

**Addis Ababa Symposium on Skills Development**  
**“High Quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training for**  
**Sustainable Growth and Job Creation in Ethiopia”**  
**28 August, 2017, Addis Ababa**

**Opening remarks by His Excellency, State Minister of Education Ato Lemma Teshome**

As the State Minister in charge of technical and vocational education and training, and the director of federal TVET agency, I would like to welcome all the participants here this morning in the National TVET Garment Symposium on “High Quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Growth and Job Creation in Ethiopia”.

Ethiopia is one of the few African countries which have gone through the fundamental reform of the TVET system according to the principles of competency-based training and industry-training partnership. The Ministry of Education announced the Ethiopia TVET Strategy in 2008. Since then, occupational standards have been developed for 632 occupations and skills of TVET trainees are assessed according to them. For the development of occupational standards, private-sector specialists are actively engaged to provide their demand-side perspectives. With the objective of improving the relevance of TVET to labor demands, we particularly value the cooperative and in-company training. Currently, TVET programs are all composed of two training venues, namely theoretical, basic-competency training and practical training in actual work places. They constitute 30% and 70% respectively of the total learning hours.

While similar reform has been initiated by many countries within and outside of Africa, ours must have been one of the most drastic one, which other countries would model after. To showcase our commitment, the enrollment in TVET programs have grown from less than 3,000 in 1996/1997 to over two millions in 2013/2014. Similarly, the number of TVET institutions increased almost 80 times from 17 to more than 1,300, during the same period. It has been a challenge to provide opportunities of cooperative trainings for all of the increased number of TVET students. While there are still shortage of opportunities, we now have more than 27,000 private enterprises which provide cooperative trainings for TVET students.

Last year, when JICA and Nagoya University hosted the TICAD VI follow-up symposium on skills development, I was invited to Tokyo as a panelist to introduce the practice of TVET reform in Ethiopia, together with the delegate from South Africa, which was the

first African country to adopt the competency-based training and has undergone the education system reform accordingly since the beginning of the 1990s. This fact indicates that, regardless that we have shorter history of the reform, we can compare ourselves with our forerunners, in terms of our commitment and efforts.

Still, partly because of this rapid expansion and changes in a short period, we face many issues to overcome. Challenges lie particularly in the quality of training and their relevance to the labor market demands. I consider that this symposium is a very important opportunity for us to analyze the situation with scientific evidences gained from the research of an international academic group. Not only to learn from them, today, there will be a participatory workshop for stakeholders with different backgrounds to share ideas. As we all know, skills development is a field which involves diverse institutions and people in the private sector, educational institutions, and the government. While it is indispensable to develop a common vision, the occasions to discuss about it together are limited. Therefore, I would strongly encourage today's participants to utilize this opportunities to bring back ideas and human networks to your workplaces for improved partnerships.

I will conclude my speech with the best wishes for us here that the discussion would become fruitful.



## **Opening remarks by His Excellency, Minister of Education Dr. Shiferaw Teklemariam**

Today, I am happy to welcome the distinguished participants from various organizations to the National TVET Garment Symposium on “High Quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Growth and Job Creation in Ethiopia”.

As this title of the event shows, it is an urgent need of this country to develop human resources to drag the economic growth. The economic growth rate of Ethiopia has averaged 10.8% per year between 2003/04 and 2014/15. Compared to Sub-Saharan regional average of 5.4%, nobody can overlook the dynamic development of our economy. Not long past, our economy had been classified among the least developed countries in the world. Gross enrolment ratio in primary education was as low as 25.5 % in 1994, but exceeded 100% in 2014 at the average annual growth rate of 7.71 %. The Ministry of Education has invested greatly in developing skilled workforce. As a result, the number of educational institutions, teachers, and student enrolment have increased at all levels of education. Regardless of such dramatic growth both in economy and educational provision, still, we face the challenge that the educated workforces, particularly those from TVET, do not have skills to meet the demands in the world of work. The issue now is more of quality and relevance of education and training for the industrial workforce than simply increasing schools and teachers. This is more important now, as the vision of the Government of Ethiopia is to export up to 30 billion US dollars of the garment and textiles products by 2025 and consolidate Ethiopia as the leading apparel and textile manufacturing hub in Africa. Here a huge question arises: “how can we capture the changing demands from the labor market in a timely manner?” Another related question is “in which areas exactly do the skills of workers and training programs need to be improved to mitigate the gap of expectation with employers?”

To find the answers to these questions, today, we first hear the presentations of research findings by the team of scholars from Nagoya University, Japan. They have been conducting skills assessment and the study to identify the expectation gap between TVET trainers, trainees, and employers in Ethiopia, with focus on garment production sector. After their presentations, we will have a participatory workshop to discuss solutions which involves all participants from various different backgrounds to exchange ideas on the equal footing. For this purpose, we invited people widely from educational institutions, industries, academics, development partners, and government bodies. From educational institutions, we have trainers of TVET colleges particularly in greater Addis Ababa, Federal TVET Institute, and Bahada Institute of Textile. Federal TVET agencies, and TVET bureaus of Addis Ababa and Oromia Region, and Education Strategic Center

are also represented. We also have distinguished representatives from Ministry of Industry, Textile Industry Development Institute, Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency, Association on manufacturing and development, and Ethiopian Textile and Garment Manufacturers Association. Garment factory managers who took part in the research by Nagoya University are also invited.

Together with Nagoya University, co-host of the event, I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the honored guests. Mr. Hiroyuki Tanaka is the Senior Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Ethiopia Office. JICA has been a strong supporter of education sector in Ethiopia, with influential projects on science and mathematics education and on community-based school management. I should also point out that this symposium is along the continuum from the earlier symposium “Industrial Skills Development for the Sustainable Growth in Africa” held in February in Tokyo, as a follow up of the sixth meeting of TICAD VI. TICAD is the series of international conference on African development hosted by the Japanese government and the sixth meeting was held in Nairobi in August 2016. Skills development in Africa is one of the pillars of action plan agreed at the TICAD VI and we very much appreciate the Japanese support to this important field of education.

Dr. Girma Lemma Fantaye, senior lecturer and former director of Institute of Education Research, Addis Ababa University, has collaborated with the Nagoya University team in conducting the research which will be presented today. Without their contribution, it would have been difficult for us to have enough evidences for today’s discussion.

Lastly, I wish this symposium will provide opportunities for us to share ideas for overcoming the challenges and for collaborating across the board to tackle the common problems of skills gap between the training and employment. I will close my remarks by expressing my sincere expectation to the outcomes of this event.

