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ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (EHRCO)

EHRCO's Press Statement on International Women's Day (IWD 2023)

March 8, 2023

Introduction:

International Women's Day, following women's movements in parts of Europe and the United States of America (USA), has been celebrated worldwide since 1911 G.C. This year, the International Women's Day is being celebrated for the 112th time, and from the time it began being celebrated it has gone through various historical challenges. Since the year 1975 G.C., this global day has been well-celebrated through the United Nations (UN). International Women's Day is celebrated under various themes each year and this year, it is being celebrated under the theme "Embracing Equality." Ethiopia celebrates International Women's Day (IWD 2023) for the 47th time under the theme "I am the protector of my sister" today.

Current Status of Women's Rights:

In the current Ethiopian year, 2015 E.C., and the previous year, 2014 E.C., various gender-based violations (GBV) were committed against women. Women were exposed to different forms of GBV and sexual assault in their homes, schools, work places, residential areas, and other places. Such assault was committed against women of every age range without making distinction of their race, religion, language, and other social classes. Granted that women are vulnerable and due to the lack of the needful legal protection and coverage, they have been exposed to myriad human rights violations. And due to the outbreak of recurrent conflicts in the Ethiopia, numerous women have been displaced, alone side their daughters, and due to drought and famine, exposed to serious problems, and in addition, to human rights violations many women faced due to the fact that they were not made to equally participate in economic activities, but also due to their economic dependency and its implication in terms of inhibiting them from raising their voice and fighting for their rights. Additionally, although women's participation in Ethiopia *vis-a-vis* political, economic, social, and other sectors have shown improvements, the fact that women's participation is still low in decision-making positions is an obstacle against the meaningful participation of women and due regard to women's issues.

EHRCO's Call:

EHRCO, while wishing all Ethiopians a happy International Women's Day, believes in the recognition and implementation of the equality of women as an expression of the respect of human rights.

- EHRCO, to ensure that our country Ethiopia is one that practically, rather than in sheer words, recognizes and demonstrates the equality of women; to ensure the Ethiopian people recognize the equality of women, to realize that Ethiopia becomes a country where international, regional, and national rights related to the equality of women are respected and enforced, and to ensure that it becomes one where GBV and sexual violence are eradicated and women actively participate in social affairs freely and having their equality affirmed,
- EHRCO, whilst expressing its long-standing desire to see Ethiopia as a country where legal reforms are realized *vis-a-vis* GBV, gender equality, and those generally concerned with women, it calls on to the government which, by enforcing women-inclusive legal frameworks, policy plans, as well as structural procedures, to practically ensure their equality and to bolster their participation in decision-making.
- In Conclusion, EHRCO calls on the government, religious institutions, political parties, social activists, media houses, civic society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders, to contribute their part in the realization of gender equality and building a society that recognizes gender equality as well.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia