“The May 15 national elections constitute the most important upcoming event in Ethiopia. The way the election is conducted and the outcome will tell us much about the progress or lack thereof on democratization in the country.” Amb. Davis Shinn, USA

“On a positive note, the opposition has mobilised an unprecedented sympathy among the urban dwellers, government functionaries and the elite. Indeed this is a new day for Ethiopia and a great new victory for EPRDF having finally succeeded in bringing about such a transformation -- that the opposition and the populace can openly advocate, participate and contest in politics; within a democratic framework and dictate the social, economic and political future of the nation”. Costantinos, Ethiopia
Ethiopia Election 2005

ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAJECTORIES THAT DETERMINED OUTCOMES AND A FOURTH TERM EPRDF AGENDA

BT Costantinos, PhD
Compiled from discussions with key international constituencies

I. A victory for all

In spite of serious handicaps, the Ethiopian opposition has mobilised an unprecedented sympathy among the urban dwellers, government functionaries and the elite; that will heavily factor on the results of the elections to held on Sunday. It has drawn the attention of the international donor community, electronic media and global peace, development and collective security establishments. This is finally to be the day EPRDF has been fighting for – to instil a democratic culture and to build a democratic society out of the vestiges of authoritarianism.

Amb. David Shinn’s testimony to the US Congress on May 5, 2005 notes that “the May 15 national elections constitute the most important upcoming event in Ethiopia. The way the election is conducted and the outcome will tell us much about the progress or lack thereof on democratization in the country. Some 35 parties are contesting at least some seats in the 547-member lower house known as the Council of People’s Representatives. Voters will also elect representatives in nine regional state parliaments that will, in turn, appoint members of the 112-seat upper house known as the Council of Federation. The ruling party and affiliated groups now hold 519 of the 547 seats in the lower house.”

This is a new day for Ethiopia. While it is expected that the EPRDF will win in a large margin, it is sure that the freedom and equal rights of all peoples and the formation of a new and unified democratic Ethiopia; whose unity is securely based on the equality, common benefits and free association of peoples, is at confirmed and secured now. This is as against hitherto cultural domination of one ethnic group by another, and ensures that the languages, customs and traditions of all groups in Ethiopia are equally respected and their growth is facilitated. Indeed this is a new day for Ethiopia and a great new victory for EPRDF having finally succeeded in bringing about such a transformation – that the opposition and the populace can openly advocate, participate and contest in politics; within a democratic framework and dictate the social, economic and political future of the nation.

But Ethiopia faces pressing issues and problems of development to be settled. What does the proliferation of ethnocentric political organisations in Ethiopia, including the EPRDF, a coalition of such organisations, mean for the democratisation of Ethiopia. How do legal regimes that limit people’s participation such as the controversial anti-corruption, civil society organisation and press laws that are already there or the ones in the making limit civic participation and create despondency among the public Ethiopia remains one of the least developed and poorest nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large.

Nevertheless, there are alternative ways of weighing up and framing the issues and of charting the course of action that may be embarked upon towards their settlement. There is no simple or immediate identification of the problems as they actually are; there is only a definition of them from a certain perspective and towards a certain ‘resolution’. What is important in the politics of change is not so much the problems themselves as against to what various, competing organisations and groups conceive them to be and how the organisations ‘settle’ their conceptual differences.
II. Contending issues in the Ethiopian election

Many in the opposition and some international observers claim that the generation long transition to democracy in Ethiopia is marked by unease and uncertainty about the direction in which the country is heading. The heavy reliance which the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the leading and dominant party of Ethiopia, on ethnic movements as mechanisms for democratisation in the country has encouraged ‘opposition’ politicians to raise fundamental questions.

1) **What does the proliferation of ethnocentric political organisations in Ethiopia, including the EPRDF, a coalition of such organisations, mean for the democratisation of Ethiopia?** How and to what extent has the EPRDF face the challenges of balancing its partisan ideology and practice with its broader responsibilities and tasks of leadership of the Ethiopian transition to democracy? Does the passage to democracy signify the reconstruction of the historic Ethiopian nation-state, assimilating new ideas and rules of democratic government into what it has already evolved, or is it a matter of the total displacement or deconstruction of that nation-state?

