

Joint Statement By Civil Societies in Ethiopia
Calling for Meaningful Representation of Women in the Selection of
Commissioners for the National Dialogue Commission.

It is known that the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives has recently approved Proclamation No. 1265/2014, that stipulates the establishment of a National Dialogue Commission in Ethiopia. The proclamation states that the purpose of the establishing the National Dialogue commission is to establish national consensus through a nation wide consultation to alleviate the differences and misunderstandings between the various political and ideological leaders and sections of the society in Ethiopia.

Experience from countries around the world shows that when women participate in national dialogues, reconciliation and peace processes, nations are more likely to achieve lasting solutions and irreversible success. It is harder to achieve lasting peace and security in any country or any region, when only half of the population is represented at a negotiating table. Women should be represented adequately at all levels of decision-making, in order to effectively use their agency in national processes. In light of this, we appreciate the commitment of the Ethiopian government to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the administration and decision-making processes, and we hope that this will continue in the future.

As the nomination process draws to a close, we would like to raise the following questions to the House of Peoples' Representatives.

1) It is stipulated in the proclamation that the Speaker of the HoPR shall nominate fourteen (14) candidates, from the nominations gathered from the public, political parties and civil society organizations. However, the criteria for screening the candidates are not clear. We request that the criteria and process for selecting the last 14 candidates be transparent and credible.

2) We believe that the exclusion of a Gender Quota on the proclamation that was suggested in previous discussions on the draft proclamation has undermined the role of women in the Commission. Therefore, we would like to urge the reutilization of gender quotas in the selection process to ensure that the number of female commissioners is equal to that of men and that at least 50% of the commissioners be women.

3) In addition, we request that the national dialogue commission to seek the support of technical consultants who can provide input on a variety of topics, including gender and inclusion issues.

4) We request that women's organizations and organizations be represented in the nomination process and participate in the screening process.

5) We call for the recognition of women's informal and traditional roles and inclusion of women community leaders in the list of nominees for commissioners.

In closing, we would like to express our commitment to supporting the national dialogue commission to realize the purpose for which it was established.