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**Final Statement on The Carter Center Observation of the Ethiopia 2005
National Elections, September 2005**

Executive Summary

The Carter Center was pleased to accept the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to observe the 2005 parliamentary elections in Ethiopia. The May 15 elections were for 524 of the country's 547 constituency-based seats in the national parliament. The remaining 23 seats in the Somali region were elected separately in votes held on August 21.

After an assessment trip in January 2005, The Carter Center's observation mission opened an office in Addis Ababa on March 19 and has maintained a continuous field presence since that time. The Center deployed observers prior to voting day in early April to areas outside Addis Ababa to assess the political environment, election preparations, and the campaign. For the May 15 elections, the Center deployed observer teams to all regions of the country to monitor voting and counting processes. In addition, teams were redeployed to 36 constituencies in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNP regions to assess post-election tabulation processes.

In late May and early June, the Center closely followed negotiations between the ruling and major opposition parties, which resulted in an agreement on June 10 to adopt an *ad hoc* complaints resolution process to deal with the large number of unresolved electoral complaints. According to the agreement, Complaints Review Boards (CRB) were established to screen election complaints to determine which merited a full investigation. Formal investigations and hearings were then conducted by 44 different Complaints Investigation Panels (CIPs) in 178 constituencies across the country. The Carter Center reviewed the operations of the CRBs, and sent observer teams to assess the investigation process in 14 CIPs covering 49 constituencies. The CIP processes resulted in a decision by the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) to hold re-votes in 31 constituencies. The Carter Center deployed teams to observe the re-vote process held on August 21 and the Somali region parliamentary elections held on the same day. In an effort to maximize observation coverage of the several phases of the electoral process, deployment of

Carter Center observation teams was coordinated with the observation missions of the African Union and the European Union.

This final statement and the more detailed final report to follow are based on Carter Center observation teams' reports on each of these phases of the 2005 election process.

The Carter Center observation has been conducted according to international standards for non-partisan election observation and is in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Observers. Ultimately, it is the citizens and voters who determine the credibility of their elections.

The 2005 Elections. The May 15 parliamentary elections were Ethiopia's third national elections following elections in 1995 and 2000. The 2005 elections took place in a highly contested environment and in a diverse country where regional considerations are influential and with the majority of voters in rural areas.

In contrast with previous national elections, the 2005 elections were sharply contested and offered Ethiopian citizens a democratic choice for the first time in their long history. The ruling party took the initiative to negotiate with the opposition and level the playing field, and agreed to a number of important electoral reforms that created conditions for a more open and genuinely competitive process. The early negotiations between parties were, in and of themselves, a step forward for the democratization process in Ethiopia.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) implemented these reforms and adopted other important measures to increase transparency and responsiveness to political parties. Civil society organizations contributed greatly to the electoral process by organizing public forums, conducting voter education training, and deploying domestic observers. Most importantly, the Ethiopian public demonstrated their commitment to democracy through their active and enthusiastic participation in the May 15 poll. As a result of these efforts and others by diverse Ethiopian actors and institutions, the overwhelming majority of Ethiopians had the opportunity to make a meaningful choice in the May 15 elections. This significant accomplishment has the potential to lead to further democratization and to consolidate multiparty competition.

While pre-election and election day processes were generally commendable, the post-election period was disappointing. The period following May 15 was marked by highly charged political tensions, several days of protests and electoral violence, delays in vote tabulation, a large number of electoral complaints, and a prolonged and problematic electoral dispute resolution process.

The Center's key concerns during the post-May period relate to the conduct of the ad hoc CRB and CIP complaint resolution processes. The June 10 agreement to establish the complaints process was agreed to by all parties and was important in order to provide a cooling off period after the violence and arrests of early June and a mechanism to resolve electoral disputes. However, in retrospect the CRB/CIP process did not provide an adequate means for a fair resolution of all electoral disputes. A significant number of cases reviewed by the CRB in appeal included a dissenting opinion arguing that there was sufficient evidence to approve the case for investigation in a CIP. The CIP process was not executed in a uniform fashion across

constituencies, with potentially consequential inconsistencies in the application of rules for the admission of evidence and witnesses.

