

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Press Release No: /2020

Date: 10 February 2020

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AFRICAN FIRST LADIES ADVOCATE INCLUSION OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE AGENDA 2063

The Organisation of African First Ladies for Development (OAFLAD), gathered today, for the 24th Ordinary OAFLAD General Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting which was held on the side-lines of the 33rd African Union (AU) Summit was organised under the theme ***'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: A Pathway to the Africa We Want'*** and aims to address the issues and identify the enablers which will promote the inclusion of women in delivering Africa's Agenda 2063 by breaking new development frontiers.



"First Ladies who attended the 24th Ordinary OAFLAD General Assembly"

OAFLAD, whose vision is *'A developed Africa with healthy and empowered children, youth and women'* has over the years provided continent-wide leadership advocating for policy and social change, and engaging in resource mobilisation efforts at the global, continental and national levels for the benefit of children, youth and women who are solid pillars of Africa and the backbone of its development.

In their session, the OAFLAD members committed to support high-impact interventions on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment; promote girls' education and gender equality; promote women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion; advocate for comprehensive legal frameworks to address gender-based violence against women and support innovative campaigns and continuous dialogues to transform social and cultural norms that inhibit women's rights.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Madam Aïssata Issoufou Mahamadou, First Lady of the Republic of Niger said, "We are aware and convinced of one thing, it is the certainty that the irreversible development of Africa cannot be achieved without the African Woman." She asserted that "The Africa We Want as envisioned in Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved with outdated practices which need to be eradicated such as early and forced marriage of young girls; female genital mutilation; gender-based violence; discrimination in access to administrative and political decision-making positions; lack of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; and unequal opportunities in access to quality education and training. She affirmed that OAFLAD will be firmly involved to bring about the intended change.

On behalf of H.E. Zinash Tayachew, First Lady of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), H.E. Ambassador Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of FDRE stated that the Ethiopian government has demonstrated an equivocal commitment in addressing gender inequalities that deter long lasting changes and equitable development by creating a conducive legal, administrative and policy environment in the country. She confirmed that there is a favourable policy environment for Ethiopian girls and women and added that the government is committed to ensuring outcomes of development are shared equally between men and women and that all enjoy equal opportunities, recognition and status."



H.E. Amira ELFADIL, the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, in her part professed: "when the guns of Africa fall completely silent, more conducive conditions shall be created for Africa's full development, as envisaged in Africa's Agenda 2063." She referred to the assertions made by the African Union Chairperson H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa who stressed on the full commitment of the African Union under his leadership to close the gender gap

between men and women and reduce the gender gap.

The Commissioner underlined that the African Union continues to advocate for strengthened primary health care systems and full Universal Health-care coverage as such the organisation is advocating for increased domestic financing for health. She echoed: "the Africa we want is free from gender violence! The Africa we want is equal! The Africa we want is where our human capital is empowered – both women and men"

During the OAFLAD Assembly a panel was also convened in which every First Lady presented their experiences and achievement in the implementation of the OAFLAD 2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan.

For further information please contact:

Mrs. Rahel Akalewold | Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | Tel: + 251 911 683737 | E-mail: rahela@africa-union.org | www.au.int|Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Mrs. Nardos Berhanu | Communication Officer | African Union Commission | Tel Tel:+251-115-508069/+251-118-962998 | E-mail: nardos@oafla.org | www.au.int|Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | **E-mail:** DIC@african-union.org | **Website:** www.au.africa | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia Follow Us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)