

Honourable President,
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Executive Director,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the very outset, our delegation would like to thank the People and Government of Kenya for hosting the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly at a time when the world is grappling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the warm welcome accorded to our delegation since our arrival in the beautiful city of Nairobi.

My delegation would also like to extend its sincere appreciations to H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Environment and Climate of Norway and current President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, for his outstanding leadership during this unprecedented circumstance of COVID-19 pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Nature provides multiple options for addressing the socio-economic, environmental, and security concerns we have been dealing with for decades. When properly managed, nature offers solutions for reducing the undesirable impacts of climate change and reversing biodiversity loss. It also enables people to ensure food security, create jobs and improve their livelihoods. Despite our total dependence on nature, our unwise and unbalanced use has put the natural balance under threat, leading to several challenges, including climate variability and change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and pollution. At this juncture in human history, it is important to note that the significance of nature to our wellbeing needs to be increasingly incorporated into national and international

policy arenas, and concrete actions need to be persistently implemented more than ever before with the provision of adequate finance and transfer of technology.

Considering the damage, we have caused to nature, we cannot afford to continue with the business-as-usual approach, at the expense of future generations. It is time to prioritize the restoration of nature's health! It is time to harness and reinforce our actions now in favor of nature. It is never too late!

The resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which is being convened under the theme of "strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" comes at a time of great relevance. Indeed, our delegation is confident that the decisions we make at the end of this Assembly will be critical in directing our actions so that we can make concrete progress on the SDGs

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

By embracing nature, Ethiopia has demonstrated its commitment to advancing its growth and development ambitions. Ethiopia's long-term developmental policies and strategies acknowledge the importance of nature in addressing diverse and multi-layered environmental concerns and in delivering results on the sustainable development goals.

In this connection, the importance of degraded landscape restoration and the protection of vital ecosystems are the focus of our national REDD+ Strategy, the National Forest Sector Development Program, and the updated Nationally Determined Contribution. More importantly, Ethiopia's 10 Year Development Plan, which runs from 2021 to 2030, focuses on realizing climate resilient green economic growth by developing, managing, conserving, sustainably managing forests, wildlife, biodiversity, and promoting healthy ecological balance.

Accordingly, several commendable interventions have been implemented, including the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, and the Green Legacy Initiative launched in 2019. The initiative is aimed at planting 20 billion tree seedlings by 2022, and thus far more than 15 billion seedlings have been planted in the last three years alone. Moving beyond physical boundaries, we have also managed to share with our neighbors' trees and fruit seedlings. This is aimed at advancing regional cooperation through regreening degraded landscapes.

The Green Legacy initiative is expected to increase forest cover and improve the productivity of land by reducing soil erosion and increasing yields from crop land, and pastures. This will contribute to improving food, feed and wood security, increase carbon stock and prolong the lifespan of irrigation systems and hydro-dams. The Green Legacy Initiative, aligned to the UN's Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), reinforces Ethiopia's commitment to implement the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), the Bonn Challenge, the New York Declaration on Forests, and the Great Green Wall Initiative. The Initiative will also boost our contributions to the advancement of the sustainable development goals in Ethiopia and beyond.

Furthermore, we are working hard to ensure the sound management of hazardous waste and chemicals by putting in place appropriate legal frameworks, including proclamations on pollution control, electric and electronic waste management and disposal, and lead in paint. Currently, we are also working on putting in place a legal framework on used lead acid battery recycling in the country.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

If we are to achieve all sustainable development goals by 2030 while leaving no one behind, it is critical to emphasize the importance of ensuring predictable and

sustainable finance and other means of implementation for Least Developed Countries like Ethiopia, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing sustainable development, which calls for the alignment of all financing flows and policies with economic, social, and environmental priorities.

In conclusion, Ethiopia wishes to reiterate its unwavering commitment to the implementation of all Sustainable Development goals, particularly the environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you, Mr. President,

Asante sana!