



March 26, 2016

**Mr. Obang Metho's speech at the Vision Ethiopia Conference on the Future of Ethiopia:
ETHIOPIA: A COUNTRY WHERE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS ARE
OFFICIAL ENEMIES OF THE STATE**

I want to Vision Ethiopia for the vision, determination and organization to plan this *Conference on the Future of Ethiopia: Transition, Democracy, and National Unity*. Thank you for inviting me to speak on the role of faith institutions, civic movements and social organizations as foundation builders, reconcilers and maintainers of healthy societies. This is a critically important subject that cannot be covered in a short amount of time; however I will do my best to address some of the major points in a way that can encourage further discussion, study and action.

Some of the major points I will cover include:

- I. Why are institutions so important in building and maintaining a healthy society?
- II. What is the state of institutions in Ethiopia?
- III. Who is hurt when a nation has destroyed, politicized or silenced its institutions and social organizations—the protectors of society— due to an intolerance for negative feedback, correction, challenging ideas, second opinions or criticism?
- IV. Could the TPLF/EPRDF have avoided the crises of today had they strengthened Ethiopian institutions rather than attacked and hijacked them to use as tools of regime control?
- V. As Ethiopians face the worst drought in 50 years; how could strong institutions have helped overcome or lessened the devastating effects on the people without perpetual dependence on foreign aid?
- VI. Who is to blame for our predicament? Is it only the TPLF/EPRDF or do we share responsibility? Have we learned from past mistakes?
- VII. What can we do about it? What is the best way to build institutions in an environment where the interests of the regime and its power holders are still in direct conflict with the interests of the people? Can we learn from our past mistakes?

I. Importance of Institutions

Most would agree that strong faith institutions, civic movements, and social organizations play a critically important role in healthy societies, but are often weak, highly controlled or missing in countries dominated by oppressive governments, like in Ethiopia. The TPLF/ERPFD also knows the emergence of strong, independent institutions is a threat to their hold on power as they can build unity when disunity is a favored means of divide and conquer policies. That unity can build a national effort to facilitate democratic development and a peaceful transition to a free and just nation for all; prerequisites to inclusive economic growth and development. They are key not only to a better future for all, but to the sustainability of that future.

Institutions are created to hold people and governments accountable; to bring transparency to what they and others do; to shed light on the vulnerable, conditions under which they live and remedies to help them; to ensure all citizens are treated fairly and with justice; to eliminate corruption and the violation of human and civic rights; to intervene in regards to disputes and conflicts; to ensure the rule of law is upheld without partiality;

to provide organization and voice to various groups of citizens who might otherwise not be heard or understood; to provide reliable news and information, to analyze issues and expose the truth; to provide for the religious and spiritual needs of citizens, to advance reconciliation, to promote private enterprise and cooperation between regions and nations; to provide services to promote maternal health and to improve the lives of women, children and families; to provide assistance to the homeless and trafficked persons, to improve education, to advance economic development and jobs, to provide better health care, to improve care for the environment and wildlife, to advocate for clean water, to work for the eradication of HIV-Aids, malaria, guinea worms and other threats to well being, to promote small farmers, land ownership and agricultural practices; and to promote the overall well being of our people. Institutions, when healthy and well functioning, focus on improving the lives of real people or the environment in which they live.

II. The State of Institutions in Ethiopia

As we know, the state of institutions in Ethiopia is bleak. *Under the TPLF/EPRDF, the light brought by institutions challenges the stranglehold on power under which they have materially prospered. As a result, the missions of these institutions, and the people and interests they represent, are in direct conflict with the interests of regime power holders and their cronies. Because they hold the power, they have been able to undermine the workings of civil society, including faith institutions, advocacy groups, civic movements and others calling for change.*

The Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSO), passed in 2009, was effective in the closure of over 2,600 organizations when it was implemented. *Regime cronies and representatives replaced the leadership within some of these or created new look-alike organizations in their place, making it appear to outsiders that there was accountability and representation of the people of Ethiopia; when in fact, all that remained were spineless, regime-controlled replicas of the former.* A vague, anti-terrorism law has further silenced civil society, faith institutions and social organizations, targeting advocates of truth, democracy, freedom and justice as well as preventing the development and use of tools of communication, such as technology.

