Democracy and the Social Question

Ulrich Müller-Schöll (Editor)

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Some Contributions to a Dialogue in Ethiopia

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Opening Remarks

Beyond its standing mission of protecting and advancing the pursuit of objective knowledge through free inquiry, the academic community has the responsibility to encourage deliberation on public issues, issues that concern everyone. In discharging this responsibility Addis Ababa University has been fortunate in enjoying the enthusiastic collaboration of the Goethe-Institut Addis Abeba and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, institutions committed to the cultivation of a democratic public culture.

The necessity for public debate and discussion on pressing issues became a matter of urgency in the wake of the May 2005 elections. In one way the elections were an unprecedented success. Indeed, it may not be an exaggeration to say that both the ruling and the opposition parties were taken by surprise by the election and its upshot. Indeed the wider public witnessed a great deal in the elections that surpassed the highest expectations of many. Participation by voters was exceedingly high. The intensity of electoral debate and its reach was impressive. The campaign, the voting and the results all seemed to indicate that competitive party politics had finally come of age in Ethiopia. It is against this backdrop of high expectations that the divisive disputes over the votes cast, the boycott and the public unrest seemed so disquieting. Everyone's high hopes were abruptly disappointed.

The lecture series on "Democracy and the Social Question" was intended first of all to break the silence that sadly followed the 2005 elections and the disturbing subsequent events. To rekindle hope in the democratic process, it was essential to open public conversation. Without conversation, it would not be easy even to come to terms with the question of what exactly went wrong with the elections. For meaningful conversation at a difficult and tense time, it was critical to draw speakers from diverse political viewpoints and affiliations. Happily, a wide range of opinion came forward, among them: members of the

ruling party, opposition parties, the private press, parliament, the diplomatic community, nongovernmental and intergovernmental institutions. Beyond students and academic staff of the university, members of the wider public were richly represented in the audience. The discussions were open and argumentative, often reflecting the animated spirit of the electoral debates.

Reference to what was called the social question in the title of the series enabled speakers to address economic and social preconditions for meaningful democratic engagement. In addition, cultural and institutional—for instance, federalism—background values that encourage and support democratic values and practices received attention. Above all, the forum demonstrated the importance of continual citizen participation and debate to ensure accountability of government, social consensus and citizen competence required for genuinely free, informed elections.

We hope these robust public conversations will continue to be hosted by AAU's academic community. I trust, too, that our partners, the Goethe-Institut Addis Abeba and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung will continue to sponsor similar fora toward the creation of a democratic culture in Ethiopia. To keep this emergent tradition going AAU and its two partners are now agreed to start a new series on tradition and modernity in Ethiopia in order to address the conception and reception of modernity in various spheres of Ethiopian life, including public life, the arts, gender, education, urban life. We trust that many from the university and wider community will join this ongoing quest for distinctively Ethiopian perspectives on modernity.

30 November 2009   Prof. Andreas Esheté
                                     President Addis Ababa University

Preface

The present publication is not only a collection of lectures on the theme "Democracy and the Social Question" which were held and openly debated at the Addis Ababa University's Ras Mekonnen Hall and the Goethe-Institut Addis Abeba between 2005 and 2007. It is also the result of the good will and open political dialogue of many politicians, academics, diplomats, journalists and other dedicated individuals in Ethiopia during a time in which there seemed to be more room for dissent than for consensus. As the coordinator of the lecture series and the editor of this book, Dr. Ulrich Müller-Schöll, states in his introduction the idea for the lecture series was born within the Addis Ababa University. The realisation of this idea, however, was a true partnership between three institutions which share a common interest in education, research, dialogue, arts and international understanding: the Addis Ababa University, the German Cultural Institute "Goethe-Institut" and the German private educational institution "Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung".

In spite of these joint efforts, the present publication is by no means a complete monograph of all the challenges and topics within the wider framework of the theme "Democracy and the Social Question". On the contrary, we would like to remain modest and admit that there are many questions that remain to be discussed and that we have simply collected some contributions to democratic dialogue in Ethiopia. Some of them take up issues of Ethiopia, while others look at experiences of other countries which might present valuable insights.

This publication collects the contributions of the first two years of the series—we have not been able to document and publish all the lectures, nor to summarize the valuable discussions we had with so many university students, government officials, members of parliament, academics, representatives of NGOs, international organisations

and diplomats. And although some years have gone by now, we think that this modest contribution in the form of a book contains points which are still valid for the present as well as for the challenges that lie ahead.

Our thanks go to all those who have contributed to the success of this series: to Muhammed Habib, who first raised the idea to the series; to the President of AAU, Prof. Andreas Esheté, who always supported the series; to the former heads of the Goethe-Institut Addis Abeba, Dr. Werner-Dieter Klucke and Friedrich Wilhelm Engelhardt, and of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Hartmut Hess, who vigorously supported the implementation of the idea; to our moderators who facilitated brilliantly the often very lively discussions; to Elisabeth Woldegiorgis who generously offered Ras Mekonnen Hall for the lectures; to the technical staff of AAU, Goethe-Institut and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: Mesay Yohannes and his team, Mengesha Hailemelekot, Heran Getachew, Endale Tilahun and Abdustar Yusuf; to Ekram Mohammed and Yared Abraham, who transcribed the lectures; to Sam Coetzee, who edited the texts; to our media partners Capital and Reporter (Amharic version).

Last but not least special thanks to the programme manager of Goethe-Institut, Tenagne Tadesse: Without her experience, her network and her high reputation within Ethiopian society the organisation of this series would not have been possible.

Dr. Bekele Gutema	Dr. Elke Kaschl-Mohni	Dr. Sabine Fandrych
Associate Professor	*Director Goethe-Institut*	*Resident Representative*
Department of Philosophy	*Addis Abeba*	*Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,*
Addis Ababa University		*Addis Ababa Office*

"Maybe we have another imperfection that we need to work on."
Prof. Kinfe Abraham on the Ethiopian Democracy

Introduction
Ulrich Müller-Schöll

The idea to this lecture series came up in summer 2005. At that time, in the aftermath of the May 15 elections, a number of problems had been witnessed. It was clear that crucial elements of the Ethiopian democracy were still under construction: central institutions of the state had not been ready to support the democratic process adequately; in the countryside people had had problems to inscribe in the electoral register; within the ruling party opinions on democracy diverged; out of more than 20 groups the opposition parties had formed two coalitions but it spoils nothing to say that their problem solving contributions were vague. Officials or observers, nobody was so immodest to pretend that Ethiopia had more than just "embarked on democracy". Nevertheless the conviction was widely shared that the country had witnessed the hitherto most democratic elections in Ethiopia and "a great leap forward" towards a multiparty system.

In this situation it was one of the vice-presidents of the Addis Ababa University who highlighted the importance to discuss seriously and openly the necessary preconditions, elements and consequences of democracy. For a fairly long period it had seemed that by their western promoters a close connection between democracy and economic liberalism was accepted if not openly promoted despite social consequences like the growing gap between rich and poor, disappearing family liaisons and deteriorating social networks. How to imagine democracy in combination with sustainably resolved social problems? For our Ethiopian partners this was the foremost question. The Germans, grown up in a Social Market Economy and considering social justice as one of the most relevant issues of democracy, needed a moment to understand this impact. The result was the idea of creating a platform for all issues of social implementation of democracy to be discussed,

by Ethiopians as well as by representatives of the international community living and working in Addis Ababa.

The planned beginning in November 2005 coincided unluckily with those now notorious riots in connection with the election results. This was a critical moment. The organisers wondered if it was wise to start up a series with political content. But the encouragement especially from the Ethiopian side (from the university as well as the elite at large, from representatives of the government as well as from members of the opposition) convinced them. They just decided to open up the horizon of "social"—in the sense of concerning all issues of and views on society. In the opening of the series the former French Ambassador to Ethiopia, Stéphane Gompertz, underlined this larger understanding by the choice of his topic. He speaks about the riots in the suburbs of Paris which, like in Addis, were mainly conflicts between the authorities and young unemployed people—a case of "social integration" in an extended understanding of democracy: how to reach people for the democratic discourse and responsible commitment, beyond the polling at the election day?

The series shows an impressive variety of contributions. A broad number of questions related to Ethiopia's current social and democratic situation is raised which can be classified within five sections. In the *first* one *sectors of the society* that matter for democratic development are addressed—economy, culture, media:

- Democracy cannot grow without a *well established economy* as its basis. On behalf of his government and the EPRDF the Ethiopian Minister of Capacity Building, *Ato Tefera Walwa*, underlines this, however, without postponing the democratisation process: "Our school of thought is to go for both at a time". It is the balance between both which counts, he stresses.
- Therefore a *democratic culture* caring for fair play and for accountancy towards the citizens is required, reckons *Robert Scott Dewar*, former Ambassador of the U.K. to Ethiopia. He recommends "mutual respect within law and constitution", otherwise no confidence in the impartiality of the "state machinery managing the elections" will grow.
- He also underlines the importance of press freedom: By the new Ethiopian press law, however, press freedom is going "from good

to bad to worse" deplores *Amare Aregawi*, former Director of Ethiopian TV and today editor in chief of the weekly *Reporter*. In his critical statement he raises six concrete requests, among them to transform the government controlled media into public media and to free defamation from being handled as a crime.

The *second* section takes into account that democracy and its elements develop under *specific Ethiopian circumstances*—i.e. in a culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse developing country.

The German Ambassador *Claas Dieter Knoop* invokes that federalism is "a powerful tool" and "a very appropriate way to produce a stable political and constitutional platform to resolve conflicts".

Mikhail Y. Afanasiev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ethiopia, thus representative of a multi-national country, highlights the importance of regional and national *symbols*. He identifies nationalism as a "powerful political force", and "one of the most effective integrating ideologies" comparable to religious convictions, allowing to overcome resistance to radical reforms. It is "of no less importance to a state than properly secured borders or a constitution". Only a solid basis of state institutions will lead the society to consent to "the necessity of democratic reforms".

In his search for the "root causes" of Ethiopia's development problems the former President of the Republic, *Negaso Gidada*, is rather focussing on the opposite. In his opinion Ethiopia suffers from the *Naftanyaa system*, a longstanding political power relation in which the gun reigns and the victims are oppressed. "Readiness to submit to the will of the people", i.e. decidedly free and fair democratic elections would be the necessary ignition to the development of a cross-cultural understanding.

Conflicts of identities within a multiethnic society came up when clashes between students of different ethnic background took place at Addis Ababa University. The lecture series discussed the issue in a panel discussion. Having done his PhD on this matter *Assefa Fiseha* indicates a number of causes: power relations, but also the lacking efficiency of the university administration.—By studies on "Ethnicity and Inter-ethnic Communication" *Anteneh Tsegaye* has learned that

"how to interact cross-culturally" is highly dependent on "political stability ... at the national level".

How did other countries bring together their social environment with democratic convictions?

This question is addressed in the *third* section presenting *several case studies from western democracies*.

Stéphane Gompertz underlines that "the re-emergence of a genuine demos" should be questioned and that democracy must be applied not only to the political but (with obvious limitations) also to the economic sphere: In Sweden a good deal of this claim has already been realized if we follow *Prof. Kinfe Abraham* who lived in Sweden for nearly two decades. Sweden's main step to democracy, he reckons, is having managed to create a welfare state between socialism and capitalism, in which the will of the majority is anchored in a justly distributed industrial surplus. African governments don't emphasise development sufficiently: "They have the carrot but not the horse."

Staffan Tillander is opposed to any "preconditions" for the functioning of democratic institutions: on the contrary, he defends that democratic mechanisms allowed to "channel through" interests and thus firstly created the "basis for growth and development". Sweden, in the early 1900s still one of the poorest countries in Europe, is among the richest today because of a longstanding, reliable universal suffrage since the 1910s. It is this development that has been making consensus-building on economic development possible.

A mechanism which is also presented in detail by the former Austrian Ambassador *Brigitte Öppinger-Walchshofer*. The Austrian "Parity System", organising Social Partnership between labour, business and government, often turns out as a prerequisite for political solutions, holding unbridled competition of market liberalism down. "What we did Ethiopians can do, too."

In the *fourth* section on the *contribution by international organisations Timothy Clarke*, former head of the representation of the European Union Commission in Addis Ababa, highlights the "fundamental values and principles" by which Europe promotes democracy, but concludes that Europe has no "model" to offer and that building up stable structures requires "home-grown" democratic institutions.

This is the reason why the World Bank puts the focus on Good Governance rather than on democracy. *Ishac Diwan*, former regional director of the Bank in Ethiopia and Sudan, presents a kind of deconstruction of state institutions which are at stake when countries look for stable conditions bringing advantages and justice for all: be it democratic in a western understanding or not.

In the *fifth* section the process of *implementing democracy in Ethiopia* is under observation. *Temesgen Zewdie*, whip of the parliamentary opposition group of the CUDP in the *House of Peoples' Representatives*, reflects on one year of parliamentary experience. He sees "encouraging signs", but he also states a lack "of a sustained democratic political culture, a dedicated civil service and of democratic institutions", which results in a lack of "exemplary and tolerant life" in the mutual relations between members of parliament of different parties.

Merera Gudina, Associate Professor at AAU and Vice-Chairman of the opposition party UEDF, looks back to the May 15, 2005 elections. He sees five major problems for the democratisation process: manipulated elections, no envisioned role for opposition parties, no impartial civil administration, an Ethiopian federalism which has failed his historical mission by now, and all together a lacking national consensus.

Hopeful expectations are coming from Kembata Women's Selfhelp Center, a project in Southern Ethiopia. *Bogaletch Gebre* reports that the struggle against "gender apartheid" leads to lively freedom and makes women "the principal agents of change", inviting all people "to examine the historical period they live in", leading to a home-made democratic understanding of a common living together.

All in all there is agreement that democracy must be extended—but the question is how: by stressing national unity or federalist diversity, creating symbols or fostering principles? What comes first—economic development or democratic structures? What example can be adapted as a model? Donor countries may offer their own solutions, but for Ethiopia they can only have a limited value. Here, the successful mediation between government and opposition, undertaken by an elders' group around Prof. Ephraim Isaac and Pastor Daniel was probably one of the most promising events in the last years as it offered a

genuinely African solution to an open sore in the democratic development. But the outcome shows: Even if, in 2010, Ethiopians will organise the freest and fairest elections (which would be, however, a most encouraging and stabilising factor)—as long as there is no reliable ground consisting of confidence, prosperity and national democratic consensus Ethiopia's democracy will remain shaky. All parts and parties should be aware of it—an outcome which underlines the importance of an ongoing dialogue on democracy like the one which is documented in this publication.

I.
The Role of Society Sectors in Democracy

Democratising and Developing Ethiopia
A Dialogue Between Tefera Walwa, Minister of Capacity Building, and Claas Dieter Knoop, Ambassador of Germany

Claas Dieter Knoop

I feel very honoured that Ato Tefera Walwa, the Minister of Capacity Building, sits next to me at this table and is ready to join the discussion ...

There can be no democracy and no social welfare without a secure basis of life in any country. That goes for many African countries and this is true for Ethiopia. To put our discussion in picture, I will give a brief introduction into the development and the extent of German development cooperation, and also give a little background of our development cooperation priorities.

We recently celebrated 100 years of formal Ethio-German relationship. Informally there has been a much longer relationship—for hundreds of centuries actually. But we have had 100 years of diplomatic relations, and out of these 100 years we can look back on 40 years of development cooperation between our two countries.

The core task of our engagement here in Ethiopia is poverty reduction. The fight against poverty is not just a dictate of solidarity, it is also crucial for the maintenance of peace, stability and the preservation of the environment for future generations. Germany's development cooperation seeks to raise living standard by economic growth, social justice and environmental sustainability. German commitments are based on an analysis of key development criteria: good governance, a functioning market economy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and participation of all parts of society in the decision making process.

Ethio-German development cooperation is re-negotiated every three years. Compared to other donors we have quite a long commitment to Ethiopia. Our total development cooperation with Ethiopia

during the past 40 years—and when I read this figure I could not believe it, but I think it is true—amounts to 1.2 billion Euros. This is quite a considerable amount. Our annual official development assistance is about 40 million, including emergency and debt relief. After the United States and the United Kingdom, Germany is the third biggest bilateral donor, accounting for four per cent of the total official development assistance.

In 2002 three key areas were identified. First: rural development—sustainable use of natural resources. Second: governance—decentralisation, the role of regions and urban development. Third: vocational training—during the negotiations in 2005 both governments decided to enhance the latter area and to transform it into the Engineering Capacity Building Program.

[...]

The necessary growth rates to overcome poverty can only be reached by massive efforts to enhance private sector development and urban centres as growth poles. This needs bold government action. ecbp, the Engineering Capacity Building Program, is our main contribution in this regard.

Let me conclude by confronting the often heard statement that Ethiopia receives less aid per capita than other Sub-Saharan countries. Basically the figures presented are misguiding. […] More important than increasing the aid to Ethiopia is the need to use it better.

There are three proposals which I would like to put to you as a matter of discussion for the development policy of Ethiopia in this regard:

First: stop the self-perpetuating emergency business and become a food self-sufficient country.

Second: use the capacity of NGOs for service delivery. With approximately 550 million dollars NGOs provide investments and running costs for service delivery, drinking water, irrigations, food and health centres. Use their capacity in planning, identifying needs and implementing projects by financing them with the increasing Ethiopian government funds for the regions. Germany is experienced in creating and enabling environments for a division of task between the state and social actors, for instance associations, churches and cooperatives.

Third: use the private sector dynamics, including the Diaspora and foreign investors for growth. In other words: change the financial sector and strengthen the judicial system to create the right environment for investment in this country.

As far as Germany is concerned, we will continue in our long term commitment with Ethiopia.

Tefera Walwa

I feel very much honoured to join this very diverse audience. There are elderly people with grey hair and young people who might be students; lecturers, foreigners and Ethiopians, the university community, government officials and representatives from diplomatic missions. I never thought this would happen. The organisers told me that there would be an audience, but I never expected it to be so diverse. This is a wonderful surprise. However, I am not surprised at the forum. I am very well informed indeed. So let me come to a few points.

First, I would like to expose the way the relationship between democracy and development is raised here in Ethiopia. We fully agree that without means for survival, a democratisation process is impossible. Let me pinpoint, however, what is our school of thought about democratisation and development. There are some theories promoting that development must come first and democracy later. Another school of thought pretends that both can be achieved simultaneously. Then there are many political scientists and a number of economists who highlight experiences of East Asia and other countries stating that they were democratised later on. So, why should not Ethiopia be democratised later on? We don't agree with this school of thought. We vehemently object to it, and we strongly believe that both can only be achieved if both are done simultaneously in the most efficient and effective fashion.

For that matter, the Ethiopian government and the party I belong to, the EPRDF, promote a concept and sense of urgency. Democratising and developing Ethiopia does not mean: at *any* time. It must be done in a very short period of time—now! We can either succeed, or fail and disintegrate. The alternatives are: to do it at the right time and with

success or, if democratisation and development fail in that given period of time, the consequence will be disintegration of our society. Disintegrated societies had and have shown: Failure in this respect leads to disintegration. Therefore, my point is, and I would like to stress this strongly, that our school of thought is to go for both at a time. By the way, one must be aware that this is a terribly theoretical argument, disseminated all over the world, probably discussed actively in your university as well.

The second point I would like to raise now is: the Ethiopian government and the German government have embarked on a new programme of cooperation. Of course, there has been cooperation over the last 40 years or so. On behalf of the Ethiopian government, we especially welcome the cooperation we have initiated now: the Engineering Capacity Building Program. This cooperation is more effective than ever—that is our understanding. From the point of view of the Ethiopian-led government I would simply like to remember: there was a delegation led by the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the former chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder. In our discussions, the Ethiopian side clearly said that if Germany would cooperate with Ethiopia in this programme it would be better done than in any other one.

There is a very serious and important reason behind this, which the Ambassador of Germany did not mention. The main reason of our belief in ecbp is our understanding of the German experience. Germany has suffered from many wars in different times. And if we take the last one, the Second World War, Germany revived and became successful very fast. We have been studying why and how this happened—after war and destruction, Germany, in a short period of time, became very successful and is now the third largest economy in the world.

The reason is that the know-how and skill system in Germany is a special one. Through our studies we found out something that may shed light on this. I visited China to find out if there are some areas of cooperation for our Engineering Capacity Building Program. I visited a number of ministers in Bejing. All of them asked, "What are you going to do now". I told them that we already had some serious cooperation with Germany, and that we were now exploring possible cooperation with China. All of them automatically replied: "Now you are at

the wrong place. Once you are in Germany and with German engineering companies you have hit the nail on the head. You don't need to come to China anymore." That's what they told us.

Then we tried to find out how Japan went out from its past to its present. If you go to some hotels in Japan, the way of dressing is what they learned from Germany some years back. While that dress might not exist in Germany anymore, it still exists in Japan. And they learned not only the know-how, but the skill and the way to dress themselves. My point is: having done all these studies we finally come to conclude that the right place for us to cooperate with Germany is in the field of the Engineering Capacity Building Program.

As a side note, the Engineering Capacity Building Program is the wrong name for the programme. We have been criticised several times about this, but once we had set it we are unable to change it. The right name would have been "Industrialisation Programme for Ethiopia".

So our main reason to cooperate with Germany is to industrialise Ethiopia faster. In addition, the experience of Germany and its cooperation will definitely help us—to go ahead as fast as possible, and to meet our concept and sense of urgency.

Now let me come to a question raised here in the discussion: how to deal with unemployment. If we are not capable enough to deal with unemployment reasonably, in a reasonable time, we will have serious problems. The Engineering Capacity Building Program, among many other capacity building programmes, is therefore the main programme working to deal with unemployment. How? That is the question. When we work on the technical and vocational system, that is to deal with the youth, which must become knowledgeable and skilled in order to be employed and be able to create businesses and employment for themselves.

And if we look at the university system, where we are trying to achieve German standards, what do we hope to achieve? We seek efficiency and creativeness in order to be capable to compete in the international market. What does this mean? It is creating employment and opportunities, be it at home or abroad, for our professionals. I could also take the value chains for the private sector. Our industrialisation can only be achieved as a result of a broad private sector. The ecbp approach to the private sector, for example the agro-processing value

chain, means that there are clear links all the way from the final product of the industry back to the primary product of the farmer. What are we doing? We are creating employment opportunities, whether employed in an enterprise or self-employed. Through these mechanisms and by accelerating and sustaining development we are trying to achieve double digit progress immediately. I think that the question of unemployment can only be addressed in this way. We think there is no other way. That is why our latest political programme is setting a target of minimum of seven per cent GDP growth every year. We wish and have to go for more than that—but the minimum we want to secure is seven per cent. I think that is the most crucial issue to be addressed.

Finally, let me come to the point the Ambassador raised in which I would like to contest him. You said: Ethiopia is getting its fair share of international aid and loans in comparison to the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. The figures I want to oppose are not our figures. These figures are the figures of the World Bank, the IMF and the European Union. And these figures show us that Ethiopia's share per capita is less than 15 US dollars while the average in Sub-Saharan Africa is about 25 US Dollars per person. So, if there are new figures you found we have to share them. Otherwise, I seriously contest that this is the case.

Now I think you commented, and I must now criticise myself as a minister. Probably, I might not have provided you the right information. Ethiopia's remittance is much less than the remittance of neighbouring countries. Even if you take the Somalian case which is a case of a stateless country: its remittance is higher than the Ethiopian one. So for making you have some wrong facts, I can take the blame. But I wish we could sort out this contest somewhere, sometime, the sooner the better.

Claas Dieter Knoop

Thank you, Ato Tefera, for these very comprehensive answers to very relevant questions. As far as the figures are concerned—we will certainly come back to this and compare our figures as soon as possible.[1]

I can agree to everything you said. I think it is no question that democratisation and development have to go hand-in-hand, and, of course, we are also very flattered by what you said about the German "Wirtschaftswunder", the German "economic miracle" after the Second World War.

After the Second World War, even when the country was destroyed by 80 per cent, we still had a very skilled work force. The skill was there, in people's heads. It all boils down to the education—education, education, education. This is what it is all about! The trouble is that all these things have to happen at the same time and very quickly, as you said. So, to make this a success it is absolutely necessary that all forces of the society work together. That is not possible if you have trouble. So, what is necessary is to really convince all layers of society, including civil society, that we are talking about the future of Ethiopia, and that everybody must take his share of responsibility.

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1 According to official figures in 2006, with 27 USD per capita, Ethiopia ranked far below the Sub-Saharan average of 52 USD (source: World Bank). According to absolute figures of Official Development Assistance, however, apart from the two special cases of Iraq (war) and Nigeria (debt relief), Ethiopia ranked first place (5.645 Billion USD) before Tanzania (5.632 Billion, source: OECD).

Democracy and Press Freedom
Amare Aregawi

Last week I was in Cape Town.[1] 1900 journalists, editors and reporters gathered to talk about press freedom in the world. When we talk about press freedom, we are talking about freedom. I want to emphasise this point publicly, to ourselves and to the government, because there is a misunderstanding of the very concept of press freedom. To me freedom of the press in Ethiopia is in danger from within and from without. We were discussing the situation of freedom of the press in North Africa. It is amazing how much press freedom is in danger there, on one side from the government, on the other from armed people who won't let any journalist tell the truth in a fundamental way. We were discussing the situation in Latin America. Press freedom was and is in danger from the government and the drug lords. Back in Ethiopia, I will try to focus the danger here.

Let me be generous first: we journalists ourselves are not good with respect to freedom of the press. Before I criticise the government, let me criticise the press itself, including myself.

Problems from within the press

1. There is little understanding of the essence of press freedom in the private press as well as in the government press. The government press thinks it is free, while the private represents the opposition. The private press thinks it is free while the government press is opportunist. Thirdly in Ethiopia we think what makes us unique is the red fox, the rock churches or the nyala animals. We are also unique regarding the press. Only in Ethiopia will a newspaper say: don't read that one, don't watch that programme. Freedom of the press means: watching, reading whatever you like. In Ethiopia even the journals and the newspapers themselves do not want to read any opinion or want the public to accept any opinion except their own one. Our basic problem is that we don't understand the concept of press freedom.

