



WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN ETHIOPIA

*Presentation by
Birtukan Midekssa*

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ORGANIZATION OF PRESENTATION

- ✘ Introduction – Why call for women’s increased participation in political leadership?
- ✘ Brief Historical Review of Ethiopian Women’s Role and Challenges in Political Leadership.
- ✘ Overview of Current Challenges and Constraints
- ✘ Recommendations

Why do we need equal participation of women in political leadership?

- ✘ Equality of women as an end in democracy
- ✘ Representation of women's voices and interests
- ✘ Necessity of transforming inequitable gender roles
- ✘ Infusing political system with feminine values

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF WOMEN AND POLITICAL POWER IN ETHIOPIA

IMPERIAL ETHIOPIA

- ✘ Political culture dominated by patriarchy
- ✘ Historiography
- ✘ Powerful queens and wives of kings
- ✘ Women after 1955 Constitution

WOMEN IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- ✘ The Ethiopian popular revolution as break through for political participation
- ✘ Women in armed groups
 - + Women and the TPLF/EPRDF

WOMEN AND THE DERGUE

- ✘ “Empowerment” without power
- ✘ Wide activities of mass organization without genuine civil society activity
- ✘ Only few women in government offices and legislature

EPRDF AND WOMEN AFTER 1991

- ✘ Symbolic gestures to hijack women's questions to party's needs.
- ✘ Labeling against women's question

WOMEN'S ROLE IN OPPOSITION POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

- ✘ Politics of persecution
- ✘ Limited participation in positions of power
- ✘ The 2005 elections and the role of women

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA

SYSTEM-WIDE POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✘ Political violence and intensive persecution
- ✘ Increased regimentation of social life which makes independent women civil society organization difficult.

CONSTRAINTS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO WOMEN

- ✘ Absence of strong women's network and movement
- ✘ Social ,economic and cultural burdens
- ✘ Limited interest to be involved in politics
- ✘ Political discourse which doesn't allow sufficient sphere to the issues of women
- ✘ Insufficient attention to political empowerment of women

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?

- ✘ Bear pressure on the regime in power
- ✘ Support and strengthen civil society organizations especially independent women organizations in Ethiopia
- ✘ Support and strengthen programs and initiatives aimed at empowering women in Ethiopia

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE? (Contd.)

- ✘ Establish and strengthen initiatives among women in the Diaspora:-
 - + promote democratic culture and tolerance
 - + work on conflict prevention and resolution
 - + Advocacy and International networking