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Statement

By

H.E. Ambassador Aman Hassen

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

On

Agenda Item: Sustainable Development

At

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Mr. Chairman,

We have found the various reports by the Secretary-General on this agenda item very useful and we wish to express appreciation for that. We associate ourselves also with the Statements by Fiji, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by myself on behalf of the Africa Group. Obviously, because most of what we had wanted to say under the item has been covered by referred to statements, I shall be brief by focusing only on a few issues that were not sufficiently covered in those statements.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the major reasons for why we consider the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development a historic landmark is because of its universal focus and also because it brings in its purview both the present and future generations. While it brings the elimination of poverty front and centre as the overarching challenge of the international community, at the same time it demands us to focus on needs and challenges that are both intra-generational and inter-generational. That is why it is so vital that
the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—are seen as interdependent and mutually reinforcing. It is in our view not consistent with the Rio+20 consensus to establish hierarchy within the three pillars. All three pillars are equally critical and that is the thrust of what we have achieved in the Rio+20 outcome document.

**Mr. Chairman,**

That is why we in Ethiopia attach extremely great importance to all three, including the environment pillar and why we are committed to our strategy of Climate-Resilient Green Economy with the aim of becoming a carbon-neutral middle income country by 2025.

It does not require us to dwell much on how Ethiopia has been affected by climate change for decades to the point of being seen as almost synonymous with drought and famine. That is changing, Mr. Chairman. In combating the effects of climate change, we are now taking serious measures at national level. As part of our international obligation, we have submitted, as a party to the
Convention, a proposal on increasing the level of ambition at the negotiations of the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Actions towards Producing a new International Law under the Convention. We had also effectively discharged our responsibility which was bestowed upon us by the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) to lead Africa in climate negotiations since Copenhagen.

As a country most seriously affected and threatened by land degradation, we have been consistently engaged in addressing the challenge through the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. We have now finalized the National Action Programme (NAP), which among many activities, will motivate local communities to sustainably manage their environment, focusing particularly on rehabilitation of eroding land, enhancement of agricultural and biomass production, and conservation of biodiversity.

Water and energy, Mr. Chairman, have been very critical to ensure our sustained growth. Ethiopia has been for long considered
the water tower of Africa while it continued to suffer from shortage of water. The historic injustice concerning this matter in our region has been downright incredible and has had no justification. Our major focus at present is the generation of energy from hydro-power. It is our view that the formulation of the sustainable development goals would give the necessary priority to affordable and accessible energy which is critical also for industrialization which in turn the prerequisite for eradicating poverty in a sustainable way. Of course, in all this international and regional cooperation regarding shared resources on the basis of equitable use and international law is critical.

Mr. Chairman,

There is one underlying value whose universality is self-evident in the Post-2015 agenda that we are trying to devise. That relates to the fact that the very notion of national interest needs to be looked at broadly in the sense that that concept should have space for what we share in common. In other words, what the post-2015 agenda calls for in this regard is enlightened self-interest.
That is how the commitment to address the challenge of eradicating poverty should be viewed. That challenge is a challenge for all. That is also how all the difficult issues we face need to be addressed. It is in that spirit that Ethiopia looks forward to the continuing work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the High-Level Political Forum as well as the responsibility of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.

I Thank You.