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**Amen Ethiopia**

**Pilgrimage of Hope  
Towards a New Chapter**

September 2007 - መስከረም ፪ሺህ (2000)

**The Year 2000 - The Eve of the Ethiopian Millennium**  
**Amen Ethiopia**  
**Pilgrimage of Hope Towards a New Chapter**

**The Aim of the Amen Ethiopia Initiative**

On the occasion of the year 2000 in the Ethiopian Calendar, Diaspora Ethiopians in cooperation with their compatriots in the motherland are planning a Pilgrimage of Hope to Ethiopia. The participants will travel from America - Europe via the Middle East to Ethiopia and the journey is intended to be a Pilgrimage of Hope, Peace, Reconciliation and Transformation.

The aim of the Amen Ethiopia Initiative is to encourage solidarity and national understanding, promoting an Ethiopian Renaissance by launching an appeal that all should work together for National Reconstruction, Development and Prosperity. In addition the initiative aims to encourage a co-existence of mutual acceptance and respect in the Ethiopia society and also to inspire others to be an example by engaging in similar activities, which will have continuity, lasting effect and to implement a new reality for the country.

The Amen Ethiopia project is initiated by the Admas Foundation in the Netherlands, an independent non-profit organisation established according to Dutch law. The Admas Foundation aims to function as a bridge between the Ethiopians in the Diaspora and the motherland, and without distinction of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or political persuasion, to encourage cooperation and promote a genuine grassroots discourse of national reconstruction, development and renewal.

**The Motivating Idea Behind the Amen Ethiopia Initiative**

On the eve of the third Millennium Ethiopia, in different ways finds herself at a cross-road. At this point it is crucial that the country should learn from her previous mistakes, and building on the foundations of the positive aspects of her heritage move forward into a new era; a bright new future.

Particularly in the present global of situation of insecurity, it is important raise a voice in favour of Peace. Peace is based on mutual understanding, listening to and respecting each other, it entails reconciliation, which flow out of oneself. If the Amen Ethiopia Initiative succeeds in opening a new chapter of mutual understanding and reconciliation in Ethiopia, it will contribute towards finding a solution to the problems of the Horn of Africa.

Historical sources have presented a multifaceted image of Ethiopia to the world throughout the ages, encompassing different cultures and faiths. In different ways our history is complex and includes various cultural and ethnic expressions. Consequently, their past and present contributions need to be examined in order to establish a basis for a system of peaceful coexistence. In various respects different mentalities and ways of thought have been the source of hostility and division. Regarding such circumstances, we need to cultivate a sense of unity in diversity and in this way open a new chapter in Ethiopian public life. Amen Ethiopia stands behind this movement!

It may seem difficult to realise all Amen Ethiopia's wide aspirations at one time, however, Amen Ethiopia will engage in various activities, and appeals to others to work together to realize these noble aims.

### **Symposiums and Conferences**

Preceding the Pilgrimage of Hope symposiums and seminars are scheduled in Amsterdam, London, Washington DC, Brussels, Frankfurt and Geneva to give insight into the Amen Ethiopia objectives. In addition, conferences are being organized in the presence of experts and dignitaries and with representatives of grassroots communities at the opening of the Pilgrimage (The Hague, The Netherlands) and at its close in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The conferences/symposiums will facilitate gaining profound understanding of the past, present and future prospects of the Ethiopian situation. The advent of the Millennium stimulates us to build on the foundations of the positive aspects of our historical heritage. We need to take the initiative to rise above the limitations of our present situation, establishing a beneficial momentum leaving behind negative mentalities to work for peaceful conflict resolution. Peace and reconciliation will be at the centre of awareness raising activities, symposiums and public discussions, as well as being the inspiration for spiritual programs. The programs will reach out to include experts in different fields, religious leaders, civil society and artists etc.

Today, on a national level we need to approach organisations with different points of view, to encourage them to engage with each other and reach understanding, solving their conflicts through dialogue. We must make efforts to encourage all groups to work together in harmony to further national development and reconstruction, and thus to usher in a period of prosperity for all. It is vital that all religious organisations that are willing be involved in the endeavour to solve differences through mediation and arbitration according to Ethiopian traditions and customs.

Furthermore, it is imperative that at all levels of society, for individuals and organisations to stop striving solely for their own ends; rather all should feel responsibility to solve our problems through discussion and dialogue. At this time we need to cooperate for the good of the nation in a spirit of solidarity, each one is called upon to make a contribution.

In addition, special efforts will be made, both abroad and within the country to encourage dialogue and increase cooperation between religious organizations concerning Ethiopia's major problems, such as: poverty, recurring drought, hunger, the aids pandemic, and recent instances of flooding.

The Pilgrims of hope will make efforts to mobilise international awareness in order to bring about tangible changes in these matters.

