

Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies Project

**Democracy Assistance to
Post-Conflict Ethiopia**
Building Local Institutions?

Working Paper 27

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Preface

In April 2002, the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (the 'Clingendael Institute') started a comparative research project analysing the role and impact of international democracy assistance on post-conflict societies. This project, entitled *Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies. Building Local Institutions*, is a collaborative research effort between participating research institutes in Central America, Africa and South Asia, and the Clingendael Institute. Unlike other studies, the analyses are conducted by local researchers and reflect their views on the influence that international assistance has had on the process of democratization in their countries. The main question addressed is how international assistance can have a more sustainable and positive impact on the functioning of electoral, human rights and media organizations in post-conflict societies. In order to include a wide variety of experiences and different socio-political settings, case studies focus on Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique and Sierra Leone.

Using a structured assessment methodology, each country report focuses on some of the key aspects that determine the democratic strength of local organizations: sustainability, autonomy/independence, accountability and influence. The primary aim of the reports is to assess which domestic organizations in the fields of elections, human rights and the media in the post-conflict countries have received international assistance. In addition, the analysis focuses on the types of activities funded and their long-term impact. Finally, the studies aim to provide lessons learnt and concrete recommendations to improve the effectiveness of international democracy assistance.

The following case study about Ethiopia concentrates on international assistance after 1991 when the military regime of the *Derg* was overthrown. The report traces the main political developments since the EPRDF came to power in 1991 and analyses the influence of electoral, human rights and media assistance on civil society and the governmental sector in Ethiopia. In this respect, Dessalegn Rahmato and Meheret Ayenew of the Forum for Social Studies (FSS) have produced a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate about the role of the international community in Ethiopia's fragile democratization process. In order to share the findings of this study with a broad range of stakeholders, both internationally and in Ethiopia, this report is also published in the Monograph Series of the FSS.

This ambitious joint project would have been impossible without the generous grant from the Department of Communication and Research (DCO) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department's strong commitment to the project. The Conflict Research Unit gratefully acknowledges this support. The contents and views expressed in this paper are the sole responsibility of the authors and should be ascribed neither to the Clingendael Institute nor to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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For any factual errors and misjudgement we alone are responsible. In this regard, we welcome any further comments and suggestions.

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 2004

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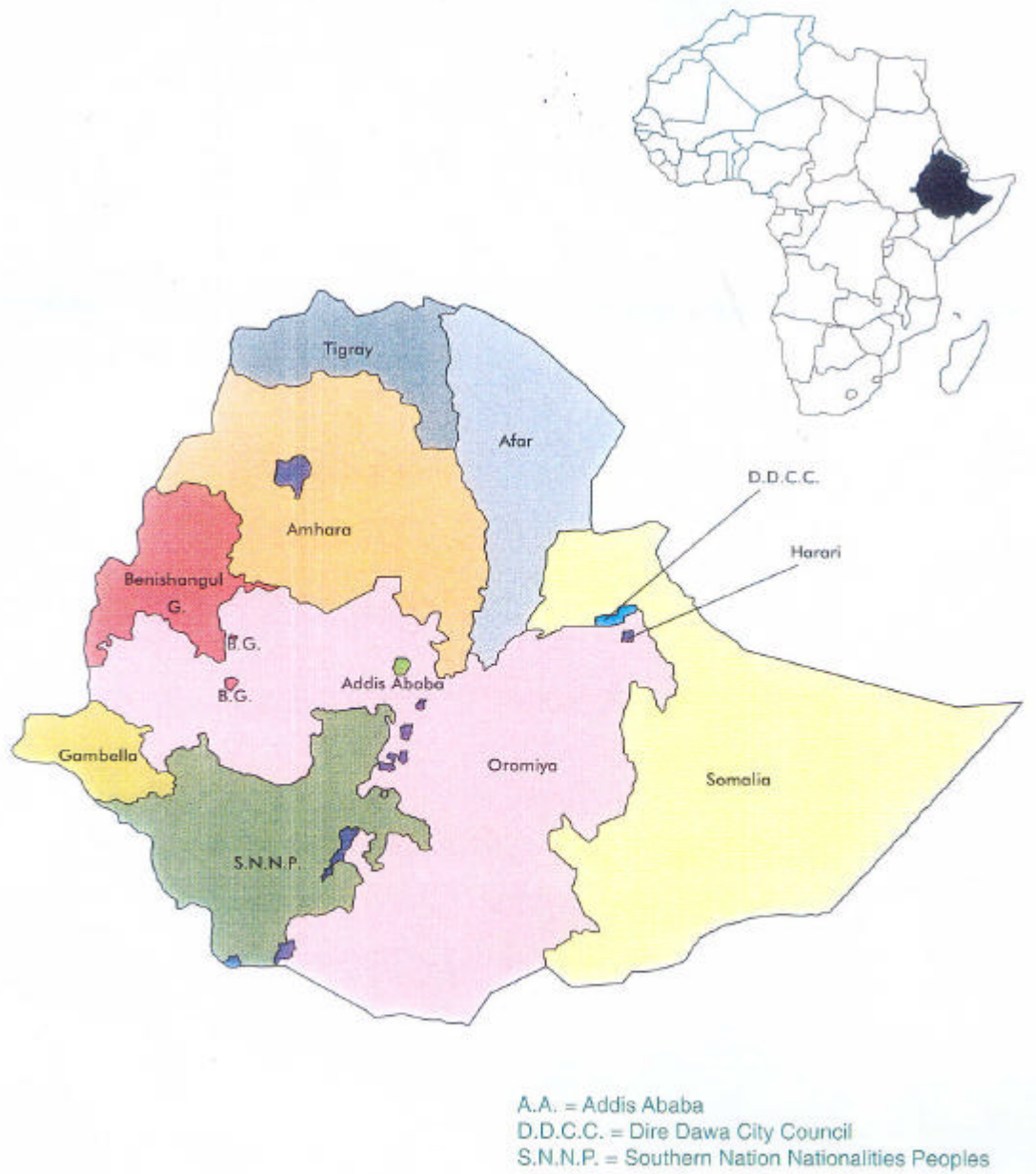
List of Abbreviations

AACC	Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce
AAPO	All-Amhara People's Organization
AAI	African-American Institute
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific [countries]
ADB	African Development Bank
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AI	Amnesty International
AIDA	Accessible Information on Development Activities
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
APAP	Action Professionals Association for the People
AW	Africa Watch
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLCBS	Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
DBS	Direct Budget Support
DEU	Donor Election Unit
DFID	Department for International Development
DAG	Donor Assistance Group
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EC(D)	European Commission (Delegation)
ECSEC	Eneweyay Civic and Social Education Center
EDP	Ethiopian Democratic Party
EEA	Ethiopian Economic Association
EEPRI	Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute
EFJA	Ethiopian Free Press Journalists' Association
EH	Ethiopian Herald
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EMA	Educational Media Agency
EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women Association
ENCONEL	Ethiopian Non-Governmental Organizations Consortium for Elections
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESP	Ye-Ethiopia Serategnoch Party
EU	European Union
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers, Association

FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEAC	Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
FES	Friedrich Ebert <i>Stiftung</i>
FSS	Forum for Social Studies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HoF	House of Federation
HPR	House of People's Representatives
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IFEX	International Freedom of Expression eXchange
IFHR	International Federation of Human Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPI	International Press Institute
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
JTU	Justice Training Unit
MMTI	Mass Media Training Institute
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoI	Ministry of Information
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEB	National Electoral Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONC	Oromo National Congress
OPDM	Oromo People's Democratic Movement
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
SAHRE	Society for the Advancement of Human Rights
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme
SEPDC	South Ethiopia People's Democratic Coalition
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
US	United States

USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia

Ethiopia and its Regions



Scale 1:20,000,000

Executive Summary

Country Profile

With a population estimated in 2000 to be more than 64 million and a land area of 1.13 million square kilometres, Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country is one of the poorest in the world, ranked 169 out of 175 in UNDP's latest *Human Development Report*. Annual per capita income, at an estimated 100 USD, is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa, and average food consumption per capita per day is less than 70 per cent of internationally accepted standards. The economy is predominantly rural, and, according to recent Central Statistical Authority (CSA) figures, this sector accounts for 81 per cent of total employment and 84 per cent of total exports.

Ethiopia's political history in the past four decades has been one of upheaval and radical change. In this period, the country has had three radically different political regimes involving in each case economic, legal and administrative reorganization, leading to a great deal of institutional instability. The Imperial regime, which was one of absolute monarchy, ruled the country during much of the first half of the 20th century; it was overthrown in 1974 by the *Derg*, a brutal military-cum-communist regime. The *Derg* in turn was ousted from power in 1991 by rebel forces combined in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forces (EPRDF) and led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which had conducted a long guerrilla war in the north of the country. Following the setting up of the transitional government in 1991, there were a number of important political developments. The country's administrative map was redrawn along ethnic lines and 'Regional States' for each of the major nationalities were created.

Post-Conflict Assistance

There is a long history of donor relationship with Ethiopia, dating back at least to the early 1940s. Initially, the main bilateral assistance came from a small number of countries, notably the USA, Britain and Sweden, and multilateral assistance from the World Bank, FAO, WHO and UNESCO. Since then, the number of bilateral and multilateral donors providing assistance to the country has grown substantially. At present, the USA, Japan and the Scandinavian countries are the major bilateral donors, while the World Bank, the EU and agencies in the UN system provide the bulk of multilateral assistance. The international assistance that was offered to the country following the change of regime may be grouped into three categories: a) development assistance; b) humanitarian assistance; and c) assistance for democratization and good governance.

International assistance has fluctuated over the years since 1991: it was about 1.0 billion USD in each of the first three years 1991–93, and then decreased gradually to 0.6 billion USD in 1997. Since then, it has been increasing, reaching 1.0 billion USD in 2001, and is expected to grow to 1.6 billion USD in 2003. Actual disbursement of official development assistance (ODA) for the period 1997–2001 averaged 804 million USD a year. In terms of make-up, there is a clear trend that humanitarian and

relief assistance is accounting for an increasing share of ODA. In the first five years after 1991, on average this category of ODA made up 32.4 per cent of total assistance; in 2000, its share amounted to almost half. In contrast, assistance to democratization and good governance is relatively small and has been getting smaller since the mid-1990s.

Three important points may be drawn from the discussion on international assistance. Firstly, the Ethiopian government is heavily dependent on international donors, without whom it cannot undertake development programmes, feed its population, or even run its own administrative machinery. Secondly, this dependence is exacerbated by the fact that so much international assistance is going to humanitarian/relief programmes – essentially, to feed the country's increasingly hungry population – rather than contributing to economic development. Finally, the donors that are most influential in terms of potential leverage over the government, because of their significant contributions to both development and humanitarian assistance, are the USA, the World Bank, and the European Union.

Electoral Process

Ethiopia has conducted a number of elections in its post-conflict experiment. Following the ousting of the *Derg* regime by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forces (EPRDF) in 1991, the country held its first interim national elections, which led to the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1992. In accordance with the transitional charter, a general election was conducted in 1995 and a permanent government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) set up. Subsequently, a federal structure was established along with a constitution that apportioned state power and responsibility between a federal government and regional state governments. In 2000/2001, national elections for federal and regional assemblies were held and gave the ruling EPRDF a second term in office. At the time of writing, the country is bracing itself for a third round of national elections in 2005.

A comparison of election costs in selected African countries shows that in Ethiopia these costs have been quite low, given the country's enormous size and its lack of experience in running democratic elections. Indeed, when compared with election costs in Angola, South Africa and Kenya and several other African countries, the cost per voter in Ethiopia's 1994 and 2000 elections was the lowest of all, which is an impressive achievement.

Ethiopia has received considerable international electoral assistance in its post-conflict transition to peace and democracy. Such aid has strengthened the capacity of the National Electoral Board, human rights organizations and civil society in general to monitor and supervise elections. Donor assistance has also been provided to political parties to make the electoral process more competitive. Unfortunately, however, the impact of this assistance to political parties has been limited. Firstly, the ruling party has failed to broaden its political power base and has not provided a level playing field for the selection of candidates to stand in elections. Secondly, and more importantly, opposition parties remain extremely weak and, because of internal power struggles, are unable to form a credible political alternative to the ruling party.

