

## **Opening remarks Slow Onset Impacts, Fast Action!**

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Good afternoon everyone.

I am quite pleased to make my opening remarks for this side event on **Slow Onset Impacts, Fast Action!**

Under the Fiji presidency - and as the chair of the climate vulnerable forum - we anticipate to see strong focus on climate change vulnerability and adaptation.

However, climate change is often associated with extreme rapid onset events such as intense typhoons and hurricanes, or heavy precipitation. Despite this, climate change is also manifested through slow onset events, such as sea level rise or ocean acidification, whose rate of impact is gradual and appears less destructive than that of extreme events.

Science is proving to us that the negative impacts of slow onset events are already affecting developing countries and there is an urgent need to manage the risks, despite the slow pace of the process.

The organizers of this side events have also pointed out that there is still much to be done in addressing slow onset events or climate impacts that develop within a prolonged period of time. And this requires forward-looking risk management options that are beyond insurance solutions.

Addressing slow onset events also brings about opportunities for coordinated action that is cross cutting – addressing important current global agenda linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Aichi Biodiversity target.

In Ethiopia our climate change response engagement has been driven at the highest level of government. Consecutive Prime

Ministers have driven the agenda, our finance and national planning authorities together with us in the environment and climate change ministry have coordinated the climate change response engagement, and our sectoral ministries and provincial governments have been the drivers for mainstreaming our climate change response measures.

However, we are aware that several non-government actors – including civil society, academia and research institutions – need to be the backbone for attaining the success our efforts deserve.

As part of our climate change response journey, non-governmental actors were critical:

- In supporting the development of district level climate change planning processes;
- In supporting the bankable project proposals development process for funding with the Green Climate and Adaptation Funds;
- In being part of the governance structure for our climate change response coordination.

The wealth of knowledge, scientific and grassroots level experiences that these institutions have – has made them an indispensable partner in this journey.

Our approach in Ethiopia has been and will continue to be to encourage academic and research institutions to take the forefront in helping us understand better - the future climate change related implications for Ethiopia, and also help us establish strong links between extreme and slow onset events, and a changing climate.

Of course, addressing extreme weather events is critical for us – we have faced several climate induced drought events, including a major drought event in 2015. However, we feel academic and research institutions will have an important role in understanding and will help us take proactive measures in relation to slow onset events.

In the context of the climate vulnerable forum we would also like to see a network of southern (developing countries) academic institutions that can have strong exchanges and learning – and eventually strong capacity - in understanding and identifying options to proactively address and respond the implications of slow onset events.

Thank you.