



Statement

by

Mrs. Woinshet Tadesse

**In respect of Agenda Item 56: Advancement of
Women**

**On behalf of the Federal Democratic Republic of
Ethiopia**

**At the Third Committee of the 63rd Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

**New York,
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Mr. Chairman

At outset, I would like to express my delegation's profound appreciation for the reports of the Secretary-General that are before us in relation to the agenda item on the advancement of women, which is now being considered. My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman

Ethiopia strongly believes that each and every positive step taken in the direction of advancement of women amounts to a forward progress for the whole society. Empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming in respect of all economic and social policies is very critical for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. We fully agree with the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report that the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly require systematic integration of gender issues in all areas of social, political, and economic development at all levels.

Women constitute half of the world's population. Nevertheless, due to power imbalances, structural inequalities between men and women, absence or inadequacy of penal legislations to deter abusers, as well as other related factors, violence against women has become common phenomenon in different parts of the world. Violence against women and girls, whether sanctioned by customary practice or traditional family relations, economic disparity or criminal activities, has still persisted to be rampant across the world. My delegation fully concurs with the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the importance of

comprehensive approach to prevent and eliminate this vicious act of human rights violation.

Mr. Chairman

Ethiopia recognizes the crucial importance of continuing to engage in activities aimed at improving the situation of women in the country as a whole. In this regard, several policy and legislative measures have been undertaken with a view to curbing all forms of discrimination against women. Strong emphasis has been given on the participation of women in the development process, for which pertinent policies and strategies to integrate and mainstream the gender dimensions in economic, social and political spheres have been duly formulated. The Ethiopian Federal Constitution recognizes women's equal rights and accords them full legal rights to participate in the political and economic life of the nation, as well as in decision-making processes.

In order to promote equal opportunities for women in assuming important decision-making positions, a number of awareness-creation, advocacy and lobbying activities have been undertaken by the Government, as well as other relevant actors, throughout the country. As a result, the number of women in decision-making and leadership has increased steadily and significantly. The number of elected women representatives in the country's parliament, i.e., the House of Peoples' Representatives, from both the ruling party and the opposition party has at present reached 117. Moreover, a number of ministerial and State ministerial positions, as well as other important public portfolios have now also been held by educated or qualified women.

Mr. Chairman

The Government of Ethiopia has also taken a number of practical measures to improve women's access to basic and maternal health services. The current health policy has attached special attention to the health needs of the family, particularly women and children. Similarly, in the education sector efforts have been made to increase the enrollment and retention rate of girls and women education in general.

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. Accordingly, perpetrators of various forms of violence against women, such as rape and abductions, among others, may receive up to 10-25 years of rigorous punishment.

The new Family Law has also enabled women to enjoy equal rights of inheritance, divorce, custody of children, among others. Furthermore, some appropriate protective pieces of legislation have been enacted and put in to effect by the Government so as to allow for women's access to land, credit facilities, and other productive resources.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairperson, My delegation wishes to reiterate Ethiopia's firm commitment to the advancement and empowerment of women and gender equality, including to the need for gender mainstreaming as an essential perspective in all development policies, plans, schemes and programs. Since gender equality and the empowerment of women are inseparable human right issues, we believe that coordination and strategic partnerships within the UN system are of critical importance for the success of the whole agenda.

My delegation wishes, therefore, to seize this opportunity to call up on our development partners to support the multifaceted efforts underway in this important field of endeavor by increasing the necessary financial and technical assistance that are critically needed to translate our shared aims into further real actions.

I Thank You