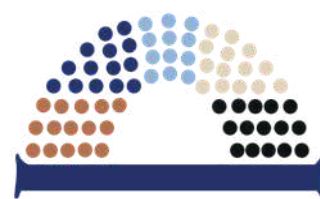


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**Ethiopian Parliamentarians'  
Monthly Digest**



**ENDERASIE**

ENDERASIE IS A PARLIAMENTARY MONTHLY  
DIGEST ISSUED BY BRIDGE RESEARCH AND  
INNOVATION.



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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

- ▮ Rigor: Delivering high-quality, evidence-driven research.
- ▮ Innovation: Pioneering creative and adaptive solutions for governance and peace challenges.
- ▮ 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:

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



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## The Monthly Activities of Ethiopia’s People’s Representatives in March/April

The Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives has carried out various constitutional responsibilities during the month of Megabit. Among these primary responsibilities, approving laws, hearing the reports of executive institutions, performing parliamentary diplomacy and conducting field visits were the major activities of the House for the month. Beyond that, in addition to the representation work they carry out from Hamle to the end of Meskerem, they have performed their representation work following the month of Yekatit. In this regard, by sending many Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives to their respective constituencies during this same month of Megabit, they have conducted voter-representative forums regarding issues that citizens stated concern them. This fourteenth edition of Enderassie has been compiled by organizing these matters into their respective sections and by including two BRIDGE analytical reviews for the month.

### REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE HOUSE CONDUCTED DURING THE MONTH

#### 6<sup>TH</sup> HOUSE OF PEOPLES' REPRESENTATIVES; 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR TENURE

Session	Date	Agendas
<b>12<sup>th</sup> Regular Session</b>	Megabit 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ratifying the additional loan agreements made between the FDRE and the Export-Import Bank of Korea for the implementation of the Medical Equipment Supply Project Phase 2 and for the implementation of the National Electric Power Transmission System Expansion Project.</li> <li>* Ratifying the loan agreement made between the FDRE and the French Development Agency for the implementation of the Renewable, Integrated, Sustainable Energy and Digitalization Project.</li> <li>* Ratifying the third additional loan agreement made between the FDRE and the International Development Association for the implementation of the Urban Productive Safety Net and Job Creation Project.</li> <li>* Examining the draft proclamation presented to re-amend the Customs Proclamation and referring it to the relevant Standing Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> Regular</b>	Megabit 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Examining and ratifying the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Draft</li> </ul>

Session		Law.
14 <sup>th</sup> Regular Session	Megabit 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Examining and ratifying the Multi-Stakeholder Agricultural Extension Service and Administration Draft Proclamation.</li> <li>* Examining the Freedom of Information and the Federal Sharia Courts Draft Proclamations and referring them to the relevant Standing Committees.</li> </ul>

## 1. LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE HOUSE

In the month of Megabit, to which we have given coverage in this edition, the Members of the Ethiopian House of Representatives ratified two laws, referred three draft proclamations to the relevant Standing Committees for detailed review, and conducted explanatory forums regarding three other draft proclamations.

### 1.1 RATIFIED LAWS

The House of Peoples' Representatives ratified two laws during the month of Megabit. The primary proclamation ratified during the 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the House was the **FDRE Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law Draft Proclamation**. It was noted that the Honorable W/ro Etsegenet Mengistu, Chairperson of the Law and Justice Affairs Standing Committee of the House, presented the report and the motion for the draft proclamation.

The Madam Chair stated that the draft law establishes a working system by ensuring the rule of law and the respect and enforcement of the human rights of suspects, defendants, and persons harmed by crime within the criminal justice administration and the criminal court process. Furthermore, the Honorable W/ro Etsegenet explained that it is a draft law that aligns with international principles, including

specialized criminal investigation methods and procedures for victim compensation, to ensure an efficient justice system.

The Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives, for their part, noted that although the draft proclamation was delayed, it is a timely proclamation to solve problems that have been sources of grievances among the public; thus, the draft proclamation plays a significant role in modernizing the justice system and providing contemporary services.



*A partial view of the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives on the day the proclamation was ratified.*

The Honorable Speaker Tagesse Chafo, in turn, was cited by the House's information service, which stated that the draft proclamation is up to date, was worked on over a long period, is exemplary for other laws, and clearly demonstrates the House's working procedures. Finally, the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives ratified the draft proclamation as Proclamation No. 1410/2018 with two objections and a majority vote.

(Regarding this proclamation, you may see a brief BRIDGE review on page 37).

The second draft proclamation ratified by the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives during their 14<sup>th</sup> Regular Session held this same month was the **Multi-Stakeholder Agricultural Extension Service and Administration Draft Proclamation**; it was noted that the Honorable Solomon Lale, the Chairperson, presented the motion prepared by the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Chairperson noted that, because the government-provided agricultural extension service was insufficient, the draft proclamation would provide a favorable platform for establishing a multi-stakeholder agricultural extension service system, as required by the times. He further pointed out that, as private, non-governmental, and governmental organizations providing digital agricultural extension consultancy and information exchange services emerge, this draft proclamation enables them to provide these services within the agricultural extension framework.

Beyond that, the Honorable Solomon noted that, since the quality and fairness of agricultural extension service delivery require focus, the proclamation has established a system requiring that services be provided by registered and certified service providers. He added that since

the Ethiopian economy is based on agriculture, agricultural extension plays a significant role in increasing production in the sector in terms of quantity, quality, and sustainability.

The report mentioned that some Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives, for their part, commented that agricultural professionals should provide services by demonstrating technologies obtained from agricultural research and those imported from abroad on practical farm plots for farmers. Finally, after conducting an extensive discussion on the draft proclamation, the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives ratified the draft proclamation as Proclamation No. 1411/2018 with a unanimous vote.



*The Honorable Solomon Lale, as he presented the motion for the draft proclamation.*

## 1.2 DRAFT LAWS

It was indicated that the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives referred three draft proclamations to the relevant

Standing Committees of the House for detailed review during the month.

The House of Peoples' Representatives discussed extensively the draft proclamation presented to **re-amend the Customs Proclamation** during its 12<sup>th</sup> Regular Session held on to Megabit 15. The Government Whip in the House, the Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, presented a brief explanation regarding the necessity of amending the proclamation. After the House discussed the major issues, it identified for amendment and inclusion, it numbered the draft proclamation as Proclamation No. 9/2018 and referred it to the Planning, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee for detailed review.

The second draft proclamation received by the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives during the month was the new draft proclamation prepared to **modernize the judicial services provided by the Federal Sharia Courts and to change their institutional working procedures.**

The House referred this draft proclamation to the Law and Justice Affairs Standing Committee during its 14<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the month; the Honorable Speaker Tadesse Chafo stated that this new draft proclamation would completely replace the old proclamation, which has been in use for many years and does not align with the current objective conditions and justice system reforms.

The Speaker further explained that the draft was prepared with the intention of sustainably resolving bottlenecks in good governance, service delivery, and related issues observed in the Sharia courts. It was also noted that the draft proclamation focuses on increasing the credibility of the justice system by making the organization of the Judicial Administration Council and the recruitment system for judges clear and accountable.

It was indicated that a broad forum will be created for legal experts and relevant stakeholders to provide their comments on the draft proclamation through the Law and Justice Affairs Standing Committee in the future.



*The Honorable Speaker Tadesse Chafo, during the discussion on the draft proclamation.*

The other draft proclamation considered by the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives during this same 14<sup>th</sup> Regular Session was the draft proclamation presented to them to **legislate freedom of information**, and they referred the proclamation to the Democracy

Affairs Standing Committee of the House for detailed review.

Regarding the necessity of the draft proclamation, the Honorable Speaker Tagesse Chafo stated that since the provisions regarding freedom of information and the mass media were previously issued in a single proclamation, it prevented the freedom of information law from being presented in an appropriate manner, with a complete administrative system and transparency in implementation; he explained that the draft was presented because it became necessary to issue the freedom of information proclamation independently and in harmony with technological advancements.

The Speaker further explained that the draft was presented because of the need to establish a system to further realize the freedom of information guaranteed by the Constitution and international human rights treaties ratified by Ethiopia, by ensuring the transparency and accountability of government bodies through the further affirmation of the freedom of any person to request, obtain, and disseminate information held by a government body.



*Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives, as they listened to the draft proclamation presented to legislate freedom of information.*

### 1.3 EXPLANATORY FORUMS

Among the explanatory forums conducted by the House of Peoples' Representatives during the month of Megabit, the primary one was the forum held through the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House, where a discussion was conducted with stakeholders concerning the **Aviation Security Amendment Draft Proclamation**.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, stated that since the sector is a key manifestation of our country's security, the Standing Committee gave it special attention and gained additional input by organizing a further discussion forum with stakeholders regarding the Ethiopian Aviation Security Amendment Draft Proclamation; he also

urged all stakeholders to fulfill their respective roles.

The Deputy Chairperson, the Honorable Dr. Fethi Mahdi, for his part, pointed out that the draft proclamation protects Ethiopia's national interests, further elevates the sector in Africa and around the world, and strengthens aviation security.

Furthermore, W/ro Tadelech Amare, Lead Executive for Draft Law Research Affairs at the Secretariat of the House, provided explanations from the perspective of international treaties and the experiences of various countries to ensure a common understanding of the amendment articles in the draft law and to incorporate additional inputs. According to information released by the House, the discussion proceeded accordingly.

It was reported that during the discussion, comments and questions requiring clarity were raised by stakeholders, and responses and explanations were provided by officials from the National Intelligence and Security Service, the Immigration and Citizenship Service, the Federal Police Commission, and the Office of the Prime Minister.



*A partial view of the explanatory forum conducted regarding the Aviation Security Amendment Draft Proclamation.*

The second explanatory forum conducted by the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives during the month of Megabit was regarding the **Customs Proclamation Amendment Draft Proclamation**; the forum was led by the Planning, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Desalegn Wedaje, noted that following the national economic reform, there have been several amended proclamations in recent times, and indicated that the amendment of the Customs Proclamation would have significant benefits in preventing contraband trade, beyond facilitating import and export trade.

