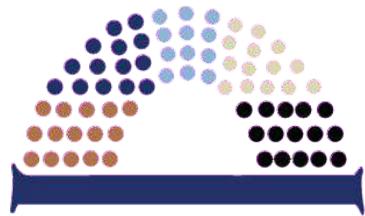




**ETHIOPIAN
PARLIAMENTARY DIGEST**

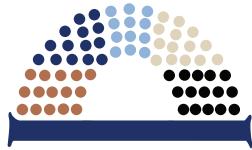


ENDERASIE

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BRIDGE Profile

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.



Mission

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.
- ① Innovation: Pioneering creative and adaptive solutions for governance and peace challenges.
- ① Trust: Upholding credibility through transparent and reliable analysis



Objectives

It aims to strengthen legislative institutions in federal and local parliaments in Ethiopia and the IGAD region by:

- ① Conducting evidence-based research.
- ① Providing capacity-building support to enhance the performance of parliamentarians.
- ① Monitoring parliamentary activities to ensure accountability and effectiveness.



+251 911 86 12 34



+251 115 57 74 96



research@bridge-et.org



<https://bridge-et.org/>



150096, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



Kazanchis, across the main gate of
UNECA, SA Building, 9th Floor, Office
No. 5, Addis Ababa.



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Ethiopian Representatives in December

The House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia performed its various constitutional responsibilities in the month of December. Among these primary responsibilities, enacting laws, listening to reports of executive bodies, parliamentary diplomacy, visiting federal institutions and conducting field visits are the major activities of the House for the month. Additionally, calling three federal ministers to the hall, it raised questions on subject matters it deemed required explanation and listened to the ministers' responses; it also listened to the historic speech of the Prime Minister of India. This eleventh edition of Bridge is thus consolidated by including these December stays of the House, adding a review prepared based on the speech of the Prime Minister of India and the Ethio-India relation thereof.



*All dates are in the Ethiopian calendar.

6th House of Peoples' Representatives in the 5th Year of Tenure

5th Regular Meeting

Approving the Plant Protection and Quarantine Draft Proclamation

7th Regular Meeting

Listening to the explanation of the Minister of Justice

December
7

December
14

December
21

December
23

December
27

4th Regular Meeting

Listening to the explanation of the Minister of Transport and Logistics

6th Regular Meeting

Approving the Ecosystem Services Draft Proclamation and listening to the explanation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

8th Regular Meeting

Approving appointments

The Legislative Activities of the House



The House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia, while approving two proclamations in the month of December, had no draft laws that it referred to its standing committees. Even so, it conducted one explanatory forum regarding one draft proclamation.

Ratified Laws

The first draft proclamation approved by the House of Peoples' Representatives in the month of December was the Plant Protection and Quarantine draft proclamation. The Chairperson of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Solomon Lale, presented the report and resolution prepared by the standing committee regarding the draft proclamation and it was stated that he noted the draft proclamation creates a platform to perform efficient and effective work synchronized with the international community by following the rapidly improving and changing international plant protection and quarantine standards and procedures from time to time. The Chairperson added and mentioned that it has a framework enabling the conduct of relevant and standardized pest exploration and survey risk analysis and to properly control incoming and outgoing plants, plant products, and other regulated materials at entry gates. Furthermore, he explained that it has great significance in terms of ensuring economic and social benefits by increasing productivity and product quality through the establishment of a modern pest prevention and control system. The representatives also raised several questions regarding whether there is a prevention method set by the proclamation to prevent pests entering with plants via air and land without a permit or in an illegal manner, and the reason why it was stated only as pests while there are situations where not only pests but also weeds enter with plants and plant products, and it was indicated by information obtained from the House that responses were given by the standing committee chairperson. Finally, the representatives approved this same draft proclamation unanimously as Proclamation Number 1400/2018.



The Chairperson of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Solomon Lale;

The second proclamation approved by the representatives in this same month was the draft proclamation presented to them regarding the Ecosystem Services Payment, and regarding the necessity of the proclamation, the report and resolution prepared jointly by the Water, Irrigation, Lowland Areas and Environment Development and the Plan, Budget and Finance Affairs Standing Committees were presented by the chairperson of the former standing committee, the Honorable Mrs. Fetiya Ahmed. It was reported that it was mentioned in the resolution that the starting reason for the issuance of the proclamation was not only that ecosystems are being used in a way whose sustainability is not guaranteed and are depleting beyond what they can naturally recover, but also the growth of scientific understanding created on the value of ecosystem services in different parts of the world. Therefore, it was stated that the Honorable Mrs. Fetiya explained it is a draft proclamation prepared because it is necessary to establish a legal framework and operational systems for ecosystem service payments that enable the sustainable management of ecosystem.

The members of the House, for their part, presented comments regarding the necessity of the proclamation, and the information from the House mentioned that they presented ideas they said focus should be placed on regarding future implementation. Finally, the House approved the draft proclamation presented to it as Proclamation Number 1401/2018 with one abstention and by a majority vote.



The Chairperson of the Water, Irrigation, Lowland Areas and Environment Development Standing Committee, the Honorable Mrs. Fetiya Ahmed, while presenting the resolution;

Explanatory Forums

The only explanatory forum conducted by the Ethiopian representatives in the month of December, which we have covered in this edition, was regarding the International Legal Cooperation draft proclamations, as indicated by the information we obtained. It was stated that it was the Legal and Justice Affairs Standing Committee of the House that conducted this explanatory forum, and the proclamation agreements are the cooperations Ethiopia made with China, Brazil, and South Africa to transfer prisoners and, similarly, the Criminal Matters Joint Legal Cooperation draft proclamations made between the governments of Ethiopia and China. It was stated that the Madam chair of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Mrs. Etsegenet Mengistu, said the significance of these draft proclamations is beyond preventing crime, and explained that since it is the BRICS member countries signing the bilateral agreement, the proclamations would

strengthen many economic, political, and strategic cooperations. The Madam chair, who pointed out that these are agreements made to execute the decisions made by countries that hand over prisoners, except for criminals sentenced to death, in their own country, stated that there is no legal basis to decide a new decision outside the agreement of the two countries or to increase or decrease the punishment. The information mentioned that she said this would enable the families of the prisoners to visit them, allow them to eat according to their country's dietary conditions, and prevent them from facing abuses related to language and other issues. For his part, the State Minister of the Ministry of Justice, Belayhun Yirga, who was present at the explanatory forum, indicated that these would be agreements through which countries protect their country's interests on both sides based on the principle of give and take. It was heard that the State Minister said international agreements do not allow the handing over of political criminals, but stated that if it is related to terrorism, it is possible to transfer them according to the agreements. According to the information from the House, it was stated that members of the standing committee and legal experts of the House raised questions and comments on the draft proclamations and a wide discussion was held on them.



The Chairperson of the Legal and Justice Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Mrs. Etsegenet Mengistu and the State Minister of the Ministry of Justice, Belayhun Yirga;

Oversight of Executive Bodies

Oversight of executive bodies is one of the primary tasks of the representatives of the FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives; in this regard, during the month of December covered in this edition, it called three federal government ministers to the hall and listened to explanations by presenting questions regarding current subject matters it deemed concerning. Beyond this, while evaluating the 2018 budget year performance of five institutions reaching from three to four months, it conducted extensive institutional and field visits.

