

## STATEMENT

### STATEMENT BY WOINSHET ASFAW AT THE ETHIOPIAN TEENAGERS' FORUM ON GIRLS' EDUCATION 4 MARCH 2004

H.E. Mr Bjorn Ljungqvist, UNICEF Representative  
Honorable representatives from Government  
Honorable students representing various Addis Ababa Secondary Schools  
Invited Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome.

The Ethiopian Teenagers' Forum has met before on several occasions, starting in November 2002, where we discussed HIV/AIDS. Following that, we have met on the subject of street children and poverty reduction and youth where we were able to raise several important issues. Today, on behalf of the Ethiopian Teenagers' Forum, I would like to thank you for coming to this meeting where we will discuss the subject of Girls' Education.

The traditions of our country that have come down to us from centuries past and the low esteem with which women and girls are held by the general public has led to the situation where girls typically have low self-confidence. As a result their performance in school has suffered. While a lot has been done to solve this, the particularly bad situation in rural areas indicates that a lot more needs to be done.

Educating girls means bringing lasting change for families, communities and the country as a whole. It is therefore imperative that Government, NGOs, the general public and we young people work toward this end.

Thank you.

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