



Integrated Country Strategy

ETHIOPIA

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The United States benefits from a strong and successful Ethiopia at peace with itself and its neighbors and able to project security and prosperity in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country and longstanding U.S. partner, hosting a sizeable number of American citizen residents and visitors, publicly voicing support for many of the U.S. goals for regional stability,¹ and representing an attractive market for U.S economic and commercial interests. A large Ethiopian diaspora in the United States as well as keen Congressional interest make Ethiopia a front-burner foreign policy issue. While the conflict that began in Tigray in November 2020 has inflicted significant damage on the bilateral relationship and exacted a breathtaking human and economic toll on Ethiopia, it has not altered the strategic logic of a healthy and vibrant U.S.-Ethiopia partnership.

As the conflict stretches into a second year and spreads to additional regions, the United States faces the imperative of assisting its long-standing partner to chart a course towards peace, reconciliation, and prosperity in the wake of a period of tense bilateral relations.

Unfortunately, even as the costs to Ethiopian lives and livelihoods have ballooned during the conflict, the USG toolkit is severely constrained. Development assistance has been paused in the areas of security cooperation, some aspects of democracy and governance, economic growth, and associated support to the Government of Ethiopia (GOE). Policy interventions, such as suspension of African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits, imposition of individual visa sanctions, and the prospect of Executive Order sanction designations, have drawn heavy criticism in Ethiopia while doing little to change GOE behavior. Like-minded partners do not speak with a single voice. The Ordered Departure (OD) of non-essential personnel and eligible family members (EFMs) from November 2021 until February 2022 hampered U.S. policy effectiveness and influence. Meanwhile, there are no easy fixes to the region's persistent challenges, from terrorism and fragile governance to recurrent epidemics and severe droughts exacerbated by a changing climate.

¹ GOE actions have not mirrored these public statements, particularly during the conflict.

Reflecting central tenets of the 2021 Interim National Security Strategy (NSS), the Mission's overarching goal for 2022-2025 is to restore and revitalize the longstanding partnership between the United States and Ethiopia in a way that serves both countries' interests. As of submission of this document, the GOE indeed shows indications of a desired rapprochement with the United States. Particularly as the Embassy returned to full staffing levels in February 2022, we see a window of opportunity to repair relations while improving cooperation across a range of priorities. These include assisting our citizens and protecting borders, strengthening institutions underpinning regional stability, and building mutual prosperity and resilience. In order to restore the full economic assistance potential from the USG, the White House and U.S. Trade Representative have publicly declared a desire to witness concrete steps from the GOE on enabling humanitarian access to Tigray, negotiating an end to the conflict, engaging in inclusive dialogue that addresses ethnic tensions, and holding perpetrators accountable for human rights abuses and violations. Absent sustained, good-faith efforts by the GOE in these areas, our partnership remains limited.

1) U.S. Citizens and Borders: Our top priority is to assist U.S. citizens and protect U.S. borders. Frequently declared states of emergency (SOEs) have resulted in the restricted movement, and arbitrary arrest and detention of U.S. citizens, likely on the basis of ethnicity. The Mission faces perennial difficulties securing consular notification and access to our citizens detained in Ethiopia. Meanwhile, we have had to curtail visa services due to increased demand for American Citizen Services (ACS) during the conflict. Coupled with the existing COVID-related backlog, the Mission has been unable to allocate sufficient resources to ensure optimal visa services that would durably strengthen U.S. border and homeland security and reunite families. The Mission will continue to prioritize ACS, regularize visa services, and seek to address broader security challenges by engaging the GOE on regional counterterrorism efforts.

