



Remarks

By

H.E Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

At

The African Development Forum 2000

December 7, 2000

Addis Ababa

Dear Co-Chairmen,

Excellencies Heads of State & Government,

Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan,
Secretary- General of the UN,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to Addis Ababa for this exceedingly important meeting. I am pleased to thank each and everyone of you for being here and for having shown, by your presence at this Forum, your commitment to the fight against a scourge which has cast a tragic cloud over Africa's future, and over the fate of our peoples.

The organizers of this Forum deserve heartfelt appreciation. K.Y. Amoako and his colleagues have done so much to initiate the African Development Forum. They are absolutely correct in their decision to make the fight against HIV/AIDS the theme of ADF 2000. There is no greater danger that the people of Africa face at present. I wish also therefore to thank all those who have been involved in the preparation of this Forum and in assisting the ECA launch what I have no doubt will be a successful project.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What I hope will take place at this Forum is frank discussion on what we should do together to remove this cloud hanging over our peoples. I trust that not only will it be possible for us to set a common direction for waging a successful war against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but that we will manage to lay the basis for practical action for prevailing upon this deadly enemy of our Continent.

This is not a task that should be left to governments alone. In fact, this will be a recipe for failure with all its consequences. We cannot contemplate failure in the fight against this terrible scourge. We have to win, and winning will be impossible to be realized unless, along with governments, all sections of society participate actively, including in leadership role, in the fight against the fatal disease. It is very vital in

particular that those sections of society that happen to be most organized assume greater responsibility for spearheading a coordinated effort against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

There is no reason why we should not succeed in what has become a war for the future of Africa. What is required is the active participation of all sectors of our population in all aspects of the fight against the pandemic. There is no substitute for this, for success in the fight against HIV/AIDS lies, first and foremost, on effective and sustained social mobilization. It is also when this is done that international solidarity would be most effective in assisting us win the war.

While talking about international solidarity, it will be fitting to express our appreciation to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for being here with us and for the message that he is conveying by his presence at this important Forum. I have no doubt that he and his colleagues in the UN system, a number of whom are here with us, will continue to stand by us as we try to address the challenge we are facing.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my appreciation to all those who have contributed to making this Forum the success that it has been so far. I have no doubt that the events of this week here in Addis will pass as important landmark in the fight against the deadly disease.

I thank you!
