

**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF  
THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF  
ETHIOPIA**

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**Mr. President,**

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of this Sixty-Second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would like to assure you of my Country's fullest co-operation in the discharge of the responsibilities bestowed upon you. I have no doubt that this Assembly will benefit both from your personal and professional experience.

May I take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for her invaluable contributions and wise leadership during the last Session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. He is already fully engaged and has made an excellent beginning in the efforts to address global challenges since he took office a year ago. I would therefore, on this occasion, like to underline Ethiopia's firm commitment to cooperate in every way in assisting his demanding endeavours.

**Mr. President,**

Just three weeks ago Ethiopia began its Third Millennium. You, here in this Assembly, recognized this as a world event. On 15 June 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating the year from 12 September 2007 to 11 September 2008 as the year of Ethiopian Millennium. The African Union Assembly also declared the Ethiopia Millennium as an African heritage and a unique occasion. We thank you all for that honour and for that expression of solidarity.

Those who have witnessed how Ethiopians of all walks of life have received the New Ethiopian Millennium, could not have missed the new spirit that has been on display in the country. This is a spirit of renewal and commitment to stand in unison for a better future for the country. The New Millennium was greeted by all Ethiopians with a pledge to do more for national harmony, for durable peace and stability, and to prevail upon poverty that has been the hallmark of the country in recent decades.

Two thousand years ago, Ethiopia was the home of one of the great civilizations of the world, at Aksum. A thousand years ago, we could still produce two of the world's greatest heritage sites. One is the city of Harar, the fourth holiest city of Islam, which by happy coincidence, also celebrates its own Millennium this year. The other is the city of churches built by Lalibela, Saint, Priest and emperor at the town which still bears his name today.

But Ethiopia's fortune began to change commencing from the second half of the last Millennium. Though a survivor of colonialism, and a representative of the greatness of Africa's past, Ethiopia also unfortunately came to represent and symbolize the poverty, the dearth and destitution of Africa's more recent history.

**Mr. President,**

Despite the formidable challenges we have had, all of this has begun to change in the last decade. Hopelessness and frustration growing out of lack of confidence in the future, is no longer an image reflecting the reality of Ethiopia. This is perhaps the explanation for the exuberance displayed by all sectors of Ethiopian society while welcoming the New Millennium. A new and strong national consensus is being created in Ethiopia today. This is a consensus around the conviction and the resolve to make the opening of our third Millennium a symbol of an Ethiopian Renaissance.

**Mr. President,**

This overwhelming optimism displayed by all Ethiopians at the opening of the New Millennium rests on tangible foundation. The political, social and economic realities in Ethiopia have been changing over the last decade. We are making meaningful progress. Indeed, we have no shortage of detractors. These are non-Ethiopians determined to scuttle the progress we are making in all areas. Their attempts include efforts at undermining national unity and at trying to micromanage Ethiopia's internal affairs. We have seen this, including over the last few days. Despite all this, however, we continue to make progress. For five consecutive years now, our real GDP growth rate has averaged over ten per cent. Our per capita income growth has averaged nearly eight per cent for the last seven years. More tangible perhaps, in terms of the progress we have been making to change the life situation of our people, is the advance we have registered towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We are set to attain universal primary health care by 2010. We are well on the way to achieving the goals set for reducing child and maternal mortality well prior to 2015. We have made much progress in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. We have managed to halt and stabilize the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce the incidence of malaria.

**Mr. President,**

What we have been able to achieve in the area of education has been quite remarkable as well. There is now little doubt that we are on the way to achieving universal primary education by 2015. Primary school enrollment at present is 91.6%. Sixteen year ago, it stood at 19%. We have also begun to ensure that the access made available to education would in fact be quality education.

We have also been committed in a tangible manner to environmental sustainability. Our Millennium celebrations, and the preparations leading to it, have been underlined by practical expressions to this commitment. The slogan "Two trees for 2000" has been enthusiastically taken up throughout the country. Popular enthusiasm has led to speeding up a process that had begun earlier, culminating just in a matter of three to four months, leading to the opening of the New Millennium, to the planting of close to a billion trees. This is a process that will continue throughout the year and beyond.

Nor are we oblivious to the specter of global warming and to the threat of climate change. Africa is exceptionally vulnerable to the effects of climate change. So many of us live on the margins that the smallest difference in climate can mean the difference between sufficiency and famine, survival and death. It is a global challenge, and it needs a global response. However, the need for speedy economic development in countries such as Ethiopia, and in Africa as a whole, should not be compromised in the interest of reversing a dangerous climatic situation for the creation of which we have no responsibility. It should nonetheless be possible through effective international collaboration to ensure that the development process in countries such as Ethiopia would be environmentally friendly. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of Brazil for a new UN Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in 2012. We are also appreciative of the European Union's commitment to cut further its greenhouse gas emissions and its plans for more responsible and sustainable energy policies. We endorse the European Union's support for reforming the institutional framework of the United Nation's environmental activities.

Mr. President,

The economic and social progress Ethiopia has made over the last decade has, no doubt, been underpinned by the real and concrete advance we have made in building democratic institutions and fostering the rule of law. In this regard as well, we are entering the New Ethiopian Millennium with even greater and renewed commitment to deepen the democratic process in Ethiopia and strengthen the culture of tolerance and mutual understanding among our people. There is a new spirit of tolerance, of dialogue and inclusiveness, and of commitment to peace, among our people.

The further democratization of the country and nurturing the rule of law is a pledge that every Ethiopian is seen to be making as we enter the New Millennium. This commitment is rooted in the conviction that durable peace in our country and the successful achievement of our objectives in the economic and social sphere can only be viable if we succeed in advancing towards achieving the democratic aspirations of our people. We urge those who wish to meddle in our affairs to be accountable to their action and to desist from seeking Trojan Horses in our society.

Mr. President,

It is this same spirit of the New Ethiopian Millennium that we are determined to make sure will guide our foreign policy. We have over the last decade and half worked in good faith for peace in our region. We are even more prepared now than ever, and in the spirit of our New Millennium, to contribute our share to peace and mutual understanding among peoples and countries, most particularly in our own sub-region.

We are indeed fully aware that the basis for the renaissance of Ethiopia to which we are committed in the New Millennium cannot be limited to what we do within Ethiopia alone. To be true to the new spirit and to succeed in the rejuvenation of Ethiopia, we feel we have the obligation to stretch a hand of friendship to all those near and far who see wisdom in a positive response to this gesture. We are well aware of the need for a regional atmosphere conducive to the rejuvenation of our region, and of ourselves. It is not just the absence of conflict and dispute but the reality of peace and co-operation which is, we know, an absolute necessity. Without this we cannot achieve our aims, whether in Ethiopia, our region, or in Africa.

Mr. President,

Permit me to express our profound appreciation to all those who have helped us make the progress we have made over the past decade. There are those who have been steadfast in their support for our endeavors and stood with us through thick and thin. We are indebted to them. Our obligation is to be true to the principles that underpin those expressions of solidarity. Ethiopia, a founding member of the United Nations, will continue to be accountable to multilateralism and to the fullest co-operation with the United Nations. Therefore, as I conclude, I wish to reiterate, once again, our readiness to co-operate fully, and without reserve, with our Secretary-General in all areas where our contribution is needed, and to seek friendship with all nations in the spirit of our Millennium.

I Thank You.