

**Honorable President,**

I am greatly honored to be given this opportunity and allow me to extend my sincere thanks to IPU for bringing the timely issue "Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth." At the outset, it is with great pleasure to express my deep satisfaction to be here at the beautiful city of Lusaka, Zambia.

**Honorable President,**

"Rejuvenating" democracy offers the opportunity of harnessing the energy and ideas of young people by providing the necessary conditions for their full participation in the nation's social, economic and political development. With their energy and enthusiasm, young men and women are typically at the forefront of new technologies, ideas and expectations. By challenging the status quo, they infuse democracy with fresh perspectives. The wealth of contributions that young people have to offer –both at the institutional and grassroots levels -brings benefits to the whole of society.

Needless to say, the active participation of all segments of the society is an important element to bring about accelerated

political, economic, social and cultural development in any country. Since the youth as a special sect are not only receptive to new ideas but also have the potential capacity for creativity and productivity, they can play a major role in all sectors of development. In order to translate their potential energies and capabilities into fruitful action, however, they need favorable environment.

In order to create favorable environment to the youth the Government of Ethiopia (FDRE) has undertaken measures that enable youth to be citizens with democratic outlook, professional competence, skill and ethics so that they can actively, efficiently and widely participate in and benefit from the country's ongoing activities that are aimed at attaining a democratic system and accelerated development. In order to realize this mission, at the very outset, there was a need to fill in the institutional and policy gaps that existed in the past. To this effect, my government has adressed policy and institutional gaps.

**Honorable President,**

Ministry of youth as a sector was established from the national to regional level and the Ministry formulated the national youth policy in 2004 with the broad objective of ensuring the active participation of youth in the economic, social and cultural life of the country, and to support democratization and good governance. The basic principles of the policy are to ensure that the youth will be active participant and beneficiary of democratization and economic development activities. The policy addresses a wide range of youth issues, ranging from HIV/AIDS to environmental protection and social services.

The Ethiopian government has also formulated the youth development package to translate the youth policy in to action. The Ethiopian youth development package was also developed through full participation of the youth themselves and their organizations at different forum.

The package recognizes that youth are the strategic force for the implementation of the youth development package in order to address their problems. According to the implementation strategy of the package Participation of young people will be

promoted at all stages of program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To ensure their participation in all stages of program implementation, efforts will be made to empower them to be agents of change by providing them technical, material, financial assistance, and training opportunity with relevant and timely information to enhance their overall capacity. The package points measures that have to be taken to efficiently ensure the participation, and to develop entrepreneurship concept and, leadership capacity of the youth.

**Honorable President,**

Ethiopia is among the fastest growing economy in the world with double digit growth in the last ten years or so. We are working towards becoming one of the middle income countries in the world. Our progress in the last ten years is truly remarkable. The proportion of people below the poverty line has been halved; access to education has expanded; the gap in enrolment between boys and girls has narrowed; under-five mortality has been reduced by two-thirds; and similar progress was recorded in reducing HIV/AIDs, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. A Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy has

been formulated and the Government has set itself a bold vision of becoming middle-income carbon-neutral economy by 2025.

As a result of the concerted effort of the government of Ethiopia a favorable political, economic and social environment is prevailing in a today's Ethiopia. Development induced policies and strategies have been formulated and the government has taken a firm position towards translating them into practical action. More than at any time in the past, priorities and serious attention have been given to capacity building activities with a view to effectively implementing these policies.

**In conclusion Honorable President,**

The full participation of the youth in all sectors has still a long way to go both at national, regional and international level. The government of Ethiopia is fully committed to improve the existing objective conditions towards the full utilization of the potential capacity of youth for the country's development effort and the building of a democratic system in an organized manner. Finally allow me to extend my sincere thanks for the people and

government of Zambia for its warmest hospitality for my Ethiopian delegation.

I thank you for your attention.