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## ICT DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA

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P. O. BOX  
34282

TELEPHONE  
557459 128077

ADDIS ABABA  
ETHIOPIA

E-mail Address: eea@telecom.net.et

## Editorial

The last decades of the 20th century were the years of massive technological revolution. Every day the world is awakened to new and awe-inspiring findings and /or processes. These advancements in knowledge have elevated ideas and technology to the forefront of the array of inputs in the production and distribution of goods and services.

The revolution in information communication technology (ICT) has narrowed the space between individuals and nations. In a matter of seconds people everywhere in the world communicate with each other and transmit data and information. The Internet has vastly changed the way people do business and learn.

The emerging consensus is that nations must strive to harness the exploding technology and use it to improve the welfare of their people. Clearly the era of cheap and unskilled labour is over. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is bound to be an era of skilled and cheap labour. Indeed the survival and development of nations as well as the welfare of their people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would depend on the knowledge and skill that the people have accumulated and use in their respective activities.

Given this general drift, it should be obvious that for Ethiopia to reduce poverty and locate itself on dynamic growth and development trajectory it would need to position itself in a ways that would maximise the acquisition and utilisation of the fast unfolding knowledge. Such knowledge would increase the efficiency of resource use, and enhance its competitiveness in the global market.

Given the fact that information, communication technology is at the centre of the acquisition and distribution of new knowledge as well as its effective utilisation; the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Information Technology Professional Association (EITPA) held a workshop intended to explore the potentials as well as the need for creating an enabling environment for its growth and development.

The motivation and point of departure for this round table discussion was the appreciation of the facts that:

- I. ICT is of critical importance to the country's survival and well being.
- II. The potential exists both within the country and in the Diaspora to make the country a centre of excellence;
- III. There is an overwhelming need to increase the awareness of stakeholders on the necessity of locating the country on a fast ICT track.

This issue of the Economic Focus contains, in the main, the papers prepared and presented at the conference.

We have also included articles on PRSP and one on culture. ■

## Letter to the Editor

### Applauding Cultivation of Culture Conducive to Economic Development

I was very much touched by the bilingual articles presented in the *Economic Focus* of Mar-Apr 2002, which deeply impressed me to note the pertinence of understanding culture to the effort of bringing development of all aspects in this country. To my judgement, all the points raised by the contributors deserve ample attention as they have vividly stipulated the attitudes we have towards seeking progressive improvement. I was very much affected by the arguments in the articles which helped me reshape my thinking and at least start thinking rather in a different way than I used to towards work - an 'engine' to continuously change one's life for the better. A culture of work is a question of value, attitude, individual and collective behaviours, which give rise to and incarnate the spirit of work.

When referring to realities in Ethiopia, articles of Professor Mesfin Wolde Mariam and Dr. Berhanu Nega impressed me in their simplistic way of clarifying the unavoidable interdependent consequential relations between culture and development and their explanation with particular reference to the realities with us. This issue, I believe, should be broadened to the extent of forming a sound base to the clearer understanding of intellectuals at all levels. We can't just underestimate its significance in contributing a lion's

share to the ruined economic condition of present-day Ethiopia through its multifaceted reflections.

Let me state my belief from personal observation to argue the case for culture as a determinant factor to economic development in Ethiopia. Actually I came to realise that the community I was brought up in, and the kind of belief, customs and attitude they had followed rather tended to dominantly shape my present understanding about development than any other factor - be it education (in which I went through to the university level) or the working environment I am currently in. With careful reflection, I concluded that I was still thinking in the way my parents (illiterate in terms of formal education) used to. The only discernible difference is in my being an urban dweller, reader and attendant to progresses taking place around the globe, and hence echo those events through appreciation without even a damn effort to transform them into useful activities. I believe a sizeable number of my colleagues have fundamentally the same attitude as I in not allowing change in our attitudes and behaviour owing to changes that occur around the globe.

The other issue that is worth mentioning is government attitude and policy. I hardly doubt the fact that the current system of political administration pursued by the government in power i.e. ethnic based regional autonomy has something to do with the case

of undermining the role of culture to go in harmony with the best of economic development. It does not motivate exchange of worthy views, beliefs, and attitudes and in general good working culture across regions, as it does not permit easy mobility of people and resources mainly due to information and communication barriers. Thus this seems to have something to do with dismantling the way that leads to convergence of rational thinking towards development.

While the issue of culture and economic development with respect to the reality in Ethiopia has become a centrepiece by distinguished scholars, the next step is believed to originate and hence gain enormous consideration from the government. As I attempted to grasp from the articles, the effective approaches to development must be supported by country owned positive culture. In the strength of culture to be the 'engine' of progressive development, government must ensure to provide a sound governance framework, help to create a functioning institutional infrastructure, and enable advanced culture in people. To this end, the thinking should emphasise the importance of establishing institutional framework conducive to creating a cultural environment consistent with steps taken to economic empowerment. In this regard, I have a crude opinion of forming an institution that deals with identification, analysis, and eventually establishment of a pro-development culture

among citizens, of course without alienating the role of government officials in its realisation, through public discussion (like the one EEA is doing but with profound public involvement), intensive short term trainings and alike. The ideal institution would be better located in educational institutions where heated debates could be entertained with a relative degree of freedom. Needless to say, allotting a budget on the part of the government sufficient enough to execute the instituted duties to the desired and expected level is a necessity. As I stated earlier, the effort may include but not limited to allowing open discussion on the matter- like some attempts

done on poverty reduction strategy paper- targeting all sectors of life -intellectuals, government officials, grassroots level members of society.

Broadly speaking it is it difficult to capture the full circumstances of culture and development at this juncture. A revolution to cultivate culture to the evolvement of noble thinking needed for bringing an all rounded improvement at all levels must become the leading agenda and priority. We need to start questioning every aspect of our move: Are we really exerting efforts towards contributing to the emancipation of our society from poverty, or...? As a gen-

eral rule, let's start creating a future with better culture by unleashing the spirit of our young generation in the right direction. Reducing the material dominance of beliefs in abstracts in our existence; avoiding backward cultures deterring the motive for seeking progressive improvement; encouraging artful way of facing and dealing with difficulties; and sowing the good sense of proclaiming independence in our minds and doing what is right towards realising it.

Yayeh Yimer  
CBE ■

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ethiopian Economic Association/Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute is pleased to inform its esteemed readers that the '*Second Annual Report on the Ethiopian Economy*' is now in the printing Press and will be available soon for sale.

### DILBERT



International Herald Tribune, July 21, 2000

## COULD ETHIOPIA TURN ICT INTO ITS DYNAMIC COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE?

Eshetu Alemu

Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission

The Government needs to build up national capacity to exploit the opportunities made available by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to capacitate the implementation of the multifaceted economic development agenda of Ethiopia in its fight against poverty.

Ethiopia's large potential of its human resource can be leveraged as a comparative advantage to speed up its participation in the knowledge economy. The exploitation of such potential can be facilitated through the introduction of different policy instruments. In line with this, the Government of Ethiopia has embarked on a full-fledged national ICTs capacity building programme. The programme has sufficiently addressed the importance of:

- producing qualified trainees who can contribute towards developing innovative products and facilitate technology transfer, particularly for public and civil service delivery mechanisms;
- attracting the Diaspora to effectively support the implementation of national programmes by assisting the government in decision making process as well as by partnering with the local ICTs private sector and encouraging foreign investors; and
- supporting professionals and institutions involved in responding to national ICTs

deployment requirements and focusing also on export-oriented products and services.

It is therefore quite understood that, if ICTs is strategically and wisely deployed in order to massively educate the young generation and enable SMEs, we can clearly anticipate its impact in its contribution to the national employment creation, good governance and penetration into the global market as well as positive impact on economic development.

The Government of Ethiopia is committed to speed up the pragmatic process in its capacity building programme. Thus, it solicits a strong and active participation of and partnership from all stakeholders to cope with the challenges of the new development order.

The ICTs capacity building programme would like to support the process that enables the role ICTs can play in the economic development structure.

"ICTs can have an immense direct impact on the lives of the poorest. Provision of ICT allows the poor to access markets, to demand services, to receive education, and to learn new skills. ICTs give a voice to the disadvantaged – a voice that enables the poor to use their own knowledge and strengths to escape poverty traps. Indirectly, ICTs have an ever-increasing role in promoting sustainable economic growth through the promotion of exports,

especially in services, through improving the function of markets and increasing the quality and efficiency of government services."<sup>1</sup> ■

### Expressions & Phrases

If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Bible  
Mark  
ca. 70

There is strength in the union even of very sorry men.

Homer  
Iliad  
ca. 700 B.C.

To win without risk is to triumph without glory.

*A vaincre sans péril on triomphe sans gloire.*

Pierre Corneille  
The Cid  
1636

If a donkey brays at you, don't bray at him.

George Herbert  
Jacula Prudentum  
1651

<sup>1</sup> C. Kenny et al. Information and Communication Technologies and Poverty. April, 2001.

# THE NEED FOR CRITICAL MASS OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY – IS ETHIOPIA READY?

**Afework Temtime and Ahmed Hussien**

Ethiopian Information Technology Professionals Association (EITPA)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world is in a continuous wave of transformation as a result of developments in the new knowledge-based economies. It is well recognised that the knowledge economy offers unprecedented opportunities. But the gains will not be automatic. It will benefit countries in proportion to their success and investment in building human capacity ready for the knowledge economy. Human resource development is not a new concept. It requires investments in education in schools and universities, as well as formal and informal training for youth and adults. What is different today, however, are the new opportunities and challenges in building human capacity for the knowledge economy.

## 2. WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY (KBE)?

Prof. Lester Thurow, an MIT professor, in his book entitled "knowledge-based economy", defines KBE as "the economy based on innovation, extension, and application of knowledge."

The KBE represents a strategic new era that human beings are entering. In this new environment of social and economic development, knowledge and information are recognised as being at least as important as physical capital, financial capital and natural resources as a source of economic growth. The rich economies are coming to depend increasingly on the creation, distribution, and use of information and knowledge, involving both technology and human capital. The most distinctive feature of the knowledge-based economy is that it uses knowledge pervasively as both an input and output throughout the economy. A report by the OECD estimates that more than half of total GDP in the rich economies is now knowledge-based, including such industries as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, education, and television.

So knowledge is becoming the most important source of growth as well as productivity. Information means competitive advantage, and knowledge leads to progress. The keys to the strong economic and cultural growth of a nation's future are successful

generation, acquisition, diffusion, and exploitation of knowledge.

## 3. WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

The new economy, knowledge-based economy, information society - these are a few of the terms people use to denote the new global order. Whatever the term one uses, it is clear that we are in a period of dramatic change. Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and knowledge are transforming the landscape of the global economy.

This ICT revolution is opening new possibilities in at least three ways. First, the new order is allowing a leapfrogging over old technologies. For example, cellular phone technology is now viable for villages and poor neighbourhoods that have never been wired for traditional phones. The number of mobile lines is already becoming larger than the number of fixed lines in most developing countries including African countries. Second, new technologies are providing links to global knowledge recorded electronically. Technical advances have made it easier to find knowledge anytime, anywhere to solve problems. Third, IT is drastically improving access to quality education, through computer-assisted learning and Internet-based distance learning. China, for example, has already trained more than 2 million college students through radio and television education.

But these new opportunities have also raised the stakes. Technical progress is shrinking the world to a global village. This makes us more interdependent and also subject to greater competition and new necessities. One of these necessities is finding investments in people a greater priority than ever. This is especially because the competitiveness of people and societies now depends on their skills, knowledge and command of information.

## 4. WHAT ARE THE NEW EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY?

Investment in people starts with education, but what are the new educational needs? Traditionally, a country's economic growth and social progress have been

strongly correlated with educational attainment. Today, the new economy calls for changes in education: not just more education, but substantially different education.

Beyond the mastery of basic subject matter and literacy, success in the knowledge-based economy requires a mix of both soft and technical skills. The soft skills include the ability to think critically, communicate well, and work effectively in teams, interdependence, willingness for continuous learning, creativity, risk taking, decision making, entrepreneurship, flexibility in the face of change, and language skills. Technical skills are required at all levels—basic to advanced. Knowledge workers, particularly those in the ICT discipline are the key players in the knowledge-based economy. The ICT discipline is so vast covering a wide range of specialisations. Following are some of these specialisations:

- Artificial intelligence
- Computer science
- Computer engineering
- Computational science
- Database engineering
- Computer Graphics
- Human-Computer Interface
- Network Engineering
- Operating Systems
- Performance Engineering
- Robotics
- Scientific Computing
- Software architecture
- Software engineering
- Systems security
- Aerospace engineering
- Bioinformatics
- Cognitives Sciences
- Digital library systems
- E-commerce
- Financial services
- Genetic engineering
- Information science
- Information systems
- Public policy and privacy
- Instructional design
- Knowledge engineering
- Management Information System
- Multimedia design
- Telecommunications
- Computer security
- System administration
- Web development
- Database administration
- Etc.

Over the past two decades, the skills needed to succeed have changed radically, but not the skills taught in schools. In most developing countries, there is a mismatch between the skills of graduates from col-

leges and universities and the needs of knowledge-based economies. Most graduates are not equipped with sufficient skills for coping with today's life and work. Some have low knowledge skills despite high levels of education.

Learning in schools, colleges and universities is important but not sufficient. Policies for the workplace and family settings are needed, and employers' role in promoting knowledge-based skills is critical. Above all, education now needs to prepare workers for lifelong learning—much of it informal—so that they can continuously upgrade their skills. For this, people must be flexible, adaptable, practised in taking the initiative, and able to absorb new knowledge and skills.

The knowledge economy thus calls for an education system that is tuned to the needs of the market, sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing demands, and encourages lifelong learning.

## 5. CHALLENGES AND RISKS

Throughout history, the success of economies has been based on knowledge. What is different today is that knowledge is becoming the most important factor for competitiveness and social welfare. This poses new challenges that may not always be easy to recognise.

At least three risks can be identified. One risk is of further excluding people who lack the right education. Among some of the developing countries there are serious concerns that the advances in knowledge may be adversely affecting unskilled workers and increasing unemployment. Certainly technical change and organisational change is widening the wage gaps between skilled and unskilled workers. The pain of exclusion will be felt even more strongly in developing countries, where access to education and IT is much more uneven. Unless governments take immediate steps to address this risk, the poorest people and countries will be left behind and increasingly marginalised. To reduce the risk it calls above all for improvements in access to basic education, and increasingly in secondary and higher education as well. It also calls for labour market reforms that will permit people to use their skills in an increasingly flexible way.