2) Peace, Security, and Democratic Institutions: Our second goal is to promote resilient peace, security, and democratic institutions in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. To this end, the Mission will push for an inclusive national dialogue process that seeks to heal longstanding ethnic cleavages; the administration of free, fair, transparent, and nonviolent local elections; independent and competent national, regional, and local institutions; greater press freedoms

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and reduced hate speech and disinformation; and improved GOE willingness and capacity to work with its neighbors and regional organizations on issues affecting regional stability. As the GOE addresses U.S. concerns surrounding the northern Ethiopia conflict and Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), we may be able to resume assistance that rebuilds the GOE's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises while investing in the professionalization of the Ethiopian military and security forces and improving their human rights performance. Despite serious setbacks in these areas during the northern Ethiopia conflict, many Ethiopians are eager to resume reforms begun in 2018, with the United States as the partner of choice.

3) Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity: Our third goal is to promote sustainable development and prosperity through expanded and deepened partnership and mutual understanding. The United States and Ethiopia have shared global interests, including with respect to mitigating and responding to recurring natural disasters; reducing carbon emissions through increased use of green energy and climate-smart agriculture; strengthening resilience to health threats and pandemics; boosting human development for vulnerable citizens and communities; and investing in youth. With Africa's second largest market as well as nascent economic reforms and privatizations that remain a work in progress, Ethiopia offers an attractive and growing market for U.S. business with the potential for greater two-way trade and investment. With respect to the USG economic toolkit, the GOE has an enormous incentive to meet requirements enabling it to resume benefitting from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and Development Finance Corporation (DFC). Underpinning these connections are deep and growing people-to-people connections with the potential to accelerate commercial activity and improve the image of "brand America" in Ethiopia, while engendering mutual understanding.

4) U.S. Mission Addis Ababa: Our fourth goal is to improve Mission Addis Ababa's management platform in a way that reinforces outstanding customer service and operational effectiveness. The Mission's ICASS customer satisfaction scores are already above the regional average, but the consistent growth of U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) and Locally Employed (LE) staff without commensurate growth in Management support personnel puts this at risk. The Mission will

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reorganize target offices, such as the Facilities Management Office, and increase the engagement of LE staff to strengthen a diverse, equitable, and inclusive team.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Assist U.S. citizens and protect U.S. borders.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Provide optimal consular services to U.S. citizens and strengthen U.S. border and homeland security. (CDCS SpO, IR3: Rule of law and democratic institutions strengthened.)

Mission Goal 2: Promote resilient peace, security, and democratic institutions in the Horn of Africa.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Strengthen transparent, democratic institutions that promote good governance, rule of law, peace building, and human rights principles at all levels of government and society. (CDCS SpO: Citizen responsive government enhanced.)
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Rebuild Ethiopia's capacity to address internal and external humanitarian crises. (CDCS DO 1: Disaster risk management strengthened. CDCS DO 2: Resilience of vulnerable populations to key shocks increased.)
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Engage and support the professionalization and improved human rights performance of the Ethiopian military and security forces, including the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) regional security forces, police, border police, and militias. (CDCS SpO, IR3: Rule of law and democratic institutions strengthened.)

Mission Goal 3: Promote sustainable development and mutual prosperity through expanded and deepened partnerships and mutual understanding.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Support shared global interests in sustainable economic and human development for vulnerable citizens and communities. (CDCS DO2, IR2.4: Barriers to social services reduced. CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted. CDCS DO 4: Sustained improvements in essential service delivery outcomes focused on women and girls.)

- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Strengthen the U.S.-Ethiopian economic and commercial relationship by promoting market-oriented reforms and expanding two-way trade and investment. (CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted.)
- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Rebuild and expand people-to-people connections between Ethiopians and Americans. (CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted; CDCS SpO: Citizen responsive government enhanced.)

Management Objective 1: Improve customer service and operational effectiveness of the Management Section through reorganization and more engagement with the Locally Employed Staff.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Assist U.S. citizens and protect U.S. borders.