The Chairperson further pointed out that the amendment draft proclamation is intended to identify and provide immediate solutions to the articles of the proclamation that have been obstacles to operations; he added that the amendment draft proclamation would be of great benefit for the institution to build institutional

capacity commensurate with the capacity of contraband traders.

The Commissioner of the Customs Commission, Debele Kabeta, explained that the amendment draft proclamation was necessitated by the need to improve procedures that hindered Ethiopia's efforts to become a member of the World Trade Organization, as well as to align it with the national monetary reform and international and continental provisions.

The report of the House cited the Commissioner, adding that regarding the confiscation of vehicles carrying contraband, the draft proclamation would help resolve problems related to good governance, justice, operations, decision-making, and the proper respect of the rights of vehicle owners that were observed in previous proclamations.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Deputy Commissioner of the Customs Commission, Azzezew Chane, stated that the draft proclamation includes a procedure whereby the income generated from the sale of properties confiscated from contraband is used to modernize the institution's operations, as well as for capacity-building work for stakeholders involved in preventing contraband trade.



*The explanatory forum held regarding the Customs Proclamation Amendment Draft Proclamation.*

The public and stakeholders' consultative forum organized by the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee of the House regarding the **Cooperatives Amendment Draft Proclamation** was another explanatory forum of the month.

As the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Solomon Hale, stated at the opening of the discussion, he explained that cooperatives play a significant role in the country's economic development; he noted that they are making significant contributions by providing industrial and agricultural products to their members at affordable prices, facilitating credit supply, and realizing financial benefits by solving the housing problems of citizens.



*A partial view of the explanatory forum.*

The Chairperson further added that although there were 125,453 cooperatives prior to the economic reform, he mentioned that most of them faced organizational, human resource, and input challenges in properly achieving their missions.



## 2. OVERSIGHT OF EXECUTIVE INSTITUTIONS

During the month of Megabit, which we have covered in this edition, the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives summoned the officials of **ten federal institutions** to their hall to hear their semi-annual performance reports for the 2018 budget year and their progress on audit findings; they raised concerning comments and questions, and listened to the officials' explanations.

### 2.1 INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS

The evaluation of institutional reports by the Members of the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives for the month began with the review of the six-month performance of the **Ministry of Labor and Skills** and its accountable institutions for the 2018 budget year. The Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs Standing Committee of the House heard the institution's semi-annual report, which was presented by the Honorable W/ro Muferiat Kamil, the Minister of Labor and Skills.

In her report, the Minister explained that employer and employee issues have been strengthening over time and pointed out that they have launched digitalized operations using technology to ensure these matters are led systematically and that citizens work with their

dignity protected. The Minister added that compared to the same period in the 2017 budget year, domestic job creation showed a 24.9% growth, while overseas job creation showed a 52% increase.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, stated that the work being done in all sectors by the Ministry and its accountable institutions over the six months has shown improvement over time.

The Chairperson added that the success of the leadership of the Ministry and its accountable institutions in working according to plan and coordinating with regions to enhance industrial peace and safety, work culture, and productivity could serve as an example for other institutions.

On the other hand, the Chairperson noted that expanding job centers to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in job creation and rewarding of competitive youth with innovative ideas had not been performed according to the plan; he urged that the training capacity for youth graduating from various universities and technical and vocational institutions must be enhanced to ensure they benefit from these opportunities.



*The Honorable W/ro Muferiat Kamil, Minister of Labor and Skills, as she presented her institution's report.*

This same Standing Committee also heard the six-month performance report of **Addis Ababa University** for the 2018 budget year during the month of Megabit; it was reported that the Committee stated the university is providing effective community services.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, noted that the university is working on many projects in collaboration with the Addis Ababa City Administration, specifically highlighting that its work in studying and consulting on the Addis Ababa Riverfront projects demonstrates that the institution is fulfilling the duties and responsibilities expected of higher education institutions.

The Chairperson further pointed out that, in addition to teaching and learning, the university's production of numerous research studies published in journals shows its competitiveness

in Africa; moreover, the fact that half of these research works were conducted in collaboration with international institutions explains the institution's high level of international diplomacy.

The Chairperson added that since the institution is the wealth and pride of all Ethiopians, it should utilize inclusive and fair criteria that enable it to admit students from all regions of Ethiopia. The President of the University, Dr. Samuel Kifle, for his part, mentioned that both government-sponsored and self-paying students show interest in enrolling in no more than 20 of the 66 programs designed by the university.



*The President of the University, Dr. Samuel Kifle, as he presented his report.*

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs** is among the federal institutions summoned by the House of Peoples' Representatives during the month of Megabit to present their reports. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Gedion Timotheos, presented the six-month performance report of the Ministry and its accountable institutions for the budget year to the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, was heard urging that the agreements Ethiopia has signed with various countries to enhance its benefits across different sectors must be implemented within a short period through focused efforts.

The Chairperson further noted that the Standing Committee has verified through various methods that the Ministry has worked to ensure tangible changes in tourism, investment flow, and the economy to protect the country's national interests during the budget year; he added that successful work has been done in changing the country's image through Ethiopia's ability to effectively host international and continental conferences and attract global attention.

For his part, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Gedion Timotheos, explained that key activities were carried out during the budget year to increase Ethiopia's influence before the G20, BRICS Plus, and other international and continental institutions. Consequently, the Ministry's information cited the Minister stating that agreements were concluded in various sectors that protect Ethiopia's interests and national benefit and serve as a foundation for growth.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs added that Ethiopia is making significant progress by implementing an independent foreign policy that safeguards national interests. According to

information obtained from the House, the Honorable Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Fethi Mahdi, stated that efforts to translate Ethiopia's maritime access issue into tangible results must continue with increased strength.



*The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Gedion Timotheos, during the presentation of his institution's report.*

Another institution that presented its six-month performance report for the budget year during the month of Megabit, covered in this 14<sup>th</sup> edition of Enderasie Vo. 2, was **the Ministry of Peace**. The report was heard by the Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Minister of Peace, the Honorable Mohammed Idris, noted in his report that by establishing and strengthening peace structures at various levels, civil society organizations are making their own contributions to peacebuilding. The Minister further explained that by strengthening collaborative working procedures with other federal institutions and regions, efforts have been

made to return displaced persons to their original areas.

He also highlighted that joint discussions and agreements have been reached with political parties in Ethiopia to ensure the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> national election is concluded peacefully. Additionally, the Minister stated that out of 33 grievances submitted by various religious institutions, 25 were resolved within the past six months.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, pointed out that since volunteer work has a significant impact on nation-building, it is essential to focus on institutionalizing it and preparing a legal framework to encourage youth to engage in volunteer activities within their own and other localities.

According to information from the House, the Chairperson added that, since women are the primary victims of the lack of peace, focus should be placed on empowering women and bringing them into leadership positions.

For his part, the Honorable Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Fethi Mahdi, indicated that the activities carried out, including following financial procedures free from audit criticism and returning displaced persons to their homes, are encouraging. He further urged that coordination

with relevant bodies is necessary to ensure these individuals receive humanitarian support.



*The Minister of Peace, Mohammed Idris, as he presented his report.*

**The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration** was another institution scheduled to present its report during the month, and the report was heard by the Trade and Tourism Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable W/ro Asha Yahya, who heard the institution's eight-month performance report for the 2018 budget year, was heard stating that the progress made in establishing online licensing and streamlining the lengthy process required to obtain a business license to make the trade system efficient, modern, and accessible is a significant leap forward and must be strengthened.

The Chairperson further noted that the measures taken to stabilize inflation and directly connect producers and consumers by expanding Saturday

and Sunday market centers are encouraging, adding that this plays a major role in stabilizing the market. The Honorable W/ro Asha also urged that, notwithstanding the current international crisis related to fuel, focused work is required, as there are locations where fuel accessibility remains a significant concern requiring answers.

The Honorable Yohannes Mesfin, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, stated that since trade sector associations play a vital role, the Ministry must maintain close oversight in terms of developing the trade sector and preventing illegality.



*The Minister of Trade and Regional Integration,  
Dr. Kasahun Gofe, during his report.*

For his part, the Minister of Trade and Regional Integration, Dr. Kasahun Gofe, stated that they would work in cooperation with the Standing Committee to achieve high performance by controlling the significant illegal activities in the sector to expand fuel accessibility. The Minister added that they would work to sustain the

strengths identified by the Standing Committee and to improve issues that require focus.

During the month of Megabit, like the other federal institutions mentioned above, **the Ethiopian Sugar Industry Group** presented its six-month performance report for the budget year; it was noted that the report was heard by the Public Enterprise Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

In his comments, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Melesse Mena, pointed out that sugar factories should work with focus to eliminate sugar imports and cover domestic consumption. The Chairperson further urged that the sugar factories should plan and work not only to cover domestic sugar consumption but also to enable Ethiopia to break into the world market by exporting sugar.

For his part, the Honorable Dr. Engineer Seleshi Kore, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, suggested that by increasing sugar production, it is possible to repeat the leap forward achieved in wheat production. The Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Sugar Industry Group, Ato Wayo Roba, explained that although sugar factories are making efforts to produce sugar in a shorter time by reducing production cycles, efforts are being made to address missing components that were not included during the construction of new sugar factories.

**The evaluation of the performance audit report of the Customs Commission**, conducted by the Government Expenditure Administration and Control Affairs Standing Committee of the House, was another institutional performance activity of the month. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Yeshimebet Demissie, stated that the Customs Commission should modernize its use of technology to ensure a tariff structure that meets international standards and is consistent with the current trade system.

The Chairperson also noted that gaps were observed in the control measures taken to ensure that duty-free imported goods are used for their intended purposes; she further urged that it must be ensured that government revenue is properly collected and that follow-ups be conducted to confirm the duty-free privilege is contributing to the country's economic growth.

For her part, the Federal Auditor General, W/ro Meseret Damte, who stated that the audit scope covers the period from 2014 to the first quarter of 2017, recommended that because the nature of customs work is dynamic, modern technology should be implemented down to the branch offices and that established legal frameworks should be properly applied by reaching a common understanding with stakeholders.

