



REFORMS IN ETHIOPIA UNDERWAY WITH A FAST TRACK PACE

Reforms being undertaken in Ethiopia continue with a fast track pace. The trail blazers who are putting their marks in the history of the country are acting in the interest and wishes of the greater public, utilizing their time and energy to its benefit. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed his staff are working day and night to answer public demands which were propagated in different forms including violent protests.

The government of Ethiopia which is formed by the EPDRF ruling coalition has put ensuring and maintaining of peace and stability in the country as its priority. Following Dr. Abiy's ascendency to the top of Ethiopia's political echelon his government has been undertaking reform measures in various areas and has scored tremendous achievements. The major milestones of those reforms and achievements include the following:

- Freed thousands of political detainees, including opposition leader Andargachew Tsege (**May**);
- Lifted national state of emergency (**June**);
- Began opening the giant Ethio-Telecom, Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Power and the Maritime Transport and Logistics Corporation for both domestic and foreign private investors (**June**);
- Approved an Amnesty Law that grants pardons for individuals and groups, either under investigation or convicted on treason, crimes against the constitutional order and armed struggle, and, accordingly reached out to political rivals, lifted bans on websites and other media, freed thousands of political prisoners and journalists/activists with pardons (**July**);
- Made a successful call for leaders of opposition parties including those engaged in armed struggle, journalists, activists and ex-government officials to return to their country after several years of exile;
- Conveyed messages and carried out discussions with the general public in various regions of Ethiopia and outside of the country including Washington, Los Angeles, Minnesota, and Frankfurt (**April-October**);
- Agreed to accept border ruling giving disputed territory to Eritrea (**June 5**) and alongside the Eritrean president declared the end of war between the two countries (**July**) which resulted in the reopening of telecommunication lines, air routes, sea ports, and land borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea (**September**);
- Brokering of the peace and reconciliation deals between Eritrea and Somali, and Eritrea and Djibouti as well as the lifting of the UNSC sanction on Eritrea;
- Appointed women to 50% of ministerial posts (**October**);
- Appointment of the former Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Mrs. Sahile-Work Zewde to become the first women President of the Nation by replacing Dr. Mulatu Teshome (**October**);
- Appointment of Mrs. Meaza Ashenafi as the country's first female Supreme Court Chief Justice (**November**);
- Appointment of Ms. Birtukan Medeksa former leader of the Unity for Democracy and Justice Party as Chair of the National Electoral Board (**November**);
- Took strong actions on high ranking officials of the previous administration, some under investigation, some already convicted of misuse of the nation's resources and of corruption

The reform measures were received with appreciation and political and economic support from the international community:

- Germany pledged 100 million Euro (**August**),
- France pledged 100 million Euro to economic reform mainly for transformation of Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (**October**),
- World Bank approval 1.2 billion USD in grant and loans to speed up Ethiopia's rapid economic growth (**October**),
- UAE pledged US\$3 billion of which US\$1 billion deposited in the National Bank of Ethiopia to bolster the country's fiscal and monetary policy and US\$2 billion to stimulate the economy and encourage joint productive investments (**June**),
- Just recently (**Nov. 27, 2018**) a milestone in reforming the country's electoral system has been laid down with a proposal to shrink the country's national political parties to less than five at a meeting with over 80 competing political parties (**November**)