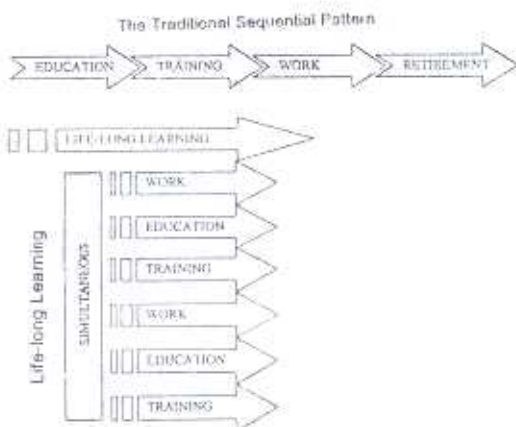
The second risk is the brain drain, which occurs when countries lose the competition to retain, regain, or attract skilled labour. The brain drain from poor to rich areas and countries is, of course, not a new problem. But the position that knowledge now occupies—as a key source of comparative advantage—has been speeding up the movement of skilled people to places where they can most easily turn knowledge into wealth. The United States is now attracting many of the brains of the world for this reason. Since

1979, China has sent 300,000 students for training in the US, but only about 100,000 have returned. A recent BBC article shows that "up to 100,000 people are believed to have left South Africa over the last three years, and 70% of skilled South Africans still in the country say they are considering emigrating, despite government calls for them to stay and help their country". To reduce the risk of brain drain, countries need to provide a policy environment that facilitates and rewards knowledge-based activities.

The third risk is of losing the competition for capital investment. In the global, competitive economy, capital investment follows human resource capacity. Singapore, for example, developed its highly skilled workforce within the context of a strategy to attract foreign direct investment in high technology industries. China has had exceptional success in its publicly sponsored high technology and science zones, where foreign-owned enterprises now account for three fourths of the exports and labour productivity is twice as high as in the rest of the economy.

### 6. RETHINKING ABOUT EDUCATION SYSTEMS

To contain these risks of a widening knowledge gap, and ultimately an economic and social development gap, governments can do a lot to catch the train of the knowledge-based economy so that the digital divide becomes a digital dividend, the knowledge divide turns into a knowledge dividend. Moreover, the knowledge-based economy is changing the traditional education and work pattern—from sequential model of learning to lifelong learning as depicted in the following diagram:



Based on the successful experiences and research findings, it is believed that countries may want to act on three fronts.

- Increasing emphasis on quality
- Providing opportunities for on-the-job training –

- lifelong learning
- Reforming education and capacity building
- Generating financial resources for human capacity
- Mobilising the Diaspora
- Improving the institutional, policy and regulatory frameworks

### 7. ETHIOPIA'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Ethiopia should play a key role at least in the Horn of Africa region. If the majority of the over 60 million population are properly educated, it will indicate the great potential that the country has in producing a critical mass of human resources required for a knowledge-based economy. Within the country itself, regions are very diverse with rich positive cultural values. This diversity provides Ethiopia ample opportunities for sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences to help one another build capacity for the new economy. As one of the most populous country in Africa and indeed in the world, Ethiopia has enormous potential to tap and a lot to contribute. As for all countries, Ethiopia's competitive edge and prospects for sustainable development will be decided by its people's ability to create, acquire, share, and use knowledge.

Ethiopia, being located in the Horn of Africa, has a very conducive time zone that attracts big ICT businesses based in States and Europe that do business around the clock – 24 hours a day. Ethiopia's proximity to the Middle East can also be considered as one of the comparative advantages.

The fact that many regional and international organisations are based in Ethiopia makes the country favourable for knowledge-based activities. Furthermore, the main medium of instructions in schools, colleges, and universities is English; making it conducive for the production of a critical mass of English-speaking workforce that can deliver knowledge-based products and services by tapping into international market as India and other English-speaking East Asian countries do.

But as it was explained earlier these potential gains will not be automatic. They will build up relative to the effort Ethiopia makes to take advantage of them. The stakes are high. People and countries with the capacity to participate in the new economy will reach unparalleled levels of prosperity. Those who lack the right knowledge and skills will increasingly be left behind, without the ability to improve their living standards, to manage their environment sustainably, or to provide a decent start for their children.

### 8. STATUS OF ICT HUMAN RESOURCES IN ETHIOPIA

Recent developments in the country show that public



institutions are being strengthened in terms of program diversity, infrastructure, human resources, and etc through the government's recently launched capacity building and civil reform programmes. Furthermore, ICT programmes are being introduced in the newly established regional colleges and universities. The new national curriculum that introduces ICT courses at high schools is also encouraging.

The private institutions that deliver ICT training, products and services are flourishing. Currently, it is estimated that there are over 100 such companies in the country compared to insignificant numbers a few years ago. Private IT colleges and certification centres are also on the rise.

It is observed that there is great program diversity in terms of the level and content of IT courses offered. The main programmes that are conducted by higher education institutions are computer science, information science, information technology, electrical and computer engineering, and management information system (MIS). Courses are offered starting from basic and special training levels to advanced levels at diploma, degree, post-graduate diploma and Masters levels.

The annual intake capacity of both the public and private institutions is estimated to be around 2000 considering both their regular and extension programmes. Starting from the academic year 2002/2003, it is estimated that there will be about 1000 IT graduates per year in the country. This figure is extremely low compared to even some developing countries including some of the Sub-Saharan African countries.

In reference to ICT human resources in Ethiopia, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed. These include:

- Very low level of annual production of IT manpower (only 1000 people)
- Local demand is not strong enough
- Over production may lead to brain drain and unemployment
- Further delay cannot be affordable in making skilled workforce available—time is against us.

Despite these challenges, there are a number of factors that contribute to the strength and huge potential that the country has in terms of developing a knowledge-based economy. These include:

- Cheap and dependable, highly motivated and dynamic young workforce
- Local market is potentially big
- Recently, more attention is being given by the government to ICT programmes
- Some efforts are underway to make the investment policy more favourable
- There is a capacity to produce abundant work-

force in the ICT sector

- Entry to the ICT market and global competitiveness is cheap and easy
- Ethiopia has potentially strong Diaspora of about 1 million people

## 9. THE WAY FORWARD—RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethiopia has a great potential for developing a critical mass of human resources for a knowledge-based economy in a short period of time. However, concrete actions have to be taken RIGHT NOW!

There is an enormous need to empower all citizens with knowledge by providing opportunities for lifelong learning programmes both in public and private institutions. Moreover, strategies should be developed that provide ICT skills for all at all levels. Apart from encouraging the IT curriculum in schools, extensive internship and apprenticeship programmes should be put in place that encourage the young professionals to acquire practical and functional skills and work experiences.

Considering the dynamism involved in the ICT sector, serious attention must be provided to keep the quality and standard of IT curricula by devising a mechanism whereby they can be reviewed on a regular basis.

Private-public partnership mechanisms should be developed to strengthen the capacity of existing educational establishments in terms of Internet access, reference materials and books, etc. Furthermore, a lot has to be done in strengthening relationships with the world leading IT companies such as Microsoft, Oracle, CISCO, etc. in order to expand the opportunities for producing world class IT personnel that can be competitive in the global market.

One of the opportunities that ICTs offer to developing countries such as Ethiopia is the enhancement of distance education programmes. Therefore, such programmes should be strengthened to produce the workforce required for a knowledge-based economy in a short period of time.

Furthermore, the development of IT Parks, Centres of Excellence, Think Tanks and professional bodies such as the Ethiopian Information Technology Professionals Association (EITPA) should be encouraged and strengthened.

Implementation of these activities requires clearly defined and articulated collaborative and joint activities of all stakeholders. Everyone has a lot to contribute. Government, private sector, civil societies and professional bodies, academia, etc. have a key role to play in the process of harnessing ICTs for development in general and producing the required workforce to develop a knowledge-based economy in particular. ■

# RETHINKING OUR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: THE NEED TO UTILISE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY ICT

**Mulat Demeke**

Addis Ababa University

The challenges of development in Ethiopia are obviously complex and considerable. Only a well-thought-out policies and strategies, based on objective and honest evaluation of the weaknesses and strengths of the socio-economic conditions and taking into account new developments in the global environment, could improve the prospect of reversing the pattern of poor growth and development observed over the last 30 or 40 years. The objective of this presentation is to contribute towards the design and formulation of a more appropriate development strategy.

The paper is organised as follows: section 1 discusses the social and economic problems, while sections 2, 3 and 4 review untapped potentials, visions of our development strategy, and the importance of ICT, respectively. Concluding remarks are given in section 5.

## I. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Ethiopia is facing a number of social and economic problems. Some of the most serious problems are high degree of poverty and unemployment, rampant HIV/AIDS infection, rapid population growth and

migration on a massive scale.

### (1) High Degree of Poverty and Unemployment

The poverty situation in Ethiopia is clearly deplorable as reflected in our per capita income and daily encounter in the streets of Addis Ababa. It is also disturbing to note that the poverty situation is not showing much improvement over time.

The proportion of people living below the absolute poverty line, defined as consumption below 2200 calorie/day—minimum requirements, was 44.2% in 1999/00, compared to 45.5% in 1995/96. The decline (only 1.3%) is not statistically significant. Poverty is also more widespread in rural than in urban areas: 45.5% in rural as opposed to 36.9% in urban areas in 1999/2000.

Unemployment is a major concern in urban areas. The number of people queuing up for a few available jobs such as janitors and messengers often exceeds two to three thousands. The growing number of beggars and street children in the capital city and other major towns is also growing rapidly.

Underemployment is a serious

problem in rural areas. Parents are sharing their small plots with their grown-up sons who have no where to go. The average farm size, which is declining from time to time owing to the population pressure, now stands at less 1 ha. About 40% of the holdings are below 0.5 ha. A minimum of 2 ha is required to fully absorb the family labour of a typical rural household, the level of underemployment can be roughly estimated as 50%.

### (2) HIV/AIDS

The rate of infection is rising and some 7.3 to 10% of the adult population is reportedly HIV positive. The country is losing its prime labour force with serious social and economic implications.

### (3) Migration on a Massive Scale

Large-scale migration to America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa among professionals and the youth has depleted the human resource of the country. It seems that many people have chosen to flee the country, perhaps believing that there is no hope given the complex problems. Brain drain, coupled with HIV/AIDS, has undermined the

possibility of rapid economic recovery.

At the root of the social and economic problems are the weak economic structure and inadequate institutions. The country is heavily dependent on weak agricultural sector. Some 85% of the employment and over 50% of the GDP originates from agriculture that is characterised by low level productivity/yield.

Severe land degradation, inadequate technological input and small and subsistence farmers with limited capacity to invest are among the major structural constraints of Ethiopian agriculture. More importantly, frequent drought has remained a major threat to sustainable production increase. On average, 10.3% of the total population was affected each year by drought between 1981 and 2001. Some 6 million people require food assistance during the current year, although the year is generally regarded as favourable.

The non-agricultural sector is dominated by petty and informal activities. The formal trade sector is being replaced non-formal and often contraband operators. High rate of unemployment has given rise to too many street peddlers and kiosks.

Agricultural raw materials dominate the export sector. The recent price collapse of agricultural raw materials has made the sector more vulnerable. Exports now cover less than 30% of the country's imports. Lack of a national port (land-lockedness) rendered the external sector costly and risky.

## (2) Weak Public, Private and Civic Institutions

Government institutions in Ethiopia are characterised by limited capacity and instability. Public services are extremely inadequate because of bureaucratic delays and inefficiency. The Federal ministries or regional bureaux have little capacity to formulate long-term and broad visions and strategies for their respective sectors.

Private institutions are very weak and young as most of the enterprises are less than 10 years old. Lack of an enabling environment and inadequate institutional and regulatory framework are among the major problems constraining the development of the private sector. Institutional and effective partnership between the government and the private sector has yet to be established.

Civic organisations are also weak and inexperienced. They have limited experience in advocacy and lobbying. The farming community has no union of its own to defend/protect its interest. Basic democratic values have yet to influence the behaviour and action of individuals and the society. Negative and unfavourable attitudes have undermined collective efforts to bring about local, regional or national development. There is always the tendency to emphasise differences, not similarities and common destinations. Polarisation and marginalisation, instead of accommodation and consensus, dominate political activities. Nearly all social, cultural and economic issues are politicised, hence the chances for

partnership and solidarity are limited.

## II. UNTAPPED POTENTIALS

It might seem preposterous, but the prospect of development in Ethiopia is not totally bleak and gloomy. There are many untapped potentials and bright spots that could help change the fortune of this country.

### 1. Beautiful Landscape

The country is endowed with spectacular geological and geographic contrasts, including mountains and plains, valleys and desert, and rivers and lakes. Semen and Bale Mountains, Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana (origin of Blue Nile), and Rift Valley Lakes are only a few of the natural wonders. The country's unique and diverse flora and fauna match the geological and geographical contrasts. There are about 800 species of birds, of which 26 are found exclusively in Ethiopia. A total of 103 separate mammal species are found in the country, seven of which are endemic. Rich plant genetic diversity has made the country prime gene centre of several cultivated crops. Undoubtedly, the terrain, vegetation and wildlife are very attractive to tourists.

### 2. Rich Historical and Archaeological Relics

Ethiopia has a long history of independence and its own script, unique in Africa. Associated with the long history are the Axum obelisks, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibella, the Castle of Emperor Fasiladas at Gonder, the isolated and secluded churches in different parts of the country, the town

of Negash in Tigary- historical place for the Muslim community. Ethiopia is also the origin of mankind, Luci or Dinknesh. The country is truly a tourist paradise.

### 3. Capital of Africa

The Organisation of African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the International Livestock Centre (ILRI) have their headquarters in Addis Ababa. The city also hosts one of the largest diplomatic community in Africa. The potential for conference tourism is obviously very high.

### 4. Large Diaspora

Skill and capital of the Diaspora have yet to be exploited. The Diaspora has played a key role in the development of India, China and many former socialist countries of Europe. There are a large number of scientists, engineers, IT professionals, university professors, medical doctors, etc. that can make valuable contributions.

### 5. Rich Water Potential

In spite of the recurrent drought, the country has a number of rivers that can generate substantial hydroelectric power and irrigate very large agricultural area.

