

Celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the German-French Friendship Treaty

- H.E Lieselore Cyrus Ambassador of Germany
- H.E. Brigitte collet Ambassador of France
- Distinguished guests
- Representative of international organizations and other developmental partners

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to appreciate the honor of addressing you on behalf of the Ministry of Urban development and construction. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Germany and Government of France who have chosen to hold a public event on the Dynamics of Urbanization in Ethiopia within the framework of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the German-French Friendship Treaty (“Elysee Treaty”) and the Ethiopian GTP. This event has two major messages for us. The first is to learn from the Franco-German experience of how cooperation can contribute to the development of nations. The second is that this event provides a powerful platform to highlight solutions to Ethiopia’s urban development problems, thereby addressing one of Ethiopia’s most pressing issues.

Ethiopia has a longstanding relationship and a history of development cooperation with Germany and France. Ethiopia is a major focus in German development cooperation since it started more than 40 years ago. In the field of urban development and decentralization, Germany is sharing its experience to build implementation capacity with the aim to stimulate participation democratization and to strengthen public participation. Likewise Ethio-French collaboration enjoys a rich and deep history. It began in 1907, with the creation of the Alliance Ethio-Francaise of Addis Ababa and then that of Dire Dawa, as well as with the beginning of the franco-ethiopian railway that reached Addis Ababa in 1917. The French Development Agency is concentrating

its activities on targeted sectors, in particular water and urban development. AFD's interventions are in line with the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan 2010-2015, which focuses on reaching the millennium development goals, filling the infrastructure gap, increasing agricultural productivity and laying a foundation for industrialization.

Ladies and gentlemen

Ethiopia is in a process of extensive administrative decentralization that delegates more and more responsibility to the local level. The principles of federalism and local self-government have already been established in constitution of Ethiopia, but still need to fully deep on into practice. Ethiopia's cities are growing fast and so are their challenges. Service delivery inefficiency, inadequate infrastructure and unemployment are the major issues facing the city administrations. Another problem is that while local authorities want to work independently and provide basic services in line with their community demand, they lack sufficiently qualified staff, revenues as well as practical skills with institutionalized procedures of planning and administration that are needed to discharge their new responsibilities. The government of Ethiopia in its Growth and Transformation Plan has acknowledged the contribution of urban and construction development for the accelerated socioeconomic development of the country. The economic growth target has been double digit within the GTP period. To contribute for this growth the urban development sector has been given the following specific objectives:

- Increase job creation and reduce housing problems through implementing an integrated housing development program
- Ensure the provision of quality urban infrastructure services through implementing urban infrastructure development programs.

- Enhance the execution capacity of regional urban and city administrations' officials through implementing urban good governance and capacity building packages:
- Create a conducive environment for the development of construction sector

The challenge however is the shift of responsibilities from the Regional government to the local level is a slow and complex process. This demands tremendous effort on providing advice on restructuring local authorities, and shaping a legal and institutional framework that is conducive to this implementation. In addition, staff from the relevant authorities and institutions to be given training in selected areas, such as urban development, land management, municipal service management infrastructure and housing, as well as the management of local authority finances. Another challenge facing us today is to build dynamic and competitive economy without undermining environmental sustainability and our heritage.

Distinguished Guests Ladies & Gentlemen

This event is taking place at a time when our government is undertaking wide ranging activities to ensure good governance, inclusive resource distribution in towns, job creation and efforts to make urban areas habitable for their residents by enhancing the capacity of main actors. While we are registering virtual achievements to date, we realize that much remains to be done relative to our growth target and goal. I believe that your discussion today can provide us with additional ideas on how to:

- Develop resilient and green cities growth policies.
- Set a course for sustainable and inclusive urban development;
- Scale up successful urban development best practices
- Indicate the role that cities can contribute in the development of Ethiopia;
- Identify lessons from France, Germany, and beyond that can help us ensure a successful resilient, inclusive and green urban development process in Ethiopia.

With these remarks, I would like to conclude my speech by expressing my heartfelt thanks for those who made possible this platform.

I wish you fruitful deliberations. With this I now declare the work shop is open.

Thank you very much for your attention.