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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement
By
H.E. Mr. Seyoum Mesfin
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia
at
the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York,
September 23, 2010

Thank you, Mr. President,

May I, Mr. President, at the outset, extend to you my delegation's warm congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the 65th Session of the General Assembly.

I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your high responsibilities as President of this session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to register our appreciation to the out-going President H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his able leadership during the 64th Session.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts to ensure that the Organization lives up to the purposes and principles as set forth in its Charter. In particular, his efforts in the areas of energy and climate change are laudable.

Mr. President,

Allow me to begin my statement today by reviewing some salient aspects of the political and economic transformation in Ethiopia. Such a review should of necessity begin with the democratization process in Ethiopia which is now completing almost its second decade. It would be tautological to state that a democratization process in any country, in particular one without a democratic culture or tradition, would be bumpy and fraught with difficulties. The road we in Ethiopia traversed over the past two decades is by no means an exception to this general trend in the development and consolidation of democracy in any society. However, despite some seemingly insurmountable difficulties our motto has been perseverance and it has paid off.

In the political transformation in Ethiopia, our single minded focus has all along been on building institutions of democracy, good governance and the rule of law that is the crux of all our efforts towards building a stable political system. The essence of all our endeavours in this regard has been the devolution of power to the people.

It has always been an article of faith in our democratization process to empower people to the lowest possible level in the structure of our society. Our federal democratic order built on the basis of unity in diversity has laid down the foundation for lasting peace and security. It is our firm belief that democracy is not an option but a means of survival for our country. Thus, the democratization process that Ethiopia has embarked on is irreversible and is taking deep roots at the level of the state and the society at large.

However, Mr. President, a democratization process in any country is not an end in itself. The whole purpose is to create a conducive environment for bringing about a better life for the people. This inevitably leads me to our economic policy and strategy. Our development strategy envisages democracy as the cornerstone of our political and economic governance, which ensures accountability and transparency. It serves as an instrument for mobilizing the entire population around development and transformation that is of benefit to every segment of society. We have, therefore, been able to build a national consensus around a developmental path within the framework of democracy and development. Today in our country accelerated development is in full swing, while a democratic culture and the institutional underpinnings are developing at the grassroots level. In this regard, I am happy to inform this august Assembly that Ethiopia has registered an annual average of double digit economic growth during the past seven years. Over and above the rapid and sustainable growth, the net beneficiaries have been the Ethiopian people as a whole in as much as it is equitable growth. Consequently, our country has been recognized as one of those countries with fair income distribution and among the top African countries in this area.

Mr. President,

The successful results achieved during the last seven years and the challenges and experience gained in the process of implementation of the previous five-year economic plan has helped in the formulation of the next five-year plan which is officially "the Growth and Transformation Plan" covering the period of 2011-2015. This plan is not just another five-year plan but a more ambitious growth and transformation plan as its name clearly indicates. The objectives of our growth and transformation plan are laying down the necessary basis for nation building by creating and strengthening a stable democratic developmental state and achieving the economic and social sector goals in the MDGs by removing the bottlenecks which are manifesting themselves in our developmental trajectory.

At the end of the five-year growth and transformation plan, we expect to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. But the net result of all our efforts in the implementation of the growth and transformation plan will be to make poverty history in our country. During this period, our people are confident to celebrate together with the international community an end of an era of food insecurity and dependency on food aid. This historic event will give us the opportunity to extend our deep gratitude to all our partners for their assistance in our difficult times. We pledge to redouble our effort and utilize your assistance for a rapid development of our country that will extricate us from food insecurity once and for all.

Mr. President,

On the Millennium Development Goals, we have reached the two-third mark of achieving the goals and targets by 2015. Looking back, many countries will not achieve several goals/targets in time while some hard-won gains are being eroded. Progress in Sub-Saharan Africa has been encouraging. However, the uneven progress and low starting base results in Africa continuing to considerably lag behind all other regions of the world. A number of new challenges to meeting the MDGs in Africa emerged in the 2008 global financial crisis.

In light of the foregoing, the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 65th session of the UN General Assembly held here in New York just last week was timely. The outcome document of this forum should not be an exhortatory appeal but a new pact binding on stakeholders with respect to renewed commitment to ensure that the collective promises made at the dawn of the new Millennium are kept. The action agenda designed for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 must ensure mutual responsibility and accountability of all stakeholders. The following five years ought to be used to make up for the lost opportunities over the past decade.

Mr. President,

We in Ethiopia have made substantial progress on all fronts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We have taken full charge of our destiny, devised our own strategy and maximized the mobilization of our domestic resources to achieve the MDGs. We made the best use of the limited available international assistance to supplement our own efforts. We made sure that all our development plans were consistent with achieving all the development goals.