### 6. Hard Working People

This is more clearly demonstrated by Ethiopians working in America, Europe and many parts of Africa. In addition to the respect many have earned as dedicated and hard working employees, many have become prominent businessmen. Given the opportunity and the

right environment, Ethiopians can perform very well in all areas, including in the academic and business fields.

### 7. Stable Macroeconomic Conditions

Owing to the strict fiscal discipline, inflation rates have remained low and exchange rates stable. The dominance of the subsistence sector in the economy have also contributed to the stability.

### 8. Political Commitment to Alleviate Poverty

The Agricultural Development-Led Industrialisation (ADLI), the National Extension Intervention Programme (NEIP), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and Food Security initiatives of the Federal and Regional governments indicate the commitment of the government to alleviate poverty. The education, health and road sector development programmes are also important components of the overall rural development efforts.

## III. MOTIVATIONS AND VISIONS OF AN APPROPRIATE STRATEGY

One of the main motivations for a more appropriate development strategy is to improve the country's tarnished image. New and credible initiatives are necessary if the image of famine and poverty is to change and the country is to regain its respect among the international community. The need for a strategy that aims at reducing dependence on weather and/or addressing the chronic problems of food insecurity cannot be overemphasised. Concrete plans

must be drawn to end the custom of appealing for food aid every year.

Another motive for a new strategy is catching up with the rest of the world. It is important to realise that several countries have registered enormous growth within a span of 10 years. The per capita income Tanzania, for instance, increased from 130 USD in 1989 to 240 USD in 1999. The increase was from 250 USD to 320 USD for Uganda over the same period. For Korea the increase was from 4,400 USD to 8,490 USD. By contrast, Ethiopia's per capita declined from 120 USD in 1989 to 100 USD in 1999.<sup>1</sup> Because of the oil discovery, Sudan is likely to become the Saudi of East and Central Africa in the near future.

Ethiopia also needs to compete in the world market. It is impossible to ignore the implications of globalisation, liberalisation and IT revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. WTO, African Union, COMESA and other trade institutions require each country to operate under a free trade arrangement.

The need to compete and change the image of the country implies a complete restructuring of the economy. Such restructuring should generate gainful productive employment, and change the structure of the economy and the export sector. The focus of the employment strategy should be on creating jobs outside agriculture, with the eventual goal of reducing the relative share of agriculture in the total

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2000/2001, Attacking Poverty, 2001, Oxford University Press.

employment. Unless non-agricultural employment is created for the rural youth, there will be further decline in farm size and fragmentation, reinforcing rural poverty and subsistence production. A target of doubling or tripling per-capita income should also be an important component of the employment strategy.

A change in the structure of the economy is necessary to reduce the share of agriculture in the GDP. It should be noted that economic growth and development is characterised by a process in which the share of agriculture in a country's labour force and total output declines. Such structural change has been achieved even in countries such as Kenya where agriculture accounted for only 20% of the GDP in 1999, compared to 52% in Ethiopia.

Country experiences all over the world and empirical studies here in Ethiopia have conclusively proved that GDP growth is positively and significantly influenced by exports. Export is definitely the engine of growth. There is a need to reduce dependence on agricultural raw materials if the performance of the export is to improve and serve as engine of growth in Ethiopia. New and more reliable sources of foreign exchange must be identified.

The vision to change the structure of employment, economy and export calls for a programme aimed at developing the non-agricultural sector. Various activities within the service and manufacturing sectors should thus be given special attention. As a land-locked country, Ethiopia's

comparative advantage is likely to lie in providing services and high value products to the rest of the world.

Tourism is perhaps the most promising activity in Ethiopia. In addition to generating foreign exchange, the tourism industry has the potential of creating considerable employment opportunities. A similar opportunity exists in the construction industry and consultancy services. Ethiopian contractors have the capacity to compete with international companies in the local markets, i.e. save/retain foreign exchange. They can also compete in Africa or COMESA countries, generating foreign exchange and employment, provided the necessary support is provided. Similarly, the consultancy sector can be developed to provide services to African countries.

Educational and training service is another strategic area. Both public and private universities and colleges can grow into centres of excellence for tertiary education and short-term training. A substantial sum of foreign exchange could be saved by offering local opportunities to thousands of students and trainees that normally travel abroad in search of training and education.

Ethiopia, like any country in the world, has the chance to benefit not only as a consumer in the knowledge economy, but also as a producer. There is a need for expanding cyber-cafes and other sites for public internet access—schools, clinics, etc..

There are ample opportunities in the manufacturing sector for

substituting imports to save foreign exchange and generate employment. Some of the manufacturing activities with significant potential could be:

- Leather products including footwear
- Labour-intensive garment industry
- Traditional clothes - traditional weaving
- Textile mills - need to be salvaged
- Silver and goldsmiths
- Plastic goods, ceramic products, building materials, etc.

Agricultural products with niche market should also be identified to generate foreign exchange. Some of these products may include:

- flowers, vegetables and fruits
- spices
- gums and incense
- live animals and livestock products, etc.

The primary objective of developing the non-agricultural sector and special commodities with export potential within agriculture is to mobilise sufficient resources for the transformation of the rural economy. Foreign exchange is required to meet the huge task of making agriculture more productive - buy technological inputs and machinery, and build irrigation and road infrastructure.

It is also important to note that developing the service sector and some manufacturing activities may not require a huge investment. Only improved policies, institutional support and partnership (with government, foreign investors, etc.) could be sufficient. Attracting

foreign investment is also possible where capital and new technology are indispensable. Foreign loans could also be sought provided the money is spent on projects with adequate returns.

#### IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF ICT IN TRANSFORMING THE ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY

ICT is at the centre of social and economic transformation in the 21st century because of several reasons.

a. In the network age, economic well-being is information and knowledge based. As observed by Stewart<sup>2</sup>: "Knowledge is more valuable and more powerful than natural resources, big factories or flat bankrolls. Knowledge and information, not just scientific knowledge, but news, advice, entertainment, communication, service have become the economy's primary raw materials and its most important product... Knowledge has become the pre-eminent resource." Developing countries can no longer expect to base their development on their comparative labour advantage, i.e., cheap labour. The comparative advantage that now counts is the application of knowledge. ICT is a competitive weapon and a strategic tool

b. Investment in ICT, like investment in education, can equip people with better tools and make them more productive and prosperous

c. There is a chance to leapfrog intermediate stages of

development with ICT. Costly investment in time, resources and the generation and use of knowledge can be avoided.

d. Training in IT is relatively less sophisticated and inexpensive. Both public and private institutions now offer IT training and several students graduate each year with diplomas and degrees in IT related areas. Recently, the Addis Ababa University launched a special program in IT and admitted 1000 students for B.Sc. training in Computer Science and Information Systems.

e. ICT has extensive sectoral applications:

##### i. Trade and Export

E-commerce has become a popular means of business, saving time and money, and creating better relationships with customers and markets. It is an inexpensive and rapid medium that may reach a wide range of customers around the world. For instance, EthioLink, a private company in Ethiopia, has developed EthioMarkato web site for export of traditional clothes and food items. A Kenyan cooperative has established a relationship with the US-based company to sell its produce directly to North American consumers.

##### ii. Manufacturing

ICTs facilitate the systematic capturing of information at all stages of design and marketing.

##### iii. Transport

The use of advanced transport telematics (ATT) has improved road safety, maximised road

transport efficiency, and contributed to solving the problems of congestion, pollution and resource consumption. Advanced Cargo Information System is now widely applied in sea and road transport.

Air transport is one of the most information-intensive industries. Online-tickets or ticketless air travel are now available in many airlines.

##### iv. Banking and financial services

Banking and finance are also information-intensive activities. In Ethiopia, the banking sector needs to start credit card payment system and internet to provide standard services—such as Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) payments. International tourism and business interactions are nowadays unthinkable without such modern system of payment.

##### v. Tourism and travel industry

Tourism and travel have become one of the fastest growing segments of the internet. Computerised reservation systems and hotels with standard IT services are among the minimum requirements for travellers.

##### vi. Education

High speed communication networks are enabling teachers in different countries or locations to develop courses jointly. Teachers and learners could obtain materials using new technology, transforming education and enabling people to develop new skills. For instance, African Virtual Univer-

<sup>2</sup> T. A. Stewart, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organization*, London: Nicolas Brealey Publishing Company, 1997.

sity is providing top quality scientific training and on-line reference materials to 13 African countries using the Internet and latest information technologies. Distance education or e-education has transformed the method of teaching.

#### vii. Health

Virtual patient records can be created by combining information from geographically separate databases. Tele-medicine can provide medical care to people in isolated places. It allows remote consultation between health professionals.

#### viii. Agriculture and the environment

ICT applications areas in agriculture and environment include Global information systems (GIS), Global positioning systems (GPS), Land information system (LiS), etc. All are used to impart information directly to farmers about new practices and systems from national and international agricultural research centres as well as other sources.

#### ix. Government

ICT can make public service more efficient and less costly. Virtual Civil Service—civil service that never sleeps—is being applied in countries such as Singapore. Government websites provide up-to-date information round the clock on the internet. Online procurement is solving critical problems for the government. When government buys goods and services on line, it realises three benefits:

a) cost saving - reduced purchase and fulfilment cycle time

b) lower administrative costs  
c) increased transparency of the procurement process

A switch from the traditional system to online procurement resulted in a saving of 10 to 22% in the USA.<sup>3</sup> There is no room for dark alley negotiations and secret handshakes under online procurement.

### V. CONCLUSIONS

There is a need to explore all possible opportunities of growth and development in Ethiopia. The potentials and pitfalls of every sector and economic activities need to be closely examined. Similar panel discussions on tourism, construction industry, consultancy services, manufacturing, etc., could shed light on what can be done to tap unused potentials. Panel discussions, workshops and conferences would help us liberate our thinking from the mindset of the 1960s and 1970s.

The private sector is critical in spearheading the economic transformation in Ethiopia. Given the size of unemployment and underemployment, job creation should be viewed as the most important contribution of the private sector.

This country has missed so many opportunities in the past. No effort was made to benefit from export promotion and import substitution in the 1970s and 1980s. It would be disastrous if the country is to

miss another opportunity this time—the opportunity presented by the ICT. The risk of further marginalisation could be much higher and extremely costly. According to UNCTAD, a UN agency: "Although the costs of using ICTs to build national information structure (which can contribute to innovative 'knowledge societies') are high, the costs of not doing are likely to be much higher."

It is critical that we all work together for the common goal of saving the nation. Individual and isolated efforts cannot help in the era of networking, partnership, interaction and integration. Partnership and networking between government, private sector, civic organisations, individual private companies, local and foreign companies are necessary to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The ongoing partnership to build Athletes Village should be expanded to build Technology Park so as to give hope and better future for the young and energetic youth and professionals of the country. The motto of development should be:

- be the first, not only competitive or
- Innovate or evaporate

A more optimistic local catchword is ይቻላል (ከቡር ገኛ) or 'it is possible' ■

<sup>3</sup> M. M. Dorothy, 'E-Commerce initiatives for the Public Sector: Online Procurement as a powerful tool for maximizing budget resources' in Berhanu Mengistu and E. Vogel (eds.) Proceedings on Governance and Sustainable Development: Promoting Collaborative Partnerships, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2001.

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# DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAPACITY FOR COMPETITIVENESS: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA

Lishan Adam\*

## I. INTRODUCTION

ICT presents a significant opportunity for economic development in Ethiopia. It has a potential to contribute to the reversal of its social crisis. Ethiopia has been suffering from long standing social and economic problems centred-around wars, food insecurity, lower human development, brain drain, weak entrepreneurship culture, lack of financial resources, marketing skills, limited domestic market and a complex red tape. The country has limited options but it needs looking for niche sector for economic development. The accelerating ICT industry would not only provide an enormous opportunity for the growth of the country but also create a sense of revitalisation through increased flow of knowledge. However, the timing, positioning and actions determine whether Ethiopia could benefit from the fast sliding window of opportunities through ICTs. This Paper analyses the potential for competitiveness through ICTs for Ethiopia and makes suggestions on possible strategies.

## II. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS TO ICT DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA

Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to ICT development in Ethiopia shows that despite long standing bureaucracy and the regulatory environment, the sector has a potential for growth. The ICT sector requires low start-up capital, less risky for entry to the market by small and medium enterprises. A growing African ICT market provides an opportunity for firms in any country to benefit from regional and international market. Being the capital of Africa, Addis Ababa's location presents ample advantages for participation in the African market.

Ethiopia has talented young people eager to embark on the ICT venture. A recent survey shows that there are about 4500 young people working for over 120 ICT companies, public institutions and Non-

Governmental Organisations. The figure is expected to grow to a critical mass of 20,000 ICT experts in the next five years. Among these are champions that would like to see the "leapfrog" in the sector for social and economic development. The Ethiopian Information Technology Professional Association (EITPA) and a few key individuals with extensive international and national experiences have been promoting the development of ICT in the country.

Recent improvement in the telecommunications sector and donors commitment has also created hopes for growth. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), a Country Assistance Strategy of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) has a strong ICT components.

Recent initiatives by the government to "leap-frog" in economic development by harnessing knowledge and ICTs has also created an impetus. A number of important projects that may have potentials for ICT growth have been started. The government intends to equip high schools with ICTs where new technologies are being introduced as a vocational subject. The government has also taken some measures in improving the ICT training both at universities and continuing education levels to enable Ethiopians to compete in the information age. The proposal by the Faculty of Information Technology of the Addis Ababa University to bring together different departments, such as information science, computer science and electrical and computer engineering, could also pave a way for innovation in the country.

The Government has also approved an ICT policy that intends to guide long term development goals in the sector. The policy focuses mainly on aligning information technologies with the key sectors. However, it has equally become important to promote ICT as key economic sector that contributes to foreign exchange and Gross Domestic Product. This requires building a capacity in ICT to compete globally particularly in software, telecommunica-

\* Email address: Lishana@hotmail.com



tions and ICT enabled services.

There is a small but vibrant private sector in the country. Recent surveys show that there are over 120 small ICT service companies of which about 20 are participating in international teleservices. Competitiveness of such a sector would lead to new revenue producing activities, new sources of employment, the acquisition of new skills and knowledge leading to improvements in social and cultural development. Ethiopia has a thriving digital Diaspora that is involved in a wide ranging ICT projects such as - managers, systems consultants, applications consultants, web developers, data encoders, systems analysts and designers, programmers, network engineers and database administrators. The Diaspora remains a key technical and financial resources for the creation of a vibrant local ICT sector at home.

