

A Tragic Consequence of the “10th Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan.”

Warning for the Future

By Dr. Negaso Gidada

07.05.14

1. Introduction

Addis Ababa is now 127 years old as the capital of Ethiopia. It was founded by Empress Taitu and Emperor Menilik II in 1887 around the hot water spring called Finfinnee. Empress Taitu is said to have seen a kind of flower which she did not know before and called the area Addis Ababa, meaning New Flower. The Oromo call Addis Ababa as Finfinnee.

History tells that King Sahle Sellasie of Shoa was involved in expanding the territory of the kingdom of Shawa into the Oromo areas of the Tulama earlier. A witness (Harris from England) to what was happening during Sahle Sellasie's wars against the Oromo also speaks particular what took place in Entoto, the hills in the northern part of Addis Ababa. This is a recorded history (Harris 1844, 178; Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibsa, 1990, 85). Here is what is written: “While these forces (Forces of Sahle Sellasie), who were in effect demonstrating their use of guns given by European to Sahle Sellasie, began to destroy the Oromo life and resources, the guests of Sahle Sellasie, the Britons who accompanied the mission with the king, were observing with field glasses what was happening. They reported that when ‘... The luckless inhabitant, taken quite by surprise, had barely time to abandon their property and fly for their lives to the fastness of Entoto which reared its protecting form at the distance of a few miles. The spear of the warrior searched every bush for the hunted foe. Women and girls were torn from the building to be hurried into hopeless captivity. Old men and young were indiscriminately slain mutilated among the fields and groves; flocks and herds were driven off in triumph and houses after houses was sacked and consigned to the flame.’ The Oromo of the area, particularly the Galallee remember that their leaders such as Tuba Mona, Birraatuu Goolee, Waamii Gaaroo, Shabbuu Bordee, and Ilaansoo Halloo died in these wars of conquest of the area. Later, after Menelik's conquest and the establishment of the capital, many of the remaining Oromo population in the surrounding were uprooted and resettled elsewhere.

Coming to the present situation, the Oromo remember three issues. The first is the Constitution of 1995. The law which was supposed to be made and the interest of Oromia which should be respected is not defined clearly and is not implemented. 300 hundred Oromo students were expelled from the university for one year after the controversy which took place in 2003/4 over the decision of to move the capital of Oromia from Addis Ababa to Adaamaa. The OPDO/EPRDF changed its mind as the result of the 2005 election and returned the Capital of Oromia to Addis Ababa. Not only that, it was then promised that a big central Oromo cultural center will be erected near the main train station (Lagahar). Other cultural centers would be built in the 10 districts of Addis Ababa. There will be schools in the 10 districts where Oromo language would be taught and where lessons will be given in Oromo language for those who want it. Nine years have passed since and nothing from the decisions and promises were implemented. In the mean

time Addis Ababa has been expanding unabated and thousands of Oromo farmers have been evicted from the suburbs and the surrounding small towns. It is thus these historical memories and the promises unfulfilled which made the Oromo furious when the Addis Ababa “Integrated Master Plan” news became public. Here lies the root cause of the current incident and the tragic consequence.

2. The situation

The violence which erupted around the controversy on so called “Integrated Development Master Plan” of Addis Ababa started in Addaamaa University last Tuesday, the 29th of April, 2014, and has spread throughout Oromia up to yesterday and today. While it seems that the situation is stable in many of the areas, it is feared that the problem may continue next week. Areas which were affected up to now are Addaamaa, Haroo Maayaa, Diree Dawa, Madda Walaabuu (Bale Roobee), Bulee Horaa (Gujii), Addis Ababa (Finfinnee), Buraayyu, Ginchii, Middaa Qanyii, Aambo, Gudar, Tokkee, Baakkoo, Naqamte, Gimbii, Nejjo, Mendii, Begii, Dembi Dollo, Airaa Gulisoo, Mattuu, Jimma and Walisoo.

