



Press Release

Italy and IOM sign agreement to foster economic and social opportunities for women Eritrean refugees in Hitsat and Shimelba Camps and Ethiopian women of host communities

ADDIS ABABA, Italy and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed today an agreement on a project entitled “Economic and Social Opportunities for Female Eritrean Refugees in Hitsat and Shimelba Camps and Ethiopian Women of Host Communities” (ESOFEE). The project, which is funded and acknowledged by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), will be implemented in Hitsats camp and its surrounding (Atsegede Tsimbilla Woreda) and in Shimelba refugee camp and its surrounding (Tehatay Adi Abo Woreda) in a period of 12 months and will have a of 200,000 Euros.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, **Giuseppe Mistretta, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy to Ethiopia**, highlighted that “Women play a major role in this project. The most vulnerable women, in the camps and in the hosting communities, will be in fact the beneficiaries of the projects’ activities which will improve their economic and social conditions enabling them to develop business skills”. “With the signature of this agreement, Italy’s and IOM’s collaboration and partnership is furtherly enhanced” he added.

Ms. Ginevra Letizia, head of the Addis Ababa Office of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation said that “The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), on the one hand, through this funding aims to support women in refugee camps, and on the other, to promote integration with host communities”. She also added: “Women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality are aspects to which AICS pays considerable attention, with this programme and other, such as the *Capacity building and job creation for youth and women in the textile sector in migration prone areas*”.

Msr. Maureen Achieng, Head of Programme of IOM in Ethiopia Chief of Mission and Representative to AU, ECA and IGAD, said on her part that “In the year 2017 alone, more than 2,300 migrants have died while attempting to cross to Europe. The implementation of such projects provide awareness and livelihood opportunities, which are crucial to curb irregular migration from the source countries”.

The project will implement strategic activities to mitigate secondary/irregular migration of female Eritrean refugees and potential female Ethiopian migrants. Through this project, basic business skills, leadership, life skills trainings will be organized for the refugees and host communities. Start-up working material will also be provided to beneficiaries and access to market will be facilitated for the new entrepreneurs. Finally, communities' awareness will be raised through experience-sharing gatherings, family/community days and community conversations.

It is observed that women in the refugee and host communities have been most susceptible to irregular migration. Hence, the project aims to curb the irregular migration of this most vulnerable group by economically and socially empowering two refugee camps of Hitsas and Shimelba and their host communities.

For further information, kindly contact:

Dario Poddighe, Communications Officer, Italian Agency For Development Cooperation
Addis Ababa Office
Tel. +251 970 75 65 33; d.poddighe@itacaddis.it

Elisa Rossetto, Communications and Public Relations Officer, Embassy of Italy in Ethiopia
Tel. +251 1 11235684; addisabeba.pr@esteri.it

Alemayehu Seifeselessie, Senior Communications Assistant, IOM Ethiopia,
Tel: +251 11 6611117 (Ext. 455), Email: salemayehu@iom.int