Statement by Her Excellency Dr Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health of Ethiopia  
On the De Minims Session of the 73rd World Health Assembly  
Agenda item 3

Thank you chair

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Congo on behalf of the African Group.

Ethiopia commends the Director General for his inclusive report on COVID 19 and highly appreciates the fundamental leadership role of WHO in coordinating the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in supporting the national response efforts of member states. The dedication of WHO leadership and staff demonstrated is to be highly valued rather than undermined during this crucial moment.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The increased adverse impacts of COVID 19 pandemics on the lives of people, and on the fabric of society around the world is concerning. The virus, is not only attacking the health of our people; but also devastating economies, social and cultural lives, and affecting our way of living at large. This is why COVID 19 response requires a whole of government, whole of society approach at national level and increased collaboration and support with a spirit of solidarity at the global level.

Ethiopia calls for universal, timely and equitable access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable essential health technologies and products including vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and Protective Equipment. We call for the removal of all kinds of legal, policy or technical barriers that impede access.

Since the first case was identified in Ethiopia on March 13 2020, the Government of Ethiopia took decisive multi-dimensional measures to contain the spread of the disease in the country. Ethiopia is also actively contributing to the continental response through ensuring timely distribution of test kits and protective equipment to African countries in collaboration with WHO, African CDC and our partners. Ethiopia is committed to continue working closely with our neighboring countries to control the spread of this devastating disease in the region.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the only way out of this unfortunate and dreadful situation is collaboration based on respect and solidarity. I would also like to emphasize the instrumentality of WHO’s leadership in order to overcome the challenge and to recover quickly by adopting to the new norm of global health security and health diplomacy.

Thank you