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**Final Statement on The Carter Center Observation of the
Ethiopia 2005 National Election**

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Oromiya and SNNPR regions 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. Following the agreement, investigations were 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 election on August 22.

Carter Center observation teams was coordinated with the observation missions of

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,Tj10.02 0 0 10.02 420.02 326.93922 r4rc022 3r0011 Tc 0.00281 Tw 10.02 0 0 10.02

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 fina

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 46 Tm(ble in)Tj10.02 010.02 381.5025

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.

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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