Human Rights

Human rights and advocacy organizations began to be established for the first time in the country following the fall of the *Derg* and the change of government. This has meant that the human rights

record of the present government has been more systematically monitored and rights violations more extensively compiled than at any time in the past. For the purposes of this study we may divide the human rights organizations in the country into four broad categories based on their main spheres of activity and mandate. These categories are:

- those that monitor human rights violations and prepare public reports on them (eg, Ethiopian Human Rights Council – EHRCO);
- those that promote gender equality and defend the rights of women (eg, Ethiopian Women Lawyers’ Association – EWLA);
- those that generally enhance public awareness about civil liberties and promote respect for the rule of law by providing human rights training to officials in law enforcement agencies, etc (eg, Action Professionals’ Association for the People – APAP);
- those that undertake civic education, in particular voter education, to enable citizens to make well-informed decisions during elections (eg, Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies – CLCBS).

EHRCO has been monitoring the human rights situation in the country and issuing reports on rights violations since its establishment in 1991. Violations that have been frequently reported include cases of extrajudicial killings, illegal detentions, disappearances, torture, unlawful expropriation of property, threats to freedom of the press and harassment and detention of journalists. On a number of occasions, EHRCO has issued extended reports on serious human rights abuses by the security forces leading to large numbers of civilian deaths, injuries and detentions, such as those that took place in Areka, Gonder, Awassa and Tepi, and in Addis Ababa following the peaceful demonstration by university students and business people.

Donor assistance for human rights has mainly taken the form of financial aid to advocacy organizations on the one hand, and financial support as well as training and technical support to government institutions on the other. Assistance has been provided for: a) preparatory work for the establishment of a governmental human rights commission and an ombudsman institution; b) reform of legal institutions, and training of law enforcement agencies; c) support to legislative bodies and training of legislators; and d) financial support to civil society organizations active in monitoring human rights, human rights protection and advocacy.

The donor community employs several methods of monitoring the human rights situation in the country. When serious violations occur, as in 2002 in Awassa in the south of the country, and in Tepi in the south-west (see above), the Human Rights Subgroup consisting of representatives of the major donor countries, and the EU send a fact-finding mission to gather information and to discuss the matter with all the parties to the incidents involved. In addition, the EU can take specific policy measures if the member states agree to this. Another way donors monitor the human rights situation is through the work of international human rights movements, including in particular Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Finally, the donor community also relies on the work of local human rights groups, in particular the reports prepared by EHRCO.

A number of international human rights groups have alleged that the response of some of the big donor countries, in particular the USA, to gross human rights violations perpetrated by the government’s security forces has been muted and disappointing. The significance of Ethiopia to the US war on terrorism has grown following the al-Qaeda attack on New York and the Pentagon in

September 2001. Ethiopia, a big power in the Horn of Africa, is important for Washington's aims of containing terrorism in the region. The USA believes that Sudan and Somalia may be harbouring terrorist groups and it needs a friendly country in the Horn to carry out offensives against such groups. Both Human Rights Watch and Africa Watch have argued that Ethiopia has now become a partner and 'frontline state' in the war against international terrorism and the USA does not wish to antagonize the Ethiopian government over the issue of human rights.

The Media

Ethiopia's media has undergone dramatic changes since the early 1990s following the fall of the military government and the establishment of the TGE. At the time of the Imperial and *Derg* regimes, the government was the sole owner of the means of public information and used the media to extend its power and legitimacy, to control the population, and to stifle public awareness.

One of the first acts of the transitional government was to enact a press law, which turned out to have a dramatic impact on the country's media. A few news magazines had already started to appear soon after the fall of the *Derg*, but the process of deregulation of the print media was accelerated by the new legislation, which allowed citizens or businesses to publish and distribute private newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals and other news sources. The press law abolished censorship and allowed any Ethiopian citizen or group to carry out press activities provided that they registered and obtained a licence from the regulatory agency, the Ministry of Information (MoI), or from one of its regional bureaus. The immediate effect of the legislation was the proliferation of a wide diversity of newspapers, news magazines and other publications in Amharic and other local languages as well as in English.

Nowadays, the privately owned press in Ethiopia faces a host of structural, economic and professional problems. The large number of papers on the market has meant stiff competition, limited sales and low levels of advertising revenue. According to data from the MoI, fewer than 10 per cent of the papers currently in publication have a circulation of 8,000 or above. No more than five papers have a circulation of over 10,000. Some papers are run on a shoestring budget and remain virtually one-man operations. Several have survived only because they have been subsidized by 'patrons' of one sort or another (frequently, political groups in exile), or by donors and (international) non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Over the past ten years, numerous papers have come and gone.

A major problem facing the free press is government discrimination and harassment. There is open and deliberate discrimination by the government which has taken the form of refusing to give information to privately owned papers and not inviting any of them to press conferences or newsworthy official events. Although the 1992 legislation acknowledges the right to information and states that the press has a right to information from government agencies, this is denied in reality. The press conferences given by the prime minister in the last ten years have always excluded the privately owned press. The media controlled by the government and by the ruling party are given preferential treatment. However, some government agencies are now beginning to be more open and to make information available, at any rate to a small number of private newspapers.

International assistance to the media (both public as well as private) has been limited in scope, and relatively insignificant in terms of its impact. International donors have failed to make any strategic intervention in the media sector and have restricted their action to low-level support, with only limited results. Donor assistance has mostly been concentrated on training programmes for journalists; such

programmes have included visits arranged for journalists to foreign countries, and exchange of experiences among media people in the Horn of Africa. There has also been some financial support to selected newspapers to publish articles on the elections and other issues; this has helped some newspapers to stay in business. And finally, international press organizations such as the International Press Institute and International Freedom of Expression and Exchange have provided financial assistance to the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA), as well as moral support to the cause of press freedom in Ethiopia. This has given the free press some measure of protection from harassment by the Government.

Conclusion

As the discussions in the preceding chapters have shown, donor assistance to the democratization process in Ethiopia has been comparatively limited. In contrast, donors have invested heavily in the humanitarian and relief effort on the one hand, and in socio-economic development on the other. Assistance to both sectors has been growing in the last ten years, but it is humanitarian assistance in particular that has markedly increased. Indeed, donor assistance in support of food security has been continuing since the second half of the 1970s. By all standards, donor support to the electoral process and the media has been fairly insignificant.

At the same time, however, financial support to civil society, especially local human rights and advocacy organizations, has been instrumental in the growth of the voluntary sector in the country. Without such support, civil society would have faced more difficult and trying circumstances, and its achievements, especially in the areas of human rights monitoring, training and advocacy would have been far more limited. The impact of international assistance on the democratization process, however, has not been very great. The achievements registered to date in the areas of elections and press freedom have been a product of local initiative, local organizations and struggles by domestic stakeholders – although international financial support has enabled them to extend their activities and outreach.

Four main points emerge regarding the limited impact of international democracy assistance. Firstly, in the area of human rights and good governance, donors rarely speak with one voice, and assistance programmes are not offered in a coordinated manner. Donors frequently fail to harmonize their decisions regarding human rights, issues of press freedom and responses to government failings in these areas. Secondly, few donors have sufficient leverage over the government to hold it accountable. The exceptions are the USA and the EU but, unfortunately, these actors have not been very outspoken (at least in public) in cases where the Ethiopian government has violated democratic principles. Thirdly, international assistance is rarely free of politics. Each donor is driven by the national interest of its own government. The dynamics of geopolitics, the desire to promote stability and peace in the Horn of Africa, and the war on international terrorism have led big donors such as the USA to befriend the Ethiopian government, and to refrain from raising issues of democratic performance. Fourthly, international electoral assistance will be more effective in promoting free and fair elections if it is properly targeted at organizations with sufficient experience in monitoring and supervising elections.

I. Country Introduction

1. Background

With a land area of 1.13 million square kilometres (km²), Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also has one of the largest populations, with the total in 2000 estimated to be more than 64 million. The population density is therefore relatively high, ranging from 150 persons/km² in Wollo in the north-east of the country to over 300 persons/km² in parts of south-central Ethiopia. The population is estimated to be growing at 3 per cent annually, and the demographic profile reflects the preponderance of the young, with those below 25 years of age making up nearly two-thirds of the total population.¹ Only 15 per cent of the population live in urban centres, which makes the country one of the least urbanized in the world.

The country is also one of the poorest in the world, ranked 169 out of 175 in UNDP's 2003 *Human Development Report*.² Per capita income is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa, and average food consumption per capita per day is estimated to be less than 70 per cent of internationally accepted standards.³ According to FAO reports, Ethiopia is one of the ten hungriest nations in the world;⁴ frequent food crises, including virulent famines, have brought suffering and devastation to the rural population. Over the past 50 years, the country's agriculture, which is the dominant sector of the economy and the main means of livelihood for the overwhelming majority of the population, has been in structural decline. As a result, poverty, and in particular rural poverty, has been growing in severity and magnitude, with recurrent incidents of mass starvation and high levels of livelihood, as well as ecological, vulnerability.⁵ Civil conflict, degradation of natural resources, high population growth and frequent environmental crises have also contributed to this situation of permanent food insecurity and increasing poverty.

According to recent Central Statistical Authority (CSA) figures, the rural sector accounts for 81 per cent of total employment and 84 per cent of total exports.⁶ Agriculture's contribution to GDP has nevertheless been falling since the 1960s, when it contributed 65 per cent; by the end of the 1990s its share was a little over 45 per cent.⁷ The sector consists overwhelmingly of smallholder peasant cultivation producing a range of food crops primarily for own consumption using traditional farming practices. Because levels of land and labour productivity have stagnated, food production has failed to keep pace with population growth. Similarly, as a result of population growth and the scarcity of arable land reserves, per capita farm plots, already small, are getting smaller, and the fertility of the

¹ CSA 1999a.

² UNDP 2003b.

³ World Bank 2000.

⁴ FAO 2001.

⁵ Dessalegn 2003a.

⁶ CSA 1999b.

⁷ Befekadu and Berhanu 2000.

land is diminishing continuously. There are those who have argued that unless a determined shift in economic policy towards greater industrialization is forthcoming, the prospects for the viability of Ethiopian agriculture and the sustainability of the country's environmental resources will be in doubt during the decades ahead.⁸

The modern sector of the economy consists of a large service sector and a small industrial base. Industry accounts for 11 per cent of total exports and 2 per cent of total employment. Manufacturing enterprises, both public and private, produce a small range of consumer goods, predominantly for the local market. However, since the economic liberalization of the early 1990s they have had to compete, often unsuccessfully, with products flooding into the country from the booming economies of East and South Asia. Manufacturing industry in Ethiopia is in a very poor state because it employs obsolete technology, and because many of the enterprises were established in the 1960s and are today in a decrepit condition. There has been only limited investment in the past in basic infrastructure and thus surface transport, communications, electric power, and water supply are not well developed. There has been some progress in this regard since the 1980s, but there is a long way to go before the country can have an efficient modern transport and communications infrastructure.

Ethiopia's political history in the last four decades has been one of upheaval and radical change. In this period, the country has had three radically different political regimes involving in each case economic, legal and administrative reorganization, leading to a great deal of institutional instability.⁹

Until the mid-1970s, the country was ruled by an absolute monarchy, with political power concentrated in the hands of Emperor Haile Selassie, and economic power in the hands of a class of landed nobility and local gentry, who controlled a preponderant share of the country's productive resources. The nobility and gentry owned a major portion of the country's arable land, which was parcelled out and worked by a class of poor tenant farmers. Haile Selassie's regime, which lasted from 1930 to 1974, with a brief period of Italian colonial rule (1935–41), was relatively stable and, for the majority of the population, it was a fairly peaceful period. The violent conflicts that were to bring large-scale destruction and loss of lives, and serious instability and disorder in the country, were by and large a feature of the post-Imperial period. The one regional uprising which erupted in the first half of the 1960s and which the Imperial regime was unable to put down was that in Eritrea, which was then a province of the country. By the end of the Imperial regime this regional conflict had become an established liberation movement, but it was successfully contained all through the 1960s and early 1970s, and had relatively little effect on the daily lives of a majority of the Eritrean population.

The modernization of the state under the Imperial regime did not extend as far as the democratization of the polity. Nevertheless, the Emperor did establish a parliament, provide a written constitution (in 1931, revised in 1955), and introduce universal suffrage and a national electoral system. Elections to the lower House of Parliament were held every five years from 1957 onwards; however, since political parties were not allowed, electoral seats were contested on an individual basis. Parliament had little effective power but it debated legislation and acted as a sounding board. Absolute monarchy did not tolerate dissent or criticism, and the Constitution affirmed that the Emperor ruled by

⁸ Dessalegn 2003a.

