

**Keynote Address**  
by  
**H.E. Ato Melese Zenaewi**

**Prime Minister of the FDRE**

**On the Occasion of the Launching of a Global MDG Report  
Entitled**

**“Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve  
the MDGs”**

**January 18, 2005  
Addis Ababa**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me start by saying how pleased I am to be here and to welcome you all to this long awaited Global Launching ceremony of the Report entitled “Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”. As you are all well aware, the MDGs are the worlds time-bound and quantified minimum targets to addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. This Report recommends the way forward, outlines the way to attain the goals, and describes how to achieve them.

The preparation of this report started in September 2000, when one hundred eighty eight member-states of the UN including Ethiopia adopted the Millennium Declaration. In doing so, the world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound, measurable goals and targets for combating extreme poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender discrimination.

The Government of Ethiopia has fully committed itself to the Millennium Declaration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This reflects the Government's strong determination to measure national development performance against the MDGs as reflected in its preparation of the first Report entitled **"Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Prospects for Ethiopia"** with the objective of trying to put the MDGs into the Ethiopian context. This was also followed by the conduct of the MDGs Needs Assessment exercise launched in July 2004. The Needs Assessment exercise is meant to review in a comprehensive manner what it takes to meet the MDGs in the Ethiopia context and serve as a basis to **scaling-up** efforts and interventions.

The Report we are launching today is the result of over two years of extensive research and hard work by the Millennium Project Task Forces. We strongly commend the Millennium Project Report, headed by Professor Sachs presented on 17 January to the UN Secretary-General, Mr Koffi Annan in New York.

## Distinguished Delegates,

For over billion people, who are living under extreme poverty, the MD Goals are issues of life and death. Extreme poverty deprives individuals of the means to stay alive in the face of hunger, disease, and environmental degradation. When individuals suffer from extreme poverty and lack the income needed to cover basic needs, a single episode like disease or drought, or pest that destroys a harvest, could make a difference between life and death.

To achieve any particular goal of the eight Millennium Development Goals, it is not enough to invest in a given sector. As most interventions have effects on several Goals, what need to be emphasized are the synergies and inter-linkages among the goals. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals thus hinges upon the promotion of ambitious and achievable action across pertinent poverty-oriented sectors (such as Education, Health, Agriculture and Food Security, Water and Sanitation, and roads and other infrastructure sectors).

The core recommendation of the Report outlines what needs to be done, where immediate action should be taken, and how much it would cost. In this regard, I would like to reiterate once again that Ethiopia fully supports and agrees with the recommendations of the Report and we also share the view that the world should not treat the MDGs as abstract ambitions, but as practical and achievable objectives. The steps at the country level should be diagnosed, planned and implemented with the proper focus and actions in creating an enabling environment by the respective relevant national governments coupled with scaled-up support from the international community.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ten recommendations feature in this Global Report we are launching today. One of the recommendations focuses on putting the right policies and strategies by national governments to achieve the goals, which also outline the specific and practical steps required to reaching the Goals. In line with this, my Government has demonstrated

commitment to meeting the MDGs. This has been reflected in the design of our Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program-SDPRP), which is built on existing Government policies, and strategies. The Process of pursuing the MDGs in Ethiopia is facilitated by the fact that they form an organic part of the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP). Long before the MDGs, Ethiopia's Development goal has been and still is to fight poverty through broad based rapid economic growth. Rural transformation is the core of this development process of fighting poverty.

The Government's commitments and resolve to integrate the goals, principles and targets of the Millennium Declaration into the national development framework have been manifested in our determination to serve as a pilot country for the MDG Needs Assessment process, which is currently well in progress. The MDGs are outlined as the Government's long-term development framework and are being owned by the Government. In line with this, the Government of Ethiopia undertook the sectoral needs assessment exercise to identify specific

public investments necessary to achieve the goals and convert it into a 10-year framework for action. For that purpose, Ethiopia is in the process of elaborating a 5-year MDG-based poverty reduction strategy paper entitled the second **“Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP II)”** covering the period 2005/06-2009/10. The outcomes of the ongoing MDG Needs Assessment exercise will feed into the upcoming MDG-based poverty reduction strategy paper, SDPRPII encompassing the period 2005/06-2009/10.

