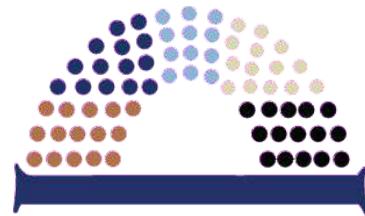




**ETHIOPIAN  
PARLIAMENTARY DIGEST**

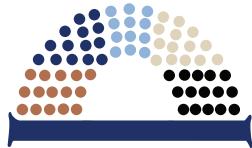


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Bridge Research and Innovation for Democratic Governance and Enhanced Peace (BRIDGE) is an independent, non-profit think tank based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Registered under the FDRE Civil Society Organization Proclamation No. 1113/2019, which specializes in parliamentary affairs, peace, and development in the IGAD region.



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To advance democratic governance and enhance peace through evidence-based research and innovative policy analysis.



### Vision

To be a leading research hub and trusted source of analysis on parliamentary affairs, peace, governance, and development in the IGAD region.



### Core Values

- ① Rigor: Delivering high-quality, evidence-driven research.
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# Ethiopian Representatives in October/ November

The Sixth House of Peoples' Representatives concluded the second month of its final working year by fulfilling its traditional constitutional duties. The House approved the draft resolution focusing on the 2018 budget year direction outlined in the opening address presented to both Houses by President Taye Atske Selassie in the preceding month of September. Furthermore, the House submitted follow-up questions to the Prime Minister concerning this and related issues, seeking clarification, and received the government's response. Although the House did not approve any new laws or refer any legislation to Standing Committees during this month, it conducted extensive briefing forums. This October issue of Enderasie covers the main talking points from the Prime Minister's speech; the activities the House conducted during the month, and also include a brief survey on the successes and challenges surrounding the representative work of the House members.

*\*All dates are in the Ethiopian calendar.*

October  
18

**The House held its 6<sup>th</sup>  
Term, 5<sup>th</sup> Year, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regular  
Session.**

## Agenda 1

**Prime Minister's Appearance:** During this session, H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed presented the government's stance and responses to questions posed by the representatives.

## Agenda 2

**Resolution Approval:** Furthermore, in the same regular session, the House approved the motion of support for the 2018 budget year Government Focus Area direction (presented by H.E. President Taye Atske Selassie on September 26, 2018 as Resolution No. 1/2018. The resolution was passed by a majority vote, with one abstention.

# The Prime Minister in Parliament

**E**thiopian representatives concluded the month of October not solely with their parliamentary diplomacy activities or their numerous briefing forums; they went further, summoning the Head of Government to the House to raise their many questions on issues they deemed concerning, seeking answers and explanations.

The representatives raised questions with the ruling party's Chairman ranging from the long-standing question of Ethiopia's access to the sea to the political tension in the North, and from Ethiopia's debt repayment to the domestic security situation. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, whose explanations took up extensive time, responded and provided clarifications on the sea access question, the current state of the macro-economy, and reiterated that his government remains ready for armed groups to begin peaceful politics. This issue of Enderasie summarizes the main topics from the Prime Minister's explanations as follows:-



## Domestic Politics

Among the topics addressed by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy, who arrived at the House of Peoples' Representatives' hall on the morning of October 18, 2018, was his government's current stance on domestic politics. The Prime Minister was heard reiterating that the government's door is open for forces wishing to struggle peacefully. He stated that foreign entities who do not wish for Ethiopia's growth and prosperity know they cannot win through war, and although they attempt to achieve their desires through mercenaries

and proxies, they will not succeed. H.E. Dr. Abiy was heard saying that the government has a strong desire for any force that claims to have a problem in Ethiopia to be able to raise its concerns peacefully. He explained that armed groups have previously chosen the path of peace and are now working together with the government for the country's development. In response to the representatives' questions, including "Is the government ready for peaceful dialogue today?" the Premier re-emphasized that his government is ready for dialogue to resolve political differences and remains ready for peace now. He added that for issues that they believe cannot be solved through negotiation, there are alternatives to find solutions through the National Consultative Process and Transitional Justice.

The Prime Minister stated that any Ethiopian who claims to have questions in various parts of the country must strive to have their problems solved through peace, negotiation, and a referendum, adding that the government has a firm commitment to this matter. Dr. Abiy, who noted that bringing stability to the country is difficult when there are countries that wish for Ethiopia not to stand on its two feet, was heard stating that Ethiopia, in its current reality, is not suitable for either secession or consolidation.



Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's session on that Thursday also turned towards the Northern politics. The Commander-in-Chief gave extensive responses to the representatives' questions on the TPLF and related matters. He raised concerns that the TPLF is not adhering to the Pretoria Peace Agreement and is using the budget allocated from the Federal Government for military activities instead of development work. In his explanation, H.E. Dr. Abiy stated that his government does not want further fighting in the Tigray region, emphasizing that the government's focus is on developing the country together. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy was heard stating that any attempt to overthrow the government by force will utterly fail. He clearly reiterated that lasting peace in Tigray can only be achieved through disarmament, reform, and cooperation, and this is his government's position. The Chairman of the Prosperity Party stated, "The budget allocated by the Federal Government to the Tigray region is being used entirely for military activities, not for development; this is not right." He stressed that Tigray needs development and must therefore work peacefully.

In detailing his government's priorities for peace in Tigray, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy listed: disarming armed groups, restarting public services, returning displaced citizens, and following the constitutional principle that the power to conduct foreign relations rests solely with the Federal Government. The Prime Minister further accused the TPLF of continuing activities that hinder the peace process, such as smuggling weapons contraband and conducting unauthorized foreign relations.

Regarding the calls for the Pretoria Agreement to be fully implemented, the Premier noted that some of the highly vocal parties were not part of the negotiation process. The Prime Minister reminded the representatives of the identity of the signatories, saying, "We negotiated Pretoria with General Tsadkan, Getachew Reda, and Assefa Abreha. These are the principal negotiators." The Premier added, "I asked them something, and they told me. However, those who were not present those who do not know Pretoria, are now

saying, 'We will enforce Pretoria.' It is like the adopted mother claiming to be the one who gave birth; that is what it is." Speaking about the TPLF's legal personality, the Prime Minister stated that the group can restore its legality by re-registering with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). He added that the TPLF is primarily expected to respect the NEBE's rules, respect the Constitution, and hold a congress to become a legal party; "and this is not a difficult matter."

