

Remarks

By

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on

Employment for Peace, Stability and
Development:

A Regional Strategy for the Horn of Africa
Stakeholders and Development Partners

UN Conference Centre, ECA
11 - 12 April 2011
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

^{Chairperson}
**Mr. ~~President~~, Commissioner, Excellencies,
Invited Guests and Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you here to Addis Ababa to this meeting of stakeholders' and development partners to discuss a regional strategy of "Employment for Peace, Stability and Development". This has been developed by the African Union Commission, IGAD and the International Labour Organization. And it rightly underlines the need to approach the challenges of peace and security in the Horn of Africa more broadly.

The world crisis in general and the uprisings in the Middle East and Northern Africa have made it very clear that political and economic stagnation have dangers, that both engagement and disengagement have consequences, and that regional and trans-regional cooperation requires more than promises to ensure economic progress and political stability as well as peace and stability.

Whatever policies we choose need to be supported by the existing framework of international trade and other existing global arrangements. Here, the current failure of international regulations on trade and finance and their effects on developing nations in particular needs to be addressed. However, there are also political failures nearer to home that we can consider, and in this context I would wish to pay particular emphasis to the current political developments in the Horn of Africa where we face multiple challenges to peace and stability. Our region has some who want peace and stability. It also has others who wish to govern their people by terror and subjugation

and make it a habit to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. The international community has largely ignored these challenges. If it continues to do so, all our efforts to resolve the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment will be in vain.

Somalia provides an obvious example of the problem. The TFG, established in Kenya and revitalized in the Djibouti peace process, still faces major challenges not least its own lack of cohesion. Its enemies are supported by international terrorist organizations and by some states within the region and beyond. There is a very clear need for international community to do more to assist.

Equally, we have made some progress. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan has brought one of the longest civil wars in Africa to an end. The referendum was conducted peacefully and democratically. As we speak, the signatories of the CPA are engaged in negotiations on the remaining issues that need to be addressed before the independence of South Sudan. We should have all our support in their efforts to work together.

Excellencies,

Governments of course need to create employment through policies and strategies that fit their domestic circumstances. The question is what types of policies can be most effective. I would like to share some of Ethiopia's experiences with you.

We recognize that education, ^{both basic education, Technical & Vocational Education & Training} is the fundamental key to resolving the problem of unemployment. We have therefore expanded education at

an unprecedented pace. Enrolment of school-age children in most of our regions is now over ninety per cent. We have high hopes of fully achieving the Millennium Development Goals even before 2015.

Agriculture is the mainstay of over eighty per cent of our population. It is the backbone of our economy. Investment in agriculture and rural development can change livelihoods fundamentally. Mobilization of local resources, particularly labour, has been critical to development. We have mobilized communities to harvest and conserve water and to protect and rehabilitate land. We have built up the capacity of farming communities, providing technical know-how through extension packages, disseminating best practice and creating a competitive spirit. The provision of credit services through micro-financing, the supply of fertilizers and selected seeds and the provision of different market mechanisms have created the basis for real agricultural expansion.

I would add that Ethiopia's development policies attach great importance to private investment and we have done much to encourage this and bring companies to establish themselves here. The focus has not only been on heavy industry and large corporations, but also on micro and small-scale enterprises which play a real and significant role in job creation and expansion. We are committed to securing gainful employment for our ever-growing work force. We are now gearing up our economy to allow a well-equipped industrial sector to support substantial urban growth. I would emphasize that the availability of real work is central to developing a functional economy and equally crucial to building peace in Ethiopia and more widely.

*rural & urban
Infrastr.
development.*

We are well aware that development, evenly applied, decreases the probability of political exclusion, social disruption and misery. No one should be ignored. All must be part of the country's democratic decision-making process. This is a central aspect of the solid foundation of peace and stability we are firmly committed to building in Ethiopia. We are equally prepared to contribute our share to realize this in our sub-region.

Excellencies,

Employment generation and economic development are inseparably intertwined. They reinforce each other, and they have an inevitable impact on peace and security. Equally, they both depend upon continued investment, and this in turn needs a stable and vibrant democratic culture. Interdependence and the pillars of democracy, peace and stability are the basis of our vision for sustainable development, to create opportunities for employment. I would note that most states in the Horn of Africa now have a structure of political representation providing for multi-party executive and parliamentary elections, with voters exercising their political rights fully. Political representation has been increasingly moving towards multi-party democratic systems of governance. The only exception is Eritrea.

This underlines the point that our path to a future of realistic development, peace and stability lies in acceptance and implementation of democratic norms, good governance and sustainable development. May I offer you my earnest wishes for fruitful deliberations.

I thank you!