Statement Delivered by H.E. Sophia Tesfamariam, Permanent Representative at the Eritrean Mission to the United Nations during the High-level meeting to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations
21 September 2020, New York

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you, on behalf of my delegation, on your assumption of the Presidency of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly. You can count on Eritrea’s full cooperation and support during your tenure. Allow me to also express my delegation’s deep appreciation to the outgoing President, H.E. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, for successfully conducting the last session despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

We are commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations amidst a global pandemic that has cost the lives of thousands; brought trade and commerce to a virtual halt, and affected the livelihoods of millions. This year was expected to bring an especially large number of leaders to U.N. headquarters to celebrate the founding of the organization, but instead, the events in the 75th Session have scaled down with most taking place virtually.

Unfortunately, not all states enjoyed the rights and privileges envisioned in the UN Charter. Eritrea joined the United Nations in 1993, spent the better part of the 75 years appealing to the UN for justice and respect for rights, enshrined in the UN Charter. The lives lost and opportunities lost in Eritrea’s quest for peace, are needless to say, incalculable.

Mr. President,

COVID-19 has exposed the inequalities in our world today, including the digital divide. It has also in many ways forced us all to work together to find solutions to many of our shared problems. It has illuminated the need for multilateralism to solve global issues. No country can defeat this scourge, and its economic and social effects, alone. Our interconnectedness and interdependence, illustrates an even greater need today for an invigorated rules based multilateral system that will leave no voice unheard, is abundantly clear.

As we enter the decade of action on the SDGs, it is imperative that we all work together, redouble our efforts, to mitigate setbacks due to COVID-19, in order to fully realize the aspirations of our peoples as envisioned in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Addis Ababa plan of action. 25 years since Beijing, it is a stark reminder that women still bear the brunt of most calamities and with COVID-19 it is no different.
The UN, in order to meet the aspirations of the world's peoples, will need to modernize, strengthen solidarity between nations big and small, achieve the SDGs, and respond to environmental issues brought on by climate change. It will need to end conflicts, promote peace and stability as well as address international crimes such as trafficking and terrorism, and growing humanitarian emergencies around the globe. A tall order for a 75 year old organization, whose scorecard remains wanting, mostly due to lack of political will from those who wield global power and influence.

But where there is hope, there are possibilities, let us take the bull by the horns, and make tomorrow a better place for all of humanity. We are indeed in this together. To paraphrase the theme for this year, the future we want, the UN we need will require political will and reaffirmation of our collective commitment to multilateralism.

Thank you