## **"Ethiopia Has No Problem Repaying Its Debt"**

The Third Prime Minister of the Republic, during his session with the Sixth House of Representatives in its fifth year, provided extensive explanations regarding the country's economic situation and his government's future processes, substantiated by figures. The Prime Minister stated that since an agriculture-led economy alone cannot grow and transform a country, it is possible to enhance national growth by pursuing and designing multi-sectorial economic alternatives. He explained that effective work has been done to ensure that agriculture provides input to the industrial sector. He informed the representatives that the government is focusing on accelerating national growth by pursuing multi-sectorial economic options, increasing production and productivity in the agricultural, industrial, and mining sectors, and expanding and connecting tourism destinations.

Referring to the implementation of the macro-economic reform, which has been underway for over a year, the Premier stated that the economic reform Ethiopia has implemented has saved the country's financial institutions from collapse. Citing the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia as one institution that was rescued from disaster, Dr. Abiy stated that the 2017 fiscal year was a year of success where the government practically accomplished matters that were deemed impossible and quickly and successfully delivered on its promises to the public.



The Representatives listening to the Prime Minister's explanation;

In his economy-focused explanation, the Prime Minister cited figures, indicating that the agricultural sector recorded a 7.3% growth in 2017, contributing 2.3% to the overall annual growth. In referencing figures for the agricultural sector, which he noted has registered significant change and growth since the reform; he stated that while 47 million quintals of wheat were produced in 2010, producing over 280 million quintals of wheat in 2017 constitutes a great change.

Addressing the topic, which had been in the news a few days before his appearance at the House, regarding Ethiopia's ability or inability to pay its foreign debts, the Chairman of the ruling party stated that Ethiopia's debt to international creditors does not exceed 23 billion USD and that the country has no problem managing or repaying its current debt, reassuring the representatives not to worry. He was heard emphatically stating that Ethiopia's economic growth in the 2018 fiscal year will double compared to the 2017 fiscal year. Speaking on the issue of inflation, which was one of the questions raised, he recalled that 440 billion Birr was subsidized to stabilize the cost of living and inflation, and was heard stating that the inflation rate for the month of October had decreased to 11.7%.

During his session with the House of Representatives, the first of the current year, Dr. Abiy also spoke about Corridor Development and his government's highly implemented Green Legacy Initiative. Dr. Abiy stated that the corridor development work marks a significant shift in perspective. The Prime Minister noted that although

individuals may find it difficult to abandon their old habits, they gradually accept the new way of life, and he stated that their corridor development work is bringing about significant creative capacity and a change in lifestyle. He also mentioned that the corridor development work has enabled many capacities to emerge, and in connection with river bank development, he was heard saying that their countrymen are successfully undertaking work that foreigners had found too difficult and abandoned. Speaking about the Green Legacy Initiative, Dr. Abiy stated that Ethiopia has committed 48 billion USD to global climate change mitigation, adding that this would have been unthinkable if it were reliant on aid and support.

## The Issue of Sea Access...

H.E. President Taye Atske Selassie addressed a joint session of the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation on September 26, 2018. In his response to the representatives' questions regarding the President's opening speech, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, as always, firmly articulated his government's stance on Ethiopia's long-standing primary question of sea access. The Commander-in-Chief began his response to questions related to the Red Sea and sea access by raising the issue of national interest. Dr. Abiy stated that every country, regardless of its size or wealth, has the right to utilize its natural blessings without harming others. He then elaborated, saying that the right to utilize nature's gift without causing damage to another rests with every country.



Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and Speaker Tagesse Chafo on the day of the explanation;



The Head of Government was heard stating that Ethiopia is a country that has been subjected to the ultimate injustice, unfairness, and irrationality regarding its national interest. He emphasized that complete peace cannot be established in the presence of irrational and unjust decisions. The Commander-in-Chief stated, "We believe that the Red Sea issue is a legal, historical, geographical, and economic question." He added, "Some say this question must be answered immediately; others say, 'I must be the one to start it tomorrow when I come to power.' Neither is necessary." He continued, "Saying there is no war does not mean the sound of gunfire will not be heard; if true justice is not ensured, war can break out at any time." Speaking about the loss and regaining of the Red Sea, Dr. Abiy said, "Ethiopia's fight to lose the Red Sea took 30 years and more; Ethiopia lost the Red Sea through the efforts of many over a 30-year struggle." He continued, "To regain it, it is essential to proceed in a calm manner, in a measured way, through discussion. However, no matter how much we discuss, I don't believe it will take the 30 years it took to lose it. But since the time is sufficient, it needs to be viewed calmly."

The Prime Minister looked back, saying, "Since some only think about today, let me provide the background." He posed the question: "Who first decided to make Ethiopia lose the Red Sea? We thought it might be the cabinet, but if we searched the cabinet documents, it's not there; the cabinet didn't know about it. We thought maybe the parliament decided it, but the parliament wasn't there either; the parliament didn't know about the decision. It cannot be said that the Ethiopian people decided it through a referendum; we were there at the time." The Premier then set the time frame and explained the process concisely to the representatives: "Who made the decision that the Ethiopian people did not decide, that their representatives did not see, and that, at the very least, the executive cabinet did not see? The fact that institutions were not involved, the cabinet didn't know, and we couldn't find a single page

of documentation explaining how we lost something as significant as a loss, shows that there is a problem of legality in the way we lost it." He then emphasized the interrogative statement; "Who decided it? This is the question."

In this context concerning sea access and related questions, the Commander-in-Chief, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, was repeatedly heard stating that his government prioritizes peace and dialogue, a sentiment he reiterated during his session on that Thursday. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy explained that Ethiopia's priority is peace and dialogue, and because Ethiopia's use of the Red Sea is inevitable, they have requested mediation from several countries on the matter. The Prime Minister indicated that the countries requested to mediate and propose a solution include the United States, China, and Russia. He was heard saying, "The thing I want to state to this esteemed House now is that since the issue of Ethiopia gaining access to the Red Sea is inevitable, and since we prioritize peace and dialogue, we ask you, 'Please mediate for us and bring a solution; this is our request.'" "However," the Prime Minister continued, "However, if the tactic is to stall by saying, 'We will mediate for you; peace is necessary,' I don't think the issue will go far." In the same context of his speech, the Premier also brought up Eritrea, stating, "The people of Eritrea are still a brotherly people; they are a miserable people; they are a people who are leaving their country and migrating. Our desire is to cooperate with this people." He firmly reiterated his previous statement to the same House, saying, "We absolutely have no desire for war." In raising the possibility of conflict, he stressed that there would be no assisting countries or forces as there were in past times. "Now, there is no such thing as 'so-and-so will help me' in a war. How can anyone talk about assisting while watching Ukraine and Palestine? No one will die for you; they will give you moral support, but they won't die for you. Ultimately, you are the one who will die; it's not worth it," he strongly cautioned.