Amen Ethiopia appeals to Ethiopians who are citizens of foreign lands to give genuine and constructive attention to the national interests, and work together with the citizens in the motherland to reduce differences in ways of thinking and to open up new avenues of opportunity, which will be of mutual benefit for all.

### **Spiritual Programs**

The cooperation of religious organisations will be sought to arrange spiritual programs in connection with the objectives of Amen Ethiopia. This will include prayer vigils, special teaching sessions and discussions, aimed at spreading the message of the Amen Ethiopia initiative. Plans have been made to contact spiritual leaders in order to involve them in these activities.

As far as circumstances allow, efforts will be made to encourage direct and continuous dialogue, and exchanges of advice between religious organisations in order to resolve conflicts and create arenas for positive interaction.

All those who support the aspirations of Amen Ethiopia, will be encouraged to express their positive intentions in a book, which will be carried by the participants to Ethiopia.

### **The Amen Ethiopia Pilgrimage of Hope**

The participants in the journey will be a group of Ethiopians representing different Diaspora communities. This group of Pilgrims of peace and reconciliation coming from various Western countries will depart from the Peace Palace in The Hague, passing through: Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva, Rome, Athens, Istanbul, the Middle East, Cairo, Khartoum and other historical cities. They will finally enter Addis Ababa before the Millennium commences in '*Meskerem 2000*' (September 2007 A.D.) as a convoy of peace.

The Ethiopians participating in the journey of Hope will be coming from different countries, representing a microcosm of the different views on matters of faith, ethnicity and culture, in the course of the journey they will engage in dialogue and exchange of views.

Pilgrimage is an actively mobilized process of recognizing our own woundedness and responding to the woundedness and sacredness of the other. The Pilgrimage will be a time of healing in which participants expose their individual woundedness and grow together. The journey constitutes a period of inner growth and transformation for the participants reclaiming abandoned parts of themselves. The Pilgrimage of Hope will symbolise the journey of transformation Ethiopia needs to go through herself, opening a new chapter on the eve of the third Millennium.

The Journey of Hope is intended to transform the current mentality of division by promoting a sense of unity in diversity. We extend a call to all Ethiopians to make a contribution according to their ability to work for national transformation and renewal.

#### **Activities in the Course of the Journey**

The Amen Ethiopia Pilgrims will engage in dialogue with their Ethiopian compatriots in the countries they pass through, concerning constructive proposals to increase solidarity and cooperation in the current situation.

On the international level, contact will be made with religious organisations, in order to encourage cooperation. In view of the great importance of Christianity and Islam in Ethiopia, and the religious significance of many of the places which will be visited, appropriate activities will be arranged including encounters with religious leaders en route.

The itinerary will include visits to international humanitarian and civil society organizations in the course of the journey. The Pilgrims will do their best to make known the positive aspects of Ethiopian history and culture to the world community.

Famous individuals involved in Ethiopian issues will accompany the pilgrims during the journey according to their own convenience, and express their support through participating in different activities.

### **Practical Participation**

In order to actualise the objectives of the Amen Ethiopia Initiative, all Ethiopians are called upon to challenge and change negative aspects of historical heritage and to work for a positive change of mentality.

Amen Ethiopia appeals to religious leaders, specialists in different fields, artists, members of civil society, figures from the world of sport, people of good will and Ethiopians able to make some special contribution to join hands in efforts to implement the Amen Ethiopia proposals and pass on the message.

Different media will be utilised to focus attention on the Amen Ethiopia initiative and to encourage different kinds of contributions, both practical and material.

The celebration of the Millennium 2000 in Ethiopia, communicates an imperative which obliges us to mobilise Ethiopians to work for Peace and Reconciliation, as the Pilgrims finish their journey and arrive in Ethiopia. The different levels of society, religious organisations and adherents of different movements need to be encouraged not only to participate in the conferences, but more than this to appropriate these noble aspirations to themselves. This should find expression in a change in mentality, towards tolerance, acceptance, cooperation and solidarity, in working for national reconstruction and renewal.

## **Conclusion**

We desire that this positive vision of the Amen Ethiopia initiative will facilitate passing into a twenty first century of cooperation and fraternal relations.

We cannot change the past history, but we can change our way of thinking on the basis of past history. Rooting out vengeance, asking forgiveness for past wrongs, replacing enmity with love, we can reconcile ourselves with our past history. Amen Ethiopia implores all to make a contribution towards progressing in the right direction, in order to create a just present and a bright future for all inhabitants of this land.

‘Amen’ is an affirmation, meaning it is true. When we use the expression ‘amen’ it acts as a blessing, encouraging creative acceptance and the beginning of a new era. Accepting and being accepted are related and interdependent.

Amen Ethiopia calls upon all Ethiopians to express ‘Amen’ to each other in word and deed, and in this way to herald a new period of positive community relations and national prosperity.

Any Ethiopian can participate and share in the movement to achieve these noble objectives. We hope you will share these sacred aspirations and support us. For more information, please consult the following address:

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