Institutional Reports

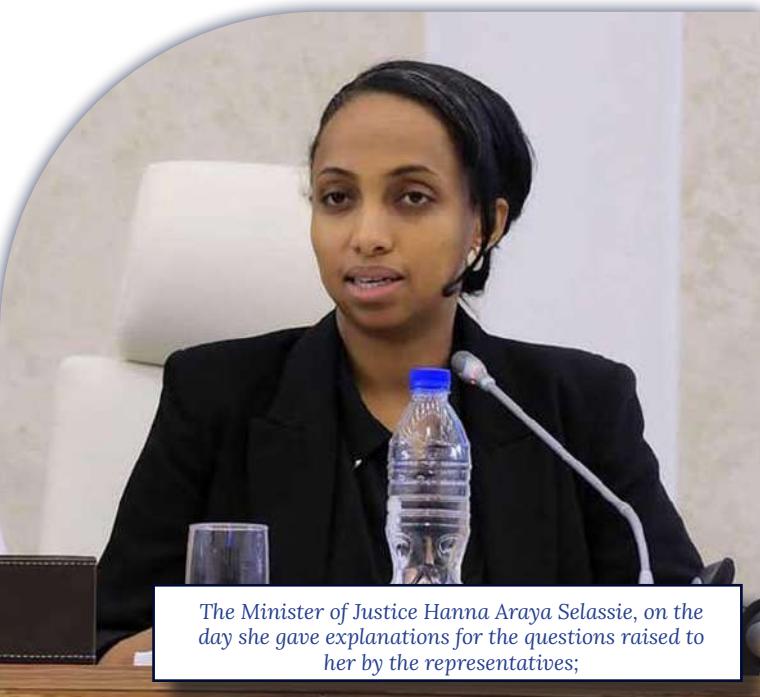
Within the time scale of the month, the one who first reached the House of Representatives and explained after being asked about the current situation of their ministry office was the **Minister of Transport and Logistics**. For the Minister, the Honorable Dr. Alemu Sime, who was present at the 4th regular meeting held on December 7, the representatives raised various questions. Among the questions raised, it was stated that those concerning works being done to reduce accidents, passenger safety and overcharging above the tariff, the work of modernizing the sector with technology, and airline construction works in various areas were the primary ones. Minister Alemu Sime, besides mentioning that works to ensure the competence of drivers and awareness-raising activities are being done to reduce accidents, explained that focused work is being done to further modernize the sector by resolving problems observed in the transport sector. Regarding the airlines that have been started, he stated that the construction of airports in various regions of the country was started by regional governments and investors, and said that the ministry office is providing technical support for their construction to be up to standard. Additionally, Dr. Alemu, who raised that the negative impact of illegal checkpoints on the country's economic growth and universal movement has been evaluated and by conducting control, their number is currently decreasing, said that the work of removing illegal checkpoints will continue in a strengthened manner. The Minister also told the representatives that the new vehicle license plate would solve many problems, including the discriminatory practices being carried out by identification.



The Honorable Dr. Alemu Sime, Minister of Transport and Logistics, while giving his explanation;

Minister of Justice Hanna Araya Selassie, who was present at the 7th Regular Meeting held in the same month, also gave explanations for various questions raised to her by the representatives on that day. The Minister, who was heard saying that work is being done to respect the rights of citizens by ensuring the rule of law, mentioned that reform works have been implemented at every level for this purpose. Regarding the democratic and human rights questions of citizens, Mrs. Hanna, who stated that anybody having a question of rights should present it in a manner that respects the constitution and the laws of the country, explained that where there are matters outside the law, there will be accountability at every level.

In connection with service delivery questions raised regarding justice service delivery and crime-related matters, she pointed out that criminal cases, due to their inherent complexity and the requirement for detailed information and investigation, could take time. Therefore, the information obtained from the House mentioned that she spoke with emphasis that it is appropriate to take into account that criminal and justice matters require detailed information investigation and that the investigation work is performed carefully by taking time



The Minister of Justice Hanna Araya Selassie, on the day she gave explanations for the questions raised to her by the representatives;

In this same month of December, the third to appear before the House of Peoples' Representatives was the **Minister of Foreign Affairs**, Dr. Gedion Timotheos; questions ranging from public diplomacy to consular office services, and from sea outlets to the Port of Assab were raised to him by the representatives, and he explained his government's position extensively. Regarding public diplomacy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, noting that various works are being performed in coordination with other institutions, stated that in the past five months, 1,300 citizens

who were in difficult conditions in Myanmar were made to return to their country. The Minister, who was heard speaking emphatically that the Medemer government has a committed stance for citizens to work abroad with their rights and dignity protected, told the representatives that through the high level of follow-up made by the Ethiopian government, in the past five months alone, in addition to Myanmar, it made 26,000 citizens who were in Saudi Arabia return to their country. Dr. Gedion, who urged that citizens should refrain from illegal travels that are life-threatening, explained that work is being done in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and Skills so that Ethiopians can go abroad and work in a legal manner. Particularly, it was indicated that diplomats who follow up on citizens have been assigned to consulates located in Arab countries and close follow-up is being conducted.

Regarding the question raised to him by the representatives on the issue of the sea outlet, Minister Gedion, noting that the sea outlet question Ethiopia presented is not only a question of the government or of a single party but a question of generations with a cross-generational goal, explained that various Ethiopians and persons of Ethiopian descent, including the ministry office, are performing extensive work to ensure Ethiopia's ownership of a sea outlet. Dr. Gedion, who added and mentioned that the activities being performed by Ethiopian embassies located in various countries to achieve the country's sea outlet desire are encouraging, indicated that every citizen should fulfill the responsibility expected of them in the diplomatic effort being made to protect Ethiopia's national interest in the future.



The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Gedion Timotheos, on the day he gave his explanation;

In the past month of December, beyond the three ministers, when evaluating the 2018 budget year performance of other federal institutions, the House of Representatives first evaluated the first-quarter plan performance report of the Ethiopian Construction Authority for the 2018 budget year. The report was evaluated by the Urban Infrastructure and Transport Affairs Standing Committee of the House, and it was stated that the committee chairperson, the Honorable Professor Mohammed Abdu, gave direction that the Authority must focus on resolving problems observed in project performance based on research. The chairperson, who stated that the capacity of contractors and consultants must be increased to improve project performance, indicated that the change seen in the National Theatre project should be reflected in other projects as well. For his part, the deputy chairperson of the standing committee, the Honorable Dr. Es-hetu Temesgen, was noted urging that work must be strengthened on infrastructure safety to protect public and government resources from waste in the construction sector. The Director General of the Ethiopian Construction Authority, Dr. Mesfin Negewo, explained to the members of the standing committee that the Authority office planned to conduct oversight on 300 projects during the budget year and is working by dividing them quarterly, and that feedback is being given by conducting monitoring and oversight on projects. Information from the House shows that he further explained that, in terms of ensuring accountability in the performance of university projects, measures centered on the executive capacity of the relevant bodies have been taken.



Members of the Urban Infrastructure and Transport Affairs Standing Committee, while listening to the report of the Construction Authority;

The second institution to present its three-month performance report for this budget year during the month was the National Election Board of Ethiopia, and it was stated that the institution's report was evaluated by the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The Chairperson of the Board, Mrs. Melatwork Hailelu, presented the Board's quarterly performance report and the preparatory activities for the 7th general election to the standing committee; it was stated that the Chairperson of the standing committee, the Honorable Ewnetu Alene, noted that the preparations the Board is making for the next general election are encouraging.