# The House's Law-Making Functions



**A**lthough the House of Representatives did not enact any laws or refer any draft laws to the relevant Standing Committees during the month of October, it did conduct two briefing forums that are part of the law-making process. These concerned the Draft Proclamation on Plant Protection and Quarantine and the Draft Proclamation on Agricultural Extension Service and Administration.

## Explanatory forums

The primary briefing forum conducted by the House of Representatives during the month of October was held concerning the Draft Proclamation on Plant Protection and Quarantine. The forum was organized by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agricultural Affairs. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Solomon Lale, is quoted as stating that although Ethiopia is blessed with unique biodiversity, significant damage is occurring due to increasingly prevalent man-made and natural events, particularly from pests. Information released by the House indicates that the Chairperson explained that since the existing legal framework has been in place for a long time, is not supported by research, and does not incorporate modern technology, it is essential to issue a new Proclamation that adheres to international plant protection agreements. Ato Teklu Bayisa, Advisor to the Ethiopian Agricultural Authority, who presented a detailed explanation of the draft proclamation, is quoted as pointing out that the existing draft proclamation does not include current and specific issues. He argued that this deficiency has resulted in damage because it has been impossible to conduct relevant pest risk analysis and control entry points.

Honorable Ato Solomon, who attended another forum held on the same day regarding the draft proclamation with briefers, was heard saying that the draft was prepared to be up-to-date and compliant with international agreements to protect crops from both pre-harvest and post-harvest pests. Dr. Melese Mekonnen, State Minister for the Farming and Horticulture Sector at the Ministry of Agriculture, is quoted as stating that since the previously issued Decree No. 56/1963 and Regulation No. 4/1985 have served for a long time, and given that international agreements, standards, laws, and practices are rapidly changing and evolving over time, it has become necessary to issue a legal framework, establish, and implement modern operating systems to resolve the bottlenecks in the sector in our country.



*A partial view of the explanatory forum;*

The second explanatory forum conducted during the month of October concerned the Draft Proclamation on Agricultural Extension Service and Administration, and the session was reportedly organized by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agricultural Affairs. Honorable Solomon Lale, Chairperson of the Standing Committee, attended the forum and noted that the government is focusing intently on ensuring food security. He also recalled that the foundation stone was laid for the construction of a fertilizer factory, which has a major role in increasing production and productivity in the sector. Dr. Melese Mekonnen, State Minister for the Farming and Horticulture Sector at the Ministry of Agriculture, is cited in the report as stating that the draft proclamation was prepared

by drawing from policy and strategy, taking experience from other countries, and ensuring that it is adapted to the current reality of the country. Days later, at an official discussion forum held with stakeholders regarding the same proclamation, Honorable Solomon Lale, the Committee Chairperson, stated that the draft proclamation would transform the agricultural sub-economy in many ways. The House report quotes him saying that the draft is designed to address limitations in accessibility, quality, capacity, and performance within Ethiopia's agricultural extension service, administration, and development, as well as in the natural resource sector.

# Oversight and Monitoring of Executive Institutions

**O**versight of executive institutions is one of the main tasks of the representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's House of Peoples' Representatives. In this regard, during the month of October, which we covered in this issue, they listened to the reports of various institutions. Furthermore, outside of the House, they conducted numerous field visits, examining various institutions physically through their respective Committees.

## Institutional Reports

Information from the House of Representatives indicates that the House of Ethiopian representatives, during the month of October covered in this issue, reviewed the first quarter budget year plan performance of two institutions.

The first federal institution was the Ministry of Justice. Its quarterly plan performance, along with that of its affiliate institutions, was reviewed by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Legal and Justice Affairs. The report was presented by Dr. Ermias Yemanebirhan, State Minister for the Ministry of Justice. The State Minister is quoted as mentioning the ongoing work to improve the drafting and enforcement of laws, enhance the administration and follow-up of advocacy services, protect the civil interests of the government and the public, and improve the enforceability of administrative justice and federal laws. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable W/ro Etsegenet Mengistu, is quoted as stating that the collab-

orative work currently underway with various law enforcement and stakeholder institutions to address problems in the delivery of justice services must be strengthened and sustained. The Madam Chair said that coordinated support from the entire community is needed to curb the illegal human trafficking that is claiming the lives of many citizens. Information obtained from the House shows that she emphasized the need to increase public trust and ensure legal accountability by prosecuting individuals and agencies connected to the issue. The Deputy Chairperson, Honorable Issa Boru, emphatically stated that justice institutions should create platforms to facilitate increased participation of civil societies in the upcoming national election. Ato Tesfaye Daba, State Minister for the Attorney General Sector at the Ministry of Justice, is cited in the report as mentioning that they are working collaboratively with various law enforcement and international institutions to track and prosecute individuals engaged in illegal human trafficking.



The second institution scheduled to present its quarterly performance report in the month of October was the Ethiopian Information Network Security Administration (INSA). Honorable W/ro Tigist Hamid, Director General of INSA, is quoted as mentioning that 13,443 cyber-attack attempts were made against the infrastructure of various institutions. She stated that as the institution is continually improving its capacity to prevent cyber-attacks; its defense capacity reached 97.8 percent during the reporting period. Honorable Dr. Fethi Mahdi, Deputy Chairperson of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and

Peace Affairs, pointed out that having such a high number of cyber-attack attempts on various institutions, coupled with a 97.8 percent defense rate, are considered as strength. However, the House report quotes him saying that the institution is expected to work diligently to increase its defense capacity to over 99 percent. The Deputy Chairperson also stressed that since all institutions use the internet, INSA must work collaboratively with various bodies to protect mega-projects and financial institutions from cyber-attacks.



## Institutional and Field Visits

The House of Representatives concluded the month of October not only by listening to the explanations of Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and reviewing institutional reports, but also by visiting numerous institutions through its various Standing Committees, thereby conducting a large number of field visits.

