Statement by

The Delegation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the Six Forum on Minority Issues

"Beyond Freedom of Religion or Belief: Guaranteeing the Right of Religious Minorities"

Promotion of constrictive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange (Agenda 5)

The religious groups in Ethiopia have established an Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia in 2010 to promote and systematize interfaith learning, collaborate and synergy to address issues of common concern such as peace building, maintaining inter-religious tolerance, promoting culture of peace through religious participation, enabling the religious institutions to advance their faith freely, protecting their constitutional rights and conflict transformation. They are working in more organized manner and mobilize significant number of people. The Government is extending appropriate support to the Council taking into account the relevance it has to ensure religious tolerance.

The Council has also organized one national and two regional consultative and experience sharing workshops with the participation of 870 religious leaders and faith based organizations (FBO) on issues of religious tolerance and harmonized relationship between religious groups. Followers of each religion have also been given the right to establish institutes of religions education, and to publish and disseminate religious books, newspapers and magazines. In addition to this, the role of women and young people in interfaith dialogue as well as on teachings on the issues of harmful traditional

practices, HIV/AIDS, maternal and youth reproductive health and peace. The Council also addresses issues of participation of religious groups in the decision making and political activities of the state in strict conformity with the constitutional principle of separation of state and religion.

Moreover, the forum is also a platform to submit and follow address administrative and other grievances religious groups and followers of the different religions to the government and have given solutions to them.

Thank you