

Gala Hosted in Honour of Olympic Heroes

15th August 2012, LONDON

Ethiopian Olympic medallists and other athletes were given a hero's welcome at a gala hosted in their honour at Porchester Hall in London's Bayswater.



Accompanied by the award-winning musical troupe, Dankira, upon arrival, they were presented by HE Ambassador Berhanu Kebede with bouquets of flower and led to their seats waving to standing dignitaries and invited guests in the hall which was packed to capacity.

Welcoming the athletes and members of the National Olympic Committee, HE Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK and the Scandinavian countries, said "There are dates to celebrate, and to celebrate in the most joyful way. Dates that hold the rhythm of life which beats like a heart. Hearts which serve as a power-house to fire up the limbs of Ethiopian athletes, urging them on to go to the distance, to push themselves to the limits, and to be crowned with well-earned medals as golden, glamorous and historical as the rainbow nation of Ethiopia."



Citing the host of events organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in London to showcase Ethiopia as a mosaic of nations and nationalities and the richness of its culture, HE the Ambassador expressed amazement at the fabulous support given by huge crowds at all the venues to Team GB and to all other athletes, including Team Ethiopia which won 7 medals, placing it 5th in the athletics medal table and 25th overall.

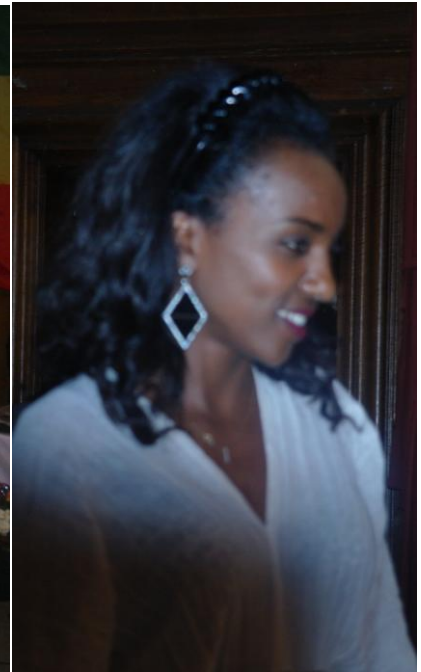
The stamina and invincibility of our Olympic heroes, their commitment, persistence and resilience is a testimony to the perseverance of Ethiopians which, he said, "lies at the heart of the Ethiopian Renaissance."



The Rt. Honourable Laurence Robertson MP, Guest of Honour at the ceremony, took the podium to congratulate the athletes for their outstanding performance at the London 2012 Olympics.

He noted how remarkable the organization of the London Olympics had been and praised Team GB for its many achievements in the games.

In an emotional speech at the gala, gold medallist Meseret Defar congratulated all Ethiopians and compatriots over the brilliant performance of the athletes and expressed her gratitude for the support and love bestowed on them during their stay in London.



Tirunesh Dibaba, the 5,000 metres gold medallist at the London Olympics, told those present at the gala "I love you all" and said she owed all her wins and resilience to the encouragement bestowed on her.



Speaking at the gala, Ethiopian Consensus Forum Chairman, Mulat Tadesse congratulated all Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin on the victory the talented Ethiopian athletes had achieved at the London Olympics and expressed gratitude to all for their support of Team Ethiopia.

He also presented a Cup to HE Ato Anbesaw Eniyew, Deputy Commissioner for Sports, as a token of this momentous Olympic games, at which Ethiopian athletes won seven medals including three gold.

HE the Commissioner thanked the Consensus Forum and congratulated all Ethiopians on the victory scored.



The Dankira dance troupe entertained guests with traditional and modern songs and dance, which delighted the audience.

A poem glorifying the feats of the athletes at the Olympics and a fashion show were among the activities at the gala, attended by over 500 people from all walks of life.

Present on the occasion were UK Government officials, parliamentarians, members of the diplomatic corps, corporate managers and institutions, media representatives, celebrities and members of the Ethiopian community and invited guests.

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For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7838 3880/3; 07717 603163; 0788 637 1094 or send an email to info@ethioembassy.org.uk.

More photos from the evening can be found on the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2MN_Z2YJ_I&feature=plcp.