Description | Ethiopia is a popular destination for U.S. citizen residents, diaspora travelers, and tourists. Assisting U.S. citizens includes providing timely, relevant, and actionable information to the U.S. citizen community in Ethiopia regarding security, personal, and environmental threats. Ethiopians seek to travel to the United States for a variety of reasons; the Mission aims to support the vibrant social, cultural, educational, economic, and governmental exchange that results from travel, and which is critical to strengthening the U.S.-Ethiopia bilateral relationship. Protecting U.S. borders ensures that all travel to the United States is legal and not detrimental to U.S. national security. The Mission will be vigilant in identifying and deterring fraud and illegal activity among consular clients, and in rebuilding relationships with Ethiopian authorities to strengthen aviation security, borders, anti-trafficking, and counter terrorism.

Objective 1.1 | Provide optimal consular services to U.S. citizens and strengthen U.S. border and homeland security (CDCS SpO, IR3: Rule of law and democratic institutions strengthened.)

- **Justification** | Mission Ethiopia supports a community of an estimated 35,000 U.S. citizen residents and some 250,000 U.S. citizen visitors annually. Ensuring the welfare of U.S. citizens abroad is a core responsibility for the Department and its overseas missions. Due to its history, culture, natural beauty, and the large diaspora community in the United States, Ethiopia is a popular destination for Ethiopian-American retirees and businesspeople, diaspora travelers, and U.S. tourists. Located in the Rift Valley, Ethiopia is prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters, in particular flooding and droughts. The Consular Section will ensure U.S. citizens have the best access to emergency preparedness and security information through the Mission's engagement with the expatriate community and local officials, and communication via traditional outreach and social media platforms. The Mission will also seek to safeguard U.S. citizens in Ethiopia by working with the Government of Ethiopia to improve its consular access and notification protocols. As the demand for American Citizen Services (ACS)

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services grows, the Consular Section will review its workloads, resources, and operations to ensure maximum efficiency and consistency of services are provided to U.S. citizens. Under normal conditions, Mission Ethiopia processes approximately 2,000 passports, 700 Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, 2,000 DNA tests, 10,000 immigrant visas, and 35,000 nonimmigrant visas annually. Through continuous training of consular staff, a focus on detecting and preventing fraud, and adherence to national security priorities, the Consular Section will ensure optimal services to U.S. citizens and promote ease of legitimate travel to the United States, the protection of U.S. borders, and the prevention of illegal immigration. Working with the Regional Security Office and the Department of Homeland Security, the Mission will train and collaborate with Ethiopian authorities to strengthen aviation security, border controls, anti-trafficking, and counter terrorism.

- **Linkages** | This goal links with the National Security Strategy Priority: Protect the security of the American people and the Joint Strategic Plan to protect America's security at home and abroad (Draft JSP Strategic Objective 5.1: Information and Services; Strategic Objective 5.2: Facilitate Legitimate Travel). It also links to CDCS SpO, IR3 because more professional and better trained Ethiopian customs and border officials contribute to rule of law. Finally, it supports the Africa Bureau Joint Regional Strategy (AF JRS) Objective 1.2, which relates to improving the capacity and will of security forces, including with respect to border security.
- **Risks** | U.S. citizens have less access to consular services and to information on their safety and security in Ethiopia. Ethiopians seek to travel to the United States for a variety of reasons, but public perception of overly strict border controls and difficulties obtaining visas could deter legitimate travelers and increase visa fraud. Weak borders could impact U.S. national security.

Mission Goal 2 | Promote resilient peace, security, and democratic institutions in the Horn of Africa.

