

**Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is, indeed, a great privilege and honor for me to be able to address this very important Public-Private Policy dialogue conference, which is organized by the Center for International Private Enterprises (CIPE).

As you may already be aware, the modern private sector in Ethiopia, having been marginalized for long under centralized economic management, is still young, small and weak sector with highly limited role in the economy.

With the introduction of market led economy system under the present government, the role of the private and public sectors in the economy has been redefined.

The Ethiopian Government now recognizes the private sector as an ally and a key actor for the development of the economy. The government is committed to regularly review and improve the environment for private investment and business activities.

In order to allow for the private sector to play its legitimate role in the economic development of the country, the

government and the private sector are currently working on creating a forum on which they regularly exchange views and share ideas and negotiate for a system that enhances better business performance. Such forum is the public, private partnership forum (PPPF).

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) is increasingly regarded as an essential prerequisite for effective private sector policy reform process. It is important that businesses be able to express their concerns, and provide constructive suggestions, to help the Government identify where bottlenecks are and for Government to be able to communicate its concerns to businesses.

The PPP dialogue forum is meant to discuss challenges encountered and suggest possible recommendations to further strengthen private sector development.

Presently, the Ministry of Trade and Industries in a process of organising regular forums with the Chamber of Commerce at the national level.

The objectives of the PPP Forum are:

To create awareness concerning government development vision;

To provide support for business communities;

To discuss and comment on draft business and investment laws and regulations

To discuss the implementation problems of laws and regulations and to create smooth relationship between government and business community

Dear Partners and Friends,

I don't want to go into detail analysis of what has so far been done because the process is in the making and much remains to be done in the area of:

- Exploring best practices in designing and implementing PPP programs that support private sector-led growth and development,
- Creating a monitoring & evaluation framework that would enable stakeholders to better perform their assigned tasks,
- Accepting & recognizing the fact that the private sector is the means and source of wealth, employment creation, technology transfer and government revenue.

In this connection, I want to express my belief that the role of Parliament, the law making body of our nation, is to ensure full participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector, in the formation of laws, regulations and policies which have an impact on business.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Experience has shown that some well-meant Public-Private Policy dialogue initiatives happen to lose momentum after a promising start, while still others manage to bear fruit.

We have come to this conference expecting to learn from the vast pool of expertise drawn from different African countries. We also hope we will share what ever little experience we have to our fellow African brothers and sisters.

It is, therefore, my belief that this conference will equip us with valuable tools to help us shape the future Public-Private collaborations.

It is also my hope that this promising and modest start will develop into institutionalized mechanism of continued consultations.

I would, also, like to express my hope that this conference will serve as a platform to examine experiences and initiatives amongst ourselves and determine which strategies are working and which aren't and why.

It is also my wish that we will be able to identify potential areas for development and pinpoint opportunities for networking and future collaboration.

May I, therefore, end my brief speech by, once again, expressing my heartfelt appreciation for all who did their level best to make this conference a success!

I thank you all