Ethiopia has also seen a proliferation of ICT training institutions that cater for the growing ICT job seekers. The desire to acquire skills to attain upward social mobility among young people and increasing competition for excellence among students has been observed in a number of occasions. Nevertheless Ethiopia still faces a considerable amount of challenges that need urgent attention. Among the key challenges and weakness are:

- Lack of modern ICT skills particularly with regards to management, marketing, technical writing and advanced tools built around components and objects in distributed networking environment Computer science graduates are often trained in outdated tools and languages.
- There is virtually no venture capital and foreign direct investment in the ICT sector in Ethiopia. In addition there is limited government support to the fledgling ICT sector in the country.
- Economic backwardness did not only create fragmented ICT sector but also made the local market insignificant. Thus there is a strong need for focusing on export market.

The limited exposure of small and medium enterprises to the international market poses another challenge. Enterprises also suffer from high turnover of skilled human resources.

Red tape and structural barriers are among the key threats to the growth of the ICT sector. The dysfunctional legal system and weak financial institutions and barely functioning regulatory framework are also other barriers. Furthermore Ethiopia needs to develop a recognisable reputation in the ICT sector to meeting specific standards outlined by the International Standards Organisation.

It is important to note that the ICT sector has been growing over the last ten years regardless of these

problems. Thus, it is possible to build a robust ICT sector in the country by twisting around some of the above challenges and threats. The sector provides ample opportunities for cross-border e-services, conventional business applications development, content and web development, and enterprises resource planning applications. The ICT sector is politics and ecology friendly – one of the “tension free” industries for developing countries. The adoption of ICTs as a key economic sector would also improve the visibility and image the country. It is one of those sectors where the Diaspora can contribute to the development of the country irrespective of distance and time constraints. Table 1, summarises the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats outlined above.

Table 1. Summary of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low start-up capital</li> <li>• favourable African market, human resources Intensity, limited distance constraints</li> <li>• cheap labour and young people eager to learn</li> <li>• Support of government through ICT policy</li> <li>• Donors support (CAS, PRSP, UNDAF)</li> <li>• Telecom sector Improvement</li> <li>• Availability of champions (EITPA, time-out...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-border e-services for employment, foreign exchange, investment,</li> <li>• Social and economic development through diffusion of knowledge</li> <li>• Politics and ecology-friendly Industry</li> <li>• Diaspora participation</li> <li>• Better visibility and image</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of modern skills (marketing, management, advanced)</li> <li>• lack of venture capital and foreign investment</li> <li>• Limited government incentive (concessions)</li> <li>• Economic backwardness small local ICT market</li> <li>• Limited exposure to international market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red tape and structural barriers – customs, bureaucracy,</li> <li>• Weak financial and legal institutions</li> <li>• Undefined Intellectual Property rights</li> <li>• Inadequate telecommunications infrastructure</li> <li>• High turnover of skilled human resources</li> <li>• Inadequate standard in use of major languages</li> <li>• Recognisable standard</li> </ul>

The analysis above shows that success in a dynamic information society requires moving away from developing strategies and policies to fast track projects that produce lasting impact on economic development. A fast track strategy calls for a number of steps:

- 1). Ethiopia needs to complement its cyclical, lower-wage jobs in agriculture and manufacturing to service industries that have better potentials.
- 2). Ethiopia should be able to harness diversity of cultural and social settings and capitalise on resilience, resourcefulness and high sense of responsibility of its citizens.
- 3). There is a need for opening new avenues for job creation to enable the country to absorb the growing unemployed out of school youth.
- 4). There is a limited window of opportunity as many countries in Africa and elsewhere move ahead in building vibrant and competitive ICT industries and knowledge workers. Complacency in the knowledge society would not help any nation.

A fast track economic transformation through ICTs requires the creation of enabling environment for the development of the telecommunications sector and creating the building blocks for the emergence of a vibrant ICT industry.

### III. DEVELOPING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA

One of the obstacles for development of knowledge society is the level of telecommunications infrastructure. Despite some effort by the incumbent operator to improve the situation, the telecommunication infrastructure in Ethiopia is insignificant even by African standards and decades behind the demands. The Internet services standard in Ethiopia is the lowest in the world. Telephone density is about .3%. It is less than the .5% average for sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that there are about 15,000 Internet users throughout the country yielding a density of 1 user per 4,000. This is far behind of the African average of 150 users.

It is altogether difficult to advance ICT for development under the current telecommunications setting. Box 1 shows some of the short and medium term steps that needs to be undertaken by the government to improve the telecommunication sector in the country.

Comparative analysis of the ICT industry in Ethiopia and other African countries shows that the industry is small and fragmented and inward-oriented. Yet, the ICT sector has been experiencing rapid growth, becoming increasingly export oriented. Although the accurate data on size of the industry is not available, it is estimated that there are about 120 ICT companies engaged in sales of computer peripherals, providing training and customising software. A few are engaged with activities related to tele-services (software development, web design etc.) for companies abroad. These firms employ about 2000 people with an average of 10 people per firm. The estimated ICT related services is about \$10,000,000 a year and expected to reach

\$600,000,000 within the next five years if enabling environments are put in place. Among steps to nurture the ICT sector in Ethiopia are:

- Putting in place private sector development strategies that cover various incentives ranging from providing adequate infrastructure to concession such as tax holidays and start-up funding; and
- Development of ICT incubation centre that provides a venue for innovation and interaction.

Establishment of ICT incubation centre is a key step to transform the fledgling sector to become a contributor to the GDP of the country. The following section describes the characteristics of an ICT incubation centre, lesson from other countries and the steps to be taken by stakeholders to establish and operate a national digital park in Ethiopia.

#### Box 1: Short Term Policy and Regulatory Changes Required to Improve the Telecommunications Sector in Ethiopia

- Liberalisation of Customer Premises Equipment including VSAT to enable users to buy bandwidth
- Enhancing the technical competence of staff of the incumbent operator to provide quality services
- Liberalisation of the Internet and its content sector
- Liberalisation of cellular and all value added services
- Developing guidelines for a national Domain Names Management
- Increasing international bandwidth to over 100 Mbits so as to lease lines and build a robust international backbone
- Revising tariffs to enable extensive use of the Internet by average people
- Reduction of ICT equipment taxes
- Change of management of the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation to make it efficient
- Building the capacities of the regulator in order to enforce quality of services, licensing, universal access, tariff, resource management and dispute resolution

### IV. TRANSFORMING ICT SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA THROUGH A NATIONAL DIGITAL INCUBATION ZONE

The development of ICT through an incubation centre could provide a fast track approach for meeting the ICT needs of Ethiopia. The terms technology park, digital park, ICT free Zone are used to describe complex large area hosting a variety of companies or organisations operating in high-tech and knowledge-centred businesses. The establishment of an ICT Free Zone (IFZ) through public and private partnership that features first class facilities, high-speed network connectivity, direct international backbone and tax and legal incentives could provide a new avenue for transformation of the ICT sector in Ethiopia. Such a park could act as a one stop shop

for all ICT companies which seek good working conditions. The Park would have inexhaustible bandwidth and power supply, intelligent buildings, minimum regulatory overheads, maximum flexibility in the choice and use of space at a minimal cost.

Such an ICT Free Zone would have a significant impact on attracting the Diaspora and multinational companies, increasing foreign earning and promoting information and communication technology businesses. It would support training programmes both at the university level and in continuing education for adults to enable Ethiopians to compete at all levels. It could provide opportunities for attracting foreign direct investment in other sectors.

The ICT park could help to curb the level of youth unemployment. It would create a sense of confidence to the majority of young people aspiring for excellence. It would open new avenues for school leavers. A medium size ICT park could create over 100,000 jobs that would have impact on over a million citizens.

The creation of ICT incubation centre would also enhance the delivery of government services that facilitate transparent administrative support, empowerment of citizens and satisfying their right for information. The snow ball effect on industries and small businesses would also be high. In addition:

- It would act as a kernel for knowledge creation and innovation in Ethiopia. Tenants would be able to turn innovative ideas to products, secure employment and contribute to the growth of industrial and intellectual capacity of the country.
- It puts little pressure on land, environment and other resources
- It will improve the use of information technology for improved governance and creating more jobs and also as a means for enhancing the standards of living of those working in the park and their families
- It will bring cooperation between educational, business and research entities and help to build stronger cluster of IT-intensive education

Tenants of a digital park would have a wide range of business opportunities that will be facilitated by the availability of incentives and facilities. Among the major business opportunities are:

- Gathering and organising data from physical documents such as legal records, warranty cards, medical records into computer readable formats, data conversion and processing,
- Consumer market research
- Software and web development
- ICT project management
- Financial and accounting services

- Data search services
- Document processing abstracting
- Applications development
- Application services provision and hosting
- Web services management
- Database design and development
- Computer networking and data communications software development
- ICT services to industry including process control software design, CAD/CAM applications
- ICT services to government
- Management of research and development projects
- Technical and quality consulting and evaluation
- Embedded software development smart card technology
- Basic office services
- Enterprise resource planning
- Animation and e-business services

The ICT parks would also help to carry out innovations intended to solve some of the development challenges at national levels. These include applications aimed at supporting rural productivity by developing systems for market information, providing timely weather forecasts, application for gathering and disseminating information on agricultural issues, government incentives and promotion measures, advance scientific tips and tricks to increase yields, etc.

Worldwide it is now recognised that technology parks have positive impacts on the development of small companies, offering an environment of benefit to all inhabitants through the use of common infrastructure and incentives. Technology parks are the sites for attraction of scientists, entrepreneurs and investors. Form Silicon Valley in the United States to Elghazala, in Tunisia, technology parks have become magnets to universities and research institutions, attracting corporate and multinationals and fuelling business startups. The May 2000 edition of Wired magazines listed 46 top sites that are regarded as venture capitals on ICTs. These capitals were rated based on the incentives they provide such as venture capitalists, the availability of good universities and research institutions in the area, presence of multinational companies and the business and entrepreneurship drive of the population.

Technology parks have also become quite common way to support and promote enterprises, to move innovation into the market and to progress business to technology. Countries such as India, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, Philippines, Singapore have made deliberate efforts to establish technology centres through various legislative incentives such as investment priorities, special economic zone acts and innovative financial and technical packages. These countries are reaping the benefits of ICTs for their overall social and economic development.

A number of African countries have also announced initiatives aimed at establishing free ICT Zones. The Egyptian Ghiza incubation centre just outside of Cairo, Mauritian ICT Free Zone, Mozambique's National ICT Centre, Senegalese Technopole, South African Gauteng Spatial Development Initiative and the Cape Town Intelligent City Initiative are just few examples. African countries are not only planning to use ICT for local development but also working towards tapping the increasing ICT employment needs of developed countries. Globally it is estimated that over 5,000,000 workers are needed over the next five years. Ethiopia should begin thinking along similar lines.

The digital park would offer the following major services:

- Infrastructure including high bandwidth Internet connection, video conferencing and secretarial services. The Park should then have ample and up to date telecommunications facilities and an abundant supply of telephone lines that allow high speed transmission of data across the world using end-to-end digital connectivity and fiber optics technologies. In addition it should have clean uninterruptible power supply, computer security and building monitoring and maintenance systems – fluctuations controls, firewalls, link to research institutions and innovation
- Rental offices or ateliers, modern office equipment, meeting facilities
- Access to educational and training services with universities
- Technology transfer, cooperation, collaborative projects and databases.
- Steady management team that is actively engaged in fostering the transfer of technology and business
- Lifestyle amenities and business support facilities for hotels to restaurants and clinics.

The location of a technology park is a very important aspect that should be determined through spatial analysis. Factors such as convenience, environment, costs are often taken into account. A detailed feasibility study should be carried out to meet the key environmental and technical requirements.

A substantial amount of initial investment capital is needed for establishing a technology park. A technology park can be established as a business venture. Experience in other countries shows that it often takes about five years for the business centre to be profitable, thus a public and private partnership is an essential component. Most parks in developing countries depend on public or government financing during the first phase. In the case of Ethiopia a public-private financing should be explored. Other key stakeholders would include the

federal government, regional administrations, donor agencies, banks and the private industry. Donor funding would be useful in providing the seed funds to carry out a fast track feasibility study and initial capital costs. The government could also set aside a high technology fund received through various mechanisms including increase of 1% tax or a certain percentage on privatisation revenue. Regional administrations could also contribute their share in the technology park. Financing from future tenants would also be an option.

Experience shows that a number of factors stand as a criteria for successful implementation of a national digital park. Such an initiative should have a high-level government support. Prime ministerial or parliamentary proclamation and resources commitment is necessary for creating a robust ICT sector through an ICT incubation centre. Government has a key role in funding early stage of the park. In addition the government needs to promote public and private partnership and create enabling environment for the digital park and stimulate small and medium enterprises. The government, through the Ethiopian Investment Agency, should pro-actively introduce promotional activities to make Ethiopia an ICT hub for private investment. It has to take deliberate efforts in promoting businesses including awarding enterprises that participate in the development and realisation of the national ICT park.

Favourable legal and regulatory environment and investment climate is a precondition for the success of the technology park. These would include possible tax incentives, tax credits, accelerated depreciation for investment on R&D facilities, and reduced import tax on research equipment. Such incentives are invaluable for attracting local private sectors and multinational companies.

The Park needs a champion that has a high level of political connection an energetic, and charismatic person that would take the project from conception to finalisation. At institutional level, the role of the champion can be assumed by the government itself or by a high-level private sector agency supported by the government.

The following activities are required to set up an ICT park in Ethiopia:

- Feasibility study on the mission and cost of a national ICT Park
- Selection of partners and resource mobilisation
- Generation of support for the ICT park
- Registration and solicitation of future tenants
- Selection of the site of the park
- Preparing feasibility design on building and construction of facilities
- Securing start up financing
- Awarding contracts for construction of facilities

based on an international building standard  
– Setting up of the incubator and marketing

Success of the technology park is largely dependent focusing on what can be achieved in short and longer terms. Long and short term strategies should be developed based on development needs, research and innovation requirements and needs of the private sector.

## V. DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR THE ICT SECTOR

The quality of the labour force is one of the major prerequisites for transformation of the ICT sector in Ethiopia. The creation of incentives and enabling regulatory environment and establishing a digital park cannot be achieved without associated high-level professional training of technicians and research within institutions of higher education. Effort towards building knowledge workers at all levels including introducing ICT to students in schools and colleges is critical to guarantee the transformation of the ICT sector. Although universities in Ethiopia began to offer courses in computer sciences, they lack faculty proficiency in modern hardware technology and software programming practices. It is inconceivable to develop skilled human resources without adequate faculty. A significant effort should be made to recruit and retain the best faculty and researchers in the ICT sector.

