



**The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

**Ethiopia's National Voluntary Review Presentation  
By  
H.E. Dr. Yinager Dessie Belay, Minister for National Planning  
Commission  
at  
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**Mr. President,**  
**Honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegations,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, let me express my appreciation, Mr. President, for continuing to ably lead the work of the HLPF. We also thank all member states who have presented their VNRs. We have been drawing important lessons from their development experience.

With the same spirit of sharing our practices and learning from each other, I am honored and pleased to present, on behalf of my delegation, which includes ministers from different government agencies, parliamentarians, and representatives of CSOs, the processes, key findings and lessons, including challenges of the Voluntary National Review of Ethiopia.

Naming the Report as “**Government Commitments, National Ownership and Performance Trends**”, Ethiopia has taken the VNR process as an excellent challenging opportunity to further deepen the ownership of the SDGs, assess the progress we have made in implementing our national development plan which integrates SDGs; and identify challenges with the purpose of accelerating our efforts toward the implementation of the SDGs to respond to the legitimate development concerns of our people. As the overarching mission of the Ethiopian government has been eradicating poverty with the full participation of citizens, I should underline that the whole exercise of VNRs has been in line with our national development commitments and practices.

**Mr. President,**

We have conducted consultations at national, regional and local levels with the active participation of all development stakeholders- the private sector, the civil society organizations, farmers and pastoralists, women and youth, vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, legislative and the executive organs of the Government, the ruling and opposition political parties as well as development partners. I must state that the process of the 2017 VNR of SDGs in Ethiopia has been country-led and country-driven. Therefore, the process has also been an opportunity to localize SDGs and further enhance national ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

**Mr. President,**

The Ethiopian Government is fully committed to ensuring inclusive and sustainable development without leaving no one behind. We have started implementing the SDGs by integrating them in the Growth and Transformation Plan (2015-2020), our current national development plan approved by the Federal Parliament. By adopting a decentralized federal system, Ethiopia has been implementing comprehensive pro-poor policies, with a vision of joining the middle-income category and building a zero-carbon economy by 2025. We have also fostered our partnership with local and external development actors to harness their support according to our priorities.

Ethiopia has taken targeted policy interventions to ensure the benefits of development reach all sectors of our society. The Productive Safety Net Programs in rural and urban areas, the SMEs development initiative, the youth development

package and the financial inclusion strategy, which give particular emphasis to women and youth, are among the primary policy tools that demonstrate the determination of the government to realize the vision of leaving no one behind in Ethiopia. Moreover, the national budget that goes to the implementation of SDGs has reached 72 per cent of our national spending. Hence, without any sense of complacency, I am confident to say that we have created a favorable national environment to accelerate the timely and full realization of SDGs in Ethiopia.

**Mr. President,**

Early performance trends of the SDGs are encouraging. All SDGs are under implementation across the country with commendable results. Let me touch the implementation of the SDGs with particular emphasis on Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17, as HLPF 2017 is reviewing them. Given the time of the VNR, I could only say we have reviewed all these goals with relative depth. We would further strengthen our continuous follow-up process.

As I have stated, the core development objective of the government is poverty eradication. In the last two decades and half, Ethiopia has made concerted and sustained efforts to reduce poverty in all its forms. By implementing pro-poor and pro-growth development policies, coupled with appropriate institutional mechanisms, Ethiopia has managed to achieve robust and broad-based economic growth, significant infrastructure and social development, as well as environmental management.

Accordingly, Ethiopia has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Poverty has decreased from 44 % in 2000 to 22 % in 2015, while it has been projected to decline to 16.7 by 2020. The growth has been job-rich, with

significant improvement in per capita income, both in rural and urban areas. With these good track records and by redoubling our efforts to sustain strong economic growth, Ethiopia is likely to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms by 2030.

Here I have to underline that, the continued support of our development partners remains critical. Therefore, I take this opportunity to call our development partners to honor their commitments to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

**Mr. President,**

To end hunger, Ethiopia has strived to expand agricultural productivity through continuous capacity development of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, ensuring access to improved technology and agricultural extension services. In addition, food security and productive safety-net programs, disaster risk prevention and management, as well as rural and urban employment generation schemes have received priority attention to end hunger, achieve household food security, improve nutrition and promote resilient agriculture and livestock development. We are also creating conducive business atmosphere to attract both local and foreign investment in the agricultural sector, in a manner that is consistent with the needs of local communities and environmental protection.

Accordingly, agricultural productivity has been showing encouraging progress and the volume of grain production significantly increased from 180 million quintals in 2010/11 to 270.3 million quintals in 2014/15 and managed to attain production of 266.8 million quintals in 2015/16. However, I have to mention that in 2015/16 our

agricultural production was affected due to climate change-induced drought which was the worst in the last 50 years.