Although the problem started in the Universities it latter involved the general public and high schools. The number is not yet clearly known, but many people have died. Unconfirmed information says that there has been one incident of mutilation and burning. Two individuals were killed and thrown into a River. An explosion in the TV room in Haroo Maayaa University killed two students and injured 70. Government and private property has been destroyed. Rumors point out that there was ethnic based violence in some places. According to these rumors, Shops and Hotels are said to have been destroyed and that there was one ethnic killing. These rumors may be 1% true, but they may also originate from forces who either want to see ethnic disturbance or from those who want to create enmity between the Oromo and others, particularly the Amhara and Tigray. Such rumors must be taken seriously and be investigated.

The Federal and the Regional security forces have been deployed to bring the conflict under control, and violently. The Federal and the Regional governments have given out statements on Thursday evening. High officials of Oromia government and the OPDO, the governing party in Oromia, have continued to defend the “Master Plan.” and blame others.

3. The Sequence of Events

- 3.1. The government press and electronic media began to broadcast about the “Integrated Development Master Plan of Addis Ababa” which is said to have been prepared by a joint task force of Addis Ababa and Oromia. This was around the beginning of March 2014 after the death of Alemayehu Atoomsaa, the president of Oromia. Explanation of the plan and the media coverage, one could observe that there was disagreement and opposition by some Oromia officials who participated on the official discussion.
- 3.2. The news about the plan spread in the country and abroad and opposition voices started to be heard.
- 3.3. A discussion took place on the subject at the OFC office on the 13th of May, 2014 (If I remember correctly). News, Interviews, and articles began to appear in Magazines and

- News Papers of the Week end, the 15th and 16th of March. Addis Admas of the 15th had an interview with me to whom I gave short back ground and warned that the matter could get out of hand, lead to constitutional federal order and other problems including the questioning of the peace, stability and unity of the country if the matter is not handled carefully, legally, constitutionally and democratically.
- 3.4. The Addis Ababa administration held discussion forms in the ten districts of the city simultaneously two weeks ago. The participants' views and reactions which broadcast on ETV and radio showed that there was mixed reception. The Addis Ababa and Oromia administrations began holding discussion on the matter at Universities in Oromia beginning in Adaamaa two weeks and ago.
 - 3.5. Social Media, Magazines and continued to cover discussions the whole time.
 - 3.6. Students began protesting after Monday and. The protests spread. The Federal and Regional security forces take harsh measures resulting in the tragic consequence.
 - 3.7. General Abbaa Duulaa the Speaker of Parliament and Woizero Aster Maammoo Vice Prime Minister (both members of the leadership of OPDO/EPRDF) travel to Amboo, the town where the worst tragedy took place, and hold meetings with some residents of the town after Thursday and try to appease the situation. But the protest was continuing in different places even up to Saturday.
 - 3.8. Officials of OPDO and the Cabinet of Oromia are on a tour through out Oromia in a campaign to appease the residents of the zonal towns and the students beginning from last Sunday and the discussions they have been holding is covered by the Federal and Regional Media. As is expected, the reports are one sided.
 - 3.9. But the disturbances have continued: Yesterday in Dembi Dollo, Aira Guliso and Innaango, today in Kuyyuu, Ganjii, Qeebbee, Meettaa Roobii, Adoolaa (Boorana).
 - 3.10. There is information that says that a school boy a security personnel and a policeman have died in a district of Gimbii-West Wallaggaa zone today. There was also clash between high school children and the police in Dembi Dolloo today. A police station was attacked and material contents, the windows and doors were destroyed. On the other hand, there is a new positive development. For the first time in the history of the area, Teargas was used to disperse people instead of using bullets by the security forces. This and the statement of Abbaa Duulaa in which he commented that "the protests of the students is "legal and justified and killing students with bullets is not correct" should be taken positively with all the negative points he made.
4. Nationalist Hate Propaganda Accompanied the Discussion on the Master Plan
One could observe that the Nationalism, "civic" and ethnic nationalism, has been revived this year aggressively which seems to have influenced the development in the last week. There have been blames and counter blames using derogatory expressions. The hate propaganda of nationalists could be observed particularly by the followers of "Itiopyawinet" (Ethiopianness) and "Oromummaa" Oromoness". The controversy which was widely publicized is reflected in the discussions around the following issues:
 - a) Al Gezira interview with Jawar Mohammed in which he is said that to have said that "he is first Oromo and then Ethiopian."

