

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMAN HASSEN , AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON THE THEME: “GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN” (NEW YORK ,FEBRUARY 6 , 2014)**

Mr. Co-Chair,

I thank you for convening this eighth session of the Open Working Group of Sustainable Development Goals.

I would also like to thank the UN Technical Support Team for their excellent job in providing us with the “TST Issues Brief” which is designed to facilitate our work. I am also grateful for the contribution made by the Panelists.

I would like to associate myself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representatives of Bolivia and Guinea on behalf of the G77 and China and the African Group.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We believe that gender inequality slows economic growth and development. Without equal participation of women in the political, social and economic areas of a country, sustainable development and social justice would not be achieved. It is with this basic consideration women’s rights have been enshrined in article 35 of the Ethiopian constitution and appear in many of Ethiopia’s existing policies and legal frameworks in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment: such as the National Women’s Policy, revised Criminal and Family laws, Growth and Transformation Plan.

Accordingly, progress has been made in the laws to protect the rights of women. These include the penal code amendment which clearly stipulated that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), rape and women trafficking are crime punishable with rigorous imprisonment. Other protective legislations have also been enacted that guarantee women's access to land, credit facilities and productive resources. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in political leadership has increased significantly.

Co-Chair

Ethiopia reaffirms her international commitments as set out in the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Conference on Population and Development.

Millennium Development Goal 3 reflects the global attention to the issue of gender inequality and has been providing impetus to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all level by 2015. While steps have been taken at national, regional and global levels including the UN system, to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspectives into all policies and programmes, a lot still needs to be done.

There have been important gains in some MDGs such as primary education, but poor progress in others such as women's access to decent work, maternal health, universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and women's participation in decision-making. With less than two years left for 2015, we need to expedite efforts on the gender dimensions of all the MDGs to ensure their timely implementation. In this regard sustained international cooperation and global partnerships are of vital importance. The international community should honor its commitments to Official Development Assistance. Increased

development assistance in areas such as women education, health and job creation is vital towards eliminating gender disparities.

Co-Chair,

The post 2015 development agenda must build up on the Beijing Platform for Action, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), relevant regional frameworks as well as on the lessons and gains of the MDGs. It must also address the critical issues that are holding women and girls back, including many structural constraints to gender equality not included in the MDGs, such as, women's low participation in decision-making at all levels (global, regional, national and local), sexual and reproductive rights, and violence against women and girls.

As articulated in the issue brief, gender equality and women's empowerment are also cross-cutting, interlinked, and indispensable to progress in all other areas of the future SDGs, for example, in eradicating poverty, ensuring food security, quality education and decent work for all, ensuring access to energy, water and sanitation. Therefore, mainstreaming of gender targets across all SDGs is crucial.

Finally, Mr. Co-chair, ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment is essential to sustainable development. Ethiopia therefore recommends the need to have a standalone goal on Gender equality and women's empowerment in the formulation of the sustainable development goals.

I thank you!