Beyond this, the Chairperson, who urged that the works started to conduct voter and candidate registration in a digitalized manner should continue in a strengthened way, stressed that the security and efficiency of the developed technologies must be tested. For her part, the deputy chairperson of the standing committee, the Honorable Azmera Andemo, indicated that the activities performed by the National Election Board to achieve the next national election are promising.

It was stated that the Chairperson of the Board, Mrs. Melatwork Hailu, informed the standing committee that work has been done to organize additional election offices and strengthen them with human resources, that candidate and voter registration will be aided by technology in constituencies and stations where complete infrastructure is fulfilled, that the general election procedure schedule has been made public, and that the voting day will be May 24. Mrs. Melatwork, who explained that works are being done to conduct voter and candidate registration with the help of software developed by the Board, noted that this trial will expand throughout the country.



The Chairperson of the National Election Board of Ethiopia, Mrs. Melatwork Hailu, while presenting her institution's report;

The discussion forum where the House Plan, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee evaluated the four-month plan performance report of the Ministry of Revenues and the Customs Commission for the 2018 budget year was another of the month's executive oversight activities. In his opening remarks, the Chairper-

son of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Desalegn Wedaje, indicated that the discussion forum was organized based on the responsibility to conduct monitoring and oversight granted by the constitution, and opened the floor for the Minister of Revenues, Mrs. Aynalem Nigussie, to present her office's four-month plan performance report. The Chairperson, the Honorable Desalegn Wedaje, pointed out in his comments that the revenue collection of the Ministry of Revenues and the Customs Commission has been improving over time and emphasized that utilizing technology is essential to prevent tax fraud and contraband and to improve service. The Chairperson added that the offices should work by making the rectification of the Federal Auditor General's audit findings a part of their plan. For his part, the Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Dr. Abraham Alemayehu, stated that because they have achieved good results by incorporating the feedback given by the standing committee every quarter into their plans, this should continue in a strengthened manner. During the presentation of her office's four-month plan performance report, the Minister of Revenues, Aynalem Nigussie, stated that since the revenue plan performance of the 2018 budget year has been improving over time, this year's revenue collection is healthy. Beyond that, it was reported that the Minister said her office's revenue collection has been improving because they worked by making the quarterly feedback from the standing committee and the audit findings of the Federal Auditor General a part of their plan.



The Chairperson of the Plan, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee, Desalegn Wedaje;

One of the executive oversight activities in the month of December was a session where the House Urban Infrastructure and Transport Affairs Standing Committee urged the Ethiopian Roads Administration to design and implement new income-generating strategies to complete road infrastructure projects across the country within their scheduled timeframe and quality standards. During the evaluation of the Ethiopian Roads Administration's first-quarter plan performance report for the 2018 budget year, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Professor Mohammed Abdo, noted that more than 1.3 trillion Birr is required to complete projects currently under construction. Furthermore, the Chairperson emphasized that the institution must conduct research-based work to devise unique income-generating strategies that would help complete road construction projects within five years or less. Recalling that the government allocated 108 billion Birr to the Ethiopian Roads Administration for the current budget year, the Chairperson indicated that if one intends to complete the projects with this

budget capacity in the coming years, it would take at least ten more years. The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Eshetu Temesgen, for his part, urged that the Ethiopian Roads Administration should modernize its institutional operations with technology and follow systems that are free from human touch to help increase project construction performance. The Director General of the Ethiopian Roads Administration, Engineer Mohammed Abdulrahman, explained that security problems in some project construction areas have been a challenge to completing constructions on time. Additionally, the Director General mentioned that a shortage of cash and the failure to pay outstanding compensation payments on time are putting pressure on project construction performance, according to information obtained from the House.



The Director General of the Ethiopian Roads Administration, Engineer Mohammed Abdulrahman, while presenting his institution's report;

Institutional and Field Visits

The House of Representatives, in the aforementioned month, did not only listen to the explanations of the three ministers and evaluate the reports of the stated institutions; through its standing committees, it visited no fewer than twenty institutions. Additionally, regions ranging from Gambella to Dire Dawa, Oromia to Sidama, and Harar to Central Ethiopia and Benishangul-Gumuz were among those selected for field visits this month.

Institutional Visits

The Ministry of Labor and Skills, which was visited in mid-December by the House Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs Standing Committee, serves as one example of the institutions visited. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, raised points regarding the relationship and coordination between the institution's leadership and staff, as well as the joint evaluation of plans and reports and the setting of future directions. He stated that the visit aimed to ensure that citizens going abroad for work do so legally and to confirm that monitoring and support are provided to ensure their safety and benefits in the countries where they work. It was also reported that the Chairperson raised questions about what specific strategies the Ministry has designed to meet the high national demand for job creation.

The Minister of Labor and Skills, the Honorable Muferihat Kamil, stated that the standing committee's visit has made a significant contribution to the oversight and control of the Ministry. The Minister, noting that the Ministry has held consultative forums with regions, accountable institutions, and stakeholders, also pointed out that regarding skills development, the admission of new students for the budget year was conducted based on psychometric assessments. For her part, the Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Betelhem Lakew, indicated that special focus should be given to improving the image of Technical and Vocational Training by consistently implementing summer programs to increase public awareness.



The Minister of Labor and Skills, Muferihat Kamil, during the field visit to her institution;

Another example of a visited institution during the month was the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation; it was stated that the visitor was the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Ewnetu Alene, noted that prior to the reform, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation was an institution that had lost its listeners and viewers and was facing collapse; however, he emphasized that it has now been confirmed that fundamental problems have been resolved and the institution is recording tangible results. Beyond that, he indicated that the institution should further strengthen the work it has started regarding protecting Ethiopia's national interest, strengthening national unity, and promoting a shared narrative.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Azmera Andemo, for her part, stated that the institution is recording changes over time and pointed out that focusing on a common narrative to realize Ethiopia's prosperity is the institution's primary task. For his part, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Binyam Ayero, explained to the standing committee that fruitful changes are being seen due to the reform works carried out to rectify the multifaceted problems that existed in the institution. In turn, the Deputy CEO of the Corporation and Head of the Media Sector, Zelalem Endeshaw, reportedly stated that the institution is working with focus to fulfill its share in the success of national unity, the national narrative, and Ethiopia's prosperity.



Members of the Government Development Organizations Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to the Ethiopian Electric Utility;



The Chairperson of the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Ewnetu Alene;

Ethiopian Electric Utility is another institution that can be cited as an example among those visited this month. The visitors were members of the Government Development Organizations Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives; the committee chairperson, the Honorable Melesse Mena, indicated that the purpose of the field observation was to assess the institution's current status on-site and provide feedback by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and issues requiring attention. According to information from the House, the focus areas included the institution's profitability, the suitability of the working environment for both employees and customers, and the mechanisms for resolving employee concerns through democratic dialogue and the provision of necessary inputs.

