



Press Release N° _____ /2019

African Union Commission Hosts 2019 “Girls in ICT” Day

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Addis Ababa, 25 April 2019: The African Union Commission jointly with the United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - Regional Office for Africa, hosted the global celebration of Girls in ICT Day 2019 with participation of more than 250 high schools Girls from Addis Ababa and 10 high schools Girls from Tanzania at the AU Headquarters.

The 2019 Girls in ICT day brought together ministers, ambassadors, representatives of diplomatic corps and international organizations including UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNDP.

The girls spent the Day at the premises of the AUC where they had access to computers connected to Internet and took a quiz on ICT and Information Technologies, interacted with Experts on ICT from the International Telecommunication Union and from the African Union Commission.

A High level panel discussion was also organized with six (06) inspirational African

women where each panelist member spoke on their work experiences, successes and how they use ICT in their day-to-day business activities.

The panel was composed Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, BDT, ITU and also First- ever woman elected official in ITU's 154 year history; Ms Betlehem Dessie, Technologist, Educator and Entrepreneur; Ms Lindsey Nefesh-Clark, Founder, Women's Worldwide Web; Ms



Bruktawit Getahun (Betty G), Award-winning Singer, Ambassador for Studio Samuel; Ms Melat Abate, Digital Entrepreneur; Ms Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, Founder, Executive Director, SoleRebels.

The panel was moderated by H.E Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST), African Union Commission (AUC) who emphasized on the importance of ICT skills to build digital Africa of tomorrow and encouraged the young girls to seize the opportunity of the event to ask questions about ICT and digital revolution to fully benefit from the experiences and advices of the six inspirational and outstanding women who spoke to them in the panel discussion.

The official segments of the program started with welcome remarks from Mr. Andrew Rugege, Regional Director ITU who recalled the importance the event as it allows young girls to discover and learn about Information Communication Technologies.

For his part, the State Minister for Innovation and Technology, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia H.E. Mr Sisay Tola, recalled the importance of ICT as a driver for change to improve people's lives especially in Africa and stressed on the high importance given by the Government of Ethiopia for the development of the ICT sector and efforts to attract and promote more women in this very innovative sector as an enabler for women empowerment and economic development of the country.

Speaking on behalf of H.E Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the AU Commission, H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor reiterated the commitment of the African Union to promote Girls and Women in ICT to enable them to fully harness the potential of digital technologies to actively participate in shaping Africa Digital future "Digital literacy for girls is of high importance for the African Union Commission. We believe, there is an urgent need to create an enabling environment that encourages and promotes greater female participation in shaping Africa digital future".

Mr Happy Yang, Vice-CEO, Huawei Ethiopia reiterated his support for developing digital competences across Africa and expressed his thanks to the AU Commission and ITU for associating Huawei in the celebrations of the Girls in ICT day every year.

Speaking at the event, Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union emphasized on the importance to celebrate the global girls in ICT day 2019 in Africa, especially with the new wave of social and economic development, and engagement for digital progress and growth. Ms Bogdan-Martin noted "Africa's digital transformation will open up vast new opportunities for the continent as Africa's young people stand to be the major beneficiaries. The huge youth demographic is something African nations can harness, because we all know that young people are the natural users of new technology".

After hearing from the girls on their views and aspirations with regard using ICT in their professional careers and presentation of prizes to the winners. The event was officially closed by Ms. Souhila Amazouz, Senior ICT Policy Officer at the Department of Infrastructure and Energy of the AUC. She congratulated the girls for their active participation in the meeting and thanked all partners who have contributed to the success of 2019 Girls in ICT Celebrations.

The International Girls in ICT Day aims to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of ICTs and enable a greater female participation in the ICT sector. It is an initiative backed by all ITU Member States in ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 70 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and celebrated every year on the fourth Thursday of April.

For further information:

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