



## Joint Press Release

### **Mekelle, 23 November 2024: Ethiopia Launches Landmark Demobilisation Process: International Partners Commend Turning Point for Sustainable Peace**

Today, international partners joined the National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC), the Government of Ethiopia, the Tigray Interim Regional Administration (TIRA), and the United Nations (UN) to observe the launch of the demobilisation phase of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) process. International partners congratulate the Government of Ethiopia, the TIRA, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the NRC, and the UN on this historic achievement, which represents a critical step towards lasting peace and reconciliation in the country. This nationally-owned programme is supported by global partners including the African Union, Canada, the European Union, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and administered by the NRC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The process will demobilise 371,971 combatants overall, including 75,000 combatants in its first phase, making it the largest DDR effort globally and significant in its scale. Demobilisation entails the formal discharge of combatants, helping them return to civilian life with financial, medical and mental health support.

The launch of this demobilisation process represents a beacon of hope for Ethiopia and a model for collaborative global peacebuilding. This initiative demonstrates Ethiopia's determination to achieve lasting peace, and is supported by a coalition of nations committed to building a stable and prosperous future for all Ethiopians. The launch of demobilisation coincides with the second anniversary of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), underscoring its significance as a critical framework for building sustainable peace in Ethiopia. This milestone reflects an important step forward in translating the agreement's commitments into tangible actions that promote reconciliation, stability, and development across the nation.

## **Canada**

Representing Canada, Ambassador Joshua Tabah highlighted:

*"Today's launch of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program in Ethiopia is a necessary next step in the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Peace is hard to achieve and can be even harder to maintain. I commend the Government of Ethiopia, the Tigray Interim Regional Administration and all stakeholders for their courage and conviction in committing to peace with this launch. By successfully implementing this program, you will demonstrate your commitment to regional and national prosperity and stability. Canada stands with you."*

## **European Union**

EU Ambassador-designate Sofie From-Emmesberger noted:

*"The EU is proud to have backed to the DDR process from its very inception and to be one of the leading supporters of this pioneering first phase of demobilisation. We commend this momentous milestone towards building lasting peace in Ethiopia. The DDR process serves as a model for the wider Horn of Africa region. The EU will remain resolutely at Ethiopia's side as we look forward to the systemic reintegration of former combatants as part of a robust structure for the transition to civilian life in strengthened recipient communities. The start of demobilisation bears witness to Ethiopia's resilience and determination to chart a new chapter of unity and hope."*

## **Italy**

Italy's Ambassador, Agostino Palese, remarked:

*"The launch of the DDR program operations marks a historic moment for Ethiopia. The path is long and it will not be easy. But it is the right path and Italy is proud to support it with a large investment on peace and stability. We are convinced that peace and economic growth are linked to each other and this DDR program is key to unlock both of them. This is why we praise all Ethiopian stakeholders involved for building a better future."*

## **Japan**

Japanese Ambassador, SHIBATA Hironori affirmed:

*"Today is a memorable day to take very important step forward toward sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Japan proudly supports Ethiopia in launching the demobilisation as well as the preparation for reintegration projects, wishing a better future for all the relevant stakeholders and the local communities. Japan will continue to cooperate with Ethiopia in its efforts to achieve peace and prosperity of the nation."*

## **Norway**

Norway's Ambassador Stian Christensen noted:

*"The start of the Demobilization process represents a significant milestone in the implementation of the CoHA, and its impact will undoubtedly contribute to building sustainable peace in Ethiopia. Norway commends the leadership and dedication of all stakeholders involved for their unwavering commitment to this and we reaffirm our partnership with Ethiopia in its endeavors to achieve lasting peace and stability."*

## **Republic of Korea**

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Kang JUNG, shared:

*"The Republic of Korea commends the efforts of the Ethiopian government, NRC, UNDP, and many donor countries for implementing the DDR program.*

*The DDR program will serve as a significant milestone in Ethiopia's peace agreement, offering hope for lasting peace to its people. We sincerely hope the program proceeds smoothly and wish all former combatants successfully reintegrate into society and enjoy fulfilling lives."*

## **Sweden**

Sweden's Ambassador, Hans Henric Lundquist, stated:

*"The launch of demobilisation today represents a crucial next step for peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia, marking the second anniversary of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Peace and stability are fundamental cornerstones for economic growth and social development across Ethiopia and the wider region."*

## **United Kingdom**

The UK's Ambassador, Darren Welch, remarked:

*"The UK is proud to play a leading role in supporting the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process. It is a critical next step to progress the Pretoria Agreement, help 75,000 Tigrayans rebuild their lives and demonstrate the possibility of peace in Ethiopia."*

## **United States**

The U.S. Ambassador, Ervin Massinga, affirmed:

*"The United States commends the National Rehabilitation Commission and the Government of Ethiopia (GOE) for launching the critical demobilization process in Tigray. This significant milestone is a fundamental part of the DDR process which is essential to healing the deep wounds of conflict and rebuilding a peaceful and prosperous Tigray. We encourage the GOE to build on this momentum in its implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA), and we stand firm in our commitment to support collaborative efforts to deliver the stability and prosperity all Ethiopians deserve."*

## **UNDP**

Resident Representative, Dr. Samuel Doe, remarked:

*"We are honoured by the trust placed in UNDP by the government and partners to manage the multi-partner programme in support of Ethiopia's DDR. UNDP has supported countries across the globe on similar programme and we are bringing that experience to this process. Demobilising and reintegrating ex-combatants back into the community is one of the key foundations for building sustainable peace and we will continue to support the roll out of the DDR across the regions."*