The information shows that in the month of December, the representatives also visited the Development Bank of Ethiopia through the House Government Development Organizations Affairs Standing Committee. The member of the standing committee and leader of the observation team, the Honorable Iyasu Sala, stated during their observation that the Development Bank of Ethiopia continues to contribute multi-faceted work to the country, as it always has. It was stated that the standing committee visited two factories supported by the bank and held discussions with the heads of the Batu branch. Relatedly, the standing committee visited the Batu branch of the Development Bank of Ethiopia and held separate discussions with the branch's employees and management. The institution's employees reportedly presented various challenges regarding transfers, auditing procedures, promotions, and asset disposal to the standing committee. The observation team leader, the Honorable Iyasu Sala, reportedly noted as a strength that, according to the report presented by the branch, there are no non-performing loans. On the other hand, Honorable Iyasu stated that the macroeconomic reform has clarified the procurement system and, accordingly, indicated that the branch must review its procurement and asset disposal system.



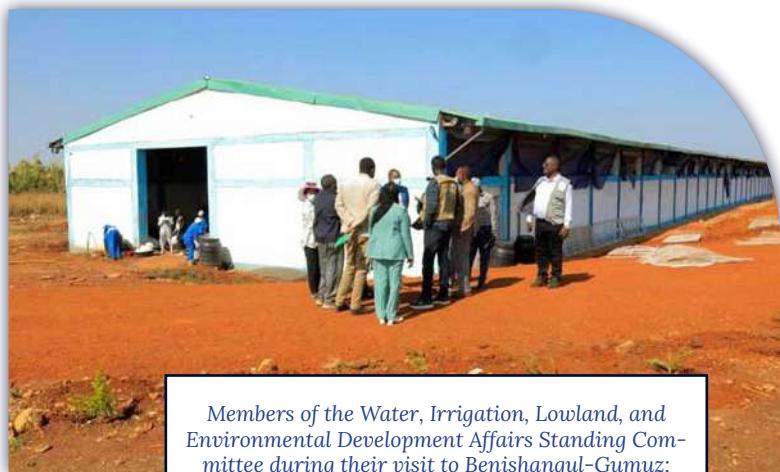
Members of the Government Development Organizations Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to the Development Bank of Ethiopia;



Members of the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee, while visiting the Hurso Military Training School;

The final example among the institutions visited during the month is the **Hurso Contingent Military Training School**, which was visited by the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Representatives. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, stated that the purpose of the field observation was to observe the teaching and training process being carried out by the school to produce competent members of the defense forces capable of protecting the country and the constitutional order from invading forces and anti-peace groups. For his part, the Commandant of the school, Brigadier General Adisu Terfasa, stated that the school is competently training peacekeepers who safeguard the peace and unity of the country and are deployed in various international peacekeeping missions. The General added that, based on modern technological knowledge, the school is providing practical training to numerous officer candidates. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima, indicated that the military school should continue to strengthen its coordinated operation with regional and city administration security and safety bodies. It was also noted by Brigadier General Adisu Terfasa that, alongside its primary mission, the school has been able to benefit the local community by assisting in agricultural work, road construction, supporting students, crop harvesting, and similar charitable activities.

The **Benishangul-Gumuz** Region was the first among the regions to receive a field observation by the Ethiopian representatives in the month of December. It was stated that members of the Water, Irrigation, Lowland, and Environmental Development Affairs Standing Committee of the House were the ones who traveled to the region. The Honorable Engineer Ibsa Yusuf, a member of the standing committee and coordinator of the field visit, emphasized that the visit serves to verify on the ground what the presented plan performances actually look like and their progress. The Speaker of the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional Council, the Honorable Askal Albero, reportedly stated that the monitoring and oversight work being carried out by the standing committee's field visit to objectively evaluate the region's path toward the expected reforms contributes significantly to the fundamental progress of the region.



Members of the Water, Irrigation, Lowland, and Environmental Development Affairs Standing Committee during their visit to Benishangul-Gumuz;

Ethiopia's border region, Gambella, was also a showcase of the month among the regions visited by the representatives. The Industry and Mineral Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Peoples' Representatives, which arrived in the region, observed the work activities of associations engaged in special small-scale and traditional gold production in the Abobo Woreda of the region. It was reported that how gold is produced in traditional and modern ways, what the legality of the marketing process looks like, as well as community service and the rehabilitation of land damaged by excavation, were the points of focus during the field observation. Accordingly, the standing committee, noting that the fact that special small-scale gold-producing associations in particular are delivering the gold they produce to the National Bank is seen as a strength, stated that the issue of rehabilitating land damaged by excavation and increasing production capacity should be given attention. The Woreda leadership, for their part, reportedly explained to the standing committee members that they are performing activities to prevent contraband and are working with focus on making the organizations rehabilitate the damaged land. Information obtained from the House indicates they further explained that continuous awareness work is being done so that the associations deliver their products to the National Bank.



Central Ethiopia Region was another of the regions where field visits were conducted in this same month of December, and it was heard that those who arrived in that new region of the Federation were members of the Urban, Infrastructure, and Transport Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The observation began with an introductory discussion held with the chairpersons of the regional council's standing committees and regional officials; it was stated that the standing committee toured and observed infrastructure, corridor, and transport service works performed in the regional seats of Hossana, Wolkite, and Butajira, as well as in Wora-be, the seat of the Silte Zone. It was stated that the standing committee gave feedback to each of the four cities regarding the field observation works conducted, and at the end of the field observation, it emphasized that the regional leadership should identify and work on focal areas. The coordinator of the standing committee, the Honorable Mrs. Talef Fetawq, who presented a summary report by identifying the strengths and weaknesses seen during the field observation, reportedly provided solution directions by analyzing issues that require future attention and should be resolved at the federal level. It was also reported that the Deputy Speaker of the region, the Honorable Mrs. Menete Mundino, stated that there should be an equitable supply of fuel between regions, as it otherwise becomes a source for price inflation and contraband trade.



Members of the Urban, Infrastructure, and Transport Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to the Central Ethiopia Region;

The FDRE representatives, through their Trade and Tourism Affairs Standing Committee, also arrived in the Oromia Region for a field visit. It was heard that the standing committee visited the Jimma Museum and toured historical utensils, traditional clothing, as well as the Palace of Jimma Abba Jifar and the Afortoma Mosque of Jimma city to confirm that they are being renovated while maintaining their heritage. During the visit, the standing committee reportedly noted that there has been works done to promote the region's potential resources and to expand their competitiveness in attracting both domestic and foreign tourists. It was stated that the standing committee observed work activities in the trade, tourism, and investment sectors in the Buno Bedele Zone and emphasized that work should be focused on promoting the area. The coordinator of the field team, the Honorable Mrs. Mulu Yirga, reportedly cited as a strength that investors who have invested in the zone have fulfilled their social responsibilities regarding technology and knowledge transfer as well as job creation, and have been able to generate foreign exchange; she further stated that it is necessary to encourage these results to ensure their continuity.



