

# **STATEMENT**

## **UPR Pre-session on Ethiopia**

**Geneva, April 2019**

**Delivered by: Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association and the Coalition**

### **1- Presentation of the Organization**

This statement is delivered on behalf of Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association, a non-profit, non-partisan association founded by women lawyers to promote and protect women rights in Ethiopia.

### **2- National consultations for the drafting of the national report**

The Association has participated in a consultation forum for the development of a national report. The CSOs in the coalition have participated in the consultation. The CSOs Coalition also invited the Attorney General, Human Rights Commission, and other ministerial office stakeholders on each thematic area for the development of the CSOs parallel report.

### **3- Plan of the Statement**

This statement addresses basically two issues: (1) Violence Against Women in Ethiopia (2) The Situation of Women Employees in Industrial Parks in Ethiopia

### **4- Statement**

#### **i. Violence Against Women in Ethiopia**

#### **A. Follow-up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle review**

To continue efforts to combat violence against women is the general recommendation by states.

The GOE has made new developments to combat VAW based on the recommendation. Among the new developments:- :The second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), Second National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP II), outline on addressing violence against women as one of the priorities and provide for measures to be taken to eliminate GBV The Women's Development and Change Strategy introduced in 2017 , addresses VAW as their priorities and provide measures to be taken to eliminate GBV and HTP's, the National Human Rights Action Plan Coordination Office has finalized drafting a National Legal Aid Strategy which aims to bring together and harmonize the current fragmented legal aid provision in the country which will have significant impact in ensuring access to justice for victims of GBV.

## **B. Gaps and Challenges:**

It is not certain that the plans were fully implemented as envisaged. There is no clear follow-up report and documentation. There is no credible data to show if the strategic plan has been operationalized. Due to irregular meetings, lack of focus on strategic issues, and absence of accountability mechanisms, a full assessment of the implementation of the plans is yet to be done.

## **C. Recommendations**

The GoE shall:

- A. Fully implement the measures identified in the Women's Strategy and NHRAPII
- B. Assess and strengthen the implementation of the strategic plan of NCB;
- C. Make available a national data on non-partner sexual violence;
- D. Operationalize the implementation of the national legal aid strategy;

## **II. The Situation of Women Employees in Industrial Parks in Ethiopia**

### **A. Context**

The past few decades have witnessed the proliferation of industrial parks in Ethiopia opening significant job market for local people and accommodating large proportion of female workforce. Thus, this focuses on the situation of women workers in industrial parks with the view to bring to the attention of the UPR third cycle review the major developments and concerns in this respect.

What are referred to as Industrial parks in the Ethiopian context are usually referred to as "Export Processing Zones" (EPZs) which have proliferated in the last three decades, as part of the export oriented development strategies mainly adopted by developing countries to boost economic growth.

### **Positive developments**

3. The economic rationale for EPZs is to attract foreign direct investment through the provision of incentives, increase value added export production output, and create employment opportunities for citizens of host countries. This is especially relevant for women who are highly concentrated in the unemployed and low-skilled segment of the labor force. Industrial parks, therefore, bring advantage to women in creating wage employment for women.

### **B. Gaps and Challenges**

- *Low wage*

Wages are generally low in the industrial parks and female workers receive lower wages in comparison with their male counterparts.

- *Housing*

The majority of the factories in the industrial parks do not provide housing allowances. As a result, workers are forced to share a room with co-workers. Female workers are often pushed to cohabit with male workers exposing them to unplanned pregnancy, STDs and HIV/AIDS which impose additional gender based constraints on their economic advancement.<sup>1</sup>

- *Promotion , leadership positions*

Women are also less likely to be promoted to higher positions compared to men. In addition to gender stereotypes, this is partly due to the fact that women are concentrated in less skill intensive part of value chains and jobs.

- *Family friendly/gender sensitive working conditions*

There is also a high turnover of female workers due to not only low wages and limited opportunities for advancement but also, inflexible working conditions. Turnover is especially high among pregnant women and women who have recently given birth.

- *Sexual violence*

Women also face sexual harassment from co-workers and management.

### **C. Recommendations**

The Government of Ethiopia should design policy interventions that should be aimed at:

- Specifically addressing and regulating low wage problems for women employees in industrial parks
- Enhancing educational, training and career development opportunities both for current female employees and future recruits;
- Supporting the establishment of gender structures and services in industrial zones and companies, creating awareness of gender issues, policies and legal frameworks among workers and management ;
- Putting in place incentives and targets to increase women's participation in male dominated technical fields and management positions,

- Improving enforcement of labor law especially in areas of discrimination based on pregnancy and marital status;
- Promot gender friendly working environments (including mandating child care services ; flexible working hours for mothers, pregnant and nursing women,
- Putting in place procedures for sexual violence reporting and accountability mechanisms for sexual harassment and sexual violence at workplace

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