

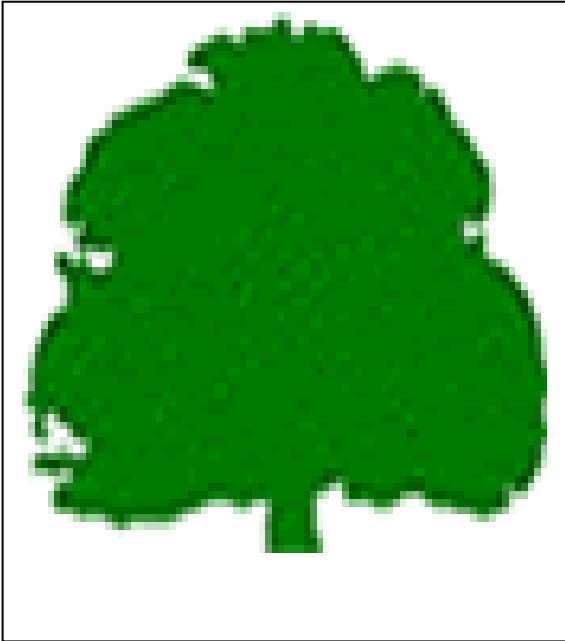
# OSA Newsletter

## Oromo Studies Association

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### In This Issue:

1. **A Message from OSA President**
2. **2007 OSA Annual Conference Preliminary Program**
3. **Another letter from Dr. Mohamed Hassen**

## 1. A Message from OSA President

Dear OSA Family,

OSA conference is just upon us I am excited to meet you all in Minneapolis-St Paul in about three weeks time. OSA is excited to present diverse speakers with more than 15 panels that constitute about 60 speakers. We have a few individuals from Oromia despite the visa restrictions common to come to the US. OSA has rented two conference halls to conduct concurrent presentations at during OSA Annual Conference this year for the first time in its twenty years history. This endeavor assumes your full support and cooperation to be successful. Obviously, it will not be possible to attend all presentation live as it is used to be. OSA will do its best to video tape concurrent presentations and make them available online at its website some times after the conference. This arrangement will enable us to accommodate most of our volunteered presentation and at the same time save time for OSA business meeting.

OSA has invited among others, Obbo Zegeye Asfaw, a great Oromo Nationalist, a brilliant lawyer, a well-respected scholar who has served in the Ethiopian civil services at high capacities since the early 70s including as a Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Justice, Minister of Land Reform, and others. He was a political prisoner for a decade during the Derg regime. Obbo Zegeye was the brain behind the March 4, 1975, Land Proclamation that ended once for all the relationship between landlords and the peasantry and made land the common property of the people. This was a giant first step that broke the chain of peasants in the long march of liberation for the Southern Peoples of Ethiopia. He has authored a well-read book on land distribution in Ethiopia. Obbo Zegeye was the only person among top appointees of the OLF in the early 90s who deliberately chose to remain in the country among his people and contribute his best at a great personal risk. He has been heading a NGO that works to empower marginalized Oromo women who labor under cultural, political and economic oppressions. I have asked Obbo Zegeye to be an OSA Keynote speaker for this conference in addition to his presentation on “Economic Empowerment and Human Rights Education of Women”. It is a great honor to welcome a great Oromo nationalist and a committed human rights activist amongst us to share his memories, observations and dreams.

OSA has allocated 4-5 hours for its business meeting that it feels will be adequate since most of the agenda items have been directly or indirectly discussed through e-mails on OSA mailservers. I do advise all OSA members to make a concerted effort to educate yourself on issues that are anticipated to be discussed at the choosing of the general assembly. Report of OSA Officers including auditor's report, election of officer(s), reports of ad hoc committees, adoption of amendments to bylaws, and other items, not necessarily in this order and per adoption of agenda items by the general assembly, will be discussed.

## 2. 2007 OSA Conference: Preliminary Program

There are 17 panels that cover wide range of subjects from human rights to the role of music, from environmental problems to the concerns of Oromo youth in Diaspora and many others. The subject matter is the main criteria used to place speakers in a given panel. Hence, similar topics are presented by different speakers in a given panel. **This is a preliminary program and is subject to change without notice. I do count on your flexibility and understanding as OSA tries its best to accommodate all your needs as much as possible.** The final program will be distributed by e-mail before the conference date and the latest schedule will be included in the package you will receive at the conference on July 28, 2007, and I would appreciate if you would try your best to adhere to the program.