The Commissioner of the Customs Commission, Debele Kabeta, for his part, stated that work will

be done to fill the gaps identified in the audit findings and to make the control more effective by strengthening digital procedures.



*Members of the Public Enterprise Affairs Standing Committee, as they heard the report of the Ethiopian Sugar Industry Group.*

The Government Expenditure Administration and Control Affairs Standing Committee evaluated another performance audit report, this time focusing on the **Ethiopian Athletics Federation**. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Yeshimebet Demissie, stated that the Federation's sports gear distribution system must be documented and governed by relevant distribution criteria.

The Chairperson added that the new system, initiated to ensure age appropriateness in the athletics sector, is a positive step and directed that it, along with other identification methods, be further strengthened.

The Federal Auditor General, Meseret Damte, noted that the Federation's efforts to address

previous gaps are commendable. However, she further explained that clear implementation documents and procedures are needed to resolve issues related to the handling of sports gear and training equipment, as well as the awarding of prizes.

For his part, the Federation's Manager, Commander Athlete Sileshi Sihine, reported that they would work to support operations with directives and bring them into a legal framework in the future to resolve existing gaps.



*The Federation's Manager, Athlete Sileshi Sihine, during the performance audit report.*

The veteran institution of the Country, **Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise** was also among the institutions that presented their reports this month; it was noted that the report was heard by the Public Enterprise Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Melesse Mena, highlighted that the enterprise contributes significantly to the distribution of information and the expansion of education by printing

publications with efficiency and quality, as well as to the security and efficiency of financial and other social services by handling confidential printing.

The Chairperson further explained that, in connection with implementing tasks according to the plan, it is necessary to maintain strong oversight regarding healthy resource management, the application of financial systems, and corrective measures taken based on audit findings.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Seleshi Kore, stated that the printing sector needs to be revitalized through modern procedures; he noted that book printing should be planned in a manner that helps address challenges in the education sector.

For his part, the Chief Executive Officer of Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise, Shitahun Wale, was cited by the House's information as stating that they have conducted studies and are working to build capacity to ensure that books and other publications currently printed abroad can be printed locally instead.



*The Chief Executive Officer of Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise, Shitahun Wale, as he presented his report.*

The House of Peoples' Representatives concluded its schedule by evaluating the six-month performance report of the **Ethiopian Pulp and Paper Share Company** for the 2018 budget year; it was noted that the report was heard by the Public Enterprise Affairs Standing Committee of the House. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Melesse Mena, stated that the Ethiopian Pulp and Paper Share Company has played a significant role in Ethiopia's development, transformation and technology transfer for over 55 years.

The Chairperson noted that the evaluations focused on the share company's efficient execution of tasks during the preparation phase of the current budget year, as well as its implementation of healthy resource management and financial systems. For his part, the General Manager of the Ethiopian Pulp and Paper Share Company, Bayisa Temesgen, explained that the

company produces paper and cardboard; he stated that the paper production plan performance for the first six months stood at 52.7%, which represents a 29.3% decrease compared to the same period last year.

The General Manager attributed the below target paper production performance to machine downtime and explained to the Standing Committee that efforts were made to coordinate maintenance and technical management to return the machinery to operation.



*Members of the Public Enterprise Affairs Standing Committee, as they heard the semi-annual report of the Ethiopian Pulp and Paper Share Company.*

## 2.2 INSTITUTIONAL AND FIELD VISITS

According to information gathered by Enderassie, although the Members of the House of Peoples' Representatives did not conduct any institutional visits within the month, they carried out several field observations; it was noted that the majority of these field visits were focused on regional universities.

### 2.2.1 FIELD VISITS

Field visits to regional universities accounted for the largest share of the observations conducted by the Ethiopian Representatives this month. The first university visited was **Dembi Dolo University**, which was observed by the Human Resource Development, Employment, and Technology Affairs Standing Committee of the House.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, stated that alongside its teaching and learning activities, the university is performing numerous research and community service tasks in agriculture and other sectors capable of solving local societal problems. The Chairperson further pointed out that the university's efforts to stabilize the market by introducing milk, vegetables, fruits, and other agricultural products to the local community are exemplary.



*During the Standing Committee's visit to Dembi Dolo University.*

For his part, Assistant Professor Soresa Shuma, a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Agriculture at Dembi Dolo University, explained

to the Standing Committee that the university is conducting various research projects aimed at solving the challenges faced by local farmers.

Another university visited by this same Standing Committee during the month was **Wollega University**. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, pointed out that since the Wollega area is well known for its agriculture, livestock, and mineral resources, the university's transition toward becoming an applied science institution should take into account the local natural gifts and the benefit of the community.

The Chairperson also noted that the university's teaching hospital is providing services to neighboring regions and is under significant pressure; therefore, he urged that the hospital should strengthen its future expansion and construction projects.

For his part, the President of Wollega University, Dr. Tesfaye Lemma, indicated that extensive work has been done in coordination with the local community to foster a peaceful and secure learning and teaching process, and that positive changes have been achieved. He added that efforts are underway to further strengthen and sustain these improvements.

The same Standing Committee, led by the Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, conducted a field visit to **Arba Minch University**. During the visit,

the Chairperson noted that the university is one of the first-generation universities in our country and stated that it is expected to be one of the centers of excellence to transition toward autonomy, following Addis Ababa University.



*The Honorable Dr. Negeri Lencho, during his visit to Wollega University.*

The President of the university, Engineer Dr. Abdella Kemal, presented the six-month performance report for the 2018 budget year to the Standing Committee. He explained that a special office led by a director has been established to facilitate the transition to autonomy. He further noted that a 10-year roadmap has been designed, along with the preparation of 28 directives and policies. The President informed the members of the Standing Committee that 96% of the preparations required for the university to become autonomous have been completed.



*A partial view of the visit to Arba Minch University.*

### 3. CONSTITUENCY WORK

During the month of Megabit, which we have covered in this edition, the Ethiopian House of Representatives extensively carried out their representative duties, a constitutional responsibility that continued from the month of Yekatit.

In this regard, **twenty-eight** representatives concluded the month by traveling to their constituencies to consult with their electors on national and local issues. Specifically, **three** representatives traveled to Benishangul-Gumuz, **one** to South West Ethiopia, seventeen to Oromia, **one** to Somali, **one** to Dire Dawa, and **five** to South Ethiopia to hold discussions with the communities they represent.

#### 3.1 WHAT ISSUES DID THE BENISHANGUL/GUMUZ ELECTORS RAISE?

Benishangul/Gumuz was one of the regions visited during the constitutional representation work carried out in the month of Megabit. Chronologically, the first to arrive was the **Honorable W/ro Bayita Bawde**, who discussed peace, development, and election preparation activities with the community of Aipopu Kebele, Dangur Woreda, in the Metekel Zone.

The **Honorable Mubarak Elias**, Deputy Chairperson of the Agriculture Affairs Standing Committee of the House, also traveled to the

region and held a constituent-representative discussion forum in Menge Woreda. The representative informed his electors that the government is working with a special focus on enhancing the economic and social capacity of society.

Additionally, the **Honorable W/ro Menahil Imran** reportedly held discussions with community members at the Nebar Komshiga center in Aburamo Woreda on good local governance, service delivery, peace and security, and social, economic, and development activities.



*A partial view of the representation work in Benishangul-Gumuz.*

#### 3.2 TO SOUTHWEST ETHIOPIA ...

Southwest Ethiopia, one of the newest members of the Federation, was also among the regions where representation duties were carried out this month. According to information from the House of Peoples' Representatives, the **Honorable Eshetu Gebremariam** held discussions with his constituents in the Gabissa Kebele of Bero Woreda, within the Dizi special electoral district,

regarding economic, development, peace, and security issues.

It was reported that he emphasized not only how local peace should be maintained but also the necessity of conducting awareness-raising activities to ensure that the 7<sup>th</sup> national election is concluded in a peaceful and democratic manner.



*A partial view of the representation work conducted in the Dizi special electoral district.*

### 3.3 OROMIA CONSTITUENT-REPRESENTATIVE FORUMS

According to information gathered from the House, Oromia was the leading region where the highest number of representation activities took place during this period. In the Jimma Zone of Dedo Woreda, the constituent-representative discussion was led by the **Honorable W/ro Aisha Shehshifa**, who briefed the community on

national and local achievements recorded over the past five years in peace, socio-economic development, infrastructure development, and good governance.

Meanwhile, the **Honorable Juhar Mohammed** visited Doba Woreda in the West Hararghe Zone, where he acknowledged that the community's infrastructure concerns were legitimate and explained the government's commitment to responding to these public demands.

In other parts of Jimma, the **Honorable W/ro Latifa Abasambi** highlighted that by consulting their constituents twice a year, representatives focus on addressing development issues by tracking and forwarding public grievances to the relevant authorities. In Sheger City, the **Honorable Adissu Asefa** led a diverse forum that included religious leaders, Abba Gadas, Adde Siiqqees, and residents from the Burayu, Gefersa Guje, and Melka Nono sub-cities. Similarly, in the Arsi Zone, both the **Honorable W/ro Zewdinesh Tulu** in Chole Woreda and the **Honorable W/ro Martha Lemma** in Munessa Woreda noted that the government is more focused than ever on resolutely addressing the infrastructure questions raised by the people during the reform years.

By mid-Megabit, the **Honorable W/ro Chaltu Mohammed** traveled to Mencho Woreda in the Jimma Zone to brief electors on major national projects, including Corridor Development, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, legislative

improvements, and technological modernization. In the East Wollega Zone, specifically in the Sasga Woreda clusters, the **Honorable W/ro Elizabeth Ejigu** led discussions where the community pledged to collaborate with security forces to protect vital road construction projects.

In Yem Woreda, the **Honorable W/rit Fayima Sheik Jamal** emphasized that regular government-public discussions are essential for building consensus and providing hope through progress in the social, political, and economic sectors. The House's information indicated that the **Honorable Meseret Shiferaw** led the discussion in the Grer Jarso electoral district, while the **Honorable Dr. Buzuaayehu Degefe** represented the constituency in Tibe Chafe Kebele, Jimma Arjo Woreda.