2. Lack of professionalism: we don't have professionalism, we didn't go to schools of journalism. In the history of Ethiopia, for the last 30 years, we were cut off from the West. Of course, we came from Russia with diplomas in journalism. But the transcription says we have been to Russia for many years: two years learning Russian; three years studying Marxism-Leninism; two years visiting Uzbekistan, nothing about journalism. We have a journalism department in the Addis Ababa University which came very late. Sorry to say that: I really doubt if there are real journalists. So we lack professionalism.

The other obstacle to press freedom is the low institutional capacity. No skilled human resources, no finance, no newspapers with their own publishing press. The payment for journalists is very low. Thus there is no institutional capacity to fight for press freedom. As long as there is a lack of ethics and rules of conduct we face a real problem in understanding and fighting for the essence of press freedom.

3. There is no self-regulatory body. We don't have a press council. In other countries the press controls itself. In Ethiopia we don't have that. Therefore it is exposed to the police or to the court to regulate the press.

Without a common platform, association and code of conduct we cannot be real fighters for press freedom.

Thus problem number one in Ethiopian press freedom is us ourselves: journalists are not good actors of freedom of the press. We have a problem from within.

Problems from without

What about from without? For the time being, I will focus on the government only because we don't have an opposition who believes in press freedom neither. It is the same problem: If you criticise them they are angry; you are free when you criticise the government, and you are its sub-author if you criticise the opposition. The same sickness and the same bias. Anyway I won't talk about the opposition now—I only focus on the government.

In order to assess the situation of the government activities vis-a-vis press freedom let us see what our government has signed. The government has accepted article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights, a beautiful law. And they have adapted article 19 in article 29 of the Ethiopian constitution. No question, this is wonderful. The African charter on Human and People's rights — signed. The Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression — we have signed it. The Windhoek Declaration on African broadcasting — we have signed it. New partnership for African Development — we have signed it. We have signed all of these declarations — but the reality is quite different.

Ethiopia is far from being exemplary, even by African standards. We have signed all these beautiful laws. We have got a very good constitution in article 29 but in practice we don't have. Let me read article 19 and 29:

Article 19: *Everyone has a right for freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference to seek, receive and impart ideas, information through any media regardless of any frontiers.*

Let me highlight four points:
1. To hold opinion without interference
2. To seek it
3. To receive it
4. To impart information
what means: through any media regardless of any frontier — very good!!

Then let us come to article 29 of our constitution:
1. *Everyone has the right to hold opinion without any interference.*
2. *Everyone has a right to freedom of speech and expression without any interference. These rights include freedom of information to seek, receive, impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any media of his choice.*
3. *Freedom of the press and other mass medias and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed. Freedom of the press shall specifically include the following elements.*
   A. Prohibition of any form of censorship, B. Access to information of public interest.

4. *In the interest of free flow information and ideas and opinions which are essential for the function of a democratic order the press shall, as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions.*

You cannot have any better constitution than this: any media, in the form of oral or written, guaranteed no censorship.

The sad thing about the freedom of the press in Ethiopia is, despite such a wonderful article in our constitution, that when we come to practice, there are frontiers, limitations, restrictions.

Government-centered problems

Let me raise some of the government-centered problems:

Inconsistent and restrictive legislation environment: media laws that are inconsistent with constitutional law. We will come to this later.

Last Thursday, the draft for broadcasting became a law. Let us compare the constitutional article 29 here and see the broadcasting law there. Here it says: "to be given to any Ethiopian". There it says: "it is going to be auctioned". Here it says: "without any restriction". Here it puts eight restrictions. So, the first question that comes up is: Why don't they respect our constitution? Why are our practices of laws and rules against the very constitution? That is the problem: the guidelines and regulations of the executive are nullifying the legislative. Another danger for press freedom: the highest body of our constitution, all over the world, is the parliament. Eight years ago, the parliament came up with a broadcasting law saying that any Ethiopian can have a private radio and television station. Then the minister of information intervenes, acting against the legislative in the parliament. Yes, he says, the law says you can have radio and television, but I am not going to give you television: the executive against the legislative. The next what he says is: I give you only radio but not short wave, only FM. Then, when it says FM, it is going to give only two. So, where is the decision of the parliament? A legislation nullifies the rules of the parliament. Why the actual implementation is not in conformity

with the Ethiopian constitution? These are dangers for the Ethiopian press freedom: You are at the disposal of individuals.

Cumbersome and restrictive provisions in the draft press and the broadcasting laws: The eligibility is amazing. The registration is hectic. The licensing is repressive, content restriction is amazing, and there is no flow of information. Suspension and banning—we have seen it at large this year. Access to information: first government media, second party media, third private media. We, the private media, are not treated equally. Heavy penalties, amazingly heavy penalties.

The other point is: the non-independent, non-neutral government controls the regulation body. One of the tragedies of press freedom is: if you are going to have real press freedom in our country, the first wisdom is that the body that regulates the press should be independent, accountable to the parliament. In Ethiopia, accountability is to the minister of information. The minister of information basically is a spokesperson. This spokesperson controls the private press, and we are accountable to him. This body will want me to agree with the thinking of the spokesperson. That is why you don't make the spokesperson at the same time a regulatory body. First it has to be independent and accountable to parliament. Second it is not only that the spokesperson should be independent and non-governmental but those who are appointed to this regulatory body should be neutral and non-partial—we don't have it in Ethiopia.

The other problem is: our government does not really recognise the role of the private press. It is really sad, when a prime minister is a prime minister for 16 years and he starts calling the private press for a press conference in his 15th year. Why? Because they are thinking that the private press bothers, is damaging. With such an attitude people will not know freedom of the press. In order to get freedom of the press, the private press should have a recognition. The private press has got a role, in the economy, in democracy, in peace and development. Our government lacks to recognise this.

The other problem is not only with the private press but also with the government press. There is a difference between government media and public media. Public media are very important. They can be government-funded, but they should have editorial independence. Look at the BBC. Whose money is it? It is government money. But by

law it has editorial independence. Whether it is the Labour Party or the Conservative Party, they don't care. Ethiopia deserves a public media. Unfortunately we don't have it, ours is a government's media.

Heavy-handed court measures: It is amazing how much one article of a defamation law, a legal law in Ethiopia, is damaging the press freedom situation in Ethiopia. Whatever you write, somebody comes and says it is defamation and takes you to court. This is not fair.

I have seven cases in court. I have to go there because only the editor-in-chief can go. All of them are in one bench, in bench number 10. One time I had five cases at one time. We wrote about telecommunication, and it was called defamation. You write about anything, and it is considered defamation. In other countries the defamation law has become not criminal but civil law. Ghana has abolished it, defamation law has become civil law. If you feel you are defamed you decide to defend yourself. But in Ethiopia the defamation becomes the most damaging article, it's a criminal law. You write about any institution and the Minister of Information comes and says it is defamation. So how are you going to fight corruption? Such heavy-handed court measures are inhibiting the free press.

The problem in Ethiopian press freedom laws is not only the rules that we find in the press law. There are other laws which are damaging press freedom. Let's take the anti-corruption law as an example. There is a law that says if a whistle blower brings information to the anti-corruption lawyer, he will not be prosecuted. If he gives it to the media, he can be charged. That means: don't give information to the media. That is one problem.

Or take the investment law. There is one article which states that any investor who invests in industry or agriculture will receive a tax free incentive. The sad thing is the exceptions. And the first exception is the media. Nobody gives us incentives, nobody sees us as an investment.

There is the draft becoming election law. One article says: Media cannot inform about democratic elections without the permission of the Election Board. The very purpose of the press is to educate, inform and entertain. If I am going to ask permission to educate about it, what should I suffer from the beginning?

You might remember: three years ago, a draft press law came up. There was a tough fight against it. They couldn't make it a law. One morning we read that the first four notorious articles in the draft form had become a law in the penal form. So, if you want to see the laws on press and broadcasting media, you have to read and know not only the press law but those which are hidden in the penal code, in the Election Board, in the investment law. They are scattered. If you want to clearly analyse the situation of the press, you have to see every "Negarit Gazata" in this country. Beside the Reporter, we have as a sister company the Horn of Africa Press Institute. The time we spent and the articles we find scattered here and there in Ethiopian laws is amazing.

Taken together, this shows a weakening of Ethiopian press freedom. Instead of building our strength regarding press freedom it is a retreat. We have got a beautiful constitution regarding press laws. Just read article 29. At the beginning the press law said: a journalist has the right to get information, and any governmental authority is obliged to give information. One should think: This is a good law. Let us build on it. But in the next draft press law this was cancelled. It was replaced by an article that says if a journalist wants to get information he should write a letter three months ahead to the public relations department of the Ministry of Information. Now compare: One law says you have got the right to get information, officials have the obligation to give, and then another draft comes that says: to get information apply and wait for three months, and we can say no, too. Is this a step forward or backward?

Two examples

Let me give you two examples from the broadcasting law that passed as a law last Thursday. The international standard says that any regulatory body should be independent, non-partisan and neutral. This is the good norm.

In 1999 there was a draft law for broadcasting. It says the regulatory body is accountable to the Prime Minister. It became a law. We said: please make it rather accountable to an independent body. We

were expecting they would listen. But the third version says it was accountable to the Minister of Information. A step forward or backward? Backward! Because the Minister of Information is a spokesperson. Imagine this spokesperson is regulating my radio station, speaks for me! You see: It goes from good to bad to worse.

Another example, regarding the licensing and eligibility issue. What does the international standard say: no blanket prohibitions on awarding broadcasting licenses. Decision on a case-by-case basis with focus on ensuring diversity. In comparison to this the 1999 version has got three restrictions—on political parties and religious institutions. The one from last week has got eight restrictions. It talks about health, if you were in prison or are insane you can't get a broadcasting license. But if you are insane you can even be a pilot. The international standard is good, the 1999 law was bad, we complained, but the 2007 version is much worse. Take the time frame: the international standard requests speedy decisions. In the 1999 law anybody who wanted to get into the media had to get the license within 30 days. In the version of last week it is up to the decision of the Ministry of Justice. It could be 30 days, it could be 300 days. You don't have a guarantee to say that you get this license on this or that day.

The international standard considers freedom of expression as a human rights issue, and our constitution says: through any means, weather art, oral or by printing. The 2007 law says: radio is going to be auctioned. You don't auction democracy! So my worries are: we are backsliding.

Recommendations to enhance press freedom

So, what is the solution? I have considered the dangers from two angles, and the solution for the freedom of the press first has to be found within the press itself.

To create a free and responsible media,
1. media professionals should create a common professional platform i.e. association and discuss their problems. It is important to sit together. If we are scattered, we can't fight for the freedom of the press.

2. We need a journalist's ethics and a code of conduct.
3. We must create a press council to regulate ourselves rather than to be regulated by the government.

What do we expect from the government side? We expect it to:
1. Respect article 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution and international principles of freedom of the press and consistency of all laws: press, information, broadcasting and information laws with the constitution has to be ensured.
2. Create an independent non-governmental and neutral regulatory body accountable to parliament—proved by appointment of non-partisan members.
3. Recognise the role of the private press and facilitate its capacity building.
4. Transform government-controlled media into a public media with editorial independence.
5. Abolish defamation as a crime and place it under civil code.
6. Facilitate the creation of a forum bringing together the government and all media organisations to discuss about it.

I tried to raise some of the problems and suggest some solutions. This is my belief—I said this already when we celebrated freedom of the press on May 3: Unless we do not solve the problem from every direction, we are not going to solve it at all.

1   The lecture was held in June 2007.

Democratic Culture and Making Democracy Matter
Robert Scott Dewar

My starting point is to underline three things when talking about democratisation, which is part of a wider issue of good governance. Firstly, *no country possesses the perfect or the same system of democracy*. We are all learning; we must all be modest in our opinions, wherever we come from.

Secondly, we are talking about *a system of government which itself cannot be described as perfect*. As Winston Churchill said:

"Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government *except all those other forms* that have been tried from time to time."

But thirdly *democracy is the system of government* which all states which are serious about the role of their citizens and the quality of their government in serving their citizens are *choosing as the best*. There are 16 elections coming up in Africa alone in 2008. And as the Commission for Africa Report says, democracy is an absolute fundamental to ensure that a government is accountable to its people for its policies and actions.

Ethiopia went through a difficult election period in 2005, which had highs and lows. We are in a post-electoral phase, what you might call a lessons-learned or lessons-learning period. Elections *are* important because they provide a health check on the state of a democracy and how a citizen feels about its government and its political parties. But periods between elections are also important because the value of democracy is embodied in the universal principles it embodies and how these principles are implemented and what they mean for the life of the average citizen.

It is in this spirit that I have chosen to talk not so much about different systems of government or systems of democracy themselves but about universal democratic values and how they are applied in daily life, in other words about *democratic culture and making democracy matter*, making it matter to the average citizen.

Rather than trying to measure democratic systems one against another it is more useful to state some of the democratic principles, including accountability and transparency, which are universal and which need to be respected in any democracy and then look at what this means for daily life, look at their application on a continuing basis.

I laid out some aspects of the UK tradition in another speech shortly before the 2005 elections, which I believe embody some universal democratic principles:

- A fair democratic system accepted by all and a level playing field for all political parties;
- mutual respect within the law and constitution;
- all political parties accepting responsibilities, fair play and justice;
- non-violence, but instead peaceful policy-based debate and dialogue (not just polarisation and one side blaming the other and vice versa all the time);
- a free media and access to that media;
- leading to the key point that the voter is able to make a free and secret choice as to which candidate or party to vote for.
- In the UK, also, the civil service, all public servants (including the security services and armed forces), should remain totally impartial and neutral and not linked to any party; we work for the State and carry out the policies of whatever government that is elected.

Such principles should contribute to a culture of democracy over time.

A key aim of democracy is to extend political participation of all citizens. For this, trust between citizens and the state is important, given that it underpins the credibility of the country. Creating the confidence of the citizen that democracy *does* matter—and that they should opt in not opt out—is important in ensuring such participation. The state has to show that no voter should fear anything by expressing his or her free choice. One important contribution to this, as mentioned above, is when public servants are known to be impartial and non-partisan, providing services without fear or favour to all citizens and carrying out the policies of whatever government may be elected. Another important signal is given when the state machinery managing the elections—i.e. the NEB in Ethiopia's case—is seen to be totally impartial. Also both sides, Government and Opposition, all need to ensure there is no harassment. Access by unbiased observers, ensuring that the elections administration is open to scrutiny right down to the lowest level, is also important for credibility. Then the Courts must be prepared to deal with electoral complaints fairly and rapidly. And finally it goes without saying that human rights must be respected. Any allegations of abuses need to be investigated and action taken publicly to remedy any breach of human rights.

All this is part of showing that there is indeed fair play and a level playing field.

Another aspect of a level playing field is money. The issue of money is important because effective political parties are needed for an effective democracy. The state can do something by helping fund all credible (legal?) parties—and in most cases should take such action. This can help make things fairer. Private sources will probably also be needed but this needs to be under clear guidelines. Provision of private money should not give privileged access to politicians or influence policies i.e. be able to buy or corrupt political power. Not only should politicians act ethically but the relationship between money and politics should be open to public scrutiny. Codes of conduct are important here, so are the regulatory authorities which make sure that codes of conduct are adhered to. They must have teeth.

In the UK we have a system whereby Parliament and the other stakeholders in our society-including crucially the media and civil society—have an important role of holding the executive to account. In all systems there should be a culture of being accountable, taking responsibility for what you manage. While expansion of government makes it difficult for a Head of Government or his/her Ministers to keep track of everything they are running, they should be expected to take responsibility when things go wrong as much as when things go right. Only by being open and honest and accepting mistakes can society learn from those mistakes. No part of any executive, including the

security services, can act with impunity, can act without being accountable, can act above the law. Everyone is accountable. No one is above the law.

Freedom of expression and of right to information are also generally acknowledged as key ingredients of democratic culture. It permits citizens to realise other rights. Information is a vital commodity, the life blood of democracy and not having information and knowledge can tilt the playing field. Ordinary voters need to have choice of information so that their choice of candidate and party is based on balanced information. Tony Blair said "freedom of information is not just important in itself. It is part of bringing politics up to date, of letting politics catch up with the aspirations of the people and delivering not just more open but more effective and efficient government in future." Without knowledge you cannot act.

The famous Indian economist, Amartya Sen, has noticed that there has never been a substantial famine in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press. In many societies it is the wealthy and powerful who are better placed to interrogate the media and gain access to better information. For democracies to function citizens require access to a range of sources of information as a means to make informed political choices. Journalists just as much as politicians should be subject to rigorous codes of conduct. And if civil society are active, then access to information will be a valuable tool in the fights for social and economic justice.

Government and Opposition, indeed all politicians, all share equally the responsibility to make a democracy work and make it credible. They must accept that the democratic systems and principles need to be taken seriously. Both Government and Opposition must behave responsibly otherwise citizens lose faith in democracy. No genuine democracy works without a widespread belief in the values of democracy and the democratic system. The political class on all sides—ruling party or opposition parties—need to think about this.

One problem exposed in the last election was the polarisation of political views. It seemed that every view expressed either made the speaker someone seen as for or against something. The idea of constructive criticism, where differing policy positions can be presented but still have mutual respect and go and enjoy a cup of buna with your

political opponent afterwards, seemed to be lacking. Constructive criticism within an open debate still seemed to be regarded by the other side, whether that be the Government or the Opposition, as making the critic into an enemy. Mutual respect seemed to be lacking sometimes. There did not seem to be shades of grey, only black and white. Ethiopian society has to think about this. Constructive criticism and presentation of alternative policies is surely what enables Citizens through their elected institutions to hold the Government accountable. Policy dialogue and a culture of informed debate, presenting alternative policy views, is needed between all parties.

There also seemed to be a question about what multi-democracy means, what it is all about.

Firstly there needs to be a substantial choice of policies, rather than individuals or identity. That requires a politically educated and informed electorate.

Secondly, inevitably in any election there will be winners and losers. Will the winners, the ruling party of the day, acknowledge the importance of the Opposition, listen carefully to their views and allow them to show to their constituents that there is a reason why being in Parliament is important even if the Opposition MPs are not in power? Will the Opposition operate within the Constitution, accept the results and campaign constructively for another day, meanwhile presenting alternative policy choices, especially in Parliament? Do all politicians, Opposition and Government support the bigger democratic project namely the national democratic system, designed to be to the benefit of all ordinary citizens? Or do ruling party members regard Opposition merely as a nuisance and Opposition MPs merely criticise everything the ruling party propose for the sake of criticism?

The new Parliament with its new Parliamentary procedures, gives a new chance for such attitudes to change, for democratic culture to grow. But it is not just Parliament where space needs to grow. The public and private sectors, the media, the civil society and other stakeholders throughout the country have an important role to play.

The new generation coming through can perhaps provide a new democratic impetus. But they need to be motivated to have trust in the democratic system, to think that it is relevant to them. I think Ethiopian people, however poor, are like people—including poor

people—everywhere. They are smart. They do want genuine democracy as an essential component in improving their quality of life. It is not just a question of how much the economy is developing. In particular they want democracy in action at the local level. The right to have a say in decisions directly affecting their lives.

They also do want democratic values, democratic culture—and universal respect of human rights. All parties should respect the right of the ordinary voter to choose freely and fairly without pressure. Again as the CFA Report states, this needs to take place in a climate of genuine commitment to the principle of accountability towards a country's citizens, including the poor, not just towards interests of elites.

Ethiopia has set high principles under its constitution and its acceptance of NEPAD and African Peer Review. The challenge for Ethiopia, for all stakeholders in this young multi-party democracy, including those present here today, is to apply these principles in practice.

II.
Democratic Development under Specific Circumstances

Federalism and Democracy
Claas Dieter Knoop

I would like to share with you some thoughts about federalism and democracy and the impact of these political concepts in Europe and in the African context.

Let me start with a confession and statement. My confession is: I am a convinced federalist. I think that federalism and democracy are two sides of the same coin. So, the ideas I would like to share with you might be biased to a certain extent. My statement is, that one can look at the political concept of federalism from various angles. From the US-type of federalism, the Swiss, the Indian, Canadian etc. I would like to concentrate my thoughts on the German experience with the concept of federalism which goes back to the early 19th century and which was substantially influenced by the American experience, particularly by the famous Federalist Papers of Madison and Hamilton.

And I don't want to be too theoretical but rather focus my ideas on some *nine considerations* and observations which in my view are relevant for a modern implementation of a federal concept in a democracy.

But before coming to these considerations I think there is a need to draw your attention to the fact that there is a clear distinction to be made between a federation and a confederation. In the conventional definition a federation is a form of political organisation of non-sovereign members who form the federation which has the overall sovereignty. In a confederation however, the members remain sovereign. Bearing this important definition in mind I turn to my

First consideration:

Federalism is a sophisticated form of *power sharing* in the constitutional setup of a country.

In my country the concrete expression of power sharing is laid down in the German constitution. The constitution contains a clear distribution of competences between the federal level and the individual members of the federation (which in Germany consists of 16 different federal states, or as we call them in German "Länder"). To give you an example: the members of the federation have competences in the field of the education system, the police, environmental matters, whereas the federal authorities, for example, have exclusive competences in the field of foreign and defence policy.

The members of the federation are represented in the second chamber of our parliament—the Bundesrat (or Federal Council). According to the constitution the Federal Council has clearly defined rights to participate in the legislating process including in the procedures foreseen for amendments of the constitution.

If there is a dispute between the federal level and the Federal Council about their constitutional rights and obligations they can put this dispute to the Federal Constitutional Court for a decision. This has happened quite often in Germany during the past 50 years.

Second consideration:

Power sharing on the basis of a distribution of competences and clearly defined checks and balances between the federal level and the members of the federation is essentially a truly democratic element and value in the constitutional setup of a country. Because the basic idea of a democratic power sharing formula in a political system seems to me to bring the accountability of the elected as close as possible to the grass-root level—that is the individual citizen.

In other words: the more centralised a political system becomes, the more it puts itself at a distance to the ordinary men and women in the street and their day-to-day concerns and problems. This does not mean of course—and I want to stress this—that a highly centralised political system cannot by definition be also a democratic system! The federal concept however, tries to bridge the necessity that certain issues—such as foreign policy and defence matters—have to be dealt with on a federal level with the accountability of the elected to their voters for

matters which are of great relevance to their day-to-day life, such as education of their children etc. The experiences in Germany and many other federal systems give proof that such a division of powers in a political system can work very well. This brings me to my

Third consideration:

Federalism is also a powerful tool to maintain different identities in a country. What do I mean by this? I, for example, come from the smallest federal state in Germany—the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. With the exception of the 12 years of Nazi-dictatorship in Germany, my home city has successfully maintained a high degree of autonomy if not independence over many centuries in the German history. I am very proud of my city. We have our own traditions (and we have the soccer team Werder Bremen!) even our own North German dialect, which I can understand but—with the lack of practice—hardly speak fluently. The Bavarians have also a very strong sense of their traditions and culture—what we could witness just a couple of weeks ago during the Oktoberfest in Addis Ababa! These are but two examples of a very wide variety of cultural traditions in the sixteen different federal states which constitute the Federal Republic of Germany.

Federalism offers a formula to preserve all these traditions, different languages, dialects etc.—and in my view this is a very precious value in the political reality and life of a country.

The German constitution has accepted this high value by forbidding expressively an amendment of the constitution by which the federal system of the country would be abolished. We call this the "eternalisation" of the federal principal in our constitution. This strong protection of the federal system in our constitution is of course also a lesson learned from our immediate disastrous past during the Nazi terror regime, which centralised Germany in a way never seen before in our history.

The eternalisation of the federal system does not, by the way, mean that we cannot change the composition of our federal states. But this can only happen if the people agree to a change on the basis of a referendum. When, for example, two of our federal states—Berlin and

Brandenburg—tried to merge into one federal state, the people of Berlin voted in favour, the people of Brandenburg said no—so the merger did not come about (the reason for the no-vote of the Brandenburg people was clear: in case of a merger they would have to take over all the public debts of Berlin which amount of some 60 billion Euro). This brings me to my

Fourth consideration:

In a democracy the implementation of a federal system is not an easy task! In a centralised political system the decision making process is usually speedier and more cost-effective. In a federal system such as ours, decision making in the legislative process is very often a time consuming affair which also becomes politically very complicated if you find different political forces in power on the federal level and in the Federal Council which quite often has been the case in parliamentary German history of the past 50 years. Sometimes this leads to a virtual political deadlock where nothing can be achieved. This is of course frustrating for politicians and voters alike.

At the same time the federal system is costly: 16 parliaments in the federal states plus the federal parliament with its two chambers cost an awful lot of money! The money spent is of course tax-payers' money. Any federal system therefore needs clear rules how the taxpayers money is distributed amongst the federal level and the members of the federation. You don't need a lot of imagination to guess that this issue used to be sometimes a bone of contention between the federal level and the members of the federation, as it has been the case many times in Germany.

My fifth consideration

will reflect on something which we can observe in all modern federal systems around the world: there is a strong tendency of federal institutions to get as much power and influence as possible in running the affairs of the country. This, of course, is seen by the members of the federation with great suspicion, sometimes even with hostility. Why? Because it means that any increase of power in the federal institutions is a loss of power on the level of the individual members of the federation—and in the German case, a loss of power of the Federal Council where all our members of the Federal Republic are represented. In our post-war parliamentary history we find many examples for this power struggle between the two sides of the federation which seems almost to be unavoidable. To give you but one example for this: as I mentioned earlier, our "Länder" have the competence in the field of education and universities. It is quite understandable that despite this competence you need some kind of coherence and coordination on a country-wide basis in order to avoid a complete mess in the implementation of this competence. It would, for example, make no sense at all if someone who completed his baccalaureate in Bavaria could not study in Hamburg or Bremen! This means despite their exclusive competence in this area the federal members of the country need to coordinate themselves with the federal institutions and have to make arrangements for a practical and efficient harmonisation of basic elements in the educational system. In the final analysis this boils down to a loss of power and influence of the individual federal state for the benefit of the whole country.