III. Who is hurt when a nation has destroyed, politicized or silenced its institutions and social organizations—the protectors of society— due to an intolerance for negative feedback, correction, challenging ideas, second opinions or criticism?

The negative impact on many of the most vulnerable people can be far-reaching; particularly when those with the greatest capacity and influence to help are intimidated from doing so or eliminated through arrest, imprisonment or forced exile. Here are some real stories of impact from such policies.

Example 1: Our religious institutions

In Ethiopia, our faith institutions are under attack. Leaders can quickly become enemies of the government by calling people to live out their faith in terms of right and wrong. Freedom of religion and conscience is one of the most dearly treasured of rights causing regime agents to fear leaders of strong moral and spiritual character.

The TPLF/ERPDF closely monitors the more out-spoken religious leaders as well as all the major religious organizations due to understanding the potential power of the religious community to mobilize the people around deeply held beliefs. This includes those in the TPLF's own region of Tigray who reportedly were among the first targets of the TPLF clique.

An Orthodox believer told of leaders who had been jailed, tortured or persecuted for speaking out and then how the regime would use them as examples to threaten others into silence. This person said that if someone speaks out for freedom, that person will be labeled “a government enemy, a member of the Derg, or a tribal, radical, extremist Amhara.”

A year ago, a popular evangelical pastor began speaking about how God gives freedom to men and women and how Jesus spoke against injustice. He told his large congregation that you cannot ignore it and when you see that something is wrong and do not speak about it; you condone it. He said it was a responsibility of spiritual leaders to show the moral way and to hold the government accountable.

In response, the government worked hard to suppress him; but despite this, he did not stop and tried to fight back by encouraging his congregation to stand with him. At this point, security police arrested him and appointed someone else to preach the regime-approved message. The church shrunk, losing over three-quarters of the people. The pastor was later released, but had difficulty finding a job and ended up working for a business owned by someone in the church. However, when the regime agents discovered this; they pressured the owner to fire him.

When the owner refused, saying the former pastor was a good man and needed to feed his family; the regime sent the tax agents after the business owner, claiming he owed back taxes. They asked him if he really wanted to lose his business over the pastor. The pastor decided to leave the country.

The same is happening to the countless Muslims arrested and jailed for peacefully demonstrating against regime interference in their religious affairs. One of those arrested in January of 2014 was a 25-year-old Muslim man. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. His young fiancé arranged to marry him while he was behind bars and videotaped it to show he was not a criminal, but was in jail because of his faith. When authorities saw the video, she lost her job.

Example 2: Our Children

Other Ethiopians are hurt, vulnerable or without resources due to the lack of social organizations and civic institutions to address their individual needs under a government that cares little about its people. This includes young children, especially the poor and homeless, some without parents. Many of the most vulnerable among us live on the streets of Addis Ababa and are easy prey for abuse or exploitation. Here is the story of one young boy.

An Ethiopian man who works with the SMNE recently returned from Ethiopia. He shared with me the very outrageous, but sad story of a poor, young boy, an orphan, who was brutally sexually assaulted by an unknown adult in Addis Ababa. Following the assault, the perpetrator left him on the street with serious injury and in acute need of medical care. After some days, this Ethiopian man saw him and noticed the boy could not move without pain and asked another older boy who knew him what was wrong and the boy explained. After learning what happened, instead of leaving, this man took the boy to the hospital for medical care and paid for it himself; yet, afterwards, he felt great sadness for there was no one to return him to and no supportive social organization or advocacy group to help the child with his ongoing life needs.

This is one boy's life that is deeply affected by the destruction or lack of civic institutions and social organizations. Who can protect these children from the dangers surrounding them? How many more are like him?

Example 3: Our people and their land

In another example, recently, a picture of men from the Omo Valley was leaked to the social media. Four men were tightly tied together with ropes. Blood could be seen covering different parts of their bodies where they had been injured. The pictures evoked the sordid scenes of slavery in past years; however, it is 2016. TPLF/EPRDF military forces hovered around them with guns. They had resisted eviction from their indigenous land, being taken over by the TPLF/EPRDF for sugar plantation development. Their faces showed strength and dignity, but where are the institutions that could hold those responsible for such land robbery, injustice and inhumane treatment?

