



ETHIOPIAN FIRST LADY AND THE JAPANESE PM'S SPOUSE TOOK THE LEAD IN OPENING A GARMENT TRAINING CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN SELAM CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

A groundbreaking ceremony for 'the Project for Establishing a Garment Training Centre for Women, Yeka Sub City, Addis Ababa' was held on 14 April 2015, in the presence of H.E. W/ro. Roman Tesfaye, the First Lady of Ethiopia and H.E. Mr. Kazuhiro SUZUKI, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Ethiopia, at Selam Children's Village in Addis Ababa. During the ceremony, a congratulatory letter from H.E. Mrs. Akie Abe, the spouse of the Prime Minister of Japan, was presented by Ambassador Suzuki. The USD 98,209 project is to contribute to women's empowerment, and is being funded by the Embassy of Japan, with Selam Children's Village as an implementing partner.

The origin of the project is unique and special for both Ethiopia and Japan. Last year in January, H.E. Mrs. Abe visited Selam Children's Village with H.E. W/ro Roman during Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Abe's official visit to Ethiopia. H.E. Mrs. Abe met and spoke with female students, who devoted themselves to skills training, and made friends with many Ethiopian children while at Selam Children's Village. This experience made a strong impression on her, which led the Embassy of Japan, together with Selam Children's Village, to proceed with the project as a follow up to her visit.

Both H.E. W/ro Roman and H.E. Mrs. Abe are known widely for their respective engagements in promoting women's empowerment. The construction of a garment training centre at the Selam Children's Village, therefore, will serve to realize their visions.

In the letter from H.E. Mrs. Abe, which was read by H.E. Mr. Suzuki at the ceremony, she congratulated those in attendance on the initiation of the project implementation and shared her memories of visiting the Village. The text of her letter is as follows.

“Dear Your Excellency Mrs. Roman and the People of Selam Children’s Village,

I am delighted to learn that the construction of a Garment Training Centre for Women will soon start at Selam Children’s Village, utilizing the Japanese Government’s Grant Scheme for Grassroots and Human Security Projects. I offer my sincere congratulations to all of those who worked hard to realize the project.

This happy news brought back the vivid memory of visiting Selam Children’s Village and meeting all of you in January of last year as if it happened yesterday.

At your Village, I formed a friendship with Your Excellency Mrs. Roman, met and talked to female students who devoted themselves enthusiastically to skills training, made friends with many Ethiopian children, and very much enjoyed a coffee ceremony with you. These were precious experiences that I truly treasure now.

On this memorable day, therefore, I am pleased to congratulate you, share with you these memories, and tell you how warm my heart really feels.

Today, my husband, Prime Minister Abe, is promoting an endeavour to realize “a society in which women shine,” where all women are free from violence and discrimination, and where their potential skills can fully blossom. I understand that, like Your Excellency Mrs. Roman, there are a significant number of women in the public and private spheres who are also, in this regard, making tremendous efforts to improve the Ethiopian society for women.

I have a sincere wish that this training centre, for which we place the cornerstone today, will help more women to “shine” even brighter in your society.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere wish that one day I would be able to meet again with everyone at Selam Children’s Village, together with Your Excellency, Mrs. Roman.

Yours sincerely”

The Project, establishing a garment training centre, will help train 80 women per year in garment making skills, which will provide an opportunity for those women to acquire jobs in the garment making profession, and help them to be economically independent in Ethiopian society.

At the ceremony, H.E. Mr. Suzuki also stated that, as one of a series of projects for women’s empowerment, the Embassy of Japan has also decided to provide USD 90,932 for the Center for Accelerated Women’s

Economic Empowerment (CAWEE) to run a project for marginalized women to be trained in leather product production. This centre is also being backed by Ethiopian First Lady H.E. W/ro Roman.

The GGP scheme was first introduced in 1989. In Ethiopia, since 1997, over 340 projects, totaling approximately USD 27 million, have been implemented through this scheme in such sectors as education, water supply, health services, and other basic human needs.

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Addis Ababa