



Ethiopian Stakeholders Convention

P. O. Box 1836, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Phone: (877) 746-4384 Email: Ethiopianstakeholders@gmail.com

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“Unity is our destiny”

Ethiopian Stakeholders Convention

CONSORTIUM OF ETHIOPIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

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October 7 to 9, 2017

Dallas, Texas, USA

“አገሪቱ ተባብሮ ካልረገጠች እርካብ

ነገራችን ሁሉ የአምባጊ ካብ የአምባጊ ካብ”

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Memorandum of Understanding for the Formation of a CONSORTIUM OF ETHIOPIAN CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Dallas, TX (USA): October 9, 2017

“አገሬ ተባብራ ካልረገጠች እርካብ
ነገራችን ሁሉ የአምቤይ ካብ የእምቤይ ካብ።”
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A Statement of Need

The state of civil society organizations (CSOs) both in Ethiopia and in the Diaspora, the way they are organized and their potentials for growth and development, leaves much to be desired. Some are engaged in the business of duplicating each other dividing up limited resources needed to address their mission. Most CSOs are limited to issuing occasional press releases in reaction to TPLF/EPRDF’s frequent and shocking human right abuses, killings and tortures. Eventually, some may leave the field of struggle or remain incapacitated to do anything tangible because there are no sufficient resources to go around helping them implement and address their cherished missions.

Upon a closer look at the charters and organizational documents of the various CSOs, one finds organizational purpose, mission, and vision that are remarkably similar. Their focus may be different, but the overall outlook is essentially the same, i.e., to be agents of meaningful social change to benefit society. Their purposes and missions revolve around protecting and promoting human rights, advocate unity of the people and Ethiopia's territorial integrity, patriotism, the rule of law, freedom of religion, advocacy for democratic rights, peace and reconciliation, developing civic institutions and civic engagement at the grassroots level. That they have had a hard time forming a united



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front for change under the common causes of unity and democracy suggests a gaping hold between professed goals and narrow organizational interests.

CSOs should be strategic and develop a vision that helps to bring about democratic change, social and economic development in Ethiopia and be able to dismantle all barriers to meaningful social change. One redemptive course of action is the coming together of CSOs at the very minimum by forming a consortium to (1) mobilize, educate and organize people at the grassroots level to stand up for their rights; (2) promote and defend the rule of law and respect for human rights; 3) keep the unity of Ethiopian people and territorial integrity of Ethiopian state; 4) help bring about democratic governance by dismantling all barriers that stand against liberty and individual freedom of Ethiopians.

Most, if not all, CSOs uphold values such as democracy, transparency, tolerance, non-violence, gender equality, poverty eradication, peace, and reconciliations to realize and advance their mission and visions. Their societal impact is indispensable whether to influencing public policy, or holding state and private organizations accountable, responding to interests or empowering citizens and meeting their needs.

Why Is A Consortium Needed To Accomplish Our Goals?

Collective action is not only a human invention for assuring human survival Social organizations are devised to provide security of life and property. Political organizations are intended to govern, strengthen, guide and codify inter-group relationships and exercise legitimate authority or power. Organizations may have different structures, such as Federation, Confederation, or Unitary, and coming together and establishing the rules of the road and their enforcement is what consortium is all about.



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A consortium is an agreement among individuals or groups to guide joint action, each pursuing its - self-interest, joining forces together for a common cause. A consortium needs to exist only as long as it is useful to its members. It is essentially a smart way of increasing the leverage or the power of groups and individuals by combining their meager resources. It is also a pragmatic method for avoiding zero-sum or negative-sum competitions among entities with similar fundamental objectives.

Forming a consortium is building relationships among various civic organizations for more influence and power that can be put to bear on governments. That relationship if handled carefully and best served through a consortium rather than through existing disparate and scattered organizational efforts. The benefits of working together outweigh the costs. By working together, we can reduce the costs and increase the benefits at the same time. Issues of duplicating efforts will be avoided, and thus resources can be used to effectively and efficiently achieve the desired goals. In the processes of forming a consortium, there is communication and understanding of each other. However, the critical benefit is the democratic values and traditions that are being developed in the process. A consortium based on democratic processes last longer and addresses the democratic needs of our people. The formation of a consortium of civil society organizations involves negotiation, mediation and consensus building based on democratic principles. In the end, it may result in the formation of unified CSOs.