⁹ The discussion in this chapter is based on the personal experience of the authors as well as on the following works: for the period up to end of the 1980s: Andargachew 1993, Clapham 1988, Gilkes 1975, Markakis 1974; for the 1990s and after: Merera 2003; Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen 2002, and Tronvoll 2000.

divine right. Neither civil society organizations (other than customary self-help associations and burial societies) nor an independent media were allowed.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), or *Derg*, which seized power by overthrowing the monarchy in 1974, switched the country's diplomatic alliance towards the Soviet bloc, and embarked on the disastrous road of 'socialization' of the country's polity and economy. The earliest reform which subsequently was to be the cornerstone of agricultural collectivization was the radical land reform of 1975. This effectively ended landlordism in the country, emancipating millions of peasants from the control of the propertied classes. However, land was to be state property and the peasants had only usufruct rights over it. Subsequent reforms eroded the benefits enjoyed by the peasantry under the 1975 land reform, preparing the way for the socialization of agriculture. In the 1980s, partly as a response to the devastating famine and environmental shocks, the *Derg* embarked on a massive programme of resettlement and villagization involving millions of peasants. The popularity and goodwill it had gained from the peasantry as a result of its effective measures against the propertied classes and the distribution of land evaporated as the government turned more and more towards hard-line Stalinist reform policies.

The *Derg's* democratic pretensions only became apparent some 12 years after it had seized power. In 1987, it introduced a constitution which vested power in the National Assembly. However, in line with the accepted formula of Soviet bloc countries, the *Derg* established a party in the Leninist tradition, called the Serategnoch Party of Ethiopia (ESP) as the ruling party of the country. Effective power remained in the hands of the military dictator, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, and a small coterie of his advisers who were appointed as the leading officials of the party. Elections to the Assembly were held subsequently, but the seats were contested only by ESP cadres, and the outcome was decided long before the formal ballots were cast. The *Derg* was perhaps the most despotic and the most brutal regime in the country's history. Thousands of people were executed without trial, hundreds of thousands were thrown in jail on trumped-up charges, and innumerable men and women were forced to flee the country for fear of arrest, persecution or execution.

2. Conflict History

Though their roots go much further back in the country's troubled history, the violent conflicts that engulfed the country all through the 1980s started in the post-Imperial period and escalated as a response to the unpopular policies of the *Derg*. These conflicts consisted of a feeble attempt at armed resistance by what the *Derg* called 'the counter-revolution' (remnants of the propertied classes and their allies on the one hand, and radical opponents of the *Derg* on the other), war with neighbouring Somalia, the Eritrean independence movement, and ethnically-based insurgency, first in the north-west of the country but later in western Ethiopia. The war with Somalia, which claimed a large swathe of Ethiopian territory, was humiliating for the *Derg*, and it was able to finally drive back the Somalia invasion forces, which had overrun a considerable part of eastern Ethiopia with the active involvement of Cuban troops and a large-scale Soviet arms airlift. The Eritrean independence struggle, which was now able to field a large fighting force and engage the *Derg* in conventional warfare, threatened to engulf Eritrea at any moment, hence the *Derg* was forced to commit a considerable portion of its military force and resources to defend the province. From the latter part of the 1970s, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which was fighting the *Derg* in the north-west of the country, grew to be a strong force to contend with. Other ethnic-based insurgencies included the Afar Liberation

Front (ALF) in the north-east and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the south-west, and an Islamic movement in the south-east.

Although on all the fronts the fighting was conducted between one armed force and another, there were spillover effects in which civilian populations were caught in the middle. But, unlike civil conflicts in some countries in Africa (such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Congo) or Central America, there were few *deliberate* attempts on the part of one side or another to extend the war to non-combatants. Thus genocide, large-scale massacres, or acts of mass terror against civilian populations during the war were not a feature of any of these conflicts. Engaged on many fronts, and exhausted by continuous warfare since the second half of the 1970s, the *Derg*'s army began to crumble in the latter part of the 1980s. Due to the large numbers killed and wounded in action, a large part of the army was made up of young peasants forcibly recruited, and these had neither the training nor the stomach to fight what appeared to be an endless war. Moreover, the restructuring of the military apparatus by the *Derg* had been accompanied by the politicization, Soviet style, of the military personnel. Alongside the regular hierarchy of non-commissioned and commissioned officers were political cadres, many of whom were recruited from the lower ranks and who, as activists of the ruling party, ESP, were given far more importance than the officer corps. This was to be one of the most important causes of low morale within the *Derg* army.

The anti-*Derg* forces, now united into a coalition of ethnic-based parties called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), with the TPLF as the dominant partner, intensified their offensive against government forces towards the end of the 1980s, winning ground and rapidly advancing on Addis Ababa. As the *Derg* army continued to disintegrate, and the government had lost all support from the public, in particular the peasantry, the insurgents' offensive met with little resistance. In mid-May 1991, with the rebels almost at the gates of the capital, Mengistu Haile Mariam fled the country for exile in Zimbabwe. There was an attempt to bring together all the rebel groups and the *Derg* at the short-lived London Peace Conference in early May 1991, with the USA playing an active role to broker a peace deal, but this failed because the *Derg* was collapsing at that very moment. The main beneficiary of the aborted conference was the EPRDF, which gained Washington's support, thus acquiring a measure of legitimacy among Western powers. The EPRDF forces finally entered Addis Ababa on 28 May, with the Eritrean liberation forces capturing Asmara soon after. This brought to an end over a decade and a half of brutal military dictatorship. Although there was confusion and uncertainty among large sections of the public with regard to the future, it was everyone's hope that the overthrow of the *Derg* would usher in a time of peace and stability.

The EPRDF's immediate objective after seizing power was to bring about peace and public order. This was a welcome initiative, for after years of insurgency and civil conflict, there was an overwhelming desire on the part of the public for an end to hostilities and civil discord. But the most important objectives on the new rulers' reform agenda were to destroy the apparatus of state built up under the *Derg*, to restructure the country and its civil administration along ethnic lines, and to establish ethnicity as the defining principle of political, social and economic discourse. As part of this endeavour, a month after assuming power the EPRDF convened a 'Peace and Democracy Conference' in which 29 ethnically based political groups, most of them hastily organized for the occasion a week or two earlier, participated. The conference, which was dominated by the EPRDF and, through it, the TPLF, endorsed a Charter for the transitional period, and approved the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), with an interim legislative body in which the EPRDF and the OLF were heavily represented. It also approved the holding of a UN-supervised referendum in

Eritrea to formalize its separation from Ethiopia. (With the subsequent independence of Eritrea, Ethiopia lost its outlets to the sea.) The Charter affirmed respect for the law, protection of human rights, and equality of all ethnic nationalities, which had the right to self-determination but which were to be part of a federal Ethiopia.¹⁰

Following the setting-up of the transitional government, there were a number of important political developments. The country's administrative map was redrawn along ethnic lines and a 'regional state' for each of the major nationalities was created. These regional states were given wide administrative and legislative power: the goal was devolution of power within a federal framework. In 1992, local and regional elections were held throughout the country. Ethnic federalism was further formalized by the drafting of a Constitution in 1994 following elections were held to the constituent assembly whose job was to ratify the Constitution. The Constitution established a federal state, the component elements of which were 'nations, nationalities and peoples'. It endorsed respect for human rights, the rule of law, and a multi-party electoral regime. There were federal parliamentary and regional elections in 1995 and five years later in 2000, and local council elections in 2001.

3. The Elusive Peace

The establishment of peace and public order in the country following the fall of the *Derg* proved to be a difficult undertaking. Many years of civil war, not only in Ethiopia but also in neighbouring countries in the Horn of Africa, meant there had been a large inflow of arms into Ethiopia as well as into the region as a whole. Moreover, the defeated and subsequently disbanded *Derg* army, numbering over 200,000 soldiers, many of whom still in possession of their arms, posed a serious threat to public order. The initial euphoria and partnership among the many small and unstable ethnic political groups that made up the EPRDF coalition following the collapse of the *Derg*, did not last long, and soon the political process became polarized.

There were sporadic incidents of armed hostility in several parts of the country as well as widespread armed robbery perpetrated by some of the disbanded soldiers and members of armed political groups. At the same time, the government began to forcibly suppress first the OLF and later other, smaller groups (such as the All-Amhara People's Organization, AAPO, and the ALF), which had decided to pull out of the coalition. Moreover, due in part what to many seemed to be the government's encouragement for 'ethnic separation' and in part to the zealous activism of party militants in the regions, there were several incidents of communal violence. Many people on the wrong side of the ethnic divide (i.e., not from the favoured ethnic groups) lost their lives in these conflicts, a considerable number were displaced and much property was destroyed.

Finally, there was the war with Eritrea, which came to a head following border incursions by the latter in 1998.¹¹ Arguably the most senseless conflict in recent African history, the war placed an enormous burden on both countries, causing tens of thousands of lives and immense suffering. Defence spending in Ethiopia went up sharply, resources that had been earmarked for development and infrastructure were diverted to support the war, and the country's foreign exchange reserves were depleted. The human toll on the Ethiopian side included 300,000 internally displaced persons, 100,000

¹⁰ TGE 1991.

¹¹ See Tekeste and Tronvoll 2000.

nationals deported from Eritrea, and 36,000 militia killed in the fighting.¹² Comparable figures on the Eritrean sides are not available, though the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) notes that 350,000 Eritreans were displaced by the war.¹³ The peace accords which were drawn up in Algiers and which called for the cessation of armed hostilities were signed by both countries in 2000, and subsequently both agreed to seek arbitration on the border issue from an independent body. This led to the establishment of an independent Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission at the Permanent Court of Arbitration which began to hear evidence in The Hague in 2001. The peace accords also led to the establishment of UNMEE, which was mandated to monitor the ceasefire and to liaise with the two parties. The war has had a damaging impact on the local economy as a whole, reducing private as well as public-sector investment, slowing down business activity, and contributing to growing unemployment in the urban areas and elsewhere.¹⁴

The political changes briefly sketched above were accompanied by equally dramatic changes in the economic sphere. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Imperial regime promoted what may be termed a 'mixed economy' made up of public, private and joint enterprises. The public sector was the dominant sector in the economy, but that was largely because of the relative weakness of the private sector rather than a conscious policy in favour of public enterprises. The private sector was made up of foreign and local capital, but the latter was overshadowed by the former. The country suffered from an underdeveloped basic infrastructure and lacked a sufficiently large skilled labour force, and as a result the flow of foreign investment into the country was limited. On the other hand, the regime pursued a pragmatic economic policy, with a fairly well-crafted legal infrastructure ensuring protection for private investment, and generous incentives to attract foreign capital.

The *Derg*, which for some 15 years was bent on building up a Soviet-style 'command' economy, nationalized all productive resources and enterprises, including land, rental houses, and both foreign and local investments, and virtually crippled the private sector. The pursuit of the full 'socialization' of the economy was undertaken aggressively in the 1980s through the expansion of state enterprises in the manufacturing, commercial and retail sectors on the one hand and the collectivization of agriculture and villagization of the rural population on the other. By the beginning of 1990s, the combination of ill-advised and ideologically driven economic policy and a decade and a half of war and violent conflict had resulted in the country's physical and human capital, and its infrastructure, being in an extremely run-down state.

The present government inherited a devastated economy and massive levels of poverty and unemployment. Its first tasks, soon after assuming power, were to launch a programme of reconstruction on the one hand, and introduce reform measures to liberalize the command economy on the other. Encouraged by the World Bank and the IMF, in 1992 the government adopted a structural adjustment programme (SAP) which involved devaluation of the currency, liberalization of trade, deregulation of labour and wages, and privatization of public enterprises. These reform measures had mixed results: on the negative side, there were sharp rises in the prices of consumer goods, putting severe pressure on poor and low-income families, and increasing unemployment; on the positive side, there was stabilization of the macro-economic environment. There was a respectable rate of economic growth in the first five years with overall growth reaching 6 to 7 per cent, according to government

¹² World Bank 2002.

¹³ UNMEE website.

¹⁴ EEA 2002.

figures, but opinion is divided on whether the main contributing factors were the SAP reforms, fortuitous circumstances, or a combination of both.