The single most important influence over how democratic development has been carved, conceived, initiated and is currently constitutionally formalised is the politics of self-determination and self-government. Consistent with this strategy, EPRDF has undertaken a major restructuring of the Ethiopian polity and nation-state, setting the foundation for and cutting it up into a score of regional governments based on linguistic, ethnic and cultural identity. Although hastily executed, the strategy appears to have been effective not only in allowing the transition to carry out its specific political agenda and ideological goals, but also in setting the tone for the political organisation and activities of alternative and opposition groups. In this sense, the Transitional Period can be said to have instituted a new paradigm of political discourse and action in our country and Africa at a larger scale.

But this is not to suggest that the strategy is uncontested. On the contrary, it has provoked a lot of controversy and criticism. Partisans, allies and supporters of the coalition seem to be sure that the approach to reform is sound, indeed the only way to a new democratic Ethiopia. On the other side, individuals and groups critical of the process are equally convinced that, left unchecked, the strategy would lead to disintegration. They regard this outcome as a national tragedy much worse than any sort of suppression of ethnic identity or difference in the country. Outside organised political forces, the strategy of transition has emerged as a vexing issue for citizens and the Diaspora who express doubts and fears – for many, particularly but by no means exclusively elite, the values, sentiments and symbols of Ethiopian unity they cherish and take for granted have suddenly become objects of controversy and deconstruction. It had been widely assumed by the urban masses, opposition groups and some international observers that the position of the EPRDF on this particular issue was pronounced earlier with the objective of legitimising its stand that condoned the secession of Eritrea; first prescribed by the Ethiopian Students’ movement and later adopted by mainstream politics.

Agreement or disagreement among and within Ethiopian revolutionaries on this very issue notwithstanding, not only urbanites, which includes in its ranks intelligentsia and the elite, but also citizens that have witnessed major social conflicts in our recent history have doubts on the trajectories of change. More than ideology they believe that it is also everyday social and economic life across tribal, linguistic and regional lines that have come under
stress and strain in the new highly ethnicised political order in Ethiopia. Many often grumble at their country having to endure another divisive revolutionary "social experiment".

2) How do legal regimes that limit people’s participation such as the controversial anti-corruption, civil society organisation and press laws that are already there or the ones in the making limit civic participation and create despondency among the public?

The antic-corruption law that has created fear among the business community to take risks because of the incarceration of prominent business community members that are being released free of any fault after four years of incarceration is indeed an impediment to the delivery of justice.

The NGO draft law that was being heavily discussed and criticised at the present time raises the main issues to be advocate for across the spectrum of stakeholders including the national assembly. These are the provisions of the new draft law that are unconstitutional limiting the ability of citizens from their rights to association and freedom of speech and expression. The period of registration of NGOs has been improved from one to three years. While this is an improvement there is no constitutional basis for this action and efforts must be exerted to have indefinite recognition of NGOs and associations. The government through the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is given undue locus in determining and controlling the internal structures of the NGOs and associations. The possibility of the MoJ intruding into an NGO and closure of an NGO by the MoJ directly contradicts the constitution rule of law and the rights to legal recourse.

The draft Press Law that has been heavy-handedly slugged to the democratic constitution that allows unfettered freedom of expression is another cause for concern. International human rights groups have even involved themselves as to its credentials in limiting the scope of the constitutional right.

3) Ethiopia remains one of the least developed and poorest nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large. What has 14 years of EPRDF leadership brought about in terms addressing famine, poverty, human development, business and entrepreneurship…?

a) The World Bank states “The turn of the millennium finds Ethiopia as one of the most destitute of nations. At US$100, Ethiopia’s per capita GDP is among the lowest in the world - and only about a fifth of the SSA average. Poverty is paramount and widespread and often linked to the degradation of the environment and natural resources. Recent national household surveys find 44 percent of people below the basic needs poverty line and indicate that improvements have been marginal”.

b) Human development indices show that “The gross education enrolment ratio has improved in favour of rural areas and females. Yet the rapid expansion has come at the cost of fast deteriorating conditions at the classroom level. The shortage of health care workers is one of the largest shortages in the world, with health worker/population ratios three to four times lower than in neighbouring countries. The nation has amongst the lowest levels of per capita health spending in the region. Over 10 percent1 of adults are HIV positive with our country ranking third in terms of absolute numbers infected and three millions orphans”.

c) The Bank also underlines that the “private sector in Ethiopia faces major constraints. Private investments (domestic and foreign) in manufacturing, agriculture, agro-business and mining, constitute about 10 percent of the GDP (up from about 7 percent in 1994).

