

Ethiopians mark Women's Day

10th March 2014, LONDON

Ethiopians residing in the UK marked the International Women's Day on Saturday 8th March in London under the theme *"Equality for Women is Progress for All"*.



The event was organized by the Ethiopian National Consensus Forum in partnership with the Women's Association of Tigray (UK), the Ethiopian Somali Women's Association and members of the Ethiopian community.

Ethiopia has been taking steps to empower women, encouraging their active participation in the nation-building endeavour which envisages beating poverty and improving livelihoods of the people about half of which are women.

Gender issues have been mainstreamed and affirmative actions put in place to foster opportunities for education and jobs that has transformed the life of women compatriots.

A number of micro-finance institutions were set up across the nation with a target to provide loans to both rural and urban women for small-scale and medium enterprises that have now become the vehicle in life-changing income generating schemes.



Opportunities are now open for the girl-child to go to school as part of the plan to achieve Universal Education in a few years' time.

Opening the event, the Head of the Diaspora Department at the Embassy, Ato Demeke Atnafu, said rights and equality of women have been guaranteed by the Ethiopian Constitution underlining the crucial role they play in bringing about development and prosperity to the nation.

Participation of women in higher learning institutes has risen significantly, he said, and with it their involvement in social, political and economic spheres has shown marked progress.

Women are now entitled to own land and property, run their businesses, are actively involved in natural resource development and are engaged in leadership at various administrative levels.

He emphasized the need to consolidate women's organizations and urged participants to engage with more vigour in soliciting funds and bond sales for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), as well as promotion of investment, trade and tourism.

The Chairpersons of the Women's Association of Tigray, W/ro Tiruwork Abriha; the Ethiopian-Somali Women Association, W/ro Sadia Abas; and a representative of the National Consensus Forum W/ro Alem Bekele, in speeches at the event called on Ethiopian women in the Diaspora to mobilize resources and support for GERD and other development projects designed to help Ethiopians improve and change their living conditions.



Chairperson of the Campaign Against Child Marriage in Ethiopia, W/ro Alemstehay G/Kidan spoke of what her charity was doing to mitigate the number of women who entered into wedlock when they were still underage.

She explained her experience as a former child wife and encouraged others to come forward to join hands to help others back home.

She commended the Ethiopian Government for the laws against child marriage and those upholding women's rights.

Women, she said, should organize themselves and contribute their share in the struggle for their equality and empowerment using to the full the enabling environment created by the Ethiopian government.



A minute's silence was observed in memory of H.E. Ato Alemayehu Atomsa, the late President of the Oromia Regional State and Chairman of the Oromo people Democratic Organization (OPDO).

A celebration cake was cut to mark the 38th anniversary of International Women's Day. Followed by an array of delicious Ethiopian national cuisines and refreshments. Traditional and cultural shows were also staged at the event. Gifts were also presented to the women's associations present for their outstanding contribution.

Present on the occasion were members of Ethiopian Women Associations in the UK, representatives of different organizations, invited guests and fellow Ethiopians.

*****ENDS*****

Video coverage on: <http://goo.gl/sLT2IH>

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