The information economy on the other hand does not only require cutting edge experts but also middle level technicians that install and manage systems. Some of the jobs may not require cutting-edge skills. These range from technical drafting services, to data processing of insurance claims, financial transactions, etc. Thus current efforts by private sector to introduce ICT courses aimed at middle level technicians should be encouraged. However, the training needs to be geared towards export markets – a clear requirement for reforming the curriculum to accommodate databases and distributed networking environment and improvement in English language and technical writing.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The ICT sector presents economic benefits including job creation, foreign exchange earning and contribution to the GDP. Its social benefits are enormous. ICTs could improve public services, empower citizens through increased flow of knowledge and education. It is a prerequisite for knowledge economy. These benefits cannot be accrued without significant effort in improving the current telecommunications infrastructure in Ethiopia by creating enabling environment aimed at competition and universal access to information and knowledge. It

also requires strategies aimed at transforming the fledgling ICT sector. A digital park that bundles physical, regulatory, fiscal and innovation incentives to the private sector may lead to the creation of ICT sector that contributes to the national economy.

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# PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRSP PROCESS\*

**Jalal Abdel Latif**

Addis Ababa University

## INTRODUCTION

I am happy to be here to speak to you today about the PRSP. We welcome the opportunity offered by the PRSP, while at the same time being well aware of the challenges that it poses. If done well, the PRSP has the potential to play a major role in building consensus and a national social contract to combat poverty. If done badly, it can be counter-productive and undermine existing progress towards poverty reduction. It is therefore in everyone's interest to ensure that PRSPs are well designed, and based on genuinely participatory processes.

While there is increasing civil society recognition of the opportunities offered by the PRSP process, there is also significant concern in a number of areas.

## GENERAL CONCERNS

Many NGOs in several countries have voiced concerns about the quality and nature of civil society participation in the preparation of PRSPs. Some of the specific concerns include:

- The fear that the PRSP could tend to undermine national sovereignty;
- The inclusiveness or non-inclusiveness of the PRSP process;
- The cost of implementation of the PRSP;
- The sequence of implementation of the PRSP, which affects the quality of the process;
- The real interest and commitment of African governments to effectively involve civil society in the PRSP process;
- African government's flexibility in accepting proposals from civil society;
- The willingness of governments to consult as widely and objectively as possible;
- The capacity of governments to engage in ef-

fective and wide consultation with civil society;

- The flexibility of the IMF and World Bank in accepting people's contributions to the PRSPs;
- The relationship between PRSPs and existing national plans;
- The relationship between PRSPs and HIPC; and
- The challenge of transparency, as transparency on the part of government and the international community is vital to the preparation of a truly participatory PRSP.

NGOs have expressed particular concern over the monitoring of participation; on accountability; and the capacity of governments to take responsibility for the level of participation in PRSP Processes.

A lot is being heard about PRSP and what it means. The PRSP is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that poor, heavily indebted countries have to produce to qualify for debt relief. The World Bank and IMF are also making PRSP a condition for concessional loans. The Bank and IMF are billing the PRSP as the solution for poor countries, but there is more to it than that.

First of all, it is important to understand where the PRSP is coming from. The PRSP is not a "divine intervention" of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is the result of years of growing pressures by global NGO movements. One of these movements is the debt campaign led by the Jubilee 2000 and others. The pressures applied by NGOs at country level also had a significant impact.

The PRSP is also a confession that the old way of doing business has not worked. The 'structural adjustment' policies that the Bank and IMF have dictated to poor countries for decades have not worked. There are differing views on why they have not worked, but many blame the Bank and IMF. The

\* This paper was presented in November 2001.

views of the extreme right and the extreme left seem to converge at this point. For instance, the Republican National Committee in the US says that the IMF should be scrapped. From the left side of the political spectrum, the '50 Years is Enough' campaign, says the same about the World Bank. The group's name indicates that the Bank and IMF have been fighting poverty for 50 years, and yet, poverty has gotten worse.

The Bank and the Fund have also been under heavy attack from influential sectors of the US establishment. The US Congress set up a Special Commission to examine the role of the international financial institutions (IFIs). The Commission, headed by top economist Allan Melzer, reported back in March 2000 with stinging criticism of the IMF and the World Bank. What it means is that PRSP may partly come from recognition of past mistakes by the international financial institutions, but it is also a response to the heat coming from all sides.

Referring to the wave of criticism of the Bank and the Fund, World Bank President James Wolfenson was remarkably frank. He said "it reflects the need to look at the structures of the international organisations and build some sense of participation." However, it still remains to be seen how far this recognition will go towards making the fundamental changes needed in the IFI's strategies to address poverty.

For instance, the Bank and the Fund now speak of fewer conditionalities and more participation. But it is still not entirely clear what this means. Since the 1999 meetings and the introduction of the PRSP, there has been growing convergence on a number of fundamental principles considered essential to poverty reduction. These are:

- Development is a process of societal transformation that takes place over time;
- A comprehensive approach to development and a multi-dimensional view of poverty are essential;
- Faster growth is essential for sustained poverty reduction, and wider participation of the poor in growth widens growth potential;
- Country ownership of the goals, strategy, and direction of development and poverty reduction—ownership that is shared by representative segments of society—is critical for sustainable development;
- The development community as a whole must work together closely, forging strategic partnerships, rationalising programs, and combining the relative strengths of its members;
- There should be a clear focus on measurable development outcomes.

Coordination with development partners is espe-

cially important, particularly with respect to PRSP, as it is closely linked to Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief and the partners are also, largely, the creditors.

The PRSP aims at an improved framework for poverty reduction. It also makes a stronger link between debt relief and poverty reduction. HIPC debt relief is tied to efforts to implement outcome-oriented poverty reduction strategies. The framework will take the form of a poverty reduction strategy drawn up by government in cooperation with other stakeholders including civil society.

The sequence of implementation of the PRSP may vary, depending on the size of a country's economy, the situation of its government and the status and intentions of its ruling party. There may be questions as to what extent a government effectively involves its civil society. It may or may not be flexible enough to accept the World Bank/IMF proposal that the process should be fully participatory and fully country-owned. There may also be issues of national sovereignty.

The relationship between PRSPs, existing national plans and programmes and HIPC debt issue is a bit complicated. There is also the issue of transparency, both on the side of government and that of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There is the issue of the extent to which we are faithful to what we preach when we speak of participation. Most importantly, the PRSP provides an excellent opportunity, not so much for its economic reform content, but in terms of its governance dimension. It is a new way for the state to talk to and engage its citizens, as well as the private and public sectors at large.

The most central question of the PRSP is: Who are the primary stakeholders, and who is championing the interests of the poor? That is the whole point of advocacy in the poverty reduction strategy. Should the PRSP be designed by non-state actors or is policy-making the exclusive domain of government? In a country where government is democratically elected, you have democratic institutions, such as the parliament, trade unions, women's groups and cooperatives. Is PRSP a new game where the only players are the World Bank, the IMF, donor agencies and international NGOs? Or is it open to others beside the few actors that are appropriately educated, enlightened and currently on top of the PRSP process?

Some NGOs have been asking: *when can one say that a PRSP has been started?* There can be different answers. For example, in the case of Ethiopia the PRSP has already started. It is going through various hiccups, but several recent meetings and forums and even the limited media coverage to

date give a picture of the PRSP process in Ethiopia and what it is linked to.

*Who leads it?* The PRSP is a process led and/or managed by Government. In most countries so far, it has been led by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning. Who has been participating outside the government? In some cases, such as Kenya, PRSP has given an opportunity for organised NGOs to negotiate and organise, or collaborate with the government in raising their issues.

*Who produces the document?* Again, we find there is a risk in PRSP. There is a drive to quickly produce a paper in order to qualify for, if not to obtain, debt relief. However, this may lead to a lack of serious attention to the content and composition of the PRSP. In most cases the authors are technical experts from the Treasury (in the Kenyan case) or from the Ministry of Finance (as in Cambodia), both with some advice from the international system.

*Who is consulted?* There was very little initial consultation in the Kenyan case. At a later stage, the Kenyan government was pressured to at least circulate the document. In the Cambodian case, consultation was simply non-existent. Actually, the Cambodian NGOs presented their own document after the Interim PRSP was submitted to the Boards of the IMF and the Bank. They were told that their document would be considered during the full and final PRSP processes. More importantly, citizens' groups raised the issue of the language used during the process. Most of them favoured local languages.

*How does the process of consultation take place?* There is no set formula. It depends on the attitude of the government, the vibrancy of civil society, the adequacy of resources, the existence of democratic practices, and on whether there is a mechanism in place for systematic consultation. PRSP is not about project design. It is about public policy formulation, specifically on a country's future economic poverty reduction, and participatory policy formulation is a new field for all of us. To be frank, we are all on the job training phase on this front.

*How is the final document presented?* The final document is supposed to be an aggregate of what happened in the country. It is then assessed by World Bank and IMF staff and finally submitted to the Board.

*What are the lessons so far?* The lessons so far include the usefulness of building on existing processes and strategies and the need for increased intra-governmental participation beyond the Ministry of Finance. They include the importance of management of the PRSP process at a high level of political authority and the need for the

existing organised networks of society to be able to participate meaningfully.

Some observations on PRSP processes indicated that the most effective contributions to participatory public policy-making were not made by individual organisations, institutions or NGOs. It was a collective effort of many in a given country. In some cases it did not require direct engagement with the state, but was achieved through conducting an independent process and reaching agreement to submit it formally.

The key issue here is setting the terms of engagement first, and the rules of engagement later. The objective is to influence the process and its content. What affects the rules of engagement is the country's governance system in terms of its willingness and readiness of government to open the space for participation throughout the country.

There are three key outcomes that are essential in the process:

- The need for mechanisms that are inclusive enough for consensus-building;
- Mapping of constituencies that have stake in the process;
- Establishing of principles as a basis for engagement.

What has been learned so far, from various country experiences, is that information and transparency are key to a meaningful PRSP. Lack of information was found to have led to confusion, not only among civil society, but also within government and among donors. The PRSP should be a process that incorporates the needs and interests of a wide range of stakeholder with a focus on poverty reduction. Making a PRSP should not be an objective simply because it is a new instrument for the World Bank and IMF or a condition for borrowing. There is life without PRSP, but there is no life without engaging the state on poverty issues.

PRSP is based on definite principles, one of which is that it must be 'government-owned.' It must be long-term and result-oriented, and there should be coordination among donors. These are the main principles of PRSP. Within the scope of these principles, there is a need for participation of the various stakeholders. The most important aspect of this is to ensure that the voices of the primary stakeholders, the voices of the poor, are heard and taken into account.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE PRSP PROCESS IN ETHIOPIA

The PRSP process was initiated against a background of two political events that have contributed



to an atmosphere of mistrust between the government and donors. The first was the Ethio-Eritrean war, while the second was the political crisis that became public in mid-2001. The attitude of the international community towards Eritrea's May 1998 aggression both during and after the war left a deep mark among the political leadership as well as the public at large. Both the government and the public at large saw the Eritrean invasion as an act of aggression imposed on Ethiopia by an irresponsible neighbour and found it difficult to understand the attitude of the international community.

To Ethiopia, donors' behaviour and understanding of the war seemed rather simplistic. The US, being preoccupied with its anti-terrorist stance, considered that any conflict in the region would most likely increase the chance of more terrorist activity. Others, echoed the immorality of a war between two impoverished countries. All were concerned about the source of funds for conducting the war. Ethiopia's public finances were monitored to see if there were any acts of diversion of aid money for military purposes. A joint World Bank-IMF mission visited Ethiopia to assess if donor funds had been used for war purposes and found no indications of this. Nevertheless, with the exception of Italy, all bilateral donors suspended their assistance to the country. This position was extended to the Boards of the Bank and IMF, who went even further, signalling to the Bank and IMF management that any new projects to Ethiopia would be "unallowable."

For two years, donors withheld development assistance to Ethiopia. Public investment in the economy was on hold. The regime's primary concern was to win the war. Resource allocation during the time reflected wartime imperatives. Funding and preparation for the war was made from internal resources. The aid community was watching and monitoring the sources of resources used to equip the army and for other procurement for war.

When the war ended, donors remained reluctant to quickly lift the ban on development assistance. This was supposedly motivated by their desire to be sure that the signed peace agreement would prevail. In contrast to this, the government wanted to get rapidly back on track and resume donor engagement. By this time, the idea of the formulation of the PRSP as a new policy instrument, and the promise of debt relief for HIPC countries, were the priorities.

Two actions had to be undertaken before the resumption of development assistance to Ethiopia. First, the preparation of an emergency proposal, involving rebuilding of war-damaged areas and demobilisation of the army; this would demonstrate Ethiopia's commitment to peace. The second measure was to embark immediately upon the for-

mulation of an IPRSP.

The government and a World Bank team reached an agreement to develop two proposals to address the immediate need for reconstruction and rehabilitation and to help get Ethiopia back on track for lending. The country was required to formulate an IPRSP in order to reach a decision point for HIPC relief.

The position of World Bank Executive Directors during the war had been such that they were not ready to fund any projects in Ethiopia. This position changed when it was known (through a Washington Post leak) that Ethiopia and Eritrea were ready to sign a peace agreement. However, while the project for emergency assistance was approved, the Board declined to consider the IPRSP for approval, thus affecting the country's eligibility for debt relief. The IPRSP was prepared with limited stakeholder participation. None of the bilateral donors and civic organisations was consulted during the formulation of the IPRSP. This infuriated most of the bilateral donors and NGOs engaged in the PRSP process.

## THE ETHIOPIAN CASE

Ethiopia is living under conditions of unbearable poverty, continuing economic and social crisis, and increasing vulnerability to chronic famine. These problems are exacerbated by a huge and unsustainable debt burden that undermines all efforts to break the cycle of poverty, crisis and famine.

The war has had adverse effects on Government-donor relationships. During 1993-1997 there was permanent and systematic consultation, and Ethiopia was a candidate for various Bank initiatives, including the CDF, IDA Review and the Cultural Heritage Programme. The war started just at the time when the reform program was supposed to be consolidated. The war was unfortunate, but under the circumstances, it was unavoidable.

Ethiopia has just completed an IPRSP. This was produced urgently as a requirement for potential debt relief to reach decision point. The IPRSP was prepared in a period of less than two months with the participation of the IMF, the World Bank and the EU. The urgency of the process did not allow time for consultation with bilateral donors. This disappointed some of the bilaterals.

