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Minister and Advisor to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia

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Minister Oqubay, it is your turn, and I am sure you will particularly focus on the need to support the smallholders' production in agriculture.

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I fully agree with Mostafa when he talks about focusing on smallholder farming. The key reason is, we need to boost agricultural outputs, not only to increase outputs and productivity but to make sure that the livelihood of farmers is improved. If we are to do that, we have to focus on changing and transforming the livelihood of the small farmers. Having said this, I would like to relate it to the economic transformation of Africa. Africa has a population of about 1.1 billion and close to half live in rural areas. In this context, when food security is linked to the broader human security issues, it is important that we consider whether Africa could be part of the problem or the solution.

I am a firm believer that Africa could be part of the solution, and for me the best example could be represented by Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a country with a population of 94 million, which makes it the second most populous country in Africa. Ethiopia also went through series of wars and famine in the 70s and '80s, but since 1991, things have changed. In 1991, we only had a population of 40 million, and now we have 94 million. We are able to address the challenges of feeding ourselves as well as bringing peace, stability and security in the country.

Key interventions have been made. First, we have primarily focused on improving the economy, focusing solely on rapid economic growth. It is currently considered one of the fastest-growing economies, without a resource book such as oil. For the last 12 years, GDP has been growing at 11%, primarily driven by agriculture, but partially driven by manufacturing. Recently, manufacturing has been growing fast. Since 2010, the manufacturing sector has been growing by 20% every year.

However, it is not just fast economic growth that matters. Without fast economic growth, there is not large pie to eat, but the key, indispensable element is, how do you achieve sustainable and inclusive rapid economic growth? Without shared growth, you will remain internally vulnerable and cannot have peace or think of good governance either.

In this respect, our policy has been consistently focused on championing an inclusive growth with sound macro-economic policy, that creates economic opportunity and boost shared prosperity for all our societal groups. There is enough piece of evidence for this. We have maintained an average economic growth rate of 10 percent for over a decade and were able to meet most of the key Millennium Development Goals of the UN. We have been able to reduce the number of people living below the poverty line from 54% in 1991 to 22% last year. Life expectancy is also a very important measure, because it talks about food security, health and education. In 1990, the average life expectancy in Ethiopia was 45 years and at the African level, it was 50 years. Now in Ethiopia in 2014, it is 64 years, and the average for Africa is 57. In less than 25 years, the life expectancy has increased by 19 years, which is the highest in the world. The Ethiopian government has performed impressively. The key lesson here, is that we needed to focus on accelerated economic growth and adopt policies and strategies that ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

One additional element to highlight is that we the Horn of Africa is facing a new geopolitical dynamics. Ethiopia is playing its critical peacekeeping and diplomatic in bringing about stability in the region. Ethiopia is significantly contributing to improve the geo-political situation in the region. We provide the largest peacekeeping force in Africa, which is fourth globally. Ethiopia is actively engaged in peace keeping, mediation and conflict resolution in the region. It is our firm belief that peace and stability are preconditions for development and deepening democratization.



My last point is about the impact of climate change and our position in the upcoming Climate Summit in Paris this coming December. Our country is endowed with greatest renewable energy resources, such hydro wind and sun radiation. We are embarking on to implement an ambitious green economy and climate mitigation strategy. This is our commitment and responsibility in addressing climate, and Ethiopia we remain strategic partner to participate in global actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For a better world, we need to jointly work together.