The majority of the constituency results based on the May 15 polling and tabulation are credible and reflect competitive conditions. However, a considerable number of the constituency results based on the problematic CRB and CIP processes lack credibility. In light of these problems, it is important to note that the CRB/CIP processes were ad hoc mechanisms to review electoral complaints, and that the prescribed legal recourse to challenge these decisions is via an appeal to the High Court. Therefore, it is incumbent upon dissatisfied political parties to file appeals to the High Court in an expeditious manner in those cases where they feel that there is credible evidence. If parties decide not to file court appeals, the NEBE's announced results should be accepted as final and legitimate. The Carter Center stands ready to assist Ethiopians and observe any other electoral processes as appropriate.

Following is a summary of The Carter Center's observation findings for each phase of the election process.

The May 15 Pre-election Period

Starting in March, the Center maintained a field presence in Ethiopia. Six medium term observers were deployed in early April across the country to observe the political environment, election preparations, and the campaign.

In contrast to previous elections, the pre-election campaign period provided sufficient conditions for a credible and competitive electoral process:

- The ruling Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia took the initiative to level the electoral playing field. Electoral law was amended to streamline the candidate nomination process, eliminating the requirement of 500 signatures on nomination papers for party nominees and reducing the residence requirement for candidates from five years to two.
- The NEBE demonstrated greater openness and dynamism. It established a system of joint political party forums at the national and sub national level. These provided a partially effective means of resolving problems among the parties and among the parties and the Board. In addition, the NEBE established a website to post the latest election news.
- Opposition parties benefited from guaranteed access to state-owned electronic media under the formula devised by the Minister of Information in implementation of the electoral law. Access to the radio appears to have been particularly important as this medium has broad reach throughout the country.
- A broad range of civil society organizations conducted civic education and organized a series of widely-discussed live televised debates. Ethiopian citizens saw that government officials could be challenged without retribution.
- The competing parties pledged a code of conduct, while the ruling party issued its own comprehensive code to its members, specifically barring many of the abuses that opposition parties had complained of in the past.
- Candidates campaigned widely and effectively.
- Most dramatically, the electoral campaign climaxed in its final week with large and peaceful campaign rallies by major contenders in Addis Ababa.
- International observers were invited to observe the entire electoral process.

The result of these developments was that more than 90 percent of the races for the 547 seat House of Peoples Representatives were contested by both opposition parties and the ruling party in marked contrast to previous elections. For the first time a large majority of Ethiopian citizens was presented with a choice at the polls, and control of the national government hinged on the electoral process.

In spite of these many positive developments, the Center also noted several concerns, some of which were reported in our Post-election Statement of May 16, 2005.

- Carter Center observers heard and investigated many allegations of violence and intimidation during the campaign and pre-election period, some of which proved to be credible while others were exaggerated. In the instances where claims of violence or intimidation were credible, our observers noted a climate in which candidates felt constrained to campaign and voters to choose without fear of repercussions.
- The campaign started out at a high level, focusing on issues rather than personalities, but degenerated in its final weeks into charges and countercharges of engaging in ethnic "hate speech."
- Allegations of opposition plots to undermine the election even as it participated were disturbing, as were continued threats of opposition withdrawal throughout the campaign, the complaints process, and the re-elections.
- The NEBE imposed severe restrictions on domestic election observation. On the eve of the election the Supreme Court overturned the NEBE's regulations on the types of domestic organizations it was prepared to grant credentials for election monitoring, but by then it was too late for domestic observers to deploy widely. Observer reports by these groups might have helped to reduce the complaints and confusion that emerged during the election.
- Three US-based non-governmental organizations (NDI, IRI, and IFES), which could have provided invaluable assistance to the electoral process, were expelled in the months prior to the election.

May 15 Election Day

For election day on May 15, the Center deployed 50 international observers from 17 countries (including Argentina, Canada, France, Liberia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, the United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) to seven regions, as well as the special administrative regions of Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. The delegation was co-led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, his wife, Rosalynn, former Botswana President Sir Ketumile Joni Masire, and former Prime Minister of Tanzania Judge Joseph Warioba. Due to logistical constraints, Carter Center observer teams were deployed to largely urban areas. Coverage of the more rural areas of the country was limited.