*Among the constituent-representative forums in Oromia.*

The **Honorable W/ro Miraj Zekiy Jamal**, who held discussions with the public in the Limmu Seka and Nono Benja Woredas, stated that the development works, achievements, and results

recorded over the past five years have been effective. Similarly, the **Honorable Fekadu Mosissa** visited the Meko Sachi electoral district in the Buno Bedele Zone; during his constituent-representative forum, it was reported that electors emphasized that the government's efforts to address public infrastructure demands must continue to be strengthened.

In the Bale Zone, specifically at the constituent-representative discussion forum held in the Goba sub-city of Robe town, the **Honorable Ustaz Kamil** received various concerns from his electors. The primary issues raised included road infrastructure, potable water, network and electricity interruptions, accessibility, unemployment, and the high cost of living.

Furthermore, it was reported that the **Honorable W/ro Farida Shemsudin** and the **Honorable Dr. Elias Ahmed** visited the Deder Woreda and town administration in the East Hararghe Zone to conduct discussions with their constituents regarding development and good governance. According to information from the House, the **Honorable W/ro Birke Bahiru** also traveled to the Debre Libanos and Yaya Gulele Woredas in North Shewa to consult with the people she represents on matters of peace and development.

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### 3.4 AND FROM SOMALI?

The eastern part of the country, Somali, was also among the regions that saw representation

activities during this month of Megabit. The **Honorable Kemal Hashi**, who traveled to Tog Wuchale town in the Arabi electoral district, held a constituent-representative forum where he addressed critical infrastructure concerns.

It was reported that he specifically highlighted the Tog Wuchale town potable water project; although the project was completed some time ago, the water wells have not yet been functional due to a lack of energy inputs. Consequently, he urged the Ministry of Water and Energy; as the oversight body for the project and all other relevant authorities to provide the necessary support to resolve these energy issues and make the project operational for the community.

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### 3.5 WHAT DID DIRE DAWA RAISE?

Dire Dawa, the second city administration of the Federation, was also among the locations where representative duties were carried out during the month of Megabit.

The **Honorable Dr. Biftu Mohammed**, who arrived in the city to lead the constituent-representative forum, received a variety of concerns from participants. It was reported that the electors raised issues they believed required urgent solutions, ranging from road infrastructure and clogged drainage systems to job creation and the high cost of living.

In response, the representative stated that for problems requiring immediate action within the administration's capacity, discussions would be held with the city leadership to ensure that solutions are provided promptly.



*The Honorable Dr. Biftu Mohammed, during her representation work.*

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### 3.6 WHAT WAS HEARD FROM SOUTH ETHIOPIA REGION?

Information from the House of Representatives indicates that the South Ethiopia region was another southern part of the country visited during the representation activities conducted in the seventh month of the year. The **Honorable Gizachew Ayele**, who arrived at the Bule electoral district in the Gedeo Zone, led a constituent-representative discussion forum where he explained the core activities carried out over the past six months and five years by the federal government and the House of Representatives, of which he is a member.

Similarly, the **Honorable W/ro Mekdes Desta** traveled to the Boditi town administration in the Wolaita Zone. Reports note that she provided briefings to her constituents regarding the major works performed and results achieved at both the House and national levels over the past six months. Meanwhile, the **Honorable W/ro Aster Beshir**, who visited the Wonago Woreda and town administration in the Gedeo Zone for similar representative duties, stated that representatives travel to their electoral districts twice a year to consult with the communities they represent on social, economic, and political issues and to gather public concerns.

concerns to the relevant executive bodies to ensure they receive proper attention and follow-up for implementation.



*Among the constituent-representative forums in the South Ethiopia Region.*

In the Wolaita Zone, the **Honorable Engineer Almaz Asale** was noted for holding discussions with her constituents in the Boloso Bombe Woreda. Additionally, according to information from the House, the **Honorable Dr. Woldeyes Debebe** visited the Woba Ari Woreda in the Ari Zone. He informed forum participants that the questions raised by the public are appropriate and assured them that he would submit these

## 4. PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

Among the parliamentary diplomacy activities carried out by the Ethiopian House of Representatives this past month of Megabit was the mission that sent **women representatives to India for training and experience sharing**. The delegation of high-level Ethiopian women leaders was led by the Deputy Speaker, the Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo. During the program, the Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo reportedly stated that celebrating Women's Day serves as an opportunity to evaluate whether gaps in participation and benefit-sharing across all sectors are being corrected and to ensure that meaningful change is being realized.



*The women representatives undergoing training in India.*

The training and experience-sharing visit aimed to gain insights into ensuring women's economic benefits, particularly through organizing cooperatives. The focus was on learning how small-scale initiatives can grow into large institutions and factories to ensure family prosperity, create jobs for numerous citizens, and

enhance domestic production capacity for national growth.

According to information from the House, the mission also sought to further strengthen the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and India. Additionally, the women leaders participating in the training celebrated International Women's Day with a grand event at the Ethiopian Embassy in India.

Another significant parliamentary diplomacy event this month highlighted the strengthening of the **multifaceted relationship between Ethiopia and China**. The Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs of the House of Peoples' Representatives held discussions with a Chinese government delegation.

During the meeting, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, pointed out that Ethiopia's infrastructure development over the past twenty to thirty years has been closely linked with China's development activities. He expressed confidence that this bond would continue to strengthen in the future.

Other members of the Standing Committee raised questions regarding China's foreign policy, specifically inquiring about planned health sector projects in Ethiopia. They also recalled the historic role of Ethiopian Airlines in anchoring China-Africa connectivity and asked about upcoming preparations in the aviation sector. In

response, the leader of the Chinese delegation, Sun Mingzi, revealed plans to develop health based Artificial Intelligence in the Amharic language for the benefit of the general public. Furthermore, the report from the House indicated that the discussions explored how China's integration of aviation and space activities could benefit Ethiopia, an aspiring continental leader in aviation that has already successfully launched its own satellite.



*Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs, with the Chinese government delegation.*

Another key event in this month's parliamentary diplomacy was the discussion between the **Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, the Honorable Tadesse Chafo, and another high-level Chinese delegation.** During talks with Wei Huan, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, regarding bilateral and regional issues, Speaker Tadesse Chafo noted that Ethiopia and China share a long-standing and robust strategic partnership. He emphasized that this diplomatic bond, rooted in brotherhood

and mutual benefit, has remained resilient even during challenging times.

The Speaker highlighted the growing investment by Chinese entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, noting its positive impact on manufacturing, infrastructure, job creation, and various other sectors. Furthermore, Speaker Tadesse Chafo called on China to support Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In response, Vice Chairman Wei Huan described the strong Ethio-China friendship as reliable, respectful, and carrying a significant vision for the future. He acknowledged Ethiopia's pivotal role in ensuring that China's diplomatic relations with Africa remain strong and productive. Additionally, the Vice Chairman confirmed that China would support Ethiopia's journey toward WTO membership.



*The Honorable Speaker Tadesse Chafo and the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, Wei Huan, during their high-level discussion.*

Another highlight of the month's parliamentary diplomacy was the dialogue centered on

strengthening the diplomatic ties **between Ethiopia and Armenia**. The Speaker of the House, the Honorable Tagesse Chafo, received the Armenian Ambassador, Sahak Sargsyan, at his office for a high-level discussion.

Their talks extended beyond exchanging experiences in trade, finance, and education; they focused on deepening the institutional relationship between the parliaments of both nations and enhancing cooperation within international and continental forums.

Speaker Tagesse Chafo noted that the bilateral connection between Ethiopia and Armenia is historically significant and long-standing, emphasizing the need to further solidify these ancient ties in a modern context.

Ambassador Sahak Sargsyan reaffirmed Armenia's commitment to elevating this historic friendship to a new level. He highlighted that Armenian investors are particularly keen on exploring opportunities within Ethiopia's technology sector, specifically leveraging their expertise in telecommunications. The Ambassador expressed a strong desire for Armenian businesses to collaborate with the Ethiopian government and relevant sector actors to tap into emerging investment prospects.



*The Honorable Speaker Tagesse Chafo, during his discussion with the Armenian Ambassador, Sahak Sargsyan.*

Another significant event in the parliamentary diplomacy of the month was the discussion held between the **House's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations and Peace Affairs** and the Honorable Thierry Mariani, a Member of the **European Parliament**.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Dr. Dima Nogo, explained that while Ethiopia lost its access to the sea through historical circumstances, securing its own maritime outlet has become a critical necessity given the country's current economic trajectory and rapid population growth. The Chairperson further emphasized that Ethiopia is committed to resolving this issue through peaceful means and mutual agreements, expressing hope that neighboring countries will respond positively to this pursuit.

Honorable Dr. Dima also noted that the forum was designed to foster a stronger institutional relationship between the European Parliament

and the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives, as well as between the legislative bodies of France and Ethiopia.

In response, the Honorable Thierry Mariani characterized Ethiopia's quest for sea access as timely, historical, and logically grounded. Recalling the historical processes involving the United Nations in the 1950s, Mr. Mariani affirmed his readiness to provide the necessary diplomatic support to help realize Ethiopia's objectives.



*The Standing Committee on Foreign Relations  
and Peace Affairs in Discussion with MEP Thierry  
Mariani.*

## 5. THE REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT THEMSELVES

### 5.1 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

As the month was Megabit, the women representatives celebrated International Women's Day, observed annually on Megabit 4. According to the House report, the occasion, commonly referred to as "March 8", was marked by various events under the theme: **"Women's Voice for Equality and a Prosperous Ethiopia."** The celebration was attended by the leadership and staff of the Secretariat of the House of Peoples' Representatives.

In his opening remarks, Ato Kereyu Banata, Representative of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary-General of the Administrative Sector, noted that this is a day to commemorate and sustain the struggle women have been leading for their rights and equality since the 20th century.

W/ro Hirut Enbiyaale, a Gender Affairs Expert at the Secretariat, stated during the program that the day serves as more than just a platform for recognition and honor; it is a vital time to examine the challenges that hinder women from participating equally in national affairs and to encourage the search for solutions.