The IPRSP was prepared simultaneously with a proposal for a post-conflict emergency assistance project. This added to the time pressure on the Government, and further limited the opportunity for consultation with bilateral donors and other stakeholders.

While there was little time for direct consultation on the IPRSP, the PRSP process came at a very favourable time, with respect to participation. This is in the sense that it came in the immediate aftermath of national and regional elections and the extensive debate of economic and social issues in the course of the election campaigns. There was also the Symposium on the Performance of the Ethiopian Economy 1991-1999 (Addis Ababa, April 26-29, 2000), organised in collaboration with donors by the Inter-Africa Group. The Symposium brought together a wide range of government and non-government actors, including opposition political parties and civil society to review the state of the economy and put forth their economic visions. This was particularly informative and instructive.

These processes and events provided the government with a great deal of feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders and civil society at large. These consultations are reflected in both the IPRSP and the country's Second Five Year Development Programs (SFYDP).

The ruling EPRDF party discussed its programmes as part of its election platform in public meetings throughout the country. As the party in government, it also conducted consultations with selected civil servants, elected officials, private sector actors and NGOs.

The IPRSP has been presented to donors to initiate the process of consultation on the full PRSP, which will build on these past and current participatory processes. A draft PRSP will be prepared based on the SFYDP and formulated in consultation with domestic stakeholders and external partners on both the content and its implementation. The draft PRSP will be widely distributed at district, regional and federal levels to deepen consultation and ensure that all key domestic stakeholders and external partners are consulted. The outcome of the consultations will help to refine priority actions for the PRSP, including implementation and monitoring systems.

### LESSONS LEARNED

There is little understanding of PSRP among the donor community. This highlights the importance of early stakeholder consultation in the PRSP process and draws attention to the important need of outreach programmes to sensitise the stakeholders.

### POST-CONFLICT ISSUES

The project for post-conflict emergency assistance at a cost of USD700 million includes USD 170 million for demobilisation, an urgent requirement, which is an important part of the peace process

and which enhances the opportunity for building sustainable peace.

Rapid support is urgently needed for both Ethiopia and Eritrea, and it can reinforce commitment to demobilisation and peace. It is widely recognised that timely demobilisation in the post-conflict situation is essential to sustainable peace, and failure in this respect can lead to further problems.

It is interesting, however, that both bilateral and multilateral donor attitudes in conflict and post-conflict situations often seem to lack comprehensive governing principles. This appears to be reflected in the application of quite different standards to different countries. For instance, it is worth noting that both Zimbabwe and Uganda are engaged in conflict outside their own territories, but continue to receive considerable assistance from the multilateral institutions. In view of this, during the visit of the Managing Director to Ethiopia, Ethiopian civil society expressed grave concern about the double standard applied to Ethiopia.

This has further implications with respect to other areas, for instance, defence needs. The World Bank, as a knowledge-based institution, needs to expand its knowledge in such areas. The Bank needs to give much more attention to what constitutes a reasonable level of defence for a country that lives in a sub-region that has become widely recognised as a rough and dangerous neighbourhood. Simplistic formulas and arbitrary numbers do not work in such a case. Among other issues, the Bank needs to look into countries' track records on poverty and consultation, even if not fully participatory consultation.

While Ethiopia's Emergency Project and IPRSP have been prepared simultaneously due to time factors, they respond to different areas and, therefore, need to be considered separately. The emergency support, in particular, will enhance the potential for sustainable peace and address areas such as demobilisation, where the timeliness of support is a crucial factor in its success.

Part of this article was published in *Reporter* special issue. Some of the points were presented to the Board of WB. ■

**Security, the chief pretence of civilisation, cannot exist where the worst of dangers, the danger of poverty, hangs over everyone's head.**

**George Bernard Shaw**  
*preface*  
**Major Barbara**  
**1905**

# የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂ፣ የሕዝብ ተሳትፎና የኢትዮጵያ ተሞክሮ

## ከዮሐንስ መኮንን

የኢትዮጵያ ኢኮኖሚክስ ባለሙያዎች ማህበር/የኢትዮጵያ ኢኮኖሚ ፖሊሲ ምርምር ተቋም

### 1. የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂው የሚወለደው በተቃርኖ ሂደት ነው።

ከሌሎች አገሮች ተሞክሮ እንደታየው የአገራችን የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂ ከሦስት ለማራጮች እንዴት መልክ ሊኖረው ይችላል። እንርሱም

- ፈጣን ኢኮኖሚ ዕድገትን መሠረት ያደረገ ድህነትን መቀነስ
- የኢኮኖሚ ዕድገትን ለማክሎ የተገኘውን አጋጣሚ ተቦ በመጠቀም መራቆትን ማስወገድ
- በመደገፍ፣ የሚገኝ ዋስትና /Support-led security/ ናቸው።

ከሦስቱም የተቀየሩ የሀገራችንን መልክ የያዘ ስትራቴጂም ሊፈጠር ይችላል። ግን ስትራቴጂው የቱ መሆን እንዳለበት የሚወሰነው ሂደቱ ነው። በአጠቃላይ አንድ ስትራቴጂና ፖሊሲ እንዲሁም ፕሮግራም ሲወሰን የሚካሄዱ ትግሎች አሉ። ትግሉም የሚከተሉትን ሦስት ገጾች ይይዛል።

- 1ኛ. በድሃውና በሀብታሙ መካከል ያሉ መልካምና መልካም ያልሆኑ ግንኙነቶች
- 2ኛ. በሀብብረተሰቡ ውስጥ በደህና ደረጃ ያሉት ያላቸውን ደረጃ ለመጠበቅ ደገሞችን የተበደሉት ከድህነትን ከመራቆት ነፃ ለመውጣት
- 3ኛ. በሀብታሞች መካከል የድህነትን ቅንሳ ወጪን የሚሸፍነው አካል ማን መሆን እንዳለበት።

ስለሆነም የሀዘቡን ተግባራት ናቸው። /Public actions/ የመወሰን ሂደት የመራቆትን /Destitution/ ችግር በመተንተንና መፍትሔውን በማስቀመጥ ያሉ ትግሎች ሂደት ውጤት ነው። የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂው አዲስ መርሀ ሀዘቡን ማሳተፍ የሚባለው ቋንቋ እንኳ የሀዘብን ተግባራት የመወሰን ሂደት የሌላቸው ድሆች በትግሉ ሂደት እንዲሳተፍ ማስቻል ነው። የመንግስት ፖሊሲና ስትራቴጂ የሚወለደው በዚህ የተቃርኖ ሂደት ነው።

### 2. እንዲሳተፍ የሚፈለጉት የተራቆቱትም ጭምር ናቸው

ድህነት በጣም ውስብስብ የሆነ ጉዳይ ነው። ድህነትን መራቆት ከሚለው ሀሳብ ጋር ብቻ ጋር ልናያይዘው እንችላለን። መራቆት ማለት

- መራትና የጉልበት ስራ በማጣት ሁልጊዜም የምግብ ፍላጎታቸውን የማያሟሉ፤
- በመዋቅር ማሻሻያና የመንግስት ሀብትን ወደ ግል ለማዘወር በተወሰደው ርምጃ ወደ ስራ አጥነት የሚገቡ ተላላኪ፣ ዕዳተኞችና ዘበኞችጣ፤
- በጦርነትና በድርቅ ምክንያት ከሀብብ ለማምለጥ የሚጣደፉትን፤
- ብድር መክፈል ተስኗቸው በረዎቻቸውን ሸጠው የነገው ሁኔታቸው ግራ የተጋባቸው ያካትታል።

ተሳትፎ ማለት እንኳ የተጉዳዩ የሀብብረተሰብ ክፍሎች ፖሊሲዎችና ፕሮግራሞችን በመወሰን እንዲሳተፉ ማስቻል ማለት ነው።

### 3. እስከዛሬ የምንመራባቸው ስትራቴጂዎች የገዘው መደብ ሀሳብ ናቸው

ኢትዮጵያ ከ1950ዎቹ ጀምሮ የኢኮኖሚ ልማትን ለማፋጠንና ድህነትን ለመቀነስ የተለያዩ መርሀዎችን ስትራቴጂና ተግባራዊ ስታረርግ ቆይታለች። የቀዳማዊ ሀይለስላሴ አስተዳደር የነደፋቸው የሦስት ለምስት ለመታት ስትራቴጂዎች፣ የኮሌኔል መንግስት ሃ/ማርያም አስተዳደር ይመራባቸው የነበሩት የአጭር ጊዜና የ10 አመት መሪ ዕቅድ፣ የአቶ መለስ ዜናዊ አስተዳደር የተገበረውና አሁን እየተመራበት ያለው 5 አመት ፕሮግራም የሚጠቀሱ ናቸው።

ከላይ የተጠቀሱት ፕሮግራሞች በስፋት የተቀረፁት አሁን ከገንዘብ ሚኒስቴር ጋር በተቀላቀለው የኢኮኖሚ ልማት ሚኒስቴር ክፍተኛ ባለሙያዎች ሲሆን፣ የአቶ መለስ ዜናዊ አስተዳደር የሚመራባቸው ፕሮግራሞች ደገሞ መራው ፖርቲ /አሁኔደግ/ እየቀረጸ የሚያወጣቸው ነበሩ።

በእርግጥ አሁኔደግ ፕሮግራሙን በየደረጃው ሀዘቡ እንዲወያይበት ያደረገ ቢሆንም የሀዘቡን ስሜት ተከትሎ የዳበረ ግን አልነበረም። ለአስተዳደሩ ቅርበት የነበረው ካድሬ ሳይቀር እንዲያጠናው ተደረገ እንጂ አስተያይቶ አልሰጠበትም።

ስለሆነም እስከዛሬ ሀገራችን ድህነትን ለመቀነስ የምትጠቀምበትን ስልት የችግሩ ገፈት ቀማሽ የሆነው ብዙው ድሃ መክሮባቸው ሳይሆን የገዢው መደብ አካላት ይበጃል ያሉትን የፈጸሙበት ጊዜ ነበር። በመሆኑም በድሃው ሀዘብ ህይወት ይህ ነው የሚባል ተጨባጭ ለውጥ አልመጣም እንዲያውም ድህነት እየጨመረ፣ በብዙው ሀዘብ ያለው ስጋት እየሰፋ መጣ። ይህ በኢትዮጵያም ብቻ ሳይሆን በመላ አፍሪካ የታዩ ችግር ነው። ድሃ ስገሮች ከአለም አቀፍ የገንዘብ ተቋማትና ከበለጸጉ አገሮች የተበደሩትን ገንዘብ መክፈል ተሳናቸው።

የአለም አቀፍ የገንዘብ ተቋማትና ለጋሾች ይበጃል እያሉ ይተገብሩት የነበረው ስትራቴጂ ብዙም ውጤቱ የተመሰገና አልነበረም። ይህ በአለም አቀፍ ደረጃ ለዕርዳታና ለብድር ግብይት የነበሩ ህጎች አዲስ መልክ ሰጣቸው። አዲስ መልክ ይዘው ከመጡት መካከል አንዱ የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂ ሰነድ ነው።

### 4. የአሁኑ ስትራቴጂ ለመሳተፍ ተስፋ ሰጥቷል።

አዲሱ የድህነት ቅንሳ ስትራቴጂ ሰነድ ከባለፉት ተሞክሮዎች የሚለይበት ዋነኛ መንሻ ሀሳብ አገሮች የሚሰንዱት የልማት ፕሮግራምና ስትራቴጂ መላ ሀዘቡ በተለይ ደገሞ ድሃው የሀብብረተሰብ ክፍል መክሮበት

መወሰን አለበት የሚል ነው። ስለሆነም የሰነዱ አብይ አላማ ፍላጎታቸው፣ ሀሣባቸውና ችግራቸው በውል ሳይሰማ የቆዩትን የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች የፖሊሲ ሀሣብን ለመወሰን እንዲችሉ ዕድል መፍጠር ነው።

አንድ ህዝብ ተግባር (public action) የሚወሰነው ቀደም ብለ እንደተመለከተው በህዝቡ መካከል ባሉ የተለያዩ መደቦችና የፍላጎት ቡድኖች መካከል በሚደረግ ትግል ነው።

ከዚህ በላይ መሆኑን ያለበት በተሳትፎና በአሳታፊ የመረጃ ማሰባሰብ ዘዴ ለዩኒት መኖሩን ነው። የምክክር አውደጥናቶች በባህሪ አሳታፊ የመረጃ ማሰባሰቢያ ዘዴዎች ናቸው። ድሃ የህብረተሰብ ክፍል የአጣውን የውሳኔ መስጠት መብት እያገኙናልም ተሳትፎ የሚለው ቃል ግን ድህ የሆነው ህብረተሰብ ክፍል በተጨማሪ እርሱን ክድህነት ለማላቀቅ የሚደረጉ ጥረቶችን በመወሰን መሳተፍ እንዳለበት ያመለክተል ይህ ማለት የተጉዳዩ የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች የልማት ትግል አካል ማድረግ ማለት ነው።

በዚህ ሂደት ድሃው የማህበረሰብ ክፍል በትግሉ ሂደት ለመሳተፍ የሚያስችል አደረጃጀትና ንቃት ስለሌለው የሰጡትን እየተቀበለ ይኖራል። ስለሆነም በሁለንተናዊ ልማት የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች ሁሉ መሳተፍ አለባቸው የሚባለው በመሠረታዊነት የአጡትን የውሳኔ ድምጽ ማግኘት እንዲችሉና በዚህም ሂደት ከአገራቸው ህብት በተወሰነው እየተጠቀሙ ራሳቸውን ክድህነት ለማላቀቅ እንዲጥሩ ለማስቻል ነው።

ስለሆነም አንድ የተሳትፎ ሂደት የሚመዘንበት ዋነኛ መለኪያ፣ ከውሳኔ ሂደቶች ሁሉ የራቁት ተጠግተው ፖሊሲዎችን፣ ውሳኔዎችንና የህብት አደላደሉን ሂደት ተጠቃሚ እንዲያደርጋቸው የሚያስችል ሁኔታ መፈጠሩና በዚህም ሂደት ሁሉም ተጠቃሚ መሆናቸው ነው። ከዚህ በመነሳት የአገራችን ተግባር ማየት ተገቢ ነው።