### Institutional Visits

The first institution visited by the representatives in the month of October was the Ethio-Engineering Group (EEG). The visiting body was the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on State-Owned Enterprises. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Melese Menna, is quoted as emphasizing that the commitment of the employees and management is crucial for the Ethio-Engineering Group to achieve its mission and vision. The Chairperson further urged employees to work with a sense of ownership and focus on transferring the institution to the next generation, recognizing its national significance. Members of the Standing Committee, on their part, reportedly indicated that the institution's efforts to fulfill its social responsibility and support manufacturing industries should be strengthened and continued. The institution's CEO, Colonel Shegaw Mulugeta, is cited in the report as stating that despite having numerous complex challenges, their institution is focusing on overcoming these obstacles so that manufacturing industries can produce at

their full capacity and achieve outstanding results. The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Dr. Engineer Sileshi Kore, is quoted as saying that for the institution to realize its vision, it must enhance its internal revenue capacity by producing quality products, satisfying customers, and being competitive in East Africa.

The other institution visited during the month was the Education and Training Assessment and Examination Service (ETAES). The visit was conducted by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, stated that the institution has been performing major national tasks, pointing out that its responsibility is not light since it administers the educational evaluation, assessment, and examinations through which generations' transition from one level to the next. The Chairperson further cautioned that since students taking the 12th grade national examination are tested under various prevailing conditions, the exam preparation should be inclusive and fair, and work should be done on this moving forward. The Deputy Chairperson, Honorable Dr. Bethlehem Lakew, is quoted as stating that the institution's effort to consolidate information that was previously in paper into a single digital system and implement new procedures is commendable.



When the Standing Committee on Government Development Enterprises visited the Ethio-Engineering Group;

## Field Visits

Among the field visits conducted by the representatives of the House during the month of October covered in this issue, Dire Dawa stands out as the first place visited in terms of time frame, and the visiting body was the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Urban, Infrastructure, and Transport Affairs. The committee members, who toured the infrastructure and service institutions under construction in the Dire Dawa Administration, reportedly stated that the encouraging work being carried out in the city to meet the public's development demands and solve service delivery problems should be strengthened. However, the Standing Committee reportedly announced that the Convention Center construction project, which is being built with a budget of 2.3 billion Birr to make the city a conference destination, is not being executed according to the planned schedule and budget. According to the House's information, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Professor Mohammed Abdo, noted that the infrastructure being built in Dire Dawa will help in meeting the residents' demands for development and services quickly and with quality.

A field visit to the Bole Lemi Special Economic Zone, which included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, and senior House officials, was another characteristic activity of the month. The Speaker, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, spoke at the time about the irreplaceable role industrial parks play in ensuring the sustainability of development. Information from the House quoted the Speaker as saying that the parks are generating significant foreign currency to ensure the country's development sustainably and are playing a big role in replacing imported goods by producing locally. Honorable Ato Tagesse stated that the House stands alongside the parks to resolve challenges related to infrastructure and power supply so that they can operate at full capacity. The Deputy Speaker, Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, who also visited the Special Economic Zone, is quoted as stating that efforts are underway to cover 44 percent of the total national product through the industrial sector. The Deputy Speaker added that the work being done to domestically produce products like glass, including iron, which previously cost a lot of foreign currency to import, using local raw materials and in an environmentally safe manner, is encouraging.



On October 21, members of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on State-Owned Enterprises traveled to Wolaita in Southern Ethiopia. They conducted a field observation at the city's Electricity Service Center, and during their visit, the Center's 2017 budget year and 2018 budget year first quarter reports were presented and discussed. Honorable Dr. Zewdu Tadesse, a member of the Standing Committee and leader of the field observation team, reportedly stressed the need for on-the-ground work to fill the institution's gaps. He also reportedly stated that a solution should be found for the transportation shortage, as it affects the satisfaction of both employees and customers. Information from the field observation indicates that these same Standing Committee members also visited the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Dilla District in the same Southern Ethiopia region. Honorable Dr. Zewdu Tadesse, who led this committee team, reportedly stated that the 43 branches are insufficient given the size of the district, and focus must be placed on expanding accessibility. In addition to these two visits, the representatives also inspected the Ethio-telecom Dilla Center in the same region, stating that they observed the center performing diverse functions. Information obtained from the House indicates that the

representatives, through their team leader, Honorable Dr. Zewdu Tadesse, suggested that a day-care facility should be established in all centers.

The border region of Gambella is one of the areas that can be cited as an example of the field visits conducted by the representatives in the month of October covered in this issue. The field observation was carried out by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agricultural Affairs. The team coordinator for the Standing Committee, Honorable W/ro Letifa Aba Temam, is quoted as saying that the Standing Committee is concretely observing the work the government is undertaking to ensure food sovereignty and the benefits derived by the public. Dr. Mok Yang, Deputy Head of the Gambella Region Livestock and Fisheries Development Bureau, is cited in the House's information as mentioning that so far, many youths in the region are benefiting from various development works. Honorable W/ro Letifa also reportedly conducted field visits to the Abobo Mengesh and Godere districts of the region. During that visit, she reportedly indicated that both the ongoing mining and coffee development in the region should be executed in a manner that does not harm the forest.



On October 25, members of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on State-Owned Enterprises arrived at the Debt and Asset Management Corporation (DAMC) located in the capital city, Addis Ababa. Through the team leader, Honorable W/ro Addise Alemayehu, the committee members reportedly stated that the Corporation must conduct its reform work collaboratively by properly planning its objectives and clearly setting its goals. Ato Lewenet Kassahun, Executive Officer of the Finance and Corporate Services Department at the Corporation, presented the institution's 2018 budget year plan and quarterly performance report. He reportedly informed the representatives present that out of the planned 19.72 million Birr revenue to be collected in the quarter, only 9.72 million Birr were secured. The House's information further noted that he added the problem that the Corporation's human resources management directive has not yet been approved and implemented, which is impacting human resource administration and recruitment.

It was reported that the Bench Sheko Zone in the Southwest Region was visited by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs towards the end of October. The Committee also toured the areas affected by the landslide disaster that displaced citizens in the region. Honorable Ato Sadiq Adem, a member of the Standing Committee and leader of the field observation team, reportedly indicated that the work carried out from the woreda (district)

to the regional level was commendable, noting that in addition to providing temporary shelter for the displaced citizens, health, education, food, and other support services were provided. The other members of the Standing Committee reportedly pointed out, as indicated in the field observation report, that other kebeles still at risk of disaster should be identified, and shelter should be prepared and provided for the residents before an accident occurs.

Sidama Regional State was another area where a field visit was conducted during the field visit coverage of this ninth issue of ours. The visit was carried out by members of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on State-Owned Enterprises. The Standing Committee reportedly conducted a field observation in Hawassa city, visiting WM Engineering, the Ceramic Manufacturing, and the Alam Granite and Marble Factory. Honorable Dr. Zewdu Tadesse, a member of the Standing Committee and leader of the observation team, reportedly stated that since this factory has a big role in achieving a better place for the country's development in the future, hard work is essential.

