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دولة ارتريا
وزارة العمل والرعاية الاجتماعية
مكتب الوزير

The State of Eritrea
Ministry of Labour & Human Welfare
Office of the Minister

**STATEMENT OF THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF ERITREA
H.E- MRS ASKALU MENKERIOS TO THE CRC PLENARY SESSION,
GENEVA, 2 JUNE 2008**

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Government of the State of Eritrea, I am pleased to express my appreciation to the Committee for providing the Eritrean delegation with this opportunity to briefly present Eritrea's second and third consolidated report under the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is certainly an honour and a privilege for us to discuss with this distinguished Committee the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Eritrea.

Before proceeding to the activities undertaken to implement the Convention, allow me to highlight the current situation in Eritrea. The no-war no-peace situation rooted in Eritrea's border dispute with Ethiopia still continues to beleaguer my country. Albeit this very serious situation, we have been able to register remarkable progress in our national development endeavours, among others, in the economic and social sectors. Mention should also be made here that my Government has prepared and seriously pursuing Food Security Strategy. All these interventions are expected to improve the living standards of the population in general, and the welfare of Eritrean children, in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Since the Committee's consideration of Eritrea's first report, the Government of the State of Eritrea has continued to take appropriate steps to implement the Convention. In this regard, the Government has enacted a Proclamation which prohibits and severely punishes the practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. It has also drawn up a national plan of action to implement it. The Government has also issued a Proclamation to provide for tobacco control which prohibits any person in Eritrea from offering tobacco to minors, as well as selling tobacco products in educational institutions.

On 16 February, 2005, the Government signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, namely: Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Following the signature of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Government has designed a national plan of action to combat the commercial exploitation of children through preventive and rehabilitation approaches.

There has been increased coordination of policies and monitoring mechanisms in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the national, regional and sub-regional levels. At the national level, a committee composed of the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, as well as the National Union of Eritrean Women and National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students has been in full swing to ensure an integrated approach across the spectrum of Government policies and programmes for children in general, and the implementation of the Convention in particular. All regions and sub-regions have been staffed and social workers provided training to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Convention. Moreover, 12-Child Well-Being Committees have been established at the sub-regional level on a pilot basis to monitor and respond to child right issues.

In collaboration with various national and international partners, the Ministry of Health has established health facilities and training institutions at different levels. Moreover, mother-and-child health related programs have been carried out both at health facility and community levels. All these have been incorporated into the newly prepared five-year Strategic Development Plan for the health sector. As a result, morbidity and mortality rates of children have substantially been reduced.

In the education sector, my Government has been engaged in a comprehensive transformation of our educational system, aimed at increasing access, improving

quality and reducing wastage. To address these issues, my Government has also prepared a holistic and integrated five-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP), the implementation of which started in 2005.

Considerable effort and resources have been channelled to child protection. The programs designed to address the problems of orphans and other vulnerable groups through community based rehabilitation and reintegration has been successfully implemented. Important steps have also been undertaken to promote juvenile justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Taking into account the fact that Eritrean children have suffered for more than two generations and been deprived of their basic rights, on the one hand, and aware of the fact that children are the most precious asset of the Eritrean nation, on the other, we are here to reaffirm the commitment of my Government to the well-being of Eritrean children and the Convention on the Rights of the Children.

Thank you for your kind attention!