



Minister, Dr. Arkebe Oqubay

Date of birth: 07/09/1957 | **Nationality:** Ethiopian | **Gender:** Male |

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

About me: Dr Arkebe Oqubay serves as a Senior Minister and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy Ahmed (winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize). He served two former prime ministers, Hailemariam Desalegn and the late Meles Zenawi. For over a decade, he has been playing a leading role in policy design and execution, monitoring and coordination of economic sectors, and development plans at federal/ national and regional state levels. He has served as the coordinator of the National Exports Coordination Committee and the Ethiopian Investment Board, both chaired by the prime ministers.

● WORK EXPERIENCE

01/2021 – CURRENT – Vienna, Austria

SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE – THE VIENNA INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC STUDIES (WIIW)

Research Focus:

Industrialisation and industrial policy, structural transformation and technological catch-up, sustainability and urban transformation, public policy and leadership; Africa and global transformation

09/2010 – CURRENT

MINISTER, SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF ETHIOPIA

Key achievements:

- **Champion of economic transformation:** He played a key role in the design and execution of economic policies, and the planning, monitoring, and coordination of the two five-year plans – the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) I and II – covering the period 2011–2020. GTP I and II were aimed at promoting rapid economic growth and structural change and accelerating the shift from an agrarian economy to manufacturing-led and private sector-driven industrialization.
- **Stimulating productive and sustainable investment:** Following consultations with the private sector (both domestic and foreign), he initiated institutional reforms and new investment attraction strategies enabling the country to attract investment and establish opportunities for employment creation, industrial clusters, and productive capacity building in key priority sectors. Since then, FDI inflows to Ethiopia have exceeded US\$25 billion, most of it directed at the manufacturing sector. He also played a key role in the formulation and implementation of policies to promote the development of agro-industry and horticulture exports.
- **Champion of industrial development:** He pioneered the development of a new generation of industrial parks and special economic zones that support exports, employment, linkages, and green industrialization. He led a programme of international study tours to learn from successes and failures in industrial park development globally, which helped shape Ethiopian policy. He was responsible for introducing the institutional, legislative, and policy framework, and led both pilot and expansion phases in the development of a significant national network of industrial hubs within a record-breaking time.
- **Development of economic infrastructure and export logistics:** He has served as vice-chair of the board of Ethiopian Airlines, which has emerged as the largest African carrier and diversified aviation group. He was chair of the board of the Ethiopian Railway Corporation, which has developed a green national electric-powered railway system that includes an export–import economic corridor and the Addis Ababa light rail system.
- **International development partnerships:** He has played a key role in fostering productive collaboration with international and bilateral development partners around sustainable industrialization, productive investment and exports, and the development of eco-industrial parks. He also initiated the Jobs Compact, a pioneering project jointly developed with the European Union, the World Bank, and the UK government, with the twin objectives of job creation and migration flow reduction.

2006 – 2010

MINISTER (S/M), MINISTRY OF WORKS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

As a state minister, Dr Arkebe designed national urban policy and transformation plans at federal level and coordinated federal agencies and corporations under the ministry, and in regional states.

Key achievements:

- **Pioneering industrialization and urban development:** He introduced major urban transformation, promoting productive cities with an emphasis on job creation, poverty reduction, and the development of SMEs.
- **Developing urban governance:** He launched a major urban governance programme to improve urban planning, rural–urban linkages, services for citizens, and urban management capacity through training programmes and a new Master’s programme for urban managers.
- **Housing and urban infrastructure:** He initiated national integrated housing development programmes involving the expansion of condominium houses in more than 65 cities and towns, together with urban infrastructure development programmes aimed at job creation, SME development, and urban transformation.
- **Domestic industrial capability:** He led the policy work necessary for the development of the private sector, the national construction industry, and the building materials manufacturing sector, which in turn contributed to boosting the cement industry as one of Africa’s top three producers.