5. መንግስት የድቅስበስ በህዝብ ተሳትፎ ለማዘጋጀት ቁርጠኝነት አሳይቷል።

የኢትዮጵያ መንግስት የድህነት ቅነሳ ስትራቴጂውን ውይይት የመራው በሚከተለው አካሄድ ነው፡

- 1ኛ. የአስተባባሪ ኮሚቴ፣ የቴክኒክ ኮሚቴና አስተባባሪ ጽ/ቤት በመንግስት ተቋቋመ የሐላፊ ጫንዋት ከመንግስት የተወኛ ብህ ፎውዎዎ
- 2ኛ. የዞደኸል ጽ/ቤት የምክክር የወረዳዎች ቁጥር መወሰን፣ ወረዳዎች በክልሎች ተመረጠዎ
- 3ኛ. የመወያያ ሰነድ ከዞደኸል መንግስቱ አካላት ተዘጋጅተው ወደ ለሐቆሥ ወረቀጫሥ ተሰጸሾዎ
- 4ኛ. የወረዳ አስተዳደሮች ከማዕከል በተላከው ቀመረ መሰረት (60% ከህዝብ፣ 40% ከአደረጃጀቶች) ተሳታፊዎችን መረጠዎ
- 5ኛ. የወረዳ አውደጥናቶች ከተመናቀቁ በላ በክልል ደረጃ መንግስት፣ መንግስታዊ ካልሆኑ ድርጅቶችና የግል ጎለህባቶችን ያሳተፈ አውደጥናት ተካሄደ
- 6ኛ. የወረዳ ተሳታፊዎች ከመንግስት አካላት፣ ከሀይማኖት ድርጅቶች፣ ከታዋቂ ግለሰቦች፣ መንግስታዊ ካልሆኑት አካላት፣ ከንግድ ማህበረሰቦች፣ ከቀበሌ ማህበራት የተወጣጡ ነበሩ።
- 7ኛ. በዞደኸል ደረጃ ከመንግስት፣ ከሰብሐል ነብረሰሳት የተወኛ ተሳታፊዎች በየመድረኩ የተነሻ ሐገሮሥን በጎሃጎረቅ ውይይት ጫደረገሩና

እንግዲህ መንግስት በቻለው መጠን ተሳትፎን ለማካሄድ የምክክር አውደጥናቶችን አካሄደ። ይህ ጠንካራና መበረታታት ያለበት ጅምር ነው። ሆኖም ግን ይህ አሁን

እየተደረገ ያለው ምክክር ሌላው ቢቀር እንኳን አሁንም በአብዮታዊ ጂኖሲድ ያስቀመጣቸውን መርሆች የተከተለ ነው። ብለን ልንጠይቅ እንችላለን። መልሱ አይደለም ነው ይህ ችግር የአሁንም ችግር ብቻ ሳይሆን የሲብል ማህበረሰቡ የሌሎችም አገራት ጭምር ነው። ተሳትፎውን ሁኔታ አስመልክቶ አስተያየት ከመስጠቱ በፊት በጎረቤት አገራችን በኬንያ እንደት ሂደቱ እንደተመራ እንመልከት፡

- 1ኛ. በአገር አቀፍ ደረጃ አስተባባሪ ኮሚቴ ተቋቋመ፣ ኮሚቴው ከመንግስት፣ ከግልና ከሲብል ማህበረሰቡ የተወጣጣ አባላት አለበት።
- 2ኛ. በአስተባባሪ ኮሚቴው ስራ ቋሚ ጽ/ቤት ተቋቋመ። ጽ/ቤቱ ከመንግስት፣ ከሌጋሾች፣ ከሲብል ማህበረሰቡ፣ ከግል ባለሀብቱ የተወከሉ ባለሙያዎች አሉበት።
- 3ኛ. የሲክተር ኮሚቴዎች ተቋቋሙ። በዋና ዋና ሲክተሮች ዙሪያ ባለሙያዎችን ያቀፉ ኮሚቴዎች ተቋቋሙ። ባለሙያዎቹ ከተለያዩ ድርጅቶች የመጡ ነበሩ።
- 4ኛ. የተለዩ ጉዳዮችን (Thematic Issues) የሚመለከቱ ዐ የቴክኒክ ኮሚቴዎች ተቋቋሙ። ባለሙያዎች ከሲብል ማህበረሰቡ፣ ከመንግስታዊ ካልሆኑ ድርጅቶች፣ ከግል ባለሀብቱ የተወጣጡ ነበሩ። በአንዳንድ ሪፖርቶች ዙሪያ የሚደረገው ውይይት የመሩት የሲብል ማህበረሰብ አባላት ነበሩ።
- 5ኛ. በኬንያ ባሉ ወረዳዎች በሙሉ ውይይት ተካሂዷል። ውይይቱ በጭስት ተከፍሎ የተካሄደ ሲሆን፣ ጠቅላላ ምክክር (የኢትዮጵያ እይነት) በ45 ወረዳ ተካሂዶ ዝርዝር ውይይት 15 ወረዳ በጣም ጥልቅና በቀበሌ ደረጃ የተመከረበት ውይይት በ10 ወረዳ ተካሄደ።
- 6ኛ. በክፍለ ሀገሮችና በማዕከል ደረጃ ሰፊ ያለ ህዝብን ያሳተፉ ውይይቶች ተደረጉና ከዚህ የተጨማሪው ደክመንት የኬንያ ህዝብና መንግስት የድህነት ቅነሳ ስትራቴጂ" የሚል ነበር።

6. ቁርጠኝነት ቢኖርም በተሳትፎ የታዩ ችግሮች ነበሩ

እንግዲህ የኢትዮጵያን ከኬንያ ጋር አነጻጽረን ብንመለከት የሚከተሉትን ችግሮች ይታያሉ።

- 1ኛ. በኢትዮጵያ ሂደቱን የመምራት ሀላፊነት የመንግስት ሚና ነበር። በመሆኑም ከብዙው ማህበረሰብ ሊገኝ የሚችለውን የሙያና የአስተሳሰብ ግኝት እጥረታል።
- 2ኛ. አንድ ውጤት የሚወሰነው በሂደቱ ነው ስለሆነም ብዙው ጉዳይ ሂደቱ ሲወሰን ተወስኗል ማለት ነው። በሊደራል ደረጃ ዝርዝር የተሳትፎ ተመር ነበር።
- 3ኛ. ምክክር የተቀረጸባቸው ወረዳዎች ውስን ነበሩ።
- 4ኛ. ሂደቱን ለመከታተል የሚያስችል ግልጽነት አልነበረውም።

እንደተጠቀሰው በመንግስት ፈቃደኝነቱ ቢኖርም በእርግጥ ህዝቡን በዘላቂነት እንደት ይሳተፋል የሚለውን አስጠባቂና ከሚመለከታቸው ጋር መክርበት ባለመግባቱ የአውደጥናቶች ይዘት ከተሳትፎ ይልቅ አሳታፊ የሚገባ ማሰባሰቢያ ስብሰባዎች ይመስላሉ። በመሆኑም የሚከተሉት ተጨማሪና ወሳኝ ችግሮች ታይተዋል።

- 1. ድሃው የህብረተሰቡ ክፍል በሂደቱ ስለመሳተፍና ቀጥሎ ያለውን ሂደት ለእርሱ ጥቅም እንዲውል በሚያስችል ሁኔታ ስለመፈጠሩ እርግጠኞች አይደለንም። ይህ ችግር ሊፈጠር የቻለበት ምክንያት ድሃ የሚባለው የህብረተሰብ ክፍል የተደራጀ አለመሆኑና ፍላጎቱን ለይቶ ለማቅረብ አለመቻሉ ነው። እርሶ አደሩ፣ እርብቶ አደሩ፣ የጎዳና ተዳዳሪ ህፃናት ወዘተ. እነርሱን ሊወክል የሚችል አደረጃጀት አልፈጠሩም። ስለሆነም በእርሱ ጉዳይ የሚከራከረው ሌላው አካል ነው። ከፖሊሲ ውሳኔ ሂደትና

ከፖለቲካ ትግል ተሞክሮ የሀብረተሰብ ክፍል በተለይ እርሶ አደሮችን የሚወክል የራሳቸው ህይወት እስከሌላቸው ድረስ ሌላው ህይወት የሚከራከርላቸው የራሱ ተጠቃሚነት እስካልተሸሸረ ብቻ ነው።

ሁሉም መስተዋዳኤ ያለበት እርሶ አደሮችና ሌሎች መደበኛ በስተበስባ መታደራቸውና ሃሳብ መስጠታቸውን ብቻ አይደለም። መረጋገጥ ያለበት በእነኚህ ስብሰባዎች ህግጋት በተደራጀና ከማንም ተጽእኖ ነጻ በሆነ መንገድ አቅርቦ በመከራከር የቻለውን ያክል ሀብት መካፈል ሲችል ነው።

2. ምክክሩ ቋሚነት የሌለው በተፈለገ ጊዜ የሚደረግ የሚተው ነው። በመሆኑም ዘላቂነቱ አስተማማኝ አይደለም። ከዚህ ላይ መታየት ያለበት ጉዳይ ራሱ ፍላጎቱ የመጣው ከአበዳሪው አገሮች መሆኑ ነው። በመሆኑም መንግስታት የፈጸሙት አስበውበት ተሳትፎን እንዴት እናረጋግጣለን በማለት አይደለም። ስለሆነም የሚጠበቀው ሙዝ እስኪገመገሙ ድረስ በፈጠራ የሚሆን ነው። ሆኖም ሂደቱ አሁን ያለውን የመደብ እሰላፍና ጥቅም የሚቀይር መስሎ ከታየ መገደቡ ወይም መቆሙ አይቀሬ ነው።

7. ውስንነት ቢኖረውም የሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ ተሳትፎ አበረታች ነው።

የሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ መንግስት እንዴት መሳተፍ እንዳለበት የመለከተው ነገር ባይኖርም በራሱ ሂደት ሰፊ ያሉ ተሳትፎዎችን አያደረገ ነው። የሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ የሚባለው በሦስት ዋና ዋና ክፍሎች መክፈል ይቻላል ይኸውም

- ህዝባዊ ተቋማት
- የሙያ ማህበራትና የውይይት መድረኮች
- መንግስታዊ ያልሆኑ ረድኦች ድርጅቶች ናቸው።

ከህዝባዊ ተቋማት የአዲስ አበባ ንግድ ምክር ቤት፣ የኢትዮጵያ ሠራተኞች ኮንፈረጫን የውይይት መድረኮችን አዘጋጅተዋል በተለይ የአዲስ አበባ ንግድ ምክር ቤት ብዙ ውይይቶች በየዘርፉ እካሄዱ የራሱን አስተያየቶች አዘጋጅቷል።

የንግድ ምክር ቤቶች አላማ በፖሊሲ ሂደቶች የበኩሉን አስተያየቶች አዘጋጅቷል። የንግድ ምክር ቤቶች አላማ በፖሊሲ ሂደቶች የበኩሉን አስተያየት ማድረግ በመሆኑ ይህ ርምጃ የሚጠበቅ ነበር ግን የንግድ ምክር ቤቱ ከሌሎች ገንዘብ ባይኖሩ ውይይቱ ሊተው ነበር ወይ? ስለራሱ ችግር ለመወያየት ዕርዳታ የጠየቀ እንዴት አደርጎ ነው ጠንካራ የልማት ህይወት መሆኑን የሚያረጋግጠው። ሌላው ውይይቱ አዲስ አበባ ብቻ መሆኑ ሙሉውን የንግድ ማህበረሰብ በነቂስ አሳትፏል ለማለት አይቻልም። እንደዚሁም በየዘርፉ የተደረጉት ውይይቶች በጋራ ሲቀርቡ እንዳንድ ቅራኔዎች ተገቢ ጊዜ ውይይት ተደርጎ በመወያየት የላኬራዊ ካፒታሊስቲን ሃሳብ የሚወክል ሃሳብ ስለመንፀባረቅ እርግጠኛ መሆን አይቻልም። ምክንያቱም ሃክር ቤቱ በጉዳዮቹ ዙሪያ ጥልቅ ምርምር በማድረግ የራሱን መከራከሪያ የማቅረብ ይልቅ በተለያዩ አውደጥናቶች እጥረት አለበት።

የሙያ ማህበሮችና የውይይት መድረኮችን በተመለከተ የኢትዮጵያ ኢኮኖሚክስ ባለውያን ማህበር የሚሰጠው ጥናት መድረክና የአርብቶ አደሮች ፎርም በዚህ ጉዳይ በሰፊ ተወያይተዋል። በእርግጥ የሙያ ማህበራቱ ጥናቶችን ያካሄዱ ሲሆን ውይይቶችንም አካሂደዋል። በዚህ ሂደት የክረምት ችግር በመከላከቻው ቅንጅት አለመኖር ነው። የመረጃ ልውውጥም እንደሚጠበቀው ጠንካራ አልነበረም። ከመንግስት ጋር ያለው ቁርኝትም እነስተኛ ነው። ይህ አካል ተገቢ ግልጽነት ሊሰጥ

የሚችለው መንግስት ተሳትፎውን ከፈለገና ካበረታታው ብቻ ነው።

መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው የዕርዳታ ሰጪ ድርጅት ሰፊ ውይይቶችና የሲቪል ማህበረሰቡን ያቀፈ ግብረ ህይወት አቋቁሞ ስራውን ሲያከናውን ቆይቷል። በእርግጥ ይህ ህይወት ከመንግስት ያላነሰ ህይወት አሳልፏል። የሰው ሃይሉና የፋይናንስ ጥንካሬው ይህ ህይወት የራሱን የስትራቴጂ ሀሳብ እስከ ማመንጨት የደረሰ ውይይት አድርጓል። በዚህ ህይወት ጥንካሬውንና ደካማውን ጎን ከማየታችን በፊት በሌሎች ሀገር የነበረውን ተሳትፎ ማየት አስፈላጊ ነው። በተመሳሳይ ሂደቱ ከጨረሱ የጎረቤት አገሮች ከታየው ተሞክሮ የሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ የሚከተሉት ተሳትፎዎች ነበሩት።

