

## **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of IFSO**

IFSO has celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on February 11, 2016, under the motto “**20 years of fighting against child vulnerability and poverty in Ethiopia**”, in the presence of invited guests drawn from donor organizations, government’s line sector offices, beneficiaries and project staff. During the event, photograph exhibition depicting the achievements of IFSO’s 20 years journey was displayed and visited by invited guests.

The Anniversary was officially opened by Dr Melese Getu, IFSO’s Board member who delivered an opening speech on behalf of Mr Kebede Woldegiorigis, the Board Chair Person. In his speech, Dr Melese highlighted the achievements made and challenges encountered in the course of the 20 years journey of IFSO. According to him, the achievements that IFSO has made so far are remarkable, which contributed a lot in changing the quality of life of its beneficiaries in a meaningful way. As to the challenges, he continued on saying, the abrupt stoppage of donor funding organizations and unavailability of permanent office premise and service delivery space (foster homes for abused children), and as a result, which incurs the organization to unbearable costs for renting the same. He, finally, requested the attendees of the ceremony to contribute their share of support in whatever way they are capable of to see to it that the organization continue serving the vulnerable sector of the society. Following Dr. Melese’s opening remarks, Mrs. Mekdes Zelelew, the founder and Executive Directress of IFSO presented the ups and downs she passed through while establishing the organization, the contribution of volunteers in the establishment and commencement of the organization, the achievements gained so far and the current critical financial problems which threatening the existence of the organization. She also informed the event participants that with a view of mitigating the financial problem, besides looking for fund from international donors, though the outcome was not found to be as expected, attempt has been made to raise fund locally.

Following her presentation, the deputy director, Mr Getachew Negash highlighted the major projects that have been implemented, the results obtained and future direction as well. As reported by him, in the past 20 years, 14 different need based projects have been designed and implemented which in turn have brought about observable changes in the lives of the beneficiaries. He further mentioned that the projects could be categorized in education, health, economic capacity building, rehabilitation, environmental protection to mention a few.

Next to Mr Getachew's report, those beneficiaries who have benefited from the different projects gave their account to the event participants how they become beneficiaries of the organization and the changes they registered to their children and themselves as well.

The partners from line government offices have also praised the works of IFSO in addressing the plights of many vulnerable children and their destitute families, which was followed by a cake cutting ceremony which was done by the guest honor

Finally, the program was came to an end by the closing remark of Mrs Zewdie Abegaz, the founding member of the organization and the Chairperson of the General Assembly who, in her part, recounted the long journey of IFSO, which is, as she said, mingled with success and challenges and she also called for all concerned to continue their collaboration so that the organization will continue growing and be capable of reaching many needy population.