The government has made a commitment to pursue a policy of free market economy, but there are contradictory elements in the development measures it has taken. Some of its decisions are ideologically driven, and it has failed to undertake a number of the reforms it promised. Until recently, the government showed no strong desire to create a favourable environment for the private sector, which was placed under pressure by high taxes, hostile attitudes from government functionaries, and a stifling bureaucracy. To this day, ‘parastatal’ enterprises, owned and operated by the ruling regional parties, enjoy favourable status with the government, and a competitive advantage vis-à-vis the private sector. The development strategy that was adopted in the mid-1990s, the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI), envisages peasant-based agriculture as the engine of growth. However, the strategy is based not on a sound assessment of the sector’s potential (which is limited) but on the ideological bias of decision-makers. It has had poor results and has led to the neglect of the urban economy and the manufacturing sector.¹⁵

Table 1.1 below provides a picture of the similarities and differences between the three regimes under discussion on the basis of four ‘measures of democratization’.

Table 1.1 Comparative Political Profile of the Three Regimes			
<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Imperial regime 1941–74</i>	<i>Derg regime 1974–91</i>	<i>EPRDF regime 1991–2002</i>
Type of state	Absolute monarchy; unitary state	Marxist-Leninist; unitary state	Ethnic federalist state
Political parties	No parties allowed; elections contested by individuals	Single Leninist party system	Multi-party; elections allowed
Media	Government media mainly; 1 private radio station	Government media only; highly restricted	Government media and independent press
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	CSOs highly restricted; some professional associations allowed	CSOs not allowed except international NGOs; traditional ones under pressure	CSOs allowed; growing number including in area of advocacy and human rights
Economy	Mixed economy; pragmatic policy	State or command economy; policy ideologically driven	Restricted market economy; policy ideologically driven

Source: Compiled by the authors

¹⁵ Befekadu, Berhanu and Getahun 2001.

4. Post-Conflict Assistance

4.1 Introduction

There is a long history of donor relationship with Ethiopia, dating back at least to the early 1940s. Initially, the main bilateral assistance came from a small number of countries, notably the USA, Britain and Sweden, and multilateral assistance from the World Bank, FAO, WHO and UNESCO. In the 1980s, at the time of the military regime, Soviet-bloc countries provided substantial assistance, both military and economic. Interestingly enough, the Imperial regime did also benefit from economic assistance from the Soviet Union despite the obvious differences in political orientation between them. Since then, the number of bilateral and multilateral donors providing assistance to the country has grown substantially. At present, the USA, Japan and the Scandinavian countries are the major bilateral donors, while the World Bank, the EU and agencies in the UN system provide the bulk of the multilateral assistance. The relationship between the donors and the country has gone through cycles – many years of amicable relationship followed by years of friction and tension. During the Imperial regime, there was a slight cooling of relations between the government and the donors towards the end of the 1960s when the latter were disappointed at the lack of progress in economic and political reforms. In the period of the *Derg*, the major donor countries such as the USA withdrew their development support, though they continued to be significant actors in the area of humanitarian assistance. The *Derg*'s Stalinist policies and its atrocious human rights record were cited as reasons for disengaging from the country. However, many European countries, the EU and all the other multilateral donors continued to play active roles in the country, supporting humanitarian efforts in particular, but also economic development programmes.

4.2 Assistance Since 1991

The current EPRDF government has enjoyed considerable goodwill from the international donor community from the moment it assumed power. As the collapse of the *Derg* became imminent, the leaders of the rebel movement had quietly abandoned their hard-line Marxist-Leninist ideology and were keen to adopt electoral politics and a free market economy. This, and their eagerness to listen to the advice of US officials, gained the new leaders many friends within the donor community.

The initial economic programme adopted by the transitional government¹⁶ was sufficient proof that this was a government that the Western powers could 'do business with'. The World Bank and IMF were eager for the TGE to implement wide-ranging structural reforms, in return for which they were to provide loans, grants and aid for reconstruction, while bilateral donors were ready to offer development assistance as well as aid for democratization and good governance. As noted above, it was not long after coming to power that the new rulers implemented a structural adjustment programme which won them considerable support not just from the international financial institutions but also from the USA, the EU and other significant donors.

But the problems facing the country and the new government were immense and the assistance required was quite complex. For a start, the country's infrastructure and social services had suffered widespread destruction in the course of the long civil war, and management capacity was at a low ebb; therefore it was necessary first to invest in reconstruction if the country was to embark on

development activity. Secondly, the new regime was confronted with a colossal human disaster: in the period up to the mid-1990s, there were over two million ‘displaced’ persons who were without means or employment, and some of them posed a serious threat to public security as well as to the political stability of the government itself.

More recently, donors were at odds with the federal government over issues relating to the conflict with Eritrea, and currently the question of the border demarcations is causing some difference of opinion. There are also other outstanding issues that give rise to disagreements between the government and donors, such as the country’s debt burden, economic liberalization, and the problems associated with recurrent food crises and famines. On the positive side, however, the government’s recently launched Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP), which was submitted to the international financial institutions as part of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative, has promoted a notable degree of harmony between the Ethiopian government and the donor community.

But the ups and downs in relations between Ethiopia and its donors over the years have also been influenced by international events, geopolitical considerations and other contingent factors. Firstly, Ethiopia is a big country within the Horn of Africa, and the international community does not want the country to collapse or plunge into civil war because this would have a spill over effect on the neighbouring countries, leading to their political destabilization. Secondly, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Sudan, Ethiopia’s neighbour, has led the USA and others to value Ethiopia’s friendship. Thirdly, the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the current campaign against international terrorism, have been a godsend, as it were, to the country: Ethiopia supported the American effort in each instance and has been rewarded in return by generous humanitarian and other support from Washington, which now considers the country as a ‘frontline state’ in the war against terrorism.

The international assistance that Ethiopia has received since 1991 may be grouped into three categories: development assistance; humanitarian assistance; and assistance for democratization and good governance. Unfortunately, figures for the last category are difficult to obtain, but available evidence suggests that it is on a much smaller scale than the other two.

4.2.1. Development Assistance

A comprehensive picture of official development assistance (ODA) to the country from 1997 to 2003 is provided by a recent report prepared by UNDP,¹⁷ and in what follows we shall present a summary of the findings. ODA here includes humanitarian and relief assistance as well as socio-economic support (including democratization and governance activities). A few words on ODA data sources and the level of external assistance to the country are in order here.

There are three major sources of information on ODA flows to developing countries and we have looked at all three. These are: data collected by UNDP; OECD’s *International Development Statistics 2003*,¹⁸ which provides data on aid flows annually from 1960; and the 2003 publication from the African Development Bank (ADB) entitled *Selected Statistics on African Countries*,¹⁹ which gives ODA data for each country starting from 1980. There are differences between the ODA figures given

¹⁶ TGE 1992b.

¹⁷ UNDP 2003a.

¹⁸ OECD 2003.

¹⁹ ADB 2003.

by each of these three sources, in the case of every year covered. For example, external assistance to Ethiopia in 1997 was 605 million USD according to UNDP, 603 million according to OECD, and 578 million according to the ADB. In general, the figures from UNDP are lower than those from the other two. We have chosen the UNDP data for all the years shown below, not because we think UNDP's is more accurate than the others', but because it is the data used both by donors in the country and by the Ethiopian government.

We should also point out that the level of assistance to Ethiopia is very low compared with that to many other African countries. On average, the country receives 16 USD per capita per annum (and the trend is downwards), while the average for Sub-Saharan African countries is 32 USD.

The ODA data provided in the UNDP report covers two periods, 1991 to 1996 (Table 1.2a), and 1997 to 2003 (Table 1.2b; here the figures for the years 1997 to 2001 are actual figures, those for 2002 are estimates and those for 2003 are forecasts). The figures in the first table are simple aggregates while those in the second are further broken down into aid sources and types of assistance. We were unable to find figures showing breakdowns for the first period. These two tables and Table 1.3 below present the flow of assistance to the country since the present government came to power.

Table 1.2a Total ODA to Ethiopia 1991–96 (in million USD)

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
1,001.1	1,089.5	1,070.3	881.1	816.1	727.2*

* UNDP 2001 gives 756.8 million for 1996

Source: <http://www.undp.org/>

Table 1.2b ODA to Ethiopia 1997–2003 (in million USD)

Year	Total ODA	ODA in form of loans	ODA in form of grants		
			Total grants	Grants to humanitarian /relief programmes	Grants to normal socio-economic sectors
1997	605	114	491	181	310
1998	675	149	526	152	374
1999	730	202	528	232	296
2000	925	142	783	448	335
2001	1,083	532	551	293	258
Average 1997–2001	804	228	576	261	315
2002*	1,448	656	792	383	409
2003**	1,584	713	871	201	670

* Estimates

** Projections

Source: UNDP 2003a

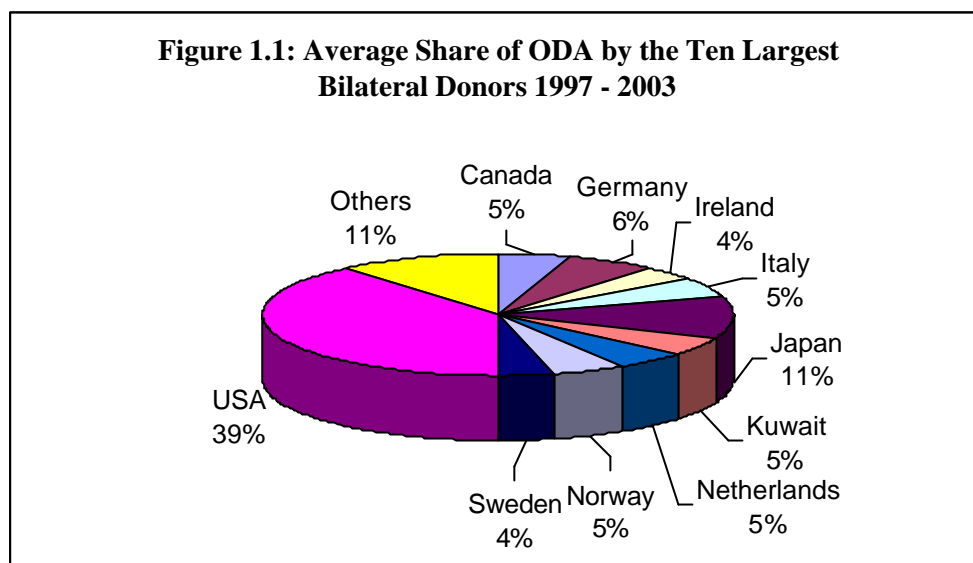
As the first table shows, international assistance peaked in the early years of the present government, declining gradually from the mid-1990s onwards. The large volume of assistance for the period until 1995 was in part to cover the cost of post-war reconstruction, to help the government demobilize the large number of *Derg* soldiers, to support returning refugees, and to avert a serious food crisis. The government's attempt to bring about restoration of peace and stability was assisted considerably by safety net programmes for the poor and for the large number of displaced and unemployed people in this period. In the second period, as shown in Table 1.2b, assistance grew from 0.6 billion USD in 1997 to 1.0 billion in 2001, and was expected to reach 1.6 billion in 2003. Actual ODA disbursement for the period 1997–2001 averaged 804 million USD a year. It is clear that the proportion of ODA going to humanitarian and relief assistance is growing. In the first five years, on average this category accounted for 32.4 per cent of total assistance; in 2000, its share was almost 50 per cent. The figures for 2002 and 2003 show a declining share, but these estimates were made before it was realised there would be a massive food crisis in 2003. Another point to note is that the grants portion of ODA is quite high and was expected to remain at about 55 per cent of total aid in 2003. It should also be noted that the loan portion of ODA jumped from 19 per cent in 1997 to 45 per cent in 2003.

Table 1.3 and Figure 1.1 below show ODA trends over the same period by source. Except in the year 2000, multilateral assistance was much greater than bilateral assistance, and the World Bank and the IMF, in particular the former, provide an increasing share of total ODA. Bilateral assistance peaked in 2000 at 575 million USD and has declined since then. At the outbreak of the Ethio-Eritrean war, many donors suspended aid, and the notable drop in bilateral assistance shown in 1999 is a result of this action, though it appears that the decline was offset by increased assistance from multilateral donors. Aid was resumed in 2000 with the signing of the peace accords, and both bilateral and multilateral assistance helped the government in its recovery, demobilization and reintegration programmes. The USA remains the largest bilateral donor, having been responsible for, on average, 39 per cent of total bilateral aid over the period 1997–2003. It is followed by Japan, a distant second with 11 per cent of the total, and Germany third with 6 per cent. Of the total multilateral assistance, the World Bank contributed (on average) 40 per cent, donors in the UN system (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, etc) 31 per cent, the EU 14 per cent and the ADB 10 per cent.

