



Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**Opening Speech by H.E. Ato Sileshi Getahun,
State Minister for Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, at the
Ethiopia – Strengthening Land Administration Program (ELAP)
Experience Sharing Workshop
November 26-27, 2012, Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa**

On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and myself, I am highly honored to welcome you all to this important Experience Sharing and closing Workshop of ELAP Project

The workshop is organized to share the lessons acquired in implementing the Ethiopia - Strengthening Land Administration Program that was implemented over a four and a half years period from August 2008 up to now. The project was funded by USAID and implemented by my Ministry in collaboration with the six regional states of Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali and Tigray. The project has also collaborated with other projects, government and non-governmental organizations such as Ethiopia Mapping Agency (EMA), universities and Private Sectors.

I would like to take this opportunity to request Mr. Jason Frazer to convey our sincere thanks to his colleagues at the USAID/Ethiopia Mission that is providing the Ethiopian people a staunch support. The support of USAID is not only in the field of agriculture, but also in education, health and other sectors for achieving our Millennium Development Goals and implementing the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) to make Ethiopia a middle income country by 2025.

Dear Participants,

As you all know, Ethiopia is a predominantly agrarian country with 83% of the population living in rural area depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture contributes to 46.3% of the gross domestic product and up to 90% of the total export earnings. Ethiopia is endowed with abundant land, water and people that are vital for developing our agricultural sector.

Land-based resources are central to meet the livelihood of the majority of the population, to advance economic growth and to attain sustainable development of the country and crucial for attaining the objectives of our Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). Ethiopia currently has one of the fastest rates of economic growth in Africa, marketed by advances in agricultural production and productivity with consequent increases in export.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have development and approved the Ethiopia Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (ESIF) as part of our continues effort for improvement of our land management to attain increased productivity and production. ESIF – SLM provides holistic and strategic planning approach under which government and stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society, academia, donors and others can work together to remove barriers and overcome bottlenecks to promote and to scale up sustainable land management in Ethiopia. ESIF is planned to be implemented in three phases over a fifteen years period. One of its six components is improving the land administration and certification system in Ethiopia. By installing responsible and innovative land administration system in the country, we believe it will be a road map to realize sustainable land management that enhances soil productivity, and improves biological resources and vegetation cover.

In addition to the land productivity dimension, the system will be an instrument for protecting the land use rights of land users including women and empowering them in all decision making in the rural community, and putting in place good governance.

Though we are determined to realize the installation of land administration system in the country, our internal capacity is limited to fulfill on what we need. We are challenged by

capacity gaps, which require supportive resources from partner countries committed to contribute to our internal efforts. Here was the importance of USAID's contribution to Ethiopia in the area of land administration. The ELAP project was in line with the interests and ambitions of the Ethiopian Government. It is, therefore, a demand driven project. I believe the project has contributed to resolve the challenges and gaps that we have in the areas of technical, institutional, legal and human resources. Furthermore, we expect the new upcoming USAID LAND project will bring in new experience and new insights that will help take land administration performance to a higher level.

Dear Participants,

This is why the FDRE government is determined and committed to putting in place a fair and sound land administration system and has given it priority in its development policy and agenda. There will be tremendous pressure on land resources as we continue to grow both in the size of our economy and population. Such challenge can only be met by prudent and judicious land use and land administration policy pursued both at the federal and regional levels.

The Government of Ethiopia has embarked on a series of land administration and certification programs. Both the federal and regional governments have been taking bold initiatives and pragmatic efforts have been exerted to tackle the key issues of rural land tenure and administration for development.

Now, I would like to underline that in all these initiatives and associated efforts, the support of the USAID-backed land administration and certification projects as well as those of other development partners such as Finnish and the upcoming DFIDs support are paramount. In just a decade, we have been witnessing the achievement of impressive progress towards our development objectives. Farmers, and particularly women, are feeling more secure and further investing in their farmlands and intensifying and diversifying their production.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Land administration will definitely continue to be a focus area of development in the five year Growth and Transformation Plan of the Government. At this point, it is worth noting that the experiences and information generated from the USAID-supported pilot projects ELAP as well other development partner supported projects are expected to significantly build on the evolving body of knowledge and provide important lessons to sustain efforts to tackle the outstanding development challenges posed by land tenure and administration issues. The earlier USAID supported ELTAP project and current ELAP has addressed important issues of harmonizing land administration legislation, testing various cadastral surveying methods, devising proper land registry archiving system, creating public awareness and providing information on rural land laws and building the capacity of land administration units at both the Federal and Regional levels.

In this regard, the conclusions and recommendations arising from this two-day experience exchange workshop will immensely contribute to our efforts to scale up development in land administration, land use and investment in land. They should provide innovative ideas and methods and priorities to address the existing legislative, institutional, technical, and resource challenges.

Finally, I wish you very fruitful and successful deliberations in the next two days. I look forward to a lively decisions in this workshop and more importantly to the production of usable sets of conclusions and recommendations for the sake of strengthening the implementation capacity of all actors in developing functional land administration systems, which will be a foundation for upcoming USAID LAND and DFID LIFT projects and others on the road. Without further ado, I would like to declare the **Workshop** is officially opened.

I thank you all for your participation,