Remarks by H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at COP 21, 30 November, 2015
Mr Chairperson!

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

At the outset I would like to express my gratitude to our host, the people and government of the Republic of France. I pledge our unity and solidarity with you, while you battle and defeat terrorism and my condolences for the families of the victims.

I have come to Paris, at this defining moment, to tell you of the struggles and hopes of my people; the stories of a hundred million people, who are working hard, to eradicate poverty and establish a fair, prosperous and sustainable economy.

Over the past 15 years, with hard work, and support, we have decreased, by more than half, the number of people living in poverty; and met many of the Millennium Development Goals, including those relating to child and maternal mortality. We are determined to work harder and achieve more in the Sustainable Development Goals we have set for ourselves.

Yet climate change, weather variability and related disasters threaten our lives, livelihoods, and hard-fought development gains.

We have seen average temperature rise, within half a century, by one degree centigrade. The rains have become unpredictable, unreliable. Extreme droughts and floods have become more frequent and severe. At the moment, el nino-triggered drought is affecting millions of my people.
We have not caused climate change. We cannot solve it on our own. We find ourselves in a situation which justifies surrender, hopelessness and bitterness. But we choose to be hopeful and proactive.

Our farmers and pastoralists contribute more than 30 days of voluntary labor in a year, terracing and planting trees and conserving the soil and water that helps to mitigate emissions and help to adapt.

We work hard and sacrifice to produce clean electric power from renewable sources. We invest in increasing our resilience to climate change. We invest in modernizing our livestock and conduct climate smart agriculture. We invest in clean, modern and efficient technologies.

No doubt, these are endeavors from which we derive benefits. But it is also true that these help reduce the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.

We need global partnership and cooperation to overcome climate change.

We are ready to be true partners, to chip in. We already announced we will create a carbon neutral economy, reducing emissions by 64 percent by 2030. Many agree that this is more than our fair share. We need to see matching actions and support from our partners.

First, our partnership should be based on clear and measurable global goals. We need to keep temperature rise to well below 1.5 degrees. We need to peak global emissions as soon as possible, and decrease it thereafter within a time frame and scale consistent with the temperature goal.
Second, every nation has to contribute. Of course, national contributions need to be differentiated, reflecting responsibility, need and capacity.

It is welcome that the national contributions submitted this year have reduced the extent of projected global warming over the century ahead. But let us not pretend that a future of around 3 degrees of warming is something to celebrate.

If poor people like us can resolve to create a carbon neutral economy, surely better placed nations can and should do much more.

Third, the global partnership and cooperation should provide for adequate support for low-carbon development and the creation of resilient societies and ecosystems.

If the poor in Ethiopia can sacrifice savings and labor, surely better placed nations can and should do more to support them.

Fourth, we should agree to regularly come to the table and measure progress in mobilizing the required actions and support and encourage each other to top up contributions.

This is no time for shirking responsibility. This is no time for false promises. We should speak in good faith. We are not adversaries. We owe this to our citizens, businesses, local governments and non-governmental organizations. Let us leave Paris with a legally binding, ambitious, durable, fair and effective agreement which shows partnership and cooperation that protects our common security and advances our common humanity.

I thank you for your kind commission!