I suspect that this mechanism is also one root cause why, for example, our British friends in the European Union have always looked with a high degree of scepticism at the European integration process, because they probably fear that too many things would end up under the control of the Brussels institutions. I shall elaborate on this a little later. The struggle for power in a federal political system carries me to my

Sixth consideration:

A political system based on federal elements will never be perfect as the concept of democracy can never be perfect. It is therefore important to note that we are talking about a living process which is always on the move for new objectives and to meet new challenges. This is a positive factor because no citizen really wants to live in a political system which does not respond adequately to changes, for example, in

the economic field or in the social/political environment in general terms. Even countries with a long and successful tradition of a federal system are constantly debating how they can improve on its implementation. This leads to another very important aspect in the concept of a federal systems and brings me to my

Seventh consideration:

How do you protect a federal system from disintegration? You can put this question also in a different manner: How can you preserve the integrity of a whole country in a federal democracy?

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, there are different ways to do this. In the German case we have two very strong principles laid down in our constitution that are a guarantee to maintain the integrity of the state:

- *First:* our federal states are obliged by constitutional law to "behave" in a manner which does not jeopardise the over-arching sovereignty of the federal institutions. In the German language we call this very important principle for the stability of the country "Bundestreue"—a word difficult to translate but meaning that all our federal states have an obligation to abide by federal legislation which is always supreme to legislation coming from the individual federal states, for example, from Bavaria.
- *Second:* The German constitution, however, provides for the possibility that others might join the federation. From the purely constitutional point of view it was therefore not difficult for the former GDR to join the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990. As the Federal Republic of Germany had never formally recognised the GDR as a subject of international law it was a rather simple act of the East German Länder to apply for becoming members of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Because of the very strong constitutional safe-guards in the German case a change of the federal system as such would only be possible in Germany in a revolutionary act or by way of replacing the present constitution on the basis of the vote of the people.

In my concluding remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to turn to the relevance of federalism for the European integration process and for the countries in Africa.

Eighth consideration:

First, let me turn to Europe. The former president of the European Commission, Professor Walter Hallstein (the only German by the way who ever had this job), once said, that the European Union was, and I quote, "an unfinished federal state". Well, this was said in the sixties of the last century, when the European Union—which did not even exist under this name at that time—had only six member states. After four waves of enlargement we now count 25 member states, next year we shall have 27 full members and we are in the middle of a new round of negotiations with even more countries.

It seems to me that before the background of these historic developments, Walter Hallstein's vision of a Federal State of Europe (some have later referred to this vision as the "United States of Europe") is no longer on the current political agenda. However, without going into details (because of time constraints) the present treaty which governs the European Union—the treaty of Nice and all its predecessors (Amsterdam, Maastricht, Rome) contain a manifold range of elements of a federal system, despite the fact that the EU is clearly not a federation in the conventional sense of the definition mentioned at the beginning of my presentation. This is even more true for the European constitutional treaty, which—so far—has not entered into force because a good third of member countries have not ratified it. I want to give you but a few examples of these federal elements:

- Transfer of sovereignty from member countries to the European Union and its institutions (for example: trade policy)
- Clear definition of who does what in the European Union (i.e. definition of competences of the EU and member states)
- Highly sophisticated and equally complicated decision-making process involving the EU-Institutions ("federal level") and the member countries
- The accepted principle that EU-law breaks national law

I shall leave it with these examples and would now like to turn to my last and

Ninth consideration:

The relevance of the federal concept for Africa as a whole and for individual countries and its impact on developing and maintaining democratic values.

When it comes to individual African countries, we have several existing examples for federal systems: our host country—Ethiopia—has a federal constitution which is also reflected in the official name of the country. Other federal systems include the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Tanzania. There are also some examples in history where attempts to install federal systems in Africa have failed: for example, the so-called Mali-Federation and the Central African Federation.

In my opinion the concept of a federal system can be seen as a very appropriate way to produce a stable political and constitutional platform to resolve conflicts between different forces in diverse societies—such as in Ethiopia—and it offers an effective tool for power-sharing. In this regard it is worthwhile to note that other countries who have longstanding experiences with the federal system, such as Switzerland, Canada, India and indeed Germany, can offer their advice for the management and development of such a system. In the case of Ethiopia this is indeed already happening, for example with a GTZ-expert in the House of Federation.

With regard to Africa as a whole it is worth noting that the African Union in its Charta of 2001 has taken on board some interesting ideas which are typical for the development of federal systems, for example,

- the setting-up of institutions such as the African Union Commission, the pan-African parliament, the council of ministers, etc. which one day might have similar powers and competences as the institutions of the European Union and
- the intention to regionalise important policy issues on the African continent on the basis of a reduced membership of regional economic organisations in Africa which very often have over-lapping memberships.

This day the African Union's working and decision-making methods are those of a classical international organisation, such as NATO or the United Nations, i.e.: so far there has been no transfer of sovereignty from the member states to the African Union institutions for the benefit of the whole continent and a more effective cooperation between member countries. I was very pleased to hear that during the visit of EU-Commission president Barroso the president of the AU-Commission M. Konaré apparently mentioned the need to discuss this issue in the African Union. The partial transfer of sovereignty to AU-Institutions in the interest of the whole continent would be indeed a substantive step which would change the quality of the African Union as an international organisation. It is up to the African leaders to make up their minds if they want to follow the European example which turned out to be a unique success in the long and often bloody history of international relations.

Democracy in Multiethnic Societies
Mikhail Y. Afanasiev

As far as my topic concerns "Democracy and multinational states" Russia is of great interest indeed. It boasts many ethnic communities on different levels (super-ethnos, ethnos, sub-ethnos, consortia and so on). Multiple ethno-national identities are characteristic of the population of the Russian Federation where several levels tie-in as follows: local and ethnic, all Russian and Russian speaking ("national" in the Western sense of the word), civilising (Eastern Christian or Islamic). In general these identities co-exist peacefully (as with other non-ethnic, non-national identities). This multiple identity is not unique to our country, but is a characteristic of many large (and not so large) states.

Within the majority of modern states, a multinational character is a historically established fact. Despite the existence of separate mono-ethnic states in which, thanks to peculiarities of historical development, the main nationality makes up the majority of the population (in the post-Soviet time, Armenia could be an example of this), the majority of democratising states have to settle complex national issues. In addressing these issues, the role of citizens' national identity has to be seen as key to the success of the democratisation process. National issues are also becoming more important through globalisation, where inter-governmental dialogue and migration are increasing and inter-ethnic borders are being erased. During the last century the world faced "ethnic cleansing", aggressive separatism, declarations of self-determination and problems arising from them. The "national" question is thus of increased importance when building a democratic society.

Democracy: a set-back of over 70 years

When speaking about democracy we have to consider some generally accepted standards for a democratic tradition to develop in society. These standards include stable democratic institutions, civic society, human rights and freedoms, free economic policy and so on and form visible mechanisms that encourage the realisation of democratic ideas.

However, hidden (and often irrational) facts play an equal role in the success or failure of democracy in transitional societies. A sense of national identity can help to understand and accept the democratic tradition, not only amongst the elite, but by society in general. It is no exaggeration to say that democracy cannot be built-up immediately; society must understand not only the "correctness", but the necessity of democratic reforms. It is only in this way that democratic values become accepted by society and also, crucially, defended by society.

As recent history shows, the creation of democratic mechanisms and institutions alone is no guarantee that democratic traditions will be consolidated. Moreover, the mistakes of democracy (for example in the socio-economic sphere) can bring about its quick collapse.

Also, let us remember that the most terrible regimes of the 20th century were not a consequence of uprisings against fearful dictatorships, but emerged because of the mistakes made by democracy. Examples of this can be found in the rise of Nazism in Germany, which was a result of the failures of the Weimar Republic, fascism in Italy and Franco's regime in Spain.

Russia is another example of what happens when democracies fail, although in Russia's case the Bolsheviks were not striking against a functioning democracy. Nevertheless, it is possible to see the October Revolution (or overthrow) as a response to the liberal regime which tried to use the mechanisms of democracy of its day. Because of this response, the development of democracy in Russia was postponed by more than 70 years.

The two sides of nationalism

The modalities of today's discussion are thus devoted to different aspects of building a sustainable democratic society in multi-national states by considering the details of historical development such as "nationalism" and "ethnic identity" and their role in the modern world.

Interest in nationality arose at the beginning of 19th century in Germany as a reaction against the "universalism" of Napoleon I. Even as early as the 15th and 16th centuries a sense of nation as language and cultural community was established in certain territories.

The term "nationalism" derives from the words natus and nata, which mean native son and native daughter. In world literature "nationalism" is understood to include both negative and positive phenomena in ethnic processes. Accordingly, the term can be considered from different points of view: as ideology, moral principle and as a form of self-consciousness. In a sense, nationalism can correspond to terms such as chauvinism, ethnic egocentrism and extremism. The Polish sociologist Shepagnsky provides us with the broadest definition of this type of nationalism: "Nationalism is the recognition that one's own nation is considered to be of the highest value." This brand of irrational nationalism offers an explanation of ideas of superiority of one nation over another, of the non-recognition of equality between peoples and intolerance towards other nations. Conversely, nationalism can be considered through the prism of national-liberation movements and even as patriotism. Not infrequently, nationalism was put on the same footing as national self-consciousness, national pride, devotion to national values and national struggle.

Attitudes towards nationalism have changed cyclically. States that were established on the fragments of great multi-national empires at the beginning of 20th century were able to do so under the flag of national self-determination. But this positive trend of nationalism exhausted itself after World War I—even before fascism came with its expansionist principles and concurrent ideas of chauvinism, racism and anti-Semitism.

After World War II and the liberation from Nazi and fascist occupation, as well as the subsequent collapse of colonial empires, a new euphoria surrounding national self-determination arose. But even at this stage the liberal tradition of supporting national self-determination was perverted to accommodate racism and warlike intolerance as a means to realise the ideas of nationalism. Nationalist convictions in developed democracies rapidly became discredited due to the alliance of nationalism with leftist anti-colonialism.

While the Western world regarded the creation of new, independent, post-Soviet states with apprehension, its support was uncritical. However, the ethnic conflicts which arose in these new states and in the former Yugoslavia confirmed the non-secure character of nationalism.

Thus, after initially pushing people towards the realisation of their democratic ambitions, nationalism underwent a transformation towards the gloomiest phenomena in modern history.

Ethno-national and nationalistic problems persisted even in developed countries and sometimes led to national disintegration (for instance with the Basques in Spain, Corsicans in France, Quebecois in Canada, the Northern Irish and Scottish in Great Britain). At the same time the readiness of these countries to settle their problems through non-violence and democratic institutions was not possible against a background of ethno-nationalism, particularly in its acute forms of national and territorial unity. Here we see that the very ideals of democracy are bound with the possibility of free will and self-determination.

At the same time there is no doubt that nationalism in its constructive form is a powerful political force. In recent European history, nationalism has been one of the most effective integrating ideologies view is the idea of nationalism as patriotism and national self-consciousness which, in times of global upheavals, can act as a form of shock therapy. This was witnessed during the period of socio-economic modernisation and democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe. Naturally, such processes face huge political and social resistance as their negative consequences become tangible far quicker than the long-term positives. To overcome resistance to radical reforms, patriotism and national self-consciousness are necessary and, in such cases, are very similar to religious convictions.

United by a national idea

Thus nationalism and the perception of a "common fate" are fastening factors for those who comprise the nation. It seems that without this "common fate" it is impossible to implement reforms and build a democratic society.

As far back as 1919, the Russian scholar Pletnev used to say that one cannot produce exact characteristics to distinguish one nationality from the other. In his opinion, a substantial feature of national unity may be hidden in the community of historical fate. He also noted that the unity of a certain nationality and wealth of its historical past are proportional to the strength of ties which connect its members as well as the strength of perceived unity among them. "Nationality" is a group of people with common interests and needs, traditions and goals, a group which aspires to create essential external conditions for its own comprehensive development.

Consequently, we are proceeding to the notion of a "national idea". It must be admitted that modern Russia remains a state whose society does not understanding itself as a community of people united by a national idea. However paradoxical it may sound, Russian society's inability to comprehend itself as such may be one of the reasons for a state crisis.

As a rule, people have a positive self-image and do not see themselves lower than their neighbours and representatives of other nations. This positive self-image is a necessary factor for social and psychological well-being, for fostering loyalty and solidarity among the population. A country cannot exist if the majority of people do not have similar and positive concepts of their country. National identity is of no less importance to a state than properly secured borders, a constitution, army and other institutions. States are set-up and exist because each new generation shares common concepts of the state and recognises it.

"Bashkiria and Russia are together forever"

In this respect, the case of Russia looks paradoxical indeed. Russians have a high-level of unity in terms of common values, cultural homo-geneity, inter-ethnic and religious cooperation—the reasons for envy on the part of many large states which maintain the idea of a united nation among their populations with varying degrees of success. The populations of such countries, unlike that of Russia, often find themselves divided by language barriers. Examples of this include India, Spain, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and dozens of other countries where there is no ethnic and linguistic similarity, but where a concept of a united nation exists that makes those states solid. On the contrary, Russia provides a real unity combined with ethnic and cultural diversity among Russians. However, Russia lacks a concept of a united nation, of national interests and national culture.

It is no contradiction that Vladimir Putin, then the President of Russia, visiting Bashkiria—a region in Russia—stated: "Bashkiria and Russia are together forever". It would be impossible to hear the slogan: "The USA and Texas are together forever", even though Texas was annexed in the middle of the 19th century. At the same time, such statements can be explained on the basis that in several of Russia's regions the non-Russian ruling elites do not always perceive themselves to be Russian or part of Russia.

On the other hand—apart from ethnic nationalism (which is often the nature of Russia's national minorities)—Russian nationalism of a chauvinistic kind uses "The people of Russia" in a euphemistic way, assuming that Russia exists just because there are Russians, though, in different historical times, all orthodox eastern Slavs (today's Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians) were called Russians. The very idea of "Russians" gained its narrow ethnic substance only during the period of building the "socialist nation".

I would like to repeat that, in this context, President Putin's statement in Bashkiria is of great importance. We regard nationalism as a factor uniting people, not separating them; as a basis to form a national idea, and its present role in building a democratic society. At the same time the task of preserving the cultures and ethnicities of people who form the nation seems to be of equal importance. In this respect ethnicity is key. Ethnicity gets special significance in the modern world if it is taken not in the context of belonging to this or that nation, but in the context of belonging to this or that culture. Nationalism

touches a collective essence of what it means to be human whereas ethnicity affects an individual part of the personality.

Essentially, each individual must know his or her roots in order to exist within the system of social coordinates. A Chinese proverb says: "Who does not know the village he stems from, will never find the village he looks for". Accordingly, the essentially individualistic phenomenon of ethnicity is common to all mankind. Cultural ethnicity, a notion which is more delicate than the notion of nationalism, needs less evident symbols than, for example, state borders, flags, national anthems, etc.

Increasing role of ethnicity and religion

Ethnicity, as one of the facets of social identity, plays an ever-increasing role in our social and cultural life. As a social regulator ethnicity is changing from "cultural capital" to a factor which tells the difference between individuals and groups under conditions where life has become more standardised and there is a deficit of cultural originality.

Religious dialogue also plays an important role in securing the stability of a transitional society. In its broader sense, dialogue is normal within a democratic society. Aversion to dialogue, tearing down anything that does not suit partisan or individual doctrines — in economic structure, political programmes, spiritual values — is a distinctive feature of the social consciousness of a society in transition.

During the past two decades, unprecedented changes have occurred in the religious structure of Russia. In the 1970s there were approximately 20 main religions, a number which has now risen to 60. It is difficult to imagine a society that could easily withstand such a religious storm in such a short period of time.

At the same time the relations between the followers of the Russian Orthodox Church, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism are of the most importance if we take into consideration the influence of religious-confessional relations over social stability in Russia. In terms of the number of followers, any of these religions surpasses several existing religions. The Orthodox and Muslim populations alone constitute nearly 90 per cent of all Russia's believers.

Under such conditions, spiritual and religious leaders play very important roles. They can be very effective in overcoming prejudices and in strengthening international relations complicated by religious factors. Taking into account all doctrinal discrepancies, different cultural traditions and even the political views of believers, religious organisations have considerable recourse to dialogue and practical cooperation to solve many social problems. First of all they concern themselves with spiritual and moral values which are common to all religions. These values are accepted by believers and non-believers alike.

Finally, the principle of democratic federalism is becoming more important for multi-national societies. A number of modern scholars believe that federalism (under certain conditions) may be more than a tool for achieving a stable and effective democracy within a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, but also an instrument for solving inter-ethnic conflicts.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Bolsheviks actively implemented a policy of "nation building" guided by a desire to control all national movements spawned by the revolution and spurred on by the idea of national self-determination, an idea which is very European and close to the idea of the nation-state. This Western idea was adopted in the East in particularly despotic ways when territories of different regions (republics, autonomies) were chaotically formed and some regions were handed from one republic to another many times over. The slogans of proletarian internationalism and "Struggle against Russian chauvinism" co-existed with the policy of adoption and bringing up the national cadres.

Russian Republics—multiethnic communities

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia found itself in a state practically unheard of for democratic federalism. The problem of Russian federalism consists first and foremost of its procedure. The presence of ethnic federalism in Russia means the presence of national statehood. Ethnic federalism is determined not by economic, territorial or any other factors, but by a certain ethnic group which retains a living space and proclaims certain autonomy.

At the same time, ethnic federalism assumes that a population with certain autonomy constitutes a homogeneous ethnic community. In this case, statehood, which is created with the principle of citizenship (both all-federal and inner-federal), does not contradict the ethnic factor (i.e. the ethno-cultural structure of a population) and does not need an official declaration of ethnic statehood. This is the case with Catalonia, whose territorial autonomy has a clearly defined profile and, in its constitution, asserts its statehood. But this phenomenon is greatly influenced by the notion of Spanish nationalism encompassing all people living in Spain, and it is only this notion that can be considered national. In fact, Catalonians represent two nations, which serves as an example of multiple, but not mutually excepted, identity.

In the majority of cases, the Russian Republics remain multiethnic communities. In some cases title groups which give their names to the republics even constitute a minority. For example, in several Northern Caucasus republics there are two to three title groups, in Dagestan their number amounts even to more than 60. Nearly all the constitutions of these republics declare their sovereignty, under which all people living in its territory affirm their statehood and legalise their power. Simultaneously, statehood at present is a kind of self-determination of a certain title nation. This complicated formula led to the usurpation of power by one of the groups and remains one of the most contentious factors in modern Russia.

Russia serves as an example of how a nation-state can be strengthened and how democratic federalism can be developed. It is a question of focusing on a multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious constitutional structure. It is necessary to establish full, actual and constitutional equality between all regions. At the same time it is necessary to increase the role and importance of non-national territorial administrative districts. It must be stressed that this issue is being resolved in Russia by reinforcing the federal districts within the framework of ongoing administrative reform. At the end of the day it demands the gradual political encouragement of language and cultural variety, of creating and developing both regional and national symbols, of ideals, myths and other ideological attributes which fix national identity according to territory, language, history and community.

Some Pending Issues of Democracy in Ethiopia: Root Causes of Underdevelopment?
Negaso Gidada

This is not an academic presentation. Nor is it political propaganda. It is a simple expression of what I feel about politics in Ethiopia. This paper is also not a scholarly work nor diplomatic. I just put my ideas on paper as they occurred to me. My writing is not done with the intention of harming, disappointing or blaming anybody. My comments and views are rather about systems and principles. There are principles which are universal in nature which I like and would also like my fellow human beings to adopt. There are traditions, cultures, and systems which I believe are harmful and damaging. I wish that Ethiopia becomes free of them. It makes me really sick to see our people living in such poverty. I am, as many fellow citizens are, helpless in the face of the terrible misery our people are suffering. But I am not yet powerless. I have still the power to say something. I will use this power as long as nature does not hinder me from using it. God save me only from those human forces that try to stop me from using this power: the expression of words. I express these words to contribute to the efforts of changing Ethiopia into a healthy country with a better life for its people, a country where people are proud to be citizens because of this and not because they are citizens of the empty "country of 3,000 years of civilisation".

The socio-economic situation

When speaking about social questions, it is important to remind ourselves, again and again, that Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries on this globe. We do so, and have to do so, not because it is a fact but because we wish that this situation changes. We must also do this

because it is a paradox that 31,000,000 of the 72,000,000 people of such a rich country endowed with enough natural and human resources are living under the poverty line, meaning: are earning less than 45 cents a day.

179 out of 1,000 children die before they reach the age five. 49 per cent of our people are malnourished. Maternal mortality is 871 of every 100,000. When it comes to education, only 42 of school age children are enrolled in primary schools.

The Derg government thought that the socialist way of development was the way out, although I personally question the credibility of that system being socialist. Then followed the era of revolutionary democracy after 1991. The idea was to initiate a system through which an economic development path would benefit the vast majority of people through the leadership of the so-called revolutionary intellectuals, with the participation of mainly the peasants and the workers. The original idea was that this path would then lead to the socialist system. This idea was dropped in 2001 when a pro-capitalist way of development was taken and strategies were adopted to integrate the Ethiopian economy into the global economy.

All these different types of economic development policies were supposed to be the correct pills for Ethiopia's illness. My view is that the root cause of the problems is not economic, it is politics.

Politics is the root cause of Ethiopia's socio-economic problems

The government claims that there is peace and stability in the country. This is what all governments do. No government admits that there is no peace and stability in the state. The reality, however, is different. Certainly, the situation is not that the government has reached the level where one can say it is falling immediately. But the situation is like an active volcano which may erupt sooner or later. The problems may even lead the country into disintegration if a fundamental political solution is not found soon.

Until 1974 Ethiopia was ruled by monarchs and had a feudal economic order. Slave owning did not completely disappear after that.

There were some pockets of the country where some members of the society kept slaves until very recently. Capitalism also began to sprout in Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie I. All these systems were based on economic exploitation. Exploitive systems are never democratic and just.

Political instability and conflicts hinder accelerated and sustainable development. Development forces cannot concentrate on economic activities if there is political instability in the country. The Ethio-Eritrean war and the ongoing fight between the government and resistance movements in Tigray, Amhara, Gambella, Oromia and Somali regions have and are costing us resources which could have been and could be used for development.

Is it possible to have sustainable development, growth and wealth accumulation under an instable condition such as ours? I think it is better to solve the root causes of instability and conflicts politically as soon as possible instead of postponing them.

The Naftanyaa system—the major cause of instability, conflict and underdevelopment

The description of the atrocities committed during the "unite Ethiopia" movement in the 19th century from Teowodros to Menilik, the number of people killed, and how much property was destroyed is not the subject of this paper. But what is clear is that force was used to conquer and subdue new areas. The forces which were involved in the making of the modem Ethiopia and the system they established had to be defended by force. The people who were subdued never gave in willingly nor did they accept the system established subsequently. There was resistance during the time of conquest and persistent revolt against the system. The term which can describe the conquest and the system which was established can best be expressed in Amharic: *Naftanyaa Siraat, the Naftanyaa system.*

Naft in Amharic means gun. The bearer of the gun is called *Naftanyaa*. It was the bearer of the gun who conquered, occupied and enforced his socio-economic and political system on the victims. The term *Naftanyaa* cannot be attached to a colour or race. The *Naftanyaa* can

be white, black or red. It can be African, Asian, European or American. It can be Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, Somali, Gurage, Walaita, Sidama, Anuak or Gumuz. Thus *Naftanyaa* does not have ethnicity or language. *Naftanyaa* simply means someone who forcefully subdues some one else and forces this someone to accept and remain under subjugation using the power of the gun or force. The *Naftanyaa* cannot even be attached to a particular class. The victor enforces his will on the victim. The victim loses his sovereignty, the right to free will and the right to self determination. The victim is at the disposal of the victor in all aspects of social, economic and political life.

Of course, the *Naftanyaa* can have nationality, ethnicity, language and thus depending on the area from where he comes, at what historical time, what language he speaks, and what socio-economic system he enforces on the victim. The *Naftanyaa* may come from far or near. He may be from the same race or ethnic group or may even speak the same language as the victim. The *Naftanyaa* invents and imposes the best bureaucratic system which better serves his interest.

One noteworthy characteristic of *Naftanyaa Siraat* is that it is a system in which the dominant group is the minority. How can a minority survive without the help of people who hope to get some kind of advantage through the system or who aspire to become members of the new ruling class? An interesting and important point here is the role of powerful outside forces in the survival of the *Naftanyaa Siraat*. Foreign powers always stood on the side of the dominant minority group in Ethiopia. The British supported Emperor Haile Sellasie after the end of the Italian occupation. The US came in around the middle of the 1950s and remained the major supporter of the Monarchy up to 1974. The Soviet Union replaced the US during the military regime, but it is an open secret that the US is helping the government since 1991 again.

The way out

I have so far tried to show that Ethiopia is at a political impasse. This political problem stems from two pending questions of democracy. The first issue is whether the basic and constitutional freedoms and rights are respected or not. My observation is that two elements of

these freedoms and rights have so far not been fully respected by all political parties of the country. The politics of intolerance and exclusion still prevail. The second problem is that the political forces are not ready to willingly accept the verdict of the people expressed through their votes in elections.

The second major pending question of democracy is, I believe, the question of the right of different peoples in Ethiopia to self-determination. The question of self-determination has existed in Ethiopia since the creation of the state and is still current. I believe that denying the prevalence of this question or deliberately avoiding it is not a solution. The question must be answered politically sooner or latter. But we witness that some of the political forces are allergic to the issue.

These forces do not want the question to be raised. Others argue that the question is already answered by the constitution and its implementation through the present federal arrangement. Still others point out to the process of formation and preservation of the Ethiopian State and argue that the question is not yet answered. These political forces are at the same time unwilling to tolerate different choices. The pending issue here is not the problem of intolerance and exclusion between the parties. The problem is whether the political forces are ready to submit to the choice and will of the people or not. One cannot imagine peace and stability in this country as long as we are at this political impasse. It is a simple logic that it is not possible to mobilise the entire forces of development as long as there is no peace and stability in the country. We all know that underdevelopment in Ethiopia and lack of peace and stability here would certainly affect the entire Horn Africa. It is thus imperative to solve these pending questions of democracy. It should be demanded from all political forces to accept and adhere to the principles of basic human and democratic freedoms and rights provided in our constitution. Among this, respect of the right to association and tolerance for other's views. Next comes the crucial point. That is the readiness to submit to the will of the people. The people's right to choose must be guaranteed. The people and the people alone should be able to decide which party should govern them. Self-determination of the different peoples must also be respected. Therefore, there should be free, fair, and democratic election carried out by a real independent election institution.