Table 1.3 ODA Trends by Source 1997–2003 (in million USD)

<i>Donor</i>	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	<i>Average 1997–2001</i>
ODA	605	675	730	925	1,083	1,448	1,584	804
Bilateral	263	303	247	575	402	345	390	358
Multilateral	342	372	483	350	681	1,103	1,194	446
UN system (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, etc)	149	130	213	203	148	274	305	169
WB & IMF	58	72	149	105	322	583	662	141
Non-UN system	134	148	121	42	211	246	227	131

Source: UNDP 2003a



Source: UNDP 2003

The development sectors that have benefited most from international assistance are transport, agriculture and the social service sector (health and education). At the macro level, ODA amounted to, on average, 13 per cent of GDP over the period 1997–2001, and is growing at a faster rate than GDP, which which grew at an average of about 5.6 per cent in the same period. The high level of ODA relative to GDP and the disparity in their respective growth rates reflects the fact that humanitarian aid makes up such a large proportion of total assistance, yet has only a limited impact on economic growth.

4.2.2. Humanitarian Assistance

The bulk of humanitarian or relief assistance has been in the form of food aid. Food crisis, including famine, has been a recurrent tragedy in Ethiopia during much of the 20th century, bringing suffering and death to innumerable peasant families and helping to prepare the ground for the collapse of both the Imperial and the *Derg* regimes. The virulent famines of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s brought devastation to a wide section of the rural population in many parts of the country. More recently, the food shortages of 1994 and the famine of 1999/2000 caused large-scale deprivation and loss of human lives and of livestock, putting enormous pressure on the present government. Behind these publicized tragedies are a large number of localized disasters which do not often attract media or donor attention, but whose impact on the population concerned is just as devastating. There is sufficient evidence that food scarcity and starvation have deep-rooted structural causes and are not a product of temporary social or environmental shocks. We also know that food shortages and famines have occurred with greater frequency since the 1960s than at any time before.²⁰ This must be seen against a background of growing poverty on the one hand and declining agricultural performance on the other over last five decades.

The vulnerable population – that is, people who are supported by food aid – has been growing rapidly in the last five decades, though we have reliable statistical evidence only for the 1980s and

²⁰ For the evidence for the discussion on the frequency of famine and food scarcity see Dessalegn 1994; the figures regarding vulnerability and the flow of food aid come from CSA and the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission (DPPC), for which see Dessalegn 2003a.

1990s. In the years between 1980 and 1989, the vulnerable population averaged 4.2 million each year; in the period 1992–2001 the figure was 5.3 million. In 1993, the third year of the new government, 7.6 million peasants (or 17 per cent of the rural population) were facing acute food shortages; in 1994, the figure was 6.7 million (or 15 per cent). In both decades, 11 per cent of the rural population were vulnerable annually. At present, the government has formally declared that 14 million people are vulnerable across the whole of the country.

The flow of food aid into the country in the last three decades is also a good indication of the growing inability of the agricultural economy to feed the peasant population. According to government figures, the amount of food aid distributed in the country has increased dramatically. In the decade of the 1970s, a total of 688,500 metric tons (mt) of food aid was distributed; on average, the total was 76,500 mt per year. In the decade of the 1980s, food aid had jumped to 5.1 million mt, and the annual average was 512,400 mt. In the period 1991 to 2000, the total and annual average figures were 8.0 million and 798,800 mt respectively. The evidence shows that between 20 and 25 per cent of the food consumed in the rural areas in the 1990s was made up of food aid. The EU and USAID, followed a distant third by Canada, are the largest donors of food aid to the country (not counting the World Food Programme – WFP – as a donor). These three donors provide about 50 per cent of the food delivered to the country in any one year.²¹

4.2.3. *Assistance for Democratization and Governance*

A brief discussion on assistance to governance and democratization is now in order. It has been difficult to get aggregate figures on the subject. We have searched all data sources on external assistance, including the UNDP, OECD and ADB documents cited above, but none includes relevant figures. The problem is further complicated by the fact that assistance to programmes in this sector is frequently channelled through NGOs, or civil society organizations in general, and in these cases, often it is difficult to distinguish what has gone to governance programmes and what to non-governance programmes.

It is nevertheless the case that many of the major bilateral and multilateral donors have indeed provided support to governance and democratization programmes of one sort or another. Among the bilateral donors one may cite the USA, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Italy and the UK.²² The programmes commonly funded may be grouped into five broad categories: support to the electoral process; improvements in the justice and court systems; capacity-building for Parliament; support to civil society and to the media. In a number of cases, support to elections has meant capacity-building for the National Electoral Board (NEB), campaign finance channelled through UNDP and the NEB, and funds to civil society groups to run civic or voter education programmes.

The available evidence suggests that, overall, such assistance makes up a small percentage of donors' total assistance to the country. There is also reason to suspect that some of the major donors have cut down on governance assistance, for a variety of reasons.²³ There is a shift of emphasis from democratization and governance to socio-economic and humanitarian assistance, and the shift, spearheaded by the USA, has been justified on the grounds that economic growth must be a priority,

²¹ See the WFP website: <http://www.wfp.org/>

²² See the website of the Accessible Information on Development Activities (AIDA) for a list of donors to civil society and governance programmes in Ethiopia. The list, which does not include multilateral donors, gives prominence mainly to Norway, Sweden and Netherlands; the USA and UK are cited a few times, but Germany and Canada are hardly mentioned.

although support to the democratic process will be made if it contributes to development, and in particular to poverty reduction. Canadian assistance, for example, places heavy emphasis on supporting the government's poverty reduction programme, the SDPRP, which was launched in 2002. One suspects also that one reason for the change of focus is that donors realize that support to democratization is bound to be contentious, with the inevitable failings in the area of human rights and the electoral process potentially causing conflict or a diplomatic standoff between donors and the government. Figures are not available, but we have been informed that USAID's governance fund has been decreasing in the last few years, not just for Ethiopia but worldwide. The Governance Department of USAID-Ethiopia was merged with another department and its main officer's contract was not renewed because of budget cuts.²⁴ The Agency's recent briefing handouts indicate that USAID has been scaling down its democratic and governance programme and shifting the emphasis of its country assistance to other sectors, in particular to what it calls human resource development, that is, education and health.²⁵

However, some donors do continue to provide strong support to human rights and governance programmes, the bulk of which is channelled through civil society institutions. A few examples may be cited here. Norway's assistance to good governance and democratization programmes has been robust and has steadily increased over the years. More than one-third of Norway's bilateral assistance to Ethiopia in 2002, for example, went to support the work being done by civil society in the country, in particular in the areas of human rights, good governance and democracy. According to the Norwegian Ambassador in Addis Ababa, if the all funds provided by Norway are added up together, civil society receives 'more bilateral and humanitarian aid from the Norwegian government than the total amount channelled by Norway to the government of Ethiopia and the multilateral system'.²⁶

Similarly, Canada has maintained a strong support programme for democratization and governance; indeed, since the end of the 1990s it has pledged more money for this sector than before, although the emphasis now is on assistance to democratic programmes that directly support development. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has identified Ethiopia, along with six other developing countries, as the focal point of its development assistance. Its support to improved governance has been running since 1994, and between that year and 2000 it spent over 2.4 million USD on various projects focusing on legal and justice reform and capacity-building.²⁷ On the other hand, the European Commission (EC), which had not had any serious programmes on governance and democratization until the Cotonu Agreement of 2000 (see below), has now earmarked a budget of 25 million Euros for such programmes for Ethiopia for the years 2002–07.²⁸ At the time of our interview with an official of the EC Delegation, there were no programmes under way but there were several in the pipeline with implementation planned to start in 2004.

In conclusion, three important points may be drawn from the discussion on international assistance presented above. Firstly, the Ethiopian government is heavily dependent on international donors, without whom it cannot undertake development programmes, feed its population, or even run its own administrative machinery. According to the World Bank, for example, aid finances about 37

²³ See for example the briefing handouts by USAID (2003) and the Canadian Embassy (2004).

²⁴ Oral information provided by James Polhemus, Former Head of Governance Department, USAID-Ethiopia. See also USAID briefing handouts.

²⁵ USAID 2003.

²⁶ Norwegian Embassy 2003.

²⁷ Canadian Embassy 2003.

per cent of the government's public expenditure.²⁹ Secondly, this dependence is exacerbated by the fact that a high and growing proportion of international assistance goes to humanitarian/relief programmes, meaning essentially to feed the country's increasingly hungry population; this aid does not contribute to economic development. Finally, the donors that ought to have considerable leverage over the government, given their significant contributions to both development and humanitarian assistance, are the USA, the World Bank, the EU, and the ADB group. While Japan with 11 per cent, and Germany with 6 per cent of total ODA may command some attention from the government, Canada and three European countries (Italy, Norway and Netherlands), with 5 per cent each, and a number of UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR) with similar contributions compete for influence on the government. Putting it in realistic terms, it may be argued that out of a total of some 45 donor countries, only a handful, perhaps no more than five, provide assistance significant enough to exercise leverage over the government if they wish to do so.

5. Methodology

This study is based on information, observations and insights, and statistical material gathered from a wide selection of sources. The following is a brief discussion of these.

5.1. Interviews

We conducted a large number of interviews with a) government officials; b) officials from a select number of donor agencies; c) people in responsible positions in a number of civil society organizations on the one hand, and newspaper editors, publishers, and government and independent media specialists on the other.

The term 'civil society organizations' in this country refers to non-governmental groups that are involved in human rights, advocacy, civic education and, in general, non-service-delivery activities. For a long time, however, these groups were often referred to as NGOs (Hyden 1997). The more current term among international and multilateral organizations (such as the African Union, the World Bank, etc) is civil society organizations (CSOs), rather than NGOs because the former is a more inclusive term.

The government officials we interviewed included the head of the country's National Election[sometimes 'Electoral' – which is correct?] Board (NEB), officials at the Ministry of Information, officials of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, and an official from the Mass Media Training Institute, a government body.

The donor agencies we focused on included USAID, the EC, the Netherlands Embassy, Canada's CIDA, and the UK's DFID. Later, we obtained information from the Norwegian Embassy. There are some 50 or so bilateral and multilateral donor agencies in the country, each of which has provided assistance of one kind or another to the government in the last ten years. The five we decided to select for the study have invested relatively significant resources in the country's democratization effort over the last decade.

²⁸ Interview with Mr Vetter, Second Secretary, EC Delegation, Addis Ababa.

²⁹ World Bank 2003.

5.2. Literature Study

We gathered a large body of documentary evidence from the Ethiopian government, the donor community, civil society organizations, and the media. Many of these records are unpublished internal documents, occasionally merely computer printouts. In addition, we selected four independent and two government newspapers for closer examination. We read these papers on a regular basis to examine their content, concerns and profile. Both authors are also familiar with many of the other papers published in the country, including the English-language ones, as well as the broadcast media discussed in the report. In this connection, it is worth noting that we canvassed a small number of opinion-makers in the capital for their views on election monitoring, the quality of the press, and the prospects for democratization. Their opinion was provided on the understanding that their names would not be revealed. Finally, we have made use of relevant published material for the discussion in each of the chapters. The sources in question consist of both primary material (ie, government and donor publications), and secondary material (ie, books, monographs, articles and, occasionally, source material downloaded from the Internet). The works also include papers, articles and monographs published by the present authors.

5.3. Methodological Problems

Arranging interviews or gathering information from donors has proved to be an immensely difficult task. Firstly, there is high staff turnover among embassies and aid agencies. Officials' term of duty is usually three years, at the end of which they are either transferred elsewhere or in some cases they leave the diplomatic service. The new officials who replace them lack the experience, and/or do not have ready access to the information that we were seeking. On a number of occasions, information is not found in readily accessible form, or does not exist at all. It is interesting to note that we found government institutions had a better system of information management and were better able to provide information than many of the donor agencies we approached. The institutional memory of the agencies in question leaves a lot to be desired. Moreover, since what we were looking for was not only hard information but also observations, comments and insights, which can only come with experience in the job, the new officials were unable to be of much help. There was also another difficulty, and this was that the months of June to August are when most of the staff of the international donor community take their annual leave, and it was therefore hard for us to meet the right people at the right time. Finally, since many of the officials we spoke to were members of diplomatic staff, some of the answers we received either were not candid or were carefully couched in diplomatic language in which the substance was lost.

