



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

National Launch of the Human Development Report 2016

Welcoming Remarks

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Check against delivery

Your Excellency, Dr. Yinager Dessie, Commissioner, National Planning Commission,

Excellencies,

Ambassadors,

Government representatives,

Development Partners,

Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to welcome you all to the launch of the latest Global Human Development Report published under the theme **“Human Development for Everyone”**.

Let me from the onset thank H.E. Dr Yinager Dessie, Commissioner of the National Planning Commission, for joining us today to launch this report here in Addis Ababa.

For the last 25 years the Human Development Report has kept our focus on people and human progress. It reaffirms the validity of the concept of human development and the imperative choices and freedoms, which are fundamental and universal values of human progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 2016 Human Development report recognizes that the world has witnessed human progress over the past 25 years.

There has been impressive progress in human development over these years—people now live longer; more children are at school; and access to basic social services have improved; and, overall, there has been improvement in people’s standard of living.

But we are not ready to celebrate. Challenges still persist in terms of poverty, hunger, and disease. The world’s citizens are not benefiting from equitable and universal access to quality education, health care, social protection; universal respect for human rights and dignity remains a challenge; we haven’t managed to realize gender equality and ensuring just, equitable tolerant, open and socially inclusive world that is free from violence. In addition, we have failed to realize sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you read through the Human Development Report you will come across some interesting findings and insightful observations that could help us break new grounds as we address some of these deficits:

First - human development is for everyone—and no one should be left out. Yet, we know and as the report states, human development has been uneven, and human deprivations persist. Progress has bypassed groups, communities, societies—and people have been left out. Some have achieved only the basics of human development, and some not even that. For example, as the report highlights,

- One person in nine in the world is hungry
- HIV infects 2 million people a year
- On average, 18 thousand people die per day because of air pollution
- And worryingly for us here in Africa, out of the 188 countries for which the human development index is presented, 41 countries belong to low human development category and the majority are found in our continent.

Second - When we look at human development through a gender perspectives we come to the shocking realization that the world is far from a free and equal place for millions of women. Let me highlight a few concerning points: On average women still have a lower human development index than their male counterparts. Access to resources has also remained a major bottleneck with women making up only 10 to 20% of landholders in developing countries. Every year 15 million girls marry before the age 18 in developing countries. And in 18 countries women need their husband's approval to take a job while in 46 countries laws do not protect women from domestic violence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We also need to recognize that achieving human development may not mean that human development is sustained. Progress in human development may be slowed or even reversed because of shocks and vulnerabilities, with implications for people who have only achieved the basics in human development and even worse for people who have yet to achieve the basics.

That is why it is important that we need to invest in addressing epidemics, shocks and risks; combat violence and ensure people's security; maintaining human wellbeing in post-conflict situations; and tackle climate change in order to make human development resilient to shocks.

Here in Ethiopia, UNDP is working with the rest of the UN country team to ensure that we introduce strong linkage between our short term humanitarian actions with our long term development interventions. This development-humanitarian nexus will help us ensure that the human development gains are sustained and remain resilient.

When you read the Human Development Report you will notice that while Ethiopia still belongs to the low human development category, the country has made significant gains in human development, with the human development value increasing by 58.3% from 2000 to 2015.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have a tough road ahead of us. The world must collectively remain vigilant and stand ready to confront new challenges that have emerged or continue to emerge, such as inequalities, climate change, epidemics, migration, conflicts and violent extremism.

We must also keep our eyes on universalism. It is imperative for universal policies to reach those left out, even though practical universalism in policy is challenging. We therefore need an appropriate reorientation of universal policies which narrow the deficits in human development, promote inclusive growth, empowers people, pursue measures to address those with special needs, and enhance opportunities for women.

Our global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is clearly couched within the need to promote human development and the principle of “leaving No one Behind”, which is critical and central to the universality of the values of human progress that defines development as enlarging people’s choices and capabilities to live lives that they value.

Let me once again stress that the Human Development Report is all about placing people where they belong – at the centre of the development process.

I urge all of you scrutinize this report and dialogue on the recommendations to inform and influence national policies and strategies. I sincerely believe the Sustainable Development Goals give us a good platform to promote greater visibility of the human development approach and the lessons and recommendations of human development reports for years to come.

Let me end my remarks by giving you the good news – human development for everyone is attainable and the world has the resources and know-how to make this happen. All we need to do is invest in identifying where the deficits are; investing in tailoring a range of policy interventions; close the gender gap; implement global commitments including on the SDGs; and reform our global systems to help us deliver on our commitment to human development.

I now have the pleasure to call upon H.E. the Commissioner, National Planning Commission to give his remarks.