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d) Ethiopia’s natural resources have been depleted to an extent that the major famines that recur every other year are attributed to this denudation resulting from abuse, misuse and overuse. The size of our country is 111.5 million ha. Out of this, 74 million ha or 66 percent of the total area is suitable for agriculture. However, the actual size of land cultivated is estimated to be only 16.5 million ha or 14.8 percent of the total.2

e) The nation experienced the effects of a severe drought in many areas of the country in 2003, affecting fifteen million people. While it is the drought that has sharply increased the number of affected people, underlying causes of vulnerability and related economic, social and developmental deficiencies have yet to be addressed. Suffering is greatest where the edges of the capacities of government and humanitarian agencies dissolve into the periphery of marginalised populations; where in the near vacuum of administrative capacity, we get only periodic – but startling – indications of a ‘hidden famine’ where crisis-related malnutrition, destitution and morbidity may never be known”.3 The 2003 famine, that the Bank asserts is related to the collapse of food prices in the previous bumper crop year, indicates that the agriculture based economic growth pattern shows wide fluctuations. Agricultural GDP growth per capita has been negative during three out of the past 10 years; its negative effect compounded by the cumulative impact of the border conflict, deterioration in the international terms of trade, and the AIDS epidemic.4

III. An agenda for 2005 - 2010

Fighting vulnerability (where households are vulnerable to multiple sources of risks and the danger of being locked into poverty traps due to repeated loss of assets, illness… – beyond food insecurity) will require multiple initiatives involving the creation of off-farm income, reforming the safety net transfer system will also play a significant role in Ethiopia’s poverty reduction strategy and mitigate the risk that individuals suffer an irreversible loss of livelihoods and assets in the aftermath of transitory shocks. The agenda to achieve this is as mentioned y the international community that I discussed with includes

1) Creating and intelligent state: Since its emergence in the early 20th century, the modern Ethiopian State has been the populace typified by autocratic leaders and primarily existed for the benefit of the powerful elite of the centre. Consequently there was little popular participation in the political process and has become distrustful, critical of the state, and wary of having any contact with it. Even under democratically favourable contemporary global conditions; these historical, ideological and strategic characteristics make democracy a costly and insurmountable exercise.

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2 FDRE, State of the Environment Report in Ethiopia, Environmental Protection Agency, Aug. 2003, Addis Abeba. It is estimated that overall the country loses 1.5-1.9 billion tons of soil annually due to wind and water erosion. Land is not for sale or indefinite ownership but rural land user rights are planned to provide for ‘indefinite use and carry inheritance’ rights, but prohibit sale or mortgage. The Government believes that a market in rural land would lead to fire sales of peasants’ land in times of shocks, with subsequent massive migrations to urban centres”. Overall agricultural growth has been below population growth in the past decade. Agricultural productivity per person remains low even by African standards. Environmental degradation and a shrinking resource base also contribute to limited agricultural production. In the highlands, 70 percent of the land is degraded to the point where livelihoods are no longer sustainable.


4 The crisis of 2002/2003 has been “characterised as one of the most widespread and severe emergencies ever to strike Ethiopia… the crisis arrived on the heels of the 1999/2000 crisis… so many affected households, communities and regions did not have sufficient respite for recovery before the current crisis intensified and inadequacies of the humanitarian responses to the warnings of crisis in 2002; having its roots in failures to fully assist disaster-affected populations to recover from the cumulative effects of previous crises.
Notwithstanding this, the government must committed to promote openness and transparency by developing legal protection of constitutionally defined rights, a functioning court system, budgets and public expenditures that are made public, an independent Auditor General's office, legal and regulatory frameworks to control corruption and rent seeking, revenues accounting, budget and adhere to them, reduce broad discretionary use of funds that escapes public accountability, spending limits on military and security, a civil service with appointments based on merit, systems that subject officials to the rule of law. Indeed more must be done in terms of compensation for civil servants and civil service career development independent of the party in power, creating a range of countervailing civil society organisations and media that function freely and openly, broadening legal provision for private ownership of property.

