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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

H.E MR. MELES ZENAWI
PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

AT THE
HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF
THE 60TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
14-16 SEPTEMBER 2005

15 September 2005
New York

**Mr. President,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am very pleased to be here for this important event which has enormous meaning in terms of the challenges we face in development, peace and in ensuring good governance and in fostering respect for human rights. Coming as it does five years after the historic commitment we jointly made when we adopted the Millennium Declaration, this gathering affords us an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the achievement of the MDGs.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, our Secretary-General, for the historic initiative he took five years ago and for the follow up work that has been done. We are very grateful also for the very dedicated and invaluable work that has been carried out by Professor Jeffrey Sachs and his colleagues at the Millennium Project.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and, through him, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for a path-breaking report that they had submitted which has served as a basis for the Secretary-General's "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for all" which I find to be a very commendable Report with vital suggestions for reform of the United Nations.

I should also pay tribute to Foreign Minister Jean Ping, President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly, for all the effort he has made in the course of this important period in the life of the United Nations and for the draft outcome document which I have no doubt will facilitate businesslike deliberation at this High-level Plenary Meeting.

Mr. President,

Five years ago we embarked on a 15 years historic journey with reasonably high hopes. With one third of the journey completed, it has become clear that without additional joint effort on the part of all, it will be impossible for low-income and least developed countries such as Ethiopia to achieve the MDGs, most particularly to defeat extreme poverty, poverty that kills.

But on the other hand, the past five years have in fact demonstrated that even for countries such as Ethiopia, most of the MDGs are demonstrably achievable. The MDGs are emphatically not unattainable goals with unrealistic targets. In fact, in our particular case, for example, the fight against poverty in all its dimensions with clear commitment and on the basis of a clearly defined strategy antedates the articulation of the MDGs. As such, what was needed in our case was to align our strategy for combating poverty and for realizing sustainable development with the MDGs, which we are convinced are far from being excessively ambitious goals.

Our experience over the last five years have indeed demonstrated that with the optimum mobilization of domestic resources and the requisite support internationally, in conformity with commitments made, countries such as Ethiopia can, with little doubt, realize the MDGs.

There is no doubt, however, Mr. President, that it is indispensable that countries such as Ethiopia require effective international co-operation consistent with the commitment made in the Millennium Declaration and at Monterrey, to be able to be on track to achieve the MDGs.

While it is obvious that the primary responsibility for achieving the MDGs belongs to the concerned countries, it is also the obligation of partners to make it possible for the low-income countries that have demonstrated the readiness to discharge their responsibilities, to overcome the poverty trap. In this regard, the Report of the Millennium Project contains valuable proposals whose implementation would no doubt ensure the achievement of the MDGs long before 2015. Official Development Assistance, debt relief and issues related to trade need to be aligned with the MDGs for low-income countries to achieve the MDG-based targets.

I am very pleased with the progress made at the Gleneagles Summit of the G8. I am also pleased with the progress made on building consensus in the fight against poverty here at the United Nations Summit. I am deeply concerned that we sometimes seem to move backward on our commitment as appears to be happening on the full cancellation of debt of the highly indebted poor countries. I believe we have to avoid backtracking and move beyond the reiteration of consensus position and start acting on them in earnest.

I am disappointed that we have not made more progress on the other issues before us but, like other speakers before me, I am reassured that we have made some progress and have charted a clear course for making additional progress.

Mr. President,

Let me close by reiterating Ethiopia's commitment to achieving the MDGs and to doing whatever is necessary to contribute to a successful reform of the United Nations.

I Thank You