



## **PRESS RELEASE - 075/2004**

### **FIRST LADIES AGAINST HIV/AIDS**

The Second General Assembly meeting of the Organization of African first Ladies against HIV/AIDS has opened today in Addis Ababa.

The meeting brought together first Ladies from Member States to discuss the HIV/AIDS scourge in Africa with a view to mapping out strategies to mitigate the pandemic.

In her welcome address, the first lady of Ethiopia, Madame Azeb Mesfin, said HIV/AIDS posed the greatest challenge to women in Africa who suffered from stigmatization more than any other group in the society.

She called upon the first ladies to take up the challenges that confront women and to endeavor to implement policies on HIV/AIDS, urging them to deploy their concerted effort to champion the cause of women.

The Deputy Director of UNAIDS, Mr. Michael Sidibe, commended the 1<sup>st</sup> Ladies for their commitment and support for people affected with HIV/AIDS and pledged on behalf of UNAIDS to support their efforts.

He urged the 1<sup>st</sup> Ladies to mobilize and sensitize the under privileged women who are vulnerable and susceptible to the virus, to play key roles in revitalizing legislations on HIV/AIDS.

**Addis Ababa, July 7, 2004**