Members of the Trade and Tourism Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to Oromia;

Among the city administrations visited by the representatives in the month of December was Dire Dawa, and it was stated that those who traveled to that city administration were members of the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The member of the standing committee and coordinator of the field team, the Honorable Mrs. Zara Biftu, reportedly ex-

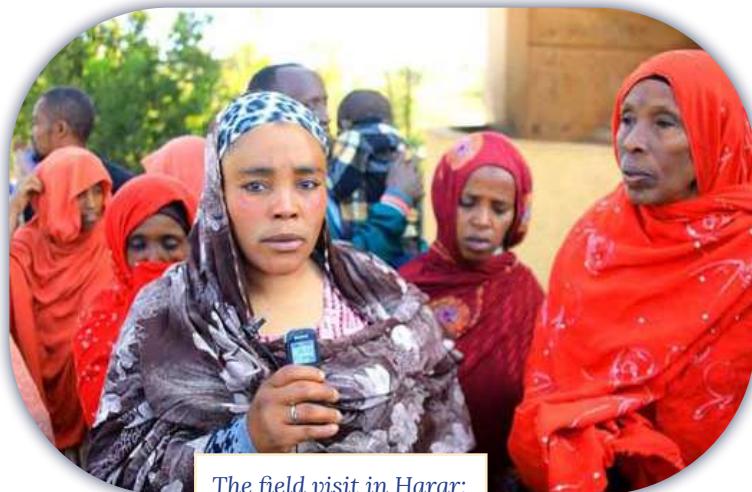
plained that, in addition to report evaluation, the observation aimed to identify the challenges being faced by democratic institutions and provide solutions by personally being present on-site to evaluate whether the performed works were carried out according to the plan. For his part, the Speaker of the Dire Dawa Administration Council, the Honorable Abdi Muktar, was reported to have stated that the administration would provide the necessary support so that the standing committee could achieve its intended objective in its field observation; the report obtained from the House cited the field team leader, the Honorable Mrs. Zara Biftu, as saying that the standing committee would provide summary feedback upon concluding the field observation.



Members of the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee, during their field visit to Dire Dawa;

Harari was another region that received its turn for a field visit in the month of December, and it was stated that those who arrived in Harar were members of the Democracy Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The member of the standing committee and coordinator of the field observation team, the Honorable Mrs.

Zara Biftu, explained that the regional government has been providing good support for the past 8 years by receiving and caring for displaced persons; she reportedly cited as a strength that the work the region is doing for over 100 displaced citizens in two condominium buildings is encouraging. It was reported that the Honorable Mrs. Zara also conveyed a message calling for Ethiopians to provide their share of support, noting that because aid organizations have currently cut off support such as food, electricity, and health services, the displaced persons are being exposed to hardship.



The field visit in Harar;

In this edition of Enderasie covering the month of December, members of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee of the House who traveled to the other border region, Afar, reportedly held an introductory discussion with officials from the regional Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Livestock and Fishery Resource Development bureaus. In a message conveyed at the discussion forum, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Solomon Lale, indicated that by evaluating the work performed in the past six months of the 2018 fiscal year, efforts should be made to ensure that strengths continue to be reinforced and issues where limitations are observed are improved. Information from the House indicates the Chairperson further announced that the main focus of the sector is for agricultural activities to ensure food security, create job opportunities for citizens, and increase domestic income and foreign exchange. It was also reported that the standing committee visited a fertilizer warehouse, summer wheat being developed through irrigation, and sunflower and animal fodder fields during its stay.



Members of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to Afar;

Among the regions visited by the representatives this month, the **Amhara Region** is one that cannot be passed over without mention; those who went to the regional seat were members of the Urban, Infrastructure, and Transport Affairs Standing Committee of the House of Representatives. It was stated that they held an introductory discussion with officials from the regional Infrastructure Bureau to observe development works carried out in Bahir Dar city to ensure the community's benefit from development. It was noted that these committee members would verify issues during the field observation, such as seeing and identifying the status of the city's projects; to which significant resources have been allocated; to ensure they are being executed while maintaining quality standards, within their set time and cost, and in a manner free from theft and waste.



Members of the Urban Infrastructure and Transport Affairs Standing Committee, during their visit to Bahir Dar city, the seat of the Amara Region;

Parliamentary Diplomacy



In the month of December, which we have covered in this edition, Ethiopian representatives carried out three acts of parliamentary diplomacy. The first of these parliamentary diplomacies by the representatives took place at the **7th East African Countries Parliamentary Collaboration Summit** held in Addis Ababa. At this summit, which was held to ensure nutrition and food security, the Honorable Tagesse Chafo, Speaker of the House, stated that Ethiopia has achieved tangible results in food security and nutrition through the Bounty of the Basket initiative and summer wheat production.

The Speaker noted that Ethiopia was able to realize this through the economic reforms the government is implementing, and information from the House cited him saying that Ethiopia has managed to lift millions of its citizens out of poverty by ensuring nutrition and food security. The Speaker further mentioned that the House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia will strengthen its oversight and monitoring, as well as its parliamentary diplomacy work, to ensure nutrition and food security.

For her part, the Honorable Meseret Haile, Deputy Government Whip at the House, explained that the government is carrying out multifaceted Bounty of the Basket activities by giving special attention to agricultural tools and mechanization to ensure food security and nutrition, according to the reports. Information from the House also indicated that the Chairperson of the East Af-

can Countries Parliamentary Collaboration, the Honorable Aden Haji Yusuf, stated that East African countries will continue to strengthen the exchange of experiences they have started to ensure nutrition and food security.

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A partial view of the summit;



The Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs, with the Japanese delegation;

The second parliamentary diplomacy conducted during the month was a discussion held between the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs and a **Japanese delegation**. During the discussion, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, recalled that the two countries have a long history of diplomatic, social, and economic relations, and stated that their ties in trade, civilization, and technology are strengthening over time. Honorable Dr. Dima further explained that Ethiopia has performed significant work in attracting foreign investment and emphasized that Japan's involvement in Ethiopia's investment sector should continue to be strengthened. For his part, the leader of the Japanese delegation, the Honorable Endo Toshiyaki, expressed that this type of forum is important for strengthening the long-standing friendship between Ethiopia and Japan in various sectors and elevating it to a better level. He added that, as Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa and is on a path of growth, support will continue for its efforts to secure access to a sea outlet and its journey to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The third act of parliamentary diplomacy by the representatives was the occasion where Speaker Honorable Tagesse Chafo stated that the two Houses would work together to ensure the peace and security of the East African region. The Speaker reportedly made these remarks during a discussion with a delegation led by the Honorable Dileita Mohamed Dileita, **President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti**. Honorable Tagesse explained that the port utilization system followed by the two countries has a significant impact on streamlining the trade services of import and export products. Mentioning that Ethiopia has good relations with neighboring countries, the Speaker added that the councils of the two countries must work focus on strengthening their participation in IGAD. For his part, the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti, Dileita Mohamed Dileita, noted that the two countries have a long-standing historical relationship and stated that the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti will work in cooperation with the House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE to sustainably maintain peace in East Africa.



Speaker Honorable Tagesse Chafo, while speaking with the Djiboutian delegation;

The Representatives' Visit

A visit made to Ambo city by senior leadership of the House, members, and senior leadership of the Secretariat, including the Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of the FDRE, the Honorable Mrs. Lomi Bedo, was another of the House's activities.

It was stated that upon arriving in the city, they were given a grand reception by senior city officials, community elders, Haadha Sinqee, youth, and city residents. Deputy Speaker Lomi Bedo stated that the purpose of the trip was for the senior leadership of the House to personally see the Wenchi-Dendi Eco-Tourism destination, which is one of the works completed in the tourism sector. During their stay, the representatives reportedly visited the Wenchi-Dendi Eco-Tourism village and lodge, which is one of the tourism destinations built under the Dine for Ethiopia project initiated by FDRE Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. As the Deputy Speaker explained at the time, she reportedly noted that the historical sites and natural graces in all areas were not created today. The Honorable Lomi stated that because developing and utilizing these graces requires a unique vision and leadership, we remained without using them despite them living with us for many years; however, she reportedly

said that now, through the initiative and leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, our historical sites and natural graces have been converted into wealth.

