

Explaining Economic Revolution in Oromia to Pseudo Oromo Activists

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1. Introduction

Recently few pseudo Oromo activists such as Dr. Tsegaye Regassa and Ato Tullu Liban targeted OPDO and its leadership for mobilizing Oromo people for economic revolution. These people think they are the only one that can protect the interest of Oromo people by focusing only on narrow democracy that cannot give economic empowerment to Oromo people. The supporter of narrow democracy usually focuses only on the regime change than improving the living standard of the people. These people they do not have modern attitude or thinking that transforms the life of their people. They are not interested to show the experiences of developed country social and economic transformation to bring modern thinking and institution to their beloved people. Their objective is denying and preventing the economic development of Oromo people in the name of freedom and resistance. Practically there is no freedom without economic development.

But Since 1991, the Oromo people with the leadership of OPDO (Oromo People Democratic Organization) participated and enjoyed the favorable economic and political systems created in the country. For the first time in the history of the country, the Oromo people established autonomous regional government to realize the political and economic development. In addition to establishing the autonomous regional state, the regional government has been involving in the wide range social, economic and cultural development. Despite the deep political and economic problem inherited from previous regime, the Oromia National Regional state achieved enormous social, political and economic development.

This incredible change that achieved by OPDO and its leadership during the last two decades could not be appreciated by few so-called Oromo activists living in abroad. These activists do not understand the power and strength of Oromo people in deciding its development destinies. The simple things these activists knew are resistance and regime change which is not the paradigm of the twenty first century. They spend more than twenty years in the same hate monger speech to undermine OPDO and Oromia National Regional State.

These hate lover activist targeted our OPDO leader and regional government president his excellence Ato Lema Megersa. Ato Lema Megers is our emblem in the current deep reform activities. He has been the sources of inspiration and endeavor in our region wide reform

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programs. As a part of national reform program, Ato Lema Megersa came up with courageous and pragmatic approaches to addresses the socio and economic problem. One of his new approaches is to mobilize the financial and human resources in the region to formulate modern economic and political system.

The purpose of this brief article is to explain the elements of economic revolution in Oromia for pseudo Oromo activists. This article consists of four sections including introduction. The second section presents the recent economic development in Oromia. The third section identifies the elements of economic revolution in the region. The last section is summary.

2. Recent Economic Development in Oromia

Economic development refers to the multidimensional process that involves the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic system to improve the life quality of the people. Economic development in Oromia can be seen though economics and social development in the region. Economic growth used as a measurement of change in the regional output. The regional report indicates that during the last ten year the region achieved an average of 10.1 percent economic growth. During the last five years the regional output increased from Birr 174 Billion 2010 to Birr 255 Billion in 2014. The sectoral composition of the national output was dominated by the agricultural sector which takes 57 percent of the regional GDP in 2014. Service and industrial sector take 29.5 and 13.2 of the regional output respectively. During the last five year, there is no significant change in the composition of the sector.

The other measurement of economic development is the region the poverty incidence of the region. According to the HICS² conducted by CSA, the percentage of poor people in Oromia was declined from 34 percent in 1995 to 28 percent in 2010. Such decline in the poverty incidence was the outcome of wide range socio-economic development in the region. Various efforts have been done to provide education, health services and infrastructure. Massive financial resources allocated to social development in the region. According to CSA (2014) abstract, the numbers of primary and secondary Scholl student in Oromia were above 7 million. The following are the major social development in the region

- Around 13 thousand health extension workers are serving their beloved Oromo people.
- More than 22 thousand agricultural extension workers are working in different parts of the region to improve the productive of the rural household.
- More than 18 million people are beneficiary of drinking water provided by the regional government that is half of the regional population get dirking waster within one kilo meter distances.

² Household Income Consumption Survey(HICS)

- During the last five years the total road network constructed was around 32 thousand KM. 2.9 thousand KM is gravel road and the remains access road was constructed by URRAP³.

Currently there are more than hundred social and economic development programs that has been implementing throughout the region or 336 Woredas (Local administrations). There are more than four thousand projects are implementing in different sectors. Today the question is how to consolidate such economic and social development started in the region. The various activities started in the region need wide range public participations to provide the required level of economic development. .

3. Explaining the Economic Revolution in Oromia National Regional State

There are various problem and challenges on the provision of quality economic development in the Oromia National Regional State. To solve this problem in short period and organized manner we need economic revolution. Economic revolution refers to the process of formulating the modern economic system. In other words it is the process of the fast transformation of the traditional economy to modern and industrial economy. The current economic situation in Oromia dominated by agricultural sector which dominated by the low value product. Despite its potential land and natural resources, the region could not use it resources to transform the economy and improve the livelihood of the people. Such situation can be reversed with the tradition approach of business as usual. We have to cam up with new thinking or breakthrough to solve the existed problems. That is why the regional state initiates the economic revolution to realize its vision of economic and social transformation. The following are the major elements that would explain the economic revolution in Oromia.

