We Live for Humanity!
Happy Ethiopian New Year

2019/20
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**Mission:**
To prevent and alleviate human sufferings through appropriate and timely humanitarian and development interventions, contribute to the wellbeing of mankind and prevalence of peace by mobilizing the public and partners in Ethiopia and around the world.

**Core Values:**

*Care* – we care about plight of affected and vulnerable people.

*Learning* – we believe in continuous learning and innovation.

*Sensitive* – we are sensitive to time, gender, disabilities and environment.

*Solidarity* – we collaborate with movement and non-movement partners to serve humanity.

*Integrity* – we walk the talk and strive to be trustworthy.
Established 84 years back, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) has been active in reaching out to the needy whenever required without any discriminatory practices. In its eight decades of existence, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society has been committed to the fundamental principles of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. In its hitherto organizational existence and its service to the Ethiopian people, the National Society (NS) won the acclamation of the targeted beneficiaries, particularly as a first responding humanitarian organization. Nonetheless, objective scrutiny of the performance of the National Society and the ever-increasing humanitarian challenges testify the need for much more works to propel the organizational potential of the Society. ERCS today has more than 5.4 million members and more than 50 thousand volunteers doing worthwhile jobs with us. But, this is not something to take pride on considering the longstanding existence of the society and the potential we have to exploit from a country of one hundred million people, proliferation of universities and emerging private sector. That’s why we are now on aggressive campaigns to expand our membership base and mobilize more resources from domestic sources to ensure organizational and financial sustainability. The quest for collective self-resilience and collective sustenance that the National Society embarked on is predicated on the grand vision of more impact, more influence and more resources to be able to rise up to the alarmingly increasing humanitarian and development challenges that millions of the citizens are facing. It is under the ambit of this framework that the new Strategic Plan and Program Plan (2020-25) have been intentionally crafted. These strategic scaffoldings are envisaged to bring this National Society to the next organizational heights.

Humanitarian and development pursuits are partnership and collaboration-intensive undertakings in their very nature. In view of this fact, thus, the NS, being auxiliary to the government is cognizant of the need for more principled-partnership with movement and non-movement partners to deal with current and emerging humanitarian and development challenges. It is only such a collaborative engagement that guarantees humanitarian and development effectiveness of our NS by way of meaningfully tackling the humanitarian challenges and alleviating the agony of more than eight millions of our citizens. All these evidences underline the imperatives of transformational changes in the critical areas of this legendary organization with more sense-of-calling and sense of exigency under the lofty cause of living for humanity.

Regarding humanitarian support, last year, we have reached 2.3 million people in emergency response and humanitarian development services through the provision of immediate lifesaving assistance, early recovery support and capacity building services at a cost of 260 million birr. This has been realized through the collaborative efforts of ERCS and its partners.

At this juncture, I would like to call upon all Ethiopians from all walks of lives to join hands and uphold humanity so that we reach much more people and make Ethiopia a better place for all of us. ERCS and its new leadership as always, is committed to Humanity.

We Live for Humanity!
Dear volunteers, members and employees of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society
Dear Partners, Stakeholders
Most of all, our beneficiaries, our reason of existence, at the remotest reach of the country

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to you ALL!

On this very day of July 8, 2019, our National Society strikes its 84th year of anniversary.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you all and express my earnest thanks for the unwavering efforts you have been making in saving the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable, affected by nature and manmade calamities.

Over the period of eight decades, hand-in-glove, we walked through the ebbs and flows and casted a better light to the needy. We sparked hope for the hopeless. We responded first and left last during disaster.

Now on this very day of our birth, with the renewed spirit of transformative change, we once again are determined to live for humanity: care for and be sensitive to the plight of the affected. By continually learning from each other we solidify our partnership on the foundation of trust and solidarity. In so doing we will always observe the very building block of our la raison d'être - the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

We shall thrive!
Humanity First!

