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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Your Excellencies,
Brothers and Sisters of Sudan,

It is with great honor that I stand here before you bearing witness to this momentous day, which marks the birth of a new era for this great nation.

We are gathered here in celebration of the people of Sudan who have sacrificed greatly to guarantee their freedoms.

We give special tribute to the fallen who have paid the ultimate price towards realizing their vision for a democratic country. As the world observes the coming into effect of this agreement between the Transitional Military Council and the Forces for Freedom and Change, let it remain a standing testimonial to remember the lives that have passed, though not in vain.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the parties to the agreement for choosing country over self; for placing the collective wishes of the Sudanese people above individual interests; and most importantly for showing the world that dialogue is the only way to a win-win solution.

In your commitment to dialogue and openness for engagement, you have all demonstrated that our historic African tradition of coming together to problem solve will always be the beacon lighting our way to our greater potential for harmony.

Dearest Brothers and Sisters of Sudan,

The people and Government of Ethiopia celebrate with you today. Your victory is our victory in the same way that your pain is our pain. The relationship between Ethiopia and the Sudan, surpassing many years, has been firmly rooted in mutual respect and solidarity. It is premised upon the undeclared understanding that our fates are intertwined and extend beyond mere neighborliness. The historic relations our two countries have enjoyed; our current socio-economic cooperation and diplomatic ties, and our shared future, are the three key pillars upon which a continuously strengthening relationship between Ethiopia and the Sudan are built.

It is with a genuine vested interest in seeing the good people of Sudan prosper and thrive that my Government committed itself over the past few months to supporting a peaceful transition - true to the peace-loving nature of the Sudanese people.

It is critical to recognize that the journey to this day has not been easy. Reaching consensus is laborious; requires both emotional and technical intelligence; and demands patience. Nevertheless, through many dark tunneled passages we persist, with the firm belief that our collective well-intentioned efforts will pave the way for a common understanding to emerge. A common ground defined by principles of fairness, equality, dignity and foremost love of country and people.

The progression of the various agreements concluded in today's ceremony is a clear demonstration of how integration of inputs from well-meaning partners can pave the way to peace. Withstanding minor temporary setbacks, which are a part of any negotiation, the Sudanese-led dialogue process that through today's signing ceremony births a civilian government, will be remembered throughout history as an embodiment of our often stated, but not always practiced, principle of home-grown solutions.

In our resolve to conceptualize and realize home-grown solutions, we demonstrate to ourselves our potential and clear propensity to manifest regional peace. The essence of our people in the Horn region has always been cooperation over competition. And inherent to our collective survival and prosperity in the region is MEDEMER – the synergistic yarn weaving us together to create collectively, what we can only imagine individually. As we work at the national level to bring peace and stability to our countries, by instilling the principles and mechanisms of democracy, we are simultaneously placing a firm foundation for regional economic, social and political integration.

Beyond the artificial boundaries we have drawn on our maps and, in our minds, our survival and that of generations to come is dependent on making a paradigm shift. This paradigm shift entails examining how we view and relate with one another. From competition to our original essence of cooperation; from dichotomous thinking and zero-sum fragmentation to harmony and amalgamation – recognizing that there is strength in unity.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey my greatest admiration and respect to my Special Envoy for Sudan, Ambassador Mahmoud Dirir. A seasoned diplomat with a desire for peace, his impartial commitment to the Sudan talks has borne fruit. I would also like to express my gratitude to the African Union's Special Envoy Professor Mohammed Hassen Labat for his tireless contribution to facilitating the dialogue between the two parties. I congratulate both of you and also share my appreciation to all who have played a positive role.

Dearest Sudanese brothers and sisters,

Your path to democracy has just began. Let not this achievement overshadow the hard work that awaits all of you. Many seek and speak of democracy but seldom grasp the responsibility that comes with it. Building functioning democracies takes more than merely demanding it. It requires a clear and steady commitment to articulating and living democratic principles by which all will be governed. It requires building the necessary institutions. It demands the combined efforts of various stakeholders working in synchronicity. But most importantly, it entails individuals recognizing that each action they take against another, who they believe is not like them, is actually decomposing the very principles they have fought to bring forth.

And so, my parting words to the new civilian Government and people of Sudan is – be the custodians of peace and the guardians of dignity. Protect today’s victory and what it took to get here, from the ill-intentioned. And recognize that regardless of which side of the negotiating table you were seated at, you were all negotiating for Sudan.

Let that common purpose be your anchor as you safeguard this great nation and people.

I thank you.

Shukraan.