

Statement on 15 December 2016 by Mr. Tesfaye Daba at the 44th session of the ACP parliamentary regarding the relations with the European Parliament

Mr President,

Hon members of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to bring to your kind attention and action a very disturbing pattern of behaviour from our partners in the European Parliament. I know this is not a concern of not Ethiopia alone but many delegations from our region and Africa at large. While I recognise the excellent understanding and good working cooperation with many MEPs based on mutual interest and respect, there are as many who are determined to tarnish the image of many African countries including my own country Ethiopia. In the last several years, Ethiopia and African countries have been subjected to unduly patronising attitude and pattern of behaviour from some MEPs. This has just become unbearable and it is time we stand together in unity and solidarity and redefine our partnership with EU and its institutions including the EP. We cannot continue to be treated as peoples and governments that are unaware of our responsibilities and duties. The patronising attitude of some MEPs to lecture us about democracy, human rights and freedom of press should stop. I think it is time to say enough is enough. If they wish to help us move the causes of democracy forward they should work with us where they can add value and engage in a constructive manner. The amount of unfounded resolutions against our member states will surely make no contribution to consolidate democracy in our countries. Many of our countries have embarked upon democratising our countries and societies out of our conviction and out of our deep belief that our people deserve democratic values. We are democratising Ethiopia not to please or displease our partners. We strongly believe that it our responsibility, Ethiopians to democratise our nation and our society. I also believe that democracy is not something you can impose or import from outside. Democracy should take the societal context and several other factors into account. Allow me to just mention the age old traditional democracy that existed in many African countries including in my own country Ethiopia. One such tradition of democratic governance practiced by the Oromo community in Ethiopia was just inscribed by UNESCO last week in Addis Ababa at the 11th conference world heritage Committee as one of the representative intangible cultural heritage. We take great pride in our traditions which may also exist in many of our society.

Mr President,

Distinguished Members

My delegation, therefore, requests this august assembly to demand for have this as an agenda for a debate in our JPA. We either are treated as equals in a spirit of partnership to ensure our definite is restored and respected or to continue to be the way things are is totally undermining our dignity and independence to govern ourselves.

I thank you.

