



## HAILE SELASSIE I INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

### Press Release

#### **Response to the statement issued by the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia on June 26, 2006 under the heading "A Statement by the Crown Council of Ethiopia Regarding the "Haile Selassie International Development Foundation"**

1. The Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation (HSIIDF) is legally constituted and duly established as non-profit charitable organization incorporated in Washington, the District of Columbia and the State of Virginia in the United States of America.
2. The organization also registered under the trade name Haile Selassie I Foundation, is a not-for-profit; non-political 501 (c) (3) entity established by members of the Ethiopian community. The organization's United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) assigned Federal Tax Exempt ID Number is 84-1628553.
3. The mission, goals, objectives and programs of the Foundation are published at its web site: [www.haileselassiefund.org](http://www.haileselassiefund.org). Additional information may be obtained by writing to HSIIDF, P. O. Box 21388, Washington, DC 20009, USA.
4. The Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation is not affiliated with the so called ""Crown Council" of Ethiopia" and its affiliated organizations, the Haile Selassie I Memorial Foundation and The Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children. Hence the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation operates strictly under the jurisdiction of the United States laws and is not required to obtain permission from the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia and its affiliates. There should not be any confusion between the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation and its legal standing with that of the Foundations run under the "Crown Council".
5. The Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation reserves the right to honor the charitable work of the late Emperor Haile Selassie I, the beloved father of Ethiopians and founder of modern Ethiopia, by continuing his legacy of development in the areas of education, health, cottage industry targeted at the most venerable sectors of the Ethiopian population, as well as collaborate with other similar organizations who operate in line with HSIIDF's humanitarian and charitable efforts.
6. Since its establishment in 2003, the HSIIDF to date has been focusing its activities on non-political events designed to raise funds to help the victims of disease such as HIV/AIDS and grinding poverty in Ethiopia, and programs to bring people in the Diaspora together to collectively celebrate their proud heritage, cultural traditions and religious institutions.
7. The Board of Trustees of the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation has made several attempts, through religious and traditional elders, and members of the royal family to discourage the "President" of the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia from issuing unsubstantiated derogatory statements, often on the eve of events, against HSIIDF. Such statements and other covert activities are veiled attempts to discourage the public from participating and supporting the HSIIDF.

On the eve of a highly memorable one week event co-sponsored by HSIIDF celebrating the Ethiopian-American centennial relationship in Washington, DC in March 2004, the "President" of the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia and associates tried to intimidate the members of the program committee, through telephone calls, in an attempt to force them to prevent the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation from making presentations. When that failed, the "President" and his entourage showed up at the event and delivered a letter with

unsubstantiated claims demanding the same. The letter was unceremoniously dismissed by the committee. The "President" of the "Crown Council" was respectfully advised that the Haile Selassie I International Foundation was a legally registered charitable organization which made significant contribution in making the event successful and the Organizing Committee would not honor the "Crown Council" "President's" request.

Following the event, the "President" of the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia issued the following statements in July 2004:

" In view of the confusion created by the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation, the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia considers it as its duty to advice the general public worldwide, to always verify the source of information whenever approached by a Foundation that is said to be established in the name of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I."

On June 26, 2006, on the eve of fund raiser in support of Ethiopian refugees who fled to Southern Sudan following massacre in the Gambella region, the "President" of the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia issued another statement in the same vain:

"...it is my duty as the Chairman of the Ethiopian Crown Council to inform them, and the public at large, that, the "Crown Council", in 2004, had publicly disassociated itself from the Haile Selassie International Development Foundation. The Council was forced to take this action because it does not agree with their method of work which is designed to confuse them with already existing well established organizations, and also because we feel that their objectives do not accurately reflect the legacy of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Our Statement of disassociation could be found on the "Crown Council" website. The Haile Selassie I Memorial Foundation has also disassociated itself from the work of the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation, and has posted a Statement to this effect on its website."

The HSIIDF primarily was established to 'honor the legacy of the Emperor Haile Selassie' as clearly stated in its mission statement and in doing so, HSIIDF's demonstrated objective is to provide shelter, food, medication, education, community development and moral and material support to the members of the most venerable population. Hence, the statement issued by the "Crown Council" that HSIIDF primarily exists to "confuse the public" is false and unsubstantiated.

It is with profound dismay and bewilderment that the Trustees, executives and members of Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation observe as to why the "Crown Council" belabors the fact that our organization is not associated with the "Crown Council" since there was never any attempt on behalf of the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation to do so. All publications distributed by HSIIDF for its charitable and or cultural events clearly state the name of the Foundation, its intended purpose along with its contact information and website address.

The purpose of the a benefit event to be held at the Debre Heile Kedus Gebriel Cathedral Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2006 was to raise funds for victims of the displaced and marginalized Ethiopians in the Gambella region, initiated by the Gambella Development Agency and supported by the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation. HSIIDF is sincerely grateful to the Church for opening its doors to host the charitable event. However, based on the kind request of her Honorable Ana Gomes to address the Ethiopian community at large and the collective desire of Ethiopian civic organizations and members of the Ethiopian community, both the Haile Selassie I Development Foundation, and the Gambella Development Agency along with the Anuak Justice Council agreed to hold the event to honor Ms. Ana Gomes. The collective efforts of all parties involved, resulted in a moving successful welcoming event for Ms. Gomes who promotes democracy, peace and stability and economic development for all sectors of the population in Ethiopia, especially the most venerable.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees of the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation is publicly requesting that the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia and its affiliates, remove all false and unsubstantiated statements issued against the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation (HSIIDF) and posted on their own and other web sites and refrain from issuing other similar statements as of this date. If the "Crown Council" of Ethiopia does not honor this request, the Board of Trustees of HSIIDF shall be forced to authorize its legal counsel to issue a cease and desist order to protect the integrity and positive reputation that the Haile Selassie I International Development Foundation has built over the past few years.  
June 28, 2006