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Ginbot 7: Movement for Justice Freedom and Democracy
Tel +44 208 1335670 foreign@ginbot7.org

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For immediate release

Ginbot7: Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy congratulates president elect Barack Obama.

Ethiopians joyfully celebrate, with Americans and the rest of the world the election of Barack Obama to take the office of the presidency of the United States of America. Ginbot7 recognizes the symbolic and historical significance of this truly remarkable event that changed the United States of America and the world making Barack Obama, an African American, the 44th president of the United States of America. Evidently our joy of celebrating the victory of Barack Obama goes beyond the fact that this prodigious son of Africa has reach the highest summit of political power on Earth.

Ginbot7, Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, has encouraged and mobilised its members and supporters to actively participate in Obama's campaign, and it has also used its modest means of communication to urge Ethiopian Americans to register and vote for Obama because Ginbot7 utterly agrees with Obama's assessment of the failure of American foreign policy that ignored the repression of freedom, justice, and democracy in Africa, Asia, and South America.

We, in Ethiopia have always argued that America's national interest will best be served if the values of freedom, justice and democracy that made the nation of America great become the guiding spirit of its foreign policy. This is exactly what the president elect promised. We Ethiopians believe the personal convictions of Barack Obama for freedom and justice will guide his administration that America's fundamental values must not be compromised to satisfy short term American interest.

Ethiopians are well aware of the challenges the new president faces. Changing the entrenched practices of past administrations, and dealing with the ruthless dictators and human right violators in many parts of the world is a task that needs time, wisdom, and perseverance. Ethiopians are also responsive of how the well connected lobbyists and the politically powerful will try hard to hinder Barack Obama from realizing his new foreign policy visions. Yet, we believe that Obama's unique ability to defy the odds and become the first African American president of the US will put him in a much better position to over come most of the challenges that he faces.

Most importantly, we believe that Obama's presidency will have the greatest impact in his ancestral land of Africa. The proud and independent people of Ethiopia believe that the fight for freedom and democracy, and the task of building strong economy in our country is our own responsibility. However, we treasure America's unconditioned presence in helping us build democratic institutions. We Ethiopians want to make it clear that America's long term interest in Ethiopia and around the horn of Africa will not be served by supporting Meles Zenawi's tyrannical regime that invades its neighbours and oppresses its own citizens. All in all, it is the deep-seated belief of Ginbot7 and the Ethiopian people that Obama's administration will not support the abuse of freedom anywhere to protect freedom elsewhere.