Description | The lethal conflict between the Government of Ethiopia and armed factions in Ethiopia's north over the past year has made the pursuit of peace and stability more challenging, yet an even more critical U.S. policy goal for Ethiopia. Continued transition to a stable multi-party democracy where good governance, the rule of law, and human rights are respected and form the core of Ethiopian democracy is a long-term U.S. foreign policy objective and a focus of our diplomatic engagement. It is in the interest of the United States to bolster and enhance Ethiopia's ability to respond quickly and efficiently to both internal and external humanitarian crises to ensure peace and stability across both Ethiopia and within the volatile Horn of Africa. This is particularly relevant in the aftermath of the armed conflict and recent severe droughts, which have dramatically grown the number of internally displaced people. It will be challenging to rebuild the bilateral relationship with Ethiopian defense and security forces in the aftermath of the damning allegations of gross violations of human rights against Ethiopian military and law enforcement personnel at every level. Yet given the important role that Ethiopia has played in promoting peace in Africa in previous years as the largest contributor of UN peacekeeping forces worldwide, the Mission will focus on Professional Military Education, human rights training, and evidence-based prosecutions to reinforce restraint and commitment to the rule of law on the part of defense and security forces.

Objective 2.1 | Strengthen transparent, democratic institutions that promote good governance, rule of law, peace building, and human rights principles at all levels of government and society.

- **Justification** | Continued transition to a stable multi-party democracy where good governance, the rule of law and human rights are respected and form the core of Ethiopian democracy is a long-term U.S. foreign policy objective and a focus of our diplomatic engagement. The conflict in Northern Ethiopia has directly undermined the country's democratic, governance, human rights, and economic gains that it had made over the past three years and our continued engagement. The U.S. Mission continues

to promote American democratic and gender equitable values and to stress that conflict, insecurity, poor governance structures, weak institutions and the lack of an open political system and a vibrant civil society threaten Ethiopia's stability. Without improved accountability in governance, strengthened institutions, a robust and inclusive national dialogue process to resolve deep rooted governance problems, and democratic development it will become increasingly difficult for the Ethiopia to thrive.

- **Linkages** | These priorities and goals tie directly to the Administration's Interim National Security Strategy which calls for increased international cooperation as democracies across the global are increasingly under siege. They are in line, specifically, with NSS Priorities: realize and defend the democratic values and reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world. They also tie into Africa Joint Regional Strategy that calls for strengthened democracies and increasingly participatory and competitive elections as well as respect for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. This supports CDCS Special Objective: Citizen responsive governance enhanced. It also supports Draft JSP Strategic Objective 3.1: Democracy and Governance; Strategic Objective 1.4: Peace and Security. It also supports the AF JRS Goal 3 to "strengthen democracy, uphold universal values, and promote human dignity" and Objective 1.4 on addressing the root causes of conflict through long-term investments in sustainable development and institution-building. Finally, it directly links with USAID's CDCS Special Objective, "Citizen responsive governance enhanced."
- **Risks** | Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country and a longstanding U.S. partner. A strong and successful Ethiopia at peace internally and with its neighbors and able to project security and prosperity in the Horn of Africa and the continent is in the U.S. national interest. An Ethiopia that is unable to resolve its internal conflicts, that is riven by perpetual insecurity, and whose economy is continually teetering on the verge of collapse would have calamitous repercussions not only for Ethiopia itself but in an already fragile and volatile Horn of Africa region.

Objective 2.2 | Rebuild Ethiopia’s capacity to address internal and external humanitarian crises. (CDCS DO 1: Disaster risk management strengthened. CDCS DO 2: Resilience of vulnerable populations to key shocks increased.)

