



The Dichotomy between Perception and Reality Vis-a-Vis the Ethiopian Somalis and Investment Opportunities in the Region

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The Ethiopian Somalis were among those of our people who have unfortunately been misunderstood, mistrusted and at times considered as "others" as opposed to "ours or as our own people." Thus, unfortunately, they were victims of external "divide and rule policy" on the one hand and, mistrust and misunderstanding on the other. However, despite all odds, the Ethiopian Somalis have never doubted or lost their origin, their identity and belongingness.

The Ethiopian Somalis have lived along side with their Ethiopian brothers and sisters and shared the Ethiopian values and norms in good and in bad times along side with their Ethiopian brothers and sisters. They shared the ups and downs, happiness, sorrow and progress of their nation along side with their Ethiopian brothers and sisters. What differentiates the Ethiopian Somalis from their brothers and sisters of other Regions however is that they were not fully and truly understood by their fellow Ethiopian brothers and sisters for generations. In fact, they were neglected from both corners with a negative portrayal and negative perception rather than the reality of their history. Due to their ethnic and clan dynamics, they, on the one hand were inappropriately and illegally been claimed by former dictators of a neighboring country; and, on the other hand, from the Ethiopian side, they were considered as less Ethiopians with less or no loyalty to the nation.

The constitution of the land on its preamble stipulates views, thoughts and aspirations of the Nations Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as follows:

“We the Nations , Nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, strongly committed , in full and free exercise of our right to self-determination, to building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of insuring a lasting of peace guarantying a democratic order , and advancing our economic and social development, firmly convinced that the fulfillment of this objective requires full respect of individual and people’s fundamental freedoms and rights, to live together on the basis of equality and without any sexual, religious or cultural discrimination, further convinced that by continuing to live with our rich and proud cultural legacies in territories we have long inhabited have, through continuous interaction on various levels and forms of life built up common interest and have also contributed to the emergency of a common outlook; fully cognizant that our common destiny can best be served by rectifying historical unjust relationship and by further promoting our shared interests ;convinced that to live as one economic community is necessary in order to create sustainable and mutually supportive consideration for conserving respect for our rights and freedoms and for the collective promotion of our interests ;determined to consolidate, as a lasting legacy, the peace and the prospect of a democratic order which our struggles and sacrifices have brought about; have therefore adopted on December 1994 this constitution thorough representatives we have dually elected for this purpose as on instrument that binds us in a mutual commitment to fulfill the objectives and the principle set forth above”

Dec 9.2013 (Hidar 29/2006 Ethiopian colander), The Ethiopian Nations Nationalist and People’s day also confirms the above reality. Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia come from every corner to celebrate their culture and tradition, to share and promote their interest, to know and understand each other better, to honor unity in diversity, to confirm their commitment to their constitution and to reinforce the fundamental principles Nation, Nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia uphold i.e. to the deep commitment they hold to live together in peace and harmony based on mutual interest and mutual understanding of the rights and responsibilities they are willing to adhere to. This deep commitment and understanding Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia posses and which has been reinforced by the constitution of the land has deep roots amongst the Ethiopian Somalis.

The Ethiopian Somalis’ Nationalism to the mother land has not been a simple rhetoric; rather, it has been tested time and again in good and in bad times. Despite that however, there has been a dichotomy between perception and reality vis-à-vis, the Ethiopian Somalis amongst many Ethiopians and non-Ethiopians alike. As a result, the Ethiopian Somalis have been strangled between the rock and hard surface from both corners with regard to their loyalty to the nation. On the one hand, from the Ethiopian side they were seen as people of double loyalty, as not so Ethiopians or as less Ethiopians; thus, many doubted their loyalties to the motherland. On the other hand, they were portrayed as sell-outs, infidels and even as traitors by Somalis of other nation thus, the perception many Ethiopians used to have towards the Ethiopian Somalis have until recently been biased least to say.

Despite all odds however, the Ethiopian Somalis have never given up to every accusations, doubts and innuendos that came from every corner. In fact, accusations and doubts, biases and miss- understandings directed towards them made them even stronger and further reinforced their commitment and loyalty to their motherland. Tested by fire, the Ethiopian Somalis became even more committed and more strengthened Ethiopians.

The strength and loyalty of the Ethiopian Somalis towards their motherland was demonstrated time and again. As what can be called a historical landmark and significant expression of their Ethiopianism happened around the 1950s when European colonialists designed to divide and sub-divide many parts of Africa on the basis of the colonialists' "divide and rule" policy when the political boundaries of almost all African nations have by and large been determined based on the colonialists' interest. As a consequence, there was a vicious-circle of conflicts wars between and among African Nations. Few who contested the ideals of the colonial powers challenged the colonialist mentality while others did not want to challenge their colonial masters for fear of violence on the one hand and to keep the political position they hold or given to them by their colonial masters; thus, to continue the status-quo ignoring or putting the real national interest on the back burner.