Ethiopia’s development of a market economy, without any doubt, heavily depends on the legitimacy of national processes that will in turn depend in important ways on it being perceived as reasonably honest, predictable, transparent and accountable in the execution of the states’ broader responsibility of providing enabling conditions for national development. Public sector inefficiencies undermine political, economic and social stability by undermining citizen’s faith and result in a general loss of respect for authority and despondency in the general population. It is apparent that as the country enters this new era of political pluralism there is a need to overhaul the executive and develop institutional alternatives that have proved to function elsewhere in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Indeed there has been progress in installing transparency and accountability and a wider social dialogue. Democratisation is a generation long mission -- to install the rules and institutions of governance that would guarantee human security in its totality. True, the Western liberal democratic model, often taken as the acme of democratic governance, is what Ethiopia has set for itself - the attainment of institutions and practices that have been the basic ingredients of established democratic traditions. The political agenda will hence focus on

a) **Permanent forums for dialogue**, debate and discourse must be opened to the public and new directions in involving civil society in political discourse meaningfully the merits and de-merits of revolutionary democracy

b) **Development of legal regimes that enhance people's capacity** to achieve sustainable livelihoods including the right of all Ethiopians to live and work anywhere in Ethiopia and development of a professional police force that ensures the rights of all Ethiopians. This entails new initiatives in assuring human security and human development

c) Revaluation and as a result reconfiguration of the **regional government set-up** in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and results and political changes within the EPRDF to advance it to a political party that has a national context in nature based on the aspirations, beliefs and the priorities of the Ethiopian people.

d) **A complete restructuring of government and governance regimes** based on merit and competence of public office holders; with appropriate remuneration. A total change is required in human development ministries – education, health, finance and economic development, trade, food security, capacity building, and infrastructure development

e) **Up holding of the rule of law** – justice delayed is justice denied. Combating corruption and enhancing development lies basically in the enthronement of democracy, but most essentially through transparency in the leadership with equal and adequate access of the citizens to popular and informed participation. There is need to heighten public awareness of the destructive effects of corruption and restore the confidence of the people in
government by exemplary leadership both of which would create and reinforce the capacity to combat corruption. The independence of institutions such as the media, the judiciary, that play the role of regulating the operation of public policies should be established and safeguarded.

f) **Liberalisation of the economy and promotion of entrepreneurship and the private sector and investment**; including finance reform, ridding government of commercial ventures not in the public interest and making all businesses government, NGO or party owned businesses commercially competitive

2) **Elimination of absolute poverty and famine and poverty reduction**: Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on food aid every other year, (albeit and indubitably an essential component of survival now). Food aid has well documented side effects on our national psyche, moral, economy, society and polity. We must face up to our donors (such as the G8 resolution) to help us develop our capacity to use our resources in an environmentally sound manner. I propose a two-pronged solution to persistent poverty that augur deep in reforming the very strategy and structure of our rules and institutions of development that would enable self-reliance…

a) First is to develop an integrated package of policy, technology and investment strategies together with appropriate decision-making tools, which are used together to **fight poverty and promote sustainable livelihoods** by building on local adaptive strategies. Its benefit arises from several features: empowerment, the provision of an integrated framework, assessment of community assets, adaptive strategies, and livelihood activities, governance and policy questions and their inter-linkages are addressed in a cross-sectoral manner. It seeks to improve productivity of people's own livelihood systems and create new opportunities in a sustainable manner. Secondly, as I said earlier, we have millions of hectares of arable land left uncultivated. Donors must support the business community, through various incentives that are available to other commercial farmers world-wide) to promote large-scale mercantile food production that can use these resources more judiciously without hampering the empowerment of nations and nationalities. In this connection, an external review of the Agriculture-led Industrial Development (ADLI) Strategy promulgated more than a decade ago is obligatory to be able to craft sound policies and strategies to emerge out food aid.