- 1ኛ. መንግስት ባቋቋማቸው ልዩ ልዩ ኮሚቴዎች በመሳተፍ የሙያ አስተዋጽኦና ተሞክሮ የሚረጋጋት፤
- 2ኛ. መንግስት በየደረጃው ባዘጋጃቸው መድረኮች የተለያዩ አውደጥናቶችን ማሳተፍና አስተያየት ማድረግ፤
- 3ኛ. ከመንግስት በሚላኩ ሰነዶች ላይ ከተሞክሯቸው በመነሳት አስተያየቶች መስጠት፤
- 4ኛ. በአንዳንድ መንግስት በዘጋቸው ወይም ተገቢ ትኩረት አላደረገባቸውም ባሉዎቻቸውና የህዝብ ተግባር /Public Action/ በሚሹ ጉዳዮች ዙሪያ ምሳሌ እድስ፣ የቤት ችግር፣ ሕዝብ ሰፊ ጥናቶችን ውይይቶችን አካሂዶ በፖሊሲ እንዲካተት የሚችሉትን ያክል መጣርና
- 5ኛ. በአነስተኛ ደረጃ ያሉ የህዝብና የመንግስት አካላት ህዝቡን አሳትፈው መስራት እንዲችሉ የአወያይነትና የምክክር ጥናቶች ላይ ስልጠና መስጠት ናቸው።

በኢትዮጵያም ሆነ በሙሉው አፍሪካ ይህ መንግስታዊ ያልሆነ ህይወት ጠንካራ የልማት አገር ነው። ከዚህ አኳያ እንደመንግስት በአግባቡ መታየት አለበት። በተሳትፎውም የሚከተለው ችግር ነበረበት።

1. የቅንጅት ችግር ነበረበት

መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው ድርጅት ሰፊ ውይይቶችን አካሂዷል። ይህ በራሱ ዙሪያ የታጠረና ብዙም ያልተዋሃደ ውይይት ነው። መላውን የፍላጎት ቡድን አካቶ ወይም መንግስት እያካሄደ ያለውን መንገድ ይዟል። ለውይይት የሚቀርቡ ሰነዶች ተገቢ የኋላ ምርምር ተደርጎባቸው በሰለጠኑ ባለሙያዎች ቡድን የተጠኑ ሳይሆን እቅም በፈቀደው በአቅራቢያ በተገኘውና በታወቀው ህይወት የተካሄዱ ናቸው።

ይህ የሚያመጣው ችግር መንግስትን በወረቀት ከምር ማጣደፍ ሲሆን በአለው ጊዜ ሁሉን እንብደና ተገንዝቦ በስትራቴጂ ማካተት ስለማይቻል ብዙም በፖሊሲና በስትራቴጂ ላይ ተፅዕኖ አያደርግም ማለት ነው።

2. ሚናውን የመለየት ችግር ነበረበት

ይህ ክፍል የተገለለትን የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች ራሳቸው እንዲደራጁና ስለጉዳዮቹ እንዲከራከሩ በመደገፍ እቅም ማጠናከርና ዘላቂ ተሳትፎን ከማረጋገጥ ይልቅ ድህውን ተከቶ አልያም ሌላውን ማህበረሰብ ክፍል ተከቶ መናገሩ ትክክል አልነበረም።

ይህን ባለማድረግ ዛሬ የምንከናወኑትን የሌሎች ባህሪያት እንጠባብቃለን። እርሱ እያለ ያለው መንግስት ይህን ያደርግ ነው። ይህን ሲጋፋ ሲደርስ የሚችለበትን መታደራት አለበት። የሀገሪቱ መንግስት ነፃነት የሚያጣው በሌሎች መንግስታት ሳይሆን ሀገር ውስጥ ባሉት መንግስታዊ ያልሆኑ ግብረሰዶች ድርጅቶችም ሊሆን ነው።

በእርግጥ ገን ከፍተኛ የልማት ሀይልና ድህነትን ለመቀነስ በገንባር ተደምጥኝነት ሊሰለፍ የሚችል መሆኑ ባያጠያይቅም በአፈጣጠና የአስተሳሰቡ መነሻ የሚሆኑት ፍልሰታዎች ምንጮችና የገንዘብ ምንጭ ሲታይ "የሃገራችን ፍልሰታ" መሠረት ያደረጉ አስተሳሰቦች ሊኖሩት አይችሉም። ስለሆነም ከዚህ አካል በዘላቂነት ድህነትን ለመቀነስ የሚችሉ የተደራጁ ስትራቴጂዎች ይፈልጋሉ ብሎ መጠበቅ ተስፋ ነው።

3. እንደጠንካራ የልማት አጋርነቱ ይህ ሀይል ራሱም ለመግርና ለመስጠት መዘጋጀትና ማጻመጥ እንደሚገባው ያገናኘበ ስለመሰለገጥ።

ይህ ሀይል በስትራቴጂዎቹ በፖሊሲዎቹ አስተያየት ይሰጣል። ሆኖም ለልማታችን የሚሰጠን ዕርዳታ በመንግስት ብቻ ሳይሆን መንግስቱ ባልሆኑ ድርጅቶች ይፈላል። መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው ድርጅት ከሌሎች የሚያገኘው ሀብት ከፍተኛ ነው። ገንዘቡን የሚያገኘው በቀጥታ ከመንግስት ለተሳካው በተሻለ ህዝብን ለማገልገልና ለውጥ ለማምጣት የተመቻቸ ነው በሚል ሰበብ ነው። ከዚህ በመላክ ከሰላ ፈቃደኞችም ያገኛል።

እንግዲህ ለድህረ ለተሰፈረ ያለው ቀለብ ግማሽ በመንግስት ግማሽ መንግስታዊ ባልሆነው አካል ይፈላል ማለት ነው። ስለሆነም ድህነታችን እየባሰ መምጣቱ በግማሽ በኩል ባለው ቀጻጽ ምክንያት ነው ብሎ ማሰብ ፈፀሞ ሞኝነት ነው።

ስለሆነም ስለድህነት መባባስ ስንወያይ መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው ድርጅት ራሱ ድህነትን ለመቅረፍ የተሻለ አግራጭ ስለመሆኑ ከዚህ ቀደም ስለዚህ ማህበረሰብ የሚናገሩ ንድፈ ሀሳቦችን ትክክል ስለሆኑትም የበለጠ ህዝብን ለማገልገል ሰራውን እንዲት መምራት እንዳለበት ሰፊና ጥልቅ ውይይት ይጠበቅበት የነበረ ቢሆንም አልተካሄደም። በእርግጥ በመንግስት በኩል የህዝብ አስተሳሰብ ተሰብስቧል።

4. ሊሳተፍበት የሚገባውና ያልተሳተፈበት መንገድ አለ

የአደገ አገርች የሲቪል ማህበረሰባት ዋና ተግባር advocacy ነው። በተለይም የድሃ አገርች እዳ እንዲቀነስ ጥረት የማያደርጉት እነሱ ናቸው። ዛሬ የምንወያይበት የድህነት ቅንብ ስትራቴጂ ሰነድ እንዲወለድ አስተዋጽኦ አድርገዋል። በሌላ በኩል የአፍሪካ ሀገሮች ሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ እዳቸው እንዲቀነስ ግንባር ፈጥሮ ይንቀሳቀሳል በእኛ ሀገር ይህ በጉልህ አይታይም።

በመሠረቱ በተዋሃደ ኢኮኖሚ /Globalized economy/ ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ የሚሰራው መንገድ፣ ማንኛውንም እድስን የቀርባ በሽታ ማጥፋት የሚጠቅመው ለአደገትም ሀገሮች ነው። ስለሆነም ብዙውን እርዳታና ብድር የሚሰጡን ለራሳቸው ጥቅም ከሆነ እስከዛሬ የተበደረውን የመክፈል ሞራላዊ ግድታ የሰብኛም። ስለሆነም እዳችን ይቀነስ ማለት ንድፈ ሃሳባዊ መሠረት አለው። ስለሆነም በዚህ መስክ በጥንካሬ መንቀሳቀስ ይጠበቅባቸዋል።

8. ድክመቶቻችን የጥንካሬዎችን መሠረት ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ

በእርግጥ በዚህ ዕውቀት የሰጠውን አስተያየት ጠንክሮ ያለ መሆኑ ያታወቀ ነው። መጠንከር ያለብን ጠንክሮ ሳይሆን ለገንዘብም ጭምር ነው። እምነቱ ገን አንድ ነው። ችግሮች ቢኖሩብንም እየተጓዝን ያለው በጥሩ መንገድ ነው። እነኚህ የሚታዩት ድክመቶቻችን የጥንካሬዎችን ምንጭ ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ። በመሆኑም በቀጣዩ ጊዜ የተቻለ ውጤት እንዲገኝ የሚከተሉትን ሃሳቦች አሉ።

1ኛ. ችኩላን መግታት ተገቢ ነው

የኢትዮጵያ መንግስታት ሁሉም ሰነድ ሲያዘጋጅ ይቸኩላል። ተቸኩሎ የሚመጣው ያው ድህነት ነው። ፈቀት ያለ ሃገር የለም። ታዲያ እንስጥን ከተባለ መንግስትም ረጋ ብሎ ለማድመጥ መሞከር አለበት። ለመደግመጥ ጊዜ ስጠን ማለት የተሻለውን ለመምረጥ ሃይል አገኘን ነው። ይህ ከሆነ ለመውደቅ ያለው ተስፋ

ገት ያለ ነው። ስለሆነም እሁን የሚደረጉት ምክክሮች የጊዜ ወሰን ሳያገዳቸው ተግባራዊ ቢቀጥሉ ጥሩ ነው የሚል እምነት አለኝ።

2ኛ. ባለሙያዎችንና ተሞክሮ ያላቸውን ለመጥቀም

በየክፍለ ሃገር፣ በሲቪል ማህበረሰቡ መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው ሰነድ ተሰብስቦ ፋይናንስና ኢኮኖሚ ልማት ሚኒስቴር ገብቷል። ይህ ሰነድ ከሌሎች የግንኙ ኢኮኖሚ ተዳዶች ጋር አጠናቅቆ በቅርብ ጊዜ ዘላቂነት ያላቸው መፍትሔዎች ማፍለቅ በጣም ከባድ ነው። በተለይ መንግስት እሁን ባለው ከፍተኛ የባለሙያዎች እጥረት ይህን በወር ግጠናቀቅ አይቻልም። ስለሆነም በዚያ እንደተደረገው በሀገራችን ካሉ ታዋቂ ባለሙያዎችን በቸሎታቸው አስተዋፅኦ እንዲያደርጉ የሚያስችሉ ኮሚቴዎችን አዋቅሮ ለመንግስት ሃሣብ እንዲያቀርቡ ቢደረግ ውጤቱ በጣም ጥሩ ይሆናል። ይህ አግካሪ ከመጠቀም የበለጠ ውጤት አለው።

መንግስት የተሻለ ስትራቴጂ ለማመንጨት ባለሙያውን ያሳተፈ ሁለንተናዊ ውይይት ማድረግ ያለበት ጊዜ እሁን ነው። ህዝቡ በየመድረኩ ያሳቸው ችግሮች ምን አልባት የችግር አመልካቶች ይሆናሉ። ህዝቡ የሰጠው መፍትሔ ሳይሆን ያመለከተው ፍላጎቱን ነው። ገን ፍላጎቱን ለማሟላት እያሉ መንገዶች አሉ። እንባቢን ካሳሰብን ለምሳሌ ለመስጠት እፈልጋለን። አገራችን ድህነትን ለመቀነስ ሰበት ዋና ዋና መንገዶች አሏት። ሦስቱም የራሳቸው ጥቅምና ችግር አሏቸው። ሦስቱም አግራጮች ተሰርተው በአገባቡ አልታዩም። እሁን ባለሙያ የሚፈለገው እዚህ ላይ ነው። በእርግጥ የተባሉት ስትራቴጂዎች በኢትዮጵያ ተሞክሮ ተዘርዝረው ከተሰሩ በኋላ የግብርና መር ነው፣ የኢንዱስትሪ መር ነው፣ የሰው ሀይል ልማት መር ነው፣ የከተማ ልማት ነው፣ በተሻለ ጊዜ፣ በአነስ መስጫነት ድህነታችን የሚያስወግደው ብለን እንወያያለን። እሁን ውይይቱ በሰማይ ላይ ነው።

3ኛ. ከሰብሰባ ወደ ውይይት ለመሸጋገር

መንግስት በፖሊሲው ህዝባዊ ተሳትፎን እንደሚያበረታታ ገልጿል። እንደ አብዮታዊ ዲሞክራሲ ስለተሳተፎ በአግባቡና በትክክለኛው መንገድ የሰነድ የገዥ መደብ ሰነድ አልታዩም። እንግዲህ ገዥው ሪፖርት ተሳትፎን እንደቃሉ በተግባር ለመዋል ካሰበ።

- 1. ሁሉንም ህዝብ ያሳተፈ /inclusive/ በህግ የታወቀ ቋሚ የውይይትና የምክክር መድረኮችን ማቋቋም ይጠበቅበታል። ይህ ጠቀሜታው በተለይ ወደ አፈፃፀም ስንገባ ነው።
- 2. ያልተደራጀውን ህዝብ ማደራጀት፣ እቅዱን መገንባት በተለይ አርሶ አደሩና ድሃው እንዲደራጅና መድረኩ እንዲያገኝ መብራታት አለበት። አዋጆችን ቀለል ማድረግ፣ ህዝቡን ነፃ እንዲሆን የፖለቲካ ተፅዕኖን ማቃለልና ለተደራጁት የሲቪል ማህበረሰባት እቅድ መገንባት አስፈላጊ ነው።

4ኛ. እዳችንን በሙሉ እንዲሠረዝ መታገል

በተለይ መንግስታዊ ያልሆነው ድርጅት በአለም አቀፍ ለጋሾች ታግኝ ሀይል ነው። ኢትዮጵያዊያን ድሃዎችም እንጋጠው ይመለከቱታል። ሙሉራኑም ሆነ የፖሊሲ ውሳኔ ሰጪዎች ጠንካራ የልማት ሀይል ነው ብለው ያምናሉ። እንግዲህ ይህ ሀላፊነት ከባድ ነው። ሆኖም ለመገኘት መጣር አስፈላጊ ነው ለዚህ ደግሞ

- በእርዳታ መገኘት
- ሚናን በአግባቡ ለይቶ መጓዝ

ያስፈልገዋል። ለዚህ ታዲያ እንደ መንግስት ፖሊሲዎችና ተግባራት ራሱን በጥልቅ መመርመር ይፈለገበታል። በአሁኑ ሂደት የሚጠበቅበት ከባድ ሃላፊነት ደግሞ እዳችንን በሙሉ እንዲሰረዝ ጠንክሮ ቢሠራ ነው። ■

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