

- **Your Excellency H.E Mr Borja Montesino Martinez del Cerro, Ambassador of Kingdom of Spain in Ethiopia, Permanent Observer Representative at the African Union**
- **Cabinet Members of the Addis Ababa City Administration**
- **Mr. Ricard Zapatero and Mr. Juan, Consultants from Fira Barcelona**
- **Board of Directors of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations**
- **Invited Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is an honor and a privilege for me to deliver a keynote address in recognition of the signing of agreement for the Feasibility Study of the New Addis Ababa Exhibition and Convention Center as one of the most important developmental projects of the Addis Ababa City Administration and the Ethiopian Government at large.

As is well known Addis Ababa has no a standardized Exhibition and Congress Center regardless of the multifaceted developmental growth and attractions of the City as a hub of the African Union and a Seat of over 90 Embassies and many International Organizations.

The contributions of standardized Exhibition and Convention Centers are immense. They are part of the basic infrastructures a city like Addis Ababa should deserve to tap opportunities related to the development of trade and investment, the generation of foreign currency, the attraction of conference tourism and related services, for the improvement of international relations and for image building.

Cognizant of the abovementioned fundamental benefits and many more, the Addis Ababa City Administration has tried to sort out the causes for the gaps along with opportunity analysis and accordingly find possible ways of taking action the result of which was included to the Second Growth and Transformation Plan as one of the prime developmental projects.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Apart from the initiatives taken to fulfill the basic preconditions at various levels, the commitment of the Addis Ababa City Administration was highlighted when a Higher Level Delegation led by H.E. Mayor Diriba Kuma visited Fira Barcelona upon the invitation of Mayor of Barcelona in March this year which was concluded by signing MoU. It was the basis for today's function: the signing of

agreement between the Addis Ababa City Administration and Fira Barcelona for the Feasibility Study.

The Addis Ababa City Administration strongly believes that the consultants will exert maximum efforts to produce a full-fledged Feasibility Study making advantage out of their age-long expertise, valid experiences and reputations aiming at producing a state of the art Feasibility Study which is expected to be a model at least in East Africa. I would also like to remind those concerned Bureaus of the City Administration and other stakeholders to actively take part to make this historic project a success.

At this juncture I would like to recognize the efforts of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations and the management of the Addis Ababa Exhibition Center and Market Development Enterprise for their encouraging efforts while managing the existing Addis Ababa Exhibition Center and Market Development Enterprise and facilitating this new project driven by the motto: **"Public-Private-Partnership for Sustainable Developmental Change"** since the last 11 years closely working with the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In conclusion, once again, I would like to express the commitment of the Addis Ababa City Administration while materializing this vital project by availing the necessary support to the consultants.

Thank you!