

**Dear Ethiopians,
Invited guests,
Excellencies,**

I would like to start by thanking God for giving me this opportunity to deliver this speech before you on such a historic day when we are establishing a new government elected through a transparent and legitimate election process for the first time in the long history of Ethiopia as a state.

At this critical time and difficult season, I would like to express my deep respect and gratitude to our heroic defense forces, others in our security apparatus, and the people of Ethiopia for their sacrifices and struggle against the threats posed against the very existence of our country and our people. Ethiopia honors her heroes and will not forget your service. Our country will give respect to the gems of this generation just as we continue to recognize the heroes of old. Your sacrifice will be written in bold in our hearts and the annals of history.

I am very proud to hail from a people that have produced so many heroes; our people's perseverance, invincibility, and firm resistance to threats are qualities I admire. Throughout our history, the people of Ethiopia have been passionate about protecting the motherland from any threats, and have been willing to put aside factional interest to protect our country from enemies. Our sovereignty is non-negotiable and our people stand guard as spear and shield – a steadfast protector of our independence. I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for our people who have once again stood up as one to rescue Ethiopia from the many threats it faces. All friends of Ethiopia who have extended a hand of support at a time when our country needed it most, who stood by our side in our moment of weakness – I thank you deeply on behalf of the Ethiopian people and our government.

**Dear Ethiopians,
Excellencies,**

Ethiopia can be represented by a ship depicting her all-inclusiveness, long and lustrous history. As mentioned in the great Holy books, Ethiopia is a country of justice, equality, freedom, and humanity. You will find very few other countries that have merited more praise in history books.

We are the people of whom it was said “Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots?” and the country of the Biblical Ethiopian eunuch who was among the first Christians; We are the fruits of the womb of the country that welcomed the early followers of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and the origin of the first Muazzin Bilal;

Ethiopians are a people described as “people who love justice and adjudication, whose buildings and paintings are full of wisdom” by the navigator Pedro Alvares;

Ethiopia is a country praised in Aesop's fables and Menander's plays;

We are children of the land the Greek historian Herodotus complimented as “the country of wise people with golden culture and ethics”;

A country whose historicity has been verified by modern archeologists;

Ethiopia: highly regarded by the likes of Marcus Garvey and Du Bois; a leader in the anti-colonialism and anti-apartheid struggle that went beyond its own battles to sacrifice its limited resources for the freedom of Africa; highly regarded in the esteem of the likes of Nelson Mandela who beautifully described Ethiopia as the country that “unearth[ed] the roots of what made me an African.”

When some today challenge us and doubt our capacity to carry on, we open our history books and show them our forefather’s feats of heroism; we invite them to witness the journey our generation has embarked upon to ensure Ethiopia’s prosperity.

We have no doubt that our tomorrow will be even better than yesterday; the only question is whether we are able to see this hope and are determined to act accordingly to make it a reality. Ethiopia will prosper to the extent we are willing to change and form a joint vision to effect change. This is the time for Ethiopia to shake off her burdens and stand tall – we, the Ethiopians of today, have a historic duty to seize this moment and work to realize it. We are entrusted with the great task of renewing our ship – Ethiopia’s – engine, protecting her from the waves and storm, picking up the anchor, and beginning the journey; the coming generations will in turn work to ensure the ship keeps her course and perseveres.

**Dear Ethiopians,
Excellencies,**

In the past half-century, our country has waged a serious struggle to establish democracy in our government. We have reached today having passed through many ups and downs on this journey between many hopes and fears, opportunities and threats. For many years, our people – from farmers to pastoralists, from urban to rural dwellers, from men in uniform to academicians, from the youth to those advanced in age, from the elite to common folks - have struggled and greatly sacrificed to advance their demands for recognition of identity, equality, freedom, equitable use of resources.

Although the 6th National Election was not without blemish and limitations, it was a monumental occasion that has opened a new chapter in our longstanding quest to establish a democratic system – it has definitely taken us a step forward. We have now reached a stage where power emanates from the will of the people as expressed through the ballot – and not from the hereditary line, from the barrel of guns, nor from conspiracy and deceitful machinations.

Our people have carried out their civic duty and participated in the election despite the torrents of challenges – not giving up, unhindered by COVID and other natural and manmade disasters; not discouraged by the challenges posed against our sovereignty; not giving in to the pressure from external threats; persevering in the face of security threats, and participated in the election process.

**Dear Ethiopians,
Excellencies,**

The outcome of the election does not make a single party a victor; it is not only a success for the government. The victory is for Ethiopia as a country and Ethiopians as people – a great success we should properly celebrate and can harness to fill many gaps if we duly recognize it. We should take note that the many political and economic problems that have piled on for years cannot be resolved through one party’s leadership alone, and instead unite to resolve the many compounded issues we face.

