

POINTS OF UNDERSTANDING AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2nd.
PARIS CONFERENCE OF
ETHIOPIAN OPPOSITION POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

A/ PREAMBLE:

We are at a time where the sovereignty of our country Ethiopia has been violated by the Eritrean government. The Conference took note of the fact the TPLF/EPRDF policy that had compromised the interests of Ethiopia in favour of Eritrea has immensely facilitated the invasion of Ethiopia by Eritrea.

The war has caused a tremendous loss of lives and property. Several thousands of persons have been displaced from their homes and having lost their property as well they are subjected to abject misery.

Although the real cause that led to the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia was not made clear by the government, the public has realized that the issue is a matter of grave concern to all Ethiopians. In realization of this, the youth have volunteered for military service to defend the motherland; the general public has come out in unison to support the displaced population and to rally as a fortress behind the efforts of the army. The Conference was cognizant of these patriotic efforts of the Ethiopian peoples.

The Conference also appraised the various diplomatic initiatives undertaken to resolve the conflict by different international bodies, and the unbalanced positions taken by some foreign governments and international organizations.

The Conference also discussed the conflict that raged between the Gujji Oromo and the Gedeo nationalities. It deplored the heavy damage to human life and property that resulted from the conflict.

Realizing all the above, the Conference had arrived at a conclusion that in order to disengage our country from the conflict situation it has been drawn into, two essential actions must be taken:

1. the opposition political organizations must form unity, and
2. a process of national dialogue must be initiated.

Following an in depth appraisal of the whole situation in the country, the Conference concluded that a fair, free and genuine election will be necessary to bring about democratization in the country. And it underscored the need for the relentless struggle to continue to bring about such a process in Ethiopia.

B/ POINTS OF UNDERSTANDING AND RESOLUTION

1. The Current Ethiopian Situation

- 1.1. The Conference vigorously condemned the invasion of Ethiopia by Eritrea and underscored the erroneous Eritrean policy of the TPLF/EPRDF government to have been primarily responsible for the invasion of Ethiopia by Eritrea.

- 1.2. The Conference appreciated the enormous contributions of the general Ethiopian populace with its drive to assist the displaced and to bolster the defense efforts of the government. However, it expressed concern that since the nature of the problem and the general resource mobilization to contain the problem are of a wide national significance, the collection and disbursement of the public contributions must be under the control of an agency that would be accountable to the public. Distribution of the public resources mobilized must be in accordance with the needs of the affected wherever that population might be.
- 1.3. The Conference was cognizant of the impending danger of widening of the area of armed conflict far and deep into other parts of Ethiopia and it may not be limited to just Badme and other parts of Shiraro. With this in view, it makes a call to all political organizations and the population at large to foil such intentions of the Eritrean government. The current EPRDF government has a duty to facilitate conditions for such a concerted effort to be realized.
- 1.4. Recognizing the fact that Ethiopians and Eritreans had lived in close association for generations and can do the same in the future, the Conference called for an extreme care to be taken to narrow the widening gap in tolerance between the two countries. For this, the Eritrean government must immediately stop the acts of human rights violation against Ethiopians who reside in its territory. Likewise, the deportation of Eritreans by the Ethiopian government must be handled in accordance with international rules and code of conduct on such matters. And both sides must respect the international convention pertaining to Prisoners of War.
- 1.5. The Regionalization policy of the TPLF/EPRDF government has led to clashes between various nations and nationalities, causing untold damages to human life and property. The recent conflict that erupted between the Gedeo and the Guji Oromo has resulted in the loss of an estimated 3,000 lives, the displacement of more than 160,000 persons and has led to the destruction of property. The Conference expressed its indignation about the failure of the government to protect the population from such violence and about its attempted cover-up of such a human tragedy of vast magnitude. It called on the government to make public the causes of the conflict, the exact magnitude of the damage to life and property, and to prosecute the perpetrators of the offence.
- 1.6. Taking note of the unbalanced statements issued by some governments and international organizations about the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Conference appealed to all such bodies to refrain from taking such unbalanced positions on the matter.

2. ON THE QUESTION OF UNITY OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CALL FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE

- 2.1 Cognizant of the need for a democratic coalition of Ethiopian opposition political organizations in order to address the problems faced by our country and to disengage it from the current conflictual situation, the 8 organizations

agreed to coordinate their political activities. To this end they have agreed to form THE COALITION OF ETHIOPIAN OPPOSITION POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS (CEOPO).

The CEOPO has drafted a program for the peaceful political struggle it has set out to wage. Furthermore, the Conference accepted with appreciation the unilateral cease fire declared by the Afar Revolutionary Democratic United Front (ARDUF) and that of the Ethiopian Unity Front (EUF) as valuable condition for the peaceful struggle the Coalition has resolved to engage in. As a goodwill gesture, to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the country, the Conference has called on the Ethiopian government to release all political prisoners, journalists and other prisoners of conscience without any precondition.

- 2.2 Following a thorough appraisal of the objectives and activities of the CEOPO, the Conference has adopted a document titled: Initiative for Democratization and Free Election to serve as its plan of action.
- 2.3 The conference adopted the organizational structures of the CEOPO resolved to initiate its activities immediately.
- 2.4 Cognizant of the difficult political situation Ethiopia is in at present and to seek a decisive and lasting solution to the problems, The Conference called for initiating a national dialogue on all outstanding issues of contention in the country. To this effect the Conference has adopted a document on national dialogue. The document is to be submitted to the government and to other interested parties.

3. ON THE ISSUE OF A DEMOCRATIC FREE, FAIR AND GENUINE ELECTIONS

- 3.1 By recognizing the principal mission of the CEOPO to be the creation of an ideal condition for the struggle being waged with the TPLF/EPRDF, for the initiation of the democratic process, the organizations agree to launch an immediate political and diplomatic initiative in all directions.
- 3.2 The Conference recognized the need for the CEOPP to take initiatives to negotiate the issue of fair, free and genuine elections with the government.
- 3.3 The Conference realized that for the CEOPO to be effective in mobilizing the Ethiopian peoples to struggle for a democratic transition, an immediate measure has to be taken by all members to strengthen the Coalition.
- 3.4 The need for rallying diplomatic support for the efforts of the CEOPO for peace and democracy in Ethiopia was recognized by the Conference, The Conference agreed on making an immediate effort along this line.

**COALITION OF ETHIOPIAN OPPOSITION POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS
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