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### Seyoum Says Third Millennium Symbolizes Ethiopian Renaissance

*Addressing the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly in New York on October 3, 2007 Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin has said that a new and strong national consensus is being created around the conviction and the resolve to make the opening of the country's third Millennium the symbol of an Ethiopian Renaissance. The full text of the speech is presented as follows:*

#### Mr. President

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of this Sixty-Second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would like to assure you of my Country's fullest cooperation in the discharge of the responsibilities bestowed upon you. I have no doubt that this Assembly will benefit both from your personal and professional experience.



Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin Addressing the 62nd  
Session of UN General Assembly in New York

May I take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for her invaluable contributions and wise leadership during the last Session of the General Assembly?

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. He is already fully engaged and has made an excellent beginning in the efforts to address global challenges since he took office a year ago. I would therefore, on this occasion, like to underline Ethiopia's firm commitment to cooperate in every way in assisting his demanding endeavors.

#### Mr. President,

Just three weeks ago Ethiopia began its Third Millennium. You, here in this Assembly, recognized this as a world event. On 15 June 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating the year from 12 September 2007 to 11

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September 2008 as the year of Ethiopian Millennium. The African Union Assembly also declared the Ethiopia Millennium as an African heritage and a unique occasion. We thank you all for that honour and for that expression of solidarity.

Those who have witnessed how Ethiopians of all walks of life have received the New Ethiopian Millennium, could not have missed the new spirit that has been on display in the country. This is a spirit of renewal and commitment to stand in unison for a better future for the country. The New Millennium was greeted by all Ethiopians with a pledge to do more for national harmony, for durable peace and stability, and to prevail upon poverty that has been the hallmark of the country in recent decades.

Two thousand years ago, Ethiopia was the home of one of the great civilizations of the world, at Aksum. A thousand years ago, we could still produce two of the world's greatest heritage sites. One is the city of Harar, the fourth holiest city of Islam, which by happy coincidence, also celebrates its own Millennium this year. The other is the city of churches built by Lalibela, Saint, Priest and emperor at the town which still bears his name today.

But Ethiopia's fortune began to change commencing from the second half of the last Millennium. Though a survivor of colonialism, and a representative of the greatness of Africa's past, Ethiopia also unfortunately came to represent and symbolize the poverty, the dearth and destitution of Africa's more recent history.

### **Mr. President,**

Despite the formidable challenges we have had, all of this has begun to change in the last decade. Hopelessness and frustration growing out of lack of confidence in the future, is no longer an image reflecting the reality of Ethiopia. This is perhaps the explanation for the exuberance displayed by all sectors of Ethiopian society while welcoming the New Millennium. A new and strong national consensus is being created in Ethiopia today. This is a consensus around the conviction and the resolve to make the opening of our third Millennium a symbol of an Ethiopian Renaissance.

### **Mr. President,**

This overwhelming optimism displayed by all Ethiopians at the opening of the New Millennium rests on tangible foundation. The political, social and economic realities in Ethiopia have been changing over the last decade. We are making meaningful progress. Indeed, we have no shortage of detractors. These are non-Ethiopians determined to scuttle the progress we are making

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in all areas. Their attempts include efforts at undermining national unity and at trying to micromanage Ethiopia's internal affairs. We have seen this, including over the last few days. Despite all this, however, we continue to make progress. For five consecutive years now, our real GDP growth rate has averaged over ten percent. Our per capita income growth has averaged nearly eight percent for the last seven years. More tangible perhaps, in terms of the progress we have been making to change the life situation of our people, is the advance we have registered towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We are set to attain universal primary health care by 2010. We are well on the way to achieving the goals set for reducing child and maternal mortality well prior to 2015. We have made much progress in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. We have managed to halt and stabilize the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce the incidence of malaria.

### **Mr. President,**

What we have been able to achieve in the area of education has been quite remarkable as well. There is now little doubt that we are on the way to achieving universal primary education by 2015. Primary school enrollment at present is 91.6%. Sixteen year ago, it stood at 19%. We have also begun to ensure that the access made available to education would in fact be quality education. We have also been committed in a tangible manner to environmental sustainability. Our Millennium celebrations, and the preparations leading to it, have been underlined by practical expressions to this commitment. The slogan "Two trees for 2000" has been enthusiastically taken up throughout the country. Popular enthusiasm has led to speeding up a process that had begun earlier, culminating just in a matter of three to four months, leading to the opening of the New Millennium, to the planting of close to a billion trees. This is a process that will continue throughout the year and beyond.