- **Justification |** Responding quickly and efficiently to both internal and external humanitarian crises is necessary in order to ensure peace and stability across both Ethiopia and within the volatile Horn of Africa. Refugees flow into Ethiopia from Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan, straining public resources and creating tensions in the border zones. Within its own borders, recent severe droughts and conflict have also dramatically grown the number of internally displaced people (IDP). While Ethiopia has played a leading role in responding to regional crises, the recent northern crisis has damaged its capacity and resources for large-scale response, both domestically and regionally. USAID invests, on average, \$500 million in humanitarian assistance each year, but 2021 saw the budget expand past \$1 billion due to both human and climate crises. The capacity of the federal and local systems to effectively prepare for and manage shocks is inadequate and puts development gains at risk. It is in the interest of the United States that Ethiopia maintains its open-door policy to refugees and IDPs, particularly by reducing the fiscal burden through measures to increase refugee self-reliance. Creating better linkages between humanitarian relief and development assistance is critical to boosting the self-reliance of refugees, IDPs, and their hosting communities. These strong linkages are required both at the national and regional levels of government and will allow the country to lead its own refugee response. Our support to Ethiopia in building more resilient communities and mechanisms for responding to shocks also mitigates the risk of internal instability, buttressing Ethiopia’s long-term viability as a strategic partner.
- **Linkages |** Mission Objective 2.2 dovetails with numerous USG priorities. With regards to the NSC, these activities will directly support Africa as it combats the threats posed by climate change by enhancing resilience in vulnerable communities. It also aligns with NDS Goal 2 and AFRICOM Goal 2. With regards to the JSP, it supports Goal 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, and 3.4. It also directly links to draft JRS Objectives 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

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These activities will also empower the realization of USAID's CDCS, especially with regards to Objectives 1 and 2 on disaster risk management and resilience of vulnerable populations. It also corresponds with AF JRS Objective 4.3 on reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty by strengthening equitable and accessible resilience capacities. It links to NSS Priority: Join with the international community to tackle the climate crisis and other shared challenges.

- **Risks** | Ethiopia is Africa's second most populous country and a longstanding U.S. partner. A strong and successful Ethiopia at peace internally and with its neighbors and able to project security and prosperity in the Horn of Africa and the continent is in the U.S. national interest. An Ethiopia that is unable to resolve its internal conflicts, that is riven by perpetual insecurity, and whose economy is continually teetering on the verge of collapse would have calamitous repercussions not only for Ethiopia itself but in an already fragile and volatile Horn of Africa region.

Objective 2.3 | Engage and support the professionalization and improved human rights performance of the Ethiopian military and security forces, including the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) regional security forces, police, border police, and militias. (CDCS SpO, IR3: Rule of law and democratic institutions strengthened.)

- **Justification** | Ethiopia's large and relatively professional defense force has been a willing and capable partner in promoting international peacekeeping and defense of Ethiopia against external threats. Ethiopia in recent years has been the largest contributor of UN peacekeeping forces worldwide, contributing more than 8,000 troops in Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. It will be particularly challenging to rebuild the bilateral relationship with Ethiopian defense and security forces in the aftermath of the damning allegations of gross violations of human rights against Ethiopian military and law enforcement personnel at every level—federal, regional, and local. Before more robust capacity-building efforts can resume, the Mission's focus should be on reinforcing professional values to reduce the risk that Ethiopian soldiers and police officers will perpetrate similar abuses in the future. Focusing on Professional Military

Education, human rights training and evidence-based prosecutions will tend to reinforce restraint and commitment to the rule of law on the part of defense and security forces.

- **Linkages** | This Mission Objective directly supports Mission Objective 1.4 of the Bureau of African Affairs' Joint Regional Strategy – Enhance shared American and African values grounded in dignity and human rights to prevent, respond to, and investigate alleged incidents by security sector actors. It also addresses Objective 3.1 of INL's Functional Bureau Strategy – Strengthen the foundations of criminal justice systems to address shared threats, promote human rights, and provide fair and equal justice to all citizens. Additionally, it contributes to two objectives within DRL's Functional Bureau Strategy – Objective 1 (Advance respect for human rights and labor rights through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance) and Objective 2 (Promote accountability by ensuring U.S. security assistance, foreign aid and economic policies are consistent with human rights and democratic principles).

It also supports JSP Strategic Objective 3.3 (Combatting Corruption) and the U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption. It furthers Objective 3.2 of PM's Functional Bureau Strategy – Build security, including peacekeeping, capacity of partner and ally nations, to ensure their effectiveness, long-term sustainability, and professionalism. It also supports CDCS SpO, IR3: Rule of law and democratic institutions strengthened; Draft JSP Strategic Objective 1.4: Peace and Security. It also supports AF JRS Objective 1.5 on preventing, responding to, and investigating alleged incidents by security sector actors; Objective 1.2 on improving the capacity of security forces; and Objective 1.1 on strengthening regional organizations and government institutions. It supports NSS Priority: reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world.

