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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى
الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS NEW YORK

**Remarks by H.E Ms. Sophia Tesfamariam
Head of Delegation of the State of Eritrea
Second World Summit for Social Development,
Doha, Qatar, 4 to 6 November 2025**

*Your Excellency,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

My delegation is honored to address the Second World Summit for Social Development. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the State of Qatar for their generous hospitality and for successfully organizing this important Summit. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank the facilitators, Belgium and Morocco, for their dedicated stewardship of the Declaration adopted at this Summit.

The 1995 Declaration and Programme of Action established a visionary global framework to **eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment, and foster social integration**. However, the subsequent decades have seen widening inequalities between and within nations, recurrent economic crises, growing climate vulnerabilities, and a resurgence of geopolitical tensions that have derailed the momentum of social progress.

The Secretary-General's follow-up reports in the early 2000s already warned that the forces of globalization were serving to deepen disparities and further marginalize the world's most impoverished populations. Two decades later, the underlying structural imbalances remain, in large measure, unrectified. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed, in stark relief, the inherent fragility of global social systems.

It is against this backdrop that we gather once again to renew our collective determination to build a just and inclusive international order where every person can live with dignity, security, and opportunity.

Excellencies,

For Eritrea, social development is not a matter of external policy prescription or a target to be met through dependency. It is an inalienable sovereign right, a paramount national responsibility, and the very fundamental object of our arduously-won independence. Our developmental philosophy is firmly anchored in the twin, indissoluble pillars of **Self-Reliance** and **Social Justice**. **Self-reliance**, to the Eritrean spirit, signifies the emancipation of the mind from any culture of subservience or dependency. **Social Justice**, for its part, is the ultimate *telos* of this self-reliant path. It is the rejection of a model that concentrates wealth in urban centres while neglecting the periphery. Eritrea's commitment to these cardinal principles is reflected in the tangible progress achieved across different social sectors, often with limited resources and in the face of sustained external hostility.

In the **health sector**, Eritrea has registered achievements by prioritizing primary healthcare and preventive medicine, the country has dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates, meeting and exceeding several Millennium Development Goals well ahead of schedule. In **education**, we have expanded access at all levels, from early childhood to tertiary and vocational education, across the country. Nationwide literacy campaigns have empowered adults, while persistent efforts to ensure gender parity have led to significant increases in girls' enrollment. Eritrea's progress in **poverty eradication** and **productive employment** is equally notable. Poverty has been steadily reduced through community-driven development initiatives that harness the energies of our people in agriculture, infrastructure, and small enterprise. Resulting in the national poverty rate falling by over one-third in the past decade, driven largely by successful rural development campaigns.

We have, furthermore, invested heavily in the foundational building blocks of **social progress**. Eritrea's nationwide water security campaign has led to the construction of thousands of micro-dams, check-dams, and reservoirs to harvest water for

potable use and irrigation. This concerted effort has improved agricultural productivity, substantially strengthened climate resilience, and directly enhanced public health and food security. In parallel, extensive housing and road-building initiatives have connected remote communities and fostered equitable regional development.

Excellencies,

It must be candidly stated that our achievements have been realized in the face of profound and persistent impediments that must be unequivocally acknowledged. **Politically**, Eritrea has been compelled to endure decades of externally imposed challenges, including unjust and illegal sanctions, the occupation of its sovereign territories, and deliberate efforts intended to isolate and destabilize our nation. We were constrained to operate under a deleterious “no-war, no-peace” paradigm that diverted immense national resources. **Economically**, we have consciously avoided unsustainable external debt and conditional assistance that erode national ownership and sovereignty.

Sustainable social development cannot possibly flourish within a global system that extracts more from the developing world than it contributes, or within a trade regime that systematically marginalizes those nations seeking equitable integration into the world economy. **Climate change** presents yet another formidable challenge. Guided by our inherent **self-reliant ethos**, Eritrean people are not waiting for others to act. The country is substantially investing in renewable energy, particularly solar and wind power, to ensure sustainable rural electrification and economic growth. Eritrea’s experience demonstrates that social development is achievable, even under the most challenging circumstances, when grounded in clear principles and a coherent national vision.

Excellencies,

As we convene in Doha, we must look forward. The international community bears the ethical duty to address the structural injustices that persistently hinders equitable development. It must immediately cease the application of coercive measures, promote genuine partnerships, and reform global governance

institutions to reflect the realities and voices of all nations, not merely the powerful few. The State of Eritrea stands resolute and determined to build a future where every citizen lives a life characterized by dignity, health, and opportunity.

I thank you.