

Statement made

By representative of Ethiopia,

H.E. Ambassador Gebeyehu Ganga Gayito, DPR

Of Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia to the United Nations, New York

At

**The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban
Development (Habitat III, Conference), Quito, Ecuador,**

**October, 2016
Quito, Ecuador**

Mr. Presidente,

Honourable Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as the Chairman of the HABITAT III Conference. My delegation is confident that under your leadership, this Conference would be successful. Let me assure you the full support of my delegation to the success of your Chairmanship.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation for the people and government of Ecuador for the warm hospitality accorded to my delegation since our arrival in this beautiful city of Quito.

Mr. President,

After two decades, we are gathering to deliberate and adopt a New Urban Agenda that could guide us as we commit to urban development that is people-centred and environment friendly. My delegation firmly believes that The New Urban Agenda that we are going to adopt would contribute to the implementation and localisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 11.

Ethiopia commits to implement the New Urban Agenda according to its national and local situations with the full participation of all stake holders, particularly local populations and administrations. The Ethiopian Government shares the vision of the New Urban Agenda to build cities that could promote inclusivity, sustainable and safe living environment for all.

However, we are all mindful that realising our vision would not be easy. Despite the progress we have registered in improving the quality of life for urban residences since the first HABITAT Conference, the persistence of absolute poverty, increasing income inequality and environmental pollution pose serious challenge to realise the New Urban Agenda. These challenges are more pronounced in developing countries, particularly LDCs.

Mr. President,

In Ethiopia, though the current level of urbanization is low, we have one of the highest urbanization rates in the world. Our urban population has doubled over the last 3 decades and it is projected to increase in the coming years. Obviously, this has both challenges and opportunities.

Despite the challenges, we have been implementing an integrated Urban Development Strategy championed by the Federal Government and executed at all cities and urban centers.

To address the housing problem, our administrations at federal, regional and city levels have been implementing a successful housing development program in which more than 250,000 houses were built and more than 200,000 have been already distributed to urban residents including to low income earners. This Housing Development Program has been successful not only in reducing the housing problem but also in creating job opportunities of millions of urban dwellers, particularly to those engaged in the construction sector. The Government is committed to redoubling its efforts by further expanding the housing development sector.

Another program that is part of the Urban Development Package is the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development which aims to tackle urban unemployment by targeting youth and women. In this regard, urban administrations have been providing training, credit service and production places.

In addition, the urban administrations have been working to expand social and physical infrastructures in close collaboration with the private sector resulting in better health and education coverage. Moreover, the Ethiopian government has been massively investing in connecting urban and rural areas through roads and trains. In this regard, the train system that has begun operating in the capital city, Addis Ababa is a successful project that contributes to addressing transportation problems in an eco-friendly manner.

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to underscore that the Ethiopia Government is ready to intensify the implementation of its Urban Development Package with renewed political commitment by ensuring good governance at all levels. In this regard, the New Urban Agenda would provide us additional impetus towards building an inclusive and sustainable urban economy that contributes to the overall objective of poverty reduction.

My delegation strongly believes that to translate the new urban Agenda into concrete actions, international partnership within the framework of North-South and South-South cooperation should be further enhanced, and furthermore, developing countries particularly LDCs should be supported in areas of urban finance and technology transfer. Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reiterating the commitment of the Ethiopian Government to implement the New Urban Agenda.

I thank You Mr. President,