- **Risks** | An extended lapse in USG support to Ethiopia's peacekeeping operations in the Horn of Africa, or a failure to ensure persistent enabler support to those peacekeeping forces, will reduce their operational effectiveness and increase the threat that violent extremism could spread from Somalia to Ethiopia. On the other hand, failing to propose solutions to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law among defense and security forces will most likely result in continued allegations of

human rights abuses; this risk should be mitigated by carefully sequencing security force assistance so as not to move on to capacity-building programs before the requisite professional education and training courses have been dispensed.

Mission Goal 3 | Promote sustainable development and mutual prosperity through expanded and deepened partnerships and mutual understanding.

Description | This goal focuses on sustainable development and prosperity through expanded and deepened partnership and mutual understanding. Ethiopia is the second-largest market in Africa by population and has the potential to be an economic powerhouse in the region; however, systemic poverty, recurring natural disasters, and the conflict have prevented Ethiopia from unleashing its economic potential as a market or as a significant exporter of goods and services. The United States and Ethiopia can work together to advance the goal of strengthened economic ties by pursuing shared global interests: acting to mitigate and respond to recurring natural disasters, reducing carbon emissions through increased use of green energy, strengthening resilience to health threats and pandemics, boosting human development for vulnerable citizens and communities, and investing in youth. Improving upon these shared goals will help U.S. businesses tap into Africa's second largest market, if GOE continues to build on its nascent economic reforms and privatizations that remain a work in progress. With respect to the USG economic toolkit, the GOE has an enormous incentive to meet requirements enabling it to resume benefitting from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and Development Finance Corporation (DFC), as well as USAID and other programming. Moreover, deepening people-to-people connections have the potential to accelerate commercial activity and improve the image of "brand America" in Ethiopia, while promoting the mutual understanding that will be needed to overcome recent setbacks in public opinion of the United States.

Objective 3.1 | Support shared global interests in sustainable economic and human development for vulnerable citizens and communities. (CDCS DO2, IR2.4: Barriers to social services reduced. CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted. CDCS DO 4: Sustained improvements in essential service delivery outcomes focused on women and girls. NGS Strategic Priority on Improving economic security.)

- **Justification** | More than 80 percent of Ethiopia’s estimated 119 million people live in rural areas, subsisting primarily on rain-fed agriculture and cultivating an average land holding size of less than one hectare. While the population remains predominantly rural, the rate of urbanization is increasing, requiring strengthened linkages between rural and urban areas. Ethiopia is highly vulnerable to food insecurity caused by a combination of factors, including droughts, low agricultural productivity, high population growth, post-harvest loss, and other systemic challenges. Poverty and vulnerability are further exacerbated by climate change-induced droughts and floods as well as widespread degradation of the natural environment, including soil and water. Ethiopia also has one of the lowest per capita electricity consumption rates in the world, which further limits opportunities and undermines resilience to natural and economic shocks. If climate-smart agricultural performance is improved, associated jobs are created, resilience to shocks is strengthened, and populations have better access to water, health, and basic education services, then rural incomes and food security will increase. USG programs and policy efforts aim to improve food security, support broad-based, inclusive economic growth, increase educational attainment, empower women to increase household food security and income, increase energy supplies, build resilience to recurrent shocks, strengthen disaster risk management, promote sustainable agriculture, protect natural resources, and provide assistance to save lives and protect the livelihoods of vulnerable populations.
- **Linkages** | JSP Strategic Objectives 2.1, 2.2; JRS Objectives 1.1, 1.2. CDCS DO2, IR2.4: Barriers to social services reduced. CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted. CDCS DO 4: Sustained improvements in essential service delivery outcomes focused on women and girls. It also supports NGS Strategic Priority on

