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**Statement Made by Ethiopia
On behalf of Africa Group
on the Decade of People of African Descent
12th Session of the IGWG on the Effective Implementation of the DDPA**

07 April 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group welcomes the convening of the 12 session of Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

The Group commend the excellent work being done by H.E. Mohamed Siad Doualeh, Ambassador Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti and reiterates our trust and confidence in his stewardship.

The African Group also welcomes the work of the IGWG, in particular its efforts to implement the outcomes of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/237.

The African Group notes with appreciation the request made by the United Nations General Assembly to elaborate the Programme of activities from the existing Draft Programme of Action for People of African Descent before 30 June 2014.

The African Group, recognise the need for us to support and work collaboratively, through this process of the IGWG and the Human Rights Council, with People of African Descent in the Diaspora in respect of the realisation of their right to equality and dignity.

The 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance recognised that People of African Descent living in the Diaspora had for centuries, been victims of racism, racial discrimination and enslavement. People of African Descent continue to be victims of the cascading legacies of slavery, the slave trade, including the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, amongst others. It is within this context that the 2001 WCAR prioritised People of African Descent as a category of victims which suffered the worst forms of historical injustices. This category is therefore universally recognised as the first category of victims in terms of the scale and gravity of suffering.

Unfortunately, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to have a negative impact on the full enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. This is particularly blatant for people of African descent, and other minorities identified in the DDPA in general, including in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, access to citizenship, administration of justice, racial profiling as well as access to political decision-making process and judicial systems. In addition, women and girls belonging to certain communities remain particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, racial abuse and violence.

In this context, the African Group strongly calls upon all Member States and the international community to further demonstrate political will to prevent and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances and promote effective action to eliminate these instances around the world.

The Group urges Member States to ensure that the Decade focus on the plight of the victims, in order to improve their human rights situation. It is important to note that the draft Programme of Action on the International Decade for People of

African Descent has been elaborated by the Working Group of Experts and endorsed by the Council in its Resolution 21/33. Therefore, our task is to elaborate the programme of activities as clearly outlined by the HRC resolution. Bearing in mind the two consensus resolutions and in view of ensuring the success, full and effective implementation of the Decade, the African Group has provided, in advance, its input to the Programme of Activities.

Finally, the African Group reaffirms the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as an action oriented, forward looking and solid foundation for states in their national capacities to elaborate programmes of activities aimed at eliminating the scourges of racism. The Working Group needs to bring its support to the Durban process and to effectively implement the commitments contained in those documents.

The African Group would like to reiterate its commitment to work constructively with all countries for the successes of this session.

I thank you.