Nor are we oblivious to the specter of global warming and to the threat of climate change. Africa is exceptionally vulnerable to the effects of climate change. So many of us live on the margins that the smallest difference in climate can mean the difference between sufficiency and famine, survival and death. It is a global challenge, and it needs a global response. However, the need for speedy economic development in countries such as Ethiopia, and in Africa as a whole, should not be compromised in the interest of reversing a dangerous climatic situation for the creation of which we have no responsibility. It should nonetheless be possible through effective international collaboration to ensure that the development process in countries such as Ethiopia would

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be environmentally friendly. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of Brazil for a new UN Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 2012. We are also appreciative of the European Union's commitment to cut further its greenhouse gas emissions and its plans for more responsible and sustainable energy policies. We endorse the European Union's support for reforming the institutional framework of the United Nation's environmental activities.

### **Mr. President,**

The economic and social progress Ethiopia has made over the last decade has, no doubt, been underpinned by the real and concrete advance we have made in building democratic institutions and fostering the rule of law. In this regard as well, we are entering the New Ethiopian Millennium with even greater and renewed commitment to deepen the democratic process in Ethiopia and strengthen the culture of tolerance and mutual understanding among our people. There is a new spirit of tolerance, of dialogue and inclusiveness, and of commitment to peace, among our people.

The further democratization of the country and nurturing the rule of law is a pledge that every Ethiopian is seen to be making as we enter the New Millennium. This commitment is rooted in the conviction that durable peace in our country and the successful achievement of our objectives in the economic and social sphere can only be viable if we succeed in advancing towards achieving the democratic aspirations of our people. We urge those who wish to meddle in our affairs to be accountable to their action and to desist from seeking Trojan Horses in our society.

### **Mr. President,**

It is this same spirit of the New Ethiopian Millennium that we are determined to make sure will guide our foreign policy. We have over the last decade and half worked in good faith for peace in our region. We are even more prepared now than ever, and in the spirit of our New Millennium, to contribute our share to peace and mutual understanding among peoples and countries, most particularly in our own sub-region.

We are indeed fully aware that the basis for the renaissance of Ethiopia to which we are committed in the New Millennium cannot be limited to what we do within Ethiopia alone. To be true to the new spirit and to succeed in the rejuvenation of Ethiopia, we feel we have the obligation to stretch a hand of friendship to all those near and far who see wisdom in a positive response to this

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gesture. We are well aware of the need for a regional atmosphere conducive to the rejuvenation of our region, and of ourselves. It is not just the absence of conflict and dispute but the reality of peace and cooperation which is, we know, an absolute necessity. Without this we cannot achieve our aims, whether in Ethiopia, our region, or in Africa.

**Mr. President,**

Permit me to express our profound appreciation to all those who have helped us make the progress we have made over the past decade. There are those who have been steadfast in their support for our endeavors and stood with us through thick and thin. We are indebted to them. Our obligation is to be true to the principles that underpin those expressions of solidarity. Ethiopia, a founding member of the United Nations, will continue to be accountable to multilateralism and to the fullest cooperation with the United Nations. Therefore, as I conclude, I wish to reiterate, once again, our readiness to cooperate fully, and without reserve, with our Secretary General in all areas where our contribution is needed, and to seek friendship with all nations in the spirit of our Millennium.

I Thank You.

### France's Foreign Minister Visits Ethiopia



Dr. Kouchner in audience with his Ethiopian counterpart, Ato Seyoum Mesfin

The Foreign Minister of the Republic of France, Dr. Bernard Kouchner paid a two-day working visit to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) from July 25 - 26, 2007.

During this visit, Dr. Kouchner held talks with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin and other senior officials.

The French Foreign Minister's meeting with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi focused on the bilateral relations between the two countries as well as regional issues of mutual concern.

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During their discussions, Meles commended France's firm commitment for peace and stability in Africa in general and the Horn of Africa Region in particular. In regard to the situation in Somalia, Meles assured the French Foreign Minister of Ethiopia's firm commitment to withdraw its troops as soon as the remaining African peacekeeping troops are deployed to the country and asked Dr. Kouchner to do his level best to provide the necessary assistance for the Burundian troops whose deployment has long been delayed due to lack of necessary equipment and logistics.

Dr. Kouchner promised to do all within his capacity for France to provide the necessary support for the deployment of the Burundian troops. He also said that he appreciated efforts Ethiopia has been making to resolve the political and social chaos in East Africa and that his discussion on this issue with Meles have been "effective".

A luncheon ceremony was organized by Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin in honour of his French counterpart at the Addis Ababa Hilton. This was attended by members of the diplomatic corps as well as senior Ethiopian officials.

In a speech delivered during the occasion, Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin stressed the need of the two countries to boost the historical and brotherly relations which always existed between the two countries by particularly strengthening their cooperation in trade and investment sectors. He also declared Ethiopia's plan to introduce the teaching of the French language into Ethiopian high schools and asked for French support in training the teachers needed for the implementation of this project.

The French Republic with a strong military presence in Djibouti, he emphasized can make significant contribution to the realization of peace and security in the Horn of African Region.