improving economic security; draft JSP Strategic Objective 1.1: Leadership in strengthening global health security; Strategic Objective 1.2: Climate Change; Strategic Objective 2.4: Strengthen Resilience; Strategic Objective 2.2: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth; Strategic Objective 3.2: Equity & Inclusion. There are multiple einvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world; elevate diplomacy as our tool of first resort; expand economic prosperity and opportunity. It also supports several AF JRS objectives including objective 4.1 on health systems, objective 4.2 on climate action, and objective 4.4 on youth.

- **Risks** | Not achieving this objective could exacerbate Ethiopia's tenuous economic growth and reform trajectory, ceding U.S. economic influence in Ethiopia to the PRC, negatively impact the long-term economic relationship, and threaten progress against health, water, agriculture, energy, and climate change objectives.

Objective 3.2 | Strengthen the U.S.-Ethiopian economic and commercial relationship by promoting market-oriented reforms in Ethiopia and expanding two-way trade and investment. (CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted.)

- **Justification** | The United States and Ethiopia have long enjoyed a strong economic and commercial relationship, which benefits both countries' prosperity. Two-way trade has expanded from less than \$200 million in 2000 to around \$1.0-1.5 billion by 2021. In 2020, Ethiopia was the United States' 75th largest export destination, and the United States was Ethiopia's 2nd biggest export market. With a rapidly increasing population of over 110 million people, Ethiopia offers a growing and attractive market for U.S. companies. Since 2018, the Ethiopian government has aggressively pursued ambitious pro-market economic reforms, with the United States Ethiopia's economic partner of choice. Recently, however, the bilateral economic relationship and the Ethiopian economy have suffered a series of damaging setbacks. The COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in northern Ethiopia, a developing drought, and decreased support from international donors have slowed economic growth from 9.0 percent in 2019 to just 2.0 percent in 2021. A U.S. government assistance freeze in response to conflict-related

concerns has halted important economic cooperation from USAID, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and other U.S. agencies. In 2021, human rights concerns led to the removal of Ethiopia's eligibility for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Competitors such as China have sought to gain advantage at U.S. expense. The United States has made it clear to Ethiopia how actions on their part can restore both economic assistance and AGOA eligibility. Should those actions be undertaken, the U.S. Government can play a critical role in helping Ethiopia benefit once again from the U.S. economic toolkit, expanding two-way trade and investment, ensuring Ethiopia succeeds on its ambitious market liberalization reform path, and restoring our mutually beneficial economic and commercial partnership.

- **Linkages** | This supports draft JSP Strategic Objective 2.1: Economic Governance, Strategic Objective 2.2: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth; JRS Objectives 1.1, 1.2. CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted. This is in line with NSS Priority: expand economic prosperity and opportunity and with AF JRS Objective 2.1 on encouraging the improvement of business enabling environments; AF JRS Objective 2.2 on expanding African capacity to participate in global markets; and AF JRS Objective 2.3 on improving economic governance.
- **Risks** | Not achieving this objective could exacerbate Ethiopia's tenuous economic growth and reform trajectory, ceding U.S. economic influence in Ethiopia to China, negatively influence the long-term economic and commercial relationship, and threaten U.S. exports and jobs dependent on the Ethiopian market.

Objective 3.3 | Rebuild and expand people-to-people connections between Ethiopians and Americans. (CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted; CDCS SpO)

- **Justification** | Decades of strong American assistance to Ethiopian economic, public health and educational institutions helped forge extremely close bonds between the United States and Ethiopia through the late 1960s, but geopolitical shifts eroded many of these gains during the reign of the Derg. The coming of EPRDF to power

coupled with the end of the Cold War changed the geopolitics in the Horn of Africa, enabling the U.S. to rebuild its relations and continue its assistance programs in different sectors across Ethiopia. Although the advent of PM Abiy's Prosperity Party offered the prospect of even stronger U.S.-Ethiopian relations, policy differences over the GERD and the conflict in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara Regions have greatly harmed Ethiopian public perceptions of the United States, which reached historic lows in the fall of 2021. While America's overall appeal in Ethiopia remains strong, supported in part by the largest Ethiopian diaspora in the world, the gap in relations has opened the door for other foreign influences, notably China.

