ETHIOPIA STATEMENT BY ANTENEH SENBETA, MINISTER, ON THEMATIC CONSULTATION OF THE PLENARY ON REPORT ON “OUR COMMON AGENDA”: THEMATIC CLUSTER II: ACCELERATING THE SDGS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND BUILDING TRUST: 14-15 FEBRUARY 2022

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President!

1. Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 & China and the African Group.

2. I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing on cluster II.

   I would like to recall the general comments we made on 10 February 2022.

Mr. Vice-President,

3. **On the matter of the listening exercise:** we appreciate the encouragement of the report for governments to engage in inclusive listening exercises. In approach, we would like to reiterate the need to adopt non-prescriptive methods for national affairs of states. The listening exercise by the UN must focus on the work of the organization and its impact.

4. **On tax and illicit financial flow and financial integrity:** The report rightly identifies critical issues. However, the institutional capability of national governments is indispensable. The global minimum taxation on multinational companies is not a replacement for national taxation. The reality is, lucrative
business goes on, untaxed and unaccounted for in conflict ravaged countries and communities.

5. Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) is chief among the impediments facing Agenda 2063 and the efforts to Silence the Guns in Africa. Africa\(^1\) lost close to a trillion dollars in the past 50 years, which exceeds the development assistance it received in that period. This loss currently stands at more than 50 billion dollars per year; my country stands ninth in Africa on this list.

6. We must recognize, this stolen money does not go to the ether. It is in banks and businesses outside of the continent. Much worse, the finance is being used to wage war and destabilize Africa. We expect the United Nations to be bold in calling out this injustice.

7. **Public information code of conduct and disinformation:** The regulation and accountability of media outlets, including the social media, demand advanced methods and approach. The UN is encouraged to explore an intergovernmental process to complement the efforts of countries to regulate online media. We must recognize, states have the prerogative to regulate content on the internet based on their national context and the need to preserve cultures and values.

8. During the 73\(^{rd}\) General Assembly, we adopted a resolution that prohibits the dissemination of false or distorted news, which can be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of other

\(^{1}\) High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows 2018
States; and defamatory campaign, vilification or hostile propaganda for the purpose of intervening or interfering in the internal affairs of other States. Nevertheless, this crime is the most rampant with the backing of states in many circumstances. The United Nations carries a unique responsibility to filter the truth from the lie, at least to make sure consequential political and other decisions are not passed based on disinformation.

9. **On the proposed Biennial Summit:** The international financial system requires an overhaul. This need has surfaced during the global pandemic, where the global system failed to address the financial implication of the pandemic according to the needs of developing economies. Therefore, the Biennial Summit should be representative of the whole membership of the UN and request the Secretary General to involve the General Assembly and the ECOSOC as primary participants in the summit.

10. **Rule of law:** rule of law and equality before the law embedded in the report are welcome. While the international norms states subscribe to are critical, we consider the need to respect the policy space of states. We encourage the United Nations to have a comprehensive look at rule of law at the international level, where we currently have might, instead of rules, instructing the conduct of states. Double standards are rife. Adherence to international laws is what economically and militarily weaker states do. Unilateral coercive measures are used in contravention with the widely agreed on norms. We also encourage the UN to look into
the organization’s institutional setting and undertake a candid review of compliance with regulations and rules set out for UN staff, UN finances and overall code of conduct to maintain its credibility and stature.

11. **Fair trade:** The structure of the global economy and the value system is lopsided against producers of primary goods. Our multilateral trading system should be mended in an inclusive way that recognizes the needs of low-income and other developing countries. Regional trading systems, such as the AfCFTA must be supported for the greater good.

    I thank you!