

## **Draft A3+1 statement at the open debate on the situation in Ethiopia**

**Thank you, Mr. President,**

1. I speak on behalf of the A3+1, namely Kenya, Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on this important crisis in Africa.

2. I thank the Secretary General for his presentation and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia.

**Mr. President,**

3. We meet today regarding the decision by the Federal Government of Ethiopia to declare seven UN officials working in Ethiopia as persona non grata. In light of the previous concerns we have expressed in calling for maximum access to enable humanitarian aid to reach Ethiopians in need, we noted the PNG notice with concern.

4. We say this in the full understanding of the duties and obligations that all humanitarian actors must respect in the conduct of their work. Nevertheless, the risks of a large-scale famine, which, to a large extent, is being prevented by the aid delivered by the organizations to which the expelled individuals belong, raises serious concerns.

5. Even within their sovereign rights, governments should observe their domestic and international humanitarian law obligations. The rights of the Ethiopian people to receive aid in this dire emergency are of the highest moral and legal character.

6. We strongly urge the government and the United Nations to undertake every effort to resolve any differences and get back to ensuring aid is delivered to

Ethiopians in desperate need. Concerns regarding the expelled individuals should be thoroughly considered, on the basis of substantiated evidence and within a frank and genuine dialogue between the Ethiopian Government and the United Nations. Discussing these issues publicly may not be constructive in the current circumstances, nor will it alleviate the suffering of the populations affected by the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

7. The efforts of quiet diplomacy, undertaken through constructive dialogue between the United Nations and Ethiopia are our best option to address this issue. In the meantime, we believe that priority must be given to the continuity of unfettered humanitarian assistance to needy people in northern Ethiopia. We welcome the renewed commitments of both sides in this regard.

**Mr. President,**

8. With a newly established Government in Ethiopia, we reiterate that peaceful dialogue and democracy are the best mechanisms for the resolution of serious political differences.

9. Today, we cannot help but return to this position. Noticing, with pain as fellow Africans, the suffering of our Ethiopian brothers and sisters in Tigray and elsewhere in the country.

10. The highest priority then, at this stage, is to declare an immediate ceasefire, to allow for an unrestricted humanitarian access to the affected population as well as for the re-establishment of public services in all the conflict areas.

11. We recognize and welcome the Government's extensive efforts deployed since the beginning of the conflict to deliver humanitarian aid and to enhance humanitarian access.

12. We emphasize on the need to continue efforts towards the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and strongly encourage the Ethiopian authorities to fulfill all their commitments in ensuring humanitarian outreach to the people in need.

13. The A3+1 recognizes the important role of UN Humanitarian agencies and all humanitarian actors, which should be supported.

14. In this context, we call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law (in particular under the 1949 Geneva Conventions and its 1977 Additional Protocols). They should also ensure the respect and protection of all humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, as reiterated in Security Council resolutions 1502 and 2175.

15. At the same time, we underline the obligation of all humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel to observe and respect the laws of the country in which they are operating, in accordance with international law, including the principle of non-interference.

16. Further, we stress the importance for humanitarian organizations to uphold the core principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity in their humanitarian activities, in full respect of the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the host State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. President,**

17. The humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia, is part of a much bigger and complex crisis which is unfolding with a potential regional spillover effect that may threaten peace and security in Ethiopia and beyond.

18. With the hostilities expanding to the Amhara and Afar regions, it is clear that there could be no military solution to this crisis and that taking up guns will only protract the conflict.

19. The A3+1 therefore calls on all Ethiopian parties to cease hostilities and to engage in discussion with a view to conclude a comprehensive and permanent cease fire which would pave the way for an inclusive Ethiopian-led dialogue and to national reconciliation.

20. We also strongly call for the withdrawal of all non-Ethiopian forces from Tigray and the standing down of all militias from neighboring federal states.

21. The African Union has a major role to play to help Ethiopians in their reconciliation efforts so that they can protect their unity and territorial integrity and recover Ethiopia's status as an anchor of regional peace and stability.

22. In this regard we support the active engagement of His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, High representative of the African Union for the Horn of Africa, to promote, through political dialogue, peace and, security in the region, particularly in Ethiopia.

23. We call on all stakeholders and international partners to extend every possible support to the High Representative and to allow the continent the necessary space to resolve its challenges with the support of the international community.

24. In conclusion, Mr. President, we, the A3+1, reaffirm our respect for and commitment to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. We stand in solidarity with our sister nation at this trying moment in their pursuit of peace and stability.

25. We hope that the new government effectively lays the foundations of a new beginning, especially by carrying the robust national dialogue on peace, cohesion, development, and unity in diversity.