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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
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Statement

By

**H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Dessalegn
Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the
African Union**

At

**The 68th session of the United Nations General
Assembly**

25 September 2013

New York

Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on your election to this high office to preside over the 68th session of the General Assembly, which will be held under the theme: **"Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage"**. I wish to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the successful discharge of your heavy responsibilities. I would also like to commend your predecessor for the able leadership he demonstrated during the previous session.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by condemning the terrorist attacks in Kenya that claimed the lives of innocent civilians and left many more injured. I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to the people and government of Kenya as well as to the families of the victims of this callous attack. This incident once again necessitates the need for us to renew our commitment to fight terrorism and extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. President,

I am addressing this Assembly today not only on behalf of my country but also representing the African Union, which Ethiopia is honored to Chair this year. It is a welcome coincidence that Ethiopia, which played host to the founding Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) 50 years ago, assumed the rotating Chairmanship of this premier continental organization at a time when its Golden Jubilee is being celebrated.

We are indeed very pleased to have hosted the Special Summit of African Heads of State and Government that marked the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU on 25 May 2013, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who sent their delegations to Addis Ababa to take part in the celebration and conveyed their messages of support and solidarity to the African Union. Since the Fiftieth Anniversary will be a year-long event, we would like to continue marking this historic milestone during this session of the General Assembly by reflecting on the relations between the United Nations and the OAU/AU over the last fifty years.

When the United Nations Charter was signed in 1945, much of Africa was under the yoke of colonialism. Since then, our continent has

been liberated from the remnants of colonialism and other forms of subjugation. Today, it is gratifying to note that African countries constitute one of the largest groups in the United Nations General Assembly. I wish to seize this occasion to express my profound appreciation to the United Nations for its invaluable contribution in the decolonization process. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that not all the challenges we face in this struggle have been definitively settled, nor can we say the decolonization process has come to an end in all its forms. We should, therefore, renew our commitment to the completion of the decolonization process in Africa.

Mr. President,

In accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the UN has indeed been working closely with the African Union and other regional mechanisms to advance its cardinal objectives. Over the last more than five decades, the cooperation and partnership between the OAU/AU and the United Nations has significantly expanded and deepened in a wide range of aspects and fields. We acknowledge with deep respect the meaningful cooperation the United Nations has provided to the then OAU and now the African Union to address the multifaceted challenges facing our continent.

This notwithstanding, however, we are cognizant of the fact that a lot remains to be done to further enhance the cooperation and partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the context of the changing dynamics both within Africa and the world at large. I earnestly hope that this historic occasion will afford us a unique opportunity to seriously reflect on our challenges and shortcomings with a view to strengthening our cooperation and partnership to better respond to the changing environment. I believe we need to adopt a flexible and innovative approach in the implementation of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to enhance our partnership with the objective of addressing our common challenges.

Mr. President,

We are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU at a time when the stereotypical narrative about Africa as a continent afflicted by poverty, diseases and conflicts has started to change slowly. In spite of so many difficulties that still persist, Africa has indeed turned the corner in reducing the number of conflicts plaguing the continent and promoting democratic governance as well as fighting poverty through accelerated economic growth and development.

With its enhanced peace and stability, rapid economic growth, natural resource endowment and a growing middle class, Africa is certainly on the rise and this is attracting a lot of attention from the rest of the world. The 21st century will be an African century if indeed we harmonize our efforts to maintain and indeed speed up the rapid economic growth that Africa has been registering for the last decade or so. We have every reason to be optimistic that African renaissance is indeed around the corner. This positive development is no doubt encouraging but we recognize that we can only achieve our aspirations for a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa by bringing about structural transformation. That is why we are capitalizing on the Golden Jubilee celebration to chart a transformation agenda for Africa, which will be implemented over the next fifty years. We have also adopted the Strategic Plan of our Commission for the years 2014-2017 in our last session in May 2013, whose main objective is to lay a solid foundation for the realization of our vision in the short and medium term.

Mr. President,

It is indeed opportune that we are engaged in crafting our transformation agenda when intergovernmental negotiations have also started in earnest to develop the Post-2015 global development framework. I am glad that this session of the General Assembly will

debate on this issue and I commend the High Level Panel Co-Chaired by Presidents of Indonesia and Liberia as well as and the Prime Minister the United Kingdom for presenting a comprehensive report to the Secretary-General. I hope this report will provide valuable inputs to our discussion on the Post-2015 Development Agenda during this session of the General Assembly.

Africa no doubt attaches paramount importance to this important issue and it has constituted a High Level Committee of Heads of State and Government to develop a common position and galvanize international support to ensure that the successes thus far achieved in the implementation of the MDGs are sustained and its development priorities beyond 2015 are fully taken on board.

As our able Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) aptly put it, *"what Africa needs is structural transformation and not structural adjustment"*. The development agenda that we are trying to set for Africa over the next 50 years is also aimed at achieving this fundamental objective with a view to eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. With respect to the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, we intend to come up with a well thought-out African position as an

outcome of the initiative of our troika: the AU Commission, the UNECA and the African Development Bank.

In this context, we want to achieve a green revolution in Africa and ensure the food security of our peoples. The theme of the African Union in 2014 will be Agriculture and Food Security and promotion of CAADP, which will allow us to reinforce our commitment for the transformation of the agricultural sector in Africa. We are also convinced of the need for Africa to industrialize in order to accelerate its economic growth and generate employment, increase income and diversify exports. This can be done so on the basis of our factor endowments and taking into account the need for us to increase value addition and exploit forward and backward linkages. It cannot be emphasized enough that overcoming poverty is downright unsustainable without structural transformation and value addition which makes industrialization not an option but a must, unavoidable necessity for Africa. Let me state here how grateful we are to all those who have made partnership available to us to ensure that Africa develops the capacity for modern and affordable energy without which industrialization would be impossible to achieve.