### **Leipzig City Keen to Cooperate with Addis Ababa in Various Areas**

A 31-member delegation of Leipzig City led by the First Deputy Mayor of the City, Andreas Muller, visited the Ethiopian Capital Addis Ababa as well as various historical sites of the country from October 2 - 7, 2007.

The delegation's visit to Addis Ababa is based on the twinning agreement signed between the two cities three years ago.

The Leipzig delegation visited the Addis Ababa Caretaker Administration and held fruitful discussions with Mayor Berehane Deressa and other Senior Officials of the City on ways of further expanding cooperation between the two cities.

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During the occasion, the Leipzig delegation presented to the City Administration with a study produced in Germany to upgrade the lion's cages in Addis Ababa to a full-fledged zoo of international standard. They held talks with the technical committee in charge of the project's implementation.

It was also noted during the discussions that the twining programme, started between the Schiller School in Leipzig and Menelik II Secondary School in Addis Ababa, is playing a significant role in strengthening ties between the youths of the two cities.

Mayor Berehane Deressa on his part thanked the Deputy Mayor and his delegation for the growing social and economic cooperation between Leipzig and his metropolis.

During this visit, the Leipzig Deputy Mayor and his delegation also met with Public Diplomacy and Public Relations Directorate General of the Foreign Ministry and held discussions on ways to encourage establishment of establishing twining programmes among universities, museums, hospitals and other institutions in the two cities.

### Church Delegation Leader Commends Ethiopia as a Symbol of Black Identity



Rev. Butts delivers speech at the Trinity Cathedral Orthodox Church

Leader of the American Abyssinian Baptist Church Rev. Calvin O. Butts III, said that Ethiopia is symbol of black identity and a country with well developed spiritual values.

Rev. Butts visited Ethiopia in September at the head of a 150 - member delegation of the American Abyssinian Baptist Church in connection with the celebration of the Ethiopian new millennium.

The delegation made a tour of various Ethiopian historical sites and tourist ondar, Baherdar. They also attended the colorful celebration of Demera at Meskal Square in Addis Ababa as well.

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Reverend Butts told MoFA Newsletter that the present visit of the delegation of his Church was an eye-opener for them about Ethiopia. "The group is overwhelmed by the uniqueness of the Ethiopian historical sites and the diversity of its peoples and cultures", he said.

The Reverend also said that he had witnessed that Ethiopia is a country taking positive measures towards eradicating poverty and improving protection of human rights.

From now on, he said, members of the American Abyssinian Baptist Church and Afro-Americans in general would be strongly aligned with the Ethiopian peoples in their endeavour for development and to make poverty history.

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is one of the oldest African-American religious institutions based in the city of New York. The presence of the group in Ethiopia at this particular moment of the Millennium celebration makes a significant contribution to changing the distorted image of Ethiopia in industrially developed Western countries.

### **The Fourth Ethio-Yemeni Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting Convened**

The Fourth Ethio-Yemen Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting was held in Addis Ababa on August 20, 2007.

The Yemeni delegation was led by Dr. Abubaker Abdellah Al-Qubi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen and the Ethiopian side by Ato Seyoum Mesfin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Prior to the convening of the Fourth Joint Ministerial Commission, the Fourth Experts' Meeting of the two countries was held from 17 to 18 August 2007.

During the Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting the two sides discussed a wide range of issues related to regional and sub-regional peace and security, and underlined the positive opportunity created in Somalia by the National Reconciliation Congress held in Mogadishu.

The Yemeni side expressed their appreciation for Ethiopia's efforts to restore peace and stability at the request of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and called for the mobilization of adequate African Security Forces for the realization of peace and security in Somalia and to allow for an orderly withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces.

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The two sides expressed their desire for a peaceful and lasting solution to the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea through dialogue and diplomatic means.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction with the Agreement reached between the Sudanese Government, the AU, and the UN to restore peace and order in Darfur with necessary safeguards to ensure Sudanese unity and sovereignty.

The two sides called for immediate action to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict on all fronts, on the basis of the UN Resolutions, the concluded Agreements between the various parties and on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative.



The two sides called for a concerted UN-Arab League effort to initiate reconciliation dialogue among all Iraqi political, ethnic and religious groups in order to re-establish peace and security in Iraq and strengthen the Iraqi Government's effort for reconciliation and national unity.

The leaders of the two delegations exchange the Agreement signed at the conclusion of the Meeting

The two sides condemned all acts of violence, extremism and international terrorism in all its manifestation and called for enhancement of their respective capacities and cooperation to combat terrorism.

Both sides, desirous of strengthening their bilateral relationship and regional cooperation have decided to promote exchanges of trade, investment and other information related to technology and economy that are mutually advantageous to promoting investment and trade.

The two sides agreed to take all necessary steps to ensure that all the agreed and signed documents work for their mutual benefit and that they are reviewed periodically.

The next Ethio-Yemeni Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting will be held in Yemen (Sana'a) in August next year.