## Representative Works of the representatives'

**I**t is known that the primary duty of the representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from July until the end of the last week of September is representative works. Nevertheless, in the month of September, two representatives performed their duty of engaging with and listening to the questions of their constituents by traveling to their respective electoral districts.

Honorable Kemal Hashi Mahmud reached the Harena Woreda of the Fafan Zone in the Ethio-Somali Region toward the end of the first week of September and discussed matters with his constituents. Government employees, youth, women, elders, and religious leaders from the Woreda participated in the discussion, where an understanding was reportedly reached with the participants on ways to sustain the developing growth in the Woreda. Honorable Mubarek Elias, Deputy Chairperson of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agricultural Affairs, also conducted his representative work during this month, reportedly traveling to the Benishangul-Gumuz Region and holding discussions with his constituents. The representative is quoted as saying that the Executive body's effort to address the public's development demands is commendable and that the commenced works must be strengthened to solve problems sustainably.



*The Honorable Mr. Mubarak Elias, Member of the House and Deputy Chairperson of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee and the Honorable Mrs. Askalech Alboro, Speaker of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional Council, discussing with constituents in the Benishangul Gumuz Region;*



## Parliamentary Diplomacy

The Ethiopian representatives carried out four parliamentary diplomacy activities during the month of October.

The House's information indicates that the Government's Chief Whip in the House, Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, his Deputy Honorable Dr. Mihiretu Shanko and Speaker of the House of Federation Honorable Agegnehu Teshager, traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, on September 11, participated in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held in the city during those days. Honorable Dr. Tesfaye is quoted as stating that, at the Assembly, he conveyed to the international community Ethiopia's position, fundamental principles, and national reform agendas, noting that Ethiopia is achieving comprehensive development in this era marked by numerous global challenges. The representative reportedly explained that the organization, which has over 180 parliamentary members from various countries worldwide, works on an agenda that includes encouraging dialogue and cooperation between parliaments, as well as issues of democracy, human rights, and other related ideas.

The second parliamentary diplomacy event of the month for the representatives was a discussion held between Ethiopia and Argentina, which was aimed at strengthening bilater-

al cooperation and future partnership. During this session, where the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs received and conversed with the Argentine Ambassador, the two countries' long-standing diplomatic and economic ties were discussed. Comprehensive discussions were reportedly held on issues deemed capable of further strengthening their broad cooperation in the sectors of trade, technology, aviation, tourism, and agriculture. The Chairperson of the House of Representatives' South American and Caribbean Parliamentary Friendship Group, Honorable Dr. Abdulqadir Gelgelo, mentioned that Ethiopia and Argentina have a long-standing historical and diplomatic relationship and that Argentina's support for Ethiopia's efforts to become a member of the World Trade Organization has been continuous. The Argentine Ambassador, Juan Ignacio Rokatagliata, for his part, reportedly mentioned that Argentina is already working jointly with Ethiopia in the education, sports, trade, and agriculture sectors, and he affirmed that they will continue to strengthen this cooperation further.



The Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, the Honorable Dr. Mihiretu Shanko and the Honorable Agegnehu Teshager, Speaker of the House of Federation, with Ambassador Tsegab Kebebew at the 151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly;



The Honorable Dr. Abdulkadir Gelgelo, Chairperson of the Ethiopia-South America and Caribbean Parliamentary Friendship Group and Mr. Juan Ignacio Rocatagliata, Ambassador of Argentina to Ethiopia;

The third parliamentary diplomacy event of the representatives was their participation in the East African Parliamentary Union Assembly held in Addis Ababa on September 19. At the opening of the Assembly, the Chairperson of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agricultural Affairs, Honorable Solomon Lale, reportedly stated that it was possible to bring about change through the activities undertaken to ensure food security in Ethiopia. Honorable Dr. Nigussie Meshesha, the Union's Ethiopian Representative for Food Security and Nutrition Safety, in turn, reportedly shared his country's experience with the member states regarding the national successes and works registered in food and nutrition security in Ethiopia.

The final parliamentary diplomacy activity of the representatives in the month of September was reported to be focused on the lasting relationship between Ethiopia and Poland. During

the meeting where the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs received the Polish Parliamentary delegation, the Standing Committee Chairperson, Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, mentioned that the countries have a long-standing historical and diplomatic relationship, and he indicated that Ethiopia has a strong desire to strengthen and sustain these relations. Honorable Ambassador Dina Mufti, a member of the Committee, for his part, mentioned that Poland has vast experience in the education and science sectors and called on the country to provide its support in these and other fields. Information released by the House indicated that the Polish Ambassador to Ethiopia, Ilona Korchut, affirmed that Poland would continue to strengthen its multifaceted diplomatic and friendly relations with Ethiopia.



When the Peace and Foreign Affairs Standing Committee spoke with the Polish delegation;

## Representatives on Themselves



**T**he representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia concluded the second month of the New Year not only by performing their aforementioned constitutional duties but also by addressing issues concerning the House and themselves.

The House of Representatives' Coordinating Committee reviewed the 2018 budget year plan presented by Ato Kereyu Banata, Deputy Chief Administrator of the House's Office and representative of the Chief Administrator, with the committee members engaging in an extensive discussion. The Speaker, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, who was present at the conclusion of that discussion forum, is quoted as saying that Ethiopians are working together to strengthen the country's unity. The Speaker added that the House is providing its support for the National Dialogue Commission to complete its work on schedule and for the 7th National Election to be held next May, and this support will be strengthened in the 2018 budget year. Furthermore, the House's information quotes Honorable Tagesse Chafo as emphasizing that since Ethiopia's question for sea access is being pursued through diplomatic means, not by force, and various countries are supporting it as a legitimate request; members of the House should strengthen their diplomatic engagements. The Deputy Speaker, Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, reportedly stressed that the administrative and professional support provided by the House's Office when members enact laws or conduct monitoring and oversight should be strengthened, building upon the work started to make the working environment conducive following the reform carried out in the office. Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, another representative and Government Whip, reportedly cautioned that since the government is focused on reducing the cost of living and inflation,

improving job creation, and project implementations, representatives should also strengthen their monitoring, oversight, and support roles.