- b) The 100th Anniversary of the death of Emperor Menelik II.
- c) Tedi Afro's "Menelik's Holy War?" and Bedele Bear incident.
- d) The ethnic conflicts in some schools in west Oromia.
- e) Attack on Amhara settler farmers in east Shawa.
- f) The Anole statue.
- g) The incident at the Bahirdar Stadium on the occasion of National School's Sports.
- h) The Sulultaa incident, after effect of Bahirdar incident.

5. Background to the present conflict

- Addis Ababa became the capital of the modern Ethiopia around 1885/1886.
- The city boundary was very small up to the end of the Dergue regime. Dergue is said to have prepared a master plan in which it was indicated that the metropolitan city should extend to Adaamaa/Asalaa, Shashmane, Walisoo, Amboo, Fiche, and Debre Birhan. The transitional government rejected this plan and affirmed the present boundary of Addis Ababa.
- The constitution of 1995 proclaimed Addis Ababa as the capital of Ethiopia with a special privilege of Oromia which was supposed to be defined in a law. This has not been done up to now.
- It was decided by EPRDF that demarcation stones be erected between Addis Ababa and Oromia during the time when Ato Ali Abdo was the Mayor of the city. But this was not done.
- Oromia had Addis Ababa as its capital city. Decision was taken in 2003/2004 to move the administration up to Adaama. This caused serious opposition among Oromo organizations and individuals. There were violent repressive measures taken by the Federal and Oromia authorities.
- As the result of the decision and the repressive measures taken, OPDO lost in many parts of Oromia during the 2005 election. (The story of the 2005 OPDO/E PRDF election results is widely written).
- OPDO, after realizing what the consequence of its actions could mean started to take measures to appease the Oromo. The first step was to re-declare that Addis Ababa (Finfinee) as the capital of Oromia. It promised that it will build cultural centers in Addis, a big one at the center and others in the ten districts (zones) of Addis Ababa. It also promised that it will open schools in the ten districts where Oromo children could learn Oromiffa and could learn in Oromiffaa. Only the building of the cultural center near the train station is complete but has not started functioning. There is no news of opening of schools and building of cultural centers in the 10 districts.
- Land allocation campaign in the suburbs of Addis Ababa and the surrounding towns was carried out to Oromo investors, individuals from the Diaspora and Civil servants of Oromia from the regional, zonal and Woreda offices and institutions who were organized in housing associations. Land was taken by Addis Ababa and administration s to build Condominium houses to be sold. High officials of the federal government and EPRDF were also given land. The fate of the Oromo farmers around Addis Ababa, particularly in Laga Xaafoo was widely reported by Finote Netsanet of UDJ.

- A step to establish a special Zone of Oromia named Finfinnee was under taken after the 2010 election. This special Zone included the towns which are now planned to be integrated in to Addis Ababa through the envisaged “10th Integrated Development Master Plan of Addis Ababa”