The question of self-determination can be answered in a similar manner. Choices in the categories of internal or external self-determination can, for example, be presented by different groups and then be decided upon by the people, say, through referendum. Such a referendum should be witnessed by the international community. The result of the referendum should then be the basis for a treaty signed in the presence of witnesses.

I know that some sectors of our society are allergic to the term "self-determination" or Article 39 of our constitution. For some, those who demand self-determination are separatists who want to destroy Ethiopia. Some sectors who demand the implementation of the right to self-determination understand it as being the realisation of separation and founding their own independent and sovereign states. However, self-determination decide between different alternatives, to decide and to determine without being forced to do so by someone else. Isn't this the essence of democracy? A democracy short of this right is no true democracy.

I am a son of an evangelical pastor. I did learn much from my father. One of the truths I learned from him was the teaching of Jesus which approximately says "Man lives not only of bread, but from the word of God also". Efforts made to bring about quick economic development and growth must be coupled with respect of the basic freedoms and rights of the people, both individual citizens and groups. My conviction is that human and democratic rights should be given due attention as pre-conditions for economic development. Liberalisation of the economy does not work without political liberalisation. This may be an influence from what I learned from my father. Bread alone is not enough for life. Whatever the case, I believe that it is expected from the civic society and the international community to persistently call on all political forces, including the government, to come to dialogue and negotiation table without pre-conditions to pave the way for a peaceful and political solution to the pending issues of democracy, issues which are crucial to the solution of economic and social problems.

On Campus "Unrest": Some Preliminary Observations
Assefa Fiseha

At the outset, it is important to make the limitations of this presentation clear. First and foremost, I am a trained lawyer in public law and more specifically in comparative federalism. The issues arising in most higher education institutions in this country are getting more and more complex and thus require more comprehensive and multi-disciplinary studies if one is to make a sound observation. Only a team of experts from political science, law, anthropology, sociology, etc. could make such a sound observation.

Secondly, I was informed about this lecture only two weeks ago. Although I understand that this is an important issue that needs utmost attention, one can hardly make an empirical study in such short time about this rather complex issue. Nor were the attempts to talk to some sections of the student community successful. Added to this is the fact that this coincided with June and July, the busiest months of the year for the university instructors.

Given these limitations this presentation should, therefore, be viewed simply as a preliminary observation of the emerging crisis between some students from different nationalities or religious groups in universities. The preliminary observations need to be subject to further test and re-tests based on empirically-based studies in the future.

Background

It is my contention that this emerging unhealthy relationship among some sections of the student community in universities is not something new and does not involve the entire community. The bulk of the university staff and student community have had a harmonious rela-

tionship and will continue to have such relationship giving rise to various interactions across ethnic and religious boundaries. Formal and informal debate clubs, sport and friendship existed and will continue to exist among the student community based on mutual respect and understanding of each other's interests, cultures, religion and traditions.

The emerging crisis among some in the student community, which in some sense has long existed, but in another sense is taking a new dimension, should not therefore be over-exaggerated and should be handled with care. We should not forget that we are referring to university students which by current estimates are within the age range of 18–21. This is certainly within the fire age, an adventurous age group that is often more prone to mob action, and any incident, serious or not, can easily be twisted to unintended ends.

Now to the factors that may have contributed to the unhealthy relationship among students belonging to different groups:

1. Power relations among the political elite coming from the different nationalities and our perspective about the state and its values have a clear impact on the relationships among the student community in higher education institutions.

Universities in general and the university community in particular should not be seen as an isolated community. It influences and is influenced by the political and social dynamics outside the campus. It is my contention that at the core of the state crisis and political stability that reigned for the most of the 20th century in Ethiopia is the concentration of power and resources at the centre as well as the state's failure to accommodate the diverse groups in the political process. The state also forced the various groups via the "melting pot" and "nation state" ideologies to melt into its narrowly defined religious and linguistic values which the various groups felt they did not share. In other words, although the Ethiopian state has long existed as a de facto federal system, with the emergence of the centralised state towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, it abolished all forms of

regional forces and concentrated power and resources at the centre, it defined the values of the state and imposed it on the various regions and groups of the country.

The state structure and its values, therefore, have been engineered along the "nation state" model with its slogan "one language, one religion, one flag, one people". This has had its own political and cultural consequences. Multiculturalism, that is, the open acceptance of the existence of diverse languages, identities, religions and the accommodation and promotion of this diversity is considered by many as anti-Ethiopian, tribal, etc. and continues to affect the relationship among various groups, not only within the political elite but also the university community. There are genuine worries about the fact that some groups may use this new political and cultural space as a means for promoting "narrow nationalism" and that deserves a separate treatment, but we should not confuse this with the fact that we as Ethiopians have no choice other than multiculturalism if we are to live together respecting our differences. The bulk of the university community or student community does not seem to be aware of this, which is officially acknowledged by the federal constitution. As a result, derogatory words and phrases that are consciously or unconsciously uttered in tearooms, dormitories, classrooms or public lectures or even in the toilets or that appear in print and electronic media have on a number of occasions caused havoc among students in universities. Culture and religion are closely connected with emotions; people are extremely sensitive to the way these are treated.

It should also be noted that in countries like ours where you find so many forms of identities, the definition and redefinition of identities is not only determined by the "self" but also defined by others. Important in this respect is the myth of common descent which often serves as a variable in the process of self-identification and, as such, has serious implications as a means for excluding people who may share the culture but not the common descent or include people who share the common descent but not the culture. In the process of definition vis-à-vis others there is bound to be a continuous interaction, sometimes smooth and at times sharp, among the groups. Power relations among groups certainly have an impact on the process of definition and redefinition of groups' identities, and this causes tension and conflict among them.

Given this reality and the Ethiopian historico-political background, we need to be aware of the sensitivity and prohibit hate/racist speeches or writings. Matters related to language, religion or identity in general are often emotional and impossible to analyse in objective terms. Higher learning institutions need to understand and design mechanisms for dealing with such tensions. The beginning of such an exercise is of course the promotion of unity in diversity. This will succeed when democracy takes roots and when political pluralism, freedom of expression and of the press will create well informed citizens that are increasingly less sensitive to such differences. Until then we need to learn live peacefully with our differences and to manage our diversity.

The political stability or lack of it at the national level will, therefore, have its own impact onto the university community and the groups within it.

2. Freedom of religion and its ramifications

Although this aspect is partly related to the issues discussed above, because of its current significance it needs to be singled out as a separate factor that affects the relationship among groups in general and the student community in particular. At a theoretical level the recognition of religious freedom and the declaration at a constitutional level of a secular state mean that there is no privileged religion and all public institutions will respect religious freedom. But in practice religious freedom often brings a lot of tension and can be a source of conflict.

Believers of a certain faith are often not content with trying to persuade others to their way of thinking by reason, preaching or dialogue but frequently make use of force and sometimes even torture, murder or massacre in an attempt to achieve this purpose. Practitioners at times resort to acts of provocation against practitioners of other faiths, for example by distributing pamphlets or by attempting to preach in the places of worship of others. Public institutions in general and higher institutions in particular have yet to define and redefine what secularism and religious freedom means in their own context. In one higher learning institution for example, on the eve of Easter, owing to the fact that the Church(es) are relatively far from the campus, a group of stu-

dents from a certain Christian denomination requested transport to be provided by the students' Dean who declined it. Within a few hours the same office provided transport to Christians from another denomination and, no wonder, the university descended into chaos within a short period causing destruction of university property and violent clashes among the two groups.

A more troubling and emerging is that fundamentalists are using freedom of religion for attaining political objectives. Again I would like to emphasise that the overwhelming majority of Muslims and Christians remain peaceful and tolerant, but a minority from all religions are emerging as militants in a manner that affects the social fabric of the society in general and the university community in particular. The fact that one religion was favoured as a state religion for a long time implied that religion and politics are so intertwined that religion is not only a matter of faith and its practicing one's faith but it also becomes part of the political debate: centre vs. periphery, that is, Islam and other Christian denominations as part of the periphery and Orthodox Christians as part of the centre.[1] In this context religion becomes not only a matter of faith but also a source of identity and political weapon for the periphery. The involvement of external forces in radicalising religion or in changing the social fabric in itself is not a new phenomenon. We know from history that there have been cases of this sort in the 16th and 17th centuries. What makes the emerging phenomena disturbing is that there seems to be a heavy involvement of external actors. This is aggravated by the widespread poverty in the country which allows for international and regional humanitarian, philanthropic and scholarship institutions to come with their own religious brands, dramatically impacting the religious equilibrium that existed. It is no secret that fundamentalism, whatever its form, endorses violence as a means to achieve its goals.

3. Academic freedom and autonomy

An equally important factor that deserves attention relates to the institutional autonomy and academic freedom that higher education institutions deserve. It is not my intention here to lecture about institutional

autonomy and academic freedoms for they are inherent rights of higher learning institutions in their search for truth and the promotion of scientific and objective research. There is a vicious circle around these rights that is causing havoc and disturbance within higher learning institutions. While the government is reluctant to grant this autonomy and academic freedom to higher learning institutions, such reluctance is being used as an excuse by the university community, including students, for all kinds of violence against the government leading to violent clashes. Some students may take this side and others that side and violence that started as a means for claiming academic freedom may end up as becoming something else. Higher learning institutions are thus becoming a means for political parties, and abusing the non-existing or partly existing institutional autonomy and academic freedom for preaching certain political doctrines or disseminating the agenda of certain political parties is then giving a good excuse for the government to intervene in the affairs of higher learning institutions.

It must be emphasised here that academic freedom and autonomy are not an end in themselves but means for achieving some broader objectives: the search for truth and scientific research. If higher learning institutions fail to use the autonomy and freedom bestowed on them for religious or political objectives, then certainly supervisory bodies will have the right and, at times, the duty to intervene in the affairs of universities. It is about time that the university community becomes aware of such responsibility. The government as well should do its job: realise the institutional autonomy and ensure academic freedom of the universities.

4. Partiality or impartiality of university institutions and the efficiency or inefficiency of university services matter.

When student unrest arises (including due to the inefficiency of the university services) it is often the case that the university administration may directly or indirectly take sides and aggravate an apparently small mob. This includes the police, the Students' Dean, health centres, etc. It is important to highlight the fact that such partiality doesn't need to exist. For the mob to take sides and be violent, it is enough if

there are even some perceptions about it. It is also the case that when rumours and complaints are emerging, the university administration often fails to communicate the right information on time to the university community and leaves them in the dark. This paves the way for all kinds of speculations. Some may even exploit such situations for their own personal and political objectives.

Ethiopian universities provide food and shelter to their regular students. Universities also provide all forms of services including the issuing of grades, official documents, student records, clinics, etc. Such facilities and services often fall short of the expectations by the beneficiaries and, although they do not all result in violence, have served on a number of occasions as a reason for violence. It may be about time, given the fact that this unrest is recurring in many universities, to outsource some of the services to the private sector and reduce the inefficiency and university bureaucracy. However, such a measure will not ensure peace at all times, although it will reduce the frequency of student unrest in higher learning institutions. The recent violence at the AAU can be traced back to complaints related to university services.

Concluding remarks

It is very difficult to single out any one of these factors as a sole and dominant reason for instability at universities, as each case of instability needs to be carefully studied in its own context. However, if one is to make an overall preliminary remark, it is often the sum total of these factors that causes campus instability.

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1   For the politics of Religion in Ethiopia see Medhane Tadesse, "Religion, Peace and the Future of Ethiopia", in: Ministry of Federal Affairs (Ethiopia)/GTZ (Ed.) (2004). First National Conference on Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building, Addis Ababa: United Printers, pp. 271–283.

Reflections on Students' Ethnicity and Interethnic Communications:
A Preliminary Study at the Addis Ababa University
Anteneh Tsegaye

The Addis Ababa University is the first and oldest institution of higher learning in Ethiopia. The university has been the engine of social and political transformation of the country. Through faculties and various centres and social figures, it attempts to positively influence the country's democratisation processes. Additionally it is there where research outputs and education influence policy making and where paradigms of political and economic strategies make capacity building and development possible.

Despite all these contributions and influences, the AAU has found challenges in the process of making itself a centre of excellence in higher education and research. One of the most recent and well-documented problems which had been affecting the university is campus unrest. There has been frequent unrest on campus which has stemmed from ethnic-related factors. This unrest has become a point of discussion among administrators, teachers and students. As an academic institution of higher learning, the Addis Ababa University is concerned with such problems and, as a teacher, I was tasked to study the problem and provide possible implications and recommendations. In addition, as a professional in the field of inter-ethnicity I was curious to learn the possible reasons behind the conflicts. Therefore, I found it interesting to study issues of inter-ethnic communication as demonstrated by students in my own classrooms.

As a lecturer and Chairperson of the Students Affairs Committee (SAC) of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL), I had the opportunity to experience inter-ethnic communication problems and record complaints of students that were based on ethnicity. My exposure to recurrent campus conflicts and interest in the area pushed me to systematise my observations and reflect qualitatively on the issue as experienced by my students. In other words, I did a preliminary qualitative study on my students' ethnicity behaviour and inter-ethnic communicative skills. My personal reflection of the study was presented at a panel discussion sponsored by the Goethe Institute Addis Ababa. This is a brief version of the paper and it focuses on summaries of my reflections.

1. Context description

I was teaching Business Writing (three credit hours course) to fourth year English Major Students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in the first semester of the 2006 academic year. The course focuses on business communication skills and writing various business documents that range from memo writing to business letters, agenda/minutes, business reports and proposals. Most of these documents were done in small groups and the marked assignments (about ten for each group) were rewritten in portfolio format and documented and checked as individual work. Thus, the course demanded the students to work together and learn from one another.

I taught four classes the same course. There were about 30 students in each class and thus the total number of the students who attended my class was 120. These students came from almost all the regions of the country and most ethnic groups were represented as my analysis of their background showed. The students were also from different religious groups. Despite the subject they minor, they took similar courses. I was teaching the whole batch; therefore, I had the chance to study them all. All of the groups were attending my classes three times a week in the mornings. They were supposed to do the group work in the afternoons and evenings.

Most of the students were familiar with me and used to come to me for help when they had problems that the Students Affairs Committee could handle. Most of the complaints that students produce were: re-marking, minor subject change, major subject change, change of advisor and related academic problems. I had a smooth and good professional relationship with the students and members of the Committee.

Therefore, the context was quite convenient for me to access qualitative data.

2. Leading themes

Thus I wanted to get a qualitatively holistic understanding of the ethnicity and ethnic communication behaviour of my students. I did not want to limit myself to specific issues on the onset of my study. I did not start with specific research questions or specific research objectives. However, through time and especially when the study got greater focus and the data collected revealed some facts, I focussed my study on ethnicity behaviour and inter-cultural communicative skills as experienced by students themselves. I focused on how students behaved cross-ethnically and how they viewed "the other". I also addressed possible reasons that could be attributed to ethnicity-coloured campus conflicts. Besides, I attempted to come up with possible implications and recommendations on how to address the problem.

3. Method and procedure of data gathering

The major purpose of the study as stated earlier was to describe the overall inter-ethnic communication behaviour of students and to come up with insights and reflections into the nature of the interactions and possible reasons related to inter-cultural encounters in the classroom and beyond as experienced by the DFLL students. To target these, the following qualitative data gathering tools were used.

- *Pattern analysis of students' sitting arrangements:* Every student was given a code and her/his demographic data was documented. This was followed by consistent record of the students' classroom sitting arrangement/pattern. Who sits next to whom was recorded for a semester. The attendance was systematically recorded according to the code given to every student.
- *Group work:* Students were given the chance to group themselves as they liked and the pattern of their grouping and cohesive behaviour of each of the groups was recorded.

- *Document analysis:* The files of the Students' Affairs Committee were analyzed systematically with a focus on which student complained about which teacher. The documents were kept confidential and used only for research purposes.
- *Interviews:* Unstructured interviews with some of the students were held. The interviews focused on friends the students had made and how they identified students from other ethnic groups. The interviews were also conducted confidentially in order to ensure the comfort the interviewee.

These tools were used to triangulate data generated from each of the instruments. The student attendance was recorded throughout the semester. The analysis of SAC documents of students' complaints was made through the year. The interviews were held as informal discussions on issues related to the purpose of study. Students were not informed of the fact that I was conducting a research. This was decided to avoid influencing their responses.

4. Results and implications

The findings of this preliminary account were made following basic qualitative data analysis techniques. Attempts were made to systematise data collection and verification procedure besides validating the results by triangulating data gathered through the techniques discussed above. The following list summarises the major findings of the project.

- The improvements among the ethnic composition of the student population at the Addis Ababa University are very positive. This is to say that most of the ethnic groups of the country are represented in the University environment. As compared to the previous regimes were no more than two or three ethnic groups used to join the University, there is now a significant change in the ethnic composition of students. Therefore, it is quite common to see students talking in various Ethiopian languages in the University environment. Teachers and university administrators should recognise this change which can bring about new views and questions among students.

- Most students' primary education was in their mother tongue. It was observed that students thus prefer to speak in their mother tongue or first language. Unfortunately, most students demonstrated a comparatively weaker command of the English language for reasons which demand further study. Schools should help students acquire a good command of the English language. The University too should support students in improving their command of the English language as it is the medium of instruction at university.
- Students demonstrated poor inter-ethnic communication skills or inter-ethnic communicative competence. Classroom sitting arrangements and groupings (for assignments) clearly showed that students identify the ethnic background of their respective fellow group-mates or classmates consciously or subconsciously. Very few students have actually gone beyond the ethnic boundaries and joined different groups. It should be noted that misunderstandings and poor inter-ethnic communication skills will result in campus conflict and unrest which erodes the conduciveness of the academic environment. Schools should teach cross-cultural skills and help students acquire positive pictures about others.
- Interview results showed that students were suspicious of those students they thought were from other ethnic groups. They preferred to work and live with students from their own ethnic group and were not confident around others. It was reported that even though a student may want to join one of the groups he/she could be avoided in one way or another. Most of the suspicions stemmed from false pictures and perceived political differences which had actually nothing to with what a particular student believed in. Therefore, there was a greater degree of misunderstanding and miscommunication which could be solved if students acquired inter-cultural communicative competence.
- As the Students Affairs Committee document analysis and interviews with the students demonstrated, some poor performing students learned to attribute failure to the ethnicity of their respective teachers. Teachers were also conscious about such students and reflected on issues of ethnicity as manipulated by poor performing students. The University administration has to take appropriate measures against those students who attempt to benefit from such

cheap means of getting grades and fuelling conflicts. In addition, such students should be punished for their attempt to damage the integrity of responsible teachers.
- The learning environment did not encourage or facilitate students' inter-cultural leaning. Since students come from different regions and ethnic groups, they should be taught how to interact cross-culturally and be aware of their own and other's cultures. On the top of this, students should learn on how to deal with differences positively. The academic environment should teach tolerance and respect of the human and democratic rights of others. Therefore, schools should teach students that people can live with differences of any kind. Intercultural environments like Addis Ababa University should be models of tolerance, respect and intercultural learning.

III.
Democracy—Socially Realised?
Three Case Studies

"Extended Democracy": Democracy and Social Integration
Stéphane Gompertz

When we speak about democracy, we usually tend to concentrate on the last part of the word, "*cracy*", meaning power (more power, less power, what kind of power), and less on "*demos*", the people, taken not only as a political entity but also in its social, economic and cultural dimension. What does "the people" mean? That concept played an important role in British debates about the ill-fated draft European constitution: is there a European demos? But beyond the still ongoing debate about what Europe really is, the question is also relevant in each of our countries: do we have a demos in our societies? Do they constitute self-conscious entities or mere collections of individuals or of other, smaller communities? Is there a collective awareness of belonging?

The question is not only political. It also has a social dimension. It goes beyond participation in the political process, particularly elections. It encompasses social inclusion, shared values, acceptance of a set of rules and values. Allowing or encouraging people to vote is far from sufficient. They must feel that there are stakes for them too.

Thus the question could be formulated in the following terms: how should democracy be revisited or redefined in order to include its social dimension and to permit the re-emergence of a genuine demos?

To illustrate this argument, I will choose examples particularly (but not only) in France and in Ethiopia.

1. The shortcomings of formal democracy

I would like to emphasise five of them—the list is certainly arbitrary and too limited:

- Insufficiencies of political representation
- Voters' disaffection
- The power of money
- The power of the knowledge
- Inequalities in education

1.1. Insufficiencies of political representation:
1.1.1. The will of the people does not express itself directly.

This traditional criticism has been expressed, among others, in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and Gaddafi's *Green book*. The idea is simple: the will of the people is distorted if it does not express itself directly. Elected assemblies cannot replace the voice of the people.

This dispute might sound somewhat academic. No country can hold referendums on each and every question. But the issue is more relevant at the local level: it reminds us of the importance of local democracy: in Ethiopia, Woreda and zone elections are perhaps even more important than parliamentary elections. In France, the left came to power for the first time after the establishment of the Fifth Republic, when Mitterrand was elected President in 1981, after winning municipal elections in 1977. Local power has three distinct advantages:

a) It gives credibility to local administrators: they can prove more easily that they can deliver.
b) Local power is closer to the people. They can listen to them but also influence them directly
c) Democracy—and this is particularly relevant for our subject—can express itself directly at the local level: local or municipal councils can hold public meetings, they can exchange views and information with citizens, and they can consult them easily.

1.1.2. "Minorities" are not taken enough into account.

Now we have to be careful in using the term "minorities" since it can have at least two meanings:

- Those whose choice does not prevail because they get fewer votes: this is particularly true in electoral systems where the winner "takes it all"
- Special groups like "ethnic minorities".

Hence several issues arise:

- The relevance of proportional voting (it is probably fairer but can lead to unstable majorities)
- The rights of the opposition in elected bodies: should opposition MPs be allowed to propose bills? Should they chair parliamentary committees? The recent debates about the rights of opposition parties in the Ethiopian Peoples' Assembly is particularly interesting in this respect.
- The representation of special groups, which are often (but not only) related with ethnic origin.

1.2. Europe and the US are often plagued by voter disaffection

The weight of abstention is often high: in the 2004 European elections, 56 per cent of the electorate did not bother to vote. In Slovakia, the percentage of voters was only 17 per cent.

This, linked with cumbersome electoral mechanisms, can lead to bizarre results: In 2000, George Bush was elected even though he got fewer votes than his opponent. In the first round of the 2002 presidential election in France, the extreme right candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen, came second, defeating the outgoing socialist Prime Minister. This came as a shock. Le Pen's score was favoured by a massive abstention (28.4 per cent). Both expressed three largely spread feelings: fear of unemployment, fear of globalisation, and alienation from the traditional ruling political class. The rejection of the European Constitution expressed an identical crisis.

True enough, the percentage of abstentions in the French presidential election of 2002 went down between the two rounds from 28.4 per cent to 19.2 per cent. But the signal was clear. On the contrary, in the 2007 presidential election, the massive turnout was interpreted as a sign of renewed collective confidence.

1.3. Politics and the power of money

Even if we leave out cases of outright corruption, which we can assume remain exceptional, money largely influences, or even distorts, the normal game of representative politics.

1.3.1. The weight of lobbies

Both in Washington and in Brussels, lobbies are officially recognised as one of the players. In France, pharmaceutical companies, wine growers and farmers, among others, staunchly defend their interests or privileges. In Ethiopia, lorry drivers have probably helped complicate the revitalisation of the Addis-Djibouti railway.

1.3.2. Politics: a costly game

This is particularly true in the USA. Apart from obvious economic reasons (electoral campaigns are costly), money is also important to the American cultural tradition: making money means being blessed by the Lord and proves managerial qualities.

Hence the idea of public financing of political parties. In France, the law permits the reimbursement of campaign expenses for those parties which reach a certain percentage of votes and which implement parity between male and female candidates. The issue has been discussed in Ethiopia; one of the advantages of such a measure would be to make opposition parties less dependent on grants from the Diaspora.

1.3.3. Money and press control

True, the influence of the press should not be exaggerated. The political editor of the English tabloid the *Sun* once pleasantly told me: "I'm just a fig leaf for page 3" (page 3 of the *Sun* regularly features semi-naked young women).

The press nonetheless exerts an indisputable influence, particularly when its ideological bias fits with the vision, or prejudices, of a large part of society. A good example of this is the power of the arch-conservative Fox News in the US.

1.4. The power of the "knowing"
1.4.1. Technocrats

In my country, higher and lesser civil servants are often accused of all the shortcomings of French society. True enough, sometimes they wear their authority as though given by divine decree and neglect to consult the very people whose interests they are supposed to serve. Once, while working at the sous-préfecture of Villefranche in the wine growing Beaujolais area, I got a call for help from a local mayor: his constituents had filed a petition against him and his council because of an ill-conceived development scheme drafted by a public engineer. I convened a meeting and managed to extract a compromise. Throughout the meeting, I could feel that the engineer desperately wished me to fail: I had challenged the wisdom of his omnipotent ruling.

1.4.2. Medical power

One of the best illustrations of the abuses of medical power is the film *One flew over a cuckoo's nest*, where Jack Nicholson plays a patient in a psychiatric institution. The perverse psychiatrist does not try and restore her patients' broken personalities but (successfully) does her utmost to maintain her domination over them, even if it means breaking them apart.

Differences in access to higher education, based on wealth, on social or ethnic origins or on gender, contribute to making political representation less fair. If those who are supposed to represent "the people" are perceived to enjoy too many privileges, the people will not identify with the system. Naturally, all those shortcomings do not disqualify democracy: as Churchill quipped, democracy remains "the worst system with the exception of all the others". It will never be perfect. Direct democracy—as was the practice in ancient Athens (but let us not forget that free people were less numerous than slaves) or as advocated by Rousseau and Colonel Gaddafi—is a myth. But formal democracy is not sufficient. It has to be enlarged.

