



Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea

**Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Araya Desta
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
during the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
11 March 2013, New York**

Mme. Chair,

Let me congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women. I also wish to extend my word of congratulation to the other members of the Bureau. I feel honored to address this distinguished gathering of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Eritrea associates itself with the statements delivered by Fiji on behalf of the G-77 and China and Chad on behalf of the African group.

Women and girls still face many forms of violence during peace or war, at school, workplace, public spaces and others. Whatever shape or form the violence against women and girls assume, our collective conscience should compel us to end this violence as we are talking about half of humanity. Therefore, my delegation believes that the theme of this session is timely and critical in order to intensify, in a concrete way, our collective efforts in ending violence against women and girls. Put together, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Millennium Development Goals, form a solid framework to champion the causes of women and girls. My delegation believes the discussions on this session's theme have been fruitful and hope there will be an agreed outcome document adopted by consensus.

Mme. Chair,

Eritrea attaches great importance to the elimination of gender based violence. Any form of violence against women is a criminal offense punishable by law in Eritrea. Domestic and sexual violence against women and girls are unacceptable. The active participation of women during the 30 years struggle for independence and their resolve to be treated equal to men has contributed in transforming their place and role within the society. In post independence era, the government has put in place specific polices and legal frameworks which provide the basis for addressing violence against women and girls. Rape, for example, is punishable by law with a maximum sentence of imprisonment of up to 15 years. The government has also enacted a law that bans the practice of FGM and under-age marriage. Moreover, consistent with its long standing laws of anti-human trafficking, Eritrea has also placed protecting victims and combating trafficking in-persons as a priority in its agenda by working closely with its neighbours to uproot this phenomenon.

While legal frameworks constitute important impetus to the advancement of women's rights, they are not sufficient without addressing in a rigorous and sustained manner the conditions created by the historical inequalities that make women and girls vulnerable to violence. Economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls is an important step to reduce the risk of violence against women and girls in general. In this regard, my government's laws that guarantee full rights to own land and property and equal pay for equal work as well as positive discrimination in education and governance have been instrumental in boosting women's economic, social and cultural status.

Mme. Chair,

In conclusion, as designated by the UN Secretary General on his 2008-2015 campaign, the international community must be "united to end Violence against Women and Girls". The adoption of multisectoral and multifaceted measures against gender based violence at national, regional and international levels accompanied by effective mechanisms of implementation are critical. In doing so, the participation of the family, community and government and non-government machineries is crucial; and this requires a long process of public awareness, public education and programs that empower women and girls.

Thank you!