

Speech

**By State Minister of Ministry of Urban
Development & Construction H.E Hailemeskel
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**Application of Geosynthetics
In Ethiopian construction Industry**

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my sincere welcome to all participants of the Geosynthetics introduction workshop. It is indeed a great honor of our ministry to host this distinguished workshop as a platform for Scientists from academia, as well as practicing engineers-to share precious ideas and experiences in validation and application of Geosynthetics in the Ethiopian construction industry context. The aim of today's workshop is to increase the knowledge of the potential applications of Geosynthetic solutions within the civil engineering industry in Ethiopian specifically within the road construction and maintenance sector.

The workshop will commence with an overview of the geology of Ethiopia and the problems with respect to the natural ground hazards that are present in Ethiopia. These include issues with expansive soils, flooding and areas of land sliding. The proceeding presentations will then focus on some of the available solutions which could be used to overcome the issues we have with problematic ground conditions in Ethiopia.

A further aim of the workshop is to introduce you all to an area of the construction sector which, to a percentage of you, may be for the first time. However, the geosynthetic market is now considered a mature technology in many parts of the world, with over 50 years of use and experience in the use of geosynthetic solutions. Much of the innovation has arisen within Europe, Japan and North America. However in the majority of Africa the knowledge, design and specification of geosynthetic solutions is still at a relatively immature stage. It is hoped that workshops such as the one today provided by Hueker of Germany and Addis Geosynthetics of Ethiopian with the support of our Ministry, will increase the knowledge of you, the professionals, in relation

to this sector of the construction industry. Through such educational workshops, it is hoped that the Ethiopian construction sector can embrace such solutions and start to develop the correct design, specification and use of geosynthetics that can improve the knowledge of our professionals with the long term goal of updating and implementing our relevant national codes and standards, so that correct reference is provided in relation to geosynthetic applications. And I know, all types of polymeric geosynthetic materials are involved: geotextiles, geomembranes, geogrids, geonets, geocomposites, geosynthetic clay liners, geopipe, geocells, and geofoam.

I understand that Huesker are very open to research and trials in Ethiopia and would like to establish a long term relationship with the Ministry. It is through local trials, research and education that these types of mature solutions gain acceptance within a market where they may be seen to be new, novel or unproven.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The construction industry of Ethiopia currently growing at alarming rate due to the conducive environment created by the government for private sector investment. Meanwhile, the existing construction regulations believed to have short-comings in streamlining this development stage of the industry and hence a lot of efforts were directed towards filling the gap and making the sector competitive. Accordingly, the existing 11 building codes were under review and 3 more were being drafted by Addis Ababa University in collaboration with professional from the industry. I believe that there will be a possibility that geosynthetics as engineering material may be incorporated into one of the newly drafted relevant codes of standards to foster its applicability.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that in current world of demographic challenge, professionals are forced to look into reclaiming abandoned difficult

grounds in order to avail land for basic infrastructure and other related developments. Therefore, a material such as Geosynthetics which shades light on the problem may be considered as both vital and indispensable. Hence, let's put our hands together and solve engineering problems with the technology new to our industry.

With this remarks, I declare this workshop officially open and wish you fruitful interaction and deliberations!

I, thank you!