It was later alleged in an [article from ESAT News](#)¹ that over 98.9% of their land in the South Omo Valley was taken over by 20 investors, sixteen of whom were members of the TPLF or Tigrayan supporters of the front. These regime cronies used the land as collateral to obtain \$32 million (USD) in loans from regime-controlled financial institutions in Ethiopia. It was also alleged that over \$31 million (USD) of the funds had not been invested in the sugar plantation development; but instead, appear to have disappeared. ***Where are the institutions that could investigate possible corruption or laundering of money? Where are the institutions that could hold those guilty accountable, under an impartial, non-politicized and independent judiciary system?***

Although we do not know the names of these Omo Valley men who had obviously stood up for their homes, families, communities and land; they are the Eskinder Negas [a well known journalist in prison for his stance on justice, rights and truth] of the Omo Valley, the valiant men who asked for nothing from the TPLF/EPRDF other than to be left to pursue their lives as they have done for centuries. ***In recent decades, the remote people of the Omo Valley have been “marketed” as a means to attract tourists in an income-generating scheme profiting regime cronies; however, now it appears that the land and loan scheme promises more than the former.***

Many other examples of individuals and groups could be mentioned if there were more time, but they could include the Oromos protesting the implementation of the Master Plan, the Amhara resisting other land issues, the human rights abuses of the Ethiopian Somalis, the neglect of the Afar people who are being most greatly affected by the drought, the countless Tigrayans who do not stand with the TPLF, Ethiopians in the South, as well as people in every region of the country. Their stories are not in the media in Ethiopia and often remain in darkness, yet their lives are deeply affected.

IV. Could the TPLF/EPRDF have avoided the crises of today had they strengthened Ethiopian institutions rather than attacked and hijacked them to use as tools of regime control?

A Biblical proverb² warns us not to trust the flattering words of those who tell us what we want to hear or do not tell us what we need to hear; and instead, to value the wounds [reproof or correction] of those who warn us about going in the wrong direction— sometimes on the road to our own self-destruction. The latter example of providing truth and accountability, even when it is not appreciated, is the critical role assumed by strong, independent institutions in a healthy society.

Right now, the TPLF/ERPFD have pretended to win a national election with 100% of the vote, while also pretending they can continue with impunity to carry on with acts of injustice, murder, falsehood, robbery and corruption. They are publicly marketing carefully chosen words and outward actions as evidence of good governance, double-digit economic growth and the growing developmental state without actually applying them in reality. These are all lies that will not only be unsustainable, they may easily evoke greater anger, negative reactions and serious consequences. In fact, one of the recent cover-ups, a devastating famine with increasing hunger and food insecurity, is a serious problem that has led to a lack of preparedness.

It is all the worse due to the absence of institutions, civic movements and social organizations that could have demanded better and more equitable agricultural policies and water management in past years as well as increased measures during this past six months where they should have been working all the harder. For example, over the past decades of TPLF control, most all resources have been situated in their own region of the country, neglecting the other 94% of Ethiopians as well as the many poor among them who are not part of the TPLF elite and their cronies.

¹ Ethiopia: TPLF members own 98.9 percent of the investment land in South Omo; ESAT News; <http://ecadforum.com/2016/03/18/ethiopia-investment-land-in-south-omo/>

² Proverbs 27:6

Now, such lop-sided development accompanied by unrest and famine is a volatile combination. It could have been avoided or mitigated. It could lead to the fall of this regime and to millions of deaths from hunger. When combined with the continued protests in Oromia, the Amhara region and in other places in the country, it is all the more serious and could become unmanageable within a short period of time. When one runs from the truth, your mistakes can bring consequences and destruction beyond oneself.

V. As Ethiopians face the worst drought in 50 years; how could strong institutions have helped overcome or lessened the devastating effects on the people? Must Ethiopians always rely on foreign aid during such crises— especially after claiming double-digit economic growth?

When one thinks of famine, what country in the world comes to mind more often than Ethiopia? Although drought, hunger and food insecurity are almost a yearly occurrence, *Ethiopia is now in the midst of the worst famine in fifty years³, which will only worsen in the coming months. Save the Children has classified the two top global humanitarian emergencies in the world as the war in Syria and the drought in Ethiopia.*

Yet, Ethiopia is not the only country plagued with famine or affected by El Nino, climate change or natural cycles of weather known in certain regions of the world to produce drought.

California⁴ has been experiencing a prolonged severe drought, now entering its fifth year, causing the driest conditions in 500 years according to a study done last year by scientists at NASA and Columbia University. They are taking steps to deal with it; and so far, food aid is not pouring in from other countries to feed Californians.