The report noted the presence of several high-level officials and experts, including Dr. Nigussie

Meshesha, Deputy Secretary-General of the Professional Support Sector, and Andinet Adnew, Head of the Government Whip's Office. (For BRIDGE's observational insights on this celebration, please refer to the feature on page 45)

### 5.2 RESEARCH CONSULTATION FORUM

Another internal activity of the House this month was a research consultation forum organized by the Standing Committee on Government Development Organizations Affairs. The forum, titled **"The Role of Parliament in the Performance and Effectiveness of Public Enterprises and Their Contribution to Ethiopia's Homegrown Economic Reform,"** focused on evaluating the strategic impact of state-owned entities. The research was conducted under the leadership of the Standing Committee in collaboration with Addis Ababa University and Ethiopian Investment Holdings.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, the Honorable Melesse Mena, emphasized that state-owned enterprises play a pivotal role in driving the Homegrown Economic Reform and bolstering the national economy.

The Deputy Chairperson, the Honorable Dr. Eng. Sileshi Kore, noted that among the enterprises under Ethiopian Investment Holdings, performance levels vary from high to low. He explained that a coordinated national effort and reform initiatives are being implemented to

harmonize these performances and bring all entities to a standard level of effectiveness.



*A partial view of the consultation forum.*

### 5.3 DISCUSSION ON PUBLIC REPRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

Another major activity carried out by the House this past month involved **a session dedicated to its constitutional mandate of public representation**. According to the House's report, regional representation coordinators presented various social, economic, and political questions gathered from the public, which then became the subject of extensive deliberation. The discussion was led by the Honorable W/ro Meseret Haile, Deputy Government Whip, during which coordinators presented fundamental issues they had compiled through successive consultations with their respective constituents.

The coordinators highlighted several key strengths, most notably the ongoing development projects being executed by the government, the visible commitment of the representatives to listen to the concerns of the

public, and the government's overall dedication to providing timely responses to the questions raised by citizens.

To ensure that the public's concerns and suggestions receive appropriate responses and practical solutions from the relevant executive bodies, the coordinators strongly recommended the establishment of a special monitoring and follow-up system.

The report noted that representation coordinators from several regions and city administrations presented their findings, including the Sidama, South Ethiopia, South West Ethiopia, Amhara, Oromia, Afar, Benishangul/Gumuz, and Central Ethiopia regions, as well as the Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations.



*Honorable W/ro Meseret Haile, Deputy Government Whip, while presiding over the consultation forum.*

## 5.4 TRAINING FORUM

Another key event for the House this month was a training forum where the Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, the Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, underscored the vital importance of job creation training in building a prosperous Ethiopia. The Deputy Speaker made these remarks during a training session titled **“Self-Discovery for Public Leadership and Future Readiness”** which was organized for the representatives by the Ministry of Labor and Skills.

The Deputy Speaker noted that the training serves a multifaceted purpose; enabling the effective utilization of untapped natural resources, achieving a superior national economy, ensuring a legacy for future generations and fulfilling national missions with competence. She further emphasized that such training is instrumental in building the resilience needed to turn challenges into opportunities, urging that the program be viewed through a multi-sectoral lens.

The Minister of Labor and Skills, the Honorable Muferiat Kamil, also highlighted the necessity of these training sessions. She pointed out that they are essential for unlocking Ethiopia's vast natural resource potential and further strengthening the national economy.



*A partial view of the training session titled “Self-Discovery for Public Leadership and Future Readiness”.*

## 6. THE REPRESENTATIVES AND THE 2018 ELECTION

As the term of the 6<sup>th</sup> House of Peoples' Representatives draws to a close, various activities related to the upcoming 2018 General Election were carried out during the month of Megabit.

A key highlight was the call made by the Deputy Speaker, the **Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo**, for citizens to exercise their democratic rights by obtaining their voter registration cards. The Deputy Speaker emphasized that the right to vote and to be elected is a fundamental constitutional right. She further stressed that for the election to be free, independent, peaceful, and credible in the eyes of the public, every stakeholder must fulfill their respective responsibilities.



Honorable W/ro Lomi Bedo, Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, while obtaining her voter registration card.

According to the House's report, the Honorable Lomi Bedo shared these remarks on the day she obtained her own voter registration card at the Dugda Maki sub-station in the East Shewa Zone of the Oromia Region.

## 7. WHAT DID ETHIOPIA AGREE TO?

During the month of Megabit, the Ethiopian House of Representatives approved several key loan agreements. During the 12<sup>th</sup> regular session of the 5<sup>th</sup> working year of the 6<sup>th</sup> FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives, the House unanimously approved a loan agreement between the **FDRE and the Export-Import Bank of Korea**. The Honorable Dessalegn Wedaje, Chairperson of the Planning, Budget, and Finance Affairs Standing Committee, presented the report and the proposed resolution. He explained that the loan would be used to equip medical institutions with necessary supplies, resolve the shortage of medical equipment, improve health services, and establish an integrated health system.

This will be achieved by involving stakeholders, particularly donor countries, international organizations, and other health support partners, to provide better healthcare services to the community. Furthermore, the Chairperson noted that the loan features a low interest rate, a 15-year grace period, and a 40-year repayment term, which aligns with the country's debt strategy. The representatives approved the draft as Proclamation No. 1406/2026.

In the same session, the House also reviewed a supplementary loan agreement between the **FDRE and the Korea Export-Import Bank** for the

National Electric Power Transmission System Expansion Project. The Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige, Government Whip, read the summary of the draft proclamation. He stated that the government recognizes the importance of meeting electricity demand to sustain the rapid growth being recorded in the country's industrial, agricultural, and other sectors.

In this regard, he mentioned that the federal government signed a supplementary concessional loan agreement of over \$60 million USD with the bank on Tikmet 14, 2018. While the loan carries an annual interest rate of 0.01%, he noted it could become interest-free if essential materials are purchased from Korean suppliers. In addition to a 0.1% service fee, the loan includes a 15-year grace period and will be repaid over 40 years. Finally, the representatives unanimously approved the draft as Proclamation No. 1407/2018.

The third loan agreement approved by the representatives this month was between the **FDRE and the French Development Agency (AFD)** for a renewable, integrated, sustainable energy, and digitalization project. The Honorable Dr. Tesfaye Beljige read this resolution to the House, noting that the loan amount is 80 million Euros. He explained that the loan carries an annual interest rate of approximately 1.2% and a service fee of about 0.05%. Dr. Tesfaye added that the loan, which includes a 7-year grace period, will

be fully repaid within 20 years. The representatives approved the draft as Proclamation No. 1408/2018.

The fourth loan agreement reviewed during this regular session was a third supplementary loan between the **FDRE and the International Development Association (IDA)** for the Urban Productive Safety Net and Job Creation Project. Honorable Dr. Tesfaye presented this resolution, stating the loan amount is \$184 million USD. He noted that the agreement would create better job opportunities for the country's youth and strengthen the manufacturing sector. The Government Whip further mentioned that the loan is interest-free and will be repaid over 30 years, including a 6-year grace period. After discussing the agreement, the representatives unanimously approved the draft as Proclamation No. 1409/2018.



*The representatives while approving the loans.*

## 8. BRIDGE'S JURISPRUDENTIAL OVERVIEW: - REFORMS AND NORMATIVE DEBATES ON ETHIOPIA'S NEW CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AND EVIDENCE LAW

The Ethiopian legal landscape has undergone a profound paradigm shift with the formal statutory repeal of the 1954 Criminal Procedure Code. For sixty-five years, the imperial era code served as the primary procedural framework; however, its mandate concluded on Megabit 24, 2018, when the 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the House of Peoples' Representatives ratified the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law Proclamation No. 1410/2018.

This landmark instrument, spanning 228 pages and 444 articles, represents a comprehensive codification of procedural and evidentiary norms. By integrating previously fragmented rules into a singular, cohesive corpus juris, the Proclamation seeks to fortify the rule of law and institutionalize robust protections for constitutional liberties and human rights.

### LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND THE REMEDIATION OF JURIDICAL GAPS

The 1954 Code was promulgated in a pre-digital era, lacking the juridical capacity to address contemporary challenges such as cyber-anarchy, transnational financial malfeasance and sophisticated syndicated criminality. While it

provided the initial scaffolding for the Ethiopian judiciary, its efficacy was increasingly undermined by significant lacunae: most notably the absence of a dedicated Law of Evidence.

In the absence of a unified evidentiary regime, the courts were historically compelled to operate under a fragmented system, intermittently citing disparate provisions from civil and customary law or relying upon the persuasive but non-binding Robert B. Seidman's Draft. After a rigorous legislative gestation period beginning in 2013, the House has produced a finalized text featuring 195 substantive amendments. These revisions are designed to resolve long-standing procedural bottlenecks and provide a technologically adaptive, rights-centric framework capable of managing the evidentiary complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### THE CONTENTIOUS ARTICLE

Although the new law was ratified with 253 votes in favor and 2 against, the proceedings were marked by rigorous adversarial debate. With only 255 representatives in attendance, Honorable Dr. Abebaw Dessalegn raised a sharp procedural objection, arguing that a legislative instrument of such systemic magnitude should not be enacted while the quorum remained contested and representatives from the Tigray region were absent.

Despite prior instances where sessions were adjourned due to quorum deficiencies, the Speaker of the House, Honorable Tagesse Chafo, overruled the motion. He maintained that because the draft had undergone exhaustive legislative scrutiny over the past six years, immediate ratification was both appropriate and necessary.

Beyond the procedural concerns, the most intense legal friction centered on Article 25(3). This provision grants Oromia Regional Courts judicial jurisdiction over Oromia regional government institutions and employees located within the Addis Ababa City Administration. Representatives such as Dr. Dessalegn Chane spearheaded the opposition, presenting a federalist critique centered on territorial sovereignty. They argued that, “one regional state should not exercise judicial authority within the territorial jurisdiction of another”, asserting that such a clause infringes upon the city’s administrative autonomy and the principle of the rule of law.

