



**Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York**

**Statement
by
Honourable Ms. Luul Gebreab
President of the National Union of Eritrean Women
during
58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
on
" Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the
Millennium Development Goals for women and girls"**

11 March 2014, New York

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation is pleased to address the 58th session of the **Commission on the Status of Women** and I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau for your elections to steer the work of this important Commission, and rest assured of my delegation's support as you lead us to a successful conclusion.

Eritrea associates itself with the statements delivered by Bolivia on behalf of the G-77 and China; and Guinea on behalf of the African Group. Let me share some thoughts on the 2014 priority theme which focuses on the "Challenges and achievements in the development of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls".

Mr. Chairperson,

Understanding and addressing roots causes of gender inequality in our respective countries are crucial in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals for women and girls, including MDGs. Eritrea's approach to gender equality emanates from its stand that gender equality is a core pillar of development rather than an instrument of development. In this regard, Eritrea repealed all the discriminatory provisions of the colonial time right after its independence. Family laws that affirm the equality between male and female were introduced and other discriminatory practices such as dowry, kidnapping or abduction for marriage, and parental forced marriage were repealed and replaced by laws that ensure the rights of women and girls. Women's equality, underpinned by social justice, is enshrined in the Constitution and incorporated in various government proclamations and documents. Many of the international legal instruments, including the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** and the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** have been harmonized with national laws. The contents of the conventions have been translated into local languages and widely disseminated. Gender policy has been adopted and mainstreamed. In short the normative framework and government policies towards women and girls are very favorable.

Mr. Chairperson,

The challenge are in the full implementation of all the policies and programs that are intended for the advancement of women. Climatic factors and issues related to human and institutional capacities as well as resources all contribute to the challenges and constraints in the fight for a better life and closing the gap between men and women, boys and girls. The prevailing no-war no-peace situation continues to impede and infringe on the full enjoyment of women's and girls' rights and on the development efforts of the country. The unjustified sanctions regime imposed on my country is another obstacle that aims to target revenues coming from the mining sector and contributions from the Eritrean Diaspora. The scope of the sanctions regime includes arms embargo and in the face of the prevailing regional condition, this constitutes a denial of my people's right to peace and security. The Eritrean experience is a vivid example that peace and security which was not featured in the MDGs, highly affects the gender equality issue. The African Summit has recognized peace and security as an important pillar for the post-2015 development agenda which my delegation shares fully. So the peace equation to the development agenda cannot be

underestimated. I mention this element as part of the women who dedicated decades of their lives to attain peace and dignity for the people and the country.

However, despite all these challenges and constraints mentioned, the country remains focused on its efforts to improve the livelihoods of women and girls; and in this regard, I am humbled to report that Eritrea is on course to achieving the three MDGs related to child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS. It is also on track on gender equality, universal education and environmental millennium development goals. It has stepped up its cooperation with respect to MDG 8, by widening partnerships that promote trade and investment and by signing a strategic partnership cooperation framework with United Nations with the purpose of "Driving towards MDGs". On Poverty Eradication, Eritrea recognizes that more needs to be done and rest assured that the ground work for sustainable food security is laid down, as several dams, terraces and roads have been built nationwide to address some of the underlying infrastructural challenges; and due to this intervention, Eritrea has survived the critical drought situation which hit our sub-region. Yet, it is important that the unfinished business of the MDGs ought to be carried forward in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Chairperson,

The factors that have contributed to the relative success in my country in moving forward the development agenda have been: resilience of the people, in particular women as they continue to shoulder equal responsibilities in spite of all odds; community based approach; committed leadership; efficient use of resources; focusing on the most needy; and building partnership. When I am talking about the resilience of the people, I wish to highlight the enormous dedication and hard work made by the youth, both girls and boys, under the national service program, as they continue to build and rebuild society torn by war. Some detractors malign their valuable contributions, yet the youth remain engaged to the development and well being of the people and to restoring the environmentally fragile country that is challenged by land degradation and irregular rains, prompting the government to place food security as the top priority of the country. For countries like mine that are located in the Sahel belt, combating desertification, access to clean water and ensuring food security remain top priorities. The Government of the State of Eritrea strongly believes that the firm commitment at all levels will drive the post MDGs to its success. To remedy and close the gender gap, it is high time to ensure mainstreaming gender and having a standalone programmes in all the MDGs.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me conclude by stressing the importance of building on the gains made in our efforts towards the achievements of the MDGs and let's aspire for post-2015 development agenda that is concise, measurable and action orientated that we can all agree for the benefit of our peoples.

Thank you for your attention.