One of the self-initiated tasks performed by the representatives in the month of October was the evaluation of the summer recess representative work. At this evaluation, the House speaker, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, was heard saying that it is necessary to establish a system where questions raised during the public representative work are distributed to the relevant institutions, their implementation is followed up, and institutions that have provided answers are commended, while those that have not provided sufficient answers are held accountable. The Deputy Speaker, Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, was reported to have mentioned that a study committee has been established and is working to learn best practices from other countries to modernize the House of Representatives' working procedures. Honorable W/ro Meseret Haile, Deputy Minister of the Government Whip in the House, who presented the representative work report, reportedly mentioned that the government has achieved numerous successful results in terms of irrigation development and the Lemmat Trufat movements, and she also indicated that in areas facing security issues, the leadership is working with better commitment than ever to restore peace.

The discussion held by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Government Expenditure, Administration, and Control Affairs on the draft plan for the 2018 budget year Audit Stakeholders Cooperation Forum was another internal forum for the representatives. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Honorable Dr. Yeshimebet Demissie, who presented the draft plan for the forum, reportedly outlined potential challenges, solutions, and detailed monitoring and control tasks. It was reported that during the discussion, stakeholders from various institutions presented feedback and questions on the plan to the Standing Committee, followed by a discussion.

Information from the House indicates that towards the end of the month, training was provided to certain Standing Committee leaders and the executive desks for Public Budget Study, Analysis, and Examination within the House. The training, which was held in Adama for the Standing Committees on Planning, Budget, and Finance and on Government Expenditure, Administration, and Control Affairs, as well as for House officials, reportedly covered government budget plan preparation, budget approval, and the budget utilization of executive institutions. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Budget and Finance Affairs, Honorable Desalegn Wedaje, the Deputy Chairperson, Honorable Dr. Abraham Alemayehu, and sub-committee chairpersons reportedly participated in the training.

## **The Representatives' Visit**

A notable event during the month was the visit of the high officials of the House of Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, members of the House's Advisory Committee, leaders and members of the Standing Committees, and heads of the House's Office to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The Deputy Speaker, Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, was heard stating that the Renaissance Dam is a great project for which citizens have paid a price, describing it as the result of the sweat, blood, and water drops of the citizens. The Speaker added that, according to its foreign policy, Ethiopia has no desire to develop alone and gives priority to neighboring countries. Discussing the question of sea access after their visit, the Honorable Lomi was heard saying that sea access is not to be viewed simply as an ordinary commodity. Information obtained from the House indicates that W/ro Lomi further explained that the House will carry out strengthened work to enable the country to acquire sea access by gaining adequate understanding on the matter, reviewing and enacting laws, and strengthening parliamentary diplomacy. Honorable W/ro Meseret Haile, Deputy Minister of the Government Whip to the House of Representatives, for her part, reportedly stated that Ethiopia has practically demonstrated its position that the riparian countries should be fair beneficiaries of the Renaissance Dam and has concretely proven its unchanged stance by not reducing the flow of the water.



Senior House leadership, members of the House Advisory Committee, leadership of Standing Committees and heads of the Secretariat during a visit to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD);



*During the celebration of Flag Day;*

## The Great Day: Flag Day Celebration

The Ethiopian representatives celebrated the Flag Day, which was observed in the month of October of this year, in a grand manner. Information released by the House indicates that the celebration took place on October 13, with the presence of the President of the Federation, Honorable Taye Atskeselassie, under the theme: "Our Flag is the Herald of Ethiopia's Great Era of Ascension, for our National Unity, Sovereignty, and Ethiopia's Renaissance!" The President was heard saying that this era is Ethiopia's great period of good news and ascension. President Taye stated that this 18th celebration of the Flag Day is a great national holiday where the youth renew their love for the country and their commitment, where shared growth is fostered and future hope

is strengthened. He is also quoted as saying that by overcoming existential challenges through the unity of its peoples, Ethiopia is proving its decisiveness.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, who attended the Flag Day celebration, is cited in the report as saying that, "Our Flag is a great national holiday where we confirm our commitment and arouse and renew our national patriotic spirit." The Speaker added that the flag is a symbol of multi-national unity and sovereignty that internal and external enemies cannot break. He is quoted as further saying that celebrating Flag Day is an affirmation of our resilience through historical ups and downs and a declaration that we have transitioned our firm stand for national prosperity and sustainable development to a bright era of ascension.



*The President and the Representatives during the celebration ceremony;*



# Bridge Observational Insights Regarding the parliamentarians' representative works

## Being a Parliamentarian

**S**ince the beginning of the modern democratic system building, the Houses of Representatives have served as the institutional manifestation of representative democracy. Scholarly works on the subject cite that the core function of representation has been shaped by historical, political, and social changes, demonstrating significant evolution over time. From ancient advisory councils to modern legislative bodies, the mediating role of parliaments in connecting citizens with the government has expanded.

The scholarly works mention that the concept of representation was initially based on a context where elected officials worked on behalf of citizens' interests and direct voter-representative interaction was limited. In recent decades, this interaction has transitioned to become more dynamic and participatory. Subsequently, voters have come to expect their representatives to be accessible, responsive, and accountable, not only during election periods but throughout their tenure.

The institutional form of the House of Representatives, which has undergone this process, shares fundamental similarities despite the conceptual differences in democratic philosophy and the historical institutional characteristics of any given country. The primary reasons for establishing Houses of Representatives are considered to be; enacting laws deemed beneficial to the country, monitoring and controlling the Executive body to ensure it properly implements the enacted laws and policies, and, beyond legally affirming the representative role of its members, creating direct interaction processes with their constituents and translating that interaction into a means of checking the Executive.

While the institutional appearance of the parliament has undergone this institutional evolution, the representative functions it performs are determined by certain procedural differences from country to country. These are referred to in scholarly works as forms of representation implementation. The first form is called direct participation. Writers who cite the British Parliament as an example mention that representatives in such countries have an obligation to establish offices in their electoral areas to perform their representative duties. They also set up regular public consultation sessions to hear citizens' grievances. The second primary example cited is the type seen in systems that implement a proportional electoral system, which scholars point out, is mainly based on the party structure. In countries with this type of proportional representation system, the role of engaging citizen voters often falls on party structures rather than on the personal involvement of the representatives. Nonetheless, even though the institutional form reflects these kinds of differences, the tendency to shift toward a more direct and meaningful interaction between representatives and the public is believed to be a global trend.

## To Ethiopia: The HoPR's

The process of constructing the Ethiopian House of Representatives, which has seen three regimes, has clearly crossed many stages to take its current form. It began with an effort to modernize the Imperial system, and then took a decade to establish the strict, top-down Socialist system of the Derg regime. The current House, following the start of Federalism in 1987, has taken its present shape by passing through various reform frameworks.

