



**USAID**  
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## DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

“I believe Africa’s progress will also depend on democracy... Ethiopia will not fully unleash the potential of its people if journalists are restricted or legitimate opposition groups can't participate in the campaign process...this is the work that we can do together.” – *President Barack Obama, African Union, Ethiopia, July 28, 2015*

The “Ibrahim Index” of overall governance ranks Ethiopia 31 out of 54 countries in Africa. Ethiopia’s “human development” score has steadily increased over the past decade, but its “participation and human rights” score has remained stagnant. The Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front has held 100 percent of the seats in the parliament since 2015. This government has continued its ambitious development agenda, yet many citizens feel that progress has not been equitable. This has triggered public protests and strong crackdowns which resulted in a significant number of deaths and arrests. During his historic visit in 2015, President Obama urged the government to ease strict controls on civil society and the freedom of assembly. Thus far, little visible progress has been made on these fronts. Ethiopia’s 2014 civil society organization sustainability score was the second lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. Challenges in democracy and human rights threaten the realization of the mission’s overall development objectives.

PHOTO: DAVID KAHRMANN

## PROGRAM GOALS

USAID works with local communities and the Government of Ethiopia to prevent and manage conflict. The mission is building the ability of local student peace actors on university campuses to help youth constructively resolve conflict through dialogue. Closely linked to these efforts is assistance to enhance good governance by supporting the government's focus on building accountable institutions, thereby promoting transparency and public accountability. USAID collaborates with government at the national and regional levels and with universities and civil society.

USAID provides continuing education to the judiciary on human rights and application of the law, improves public access to justice through legal aid and education, and facilitates non-violent means to resolve disputes. USAID also promotes and supports the role of local organizations as key partners in Ethiopia's development, including organizations working with government to improve services for people with disabilities and those affected by harmful traditional practices.

To sustain major development gains, USAID plans to integrate participatory governance practices across its portfolio to improve service delivery. This supports local populations to hold government more accountable for commitments they have made to improve services. An activity to strengthen legislative oversight by empowering the Women's Caucus in Parliament is also planned.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- Access to Justice and Legal Awareness: Aims to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable populations including low-income groups, the disabled, and victims of gender based violence by raising awareness of their legal rights and providing them with access to expert legal advice to seek redress and obtain professional representation before a court of law.
- Enhancing the Status of Human Rights Protection and Systems of Good Governance in Ethiopia: Builds the ability of Ethiopian judicial and law enforcement authorities to improve the quality of justice and enforcement of human rights. Via the bi-annual Joined-Up Justice Forum, the activity also provides a platform for justice sector and law enforcement professionals to discuss and reach consensus on common issues connected to their role in interpreting and enforcing the law.
- Inclusive Skills Training and Employment Program: Supports an increase in the number of local organizations providing mainstream vocational skills training, business skills training, and employment opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities in Tigray, SNNP and Dire Dawa.
- Local Capacity Development: Strengthens the capacity of local Ethiopian organizations. This activity provides assistance in the areas of organizational and financial management, activity management, and monitoring and evaluation skills.
- Strengthening Institutions for Peace and Development II: Establishes and strengthens partnerships between government and communities to understand and address issues that can lead to conflict.
- Sustaining Dialogue on Ethiopian Campuses: This conflict management and mitigation activity brings students of conflicting groups together to interact and engage constructively in a safe space, in order to break down barriers to trust and understanding, and build collaboration around common causes.