Very few in our world today articulate questions related to poverty reduction in terms of scholarly approaches to human development. Instead, many jump at finding a silver bullet answer (such as debt cancellation, more aid…) to the complex nature of poverty. Poverty is a complex phenomenon of a web of factors leading to destitution and marginalisation that requires an intergenerational and interdisciplinary strategic framework to remedy the complex web of factors of impoverishment.

i) First and foremost, it is useful to distinguish different strategies of reducing vulnerabilities and factors of impoverishment on the basis of the underlying forces of policy-relevant social change, which inform them. One way of conceptualising forces of social change is in terms of different forms of ‘capital’ – applied here in the broadest sense as resources or assets, which may be utilised to achieve social objectives. For the purposes of conceptualising poverty-relevant social change, seven forms of capital are particularly relevant: human; economic; social; political (the network of informal and formal political alliances that confer decision-making authority; sources of violence and means of enforcing social norms and maintaining social relationships) and environmental capital (natural resources). Changes in anyone

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5 widely promoted by the IISD, CHE, CIDA and UNDP
of the above forms of capital interact in complex ways with other forms of capital to constitute poverty-relevant social change. Analyses based on different forms of capital may very well lead to similar policy prescriptions. Hence combinations of reasoned poverty reduction strategies that have direct implications on begetting SL are recommended. We focus our anti-poverty strategies primarily on human capital development that links investment in education, health and nutrition with SL. Policies, strategies and action plans to enable human development must per force play a leading role.

ii) Secondly, we have those mechanisms which increase the primary income of the poor – with emphasis placed on factors which increase the level or price of output and/or the returns received by poor producers; whereby output is a function of factors of production (land, labour and physical capital and financial capital (credit) and technology). Increasing output entails increasing the volume, distribution, productivity or changing the relative prices of factor inputs.

iii) Finally, the human security, governance and rights-based poverty reduction promises to cap the entitlement and equity arenas. Sadly, it has been primarily and narrowly reckoned in technocrat terms to refer to public sector management issues (e.g. civil service reform), in public policy terms (market liberalisation, privatisation), etc. Needless to say, human security ‘protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhances human freedoms and human fulfilment – it is protecting fundamental freedoms – - freedoms that are the essence of life... build on people's strengths and aspirations.... protecting people form critical and pervasive threats... using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations…. creating political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural system that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity’. In its present use, it embodies three basic principles: inclusiveness, lawfulness and accountability. Safety nets to poverty reduction that aim to transfer cash or in-kind income to the poor by providing subsidised goods, services or employment guarantees don't rely on the above analyses of forms of capital; but are included because of its importance as buffers in an anti-poverty strategy.

To sum up, a combination of safety nets, investment in education, health and nutrition and the primary incomes, increasing output entails increasing the volume, distribution, productivity or changing the relative prices of factor inputs and human security and development are the primary tools for human empowerment and hence poverty reduction. Having come out of decades of authoritarian governance, the EPRDF Government, which is still the main actor in development, has recorded impressive gains over the past year in terms of economic growth (11.6% for 2003/2004), it has increased its food security spending by 200 fold over the past few years implementing some of the strategies discussed above and the gross education enrolment ratio has improved in favour of rural areas and females; while challenges remain in the health sector.

3) **Human development:** I have been on record underlining the crux of the challenge - creating, retaining and putting to productive use peoples with such qualities throughout the economy. It is basically about having the ability and willingness to identify, sequence, and execute human-centred development priorities and programmes in the face of limited human, financial and institutional capacities. It boils down to formulating and executing national and sectoral policies that would enhance aggregate commitment, will power and capacities to mobilise, develop, motivate, encourage and utilise all segments of the population. To meet this challenge is synonymous to meeting the development challenge at large. The results, under all probability, would lead to the creation of a strong nation, active
in both domestic and world transactions. The overall objective is to develop a critical mass of human qualities and ensure their effective participation in the development process in order to provide, consolidate, expand and sustain the required base for development within a rapidly shrinking and competitive global environment.

a) As I said above, we in Ethiopia need to expedite our human development – of enlarging people’s choices; and expanding human capabilities. The three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these basic capabilities are not achieved, many choices are simply not available and many opportunities remain inaccessible. But the realm of human development goes further: essential areas of choice, highly valued by people, range from political, economic and social opportunities for being creative and productive to enjoying self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community.

