



AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AND DIASPORA NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

Official signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network



NEW YORK, Thursday, 11 February 2021, Her Excellency, Filsan Abdullahi, Minister of Women, Children and Youth of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and Dr. Djibril Diallo, President and CEO of the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network (ARDN), signed today, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which establishes a framework for intensifying cooperation and collaboration between the two signatory entities in furtherance of, amongst other items, (i) putting an end to all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, and to promote equality, inclusion and empowerment of all members of the human family; (ii) popularizing and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, in tandem with Africa Agenda 2063; and (iii) promoting peace, security and sustainable development in Africa and the African diaspora.

“We will keep fighting until our mothers, sisters and daughters are able to have true ownership over their bodies, and are able to make real choices in all aspects of their lives,” said Dr. Diallo. “It is our profound honor to call Ethiopia a partner in this global effort to put an end to gender-based violence and discrimination, and to create a more peaceful, sustainable and equitable world for all people.”

“We are honored to partner with the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network on a cause that is near and dear to our hearts. The Ethiopian government’s commitment to eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls is reflected in its policies and strategies and long-term plans including the recently unveiled 10 Years Perspective Plan”, said Her Excellency, Filsan Abdullahi, Minister of Women, Children and Youth. “Ethiopia will continue to take the lead for the success of the Red Card Campaign for a shared vision of a world where violence will no longer shadow women’s lives”

The MOU signing ceremony was held during the Second Women of the Diaspora Summit, convened by ARDN in collaboration with the Republic of Costa Rica, UNFPA and UN Women, and which seeks to propose solutions to address economic inequalities faced by the women of African descent throughout the world. The Summit was convened within the framework of the ARDN Red Card campaign, which aims to obtain a minimum of one-million global commitments to “give a red card to all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.” Significantly, the MOU sets forth the commitment of Ethiopia to cooperating with ARDN to obtain one-million ARDN Red Card campaign signatures from within the country.

Violence against women in all its forms has become a major concern of our time. As with other countries, stark gender disparities exist in Ethiopia. In 2016, the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia suggested that nearly a third of women and girls aged between 15 and 49 had experienced either physical or sexual violence, 65 percent of women and girls aged between 15 and 49 experienced female genital mutilation, and 58 percent of women aged 25 to 49 were child brides (source: Ethiopia, 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, Key Findings, *available at* <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR241/SR241.pdf>).

At the same time, Ethiopia has taken great efforts to advance equality and women’s empowerment. In 2020, about 39 percent of the seats in the parliament, and about 50 percent of cabinet positions, were held by women, in Ethiopia. In comparison, about 24 percent of the seats in congress, and about 13 percent of cabinet positions, were held by women, in the United States, in the same year.

ABOUT ARDN

The African Renaissance and Diaspora Network (ARDN) serves as a coordinating body to unite the efforts of individuals and organizations with a single goal: to support the advent of the African renaissance by fostering unity among African nations and all peoples of African descent. ARDN has been active as an informal body since the 1990s. It has been recognized by the United States government as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt public charity. ARDN is formally associated with several United Nations system entities, including through a series of Memoranda of Understanding and Implementing Partner Agreements.

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