On the eve of second World War, close to the 1950s, The British came up with the notion of "Greater Somalia" This brain child of the British Colonialists has never been the agenda of the Ethiopian Somalis. The idea of establishing a "Great Somalia" that would have included Somalia, Djibouti, part of Kenya and part of the Ethiopian Somalis was the agenda and wishful thinking of the British colonialists. Confident with their idea, the British came to a place called KALI, a place in Danaan district not far from Gode within the Ethiopian Somali Region. Since the Somali Elders had the final say, the British wanted to discuss and convince the Somali Elders in KALI about the matter. The British then met the Ethiopian Elders in KALI and asked them to join the rest of the Somalis in establishing a "Great Somalia" that the British planned to establish and thus, to separate the Ethiopian Somalis from the rest of Ethiopia. On the meeting, the Ethiopia Somalis (Elders) were asked; in fact were pushed to join the "Greater Somalia". However, these committed Ethiopians flatly and adamantly rejected the British demand and in a clear and unequivocal terms, they told the British that they have always been Ethiopians, that they wanted to live with their Ethiopian brothers and sisters as always and they even told them that their color, their culture, tradition and their way of life is simply Ethiopian and has nothing to do with the British or with their demand. Thus, Ethiopian Somalis showed their unwavering loyalty, tacit approval and firm commitment to their motherland. That sort of a "referendum" directed by the British colonialist was flatly and adamantly rejected once and for all by the Ethiopian Somali Elders in KALI.

That feeling of Ethiopian nationalism and a solid character of nationhood exhibited during that time is simply unprecedented and truly remarkable history of the Ethiopian Somalis. Our late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had several encounters with the Ethiopian Somali Elders. On one occasion, he was challenged by the elders. They complained about variety of issues: belongingness, loyalty, nationhood etc. After patiently listening to their complaints, the late Premier asked them to be a little patient, look at the activities and infrastructural endeavors undertaken and planned for the Region before deciding what kind of future will uphold for them and for their children. On his next encounter, the same elders apologized for their previous remark and told the Premier that during the previous regimes, helicopters used to fly over their ski to bomb camel herders, children and their camels but now, helicopters are bringing them food, medicine and other important tools. His answer was simple, precise and eloquent. He told them "The difference is that these are your own helicopters".

The real history of the Ethiopian Somalis has not been told, written or documented by Ethiopian historians or acknowledged by the former regimes. It was during the recent visit of artists to the Somali Regional State organized and led by The Speaker of the House of Federation and the President of the Somali National Regional State and then, by the historic tour of Regional and National investors from the private sector accompanied by high level Regional and Federal government officials led by The Deputy Prime Minister, The Speaker of the House of Federation and the President of the Somali National Regional State aimed at promoting the Somali Region's culture, tradition, history and investment and developmental endeavors that such facts of history started to emerge. The Speaker of the House of Federation and the President of the Somali National Regional State met with the Somali Elders in the area and had a through discussion with them and such a discussion was transmitted live on the national TV to the amazement of millions of Ethiopians. The second historic tour of investors to the Region also invigorated the People of the Region and the investors themselves as well. Millions of Ethiopians felt proud by what happened but ashamed of not knowing, not learning and not understanding the true history of their own brothers and sisters for so long. Now that things have started to clear up and events are put into perspective, the true history of the Ethiopian Somalis shall be re-written by writers and historians alike and will be documented along side by side with the history of the other proud Ethiopian historical events. Thus, perceptions about the Ethio-Somalis will be put aside and the real true history of the Ethiopian Somalis will be proudly talked about, written and documented.

Another recent demonstration of the feeling of nationalism of the Ethiopian Somalis was manifested during the Eritrean aggression over our nation. The Ethiopian Somalis were among the first people to go to the war front to encourage our Defense Force and that was again a remarkable historical event. Further, The Ethiopian Somalis participation and contribution to the overall development endeavor of our nation particularly those Ethiopian Somalis in the Diaspora has also been remarkable. The Ethiopian Somalis are arguably the highest bond buyers for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. They are also the first people to name a Grand Referral Hospital in Jijiga after our late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, thus, becoming exemplary to others.

Mistakes have been done by former successive governments; but, those mistakes must be corrected once and for all. Mistakes must not be repeated because two mistakes don't make one right. The Ethiopian Somalis need to be understood and assisted. In the same way, Ethiopian Somalis must respect and live in peace and harmony with their brothers and sisters who come from different parts of the country and reside within their region because respecting each other and rejoicing unity in diversity is a symbol and sign of a civilized society. This generation must join hands in developing the Somali National Regional State because developing the Somali National Regional State means developing the Nation as a whole.