6. Issues Which Have Come Up Now

- Addis Ababa is capital of Oromia, Federal State and Africa. It is the seat of many regional and International Organizations. It must be wide enough and has to be modernized. Modern infrastructure should be extended. Addis Ababa should be a good metropolitan city with the surrounding towns.
- The Oromo forward historical claim to Addis Ababa and oppose the refusal of satisfaction of their interest in the city although they accept the decision that it is the capital of the Federal State, as Oromia is also a member of the federation. The Oromo are not opposed to the extension of infrastructure to the surrounding towns but want guarantee that Oromia has jurisdiction over them. They want that the identity of the Oromo be preserved, that the Oromo farmers should not be evicted or if their land is needed that they get proper compensation, that Addis Ababa pays for the services it gets from the surrounding areas (i.e. land, water, construction material) and do something about the depositions of waste substances (domestic and industrial).
- Those opposed to this argue that not only the surroundings of Addis Ababa but the whole of Oromia and other federal states in Ethiopia belong to all Ethiopians and the Oromo have no right to forward special rights on Addis Ababa and surrounding towns. This group attaches the matter with land policy and demands the changing of the land policy provided in the constitution. Here is where one observes the nationalist’s hate propaganda and counter propaganda. The followers of “Ethiopiawinet” accuse the followers of “Oromummaa” of being “backward”, “narrow nationalists”, “racists”, “divisive” and “separatists”. The “Oromummaa” followers accuse the “Ethiopianists” of “expansionists”, “colonialists”, “naftagnas” ((“naftagna” actually means a system created and defended by bearers of the gun (musk) but some people wrongly equate the term with Amhara)).
- Some people accuse mainly the TPLF but also the ANDM of deliberately enforcing the master plan and that the OPDO, instead of defending the right of the Oromo and Oromia, is submitting to the dictates of the two.
- EPRDF is also accused of subtly violating and amending the constitution. It claims to defend the constitution but it violates it in practice.
- Some people predict that EPRDF, through OPDO, will lose in the 2015 election.
- Some others say that there are forces which want to overthrow the EPRDF unconstitutionally earlier than the 2015 election. But there others who say that the current issues are indicative to the campaign agendas for the coming election.

7. The Addis Ababa Mater Plan and the Constitution.

The current situation leads me to question if we knowingly or unknowingly are undermining the Constitution. This is very dangerous. If we do not do something, even though the national question is vividly revived at the moment, developments can get out of hand and may lead to a

situation where the federal system breaks down. This could lead to ethnic conflict with its dirty face of genocide and ethnic cleansing which we now observe in different parts of the world. We have to avoid that by any means. The end result could also mean the disintegration of Ethiopia which no one of us wants to see. When rereading the constitution I observe that it is not respected. Forces, namely nationalists and the ruling party are at work eroding the constitution. The nationalists are opposing the constitution directly or indirectly. The ruling party with its urge to implement its “development and transformation plan” seems to not care about the constitution and violates it at will. I therefore thought that it would be good to revisit the constitution, particularly the part which should be seen in connection with the current problem. The question is whether we want to save our people and our country from agony and destruction. If want to live together and save our people and country, we should either respect the constitution as it is or create a situation in which it could be amended and ratified by the people through a referendum.

6.1.

PREAMBLE

“We, the Nation, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia: Strongly committed, in full and free exercise of our right to self-determination, to build a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing our economic and social development;

...fulfillment of this objective requires full respect of individual and people’s fundamental freedoms to live together on the basis of equality and without any sexual, religious cultural discrimination;

... by continuing to live 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 emergence of common outlook;

...our common destiny can be served by rectifying historically unjust relationships and by further promoting our shared interests;

...create sustainable and mutually supportive conditions for ensuring respect for our rights and freedoms and for the collective promotion of our interests;

... consolidate, as a lasting legacy, the peace and the prospect of a democratic order...

6.2. Chapter One:

General Provisions

Article 1

Nomenclature:

“This Constitution establishes a Federal and Democratic State structure. Accordingly, the Ethiopian state shall be known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.”

7.1. Article 2:

Ethiopian Territorial Jurisdiction:-

The territorial jurisdiction of Ethiopia shall comprise the territory of the members of the Federation and its boundaries shall be as determined by international agreements.

7.2. Article 8

Sovereignty of the People:

Article 8/1

“All the sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.”

Article 8/3

“Their sovereignty shall be expressed through their elected representatives in accordance with this Constitution and through their democratic participation.

7.3. Article 9

Supremacy of the constitution:

Article 9/1

“The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Any law customary practice or a decision of an organ of the state or public official which contravenes this Constitution shall be of no effect.”

Article 9/2

“All citizens, organs of state, political organizations, other associations as well as their officials have the duty to ensure observance of the Constitution and to obey it.”

Article 9/3

“It is prohibited to assume state power in any manner other than that provided under the Constitution.”

7.4. Articles 29, 30 provide the Right of Thought, Opinion, Expression, Assembly, Demonstration, and Petition.

7.5. Article 39

The Rights of Nationalities and Peoples

Article 39/1

“Every Nation, Nationalities and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession.”