The contentious article stipulates: - *“The Oromia Regional Courts shall have judicial jurisdiction over crimes committed against the institutions, documents, budget and similar interests of the Oromia National Regional Government located within the Addis Ababa City Administration, as well as over crimes committed by regional*

*officials and employees in connection with their official duties within the City Administration.”*

In response to the dissent, the Legal and Justice Affairs Standing Committee defended the provision as a Constitutional Special Interest right. The Committee clarified that the jurisdiction is limited to crimes committed specifically within the premises of Oromia regional offices found in the city, framing it as a constitutional entitlement. Speaker Tagesse Chafo concluded the session by stating that “some questions do not require a response”, emphasizing the profound labor invested in the document and affirming that its enactment was a vital step forward for the justice system.

## CORE COMPONENTS OF THE NEW LAW: KEY PROVISIONS AND SUBSTANTIVE REFORMS

The newly enacted Federal Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law introduces several transformative shifts aimed at modernizing the Ethiopian justice system. The primary pillars of this legislation can be categorized as follows;

### A. INTEGRATION OF PROCEDURAL AND EVIDENTIARY NORMS

Historically, Ethiopia operated with a fragmented legal framework where the Criminal Procedure Code was a formal statute, while the Law of Evidence existed merely as an unratified draft for

decades. The new Proclamation formally integrates these two vital legal pillars into a single, unified corpus juris. This codification is expected to eliminate procedural ambiguity and enhance the overall transparency and efficiency of the criminal justice process.

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## B. SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

Designed to operationalize the fundamental rights enshrined in the FDRE Constitution and international human rights treaties ratified by Ethiopia, the Proclamation provides an explicit roadmap for the protection of suspects. It meticulously defines the rights of individuals from the moment of arrest through to the final judicial disposition. The law imposes strict limitations on law enforcement to prevent the abuse of power. A significant milestone is the inclusion of provisions that strictly prohibit the admissibility of evidence obtained through coercion or inhuman treatment. By rendering forced confessions legally void, the law serves as a primary guarantee for the preservation of human dignity and the rule of law.

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## C. ADMISSIBILITY OF DIGITAL AND ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE

In response to the technological evolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the new law provides a comprehensive statutory basis for the recognition of digital and electronic evidence. This includes

video footage, audio recordings, computer data and social media communications. While empowering investigators to utilize technology, the law balances state power with individual privacy. Specifically, police orders for the preservation of electronic data are capped at a duration of one month to prevent indefinite state retention of private information.

The Proclamation establishes a rigorous judicial oversight mechanism for intrusive methods such as telephonic interception and covert surveillance, ensuring these actions only proceed under a strict legal framework and with express court authorization.

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## D. PROSECUTORIAL AUTHORITY AND THE INITIATION OF CHARGES

A seminal development within the Federal Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law Proclamation No. 1410/2018 is the formal institutionalization of Plea Bargaining as a recognized mechanism for the disposition of charges. This procedural innovation allows for the mitigation of sentencing or the withdrawal of specific counts upon an admission of guilt; however, it is strictly contingent upon rigorous judicial oversight.

To prevent the admissibility of coerced self-incrimination, the statute mandates a private judicial inquiry in which the presiding judge must verify that the defendant entered into the

agreement with full voluntariness. Furthermore, the historically expansive prosecutorial discretion to terminate proceedings in the public interest has been significantly curtailed. Such executive actions are now subject to specific administrative directives and judicial review, ensuring that administrative transparency is upheld and the potential for the abuse of discretionary power is minimized.

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#### E. PROTECTION OF WITNESSES AND INFORMANTS

To fortify the integrity of the adversarial process, the Proclamation introduces a robust statutory protection framework for whistleblowers and witnesses. This provides a necessary juridical shield against retaliation, particularly in cases involving syndicated or transnational criminality. This provision has received significant acclaim from legal scholars for safeguarding participants in the fact-finding process.

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#### F. JUDICIAL EFFICIENCY AND PROCEDURAL STREAMLINING

In pursuit of judicial efficiency, the law introduces Pre-Trial Conferences designed to narrow the triable issues and clarify evidentiary points before the formal trial commences. This is accompanied by strict statutory caps on investigative remand, which serve to eliminate indefinite pre-trial detention and uphold the constitutional right to a speedy trial.

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#### G. HARMONIZATION OF CUSTOMARY SYSTEMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Proclamation seeks to harmonize Alternative Dispute Resolution and customary conflict resolution with modern jurisprudential standards. To safeguard the rights of vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, the law mandates that community-based or traditional settlements must undergo formal judicial ratification. Furthermore, the law requires that these judicial reviews be finalized within a 30-day statutory window, ensuring that traditional systems operate within the bounds of universal human rights protections.

#### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THREE KEY POINTS

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In this manner, having briefly explored the changes contained within the new law, let us raise a few points as illustrations regarding three provisions of the law that we consider primary; these are the new procedures of the law, namely, Bail, Plea Bargaining, and Evidence Law.

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#### A. BAIL

As clearly stipulated under Article 19(6) of the FDRE Constitution, arrested persons have the right to be released on bail. This right is constitutional, and it is clear that it has many benefits in terms of respecting the rights of arrested or accused persons. The first benefit is

the ability to respect other constitutional rights, which is linked to the constitutional provision that no one shall be detained except in accordance with the procedure established by law.

It also protects the right to be released on bail so that the liberty of individuals is not eroded and they are not unjustly detained before trial. The new law views the right to bail as a fundamental right and the denial of bail as an exceptional circumstance. The law has also set out clear types of bail; these are: personal recognizance, individual surety, property collateral, or cash bail; however, bail may be denied when it is believed that the suspect will abscond, destroy evidence, or commit additional crimes if granted bail.

Furthermore, there may be restrictions on offenses where the sentencing threshold is grave (for example, those punishable by death or life imprisonment). When the court grants bail, it may issue orders for the suspect to surrender their passport so as not to leave the country, to be prohibited from certain locations, or to report and sign at a police station periodically. The right of a suspect who is denied bail or a prosecutor who has an objection to granted bail to appeal to a superior court is also clearly set out.

The primary benefit of such a provision is that when a person arrested on suspicion of a crime is released on bail, they gain better freedom to gather evidence and make other preparations

that enable them to defend themselves against the charges brought against them. Beyond assisting the efforts of justice bodies to find the truth in this process, it should be remembered that releasing a detained person on bail also contributes to reducing prison congestion in correctional facilities.

Releasing persons detained on suspicion of a crime on bail in accordance with the law is one method of protecting the human dignity and material interests of citizens by reducing the damage that may occur to the morale and material wealth of persons who may be released freely after the trial process.

The aforementioned matters notwithstanding, it can be understood from the provision set out in Article 19(6) that the constitutional right to bail is not absolute. Accordingly, the court may reject bail applications in exceptional circumstances prescribed by law. These circumstances include the types of crimes (for example, the crime of terrorism), the type of crime and sentencing threshold (for example, a corruption crime punishable by more than ten years), the sentencing ceiling (for example, if it is punishable by death) and the type of victims (for example, if they are children and women).

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## B. PLEA BARGAINING

Among the novel frameworks introduced by the new law is the system of Plea Bargaining. This is

a procedure whereby a suspect admits guilt and negotiates with the Public Prosecutor to secure a reduction in sentencing or the withdrawal of charges. While Plea Bargaining is a nascent concept within the Ethiopian justice system, its stated objectives are to economize time and costs while alleviating the judicial workload of the courts.

A suspect may initiate a plea negotiation after an arrest is made or following the formal filing of charges, provided it occurs before a final judgment is rendered. Admittedly, many observers express concern that while this practice is common internationally, in nations such as ours, it may facilitate corruption or embolden law enforcement to exert undue pressure on defendants to secure admissions.

There are two primary modalities of Plea Bargaining; negotiating to downgrade a grave charge to a lesser offense and agreeing to the original charge in exchange for a mitigated sentence. However, the court is legally mandated to verify that the negotiation was conducted with full voluntariness, that the defendant understood their procedural rights, and that the agreement does not undermine the public interest. Furthermore, the tribunal retains the discretionary power to reject the plea agreement. The law also stipulates that the Public Prosecutor must take the victims' interests and sentiments into account during the negotiation process.

Beyond the possibility of the victim receiving restitution through the agreement, the defendant secures a sentencing reduction; the state conserves resources otherwise expended on witness logistics and protracted litigation and victims may obtain compensation or closure without enduring a prolonged judicial process.

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### C. EVIDENCE LAW

The Law of Evidence is defined as the set of rules that distinguishes admissible evidence for adjudication or prescribes the methods utilized to determine questions of fact within judicial proceedings. It governs the facts in issue required by a court, the facts presented to prove those issues, and determines their relevance and admissibility. This legal framework regulates the types of evidence presented, whether through physical objects, documentary exhibits, oral testimony, judicial notice, or the admissions of the litigants, as well as the methodology employed to persuade the court of the veracity or falsity of a contested matter.

Consequently, the new law not only categorizes these elements but also explicitly stipulates the conditions under which evidence is deemed admissible or subject to exclusion. For instance, a confession extracted by police through physical assault or evidence obtained via telephonic interception without prior judicial authorization

(subject to specific exceptions) is legally inadmissible.

Furthermore, as previously noted, the new law provides a statutory basis for the admissibility of digital or electronic evidence. However, it mandates that modern investigative techniques, such as wiretapping and covert surveillance, be conducted under a strict legal framework and express judicial warrant. This is rooted in the principle that the presumption of innocence remains a cornerstone of the nation's constitutional framework. One of the fundamental evidentiary doctrines introduced by the new law is the standard of proof. A defendant may only be convicted and penalized if the Public Prosecutor proves the commission of the alleged offense; moreover, the threshold for establishing such guilt is rigorous.

The new law explicitly dictates that the Prosecutor must prove the charges “beyond a reasonable doubt” to secure a conviction. The statutory codification of this principle is regarded as a significant advancement in safeguarding the constitutional and international rights of the accused. While the capacity of law enforcement and the prosecution to meet this exacting standard remains a subject of debate due to institutional limitations, a capacity deficiency cannot justify a departure from universal human rights standards.