6. Outline of the Report

The discussion that follows is presented in four chapters. Chapter two focuses on the electoral context and international assistance to the country's major elections. There have been three major national and regional elections since the new government came to power. Each of the elections is discussed from the point of view on the one hand of management and participation and, on the other, the contributions of international assistance to the success or failure of the electoral process. Chapter three deals with human rights, the government's record so far on respect for democratic freedoms and citizens' rights, and the nature and impact of international assistance in this sector. Chapter four is concerned with

international assistance and the media. We shall discuss the nature of the assistance provided and the impact it has had on the media. We present short conclusions and recommendations at the end of each chapter. Finally, Chapter five provides the overall conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and analysis of this study.

II. International Election Assistance

1. Introduction

Time and again, the international community has intervened and supported elections to bring about peace and order in states shattered by many years of civil war. According to Kumar and Ottaway, the international community has often provided financial, technical and political assistance to organize elections in post-conflict states.³⁰ These forms of assistance have proved valuable in conducting elections that lead conflict-ridden nations towards democracy and political stability. Public opinion in donor countries supports such initiatives because the alternative to inaction is continuous political and economic turmoil in such states and untold suffering for their peoples. For obvious reasons, the Western public can ill afford to sit back and watch indifferently an unfolding crisis of immense proportions. Simply put, the advantages of electoral assistance in ending incessant instability and war cannot be overemphasized, and over the past few years there have been tremendous efforts to make such assistance more effective.

Ethiopia has conducted a number of elections in its post-conflict experiment. The country has received substantial international electoral assistance for the series of elections between 1991 and 2000. The driving force behind much of the bilateral and multilateral electoral assistance has been the desire to pull the country out of many years of war-torn politics and create a stable and peaceful nation-state that would be inclusive of all opposition groups that fought against the *Derg*'s dictatorial military regime.³¹

2. Electoral Context

Ethiopia has an election record dating back to the Imperial era. The first electoral law in the country's history was promulgated in the 1950s and consisted of many articles on prohibited acts and unfair practices during public elections. Later, this law was amended in 1969 and the Central Election Board was created under the Ministry of the Interior to conduct elections throughout the empire. It contained provisions on voter rights and obligations, registration and qualifications of candidates, number of constituencies, proper conduct of elections, counting of ballots and announcement of results. The *Derg* regime, which succeeded the Imperial government, adopted a similar electoral structure, including a national electoral board and a set of penal code provisions relating to offences during public elections. Under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

(EPRDF), Proclamation No. 111/1995 is the major piece of legislation that defines the electoral process in Ethiopia. It contains provisions on powers and duties of the National Electoral Board

³⁰ Kumar and Ottaway 1998.

³¹ Harbeson 1998; Kassahun 2003.

(NEB), organization of the electoral system, election principles, and processes of registration of candidates and voters.

At present, Ethiopia has a bicameral Parliament consisting of a House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) and a House of Federation (HoF). Under the 1995 Federal Constitution, both Houses are elected for a five-year term. The HPR has 550 seats, acts as the lower House of Parliament and is the main organ that makes laws and approves major policies of the government. In addition, the HPR elects the Prime Minister. There is a State President who serves for a six-year term but his/her role and functions are largely ceremonial. As the leader of the party with the largest number of seats in parliament, the Prime Minister is the chief executive officer and wields tremendous power in the running of the country as well as in his/her relations with the legislature and the judiciary. He/she has the authority to dissolve the HPR but is required to call elections within six months of the latter's dissolution. One-party executive dominance is a typical feature of the Ethiopian government and this has meant a weak system of checks and balances among the three organs of government.

The HoF is a *de facto* upper house composed of representatives of nations, nationalities and peoples of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. According to the Constitution, this house consists of at least one member from each 'nation and nationality' and one additional representative for each one million people of the 'nationality or nation'. Although constitutionally important as a representative body, the HoF does not have formal law-making powers but decides on issues relating to the rights of nations and nationalities to self-determination, including secession. Its other main responsibility is to provide interpretations on constitutional issues.

Members of the HPR are elected on the basis of a plurality of votes cast in single-member constituencies. Under this system, the candidate who receives the highest number of votes is declared the winner and others are dropped, regardless of the number of votes cast in their favour. This electoral practice precludes the representation of candidates having alternative programmes and views to those of the winning candidate. In electoral systems that do not provide for a level playing field, such as Ethiopia's current system, this practice can give undue advantage to the party in power especially when the government has complete control over the mass media and other state resources and uses the same to influence the outcome of the elections in its favour.

Finally, there is another important electoral institution. Chapter 6 of the Ethiopian Federal Constitution provides for an independent National Electoral Board (NEB) to manage elections at federal, regional and local levels. The Board has seven members, who are accountable to and appointed by the HPR on the nomination of the executive branch of government. It has a chairperson and a secretary, who assumes the role of chief executive of the secretariat and is non-voting. The Constitution does not specify the Board members' term of office and the assumption is that they will 'continue to serve provided they demonstrate 'good behaviour'. It states only that the Board will be composed of members designated in consideration of 'national representation, technical competence, integrity and experience'. Although set up by the federal government, the Constitution allows it to have branch offices at regional and sub-regional levels for organizing elections throughout the country.

3. Post-Conflict Elections

3.1. Introduction

On coming to power in 1991, the EPRDF made a public commitment to democracy, national reconciliation and a broad-based government that would be inclusive of all vying groups that fought against the *Derg* regime. It has already carried out four major elections: the 1992 interim elections; 1995 national parliamentary elections; the 1995 Constituent Assembly elections and the 2000 national elections for federal and regional assemblies. All were intended to consolidate peace and order throughout the country, and create a proper climate for economic reconstruction and development. At present, the country is bracing itself for another round of nationwide parliamentary elections in 2005. It is necessary to review the purposes and outcomes of these elections to provide a proper scene for assessing their contribution to peaceful transition and the prospects for democracy in post-*Derg* Ethiopia.

3.2. The 1992 Interim Elections

Following the ousting of the *Derg* regime by the EPRDF in 1991, the country conducted its first interim national elections, which led to the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1992. The TGE was set up in the wake of the London and Addis Ababa peace conferences and was entrusted with the task of administering the country on a provisional basis under a transitional Charter. Under the Charter, the TGE was committed to conducting regional and local elections within three months of its establishment, drafting a new Constitution, which required elections for a constituent assembly, and holding national elections under the new Constitution within two-and-a-half years.

The EPRDF conducted the 1992 elections at national, regional and *woreda* [administrative district] levels to establish a transitional government that could fill the gap created by *Derg*'s departure. The elections took place in about 450 of the 600 *woredas*. They were hastily prepared and quite a number of ethnically based liberation groups that fought the *Derg* regime participated. As Ethiopia's first post-*Derg* elections, they were characterized by chaos and poor organization of the electoral process.³² Election irregularities were widely reported, raising serious concerns about the legitimacy of the outcome as being the true wish of the people. Most seriously of all, the EPRDF-affiliated parties manipulated the elections in most of the constituencies to ensure complete victory.³³

The attempt to establish a broad-based government following the 1992 elections was unsuccessful because major political and ethnic groups boycotted the elections on grounds of 'unfair and unequal conditions' for participation set out by the dominant EPRDF coalition.³⁴ Although controversial, these elections were nevertheless important in setting the stage for the division of the country into ethnic regions controlled by parties closely affiliated to the EPRDF. The Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo People's Democratic Movement (OPDM) and the South Ethiopia People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) constitute the

³² Harbeson 1998.

³³ Vestal 2000; NDI and African-American Institute 1992.

³⁴ One of the major groups that boycotted these elections was the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). For more information, see Pausewang and Tronvoll 2000.

core parties of the EPRDF. About 45 other smaller, predominantly ethnic, parties are supported by and work with the EPRDF coalition but are not member organizations of the Front. Over the years, ethnic parties closely allied with the EPRDF emerged as single ruling parties in their respective regions with little or no challenge from opposition parties. This eventually helped the EPRDF to consolidate its control over the different regions because the parties affiliated with the coalition continued to provide the bedrock for its power.

3.3. The 1995 Constituent Assembly Elections

The EPRDF conducted the 1995 constituent assembly elections following the appointment of a constitution drafting commission by the Council of Representatives of the TGE. This commission was entrusted with the task of preparing a draft constitution that was to be adopted by an elected assembly. The credibility of the commission was seriously questioned by opposition groups and political observers, as the positions of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary were all held by members of the EPRDF.³⁵ The opposition and critics of the government saw it as a move by the EPRDF to pre-empt any alternative vision for the future of the Ethiopian state and to entrench the ruling party in power.

The 1995 constituent assembly elections resulted in the adoption of a Constitution that established a federal state structure composed of quasi-sovereign ethnically based regional states. The Constitution devolved considerable powers and authority to the regions and transformed Ethiopia from a state with a highly centralized unitary government to a decentralized federal state. While much of this exercise was important to the extent that it aided the country's peaceful transition, the inclusion of the controversial Article 39 of the Constitution, which sanctions secession for any nationality or ethnic group, has to this day continued to be a source of acrimony among groups with different visions for the future of the Ethiopian state.

Table 2.1. Constituent Assembly Election Results 1995

No.	Region	Estimated eligible voters	Registered voters	Actual votes cast	Number of winning candidates
1.	Tigray	1,549,192	1,226,208	1,146,510	37
2.	Afar	355,196	358,170	291,764	8
3.	Amhara	6,392,052	3,916,118	3,517,781	137
4.	Oromiya	8,072,722	5,197,913	4,444,640	177
5.	Somale	2,399,984	1,607,532	1,396,933	23
6.	SNNPR*	4,810,319	3,590,440	3,277,368	123
7.	Gambella	53,784	49,316	26,085	3
8.	Harari	80,750	35,304	31,212	3
9.	Dire Dawa	184,221	66,702	40,794	2
10.	Addis Ababa	1,128,781	593,946	398,044	23
Total		25,359,550	16,778,620	14,697,992	536

* SNNPR stands for the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Region

Source: NEB, Report to the House of Representatives, Addis Ababa, 1997

³⁵ Kassahun 2003.

Voter turnout for the 1995 elections was low compared with earlier elections. According to data obtained from the NEB, out of more than 25 million eligible voters, only about 15 million, or 60 per cent of the eligible electorate, actually voted. As in the 1995 national elections to the House of Representatives, however, the EPRDF again had a landslide victory, winning 460 (90 per cent) of the total 510 organized constituencies. This assured it of an unquestionable hegemony in shaping the form and content of Ethiopia's post-*Derg* Constitution; it also set the stage for legitimizing two singularly important and core agendas of the dominant EPRDF for the future Ethiopian state – the division of the country along ethno-linguistic lines, and the constitutionally enshrined right of any nation or nationality to secede from the Federation.

3.4. The 1995 National Assembly Elections

After nearly four years in power as a transitional authority, the EPRDF ruling group conducted the 1995 parliamentary elections to provide for a permanent government. These were largely peaceful and took place in a climate of relative political calm and order throughout much of the country. Nevertheless, many opposition groups and independent candidates boycotted the elections, and allegations of intimidation, imprisonment and voting irregularities were widely reported.³⁶ In addition, the elections had other shortcomings, including insufficient civic education, apathy among the voting public especially among the rural peasantry, and the absence of a strong and united opposition that could provide an alternative.³⁷ Despite the inadequacies, however, the EPRDF gained a landslide victory and managed to assert complete control of the executive and the legislature.

Table 2.2. House of Representatives National Election Results 1995

No.	Region	Registered voters	Actual votes cast	Number of winning candidates	
				M	F
1.	Tigray	1,364,087	1,341,850	36	2
1.	Afar	574,616	503,483	8	--
3.	Amhara	5,447,236	5,268,501	137	1
4.	Oromyia	6,191,826	5,855,598	174	3
5.	Somale	2,294,497	2,086,869	23	--
6.	Benishangul-Gumuz	213,665	195,487	9	--
7.	SNNPR	4,473,679	4,204,693	123	--
8.	Gambella	52,487	32,228	3	--
9.	Harari	60,357	52,412	2	--
10.	Dire Dawa	1,005,51	82,378	2	--
11.	Addis Ababa	564,378	445,058	19	4
Total		21,337,379	19,986,179	536	10

Source: NEB, Report to the House of Representatives, Addis Ababa, 1997

³⁶ Tronvoll and Aadland 1995; Polhemus 2002.

