



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Signing Ceremony - SEEDS with the Government of Japan

**Remarks
Turhan Saleh
UNDP RR**

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Check against delivery

H.E. Ms. Birtukan Midekksa, Chairperson of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia,

H.E. Daisuke Matsunaga, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

A warm welcome to you all this morning.

We are here today because we are all committed to free, fair, credible, peaceful and inclusive national elections in 2020 that leave no one behind.

Even in my short time here, I have sensed the importance of this event in the national conversation and in popular expectations about the future of governance and development in Ethiopia. There is a lot at stake – with much to be gained if there is success, but also serious risks that will need to be overcome should things fall short.

This is why I am especially honoured that their Excellencies, the Chairperson of NEBE and the Ambassador of Japan, are gracing UNDP with their presence today to sign off on the support that Japan will be providing to the multi-partner election support project – called the SEEDS project – that is led by UNDP to offer the best possible assistance to NEBE so that this vital national institution can effectively deliver on its mandate.

Thank you, Chairperson, for our partnership and close collaboration. It is a privilege to work with you and NEBE.

Thank you, Ambassador Matsunaga, for the trust you are demonstrating in UNDP. We look forward to deepening our collaboration with Japan in the future, in this and other areas of mutual interest. We have a solid base to build on: Japan, through

UNDP, has been supporting Ethiopia's peacekeeping support training centre; it is assisting refugee host communities in Gambela; providing funding for the recovery of communities affected by the Gedo-West Guji crisis; and, in the past, helped reinforce Ethiopia's climate change adaptation action.

Looking ahead, there will undoubtedly be challenges big and small around the elections – that is hardly surprising or unusual – but I am confident that with the commitment of national leaders and authorities, a spirit of national unity among all Ethiopians, and the strong support of development partners, success will be within reach – opening the door to the brighter future that Ethiopia amply deserves.

Thank you!