SELECTED GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC POSTS HELD

Dr Arkebe has served as chair and vice-chair of several task forces and committees appointed by the Prime Minister. He has been a member of prime ministerial delegations to several bilateral and multilateral meetings and has represented the Prime Minister at numerous international forums and summits. He has led the board of directors of many leading public enterprises, including the following:

- 2013–present, **Vice-Chair**, Ethiopian Airlines
- 2014–present, **Chair**, Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Corporation
- 2007–15, **Chair**, Ethiopian Railway Corporation
- 2009–14, **Chair**, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University

2002 – 2006

MAYOR OF ADDIS ABABA METROPOLITAN CITY

As Mayor of Addis Ababa, Dr Arkebe’s key achievements were:

- **Private-sector development and job creation:** He transformed the city of Addis Ababa into a vibrant, investment-friendly city and a thriving African political and diplomatic hub. The city recorded remarkably high economic growth and hundreds of thousands of jobs were created. Thousands of SMEs were established and supported, and reforms to attract investment were implemented. Opportunities for industrial clusters for large enterprises and SMEs were expanded.
- **Transformation of metropolitan city:** He launched an innovative integrated housing development programme, the first of its type, that generated jobs, condominium housing, and home ownership with priority given to women; and city infrastructure and utilities were expanded. A green and clean city vision was introduced with community participation and public–private partnerships.
- **Human capital and social inclusiveness:** He was responsible for a major campaign to improve health and education, including an extensive anti-HIV campaign and the expansion of schools for more than 250,000 students, ending the practice of multiple shifts.
- **Urban governance reforms:** He initiated new urban governance reforms and implemented city-wide restructuring and improvement of municipal services. The reform of the revenue collection systems resulted in increased city revenues.
- **International positioning:** He promoted Addis Ababa as a true continental capital jointly with the African Union, UNECA and other partners; and led city cooperation with many cities worldwide including Leipzig (Germany), Johannesburg (South Africa), Beijing (China), and Chuncheon (South Korea). Addis Ababa’s transformation was recognized by UN-HABITAT, UNECA, the African Union, and others.

1998 – 2001

VICE GOVERNOR OF A REGIONAL STATE

As Vice Governor of a regional state, responsible for all economic sectors, including industry, trade, infrastructure, tourism, and urban development, Dr Arkebe introduced several sector-specific initiatives to promote investment, trade, and industry in order to expand employment opportunities for thousands of unemployed young people. Taking a hands-on approach, he chaired the Tourism Development Council, the Construction Development Council, the SME Development Council, and the Trade and Industry Council to ensure that each council made the maximum effort to implement the strategies effectively and achieve concrete results. Through his strong and visionary leadership, the regional state was able to register concrete results on the economic and social development front.

Key achievements:

- **Industrial capacity and economic reforms:** He initiated economic reforms and industrial development programmes to improve the investment climate and urban–rural linkages, and to develop SMEs. He introduced support packages for private-sector development and industrial clusters throughout towns and cities in order to increase job creation.

- **Governance reforms:** He implemented urban governance reforms to improve municipal services in all towns and cities and introduced new local government legislation to increase decentralization and expand local government autonomy.

1991 – 1998

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

During the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1991–1993), Dr Arkebe played a leading role in the economic recovery, reconstruction and development, and industrialization of the war-torn regions of Ethiopia. New industrial capacity was developed in various sectors, including textiles, leather, cement, pharmaceuticals, industrial engineering, services, and agro-industry, which created more than 25,000 direct jobs.

● LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mother tongue(s): AMHARIC | TIGRIGNA

Other language(s):

	UNDERSTANDING		SPEAKING		WRITING
	Listening	Reading	Spoken production	Spoken interaction	
ENGLISH	C2	C2	C2	C2	C2
FRENCH	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2

Levels: A1 and A2: Basic user; B1 and B2: Independent user; C1 and C2: Proficient user

● INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Professorial positions in Africa, Europe, and Asia

Professorial posts

- **Professor of Practice.** South African Research Chair in Industrial Development (SARCID), University of Johannesburg <https://www.uj.ac.za/>
- **Visiting Professor.** School of Public Policy, Sciences Po, Paris, France <https://www.sciencespo.fr/en>
- **Senior Visiting Professor.** School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore <https://www.ntu.edu.sg/>
- **Distinguished Visiting Professor.** School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA), Fudan University, Shanghai, China <https://sirpa-en.fudan.edu.cn/>
- **Professional Affiliate.** Santanna Institute of Economics, School of Advanced Studies, Pisa, Italy <https://www.santannapisa.it/en/university/school>

