

# ***OPENING SPEECH***

***BY***

***H.E.-MR. GIRMA WOLDE GIORGIS***

***PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA***

***AT THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL  
ADAPTATION PROGRAMS OF ACTION  
(NAPA) FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES***

***ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA***

***25- 27 JUNE 2003***

**Mr. Chairman  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this important Regional Workshop and to Addis Ababa.**

**National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) tasks are communicating priority activities, addressing the urgent and immediate needs and concerns of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), relating to adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change.**

**Due to man-made anthropogenic emissions of Greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, scientists have discovered that the air had been polluted. The increasing trend of concentration of trace gases has been found to raise global surface temperature leading to the disruption of the normal atmospheric circulation patterns. This in turn disrupts the economic activity and growth of a country.**

**Ethiopia has reasonably good resources of agricultural potential, bio-diversity, water resources, minerals etc. Paradoxically, it is one of those countries facing serious environmental problems. There is alarming land degradation in rural areas, forests have been depleted, desertification is spreading and the population is alarmingly increasing. Although industrial development is at infant stage, the existing industries, which are concentrated in few urban centers, are discharging untreated waste into nearby rivers and streams. This is causing serious pollution.**

**Due to the adverse effects of climate variability, Ethiopia is prone to severe and continuous drought and famine problem. About forty-five percent of its people are living below the poverty line. To reduce this abject poverty an integrated development strategy has been formulated.**

***My Government has put up a number of remedial measures from the highest policy framework down to implementation at the grassroots level. Being dominantly dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, our policy focuses on rural development and poverty reduction. For these appropriate actions are being underway. For Ethiopia and its people there is no doubt that Climate Change will pose additional stress to its natural resource base and its economy, which is already very sensitive to climate variability.***

***Mr. Chairman  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen***

***The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has formulated policies and strategies to guide overall development with focus on rural and agricultural development. Our fundamental objectives are to build a free market economic system in the country, which will enable rapid economic development and food security.***

***Economic growth is the primary goal and poverty reduction is to be achieved through measures complementary to growth. Agricultural Development Led Industrialization, Justice System and Civil Service reform, Decentralization and capacity building in public and private sectors are the major pillars for the country's development. These approaches are believed to be effective in a fight against poverty and ensure sustainable development.***

***The Government has conducted extensive reviews of its agriculture and rural development policies. We have made voluntary based resettlement, water harvesting, and small irrigation development to mitigate the effects of drought.***

***The Climate Change Convention recognized that all countries have a common but differentiated responsibility to address the***

***issue of Climate Change. By signing and ratifying the Convention, Ethiopia has also made it clear that it will contribute to the international effort to combat climate change. So by organizing this Workshop we believe we have made a small, but fair contribution to this global effort. I also believe that the outcomes of this Workshop will contribute to the efforts of Least Developed Nations in their efforts to alleviate the problems associated with climate change.***

***Finally let me wish you success in your three days deliberations and with these few remarks, it is my pleasure to declare this Workshop officially open.***

***I thank you.***