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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى
الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Sophia Tesfamariam,

on Africa Day, at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

**Theme: *'Scaling-up Innovative Financing and Leveraging
Partnerships for the Africa We Want'***

July 12, 2022, New York

Excellency, Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the ECOSOC

Excellency, Macky Sall, President of the African Union

Mr. Moussa Faki, Commissioner, African Union Commission (AUC),

**Eminent Colleagues of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the
United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa United Nations
Development Programme (UNDP), the African Institute for Economic
Development and Planning (IDEP).**

**Allow me to thank Ms. Christina Duarte, ASG at the Office of the Advisor for
Africa, for inviting Eritrea to participate in this timely discussion at the 2022
HLPF.**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen,

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I am more than honoured to be invited to speak at such an auspicious gathering of African leaders on a topic that is very close to the heart of all Eritreans –

‘Innovative financing and partnership for the Africa We Want’.

To many people outside Eritrea, including most here present, Eritrea is a mystery, especially when you have only listened or read the narratives from those who insist on defining us, by manipulating and mispresenting the realities in my young country.

Eritrea, has been depicted as an isolationist country and as a place where no development is taking place- just because we insist on doing it our way. This gives me extra impetus to join this group today to share my country’s model & experiences which have been undermined and maligned despite the positive results on the ground.

My country’s financing and partnership model is strongly anchored on the principles of self-reliance and social justice; and development cooperation that is mutually respectful and beneficial. These principles today appear far-fetched and unrealistic in a world where aid dependence and excessive borrowing are the archetype of partnership and financing. Eritrea is changing that. In Eritrea, we believe we and Africa can formulate our own strategies for development. Africa cannot achieve sustainable development without breaking free from economic



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dependency, an addiction of our own creation. In Eritrea, we rely on our own resources, our people, and our ways first. With the changing global dynamics,

there is no better time to look inward and have our own counterpowers to the unequal and unjust global structures that have held us back for so long. We have been pinned back for far too long by aid policies and programmes that only worsened our predicaments. Look at us - we have big countries, big cities, strong economies, strong leaders, young people that are hungry for success and smart men and women that can lead an economic transformation of our own. Africa must use these socio-economic forces and opportunities to our advantage and craft a fairer and better way for all. We have what it takes to do so. The harsh lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and other global economic crisis demand that we do so urgently.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

A key lesson from my country's experience on financing and partnership is that if it is not fair and mutually respectful and beneficial, it is not for us. We ensure we fully benefit from our resources. We do not get into generous agreements and contracts that throw away wealth as a nation. We make sure our people wherever they are contributing to our development in country. I encourage you all to study our diaspora policy and approach. In addition, we are always in the



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driver's seat as far as our development is concerned. We avoid beggarliness, made-up backwardness, monkey business and pipedreams. These are prominent in many countries and have entrenched the culture of dependency and inability to do anything with external support.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to use my remaining time to share our modest achievements on the SDGs. Most of these achievements have been in partnership with organizations such as the United Nations, and friendly countries from both the north and south. My country will be presenting an evidence-based development achievements on two SDGs (SDG 3 on Health and SDG 13 on Climate Action). The highlights include our achievement on comprehensive immunization for all children (at 95%), increased access to free primary health care for all including 1.7 million women and children over the last 12 months; greater access (on average 10,000 per year) to safe drinking water and sanitation especially for hard-to-reach communities; and increased investment in clean energy and climate adaptation. These are successes are borne largely out of our peoples steadfastness, and our policies anchored in the core principles of self-reliance and social justice.

On other SDGs, post-COVID school enrollment saw more than 670,000 more children enrolled ensuring children in vulnerable communities including refugees have inclusive, equitable and quality access to early learning and basic education.

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Food and nutrition security has improved in rural communities due to investment in sustainable food production and agriculture in Eritrea.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking the organizers of this event and the United Nations for accompanying us throughout the VNR process. I would also wish to reiterate that as a proud nation, we hold on conviction that Africa's problems demand African solutions. We must harness and mobilize all our local resources, block all leakages and malfeasance so that we can invest judiciously and copiously on our young population, young economies and great ideas in order to deliver our own results as part of our implementation of the SDGs and the Africa Agenda 2063.

I thank you