

DIASPORAS MUST ACT AS GOOD WILL AMBASSADORS IN TIME OF ENVIROMENTAL CATACLYSMS BACK HOME

By

Yohannes Gebresellsie (Ph.d) Addis Ababa

History reveals that many nations including those that are currently highly developed and highly industrialized and wealthy have at one point in time been confronted with man-made and/or environmental cataclysms. As a result of those unfortunate events, their citizens suffered enormously and their economy came to its lowest level causing social, economic and political turmoil and political unrest. Throughout those difficult times and when those tribulations occur, the people in question confronted those human as well as environmental cataclysms and challenges with more persistence and courage from within and with humanitarian and international solidarity from abroad. Especially, citizens from within came hand in hand encouraging and supporting each other and those in the Diaspora lobbied the international community to support their country of origin. Most importantly, citizens in the Diaspora became very active in providing assistance in all aspects in order to come to the rescue of their country of origin and were very instrumental in resolving the socio-economic problems back home. They were also instrumental in restoring and maintaining the good image of their country of origin. Further, they advocated and promoted investment to their country of origin. In a sense, Diaspora citizens were acting as good will ambassadors of their country of origin. There was no time what so ever that Diasporas stood against the national interest of their country of origin or stood side by side with the enemies of their country of origin in order to punish their own citizens simply for individual and/or group's political agenda. Whereas political rallies, demonstrations and other political differences between and among people exist at any time, Diasporas must at all

time show solidarity and citizenship responsibility when their country of origin is in difficulties. Whenever there are political differences amongst people, they must agree to disagree in a manner legal, constitutional, peaceful and democratic. More importantly, they must do things in a manner that cannot and will not affect the national interest and the good image of their country of origin. Generally speaking, they must not pass judgment from the sanctuary of the Diaspora on their country of origin's social economic and political affairs. For example, during the difficult times of the 1980s where many parts of Ethiopia were stricken by recurrent drought and war and even with the then dictatorial military regime: the Derg, tens of thousands of Ethiopians left their political differences behind and got their hands together to assist their citizens from poverty and malnutrition. Their political difference did not act as an impediment to extend their assistance to their country of origin. In fact, their effort to help their country of origin was the principal cause and motivation for the international community to act favorably. Further, it helped reinforce foreign food supply and other necessary assistance to arrive in Ethiopia and for the international community to act rapidly and come to the rescue. Further, during that difficult time, Ethiopian Diasporas knocked at the doors of governmental as well as non-governmental organizations for food, medicine and other necessary tools to help their people back home. They did not side with the enemy form within and abroad to impose economic sabotage against innocent citizens back home. Instead, they lobbied many governmental as well as non-governmental institutions to support their people on food, medicine and other necessary items. They also made sure that international assistance is rigorously monitored by donor government and non-government agencies in order to make sure it reaches the intended destination and fulfils the intended objectives. Similarly, during the Shabia's aggression over Ethiopia, many Ethiopians from coast to coast rallied behind their country of origin to undo Shabia's aggression.

As a result, they were instrumental from within and the Diaspora in exposing and fighting Shabia's unprovoked aggression over their country of origin and in assisting their country of origin economically, morally and diplomatically. They used every way and means to support their country of origin and in doing so, they made history. Internal political differences amongst them did not prevent them from doing what they were doing. So what is going on this time with few opposition Diasporas? More importantly why are some Diaspora Ethiopians siding with the enemies of their country of origin and rallying against the national interest of their country of origin? Why are some Diaspora Ethiopians mainly those in Europe and North America knocking every foreign governmental and non-governmental office to shatter the image of their country of origin? Further, why are they lobbying against international assistance to their own country and their own people? Why are they rallying on the streets of Washington D.C. London etc. side by side and holding the same slogan with Ethiopia's enemies? Why are they helping the agenda of defeated enemies of their country of origin? It seems that most of them are simply disillusioned by the propaganda of Genbot 7, OLF, ONLF leadership who are labeled as terrorist groups. As is practiced in any country, the law and the constitution of the land must be respected by all citizens. What is important however, is that any one should be governed by the law of the land and respect the constitution of the land even when one is behind bars. It is equally important that the case of any one behind bars should also be tried in a manner fair, free and just as is expected from any independent justice system. For that to happen, the people in question must realize that peace, stability and the rule of law are not only important but simply indispensable and therefore, they must be respected. Ethiopians from within and the Diaspora must focus upon and give priority primarily to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. For that, Ethiopians from within and the Diaspora must work industriously and help each other to change the image of

their nation once and for all. Once they do their share in that regard, the international community will come aboard in collaboration and cooperation with them as a development partner. In developing countries like Ethiopia, international cooperation and assistance reinforces indigenous initiatives in democratization, good governance and in sustainable development. It is important therefore that the international community in general and Ethiopians from within and the Diaspora in particular realize that economic assistance designed to encourage development, democratization and good governance is truly significant and thus must be reinforced and certainly not stopped.