b) Unfortunately, the human development expenditure balance sheet in terms of investment in education, health including HIV/AIDS and livelihood security (water supply, nutrition, shelter…) are far below than the expected commitment. Donors support, albeit deliberately or by default, to finance turn-key projects aimed at famine assistance, roads, telecommunications and power grids which leave behind little or no skills once sub-contractors have packed and gone home. Today the shortage of teachers, teaching material and classrooms we have in rural Ethiopia compared to the needs (population growth of 2.9%) that many kids will have to forgo education. This situational crisis is compounded by illusive threat posed by HIV/AIDS and a health delivery system that is in dire need of good ideas and resources to match them. **Failure is not an option as it will take a revolution to stem the tide of the human crises that has yet to be contemplated.** We have to look at the poor for answers as their forces derive from accumulation of their non-utilised aptitude and their astounding working capacity (given the chance) and solidarity.

c) As I said earlier, the size of our country is 111.5 million ha. Out of this, 74 million ha or 66 percent of the total area is suitable for agriculture. However, the actual size of land cultivated is estimated to be only 16.5 million ha or 14.8 percent of the total. A major **commercially viable labour mobilisation scheme** must as a priority be designed on a commercial level initiative where private investors can attract farmers from highly denuded areas can be employed and gradually be relocated to productive areas of the nation.

4) **Development of independent think tanks** that can provide scenarios and option for development to the government and parties in power. **Independent, pluriformistic and highly qualified research and policy reflection are indispensable elements** in a modernising society that wants to cope with the internal and external challenges of our time. The think-thank will devise methodologies to attract organisational development with aim to facilitate the definition of indigenous ideas and systems which embody and institutionalise good governance and political pluralism within the context of our cultural traditions by promoting increased understanding of the process and requirements of democratic transition. While it is of fundamental importance that communities themselves define approaches to, and processes of, participation, democracy and good governance, it is also necessary that such approaches be synthesised with universal principles of democracy, which assure both political contestation and political participation. With out this, political transitions may well result in varying degrees of political liberalisation, but not functioning democracies. From a policy perspective, therefore, the think tank, will provide information
which will enable civil society leaders, policy makers and political parties to identify the institutional gaps that inhibit a transition to democracy; identifying ways and means of
a) helping foster institutions which currently do not exist;
b) reorienting institutions which have been diverted to non-democratic ends;
c) Building in-country capacity for democratic governance on the basis of Ethiopian demand and with a minimum of outside expertise.
d) Developing good relations with faith communities, marginalised local minorities, youth, gender sensitivity and other cultural and social agenda that can enhance people’s and ability to live in dignity.

5) **International aid:** The EPRDF needs to drum up international support for its development agenda more than it has done in the past. The G8 has pledged to help; as Ethiopia presents a “compelling case -- approximately five million are chronically food insecure”... G-8 members have expressed the following actions in close coordination with all relevant stakeholders”:

“We will work to give unified support to the nascent structural reform effort … to realise the Government's goal of attaining food security for five million chronically food insecure people by 2009 and we will help accelerate land reform and strengthen land tenure for all Ethiopians. “We will expand our support for rural infrastructure development... social infrastructure, soil fertility, and water management programmes… farm-to-market or feeder roads… assist the health and education sectors and building the capacity of institutions and civil society organisations to bring a multiplier effect to the wider economy”6. The Commission for Africa has also launched a vigorous effort to help us. EPRDF should not waste these opportunities.

a) The Ethiopian version of the PRSP, the **Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme** – SDPRP, encompasses a wide range of development goals that are being linked to the Millennium Development Goals of the UN. In this effort donors provide the bulk of the Direct Budget Support, in accordance with the Rome, Marrakech and Paris declarations on Aid Harmonisation and effectiveness. The SDPRP to its credit has shown encouraging trend lines in terms of achievement of goals through bilateral, multilateral and direct budget support; although its monitoring mechanisms have yet to be full developed.

