

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
FOR
FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA**

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) is entered into this ___ day of May 2006 by and between the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP), the Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (EPPF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Sidama Liberation Front (SLF), and the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF)¹. The signatories are referred to in this MOU individually as a "Party" and jointly as the "Parties."

The delegates of the Parties convened in The Hague May 19-21, 2006 to finalize this MOU. The purpose of this MOU is to underpin the Parties' commitment to forge a new workable arrangement that defuses the current crisis and pave the way for the establishment of a democratic order in Ethiopia. The Parties believe this arrangement will enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the population, as well as the backing of the international community.

The Parties are aware of the window of opportunity that currently exists to effect fundamental and positive change in Ethiopia. To discharge this historic responsibility, it is important for the Parties to reach a common understanding and work together while maintaining their respective political programs. Given the gravity of the political situation, the Parties understand the need to prioritize the common good and conduct future relations in the spirit of cooperation, providing the foundation for a lasting and durable solution to the many political, social, and economic problems.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the Parties aspire to achieve freedom, justice, liberty, and democracy and chart the course to sustainable peace, stability and development;

WHEREAS, arbitrary rule and the denial of democratic and human rights in Ethiopia has created bitter resentments and conflicts lasting for generations;

WHEREAS, the repressive policies of the regime have resulted in the waste of vast human and economic resources, and equal amounts of resources have been expended in order to fight against such injustices and human rights violations;

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to establish a just and democratic political system where authority emanates from the freely expressed will of the people, where people have control over decisions affecting their lives, where power is devolved to organs of government closest to the people, where the rule of law reigns supreme, and where fundamental freedoms and civil liberties are

¹ The names of the organizations are arranged strictly on an alphabetical order.

guaranteed for all;

WHEREAS, the parties believe that the combined and/or coordinated efforts and actions of the Parties are necessary for freedom and democracy to blossom and to end the isolated struggles that have contributed to the continuation of tyranny and injustice;

Therefore, OLF, CUDP, ONLF, UEDF, SLF and EPPF through their duly authorized representatives enter into this MOU to guide them in their joint efforts and coordinate their activities in the formation of a wider alliance. This MOU also calls for the convening of an all-inclusive conference, the date and venue to be determined by the Parties.

NAME

The name of the Alliance shall be the Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD).

WORKING LANGUAGE

Afaan Oromo, Amharic and English are official working languages of the Alliance.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Alliance is to establish a working arrangement that:

1. Ensures liberty, peace, justice, and the rule of law;
2. Promotes peace in Ethiopia and the region, ensuring that the resulting peace dividend shall be enjoyed by all;
3. Lays the foundation for a fully democratic system in Ethiopia that meets the aspirations of all and address their grievances by instituting a genuinely representative political order;
4. Guarantees the supremacy of the rule of law based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant United Nations Covenants;
5. Reaffirms respect for and commitment to the basic norms of international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
6. Achieves a new, just, and democratic Ethiopia where all human and democratic rights are fully respected; and
7. Genuinely and boldly addresses the serious issues in Ethiopia and amicably resolves the many intractable conflicts in the region thereby laying the foundations for lasting peace, democracy, stability and development.

TASKS

The Alliance shall:

1. Coordinate the activities of member organizations by mobilizing and galvanizing their respective constituencies in order to achieve freedom, lasting peace, and democracy;
2. Pool together the Parties' resources and talents in order to conduct an effective political and diplomatic campaign;
3. Work together to promote brotherly relations among all the people in Ethiopia by mitigating and preventing all forms of inter-communal and inter-confessional discord;
4. Uphold a culture of peaceful resolution of intrastate and interstate conflicts in the region and enhancing regional cooperation as a vehicle to create conditions for peace, stability, economic development, and political integration;
5. Promote harmony between the Parties and their constituents by overcoming the history of mistrust through dialogue, mutual understanding and respect;
6. Advance the development of democratic culture and institutions; and
7. Actively promote good relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea based on agreements to be reached between the two sister countries. _____

MEMBERSHIP

1. Any political organization with a proven track record that accepts the basic principles of the Alliance and is committed to perform duties associated with membership may be admitted as a member pursuant to the criteria set forth by the Alliance.
2. A detailed procedure and criteria of admittance shall be established.

ORGANS OF THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance shall have the organs necessary to carry out its functions and meet its objectives. The detailed structure and the modalities of representation in the Alliance shall be finalized through negotiation between the parties in subsequent discussions.

UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The Parties agree that all Alliance documents shall be prepared in English. The translation of the agreement may be made in Amharic and Afaan Oromo.
2. The Alliance shall work to convene an inclusive conference to establish a workable arrangement;
3. The arrangement shall be on the basis of the present framework of the Ethiopian constitution;
4. While maintaining their political programs, organizational independence and autonomy, the Parties will refrain from entering into any unilateral negotiation or agreement with another party that could jeopardize the Alliance;

5. The Alliance shall convene in Europe and its public declaration shall be in Washington, DC on or about May ____, 2006;
6. The Parties shall prepare the structure, statutes, and work plan for adoption at the inauguration of the Alliance.

WHEREFORE, each Party has caused this MOU to be executed by its duly authorized representatives.

Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)
Dawud Ibsa, Chairman

Yoseph Yazew, NA Committee Chairman
Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP)

Abdulkadir Hirnooge, 2nd Vice-Chairman
Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)

Fasika Belete, Chairman
United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF)

Galfato Seqa, Chairman
Sidama Liberation Front (SLF)

Meskerem, Chairman
Ethiopian People's Patriotic Forces (EPPF)