Statement

By

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the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

at

The 68th Session of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

On Agenda Item 27 (a-d): Social Development

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MR. Chairman,

Let me first congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of Ethiopia’s cooperation in your conduct of the deliberations of the committee.

My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to the Secretary General for the reports that have been prepared for the Committee.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statements made by the African Group and the Group of 77 and China

MR. Chairman,

Ethiopia accords the highest importance to the promotion of social development that is inclusive of all social groups in our society. Indeed, this is one of the goals of the current Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which began almost three years ago. We are also making significant progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Development goals which include objectives of social integration and inclusiveness laid down in our national plan.

MR. Chairman,

Being cognizant of the fact that economic growth and inclusive development are essential to social advancement, in particular in reducing drastically the level of poverty and meeting other MDGs, the government of Ethiopia has been implementing policies and strategies that are pro-poor and centered in rural areas where the majority of our people live. Agricultural development is a key to fight poverty and other social problems for a country like Ethiopia with its large population. Accordingly, the GTP is focusing on enhancing agricultural production and rural areas based community development activities to alleviate the negative impacts of economic insecurity on our people’s well-being. It is also in this context that the government has put in place other policies and social
programs that are aimed at addressing problems faced by different vulnerable social groups, including persons with disabilities, youth, children, family and ageing people.

MR. Chairman,

In relations with persons with disabilities, Ethiopia has undertaken series of measures that aim at empowering women and men with disabilities to enjoy their full rights and benefit fully from their participation in various social programs. In addition to the decision taken to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we are implementing other national legal instruments such as the establishment of National Implementation, Monitoring and Coordinating Committee under the Ethiopian Development Social Welfare Policy. Moreover, we have enacted a proclamation that prohibits discrimination in all its aspects - law, practice, customs, attitudes and other discriminatory situations. The proclamation further more provides tax exemptions for employers who recruit 60% or more of their work force are persons with disabilities.

In collaboration with our partners, technical, material, financial and skill support have also been provided to eight governmental prosthetic –orthopedic centers to enhance their abilities to move without physical limitations and contribute to the development of their communities in which they live.

MR. Chairman,

Ethiopia’s National Youth Policy and Youth Development Package are designed in line with the World Program of Action for Youth and the African Youth Charter and accord top priority to youth development agenda since youth constitutes a significant proportion of the Ethiopian population. In fact, our Youth Development Package is particularly formulated with the view to alleviating the economic and social problems of youth living in urban, rural and pastoralist areas.
MR. Chairman,

Our national social inclusion policies and programs also take care of ageing population through the National Plan of Action of Older Persons. The plan is designed on the basis of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and has been implemented since 2006. In order to facilitate the Implementation of the Plan of Action, we have established Older Persons Forums as well as Older Persons Associations at regional states and federal levels to empower them through training and income generation activities.

MR. Chairman,

Ethiopia’s family planning has been in place for many years now and is being supported by family focused social service programs. As clearly indicated in the report of the Secretary General, Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme provides wide-ranging child care services. Through this program, the government has offered adequate time for mothers with pregnancies and who are breastfeeding as well as day care facilities and flexible working arrangements. In general, our family planning, in addition to addressing challenges associated with management and population control in order to achieve long-term population stabilization, is also providing valuable mother health-related care services. The deployment by the government throughout the country over thirty four thousand health extension workers who are in the forefront to provide reproductive health care at community level is a case in point.

So far, our reproductive and child health care programme has benefited millions of women and has become a major successful intervention in reducing maternal and infant mortality. According to the 2013 Progress Report-Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed-compiled by UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group-Ethiopia has reduced child deaths by more than two thirds over the past twenty years. The report says that “by 2012 the rate of deaths had dropped to 68 (from an estimated 204 children in every 1000 in 1990), a massive 67% fall in the under-five mortality rate”.

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MR. Chairman,

As noted in the report of the Secretary General, we have been able to make progress in some of the social areas, including human resource development sector using our own various local languages and programs for Out-of-School Young People. Social development challenges, however, are still impediments that prevent our efforts from effectively addressing income and gender inequalities and social exclusion facing the poor and the most vulnerable groups.

MR. Chairman,

Ethiopia acknowledges that global actions are required to complement whatever efforts exerted at national and regional levels in order to promote social inclusion and integration. Although many countries now recognize that they have responsibility to ensure the inclusion of the much needed coordination and coherence in their national policies and strategies, there remain, however, concerns as to the lack of adequate focus on regional and international collective actions in advancing social inclusive issues in the context of universally accepted development goals, including MDGs. It is therefore imperative that, recognizing social development cuts across many aspects of people’s life, promoting social sectors must be seriously taken into consideration in the formulation of the new generation of global development goals.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our government commitment to advance social development by enhancing activities aimed at creating better conditions for the lives of millions of our people.

Thank you.