Another recommendation of the Report is on the need for rapid scale up and action and also for planning it carefully in a participatory manner with stakeholders in partnership within and between government, the private sector, NGOs and civil society. This has been demonstrated in the past in the course of implementing our poverty reduction strategy and will be strengthened further.

## Ladies and Gentlemen,

The outcomes of the project indicate that the cost of meeting the Goals is approximately half percent of the GNP of the industrialized nations, which is in fact less than the 0.7 percent agreed during Monterrey and Johannesburg. However, the 2003 total ODA stood at about 0.25 percent of the collective GNP of industrialized countries.

In the case of Ethiopia, as has been already indicated, we have had the right policies and strategies in place and we have been doing our level best to address implementation bottlenecks through the National Capacity Building Program. Thus what is important to us, and what we should focus on, is on scaling-up efforts to meet the MDGs. Thus, what is binding here in our case is the resource required to meet the MDGs.

The existing level of external resource flow to Ethiopia, although showing some relative improvements in recent years, is still one of the lowest even by Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) standard. As the outcomes

of the ongoing needs assessment exercise is not yet finalized, it may be premature at this stage to cite figures on costs required to meet the MDGs during the coming ten years. Even taking into consideration the ongoing effort in the domestic resource mobilization, preliminary indications show that per capita costs in the range of US\$ 40 to 50 may be required to meet the MDGs during the coming 10 years.

For donor countries, this Report rightly recommends not just an increase and rapid and immediate scale-up of aid, but also a much higher quality of aid. The implementation of effective aid policy and strategies as well as harmonizing donors practices and procedures are under process in consultation with donors to render external assistance more effective and provide an efficient use of it towards the achievement of the MDGs

**Distinguished Delegates, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As reflected in the Report, at the global level there is urgent need for redefining **“Debt Sustainability”** as “the level of debt consistent with achieving the MDGs” to get to 2015 without a new debt overhang. For many heavily indebted poor countries like Ethiopia, this will require significant debt cancellation and more debt relief than has been offered already.

Another important area worth mentioning in this connection is the issue of fair trade, which has become among the most politically charged agenda of international issues for development. As outlined in Monterrey, an MDG-based international trade policy should focus on two overarching issues: improved market access and terms of trade for the poor countries, and improved supply-side competitiveness for low-income countries exports through increased investments in infrastructure (roads, electricity, etc.) and trade facilitation.

Even though some of the goals may seem far off track, Ethiopia lay out a challenging and achievable vision of all Goals. If the goals are achieved, millions of Ethiopians will be lifted out of poverty and millions of lives will be saved in Ethiopia, millions of children will be given an opportunity to attend primary school etc.

**Distinguished Delegates, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We all do recognize that we have many challenges ahead of us to overcome in our journey toward achieving the MDGs. In response to those challenges, we have developed short and long-term plans and strategies with adequate policies. Those policies and strategies require adequate capacity in human resources and the establishment of effective and efficient institutions and government for substantial progress. Human capacity must be improved to ensure the improvement of the impact of resources committed to reaching the MDGs.

The development journey that Ethiopia has embarked upon is long and arduous with many, seemingly insurmountable obstacles on the path to prosperity comparable to the level enjoyed by the developed countries. Indeed, poverty reduction remains to be the most important objective of the Ethiopian Government. The Ethiopian Government acknowledges that poverty cannot be fully resolved in the short and even medium-term.

However, with a clear policy and strategy direction, concerted and coordinated effort and continuous support from our partners, we can certainly achieve many incremental positive improvements that would help uplift the people of Ethiopia from their age-long misery day-by-day.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary General's able leadership and visionary thought on global poverty and its multi-dimensional consequences. I would also like to recognize the efforts exerted by Mr. Marke Mallocc Broun in his capacity as Chair of UNDG. I would also like to thank all those involved and worked hard,

particularly professor Jeffery Sachs and his team for bringing the MDGs at the forefront as a global agenda into the framework of the international political system. Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to the UN Country Team here in Addis for bringing this occasion into reality. With firm belief that our common people will benefit from the global partnership, I now declare the formal launching of the Millennium Project Report in Ethiopia.

**I thank you!**