

IF A=B AND IF B=C THEN A=C A FORMULA AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE UPCOMING NATIONAL ELECTION

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If A=B and If B=C then A=C. This is a logical mathematical formula mathematics teachers teach their students and I recall learning it I believe in my high school by the then my mathematics teacher Ato Mekonnen Mengesha. He was a brilliant teacher and I never forget his devotion as a good teacher. We all gave him the due respect and appreciation as we did to all teachers we had. In fact, we considered our school teacher as our own parents and they did consider their students as their own children and they always demanded that we do our home work and that the school ethics and teacher-student relationships be kept that way because that has always been the right way. Then, I found similarities between the above logical mathematical formula that is still true today with the following: **Peace/Stability =**



Democracy/Rule of Law = Free/Fair Election. Whereas peace and stability is the base for democracy and whereas democracy has to be reinforced with the rule of law in order to prevail and thrive and because free and fair election is the result of peace and stability in a given nation then just like the above logical mathematical formula: if A=B and if b=C then A=C, we can also formulate as follows: if **Peace/Stability = Democracy/Rule of Law and if Democracy/Rule of Law = Free/Fair Election then Peace/Stability = Free/Fair Election.** All these are intertwined with each other, inter-related and non separable and quite logical just like the above logical mathematical formula. Therefore, this formula must be realized in its totality because it is an inseparable package and the co-existence has to be respected. Any efforts to try to miss-interpret and miss-place this formula may causes the whole thing to fall out creating a dangerous precedence and dangerous result.

The prevalence of peace and stability is a cornerstone, a pillar and a foundation for a free, fair and democratic election. It is also a major factor for any nation's sustainable development. Democracy is a concept where freedom of citizens is protected and where political competition takes place on a reasonably similar level of playing field and where citizens know their rights as well as their responsibilities. Democracy by itself is not a perfect governing philosophy but as Winston Churchill pointed out "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time". This is to mean that

democracy provides a better form of governance than any other form of governance ever tried by governments thus far. However, even democracy: the best form of governance is way below being perfect. Democracy becomes closer to perfection when the mandate of citizens is embodied to and eternalized with the concept of the Rule of Law. This is to say that the factor that differentiates democracy from other form of governance is the adherence to the Rule of Law meaning that people will obey the laws made by their own compliance and that no one is above the law.

The Rule of Law takes its roots from a Latin Term “Equitas”. Equitas means equity, farness and justice is recognized as a fundamental principle of administerial importance to the ethical functioning of good governance. Meaning equity, fairness and justice are entrenched and embodied within the consciousness of the public at large in order to enhance and strengthen safety, trust and legitimacy. In simple word, Rule of Law is a glue of democracy and that means having a through understanding of the public good. In simple words, this means: doing the right thing and doing the right thing is keeping our streets clean, doing the right thing is giving the due respect to women, children, the elderly, the disabled, doing the right thing is not driving over the speed limit and causing human and material damage. It also means giving the due respect to our teachers, those whom we elect as our representatives, those authorized by the law of the land to lead our nation; it also means keeping our schools, Colleges and University a healthy place for learning, doing the right thing is doing voluntarism to help the under privileged and assist our country of origin from wherever we are with educational, medical and other vital materials and providing technical and technological assistance through among others the transfer of technology etc.. Generally, doing the right thing is simply doing the good things and avoiding the bad things. This is what society at large and manly the young generation should comprehend and pursue.

In order for democracy to grow and strengthen, citizens must respect the Rule of Law and when they do that, peace and stability will flourish and where there is peace, then there is development for without peace and stability neither democracy nor development can be realized. President Eisenhower once said “The clearest way to show what the Rule of Law means to us in everyday life is to recall what has happened when there is no Rule of Law”. This is to say that when there is no Rule of Law then peace and stability will be replaced by lawlessness and anarchy and in the absence of peace, all development endeavors can be crippled and the result can be chronic and vicious circle of poverty and under development. Peaceful, free and fair election which is part and parcel and a major component of democracy can not be realized without the prevalence of peace and stability. Therefore, a mature and civilized society must internalize the premises of democracy in its mindset in order to continue in its uphill battle against poverty and underdevelopment and in order to defeat those number one enemies. The Russians have a famous saying in that regard: “Let there be Peace to the world and bread on the table” this is simply to emphasize the importance of peace even in securing livelihood of humanity and to point out that one can not have bread on the table without the prevalence of peace.

