and designed and executed creative awareness raising programs.

The pandemic in a way brought the Ethiopian people together and forced the re-setting of our priorities. All democratic actors including political parties, civil society organizations, academicians and media have been working hand in hand to stem the impact of the corona virus.

To conclude, the Ministry of Peace is working closely with different government organs, civil societies, media and strategic partners to link our efforts on jobs with our grand priorities on peace building and youth mobilization.

I would like to inform distinguished panelists here today that we as government are indeed dedicated to narrowing the economic inequalities in



Ethiopia through more incentives to the private sector, encouraging them to invest in our youth, thereby complementing our commitment to national peace building, social cohesion and democracy.

I thank you very much!