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## Progress on Electoral Preparations

As the highly anticipated national elections will be held on June 5, 2021 with Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa cities casting their vote on June 12, 2021, far reaching preparations have been undertaken in all regions together with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has been convening Regional Presidents and leadership of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia for the past few weeks, to review progress and provide direction on addressing bottlenecks. Resultantly, a follow-up meeting was held online today to assess voter registration, polling station setup and transportation of polling materials to each constituency.

Based on the report provided and discussion with Regional Presidents, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed acknowledged the progress made since the last meeting in increments of voters' registration. With continued work in the remaining days, he reiterated that voter registration has a marked increase in comparison to the 5<sup>th</sup> National Elections.

In ensuring that the elections are peaceful, the Federal government has been organizing election security forces to be deployed at each polling station in coming weeks and to complement regional electoral police in their work to ensure peace and security. Citing the positive turnout in voter registration, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed noted that citizens have the desire and high expectation to engage in the upcoming elections and noted that concerned authorities need to engage community members to be custodians of peace.

The Government of Ethiopia continues to be committed to holding democratic and peaceful elections and has shown goodwill in creating an enabling environment, within its capacity, for international election observers. We welcome all international observers who are interested in witnessing Ethiopia's process. Ultimately, the Ethiopian people are the primary observers in ensuring legitimacy and whose commitment to peace and democracy is sought. Therefore, all Ethiopians are encouraged to continue registering for voting cards in an exercise of their democratic rights and advised to be vigilant in guarding their communities.

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