The last national elections demonstrated that the Ethiopian people are determined and committed to carry on with the above fundamental democratic values in order to maintain a civilized culture of mutual coexistence. They have clearly demonstrated that there is no turning back or giving up to obsolete and backward mentality such as violence, intolerance, destruction etc. because those are things of the past and signs of uncivilized society. Ethiopians have given a clear message in that regard to those who aspire to bring back their detrimental and destructive beliefs. The last elections further demonstrated that political power can not be achieved through confusion, economic sabotage or any other illegal and unconstitutional means but rather through legal and democratic, ways and means alone. The Ethiopian people said rather loudly that enough is enough and that they do not need any violence and that they will not accept those who may seek out the beliefs and ideas of the past. As a result, people are becoming more and more sophisticated and are adopting peaceful and democratic means to resolve any problems that may exist amongst them. Dialogue and tolerance are thus becoming the order of the day. These peaceful and democratic ways and means of resolving differences are helping people to get closer and closer every day. Consequently, our world is becoming a global community of a civilized society. Despite this trend however, there are few exceptions who want to re-invent the old and archaic ways and means and who want to confuse and disturb society through their obsolete and detrimental values and beliefs. Instead of using legal, democratic and peaceful ways and means of resolving differences, they opt for destructive violence and undemocratic ways and means simply to fulfill their personal as well as group interests putting the society at large in jeopardy. As a result, they create anarchy and lawlessness that cause detrimental and destructive consequences upon the society at large. It is time therefore that they come to their senses and do away with their illegal and undemocratic activities.

Diaspora Ethiopians should always remain well informed about the reality unfolding within their country of origin. They must say enough is enough to destructive forces and like other African Diasporas, they must focus on helping their country of origin and on defeating poverty and under development: the number one priority of the people at large. Further, the Ethiopian community abroad should be vigilant and stand on guard to defeat these extremists who carry racist propaganda. Ethiopians must work very hard day and night because the country can not afford economic sabotage from within and abroad. People must work hard to help themselves, their family and their country. Generally, violence and any other illegal activities are issues of the past and with no fruits to bear. Therefore, violence can not and will not be the answer. Legal, constitutional and civilized dialogue is.

Our nation has concluded three national elections and is ready to conduct its forth national election soon. Whereas few electoral descriptions have been manifested as is the case in most elections anywhere, by and large, the government and the public at large should be congratulated for three successful electoral achievements. The

success of those last elections can be accounted upon the prevalence of peace and stability in the nation and the political maturity of the Ethiopian public. It is therefore important and indeed indispensable that even better wisdom and tolerance be manifested from all parties, the civic society, the media, the public at large from within and the Diaspora in order to make the next election even better organized and better implemented. Also international governmental as well as non-governmental institutions alike must continue their assistance in that regard in order to reinforce those civilized values and norms they have cherished over many years and in order to help maintain peace and stability in this country. Here, it is important to note that Ethiopian national election is conducted not to satisfy external observers or external governmental and non-governmental institutions but rather it is conducted because it is the duty and responsibility of Ethiopian citizens. Therefore, as there is no substitute to peace, Ethiopians from coast to coast to coast must manifest their usual cultural and traditional value of tolerance, maturity and brotherly and sisterly closeness as a people during the upcoming forth national election.

Finally, the following are few but vital code of practices that must be remembered during and after elections in order to insure peace and stability on the one hand and conduct a free, fair and democratic forth national election on the other.

- All competing parties must be willing and able to fulfill their pledges and abide by the procedures and principles drawn by the Electoral Board and they must respect and adhere to the Rule of Law of the land. Further, all parties must refrain from encouraging or instigating violent activities and must teach and inform their followers not to involve in any illegal, unlawful and distractive activities. Instead, they must encourage their followers to use peaceful and democratic ways and means of conducting the electoral campaign throughout the electoral process including after the results are out.
- The public at large (citizens) especially the youth must comprehend adapt and naturalize their state of mind with the fact that elections are peaceful political competitions between and among political parties and not between rivalries or enemies. Therefore, they must exert maximum tolerance and maturity in that regard and focus solely on exercising their citizenship and constitutional right by electing their representatives peacefully and democratically. They must not be confused or persuaded by few internal or external self-interested individuals or groups alike that care only about themselves or others that advance their hidden agendas. In other words, they must put their money on the right price.
- Local media outlets must be ready and willing to fulfill their professional journalistic responsibilities as informers with a very high level ethical standard that their profession dictates in order to pass real and unbiased message. They must not at any time or place compromise their professionalism or be an advocate or client or instrument of those who like to see division, chaos and disorder in this country. They must instead encourage citizens to peacefully and democratically fulfill their

