



EU welcomes Ethiopia's commitment to multiparty democracy, respect for human rights, gender parity

Addis Ababa, January 8, 2019 – Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's nationwide and fundamental political and economic reforms could be a model to the East African region and beyond, said EU ambassador to Ethiopia.

Ambassador Johan Borgstam told The Ethiopian Herald, that EU welcomes the commitment of the Ethiopian Government to multiparty democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law and gender parity.

The appointment of SahleWork Zewde as the President and nominations of 50 percent women in the cabinet are also encouraging steps toward a greater degree of gender equality and inclusiveness, he said.

EU encourages the Ethiopian Government to continue towards developing an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders, including federal and regional authorities, political parties, CSOs, youth groups and media on sustainable solutions towards better governance, justice and accountability, election, job creation, and security challenges.

According to him, the EU stands ready to support Ethiopia in its continued work to ensure the respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and access to information, the right to assembly, foster religious tolerance and safeguard gender mainstreaming.

The Union also backs activities towards promoting women and girls' education and empowerment and moves to eliminate all forms of violence against them, also in efforts to make the upcoming election inclusive, credible and transparent.

EU welcomes the announcement of reforms aiming at revitalizing the economy by improving the investment climate and strengthening the role of the private sector, the ambassador said.

It appreciates Ethiopia's engagement in multilateral free trade mechanisms, reforming key state-owned enterprises and opening them to competition and foreign participation as well as putting the economy on a fiscally sustainable path, he added.

Noting economic reforms should contribute to address the crucial need for job creation in a country where two thirds of the population is under the age of 30, Borgstam said the EU will intensify its support in job creation, industrial and agro-industrial parks, export and trade promotion as well as private sector development.

The recently proposed Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs promotes a strengthened framework to support Ethiopia's economic transformation, he said.

The EU and its Member States have been steadfast allies in supporting Ethiopia through various platforms and they will step up coordination to back government's endeavors.

Furthermore, EU and its Member States have been providing humanitarian assistance for millions of internally displaced people across the country thereby supplementing government's efforts to deter the existing large-scale internal displacement from posing a risk to the reform process.

Ambassador Borgstam pointed out that EU supports the driving role Ethiopia has been playing in the regional Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) process as the second largest refugee hosting country in Africa.

The Union commends Ethiopia for its constructive role in the Khartoum Process and the Valletta Summit on Migration and applauds the decision the government has made to grant visa-upon arrival to African citizens as a step towards further regional and continental integration.