



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Celebration of the International Women's Day-2017 by  
Indian Women's Association**

The Indian Women's Association (IWA) with the support of the Embassy of India organized an event on 19 April 2017 at the Embassy Residence to mark the International Women's Day-2017. The Indian Women's Association works under the aegis of the Embassy and act as its charitable and philanthropic arm. IWA supports organizations involved in such activities as well as promotes people-to-people contacts and cultural ties between India and Ethiopia.

H.E. Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, First Lady of Ethiopia graced this event as Chief Guest. In a traditional way, the Hon'ble First Lady inaugurated the event by lighting the lamp, followed by a prayer song by the IWA members.

In her keynote address, H.E. Mrs. Roman Tesfaye mentioned that during her education at Aligarh Muslim University in India, she stayed with common people and mingling with them gave her a realistic understanding of the commonalities both India and Ethiopia shared. She also noted that along with these commonalities both countries had common problems too. Both have very extensive development programmes that need to be complimented with social work of organizations like IWA. Emphasizing the necessity to engage in taking up socially effective projects for development, she appreciated IWA for their tireless work as well as commended the Embassy for its efforts in this direction.

The IWA felicitated Yeenat Weg Charitable Association of Ethiopia for their exemplary work in ensuring quality education in primary schools by supporting the needy students through their school meal programme, and the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa Sisters), Ethiopia for their exemplary work in caring for the uncared, regardless of their religion, or social status. Along with Mrs. Meghna Srivastava, President, (IWA) and H.E. Mr. Anurag Srivastava, Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, Djibouti and the African Union, the Hon'ble First Lady honoured the two organizations and the women behind them. A citation and plaque were presented to Ms. Debrework Luleseged, General Manager on behalf of Yeenat Weg Charitable Association of Ethiopia and Sister Maryla Mc, Regional Superior, Sister Servita Mc, Superior, Sister Sina Marie and Sister Marie Ajit Mc on behalf of the Missionaries of Charity.

Mrs. Meghna Srivastava, President, (IWA) delivering the welcome address thanked the Hon'ble First Lady for her generous presence which was a source of great encouragement and inspiration for IWA members. She also touched upon the First Lady's strong zeal for social change through women's empowerment by, first, establishing the office of the First Lady and then working relentlessly through it in creating economic opportunities for Ethiopian women as well as through targeted interventions for skill development and support for women entrepreneurs. She highlighted that First Lady's initiatives like child education & proper nutrition, school feeding programme, healthcare and education have created a very positive impact in the Ethiopian society.

H.E. Mr. Anurag Srivastava, Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, Djibouti and the African Union addressing the gathering touched upon the historical and time-tested collaboration between India and Ethiopia in resources, knowledge, opportunities, expertise and development partnership. Ambassador also assured of Indian support and cooperation in rural development and in addressing problems of rural poverty, provision of water, education, healthcare, employment, rural handicrafts, women's empowerment and wasteland development. etc. He also elaborated specifically on low-cost, home-grown, community-driven models like Women Barefoot Solar Engineers or 'Solar Mamas'. The other initiative is SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) which is a union of 1.9 million women workers of the informal economy. Their goal is to organize women for full employment so as to achieve self-reliance with income security, food security and social security. Another successful model is SETU Africa project providing support to local community-based organizations through experience sharing and capacity building and also initiatives like setting up of women's banks, savings and credit groups, child care centers and trading between women's cooperatives. The Ambassador recalled these initiatives because of the two countries have had a partnership in providing for women's economic empowerment and possibilities for the future are immense.

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23 June 2017