

Check against Delivery

REMARKS

BY

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA**

AT

**THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES (LDCS)**

**17 September 2020
New York**

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me begin by expressing my profound appreciation to you for effectively representing and promoting the collective interest of LDCs in multiple UN intergovernmental processes and outcomes since the assumption of your chairmanship. I wish to take this opportunity to assure you of our continued support and cooperation in the effective discharge of your responsibilities during the remaining period of your chairmanship.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are all witnessing the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries. It is all the more apparent that the impact of this pandemic will certainly go well beyond 2020, eroding the development gains achieved over many decades. Even before the pandemic, despite some achievements registered, we know the progress made remained insufficient and uneven.

That LDCs remain far below many of the targets set by the SDGs is indeed a matter of serious concern. We continue to face multiple structural challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and the adverse impacts of climate change. We are, therefore, the battleground for the success of the 2030 Agenda. That is why we must recommit to accelerating the full and effective implementation of

the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA). With barely few months left for the end of its decade long implementation, there is no doubt that significant gaps persist between the goals and targets contained in the IPOA and the achievements made on the ground. Particularly, least developed countries in Africa like Ethiopia continue to face multifaceted challenges, which hindered their progress in the implementation of the priority areas set out by the IPOA.

Therefore, as we look forward to the negotiation on the future programmes of action in light of the upcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries to be held next year, there is certainly a need to make the necessary assessment to measure progress and identify challenges with the involvement of all key stakeholders. The Africa Regional Review Meeting that was scheduled to take place in Malawi but had to be postponed because of COVID-19, will be critical in this regard. We believe the concerns of least developed African countries will have to be considered in the development of the future Programme of Action, including concrete financial, technological, and capacity building support to their national development plans and priorities.

Mr. Chairperson,

We in Ethiopia have been implementing the IPOA and the SDGs as an integral part of our national development plan. We have indeed registered

encouraging results in sustaining our broad and rapid economic growth. By expanding rural development programs, we are striving to achieve food security and promote agricultural productivity.

In order to sustain our economic growth and achieve structural transformation, we have continued to invest in social and physical infrastructural projects, including in the renewable energy sector. We have also been trying to create an enabling business environment, including through the establishment of eco-friendly industrial parks. Furthermore, building a climate resilient economy, preventing, and managing disasters, including by implementing productive safety net programs, remain our major priorities.

Despite our progress, we continue to face serious challenges, including poverty, youth unemployment, sluggish export sector, shortage of foreign currency, rising public debt and climate change. To address these impediments and sustain our pro-poor economic growth, we have embarked on homegrown economic reforms that would respond to the growing demands of our people. These reforms- which include opening state-owned enterprises to local and foreign investment- would be undertaken as we renew our commitment to ensuring inclusive and sustainable development for all.

Mr. Chairperson,

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Of course, we recognize that the road to reform would not be an easy task. We, therefore, need all the support we can get from our international development partners. As we set out our Ten Year Perspective Plan, which coincides with the launching of the Decade of Action for the implementation of the SDGs, I want to take this opportunity to call upon our partners to continue extending technical and capacity building assistances in line with our national priorities and based on the commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Let me conclude, *Mr. Chairperson,* by reaffirming our commitment to redoubling efforts to effectively implement the IPOA and the 2030 Agenda in close collaboration with local and external development partners.

I thank you.