2. The new instruments of democracy

Far from challenging their legitimacy or relevance, new instruments of democracy complement the traditional instruments of representative democracy. The list of them is probably infinite. I will mention four of them:
- Decentralisation
- The new technologies of information and communication (NTIC)
- The reasonable acceptance of communities: reconciling equality of all and the right to be different

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and social reintegration

2.1. Decentralisation

Here, I am voluntarily leaving aside the issue of ethnic regionalism. I am limiting myself to what we call de-concentration (devolving more responsibilities to state administrative structures at the local level) and decentralisation (devolving power to locally or regionally elected bodies). It has a double aim: efficiency and democracy.

Efficiency: it is based on the principle of subsidiarity. The idea is the following: if a task can be performed as well or even better at the lower level than at the higher one, preference should be given to the lower level. This principle is also (supposed to be) applied in the European Union.

Democracy: the more power is exercised at the local level, the more people have a say. Local bodies can even apply direct democracy (for instance by organising public deliberations and allowing citizens' participation), which would be inconceivable where the number of people involved becomes excessive.

True, decentralisation also entails some dangers: in societies which are still governed by traditional allegiances or submit to the power of mafias, decentralisation can dangerously diminish the regulating power of the State and be detrimental to law and order as well as to public morality. Southern Italy and Corsica are still to a certain extend run—and undermined—by local feudalism.

The other danger is evident: if there is no consensus on the limits to devolution, it can jeopardise the unity of a country.

2.2. The role of new technologies of information and communication (NTIC)

The Internet plays an increasing role in politics: politicians open websites and blogs. Forums are organised to discuss issues and personalities. Debates on the net attract as many followers as debates on television.

The Internet also offers new avenues for freedom of the press. In countries where there is no free press and where other forms of expression are censored, the internet can, to a large extent, escape the vigilance of the state apparatus. True, instruments of control become more and more sophisticated and efficient. Key words offer censors an easy

way to detect and to suppress undesired message and exchanges. In Cuba, emails which uses the word "Fidel" are automatically deleted. Search engines and Internet providers have to submit themselves to a kind of self-discipline in order to continue to operate. But internet users and bloggers conversely invent new ways to escape surveillance. In this cat and mouse game, despite all limitations, freedom has probably been on the winning side.

We should not forget, however, that NTIC can also be used by the enemies of democracy like terrorist movements. But this is true for every kind of media. Since terrorism ultimately feeds itself on ignorance much more than on knowledge, it would be a dramatic mistake to incriminate new means of communication instead of the real and complex roots of frustration, fanaticism and violence.

2.3. The debate about communities and minorities

Democracy in our modern societies cannot escape the controversy surrounding communities and minorities. How can the preservation of rights for all and of equality among all citizens be reconciled with the defence of the idiosyncrasy, the way of life and sometimes the values of a particular group?

In a rather schematic way, I will oppose two approaches: the British one and the French one. Both have failed.

The British approach recognises the existence of ethnic groups and communities. Muslim women can wear veils without limitation. The reasoning behind this attitude is that wide enough tolerance will appease alienation and hostility, thus ultimately preserving Britishness. But riots and terrorist acts have proven that even apparently well-integrated youth resent their host environment and will not hesitate to kill to prove their point.

The French approach is based on integration and equality of all before the law. The most famous example has been the prohibition of the Islamic veil in public schools: the veil was perceived as an unacceptable distinctive sign leading to discrimination and to pressure on women. Indeed, after a few isolated protests, this measure has been widely accepted and enjoys massive public support. Nevertheless, the recent riots in the suburbs of Paris, in which more than 10,000 cars

were burned, demonstrated that integration à la française is, so far at least, largely a failure.

There is certainly no easy answer. The debate will continue. What is certain, however, is that one approach or the other will not suffice to solve the issue of social or ethnic alienation and new policies have to be devised, combining social policies and enhancing national pride and identity.

2.4. Social action, reintegration and reconciliation

Extended democracy depends both on the state and on civil society organisations. After the Paris riots, the then Prime Minister recognised that it had been a mistake to cut subsidies to CSOs and NGOs working with disadvantaged youth. Recently, elders in Ethiopia have brought a decisive contribution to national reconciliation and hence to democracy. NGOs which defend the rights of women, which fight against traditional practices such as enforced marriages or female genital mutilation like KMG in Kembatta and many others, do not only promote human rights as one of their essential components: they push democracy forward in as much as they give women a say.

3. Democracy in the economic world

Democracy does not limit itself to the traditional political sphere. It is relevant also in the productive world and in business, even if rules and constraints are obviously different in a competitive and profit-oriented environment.

3.1. Representation of employees: the French example

In French companies, there are three mechanisms through which employees are represented:

- Delegates of the personnel: these are compulsory if a company has 11 employees or more. They can present individual or collective claims. They can appeal to Labour Inspectors or judges. They enjoy special protection against employers.
- Trade Union delegates or section: delegates are compulsory in any company with more than 50 employees. Delegates receive copies

of collective conventions and amendments; they participate in negotiations on salaries. If an officially recognised trade union is represented in the company, the delegates set up a "trade union section": it can collect fees, it can organise meetings, and it is entitled to a special room to perform its work.

- Enterprise committee: required if the company has at least 50 employees. It comprises elected representatives of the personnel as well as representatives of trade unions. It is consulted by employers on management, work schedules, training, layoffs, etc. It receives written information on all those issues. It manages social activities (kinder gardens, etc.). It is financially supported by the company.

Thus the French model is a hybrid one: it rests on a dual system of representation: direct representatives of the personnel and representatives of trade unions.

3.2. Representation of shareholders

There are seven million shareholders in France. Buying shares has become increasingly popular; five million French bought EDF shares (among whom 100,000 EDF employees) when the public electricity utility was privatised.

However, it is often difficult for small shareholders to be heard in General Assemblies, when crucial decisions for the future of the company have to be taken. The growing weight of investment funds, particularly pension funds, reinforces this difficulty, even if sometimes small shareholders are suddenly courted by big ones, for instance in the case of a hostile bid or an attempt at a takeover by a new majority.

In order to exert their due influence, small shareholders have created associations: ADAM (association de défense des actionnaires minoritaires, 3,000 members), ANAF (association nationale des actionnaires de France, 2,700 members). Their influence remains limited but this trend will be interesting to follow.

3.3. Association labour—capital and participation

Participation of employees in the profits of the company is compulsory when there are more than 50 employees. There are a lot of schemes: employees can receive shares of the company, they can

become its creditors, or they are entitled to financial products generated by its profits.

These sums are blocked for a certain time. In certain conditions, they are tax exempt.

3.4. The necessary limit: necessity of a unified and coherent command

Self-management by employees, as it was imagined once by some socialist theories, particularly in Tito's Yugoslavia, has never worked and has become an obsolete myth. Business needs bosses. It also needs enough secrecy to preserve its strategic decisions and business confidentiality. I once worked as a trainee in an oil company. I heard that a refinery was to be shut down. But the management would not—rightly—tell me which one. Total transparency is incompatible with business efficiency. But some transparency is required, both vis-à-vis shareholders and employees, and even the general public: it belongs to good business governance.

4. Future vs. present

Finally, extended democracy presupposes that the rights of those to come should also be taken into account. I will give you two examples.

Companies often have to make difficult choices between short term financial interests (return on investment) which are the main concern of financial institutions like pension funds, and the economic interests of the company, which might lead to strategic investment decisions geared to long term profitability and, ultimately, the good of the community. One of the challenges our modern democracies have to face is making sure that crucial economic orientations will not only be dictated by short term and short sighted financial concerns.

More and more governments too have to take into account the interests of future generations, even if this means some discomfort for the present ones.

This particularly applies to the environment: we have to save energy, to drive less carelessly, to change our wasteful behaviour, to sacrifice some of our favourite eating habits. As a traditional African saying

puts it: "We have not received earth from our parents; we have borrowed it from our children."

More generally, should present citizens alone have a say in the state of affairs or should democracy accept implicit rights of future generations? For instance, a government must face a difficult choice: should it alleviate taxes (for the benefit of those living now) or maintain or even increase them in order to finance new long term investment? Similarly, in most advanced societies, it has become increasingly clear that the age of retirement should be raised: otherwise, the weight of retired people will put too heavy a burden on future generations.

"Extended" or "inclusive democracy" should encompass all citizens, including the most disadvantaged. It should be applied both to the political and (with obvious limitations) to the economic sphere. It should take into accounts the rights of both present and future generations.

Perspectives on the Development of Democracy in Sweden
Kinfe Abraham

Excellencies, scholars, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen: it is my singular honour and pleasure to address this august body this evening on the experience of democratic transformation in Sweden. Having lived in Sweden for almost two decades I have gone through a total immersion of the Swedish culture: I speak Swedish, I can write in Swedish and I have a smattering of Norwegian and Danish, which are related languages.

When one thinks about Sweden the image that immediately comes to mind, and this is based on my impression before I went to Sweden, is that Sweden is a country of missionaries, tall Swedish ladies with long dresses, walking in simplicity. The other picture I had was that Sweden is a country of blond, blue-eyed girls. Very attractive. But the image of Sweden is perhaps under-represented by these two statements. The Swedes are friendly people. The characteristics I alluded to are relevant to this situation.

Sweden has a long and glorious history which stretches far back in time. Early in the first century roman historians had written about the country and it was in fact the most important of the Scandinavian countries. Finland was a part of Sweden for nearly 500 years. There was a time when Denmark, Norway and Sweden were fused or united together to form a Scandinavian country. That happened in 1389, in an agreement signed in the town of Kalmar. The three countries stayed together for a long time. But the Swedish were not happy with the union, they wanted to go out of the mould and finally decided to break away around 1521. A famous Swedish monarch, Gustavasal, essentially laid the foundation which became the basis for the establishment of modern Sweden. After 1551 Sweden remained independent. In this period Finland was a part of Sweden—from 1362 to 1809. Then Norway became a part of Sweden after Denmark was defeated by Napoleon at around 1800. Eventually the two countries broke away from Sweden. In 1905 Norway became an independent nation. Similarly Finland also declared its independence. The result is the current Sweden that we have. It is a very big country, which makes development of infrastructure difficult. Its population of nine million makes it smaller than New York, but it is a highly respected country on the international stage.

In 1917 when the Russian revolution (or the October revolution) occurred, there was a strong political movement in Sweden that was radically left-oriented, and a revolution was averted because of the introduction of parliamentary democracy into the country. Sweden has been a constitutional monarchy since 1866, essentially reviewed in 1975. In 1971 the bicameral parliament was dissolved and replaced by a single chamber parliament. Since then the power of the monarch has been curtailed significantly. So, what we have is a nominal monarch with ceremonial duties who, from time to time, plays an important public relations role.

Around 1850 Sweden was impoverished, and there was an rise in poverty and alcoholism that resulted in massive migration. Between 1850 and 1910 near to one million people migrated to the United States. Today there are around 10 million Swedish-Americans—perhaps more people than in Sweden itself—an important source of trade for Sweden.

Sweden has remained a neutral country. It even had difficulties joining the European Union. It is not a member of the military alliances, which is quite exceptional in the Scandinavian context, as Norway is a member of NATO and so is Denmark. Sweden essentially joined the European Union some ten years ago following a referendum. I think that about 52 per cent of the population voted for membership of the European Union. Sweden remained neutral during World War One as well as World War Two. And because of its policy of neutrality it has enjoyed nearly two hundred years of peace and tranquillity, which has been of great value to the rapid development of the country. This, of course, contrasts sharply with our situation here. We have hosted nearly 30 conflicts over the last 100 years—Sweden has enjoyed more than 200 years of peace and stability.

Sweden was a beneficiary of the Marshall plan in the post-war period. But, it is essentially the industriousness of the Swedish people that created the rapid transformation in the country.

Over the period 1920 to 1960 Sweden transformed itself into a modern industrial state and one of the richest countries in the world. Its per capita income is around 20.000 US dollars. The GDP of the country accounts for 270 billion USD, a significant amount for a country of nine million and if you compare it with Ethiopia's GDP, which is around 8 billion. Because of this stable affluence Sweden is one of the most generous countries when it comes to international development assistance. Ethiopia has been a beneficiary of Swedish support for a number of years. You are probably familiar with the Ethiopian school buildings ASBU which has constructed nearly 700,000 schools in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Paediatric Clinic was also a Swedish contribution. The building college was a result of Swedish assistance to Ethiopia. Swedes were also engaged in the economic and the diplomatic spheres. Emperor Haile Selassie had many Swedish advisors because he did not want to be too reliant on the UK which had assisted Ethiopia by pushing the Italians out of Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Emperor did not want his foreign policy to be dictated by a single major power: neither the United Kingdom nor, later, the United States. So, in an attempt to diversify his foreign policy he invited the Swedes. In fact, the pilot who flew the Emperor out of the country when the Italians invaded Ethiopia for the second time was a Swede, Van Gunssen. Swedes were also involved in the training of the imperial bodyguard and they started the Holosup Military Training College. So they have been engaged in various segments of the economy, the political and the social life of the country.

Swedish involvement in Ethiopia actually started much earlier, as early as 1685.

Swedish missionaries operated in Ethiopia, particularly in the north in places like Kuren, Adowa, and subsequently in Wollega, where schools were organised by the Swedish Lutheran church. So they were actively engaged in the modernisation of Ethiopia which started early enough but which essentially became sluggish after World War Two.

Sweden is a paramount donor. It is one of the few affluent countries that contribute close to one per cent of their GDP. It also plays a very active role at the United Nations and supported Ethiopia during the Italian invasion in 1896 at Adowa. During the vendetta, the return of Italy to Ethiopia in 1936, the Swedish Red Cross society actively supported Ethiopia in the medical field.

But back to the Swedish political development. As I mentioned before the social democratic party of Sweden has played a decisive role in the political life of the country. In fact, from 1917 to the present, the social democratic party has dominated the political scene with the exception of only three terms of election (won by a coalition of the conservative centre-right parties). Prominent people like Olof Palme played a visible role in the international political arena. Unfortunately he was assassinated—an act of violence rarely seen in Sweden—the Swedes are generally a very law abiding people.

One of the most important things of the democratic transformation of Sweden is that it has managed to create a welfare state. Income is very equally distributed; probably it is one of the few countries with the most evenly distributed incomes in the world. Taxation as a result is very, very high. Maintaining the welfare state is quite expensive. People have to pay 30 per cent municipal tax, and 55 per cent income tax. That is why Sweden has been able to maintain a very functional and humane welfare establishment. It is called the Scandinavian model generally, and it is regarded as something between socialism and capitalism, envied by the Russia, the Chinese and so on. Even the so-called socialist countries do not have the same fairness when it comes to income distribution. Sweden is one of the wealthiest countries, and the source of its wealth is firstly forestry, timber, hydropower, and it has been a major exporter of steel as well. That has expedited or speeded-up the rapid industrialisation of the country. The industrial sector accounts for around 19 per cent, while agriculture accounts for only two per cent of the GDP (and for two per cent of employment). That contrasts with our situation: agriculture in the Ethiopian situation accounts for around 60 per cent. That gives an indication that we have a long way to go.

Sweden has an export-oriented economy. In 1994 it exported industrial commodities to the value of 106 billion USD, which is a significant amount. The biggest source of revenue is the public sector services followed by industry. Another interesting source of contrast

is the energy sector: Sweden relies heavily on hydropower. We have a great potential for hydropower and the export of hydropower. After the oil crisis of 1973, Sweden diversified its sources of energy and brought down its prices of petroleum. Now it relies heavily on plants, hydropower and other renewable sources of energy like biomass transformed and so on. This policy has made it less and less dependant on the import of petroleum, which is now affecting our economy in a big way.

Sweden is a member of the European Union, an important one among the smaller nations at least. The leading ones are of course Germany—Germany is by far the largest economy in Europe—and the UK and France. But among the countries that follow, Sweden ranks highly.

What we can learn from the Swedish experience is the value of hard work, dedication, the value of making people the centre of development. The social democratic policy is predicated on human welfare. The will of the majority: the gap between the haves and the have nots should not be wide. Swedes attach great importance to education, so education is basically free at all levels, but of course this is a result of the industrial surplus. Sweden is perhaps among the few countries in the world that attach great importance to gender equality, and it attaches great importance to childcare: every Swede is entitled to 480 days paid leave over a period of eight years, from when a child is born to its eighth year. They have parenting rules: maternal leave and paternal leave that can be shared equally. Basically I think these are the benefits of a welfare state and the value of international solidarity, support for fellow human beings—beyond Sweden in Africa, Asia, Latin America and other places. There is a lot more that we could learn from the Swedish experience but I am given to understand that my time is up. Thank you very much for your attention.

Moderator: We had an exciting tour through northern Europe and Sweden, from the history to the social situation and development, and I can imagine that there are many contributions from the floor. Let's give Prof. Kinfe the opportunity to explain more by answering your questions.

Question: What is the relevance of the Swedish experience to Africa?

Essential is a distribution of wealth—that one has resources in order to distribute. What has been disregarded by African governments is that they have no emphasis. They generally emphasise accommodating the East and West for different reasons, but they are not really related to development. In other words, they have the carrot but not the horse. You have to produce and create wealth to distribute. Then perhaps one can see the value of socialist policies. The Swedes have taken advantage of 200 years of peace and stability, whereas the post-colonial African states have been engaged either in civil wars or border conflicts for the last three or four decades. As a result a lot of development opportunities were wasted, massive amounts of resources were allocated to the defence sector and therefore the development agenda has been marginalised or compromised. Many resources have been allocated to retaining power, reserving power by elite groups openly collaborating with the private sector. So it is a choice of development and also aspects of the fact that production should be the number one priority. Then it should be mentioned that African conflicts are extremely detrimental. They are counter-productive, they hamper development, they hamper the welfare of human beings. The emphasis should be on creating a stable work environment in which people can be actively engaged in the production process and in the process of creating wealth. Taking the right priorities is of paramount significance.

Question: Democracy is based on political parties engaged in dialogue where elections are held. What is the professor's opinion on this? What constitutes a political system?

Class analysis. I haven't called it class analysis but essentially most of what I talked about has to do with class analysis because one raises the issue of ideology which of course raises issues relating to the wealthy strata of society. We talked about the distributional nature of wealth. Sweden is characteristically democratic when it comes to an even distribution of wealth. That's why the welfare state was created. Even in a strictly socialist context or a Marxist complex the ultimate objective is to create a fair and distributionally just society. We talk about the working class, we talk about the capitalist class, and it is because of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. The Swedes have overcome that through a scheme of rationalist distribution

which is legalised so that you have a very narrow gap between the rich and the poor. They have not actively hampered the creation If you don't have wealth how can you distribute it? of wealth because in order to create welfare you have to create wealth. And in order to gain wealth you have to encourage those who produce, even if the group is numerically marginal.

Question: How did the Swedes manage to democratise by maintaining the monarch?

As I said in my presentation, the monarchy has a limited and ceremonial power essentially, which sometimes happens by way of the king visiting countries, promoting the country and essentially playing a public relations role which resulted in a reduction in the power of the monarchy. In Ethiopia the monarchy was painlessly removed perhaps because Ethiopia is a more heterogeneous society in relation to Sweden. Sweden has a more homogeneous society, thus this process was undertaken over a long stretch of time, and the reform therefore was not immediately painful. What we can learn from the Swedish experience is the value of tolerance, the value of consensus, the value of hard work, an emphasis on the commonalities among ourselves rather than the divergences. Finally, friends, these are values that you can learn from the Swedish experience, and, I'm sure, from the German one.

Question: How did Sweden maintain its neutrality?

Basically by staying neutral. By not getting actively involved. Sweden is a small country. It also happened as a result of the social democratic party that represented the middle ground between capitalism and socialism: it was not negatively viewed by the Russians. It was a preferred country by Hitler because of the looks of the Swedes. And allied forces did not put much pressure on it. Thus it managed to keep its liberal constitution.

Question: Is Ethiopia on the right track?

Right now we are trying for a democratic order because democracy, as I said earlier, has never been perfected, even in countries where it has been for 400 years. So maybe we have another imperfection that we need to work on to achieve stability.

Swedish Democracy: Conflicts, Consensus, Compromise
Staffan Tillander

Conflicts, compromise and consensus may seem contradictory but do in fact reinforce and presuppose each other. Conflicts because Sweden is a pluralistic society with numerous interests. Compromise because resolving conflicts peacefully characterises Swedish decision making. Consensus because that is both the end result of the decision making process and the basis for its success.

In describing some characteristics of Swedish society, I will emphasise the fairly recent modernisation of Sweden into a developed democracy, open economy and pluralistic society, with conflicting interests. Pluralism is an asset, not a liability.

I will then discuss some mechanisms through which the policy making process can turn conflicting interests into compromise and consensus. I will describe civil society, political parties, parliament, the press and the civil service—all essential elements or channels through which demands and criticism can be expressed and different interests reconciled.

Let me say at the outset that Sweden is not a homogeneous society, all blond and blue eyes. It is a mix of different cultures, regions, religions, economic and social groups and ideologies. Perhaps it is this blend of interests, private initiatives, ideas and forces that has created the dynamics that has allowed Sweden to develop into what it is today. Diversity breeds ideas and a dynamic development which in turn encourages initiatives, growth and development.

What is the relevance in the Ethiopian context? It is always difficult to use experiences from one setting as a guide in another, totally different, setting. At the same time, lessons learned are useful, and there are principles, methods and mechanisms for decision making and conflict resolution that are generally applicable.

Some key characteristics

1. Sweden has only fairly recently developed into what it is today. Sweden had its severe poverty, starvation that forced people to emigrate in the late 1800s/early 1900s. Sweden was then one of the poorest countries in Europe. In the mid 1900s, Sweden was among the richest.

2. Sweden has an open economy, a free market system. The basis was created in the 1800s, through economic reforms, education for all and protection of private property.

This created an early predictability in terms of private activities and initiatives. Predictability and fair rules are necessary for wise and long term economic investments.

3. Sweden has an egalitarian political culture. We have a strong social safety net. We have taken steps towards equality between social groups, men and women in terms of work, salaries, political decisions, inheritance, responsibility at home and so on. This has contributed to a strong social basis for consensus and democracy.

4. Swedish democracy developed step by step, hand in hand with the economic and social development. Some important examples:
- There is a long tradition of self-rule (Vikings had their "Ting"; Arboga Parliament 1435 elected the King; the Riksdag had representation from peasants and the bourgeoisie, not only from the nobility and the church.)
- Administrative structures developed early (in the 1500–1600s, a strong centralised structure arose and ensured efficiency in terms of rule and administration).
- Freedom of the Press was recognised in the 1700s; the institution of the Ombudsman was established in 1810 to speak for the people against the government.

5. Liberal Democracy as we know it today developed late; in the 1900s. Universal suffrage was introduced stepwise, from 1909 to 1921. The political party system was created during a period of industrialisation and reflected the social and economic structure at the time (labour, farmers, liberal, conservative and communist). Also popular movements evolved into a strong "civil society". Social movements organised and represented important parts of the population, including otherwise marginalised groups.

6. Sweden found ways to resolve conflicts with neighbours peacefully. Sweden has a history characterised by war and conflicts until the early 19th Century. We have the historic archenemy Denmark and a troubled relationship with Russia over several centuries. Sweden took active part in the 30-years war in the 1600s. We have had conflicts with Germany and Poland.

In 1658, Sweden took parts of Denmark, parts that have remained Swedish after that. The relationship remained tense, with a potential for conflict for a long time. We were at war with Russia in the 1700s, and even as late as early 1800s.

Since 1814, Sweden has had no war. We lost Finland in 1809. After that we gained Norway, which remained with Sweden through a Union until 1905. Then the countries split, a politically difficult process, but nonetheless peacefully. After that there has been no conflict between the two countries. Sweden was neutral in First and Second World War. We had a conflict with Finland over the island of Aland in 1917–21, the island was then given to Finland by the League of Nations.

The point here is that we have had no wars over these territories (not with Finland, Norway, Denmark) over the past 200 years. Why is that? Because the countries are democratic? Because they are mutually dependent economically and on trade? Wise decision makers? Perhaps internal and external peace and development have become more important than territorial issues?

Mechanisms for compromise and consensus

How was this tradition of compromise and consensus created? The challenge is how to channel and respond to new ideas and demands.

1. Political parties play a key role. They must respond to new ideas and demands.

In Sweden we have different political parties (the numbers vary between 5 and 8). It is a rather fragmented system. Some political parties reflect old values and divisions (labour, liberals, farmers). Other parties reflect new developments (Greens, New Democracy, Skaneparty, the party against EU).

2. There are sometimes links between interest groups and political parties. Civil society is a part of the political process. The farmers' organisations had access through the farmers' party. Workers and trade unions through the social democratic party. Interest groups work through established ties to political parties. These are not two separate worlds; it is difficult to separate politics from interest groups. Ideas and demands are channelled through the political parties.

3. Conflicts are also settled through voluntary agreements among strong and independent interest groups. We have strong and cohesive labour unions, strong employers, farmers and businesses. They have clearly conflicting interests, but also common interests. They enter into agreements and peaceful settlement of disputes. A special spirit of cooperation and consensus that developed in the 1930s has characterised the system ever since.

The electoral system and its impact

How does the electoral system affect this?

First a few words about the party system and stability. It is a common assumption that two party systems create consensus. With single member districts and a first past the post system, one tends to get two political parties—one of which dominates and has a majority. It is then argued that this creates a stable base for a majority in parliament, like in the UK.

Proportional systems on the other hand, it is often argued, create multiparty systems and breed instability. One could also argue, though, that thanks to this system, parties better reflect popular opinion, different ideologies and regions.

Is Sweden with five to eight political parties unstable?

It has been argued that the Social Democrats are dominant, having ruled Sweden since the 1930s. This is partly true and one aspect of Sweden's stability. But the situation is much more diverse when one looks at the entire political system over a period of time. One can see that the Social Democrats often have formed minority governments, or been in office in a coalition with others (such as with the farmers'

party, in 1933–1939, and in the 1950s). In the 1960s, the Social Democrats formed a minority government (except 1968–1970). We had a centre-right coalition 1976–1982 and in 1991–1994. After that, the Social Democrats headed a government dependent on the Left and the Greens until 2006.

