

Translation of the Statement as it appeared in the news paper Addis Neger on the 25th of September 2009

Mr Negusu Aklilu, Director of Forum for Environment frequently quotes the words of famous American Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference." He uses this quote to express his deep rooted concern for environmental protection and to argue strongly that the developed nations need to stop being indifferent to Africa, a continent hit hardest by the impacts of climate change. In addition, he is known for advocating that developed nations should immediately act to stop or decrease the problems caused by climate change. As Coordinator of the African Climate Appeal, he has been at the forefront in signing the Appeal together with Wangari Mathai, the 2004 Peace Nobel Laureate and other environmentalists. This appeal, which explicitly states that Africa is being affected by green house gases released to the atmosphere by the developed nations, also reiterates that the developed nations should take some measure to mitigate the problem.

The appeal was successfully accepted at regional level, by the African Union, through Negusu's initiatives. The appeal was delivered to African Union by His Excellency Girma Woldegiorgis, President of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who was in turn convinced by Negusu to do so, in his capacity as the coordinator of the appeal.

Consequently, several actions are being taken by the union, as was indicated in the appeal. For instance, the need for taking similar position by all African countries with regard to climate change was endorsed recently by the African leaders' summit and they have managed to come up with agreed document.

His fruitful and commendable efforts, has brought him international recognition which had reflected in him being invited to attend a number of international conferences and meetings on climate change. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the speech he made at the German Green Party and European Parliamentarian meetings.

Mr. Negusu was also one of the 13 emerging environmental leaders selected by the Global Environmental Governance Forum, also one of the three from the African continent. The selection was out of about 90 environmentalists who applied to participate in the forum organized by Global Environmental Governance Project of Yale University.

Nationally, his organization, Forum for Environment, spearheaded a number of successful campaigns, under his leadership. One among them was the successful campaign to save the Babille Elephant Sanctuary, part of which was allocated for biofuel development. Through his campaign, the government formed a committee to study the case, which later on learnt that quite a large part of the Sanctuary itself was given to a private foreign company for investment. The findings led to, the Federal Government and Oromiya Regional agreeing to re-demarcate the boundary.

Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that he has played a vital role in making aware the different stakeholders, the fact that farmers of Wolayita zone of SNNPR faced problem to obtain remuneration from the land due to the issue of production to grow castor seeds. It was known that a company called Global Energy-Ethiopia has taken land from the farmers for biofuel crop production but did not pay the right amount. Mr. Negusu and his colleagues by engaging in lobbying with key government officials made them aware of the grave injustice being made to the poor farmers. In addition, he facilitated the condition for local officials to visit the farmers and created platforms for discussions, which had led to the change in the situation.

Taking into account the contributions and participation of Negusu Aklilu in the area of environment and development related activities, *Addis Neger* Newspaper has nominated him as one of the 25 most influential people for the year 2001 Ethiopian Calendar.