Formation of a strong and a fully coordinated consortium also facilitates credibility and support on an international level thereby achieving a positive impact in critical efforts of advocacy and the prevalence of the policy required for the benefit of the Ethiopian people.



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Consortium formation requires knowledge and skill. It is extremely important to realize that an effective consortium of CSOs is one of the key pillars of a strategy of national survival for Ethiopia. It is our strong belief, and there is also abundant evidence for it, that -a "shared vision" for a democratic Ethiopia and a well-crafted "strategy of transition" to achieve it must be debated and approved by the CSO Consortium.

PREAMBLE:

WHEREAS the people of Ethiopia have been denied peace, justice, and universally recognized basic human, civil, and political rights;

WHEREAS Ethiopian people are currently conducting a resolute life-and-death struggle against the ethnocratic, tyrannical and extremely corrupt regime of the TPLF/EPRDF;

BELIEVING that a unified civic movement is as important, if not more, as the organized political opposition to ensure accountability and establishment of democratic governance;

TRUSTING that a consortium of pan-Ethiopian CSOs at home and abroad can play the role of catalyst, the formulation of a national agenda for change and post-TPLF/EPRDF transition to a democratic and sustainable political order is critical;

KNOWING that the purposes and missions of our individual organizations revolve around protecting, and promoting human rights, advocate for the unity of the Ethiopian people and Ethiopia's territorial integrity, patriotism, rule of law, freedom of religion, advocacy for democratic rights, peace and reconciliation, developing civic institutions and civic engagement at the grassroots level, a sustainable economic development for the benefit of the Ethiopian people;

BELIEVING that our missions are best served through a consortium rather than through disparate and scattered organizational efforts engaged in silo operations;



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RECOGNIZING that the benefits of working together outweigh the costs and increase the benefits at the same time thereby assuring members the best-value-for-money;

Therefore, we, the undersigned CSOs, find it necessary to establish a CONSORTIUM henceforth, referred to as TIBIBIR or the "Consortium." The consortium is formed by the founding CSOs that adhere to the principles of:

- 1. Uncompromising stand and commitment to respect the unity of the Ethiopian people and the territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state, and**
- 2. Commitment to uphold and promote all human, civil, democratic, and political rights of all Ethiopians as adopted and declared by various international conventions.**

VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS:

Vision: To actively participate and realize the establishment of a united, genuinely democratic and prosperous Ethiopia.

Mission: TIBIBIR, the consortium of Ethiopian CSOs is a global strategic collaboration for the protection and promotion of human and democratic rights in Ethiopia as well as supporting the formulation of an appropriate policy and a socio-economic development strategy to lift the Ethiopian people from the current depths of abject poverty.

Goals: Members of the consortium, representing diverse civic organizations and individuals have formed a strategic alliance for the purposes of addressing and promoting the following objectives that each has commonly articulated in their mission statements:



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1. to advance and foster civic engagement, patriotism, and democratic institution building to empower Ethiopians in establishing an accountable democracy and strengthening the rule of law and protection of human rights in Ethiopia;
2. to advocate effectively for the causes of freedom, democracy and human rights to foreign policy makers, legislators, Human rights, organizations, foreign policy think tanks, and other relevant entities;
3. to promote accountability for human rights violations, and
4. to support policies necessary to advance freedom, democracy, human rights and appropriate socio-economic development in Ethiopia;
5. to create mechanisms to educate and broaden understanding of human rights in the Ethiopian community;
6. to promote dialogue and consultations on democratic development and human rights;
7. to raise public awareness globally by closely monitoring the human rights situation in Ethiopia and applying effective mechanisms for collaborating with international CSO's and such institutions which have special interests in human rights, and the rule of law; and
8. to provide a clearinghouse for information and materials.

