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Embassy of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia - Berlin

Berlin, August 17, 2011

22. Aug. 2011

Prof. Dr. Reinhard Kees
Africareferat
Evangelische Kirche
Berlin- Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausit
Berlin Missionwerk

Dear Prof. Dr. Kees

The Embassy of the Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia presents its compliments to the Berlin Church International Mission and has the honour to bring to the latter's attention the following:

The Embassy would like to recall the discussion it had with representative of the Mission, Prof. Dr. Reinhard Kees in the Embassy premises, regarding the upcoming symposium scheduled on September 9-10,2011, on the theme 'Land Policy in Ethiopia: Development or Sell out.' The participation of the Embassy was also raised during the meeting.

In this connection, the Embassy would like to express once again its concern on the following:

- As per the discussion, the symposium is aimed to create a platform for the opposition to air their view, which the Mission believes, is lacking in Ethiopia. This is a misperception and/or misrepresentation of the realities in the country. As a young democracy in progress, the Embassy believes, there are several tasks ahead to further strengthen the ongoing federal democracy in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, oppositions in Ethiopia have several platforms to raise their case.

- It is also critical to recall that selling of land is constitutionally prohibited in Ethiopia as it is a public property. In the same way, Ethiopia has the right to utilize its land and other resources for future development, including by inviting foreign investors, without compromising its public interest. In other words, the well being and respect of the right of all Ethiopians are the main pillars of the country's development policies. In this regard, it will be sufficient to revisit the progress achieved so far in fulfilling the MDG's, to check the validity of the Ethiopian government policies. The facts on ground, without any doubt, are self explanatory for any positive mind who wants to compare Ethiopia yesterday and today. Last but not least, the current government encourages voluntary settlement of people without affecting their cultural identity. It is against any form of forced resettlement. The government has at times encouraged resettlement in the last 20 years; nevertheless, an iota of evidence could not be presented to the contrary.

In summation, the Ethiopian government is known to entertain any positive and constructive opinions regarding its development policies. The embassy is also convinced that the premise and assumptions of the symposium are misrepresentation of the realities in the country and decides not to participate on such type of discussion.

Finally the Embassy wishes to continue its engagement with the esteemed church, however, its participation in the meeting will depend on the diverse views and participants in the future.

The Embassy of Ethiopia to Germany avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Berlin Church International Mission the assurances of its highest consideration.

With best regards



Siraj Reshid (Ambassador)
Deputy Head of Mission