### 2007 OSA Annual Conference Schedule (Preliminary Tentative Program)

The University of Minnesota  
Coffman Memorial Union  
Great Hall

Ω Saturday, July 28, 2007 Ω

8 AM

Registration and Social Event

8:30

Ceremony/Blessing

Religious Leaders	Ceremony and Blessing
IOYA	Short Drama

9:00 AM

Welcome: OSA President

Welcome: University of Minnesota

9:30 AM

**Keynote Speakers**

Obbo Zegeye Asfaw	<b>OSA Keynote Speaker</b>
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10:15 AM

**Panel 1: The Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia**

**Chair: Prof. Mohammed Hassen**

Dr. Trevor Trueman	The Human Rights Record of the Ethiopian Government: An American Import
Obbo Firehiwot Samuel	Human Rights Violations by the Ethiopian Government: The Inquiry Commission Report
Obbo Obang Metho	The Anuake Human Rights Violations

11:15 PM

**Panel 2: Discourse on Oromo Music by Oromo Musicians**

**Chair: Prof. Asfaw Beyene**

Obbo Ali Birra	Oromo Music: Voice of Oromo Identity and Nationalism
Adde Elfinesh Qanno	The Challenges and Roles of Oromo Artists in Diaspora
Obbo Qamar Yusuf	Role of Oromo Music in Construction of Oromo Identity and Nationalism

12:15 Noon

**Lunch, on Site**

1:15 PM

**Panel 3: Forming and Building the State in the 21st Century Oromia**

**Chair: Dr. Beyan Asoba**

Prof. Asafa Jalata	Applying Gada Principles to Form and Build the State in the 21st Century Oromia
Prof. Guluma Gemada	Oromo State Formations in Historical Perspective
Prof. Ezekiel Gebissa	Political Transitions and Common Fallacies in the Debate on Oromo Liberation
Rev. Harwood D. Schaffer	Agricultural/Economic Policy for a New State in the Horn of Africa

2:35 PM

**Panel 4: The Constants of Ethiopian Rulers: Repression, Human Rights Abuse and Poverty**

**Chair: Dr. Melaku Mekonnen**

Dr. Mohamed Mukhtar Hussein	Who Owns the Ethiopian Nation-State? Understanding the Ethiopian – Somali Ogaden Conflict
Adde Fowsia Abdulkadir	The Impact of a Century Long Human Rights Abuses on the People of Ogaden
Prof. Mohammed Hassen	Brutality: The Art of Governing in Ethiopia

3:35 PM

**Panel 5: The Oromo Women: The Complex Nature of Oromo Women Struggle**

**Chair: Adde Duneë Silga**

Obbo Zegeye Asfaw	Economic Empowerment and Human Rights Education of Women in Oromia
Adde Zeituna Kalil	The Cultural Oppression of Oromo Women in the Society
Adde Bengu Qaweti	Siiqqee: An Oromo Women Empowerment Tool

4:35 PM

**Panel 6: Second Edition on Oromo Democracy and The Quarterly Burqaa Magazine**

**Chair: Prof. Asafa Jalata**

Prof. Asmerom Legese	Oromo Democracy: Publication of the Second Full Edition and Follow up; My Visit to the Oromo Immigrant Community in "East Leigh, Nairobi"; My Dialogues with Arsi Elders, and My First Ever Field Trip to Tana River Orma
Obbo Darara Matti	Deemsa Guddina og Barruu Afaan Oromoo Keessatti Gahee Maxxansa Burqaa.

