Dear Ladies - let’s go due south in Africa from my home in Egypt to attend a scientific conference in Addis Ababa, the Capital of Ethiopia.

January 7, 2013: The plane flies above green mountainous countryside punctuated by meandering rivers. Yes, you are right, we are landing in Addis Ababa. The copilot announces the time and weather conditions to the passengers and also what precautions they need to watch out for. I inhale and think that within a couple of minutes I’ll be landing on the hottest point of the world – the beginning of the Great African Rift. Wow!

My breath is quickly taken away as I get off the plane. I can barely breathe! That’s because I am 2600 m above sea level. Welcome to the Ethiopian Plateau, ladies.

Here’s some geological background regarding my new location – I am standing in the only country that has outcrops in the orogenic belts of the Arabian Nubian Shield (ANS) and the Mozambique Belt (MB). According to the Geological Survey of Ethiopia, the southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia are covered by “…Proterozoic basement rocks of poly-deformed and poly-metamorphosed, high grade ortho- and paragneisses and schists, which are associated with less deformed and metamorphosed mafic-ultramafic suites and meta-sedimentary rocks”… The southern, southwestern, northern, eastern and western parts of Ethiopia contain outcrops of Precambrian basement. These rocks have been historically explored for gold and base metal mineralization. Late Paleozoic to Early Mesozoic marine and continental sedimentary rocks are exposed in many area of Ethiopia. Ethiopia contains the Afar Depression, which is the only area on earth where the end stage of continental rupture and the start of seafloor spreading are occurring above sea level. Erta Ale, one of the more active volcanoes in the Afar Depression, erupted in 2010.

January 8, 2013: The 24th colloquium of African Geology begins. It is 3 kilometers to the conference venue from my hotel. The streets are paved and fairly clean. Trees are everywhere. Don’t forget that Addis Ababa is close to the equatorial line - the weather can be sunny, rainy and windy – basically there can be 3 seasons in one day!

On the way to the venue, I see people dancing to drums and African music. Dancing in Ethiopia looks like dancing in Nubia (the extreme southern part of Egypt). Women are singing in unison as they make the a sound known as the “yeyeyeyeye” voice.

450 participants are attending the conference with more than nine company sponsors present. The conference attendees include many people from all over the world and from all over Africa.
It is a great opportunity for me to get to know Ethiopia from within the country itself. For example, I am learning how Ethiopia addresses its water management issues as well as the mining of its mineral resources. I believe that Ethiopia will soon rank high in gold production among other African countries.

In the middle of the conference I attend a round table talk for the African Association for Women in Geosciences (AAWG). I talk about AWG and how it has an effective role for women in the geosciences, and my audience listens carefully. I hope to make AAWG similar to AWG one day.

During the conference I am fortunate to meet Egyptian scientists for the first time. Then it comes time for my talk and I am glad to see that the participants, among them African researchers, like my ideas on Egyptian geoeducation. They want to apply my ideas in other African countries as well. This is very encouraging!

The closing ceremony comes too quickly. Leaving the hotel and heading toward the airport is sad as I say farewell to the green mountainous countryside.

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**AWG News**

- **NATIONAL**
  - **May 19-22, 2013** AAPG, Pittsburgh, PA, where the AWG booth will be displayed.
  - **Summer 2013** Field trip to Cuba