Statement

By

Mr. Whawariat Gselassie Tesfay
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

at

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

On Agenda Item 28 Advancement of Women

68th Session of the UNGA
October 16 2013
New York
Mr. Chairman,

Permit me first to associate ourselves with statements made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and my delegation on behalf of the Africa group.

My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary General for the reports submitted under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

Women in Ethiopia constitute half of the estimated population of 85 million. Obviously, our development endeavors in all areas- political economic and social-cannot be ensured without their active and full participation. That is why the equality of women in Ethiopia, which is also enshrined in our constitution, is a critical consideration in the legislation of laws, formulation of policies and strategies in the country. Moreover, International conventions concerning women such as CEDAW, ICCPR, CERD, CAT and including African Regional Agreement of ACHPR to which Ethiopia is a party are an integral part of the constitution.

Mr. Chairman,

The Ethiopian government, based on its national constitution and the international and regional conventions referred to above, has been exerting relentless efforts to promote gender equality and women empowerment as well as to address the various challenges women are presently facing in Ethiopia.
The measures undertaken by the government to implement the various Conventions and agreements have been reported to the appropriate human treaty bodies and committees at different times in the past. It is in this context that we have also presented our Sixth and seventh combined periodic report under CEDAW recently.

We wish to express our gratitude to the office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) – East Africa Office for its technical assistance in the preparation of the reports and capacity building support in general. It is our delegation’s belief that the technical assistance provided by OHCHR is very useful to less developed countries like ours to assist them in the implementation of their treaty obligations. Hence, serious consideration needs to be taken into account in order to address the budgetary constraints faced by OHCHR as indicated in the secretary General report contained in document A/68/121.

Mr. Chairman,
The Secretary General in his report on Violence Against Women Workers, contained in document A/68/178, among others sheds light on the horrendous crimes and injustices being committed against migrant women workers in their countries of destination. This is true for migrant women workers from developing countries, including my own who are falling victims to illegal trafficking and smuggling, and are being exposed to severe abuses, including
physical and sexual assaults, confinement, incarceration and murder.

In the case of my country, we are making great efforts to combat illegal trafficking and other associated crimes. We have introduced a broad-spectrum of new provisions, penalizing acts of trafficking in women and children into our criminal Law. In addition, we have been undertaking concrete measures such as launching national campaign to address illegal trafficking through public awareness programs at federal and regional states levels with the involvement of all stakeholders in the society.

Efforts are also being deployed to end human trafficking and smuggling through the collaborative approach with our neighboring countries and countries of destination. In this regard we have concluded bilateral agreements with Kenya, Djibouti, the Sudan, Yemen and Kuwait. We have also initiated discussions to sign similar agreements with other countries as well.

Mr. Chairman,

Over 83% of the population in Ethiopia lives in the rural areas and females account almost half of the population. Moreover, the Ethiopia Economy is dominated by small holder agriculture and women comprise a proportionately large group of the labor force.
The small holder agriculture and the welfare rural women have been the main focus of the government as they are the basis for fulfilling the government’s commitment to the MDGs, particularly in reducing poverty and hunger in order decrease by half the number of people below the poverty line by 2015.

The government has made and continues to make significant efforts to improve the lives of the poor in rural areas, including women to access to natural resources such as land, water, improved agricultural and livestock technologies and financial resources. As a result, and according to the house hold income and consumption expenditure survey released recently, rural poverty headcount index which was 39.3% in 2004/2005 had substantially declined to 30.4% in 2010/2011.

We believe that these encouraging results have been achieved by the hard work of the Ethiopian people in collaboration with the generous support of the United Nations Agencies, in particular the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of women (UN-Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) IFAD and the World Food Program (WFP) as indicated in the Secretary General’s report A/68/179.
Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia has made important strides to promote women’s political participation in the past two decades. The participation of women in elected bodies, appointed and other positions such as the Federal House of People Representative, all Regional States Councils, higher and middle level executives and judiciary have increased substantially.

The Ethiopian government has also taken various measures to ensure equal participation of women in decision-making, including the allocation of additional financial support for parties presenting women candidates under the election code of conduct. Consequently, in the four elections that were held since 1995, out of the 547 parliament seats, the proportion of women seat held increased from 13 members or 2.38% in 1995 to 152 members 27.8% in 2010. Likewise, the proportion of women being elected to Regional States Councils and local governments as well as primarily appointed bodies such as ministers, state ministers, judges etc... are increasing form time to time.

Mr. Chairman,

It should be emphasized here that the achievements registered so far are modest beginnings and many challenges affecting women’s political participation still persist at all levels in multiple forms. Even though the pace and modality to fully integrate women in the decision making process at all levels rests with national
governments, gender equality and women empowerment is a collective endeavor. We, therefore, call on the United Nations and other development partners to continue their support in a more enhanced manner.

My delegation also shares the view, which is widely reflected in most statements in the committee under this item, to include a gender goal and the main streaming of gender issues throughout the Post -2015 development agenda.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Ethiopian government remains committed to promote gender equality and empowerment of women in all walks of life of our society. Indeed, this is our guiding principle in ensuring that all our development and social policies are delivering positive results that benefit our society.

Thank you