## AS A CONCLUSION

A Criminal Procedure Law must safeguard the security and peace of society and the state by effectively balancing two competing interests. On one hand, it is required to ensure that individuals who violate the penal law are brought before the law through a process that is effective, fair, efficient, and reliable, resulting in corrective and instructive punishment to protect public safety. On the other hand, it is expected to establish rigorous precautionary measures to ensure that punishment is administered only to the guilty and never to the innocent. Even when punishment is applied to offenders, the procedure must guarantee that it is executed in a manner that does not violate human dignity or the identity of the individual.

Above all, it is understood that the presumption of innocence serves as a foundational principle for both Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law. The meaning and applicability of this principle are anchored in the type of legal system a nation adopts. Although not explicitly written in previous national laws, it is well known that our courts have consistently applied the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard of proof. Linked to the presumption of innocence is the requirement that the Public Prosecutor must prove every element of the crime according to this established standard of proof.

In general, the new Criminal Procedure and Evidence Law can be characterized as a document that operationalizes the principle of the presumption of innocence and balances public peace with individual human rights. While the law has undergone careful scrutiny over the past six years, its success in implementation will be measured by the independence and consistent institutional capacity of the police, the prosecution, and the courts.

In this regard, BRIDGE believes that the forensic and investigative capacity of the police and the prosecution must be built up to a level that enables them to prove cases “beyond a reasonable doubt.” Furthermore, regarding the grievances heard concerning Article 25(3) of the new law mentioned above, we assert that rigorous monitoring is required to ensure these issues are resolved solely through legal interpretation rather than political narratives. Our organization also wishes to remind stakeholders that mechanisms must be established without delay to ensure citizens receive adequate awareness and education regarding their new digital rights and their right to bail.



## 9. BRIDGE'S EXPLORATORY INSIGHT: - THE TRAJECTORY OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION BEYOND MARCH EIGHTH

As the month of Megabit marks the 50<sup>th</sup> observance of International Women's Day in Ethiopia, the nation has commemorated the occasion with formal solemnity. Women parliamentarians celebrated the global event, which falls on March 4 annually. According to reports from the House Secretariat, International Women's Day was observed under the theme "Women's Voice for Equality and a Prosperous Ethiopia", attended by House leadership and staff. This event serves as the primary catalyst for BRIDGE's March insight, which seeks to provide a high-level overview of the historical evolution, contemporary challenges and current status of women's political participation and legislative representation in Ethiopia. To this end, we examine these fundamental inquiries through selected theoretical frameworks integrated with quantitative data.

### OUR WOMEN'S YESTERYEARS

In the history of modern Ethiopia, although formidable women such as Empress Taytu and Empress Zewditu were renowned for their leadership positions within the Nation-state and their significant roles during the Battle of Adwa,

institutional political representation for women is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the inception of Ethiopia's modern parliamentary history in 1923 during the era of Emperor Haile Selassie, women's representation was negligible. During that period, the only women visible in the public political discourse were a few spouses of the aristocracy, nobility, and military officers.

While the 1948 Revised Constitution provided the legal basis for women's suffrage, the first female representative was not elected until 1949. Consequently, women remained marginalized from high-level leadership positions; in the elections of 1957 and 1961, the number of women representatives was a mere 2 and 5, respectively. Although women's movements began to emerge during this era, they lacked the capacity to transition into potent forces of political influence.

The substantive political socialization of Ethiopian women, like many other modern political beginnings in the country, traces its lineage to the early 1960s. In a societal structure that perceived the political arena as a domain reserved exclusively for men, the emergence of women was significantly catalyzed by the Ethiopian Student Movement; a point upon which historians of that era unanimously agree.

Analysts indicate that while the Ethiopian Student Movement, largely centered at Addis Ababa University, did not permit women to establish

autonomous institutions free from male influence, attempts were made to represent gender centered political interests through subsequently established parties. Research suggests that parties such as MEISON and EPRP presented the “Woman Question” as a dual struggle of class and gender. Despite these attempts to define gender politics within their party structures and ideological leanings, the violent removal of these parties from the political stage resulted in a significant cooling of women’s political mobilization.

Upon the Derg’s assumption of power, the number of women representatives decreased to four; however, it is widely documented that women participated actively in the student movement and subsequent public demonstrations concerning women’s rights. The origins of organized female political participation are rooted in the ESM, where debates regarding the “Woman Question” contributed greatly to the development of political consciousness.

Following its ascent to power, the Derg established the Women’s Coordinating Committee in 1967, creating a pathway for women to move beyond domestic spheres and organize formally. However, while the regime’s ideology initially viewed the plight of women as double oppression (class and gender), after 1970, it adopted the stance that “class oppression supersedes gender oppression”,

thereby subordinating women’s issues to the victory of socialism. This effectively hindered the gender focused struggle intended to bring about substantive change.

The Women’s Coordinating Committee was founded in 1967, followed by the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women’s Association (REWA) in 1972. The Derg is credited with attempting to increase women’s participation numerically by structuring REWA down to the lowest administrative tiers. Nevertheless, since the association’s leadership consisted of members of the Workers’ Party of Ethiopia (WPE), women lacked the autonomy to draft their own agendas; thus, these associations served more as instruments for ideological indoctrination rather than platforms for genuine political participation.

While the 1979 PDRE Constitution was the first document to explicitly recognize women’s equality rights, it is recalled that the ongoing civil war prevented its practical implementation. Although the Derg believed it was interpreting Socialist Feminism by establishing wings like REWA, scholars who have studied the era disagree. These authors critique the Derg for utilizing women organized through REWA primarily for logistical support, such as cooking for soldiers, while making no significant effort to address their fundamental interests.

Relatively speaking, the TPLF is cited for making superior attempts during the armed struggle.

Contemporaneous chroniclers describe the participation of Tigrayan women as historic, noting the front's actions in dismantling the gender inequality deeply rooted in the society of that time. From restricting the age of marriage to implementing land reform programs, the TPLF is credited with enabling Tigrayan women to achieve greater empowerment than in previous eras. However, many believe that following the fall of the Derg, the party marginalized the women who had sacrificed for the cause.

Following the fall of the Derg in 1983, the EPRDF made national efforts to address gender inequality. The 1995 Constitution explicitly affirmed women's rights and mandated affirmative action to ensure their active political participation. Nonetheless, the prevailing conclusion for the Ethiopian state structure until at least 2010 remains that women were not adequately represented at all levels of power.

Following the 2010 political transition, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed took unprecedented steps regarding women's political representation. It is recalled that on Tikimet 18, 2010, he established a gender balanced cabinet comprising 20 members, half of whom were women. This was lauded as a significant departure from the previous situation where only 4 out of 28 ministers were women. Ethiopia received international acclaim for this move, following the experiences of countries like

Rwanda. Under this new arrangement, women began to occupy critical portfolios such as Defense, Peace, Trade, Science, and Finance.

Engineer Aisha Mohammed became the country's first female Minister of Defense, Muferiat Kamil served as the first female Speaker of the House and later as Minister of Peace, Meaza Ashenafi became the first female President of the Supreme Court, Birtukan Mideksa chaired the Election Board and Sahle-Work Zewde became the country's first female Head of State, marking a new chapter in Ethiopian history.

Undoubtedly, the growth of women's representation in the executive branch has been most pronounced. The percentage of female ministers rose from 10 percent in 2009 to 47.6 percent within just two years. While this shift appeared to confirm a new historical epoch in gender equality, the subsequent removal of several female appointees for various reasons seems to have cast a shadow over the initial acclaim.

## MECHANISMS OF PARTICIPATION: - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The fact that women's political participation remains significantly lower than that of their male counterparts necessitates a re-examination of how women engage in politics. In this regard, several theoretical arguments are pertinent.

Scholars primarily advance three arguments concerning women's participation. The first centers on women's intrinsic motivation to participate in politics. While researchers call this the 'first threshold', they argue that desire alone is insufficient. The existence of a conducive contextual environment is mandatory to translate this will into action. This includes a favorable political system and access to the socio-economic resources (financial and material) necessary for women to enter the public sphere. These conditions are facilitated by the proliferation of gender-centered movements or institutions that advocate for political representation to mitigate systemic injustice, thereby attracting women to the political arena.

The second theoretical perspective emphasizes the role of socio-economic and cultural variables. Proponents argue that women's political success is determined by their success in other social sectors. For instance, educational attainment is considered a critical determinant; women who are journalists, legal professionals, or business leaders are argued to be more successful in politics than their peers. The rationale is clear; success in these professions builds self-confidence, public speaking skills, and a deep familiarity with the country's legal and political landscape, facilitating a seamless transition into political roles.

Furthermore, the existence of a robust gender-focused movement is vital for integrating women's issues into the socio-economic and political agendas of the state. A society free from gender-biased perceptions is a final prerequisite; where the political culture is not defined solely by men and where 'doing politics' is not seen as alien to women, the empowerment of female representatives becomes more achievable.

The third analytical framework focuses on the electoral system and gender quotas. There is a broad scholarly consensus that Proportional Representation (PR) systems are superior to First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) systems for facilitating women's entry into politics. In a PR system, political parties are encouraged to field multiple candidates per district, incentivizing them to include women to broaden their appeal based on gender-centered policies. Conversely, winner-take-all systems tend to favor male incumbents, thereby diminishing women's participation.

Connected to this is the concept of district magnitude, the number of seats available in a given constituency. As the number of seats increases, competing parties are more likely to nominate women; if the number of seats is limited, women's opportunities for participation are eroded.

Another significant argument concerns the quota system, which researchers categorize into three types. The first is a legislative quota that reserves

specific seats in the legislature exclusively for women; a method recently adopted by several emerging democracies. The second is the voluntary party quota, where individual parties adopt internal rules mandating that a certain percentage of their candidates be women. Studies show that many parties adopt this when federal laws necessitate female participation. The third type involves a hybrid approach where all parties are legally mandated to set specific thresholds. Researchers note that while authoritarian regimes may rapidly include women to consolidate support through gender politics, established democracies often experience a more gradual process of inclusion.