³⁷ Pausewang and Tronvoll 2000.

When the results of the 1995 national elections were announced by the National Election Board, EPRDF scored an overwhelming victory, winning 89 per cent (491 out of the 546 seats) of the parliamentary seats. Political groups not directly allied with the EPRDF and independent candidates won 19 per cent, out of which more than 55 per cent of the seats were filled by region-based ethnic parties which were not members of the ruling coalition but were under the direct tutelage of the EPRDF, such as the Somali Democratic League and the Benishangul People's Unity Party.

3.5. The 2000 National Elections

After the expiry of its first five-year term as a permanent government, the EPRDF conducted the 2000 national, regional and *woreda* elections to provide a second term for itself. The elections took place at a time when relative peace and stability had reigned over much of the country. It was also a period when there was greatly improved law and order throughout the country, in sharp contrast to the 1992 and 1995 elections when the EPRDF had not yet firmly established state authority throughout the nation. Nevertheless, it was also a time when the general public had not yet come to grips with the disastrous consequences of the 1998 Ethio-Eritrean border war and the ensuing fragile ceasefire. In 2000, the government signed the Algiers Peace Agreement immediately before the elections. Although the government scored a landslide victory in the polls, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the signing of the peace agreement might have helped its cause in influencing the outcome.

Table 2.3. National Election Results for the House of Representatives 2000³⁸

No.	Region	Number of registered voters	Number of actual votes cast	Voter turnout (%)
1.	Tigray	1,391,575	1,338,197	96.1
2.	Afar	495,181	328,908	94.9
3.	Amhara	5,333,079	5,293,553	99.2
4.	Oromiya	7,006,783	6,396,025	89
5.	Benishangul-Gumuz	205,489	172,865	84
6.	SNNPR	4,630,308	4,043,351	86.4
7.	Gambella	94,565	93,563	98.9
8.	Harari	56,295	56,066	99.5
9.	Dire Dawa	112,307	74,484	66.3
10.	Addis Ababa	849,510	664,759	78.2
	Total	20,354,156	18,659,481	91.6

Source: NEB, Addis Ababa, 2001

The 2000 elections provided the EPRDF with legitimacy to govern for a second term. As Table 2.4 below indicates, a total of 1,156 candidates competed at the national level. There were 412 independent candidates, and 744 candidates were put up by about 50 political parties that participated in the elections.

³⁸ Election results in the Somale Region are not included in the table.

Table 2.4. Number of Candidates in the 2000 Elections

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Number of candidates</i>	<i>% of total</i>
1.	Number of EPRDF and other party candidates	744	64
2.	Number of independent candidates	412	36
3.	Total number of candidates	1156	100

Source: Compiled by the authors and on the basis of Berhanu and Meleskachew 2001

There was a total of 547 parliamentary seats in the 2000 elections. Of these, 263 or about 48.1 per cent were uncontested, ie, only one candidate, often from the ruling party, ran unopposed, and the seat thus went automatically to the ruling EPRDF. As shown in Table 2.5, by winning 481 (88 per cent) of the 547 parliamentary seats, the EPRDF was assured of an overwhelming victory.

Table 2.5. Number of Parliamentary Seats in the 2000 Elections

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Number of seats</i>	<i>% of total</i>
1.	Number of parliamentary seats won by EPRDF and affiliated parties and uncontested seats	481	87.9
2.	Number of parliamentary seats won by the opposition	53	9.6
3.	Number of seat won by independents	13	2.3
4.	Total number of parliamentary seats	547	100

Source: Compiled by the authors and on the basis of Berhanu and Meleskachew 2001

Of all the elections that the EPRDF conducted in the first decade of its rule, the 2000 national elections were by far the most important, better organized and showed a relative degree of competitiveness, especially in the Southern Region and some urban areas such as Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. There was much more spirited public discussion of issues among candidates representing different parties, and the people followed many of these elections with a great deal of interest. More importantly, the government allowed limited access to the state-controlled media and airtime for campaigning by opposition and independent candidates. However, the broadcasting media was still largely dominated by politicians from the ruling party, as Table 2.6 below demonstrates.

Table 2.6. Estimated Use of Free Airtime in Minutes by Parties and Government Officials in the 2000 Elections

<i>No.</i>	<i>Organization/politician</i>	<i>Radio</i>	<i>Television</i>
1.	AAPO* – opposition	15	15
2.	EDP** – opposition	15	15
3.	EPRDF – ruling party	57	57
4.	Meles Zenawi – Prime Minister	60	60
5.	Ali Abdo – ruling party	30	30
6.	Addisu Legesse – ruling party	45	45
7.	Abate Kisho – ruling party	42	42
8.	Kuma Demeksa – ruling party	40	40
9.	Total	304	304

* *All-Amhara People's Organization*

** *Ethiopian Democratic Party*

Source: Berhanu and Meleskachew 2001

The airtime offered to pro-government and opposition candidates was highly skewed in favour of the former. As can be observed in the table above, of a total of 608 minutes of airtime (divided equally between TV and radio) used by various politicians, the opposition used only 60 minutes. In contrast, the ruling party's politicians and officials used nearly 90 per cent of the total airtime, giving it undue advantage in introducing its programmes and plans to the electorate. The role of the electronic media, particularly radio, is critical in a country like Ethiopia where print media reaches only a small proportion of the people. Hence, giving all parties fair access is absolutely necessary if they are to compete on a level playing field during elections.

3.6. Comparison with Pre-1991 Elections

Elections during the Imperial and *Derg* eras were neither democratic nor free. Under both regimes, they were tightly controlled from above and were largely ceremonial activities, which the people had to carry out as an expression of their obedience to the authority of the state. The public lined up and cast their votes because failure to do so could bring the wrath of the government.³⁹ Under the monarchy, there were no political parties and candidates had to be land or property owners; these conditions could hardly qualify the electoral process as democratic. Under the *Derg*, people could vote only for candidates of the regime's Marxist-Leninist party masquerading as the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE). Since the elections were neither competitive nor open under the two pre-1991 regimes, only official candidates won, and often with a landslide victory. This reality is reflected in Table 2.7. It can be observed that the outcome of elections under the EPRDF shows an extremely interesting resemblance to the two preceding regimes despite formal claims by the present government of having allowed multi-party politics.

³⁹ Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen 2002.

Table 2.7. Outcomes of Elections Under the Three Regimes

No.	Regime	Regime characteristics	Election outcomes
1.	Imperial	No parties allowed	Regime candidates won 99% of seats
2.	Derg	Single ruling party	Regime candidates won 99% of seats
3.	EPRDF	Multi-party	Ruling party won 99% of seats

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 2.7 shows that despite differences in types of rule, all three regimes invariably won elections with a landslide victory and the ruling group held on to power unchallenged. However, it is important to note that there are also important differences between the three regimes. For example, the Imperial and *Derg* governments never allowed the existence of a free press or freedom of association. Neither did they allow international supervision and monitoring of elections. In contrast, there is a struggling free print media under the EPRDF and the current government has, albeit reluctantly, allowed international and domestic monitors to observe elections in the country. In addition, unheard of under its predecessors, the present regime has to its credit allowed the growth and functioning of independent civil society organizations (CSOs), such as the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), which have been very active in the election process and in monitoring the state of human rights in the country.

In Ethiopia, most political parties are ethnically based and there are far too few multi-ethnic/national parties. As has been indicated elsewhere in this report, about 50 parties contested the last 2000 national elections and a substantial majority supported the ruling EPRDF. At present, there are a few opposition political parties but these are largely weak and ineffective in challenging the dominant EPRDF and at offering the electorate any alternatives. In addition, most are urban based and thus unable to reach the larger rural constituency. Finally, these parties have been made less effective partly by the heavy-handed tactics of the ruling EPRDF, including harassment, intimidation and imprisonment of opposition party functionaries and supporters.

4. International Election Assistance

4.1. Assistance to the National Electoral Board (NEB)

Post-conflict elections can be costly affairs for a very poor nation such as Ethiopia.⁴⁰ Often, the donor community provides financial assistance to help cover the cost of elections in poor states struggling to come out of crisis. In its post-conflict history, Ethiopia has conducted nine national, regional and local

⁴⁰ Some argue that the cost of elections must not be too expensive for parties and individual candidates because of their dampening effect on competitive politics. The experience of many African countries over the past two decades shows that the costs of elections have been escalating and there is a grave danger that this might impede democracy and effective participation in election campaigns by several parties. In addition, there is also the argument that if elections become expensive, fund-raising becomes a major preoccupation of politicians, thereby distracting them from public policy-making and their role as trustees of the public interest. See Shugarman 2000; Oyugi 2003.

elections under the EPRDF at a cost of nearly 17.5 million USD, the total amount allocated by the government to the NEB between 1992 and 2000. Table 2.8 below shows only regular budget allocations made by the Ethiopian government to the NEB.

Table 2.8. Cost of Elections in Ethiopia 1993/94–2001/02 (in USD)⁴¹

<i>No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Area and type of election</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1.	1995	Constituent assembly elections	5,026,394
2.	1995	First National Assembly elections	469,484
3.	1996	Nationwide woreda and kebele elections	1,900,193
4.	1997	Afar elections	296,663
5.	1998	Debub woreda elections	1,398,202
6.	1999	Gambella, Benishangul and nationwide by-elections	698,338
7.	2000	Second national elections	3,370,310
8.	2000	Woreda and kebele elections in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Afar and Addis Ababa	3,360,26
9.	2001	Zone, woreda and kebele elections in Debub	949,426
Total			17,469,036

Source: NEB, Addis Ababa, 2003

The total budget figure in the table does not include any bilateral or multilateral assistance that might have come to the NEB or to CSOs engaged in various activities related to elections, such as voter education and monitoring of elections.

The Ethiopian government received a major infusion of international electoral assistance in the early 1990s before the present NEB was formally established. This was given through UNDP under the project title ‘Assistance to the National Electoral Board of Transitional Government of Ethiopia’ in May 1994 and amounted to more than 14.9 million USD. Including this UNDP grant, the total bilateral and multilateral electoral assistance that Ethiopia has received from 1992 to 2004, for administering elections and supporting political parties, amounts to 15.5 million USD. As noted earlier, the government’s budgetary allocations to the nine elections conducted between 1992 and 2000 totalled 17.5 million USD.

The UNDP grant in 1994 was intended to assist the NEB in preparing and carrying out the constituent assembly elections held in 1994. In particular, the project was to assist in the planning of the elections and mobilization and coordination of external resources, and in the procurement of inputs to be financed by donor contributions through a cost-sharing mechanism. It is also possible that some of the assistance was used in drafting the Constitution and the legal provisions for elections; but, given the chaotic situation and the level of disorganization at the time, there is no evidence to assess how much aid was used for these purposes and what its impact was. The aid was intended to be used for the provision of computer systems; a wide range of materials, equipment and support for civic education and the training of polling stations; supplies and materials in support of voter registration, ie, voter

⁴¹ The original budget in Ethiopian Birr has been converted at the rate of 1 USD = 8.52 Eth. Birr.

registration books, voter cards, pens, pencils, etc; and supplies and materials in support of election-day activities.

As already discussed, the period when the UNDP grant was given was characterized by disorganization and poor preparation of the election process. The current NEB has very little information on how the money was spent and it was unable to provide any evidence that would serve as a basis for assessing the grant's impact. Neither could any other government agency, or the UNDP, provide any proper accounts showing the way the money was used. Hence, although the donation was significant and it possibly made an immense contribution towards democratizing the electoral process, the absence of relevant documentation regarding the use of resources has made it difficult to assess the full impact of this assistance.

However, mention can be made of the roughly 300,000 US dollars that the NEB received from USAID to purchase communication and radio equipment, computers, vehicles and other accessories for the 2000 elections.⁴² The executing agency in this case was the Washington-based International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). It can be argued that this was only a small portion of the cost of elections that Ethiopia incurred and its impact on democratization in this country was bound to be limited.