In a post-election statement released May 16, the Center noted that the environment throughout most of the country on May 15 was calm and peaceful, and voter turnout was overwhelming. While citizens had to wait in extremely long lines, they showed remarkable patience. Irregularities in procedures were observed, but many of these were relatively minor, particularly in Addis Ababa. More serious irregularities were seen in other parts of the country, including instances of failure to check identification cards and of underage voting. Party representatives and domestic and

community observers were present in most polling stations observed, especially in urban areas. Remarkably, there were almost no reports of problems from party agents present in the stations, although opposition party headquarters did submit a list of problems and allegations to Carter Center staff.

On election night, in the context of the highly charged atmosphere among both opposition and ruling party supporters in the capital city, the Prime Minister imposed a one month ban on demonstrations in the capital city.

May 15 Post-election Period

Starting May 16 the quality of the electoral process in many ways declined rapidly. When disturbing reports were received about the vote counting and tabulation process, observation teams were redeployed to 36 constituencies in Amhara, Oromiya, and SNNP regions.

Our observers received and in some instances were able to confirm credible reports of election-day and post-election intimidation and harassment. In several constituencies at the polling station level we found evidence that ballot boxes had been improperly moved, were improperly secured, or that party agents had been barred from polling stations or not allowed to watch the entire count. Generally, inquiries made to the NEBE in Addis Ababa were responded to quickly, but obtaining information from field offices was sometimes difficult. In Amhara and SNNP regions, observers experienced difficulty in accessing information from local NEBE officials.

In the days following the election, it became clear that the ruling party had lost by a landslide in Addis Ababa and most urban and peri-urban areas in the country. Election results trickled in, but there was no authoritative information on outcomes for rural constituencies. Both the ruling and opposition parties claimed victory. The opposition accused the ruling party of fraud and rigging the election, while the ruling party accused the opposition of carrying out an orchestrated plot to destabilize the country and subvert the constitution. Opposition parties no longer had access to state-owned media, which had been available during the campaign period.

The NEBE faced a difficult and challenging situation in the late May-early June period. With both the ruling party and opposition parties claiming victory, it became important for the NEBE to release provisional results as they were available. However, finalizing elections in more than half the country's constituencies became mired in unresolved complaints. As the scheduled June 8 date for the announcement by the NEBE of provisional results approached, it became apparent that the deadline was not going to be met.

At dawn on June 6 Addis Ababa university students demonstrated at their campus, resonating opposition complaints that the election had been rigged. Hundreds of students were soon arrested, and rumors of a general strike were heard around the city. On June 8 a transportation strike spread throughout Addis Ababa. Violence and gunfire broke out in several areas of the city. Official reports placed the number of shooting deaths during this June 6-8 period at 37, with hundreds injured.

Following the protests, opposition party leaders and supporters were rounded up and arrested, or placed under house arrest. Opposition leaders claimed these acts were political persecution, while the government blamed the opposition for inciting the violence.

On June 9 The Carter Center issued a public statement condemning excessive use of force by security personnel and the harassment of political leaders. The Center called on all parties to use legal mechanisms to address any election related disputes.

Complaints Review and Investigation Processes

Carter Center personnel followed the negotiations that led to the adoption by the ruling and major opposition parties of the ad hoc complaints resolution process to deal with the numerous complaints that were not resolved through established complaints resolution processes. The ad hoc process was structured to include two Complaints Review Boards (CRB) and 44 Complaints Investigation Panels (CIPs).

The Carter Center followed the operations of the first CRB, which screened the initial complaints, some of which were approved for investigation. The Center then followed the second CRB, which was established to provide the opportunity for a second hearing to appeal decisions taken by the first CRB. Parties were allowed to introduce additional evidence into the deliberations of the second CRB. The first CRB consisted of five lawyers and the second CRB consisted of two NEBE officials, and one legal advisor.

Carter Center observers attended 14 of the 44 CIPs that conducted the final phase of the complaints resolution process. As the CRB/CIP processes are the more problematic aspects of the electoral process, this statement includes more background and detailed findings.

Background. The NEBE *Polling Station Handbook*, distributed to all of the polling stations, provided for the establishment of complaints committees at each polling place and outlined further steps for complaints that could not be resolved at that level, including ultimate resort to the Federal High Court. Prior to the elections, judges and prosecutors were trained on election law, and special benches of judges and "fast-tracking" procedures for election cases were introduced.

