

## **Opening Remarks by for the Conference on "Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future in Africa":**

Distinguished Guests, Honorable Ministers, Representatives from International Organizations, Esteemed Speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and a warm welcome to all of you. It is a great honor for me to address this distinguished gathering at the conference on "Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future in Africa." This is not only a timely topic but also a critical one, as we stand at the crossroads of digital transformation and sustainable development in our continent.

Africa is on the cusp of a digital revolution that presents unprecedented opportunities for economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability. However, the benefits of this revolution will only be fully realized if we adopt a holistic and inclusive approach that integrates digital advancement with sustainability principles. Today, we are here to discuss, collaborate, and strategize on how to create a digital future that is not only innovative and inclusive but also environmentally sustainable.

Africa is a continent rich in diversity, culture, and innovation potential. Yet, we face numerous challenges, including climate change, energy access, and the digital divide. It is vital that our efforts to advance in the digital space do not exacerbate these challenges. Instead, we must leverage digital technologies to address them. From harnessing renewable energy to power our digital infrastructure, to employing digital tools for climate monitoring and disaster management, we have an opportunity to lead by example in sustainable digital innovation.

Moreover, we must ensure that this digital future is inclusive. Digitalization should not deepen existing inequalities or create new ones. It is our responsibility to ensure that women, youth, rural communities, and marginalized groups are not left behind. Digital

inclusion must be at the core of our strategy, and this requires intentional efforts in policy formulation, education, and access to digital tools and resources.

Today's conference is an excellent platform for exchanging ideas, best practices, and collaborative strategies to shape an environmentally sustainable and inclusive digital future for Africa. We have with us today experts, innovators, policymakers, and leaders from across the continent and beyond. Let us use this opportunity to build partnerships, share knowledge, and commit to actionable solutions that drive both digital and sustainable transformation.

For Ethiopia, digital transformation is a national priority aligned with our broader development goals under the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy. We are committed to creating a robust digital ecosystem that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. We believe that our collective efforts, both nationally and regionally, can make a significant impact in driving Africa's digital and green transition.

In conclusion, I urge all of us to approach this conference with a spirit of collaboration, open-mindedness, and determination. The task ahead is not an easy one, but it is essential for the future of our continent. Let us seize this moment to shape a digital future that is sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial for all Africans.

I look forward to the fruitful discussions and outcomes of this conference and wish you all a successful and productive event.

Thank you