Another country, Australia,⁵ has been dealing with a decades long drought, the worst drought on record. In response, water planners and government worked together to develop strategies for water management that they are now sharing with others, like California. Neither are they on the receiving end of huge amounts of global food aid like is now needed in Ethiopia.

Why have these countries managed so much better than Ethiopia, where few lessons have been learned despite a long historical legacy of drought and famine? Why must Ethiopia continue to rely on the good will and donations of foreign NGO's and donor governments to rescue the people from starvation? How much of the money illegally that has been laundered out of Ethiopia could have been used to address this crisis before it ever happened? Where is the moral conscience of these leaders?

Ethiopia is a land starving not only for food, but for truth, justice, morality, good governance and strong, independent institutions. The oncoming months could be dangerous ones for Ethiopians in crisis. It will require deep changes.

VI. Who is to blame for our predicament? Is it only the TPLF/EPRDF or do we share responsibility? Have we learned from past mistakes?

Today, civil society has been closed down within the country; but under the right conditions, it may quickly re-emerge with new vitality, especially if Ethiopians in the Diaspora helped prepare the ground in advance.

³ Ethiopia faces worst drought in 50 years, UN warns; CBC News/World; Thomson Reuters, Jan 25, 2016; <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ethiopia-drought-warning-1.3418321>

⁴ Scientists say California hasn't been this dry in 500 years; The Washington Post, Darryl Fears, September 14, 2015; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/09/14/scientists-say-its-been-500-years-since-california-was-this-dry/>

⁵ What California can learn from Australia's millennium drought; PHYS.ORG; <http://phys.org/news/2016-02-california-australia-millennium-drought.html>

If this were done, Ethiopian leaders and their groups may suddenly rise up to reclaim positions of influence in the country, which could then call the TPLF/EPRDF clique to account for a myriad of misdeeds committed against the people and institutions of Ethiopian society.

Are we prepared for such opportunities? Have we learned from our past mistakes when we, with great sacrifices made, replaced the monarchy with the Derg and then the Derg with the TPLF/EPRDF? Has life really improved for the people of Ethiopia or only for a few entitled groups and their cronies? We dream of Ethiopian democracy, unity, peaceful coexistence and a more robust economy for all, but are our cultural attitudes, values and actions in line with those dreams or are they a roadblock?

Ideas we hold matter and have a direct impact on results— for good or for bad. This can be called our worldview of life. *Because our present worldview can be a mix of both positive and negative aspects and because it has been deeply ingrained in our culture for decades if not centuries or millenniums; it makes it hard for us to look at it objectively. That means it may be hard to give up, despite the fact it is no longer working for us. However, if we want positive change for all Ethiopians, we must challenge views that promote “one tribe taking all.” If you believe it is “your own tribe’s turn to eat”; do not expect unity among Ethiopians.*

This tribal viewpoint is part of our Ethiopian problem that has led to oppression of the majority, no matter who has been in power. It is entrenched in the current ethnic federalist system and constitution. Such a viewpoint will not support democracy, unity and peaceful co-existence, but instead will continue to support tyranny, brutality, selfishness, the dehumanization of others and the robbing of land, livelihood and lives. The TPLF/EPRDF is simply an extension of a worldview that is still strongly held in Ethiopia. This means that sacrifice, protests, violence and pressure from the outside will not measurably change the state of affairs in Ethiopia for all unless there is a change of thinking. Without putting humanity before ethnicity or any other identity factors and working for the freedom of all people because no one is free until all are free; efforts could possibly lead to the overthrow of the present regime, but only to be replaced by another, just like it.

Only a major shift in worldview, which can lead a nation to a more democratic, unified and peaceful Ethiopia for the future, will work; but only if it is embraced as right, sensible, and good by many. This worldview would include affirming the value of a human being, equitable justice, property rights, accountability, transparency, the rights of free speech, assembly and association, land ownership, independence of the courts, and so on.

Let us start with creating the “right conditions” within and among ourselves, wherever we are, which could increase the strength and effectiveness of our faith institutions, civic movements and social organizations in addressing the crisis of freedom and democracy in Ethiopia.

VII. What can we do about it? What is the best way to build institutions in an environment where the interests of the regime and its power holders are still in direct conflict with the interests of the people?