5:15 PM

**Panel 7: Challenges and Opportunities for the Oromo People's Quest for Self-Determination**

**Chair: Prof. Gobena Huluka**

Dr. Alemayehu Biru	Can Democracy Deliver a Comprehensive Solution to the Complex Problems of the Ethiopia Empire?
Dr. Negasso Gidada	Invoking the Right to Self-Determination in Ethiopia; Relevant or Taboo? The Oromo Quest to Self-Determination
Obbo Mesfin Namarra	Trends and Prospects of Voicing Oromo Issues in Parliament
Obbo Leenco Lata	The Emergence and Consolidation of Electoral Authoritarianism in Ethiopia.
Prof. Marara Gudina	The Ethiopian State, Electoral Politics and Oromo People's Quest for Democracy

7:00 End of Saturday schedule

**The Mississippi Hall**

**Ω Saturday, July 28, 2007 Ω**

1:15 PM

**Panel 8: The State of Health in Oromia**

**Chair: Dr. Gudata Hinika**

Dr. Ibrahim Elemo	The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Oromiya
Dr. Begna Dugassa	Collective Rights and Public Health: The Case of Oromia.
Obbo Kadiro Elemo	The Role of Customary Law in the Prevention of HIV/AIDS with Special Emphasis to the Boorana Gadaa System

2:15 PM

### **Panel 9: The Oromo Youth (The Qubee Generation): Challenges and Opportunities**

**Chair – Adde Arfasse Gameda**

Obbo Jawar Mohamed	The Origins and Challenges of Regional and Religious Divide Within the Oromo Nation: Possible Solutions for the New Generation
Gadab Foundation	Empowerment through Education: Building the Future of the Oromo Nation
Adde Gelane Gamechisa	A Youth Perspective on the Struggle to Define Oromummaa in the 21st Century: Exploring Internal and External Identity Issues Facing Oromo Youth in Diaspora
Obbo Damee Ormaa	Oromo Youth in Diaspora: Challenges and Opportunities

3:35 PM

### **Panel 10: The Question of Oromo Self-Determination**

**Chair: Prof. Ezekiel Gebissa**

Dr. Bahiru Duguma	Trends and the Dynamics of Oromo Struggle: Impacts of the First on the Latter
Obbo Darara Gubo	Self-Determination Rights in Ethiopia: The Case of Oromia
Obbo Daba S. Gedafa	Some of the Challenges and Solutions for Oromo's Self-Determination in 21ST Century
Prof. Tsega Etefa	Pan-Oromo Confederations in the Seventeenth Century: A Legacy?

**Coffman Memorial Union  
Great Hall**

**Ω Sunday, July 29, 2007 Ω**

9:45 AM

### **Panel 11: Strengthening the Core Components of Oromo National Movement**

**Chair: Dr. Alemayehu Biru**

Obbo Aba Kalacha	Common Denominators that Mobilize Oromos for Common Causes
Prof. Addisu Tolessa	Organizational Models for Oromo National Movement: Lessons from the Past for Present Realities
Obbo Dima Noggo	Leadership in National Liberation Struggle: The Oromo Experience
Obbo Lube Biru	The Importance of Unity and Tolerance for Oromo National Movement

10:45 AM

### **Panel 12: Sustainability and Natural Resources**

**Chair: Dr. Bonnie Holcomb**

Obbo Mohamed Adilo	Invasion of Borana Rangelands by Woody Perennials: Climate Change or Institutional Constructs?
Dr. Tolessa Deksisa and Obb Bula Atomssa	Deforestation is Putting Fresh Water Resource at Risk in Oromia
Obbo Mohamed Bedri	A Grassroots Oromo Organization: Activities of Saphalo Foundation in Kenya
Gobena Huluka	“Whose Land is This Land?”: The Question of Resource Entitlement in Oromia

12:00 PM

**Lunch, on site**

1:00 PM

**Panel 13: Gada: An Indigenous African Democracy**

**Chair: Dr. Asmerom Legesse**

Obbo Rundassa Eshete	Evaluating the Gadaa System and Compare It to Other Social Organizations Around the World
Obbo Aman Qamsare	The Past, the Present and the Future of Gadaa
Obbo Daba S. Gedafa	Comparison of Oromo’s Gada System with Maasa’s Age-set System
Obbo Lube Biru	Oromoo Gadaa System: Unacknowledged Indigenous African Socio-Political Democracy

2:20 PM

**Panel 14: Entrepreneurship and Business Potentials for the Oromos**

**Chair: Prof. Bichaka Faissa**

Obbo Amsalu Bultosa	Oromia Business Environments and Its Prospects
Obbo Samuel Gamtessa	Playing for the Best Bet in the Non-Cooperative World: Some Lessons from the Theory of Games of Strategy
Obbo Mike Abebe	Entrepreneur and Business Potential of Oromos in Diaspora
Obbo Desta Galgalu	Connecting Immigrants to the Financial System of USA: The Case of Oromo Immigrants

