

Opening Remark

By

H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide

Chairperson;

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by welcoming you all to Addis Ababa. It is an honour for the Government and people of Ethiopia to receive you from all parts of the world. I hope despite your busy schedule you will find some time to visit the city.

I would also like to welcome you all to this important Africa Regional meeting on Small and Medium Enterprises as Drivers of Productive Capacity and Job Creation. As put forward by the organizers of this event, the outcome of this meeting will contribute to the preparations for the 2012 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Annual Ministerial Review which will take place during the council's high level Segment scheduled for 2 July 2012 at the UN Headquarters in New York. -9

As you are aware, population growth, unemployment and poverty are the salient features of most developing countries. Significant portion of the population of developing countries are below the age of 30 and are unemployed. Employment generation and poverty eradication will remain the top priorities of many developing countries for the years to come.



promote and expand micro and small enterprise development in different regions and city administrations. In this regard, substantial support was provided including increased supply of credit, training, and provision of production and market facilities, technology support and provision of small enterprise information services.

Owing to the top priority and substantial support provided to the SMEs subsector, over 1.5 million new jobs were created at the end of the -