Dr. Meshesha Shewaregā
Secretary General, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society
8th of July 2019
On 13 and 16 April 2019, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society Governing Board members and Secretary General handed over food and non-food relief items to internally displaced people (IDPs) in Gedeb woreda of Gedeo zone, SNPP region and Aymba and Tikil Dingay sites in Central Gonder zone of Amhara region.

On 13 April 2019, ERCS officials also distributed food items to IDPs in Gedeb woreda. On the occasion, Mr. Teshome Takele, Head of ERCS Southern Regional Branch, explained that the Society is doing its level best to arrive first, irrespective of the amount of relief needs. ERCS reached over 40,000 IDPs in Amaro Kelo, Kembata-Tembaro, Tepi and Basketo. It has also been working to rehabilitate 24,502 IDPs to their vicinities. Youth Governing Board Member, Eyasu Kumsa, during the hand over at Gedeb woreda on his part stated that ERCS, with support from its volunteers and different humanitarian organization, will strengthen its humanitarian intervention and will work towards the building of resilient community.

On 16 April 2019, the Society has dispatched 1,651 quintals of wheat powder and 3,302 liter oil to IDPs sheltered in Tikil Dingay and Aymba, in Central Gonder zone, in the presence of Governing Board Members and Secretary General of ERCS. The distribution is continued in Metema Yohannes (Quara) and Soroqa settlement areas, in Western Gonder zone, until it reached the targeted 10,840 IDPs. During the handover of the relief items at the woreda, Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Secretary General of ERCS, while addressing the beneficiaries, said, “The Society is here to be with you during this difficult situation though it may not solve all your problems.” He added on that the Society, together with the government and other stakeholders, will strive to provide every possible assistance until this difficult situation will certainly pass. During the emergency relief distribution at Tikil Dingay, Mr. Abebe Kebede, Governing Board member stated that support resources were raised internally and externally and this will continue until the rehabilitation is done.

“ERCS has for long been engaged in assisting citizens in need. It has been assisting internally displaced people in Amhara region. Yet we haven’t reached all as the number is massive,” said Ali Gebeeyehu, Board Chairman of ERCS Amhara Regional Branch.

In Amhara region, ERCS has supported internally displaced people with the cost of 20 million birr worth food and non-food items to 18,860 IDPs in Western and Central Gonder zones alone. The Society has also reached IDPs sheltered in various areas of Finote Selam and Qobo woreda of North Wollo zone.

Tariku Kifle and Birchiko Adane, emergency food beneficiaries from Gedeo and Central Gonder zones, told that in addition to emergency nutrition, the Red Cross is helping them in healthcare support and water development. They requested the Society to continue its support with the basic needs.

Dr. Meshesha Shewarega noted that, over the past three months, since January 2019, ERCS allocated 38 million birr in response to the emergency situations all over the country. While underlining local resource mobilization as a sustainable solution to the problem, Secretary General Meshesha called upon the public to be a member of the Red Cross and support the vulnerable.
We Ethiopians have a traditional maxim, which says that one can only be sure of their leaving their homes in the morning but not so sure about their safe return in the evening. This observation epitomizes the dangers that may lurk at every corner of their daily lives; traffic accidents assuming increasingly devastating roles and becoming one of the most dangerous potential causes of deaths and injuries both in towns and in the rural areas.

Traffic accidents are devastating in a number of ways. First and foremost road accidents claim lives, young or old, of individuals in every walk of life. Road traffic accidents do not discriminate. They make victims of the educated and the uneducated, the rich as well as the poor, head of families as well as unmarried people, government officials as well as university professors as ordinary citizens, as much as students whose lives lie ahead of them. Road accidents kill artists, comedians and celebrities who are successful entertainers as well as soldiers who guard their country’s borders.

Second, road accidents do not only kill; they also injure and make physical cripples of many of their victims. This is as devastating as the deaths caused by these accidents. Thousands of citizens are killed in road accidents every year. More than 4000 people have lost their lives to car accidents last year in Addis Ababa alone. Thousands more have been injured, most of them turning into physically disabled and dependent individuals in the blink of an eye.