3:40 PM

**Panel 15: What Clicks to the Oromo Youth?**

**Chair: Obbo Jawar Mohamed**

Obbo Beka Jalata	Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela: Lessons for Oromo Struggle for National Liberation
Adde Kulani Jalata	Oromo Nationalist Heroes
Oromo Youth (TN)	Regional and Religious Divide within the Oromo Nation: Facts or Myths?
Gadab Foundation	Empowerment through Education: Building the Future of the Oromo Nation

**Ω End Ω**

**OSA Business Meeting, Members Only**

**The Mississippi Hall**

**Ω Sunday July 29, 2007 Ω**

1:00 PM

**Panel 16: Discourses on Ethiopian Political Changes**

**Chair – Dr. Mesfin Abdi**

Dr. Teka Obsa Fogi	Oromo Identity and the Christian Faith
Obbo Apee Jobi	Some Thoughts on the Narrative of Modern Ethiopian Nationalists
Prof. Sisay Asefa	Peace, Democracy and Progress in Ethiopia

2:00 PM

### **Panel 17: Education as Basis for Development of Oromia**

**Chair: Prof. Addisu Tolessa**

Obbo Dinku Deyasa	The Status and Role of Private Higher Education in Oromia
Obbo Kebede Feda	Family Size and Children's School Attendance in Rural Oromia
Dr. Mohamed Rashad	The Early Development of Qubee Afaan Oromo
Obbo Kebede Hordofa	Preliminaries to Oromo Dialectology: Towards Sub-classification

3:20 PM

**Ω End Ω**

**OSA Business Meeting, Members Only**

### **3. Another letter from Dr. Mohamed Hassen**

#### **The need for Establishing a Reliable Source of Financial Support for JOS**

On July 7, 2005, I submitted an 18 page report (including appendices) for OSA Review Committee. That report dealt with how to secure financial and institutional support for JOS as well as how to improve the quality and quantity of articles published; widen the circle of article contributors, assure the reliability of JOS distribution. When I prepared that report, I did not expect that two issues of JOS would be published in 2007. What has been achieved this year is a great landmark in the history of OSA. It is a great joy for those who love the expansion of Oromo studies to see two high quality issues of JOS. If this achievement is to be sustained it needs greater intellectual and financial commitment from OSA members, which makes my report of 2005 more relevant today than it was in 2005. In what follows I will summarize the relevant part of the 2005 report for OSA members so that every one understands what is involved in sustaining two issues of JOS annually.

At the outset let me acknowledge my indebtedness to Drs. Asafa Jalata, Bichaka Fayissa, and Guluma Gameda, who served as JOS editors between 1993 and 2006. Because of their experience I submitted 12 questions and sought answers from them on the difficulties involved in producing and the joy of having it published on time regularly. I am also indebted to Dr. Ezekiel Gebissa, who shared with me his experience of working Northeast African Studies journal and other publications. Since August 2006 Ezekiel has been serving OSA admirably by producing two issues of JOS in a single year- opening a new chapter in the history of our

organization. I will deal with the financial implication of two issues of JOSA further in this presentation. For now let me focus on what was achieved between 1993 and 2006.

Overall, I am truly astonished that OSA has been able to produce its journal regularly since 1993. Without any consistent financial support from any institution, it was remarkable achievement for OSA to have published its journal on time for 13 years. This achievement reflects the commitment of OSA members, the dedication of JOS editors and the contributors of articles by a small group of Oromo and non-Oromo scholars. This achievement is all the more remarkable when we compare it with other publications. For instance, I have been serving on the Horn of Africa journal editorial board for years. Though this journal enjoys financial support from Rutgers University (one of major universities in the USA), and has wider pool of article contributors than JOS, it is usually published most of the time one or two years behind the schedule. I have also been serving on the Eritrean Review editorial board, which enjoys larger financial support and has a rich pool of article contributors, it has not been published with the consistency and regularity of with which JOS has been published between 1993 and 2006. The Journal of Ethiopian Studies, which enjoys richer financial support and has a large pool of article contributors, is published usually most of the time behind schedule. How do I know about it? My university library, which subscribes to it, usually receives a copy two to three years behind the schedule. Even the Northeast African Studies Journal which enjoys the financial support of the University of Michigan at East Lansing, is not published on schedule.

