

**Press Release N°081 /2014****Girls in ICT day 2014 celebrated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Addis Ababa 24 April, 2014: The African Union Commission department of Infrastructure and Energy in partnership with ITU, UNECA and UNDP regional office celebrated “International Girls in ICT Day” on Thursday 24th of April 2014 at the African Union HQ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The celebration which held under the theme “Expand Horizons, Change attitudes” was aimed at empowering and encouraging girls and young Women to consider careers in the growing field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The event witnessed the participation of the AU department of Infrastructure and Energy, ITU, UNECA, UNDP, UN WOMEN, Addis-Ababa Schools girls, Ethiopian Minister of ICT and Youth, Social Affairs, Journalists, women entrepreneurs and activists.

Policy statement presentation from honorable guests and Key note speeches were delivered by Mr. Andrew Ruggie ITU regional director, State Minister of Communication and Information Technology of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission. Each on their own ways emphasized the importance of ICT to girls and our society as a whole, the difficulties faced and the lack of women and girls in the field. They also shared their personal experiences and urged the attending girls to rise up to the challenges and promised to be on their side to assist on difficulties faced.

These inspirational speeches were supplemented by a Panel discussion by successful women leaders, Ms. Lethy Chiwara, Ms. Bethlehem Telahun and Ms. Biruktawit Tegabu who shared their personal success stories, answered different questions raised by the panel and encouraged the girls to utilize ICT to create wanted future beyond just seeing it as a job sector. The celebration also included a quiz contest among girls from different schools of Addis Ababa in the area of ICT, movies and documentary presentation on Successful Women in the ICT sector.

The international Girls in ICT Day is an initiative backed by the ITU Resolution 70 adopted by Member states at the ITU plenipotentiary (Guadalajara, 2010) to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

This is the first time it is celebrated in Addis Ababa and the Commission plans to play a key role in the celebration of this event in the future.