

Professor Kifle Abraham



Distinguished Pan-Africanist, Professor Kifle Abraham, who was the president of the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (EIIPD) and the Ethiopian Special Envoy to the Sudanese Peace Process, passed away on Thursday 8 November 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Professor Abraham was the author of over 20 books and numerous articles on a range of topics pertaining to conflicts in the Horn of Africa, the function and role of the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU). He also served as the Director-General for Political and Humanitarian Affairs and then as the Acting Deputy Executive Secretary of IGAD.

Kifle Abraham was born in the historic Ethiopian town of Adwa, Tigray, on October 20, 1950 to Abraham Shale and Birrneshe Wasyihun and undertook his primary and secondary education at Atse Fasiledas School in Gondor town. In 1967 he commenced studies at Addis Ababa University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Educational Administration in 1971. Shortly thereafter he left for the Research Institute for Management Science in the Netherlands where he received his Masters of Arts in Industrial Management in 1973. In 1979 he was awarded a second Masters degree, this time in American Literary Studies, from Sweden's Uppsala University. Dr. Abraham followed this up with a doctorate in Race and International Relations from the same institution in 1982. He developed a wide-ranging degree of expertise in the areas of education, economics, development, politics and international relations.

Professor Abraham was a staunch advocate of African economic and political emancipation, and undertook a range of projects for international organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). More recently, in his capacity as the Chief Political Advisor and Special Envoy to the Sudanese Peace Process, Professor Kifle led the Ethiopian effort to secure peace in Sudan. He has also been actively engaged in leading and supporting mediation efforts in the Horn of Africa.

Professor Abraham's experiences enabled him to publish a range of books on the conflicts in the region including *Sudan: The Politics of War and Peace*; *The Horn of Africa: Conflicts and Conflict Mediation*; *Somalia Calling*; and *Ethio-Eritrean History and War*. His interest in supporting and enhancing the processes of regional and continental integration in Africa is encapsulated in his seminal work entitled *The African Quest: the Transition from OAU to AU and*

NEPAD. In this book he outlined the historical evolution of the Pan-African movement from its inception, and analyzed the obstacles and challenges to implementing its ideals. He also discusses the opportunities that Africa should embrace in order to accelerate economic and political integration.

Professor Abraham's interests in development encouraged him to pen a critique of the emerging global order and corruption in Africa in a book entitled *The Missing Millions: Why and How Africa is Under-Developed*. His credentials as a Pan-Africanist were illustrated by his committed advocacy of continental integration. Some of his earliest work documented, analyzed, and contrasted black nationalism in the United States and Africa, and led to the publication of *The Politics of Black Nationalism: From Harlem to Soweto*. It is no surprise that he was a sought-after speaker who delivered speeches at international events and institutions in countries ranging from the US, UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Japan, Israel, Norway, China, Austria, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, and Djibouti. He had also chaired and convened several international conferences on themes like international and regional security, conflict management, economic integration, trans boundary resources, the hydro-politics of the Nile River Basin, the Ethio-Arab and Middle Eastern relations, NEPAD, and the African Union. The late Professor Abraham, who is survived by his wife, daughter and son, will undoubtedly command a place in Africa's intellectual history, and his status and legacy as a leading Pan-Africanist is secure. The Africa World Journal (AWJ) described Professor Abraham as one of the leading thinkers of Africa. He will remain an inspiration to current and future African thinkers. His prolific research output and his rich intellectual life have set the standard for Africa's aspiring young and emerging scholars.