The **Consortium** shall pursue the following strategies to reach its stated goals:

The first step, which has been achieved by identifying and selecting legitimate Ethiopian civil society organizations, faith-based institutions and special interest groups, is to invite them to a convention on October 7 & 8, 2017 in Dallas, Texas, USA. **The goal is to forge a Consortium and to formulate a framework as well as a common national agenda for democratic change.** The Convention will also identify the modalities of



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transition to a democratic order that will resonate with Ethiopian citizens as well as pan-Ethiopian political organizations.

The next step and goal is to convene a Stakeholders Convention of Ethiopian civil society organization, faith-based institutions, media and special interest groups, prominent Ethiopian personalities and democratic political parties, to discuss and adopt a road map for building national consensus proposed by the CSO convention.

To realize these complementary goals, the CSO convention will address and review in full the framework, logistics, financial and material resources that are necessary to support the Stakeholders Convention.

At the inauguration stage of the consortium, the institutional arrangement which will consider the following elements will be discussed to ensure the upholding of the lofty principles of internal democracy, transparency, accountability, systematic planning, implementation, monitoring, and participation.

1. **Representatives' Assembly** (Yetewekayoch Gubae) comprising member CSO representatives:

Staff functions of offices reporting to the RA:

- 1.1 External Auditor (to be utilized on an annual basis),
- 1.2 Election Office.

2. **Leadership Council** (Yeamerar Miker Bet); 9

Staff functions of offices reporting to the LC:

- 2.1 Planning and Monitoring Office.



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3. **Executive Director** (Sira AsfeSami):

Staff functions reporting to the ED:

- (a) Internal Audit Office,
- (b) Public Relations and Information Office.

Operational Divisions reporting to the ED:

- 3.1 Democracy Development and Civic Engagement Division,
- 3.2 Advocacy and International Relations Division,
- 3.3 Resource Mobilization Division,
- 3.4 Research and strategic planning Division,
- 3.5 Administration and Financial Division,
- 3.6 Regional Resource Centers (including Ethiopia).

The Representatives' Assembly of the Consortium of Ethiopian Civic Society organizations (TIBIBIR) shall approve the by-laws, the structure, Code of Conduct and elect the leadership as soon as possible.

DONE and signed this 8th day of October 2017 in Dallas, Texas, United States of America.



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CSO name	Representative	Signature
1. Afar Human Rights Organization:		Gaas Ahemed
2. Association of Human Rights in Ethiopia:		Yared Hailemariam
3. Bale Raey Wotatoch Maheber:		Alemayehu Abebe
4. Border Affairs Commission		Alemu Yayine
5. Center for the Right of Ethiopian Women		Meron Ahadu
6. Ethiopian American Council		Getu Engidaw
7. Ethiopian Dialogue Forum		Aklog Birara
8. Ethiopian Heritage Society		Yeshitela Araya
9. Ethiopiawinnet: Council for the Defense of Citizen Rights		Erku Yimer
10. First Hijerah Foundation		Haji Nejib Mohammed
11. Gasha for Ethiopia		Negasi Beyene
12. Global Alliance for the Right of Ethiopians		Tamagn Beyene
13. Gojam Global Alliance		Kinfemichel Alemu
14. Gonder Hibret		Abebe Gelagay
15. International Ethiopian Youth Union		Denku Adale
16. One Ethiopia Movement		Fiseha Eshetu
17. Shewa Hibret		Assegid Merin
18. Sidamo Maheber		Daniel Teffera
19. Solidarity Movement for a new Ethiopia		Obang Metho
20. The Legitimate Ethiopian Orthodox Church		Abune Petros



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| 21. | United Ethiopiam Muslim Movement | Ahmed Ali Nur |
| 22. | United former Ethiopian Airforce Association International | Daniel Bekele |
| 23. | Vision Ethiopia | Getachew Begashaw |
| 24. | Wollo Heritage Society | Berhanu Abegaz |