



September 5, 2018

## SMNE Team Headed by SMNE Executive Director, Mr. Obang Metho Will Travel to Ethiopia on September 6, 2018 to meet with PM Abiy and Others



### SMNE Mission

*Motivated by the truth that no one will be free until all are free, we envision an open, free and reconciled society in Ethiopia, a society where humanity comes before ethnicity and where the same rights, opportunities and privileges are available to all. We work to mobilize Ethiopians in the Diaspora and within Ethiopia to unite in a coalition across ethnic, regional, political, cultural and religious lines around principles of truth, justice, freedom, civility, equality and the protection of human rights.*

### SMNE Vision for Ethiopia

*To be a catalyst in bringing about and sustaining a more reconciled Ethiopia where robust freedoms, the rule of law, respect for human rights, equal opportunity and good governance undergird a societal structure conducive to the enhancement of life and well-being for all its citizens.*

A team from the **Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE)**, headed by SMNE Executive Director, Mr. Obang Metho, plans to travel to Ethiopia in September to meet with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, other members of his staff and various groups in different regions of the country. ***Out of the darkness and the challenges of these past years of work has come this new opening, one that gives light to a new road that was previously blocked.***

Few expected the appointment of Prime Minister Abiy, and the subsequent amazing progress made by him, his team and others, to open up a former closed system to new possibilities that did not exist five months ago. As a result of these significant changes, ***the SMNE leadership now sees an opportunity to take the mission, vision and principles of the SMNE back home, so they may become integrated into the foundation of these changes now being implemented. This would mark the beginning of a second phase of work of the SMNE.***

***The SMNE would like to thank its supporters who have stood with us in many various ways, including the contribution of time, money, encouragement, prayer and other means of support, because they believe in the key principles undergirding the work of the SMNE.***

***The SMNE evolved out of witnessing the widespread suffering and painful consequences of a destructive worldview where individual and collective pride, greed and ambition fueled the dehumanization of others, especially those outside one's own ethnic or other identity group.*** This self-centered worldview has repeatedly led to human rights abuses, marginalization, ethnic hatred and divisions, corruption and the robbery of land, resources and opportunities.

We have seen the isolated seasonal struggles for one's own group come and go with little effort to reach out to others to help them at their time of need, even when the aggressor was the same.

***The foundation of the SMNE began as we sought to reach out to others after seeing the fundamental flaws in this thinking—worldview—which would only be challenged by the acceptance of principles that restored the value, dignity and rights of all human beings, including those beyond our own groups.***

***We realized that the root problem of Ethiopia has been created by Ethiopians because of their short-sightedness, ethnocentric thinking and widespread acceptance or cooperation with this destructive system of beliefs; and therefore, can only be solved by Ethiopians by a shift to a bigger vision—one that is based on universal, principles of how we should treat each other. We are in a battle of ideas.***

***The whole country has been held hostage to misery due to the ethnic hatred, division and lack of caring about others that led to opportunistic injustice and oppression; however, this idea was not new, but carried over from past generations. Yet, in the last 27 years, it has been worsened. We have lost much of our sense of humanity, our own and that of others. One way has been to silence our consciences, depriving us of one of the most essential pillars of healthy and caring societies. The wrong idea won.***

We are convinced that this destructive idea will never bring peace and justice to Ethiopia; instead Ethiopia will find itself in a vicious cycle that will eventually bring the country down, destroying the soul of our nation before the country disintegrates— as some experts have warned could happen. These damaging ideas have consequences and will serve to fuel the struggle for dominance, even as PM Abiy and others attempt to bring positive change. ***We in the SMNE seek to support the underpinnings of these changes with the help of many others who are also ready and willing.***

***To revive the soul of a nation will require a totally different approach and idea. Many faith-based leaders, elders, community leaders and countless others can play key roles. Our history in Ethiopia and beyond reveal that the first targets of corrupt systems and emerging authoritarian societies have been people of strong conviction, faith, and conscience who speak out against these wrongs. The goal has been to silence them so they cannot or will not speak out against acts of corruption, injustice and violence; such acts thrive in the darkness and hate the light.***

The widespread human rights abuses experienced by so many Ethiopians were repeatedly covered up. No wonder Ethiopia had so many political prisoners, until only recently. ***Now is the time for truth and restored justice.*** Where are the dark places in our country that require more light for real change to come— for the protection, security and well being of the people?

***We must start talking and listening to each other. If we are genuine, we will develop enough trust among ourselves to start healing the wounds by first acknowledging what happened, what still needs to happen to correct it and by repenting, forgiving, reconciling and then developing a common vision. This will enable us to escape from cycles of violence, bitterness, hatred and revenge, enabling us to rebuild our country. Without this process, we may fall back into our old ways and recycle what's wrong, once again. Let us recognize this present time as a new opportunity, given by God, for new life in our ancient country.***

## What's Next?

Now, a new chapter is being written that allows us to bring these principles home to Ethiopia. In the past, the environment would not allow it, especially the leaders; yet, miraculously, these principles have now emerged from PM Abiy. He and his top leadership have articulated and acted on a new inclusive worldview; which is now being enthusiastically embraced by people from all over the country. ***For the first time, people have come out to stand side-by-side as they listened to PM Abiy put forth his vision for an inclusive Ethiopia. These people stood together as human beings, regardless of ethnicity or other differences. Other leaders are now joining in to advance this same vision for an inclusive Ethiopia.***

In the past, Ethiopians came out to protest against the government based on their grievances or to advance the interests of their own group. ***Now, this new leadership has found support for a new positive vision in all the regions of the country, finally coming to the US to address people in the Diaspora for the first time. Diverse Ethiopians in the US also found new reasons for unity around this inclusive message, given in the three different cities in the US where the PM spoke.***

We are grateful to see the same principles, for which we have been advocating for the last many years, being advanced in the public square; but the job ahead is still very large and requires many. ***We in the SMNE are ready to contribute to its long-term success by now taking this message back home.***

In September, the SMNE team will take the message back home of: 1) **putting humanity before ethnicity or any other differences**, 2) that: **no one is free until all are free—caring about the freedom and wellbeing of each other**, 3) **to talk to each other, not about each other, to start a real dialogue to build relationships, trust and to solve conflicts**; and 4) **the importance of: repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and restorative justice as a way to bring lasting peace, harmony and prosperity.**

Our people have suffered so much under the self-serving, ethnically divisive politics of the past. ***Now, we are going to come back to build upon this new worldview and new approach. We look forward to meeting with many of you in Ethiopia and exchanging ideas and ways we can all help.***

In great anticipation,

### **The SMNE Leadership Team**

May God heal the soul of our people and nation and see Ethiopia transformed!

### **P/S**

*We hope you will join in to help grow a "harvest of transformative change" in Ethiopia by contributing to the target goal of raising. Will you commit to this effort right now? This plan will not be possible without the financial contributions from people like you! We depend mostly on Ethiopians to fulfill this need because it is for the betterment of our own people and nation!*

*Be part of the trip through your donations.*

<http://www.solidaritymovement.org/donate.php>