The results so far have been very encouraging. Over the past seven years, the Ethiopian economy has performed well, having achieved 11.6% annual average growth rate. The robust economic growth we have achieved has created the basis for a similarly robust growth in social indicators and hence on progress in achieving the MDGs.

As we assess, Mr. President, the state of the MDGs today it would not be complete without some reflections on Africa from the perspective of economic and social development and its organic link to the MDGs.

In this connection, I can do no better than what Mr. Robert B. Zoellick, President of the World Bank said at the High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs. The most important point he made was that he believed in Africa and that Africa can be a global pole of growth

and Africa can attract investment on African terms. That is what we have been saying all along. What he said about developing countries in general applies even more so to Africa, particularly, his apt remark that one needs to work with developing countries as clients, not as development models from text books and help them solve problems not test theories. As he said, we in Africa know what we can do, we want to know what the rest of the world will do to help us achieve our goals.

Mr. President,

The issue of climate change remains among the most critical challenges facing humankind today. In this regard, despite difficulties encountered during the meeting, Copenhagen has on the whole been encouraging in that agreement was reached on the political commitment necessary to tackle this most vexing issue. It is from this perspective that the next meeting at Cancun assumes particular significance. Much has been said from Rio to Kyoto and up to Copenhagen and what has been promised has thus far resulted in far less than the urgency of the matter merits.

We believe that time is running out and we are concerned that national agenda of zero-sum preferences are over shadowing the real urgency of addressing the matter in an accelerated and coordinated manner. The up-coming Cancun meeting on climate change should be different from its predecessors. It should come up with a legally binding commitment coupled with the political will to allocate the necessary resources for adaptation and mitigation efforts, especially for the most vulnerable and exposed countries

On energy and development, Mr. President, it has always been self-evident that access to energy is key to fighting poverty. It is central to development. Yet 1.4 billion people worldwide are without electricity, 80% of which in rural areas. Given the urgency of this dire situation we fully support the goal of universal energy access by 2030 set by the U.N.

Ethiopia is fully committed to the development of renewable energy. Our strategy is zero carbon emission by the year 2025. Since the celebration of our Millennium in 2008, we have been planting over a billion trees annually throughout the country. Electrification of rural areas in our country is an objective to which we attach top priority in our development endeavours. To this end, 45% of rural areas in Ethiopia already have electricity. Our target is 75% rural electrification by the year 2015. By the time we complete our growth and transformational plan five years from now, we will have 10,000 MW of hydropower with parallel development of our geothermal, biofuel, wind and solar power potentials. It need hardly be emphasized that we cannot achieve our goals solely utilizing our resources. This makes external assistance all the more critical and indispensable.

Mr. President,

The maintenance of international peace and security figures at the top of the purposes of the UN. As the prevalence of conflicts around the world clearly indicates the need for international cooperation is of paramount importance to complement the efforts of the UN in the area of peace and security. In this regard Ethiopia as a founding member of the UN has always been at the fore front in discharging its responsibilities in the area of peace and security. Since the early 1950s, Ethiopia has been an active participant in UN peace-keeping operations. At the moment Ethiopia is among the major troop contributing countries for UN peace-keeping missions.

Among the challenges which the international community is facing in the area of peace and security is the scourge of terrorism. Like many other countries we have been at the receiving end of this problem. We believe the only viable way of combating terrorism is unreserved international cooperation. Ethiopia will continue to do its level best in this regard.

Mr. President,

Any discussion of peace and security on the international scene today will inevitably have to take up the situation in the Horn of Africa.

It is regrettable that we still cannot talk about the situation in Somalia with a great deal of optimism. On one hand, the threat of extremism continues unabated in Somalia, as is the danger of international terrorist networks and their sponsors represent to Somalia and beyond. The IGAD Heads of State and Government have defined the challenge that the people of Somalia are facing at present. It is a conflict they said between the people of Somalia and international terrorists.

It is, on the other hand, clear that there is little chance for making progress in Somalia until there is harmony and greater seriousness of purpose at the highest level within the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) of Somalia.

At its extraordinary meeting held here in New York on 22 September 2010, the IGAD Council of Ministers had an extensive discussion on the situation in Somalia. In a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting which has subsequently been supported by the Mini-Summit on Somalia convened by the Secretary-General on 23 September 2010 the Council, among other things, expressing regret regarding differences within the TFG leadership called upon them to strengthen their cohesion and work together to address the multiple challenges the country is facing.

Furthermore, it reaffirmed the Djibouti Process as the sole basis for peace and reconciliation in Somalia, and expressed concern about the proliferation of initiatives that could undermine the Djibouti peace process and the efforts of the region and urged the UN and other stakeholders to engage within the region and with IGAD.

It further expressed regret that Eritrea, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, continues to play the role of a spoiler and the main conduit of arms to the terrorist groups and called upon the Security Council to implement its resolutions on Eritrea and Somalia and called upon member states of the UN to mobilize the necessary resources for AMISOM to sustain an enlarged deployment of forces pending its transformation into a UN peace-keeping operation.