The Somali National Regional State which is located at the Eastern and South Eastern part of our nation with a population of 4,749,481; 2,666,399 male and 2,128,081 female live in the urban and the rest 4,074,308 residents in rural areas. It has a land mass area of 350,000 km square between 40-11-N latitude and 4 degrees to 48 degrees longitude. It shares borders with Kenya at the South, Somalia at the South-East and East; locally with Oromia and Afar Regional States to the west and South West and North West respectively and topography of 500-1600 meters above sea level. The Region has immense land, vast agricultural potential, extensive animal population

(camel, cattle, sheep, goats etc.), and value added agricultural land. Out of the estimated 2 million hectare of irrigable land 150,000 hectare of land is under cultivation or developed. The presence of large rivers namely Wabishebele, Genalle, Weyb and Dawa and other smaller rivers such as Erer, Daketa, Jerer and Fafem realizes that the region has great potential for the development of irrigation and agriculture. During the last 2 years (2002 – 2004 EC – 2009/10-2011/12 GC) a total of 408 with a capital budget of ETB 12.10 billion (about USD 637 million) has been registered and started to work.

There is peace and stability in the Region and peace and stability leads to investment and development. Our late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi along with the then Federal Affairs Minister Abay Tsehaye, The new leadership of the Ethiopian Somali National regional state and our heroic Defense Force especially the Eastern Command leadership lead by Major General Abraha and his staff have been instrumental in securing peace and stability in the region. This means that there is good opportunity to investors from within the country and abroad to invest in the Region and the region has been receiving potential investors with open hands and with encouraging incentives. Good opportunity for local and international investors on variety of areas such as public private partnership, technology transfer, construction, textile manufacturing, import-export trade, power and energy such as solar and wind energy, investment on education and health sector development, hotel and tourism etc. **So Come! Invest! Help develop the Region! After all, it is Your Region, Your Country and Your People; if you don't help develop Your Region, Your Country, who will? We must all learn a lesson or two from the Elders of KALLI.**

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTSON INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ETHIOPIAN SOMALI NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE: ON LIVESTOCK

1	Dairy farming	7	Livestock export and Marketing
2	Fattening (Sheep and Goats)	8	Meat processing for export
3	Cattle and camel fattening	9	Dairy and dairy products processing
4	Poultry in modern methods and equipments	10	Honey and wax processing as well as their products
5	Livestock feed production, storage and processing		
6	Livestock health and veterinary clinics		





INVESTMENT PROJECTS (2002 – 2004 EC 2009/10 - 2011/2012 GC)

1	Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) - (8 with a capital budget of ETB 720 million)
2	Diaspora (Ethiopian origin) investors (69 investors with a capital budget of ETB 5.9 Billion)
3	Domestic investors (332 with a capital budget of 5.5 billion)

LIST OF FOREIGN INVESTOR

1		2,400,000.00
2	Docomo oils PLC Ashok kumar mgr:	26,478,000.00
3	Asad Talaba kodi:	11,004,455.00
4	Abdulahi Abdulkadir Farah	10,000,000.00
5	Mr. Ramazan Sahin G.M:	150,000,000.00
6	Mr. Brent Alexander Wallace G.M	500,000,000.00
7	Mr. ERCAN OZBUDAK	6,000,000.00
8	Agro-Peace Ethiopia	15,000,000.00
	Total	<u>720,882,455.00</u>

Investment Participation of Diaspora – Ethiopian Origin

Investment Sectors	No of Investors	Total investment Capital
Hotel	20	820,892,229.00
Education	3	7,000,000.00
Agriculture	10	38,700,000
Trade	21	565,156,294

Construction	5	49,308,591
Industry	2	11,780,237
Water Drilling & Filtration	2	22,000,000
Transportation	2	4,153,015,040
Slaughter House	1	41,000,000.00
Health	3	109,925,425
Total	69	5,818,777,816.00

Names of some investment project profiles currently available in the agency

1	Fuel briquette	11	Calcium carbide	21	Sheep and goat farm	31	Orange squash	41	Aggregates
2	Leather foot wears	12	Absorbent cotton	22	Wet blue leather	32	Lime production	42	Canned meat
3	Sisal sacks	13	Caustic soda	23	Crust leather	33	Sodium silicate	43	Glucose
4	Peanut butter	14	Laundry soap	24	Cotton farm	34	Cement plant	44	Calcinated gypsum
5	Seed processing plant	15	Citrus farm	25	Vegetable farm	35	Cement plant	45	Cotton ginning plant
6	Cattle fattening farm	16	Grinding stone	26	Livestock feed	36	Finished leather	46	Sodium silicate
7	Mineral licks	17	Canvas hoses	27	Sugar cane farm	37	Bricks making plant	47	Dairy farm
8	Flour plant	18	Sisal rope	28	Leather sandals and chapels	38	Iodized salt production	48	Marble processing plant
9	Pasta and Macaroni plant	19	Natural adhesive	29	Sesame farm	39	Marmalade	49	Sugar cane farm
10	Sugar plant	20	Corn starch	30	Salt production	40	Handmade paper	50	Sheep and goat farm

