

Statement by Ambassador Taye Atske-silassie, Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations, on the General Debate of the 2020 ECOSOC High Level Ministerial Segment of the HLPF (16 July 2020, New York)

Madam President,

At the outset I would like to thank your excellency for the successful organization of this year's High-Level Political Forum under the theme: *Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*. We believe that the meeting is timely given the unprecedented circumstances we all are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic whose repercussions continue to adversely affect all aspects of our life.

My delegation would like to align itself with the statement communicated by the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, on behalf of Group of 77 and China; and I would like to emphasize on the following points in my national capacity.

Madam President,

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities within and among countries. Hence, accelerated progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda should be our collective roadmap, to respond and build back better, prevent future pandemics, and achieve a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for all.

As we are entering the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, I would like reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the 2030 Agenda, which is people-centered, transformative and universal in nature and that its Goals and targets

are integrated and indivisible, balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

I would also like to reaffirm our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda in its entirety by leveraging its interlinkages and minimize trade-offs across Goals and targets, for a sustainable and inclusive recovery, and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of the decade of action and delivery.

Madam President,

Eradication of poverty and achieving inclusive and sustainable development have been the overarching policy objectives of the Government of Ethiopia. By setting the national vision of becoming a lower middle-income country by 2025, Ethiopia has made considerable progress in economic growth, infrastructure and social development and environmental management in the last decade and half. To ensure that no one is left behind, we have been effectively implementing pro-poor and pro-growth development policies with the participation of all development stakeholders, including persons with disabilities.

As a result, Ethiopia has registered a milestone achievement, including halving poverty; substantially increasing per capita income; significantly improving social development; increasing infrastructure connectivity; increasing foreign direct investment, and the overall effort in the structural transformation of the economy.

Our significant progress has been underpinned by rapid, broad and sustained economic growth, making Ethiopia one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Our progress has also been the result of firm political commitment, national

leadership, public participation, and effective utilization of the support we gain from our development partners.

Madam President,

At the beginning of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, we are deeply concerned that the multifaceted development challenges have been gravely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and its impacts will certainly go well beyond 2020, eroding the development gains achieved over many decades.

And in this connection, it is worrisome for us to learn that, for the first time in decades, the trend of poverty reduction is being reversed, and in this regard, to end hunger and achieve food security and nutrition for all to truly leave no one behind, being challenged.

In order to tackle these challenges, my government has finalized, the multi-sectoral preparedness and response plan, taking into consideration, Ethiopia's Home-Grown Reform Agenda and its Ten-year Perspective Plan to enable redoubling our execution efforts as well as contribute to address the complex socio-economic challenges. Hence, at this juncture, I would like to stress the urgency of taking concrete and targeted measures, beyond the immediate response plans, to eradicate poverty, with increased means of implementation.

Underscoring a people centered, sustainable, inclusive, and resilient recovery, and in line with the principle of leaving no country and no one behind, addressing the challenges and needs faced by all developing countries, especially countries in special situations and countries with specific needs and challenges, is critical.

This requires greater emphasis on strengthening the means of implementation, particularly in the areas of finance, international trade, technology and capacity-building. Furthermore, I would like also to emphasize the importance of creating a global environment conducive for development, characterized by sustainable financing options, global partnerships, and long-term investments for sustainable development.

Madam President,

The need for international community's engagement to mitigate the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 through rigorous support to build resilient health systems and protect employment and incomes cannot be overemphasized.

Particularly, the burden of unsustainable external debt is a major development challenge that should be addressed in the light of COVID-19 and beyond. A call should be made to all creditors to provide rapid solutions to this issue, especially in the context we are now. Developing countries, particularly, African countries, LDCs and LLDCs, do not have the reserve cushion to withstand the impact of these shocks which necessitate an urgent mobilization of funds to address their debt relief needs.

In conclusion, national development efforts to implement SDGs should be complemented by strengthened means of implementation and revitalized global partnership, based on the principles of unity, solidarity and multilateralism. In this regard, the international community should translate into action its commitments in the 2030, Addis Ababa Action Agendas, the Paris Climate Agreement; and other intergovernmentally agreed development goals, by providing nationally aligned financial, technological and capacity building supports to developing countries,

particularly LDCs; to deliver on our collective commitments to place our world on an accelerated pathway towards sustainability; and no one is left behind and reach the furthest behind first.

I thank you!