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF REPRESENTATIVE RATIOS

Over the past thirty years, women's representation in the FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR) has undergone significant shifts. Political participation has increased markedly with each successive election cycle.

In the first national election in 1987, the number of women in the HoPR was only 15 (2.7 percent); this grew to 42 (7.7 percent) in the second term. In the third federal election in 1997, the number rose to 116 (21.4 percent). The growth continued in the fourth national election in 2002 to 152 (27.8 percent), and in 2007, women occupied 210 out of 547 seats (38.8 percent). In

2013, the share reached 42 percent. Consequently, women's representation in the HoPR has seen an average increase of 6.6 percent per election cycle. However, when looking at the overall thirty-year average, women have held only 23 percent of the seats, while 77 percent were held by men, indicating a gender composition that still leans heavily toward males.

It is also important to note that representation is measured by leadership roles such as Speaker and Deputy Speaker. While women have had better participation in the role of Deputy Speaker, only one woman has been appointed as Speaker in the history of the HoPR, suggesting that further legal and structural reforms are needed to ensure sustainable gender equality.

Extending our observation to the House of Federation (HoF), the data reveals a slower rate of change. In the first national election in 1987, only 7 out of 110 HoF members were women (6.7 percent). Unlike the HoPR, the highest representation of women in the HoF was recorded in 2007 (32.6 percent). However, this number decreased to 30 percent in 2013, largely due to the non-participation of representatives from the Tigray region following the conflict.

BRIDGE's analysis shows that over six election cycles, the male share in the HoF is 81 percent, while the female share is only 19 percent. This indicates that women's representation in the HoF is significantly lower than in the HoPR.

Furthermore, this lack of representation extends to the Council of Constitutional Inquiry, a high-level body where women's voices and perspectives remain underrepresented in interpreting the law and the justice system.

## WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF PEOPLES' REPRESENTATIVES

No.	Election Term	Number of Female Members	Share of Women (%)
1	1 <sup>st</sup> (1987 – 1992)	14	2.6%
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> (1993 – 1997)	42	7.7%
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> (1998 – 2002)	117	21.4%
4	4 <sup>th</sup> (2003 – 2007)	152	27.8%
5	5 <sup>th</sup> (2008 – 2013)	213	38.9%
6	6 <sup>th</sup> (2014 – )	197*	41.7%

*\*Note: In the 6<sup>th</sup> election term, or the currently sitting House of Peoples' Representatives, the female ratio appears lower in numerical total because of vacant seats in areas where elections were not held due to security challenges; however, when calculated as a percentage, it reached a historical high of 41.7%.*

## WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN STANDING COMMITTEES

No.	Service Term	Number of Standing Committees	Female Chairpersons (%)	Female Deputy Chairpersons (%)
1	1988 – 1992	9	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
2	1993 – 1997	12	1 (8%)	1 (8%)
3	1998 –2002	13	3 (23%)	4 (31%)
4	2003 –2007	16	4 (25%)	5 (31%)
5	2008 –2009	18	7 (39%)	10 (56%)
6	2010 – 2011	20	8 (40%)	10 (50%)
7	2011 – 2013	10	6 (60%)	2 (20%)
8	2014-	11	5 (45%)	4 (36%)
<b>Avg</b>	1988 – 2014	-	31.5%	30%

### Summary Points;

- \* Peak Chairpersonship; Women secured their highest proportion of Standing Committee Chairpersons between 2011–2013, presiding over 60 percent (chairing 6 out of 10 committees).
- \* Peak Deputy Chairpersonship; The period spanning 2008–2009 marked the only instance where the number of female Deputy Chairpersons reached 56 percent, effectively outnumbering their male counterparts in those leadership roles.
- \* Historical Average: Over the cumulative 26-year period analyzed, women's leadership participation within these parliamentary structures has reached an average of approximately 31 percent.

## WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF FEDERATION

No.	Election Term	Total Seats	Number of Female Members	Share of Women (%)
1	1 <sup>st</sup> (1987 – 1992)	110	7	6.7%
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> (1993 – 1997)	112	8	7.1%
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> (1998 – 2002)	120	22	18.3%
4	4 <sup>th</sup> (2003 – 2007)	135	24	17.7%
5	5 <sup>th</sup> (2008 – 2013)	153	50	32.6%
6	6 <sup>th</sup> (2014 – 2019)	144	43	30%
<b>Total</b>	1987 – 2019	774	154	19% (Average)

### Summary Points;

- \* **Historical Peak;** The highest level of women's participation in the history of the House of Federation was recorded during the 5<sup>th</sup> election term, at which point it reached 32.6 percent.
- \* **Comparative Representation;** Over the last six election cycles, the average female representation stands at approximately 19 percent, indicating a slight decrease when compared to the ratios observed in the House of Peoples' Representatives.

*\*All three of the quantitative data tables presented above have been compiled by Enderassie.*

## BRIDGE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As observed in our comprehensive overview, while the political participation of Ethiopian women and the corresponding gender ratios in parliamentary representation are influenced by broad political, social, and economic factors, BRIDGE has elected to focus exclusively on legislative and policy-oriented recommendations feasible within the Houses. Consequently, we wish to share the following strategic policy recommendations:

**LEGISLATING A MANDATORY GENDER QUOTA SYSTEM:** Although women's representation in the House of Peoples' Representatives increased during the EPRDF era, this growth was not legally mandated but relied on unwritten internal party directives. Under the current Prosperity Party administration, while high-level executive positions have been granted to women, a mandatory legal framework ensuring representation at the parliamentary level has yet to be established.

BRIDGE maintains that women's representation should not remain contingent upon the goodwill or unwritten directives of political parties. Therefore, to ensure that female representation is not subject to the temporary benevolence of a governing party, we believe it is necessary to explicitly stipulate a minimum quota (e.g., 30

percent or higher) for female candidates within the electoral law.

### BALANCING STANDING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP THROUGH GENDER PARITY:

BRIDGE's exploratory analysis reveals that women's participation remains low in critical Standing Committees such as Revenue, Peace, Foreign Affairs, Budget, and Economic Affairs. Consequently, BRIDGE asserts that when the House of Peoples' Representatives assigns chairpersons and deputy chairpersons, an internal parliamentary directive must be formulated to mandate a greater leadership share for women across all committees, particularly those focused on the economy and security.

### TRANSITIONING INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY FROM CENTRALIZED CONTROL TO INCLUSIVITY:

During the EPRDF era, the selection of candidates was governed by the principle of Democratic Centralism, which meant female candidates were often nominated via top-down executive decisions rather than grassroots demand. As the Prosperity Party has largely inherited this organizational structure, a similar pattern of high-level hierarchical control persists.

Given our previous analysis of the benefits of transparent systems, BRIDGE suggests that if parties establish clear, competitive recruitment processes free from central interference, it would create a national environment where women can emerge based on their own competence and

public support. As the Prosperity Party holds the majority of seats, its consideration of this recommendation would be of significant national value.

**FACILITATING FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES:** It is well-established that Ethiopian electoral campaigns require substantial financial and material resources, which studies indicate is a primary barrier to women's participation. BRIDGE believes the government and the National Election Board should establish mechanisms to increase state support for female candidates beyond the levels provided to men.

Such support would significantly contribute to ensuring that women are not marginalized from electoral competition due to financial constraints. Furthermore, we suggest exploring the establishment of a specific State Election Fund for women and a legal framework that encourages private donors to support female candidates.

**ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM:** Although the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> national election is expected to follow the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system; a winner-take-all model where the victorious party forms the government; BRIDGE wishes to remind the current House of Peoples' Representatives to explore options for transitioning the electoral system for future cycles. This system remains one of the structural obstacles preventing women

from entering parliament. BRIDGE emphasizes that transitioning toward Proportional Representation (PR) or a mixed-member system would pave the way for a more balanced representation ratio for women.

**ENSURING CIVIC SAFETY AND DIGITAL SECURITY:** While gender-based pressure in the past was often structural and less visible, today's female politicians frequently fall victim to overt insults, threats, and gender-based attacks, particularly on social media. BRIDGE underscores the necessity of establishing a robust legal protective framework to safeguard female politicians and public advocates, ensuring that perpetrators of verbal abuse and threats are held accountable. This intervention is vital for the encouragement of the next generation.

**OPTIMIZING THE LEGISLATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN:** It is undeniable that the House of Peoples' Representatives must create a conducive work environment by refining meeting schedules, providing childcare services and implementing strict regulations against sexual harassment. BRIDGE believes that such institutional measures would enable women to effectively balance their familial and political lives, thereby encouraging active participation in critical parliamentary deliberations and decision-making processes.

**STRENGTHENING DATA MANAGEMENT AND GENDER ANALYSIS FRAMEWORKS:** The House of Peoples' Representatives should possess a formalized system for conducting gender-responsive analysis to evaluate the impact of proposed laws and approved budgets on women. Furthermore, BRIDGE believes that if a contemporary data repository system, documenting women's representation at all levels, is strengthened through the House Communications Directorate, it would provide institutional benefits for policy

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

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” (ራሴ). “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 “Bitwoded-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” (Rep- resentatives). 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.

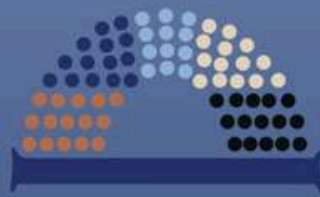
In this context, when we say “Enderasie”: on one hand, we have denoted it in alignment with the constitutional principle of ‘self-determination’ upon which the Ethiopian Federation stands, regarding the word “Ras” (Self). This means we have used a denotative translation to solve the “Rasie” within “Enderasie” 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 Wolaytta—Kal Atiya/Taga ton.

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#### **Disclaimer note;**

“All pictures whether of personalities or typographies featured in these monthly digests are sourced from the official pages of the House of Peoples’ Representatives Secretariat Office. Likewise, all data presented are drawn from this same source. BRIDGE assumes responsibility for the insightful observations, summaries and any interpretations thereof.”




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