

**Guest of Honour Address**

**by**

**H.E. Demeke Mekonnen**

Minister for Education  
Government of Ethiopia

**at**

**First ICWA Africa-India Academic Conference**

**on**

**“Africa and India: A Partnership for Development and Growth”**

**at**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**May 11, 2011**

Her Excellency Erastus Mawencha, Deputy Chairperson of African Union  
Honorable Ambassadors and Ministers

Mr. Sudhir Devare, Director General for Indian Council of World Affairs

Honorable guests and participants of this conference,

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, I would like to sincerely convey my deepest gratitude for I am honored to address the first Africa-India Academic Conference as the opening event of the second subsequent Africa-India Academic as the opening event of the second subsequent Africa-India Forum Summit that will be held in Addis Ababa on 25 May, 2011.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Indian Council of World Affairs, African Union Commission secretariat and Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development for their collaborative effort to make this conference a reality.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Please allow me to extend my highest consideration to all of you and my greatest respect to this academic conference that thematically promotes the currency of development and growth within a real partnership.

The government of India has long recognized to establish comprehensive and sustainable partnership with Africa. Concomitantly, Africa has been strengthening its relation through investment, education and diplomatic ties. This rock solid and unwavering partnership has been boosting over the last few decades. Within this passage of time, India's and Africa's shared values of cultures, views and visions significantly impacted the ever-evolving socio-economic development of the regions. Indeed, this historical relationship clinched contemporary partnership.

I believe that education is a worthwhile investment for sustainable growth and transformation. Africa, unequivocally, could learn how education transformed incredible India. On its part, India could considerably discover Africa's strong commitment to invest on education that has a fundamental role in its rapid economic and overall development. I also believe that valuing these lessons is paramount to move forward our partnership.

Capacity building and human resource development is profoundly important element in India-Africa cooperation. Africa has been benefiting from this cooperation at which this is manifested with the production of skilled and changed human capital. In this respect, I can assure you that Ethiopia is one of the beneficiaries of African nations. However, we need this cooperation

strengthened. I am optimist that India will redouble its effort while Africa will remain cooperative to provide the necessary support.

One of the focus areas of this conference, using the Diaspora as a resource for Africa and India, is much prominent which we are striving for. As a strategic resource, we have to thoroughly explore and deploy Diaspora engagement policies and strategies. Along this line, Ethiopia as part of Africa has recently made a major breakthrough in mobilizing its Diaspora engagement to the national growth and development. It is also my sincere hope that all the prospect discussion points enrich this academic conference.

Finally, I wish you all to relish this academic conference, the ideas in the course of your stay in Addis, your second home.

I declare this conference is officially opened.

I thank you.

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