If one looks further, one can see that different political parties rule at different levels of government. Political power changes hands more often than it appears when looking only at the central level.

Does this mean that the political system is unstable? Not necessarily. I would argue, that the system of proportional representation is more likely to result in a flexible, dynamic and pragmatic party system. It is a system more able to respond to new ideas, to absorb and channel ideas—this contributes to stability.

One could also argue that the political stakes are higher in elections with one member districts. The winner takes all, the loser gets nothing. In a system with proportional representation even if you do not win, you do not lose everything.

How to handle conflicts?

One important conclusion emerges from the discussion so far: conflicts exist and they need to be handled and resolved. Opinions, loyalties and feelings must be channelled through institutions, parties and interest groups. A system with proportional representation serves this purpose well.

1. The role of Parliament

The Parliament has an important role. It allows the opposition to challenge the government. New ideas can be expressed, protests can be voiced, popular sentiments and demonstrations find their way through the system to the floor of the Parliament.

In the Swedish Parliament there are numerous mechanisms in place:
- Members introduce proposals through committees annually.
- Special debates can be called.
- There is a general monthly debate.

- A weekly question time to the Prime Minister and ministers.
- A special mechanism for questions, followed by 30 minutes debate between members and ministers.
- Committees can hold public hearings.

The Parliament is ruled by speakers representing all parties. The rule is by consensus, with respect for each other. This means that debate is out in the open. It can influence the ongoing policy making process and even a minority in parliament has a role. It can complain and it can show some results.

2. An open policy making process
Sweden's policy process is designed to take various conflicting views into account. Every cabinet proposal is preceded by broad and inclusive consultations with all parties and all interest groups. A committee is often appointed to elaborate proposals (with representatives from different groups). A proposal is then submitted for comments by all those affected (all wishing to comment). The final Cabinet proposal contains description and discussion of the proposal and comments. The proposal is then introduced in committee and debated in Parliament.

There are numerous opportunities to propose changes and to alter and affect proposals, even to stop proposals. Sometimes the policy process becomes slow. This is sometimes frustrating for government or those wanting change, but it creates awareness of issues and conflicts; it makes compromises possible and it builds consensus.

The best ideas can become government policy. They can be channelled through interest groups and political parties but also through the administrative structures and through civil servants.

3. The role of the civil servant
Civil servants in Sweden are different from politicians.

I mentioned earlier that the centralised administration was built up in the 1600s. The idea was to have effective and efficient civil servants to implement decisions of the king. Essentially, this tradition remains. Civil servants carry out the duties, the administration, in accordance with the political guidelines. Guidelines are issued through laws. Politicians make the laws. Civil servants implement them in a neutral manner, not in a partisan fashion.

Political parties are separate from the administration. When there is a shift in political office, only a handful top level political officeholders change. Most positions in government and agencies remain and continue to carry out the work in accordance with the guidelines provided by the new government.

The civil service provides continuity and administrative neutrality. This gives stability, because administration remains even when the parties shift. New ideas, demands and suggestions can be picked up by interest groups and political parties, but also by civil servants.

4. The free press: the mechanism that allows the flow of new ideas
How do we ensure the flow of ideas? How do they hear about ideas? I have already talked about interest groups, political parties, the Parliament and civil servants.

We also need to point to the free press that can challenge and criticise government.

In Sweden, freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy. It is impossible to force papers to close for political reasons. We had *Aftonbladet* in the 1800s, a liberal paper that challenged the established order. It was a moderniser and government tried to close it. It was then published under different names, over and over again. *The New Aftonbladet*, *Aftonbladet 5, 6, 7* etc., until government finally gave up.

Today the press is an important part of the democratic system. As in other countries, it is referred to as the fourth estate (next to the executive, legislative and judicial branches).

The media can voice demands of interest groups and political parties and make sure that viewpoints are expressed and heard. The press is, in some cases, linked to political interests. It can openly be linked to a political party, or owned by a party or an interest group.

The press can follow and criticise what government officials do. It has a strong position and the law gives protection of sources. The law of public access to documents is another important tool. All correspondence to and from government is public, unless specifically declared secret for specific reasons such as national security.

Summary and conclusion

There are many political, economic and social problems, issues and conflicts in Sweden. This is obvious when one follows the election campaign leading up to the election in September 2006. Such conflicts need to be dealt with, not hidden. This is one main asset of a democratic system, it provides the mechanisms and channels through which conflicts can be handled and resolved.

Swedish democracy, I have argued, is characterised by conflicts, compromise, and consensus.

There are numerous conflicts and different interests. This is not necessarily a problem but could be seen as an asset in that it breeds new ideas and creates the basis for a dynamic society. Policy making in Sweden is aided by a strong civil society and a strong and independent press. There are ways to influence the decision making process. The press and civil society channel ideas, criticism and different views. They contribute to an open debate that informs decision makers about new challenges, problems, and unhappiness among the population.

Conflicts are best dealt with when out in the open, discussed and debated and channelled through mechanisms and institutions.

There is a tradition of compromise. Broad coalition governments are formed in times of crisis. Political mechanisms (interest groups, political parties, the press) contribute to compromise. They allow almost everybody to be part of the political process, to influence decisions. A lost election does not mean that everything is lost. Political efforts can be channelled through other means between elections.

The key is a policy making process through which good ideas can become reality. Through the vibrant Parliament, parties are proportionally represented and take part in the work of committees and can challenge government officials in debates.

The civil service is neutral and assures continuity.

There is compromise also in terms of relations to neighbours. Conflicts are resolved and pragmatic solutions are found. For Sweden the fact that peace has reigned for 200 years has been more important than the loss or gains of some territories. A historically hostile environment has been replaced by close and fruitful cooperation.

The political process builds and reinforces consensus. It creates predictability and stability and a good basis for growth and development. Conflicts and diversity promote dynamic development.

Austria: Democracy and Social Partnership
Brigitte Öppinger-Walchshofer

You might ask yourself how we Austrians fit into this series of lectures—and I think we do, as in Austria we have developed our own approach in addressing the issue of the "Social Question" in our society. This approach, coined by the founding fathers of the Second Austrian Republic, which started in 1945 after the end of the Second World War, is called the "Social Partnership".

Today's Austria is a democratic, "Western-style" federal republic. What distinguishes Austria from other West-European political systems is the scope and influence of its specific form of social partnership. In contrast to other countries, social partnership in Austria is not just a system of labour management relations or of wage bargaining, but a system of institutionalised cooperation between labour, business and government that is involved in all important aspects of economic and social policy.

In short, the "Social Partnership" is a well developed system of cooperation between major economic interest groups on the one hand and the government on the other for the benefit of all members of the economy.

Let me first provide you with a short historical overview of the origins of the social partnership and how it functions before I embark on the experimental question whether there are any lessons that can be learned from the Austrian experience for other countries.

The essence of "social partnership" is the mutual agreement of all parties involved to cooperate in social, political as well as economic spheres. The founding principle of the Austrian economic system is the idea that social stability is irrevocably linked with economic growth and that both are the foundations for a functioning and stable democracy. The social partnership as such takes a centre position in

promoting democratic stability. Now comes a short historical introduction as this might help to get a deeper understanding of this model.

History

After World War Two, the government, as well as industry and the trade unions, realised that the country could not afford to repeat the continuous social, political and economic conflict that marked the 1920s and 1930s when the country moved from one crisis to another until Adolf Hitler's "Anschluss" in 1938. They wanted to avoid ruinous social and industrial conflict, strikes, lock-outs and the kind of persistent social battles that had contributed to the paralysis of the Austrian economy and its body politic during the interwar years. The founding fathers of the second Austrian republic in 1945 agreed that in order for a small market-oriented economy to survive, cooperation between all members of the economy was essential.

To find a solution, the government and its political and economic institutions reached back to earlier concepts that also had an influence on Austrian thinking and Austrian history.

One was the papal encyclical Rerum Novarum of 1891, which had envisaged a working class that would be gradually absorbed into a property-owning class, not through social conflict but through constructive social cooperation.

Another was the Austrian tradition of the Labour Advisory Council (Arbeitsbeirat), which had functioned as a section of the Ministry of Commerce under the Austrian-Hungarian Empire from 1898 to the outbreak of World War I and which offered a model for the pragmatic participation of the labour movement in the functions of the state and the general direction of the economy.

After World War Two these concepts coincided with the practical exigencies of the moment to force representatives of social groups to work together to cope with the combination of unemployment, inflation and widespread poverty and misery. You must remember that at that time Austria still lay in ruins from the carnage of the War. The ÖGB (Austrian Labour Union Organisation) and the re-established business organisations of the three main economic chambers played

central roles in working out a series of wage-price agreements between 1947 and 1951.

Those agreements, and the negotiations that led to them, were based on a mutual recognition that no social group could benefit if it imposed its demands at the expense of the collapse of the state and its economy—a collapse that often seemed all too near in the immediate postwar years. The bitter lessons of the First Austrian republic were taken at heart, where battles and strikes between employees and employers led to a virtual standstill of the economy with disastrous consequences to the living conditions of Austrian citizens. Long term interests were gradually sacrificed for short term successes in order to keep the Austrian electorate at bay. Not so after the Second reconstruction of the Austrian state. Cooperation was the first and foremost guarantee for a gradual expansion of the economy and thus for the improvement of living standards in the Second Republic.

The social partnership, up until today, has been successful in maintaining a cooperative spirit and in avoiding industrial strife. After World War Two, Austria had fewer strike-minutes lost per worker than any major economy in the industrialised world. In many years, there were no strikes at all. Austria's transformation from a poor country in the period between the world wars to one of the richest countries of the world on per capita basis is closely connected with, and largely caused by, the system of social partnership.

How it works

Here the structure of the Parity Commission:
Strong and comprehensive institutionalised interest groups form the basis of the system of social partnership in Austria. At the heart of these interest groups are the various chambers, which are representative bodies of different economic groups with legally compulsory membership. It is only in Austria where such an official system of interest groups, which historically dates back to the medieval guilds, has survived on this scale.

The chambers are empowered by law to represent the interest of their members in public affairs and in contacts with public authorities.

Thus, the chambers must be consulted by the government on economic and financial legislation and policy. The form of the chambers' organisation, too, is stipulated by law. Common to all of them is a democratic structure, which requires all positions to be filled through elections.

Austria's independent entrepreneurs are represented in the provincial and federal Chambers of Commerce with the federal central body being composed of six sections comprising industry, commerce, trade, transport, tourism and finance, credit and insurance. Representation is organised primarily at the provincial level, followed by a system of indirect elections for the appointment of officials at the federal level.

The Chambers of Agriculture are based in the provinces, where all office holders are elected directly by farmers. Representation at the federal level is provided by a Presidential Conference. Chamber positions are filled through direct elections and activities are financed by compulsory membership fees.

Unlike the chambers, the Trade Union Federation is based on voluntary membership. It represents employees of private as well as public enterprises. The Federation has a total membership of about 1,600,000 and is, in legal terms, a juridical person, while the unions it incorporates are not. Thus, while a union may negotiate a collective agreement, legally, the federation as such must endorse it. Moreover, it is the federation that decides jurisdictional questions among unions, which are, in the main, organised on an industrial basis. The exception is the Private Employee's Union.

The powerful Federation of Austrian Industrialists, which in the context of social partnership is in close cooperation with the Federal Economic Chamber, is also based on voluntary membership.

Today, the social partnership system works on the basis of a mutual recognition of three principles.
- The first is that the three main economic groups—industry, agriculture and labour—will be properly represented through four mutually recognised organisations—the chambers of commerce, agriculture and labour and the ÖGB—that represent their interests and that can take the responsibility for decisions.
- The second is that economic decisions can be legitimately made outside the ideologically competitive political atmosphere of

Parliament, thus in effect depoliticising crucial matters related to the Austrian standard of living.

- Third, the principle of consensus will function in such a manner that no social group is ignored and no social group will prolong the struggle once an agreement has been reached.

What distinguishes the Austrian social partnership is that it extends to practically all areas of economic and social policy. For this reason, Austria is considered an excellent example of corporatism, a comprehensive and coordinated representation of group interest.

The aims of the social partnership are defined in several agreements. The Social Partnership Agreement of 23 November 1992 sets out the current activities and, most importantly, has considerably broadened the aims of the partnerships. The social partners are no longer concerned solely with full employment, price stability and growth but also with securing the competitiveness of the Austrian economy in the international markets, full participation in international organisations and especially European integration, increasing the internationalisation of the Austrian economy, promoting human talent and skills, maintaining and improving humane labour conditions and meeting environmental challenges.

The Parity Commission

The core consultative instrument of the social partnership is the Parity Commission.

The Commission consists of seven members of the government—the federal Chancellor, three ministers and three state secretaries—and two representatives each from the Federal Chamber of the Economy, the Presidential Conference of the Austrian Chambers of Agriculture, the Council of the Austrian Chambers of Labour and the ÖGB. This distribution of seats on the commission gives the interest organisations a majority, not the government. Experts in various areas attend the meetings in an advisory capacity. The Parity Commission's decisions must be unanimous, because the Commission is not based on law, and participation is completely voluntary.

The Parity Commission began its work in 1957 on the basis of an exchange of letters between the president of the Federal Chamber of the Economy and the president of the ÖGB. Its original purpose was to slow down a troubling wage-price spiral, but it later expanded into much broader discussions on the general trends of the European and Austrian economies and what would be the best response to these trends.

The Commission has subcommittees on wages and prices. In addition, the Commission includes the Advisory Committee for Economic and Social Questions, which was established in 1963 to provide the basis for an objective approach to economic policy and to conduct studies required by the Parity Commission. Such studies are usually conducted by task forces made up of experts from all areas of government, academia and business. Expert input in a policy related body can thus be used to find common ground, establish facts and data and encourage objectivity in economic policy debate.

The Parity Commission, however, only deals with the central questions of the economy. It establishes the general principles for solving economic problems and disagreements. Below it, at the industry level, the interest-group associations of the various chambers or the trade unions negotiate the separate and legally binding agreements governing employers or employees. The agreements are reached on the basis of the broad principles and criteria set by the Parity Commission.

Recent developments, however, show that the Parity Commission has become far more than that. As already mentioned, previously it dealt mainly with price controls and combating inflation, yet today it has become an institutionalised forum for dialogue between the social partners and the government. Here matters of particular importance, common strategies and concerted actions as well any arising conflicts are discussed and the recommendations of the Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs are considered.

The collaboration between state and social partners is an important connecting link between industrial relations and government policy. It provides the means of attuning collective bargaining to national economic and social policy and, conversely, opens up all aspects of that policy to possible influence by the social partners.

Accordingly, two subsystems of social partnership can be differentiated: bipartite consultations and negotiations between the social partners and tripartite consultation and concerted policy-making (Konzertierung) between the social partners and the state.

Bipartite social partnership encompasses three arenas:
1) the informal practice of negotiations and discussions at cross-sector level as institutionalised within the Parity Commission;
2) the collective bargaining system, focused on the sectoral level and representing the core institution of bipartite social partnership; and
3) co-determination as founded in the works constitution, providing the basis for consultations and negotiations between management and the works council at establishment and company level.

Tripartite social partnership relates to all social and economic policy issues which in formal terms fall within the purview of state powers and responsibilities. In accordance with the structure of the Austrian state, a distinction is made between the Federal Government and the individual *Länder* [regions], with most social and economic policy issues falling within the purview of the Federal Government's legislative powers.

As a result of that, the focus of social partnership lies at the Federal Government level, although its importance at individual *Land* level, particularly in the area of national labour market policy, has increased in recent years.

Some forms of social partnership involve little or no participation of government organs:

The so-called self-administration associations require the cooperation of interest associations in such structures as social insurance institutions, agricultural boards, labour-market bodies and tribunals, and in other institutions where agreements between potentially conflicting interest groups must be reached. Those institutions more often deal with social than with economic questions, but the participants in the negotiations usually evaluate the broad economic situation and the policies agreed on in the Parity Commission as they negotiate.

The Social Partners are well-established in Austria's political system in numerous ways.

Legislation: The representative organisations have the right to evaluate proposed legislation, to make recommendations to law making bodies and to draft texts for legislation directly related to the interests of the social partners (social welfare and labour law).

Administration: The social partners are represented on numerous commissions, advisory boards and committees and thus exert influence in matters of, for example, the apprenticeship system, inspection of working conditions, issuance of certificates of origin, competition and anti-trust policy, labour market policy and public promotion and funding programmes.

Justice: The social partners nominate candidates to act as lay judges at labour courts and appoint assessors for the cartel court.

The organisations play an important role in the social security system by maintaining representatives in the social insurance institutions, which are organised as self-administrating entities under public law.

The social partners' responsibilities also include informal negotiating and problem solving in their special areas of expertise, such as labour law and social welfare issues, but also trade regulations and family law, where agreement between the social partners is often a prerequisite for an appropriate solution at the political level.

Beyond the mechanics of the Parity Commission and the representation of the social partners in various institutions, other elements also work to produce an atmosphere of cooperative consciousness. One of these elements is the virtually universal recognition by all Austrians that theirs is a small state and a small economy in a world full of larger and potentially more competitive actors. Austria cannot afford self-indulgence because it would immediately risk its survival!

Another cause for cooperation rather than unbridled competition is the large public and foreign ownership of Austrian firms. At the beginning of the 1990s, state-owned firms constituted a total of 32.8 per cent of all Austrian companies and foreign-owned firms constituted an additional 25.1 per cent, leaving only about 35 per cent in private hands, with an additional 7 per cent in scattered holdings. Since its election in 2000, the current coalition government has pledged to liberalise large parts of the economy. This thrive for privatisation, however, is in no way intended to reduce the influence of the social partners. It merely shows the adaptability of the system to current

market trends. The social partnership is still seen as an essential ingredient to the success of the Austrian economy.

Lessons to be learned?

Are there any valid lessons to be learned by other countries from the experiences of the Austrian social partnership? Of course there are many historical and institutional features that are particular to Austria and cannot be easily generalised.

Yet I would like to offer two main lessons from the Austrian experience.

- First, a policy that is based on the concept of "countervailing powers" and on an "interventionist market economy" seems to be better able to combine economic growth, structural change and social stability than one based on an "invisible hand" approach.
- Second, an interventionist model like the system of social partnership can only be successful if it is based on the voluntary cooperation of strong, encompassing social and economic organisations. This necessarily means power-structures different from a model of democracy that is based on a strict separation of politics and economics. In my view, such a separation is not realistic. The Austrian system of close, but open connections between politics and economics can be seen as more balanced and democratically controlled than a political system that is heavily influenced by uncontrolled and single issue-oriented special interest groups and political action committees.

On the other hand big, all-inclusive, "social partnership organisations" necessarily bring high concentrations of power. Therefore it is essential to see the social partnership as part of an overall conception for dividing political and economic powers, as a subsystem characterised by checks and balances. As the Austrian experience shows, the distribution of powers within such a system is not stable but will have to change according to the historical, social and economic development of a country. The more open and adaptable a social partnership proves to be, the better it can perform from the standpoint of both democracy and economic and social efficiency.

This is especially true for Austria. Through their deep involvement, the interest groups of the social partners have developed a strong responsibility for their political decisions, for they are aware that they influence not only their members but also the economy, democracy and society as a whole. The social partners strive to promote social stability as a comparative advantage in the internal market and, through their cooperation, to stabilise economic policy and the expectations of the economic players in the medium term, thereby contributing to balanced economic development and democratic stability.

The social partnership in Austria is thus marked by a special atmosphere conducive to dialogue and negotiation. The partners are willing to implement compromises both internally and externally and to consider common long term goals and the broader interests of society while representing the differing interests of their members.

In short, with the system of "Social Partnership" I have explained—together with a highly skilled labour force and a very industrious population—we in Austria have found our way to get out of the misery of the post-war situation in less than 50 years. Today we are among the 10 wealthiest countries in the world, but still do not believe this to be a reason to be complacent.

What we did in Austria you can also do in Ethiopia. May be you will find a system of social partnership that is modelled to your needs. It is worth trying.

IV.
The Role of International Organisations

Europe's Role in Promoting Democracy
Timothy Clarke

I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to participate in this series, since my own institution, the European Commission, is at the vanguard of this debate, and I myself have, in some of my previous jobs at the Commission Headquarters in Brussels, been actively involved in this process.

This subject is not a dry, academic one, dusted off and analysed every now and again by eminent history scholars. It is an eminently political one. Hardly a day goes by without some new development, both within and outside Europe.

Nor is democracy a subject which is the unique reserve of politicians. We are all—you, the audience, me—stakeholders. We all have our own personal views. Our institutions all have their views too. I suspect that if I asked ten individuals in this room what would be their definition of democracy, I would get ten different answers.

In the relatively short time before us I propose to deal with the issue in three sections:

- Firstly, how is Europe trying to promote democracy within Europe itself? And how has the European Union that has emerged from the ashes of two major World Wars succeeded in building a democratic system that can withstand the daily pressures placed upon it? And how has it done so whilst preserving the unique cultural heritage of each of its 25[1], shortly to become 27, Member States?
- Secondly, how has Europe tried to promote democracy outside Europe? What are the fundamental values and principles that are enshrined in every agreement that the European Union signs with its partners, whatever the partner's size and political credo? What criteria does the European Union use to judge whether new applicants should be able to join the European family?

- And thirdly, how has this been applied to Africa, particularly the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia?

I am not a political scientist, nor a historian, so you will have to excuse me if I brush over some of the details. I don't think it is possible to do a history of democracy in Europe in a few minutes.

1. How is democracy within Europe being promoted?

A few days ago I was in Brussels attending a Conference organised by the European Commission on Democracy and Governance. Many African Presidents and Prime Ministers attended, including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The final speaker was Nobel Prize Winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This is a man whose moral integrity and wisdom is beyond question. Few individuals in history have contributed as much to the cause of reconciliation and peace. As his moving oratory caused tears to flow in the audience, he talked of the horrors of the holocaust, of the dramatic achievement of the construction of Europe from the ashes of war, and of the creation of a modern Europe which lives in peace and stability, a major economic power, a model for Africa and the world.

As a British person, I grew up in a Europe that was foreign to me. I was surrounded by people who had no empathy with anything European. British culture and European culture seemed at times to be on a collision course. Thankfully, there were visionaries, even in the UK, who saw that the European ideal, a Europe of political, social and economic integration *could* be built whilst at the same time preserving our own uniquely British way of life.

Yes, on some things there would have to be compromises. Even the UK's beloved "Pint" of beer or "Gallon" of petrol or "Miles" would ultimately have to be sacrificed if we were to be part of a common, harmonised market.

The politicians driving the building of the European Union were wise enough to see that the key to bringing countries together that had been at war with each other, with widely differing histories and cultures, was to develop a set of core principles and values that all could

share. It also required the establishment of joint programmes that required some national sovereignty to be lost for the common good.

How you put these principles and values into practice was up to each state. But you had to sign up to them if you were to be part of the "club". From Rome, to Maastricht, to Amsterdam, to Nice each successive European Treaty built upon the commitments of its predecessor and spelt out in more and more precise terms the core European values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Further attempts to enshrine these into a Constitution have so far faltered, following the referenda results in France and the Netherlands, but I am not alone in thinking that this will come back on to the agenda again, sooner rather than later.

For the present, Article 6 of the Treaty of the European Union:

"re-affirms that the European Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to Member States."

Furthermore, Article 7 states that:

"The EU can suspend certain rights of a Member State … if it has determined the existence of a serious and persistent breach of these principles".

A later article, Article 46, empowers the European Court of Justice to ensure the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms by the institutions of the EU — the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

I do not imagine that these powers will ever be exercised, but they are there if needed.

Both at a national and European level, a whole array of checks and balances have been put into place to ensure that these principles and values are adhered to. At national level, a lively press, public and parliamentary debates ensure that every citizen in Europe has the possibility to follow these issues and develop his/her own opinions.

At the European level, the debate on fundamental human rights, launched several years ago at the highest political level, emphasised the necessity to consolidate the fundamental rights applicable at EU level into a new Charter, thus making them more visible to every

European citizen. This Charter, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, was subsequently adopted at Nice in 1999.

The Charter highlights the EU's respect for the principle of democracy, for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The most obvious opportunity for every citizen to play his/her role is through participating in regular elections. National Parliaments hold *Governments* to account. Through elections, each citizen can influence the formation of a new government. In the European Union, there are twenty-five different, sovereign National Parliaments each with their own peculiarities based upon the history and culture of each nation, but each applying similar rules—such as universal suffrage, a representational system, the principle of a free and fair election process, equality of votes, election outcomes determined by rules established in advance, to name but a few.

The European Parliament with 732 members, seven political parties and groups shared across the Union, is a different animal altogether, with relatively few powers, although it still has ultimate budgetary authority and the power to sack the European Commission's President and Commissioners. It is not surprising that the European Commission listens very carefully to the views of the European Parliament.

2. What is/has the EU done to promote democracy outside Europe?

The EU itself of course is not a static entity, and several countries, attracted by the peace, stability, security and economic potential of the club, have been knocking on the door. This lecture is not the place to try and draw European boundaries—even a North African country once was interested in membership. But there certainly are many countries on the borders of the present European Union which would like membership. At present the Union has decided on a sort of pause in enlargement until it has sorted out some major issues on how to manage itself better.

In fact, the European Union is a victim of its own success. Managing a Community of six is not the same as managing a Community of 25. The growth of the EU has gone in leaps and bounds, from the six

initial core countries to the 25 that are members today. The fact that certain decisions still require unanimity can stifle and sclerotise the organisation. This is a major issue faced by EU politicians.

To help deal with new applications to join the EU, in 1993, at a time when several countries from Eastern Europe sought entrance, the European Council established a set of criteria, the Copenhagen criteria, a sort of yardstick to judge whether or not an accession application should be agreed. These criteria included:

- Stable political institutions to guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities (political criteria);
- A functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU's internal market (economic criteria);
- The ability to take on all obligations of membership, i.e. the entire body of EU law and policy, and the adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union—the so-called *acquis communautaire*.

Let me take the recent cases of Bulgaria and Romania, both of which will join as from January 1st next year. Since they submitted their first applications, the Commission has been making annual reports to the Council and Parliament based upon an evaluation of the Copenhagen principles to their specific cases.

