Keynote Speech at the 2016 Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting

by H.E. Dr. Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Addis Ababa

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Excellencies,
Distinguished delega
Ladies and gentlemer

On behalf of the gove
Myself, I welcome you
pleasure to speak at th

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Excellencies,
Distinguished delegat
Ladies and gentlemen

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To realize this broader objective, my government has implemented comprehensive policies, strategies and programs. The National Water Resource Management Policy laid out a framework to implement community-based water supply, sanitation, and hygiene interventions in an integrated manner.

To further elaborate, the Water and Sanitation Universal Access Plan was formally established.

In 2006 Ministries with responsibilities for sanitation and water signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which together with the Universal Access Plan provided a much-needed foundation for national WASH program for both government and development partners, and it also served as an important milestone in the context of donor alignment and harmonization.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen!

We are fully aware that improving access to sanitation and water is not only about broad sector goals, it is also about improving the ways through which we, our partners and communities do business. For many years WASH implementation in Ethiopia has been project based without harmonized funding from development partners. Such approaches not only create high transaction costs and more workload on the government, but it also hinders the possibility of reaching our goals with scale required.

Achieving the SDGs will clearly require a break from the past. In Ethiopia we believe that we have put in place key pillars that can support the sector to achieve its SDG milestones. Our ministries and partners work together in support of the ONE WASH Program. You will hear more about this program later but may I highlight some pertinent aspects of this program –as I believe that it can serve as a good example especially in discussions around the collaborative behaviors that the SWA Partnership promotes. The OWP is premised on the understanding that our vision and goals do not mean anything if we cannot reform our ways of working. Through our OWP, we have developed and have encouraged our partners to use

i) ONE report
ii) ONE procurement system
iii) ONE plan
iv) ONE monitoring and evaluation system

These approaches seek to strengthen alignment of our partners to our vision, develop and improve our systems and ensure that we rely on good and reliable evidence for planning and targeting of resources. We believe that the SDGs will require an even sharper focus on collaborative behaviors that strengthen government systems. In Ethiopia, we are happy of the review mechanisms that we have put in place, all actors in the sector contribute to joint technical reviews which precede the annual multi-stakeholder forums which we have organized consistently for 8 years. We are proud of this record but it is not without challenges.

Challenges in planning the ONEWASH – i.e. the plan was linked to a low level of service (e.g. 20lppcd) which has now changed to a higher level of service and therefore needs more Capital Investment to ensure that the SDGs are obtained. This goes to show the higher expectations that the SDGs place on all of us and requires clear and ambitious plans.

The government provides the single largest source of funds through a federal block grant, channelled directly to regions in the district. This funding includes 20% that is channelled through the CWA of OWNP. The sector also receives funds from a large number of diverse sources and an equally wide range of channels that covers half of the available funding for the OWNP. However, 32% of the OWNP is not yet funded and this has motivated us to seek 'innovative financing' mechanisms such as the current Government of Ethiopia – European Investment Bank – UNICEF blended financing agreement for the emerging urban sanitation agenda. I.e. 50% from public sector resources, 50% from development partners.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen!

Our conversations this week will almost exclusively focus on the SDGs. However, let us not forget that we have to build on whatever has been built through the MDGs. Through the support of the UNICEF and WHO Joint Monitoring Program we are fully aware that our country and others need to periodically review their systems and indicators in order to have reached the SDG targets, the high priority given, and the several simultaneous efforts made by the government, development partners, NGOs and communities to address the challenge of the sector, Ethiopia has made remarkable progress towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation.

As a result of this in March 2015, Ethiopia with the support of many partners celebrated the achievement of MDG Goal for water supply.

Notwithstanding the challenges faced, I believe that the following key success factors, and the lessons learned which were determining factors of the progress achieved so far, are worth mentioning, and sharing with you.

First, the commitment of the government to achieving the goal set nationally and internationally is a critical factor. In Ethiopia, this has been manifested in many ways, such as the provision in the constitution, the inclusion of the sector in the main pillar of successive Medium Term Plans, continuously increasing allocation of public funds, and the creation of a strong coordination mechanism.

Second, it is apparent that if WASH program is going to be successful in a sustainable way, countries must ensure that they have technical capability and institutions that produce technical experts at the required level, quantity and quality. Thus it is important to develop and invest a minimum target for WASH capacity at sub-national level, and this should be linked to the target of the SDG, and sustaining the services provided.

The third critical factor, from our experience, for sustained progress to meet SDG is harmonization of efforts. Given the importance of the sector, there is a huge

presence of development partners supporting the effort of the government. Therefore, it is very critical to insure harmonization of donor groups and the procedures in terms of planning, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluations. However, our experience shows that it is not an easy task to bring donors to a consolidated pool funding and a joint program arrangement, as some development partners still prefer to operate in projects using their own rules and procedures. Each modality has its own system for budgeting, planning, implementation and reporting. This situation is highly inefficient, and most importantly, weakens much of the limited capacity available.

To address this issue, the government, in agreement with development partners Such as UNICEF, DFID, World Bank and African Development Bank, has already established a consolidated One WASH Program and a WASH account to finance and implement one national program which is an aligned, harmonized and integrated mechanism in partnership with all external financiers and NGOs and the private sector.

As you know, the water, sanitation, hygiene program is multi-sectoral in nature and several sectors are implementing some of the components of the program. Ensuring effective coordination among governmental and non-governmental institutions in the sectors is a precondition for the successful implementation of the program.

Therefore, establishing all-inclusive and transparent coordination mechanisms is among the key lessons that are worth noting. In Ethiopia the 2006 WASH Memorandum of Understanding between the water, health and education sectors under the One National WASH Program were a great step forward for coordination, investment planning and implementation.

Fourth, addressing inequalities is a vital area where we should be critically mindful. If countries are going to meet SDG, the disparities that may exist in various parts of the world need to be addressed. Cognizant of this fact, the Government of Ethiopia has given more emphasis to developing regional states with packages specific and compatible to the situation of the regions.

Excellences and distinguished delegates,

The progress we've made so far is not only the result of government effort; it is also a result of unconstrained effort from our development partners, NGOs and the community itself. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank them all for their contribution and as a result the progress we have made so far.

But, being here today, seeing the commitment and enthusiasm in this very room, with this diverse and prestigious group, I am convinced that we will undoubtedly deliver on our commitments.

I would like to encourage you to focus on the main factors that can drive progress for the SDGs. This meeting is historic; it is the first global meeting for ministers responsible for sanitation and water in the era of the SDGs. You have the chance to make this meeting a real defining feature of how we will all achieve our targets for the SDGs.

Finally, I would like to thank the organizers for the opportunity accorded to Ethiopia to host the first ever SWA Meeting of Ministers of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

I thank you very much.