

**Statement**

**By**

**H.E. Ato Seyoum Mesfin**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal**  
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**at**

**the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit of the**  
**Non-Aligned Movement**

**Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt**

**16 July 2009**

**Mr. Chairman,**  
**Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**  
**Distinguished Heads of Delegation,**  
**Dear Delegates,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish, first of all, to thank the people and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the generous hospitality accorded to us in this beautiful city of Sharm El Sheik. We are also very appreciative of the arrangements made available for this important summit. We are confident that NAM will thrive under the stewardship of Egypt for the next three years.

The past three years have been years when NAM has had the opportunity to show that continues to play a vital role in world affairs, particularly in promoting global peace, security and stability as well as in realizing our common goals for development and growth. The Cuban leadership of the Movement has been enormously beneficial and we wish to express our deep appreciation to the people and Government of Cuba for raising high the banner of the Movement of the Non-Aligned countries and for enhancing its credibility. But we need to do more and the following years and decades are going to be critical in this regard.

That is also why the themes for this summit are so important.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The ongoing global economic crisis has not only had major negative impact on our economies, but this is bound to continue for some time to come. It is difficult to say that what we have ahead of us, is a period of great opportunities for the developing world for economic development.

For African countries, the accelerating rise in food prices and the sky-rocketing oil prices were the major hindrance to economic growth and a major burden to the well being of our people in 2008. This was followed in 2009 with the global economic downturn following the financial crisis. These developments have shown clearly how much African economies are indeed fragile. We are vulnerable, and devastatingly so, to both to too high commodity price rises and to the opposite phenomenon, to too low commodity prices. These economic events have also made too obviously manifest, the weaknesses and the deficiencies of the neo-liberal paradigm, and the fact that this orthodoxy does not offer a solution to our economic future. There is no doubt that there is a need for a new consensus; not dogma but workable economic consensus that lays the basis for the transformation of our economies. Our present vulnerability lies in the fact that our economies have not yet begun to rely on value addition, thus making us close to fatally dependent on commodities which, as present events have shown, cannot offer the bases for sustained economic growth and development, and economic transformation.

It is of course unrealistic to hope that it would be easy to reach a new consensus as a guide for economic development and co-operation. The maximum that can be done at present is perhaps to agree on the objectives and goals for international co-operation, say on achieving the MDG's, and then allow policy space for each country to devise its own economic means of achieving those goals.

**Mr. Chairman,**

One thing that we have to admit quite frankly is that we have not had so far the necessary policy space in international economic co-operation to be able to pursue effectively and with real international support economic policies that are independently formulated. Conditionalities have so far been the order of the day.

This has to change because there is no rationale for the attempt to impose orthodoxies that have been shown to be deficient. The Non-Aligned countries would need to raise their collective voice in this regard and work for the attainment of conditions in international co-operation which are friendly for the transformation of our economies. The future will indeed be bleak otherwise.

This should be done hand-in-hand with our collective effort on the issues of climate change and global warming for which the developed and the developing worlds have common, but differentiated responsibilities. Obviously, we have little responsibility for the growing danger and for the increase in global warming which is now growing at an alarming rate. But managing this increase at below 2<sup>0</sup>C is a common responsibility for which the developing world needs to be compensated. The Movement needs to play a pro-active role in this and take part in the upcoming Copenhagen meeting on climate change, actively. I am pleased to note that Africa has already made a decision to participate in that occasion through one delegation which is authorized to articulate the common African position on this vital matter. This issue should be brought upfront on the agenda of our Movement because at the end of the day this is a matter of protecting the very viability of our planet for which NAM has taken responsibility right from its very inception.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Our Movement has always been associated with advocacy for peace and for friendship and solidarity among peoples and nations. As members of the Movement, we all have the solemn obligation to the scrupulous observance of principles of international law governing inter-state relations. No doubt, it would be an illusion to hope for sustainable peace in an environment of economic malaise, hopelessness as well as in the midst of injustice. That is why the solution to the present global economic crisis and its impact on the developing world is so

crucial, as is finding just solutions to all conflict situations as well as all situations where injustice prevails.

But it is also critical that states and governments abide by rules and principles governing civilized behavior among nations. No less critical is our readiness, in good faith, to take a firm position, as a matter of principle, when states, include some among us, not only fail to comply with, but also violate in a flagrant manner, this rules and principles.

Our Movement is not a movement based on the exercise of power. The real power it has is the power of moral suasion and the credibility it has as a Movement that stands for what is in the interest of humanity in general. That is why there is no other entity in the world comparable to NAM with the global reach as a custodian of multilateralism and principles of international law governing friendly relations among nations. Our Movement has its plate full in this regard in the following years. I have no doubt we are in good hands with Egypt at the helm for the next three years.

**I thank you!**