Dear Sir/Madam,

The designated operator of **ETHIOPIA**, Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise, asks me to inform UPU member countries and their designated operators of the following:

"Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise takes this opportunity to confirm and underline that, in accordance with the national legislation of Ethiopia and article 8 of the Doha Universal Postal Convention, Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise represents the sole official authority and only designated operator on the territory of Ethiopia that is authorized to issue and circulate postage stamps in the name of Ethiopia.

"Thanks to the philatelic community, Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise recently discovered that the following series of illegal issues in various formats are being sold and distributed over the Internet as stamps allegedly produced by Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise.

"To date, these illegal issues have been found on Internet sites located in Germany, Latvia, Romania, Spain and the United States. It is possible that there may be other sites in other countries:

– A series of 10 sheetlets of nine perforated values each (1B, 5B, 10B, 100B, 200B, 300B, 400B 500B, 600B) including the year 2016, the country name "Ethiopia" and illustrating as follows: 1 "F1-Ferrari"; 2 "Michael Schumacher in action"; 3 "NHL Hockey Stars"; 4 "Soccer Stars"; 5 "Cristiano Ronaldo in action"; fauna (6 "Crocodiles"; 7 "Fishes" and 8 "Tigers"); flora (9 "Roses"); and 10 "Nudes". Some sheetlets are presented as individual pieces, while others are presented in a set of 10 sheetlets.

– A series of seven sheetlets illustrating different soccer players as a team and individually that apparently form part of the "Netherlands national football team" that would play in the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018. The two larger sheetlets include five stamps that are reproduced separately within miniature sheets. Each individual illegal issue includes in the top part "Ethiopia postes 2015" and a face value (46m, 35C, 15C, 15C or 2C); the body of the stamp has the image of a soccer player whose name and original team are reproduced at the bottom of the stamp.

– A series of two sheetlets (one of nine values, another of four values) of imperforate illegal stamps illustrating different scenes with pandas, and another series of two sheetlets (one of six values, another one of four values) illustrating different scenes with chimpanzees. Each individual illegal stamp includes in the bottom part a face value of 8 BIRR, the name of Ethiopia in English and in the Ethiopian alphabet, and the year 2009.

"In addition to the 21 sheetlets, there are altogether 128 issues that could be sold individually. Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise confirms that these illegal issues are not valid as evidence of the payment of postage, nor should they be acquired in any way for any other purpose, such as the completion of a country or thematic stamp collection.

"UPU rules themselves strongly denounce and condemn the designing, printing and selling of such illegal issues. This regrettable activity is causing moral and economic harm to our country.

"The unscrupulous individuals responsible for these acts are seeking to undermine our country's reputation and good name by circulating postage stamps which they claim have been issued by Ethiopia.

"Consequently, Ethiopian Postal Service Enterprise is calling upon the cooperation, solidarity and support of all member countries of the Universal Postal Union and their designated operators to prohibit the sale and circulation of the illegal issues in accordance with their own laws and regulations, as well as the provisions of the Universal Postal Convention, and to help Ethiopia to take all necessary and appropriate measures to bring the perpetrators of the illegal issues to justice. The continued production and sale of illegal issues is a dangerous activity, which is harming not only philately and the reputation of the country concerned, but is detrimental to all countries and the wider postal sector."

Yours faithfully,

Pascal Clivaz
Deputy Director General