- 1. Adopt a worldview that embraces all Ethiopians:** With a unifying worldview, shared core principles, and common goals that embrace all Ethiopians, we can achieve greater unity of purpose, resolve disputes, and restore justice in ways that will lead to greater reconciliation and better serve the best interests of future generations.
- 2. Acknowledge those already doing the work:** We should acknowledge the good work many are already doing, encouraging those individuals and groups to continue. We should give credit where credit is due, regardless of whether or not you are part of a particular group, organization or effort. For example, credit is due to:
 - a.** the organizers of this conference who have brought so many people together so as to give room for dialogue, to increase understanding between previously isolated and alienated groups, and to discover new ways to work together; all which can produce positive results

- b. ESAT, Oromo Media Network (OMN), radio programs and websites that have become a voice of the people and who are doing the job of communicating information and ideas to the people.
 - c. working groups like Oromo evangelical leaders who organized a national day of prayer for the Oromo and those who have been wounded or who have lost family members
 - d. religious groups and leaders, like the Orthodox, Evangelicals, mainstream Protestants, and the Muslim who have taken a moral stand against wrong, despite the consequences
 - e. the Global Alliance for Justice who is helping Ethiopians who are starving as well as helping with women trapped in the Middle East and other projects
 - f. those NGO's who are doing their best to help Ethiopians who are suffering for lack of food, freedom and voice
3. **Be clever; find new ways to work around obstacles:** The work must be carried out in a way that is possible, considering the circumstances, so people must think creatively and cooperate the best they can. In Ethiopia, the work does not have to be centralized in this hostile environment, but can be carried out in multiple locations by multiple persons in multiple ways. For example, in the case of the effective work during the recent Oromo protests and in the case of the Muslim protests of the past, a central location would have been more vulnerable. The decentralization of the effort is an asset to its sustainability.
 4. **Become a reporter:** Anyone with a smart phone can now become an impromptu journalist and reporter like those who documented what happened as witnesses of these events. If you have information, disseminate it whenever and wherever possible.
 5. **Document what you know, especially the names and facts surrounding those committing crimes,** or other illegal practices, including money laundering, land or resource grabbing and other forms of corruption or illegal activity.
 6. **Fill the need as you see it:** Some individuals and groups are taking on organizing roles to locate families in the Diaspora who will help support other families within Ethiopia who have been affected by the loss of wage earners due to death or imprisonment, contributing financially to their care.
 7. **Support others doing the work:** What is missing now is a lack of greater coordination and cooperation, which can help ensure greater strength and consistency of purpose, principles, goals, strategies and tactics. Do what you can to support these efforts.
 8. **Centralize efforts when possible:** It could be more effective to centralize to a greater degree when possible; sharing knowledge, sharing resources and goals
 9. **Create and support organizations and institutions for the longer term that will protect the interests and welfare of Ethiopians:** See examples like in the case of Armenian and Jewish groups that have accomplished significant goals for their respective countries from the Diaspora. They did it as a people. We should be hiring our own people, many who are talented, experienced and capable leaders who have held positions of responsibility within Ethiopia, but who are now working for others due to the lack of an organizing institution in the Diaspora that could provide opportunity for serious work in critical areas.

As most of you know, we recently established the **Ethiopian Council for Reconciliation and Restorative Justice (ECRRJ)**. Its mission is to bring the people of Ethiopia together through talking to each other rather than about each other. Reconciliation, healing and restorative justice are keys to bringing meaningful reforms and transformation to Ethiopia. The Council is working on its internal structure and will soon begin its mission of bringing our divided people together under common goals and principles. Those who believe in the need for this kind of work can join in this effort to make it reality.

I am also proposing the creation of an **Institute of Ethiopian Affairs** that would focus on organizing and empowering task groups in areas where preparations should be implemented in the Diaspora and as possible, supporting the same in Ethiopia, in order to bring future meaningful reforms to Ethiopia.

Institute of Ethiopian Affairs: The vision of the Institute of Ethiopian Affairs (IEA) is to prepare, develop and advise the people of Ethiopia and its institutions on policies related to each sector of Ethiopian society in anticipation of needed reforms and the possible collapse of the TPLF/EPRDF.

