

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Abdusalam H. Omer**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**The Federal Republic of Somalia**

**“SDGs coming to life”**

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**Excellencies and distinguished guests,**

It is truly a great honour to be welcomed to speak at this event by H.E. Helen Clark, the Chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Helen is very humble and energetic and I can tell you she has broken many glass ceilings in terms of international politics by becoming the 37th Prime Minister of New Zealand. As Prime Minister she served three consecutive terms from 1999 to 2008 and was the first woman elected at a general election as the Prime Minister of New Zealand. This valuable experience and utter determination has seen her lead on the SDG's in a way that has both brought them to life and made them an international priority. Thank you, Helen.

I am glad for the title of this side event, “**SDG's coming to life**” because I believe that we must urgently bring the SDG's to life to act on the hopes of millions of people across the developing world and to create more progressive, inclusive and prosperous societies everywhere. I believe, in the final analysis, that development in all its forms is a basic human right. Which human being does not need to eat? To work? To feel safe? To learn? To be treated equally and fairly? These are painful but pertinent rhetorical questions and their answers are contained in the SDG's we endorsed at last year's General Assembly. Therefore, it is crucial we work even harder to make these empowering 17 SDG goals practicable and meaningful.

Implementing the SDG's anywhere in the developing world comes with some complexities and challenges. Aside from the physical need for security, the urgency to kick start the economy to create jobs and provide decent education like in the case of Somalia, there can also be policy and political constraints such as limited human resources. Yet, despite all these challenges, we in Somalia are proud to report that we are well on our way to not only understanding the importance of the SDG's inclusive implementation but that we have undertaken a large scale, year- long listening and drafting exercise to complete our first draft National Development Plan which is based on the achievement of the SDG's in their entirety.

Somalia has made tangible social, political and economic progress since 2012 when the first internationally recognized Somali Government since 1991 came to office. This Government is laying the fundamental groundwork for the creation of a more democratic, inclusive and prosperous Somalia with State institutions that both recognize and respond to the resilient Somali people's developmental needs and aspirations. Yet given our difficult past and the limited timeframe within which we have made this progress, the recovery is still fragile and must be secured with economic development and lifesaving and empowering basic public services such as health, education, water and employment. The Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia truly agrees that the only way to have long term recovery and resilience is to have a truly inclusive approach to form the foundation for long term sustainable development.

Somalia is grateful for the efforts of all its valuable partners in our fruitful national developmental journey but we recognize ourselves that we have not yet fulfilled our potential due to economic and certain political constraints. However, what we have learnt is that in order to achieve the SDG's, given our limited national resources, we prioritize within the SDG's themselves. In this regards, we must focus on the key immediate priorities such as institutions building, skills, education, job creation and investment in key sectors like infrastructure so that we can also achieve the remaining SDG's in a timely and effective manner by 2030.

Somalia has the longest coast in Africa. At 3,330 Kilometers in length, our coast is a treasure trove of wealth, health and leisure for our people, investors and visitors. Therefore, promoting and benefitting from the Blue Economy in all its forms, including sustainable fishing, tourism, and coastal community development, is a must for our Government to achieve many of the SDG's by 2030. On this issue, I always like to summarize the potential of the rich Somali coastline and its lack of full utilization by the Somali people and investors with a joke. **This joke is Somali fish are dying of old age.**

Diverse partnerships, SDG 17, have and remain absolutely fundamental to bringing the SDG's to life in Somalia and everywhere else. The Somali Federal Government understands that it cannot do it alone and as such, we have engaged with the Somali people, business community, Diaspora and our international partners, including the UNDP, to formulate our National Development Plan. This is the best evidence of the Plan been people led and centred. It also contains their priorities and how to achieve them so that in the end, no one is left behind.

While the Somali Federal Government and People will do the heavy lifting, I am confident our valuable partners will continue with us on this fruitful journey to further progress.

**I thank you.**