In a media environment that is closely controlled by the GOE, the tone of public messaging can change overnight. Achieving and consolidating longer-term gains in public opinion, however, will require re-establishing connections to universities, schools, and other public institutions that have become frayed, empowering our active alumni community to engage on issues of mutual concern, and engaging new audiences, including among the influential Ethiopian-American diaspora.

- **Linkages** | This objective aligns with Goal 3 of the 2018-2022 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan by increasing partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations to mobilize support and resources and shape foreign public opinion. It also aligns with CDCS DO3: Private sector-led economic growth promoted and CDCS SpO. This supports draft JSP Strategic Objective 1.5: Build Support for American Values and NSS Priorities: expand economic prosperity and opportunity; and reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world. It also supports AF JRS Goal 3 on strengthening democracy and upholding universal values.
- **Risks** | Following the historic low point in Ethiopian public opinion of the United States, the USG must tread carefully to avoid missteps, or risk blowback from Ethiopian audiences that generally respect American culture but have become extremely skeptical of U.S. policy objectives in Ethiopia.

4. Management Objective

Management Objective 1 | Improve customer service and operational effectiveness of the Management Section through reorganization and more engagement with the Locally Employed Staff.

- **Justification** | The Management Section continues to achieve ICASS Customer Satisfaction Survey scores that are above the regional average. However, consistent growth of U.S. and Locally Employed (LE) Staff without commensurate growth in Management support personnel has affected operational effectiveness. Rather than increasing support staff, Post seeks to realign and reorganize targeted offices first. The Facilities Management Office (FAC) will see a significant change to its workload once 65 employees relocate from single family homes to a new apartment complex. Maintenance and utility services at the building are the responsibility of the landlord and will relieve FAC from water and generator fuel deliveries, routine maintenance work orders, and driving to 65 homes scattered across Addis Ababa. A review of the workload is necessary to determine how best to reorganize the office to address the changing requirements and better protect U.S. Government owned and leased facilities. The increase in U.S. and local staff over the years has contributed to a rise in the workload of the Human Resources staff. Smooth operation of the office is essential to recruitment and retention of employees, obtaining diplomatic accreditations, offering training, managing benefits, and fostering a diverse, equitable, and included team. A thorough review of HR tasks, realignment of duties, and giving more authority and responsibility to LE staff will result in improved performance without hiring additional staff. The Foreign Service National (FSN) Forum is the elected body representing LE staff from all agencies at Post. The LE staff perform a vital role at the Embassy and are an overwhelming majority of the Embassy's workforce. They require a means to regularly meet with and advise the Management Officer and the DCM on matters that are important to them. Enhancing dialogue with the LE staff will build a more productive partnership, rebuild relationships between American and local staff, and improve

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morale, and support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce. **Linkages** | E.O. 14035, E.O. 13583, E.O. 13985, E.O. 13988, E.O. 14020, and taking care of people components of the JCS and National Strategy documents. It also links to the draft JSP Strategic Objective 4.1: Workforce; Strategic Objective; 4.3: Personnel, Information, and Infrastructure. It supports NSS Priority: expand economic prosperity and opportunity and the AF JRS Management Objective on Management Objective on revitalizing the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure.

- **Risks** | The risk of not achieving this objective is degraded USG-owned and leased facilities; a workforce weakened by lack of diversity, lack of attention to training and morale issues; and the loss of institutional memory provided by a consistent and loyal LE staff corps.