I give these four examples, not to exaggerate the achievements of JOS, but to caution OSA members that publishing a journal regularly is a very challenging task and a difficult undertaking even for institutions with richer financial and intellectual resources than OSA. Measured against this background, for those who have the wisdom to appreciate what our small scholarly organization with limited financial and intellectual resources, achieved between 1993 and 2006 was very good indeed..

Notwithstanding the achievement just mentioned, OSA needs a number of improvements, if two issues of JOS have to be sustained in the future. These include improving the quality and quantity of articles; securing reliable source of income for JOS, expanding the pool of article contributors, expanding circulation of JOS, lessening the burden on JOS editor and establishing a reliable data base for JOS distribution.

OSA members must realize that scholarly organization is judged by the quality and scientific reliability of its scholars productivity. Only solid academic scholarship stands the test of time. JOS is the main outlet for the scholarship on the nation of Oromia. Over the years the qualities and quantities of articles that have been published in JOS have improved tremendously. However, we should never be satisfied with what has been achieved so far. There is always room for improving the noble task of generating and disseminating knowledge about every aspect of the Oromo society. The key to improving the quality and quantity of JOS articles is expanding the pool of article contributors, this could be done in several ways, two of which were suggested by Drs. Guluma, Ezekiel. According to Guluma, we need to:

1. recruit more contributors;
2. solicit more submissions from scholars who are working on the Oromo;
3. expand the scope of coverage of the paper so that scholars working on Northeast African issues may consider JOS an alternative venue for their publications;
4. increase the publication of book reviews;
5. increase the contact and collaboration with scholars who are working on Oromo issues, but are not OSA members.”

Along a similar line, Ezekiel suggested the following for expanding the pool of article contributors:

“ We could increase the number of issues by adding guest edited volumes. We should invite scholars that have and are studying the Oromo to guest edit JOS volumes on specific subjects such as Oromo religion... Oromo world view, Oromo literature, human rights and law, environment, language, regional and corporate histories, political economy and development and so. Forth.”

What the above two suggestions have in common is that OSA has to expand the pool of article contributors, widen the scope and the range of articles that appear in the pages of JOS. One practical way of doing this was demonstrated by Drs. Aneesa Kassim and Paul Baxter, who guest edited in 2005 special issue of JOS on Father Lambert Bartels and Oromo

religious experience. That issue included more articles by scholars working on the Kenyan side of the border.

OSA urgently needs to establish a reliable consistent source of financial support for the publication of JOS. Without such financial support, it will not be feasible to sustain the regular publication of JOS on schedule. I suspect the cost of publishing two issues of JOS this year will be huge.. Such a huge expense could be sustained by obtaining institutional support or through increasing annual membership dues. The option of getting institutional support is very limited as only few Oromo scholars teach at a university level. This year OS has been blessed with a dynamic editor, who worked very hard to produce two issues of JOS and at the same time managed to get financial support publication of JOS from his university. Most probably the contribution from Ezekiel's university will cover only a very small portion of this year's expense for JOS publication.. It goes without saying that the current \$ 50.00 annual membership fee, is not sufficient for sustaining the publication of two issues of JOS annually.. I hope during the 2007 conference this issue must be seriously discussed decided upon in the best interest of JOS.

The other alternative for obtaining funding for JOS may be suggested as follows. If every OSA member takes the responsibility of selling, at least a copy of JOS, over hundred copies will be sold easily. Those who have served as OSA officers in different capacities, must take the responsibility of selling at least 5 copies JOS. That way many more copies of JOS will be sold among the Oromo Diaspora in several cities in North America. Since April, 2007 I was able to sell 20 copies of JOS in Atlanta alone. If we all volunteer to sell one or two copies of JOS, it will be possible to sell two or three hundred copies , thus creating a significant source of income for JOS.

The editor of JOS has the heavy burden of soliciting articles, sending them to reviewers, editing and roofing articles negotiating with publishers. This is too much work for a single individual. JOS needs a system, similar to Northeast African Studies as suggested by Ezekiel Gebissa.