Research fellowships and international advisory boards

- **ODI Distinguished Fellow.** Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, UK <https://www.odi.org/>
- **UNU-WIDER Honorary Fellow.** United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research <https://www.wider.unu.edu/>
- **Member of the International Board.** African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), Accra, Ghana <https://acetforafrica.org/>
- **Research Associate.** Centre for African Studies, University of London, UK <https://www.soas.ac.uk/>
- **Senior Research Fellow.** Member of International Advisory Board, Centre for Economic Catch-up (CEC), Seoul National University, Republic of Korea <http://www.catch-up.org/main/?skin=index.html>
- **International Advisory Board Member.** The Shanghai Forum, China <https://shanghaiforum.fudan.edu.cn/forumen/main.htm>
- **Founder and Chair.** Policy, Research, Dialogue for Africa <https://www.prdafrica.org>

● ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

2013

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Development Studies

Pass with no corrections, magna cum laude, SOAS, University of London, UK <https://www.soas.ac.uk/>

1996

Postgraduate Diploma in Manufacturing: Management and Technology (MMT)

The Open University (OU), Milton Keynes, UK <http://www.open.ac.uk/>

1995

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The Open University (OU), Milton Keynes, UK <http://www.open.ac.uk/>

1994

Master of Arts (MA) in International Relations

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands <https://www.uva.nl/en>

● **INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

International development cooperation

Dr Arkebe has acquired extensive experience in international development cooperation, building enduring and productive partnerships with international development partners, the private sector, civil society, and international research centres.

International advisory boards

He currently serves on a number of international advisory boards, and through policy dialogue, participation in international forums, and policy research, he promotes international development, global collaboration, and the development agenda, and more specifically the industrialization and economic transformation of developing countries.

Support development priorities and industrial development initiatives

He has successfully mobilized the resources required to support development priorities and industrial development initiatives. He has been actively engaged in resource mobilization for the development of industrial parks, key infrastructure, and cities. He also played a key role in attracting tens of billions of dollars of FDI into the manufacturing and other productive sectors.

Regular contributor of commentaries

Dr Arkebe is a regular contributor of commentaries to the *Financial Times*, Project Syndicate, ODI, UNU-WIDER, UNECA, AfDB, ACET, Brookings Institution, and OECD Development Centre. Among other subjects, his commentaries and papers have focused on industrialization and economic transformation, developing countries, COVID-19, and the economic crisis. On numerous occasions, he has participated as an international speaker in global forums addressing diverse issues, particularly Africa's transformation and industrialization, Africa's global partnership, and policy advocacy for developing countries.

Network of ongoing research collaboration and dialogue

He has built an impressive network of ongoing research collaboration and dialogue with researchers from leading universities across the globe as well as with key UN and other agencies, including UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNECA, UNU-WIDER, African Union Commission (AUC), The World Bank and IFC, OECD Development Centre, and bilateral agencies in China, Germany, and Japan.

Representing Africa and his government

Representing Africa and his government, he has presented keynote speeches at international forums focusing on climate change, investment, trade, economic growth, and global collaboration. These include the Copenhagen Environment Summit (Copenhagen, 2016); Marshall Plan with Africa (Berlin, 2018); UNCTAD Trade and Development Board (Geneva, 2019); Shanghai International Forum (2016); OECD Development Centre–African Union Forum (Antananarivo, Madagascar and Madrid, Spain, 2019); ministerial cabinet-level policy dialogue sessions in Kampala, Accra, Nairobi (2016, 2017, 2019); Africa Growth Summit (Paris, 2016); and *Economist* Ethiopia Summit (Addis Ababa, 2016). He has presented at international investment forums in Washington (2018); London (2017, 2018); Amsterdam (2017); Hong Kong (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018); Seoul (2016); and Tokyo (2016, 2018).