For Bulgaria, the Commission had indicated several deficiencies, mainly in relation to the functioning of the justice system: the court backlogs had to be dealt with; additional efforts were needed to combat organised crime and corruption; and the protection and integration of the Roma minority into the community also needed to be improved.

For Romania, despite many efforts to improve the freedom of the media, reform of the justice system and child protection, the Commission concluded that more needed to be done to pursue the reform of the public administration and fight corruption. More also was needed in terms of the protection of the rights of the mentally ill and disabled.

In the meanwhile the necessary reforms have been made, and now, after a positive assessment made by the European Commission and a

formal proposal for full membership, the EU Heads of State gave a green light, and we will enjoy their full membership in a few weeks.

Turkey is another case which is still under consideration, with varying views amongst EU Member States. The Commission is still very much hoping for a successful outcome to the current negotiations, but as you know, there are still substantial concerns that need to be addressed.

Let me now say something about the EU's relations with so-called "third countries"—the non-EU states. The EU has now negotiated agreements with about 120 such countries. Each agreement, since 1995, has included a clause that stipulates that protection of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy are essential elements in the partnership between the two parties. It does not matter if the country is Australia or Zimbabwe, Guatemala or India, this clause is in the agreement.

Articles 177 and 181a of the Treaty of the European Union provide the legal basis:

"Community policy in this area shall contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms".

In the case of the EU's relations with the 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries—including of course Ethiopia and other countries of the Horn of Africa—the first such agreements were signed in 1957, then subsequently a further two Conventions were signed at Yaoundé, Cameroun, then four signed in Lomé, Togo, and most recently the Cotonou Agreement signed in Benin in 2000, updated a year and a half ago.

In the Cotonou Agreement, Article 9 stipulates a requirement that the partner signatories must agree to a certain number of essential elements and a fundamental element (good governance) that permeates every aspect of our co-operation.

It states that:

"The partnership shall actively support the promotion of human rights, processes of democratisation, consolidation of the rule of law, and good governance," and that these areas will also "be a focus of support for development strategies".

It further states that:

"Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including respect for fundamental social rights, democracy based upon the rule of law and transparent and accountable governance, are an integral part of sustainable development".

Article 8 states that Political Dialogue should be one of the means of achieving these goals.

Although the Cotonou Agreement sets out a mechanism for dealing with possible breaches—on both sides, whether by a Member State of the EU or an ACP country—in practice it has been rather rare for any party to invoke the mechanism.

Within the framework of its partnership agreements with other countries, the European Union has a remarkably wide series of instruments within its tool-box to promote democracy.

Some are essentially political: for example the agreement at the level of EU Foreign Ministers of "common strategies", (for example on Africa or a theme such as AIDS); on Human Rights dialogue (for example on China and Iran); the nomination of EU Special Representatives (for example for the African Great Lakes region, West Africa, the Middle East, and the Sudan); the formulation of Common Positions (for example on Zimbabwe and Togo); the undertaking of EU Troika démarches involving the European Union Presidency (currently Finland), the future Presidency (Germany) and the European Commission, (on, for example, specific conflicts, weapons of mass destruction, adhesion to the International Criminal Court, etc.); the undertaking of Article 8 dialogues between the EU and ACP partners on matters of particular concern for both parties (for example good governance, regional conflicts, respect for human rights and the rule of law, economic issues); EU Declarations on issues such as development co-operation, corruption and human trafficking, the promotion of civil society; EU Declarations and positions taken in various international fora—for example on migration in Libya last week at the Joint AU/EU Ministerial meeting on migration; undertaking EU Election Observation missions; carrying out actions within the framework of EU Guidelines on Human Rights, given new emphasis in June this year in a new Council decision.

Others are primarily technical and financial, relating to specific development co-operation programmes around the world. As many in

this room will know, the EU is the biggest provider of development assistance in the world, providing 55 per cent of the world overseas development. The EU agreed last year to aim to hit the 0.7 per cent target by 2015, which will result in an extra €22 billion development assistance per year being mobilised. A significant percentage of these resources is focussed on support to the judiciary, the rule of law and democracy-building. The main focus of course is on poverty allevi-ation and the attainment of the Millenium Development Goals by 2015.

Some resources are primarily based upon specific geographical groupings: the European Development Funds for Africa, the Carib-bean and Pacific countries; the MEDA funds for the Mediterranean countries, the CARDS programme for the Balkans, etc.

Others are thematic: such as the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), created at the initiative of the European Parliament with an initial allocation of €0.5 million which has now grown to over €100 million per year, focussed on democracy-building, supporting Human Rights defenders, the fight against torture, racism and xenophobia; support for the International Criminal Court; and support for indigenous peoples and minorities. Virtually all these funds are channelled through NGOs. Apart from funding certain world-wide campaigns—such as the campaign against torture and the use of the death penality—most of the resources are focussed on par-ticular countries (about 30) where respect for human rights is con-sidered to be of concern.

Out of this package some €15 million is allocated to financing Election Observation missions world-wide. The EU has now built up a solid professional experience in almost 50 countries since 2000 all over the world where it has deployed an EU Election Observation Mission, and frequently is asked to observe such elections as a means of providing an independent, impartial view of the election process. The general practice now is for such missions to be run by a Chief Observer appointed by the Commissioner for External Relations—normally a European Parliamentarian—backed up by a team of elec-tion observation professionals. The Chief Observer is politically independent from the European Commission and his/her final report is an independent document issued under his/her responsibility.

Then there is also the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) to help prevent conflict; and the €200 million per year allocation to help NGOs and civil society; and resources to help address asylum and migration issues. The list is endless. So the EU has the capacity to be an active player on the world scene in promoting democracy, and has the financial and technical resources to do so.

3. Promoting democracy in Africa

Let me, finally, turn to our efforts to support and promote democracy in Africa, and more specifically in the Horn of Africa.

Africa is the prime focus for EU development co-operation, and increasing political efforts and attention from the EU to address its long-term needs. This is probably not the place to go into this in detail. I just want to highlight three points:
- The building of home-grown democratic institutions is recognised by all to be a critical element in building stability and prosperity;
- Europe has no particular "model" to offer on how this should be done. It does however, through its value system and practical experi-ence of building democracy from the ashes, have a historical ex-perience and perspective that may be of relevance for its partners;
- Governance—which embraces not only democracy-building but also protection of fundamental human rights, rule of law and so on—also has to be home-grown if it is to have a lasting effect.

The EU's daily work with the African Union, its Regional bodies, and its individual member states puts Governance at centre stage. One innovative instrument that is being developed is the EU Governance Initiative which will play an important part in the 10th EDF program-ming exercise. As regards the AU, this initiative will build upon and reinforce the African Peer Review Mechanism—a uniquely African product which may provide important lessons that the EU can draw upon in consolidating democracy in Europe.

Our EU Strategy for Africa, approved by all European institutions in December 2005, gave great prominence to governance and other vital issues for the achievement of MDGs. We are currently working closely with the AU, civil society and other stakeholders in trying to

build a truly Joint Africa/EU Strategy that—hopefully—can be approved at a Africa/EU Summit planned to take place in the second half of 2007 in Lisbon during the Portuguese EU Presidency.

As regards the Horn, the present situation remains a huge challenge, not only for our institution, but also our African partners. The region remains one of extraordinary complexity, vulnerability, and fragility. Poverty levels are some of the lowest in the world; climatic threats are ever-present; regional integration is in its infancy; security threats and political instability are an ever-present hazard to developing a peaceful and secure environment for growth and prosperity. Noble efforts are being made by regional organisations such as IGAD and COMESA to address these issues. But it is an uphill struggle.

The European Commission has for a long time recognised the special needs of the region. A month ago, after a long and thorough consultation process within the region, my Commissioner, Commissioner Louis Michel, launched a new Commission policy initiative for the Horn of Africa. You can access it on the Internet at: *http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/tmp_docs/com2006601_en.pdf*

The Commissioner hopes that it will breathe new life into the political integration process in the region and pave the way for the region as a whole to put peace, security and stability at the top of the agenda, thus paving the way for democracy and economic growth to take root. This document is currently being looked at by the European Parliament and Council with a view to having a formal EU policy for the region by the end of this year. Commissioner Louis Michel hopes he will be able to present it at the next IGAD Head of State meeting.

This policy will be matched by financial resources commensurate with the challenge. A new EU Regional Co-operation strategy, with a doubling of resources devoted to it, will be finalised in the coming months. Regional integration, trade, regional food security and support to democratisation are all part of this new approach.

My father, who started his professional life as journalist with the *Financial Times*, spent a considerable part of his life working closely with John Maynard Keynes after the Second World War, trying to lift Europe out of the ashes: drafting the Marshall Plan and creating the conceptual basis for establishing the international financial institutions agreed at Bretton Woods in 1944.

In a strange way, 60 years on, I feel very privileged to play a small part in a similar process that is seeing the renaissance of Africa through a re-vitalised African Union, and the creation of new Africa-wide institutions such as the Pan-African Parliament and African Court which hopefully will do the same for Africa as the European Union did for Europe.

What is clear is that a "business as usual" approach has no future. The Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, at the recent 5th African Development Forum held in Addis in the presence of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in a remarkable impromptu departure from his speech, posed the same question. He asked whether African leaders must be "mad"—to continue to try old development models and yet expect new results. His answer to his own question was the need to re-think our strategies and mix wisdom, youth and creativity to find new solutions to old problems.

In Africa as a whole, and the Horn in particular, there is no doubt that new ideas are needed to re-kindle hope. Democracy, peace and stability are old concepts but they need re-stating and re-formulating to fit with the new challenges.

Europe, notably the EU and the European Commission, will, I am sure, continue to stand side-by-side with Africa to support its efforts to bring prosperity and peace to the continent.

As Desmond Tutu said in Brussels, we are part of one globe, one unity, one partnership, one family. The fight to build long term economic prosperity, democracy, peace and stability in Africa is a global issue. We cannot afford to fail.

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1   The lecture was held in November 2006.

The World Bank's Role in Good Governance
Ishac Diwan

I was asked to talk about development and democracy, but I would prefer to talk about development and good governance, since good governance is a broader concept we at the World Bank are more comfortable with. Rather than presenting my own opinion I will try to cover how my institution sees good governance.

Good governance is a topic that has emerged over the years and is perceived today as central to development, poverty reduction and empowerment. I will highlight its importance, its definition and then spend some time on a framework: How do we think of the various pieces that constitute governance? Finally, if time allows I will give some indications about the way the World Bank works at improving governance.

The World Bank doesn't focus on the whole picture of good governance, it focuses on certain parts. Some of them are more political than others, but as the World Bank is a multi-lateral organisation owned by many States, we are not supposed to be involved in political party issues. We tend to focus on the medium term, on the foundation of good governance and democracy and the institutions that ensure that good governance prevails.

All this is relevant for many countries, and there is no *one model*. The emerging goals and the efforts are always country specific, and I will try to give you a sense of that as well. Ethiopia is used just as an example, and I will not specifically focus on it. Let me note, however, that we are putting good governance at the centre of the country's strategy not only because good governance is the subject of the day (governance has always been a central issue in Ethiopia), but because we are reminded by recent events of how important it is that institutions such as Parliaments and the judiciary are transparent and able to resolve conflicts.

Perhaps a good puzzle to keep in mind is the difference between good and bad performances of many countries in the past 50 years. Some governments—we tend to think of East Asia—have delivered a substantial improvement in income, health and education over three to four decades while others have not. They wasted their resources, there was weak entrustment and growth, and there was often corruption. At the end of the day we need to know: What is the key difference between these countries? Increasingly it is perceived to be governance, not as something that can be implanted but as a reflection of a set of conditions that ensures success. It shows in the numbers when we put the figures together. For example: We measure the quality of governance (and it would be a topic by itself to explain how we measure its quality). The percentage of investment as a share of GDP, a key contributor to growth, depends on perceptions of good governance. A good investment climate is much higher in countries with good governance since good governance implies that per capita income growth is much higher. If societies grow at two per cent per capita for thirty years they transform completely. And during that transformation many different things happen: Lives are transformed, there are winners and losers, families have to move, and tensions between regions and institutions arise. Yet it is through good governance that institutions mediate conflict, and in the long run this can lead to sustainable growth. Growth certainly causes an improvement of governance. When the pie grows, interests frequently converge in setting up good governance and good institutions. But equally, better governance causes growth—the causality goes in both directions.

These relations are not very clear and are a subject of great academic debate. Here Bangladesh offers an interesting case since moderate growth and corruption co-exist. It has a growth rate of about five per cent a year yet governance is not great. Although there is a lot of corruption in government, the government has allowed civil society to be active and be involved in service delivery. That has lead to important developments, but it has also highlighted that growth needs to increase. Furthermore, current growth rates are not sustainable depending on donor agreements, which have provided some advantages to Bangladesh with the expectation that the country will become more open. Most resources show that improving governance will be the key to

improving development outcomes. For example, when you do business surveys you see that the main limitation of investment is corruption and that major constraints to growth are found in the domain of infrastructure, especially in power imports. So, when you unbundle these issues, you come to the conclusion that growth and corruption can go together, even though it is very rare.

The World Bank's framework

What is governance? We describe it very broadly as the manner in which states acquire and exercise their authority to provide public goods and services. We are focussing on the state, on the exercise of authority, on the provision of public goods and services which are so essential for economic development. Corruption, here, is simply one of several outcomes; we are looking at much broader environments. It is very useful when we think about governance systems to differentiate between the *supply* of good governance and the *demand* for good governance. If there is no demand, the supply does not necessarily go in the right direction.

What we define as supply are capacities and organisational arrangements of leadership, skills, human resources and financial management systems, which are embodied in state institutions that deliver goods and services. But equally important is the demand generated in institutions and accountability arrangements, i.e. in the way people exercise their oversights over the state. This is mirrored by elections, political parties, parliament, judicial systems that function, the press, civil society organisation and in the way local governments are organised. Through these organisations citizens can hold state institutions accountable—the supply does not work alone.
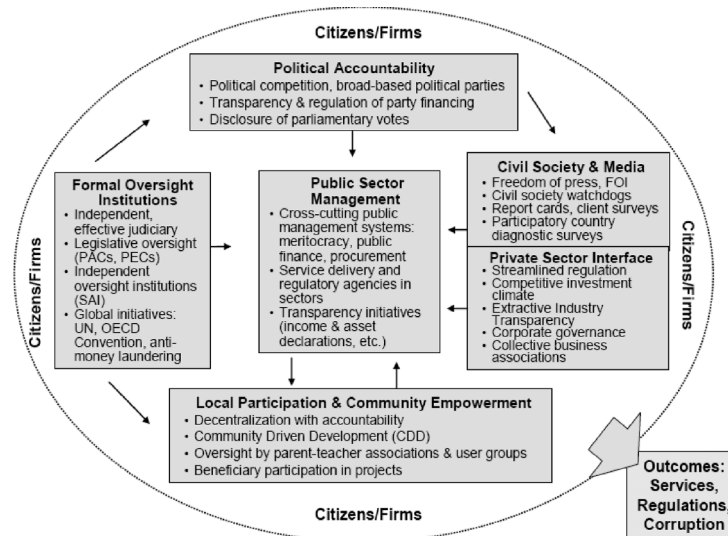
SAI: Supreme Audit Institutions   PAC: Public Accounts Committee

Let's have a look on our model in the diagram above. In the centre we have the executive, the central government together with all kinds of cross-cutting systems within the government, such as financial management, human resources that ensure that money circulates as intended and that meritocracy and good skills exist in government (Public Sector Management).

But the state does not function in a vacuum. In the box above, Political Accountability deals with political actors and their institutions—political parties. Here the key words are competition and transparency.

Competition does not function without information, information requires transparency, competition ensures that political parties reflect the will of the people and put pressure on the state to deliver. On the left of the diagram (Formal Oversight Institutions) the actual formal institutions of checks and balances are mentioned: parliament, the judiciary and other oversight institutions.

On the opposite side (Civil Society & Media; Private Sector Interface) we have the direct influence of civil society and associations in

the private sector. These are civil society watchdogs, activist groups, the media and business associations that lobby for their own interest.

Below that you find the sub-national governments and communities at the local level that demand the delivery of goods close to schools, to clinics, to woredas, to the kebele.

When we speak of good governance, it is about this system. It may be that some parts are working but not others, and you would not get outcomes, good services and low corruption unless the whole functions. So, when one has a problem in society, one has to look at what is missing.

You might have problems of state capture—the relationship between political actors and the state; you might have a problem of patronage and nepotism which has to do with relationships between strong groups in society or in the private sector and the state. You might have administrative corruption if the checks and balances are not working properly. Various weaknesses can be focussed on and turned around.

Broad based parties, transparency, the regulation of party financing so that parties are not in the pocket of particular interests, disclosure of parliamentary votes—various elements can make this particular dimension work well, a dimension of good governance which would figure within *Political Accountability*. As far as checks and balances are concerned an effective judiciary and independent legislative oversight are very important. On the civil society side freedom of the press and report cards are requested. By the way, report cards are a new development in Ethiopia: there are groups that check schools, clinics, etc. and see what they are delivering and make it public; that's the way to help keep these institutions accountable. There has been an excellent report by the new group called PANE in Ethiopia, serving 50 or 60 woredas that has taught us a great deal about the ability of institutions at the local level to deliver. This is starting to make a difference. This operation is also going to support transparency, i.e. the provision of information by governments at all levels (federal, regional, woreda and kebele) about budgets, and these budgets will be posted at all levels down to the facilities—schools, clinic, etc.—so that private groups can see how much money is available and request services from these institutions that are comparable with their financing. Finally, in *Local Participation and Community Empowerment* decentralisation with

accountability and the role of communities are very important on the demand side and are elements of good governance.

World Bank's main focus

The World Bank does not work on all of these. We specialise in certain elements. The services we offer are on the government side (ethical leadership, public management systems, financial procurement), and on the civil society side we are increasingly active with report cards, participatory monitoring, diagnostic services. We are also active in making intergovernmental relations and decentralisation work. We have many programmes here with the state, but run by communities, such as programmes that deal with pastoralist communities on food security, and, increasingly, we are supporting oversights by civil society.

Roughly speaking we are following two broad patterns: Good enough governance as opposed to clientelist states that are stuck with bad governance and bad outcomes. For example, a country that has a lot of potential but is stuck right now, is Kenya. It has a lot of potential but is not growing because of major problems with governance.

A useful typology, we think, is to differentiate three types of ways countries move forward:
1) in raising the quality of bureaucracy;
2) in enhancing the quality of checks and balances of governance institutions;
3) in pursuing the goal of development to reach something new.

As a matter of fact, it is not possible to reach good outcomes without good bureaucracy and good checks and balances. But the way in which countries get there differs. It depends on their history, their culture and where they are coming from. This path also varies over time. We cannot suppose that countries always move forward by improving governance and bureaucracy at the same time.

Some countries (most notably in Asia) concentrate on improving bureaucracy (the first type). Asian countries were very good as states and focussed enormously on improving outcomes, but without improving governance—not a very sustainable path. This led to the well

known Asian crisis. Asia has learned its lesson: Right now—looking at the Thai elections or Malaysia, for instance—the focus is on good governance.

Secondly, countries may bet on good governance and checks and balances during certain periods and not deliver much. This case is extreme, but one could think of countries in Eastern Europe when the Soviet Union collapsed. They went through a phase of promoting governance and not the state, even through a period of destroying the state by focussing on the basic elements of checks and balances.

And then there are the lucky countries that are balanced and evolve equally in both directions.

Improving governance

I think it is useful to remember that there is no one way to the Nirvana of development. Ultimately these two dimensions—the state and checks and balances—matter in order to make sure that the states deliver. The main issues to be addressed are:

- *Fixing public finance management*: This is the simplest element of good governance. It's always a priority, being able to track money and to have good procurement systems. In the past, donors such as the World Bank focussed on ring fencing projects; we showed ownership to *one* project, made sure there was no corruption and didn't care about the rest. This was a mistake because we actually attracted some of the best people and we paid them very good wages which made the rest of the system worse. The main principle on which the donor community now agrees is the need to strengthen the existing system. This sometimes gets criticised, for example if there are political disturbances people say: Why doesn't the World Bank focus on projects with NGOs rather than going through the state? Well, we tend to think that unless you fix the state nothing happens.
- *Administration*: There are often ambitious projects to fix the state through technocratic means by offering training—changing all the rules, giving computers to everybody. Ethiopia is engaged in one of these ambitious programmes—the Public Sector Capacity Building

Program—in order to strengthen the state. These are difficult tasks: Unfortunately, when you look around the world, ambitious administrative reforms don't work very often. They only work when you have a very strong political commitment, coherence and follow-up for many years. In general something more modest works better; where you focus on the top level administration (initially at least) that can later pull in the rest.

- *Checks and balances*: They involve all kinds of actors, concentric circles going from executive to sub-national governance, legislature, judiciary, then to civil society and the media. It's difficult to improve the inner circle in a sustainable way—the executive and the decentralised organisation—if you are not working at the same time at improving all the other parts of the circles. The broader international community, we hope, will have a role to play—I say that with a little doubt as this cannot be taken for granted. Sometimes we become part of the problem.
- *Transparency* in all the elements of good governance and a *national integrity system* is very important. Here we intervene around the world. We try to attain transparency at the national level by building statistical systems, by making information more available through things like freedom of information acts and by supporting groups in civil society that demand information; all these exercises around poverty reduction strategies, for example, needn't be technocratic per se but can be implemented by involving society and demanding information.
- Another level to address is the *community level* of *citizens and their surroundings*. I talk about the citizens' report cards, and there are many examples of involvement at the community level that make a difference. A good example is *civil society monitoring* for improved provision in Bangalore. These are surveys of consumers, of citizens, that go to various state institutions like electricity, water supply, telephone, hospitals and police etc. A dramatic shift was witnessed after these report cards were introduced. The reason it worked in Bangalore was that the report cards contribute to direct pressure by the media and also into a political computation at a lower level.
- We have not been very good in *strengthening justice systems*; we know, for example, that we have to work simultaneously on inde-

pendence and on accountability. Independence alone doesn't work. When you do this, bad judiciaries can develop their own chiefdoms. Accountability is also important, but accountability without independence does not work either. Part of the job is simply management—managing the courts and backlogs, part of which can be technocratic. What is confusing is that informal systems remain predominant in many countries and often manage to deliver very good services. We are trying hard, but a lot of work is still to do.

- *Decentralisation* is another area we are working on—especially in Ethiopia, and it is always important to keep two dimensions in mind: One is the allocation of responsibilities, i.e. what does the federal government, the region, the woreda, the kebele do? There has to be clarity, and the financial resources have to match these responsibilities. The more autonomous these actors are, the more they raise their own taxes. But equally important is the accountability on the lower level, the relationship between local government and citizens. This is really the foundation of a good system.

Decentralisation only works when there is a very strong political desire, since decentralisation can create problems of its own. When you have inequality at the local level you can face problems of power. What do we do when we are in different situations? We first support the momentum that is moving in the right direction whether it is improving the state or checks and balances. So we try not to jerk the system. But at the same time it is very important to focus on the dimension that it is missing, not today but in three years. What does it take to improve parliament, the judicial system, without disrupting what works? If there are existing services in schools, health and water, we support that system knowing very well that it is not sustainable without checks and balances. But it will improve the lot of the population if you do that as long as you are focussing at the same time for the medium term on what is missing.

Let me conclude with options for weaker governments (this is not a remark about Ethiopia, which has a lot of governance!). It is good to keep in mind that in weaker settings we should focus on what is *typically missing*: on an engagement of civil society as the only real means to achieve change over time, the basics, the public financial manage-

ment. It is always good to look for *specific* entry points: to work on the education system, on the justice system. Then the discussions become pragmatic (as opposed to ideological) and problem solving. And we should focus on *community driven development*: we have always found it very useful because it mobilises communities and gets the things moving.

V.
Implementing Democracy
in Ethiopia

One Year of Experience with Democracy in the Ethiopian Parliament
Temesgen Zewdie

My discussion will focus on the Lower House of the Parliament. This is not only for the simple reason that I am a member of the Lower House but also the topic of this discussion is about parliamentary democracy: and in the Ethiopian context, legislative power is constitutionally delegated to the Lower House of the Parliament. Therefore, I will briefly assess how the Lower House exercises the power that is entrusted to it.

Parliamentary democracy—an Ethiopian perspective

Parliamentary democracy is the core and source of democracy. This is because all legislations, laws, rights, and obligations emanate from the Parliament. The life or death of democracy begins from it. In parliamentary democracies, the Legislature is the centre-point in expressing the will of the People. The Federal Parliament of Ethiopia is constitutionally the highest authority of the Federal Government; similarly, the Legislature of the State Council is the highest organ of State authority that is subject to the people of the Regional States.

Composition of the Federal Parliament

The Federal Parliament has a Lower House known as "The House of Peoples' Representatives", with 547 elected members, and an upper House known as the "The House of Federation" which is elected by the State Council representing the interest of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples.

Parliamentary democracy in progress

Our Federal Parliament is now operating under the recently agreed upon Code of Conduct and Rules of Parliament, which is by far a better piece of document as a total package than what was enacted by the previous Parliament on its last working session. Although the opposition did not succeed in influencing the outcome of the new Code of Conduct to its own liking, the opportunity to open dialogue with the government on such an important document, which is the corner stone for a parliamentary democracy, is taken as an important step in the right direction. The current document would partially fulfil the requirements of a parliamentary democracy for the reasons stated below. That the number of the Standing Committees have increased from 12 to 13. Besides one of the Standing Committees is being chaired by the opposition. In addition the deputy chairs of two Standing Committees are from the opposition. Further more, the number of Committee members in the Standing Committees has increased from 13 to 20, allowing almost half of all the members to participate in committees. Moreover, there is a question session with concerned government Ministers once a week and members can initiate a motion of "no confidence" on the executive branch. Finally, the opposition has one hour a month to discuss its own agenda.

