**Delegate: Aidan O’Toole**

**Country:Eritrea**

**Committee: Commission on the Status of Women**

**Delegation: Ursula Franklin Academy**

Historical Context

Eritrea was inaugurated in the cold, hard determination of those who strove to make their lives better. In 1993, Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia after a referendum supervised by the UN saw 99.8% of Eritreans voted for independence. Since then, hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia have resulted in an estimated 70 000 casualties on both sides and hundreds of millions of dollars in costs and damages. Eritrea’s history is one of grit, of being knocked down and getting back up. It is the challenges the people of Eritrea faced in the War of Independence that taught them never to be afraid to improve their lives. It is with these experiences that Eritrea commits itself to the empowerment of women through cultural remedification and economic effort both domestically and abroad.

Central Stance on Issues

Eritrea does not consider women’s equality a pertinent issue as equality would not cause women’s betterment. It would mean Eritrean women would have a life expectancy of 62.4 years old, a school life expectancy of 6 years old and a literacy rate of only 82.4% among other equally serious realities[[1]](#footnote-0). Due to Eritrea’s perpetual conflict with Ethiopia and the regular armed conflict along the southern border the entire civilian populace is required to be enlisted in the military.[[2]](#footnote-1) In the eyes of the government there is complete equality but it is not liberating nor positive, equality in a system that cannot support the social and economic success of even one group cause all groups to become trapped. Without the means for personal betterment for any group equality even as a factor in legislation and advocation enters the periphery. This is not to downplay the importance of gender equality or Eritrea’s commitment to creating a world where everyone has equal opportunities. The EPLF ran on a platform of liberalization of women’s rights and education and maintains these stances. However for a country like Eritrea that has been at war since its inception and has only one university the country first must be stable and allow its citizens to succeed before wide cultural and economic remedification is even considered. In order for Eritrea or any similarly developing country to effectively and honestly deal with women’s empowerment significant foreign aid must first be provided. Given time any developing country has the ability to get itself on track, however the citizens of these countries do not have that time to give. They are being married off as a child to pay for their families farm[[3]](#footnote-2), they have never even seen a improved[[4]](#footnote-3) water source before and are now dying of diarrhea from the river they walk to everyday, they and their families are dying on average before most people in developed countries retire[[5]](#footnote-4), they need help now.

Topic 1: Women and Sustainability

Although the issues that affect developing countries affect all this aid should not be spread out in the form of pure fiscal investment. Instead, the aid Eritrea calls for will be designed to specifically target the forces that cause developing countries to lag behind the rest of the world, namely negative conceptualizations of women. By directing aid and new infrastructure to better empower and educate women developing countries will more effectively achieve a state that allows for all of its citizens to live within their fundamental rights and freedoms. For example, the establishment of small manufacturing plants for essential health products such as menstrual waste napkins, toothbrushes and soap would provide many low education jobs within countries and provide communities with essential products for very low prices. Projects such as the Kenyan Green Belt Movement show the effectiveness of intelligently designed and sustainable development projects and should serve as a model for how aid should be carried out in the future. Just because a problem is widespread does not mean its solution is, my targeting the specific causes of inequality and intelligently designing intervention methods women will not only achieve equality with men but serve as the vessels by which their country achieves stability and sustainability.

Topic 2: Elimination of Gender Based Violence

Gender based violence is not its own independent issue but rather a symptom of universal prejudices against women, thus in order to abolish it these prejudices must first be acknowledged, deconstructed and replaced with unbiased cultural beliefs. However this cannot come from external actors, it must be the job of those who have experienced these prejudices to carry this mission out, whether it be from a victim or perpetrator of these prejudices it is imperative. This will not be easy as gender based prejudices exist everywhere and inform everything we do but widespread acknowledgement is the first and most important step. Eritrea will work to have all UN member states formally acknowledge pervasive sexism and gender based prejudices in order commit themselves to action. By having all member states acknowledge that the existence of these prejudices cause the violations of the fundamental rights and freedoms as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms if any countries shall refuse to take action against such prejudices they shall then by refusing to uphold human rights. This is designed to motivate all countries towards global female equity and to encourage developed countries to provide assistance to developing countries.

Topic 3: Women in Education and Employment

Women’s equality is not an issue for developing countries to deal with but rather an ideal and paradigm to maintain whilst navigating everyday governmental and legislative concerns. It is because of this mindset that Eritrea seeks to establish an international education body with the focus of maintaining, promoting and ensuring educational growth in developing countries the place of women and girls these education systems. This body will be built upon three pillars of achievement

1. Building schools that act not only as a place of learning and enrichment for children but also a community hub
2. Ensuring curriculum is mandated on a national level to decrease education gaps within nations and create national unity as well as ensuring all people within a nation receive the same level of education regardless of gender, ability or race
3. Ensuring all nations have the resources available to establish and maintain proper educational infrastructure.

Eritrean hopes to serve a vital role on this body using its unique viewpoints as a recently founded and developing nation. It is ultimately imperative that a body be established to ensure that education serves all people not just those who are male. It is equally important that this body be made up of countries that have direct experience with the socio-economic barriers this body is created to dismantle. Ultimately, it is by revitalizing global education and ensuring all developing nations have proper education systems that Eritrea plans to combat employment inequities. By giving all genders equal educational opportunities economic gaps will shrink and by creating environments where all people can come together to learn and grow the social prejudices and barriers that hold us apart will soon disappear.

1. Eritrea Demographics Profile 2016 "Eritrea Demographics Profile 2016". *Indexmundi.com*. N. p., 2016. Web. 7 Nov. 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. L., C. "National Service in Eritrea: Miserable and Useless." *The Economist*. The Economist, 10 Mar. 2010. Web. 1 Nov. 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Brides, Girls. "Eritrea - Child Marriage Around The World. Girls Not Brides". *Girls Not Brides*. N. p., 2016. Web. 7 Nov. 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Eritrea - Health "Eritrea - Health". *Eritrea.be*. N. p., 2016. Web. 7 Nov. 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)