Information from the House indicates the Deputy Speaker further explained that these are projects that show how Ethiopia's nature, history, culture, and heritage can be changed from dust to legacy and be put to use. Mrs. Lomi Bedo added that regarding the Kirkos Monastery, which had been closed for over 800 years, our Honorable Prime Minister came in person, saw it, and directed that everything from the guest reception to the tabot sanctuary be built; since it received government support, she stated that the monastery will be open to the local area, all followers of the Christian faith, and visitors in less than a year.



The parliamentary group led by the Deputy Speaker, the Honorable Mrs. Lomi Bedo, during their visit to Ambo;



The Representatives About Themselves

The FDRE representatives concluded the month of December not only by enacting laws or overseeing executive institutions but also by evaluating the five-month performance report of the Women's Caucus Council for the 2018 fiscal year and providing training for the representatives.

The primary activity of the month was the evaluation of the 2018 fiscal year's five-month performance by the Executive of the Women's Caucus in the House of Representatives. It was stated that the Deputy Speaker of the House and Patron of the Elected Women's Caucus, the Honorable Mrs. Lomi Bedo, emphasized the need to enhance leadership capacity to ensure that women in all areas are participants, beneficiaries, and able to fulfill their decision-making roles. It was noted that the Honorable Lomi Bedo stated the Caucus is expected to carry out awareness-raising activities in all regions to establish a system that enables increased women's participation for the 7th national election.

The Deputy Speaker further pointed out that focus should be given to working in all areas to ensure women's involvement in the National Dialogue Commission and to increase their participation in leadership. For her part, the Chairperson of the Health, Social Development, Culture, and Sports Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Mrs. Werksemu Mamo, reportedly indicated that the training provided to female university students lays a foundation for the future successors of the country and should continue to be strengthened.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Elected Women's Caucus, the Honorable Mrs. Alemitu Abebe, who presented the detailed five-month performance report to the executive, noted that the Women's Caucus has been able to perform numerous activities during the fiscal year in terms of fulfilling its mission. It was mentioned that she stated future work will focus on expanding experiences and best practices to enable women in all areas to fulfill their national responsibilities.



The five-month plan performance evaluation of the Women's Caucus Council for the 2018 fiscal year;

In the month of December, awareness-raising training was provided to the standing committee chairpersons, members, and legal professionals within the House of Representatives regarding international cooperation on legal matters. The Minister of Justice, Hanna Arayaselassie, was present at the training, and it was stated that the main points of the session were international cooperation on legal issues, agreements with other countries, extradition, mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, and the transfer of sentenced persons.

The Chairperson of the Legal and Justice Affairs Standing Committee of the House, the Honorable Mrs. Etsegenet Mengistu, reportedly explained that the training provided on international legal cooperation and crime prevention aids in creating clarity regarding the draft ratification proclamations currently being examined by the standing committee. The Madam Chair further explained that the training enables the standing committee to ensure that proposed agreements with China, Brazil, and South Africa meet international standards, allowing citizens in various countries to serve their sentences in their home country and facilitating the extradition of individuals involved in criminal acts through international cooperation.



A partial view of the trainee representatives;

Information obtained from the House indicates that another training session provided to the representatives this month focused on the inclusivity of persons with disabilities. Regarding the training, the Madam Chair of the Health, Social Development, Culture, and Sports Affairs Standing Committee, the Honorable Werkseemu Mamo, stated that Ethiopia is making efforts to resolve obstacles that cause persons with disabilities to be left behind in various aspects of life and to remain in poverty.

It was noted that participants in the training included the Deputy Government Whip in the House, the Honorable Mrs. Meseret Haile, along with chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of standing committees, as well as senior leadership from the Secretariat of the House.



A partial view of the training session held on the inclusivity of persons with disabilities;

Information obtained from the House indicates that the focus of the third training session for the representatives this month was to enable them to ensure that executive institutions incorporate peacebuilding activities as part of their plans when evaluating performance reports.

Speaking on the subject, the Deputy Speaker, the Honorable Mrs. Lomi Bedo, reportedly emphasized that because peace is universal, it has significant implications for human thought, outlook, culture, and values, as well as for natural resource development and conservation, the government's political system, and a stable structural system and operations.

The Deputy Speaker added that sustainable peace can be achieved when citizens' freedom, equality, unity, participation, and inclusivity are strengthened, when the right to free movement is respected, and when service and social utility are ensured. Stating that peace is not something we bring about through desire alone, the Honorable Mrs. Lomi urged that everyone must fulfill all their expected responsibilities to ensure personal and communal peace and to build a great Ethiopia. It was reported that the forum was attended by senior leadership of the House, chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of various standing committees, the Minister of Peace, state ministers, senior officials, speakers of regional councils, and invited guests.



A partial view of the training session;



When Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his address to both Houses, alongside Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, the Honorable Abegazhu Teshager, Speaker of the House of Federation and the Honorable Tadesse Chafo, Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives

The Indian Man's Day

The sixth Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives, with only a few months remaining to complete its term, hosted a unique forum in this month of December that stood out from the sessions held over the past four years. The forum featured the Prime Minister of India; a country nicknamed the Benchmark of Democracy. On December 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived at the House of Representatives and delivered an extensive thirty-minute speech to both federal houses.

In his speech to the members of the House of Federation and the House of Representatives, Modi raised and praised the historical relationship between the two countries. "I feel great joy to be among you; I feel immense pride to be here in Ethiopia, the Land of Lions," Modi said. He noted the cooperation between the two nations, stating, "Today, the people of the Global South, as owners of ancient civilizations, stand together as friends like Ethiopia and India." The Prime Minister was heard saying, "On behalf of 1.4 billion Indians, I offer you my greetings of friendship, goodwill, and brotherhood." He added, "I have been told there is a saying in Ethiopia: 'When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.' In India, we have a saying: 'If hearts unite, they can move mountains.' Indeed, togetherness is strength; cooperation is power."

The Indian Statesman, in this speech delivered in the presence of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, also commented on the strength of the enduring bond between India and Ethiopia. During the session, it was noted that the relationship between these two owners of ancient civilizations has reached a new chapter and transitioned into a strategic partnership. The Prime Minister mentioned that the economic, social, and diplomatic relations between the two countries have grown over the past years, noting that Indian investors are currently investing over 5 billion dollars in the health, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. He also stated that since both countries are influential in their respective continents, they will work together through strategic cooperation for mutual benefit and prosperity.



When Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his address to both Houses;

Stating that the comprehensive cooperation between Ethiopia and India will continue to be strengthened, the Prime Minister expressed his readiness to enhance his country's support. He also noted their preparedness to collaborate on technology transfer, cybersecurity, capacity building, agriculture, education, and health. Highlighting the shared history, heritage, and interests of the two nations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi explained the similarity between the Indian and Ethiopian national anthems, noting that both personify the "country as a mother." Modi added that this is a source of pride and reflects one's responsibility to their nation.

Prime Minister Modi was also awarded the country's highest honor and medal by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

Appointments

The Representatives of the FDRE also approved several appointments during the month of December. It was reported that the motions for the appointments were presented by the Government Chief Whip, the Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige.