Mr. President,

With regard to the situation in the Sudan, Ethiopia is of the firm view that there is conceivably no other conflict in the continent today comparable to that of the Sudan. As such we believe success in the Sudan will mean a significant success for Africa as a whole. By the same token failure may entail a serious catastrophe for Africa. That is why the AU has given its unreserved attention to the issue as illustrated by the effort of the High-Level Implementation Panel led by Former President Thabo Mbeki whose activities should be strengthened and parallel initiatives should at all costs be avoided. On the implementation of the CPA, we are of the view that a global treatment of all issues by the parties is imperative. The referendum on Abyei, popular consultation in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan and the border demarcation as well as post-referendum issues need to be addressed as they are organically linked to the implementation of the CPA. There is clearly a need to change the mode of operation in the negotiation on the implementation of the CPA since business as usual is obviously not going to work. In the final analysis, both parties have to carry out their respective obligations without putting preconditions along the way. In doing so their incentive should be peace and no one can impose it on them if they do not show the political will to achieve it. On the active role the international community should be playing - we would also like to express our appreciation to the UN Secretary-General for holding the timely High-Level Meeting on Sudan held here on 24 September 2010. The outcome of the meeting as reflected in the Communiqué is encouraging.

It goes without saying that the referenda should be held in time strictly in conformity with the terms of the CPA. However, we consider irrespective of the outcome of the referenda the fixation of the parties should not be solely on January 2011 without in any way detracting from the historic significance of this date. The parties ought to recognize that there are several commonalities, bonds and values between the peoples of the Sudan, north and south that transcend the decision to be taken in January 2011. That is why it is

of paramount importance that negotiations on post-referenda should be conducted in earnest with the seriousness of purpose the issues deserve.

Mr. President,

When we talk of security in the Horn of Africa region and Southern Red Sea, we cannot avoid raising our concern once again on the destructive role the Government of Eritrea has continued to play since independence. It is an open secret that the Eritrean regime has for sometime now been actively playing the role of the spoiler in the whole tragic situation in Somalia. We in the IGAD region have warned the UN as well as the international community time and again, that the Eritrean regime is the principal destabilizer in our sub-region with utter contempt for international law and the norms of international behavior. If it were not so, the Security Council, although after some prevarication, would not have imposed sanctions on Eritrea under Chapter VII of the Charter. In doing so, it was the hope of the international community that Eritrea will mend its way and refrain from making the situation worse in Somalia by actively supporting those bent on destabilizing the legitimate and internationally recognized Government in Somalia (the TFG).

It is indeed regrettable that the Security Council is not taking the necessary steps to compel Eritrea to live up to what is expected of it under resolution 1907(2009). Despite the sanctions Eritrea is still the principal architect of the complicated situation in Somalia by training, arming and nurturing the extremist elements such as Al-Shabaa and Hisbul Islam who are causing havoc in the country today.

This reprehensible behaviour of the regime has by no means been an isolated conduct manifesting itself only in our sub-region. On the contrary, it has been the standard behaviour of the Eritrean regime extending far and wide beyond our sub-region and to other parts of the continent and sometimes even outside our continent. Consistent with this built in character of the regime it committed acts of aggression against practically all its neighbours in the space of only a few years following its independence. This is indeed unprecedented for any newly independent state giving it the dubious distinction of being an international pariah among the family of nations.

True to form, Eritrea when it is under pressure is trying every devious means to hoodwink the international community by shamelessly wearing the peace maker's mask to sidestep the requirements of resolution 1907(2009).

The time, therefore, is long overdue for the Security Council to take resolute action and see to it that its decisions are complied with if we are to maintain the integrity of the decisions of our organization.

Mr. President,

Since its founding over six decades ago the United Nations as the principal global player on the international scene with multifarious responsibilities has been under the circumstances living up to the vision set forth in the Charter. There is no gainsaying the fact that if the United Nations did not exist, it would have to be created. It is an indispensable organization in particular for us in the developing world.

However, while underscoring the importance of the UN we should not lose sight of the need for reform of the organization, which is an ongoing process. That is how we can ensure the vitality of the organization. Ethiopia will always be ready to give whatever support is necessary to this end.

When we talk of the UN as a global actor, cooperation between the UN and our continental organization the African Union need hardly be emphasized. Of particular significance would be the ongoing cooperation and consultation between the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in line with the provisions of Chapter 8 of the Charter of the UN. We should continue with this cooperation and Ethiopia will do whatever is necessary in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate as a founding member Ethiopia's enduring commitment to the ideals of our organization and the fulfillment of its objectives as set forth in the Charter which remains a living document and a source of inspiration for the international community.

Thank you