Carter Center observers saw little evidence of effective use of established complaints procedures in the polling stations observed. The NEBE reported that the ruling party did avail itself of this system. But opposition parties appeared to have difficulty navigating the complaints process. Some opposition complaints were dismissed due to a lack of information or evidence. In other cases, the complaints were not addressed by the relevant local authority. Ultimately the established complaints resolution process did not prove effective for many of the cases.

By early June, some 380 complaints involving numerous seats in the parliament had been presented to the national level NEBE. Although the NEBE had the authority to dismiss them out of hand, it extended deadlines for submission of evidence, providing complainants with more opportunities to present additional evidence. In an effort to deal with the complaints in a credible manner, the NEBE consulted with the ruling and opposition parties and the international community to devise new procedures. After several days of intense negotiation, on June 10 the ruling party and the major opposition parties signed an agreement to adopt the ad hoc complaints resolution process, accepting the legal authority of the NEBE and the courts and agreeing to abide by their decisions.

Complaints Review Board (CRB). The Carter Center followed parts of the CRB process and conducted a review of the CRB data and the decisions provided by the NEBE. From the available information, it appears that the initial CRB adequately handled the cases reviewed, with an appropriately permissive threshold for sending the complaints forward based on either quantity or quality of evidence. The second CRB referred an additional 25 cases for investigation. However, the Center noted that the outside legal expert on the CRB dissented in 14 cases in which the CRB voted 2-to-1 to reject the complaints because parties were bringing evidence of irregularities at additional polling stations within the same constituencies. The basis for these rejections is not clear given that the complaints process was structured at the constituency level.

Complaints Investigation Panel (CIP). A Complaints Investigation Panel (CIP) consists of a NEBE official as chair and one representative from each of the complainant parties and the party that stood to lose the seat should the complaint be upheld. The CIP was charged with investigating the complaints by traveling to affected areas and calling on and hearing witnesses and assessing the veracity of the claims. Observation teams attended 14 of the 44 CIPs that conducted the final phase of the complaints resolution process.

From the some 380 complaints, the two-part CRB screening process identified 178 at the constituency level for investigation by CIPs. The NEBE created 44 CIPs, which fanned out over the country to investigate complaints in 178 constituencies. The Carter Center observed the process in 14 panels covering 49 constituencies.

We observed:

- Inconsistencies in the application of rules for the admission of evidence and witnesses
- Credible reports of intimidation of witnesses
- Apparent partisanship on the part of NEBE presiding officers
- Intentional delays on the part of opposition parties
- Withdrawals from the process by the opposition parties, resulting in decisions being taken in their absence

Notwithstanding the fact that the CIP's terms of reference (TOR) permitted adjustments to the operating rules based on consensus of the panel, there seemed to be no clear instruction or guidelines from the NEBE regarding acceptable modifications in operation of individual panels. While the flexibility of the rules of procedure was an important factor in allowing the process to go forward, it was undermined by the lack of clear procedural parameters that resulted in inconsistencies in the conduct of the panels.

Per Article 12 of the rules of procedure the complainant and other interested parties can only request a reasonable number of witnesses, in no case to exceed five, for each irregularity alleged. However in observed panels, some only heard testimony from five witnesses, others heard testimony from five witnesses per complaint raised, and still others heard testimony from five persons per polling station. There was a lack of clarity regarding the criteria for deciding whether re-elections should be held only in certain polling stations or throughout the entire constituency. In a third of the panels observed, the CIPs limited the complaints to only those noted on the checklist from the CRB's initial review, even though the rules of procedure state that all issues raised in the complaint should be considered.

In the majority of cases the Center observed, witnesses could give testimony without fear of retribution. However in a third of the panels, the Center found either individuals not willing to talk to the CIP for fear of reprisals, witnesses who appeared frightened or intimidated while testifying in front of the panel, or credible evidence of intimidation and harassment, including beatings and bribes, in the areas around the Panel sites.

In slightly less than half of the CIPs observed, the Center found that CIP members behaved in ways that created the appearance of political bias, including refusing to hear evidence, not providing clear explanations of reasons for decisions, and quickly dismissing opposition arguments. Although the terms of reference called for CIPs to operate by consensus, binding majority decisions were allowed in cases when consensus could not be reached. Reaching consensus in such a highly charged environment proved extremely difficult. Only a third of CIP decisions observed by the Center were made by consensus. In another third of the cases, one or more parties refused to sign the decision. There were far fewer consensus decisions made in the CIP constituencies that the Center did not observe.