On our side, we commit to an inclusive and participatory process that will help build an Ethiopia that is by all, from all, and to all. We will work to ensure our political system will be a result of our agreed compromises instead of only a reflection of the winner’s interest. A look at our history clearly shows that our internal divisions have made us vulnerable to attacks from our enemies. Oromo fathers say “Walii-galan alaa galan” meaning “those who agree can come inside; those who deliberate and consult, will find solutions for pressing problems.”

Going forward, we will work to embrace our diversity as beauty; reconcile our conflicts while respecting our differences; strengthen our multinational unity and collectively achieve new heights. We will conduct national consultations and discussions to narrow our political differences. We will include all who believe in resolving problems through discussions. The process will not just be consultations among political elites but will instead ensure participation of all parts of society and led by Ethiopians with the aim to find homegrown solutions.

Ethiopia is a mother, a legacy, a country to us all – our common home. Our country is still in the making and we, today’s generation, have a lot of work ahead of us: there remain many historical wounds to be healed, crises that need answers. Instead of giving its back to tomorrow and focusing on historical contradictions, our generation should focus on finding solutions to our country’s current problems.

We should be students of history, but not be its prisoners as we plot to take revenge for historic wrongs. Our responsibility is to pass on Ethiopia in a better shape and condition than what we received.

**Dear Ethiopians,
Excellencies,**

The conflict in northern Ethiopia born out of betrayal and arrogance this past year has cost our country dearly. This war was created by few individuals who were intent on destabilizing the country unless they could be in charge to turn the wheels as they pleased. This enemy, aided by its supporters, armed itself and committed a heinous crime against the northern command of our defense forces.

When we recently pulled back our forces with hopes the enemy would come to its senses, instead they armed and put children on the battlefield; destroyed public resources; demolished schools and health centers; dismantled families, murdered innocent civilians; killed cattle vital to farmers’ livelihoods; desecrated holy sites.

When such an attack was waged against our beloved country, we had no choice but to relaunch the mission to enforce the rule of law. The main goal of our mission is to stop the perpetrators of such violence and destruction. Our fight is only with those anti-Ethiopian forces that are intent on threatening the very existence of our country, turning people against each other, stealing and looting our resources to fill their pockets and usurp power. We will exert all effort, take any action, and pay every sacrifice necessary until this existential threat is removed and the peaceful continuity of Ethiopia is assured.

Ethiopia will build a strong and efficient peace and security apparatus to properly protect itself against internal and external threats and continue to fully protect its national interests.

Excellencies,

At this critical time as we are working to fend off threats against our national sovereignty. The international pressure we faced has made us look back at our history: on the one hand, we have always had countries, people, institutions, and individuals who stand with us in our time of need; on the other hand, we have witnessed many betrayals as we strive to stay committed to principles.

We have once again seen how some have betrayed us while others continue to stand by our side. Ethiopia seeks the partnership of our friends in our quest to achieve prosperity, but no friendship can be sustained at the cost of our national honor and sovereignty. Our doors will remain open to all countries that approach us in a spirit of cooperation and we look forward to their support, advice, and good wishes.

Dear African Brothers and Sisters,

We Ethiopians firmly believe that we need to strengthen our capacity to produce African solutions to the many natural and manmade challenges we face as a continent. We will work harder than before to carry out our responsibility under the principle of “African solutions to African problems” to create a united, peaceful, and prosperous Africa that protects our continental interests in world stages.

We have a quote that says “may your neighbor sleep in peace so you will sleep in peace.” In our region, we have more that unites than divides us. It is imperative for us to work in the true spirit of African solidarity and of cooperation if we are to protect our neighbors’ peace and ensure our bright collective destiny. As Gamo father’s say “if you do not farm with others one year, you will farm alone for seven years” - so it is in our Region: if we create synergy by pooling together our individual strengths, the challenges we face will pale in comparison to our collective resources.

Excellencies

Beyond the multiple economic and social benefits, it creates for our country, the Grand Renaissance Dam is a huge project that promotes good neighborliness and regional integration. For us Ethiopians, the Abay river represents significant symbolic importance beyond its economic utility. Abay represents our determination to rise up to challenges, stand on our own feet and unite for good.

All Ethiopians from children to seniors, city, and town, north to south, east to west are determined to contribute to this project united together by the hope and confidence that Abay inspires. We are ready to work to ensure collective benefits, stronger regional integration, and a mutually beneficial outcome for all our neighbors and children of Abay.

