

**Remarks by the Hon. Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Minister of Health, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

***Award Ceremony for Ambassador Mark Dybul
O'Neill Institute for National Global Health Law, Georgetown
25 September 2009***

Dean Alexander Aleinikoff, Distinguished guests, friends and colleagues:

Good morning. Thank you for being here. I am very pleased to be here and to have this opportunity to recognize, along with [so many] friends and colleagues the outstanding contributions of an exceptional individual -- Ambassador Mark Dybul. I want to thank all at the O'Neill Institute and all those involved in the organization of this event.

Amb. Dybul has shown exceptional leadership across Ethiopia's diverse AIDS response community - and I would venture to say that the same is true in all other PEPFAR-supported countries. I can give you at least three compelling examples of the lasting contributions Amb. Dybul has made from the experience of Ethiopia:

Firstly, he has shown us that he is a true champion of the principle of 'country ownership'. So much is said of 'country ownership' in development discourse these days. Yet, I have known so few who have upheld this critical cornerstone of successful development as consistently as Mark Dybul has. Allowing countries the autonomy and space to lead in the identification and prioritization of their own specific problems and needs, to design the appropriate programs to address them and to allocate the necessary resources needed to implement these programs as they see fit – this is what country ownership is about. And Mark Dybul understands this exceptionally well. He recognizes that the best way international partners can support the efforts of countries like Ethiopia to combat this complex and rapidly evolving disease is by focusing on the **results** rather than the process.

And this requires an exceptional willingness and ability to listen to the people on the ground – those charged with the task of shaping national policies as well as the experts in the field who are at the forefront of AIDS service delivery in African countries hard hit by this pandemic. His unwavering support of country-ownership of the AIDS response has been the bedrock of PEPFAR's dramatic success in Ethiopia.

Secondly, Ambassador Dybul has also shown a deep appreciation of the fundamental challenges that countries such as ours face in scaling-up effective AIDS prevention, treatment and care services. He understands exceptionally well that we cannot hope to defeat this disease without significant concomitant efforts focused on strengthening our health systems – this includes, building our human resources capacities, improving our healthcare infrastructure as a whole as well as our management, information and documentation capacities. And in this regard, we have seen how Mark Dybul is a man of pragmatic action – one who wastes no time in getting things done – mobilizing the resources available in order to solve the problems and constraints identified

Thirdly, Mark Dybul has also been instrumental in the significant advances Ethiopia has made in furthering the global health aid harmonization agenda. Again, with his remarkably quick and incisive understanding of the challenges we are facing in Ethiopia as well as his steadfast focus on results, he was able to lead the way in quickly responding to the pressing need to improve coordination between PEPFAR-supported initiatives and efforts supported by other partners, particularly the Global Fund. This has been no small feat given the significant differences between the way PEPFAR and the Global Fund were designed to operate. As a result, PEPFAR’s impact in Ethiopia has simply been tremendous. Today, for example, 155,000 Ethiopians living with HIV/AIDS who are eligible for treatment are now receiving anti-retroviral treatment, compared to a mere 900 just three years ago. This has been, in large part, due to the concerted efforts of PEPFAR and Global Fund-supported programs.

It is the type of strong and sustained support – well-tailored to our specific needs -- that we have been receiving from PEPFAR under Ambassador Dybul’ leadership that has bolstered my belief that, despite the challenges Ethiopia faces, we now stand not only to reverse the terrible toll of this disease, but to also bring about a lasting transformation in the health of our people.

Given the genuine concern and his exceptional dedication to the fight against this scourge, Mark will continue to make an invaluable contribution to global health in whatever endeavour he chooses to pursue next. I know he is already doing so.

Finally, as regards Mark's personal qualities, words simply fail. Let me just say that he is one of the most gifted, hard-working, principled, compassionate and committed people I have had the privilege to know – an outstanding leader and a truly exceptional human being. I believe he is a great pride to his country and his exceptional leadership deserves due recognition. Mark has been a great inspiration and tremendous source of encouragement for me personally. I feel proud to count him as a good friend and a true friend of my country – Ethiopia.

Please join me in a warm round of applause for Ambassador Mark Dybul.
Thank you.