

COMITÉ DE COORDINATION
Conférence Nationale
pour
La Paix et la Réconciliation
en ETHIOPIE

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COORDINATING COMMITTEE
National Conference
for
Peace and Reconciliation
in ETHIOPIA

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ANNEXE I : DECLARATION OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE **ON PEACE IN ETHIOPIA**

The Conference on Peace in Ethiopia which was convened from March 11 to 13, was organized by the French Catholic Committee Against Hunger and for Development (CCFD) and the Foundation for the Progress of Mankind (FHP). The ruling EPRDF and eight major opposition forces were invited. Regrettably, the EPRDF declined participation. Among the opposition forces invited the All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) was unable to attend because its delegates were denied exit visas by EPRDF authorities. The remaining seven who were able to attend, namely the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union (ARDU), the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces (COEDF), the Ethiopian Medhin Democratic Party (MEDHIN), the Multinational Congress Party of Ethiopia (MNCPE), Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Tigray-Tigriny Ethiopia (TTE) proceeded with the conference and after thorough and full deliberation of the current critical situation facing the country have made the following unanimous observations and resolved to set a mechanism in motion to stem the continuing conflict and to achieve a peaceful transition that would be acceptable to the peoples of Ethiopia.

The Conference unanimously observed and pronounced the following :

1.- On human rights

The transitional process has been marked by gross violations of human rights among all sectors of the population. Individuals, groups and minority communities have all been targeted for abuse. Supporters and members of other political groups including those who were participating in the transitional arrangement have been subjected to harassment, intimidation and arbitrary arrests. Numerous massacres were committed, the latest of which is the shooting of Addis Abeba University students whose only crime was peacefully marching to present a petition to the visiting U.N. Secretary General. They were also dismayed by the fact that thousands of Ethiopian families have been turned overnight into homeless beggars by the arbitrary decision of the EPRDF to disband the defence forces of the previous regime.

2.- On the Democratization Process

A number of political decisions taken by the EPRDF including the exclusion of several important political groups from the political process, the restriction imposed on the freedom of organization and the denial of the right of the opposition to organize and function legally have crippled the process of democratisation.

3.- On the Regional Elections of June, 1992

The regional elections of June, 1992 were marred by such serious flaws as voter harassment and intimidation, the exclusion and/or withdrawal of a number of very important opposition parties, including some who are or were members of the Transitional Government, outright fraud and rigging of election results and even assassination of opposition candidates. The Conference, therefore, totally rejects the outcome of the regional election of June, 1992.

4.- On the Question of Law and Order and National Defence

The wholesale transformation of the military arm of one of the contending political factions into the national police and defence apparatus has enabled the EPRDF to advance its political interest by the use of the State's coercive power.

5.- On Escalating Armed Conflicts

The EPRDF has increasingly resorted to militaristic solutions to crush dissent and impose its will. It has mounted massive military campaigns, massacred innocent civilians and burnt villages in many parts of the country.

6.- On the issue of Self Determination and the Forthcoming Eritrean Referendum

The Conference reaffirms the right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

In Ethiopia, various regimes which had no popular base have very often overstepped their limits and have burdened succeeding generations with onerous commitments. The present regime which is narrowly based and which has come to power by sheer force of arms has no respect for law. Its decisions has no binding force on the Ethiopian peoples. The initiation of the process of a referendum to determine the future of the peoples of Eritrea and the need to obtain the support of th Ethiopian government to provide legitimacy to that process under the prevailing circumstances has made the issue controversial. At present there is not legitimate government in Ethiopia with a popular mandate to commit the Ethiopian peoples. The right of a future Ethiopian government which fulfils these requirements to take a different position on this issure is therefore reserved. In view of the volatile situation inEthiopia, the free and democratic participation on all sides in the referendum has become questionable. Therefore, all those concernend including the UN should be aware of this legal controversy.

Having thus recognized that the transitional process initiated in July, 1991 has, for the most part, failed to advance the cause of lasting peace and set in motion a process of genuine democratization, the Paris Conference on Peace in Ethiopia has resolved :

- 1.- An all-inclusive National Conference on Peace and Reconciliation in Ethipia be convened in the shortest time possible.
- 2.- As EPRDF participation is essential for the success of the Conference on Peace and Reconciliation, the participants of the Paris Conference urge EPRDF to participate in the Conference.

3.- A Peace and Reconciliation Coordinating Committee (PRCC) be established to follow-up the process of convening the conference and establishing the support of the Ethiopian peoples and the international community.

4.- Call upon the peoples of Ethiopia and political forces within the country to support the calls of this Conference and to play an active role to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation.

5.- Similarly, the Conference calls upon all friends of the Ethiopian people and the international community at large to support our endeavour to bring about national reconciliation, enduring peace and genuine democratization of our country.

Finally, the Conference participants unanimously expressed their profound appreciation and gratitude to CCFD and FPH as well as the members and staff of GRAPECA for the concern they have shown for the plight of the Ethiopian people and for enabling the holding of the Conference.

The Conference further expresses its appreciation for the messages of support that were sent to the Paris Conference on Peace in Ethiopia from :

1. The President of the European Parliament ;
2. The Vice President of the European Parliament ;
3. The President of the Human Rights Commission of the European Parliament ;
4. The President of the Development and Cooperation Commission of the European Parliament ;
5. The co-Presidents of the Green Group in the European Parliament.

Adopted on March 13, 1993.