“NRAS has a system of soliciting, reviewing, critiquing, accepting, editing, sending, sending to the press, proofing, and feed-backing( if you wish). A journal must make itself in keeping in touch with readers.” .

Ezekiel goes on suggesting that in order to ease the burden for the editor, increase efficiency, and improve quality, we need to have more than one person in charge. “Perhaps we could talk about an Associate Editor” This is a matter to be discussed seriously and decided upon. Furthermore, it appears to me that JOS needs a book review section editor. This may fall under the responsibility of the Associate Editor suggested by Ezekiel. What is needed urgently is that the number of book reviews published in JOS must increase. A scholarly journal worthy of its name, must include at least five book reviews in every issue. Major journals usually include three or four times that number. The books to be reviewed do not necessarily need to be limited only to Oromo issues. Realistically JOS editor alone will not be able to handle, if he is called upon, to expand the book review section of JOS. I hope this issue will be discussed and decided upon during the 2007 conference.

Though JOS has been published since 1993, I do not know the exact number, but I suspect no more than ten university libraries have subscribed to it. This reflects our institutional weakness.. No purpose will be served by blaming OSA leadership for not aggressively advertising JOS in the past. What is needed is to take action now. And that is what counts. There are two immediate and practical ways of taking action, the first of which was suggested by Dr. Guluma Gemada as follows:

“All of us who have university affiliations should make the effort to convince our colleagues and university and research librarians to subscribe to JOS. We need to have a marketing campaign. I will try to propose a brochure that can be distributed at conferences such as the African Studies Association. We may also consider putting an advertisement in ASR and other publications”.

Dr. Guluma did keep his promise and produced a brochure that was distributed at the ASA meeting. What is now needed is to improve the quality of that brochure and distribute it at several scholarly organizations gatherings. I believe all OSA members, who have university affiliations (both teachers and students) must impress upon their university library acquisition officials, the importance of subscribe to JOS for research purposes. The trick is to do it in writing emphasizing the crucial importance of JOS for teaching, learning and research purposes. If a good case is made, generally university libraries will subscribe to publication(s) for which there is demand. What OSA members have to show is that there is demand for JOS.

Secondly, if OSA members, especially those who have specialized knowledge in any field, organize seminars and workshops in their respective communities, they will be able not only to sell JOS but also for generating additional financial resources for JOS. Seminars and workshops are ideal venue for selling JOS as well as other books on the Oromo.

JOS is not accessible in colleges and universalities in Oromia. This is a weakness that can be corrected immediately so that JOS will be available in several libraries in Oromia, and where possible in other parts of Ethiopia. It is the responsibility of OSA members, who are fortunate enough to live beyond the long brutal arm of the Ethiopian state, to disseminate accurate knowledge about the Oromo to other people in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa and beyond. That will be done in the future. What is needed immediately is to make our journal access in Oromia. OSA members must realize that JOS should not be limited to the Oromo Diaspora mainly in North America. Every effort must be made to send free copies of JOS annually to:

- (1) Oromo scholars at Addis Ababa University;
- (2) The Institute of Ethiopian Studies;
- (3) every university and college libraries in Oromia;
- (4) The Cultural Office of the Government of Oromia.

In short, OSA must be able to send 10 to 15 free copies of JOS to Oromia whenever it is published. The purpose of this is to share knowledge with scholars in Oromia and also encourage them to contribute articles to JOS. Our journal will survive and flourish as the scholarly voice of our nation if it is planted in Oromia, where it will be nurtured with fresh and original research ideas. In other words, OSA must make JOS, the main outlet for publishing the scholarship produced in Oromia itself.

Finally, OSA must establish current data base for JOS subscription and its distribution. This must be done without any delay as it will enhance the professionalism of our scholarly organization. It goes without saying that OSA needs a separate bookkeeping for JOS, so that we clearly know how much it costs OSA and how much income JOS can generate for itself.

Mohammed Hassen

Thanks again and again for articulating what has occupied OSA executive committee discussion time and setting such ambitious agenda for JOS. I hope and pray we all share your vision and shoulder the burden together to make a small change in the dissemination of Oromo-centered knowledge. For no better word, thank you my brother again.

I look forward seeing you at OSA Conference and wish you all a safe trip.

Together we can do more for OSA.

Nagaan,

OSA President

*Gobana Huluka*

<http://www.oromostudies.org>