

**Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Teruneh Zena, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations
On behalf of the African Member States of the United Nations
On the observance of the World Food Day**

Thank you,

I am pleased to address the observance of World Food Day 2004 in my capacity as the Chairman of the African Group. Our group attaches great importance to the activities carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Indeed the African continent is the only region where the food security situation has either stagnated or deteriorated over the last couple of decades. And ironically this happens to be the period when the rest of the world has experienced tremendous achievements in terms of improving agricultural productivity and food availability. The African leadership recognizes this unacceptable state of affairs. It has therefore accorded high priority to the achievement of food security in the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Africa is one of the major bases of bio-diversity. The theme of this year's World Food Day has therefore significant meaning to our continent. The objective of attaining development in general and food security in particular needs to be seen from the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environment. The preservation of bio-diversity is at the heart of sustainable environment.

As we observe the World Food Day, let us remind ourselves the plight of the more than 840 million people who remain hungry around the world. Given the technological advancement in agriculture and other fields solving this problem is within our reach. Obviously, the world needs to do much more than what it has so far to realize the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals of reducing the number of the hungry by half by 2015. Bio-diversity and its sustainable use is one crucial factor to the achievement of this goal.

Thank you.