Physical disability is not only a burden to families. It is also a major cause of economic and social crises as the victims lose their jobs and the economy suffers as a result. Devoid of their sources of income some of them are driven into poverty and begging in the streets. In the worst case victims’ lives are cut short by the trauma that follows their injuries. It is estimated that countries across the world lose 3% of their Gross Domestic Products to damages caused by road traffic accidents across the world. In Addis Ababa more than 20 million birr is estimated to have been lost every year on average due to traffic accidents. The losses continue to rise and there is no way of stopping them, at least for the moment. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the African region has the highest road accident related mortality rate in the world (24.1 per 100 000 population vs. 10.3 per 100 000 in Europe) and that 38% of these deaths occur among vulnerable road users that is to say pedestrians and cyclists.
According to the available data from Addis Ababa Traffic Police Office, in the year 2012/2013, the annual motor vehicle casualty increase was 194 per 10,000 vehicles. This figure tells us the importance of prevention mechanisms being in place to mitigate car accidents in the capital city. Locally conducted studies have shown poor road infrastructure, weak enforcement of traffic laws, and low levels of pedestrian and drivers’ knowledge as well as behavior gaps as key determinants of the problem.

In view of the enormous challenges road accidents pose to the economy, society and country, The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) Addis Ababa branch office has designed a project for the prevention and control of road traffic accidents in the city.

According to Ato Abebaw, the Addis Ababa branch office manager, there are activities underway on primary and secondary levels of traffic accident prevention aimed at reducing and/or doing away with injuries caused by traffic accidents. "Primary prevention aims at eliminating all the possible causes of injuries such as bad roads and reckless driving. Secondary prevention focuses on keeping the people free from the most severe forms of injuries following road accidents." Ato Abebaw recently said. To this end the branch has designed a project for a one year primary level prevention activities that will be financed by the Finnish Red Cross.

The main objectives of the project is to enhance the road safety awareness of the city’s residents by providing and coordinating technical and material support to key stakeholders, implement behavioral change communication targeting both drivers and pedestrians, build the capacity of the key stakeholders and institutions that have direct roles and responsibilities in the prevention and control of traffic accidents. Last but not least, one of the main objectives of the project is to put in place traffic management mechanisms of the line sector offices of the city administration.

To this end, a workshop was conducted with key stakeholders and representatives of partner organizations. A total of 25 individuals from sector offices of the city and non-governmental associations participated in the one-day workshop. Professionals in road safety drawn from the Addis Ababa Police Commission Traffic Control Department and the Addis Ababa Road Traffic Management Agency conducted the workshop.

Moreover, public awareness and promotion of road safety interventions are also being carried out through community conversations. Ten community conversation groups have been established in sub-cities of Addis Ababa and in and at road traffic accidents hotspot areas. Each group consists of 15-20 members. In this connection, Ato Abebaw said that, the major findings of the discussion groups showed that exceeding speed limits, lack of strict adherence to road traffic laws and regulations, inappropriate road maintenance and pedestrian misuse of sidewalks were some of the problems that require speedy intervention and rectification.

Public awareness on road safety and traffic accidents is also being promoted through the mass media at prime times. A total of 10000 stickers carrying road safety messages were distributed to drivers with the collaboration of the Traffic Management Agency.

ERCS is actually making preparations to conduct the next phase of secondary level prevention activities in the next two years by allocating funds from its budget.

"Secondary level prevention focuses on pre-hospital first aid service training for drivers that are potential first responders to injuries. We are working in collaboration with Addis Ababa City Road Authority and Drivers Training Center to give this training when everyone takes driving lessons for a license." Ato Abebaw said.

Pre-hospital first aid service is a compulsory unit of driving tests in most European countries. However, in Ethiopia many drivers involved in accidents are completely powerless to help victims of road traffic accidents due to not having this basic skill in first aid service.

ERCS is therefore negotiating with the stakeholders to give a three-day training on pre-hospital first aid service for trainers of eighty training centers.