The appointees included Her Excellency Mrs. Haymanot Zeleke Workneh as the Director General of the Ethiopian Media Authority and 34 nominees for Federal High Court judges. The Representatives approved the appointment motions presented by the Chief Whip; Resolution No. 3/2018 and Resolution No. 4/2018 respectively; with a unanimous vote for the former and one abstention for the latter.



When the thirty-four High Court judge nominees took their oath of office;



When Mrs. Haymanot Zeleke Workneh, who was appointed as the Director General of the Ethiopian Media Authority, took her oath of office;



A Bridge Survey: Ethiopia, India, and Modi

On December 7, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, made his first official visit to Ethiopia. Following former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Modi became the second Indian Head of State to visit Ethiopia. In addition to being awarded the country's highest honor by Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, he appeared before the House of Peoples' Representatives and delivered an extensive thirty-minute speech.

Since the ratification of the constitution that established the current House of Peoples' Representatives, he has become the second incumbent leader to address the House in person. This December edition of Enderasie has chosen to explore the longstanding relationship between Ethiopia and India, current agreements and key points regarding the Indian statesman.

What did Egypt Say?

The first leader to deliver a speech at the FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives while in office was Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. After signing the Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in Khartoum on March 14, 2007, the President came directly to Addis Ababa and was scheduled to address the House of Representatives on March 16. It is recalled that on that same day, he held bilateral talks with former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn at the Palace. During his speech to the Ethiopian representatives, President el-Sisi touched upon his hopes and concerns regarding the shared use of the Nile River waters.

El-Sisi stated that he understood Ethiopia's development efforts; however, he moved toward a cautionary tone, noting that conflicts must be avoided in the pursuit of utilizing resources and achieving growth. He was heard saying, "Do not forget that your Egyptian brothers have not only a right to development but also a right to life."

In his roughly 15-minute speech, he remarked that the agreement signed prior to his arrival should enable the crossing of differences and unresolved points within the Nile Basin Initiative Framework Agreement; aiming for an inclusive approach that addresses the interests of all basin countries. Raising various regional issues, he warned that the threat he termed the "epidemic of terrorism" was spreading rapidly, stated that further cooperation between countries was needed to curb its impact and then took his leave of the Representatives.

“Accept My Gratitude”

“My joy is immense because this medal of honor has been bestowed upon me by a country that is the owner of ancient history and a glorious civilization, and a symbol of the great freedom struggle of Black people. Behold, accept my gratitude on behalf of the 1.4 billion people of my country.”

This speech was not taken from history books or copied from the pages of a play. It was spoken in the public square of Ethiopia on the evening of December 8. The speaker was the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, whose country is nicknamed the Land of Great Democracy. Modi delivered these words, filled with warm sentiments, during the event where he received Ethiopia's highest honor from the hands of Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

Speaking at that honorable assembly, Dr. Abiy Ahmed was heard saying that the cooperation between Ethiopia and India is a great asset for South-South partnership. In his speech that evening, the Prime Minister stated that the strategic relationship currently established between the two countries is growing and has created a cultural bond between their peoples. He noted that the historical relation-

ship between Ethiopia and India, which has lasted for 1,000 years, has excelled in diplomacy, trade, education and culture, and has now transitioned into a strategic cooperation.

Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's consistent stance regarding the African continent, stated that other friendly nations should also strengthen their partnership in this regard. He said that Ethiopia's development path, which is based on mutual cooperation, originates from Africa, is guided by African thought, and is interpreted by Africa. He added that Ethiopia desires a modern partnership and tangible cooperation with India that respects sovereignty. Emphasizing that the relationship between the two countries must be based on equality, the Prime Minister noted that it should focus on the principles of the Global South alliance.

Describing the strong growth of the Ethiopian economy, Dr. Abiy stated that it showed a 9.2% growth last year and is expected to register a 10.3% growth in the current budget year. Mentioning that 650 Indian companies are engaged in various investment sectors in Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy concluded the dinner banquet hosted for his Indian counterpart by stating that this can be elevated into an even stronger collaboration.

The Significance of the Visit

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted a historic visit to Ethiopia from December 17 to 18, 2018. Beyond highlighting Ethiopia's increasing economic ties, multifaceted development, strategic cooperation, and people-to-people relations within the framework of India's Africa policy, the visit also reaffirmed Ethiopia's status as a primary diplomatic hub on the African continent.

Bridge observes that Modi's visit, moving beyond traditional diplomatic friendship, demonstrates India's growing desire to strengthen its bond with Africa and collectively amplify the voice of the Global South. As Bridge understands it, Modi's two-day stay aimed to bolster bilateral cooperation in several key areas, for example:

- **Strengthening Economic and Investment Ties:** India is one of the leading sources of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ethiopia. It is clear that the visit aimed to increase trade exchange and expand the participation of Indian companies in education, health, manufacturing, and agriculture. Furthermore, a major benefit of the visit was confirming India's financial and professional support for Ethiopia's ongoing Macro-Economic Reforms.
- **Technology Transfer and Capacity Building:** Much has been written about India's advanced experience, particularly in Information Technology and pharmaceutical production. Bridge believes the visit will help accelerate the exchange of experience and technology transfer India provides to help Ethiopia build its digital economy and train its workforce. India's continuous provision of scholarships to many Ethiopian students supports the skilled human development that Ethiopia desperately needs.
- **Alignment on International and Regional Issues:** Ethiopia and India have extensive experience working together on global political and security issues within the African Union and the United Nations. It is worth noting that Modi's visit provided an opportunity for both countries to strengthen their common positions on peace in the Horn of Africa, UN Security Council reform, and the necessity of multilateralism.

Additionally, Bridge believes the significance of the Prime Minister's visit is amplified by Ethiopia's role as the seat of the African Union and its recent BRICS membership. As Ethiopia begins to leave its mark on the activities of the "Global South"; the massive political and economic collective of developing nations striving to make their voices heard in international decisions; this visit takes on even greater weight.

It's All About Trade!

India works in collaboration with Ethiopia across trade, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and cultural sectors. In recent decades, the two nations have developed a historically significant relationship that has evolved into a robust and multifaceted economic partnership. Among the primary goods India exports to Ethiopia are pharmaceuticals, machinery, iron and steel products, vehicles, electrical appliances, plastics, and paper products. Conversely, Ethiopia's primary exports to India consist of raw hides and skins, pulses (legumes), spices, and coffee.

India stands as one of the top foreign investors in Ethiopia. Recent figures confirm that over 650 Indian companies have already invested in Ethiopia; when including investors who have secured licenses, the total investment value exceeds several billion dollars. Looking at the economic sub-sectors where these investors are currently active or expected to begin operations, it is clear how vital this cooperation is to Ethiopia's macro-economy. These key sectors include: Textiles and Apparel, Leather Processing, Sugar Production, Agro-processing Industries, Plastics and Ceramics, Agriculture and Floriculture.

Many Indian companies manage large scale commercial farms and are leading players in Ethiopia's highly profitable flower export industry. Furthermore, Ethiopia is a top beneficiary of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) framework. Additionally, it is worth noting that numerous Ethiopians are receiving training in India in fields such as governance, IT, entrepreneurship and diplomacy.