b) Indeed donors have in recent years taken a large number of initiatives aimed at directly or indirectly helping Ethiopia develop its way out of economic chaos and socio-political instability. In doing so, they rely on a wide variety of programmes, institutional mechanisms and policies. Indeed, growing external involvement in projects of economic recovery has resulted in increasingly challenging problems of conceptualising and understanding the role and function of foreign interventions. This is in marked contrast to the limited thought and effort exerted by developers of our polity to put the interventions in coherent theoretical or strategic perspective.

c) Programmes to provide and utilise substantial quality of resources to meet the challenge of development have been on the Ethiopian policy agenda for quite a long time. Substantial technical assistance, grants and loans have flowed into all African countries beginning with the 1950’s in support of ‘human development’ activities. Yet, like many other policy efforts, these have not yielded the desired results. Human capital flight has reached high proportions leaving behind an ill-prepared leadership, managerial and labour force. Skills, knowledge and positive work habits continued to be in short supply as learning systems decay in most countries. In response to this African governments have launched many initiatives collectively, in their efforts to tackle the formidable

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The African Union has seen a renaissance of sorts with the launching of the contentious “Africa: New Partnership Agenda for Development” NEPAD, Commission for Africa report launched recently in Addis Abeba. NEPAD was adopted in 1997, by the United Nations and revised late 1998. The focus is placed on the achievement of macroeconomic stability, economic growth and the equitable distribution of that growth. While it is too early to evaluate its trends, NEPAD is struggling to gain institutional acceptance among the majority of states and land on the development pedestal that all states would like to see. Ethiopia’s place in the globalisation, especially with WTO and its agenda such as TRIPS were considered and articulated and an action plan developed, defining institutional strategies aimed at ensuring enhanced coordination and feedback between global initiatives and Ethiopia; defining strategies for harmonisation of various multilateral and bilateral initiatives, ensure effective follow-up, monitoring and productive mobilisation of financial resources.

Ethiopia will definitely benefit from these programmes and resources; especially if the promises of NEPAD can be actionable. The Commission for Africa’s proposed programme of work are focused breeding more leaders committed to real and effective poverty alleviation: contributing to improved governance. A concerted massive action over a sustained period, on the development and utilisation of a pool of critical human qualities at all levels and spectrum of society would provide the foundation and engine for the elimination of absolute poverty and gaining a respectable and beneficial place within the process of globalisation.

7 UNPAAERD 1986-1990 and Africa Alternative to Structural Adjustment Framework, as part of the search effort. These were aimed at presenting clearly the region’s medium and long-range development priorities and strategic agenda within the global arena. Their overall desire was to achieve a broad-based “self-reliant” and “self-sustaining” growth and development process. International multilateral and bilateral initiatives were also taken to help define the African development agenda and to support its implementation within a global perspective. Among the multilateral initiatives is the United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. The World Bank’s Accelerated Development in SSA: an Agenda for Action (1981), and Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth (1989). At the bilateral level, initiatives covered both socio-economic and political issues. Those dealing with the former include the United States Proposal for a Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa; the Swedish Initiative Partnership with Africa; and the initiative by the United Kingdom entitled “Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the Twenty-first Century”. Initiatives related to peace and security, include the French Reenforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix; the British African Peacekeeping Initiative; the United States African Crisis Response Initiative and the Office of Transitional Initiatives. As Africa enters to the mainstream Globalisation, off direct significance to Africa’s survival within the process, is the Tokyo International Conferences on African Development, Japan-led initiative. Under the European Union - African, Caribbean and Pacific partnership billions have been pouring into the continent for decades. The revised Lomé convention brings the two dimensions, viz. the citizen right dimension and the “developed” and “underdeveloped” nations interface; into one instrument where inter-state and citizen-state relations are examined through human rights.
Conclusion

Ethiopia faces pressing issues and problems of development to be settled. Nevertheless, there are alternative ways of weighing up and framing the issues and of charting the course of action that may be embarked upon towards their settlement. There is no simple or immediate identification of the problems as they actually are; there is only a definition of them from a certain perspective and towards a certain ‘resolution’. What is important in the politics of change is not so much the problems themselves as against to what various, competing organisations and groups conceive them to be and how the organisations ‘settle’ their conceptual differences.