citizenship responsibilities. Finally, they must work to reinforce peace, stability and democratic good governance in this country. They must be a champion of peace, not of hate.

- Ethiopian Diasporas by and large reside in countries where elections are held almost entirely in a peaceful environment even under some electoral drawbacks and discrepancies here and there. Therefore, they must share their exposure and experience and must transcend those principles, standards, norms and values into their country of origin. They must preach peace, love and friendship and not division or hate among the same people. Further, they must not be guided or misled by few self-interested individuals and/or groups with hidden destructive agendas. They must say enough is enough to those who make their daily lives by defaming our nation and working day and night against the national interest simply to fulfill their personal ambition. Further, they must once and for all tell “a slate is a slate” to those who preach hate and division between and among the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. Ethiopian Diasporas like to see progress, prosperity and development within their country of origin. They do not like to see a vicious circle of poverty and under-development. Therefore, there is no reason why they lend their time, energy and resource to few destructive forces that are against the progress and prosperity of this nation. Finally, African Nations have learned a lesson or two with regard to conducting free, fair and democratic elections. Ghana’s recent election was considered as one of Africa’s success with regard to democratic good governance and was praised by all international governmental as well as non-governmental institutions alike as an excellent demonstration of democratization process of the continent. Also Botswana’s current National election had the same praise and admiration from all over the world and the people and competing parties within the country were praised for their tolerance and political maturity throughout the electoral proceedings. Both countries have done it and if they can do it, so can we. For that, the following points can help.
- International Media outlets must not rush to judgment or to conclusion prior to conducting realistic and professional evaluation of the electoral procedures and proceedings. They must not rely solely on the opinion of few interest groups alone. They must rather base their judgments on data collected from both primary as well as secondary sources using professional logical, realistic and scientific data collecting, analyzing and synthesizing methodological framework. In simple words, they should not be biased.
- International observers have often made an irredeemably biased representation not worthy of recognition regarding our nation’s electoral process. Hope they will correct their colossal failure and correct their journalistic research this time around. It is hoped that they will fulfill their homework with dignity, fairness and high standard of responsibility. They must understand the culture and history of the country they are assigned to and not ignore the views of their indigenous counterparts and Local as well as Federal authorities. Further, they must not pre-judge the outcome before the results are out. Instead, they have to use their

international experience, exposure and expertise to reinforce peace, stability and democratic good governance in this country and not activate hostility and chaos.

- Finally all parties must not look at each other as enemies but rather as friends and colleagues who want to bring about socio-economic and political progress, prosperity and sustainable development to this beautiful nation of ours. They should continue to use peaceful dialogue as their main instrument to resolve differences that may occur at any time. The recent agreement reached by sixty five different political parties on the issue of electoral code of conduct regarding the upcoming national election and other future elections is a momentous moment in this nation's political history. It is also an excellent demonstration for future political maturity, for the prevalence of tolerance, peaceful and democratic dialogue and the adherence to the Rule of Law among the different political parties in this country. These different political parties have further exhibited tremendous sense of responsibility that will pave the way for a longer term of peace and stability in the country and shed the electoral process from any irregularities and make it a free-willing election. This trend further demonstrates that all parties are willing and able to advance democratization, good governance and political civility in this country and are expected to live up to the peoples' expectations by doing a great leap to democracy and by working hard to make our nation peaceful, stable and prosperous. Ethiopia can not take two hundred years to learn what took the civilized world to come to where they currently are. Instead, Ethiopia will, in information technology terms do a **“leap Frog” or “cheetah pole vaulting”** meaning it will jump up fast and aside itself within the lines of the advanced and democratic nations of the world. The upcoming forth national election will prove exactly that if everyone sincerely does his/her homework. Let us all make the upcoming fourth national election a success story.