This work should include a strategic plan so as to prevent chaos, ethnic violence and the disintegration of the country and instead to prepare for a future transition to a healthier, more just, more reconciled, better functioning and more inclusive society capable of promoting opportunity for the social and economic advancement of all.

Explanation: Entrenched within the development and execution of every component of the Institute would be the stated principles within its mission statement. These principles include:

- 1) *Putting humanity before ethnicity* or any other identity factors, and
- 2) Upholding the democratic and human rights of all persons, for *no one is free until all are free*.

In other words, freedom, justice, the rule of law and opportunity are only sustainable when they are equally applied and available to all. These core human values should permeate every aspect of policies, programs, and their implementation within each sector of the Institute; providing the overall framework under which each should function for the benefit and national interest of Ethiopia.

Mission: To sustain and maintain the national interests of Ethiopia and of all Ethiopians in a transparent and legitimate way.

Sectors of Society/Potential departments within the Institute

- Security/Military/Intelligence
- Elected Government: Federal & Local /Parliament
- Justice/ Constitutional reform/Transitional justice/Corruption
- Foreign Affairs/International & Donor community relations
- Media/Communications
- Education/Technology & Science
- Reforms - Land/Election/Environment
- Civil Society & Service/Human Rights/
- Religion
- Women's affairs
- Economy/Finance/Commerce & Trade/ Revenue & Taxes
- Health & Social Welfare
 - Children and family services
 - Youth development
 - Services to the disabled and vulnerable
- Agriculture and Food Security

- Resources and Infrastructure – Natural & Water/ Energy

Execution:

1. Define role and responsibilities within each department associated with these sectors
2. Identify key experienced Ethiopians and Friends of Ethiopia—individuals with appropriate qualifications— to lead and participate in each department
3. Work with these Sector & Department heads in identifying priorities and task roles for teams and forums to address, communicate and cover areas of interest to Ethiopians
4. Draft strategic short-term, mid-term and long-term goals, objectives and plans
5. Raise and access funding for programs as well as drawing on contributions of volunteers
6. Promote and introduce the Institute's and department's work to the public transparently
7. Establish a presence in strategic locations worldwide: Nairobi, Cairo, Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, London, Brussels, Berlin, Rome, Toronto, Ottawa, Dubai, Delhi, Beijing Peking, Tokyo, Seoul and Melbourne.
8. Execution of plans

Conclusion:

Can we learn from our past mistakes? If we do not, do we really want to sacrifice our time, financial resources and lives for another regime in Ethiopia where ethnicity and cronyism is only for power holders, leaving the rest of Ethiopians blocked from participation? Are we more self-aware and politically mature? **In 2016, rallying one's ethnic group can still be misused to gain power and political support in pursuit of ethnic opportunism, but we are no longer living as isolated groups, in no need of others. If the TPLF model is not working now, let it be discarded for good. It has never delivered sustainable peace.**

We gave up past opportunities to grow out of a selfish-based ethnic viewpoint following the overthrow the last consecutive regimes with dire consequences. The good news is I see signs that Ethiopians are changing. It is very encouraging!

Here is a sign. When the Anuak were massacred in December 2003, a march was held in Washington DC and only a handful of non-Anuak showed up. In 2016, the picture of the four men from the Omo Valley has outraged hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. In an unprecedented display of outrage and support for these people, Ethiopians and others have shared this picture on the social media with nearly a half a million people. Ethiopians are changing!

Here is another sign. Recently, the Afar people posted a press release on the social media where they stood against the land grabs and injustices going on in Gambella and in other locations, even while they have faced the worst effects of the drought, with the means of their livelihood, their cattle, dying and their children starving. Let us do what we can for our Afar brothers and sisters. This is the Ethiopia that will bring different results than our past mistakes.

Today, our Oromo and Amhara family members are rising up in protests, let us take their side and work together for a country that can listen to each others' grievances and change for the better.

Let us guard against seeing collective others as our enemies and seek to reconcile across lines of division. This means we should not put whole groups of people into enemy camps, but instead be ready to do the work of reconciliation, restorative justice and building the institutions and moral leadership we desperately need for a better future.

Today, let us seek God and His divine guidance so we avoid the many roads to destruction and choose the higher road to what is moral, right and good not only for ourselves, but for our neighbors. Thank you and May God bless Ethiopia!

Please do not hesitate to e-mail your comments to Mr. Obang Metho, Executive Director of the SMNE at:
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