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Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association

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Ref. No. EW/1534

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Date March 22, 1999

Ms. Marjorie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445-12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Amendment of AfriSpace, Inc.'s Application for Authority to Construct, Launch and Operate a Subregional Africa and Middle Eastern Satellite Sound Broadcasting Transmission System, File No. CSS-90-017 [IBFS File No. SAT-LOA-19900723-00002]; Amendment File No. SAT-AMD-19990125-00016 (Call Sign 52367)

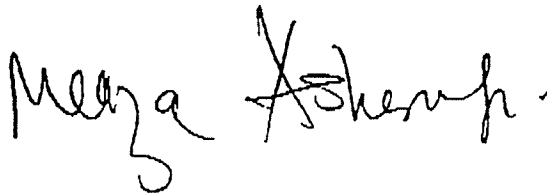
Dear Ms. Salas:

The Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA) is a non-profit, non-partisan, organization founded by Ethiopian women's lawyers to promote the economic, social and legal status of women, and to that end, to assist women to secure full protection of their rights under the new Ethiopian constitution and the relevant international human rights conventions. EWLA has been registered on 7 June, 1995, as a civic association under the Ethiopian Civil Code. In addition to providing women with free legal representation--over the last three years EWLA has supported 2500 women with legal problems, mostly matrimonial litigation and cases of gender based violence--and lobbying policy and decision makers to reform discriminatory laws, EWLA endeavors to ensure equality before the law by creating public awareness through persistent information campaign and training of more women activists. EWLA has been active in disseminating information on the legal and constitutional rights of women, including paralegal training. Our current activities include, promotion of a domestic violence bill, research into the conditions of women domestic workers and unskilled laborers, publication of a human rights journal, and various civic educational programs aimed at enhancing women's political participation.

It is especially in connection with its education endeavors that EWLA expresses its strong endorsement of AfriSpace's effort to introduce satellite radio broadcasting to the African continent. The availability of such communication technology will go a long way in promoting EWLA's aims by enabling us to reach women in the most remote regions of the country. Our hope is to use this technology to promote the empowerment of women, not only by giving them access to information relevant to their daily lives, but also by giving them an opportunity to speak in their own voices and to have their voices be heard by millions of listeners. This to us is an important part of the meaning of women's empowerment.

Accordingly, the Ethiopian Women's Lawyer's Association urges the Federal Communications Commission to approve the AFRISPACE application. It is critical that the women of the world benefit from the information age. This service will benefit millions of women.

Sincerely,



MEAZA ASHENAFI
Executive Director

