

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE ALLIANCE FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY (AFD)

July 3, 2006

The Executive Committee of the Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD) held its first plenary meeting from June 29-July 1, 2006.

The Executive Committee **recognizes** that the formation of the Alliance is an unprecedented undertaking. It is the first time in the history of Ethiopia that groups with divergent political spectrum joined to form an alliance of a new kind.

The Committee is **aware** that in order to realize its vision of a just, free, representative and democratic order in Ethiopia, AFD needs the understanding and support of its members' constituencies and all the people in Ethiopia and the international community.

The Alliance **commends** the constituents of member organizations for their relentless struggle for freedom and democracy. Member organizations have decided to begin to coordinate their energies, voices, and actions in order to hasten the change needed to achieve freedom and democracy. That is why they have, therefore, taken steps to reach across political, cultural, geographical, and linguistic divides--and create the basis for a coordinated struggle for freedom and democracy.

The Alliance **recognizes** the complexity of the challenges and the problems in Ethiopia.

However it is **determined** to constructively work towards their resolution in a democratic manner and in the spirit of mutual tolerance by rejecting the old zero-sum politics.

The Alliance **asks** the patience, understanding and support of every freedom, peace and democracy loving person and urges them to rally behind the objectives of the Alliance.

The Alliance does not seek to ostracize the ruling party. The Alliance's members wish is that the ruling party accepts the call for an inclusive forum to discuss Ethiopia's complex problems and develop comprehensive and effective strategies to address them. The Alliance thus **hopes** that the ruling party will not isolate itself by rejecting this unprecedented initiative. Now is the time to join at the conference table and resolve Ethiopia's problems through dialogue and deliberation.

As a gesture of its willingness to become a party to this historic process, the Executive Committee of the Alliance calls on the ruling party to take the following steps:

First, release all

- (a) political leaders jailed after the May 2005 elections;
- (b) those prisoners of conscience imprisoned after the May 2005 elections;
- (c) political prisoners who are incarcerated prior to the May 2005 elections and since, including those languishing in the small towns and rural villages, particularly those facing torture in the notorious Maikalawi central prison.

Second, end the destructive military campaigns and security crackdowns throughout the country.

Third, end immediately the current military campaign in Ogaden.

Fourth, stop the repression in Oromia, Sidama, Gambella, Amhara and other regions.

The Alliance **appeals** to the international community to support the objective of AFD and use their good offices and influence with EPRDF to persuade it to join the all-inclusive process.

This Alliance's members **speak** on behalf of the overwhelming majority of Ethiopia's population—and with their backing, we are confident that our alliance for freedom and democracy will ultimately prevail.

The Alliance **trusts** that the international community will support the initiative to hold an all-inclusive conference. Its success will undoubtedly remove the root causes of recurrent conflicts, instability, repression and chaos in Ethiopia and the Horn region.