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**Topic 1 – Women and Sustainability**

Occupying a sector of 1.1 million square kilometres, Ethiopia is the tenth largest country in Africa with more than 86% of the population occupying rural regions. Ethiopia has preserved its independence until the military overpowered its old fashioned government in 1974. In May of 1991, a federal system of government was put in place. The Ethiopian parliament consists of the House of the Council of Peoples Representatives and the House of Federal States. Ethiopian women are continuously subjected to poor health conditions to cultural influences and poverty. Due to lack of sanitation and protection, the life expectancy of the country in 1994 was calculated to be fifty-one to fifty-three years of age. Later, it was expected to decline to forty-seven and forty-nine years oldi. The federal Republic of Ethiopia has put together specific policies in order to restore social and economic balance to create an improved environment for its population. For example, they have implemented the National Health Policy and the Agricultural Development Led Organization (ADLI) to establish new platforms. Their main principles include developing equitable and quality healthcare for the population and encouraging the participation of women in environmental initiatives.

Environmental involvement is critical a basic need, yet access is deprived from many women. The United Nations have proposed multiple solutions to the matter at hand to enforce proper sustainability for women. This includes the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), where Ethiopia was a proud cooperator ii. This declares that people are entitled to healthy and productive livesiii. Since 1992, the Republic of Ethiopia continues to prioritize the quality of life for the population, creating the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia to promote sustainable development. One operation tactic is the efficient management of natural and environmental resources from the federal level to the community level. To fulfill this, the community’s participation and decision making is imperative as it affects their lives and the environment itself. However, securing food is an important part of the sustainable development initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, and Ethiopia suffers greatly from droughts. Ethiopia's economy relies profoundly on their agricultural sector, and because of the scarcities, the economy is vulnerable to climate change. Ethiopia is an agricultural-based economy, and more than 85% of its population depends on it. The sector provides 52% of the GDP and 90% of the total imported exchange, and 15% of farmers are women. Sadly the land experiences destabilization and degradation, urban pollution and poor waste management. Because of this, there are also food shortages in many parts of the countryvii.

The uncertainty is getting worse because of the low status of women which has led to mismanaged development programs, of which do not take into account their vital role in cultivation. Men are typically given harder work such as plowing, and even as far as owning land and women have little say in relation to their land distribution and manufacturing. Every nation should consider focusing on supplying the Ethiopian economy with necessary equipment to be able to reduce climate change, primarily in our dry lands, as well as encourage women to take on leadership roles.

**Topic 2 – Elimination of Gender-Based Violence**

Violence is an ongoing issue that the Republic of Ethiopia is trying to solve. This includes rape, abduction, early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and more. Targeted primary against women, gender inequality goes against necessary freedoms and rights that they should be permitted. According to the WHO country study of 2005, 49% of women in Ethiopia have experienced physical assault from a male partner. Also, the EDHS denoted that 75% of girls have FGM and get married at around sixteen and a half years old, as well as an average of fourteen years old in the Amhara regionvi. In 2011, the Minister for Women, Youth and Children Affairs, Zenebu Tadesse, addressed the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). She claimed that women’s equality and prejudice had been integrated into Ethiopia’s Federal Constitution, which encompasses “strong and comprehensive” measures to encourage women’s rightsvii.

Forced and early marriages are a reoccurring problem that happens among young women and girls. Marrying under the age of eighteen is considered as a human rights violation according to the United Nations in the CEDAWviii. The United Nations have implemented many regulations against mistreating women and the Republic of Ethiopia supports their efforts, criminalizing early marriage. Although the laws prohibit forced and early marriage, it does not mean that they do not exist. The practice continues to grow and bride kidnappers are rarely punished. Ethiopia would like to see every country increasing their security because women try to flee the country because of their circumstances.

Although violence against women was a profound problem because of gender inequality endorsed by patriarchal cultural traditions, the new Criminal Code and Gender Sensitization programs have enforced change to support women’s rights. Important prosecution and investigation units were instructed to investigate and indict criminals for acts against women while providing counselling. The fundamentals of women’s equality have been included in Ethiopian federal and regional laws, especially in the Federal Family Code, and even labour legislations. Campaigns were carried out to allow people to understand why discrimination should end. Furthermore, Women are being trafficked in and out of countries in Africa. Consequently, Ethiopia has prohibited smuggling. In other areas, Ethiopia has targeted the reduction of poverty among women, since the main cause of these challenges could be economic dependency and established culture. The republic of Ethiopia would like to see every country enforce the same laws, while maintaining the happiness of every women and child.

**Topic 3 – Women in Education and Employment**

Education is a fundamental tool that every individual should have access to. It is a crucial mean of economic, social, and cultural progression. Women’s education is connected to key issues such as participation in industrious activities, the growth of a population, and the education of their daughters. However, women still have difficulty gaining access to education. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2000, the illiteracy rate is 74% (54% are men and 75% are women) for people in developing countries. Many Ethiopian children cannot go to school due to their parent’s financial standing. In 2000 the MOE also observed that the national General Education Requirement was 57.4% displaying that 42.6% of Ethiopian children are not being taught. The same year, the amount of female students in high school was 41.49%vii. The Republic of Ethiopia has put forward many initiatives to diminish these percentages. This includes the “Leave No Woman Behind” program, aimed to empower women in the Amhara and Tigray regions as well as the Education and Training policyix.

Poverty is one of the primary obstacles to girls and women’s education. Socio-cultural factors like social customs add to the negative standpoints on women in Ethiopian society such as teenage pregnancy, and lack of access to crucial necessities. The United Nations has established the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) to uphold gender equality while promoting female educationx. The United Nations has also enabled participation directly in Ethiopia. The meeting was named the UN/ Donor Group on Advancement of Women (GAW), to supply to the advancement of women by offering support. The GAW also planned a workshop on Gender Equality to follow up on the Beijing conference of New York in June 2000vii. Ethiopia has benefitted from these advancements; however, the numbers continue to be consistent. Ethiopia would like to see the UN provide ways to help women and children move past the barrier of poverty so that they could be able to attend schooling.

If women and children were all able to gain access to education, they would be able to open new doors to the future. Educated women would boost income growth, child death rates would fall if education levels flourished, girls would be able to provide for their future families, and educated mothers could raise their children properly. The Republic of Ethiopia wants to promote services and new programs for women to be able to be educated, as well as children, by breaking the poverty barrier. In this, every country should be able to provide and support their populations to advance education one step further.

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