

Statement by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations Environment Program, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps on the South-South Cooperation during the 5th Annual Meeting of the UNEP Subcommittee

Thursday 26th October 2018

Madam Chair,

Ambassadors, High Commissioners and dear Colleagues,

The African Group has taken note that the issue of south-south cooperation has received particular attention during this week's discussions. We would like to begin by recognizing the role of global partnerships to promote sustainable development, with environment being the core pillar; particularly within the current global discourse on the dire need to achieve development and eradication of poverty.

Madam Chair,

The African Group wishes to point out that south-south cooperation as an outlook towards global progress and a strategy for global development, is recognized at the highest level of the United Nations system, the General Assembly.

The African Group further recalls the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing

Countries introducing South-South Cooperation under the impression that most developing countries are at a similar stages of development and therefore have common environment protection demands. At the same time the countries would be able to leverage their resources in a win-win manner. As such the Group strongly believes that cooperation between developing countries can break the asymmetric distribution of technology and embrace appropriate technology transference.

Madam Chair,

In a similar manner, the UN Conference of Sustainable Development (RIO+20) also stressed the centrality of working towards an inclusive Green Economy to achieve improved social equity and environmental quality. In doing so, RIO+20 identified South-South Cooperation as a key enabling tool for developing countries to work along these lines.

Madam Chair,

Given the foregoing, the UNEP Governing Council highlighted this link between Green Economy and South-South Cooperation by requesting UNEP to collect initiatives and experiences on different pathways for reaching a resource-efficient, low-carbon and socially inclusive economy, and to disseminate them, and facilitate information sharing among countries, so as to support them to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. The Africa Group believes that it is these links that give UNEP a clear mandate to embrace the South-South Cooperation to deliver on its mandate. In this regard, the Group recalls the 23rd Session of UNEP Governing Council that adopts the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, which requested UNEP to strengthen its

South-South Cooperation strategy in order to facilitate knowledge sharing and appropriate technology transfer among countries.

In this regard, the Group appreciate UNEP's involvement in coordinating this cooperation which will then allow for a creation of higher levels of capability and development opportunities for those involved.

Madam Chair,

South-South Cooperation can more reflect the cooperation of equality, mutual benefit and collective ownership; with respect of national sovereignty at the core of this relation. In addition, South-south cooperation is about interdependences and not 'new dependencies'. The partner countries themselves initiate, organize and manage south-south cooperation activities. Part of the value of South-South Cooperation lays in its primary purpose to empower countries to shape home-grown, local/indigenous, responses rather than relying on external interventions to development problems; an idea which the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly is embracing.

Madam Chair,

The Group is aware that UNEP has had few projects within the framework of South-South Cooperation: namely "Enhancing South-South Cooperation – Building the Capacity of Developing Countries to Promote Green Economies" provides a forum for countries from the ASEAN region to share their experiences with national-level initiatives for transitioning to resource-efficient, low-carbon and socially inclusive economies; and "South-South Cooperation in Mongolia and Central Asia Countries: Sharing Knowledge on

Inclusive Green Economies and Ecological Civilization” aims to support Mongolia and Central Asian countries in developing research capacity in these areas, with a particular focus on green investment in the water sector. The Group appreciates these projects and requests UNEP to capitalize on the achievements of these projects and strengthen existing and potential new initiatives.

Madam Chair,

The Group wishes to underscore that South-South Cooperation is complementary mechanism to other forms of cooperation especially towards the implementation of SDGs and the environmental agendas. In fact, it is worth noting that that frameworks such as GEF and GCF are clear examples of partnerships frameworks that could be viewed as mirrors of south-south cooperation.

In this regard, the Group further request UNEP to ensure to South-South Cooperation initiatives are effectively implemented in the spirit of accountability and transparency. The Group further requests the Secretariat to constantly update on the work of South-South Cooperation

I thank You!