Given the complicated task, another factor undermining the process was the time pressure facing the CIPs to complete their work. This was exacerbated by delaying tactics and withdrawals by the opposition. In several constituencies observed by the Center, opposition complainants halted work of the panel in order to subpoena an incarcerated witness. The Center only observed one case where a detained person was not subpoenaed and thus not able to participate in the hearing. However, the Center observed two cases in which the NEBE chair issued subpoenas to call detained witnesses (both for opposition complainants), but where the complainant indicated they no longer desired the testimony of the subpoenaed individuals. The efforts to locate these people delayed the panels for a considerable amount of time. Most instances of intentional delays observed by the Center were caused by opposition parties. In the majority of cases observed, the practice of bringing forward incarcerated persons for testimony appeared to work.

It should also be noted that early in the process opposition advocates and panelists withdrew from the proceedings in some constituencies to protest what they viewed as biased decisions by the CIPs. According to the terms of reference, the panel is to proceed if the party absent is the provisional seat holder, but should drop the case if the party absent is the complainant. As a result, unfortunately, the deliberative purpose of the panel was not possible in the instances of withdrawals.

The Carter Center acknowledges the challenging conditions under which the CIP process was implemented, and that the negotiations and agreements to undertake the CIPs provided a cooling off period in the wake of the early June unrest. In retrospect, however, given the highly charged and distrustful environment, it seems clear that the CIPs were structurally flawed in the sense that the complainants themselves were part of the panel judging the veracity of their own claims. The process relied heavily on the good faith effort of all parties involved to stay engaged in and committed to the conclusion of the process.

Overall, the CIP mechanism did not provide an adequate remedy to ensure a fair resolution of all electoral complaints, and it did not serve to increase general confidence in the election process.

It is important to note that the NEBE provided multiple opportunities for dissatisfied parties to bring forward additional evidence. The sheer volume of complaints clogged the system and distracted the NEBE from other operational duties. Looking forward, it is incumbent upon the NEBE to clarify electoral complaint procedures early in the election process, and for parties to create internal mechanisms for presenting credible evidence in a timely manner within the established parameters.

August 21 Re-elections

As a result of the CIPs, the NEBE conducted re-elections in 31 constituencies on August 21. The opposition party Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) unsuccessfully challenged the re-voting in court, claiming that the NEBE had not justified its decisions on which constituencies deserved new polling.

Carter Center observer teams were deployed to 11 of those constituencies for the August 21 ballot, visiting 94 polling stations. The Center's observers reported that election administration ran smoothly in most polling stations. In some places identification (ID) cards were not checked, polling stations opened late and closed early, and voters' fingers were not checked for indelible ink. In almost half of the constituencies observed, voters and community members appeared to lack knowledge as to why the re-election was taking place.

Prior to polling day there were reports of intimidation of opposition members and supporters. Although there were few formal withdrawals from the re-elections, in many places the opposition parties effectively surrendered the field, and opposition party representatives were difficult to find and interview.

Armed militia, police, and/or military personnel were seen outside of polling stations in many areas visited by CC observers, and in some areas also inside the polling stations. Although security personnel can be present inside the station if requested by polling station officials, in the polarized environment surrounding the re-elections, some Center observers reported that the security presence appeared to have an intimidating effect on voters.

The ruling party made a clean sweep of the re-elections, in some cases overturning what had been substantial defeats in the 15 May elections.

August 21 Somali Region Elections

For 2005, elections in the 23 constituencies of the Somali Region were scheduled on August 21. In four constituencies they had to be further postponed because voter registration had not been completed. The period before the election was marked by announcements of withdrawals from the elections by the major regional opposition parties.

Four Carter Center observer teams were deployed into three urban areas in the Somali region to observe the August 21 voting. On election day, Carter Center observers found that polling stations were chaotic, with the voting process extremely disorganized. Observers uniformly witnessed instances of underage voting, multiple voting, heightened security presence (anticipated due to extreme insecure conditions in this region), openly partisan polling officials, and open campaigning on voting day in and around polling stations. Opposition parties did not engage in the process in many areas.

