



35th Anniversary of UTNA and 13th Annual Festival of Tigray Celebrated in Chicago

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A dual celebration of the 35th year of the founding of the Union of Tigreans in North America /UTNA/ and the 13th anniversary of Tigray Festival was held amid jubilation and fanfare by members of the Ethiopian Community from Tigray and friends that thronged from far and near in the windy city of Chicago. The tens of hundreds of the jovial crowd who participated in a festive and reflective mood witnessed an array of activities organized by the Chicago chapter of UTNA in charge of coordinating and streamlining the multi-faceted functions, specially focusing on the youth, who are the torch bearers of this community centered engagement.

Some activities that crowned the occasion with special flavor were the UTNA conference, which navigated through the all-round responsibilities of the Union as pertains to lending a strong support and impetus to the on-going process of democratization, development and peace in Ethiopia. A spirited debate ensued wherein, the mission, focus, clarity of objectives and activities of UTNA were discussed in detail and a sober and considered reflection of the contributions, progress and draw-backs, opportunities and challenges that the Union continues to encounter as it moves forward were all appraised.

The joyous and momentous occasion was capped by an all-night entertainment extravaganza that marshaled, children's cultural show, traditional dance and music, poetry recital staged by enthusiastic kids from the area and teens and youth that assembled from the width and breadth of the US, and music presented by famous artistic and musical troupe whose members were drawn from Ethiopia and across the United States of America. The menu of activities also exhibited an engaging soccer game, a BBQ and a shipping cruise organized by the youth.

The 6-day celebration was also graced by the presence of the famous and fabled motivational speaker Mawi Asgedom. The electrifying presentation which was spiced by cultural and linguistic ornaments punctuated by the speaker left an enduring inspirational message both to the young and older generations who were glued to his mesmerizing speech.

Ambassador Fiseha Asgedom the guest of honor, who briefed the attendants of the function and community members on current and wide-ranging issues pertaining to the homeland made a clarion call on the Ethiopian Diaspora community to be engaged in and be on-board in the nation-wide development endeavor currently in full gear in Ethiopia. Representatives from the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington DC, who were on hand to brief the attendants deliberated on issues pertaining to the opportunities that abound, calling upon the participants to make good of the propitious conditions and inviting environment that presently prevails in Ethiopia to benefit the nation and themselves alike.

Mr Mezgebe G/Kristos, who is the chief architect and leader of the organizing committee praised all the

members of the committee, the whole community in Chicago, Ethiopian restaurants and businesses, and individuals who left their indelible imprint on the occasion by hailing the meticulous planning and exceptional execution they performed towards the triumphant consummation of the happy and delightful moment.

The historic Chicago Tigray Festival and UTNA Conference concluded by passing a resolution vowing to re-organize, re-orient and re-energize itself anew to meet the challenges of today in order to better equip itself to undertake and discharge the onerous mission it shoulders to the ultimate success of the on-going process of democratization, development and peace in a sustainable and dependable manner. The Conference also re-dedicated itself to untiringly contribute towards the upcoming 2010 Ethiopian national election with the unflinching belief that it will be a showcase for a fair and free election and a true expression of the Ethiopian people in their fourth democratic election exercise.