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**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

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## Press Statement: Ethiopia's Food Self-Sufficiency Endeavors

In a world that often portrays Africa as perpetually dependent on aid, Ethiopia is working to reshape this narrative by taking decisive steps toward food self-sufficiency. Over the past six years, **the Ethiopian government has implemented bold policies to enhance agricultural productivity**, aiming not only to achieve food security but also to ensure long-term self-reliance. These efforts reflect Ethiopia's commitment to breaking free from dependency and fostering sustainable development.

**We recognize that such a bold shift—moving away from reliance on external support—has drawn attention, including skepticism and criticism of our productivity and data.** We are also aware of external efforts to undermine national progress and discredit our development efforts, particularly in the agricultural sector. However, **our resolve—along with that of the many smallholder Ethiopian farmers laboring for dignity—remains unwavering**, as food security is not just a policy goal but an existential necessity for our nation and people.

### Our Wheat Endeavors

Ethiopia has made wheat production a central pillar in its journey toward food self-sufficiency. Through the expansion of irrigated farming, the use of improved seed varieties, and the adoption of modern farming techniques, the country has significantly increased its wheat yield and marketable surplus. This strategic focus has transformed Ethiopia from a wheat importer to a self-sufficient producer, showcasing the success of its agricultural policies, programs, and associated initiatives.

### What Is Being Done?

The Ethiopian government has launched a range of initiatives to maximize agricultural output, including:

- **Expansion of Irrigation-Based Farming** – Scaling up irrigation systems and technologies to reduce dependence on unpredictable rainfall.
- **Promotion of Climate-Resilient Agriculture** – Encouraging sustainable farming practices to mitigate the effects of climate change.

- **Duty-Free Import of Agricultural Machinery** – Over 400 types of agricultural mechanization tools are exempt from import duties, lowering costs for farmers and boosting productivity.
- **Policy and Legal Reforms** – Introducing a new agricultural and rural development policy, revising the Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation, and modernizing the legal framework for contract farming to support contemporary agricultural practices.
- **Revised Seed Regulation** – Updating the regulatory framework for seed supply and distribution to increase private sector participation, including multinational involvement in seed multiplication and distribution, fostering a more competitive market.
- **Flagship Initiatives** – Implementing key programs such as the widely acclaimed *Irrigated Wheat Initiative*, *Ye Lemat Turufat* (Bounty of the Basket), and the *Green Legacy Initiative*, which are central to achieving food self-sufficiency and food sovereignty.
- **Agricultural Commercial Clusters and Extension Services** – Expanding cluster farming practices and strengthening the world's largest agricultural extension service program, supported by over 60,000 government extension workers, to enhance technology adoption and application.

## What Does Wheat Self-Sufficiency Mean?

When we say Ethiopia is wheat self-sufficient, we mean that the country no longer relies on wheat imports due to a significant increase in domestic production in recent years. As a result, the need for wheat imports has been eliminated.

Historically, Ethiopia spent nearly **\$1 billion annually** on wheat imports to meet domestic demand, as local production was insufficient. However, since the **2020/21 harvest (2013 Ethiopian Fiscal Year)**, Ethiopia has completely ceased wheat imports.

That said, achieving wheat self-sufficiency **does not mean that wheat imports will entirely disappear from Ethiopia's customs data**. Humanitarian agencies operating in the country may still choose to import wheat rather than purchasing from the local market, depending on their operational needs and strategies.

## How We Collect Data

Ethiopia employs a rigorous data collection process to assess agricultural progress and refine its strategies. This includes:

- **Ground Surveys** – Conducted by agricultural experts to collect real-time data.
- **Agricultural Census by Ethiopian Statistical Services (ESS)** – In addition to surveys, ESS conducts agricultural censuses to track changes in land coverage, crop types, and productivity.
- **Use of Administrative Data** – Where applicable, administrative data from the Ministry of Agriculture and other reporting agencies serve as data sources. However, **these figures undergo rigorous scrutiny and validation by the relevant authorities** before being recognized as official government statistics.

- **Remote Sensing and Image Processing** – These technologies are employed to monitor crop coverage in remote or inaccessible areas, enhancing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of agricultural data.

Ethiopia is a sovereign nation with a longstanding tradition of producing reliable statistical data on economic, social, and other key issues. The Ethiopian Statistical Service (formerly the Central Statistics Agency) is one of the oldest and most reputable statistical offices in Africa. While external organizations may present differing figures, **the Ethiopian government, as the sovereign authority, exclusively relies on official data produced through its national systems and does not adopt external figures as official statistics.**

As per its mandate, the **Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)** holds the final authority for data clearance on real-sector figures, including crop production statistics.

#### Official Wheat Production Figures

- **2022/23 Season** – Ethiopia produced **151 million quintals (15.1 million tons)** of wheat:
  - **104 million quintals (10.4 million tons)** from the main season (*Meher*).
  - **47 million quintals (4.7 million tons)** from dry-season irrigation.
- **2023/24 Season** – Ethiopia produced **23 million tons** of wheat:
  - **12.3 million tons** harvested during the main production season (*Meher*).
  - **10.7 million tons** cultivated through irrigated wheat initiatives.

These figures underscore Ethiopia’s significant progress in wheat production, reinforcing its commitment to achieving food self-sufficiency.

### Why the Food Self-Sufficiency Agenda Matters for Ethiopia and Africa

Ethiopia’s food self-sufficiency is not just a national priority but a critical step toward Africa’s broader economic and political empowerment. Achieving self-reliance in food production strengthens resilience, reduces dependency, and paves the way for sustainable growth across the continent.

Ensuring food self-sufficiency is a fundamental pillar of Ethiopia’s national strategy, with far-reaching implications beyond its borders. By securing domestic food production, Ethiopia is not only **safeguarding itself against global supply chain disruptions** but also demonstrating the potential for African nations to achieve agricultural independence.

Though the journey is arduous and challenging, Ethiopia’s agricultural transformation serves as a model for other African countries striving for self-sufficiency. By prioritizing sustainable farming and innovative solutions, Ethiopia is showing that **Africa has the capacity to feed itself and has the capacity to ensure a prosperous, food-secure future for generations to come.**

This is a journey that Ethiopia takes great pride in!

**Further visual information:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C71wlh1972w>

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