Organisational structure of the Parliament and its functions

1. In our Federal Parliament, the responsibility of legislating laws is constitutionally delegated to the Lower House; this arrangement and practice not only limits the opportunity of sharing the views and wisdom of the Upper House in matters of grave importance of legislating the laws of the Nation, but also prevents the people from having a second body of opinion from the Upper House of the Parliament. The practice of having the Lower House have its way in the process of law making, without any limit to its authority, has taken away the art of debate, discussion, deliberation, and compromise that would have been the norm in reaching an agreement with an Upper House on a pending legislation before it becomes law. Having both Houses par-ticipate in the process of legislating laws has the added advantage of accommodating different views, interest groups, and constituents of both Houses, which would have resulted in a far better parliamentary democracy.

2. In our parliamentary democracy, the power to interpret the Constitution is given to "The House of Federation". This is in direct conflict with the essence of Federalism and the federal structure of most parliamentary democracies, in which power is vested on the three branches of government, namely the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The foundation of parliamentary democracy of a federal system rests upon the *checks and balances* of these three branches of government. Parliamentary democracies in other nations have gone to great lengths to ensure that one branch of government does not dominate and undermine the other branches by explicitly stating the constitutional mandate for each branch of government. The interpretation of the Constitution demands legal and technical skills with many years of experience in addition to having an academic background in constitutional law and a proven ability in legal scholarship. In light of the above, to delegate the interpretation of the Constitution to another body other than the Judiciary is to deny the right of appeal of citizens in the court system, in addition to circumventing the major intended benefit of Federalism as a form of government. Because of the organisational structure that the Ethiopian parliament currently maintains, it is difficult to conclude that it is truly a bicameral parliament. While it appears to be structurally bicameral, it is actually unicameral in nature since it does not share the responsibility of legislation with the Upper House of Parliament.

What are the indicators of a parliamentary democracy?

1. Direct participation:
where members can freely express their concerns in parliament. In the case of our Federal Parliament, we have to ask the following questions:
a) Do members get enough time for debate?
b) Is the Speaker impartial and free from the influence of the Ruling Party to which he belongs?

c) Does Parliament give due consideration and include the rights and opinions of the opposition in its deliberation and resolutions or is it just majority vote? The answer to this and other questions will be clear as we continue our presentation.

2. Indirect participation through committees:

The ruling party chairs 12 out of a total of 13 Standing Committees and the majority of members in the Committees belong to the ruling party. The question that should be asked is: what could be the role of opposition under this situation?

3. Setting agendas:

In the New Code of Conduct and Rules of Parliament, agendas for debate, their priorities, and the time allocated for discussion are supposed to be set by *consensus* in the Business Advisory Committee. When there is no agreement on the agenda and consensus cannot be reached in the Business Advisory Committee: it will be referred to the floor of the Parliament by the Speaker for the matter to be decided by a 1/3 vote. The irony of the matter is that all of the opposition combined cannot add-up to 1/3 of the vote of the total members of parliament. It is, therefore, a foregone conclusion that the ruling party will have a simple majority vote on any issue either in the committees or on the floor. The question to ask is: what are the chances of an opposition having its agenda brought to the floor of the Parliament for debate? To be fair to the new Code of Conduct and Rules of parliament: *one hour a month* is allotted to the opposition to discuss its own agenda. Is one hour a month a fair distribution? Why is it that the majority party is apprehensive to allocate reasonable debate time to the opposition? I want you to be the judge given the facts stated above.

4. Fear of prosecution vs. freedom of speech:

Article 54 sub-article 5 of the Federal Constitution clearly states: "No member of the House may be prosecuted on account of the opinion he expresses in the House, nor shall any administrative action be taken against him on such grounds". In contravention to the constitution, the new *Code of Conduct and Rules of Parliament* stipulates in Article 29 of its House Rules that:

- A member may not bring an issue, which is under consideration in a court of law, no matter whether the issue is political in nature, and of major concern to the peace and stability of the Nation.
- No statement can be made that could easily be interpreted by the Speaker as disestablishing the peace and security of the Country.

Given the above situation; it is appropriate to ask the following questions:

What is the scope of the Speakers authority? Given the fact that the Speaker is a member of the ruling party: would he be able to judge impartially and outside the influence of his party's interpretation of the member's speech without bias? What are the mechanisms put in place to limit the Speakers authority to prevent tyranny and abuse of power?

Given the above situations:
- Is it fair for the Speaker to expel members from the floor for an alleged inappropriate speech?
- How about suspending the member from Parliament for using a strong tone of voice on the floor or in the hallways of the Parliament?

It is simple to see that the new code of conduct infringes upon members constitutionally guaranteed immunity and freedom of speech in Parliament and the trust placed upon him by the thousands of voters.

5. Limitations on representation of constituents:

- Limitations are placed on members by the new Code of Conduct and Rules of Parliament so that they cannot bring to the floor of the Parliament issues that are not under Federal Jurisdiction. The fact of the matter is that every member of the House is elected from his electoral districts, the majority of which fall under State Jurisdiction. Often a member is challenged by his constituents to deal with a problem that relates to his district's social, economic and political issues. But according to the rules of Parliament, since the issue falls under State Jurisdiction it cannot be raised in Parliament. What is to be done? If a member cannot serve his constituents, what is the relevance of his being elected as a representative of this or that district?

6. Party discipline vs. constitutional rights and the member's conscience:

Although the Federal Constitution clearly states in Article 54 (4) that member are governed by (a) the Constitution (b) the will of the people and (c) their conscience, what is being practiced in parliament is that members of the majority party vote as one unit (in blocks) on each and every issue brought to the floor for fear of being accused of violating party discipline. Of late, we are being told by the Speaker that crossing of the floor (switching from one political party to another) is not allowed, even in the absence of an *Ethiopian law* clearly stating this. The above is equivalent to saying that a member is *a slave* to his party for the term of his office in Parliament and violates Article 54 (4) where the member is subjected to *vote only according to his party line* and not to his conscience and in free exercise of his constitutional right. In a parliamentary democracy, the opposition takes the art of persuasion and negotiation to sway votes away from the majority party by appealing directly to a member in debate or in the committees. In the Ethiopian context this opportunity is totally denied since members of the majority are instructed to *always vote with their party line*. The practice stated above is not only a clear intention of the ruling party to limit the role of the opposition in Parliament but also a flagrant violation and infringement on the rights of individual members of the majority party who are restricted from exercising their constitutional right for fear of violating party discipline.

Conclusion

In a mature parliamentary democracy, legislatures, in addition to performing the duties described earlier, also serve as a forum for the formation of public opinion and as a vital link between the government and the governed. Because of parliamentary democracy, public issues acquire political significance both at the local and national levels of government.

When we turn our attention to parliamentary democracy in Ethiopia: although there are encouraging signs, a lack of a sustained democratic political culture, a dedicated civil service and the lack of democratic

institutions are challenges that have to be dealt with at the national level to meet the standards of a parliamentary democracy—and these challenges can be tackled successfully only when people in positions of leadership take an active role in living an exemplary and tolerant life to be role models to the rest of the population. No democracy, inc1uding that of parliamentary democracy, can be built and sustained without a willing and committed leadership to accommodate the views of the opposition without resorting to suffocating tactics under the guise of parliamentary rules and procedures. The free exercise of a member's freedom of speech and all other natural and constitutional rights has to be respected, whether that member is of the opposition or the majority party.

Electoral Politics and the Future of Ethiopian Democracy
Merera Gudina

I. Regime change and the original promise

The post-1991 political metamorphosis in Ethiopia has been the "remaking of Ethiopia", a political process that can be characterised as an antithesis of the "making of modern Ethiopia" in the second half of the 19th century. The twin missions of the new political trajectory are: ending of ethnic domination by creating a nation state of equals and ending of centuries the autocratic/authoritarian rule by democratising the Ethiopian state and society. The introduction of multiparty democracy and the "free and fair" elections thereof are expected to fulfil the role of a midwife for both goals. To this end, several elections were held since the change of regime in 1991—nearly all of which were non-competitive.

II. Multiparty democracy and "free and fair" elections

Since both the popularity and acceptability of the one-party state as a source of legitimacy of governments have become less important with the near retirement of socialist democracy as a competing global ideology, the role of multiparty democracy as source of legitimate and accountable governments is no longer debatable. Even notorious dictators, instead of resisting the popular wind of change, are quick to adjust themselves by seeking legitimacy through multiparty elections—in certain cases by manufacturing loyal opposition parties. Judged in this light, most democratic transitions in Africa are failing to pass the acid test for multiparty democracy.

As the empirical evidence clearly shows, what is central in the problematic of democratic transitions across Africa has been the question of accepting the rules of the game for "free and fair" elections and allowing the organisation of credible elections by the incumbent regimes. In this regard, as Felix K. G. Anebo has persuasively argued:

> Elections represent a way of making a choice that is fair to all—one which leaves each electorate a reasonable hope of having his alternative elected. The use of elections, therefore, implies the existence of several possible alternatives from which to elect, and that within the electorate, different groups and individuals are likely to indicate their political preferences by voting for one or by the other alternative. By serving this function, elections and their results confer legitimacy to those who emerge as winners. The winners' party is to be determined by the number of votes it commands. Such a government can claim rightly that it is ruling for and on behalf of the people who elected it in accordance with democratic principles. (Anebo 2001: 76)

What one can easily understand from Anebo's arguments is that the questions of alternative choices both in terms of parties and policies, a fair game and a free vote of citizens, are central to democratic elections: The ultimate goal of such an exercise is to produce a legitimate government as well as accountable leaders in the eyes of citizens. There is general agreement among academics that the existence of autonomous institutions, e.g. independent electoral commissions, independent media and freedom of organisation for the competing parties, are central to "free and fair" elections. The most difficult part of this is, therefore, how to create autonomous institutions that can conduct credible elections. To be sure, it is here that political manoeuvring from constitutional engineering to actual rigging of election results is mostly manifested. As Anebo has correctly observed:

> Another intriguing characteristic of electoral politics in Africa is that the incumbents however tend to win elections, it is not uncommon for ruling parties and their leaders to manipulate the vote with ease. Most African heads of state see nothing in using the trappings of office to campaign for reelections. Some presidents also appoint those who run the election. And

when all else fails they can loot the treasury to buy votes. Furthermore, with only a small middle class, many of whose members owe the government, oppositions parties are poor and fractious and defections to a cosy official job are not uncommon. (Anebo 2001: 70)

Needless to add, most dictatorial regimes ensure their own existence by ensuring the creation of partisan electoral commissions that can shelter them from the challenges of the opposition and dissatisfied citizens.

III. The May 2005 elections as a political earthquake for the EPRDF regime

Seen in the above light, the May 2005 Ethiopian elections are the best example of a ruling party persuaded to hold elections, but upon realising it is not winning in a fair game quickly moved to manipulating election results to stay in power through a partisan Election Board created for the job. In fact, this has put both the future of electoral politics as well as the future of multiparty democracy in the country to a severe test.

What should be clear from the outset is that, after several years of non-competitive elections, Ethiopia made a great leap forward in the direction of "free and fair" elections with the May 2005 national and regional elections. The leap has been made possible as the result of a combined national and international pressure which forced the EPRDF regime to open up the political space in a manner unknown in the country's recorded history.

The repressed Ethiopian opposition, after having drawn lessons from years of failure, made two critical decisions to overcome its fragmentation creating two major coalitions and ending its boycott of elections—both of which helped it to mobilise the populace. And, in the face of mounting national as well as international pressures, partly confident of its control over the country's peasants and counting on the relative weakness of the opposition, the EPRDF regime accepted the presence of international observers; allowed the opposition limited access to public media and created a relatively relaxed situation for

members and supporters of political parties to agitate and organise mass rallies in many parts of the country. However, the EPRDF leaders, who are well aware of their narrow support base, adamantly refused the restructuring of the NEB, which left the EPRDF both "referee and player".

To be sure, both candidates' registration and the election campaigns were never smooth. Hundreds of candidates were intimidated and forced to withdraw while hundreds of opposition members and supporters were detained and some were even killed. But the unprecedented national debate between the ruling party and the opposition over key election issues and the massive mass rallies across the country mobilised millions for the historic election. Television programmes were eagerly watched and radios were listened to by the public while the turn out for opposition rallies was astonishingly high. As the result, the country's hitherto repressed opposition as a whole was able to break its isolation and galvanised the support of millions with the genuine and rising expectation that engulfed the nation—people came out in force to vote for the candidates of their choice. In most places voters waited for several hours to cast their votes. In fact, the turn out of 26 millions was a record high in the country's history of elections (see EU-EOM, 2005).

IV. The elections day and after: from rising expectation to rising frustration

Despite mass arrests and harassment of opposition members and supporters on the eve of the May 2005 elections, and bringing away party poll watchers to open the way for fraud, the Election Day passed relatively peacefully. But when an opposition win seemed likely, the Prime Minister, who had a better grasp of the overall situation and expected trouble, declared a semi-state of emergency in Addis Ababa which was practically applied throughout the country by zealous cadres.

At the morning after the elections things started to turn for the worse when, with the shock of losing Addis Ababa, the ruling party declared its victory in the major regions of the country and claimed to have won enough seats to form the next government. Arguably, the

ruling party's strategy was both to pacify its bewildered cadres and to prepare the ground for the intended massive rigging in the vote counting—without which it became impossible to win elections. Surprisingly, the declaration of victory by the incumbent was made even before 50 per cent of the votes were counted. Subsequently, using hand-picked partisan election executives throughout the country, massive tampering of votes took place in many constituencies, which led to 299 complaints of irregularities, which is more than 50 per cent of the total constituencies.

With the government victory, the opposition continued to challenge the results and the frustrated populace started to react. From June 5–8, 2005, first the university students of Addis Ababa and then the larger populace of Addis Ababa came out in their thousands to demand an investigation into the massive election fraud. The EPRDF leaders, who were neither prepared to share power nor to give it up, responded with a massive show of their military muscle. And, in what can be termed post-election systematic state repression, hundreds of people were killed, thousands were wounded while several thousands were herded to prisons (ibid.).

The opposition's accusation that the EPRDF regime stole the victory was further strengthened by the report of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM), which, to the anger of the EPRDF leaders, unambiguously stated that there were major irregularities at the counting stage and that the Ethiopian election fell short of international standards. The anger was not hidden from the EPRDF side. The Prime Minister himself broken diplomatic niceties and wrote a lengthy open letter accusing the Head of the EU-EOM of bias toward the opposition.

The emerging academic consensus regarding the crisis of the Ethiopian state after the May 2005 elections also points towards the intransigence of the EPRDF. Both Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian academics are converging in depicting the EPRDF as a road block to Ethiopia's democratic transition. For instance, Clapham (2005), a keen observer of Ethiopian politics, has underlined that "the EPRDF has now reached a stage at which it is almost impossible to imagine winning a remotely fair election against any reasonable plausible and effective opposition". He has further argued that EPRDF "has lost 'the

mandate of heaven'" and has envisaged three possible scenarios, i.e. that "The EPRDF government might leave power peacefully … the government might leave power violently … [or] the government might succeed in retaining its hold on power, in the process converting itself into an overtly repressive regime".

To take the emerging academic consensus seriously needs a fundamental rethinking on the part of the EPRDF leaders. Their hegemonic aspiration has hindered the creation of a national consensus, a *conditio sine qua non* for building democratic institutions such as the Parliament, an independent National Election Board as well as an independent judiciary.

V. Quo vadis Ethiopia?

As the second anniversary of the May 2005 elections is approaching, its sequel is still rocking the country. No less disturbing, there is no workable modus vivendi between the opposition groups in the parliament and the governing party while the court case of those who boycotted the Parliament is unresolved. Worse still, the more militant opposition groups working outside the legal framework appear to have continued their anti-government activities unabated. Yet, the response of the regime is business as usual. With these comments, let me summarise my thoughts by identifying five major problems related to the dead end and suggest some possible ways forward.

Problem 1: Democratisation without national consensus. Following its impressive military victory the EPRDF leaders quickly moved to the "remaking" of Ethiopia without creating a national consensus over the basics of state transformation, a badly needed action for countries like Ethiopia where there are contradictory perspectives regarding the interpretation of the past, the understanding of the present and the vision concerning the future.

Problem 2: Perception of EPRDF leaders regarding the opposition. Judged by their actions, the EPRDF leaders appear to have never envisioned a role for opposition parties. If at all they have envisioned one, it appears, not to include winning elections.

Problem 3: The determination of the EPRDF leaders to use the emerging institutions to promote their partisan interests. The major institutions, which are supposed to act impartially and promote democratic governance such as the Election Board, the Parliament, the judiciary, the police, the army and the civil administration as a whole are not fulfilling, and not allowed to fulfil their duties impartially as per the country's constitution. The end result is no separation of power between the three branches of government while there is strong fusion between party and state like the old socialist days.

Problem 4: Fixing Elections: The EPRDF leaders have developed a culture of fixing elections, which sometimes include outright harassment as well as manipulation of election results by using such mechanisms as massive tampering with vote counting, manipulation of numbers, soaking or burning the votes of opposition candidates, etc.

Problem 5: The use of federalism and the decentralisation of power thereof as instrument of divide and rule. Ethiopian federalism has never achieved its historic mission of creating both shared-rule and self-rule. And, contrary to the claims of the ruling party, what it has achieved is facilitating the divide and rule policy of the regime by pitting one ethnic group against the other.

The mother of all problems is the hegemonic aspiration of the ruling party, which not only blurred the vision of the EPRDF leaders but also made them think that "we alone know what is good for the people" and the thinking of others is anti-people. The problem with such thinking is the refusal to allow people to judge what is good for them and arrogate oneself to the role of judging what is good for the people.

Seen in the above light, in the short run—if Ethiopia is to move forward—the EPRDF needs to transform itself both from within and without. Above all else, the EPRDF government should initiate politics of inclusion without delay so that we can go back to the drawing board and build a common democratic home for our children and for posterity.

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Sanctioned Violence against Girls and Women— Experiences of Social Mobilisation in Kembatta, Tembaro Zone, Southern Ethiopia
Bogaletch Gebre

Sanctioned violence against womankind perpetuates the subordination and discrimination of women across the world. I would like to focus on how our organisation, Kembatti Mentti Gezzimma—Tope (KMG)—Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center, works at the grass roots in Kembatta, Tembaro Zone, Southern Ethiopia. There we have initiated an organic social movement against violence against children, particularly on female genital excision/mutilation, "bride abduction", domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and created political space for women's participation, self-empowerment, etc. and are now promoting possibilities for hope, change and transformation.

Sanctioned violence against women and girls is endemic, and because of their sex, it accompanies females from the cradle to the grave; it is the most pervasive human rights violation in the world today. Gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of women and girls. It encompasses a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual assault and abuse of children, incest, physical and mental abuse, coercion and murder. Harmful customs such as female genital mutilation, "bride abduction", sex trafficking and slavery are directed at women and girls. This violence causes physical and psychological harm, humiliation and deprives women and girls of their dignity. It is the sanctioning of commonplace violence against women that perpetuates female subordination and female poverty.

It is ironic that it is at home, the "woman's place", that women are most unsafe. Domestic violence is an accepted phenomenon. It is not limited by religion, region, caste or class. It is a "common", "daily",

widespread affair. It is endemic and results in untold physical and psychological harm. Studies around the world indicate domestic violence to be the largest cause of death for women between 15–44 years old, higher than AIDS, TB, or Malaria.

Sadly, women have come to see violence as normal, "natural" and part of their fate. Women bear the violence and suffer silently.

Home and the role of the mother is also where children, particularly young girls, learn their fate. Even when she has a choice and chance to escape from violence, the mother does not. This is because she has been so deeply conditioned to accept her fate. The home is also where sons learn about violence against women. They learn to value women as objects, as passive resources to be used, abused and exploited.

Thus it is essential when addressing violence against girls and women that we begin by looking at the root causes—the sanctioned and institutionalised violence against womankind—the gender apartheid.

Although this may not be the forum for an in-depth exploration and comparison between gender apartheid and racial apartheid, the two forms of apartheid are strikingly similar: Each is equally an offence against human rights and human dignity. Each elevates one category of humans above another, leaving the subordinate category without a broad range of fundamental human rights. Racial supremacy gives privilege and power to whites over blacks, while the parallel patriarchal system gives privilege and power to men over women.

Both ascribe "separate development": where the whites with their "superior culture" and skills naturally occupy the positions of power, the blacks "naturally" occupy the more menial jobs. So sexual difference was equally used to justify male power over females. Thus, whereas racial apartheid confined the male black to the factory conveyor and cotton belts, so gender apartheid confines female workers to the kitchen. Racial apartheid was justified by the beliefs that whites were biologically and mentally superior to blacks, whereas gender apartheid is justified by the belief that men are biologically and mentally superior to women.

Both white supremacy and patriarchy claim to be the "paternal" and benevolent custodians of the welfare of subordinate groups. Both use their monopoly of power to maintain privilege and disburse state benefits

and services—primarily to whites, and males, respectively. Such paternalistic and patriarchal claims are an offence against the most basic principles of representative democracy, which state that all interest groups must be proportionally represented in the decision-making process, in the making of laws and in the allocation of public resources. The mere existence of male domination of parliament (averaging 89 per cent in Africa) should be enough to alert all women and those who support equality for women.

Principles of human rights are directed towards ensuring that no one group in society can dominate another. Therefore, male domination of government, as with a white domination of government, is automatically a prime issue regarding fundamental human rights—and an example of gender apartheid.

It is when we have better understood the nature of gender apartheid that we will be better able to abolish violence against women. When we have properly understood the close similarity between racial and gender apartheid, we will be able to learn from the successful struggle against racial apartheid in the 20th century. From these lessons we can build the necessary strategies to fight gender apartheid in the 21st century.

As with the fight against racial apartheid, the struggle against gender inequality must begin with the clear recognition of the issues of discrimination and inequality which should form the basis for political and social campaigns to enforce the equal treatment of women.

Many governments weakly deny the existence of legalised discrimination against women. They claim, after all, that women are equal in the eyes of the law and that gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution. Throughout Africa such claims are nothing but a sham. Women in Africa are routinely denied many of their basic human rights. Female genital excision/mutilation, domestic violence as a mode of "discipline" by husbands leaving behind battered and shattered women, child brides, child abuse, sexual harassment, widow inheritance, women as legal minors (under the guardianship of husbands), disinheritance, women not controlling resources, women not participating in decision-making are just a few of the experiences shared by women throughout Africa. In the more Islamic areas, the position is often worse because there is not even pretence of a separation between

Statutory and Customary laws, because both are subsumed under Shari'ah law. In these cases, there are no theoretical "statutory spaces" where women can claim gender equality.

Human rights are largely concerned with ensuring that there is no discrimination against any individual or group of citizens. Such discrimination is outlawed by adhering to basic legal principles of equality; the right to dignity, the right to life, the integrity and security of the person, the right to equality of opportunity in accessing resources.

Whenever an international debate on women's human rights arises, it is always on culture. Is culture fundamentally at odds with women's human rights? Or are we using culture as a scapegoat to deny, segregate, discriminate and devalue women?

What is culture? UNESCO's broad definition of culture is: a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. It also encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

The relationship between culture and rights is multi-faceted, complicated and seemingly elusive. In this age of globalisation, culture does not belong just to "them"—to one group. We do not belong to only one culture, but many cultures, and our identity is multi-faceted. Culture is neither static nor monolithic; it is constructed through human action rather than through superorganic forces. Most importantly, culture is incorporated within structures of power for the construction of hegemony.

Each of us is entitled to our cultural rights. However, the respect of human rights is not dependent on culture or social setting; it is a universal value that must be upheld. Nevertheless, because human rights are founded on international consensus, they cannot be automatically enforced. Therefore, how do we identify ways of harmonising the views and values in those cultures that violate human rights, particularly those of women and girls? How can we facilitate change and transformation processes while dismantling the fundamentals of patriarchal systems that segregate women in the 21st century?

KMG, as an indigenous, non-governmental, woman-focused, integrated community development organisation, has taken steps to both harmonise cultural beliefs among communities and struggle against

gender apartheid. From its inception, KMG recognised the indispensability of freedom for women and making women the principal social agents for change. The challenges, however, were to establish methods whereby the various components that make this freedom workable and practical could be effectively brought together.

In order for women to lead and be the principal social agents of change, women themselves must go through transformation, from a state of passive resources and objects to active citizens.

In the struggle against white supremacy, it is easier to achieve black consciousness and lead organised political action compared to the problems of developing female consciousness and action. In South Africa and North America whites were geographically separated from blacks, who lived primarily in townships or ghettos. Here the oppressor was easily identifiable. Women have no such geographical or community separation. Rather, they are isolated in their domestic location and are disenfranchised. Traditional forms of female political discussion and mobilisation often collapse, especially in urban settings. Here, the oppressors are within women's households—as husbands, fathers, sons, uncles, brothers and other community members.

Therefore, the women's struggle for freedom and equality has to be qualitatively different. It must address the notion of a "solidarity of humanity", committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, female and male. It has to be the kind of struggle where men and women recognise the strength of the other.

KMG has had to find ways for women to recognise their value in society, and claim their places and spaces, taking leadership roles, developing strategies to struggle against the violent patriarchal psyche, and gaining support within their households and their communities.

KMG's core strategy links the practical needs of communities and women with their strategic issues linking ecology, economics, social and political systems. KMG created programmes in health, livelihoods, environment, gender and democracy, making human rights and freedom real and relevant on the ground.

Through the processes of inclusive interaction, KMG builds communities' capacities to reflect on and examine their own conditions against the historical period they live in and in relation to the rest of the world. KMG ensures the ownership of solutions stays with com-

munities and incorporates culture where it helps build a consensus to stop violence against women and girl children.

Women have become a critical link in this process. Most of them have never participated in any meaningful decision-making process (in particular rural women) and have grown up thinking they were no better than the cows they milk: property. Today, they are claiming their entitlement to a role in society and their rights as personal agents for the first time.

Female genital excision (FGE)/female genital multilation (FGM) has been deeply ingrained in Kembatta—Tembaro zone. This painful ritual was called "removing the dirt", because we could not utter the word for it. Now, uncut girls, marrying in public and public marriages offer a forum for teaching/learning and have become a common event—in the very heart of FGE/FGM territory.

The reasons for these positive changes at the individual and community levels in Alaba, Kembatta, and Tembaro is that now, for the first time, the action has been led by women; the principle victims became owners of the solutions and have mobilised communities to change.

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