

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with a heavy heart that I, on behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, join you “the United Nations Family in Ethiopia” to commemorate and pay tribute to the life of the profound and beloved son of Africa, Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General.

We Africans know how to celebrate the life of a great man while mourning his departure. I feel honored to commemorate the extraordinary life and achievement of our Brother at the same place where he started his long and successful career at the UN Economic Commission for Africa, here in Africa’s political and diplomatic capital - Addis Ababa.

Mr. Kofi Annan was the face of the United Nations and represented multilateralism. He made us all Africans proud by his tireless service for the causes of peace, sustainable development, the rights of women, and above all by being a staunch vanguard for the principles of the United Nations Charter. Most notably, Mr. Kofi Annan made crucial contributions to help developing countries navigate through, and play a meaningful role, in the increasingly globalizing world. He wrote, spoke, and established an organization for these causes that he believed in.

Mr. Kofi Annan’s service was not without challenges. In fact, he had served as the Secretary General of the United Nations at the dawn of a trying time for multilateralism. He dealt with the emergence of new peace and security threats, armed conflicts that continue to date, and polarized debates on issues such as climate change that changed the dynamics of international relations. Through all this, Mr Kofi Anan was exemplary in speaking truth to power and in putting forth his concerns regarding the rise of intolerant political cultures.

At the time of his passing, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kofi Annan was not done serving the world and was far from retirement. He continued to make huge contributions through his foundation for the betterment of the world.

His great works and his remarkable legacy as a global champion for peace, development and human rights will remain a true inspiration for all of us in Africa and the world at large.

I wish to use this opportunity to express Ethiopia’s deepest condolences to his family and friends.

I thank you.