



Statement

by

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to the United Nations**

at the

**Third International Conference on
Financing for Development**

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Check against Delivery

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to commend the Government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality and for the tremendous effort and energy they have invested to ensure the success of this Conference. I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Co-Facilitators of this process, Ambassador Pedersen and Ambassador Talbot, whose leadership and commitment have been instrumental for the successful conclusion of our arduous negotiations on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Both the time and place of our conference are of high significance for humanity and for our planet. We meet at a crucial year on the International Development calendar as it will also comprise a UN Summit in September during which we will sign on a new Agenda that will shape Global Sustainable Development for the next 15 years and beyond, and a Climate Change Summit in Paris in November.

We are also meeting in the continent of Africa, the birthplace of our species, and more specifically in the Horn of Africa, the region from which our ancestors ventured out of this continent to populate the rest of the world millennia ago. Humankind has made huge leaps since that era, on the social and economic fronts. Our ancestors faced many obstacles and hurdles along that trek, but they were always able to find ways to overcome them. At every crucial crossroads, when our species faced developmental bottleneck situations, threatening its sustainability and sometimes its very existence, the combination of our ingenuity, adaptability and survival instincts contributed to the emergence of new technologies, methods, techniques, and occasionally philosophies and political systems, that catalyzed the Agricultural, Industrial and Information Revolutions which, among others, have helped us reach new heights and push generation after generation the boundaries of the possible.

Today, despite the immense progress that has been achieved, our world still faces massive challenges. Most of these challenges have been well captured by the Co-Facilitators of the Post-2015 process in the Zero Draft they published last month. Poverty, rising inequalities, natural resource depletion, environmental degradation, climate change, communicable diseases, spiraling conflict, violence, extremism, and the resulting humanitarian crises, including forced migration, are a few of the many challenges facing our world today, some of which are protracted, others emerging or re-emerging. The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets ambitiously aim at addressing most of these challenges, within the next 15 years.

Against this backdrop, we meet in Addis to adopt an Action Agenda that will address an important component of the Outcome Document of the UN Summit in September. Without adequate financing, capacity building, technology transfer and other means of implementation, the Post-2015 Development Agenda risks remaining a statement of noble wishes, and we might end up in 2030 facing even greater challenges than

those that have prevented many of our nations from achieving faster developmental strides in the past. It will also leave us ill prepared to address the question of Climate Change, which is among the most serious challenges that have ever faced humanity.

Adequate financing, international and domestic, public and private, technology transfer, and capacity building, on their own are not enough of course. An enabling environment remains a must. Hence, stable and peaceful societies, strong and representative institutions, good governance, the rule of law, gender equality and women empowerment, quality education and health care, a vibrant private sector and civil society are, among many others, essential elements for Sustainable Development.

However, the most important elements of all are unity and solidarity, both among and within nations. In our increasingly interconnected world, everyone's talent, effort and ability will be needed to address the existential threats facing us in this century. "No One Left Behind" is not a utopian over-ambitious motto or vision. It is an indispensable prerequisite for our sustainable future. Also, the traditional divide between North and South, or between developed and developing countries, must be overcome, based on the fundamental principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

History has sufficiently shown how injustice and inequality are recipes for instability and conflicts. In my part of the world, that is the Middle East, they have fueled resentment, insecurity, anger, and eventually crises and wars, leading to the worst mass displacements since World War II, forcing millions of people to leave their homes and livelihoods, within countries and across borders and seas, and putting a massive humanitarian and economic pressure on host communities and countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The biggest challenge facing my country today is the growing mass displacement of refugees precipitated by the Crisis in Syria. Lebanon, the smallest country in the region, is alone hosting more than 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees, and about 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria, representing a third of my country's total population, thus turning Lebanon into the highest per capita refugee hosting country in the world.

This Crisis has had a devastating impact on the security, development, economic activity, social progress and the environment of my country, overstressing the capacity of our social services, healthcare and education systems, housing, water and sanitation facilities and energy infrastructure. Poverty has increased by 61%, unemployment has doubled, and the average personal income of the local population has significantly decreased.

The humanitarian response to the crisis in Syria and in neighboring countries has been generous, but unfortunately, not sufficient. Humanitarian funding has fallen way short of the resources needed and identified by the United Nations agencies. In fact, only 21% of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan has so far been funded. In addition, tackling humanitarian crises through the narrow channel of humanitarian assistance has proven to be insufficient; hence, the need to tap on the wider purse of development funds, and our call on donors, international financial institutions and UN agencies, to provide Syria's neighboring countries, including middle income countries like Lebanon and Jordan, with adequate development assistance that would meet their needs, strengthen their resilience and alleviate the impact of the crisis.

In this regard, we welcome the recognition of this issue in the Addis Action Agenda, and strongly support the language of paragraph 66. We do believe that development finance contributes to reducing social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and enables countries to prevent and combat situations of chronic crises resulting from conflict. We also believe that there is a need for increased coherence of development and humanitarian financing to ensure more timely, comprehensive, appropriate and cost-effective approaches to the management and mitigation of complex emergencies, including the large scale displacement of people.

Mr. Chairman,

I'll conclude by quoting the powerful words of the Secretary General of the United Nations in his Synthesis Report of December 2014:

“The stars are aligned for the world to take historic action to transform lives and protect the planet. I urge Governments and people everywhere to fulfil their political and moral responsibilities. This is my call to dignity, and we must respond with all our vision and strength”

Thank you.