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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 Second Avenue, 3rd Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017

**Statement by Ambassador Aman Hassen,
Charge D’Affaires A.I. of the Permanent
Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic
of Ethiopia to the United Nations
On the High-level Segment of Economic and
Social Council Substantive Session**

July 1, 2010

Mr. President

At outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for this year's theme of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on "Implementing the international agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women". My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President

Ethiopia strongly believes that full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action and the outcomes of subsequent intergovernmental deliberations that are geared to advance gender equality and empowerment of women are very critical in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Declaration.

It has been fifteen years since the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action was adopted as a global policy framework for gender equality and empowerment of women. In spite of the progress we have made, women and girls constitute the majority of the world's poor. Women's access to full employment and decent work has become a major challenge in many parts of the world. Discrimination and violence against women and girls still persist in many countries.

In general, we are encouraged by the positive trend in achieving gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment as well as the progress in women's access to tertiary education. However, in sub-Saharan Africa girls' participation in secondary education remains low. In addition, those girls living in poverty, in rural areas or in urban slums or those girls with disability are still facing difficulties in accessing formal education.

Mr. President

We would like to express our concern regarding the uneven progress and significant gaps and challenges in women's health. Every minute of everyday one woman dies due to reproductive health problems, such as complication during pregnancies and deliveries. Another 30 women suffer long-lasting injury or illness from preventable pregnancy-related causes and complications. We would like to echo Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon opening remarks to the high-level segment of ECOSOC, "in the twenty-first century it is unacceptable that mothers should die while giving new life". In this connection, my delegation would like to express its strong appreciation and full support to the Secretary General initiative of global effort on women's and children's health and call up on all our development partners, the private sector, civil society, the academia and research institutions to lend their concrete support to fully implement the Joint Action Plan for Women's and Children's health.

Mr. President

At national level, the Government of Ethiopia has taken a number of measures to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Government has promulgated National policy on Women and has taken various steps to improve the conditions of women in the country through formulating policies and strategies to mainstream gender dimension in all development programmes. Sector Ministries from Federal down to the District level have established women's affairs department in their domains. In order to promote equal opportunity for women in decision making position, significant awareness creation, advocacy and lobbying activities have been accomplished across the country. As a result, the number of women in political leadership has increased significantly. Currently, the number of women representatives

at the federal parliament has reached 117 or 21 percent. Similarly, the representation of elected women at regional level has increased to 40 percent.

Mr. President

Special efforts have been made to bridge the gender gap in development through taking affirmative actions and prioritizing among the critical areas of concerns. Since education is one of the important success factors in empowerment of women and girls, Education Sector Development Programs in Ethiopia have been targeted to guarantee equality of female participation in all education and training programs. Consequently, the enrollment share of girls to boys at primary, secondary and tertiary education has reached at 45, 35 and 22 percent respectively. Moreover, to increase the participation of the pastoralist girls and women in different educational programs, gender sensitive education package has been developed and being implemented in these areas of the country.

The legal and policy framework for the protection and promotion of reproductive rights of women and their well-being has shown immense improvements over the last fifteen years. Gender mainstreaming in the health sector has been given due attention, while best efforts are being made to promote the provision of adequate health services in equitable manner. Recently, the Government launched a campaign to promote safe motherhood with a theme called 'No woman should die while giving life'. In addition, tremendous efforts have been made to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other related infectious diseases that are affecting women.

Mr. President

Several policy and legislative measures have been undertaken with a view to curbing all forms of discrimination and violence against women. In an effort to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure the respect for their rights before the law, the Family Law and the Penal Code have been thoroughly revised. As a result, the new Family Law has enabled women to enjoy equal rights of inheritance, divorce and custody of children. According to the Penal Code of Ethiopia, perpetrators of various forms of violence against women, such as rape and abductions, among others, are subjected to rigorous punishment. Furthermore, protective legislation have been enacted and put in to effect by the Government so as to allow women's access to land, credit facilities, and other productive resources

Mr. President

Finally, I would like to reiterate Ethiopia commitment to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals to advance gender equality and empowerment of women. My delegation also wishes to seize this opportunity to call up on our development partners, to boost their financial support and fulfill their commitments of Official Development Assistance. We need to scale up our global partnership to translate our shared goals into further real actions.

I thank you