Article 9/2

“Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history.”

Article 39/3

“Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in the state and federal government.”

7.6. Article 40

The right to Property:

Article 40/3

“The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is vested in the State and the people of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange.”

Article 40/4

“Ethiopian peasants have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession. The implementation of this provision shall be specified by law.”

7.7.

Article 49

Capital City

Article 49/1

“Addis Ababa shall be the capital city of the Federal State.”

Article 49/3

“The Administration of Addis Ababa shall be responsible to the Federal Government”

Article 49/5

“The special interest of the State of Oromia in Addis Ababa, regarding the provision of social services or the utilization of natural resources and other similar matters, as well as joint administrative matters arising from the location of Addis Ababa within the State of Oromia, shall be respected. Particulars shall be determined by law.”

6.9.

Article 50

Structure of the organs of State

Article 50/2

“The Federal Government and the states shall have legislative, executive and judicial powers.”

Article 50/4

“State government shall be established at State and other administrative levels they find necessary. Adequate power shall be granted to the lowest units of government to enable The People to participate directly in the administration of such units”

Article 50/8

“Federal and State powers are defined by the Constitution. The States shall respect the powers of the Federal Government. The Federal Government shall likewise respect the powers of the state.”

6.10.

Article 52

Powers and Functions of States.

Article 52/2/a

“... establish a state administration that best advances self-government, a democratic Order based on the rule of law, to protect and defend the Federal Constitution.”

Article 52/2/d

“ ... Administer land and other natural resources in accordance with Federal laws.”

Article 52/2/e

“... levy and collect taxes and duties on revenue sources reserved to the states and draw up And administer the State budget.”

8. Concluding Remarks:-What should be done?

Damage has taken place. A tragedy which will not be forgotten has happened. We can only take try to mend the damage by taking corrective measures which is based on what w have learnt from the mistakes done.

8.1. The government should quickly apologize for its mistakes :-

- Not clearing the relations between Addis Ababa and Oromia in a binding law as is provided in Article 49/5 of the Constitution and not clearly demarcating the boundary between thaws two as was decided before 2008.
- Not implementing the decision to build cultural centers and opening schools for the Oromo community in Addis.
- Taking steps to introduce the “10th Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan” before the above two mistakes were corrected.
- Crimes and human rights violations committed by the security and armed forces of the regional and Federal government in Amboo and other places in Oromia during the current crisis.

8.2. An independent and serious and balanced investigation on the crimes committed by security forces and individuals should urgently be done as urgently as possible. The criminals should be brought to justice. The House of People’s Representatives and the Oromia Parliament are demanded by the Constitution (Article 55/7) to “ carry out investigations and take necessary measures” “If the conduct of the forces (defense, public security and police force) infringes upon human rights and the nation’s security.”

8.3. Article 49/5 should urgently be implemented. The jurisdiction of the towns around Addis Ababa should be reaffirmed. The boundaries of Addis Ababa and Oromia should then be clearly demarcated. Implementation of the provisions of the law which would come out, which I hope soon, should start. Promises of 2010/11(cultural) should be quickly implemented.

8.4. Hate propaganda, particularly nationalist (be it civic or ethnic) based, should be condemned and stop. All press and electronic media should (public, parties, and private) should help and contribute in positive direction.

8.5. National public discussion should start to discuss Ethiopia’s on burning issues such as:-

- The possibility of amending the Constitution.
- The National Question: Nationalism (civic and ethnic) and its dangers and how the national question is to be solved. Article 39 of the Constitution or in another way?
- Land Question.
- Federalism.
- National working language.
- Ethnicity, hate propaganda and the role of the media.
- How to strengthen, democracy, multi-party system at national and regional level. How can a condition be created in which not legally registered organizations (clandestine or armed) be attracted to legally and peacefully participate in the political development of our country. What is expected from the ruling party and the government?
- How to strengthen real and democratic participation at the local, regional and national level. Related to this is the electoral system.

Thank you for reading this note. Please do not hesitate to give me your comments and criticisms.