- **Employment creation by using local resources:** lack of employment is one of the big challenges in Oromia during the last few years. The number of young people joining to labor market and available employment opportunities created for them are not comparable. This problem cannot be solved by simple market labor demand and supply principle. It needs the big push by the government in creating employment opportunity by identifying labor intensive sector. For instances mineral production and provision is the important area that provide employment opportunities. There are various types of mineral resources in the region which was not used properly in creating employment opportunities. Therefore the government facilitated the establishments of youth association to involve in mineral production and other related activities. The objective is not only to give employment opportunities but also increase the mass participation unemployed youth in the regional economic growth. Further the government of Oromia allocated more than Birr 6 billion youth fund for employment creation.

- **Cultural transformation to modernizing the regional economy:** Cultural transformation is the dynamic process that changes the life of individual or communities. The

³ URRAP-Universal Rural Road Access Program

existed culture thinking of the people in the region is to involve in the traditional farming activities which could not change their life. There must be cultural transformation that enables the rural people to involve in the modern or high value agricultural production. In this regard the regional government promotes youth entrepreneurship through its technical and vocational schools. In addition to that the functional education will be provided for the rural farmer to transform their economic activities to change their life. Such transformation enables the people to identify and adapting the internal and external factor to strength their resilience. In other words it is like creating self entitled or empowered people.

➤ **Building Oromo nationalism to speed up economic development:** Nationalism directly related to economic development. Highly nationalist people accelerate economic development by enhancing social capital. The Oromo people have full natural and legal right to use its natural resource to improve the livelihood of its people. Encouraging people to be part of the government structure and process of economic policy would build trust and confidence between the society and ruling party in the region. Therefore building civic Oromo nationalism plays the pivotal role in speeding up the current economic development in Oromia.

➤ **Enhance regional private sector by public and private participations:** Private sector plays the major role in accelerating investment and economic transformation. The Oromia regional state could not enjoy the benefit of private sector during the last decades due to lack of appropriate mechanism to increase the number of private sector. To solve these challenges the Oromia National Regional State established Private and Public Council that will enhance the participation of private sector. Such council mobilizes the necessary financial and human resources to promote suitable businesses and investment environment in the region.

➤ **Economic empowerment of Oromo people:** Economic empowerment is the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. The quality of any country economic development evaluated by the number of people empowered in the economy. This economic empowerment should be evaluated by enhancing the standard and income of its people. The inclusive economic growth and development is the only way to achieve fast and sustainable development. The Oromia regional state strongly will work on economic entitlements or empowerments of its people to bring fundamental change for its people.

➤ **Agro-processing industry to achieve structural transformation in the region:** Agro-processing industry refers to the subset of manufacturing that processes raw materials and intermediate products derived from the agricultural sector. Agro-processing industry thus means transforming products originating from agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The development of agro-processing industry increases the forward and backward linkage between industry and agricultural sector. The focus on the agro-processing industry in Oromia is to increase agricultural diversification and innovation to achieve the sectoral transformation. The regional

government now working on paper, beverage and related agro-processing industry to modernize the regional economy.

➤ **Utilization of regional resources to improve the livelihood of Oromo people:** There are abundant natural resources in Oromia region. The region has large size of fertile land suitable for the agricultural sector. There are also various natural resources that important to economic development. Therefore the regional government focuses on proper and efficient utilization of its natural resources and economic opportunities to enhance the life of its people. The region can improve the livelihood of its people by designing appropriate resources utilization strategies.

There have been more than three revolutions passed in the world during the last centuries. There was no single economic revolution realized in Ethiopia in general and in Oromia in particular. The economic revolution in Oromia means the economic revolution in Ethiopia. It is illogical and unacceptable to undermine economic revolution in Oromia by Oromo activist. Actually history repeats itself. Since their birth these pseudo Oromo activists never show modern thinking or Oromo dream to transform the life of their nation.

4. Summary

Beginning 1991 Ethiopia nation and nationality enjoyed the constitutional federalism that recognized the right to administer by own or local government. Such unprecedented move by the current ruling party paves the way for nations and nationalities in the country to administer them self based on the development need of their respective people. Such suitable political system could provide the required level of social and economic development in the country in general and in regional state in particular.

Oromia national regional state has achieved wide range economic development and growth during the last two decades. As compared to the available resources in the region, the people development demand not satisfied due to various reasons. Recently the Oormiya national regional state started the economic revolution to achieve the required level of economic development. This economic revolution involves Employment creation by using local resources and entrepreneurship, Cultural transformation to modernizing the regional economy, Building Oromo nationalism to speed up economic development, Enhance regional private sector by public and private participations, Economic empowerment of Oromo people, Agro-processing industry to achieve structural transformation in the region and Utilization of regional resources to improve the livelihood of Oromo people.

Such economic revolution in Oromia may be the death for pseudo Oromo activist who does not care about economic democracy for Oromo people. These activists promote elite democracy that cannot provide road, school and health which is the basic need of the people. Our activists' freedom is distraction which is not affordable in the twenty first century. Economic development will make strong Oromo people. We have to tell for these activist Oromo people

deserve the type of life the world enjoys today. Actually these people they do not have organizational quality that would transform the life of Oromo people. Now we have vision of economic revolution beyond the imagination of our pseudo activist. Therefore nobody stops Oromo people to enjoy it economic development prosperity with the leadership of OPDO. We should strength OPDO capacity, rally all the sons and daughters of the Oromo people around us in a common efforts to build our region.

God Blesses Oromia and Ethiopia