The current House of Peoples' Representatives, although the ruling Prosperity Party holds the majority of seats, also includes a few members from opposition parties. This House, established after the sixth national election, has 481 seats occupied out of the total 547 seats. This numerical difference is known to be attributed to the complete absence of elections in the Tigray Region and the lack of elections in some constituencies in Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, and other regions. Nonetheless, the House's information shows that it includes elected representatives from various opposition parties, ranging from the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (Ezema) to the Gedeo People's Democratic Organization (GPDO); and from the Kucha People's Democratic Party (KDPD) to the Gumuz Peoples' Democratic Movement (GPDM) and the Boro Democratic Party (BDP). The House, comprising 279 male and 201 female representatives, assigns each representative the constitutional responsibility of representing at least two hundred thousand citizens. This means that each representative is tasked with the heavy responsibility of not only listening to the questions, grievances, and aspirations for good governance of this large number of citizens but also monitoring the resolution and implementation of those grievances.

## Aspects of the Representation

When we attempt to view public representation, which is the subject of our October issue, within this context, we find a few institutional aspects. Article 54, Sub-Article 4 of the Constitution mandates that representatives are expected to be subject to the Constitution, the people, and their conscience. It is clear that the typical way for representatives to fulfill these three heavy responsibilities is through public representation. It seems important for us to examine the institutional framework through which they implement this responsibility to get the full picture.

According to the rules of procedure of the Ethiopian House of Representatives, after representatives meet with their constituents for their representative work, a systemic regulation is in place for them to submit any legal issues raised by their constituents to the House. For this representative work, which is carried out twice a year, the representatives are expected to coordinate with regional or zonal liaison bodies in the constituencies they visit beforehand to organize their voter-representative forums. Every representative is obligated to prepare a detailed report for the relevant body of the House after physically meeting with their constituents. This report is extremely vital for ensuring the accountability and transparency of public representation.

According to the House's rules of procedure, the representative preparing the report must include detailed information on the voter-representative forums, specifically the name of the polling station, the number of voters present at the forum, and the main questions and comments raised by the participating citizens. Furthermore, the representative is explicitly required to include their own general observations regarding the conducted representative work, the methodology used to engage the public in discussion, the main themes that emerged from the discussions and the challenges and solutions encountered during the representative work. Beyond this, if money or materials were allocated for the public representation work, the representative concerned is expected to include a detailed breakdown of the utilization of the allocated resources in the report. After this report, prepared following the representative work, is submitted to the relevant House team, the receiving body is expected to aggregate the information received, identify key issues that should be presented to the House, and submit a consolidated report to the Speaker. If such a report includes matters under the jurisdiction of a regional government, the representative is responsible for sharing an abstract of the information with the relevant local or regional administration. The House Speaker and the three Government Whips in the House are expected to facilitate a process that enables representatives to separate grievances and good governance questions that concern the federal government's responsibility from those that can be addressed at the regional or local administration level, and to follow up on the provision of responses.

According to numerical data the magazine received from the House regarding the representative work carried out in the brief manner we have mentioned, the representative work conducted by the representatives in the month of February 2017 alone reached 62 percent success. A survey of the representative work carried out in the months of August, August/September, and October, as per the regulation, shows that the implementation of the representative work is close to 85 percent. This representative function,

which is fundamentally beneficial for ensuring that all institutions in the country use their governmental responsibilities fairly, and primarily for monitoring the uncompromised implementation of the constitutional rights granted to the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia, has shown both commendable results and observed gaps that can be improved upon.

## What Was Achieved?

Bridge, after collecting information from the records of the House of Peoples' Representatives and other direct and secondary sources concerning this matter, has recognized that various successful outcomes were observed in the representative work. We will mention the main ones as examples:-

- We believe it should be considered a remarkable success that the representatives were able to hear the voices of citizens in virtually all regions and the two city administrations, with the exception of the Tigray Region, where the 2013 election was not conducted.
- It has been observed that the process through which questions of concern raised by voters during the representation discussions are conveyed to the Federal government and the relevant federal and regional institutions has been improving over time, and that a large number of grievances have been addressed and answered.
- According to the Bridge survey, the fact that most of the voter-representative forums were held jointly with regional, zonal, and woreda officials and members of the respective local councils is a strength that deserves mention; this is because such forums undoubtedly play a huge role, not only in forging a strong shared vision between the Federal government and regional governments in terms of creating a single political-economic community but also in the gradual strengthening of the democratic institutions of the Federation.

- In the context of the wide-ranging national projects the country has undertaken, the information we have gathered indicates that local citizens raised issues they consider to be of close concern to them at various representation forums. As these questions reach the Federal government and the relevant institutions, this truly stands out as a strong point of the representatives' function, as it is conducive to instilling a public sense of ownership in the colossal projects and monitoring their implementation metrics.
- Bridge has recognized that the citizens' comments and questions observed during the hundreds of public representation sessions, especially the broader voter-representative forums held in the month of August/September, provide the representatives with convenient assessment criteria for monitoring the executive bodies. From this perspective, this should be cited as a remarkable positive outcome of the representatives' oversight function.
- Bridge's short survey indicates that during many of the public representation sessions, some of the voters' questions stemmed from a lack of proper understanding of the government's current priority policies and development directions. In this regard, representatives were observed using the forums to properly explain such issues; this is a commendable and notable outcome of the representative work that should be encouraged.

## **Gaps and Bridge's Recommendations**

Although the public representative work of the Ethiopian representatives in the previous year had the notable results we briefly mentioned above, there were also observed gaps that require additional work. We believe that examining these challenges that we consider in need of solutions, along with tangible solutions from our institution, will ease the remaining work of the House. By way of example:-

- Non-Participation of Some Representatives: - Even the draft five-year strategic plan document of the HoPR mentions that some representatives were observed not carrying out their public representation duties for various reasons. Given that the number of people they represent is no less than 200,000, as we mentioned earlier, the denial of a forum for this number of voters to voice their concerns can be considered a gap in implementation. Therefore, we believe that if the House was to take corrective action based on its rules of procedure and directives against representatives who demonstrated such conduct, the representative work would show even better results.

