



**Welcoming Speech**  
**By**  
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**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

*'African Leadership for Child Survival—A Promise Renewed'*  
*January 16, 2013*

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And welcome to the 'African Leadership for Child Survival—A Promise Renewed' three days conference.

I'm confident you'll find you stay in Ethiopia hospitable and productive.

It was back in June of 2012, that the Government of Ethiopia accepted to co-host the Washington summit of 'A Call to Action for Child Survival, a promise kept', with the Government of India, the United States and UNICEF. The main objective of the summit was to propose to the leaders of all countries of the world a renewal of their commitment to child survival and to the elimination of all preventable deaths within two decades.

It was a great accomplishment that, shortly after the June summit, 169 countries signed a pledge committing to develop and implement actionable plans.

Together we stood up and declared that All Children must have a future that is bright and full of hope! Because, our boys and girls deserve nothing less than our full and dedicated efforts to this end!

What is even more impressive, in our continent of Africa, 47 out of 54 countries signed the call for action pledge and with determination to achieve 100 percent of the targeted goals.

**And, this is a great achievement!**

The African continent has made tremendous stride in advancing health status and health care in the past decades. However, progress has been uneven. Countries affected by conflict and chronic emergencies face additional challenges; and in some cases delays to Millennium Development Goals (MDG) achievement.

I can assure you of Ethiopia's commitment to the provision of the necessary leadership to significantly decrease maternal and infant mortalities. Through determined efforts — an investment in financial and human resources, as well as progressive policies and unique community mobilization effort—Ethiopia has and will continue to expand our health care system to reach under-served communities, especially women, children, and young people in rural areas.

The Government of Ethiopia's unwavering commitment towards achieving the country's Millennium Development Goal will also be reflected in the increased rate in child survival.

As we look beyond 2015, the effort and resources that we have invested to the Millennium Development Goals must be continued. We need new vision, new targets and new frontier to concur. Our global and national achievements have collectively been remarkable, however perhaps uneven within our own boundaries. We have to cognizant that we still

face pockets of child mortality higher than the national average and MDG targets. Therefore, beyond 2015, we should consider and develop strategies to ensure equity for children's survival.

Eliminating preventable deaths among children shouldn't only be a dream, but a duty and a reality to aspire for, carried out with full conviction.

**And, this, I believe, is achievable!**

I, therefore, call upon all the countries to honor your pledge with a firm local commitment, national plans and budgets, but most importantly with action.

I also call upon all development partners to support country led initiatives to end preventable deaths among women, newborns and children.

Let's join hands to make Africa a continent a place fit for children not only to survive but to also thrive, hence becoming members of a productive society.

I wish you a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa, and a successful conference with meaningful outcomes.

**Thank You!**