

**Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 26, 2017**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary Tillerson for their trust and confidence in me. I am also very proud to have my family with me today: my wife Kate; my son Bradley, who is serving with Teach for America in Buffalo, New York; and my daughter Emma, who is going into her senior year at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

During my 29-year career as a Foreign Service Officer, I have developed substantial African policy and managerial experience, and a record of leadership fostering interagency collaboration, strong performance from diverse teams, and high morale in challenging environments. As U.S. Ambassador to Benin, I strengthened the country's democratic trajectory, elicited strong anti-terrorism cooperation, and helped improve the business climate while promoting U.S. commercial interests. As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I coordinated some of the United States' most complex law enforcement and foreign assistance programs as well as the embassy's large security and management operations, while also engaging with the Afghan government on security and governance challenges. As Executive Director of the Bureau of African Affairs, I led management and crisis support to over 50 African posts.

If confirmed as the next U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia, my top priority will be the security, interests, and welfare of American citizens. Whether ensuring responsive consular services, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships against terrorism, this priority will guide the Embassy's activities and objectives. If confirmed, I also commit to doing everything I can to ensure that the dedicated women and men working at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa are safe, secure, and have every opportunity for success.

The United States has strong partnerships with Ethiopia, in alignment with the Ethiopian government's own priorities, to support health, education, food security, and economic growth. These programs contribute meaningfully to Ethiopia's governance, stability, and prosperity. However, starting in November 2015, Ethiopia began experiencing widespread unrest, resulting in the imposition of a state of emergency that has included arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, and restrictions on civil and political freedoms. The unrest stems from complex factors including land tenure, ethnic tensions, and joblessness, but is rooted in popular desires for greater political freedom and civil liberties. If confirmed, I will advocate for full respect of the rights guaranteed under Ethiopia's constitution, as well as for reforms that strengthen democratic institutions. Such steps will not only support Ethiopia's own aspirations for stability and development, as well as its efforts against violent extremism in the region, but they will also strengthen the foundation for the U.S.–Ethiopia partnership in areas of vital interest to both nations.

Ethiopia is a strong partner to the United States in the Horn of Africa, and has a deep commitment to promoting regional stability and countering terrorism. This engagement includes Ethiopia's significant contributions to the African Union's counterterrorism and peace support mission in Somalia and to the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan, as well as Ethiopia's leading role in the South Sudanese peace process. Ethiopia also contributes to regional stability as the second-largest host of refugees in Africa. If confirmed, I intend to sustain and strengthen this important security relationship.

U.S. national interests lie in supporting Ethiopia's economic progress as well, because economic freedom and a sound business environment are strong drivers of good governance, rule of law, and long-term stability. These factors also create opportunities for American businesses, and if confirmed, I will work to promote a business climate in Ethiopia that encourages U.S. private sector activity and ensures a level playing field for U.S. firms.

Ethiopia is a dynamic nation with an extraordinary history of independence and accomplishments as well as a future of enormous potential. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting. If confirmed, I will welcome input and advice from you and your staff on any aspect of the multi-

faceted relationship between the United States and Ethiopia. I will also be pleased, if confirmed, to receive you and your staff in Ethiopia and to keep you apprised of the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.