At the heart of all this is the role of the Ethiopian state - the key distinction, which runs through much of in the history of political theory is between the stewardship on the one hand and guiding role of the state on the other. Over the centuries, these two images i.e. the shepherd and the helmsman - have been at the heart of many political governance controversies. Although neither guardianship nor guiding can be discharged effectively in isolation, some writers advocate one and others the other as the primary responsibility of the state. Developmentalists emphasise stewardship while neo-classical economists augur its guiding functions. All stakeholders must make deliberate efforts to define the role of the state in choices in how we successfully implement the SDPRP. African governments and societies undoubtedly depend on international assistance in their projects of reform. Such assistance is vital for the projects in many areas and at many levels. Yet it must be recognised that external support creates problems as well as opportunities for development and democratisation on Ethiopia.

One can question: what is the overall rationality or significance of the great traffic of international projects that seem to show little regard for economy of co-ordination? How far and in what ways do various international agencies, programmes, mechanisms, forms of knowledge and technical assistance feed on one another in helping set the boundaries of reform?

The important issues that these questions suggest are not sufficiently addressed, or even raised, in much of the current discussion of development. Insofar as the activities of external agencies are not understood and engaged in partly as indigenous societal potentialities developing gradually into actual structures, functions and characteristics of societies and polities, their developmental impact may diminish with their proliferation. This can mean little more than a weakly co-ordinated multiplication of projects which have immediately recognisable or measurable effects in limited areas, but which seem to suspend rather than serve the ultimate goals of development. The strategic co-ordination of diverse international activities supportive of development can become a challenge both for the international agencies involved and for the Governments partly because of limitations in the individual characteristics of the activities and their narrowly technocratic orientation and limited generalisability and variability.

To label Ethiopia’s human development progress as a success at this stage is problematic. These are constrained by the low level of awareness and understanding of democratic norms, practices and processes by the populace at large. Indeed, a major problem inherent in this is the
extreme weakness of the social movements and their failure to develop coherent strategies for promoting broad based and well organised citizenry - whose functions are to preserve basic rights of its constituents and the society at large, educate the citizens and advocate popular claims, build a consensus and promote political and moral ethical values, and disseminate them among the populace; it has become difficult to nurture a sense of civil society. Practices such as free elections, the formatting of political parties, free and open discourse on public issues are all foreign concepts that needed to be installed carefully over the past fourteen years in the minds of the majority of the populace. The dearth of political culture is also clearly manifest in the disarray and inability of the opposition political forces to achieve internal unity.

Hence, there is every reason to place renewed emphasis on the political and moral dimension of education for democratic citizenship. The emergence of the modern understanding of citizenship was associated with the 16th and 17th Century Western revolutions; as a massively influential political concept. The ‘natural rights’ and ‘Rights of Man’, their concepts of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ helped to construct the modern conception of citizenship – concepts that are often conflated into the immediate stuff of our political and social experience without our comprehension of the basics.

Outside the sphere of political agency, possibilities and problems of human development, human security, political transparency and accountability and a wider social dialogue can be grasped in terms of the related domain of ideological elements and constructs that are the very constitutive structure of process openness and closure and will commonly be characterised by a number of distinctive and shared additional elements, including concepts and rules of government, cultural values, traditions of political discourse, and modes of representation of specific interests, needs and priorities. These elements, or complexes of elements, will tend to assume varying forms and enter into shifting relations of competition, co-operation and hegemony during the reform process. Yet the government is only one of the many (although an important one) actors in this process as ideological elements and relations also take shape and come into play within a hierarchy of global and local agencies and groups.

A determinate order of institutions, powers, interests and activities operate through complexes of ideas and values, filling out, specifying, anchoring and, often short-cutting their formal content or meaning; imposing ideological as well as practical limits on the extent to which and how the processes can be opened up or broadened. Hence the potential of the ideas this raises the issue of whether the ideas in question may be fundamentally constrained at the moment of their conception, the initiatives tending to work toward these goals in narrow technocratic and managerial terms; equating technocratic rationality and capacity with totality of institutional purposefulness and strength. Issues such as these are important in examining and assessing the ideological openness of all participants: legislature, judiciary, executive (police, anti corruption commission, attorney general…) and the number and diversity of ideas, values and opinions allowed to gain currency.