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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Your Excellency Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to join you once again in this discussion exploring connectivity and sources of growth. As a global community, we are witnessing that over the past several years our world has become ever more interconnected and interdependent. The role that technology has played and will continue to play in closing the distance is quite evident.

In our collective efforts to strengthen transnational cooperation through the Belt and Road Initiative, platforms like this give us the space to fortify the means and processes through which our policy, infrastructure, trade, financing and people-to-people connectivity is enhanced.

Furthermore, it also gives us the opportunity to ensure that our collective growth is anchored in equity, mutual respect, justice and win-win outcomes for all. It is with this spirit of connectivity that Ethiopia has welcomed the Belt and Road Initiative.

An early harvest of this initiative in Ethiopia has manifested in the construction of export-oriented industrial parks, expected to facilitate the expansion of our manufacturing sector. In enabling cross-boundary connectivity, the Belt and Road Initiative is also marking a win through development of the Addis Ababa to Djibouti electric railway. Such infrastructure facilitates not only ease in trade, but enhances the opportunities for people to connect across borders and artificial divides.

My administration's vision espoused in our philosophy of MEDEMER, which loosely translates to synergy – is to see an economically and socially integrated Horn region. Therefore, regional

cooperation championed through the Belt and Road Initiative provides the impetus for Horn region integration efforts.

Boosting the political successes being made in the region requires us to further strengthen infrastructure connectivity. It also entails increasing concessional financing while reducing the related costs. Lastly, it also necessitates innovating new channels of financing like Public Private Partnership schemes.

It is also my expectation that in sustaining the Belt and Road Initiative, we will have to anchor it where it matters most – maximizing people to people connections and cultural exchanges. It is ultimately our understanding and acceptance of each other that will sustain our cooperation.

Lastly, I would like to draw your attention to the abundance of opportunities that are flourishing in Ethiopia. Through our economic reforms, we are focused on creating an enabling investment environment. Therefore, our priority areas like agro-industry and tourism sector development have great potential for mutual growth.

On this note, I conclude by extending a warm invitation for investment and trade partners to come explore and participate in the bounty of our reforms.

I thank you.