Furthermore, we would like to invest in infrastructure, which has been neglected over the past decades, to promote intra-African trade and fast-track regional integration. We are also committed to redouble our

efforts in improving the overall wellbeing of our society. Particularly, we believe that Africa should reap the benefits of its demographic dividend by investing in its people. Educating our youth and upgrading their skills is critical to effectively utilize our human capital. Therefore, we very much hope that the global development framework beyond 2015 will be aligned to our development priorities and needs.

Mr. President,

We in Africa certainly recognize that we cannot realize our development aspirations in the absence of durable peace and security. That is the reason why we have dedicated tremendous efforts to addressing the scourge of conflicts in our continent. We are indeed very pleased to note the drastic decline in the number of conflicts in Africa in the course of the last decade with the exception of few situations. But we also understand that there is a new security dynamics in our continent with the rise of popular dissatisfaction in connection with demands yet unmet.

In this regard, the African Union has been exerting efforts to assist Egypt – a member State whose contribution to the decolonization process in our continent and to African Unity has been second to none - in overcoming its current difficulties in the spirit of African solidarity. The

African Union is also extending all the necessary support to Tunisia in order to ensure a successful political transition through the adoption of a new constitution and the holding of elections.

On the other hand, we welcome the successful conduct of elections in Mali that paved the way for the restoration of constitutional order in that country. The African Union is indeed firmly committed to continue assisting Mali in its efforts to ensure lasting peace, security and development. We draw satisfaction from the significant progress made in Somalia towards peace in the country and we are also encouraged by the agreement reached between the Somalia Federal Government and the Juba Interim Administration, which constitutes a significant milestone in promoting peace and national reconciliation. The New Deal announced at the Somalia Conference in Brussels on 16 September 2013, will certainly strengthen the momentum for the reconstruction and peace building of the country.

Mr. President,

The security and humanitarian situation in Central African Republic still remains to be a matter of serious concern. I wish to reiterate our call to the United Nations to provide multifaceted support to the African-led International Support Mission in Central African Republic

(AFISM-CAR), which will be deployed in that country to protect civilians and restore security and public order. On the other hand, the escalation of tension in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo also poses threats to the peace and security of the Great Lakes region and the continent as a whole. The only durable solution is for both the Government and the armed opposition to conclude their peace talks under the auspices of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). In this regard, I would like to welcome the outcome of the extraordinary Summit of ICGLR in Kampala on 5 September 2013.

With regard to the relations between Sudan and South Sudan, the African Union in close collaboration with IGAD has established an Ad-Hoc Investigation Mechanism (AIM) to verify allegations made by the two countries of supporting and harboring dissident elements one against the other. The team is carrying out its work and I am hopeful that the outcome of this investigation will help the two countries to move forward in the implementation of the agreements that they have signed and the normalization of their relations. On a more practical level, the regular engagement that the leaders of the two countries are having will go a long way in breaking the impasse and resolving some of the difficult outstanding issues.

Mr. President,

I would like to raise one important issue, which has been a matter of serious concern for us in our efforts to promote peace, security and national reconciliation in the continent and regarding which there is a strong consensus in Africa. We in Africa, time and again, have affirmed our unflinching commitment to fighting impunity and promoting democracy, rule of law and good governance throughout the continent in conformity with the Constitutive Act of our Union. This has been empirically validated by bold actions taken by the AU in recent times. When it comes to the ICC many of our member States ratified the Rome Statutes faithfully subscribing to its cardinal objectives and principles.

Unfortunately, the manner in which the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been operating left a very bad impression in Africa. Instead of promoting justice and reconciliation and contributing to peace and stability, it has degenerated into a political instrument targeting Africa and Africans. This is totally unacceptable and that is why Africa has been expressing its serious reservation against the ICC.

It is regrettable that our repeated request to the United Nations Security Council to defer the proceedings initiated against President Al-Bashir has neither been heard nor acted upon. We have also received no

response for our request for a deferral of the ICC investigations and prosecutions in relation to the 2008 post election violence in Kenya, in line with the principle of complementarity, to allow for a National Mechanism to investigate and prosecute the cases under a reformed Judiciary provided for in the new constitutional dispensation.

In light of the encouraging developments in Kenya with the adoption of the new Constitution, the reform of the Judiciary and the holding of successful legislative and presidential elections, we believe it is very critical to support the peace building and national reconciliation processes in the country. In this regard, the recent decision of the ICC in relation to the Kenyan situation is unhelpful adversely affecting the ability of the Kenyan leaders in discharging their constitutional responsibilities. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to once again urge the United Nations Security Council to respond to our requests.

Mr. President,

In an increasingly globalized and multipolar world, Africa obviously needs to forge multiple partnerships to realize its development aspirations and assume its rightful place in the international arena. In this regard, it gives me great satisfaction to note that Africa's strategic

partnership with both developed and emerging economies has expanded and deepened in recent years. This is the path we wish to pursue. Africa needs the solidarity of all sections of the international community and it is our hope that all the necessary support would be extended to Africa in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, which has underlined so empathically the special situation of Africa. This, in our view, should be the spirit with which the deficit in the implementation of MDG 8 must be treated during the very short remaining period of the MDGs.

As I conclude, Mr. President, I wish to underline Africa's enduring commitment to this indispensable global body – a universal organization whose viability is an existential necessity. It is in that spirit that Africa will continue to nurture its close cooperation with the UN.

I thank you