A Look Back

Historical records and archaeological findings testify that Ethiopia, the owner of an ancient and glorious civilization, and India, whose name is mentioned with similar antiquity, shared a trade relationship that crossed African borders via the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea more than two thousand years ago. It has been documented that gold coins used as currency during the Kushan Dynasty of ancient India were found in the Axum and Debre Damo monasteries. Artifacts from India's Gupta Empire, including period tools, precious jewelry, and beads, were discovered in Adulis; the ancient port of Axum; a fact that has been documented for over three generations. Other historical travel journals narrate how ivory, gold, and pearls from the era of leaders like Ezana crossed the Red Sea, facilitating trade between Axum and India.

A key historical fact proving the long standing bond between Ethiopia and India is that Ethiopia was among the first countries to recognize India after it gained independence from Britain. Ethiopia and India established formal diplomatic relations in 1948, making Ethiopia the first African nation to open an embassy in India. The visits made by Emperor Haile Selassie I to India twice (in 1956 and 1958) are cited as the foundation for strengthening the relationship between the two nations.

One of the clearest manifestations of the connection between the people and governments of India and Ethiopia is their bilateral relationship in the education sector. While many Ethiopians have had the opportunity to pursue their studies in India, Indian citizens were among the first overseas nationals to serve as teachers in Ethiopia. The Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Addis Ababa, established with the support of the Ethiopian and

Indian communities, stands as a symbol of the friendship between the two countries. Although the Derg regime eventually removed it, India had even erected a statue for Emperor Haile Selassie in the Piazza district of Addis Ababa.

The close relationship that began during the reign of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I has remained strong despite changes in government. Various records explain that Ethiopia and India have shared a comprehensive relationship spanning over two thousand years. Since the 19th century, there are numerous indicators that many people of Indian descent chose Ethiopia as their home. During the years between the First and Second World Wars, a significant number of Indians were engaged in trade in various Ethiopian cities.

Ethiopia established formal diplomatic relations with India in 1948, and records show they upgraded their ties to the ambassadorial level starting in 1952. At that time, many Indian teachers came to Ethiopia to teach in schools across every province. This educational cooperation, which has spanned more than two generations, enabled the growth of Ethiopia's higher education capacity; it played a vital role in fulfilling the need for a trained workforce by allowing many Ethiopians to obtain their Master's and PhD degrees in India. It is often said that the diversity of nations, religions, cultures, and landscapes makes Ethiopia and India similar, and their respective geopolitical regions have enabled them to cooperate in politics and foreign relations. The diplomatic bond between Ethiopia and India has lasted for the past 74 years, intertwining the two countries in economic, political and social fields.

The Previous Agreement

Ethiopia and India had signed what can be described as a robust agreement even before the aforementioned visit of Prime Minister Modi. They held their first Joint Defense Cooperation meeting in the Indian capital, New Delhi, which was intended to strengthen the long-standing bilateral defense relations between the two countries. The meeting was co-chaired by Amitabh Prasad, Secretary of the Indian Ministry of Defense, and Major General Teshome Gemechu, Director General of Defense Foreign Relations and Military Cooperation of Ethiopia. Indian news sources reported that the two nations reviewed their previous defense cooperation and discussed new areas of collaboration, including training, joint military exercises, medical cooperation, and defense industry-related partnerships.

Reaffirming their mutual commitment to strengthening the defense partnership, it was noted that they agreed to continue enhancing defense cooperation activities. This Joint Defense Cooperation meeting is part of an institutional framework established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the defense ministers of the two countries earlier in 2017. The MoU provides a system for regular exchange and

strategic dialogue on defense matters. Ethiopia has been known as one of India's key defense partners in Africa since the 1950s. The growing defense relationship was further evidenced by the attendance of the Ethiopian military commander at the UN Peacekeeping Force Contributing Countries' Commanders Conference held in New Delhi from October 14 to October 16, 2018.

Prior to that agreement, in March 2017, the two governments announced they were finalizing a defense cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening Ethiopia's military capacity through training and financial support. Ethiopia's Ambassador to India at the time, Demeke Atnafu, stated that the agreement is a continuation of long-term defense cooperation, recalling India's support in establishing the Harar Military Academy in the 1950s and subsequent training initiatives. It has been noted that this initiative aligns with India's broader geopolitical strategy of expanding defense cooperation across Africa to enhance regional security and strengthen bilateral relations.

The Man at a Glance

The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, is an eloquent and persuasive leader. Persuasion is an art he has mastered; his literary and theatrical talents have granted him a unique ability to convince and mobilize people. He is known not just for his speeches, but for making unwavering and decisive choices. A prime example is his bold decision to revoke Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted autonomous status to the region of Kashmir, integrating it fully with the rest of India—a move that demonstrated his boundary-crossing leadership.

He has torn up old laws from the British colonial era, replacing them with new legislation based on Indian values. It was under his leadership that a law was passed mandating that 33% of seats in the Indian Parliament and state assemblies be reserved for women. For the first time in 34 years, he overhauled the education policy, shifting the focus toward practical application and creativity. Recognizing that youth make up half the population, he implemented policies for large-scale vocational training to make them job-ready. His creation of the world's largest government-funded health insurance program, providing free medical care to millions of poor citizens, has made his name resonate deeply with the public.

In a single night, he declared the 500-and-1000-rupee notes void to curb illegal money laundering and black markets. Although the short deadline led to long bank queues, this firm decision protected the Rupee from collapse. He also launched the "India Stack" system, making India a world leader in digital payments. Today, nearly a billion residents in Indian cities use their phones to pay for everything from a cup of tea to major shopping mall purchases.

In infrastructure, he has achieved a radical transformation considered a revolution in the Indian context. The distance of highways built daily has increased significantly; besides launching modern new trains, the country has begun manufacturing high speed train coaches daily. In space science, he led his country to become the first to land a craft on the Moon's southern pole at a remarkably low cost. Focusing on domestic production to reduce military imports, Modi is credited with the direct oversight of building India's first indigenous aircraft carrier. With billions of dollars allocated to build its own semiconductor chip manufacturing industry, success in this technology is expected to catapult the country many levels above its current status.

In foreign policy, Modi looks both East and West, flexing between the US and Russia and from the EU to BRICS, positioning his country as a middle player. Reports praising his diplomatic victory during India's G20 presidency noted his successful push to make the African Union a permanent member of the group. Despite border disputes with China, his ability to manage differences as a fellow BRICS founding leader showcases his diplomatic flexibility. These combined successes have ensured that even after leading a democracy for a long time, Narendra Modi's popularity remains high among his people.

Ultimately, Great India is challenging Western textbooks that suggest democracy cannot stand without specific roots, fashioning a democracy in its own form. India will spend the next four years; believed to be his final term; with the fast-ing leader, Modi. We hope that Ethiopia can learn how to root its own budding democracy from this multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation.

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).

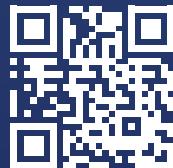
The expression “Enderasie”:- although Amharic, the national language of the time, was the only working language of the council when the first Ethiopian Council of Enderasies was established; note that the expression is found within the other languages of the nations and nationalities of our country; 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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BRIDGE Research & Innovation for Democratic Governance and Enhanced Peace

 +251 115 57 74 96

 +251 911 86 12 34

 research@bridge-et.org

 150096, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

 Kazanchis, across the main gate of UNECA,
SA Building, 9th Floor, Office No. 5, Addis
Ababa.