



## **Press Statement on CECOE's Election Day Observation**

6th General Election of Ethiopia

Friday, June 18, 2021

**Addis Ababa** - The 6<sup>th</sup> National Election that will take place this year is decisive to advance the political change that began in 2018. It is also an important step in the process of building a deepening democratic system in our country. The Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Election (CECOE) is contributing to the election by deploying citizen observers to ensure the inclusivity, transparency and credibility of the process. The purpose of election observation is to collect and provide independent and non-partisan information for citizens, candidates, media institutions and journalists, election officials, civil society organizations and various government bodies so that they can make informed judgments on the quality of the election. CECOE is in the process of training 4,000 citizen observers for this election. These trainings will continue in the next few days to maximize the number of citizens empowered to monitor the process on election day.

CECOE's election day observation is premised on a systematic approach to data collection, which will allow it to use standardized checklists to gather consistent information on the quality of the process in all parts of Ethiopia where the election will take place. CECOE's deployment of its observers in the regions and administrative cities will be proportional to the total number of polling stations per region or administrative city, sending more observers to zones with more polling stations and fewer observers to areas with fewer polling stations. This will allow CECOE to provide information that more accurately reflects the overall experience of citizens. This systematic approach will enable CECOE to be methodical in its observation, data collection and analysis, empower a diverse group of citizens to engage actively in Ethiopia's democratic process, and, more importantly, give accurate information of what is happening on election day across the country. CECOE will complement these proportionally deployed observers on election day with additional stationary observers deployed to conveniently located polling stations, as well as a group of mobile observers who will monitor the environment outside polling stations.

On election day, CECOE plans to deploy between 1,500 and 2,000 stationary observers proportionally throughout the regions and administrative cities where elections will take place. These observers, duly accredited by NEBE and properly trained, will arrive at their assigned polling stations at 5:30am and stay at the polling stations until the end of voting and official announcement of the ballot count. Guided by an observation checklist, they will observe the polling station set-up process, opening of polling station, voting and counting procedures, and announcement of the vote count. On the day of elections, proportionally deployed observers will

report their observation findings at designated times using Short Message Service (SMS) technology to the CECOIE National Data Center in Addis Ababa.

CECOIE's remaining observers will serve as both conveniently deployed stationary and mobile observers. They will monitor the overall environment in their assigned communities, paying attention to the areas close to polling stations and for mobile observers specifically, they will monitor the environment between polling stations. In addition, CECOIE will set up a critical incidents desk at the data center to receive information from all observers on infractions, irregularities, disruptions, and other election malpractices that may occur during the voting and counting processes. To ensure the integrity of CECOIE's observation, access to the CECOIE National Data Center will be by invitation only.

CECOIE will release regular statements on the observation of the polling process as and when data is received, verified and analyzed. This system of reporting will enable CECOIE to quickly and thoroughly analyze the conduct of voting around the country.

This observation and reporting approach employed by CECOIE will provide Ethiopian citizens, political contestants and public servants with information they can use to assess the conduct of the election process, contribute to the openness of the polling process, enhance the transparency of the election for the benefit of all stakeholders, including political parties and voters, and seek to promote public confidence in the electoral process and deter potential electoral fraud.