While the Somali elections suffered from severe irregularities, the Somali region is somewhat of an anomaly in Ethiopia. The region is clan and tribe-based, a large part of the population is pastoral, and elders are influential in the local communities. Most Somalis did not appear disturbed by the apparent irregularities in the process as it unfolded, and certainly no one tried to hide events from the scrutiny of observers.

It also should be noted that the NEBE was planning for the Somali elections at the same time it was conducting the CIP process, so its resources were heavily challenged. More civic education campaigns are likely needed prior to future elections, as well as a careful review of how best to implement elections in the region.

National Election Board

The NEBE is to be commended for its electoral preparations and successes in implementing the May 15 voting process. The increased transparency and responsiveness of the NEBE was an improvement over previous elections. The NEBE showed remarkable flexibility and responded in an inclusive and timely fashion to the demands to replace the complaints process that had proved inadequate.

However, there are several areas of concern with respect to the NEBE's performance in the course of the election. The focus and dedication to impartiality that were exhibited by the NEBE at the national level quickly dissipated in some areas outside of Addis Ababa, especially as the complaints process wore on. While NEBE officials reported that some election officials were replaced in response to verified claims of partisan activities, there remains a need to ensure election officials at all levels are accountable and perform their duties effectively and transparently.

Conclusion

The May 15, 2005, elections were Ethiopia's third national election. The 2005 elections were held to choose representatives to fill 547 seats in the parliament in a very diverse country, where regional considerations matter and where regional and local leaders wield a high degree of influence.

The elections process demonstrated significant advances in Ethiopia's democratization process, including most importantly the introduction of a more competitive electoral process, which could potentially result in a pluralistic, multi-party political system. Ethiopians saw and understood that public policy appropriately receives debate, that public media cover multiple points of view, that voters' choices can result in the election of opposition members of parliament, and that local administration may be in the hands of a party other than the ruling party. Depending on developments in the coming months and years, the 2005 elections could potentially represent a historic sea change in attitudes toward political power and competition in Ethiopia.

The Carter Center's assessment of the elections suggests that the majority of the constituency results based on the May 15 polling and tabulation are credible and reflect competitive conditions. However, a considerable number of the constituency results based on the CRB and CIP processes are problematic and lack credibility. Within the universe of seats impacted by the complaints process, many of these

cases lacked sufficient evidence to warrant challenging the result. However, serious problems were found in parts of the CRB process and in a considerable number of the CIPs. In addition, there were problems in some of the re-election constituencies.

In this context, it is important to note that the CRB/CIP processes were ad hoc mechanisms to review electoral complaints, and that the prescribed legal recourse to challenge these decisions is via an appeal to the High Court. It is incumbent upon dissatisfied political parties to file appeals to the High Court in an expeditious manner in those cases where they feel there is credible evidence. If parties decide not to file court appeals, the NEBE's announced results should be accepted as final and legitimate. The Carter Center stands ready to assist Ethiopians and observe any other electoral processes as appropriate.

The NEBE is entering polling station level results into a database, aggregating these results and comparing them to the constituency level results. This is an essential procedure, which should be completed soon, and will provide important polling station data for all parties to cross-check results. The opposition CUD claims to have polling station level data proving it won more seats in parliament than the official NEBE results indicate. It is incumbent upon parties to bring data and evidence of discrepancies to the NEBE as soon as possible.

On May 15 an overwhelming number of Ethiopian voters stood in line for long hours to express their democratic right to elect their leaders. They exhibited faith in a process and a desire for democracy and sent clear messages to all Ethiopian political leaders that this desire was a will of the people.

In the spirit of the expressed will on the part of the electorate for furthering democracy in Ethiopia, we urge the leaders of the new parliament, both ruling party and opposition, to work together to devise new rules and practices to ensure that all voters' interests are represented in parliament, and that the upcoming 2006 woreda and 2010 national elections build on the gains made during the 2005 elections.

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This is The Carter Center's fourth post-election statement. Previous statements were issued on May 16, 2005, June 3, 2005, and June 9, 2005.

The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. A not-for-profit nongovernmental organization, the Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 65 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; improving mental health care; and teaching farmers to increase crop production. Please visit www.cartercenter.org to learn more about The Carter Center.