



NOVEMBER 4, 2014

Embassy of Ethiopia
3506 International Dr NW,
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Girma Birru,

I would like to personally invite you and any interested Ethiopian Embassy staff to join us at the upcoming [Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia](#)ⁱ forum, *Breaking the Cycle of Dysfunction in Ethiopian Institutions*, to be held on November 15, 2014 in Washington D.C. from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the **Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, 900 S. Orme St., Arlington, VA**. We would be honored to have you attend and would give you opportunity to speak if you would be interested in doing so.

At this forum we will hear from a variety of experts who will be speaking on the state of affairs in Ethiopia, offering ideas and solutions to some of the difficulties we are facing as a people and as a nation. It will also be a people-to-people dialogue, encouraging us to step out of our factional groups to embrace “*the other among us*,” who may be of different ethnicity, religion, political viewpoint, gender, socio-economic background, age, or experience. In the past, we only talked about each other. It is now time to start talking—and listening—to each other and to diverse points of view. No one should be left out.

This is not a political event, but an effort to start a dialogue among people who care deeply about Ethiopia. That is why we believe you should be part of this discussion. It is not about being “pro-government” or “anti-government” but about being “pro-future” for the common good of Ethiopians. All attendees should expect differences of opinion among the people; however, this forum is to serve as an example of the best of Ethiopian civility so all, including you and your staff, feel safe to participate. This is something I will make clear from the start, that all persons, regardless of whether or not they agree, would be expected to offer unconditional respect and courtesy, furthering an atmosphere where we can learn to respect each other. This is a core principle of the SMNE and foundational to building a new Ethiopia. Such an Ethiopia would have room for all of us.

As you know, tensions between the Government of Ethiopia and many Ethiopians have escalated over the past years, something that endangers our shared future. To avert a crisis, it is critically important for us to find a way to build a better, more healthy, harmonious and more prosperous society for our children and yours. We may discover the many core values we share that will serve to accomplish the common good for all of the people of Ethiopia and beyond our borders. Together, we have a job to do; let the conversation begin!

Please feel welcome to come so this much needed conversation can begin. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact me. I would be available by email at: obang@solidaritymovement.org or can be reached by phone at: (202) 725-1616.

Sincerely yours,

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