

**January 20, 2012** - The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Report on Ethiopia was launched at the National Palace on Friday (January 11th) at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Hailemariam and Minister Neway Gebreab, special economic advisor to the Prime Minister as well as Ambassador Ashraf Rashed, the lead member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons and Professor Amos Sawyer, a member of the Panel, Assefa Shifa, the Chief Executive Officer of the APRM secretariat and other high level dignitaries.

Minister Neway, Ethiopia's focal person for the APRM delivered an opening speech detailing the APRM process that led to the writing of the report. The Country Review was conducted on four thematic issues: Good Governance and Democracy, Economic Governance, Corporate Governance and Socio-economic Development. Minister Neway said the Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) had been conducted in an inclusive manner with civic societies, the media, professional associations, political parties, institutions of governance and the public at large, all actively participating. Representation by the ruling party was kept deliberately small to ensure fair representation of all political parties and produce a representative report.

Awareness creation and sensitization sessions were also conducted to ensure that the report reflected the views of a cross-section of society. To that end, daylong meetings were conducted in some thirty three districts. Minister Neway also noted that the task of writing the report and conducting interviews and surveys was given to an independent technical body well known for successfully accomplishing similar tasks. The findings of this technical institute were later tabled for public consultation and close to 1,500 participants, in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and in eight of the country's regions participated. According to Minister Neway, the Country Self-Assessment Report and the National Program of Action were finalized after including comments, suggestions and corrections provided by the public consultation forums. The two documents were validated in 2009 by the Country Review Mission after it had made a visit to Ethiopia to hold discussions with different governance bodies. Subsequently, the Country Review Mission raised a number of queries and Ethiopia submitted responses in January 2012 before the Report was finally released.

Ambassador Ashraf Rashed in his speech praised Ethiopia for being "one of the first countries to join the APRM process, setting up the required the organizational, institutional, and national structures, designating a focal point, establishing the National APRM Governing Council and selecting the Technical Research Institutes." Ambassador Rashed added that the successful completion of the review and "the formal launching [of the Report] was a significant step in the APRM process in Ethiopia." He expressed his hope that Ethiopia would make the report available in local languages and embark on preparing its Annual Progress. He also took the opportunity to underscore the importance of reflecting on the accomplishments and challenges of APRM upon its 10th anniversary which will be celebrated at the forthcoming APR Forum on the sidelines of the upcoming 20th African Heads of State and Government Summit here in Addis Ababa.

Prime Minister Hailemariam said that the APRM, as an offshoot of NEPAD and as an African

initiative aimed at ensuring rule of law and governance, had grown tremendously in the ten years since its inception. The number of countries that had voluntarily joined the process had now reached 31, he said, and four others were also involved in joining the Mechanism. He said that as the Report was part and parcel of the APRM process “we welcome it heartily.” He noted that as the APRM was a voluntary process of self-assessment, selecting assessment criteria applicable to all countries, ensuring the independence of the panel assessments and coming up with credible reports were a challenge. The past efforts however, he said, had shown “that the value of the reports has always outweighed the burdens.”

The Prime Minister also referred to the theme of Democracy and Good Governance, stressing “Democracy is a matter of necessity and not a choice, and since the coming into power of the EPRDF Ethiopia has embarked on the road towards a full-fledged multi-party democracy”. He added “the government will press ahead with the recommendations of the report to effect transition in to robust democracy and good governance.” He said Ethiopia highly valued the Report as genuine reference material for designing future plans for the country, to improve governance and to address identified deficiencies in the thematic areas covered by the Report. At the conclusion of the launching ceremony Ambassador Ashraf Rashed presented a copy of APRM Country Review Report No.14 to Prime Minister Hailemariam. (Source: MoFA)