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**Open letter to H. E. Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali
from Association of Ethiopian and Eritrean Adoptees in Sweden, AEF
Stockholm, December 10, 2019**

Dear Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali,

We, the Association of Ethiopian and Eritrean Adoptees in Sweden, AEF* are happy to see that peace has been reached with Eritrea and hope that you and your delegation have a nice stay in Stockholm and Oslo during the the Nobel Peace Prize week. As you have now visited Sweden in connection to the awarding, we would like to direct your attention to the situation of former Ethiopian and Eritrean citizens who have been adopted transnationally as children, and now live in Sweden as Swedish citizens.

The majority of the members of AEF were adopted during the 1960-80:s when transnational adoptions were performed as “closed” procedures. In almost all cases birth parents and adoptive parents were kept strictly apart from each other and little, if any, regard was given to the child’s history and experiences before the adoption.

Today, being adults and parents ourselves, many of us want to learn more about Ethiopia and our origins. But when we travel to Ethiopia and turn to Ethiopian authorities, attempting to search for our personal life stories and biological relatives, we are faced with missing, distorted, forgotten and destroyed information, due to accidents, lack of knowledge, lack of resources and other unfortunate circumstances.

Many Ethiopians have met us with great kindness, generosity and friendship. Still, we have members struggling with feeling of loss, rootlessness and of lack of belonging. Therefore, we turn

* AEF is a Swedish nationwide non-profit association for adult adoptees from Ethiopia and what is today Eritrea. The AEF was founded in 1996 and is politically and religiously independent. It is a forum for members to shed light on experiences of being an adult adoptee from Ethiopia and Eritrea in Sweden.

to you, asking for help and support for Ethiopian adoptees, from all countries in the world, who are reaching back to their country of birth.

Our request concerns help with the following:

- Finding and keeping all Ethiopian documents about our adoptions in Ethiopia and making them available for adoptees to find when searching.
- Reaching out to our birth families and relatives in Ethiopia, inviting them to leave information for those adoptees who are actively trying to find them.
- Reaching out to the governments in our adoptive countries, inviting them to cooperate in helping adoptees search for their roots, through for example translations and local guidance when visiting Ethiopia.
- Using new technology, to build a DNA-register located in Ethiopia, specifically aimed for those adoptees and biological relatives who are searching and wishing for contact with each other in Ethiopia, and also what is today Eritrea.

We will be happy to tell you more about our concerns and ideas in any way that is convenient for you.

Thank you for taking time to read our concerns. There is a growing number of Ethiopian born adoptees in the worldwide diaspora ranging in age from small children to adults and soon to become seniors, and we trust that your government will further address this issue.

Most respectfully,

Hanna Wallensteen, chairperson and Anna-Chuchu Schindele, secretary
the Association of Ethiopian and Eritrean Adoptees in Sweden, AEF

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