

His Excellency, Dr. Seleshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Electricity of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Madam Nehal Magdy Ahmed Elmegharbel, Deputy Minister of Planning and International Co-operation of Egypt, His Excellency Dr. Anthony Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs at the African Union Commission, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Excellences, Honourable ministers, distinguished delegates, welcome to the third African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

The overall objective of the ARFSD is to undertake regional follow-up and review and to facilitate learning, including the sharing of experience and lessons learned to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

The 17 sustainable development goals are about a blueprint for development. It is about a collaborative road map that global leaders have charted to configure a new model of development that will deliver on economic growth and sustain environmental preservation.

In Africa, it is about a plan that will bail the continent out of poverty – Ladies and Gentlemen, it is our unique opportunity to arrive at transformational change –and ensure sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices.

It is also about a lot of other imperatives – but more than that, it is about our common future as humanity, as people, as economies, striving to ensure that peace, prosperity, people and planet are not mortgaged in our drive to achieve absolute growth.

With that, I would like to now hand over to our distinguished speakers to make their respective statements. I would like to call on Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, the acting executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to make his statement. Mr Hamdok.