I would like to underline that again due to climate-induced drought, we have 7.8 million people that need emergency assistance. We are taking all the necessary measures, including by allocating more than 300 million US dollar, to minimize the adverse impacts of this drought. Let me take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all our development partners for their support; and we would appreciate their continued support in this regard. I have to stress that climate change is indeed happening and it is undermining the development gains of vulnerable countries like Ethiopia. Therefore, the timely and full implementation of the Paris Agreement is not a choice, but a necessity.

**Mr. President,**

The Ethiopia health sector development policy and strategy have been focusing on preventive health services to address key challenges such as communicable diseases. With the main objective of ensuring access to, and quality basic health services for all Ethiopians, we have made massive investment in expanding health infrastructure and to build human capital. Moreover, the Health Extension Program has also been instrumental for effective implementation of the Health sector Development Policy both in rural and urban areas, with the deployment of about thirty eight thousand trained health extension workers across the country.

Therefore, with the effective implementation of the Health Sector Development Policy and Strategy, together with community mobilization, Ethiopia has been witnessing remarkable progress in improving the well-being of its population. The national health services coverage reached 98 % in 2015/16. Maternal, infant and

child health has improved significantly. Incidences and spread of communicable diseases have been reduced; and life expectancy has shown significant progress. Healthy and productive labour force is, thus, availed for the economy to maintain its accelerated pace and to achieve the goal of eradicating extreme poverty in all its forms by 2030.

**Mr. President,**

Achieving gender equality and empowering all girls and women is critical to realize SDGs. The Ethiopian Government has been implementing women's policy and development packages aimed at ensuring women's equality and economic empowerment as well as participation. Ensuring land access to rural women, provisions of financial services and entrepreneurship training as well as affirmative actions have yielded concrete results in enhancing the economic empowerment of women in Ethiopia.

Women participation in the political sphere has also been increasing. Their representation in the House of Peoples' Representatives reached 38.7 percent, while at regional and district administration levels, representation of women in legislative organs has reached 50 percent. In addition, gender parity index in primary education (grades 1-8) reached 0.91 in 2015/16. This clearly shows that girls and women in Ethiopia are getting empowered in all sphere of development.

**Mr. President,**

Building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation are indispensable for poverty eradication, economic growth, job creation and structural transformation. Ethiopia has set an

ambitious vision of becoming one of the leading manufacturing hubs in Africa. Accordingly, by integrating SDG 9, the Second Growth and Transformation Plan has given special attention to inclusive and sustainable industrialization, resilience infrastructure and innovation.

We are taking integrated policy measures to build quality infrastructures that enhance our productive capacity, increase global competitiveness and connectivity as well as support the manufacturing sector. We are also hugely investing in renewable energy sector (hydropower, geothermal, wind and solar).

By implementing comprehensive industrial strategy, based on our comparative advantage, we are also actively promoting industrial development. The Government has been building eco-friendly industrial parks to attract local and foreign investment, and provide single-window services. Our endeavors in promoting industrialization and infrastructure also are supported by our science and technology eco-system that promotes the use, adaptation and transfer of appropriate technologies.

As SDGs should be implemented according to national contexts, we are taking measures to implement Goal 14, though we are a land-locked country. Ethiopia has abundant water resources such as lakes and rivers. In this regard, extensive soil and water conservation works as well as massive reforestation have been undertaken in Ethiopia. In 2015/16 alone; about 20.3 million people (9.5 million women and 10.8 million men) participated in community watersheds development all over the country. These activities have contributed to preserve our rich biodiversity.

**Mr. President,**

Ethiopia has drawn important lessons from the VNR process. Given the time, let me highlight the major ones. By implementing comprehensive, nationally-owned development policies and strategies with political commitment, we have been able to register rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth that reduced poverty. We believe this would provide us an additional impetus and experience to continue to implement the 2030 Agenda.

However, we are mindful that the SDGs require transformative and innovative ways of implementation. Business as usual will not enable us to realize our ambitious vision of eradicating poverty in all its dimensions and forms. In Ethiopia, poverty eradication and achieving inclusive and sustainable development would remain our primary objective in the years ahead. We will redouble and intensify our endeavors to address the development challenges we continue to face- the adverse impacts of climate change, unfavorable global environment such as commodity price volatility which is affecting our export performance, and deficits in good governance.

Before I wrap up my presentation, Mr. President, I would like to reaffirm the importance of strong political commitment and transformative leadership to realize the 2030 and the Addis Agendas, as well as the Paris Climate Agreement. Allow me also to underline that we can only achieve SDGs if all development actors- governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, the UN and other international organizations - act with enhanced and practical commitment to genuine and revitalized partnership. What we have achieved in Ethiopia is the

result of effective political leadership and development partnership. We are grateful to all our partners, both at home and abroad.

It would be remiss of me if I were to conclude without expressing my profound appreciation to all UN agencies and all our development partners that have been supporting us throughout the VNR process. We hope they would continue their valuable partnership as we accelerate our journey to implement SDGs, according to our national priorities. Thanking you for your kind attention, I would be glad to take listen to your comments and respond to your questions.

I Thank You