



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**8th PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE (PAC)
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
SOCIETIES (IFRC) AND THE ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (ERCS)**

STATEMENT

by

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Excellency, Ato Haile-Mariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia,
Distinguished Leadership of the ICRC,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to be here with you at this 8th Pan African Conference of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which is being co-organized with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society. The IFRC and its associated national bodies continue to justify their well-earned reputation for being first in line for responding to astounding humanitarian crises.

These notable efforts to build the capacity of affected people to create a better and more secure for themselves and their families are commendable. They resound very much with the work that we are doing at ECA to promote growth and transformation in Africa.

The IFRC vision that all humanitarian interventions should alleviate human suffering, while promoting social advancement is a compelling one. It is a testament to the importance that Societies, such as this one, place on being relevant and adapting to modern times. African countries continue to be ravaged by a variety of humanitarian crises, including most recently devastating floods.

The reality, however, is that if humanitarian responses remain static and reactive they will fall short of achieving their ultimate purpose. Interventions must accordingly move beyond simply providing short-term relief, to also supporting the emergence of empowered citizens with improved quality of life.

It is for the foregoing reasons that I am pleased that the theme of this meeting is - Investing in Africa. It is a particularly relevant topic to address in the Africa of

today. I envision in this regard a process of transforming victims to change agents which along with other positive trends will help to bring about a paradigm shift. To make today's innocent victims of catastrophic events tomorrow's change-makers requires that we equip them with relevant knowledge and technical skills. It means that they should have opportunities for gainful employment or entrepreneurship. They should be further supported to know their rights and demand accountability of governments at all levels. In other words they should become "active citizens".

A number of things would need to be done if the desired investment is to be meaningful. Most important of all, we should think beyond our traditional *modus operandi*. We should not be satisfied with simply responding to the basic needs of unfortunate victims. We must invest in them so that they are equipped to provide for themselves. We must invest in young minds, so that the next generation moves away from conflict and is strategically able to respond to humanitarian disasters arising from natural events and environment damage. We must also invest in the political landscape so that leaders are visionary, accountable and conflict averse. We must invest in stronger governance frameworks that promote transparency and equity. We must, indeed, invest in African economies such that they can better attract both domestic and foreign investment for own growth and transformation.

In closing, let me urge you to pay close attention to considering what further role the IFRC and its associated chapters can play in Africa while attaining the purposes mandated by your humanitarian vision. Investments in behavioral change and in disaster risk reduction are undoubtedly required – and urgently so. I implore you to consider how you can assist this great continent in moving from being the standard and traditional recipient of short-term humanitarian assistance to instead become the formidable global player that it should be.

Thank you for your kind attention.