Dear Compatriots,

We shall work to ensure that our economy is diversified with multiple actors, multiple sectors, and will be beneficial to the multitude. We shall work relentlessly to build a private sector-led economy that is governed by market principles and is supported by the government; an economy that is competitive and linked to international trade and investment, capable of ensuring fast and equitable growth, creates ample and reliable job opportunities for our citizens with a view to bringing to reality our aspiration for a prosperous Ethiopia.

Although efforts to address macroeconomic imbalances have yielded some results, we recognize that inflation and the ever-increasing cost of living have made life difficult. The Government understands very well that the brunt of these problems is borne by the poor. One of the priority tasks of the government in the coming years will be reigning in inflation.

**My fellow Ethiopians,
Excellencies,**

Our well-intentioned aspirations and goals will only have meaning when we develop a capacity to implement them. We need to establish a government that is thoughtful, plans and executes - not merely one that dreams. We have had plans that never left shelves, projects commenced but could not be brought to completion - these have held us back from making progress and caused some digressions.

As of today, we need to extricate ourselves of such customs and commit to adopting a culture of finalizing what we initiated to address the grievances and sufferings of our citizens. We will espouse corrective measures to address such limitations and create a technology-enabled, transparent, and efficient public administration system. More importantly, in the coming years, we will engage in initiatives that would identify corruption not just as a minor infraction - but as a problem that poses serious national security and existential threat.

**My esteemed countryfolk,
Excellencies,**

While our reforms journey has registered significant achievements, we have also encountered numerous challenges. We still live in a country in which not so few individuals and groups believe that they will be exposed if justice prevails, will be suffocated if democracy entrenches, and identify equality as subjugation. We need to realize that our national drive to prosperity will continuously face serious predicaments. We need to build on our past successes, remedy our shortfalls and rise up with new ideas, novel perspectives, and an orientation that can redeem the years ahead.

We recognize that our enterprise to institutionalize the reforms within the wider public will occasionally entail blunders on our part. But we anticipate that those who would come after us would perfect our shortfalls and reinforce our achievements.

The coming five years will mark a period when all the great achievements of the reform journey will be reinforced and transition to fruition.

In the coming years, we will mobilize all our resources and emerge against internal and external predicaments by extricating ourselves of hatred that has hitherto posed a danger to our unity and by disentangling ourselves of the yoke of poverty which heightened our vulnerability to the arbitrary and hegemonic desires of those who commanded wealth and power. We should toil to rout out hatred through broader understanding; subjugation through democracy; poverty through inclusive and comprehensive prosperity; and our vulnerability by building a strong national security apparatus.

**My fellow Ethiopians,
Invited guests,
Excellencies,**

Finally, I wish to express my strong conviction that the coming years will be a period when we demonstrate to the whole world that the name 'Ethiopia' is truly associated with 'perseverance'. It will be a period when we show that challenges will never drag us back but increase our resolve to leap-frog towards our destiny.

The coming years will witness Ethiopia take out the thorns on its side, heals its wounds, establishes its multi-national unity on rock solid foundations, and an era when its name shall be celebrated throughout the world. The coming years will notice - the spine of poverty, the flanges of hatred, the pillars of disunion, the receptacles of displacement, the hands of carnage, and the powers of conceited incrimination - shredded to fragments through the united action of my countrymen.

As the saying in Afan Oromo goes "Akka duriifi harka xuriitti hin hafan", "a muddy hand and yesterday's feeble identity will grow pure in time", Ethiopia - who triumphantly glitters like gold from its past challenges, whose true distinctiveness will not be affected by layers of dirt accumulated on its surface - had subsisted in the past and will continue to live. Tomorrow, no earthly power will stand before it when it shrugs off the dust and gets rid of the pile of dirt.

And for this, we are entrusted with a sacred duty. This duty is bestowed by our electorates who stood up in rainy days and long ques without being deterred by sleepless nights, by Ethiopians who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield to safeguard the sovereignty of our country, by Ethiopian mothers who perpetually hold prayers for the peace and welfare of Ethiopia, by fathers and mothers who through their sweats and labor serve our proud nation, and by children who rested their hopes on us and sing about Ethiopia. Yes, we indeed are entrusted with a sacred duty. Hence, on behalf of our government and our party, I take this opportunity to once again assure you that in the coming years we would remain sleepless and focused to maintain and fully realize the entrusted duties and to offer ourselves without any reservation. Be assured that the coming years will be a period when we nurture our hopes, rid our concerns, fully utilize our opportunities, overcome our challenges and lead our country on a path of prosperity.

God bless Ethiopia and its people!