- **Insufficient Follow-up on Public Questions:-** We observed in the public representation work conducted last year that the questions raised by constituents mainly stemmed from localized good governance deficits, particularly the rising cost of living driven by inflation, the failure to complete infrastructure projects within the set deadline, and minor, though scattered, disruptions to peace. To solve these public questions, the representatives need to conduct strong oversight on the relevant institutions to ensure whether the questions rose in the month of February were resolved in August-October. Bridge wishes to call on the representatives to carry out more continuous follow-up on this subject, as it will facilitate the resolution of the problems, and urges the relevant House bodies to further strengthen their support for the solution.
- **Limited Utilization of Communication Tools:** - The public representation work of the representatives is known to be the cornerstone of the House's accountability. In this regard, the ways in which representatives connect with their constituents appear to have gaps, at least partially. This means that it is not possible to claim that the representatives fully utilized all available communication options, from telephone to fax and social media networks, for their representation work. While this constraint may not make the House different from other institutions in the country, it certainly hampered the representatives' work to some extent. Therefore, Bridge's opinion is that the House would benefit greatly by collaborating with the relevant federal and regional institutions to further improve these types of voter-representative communication options and push for the use of new technological advancements.
- **Leveraging the House's New Media Outlet:** - One of the commendable achievements of the Ethiopian House of Representatives this year is the establishment of its own television station. Previously, public representa-

tion activities were publicized through news reportage on the House's social media platforms. However, the presence of this station now creates a good opportunity to broadcast public representation work through this media option. Bridge wishes to pose the question of whether this process should be considered a crucial monitoring option, allowing the public to follow the questions they raise, and the efforts made by the executive body and the relevant regional institutions to hear and resolve the grievances.

- **Addressing Unrepresented Areas:** - As is known, the Tigray Region and other smaller areas did not send their representatives to the House due to the absence of a conducive environment for elections. This compelling situation has prevented citizens in these areas from bringing their requests; whether they seek answers from the Federal government or their local administrations to the House forums. Therefore, even though the next election is expected to be held this year, Bridge wishes to remind the relevant House bodies that the benefit is immense if they urgently consider a mechanism for the voices of these areas to be heard by the remaining representatives in the months leading up to that time.
- **Improving Participation of Marginalized Groups:** - The House's internal and external studies conducted on the public representation work of Ethiopian representatives' mention that the participation of women and especially persons with disabilities in the voter-representative forums is a small gap that needs improvement. Bridge wants to remind the representatives and the relevant internal House institutions to think seriously about this, as even this small effort contributes greatly to the inclusivity of the national democratic institution building.

## As a Concluding remarks

The currently serving 6th House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE has implemented better public representation work compared to the previous five Houses. While there are a few areas that representatives could not reach due to reasons beyond the House's capacity, the fact that public representation work was carried out in virtually all regions of the Federation, including in the months of February, August, September, and October, is a notable achievement.

Nevertheless, since the ultimate purpose of representation is the public representation function, if the few gaps mentioned above can be addressed in the subsequent representative activities of this House, the representation will be even more successful. Beyond that, it is expected that conducting extensive studies that compare the questions and problem-solving suggestions raised by the constituents during the representative work across different regions will be of great benefit, especially for policymakers and the Executive branch. Furthermore, it must be remembered that if the representatives' continuous and uninterrupted oversight of the Executive is further strengthened, the benefit for the building of the democratic system will be significant.

### *The Denotation of “Enderasie” (እንደሸ)*

The term “Enderasie” is a conceptual expression that holds significant weight in Ethiopia’s ancient and modern political discourse and constitutional history. The etymology and denotation of the word, in a general sense, had/have the following meanings:-

The expression is derived from the combination of two words: “Ende” (እንደ) and “Rasse” (ራሱ). “Ende” signifies likeness, stead, or substitute; “Rasse” reflects the self-calling identity or the owner and when denoted, it reflects the authority. In its connotation, it is said to mean “as me” or “being me.” When referencing its title in Ethiopian constitutional history, the term “Enderasie” had different socio-political interpretations across various eras; to wit: -

A. The Representative of the Emperor (Regent): During the monarchical era, if the emperor was unable to lead the state for any reason (not coming of age, illness, or other reasons), the person granted full authority to administer the country was called “Bitwod-Enderasie.”

B. Regional or Provincial Governor: Since the Emperor could not be present in every province personally at all times, the representatives who judged and administered in his name were called “Enderasie”; this grants the full representation of the King.

C. Representation of the People: Since the advent of the first Ethiopian Constitution, however, the word took on a new denotation. The people began to call the persons they elected to deliberate and make decisions in their stead in the council “People’s Enderasies” (Representatives). The denotation of this gave it the meaning of “one who works as the people,” “image of the people,” or “representative of the people.”

Today, it is used interchangeably with the word “Representative” (as in the beginning of Western parliamentary history). However, the word “Enderasie” holds a political and socio-cultural denotation of gravity that goes beyond representation, carrying the full honor and identity-based association of the body it represents.

### *The Bridge Denotation*

Our institution, Bridge, has utilized this word by denoting it from the past to the present era while maintaining the rules of Amharic grammar. Let us first cite what the noted scholars have established: Desta Tekle Wold defined “Enderasie” as “being me, one who works holding my authority”; Kidane Wold Kifle described it as “standing in the stead, in the substitute”; Tesemma Habte Michael Gitsew, in turn, gave it the definitions of “alternate, representative, plenipotentiary.” Even Mahteme Selassie Wolde Meskel raised that when a person appears not in their own name but in the name of another to perform legal acts, they are called “Enderasie.” As these references show, while the word was initially used only for the representatives of kings, its later application to representatives of the people served to express the supremacy of the people; furthermore, it provides the denotation that the representative appears as the people and is called as the people.

In this context, when we say “Enderasie”: on one hand, we have denoted it in alignment with the constitutional principle of ‘self-determination’ upon which the Ethiopian Federation stands, regarding the word “Ras” (Self). This means we have used a denotative translation to solve the “Rasie” within “Enderasie” through the nations, nationalities and peoples encompassed by the meaning of “Ras” in this principle. Beyond that, just as the elector in the former era was the emperor, in this era of ours, it is the people; therefore, note that when we say “Enderasie,” we use the definition:- one who becomes like the electing people, nation, or nationality. When we align it with the modern electoral system, the individual elector sends the Enderasie to the council to decide on the affairs of their life, saying, ‘speak with my lips, sit on my throne.’ It asserts that if the elected is not as the self to the elector, the elector can strip away their likeness of me (aka the representation).

The expression “Enderasie”:- although Amharic, the national language of the time, was the only working language of the council when the first Ethiopian Council of Enderasies was established; note that the expression is found within the other languages of the nations and nationalities of our country; for example: in Sidama—amaalete mina, in Afaan Oromo—Bakka bu’aa, in Tigrinya—kemay, in Wolayta—Kal Atiya/Taga ton.

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