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## Ethiopia says wheat production needs 'big transformation'

By Kiram Tadesse

ADDIS ABABA - The government of Ethiopia said the country's entire wheat sector has to undertake a big transformation.

Ethiopia put its possibilities of wheat production concern over the International Wheat, Flour and Pasta Conference organized by Ethio-Italian Cooperation and trade agency here at the weekend.

Dr Mebrahatu Meles, State Minister of Industry said the country has to undertake a big transformation to provide the population with augmented and better food products.

He said however the country has been registering double digit economic growth the productivity of agriculture is still low,

requiring an immediate and dramatic overhaul.

The government at the same time asserts that the existing business opportunities are emerging both in field production and the agro-processing sectors.

Despite the opportunities for wheat production in Ethiopia the Minister has mentioned his government is also supplying the demand gap through importing huge amounts of wheat.

The international conference at the weekend aims to address all the private and public sectors which are functionally linked, specialized companies, dealers both on the industrial sector and on the field sector, according to the organizers.

## Ethiopia says . . .

### Issues of wheat value chain

Oromia Regional State comprises the three largest wheat producing zones in the country, also with the 2013/14 post harvest estimates of 23.1 millions quintals production, which holds nearly 60 percent of the national wheat produce.

Abebe Diriba, representing the regional state said at the conference that, wheat value chain development strategy is one of the region's transformation agenda, which he said is currently underway.

He said agricultural based cluster interconnect and build value networks when addressing common challenges and pursuing common opportunities among stakeholders initiative is emplaced in the region.

However, despite the opportunities of natural resources, linkage among

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research and cooperative unions in the region is crucial, Italian Overseas Agronomic Institute in assisting for better quality and quantity of Durum Wheat project said, adding that there remain market challenges.

After the implementation of the value chain project in the region which also looks for import substitution of Durum Wheat, Tiberio Chalari, Project Coordinator, said new relationship has been created to link between cooperatives unions with the industries.

The conference has been jointly organized by Ethio-Italian Cooperation, Ethiopian Milers' Association and Oromia Regional State, to setting business to business (B2B) opportunities for field-producers, agri-processors, distributors, restaurants as well as hotels.

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