

Statement by

**H.E. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
on behalf of the African group**

Copenhagen, Denmark

December 16, 2009

Allow me to first of all thank our gracious hosts, the people and government of Denmark for the warm reception we have enjoyed since our arrival and for the excellent facilities put at our disposal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our overworked and under appreciated experts and ministers who have, through their dedication and hard work, kept the hope of a global treaty on climate change alive.

Your Excellencies.

Global warming is happening. The rise of catastrophic climate change is very real. The science is as clear as it could ever be as to what the causes of such change are. It is no exaggeration to say that this is our best and perhaps our last chance to save our planet from destructive and unpredictable change. This is a test as to whether we as a global community are able to rise over our parochial interests to protect our common destiny.

In a way the climate change negotiations are about a lot more than merely addressing climate change issues. They are test cases as to how humanity is likely to face the emerging challenges of the 21st century. As globalization transforms the world into a single and tightly integrated economic space, how we manage global public goods such as the environment without a world government is likely to become a defining issue of our new century. If through foresight, dialogue and compromise we succeed in addressing the threat of climate change, it would be reasonable to assume that we

can manage similar challenges of our new century through collective effort. If we fail to rise above the current challenge of climate change, we will then have proved that global economic progress is based on a fundamentally dysfunctional political system. Sooner or later the economic edifice we have built will have to come crashing down.

It is therefore true that in more ways than one what is at stake here is the future of our species, the future of human civilization as we have come to know it.

Africa is keenly aware of the significance of climate change negotiations, and the Copenhagen Summit. That is why, for the first time since the establishment of the OAU, Africa has decided to speak with one voice and to field a single negotiating team mandated to negotiate on behalf of all the member states of the African Union. That is why all the delegations of African countries participating in the summit are here to support and reinforce the common negotiating team rather than negotiate on behalf of their individual countries. Ethiopia is deeply honored to have been chosen to be the spokesman of Africa on climate change and to lead the common negotiating team. I am immensely proud to be able to speak today not on behalf of my country Ethiopia, but on behalf of mother Africa as a whole.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Every one of us knows that Africa has contributed virtually nothing to global warming but has been hit first and hardest. The fragility of our eco-system has meant that for Africans the damage of climate change is not something that could happen in the future. It is already here with us sowing misery and death across the land. Africa is indeed paying with the misery and death of its people for the wealth and wellbeing that was created in the developed countries through carbon intensive development. That is fundamentally unjust.

But we are not here as victims nursing our wounds of injustice of the past. Africa is a continent of the future; it is destined to be a growth pole of the 21st century. We are therefore here not as victims of the past but as stakeholders of the future reaching out across the continents, so that together we can build a better and fairer future for all of us.

Not only has Africa contributed virtually nothing to the current level of carbon emissions, but is unlikely under any scenario to be a significant polluter in the future. Africa is a green field that can and wants to chart a different course of development, one that is not carbon intensive. To give an example of my own country, Ethiopia, we plan to sustain our current double digit rates of growth for the next 15 years so that by 2025 we become a middle income country. We plan to do so in a manner that would allow us to have zero net-carbon emissions by 2025. Our ambitions as Africans are the same throughout the continent. When it comes to taking care of the environment, we occupy the moral high ground and are proud of it.

But we are not here to bask in the glory of our high moral standards and pristine principles. We are not here to preach or to grandstand. We are here to negotiate, to give and take and seal a fair deal however messy such a deal might be. It is with this in mind that I wish to appeal to everyone to fill the limited gap we have in terms of carbon emission so that we will all have the chance to adapt to the new circumstances. It is also with this in mind that I wish to make the following specific proposals on finance on behalf of the African delegation.

I On-start up funding I propose:

(a) Support the establishment of a start-up fund of 10 billion dollars per annum for the three years of 2010-2012 to be used to address urgent adaptation and mitigation tasks including forestry and to prepare plans for more ambitious programs in the future.

(b) Propose that the start-up funding money should be put in a trust fund to be administered by a board of trustees composed of equal number of donor and recipient countries.

(c) Demand that 40% of the start-up fund be earmarked for Africa and request that the fund allocated for Africa be administered by the African Development Bank under the board of trustees mentioned above.

(d) Ask for the establishment of a committee of experts to work out the details of the points I have outlined above with the view to launching

the fund by the time of the next G-20 summit and ensuring quick disbursement thereafter.

II On long-term finance I propose:

(a) That funding for adaptation and mitigation start by 2013 to reach up to 50 billion dollars per annum by 2015 and 100 billion per annum by 2020.

(b) That no less than 50% of the fund should be allocated for adaptation to vulnerable and poor countries and regions such as Africa, and the small island states.

(c) That the fund be financed through creative financing mechanisms. No such mechanism from assessed contributions to creative use of SDR from taxes on financial transactions, to global auction of emission rights from carbon taxes to taxes on bunker oil and aviation should be excluded.

(d) That the UNFCCC mandate a commission of political leaders and experts to review all such funding mechanisms and come up with a reliable system of funding to achieve our targets and to submit its report within six months.

III On the administration of the fund I propose:

(a) That a fund for adaptation, and a fund for mitigation be established under the authority of the conference of the parties which should determine such things as access criteria, broad parameters for allocation of the fund etc.

(b) That a board of trustees composed of equal number of representatives from the developed and developing countries be established to oversee the day to day management of the fund.

(c) That the fund be administered in the case of Africa by the African Development Bank.

Your Excellencies.

I know my proposal today will disappoint those Africans who from the point of justice have asked for full compensation of the damage done to our development prospects. My proposal dramatically scales back our expectation with regards to the level of funding in return for more reliable funding and a seat at the table in the management of such fund.

I believe there is an important underlying principle here. Africa lose more than most if there is no agreement on climate change. We lose more not only because our ecology is more fragile but also because our best days are ahead and lack of agreement here could murder our future even before it is borne.

Because we have more to lose than others, we have to be prepared to be flexible and be prepared to go the extra-mile to accommodate others. That is exactly what my proposal is intended to achieve.

There should not be any doubt about our eagerness to compromise and cut a deal. But such flexibility on our part should not be confused with desperation. Africa is not prepared to accept empty words and agreements that undermine its fundamental interest. We are determined to make sure that in Copenhagen we will have an agreement that all of us, Africa included, are happy with or there will be no agreement for anyone.

I hasten to assure everyone that this is not meant to be an idle threat. It is meant to be a solemn promise by Africa that we will strive for a fair and just deal, and nothing more or less than that.

May I ask, Mr. Chairman, that my proposal be considered with the view to incorporating it in some final document that the leadership of our summit might submit to us all for final consideration?

I thank you for your kind attention.