



Permanent Mission of Eritrea
to the United Nations

Statement
By
Amanuel Giorgio, First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations
At the 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
New York, 28 February 2011

Mr. Chairman,

I am making the following statement on behalf of Ms. Luul Gebreab, President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, who could not participate at this session because she could not get entry visa to the USA. This matter will be raised at the appropriate fora of the United Nations that specifically deals with issues related to the UN and the host country.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Argentina on behalf of NAM and Mozambique on behalf of the African Group.

Eritrea welcomes this session's priority theme "Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work"

Mr. Chairman,

Education and training is recognized as one of the best tools available in the empowerment of women. Eritrea has committed itself to narrowing the gap between boys and girls, between urban and rural, as well as between central region and other regions by making education accessible to all children who are of school age. Through its National Education Gender Policy and Strategy, Eritrea aims to eliminate gender gap in primary and middle schools levels by the year 2015. And by the year 2020, it expects to achieve gender parity at the secondary level.

To make these targets a reality, several schools, training centres and higher institutions have been built recently to enhance access to education to all, in particular to girls and

women. Access to education is facilitated to persons with disabilities and to girls and women in difficult situations by providing proper attention and support.

Affirmative action is applied to promote women's access to education, skills training, employment, credit and other resources with a view to rectifying women's disadvantaged position. This is a temporary measure until a level playing field is created in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres.

Mr. Chairman,

The overall participation of women in the tertiary level is much lower than their men counterparts. There is a gap that needs to be filled. However, it must be stressed that there is an upward trend in the number of girls entering into colleges and in graduating in fields of study that were traditionally regarded the domain of men. The average of girls that passed the college entrance exam between 2003 and 2008 was 26.5%. The recent figure show that this figure has gone up remarkably to 43.6%. The current figure for college girls attending natural science has reached 31.5%, for health 22%, and for engineering 11.8%.

The enrollment of females in the agricultural training has come close to parity with that of males. At the vocational training centres, women's participation exceeds that of men, in areas such as building technology and business management. Training in information technology is regularly organized to increase women's access to remunerative employment opportunities. Micro-credit programs continue to facilitate women's participation in small and medium enterprises. These types of training are useful in creating opportunities for gainful employment of women, although the majority of women still remain employed in the agricultural sector due to the fact that the country largely depends on agriculture. As the economy of the country expands, more women are expected to enjoy better access to better employment opportunities.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea supports the areas of focus identified by UN Women, in particular in enhancing cooperation with member states in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Eritrea is one of the four African countries that is on track in achieving some of the social goals of the MDGs; and it remains committed in accelerating its efforts to further improve the status of girls and women to enable them to reach their full potential.

Thank you.