4.2. Political Party Assistance

Another form of international electoral assistance worth mentioning is the 318,625.39 USD that was given to the NEB to be distributed to political parties during the 2000 elections. The money was distributed to 33 registered political parties through a committee chaired by the head of the NEB. The disbursements ranged from 35,798 USD, which went to the Oromo National Congress (ONC), down to 586 USD, which went to the Yem Nationality Democratic Movement.⁴³ A number of European countries and the UNDP contributed to the fund. Detailed information on donor contributions is provided in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9. Assistance to Registered Political Parties for the 2000 Elections

No.	Donor	Amount in USD
1.	UNDP	58,685.44
2.	Government of Norway	56,383.22
3.	Government of Netherlands	56,989.97
4.	Government of Sweden	58,538.58
5.	Government of Ireland	29,342.72
6.	Government of the UK	58,685.44
	Total	318,625.39

Source: NEB, Addis Ababa, 2001

The donation went into a provisional fund established under Proclamation No. 46/1993 at the initiative of the NEB. The purpose of this fund was to provide financial assistance through the Board to legally registered political parties to enable them to contest the general elections in a competitive manner. The

⁴² NEB 2003.

support was used for communications, office space, access to the public media and for any other measures to ensure broad participation and free and fair elections.

In general, the establishment of this provisional fund was helpful in providing support to legitimate political parties and in facilitating participation in the 2000 elections. This definitely contributed to broad participation in the elections and might have aided the democratization process. However, despite the positive contribution, there were some weaknesses in the distribution and utilization of the money. For example, the majority of the parties that benefited from the support have not provided complete financial reports, so there is an absence of transparency regarding how the funds were used. Another important point is that, according to reports received from many political parties, the money was late in arriving, which might have reduced its effectiveness in assisting fair political competition. Although there is general consensus that the support might have helped to broaden participation in the 2000 elections, none of the donor governments has insisted on seeing reports detailing how the contributions were spent by political parties. The lack of effective follow-up and monitoring has made it difficult to assess the full impact of this type of international assistance on electoral processes in Ethiopia.

4.3. International Election Monitoring

Many embassies and bilateral and multilateral aid agencies based in Addis Ababa organized election monitoring missions or sent representatives to observe the election process in various parts of the country. During the 2000 elections, for example, the US Embassy fielded 17 observers and election monitors throughout the regions and Addis Ababa. The assessments that followed were largely positive and reflected a cautious sense of optimism. According to the report of the the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 'Most opposition political parties competed in the May election; however, due to lack of funds and often weak organization, opposition parties contested only 20 per cent of the seats to the federal parliament.'⁴⁴

Another reason for the relative success of the 2000 elections was the fact that the major aid providers were keen to see a democratic and competitive electoral process. The donor community in Addis Ababa set up a Donor Election Unit (DEU) to coordinate aid to the elections and political parties, and to closely monitor whether the elections would be fair and free. This joint platform helped the group to exchange information and express a common position to the Ethiopian government regarding any irregularities that were reported in the electoral process and the outcome.

4.4. Civic and Voter Education

With international and bilateral electoral support, a number of CSOs were active in voter and civic education programmes in the period leading up to the 2000 elections. They included, in particular, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (AACC), Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), Eneweyay Civic and Social Education Center (ECSEC) and the Society for the Advancement of Human Rights (SAHRE). These are only a small part of the civil organization community and their outreach was limited because they could cover only

⁴³ NEB 2001.

⁴⁴ US Department of State 2001.

Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and some cities in the Southern Region. In addition, many of them only started their work just before the elections and as a result they did not have a very great impact.⁴⁵

In order to carry out a better coordinated programme of voter and civic education, in early 1999 a group of six NGOs had established the Ethiopian Non-Governmental Organizations Consortium for Elections (ENCONEL). The objectives of the Consortium were 'to develop standard and coherent teaching materials for voters' education; to determine target areas for voters' education among the constituent NGOs in order to avoid a geographical duplication of efforts as well as to maximize the use of scarce resources; and, finally, to apply a coordinated and structured approach towards the donors in the process of equitably using the limited available resources'.⁴⁶

Voter and civic education programmes prior to the 2000 elections focused on human rights and the law, good governance, the Ethiopian electoral law, and election processes and procedures. Some of the programmes initiated by CSOs either had targeted audiences or were intended to advance the cause of a particular constituency. For example, with assistance from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the British Council in Addis Ababa and CIDA, EWLA's activities focused on increasing the participation of women in the elections. With assistance from USAID, CETU arranged public forums for political parties and individuals to introduce their programmes to workers. It also encouraged workers to participate actively in the national elections. Through a project known as 'Vote Addis', AACC's efforts focused on encouraging the membership to vote for candidates that supported the business community's agenda. By buying airtime, AACC also supported the media to cover the election in a fair and acceptable manner and serve as a bridge between candidates and voters.

5. Impact of Electoral Assistance

The substantial international electoral assistance that Ethiopia received between 1992 and 2000 helped to build NEB's institutional and logistical capacity to administer elections. In addition, donor assistance has been targeted at programmes to establish or strengthen CSOs, develop and institutionalize political parties, hold public debates and discussions during and before elections and conduct voter education and training. However, this assistance has not had any real impact in terms of democratizing the electoral process, as two important points illustrate.

Firstly, it seems that elections have not led to more political diversity. Bent upon improving its image as a democratic government domestically and abroad, the EPRDF regime wanted to be seen to open up the country's politics to multi-party competition. However, none of the elections it conducted was judged to be either free or competitive, because voting irregularities were widely reported and the main opposition parties boycotted the elections.⁴⁷ What is more, the people were not given real choices because the ruling party, using state and bureaucratic resources under its control, repeatedly gained landslide victories.⁴⁸

Secondly, there are problems relating to the autonomy of the most important electoral institution, the National Electoral Board. Officially, the NEB has been given full and independent authority to confirm and officially announce election results as well as rectify electoral irregularities and decide on complaints submitted to it. This assumes that it will be impartial, independent and free of any

⁴⁵ Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies (CLCBS) 2003.

⁴⁶ Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies (CLCBS) 2003.

⁴⁷ AAI/NDI 1992; Aalen 2002; Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen 2002; Polhemus 2002.

⁴⁸ Abbink 2000.

interference in carrying out its mission. However, this principle was put to a severe test in 2003 when the general manager of the NEB was jailed for three days on charges levelled against him by the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption and Commission (FEACC). The Commission accused him of misuse of authority and of violating the constitutional right of a public employee who was arbitrarily dismissed for exposing acts of corruption in the Board. He was released after agreeing to respect the law and reinstate the suspended public servant.⁴⁹

The order to arrest the general manager came from a department under the executive branch of government, and this could be considered as unwarranted meddling in or manipulation of the NEB's activities and a serious challenge to its status as an independent and impartial body. Despite the implications that the incident signalled for the Board's ability to conduct free and fair elections, however, there is no evidence to indicate that any donor group or country providing assistance to the government of Ethiopia took up the issue or expressed concern about the general manager's arrest.

Regarding the value of election monitoring and observation and what contribution this has made to the democratization process, diplomatic staff from various embassies and donors' representatives based in Addis Ababa expressed differing views. In informal discussions that the writers had with representatives of selected foreign embassies, it was emphasized that the intention of such missions was not to influence or pressurize the government but to see to it that elections in Ethiopia followed international standards and practices. The fact that the donor community was paying close attention to the election process might have helped to create a more level playing field for competitive and free elections than in the past, the representatives suggested.

When asked about the role of international election monitors and observers, the NEB's general manager was less positive. He criticized many of them for being prejudgemental, of having ulterior agendas and being bent upon fault-finding rather than providing constructive advice and suggestions on how to improve the electoral process. He also resented the fact that in many instances, inexperienced recruits with little knowledge and appreciation of Ethiopia's history and culture were appointed for monitoring the elections, and this had resulted in superficial and highly impressionistic assessments of election processes and outcomes. More neutral observers, reasonably knowledgeable about the history and politics of the country, could make significant contributions to improving the system for future elections. In his opinion, it is also absolutely necessary for the international monitors to be seconded to the country well in advance of the actual elections in order to observe the entire process from the start, including campaigning, registration, voting, counting, and announcement of results.⁵⁰

On a comparative basis, Ethiopia has been very successful in conducting low-cost elections. The international electoral assistance it has received over the years might have been a significant factor in keeping the cost of elections low. However, possibly the most critical factor has been the NEB's use of the huge state bureaucracy and the civil services at federal, regional and local levels for the administration of elections. As this practice differs from that in other African countries, a short explanation is needed.

Cost per voter is often used as a yardstick to assess the cost of elections and make comparisons among countries. Available evidence suggests that elections are expensive affairs in some African countries. Lack of experience in administering elections, and undeveloped physical and

⁴⁹ *Addis Zemen*, 24 April 2003; *Addis Zena*, 22 April, 2003.

⁵⁰ Interview with Assefa Birr, NEB.

communications infrastructure, often dilapidated through many years of neglect and civil war, add to the cost of elections in post-conflict states. Table 2.10 below presents data on election costs for selected African countries. It can be observed that Ethiopia's have been surprisingly low, given the country's enormous size and its lack of experience in running democratic elections.

Table 2.10. Comparative Data on Cost of Elections in Selected African Countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date of election</i>	<i>Total cost (million USD)</i>	<i>Number of voters (million)</i>	<i>Cost per voter (USD)</i>
Angola	1992	100	4.5	22
Botswana	1994	1	0.37	2.7
Ethiopia ⁵¹	1995 Constituent Assembly elections	8.2	14.7	0.55
	2000 national elections	3.5	18.7	0.19
Kenya	2002	45.5	5.9	7.8
Lesotho	1995	6	0.83	6.9
Malawi	1994	8	3.8	2.1
South Africa	1994	250	22.7	11.0
Tanzania	1995	Shillings 28,567 million	n.a.	7.88

Note: The figures for Ethiopia for the 1995 Constituent Assembly and 2000 national elections relate to government outlay only.

Source: Fambon 2003; NEB 1997

From the preceding table, it can be observed that Ethiopia, with 55 and 19 US cents per voter for the 1995 constituent assembly and 2000 national elections respectively, has conducted the least expensive elections among the countries sampled. By all standards, this is a spectacular achievement when compared with Angola's 22 and South Africa's 11 US dollars per voter. As noted above, the NEB makes use of existing government administrative structures and resources for the conduct of elections. In addition, the Board also deploys a huge army of government civil servants at very low rates of pay, and this, too, keeps the cost of elections down. However, serious questions can be raised as to whether the elections are likely to be free and fair, given the fact that they are conducted through the state apparatus and public personnel, both of which are under the tutelage of the ruling party.

At the same time, though, people interviewed by the authors expressed reservations about the alternative strategy, ie, direct international funding of national elections. For example, the NEB's general manager insisted that a government must be able to cover the full cost of elections because external funding can bring with it undue influence that can compromise the country's sovereignty and independence. In whatever form international assistance may be given, it should be viewed as a

⁵¹ The calculation for Ethiopia was made using the Ethiopian Government's budgetary allocations.

gesture of solidarity or partnership in a common endeavour to conduct free and fair elections, rather than as a measure taken in the context of a donor–recipient relationship.⁵²

To conclude, Ethiopia has enjoyed relative peace following the series of elections discussed earlier. The international community has provided considerable reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to aid the country's peaceful transition. As in many other similar states, however, elections in Ethiopia have not achieved full reconciliation among the protagonists because some important contending groups were not included in the post-insurrection power structure.⁵³ To date, the electoral process in Ethiopia has been consistently dominated by a single ruling party, which has failed to provide a level playing field for competitive, fair and free elections for all contestants that could provide the electorate with alternative choices. Hence, contrary to the expectations of bilateral and multilateral donors, Ethiopia's transition to peace and democracy has been fraught with problems, and considerable anxiety still exists about the country's long-term political stability and the inability of its political system to be inclusive of all groups.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

In view of the preceding discussion, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

6.1. Conclusions

Although some positive changes have taken place in state–society relations in Ethiopia, such as the burgeoning private print media and growth of civil society organizations, the political regime that has emerged over the past 12 years has failed to broaden its political space and create a level playing field for free and competitive elections for all contestants. Despite substantial international support, political party assistance and the original installation of a broad-based political coalition, post-Mengistu Ethiopia remains a state and society in the tight grip of virtual one-party rule.

In Ethiopia, national, regional and local elections have been conducted with the assistance of a government-managed electoral authority (the NEB), that formally has statutory independence. In practice, however, this has provided little guarantee for its effective functioning as a neutral body free from outside influence, especially from that of the executive. Moreover, the manner in which the NEB functions has led to the virtually inevitable election of ruling party candidates and has had serious implications for the legitimacy of electoral outcomes as 'the true expression of the wish of the people'.

Ethiopia continues to use an electoral system that operates on the basis of a plurality of votes cast in single-member constituencies. This system precludes the election of candidates representing parties with alternative programmes, and minority and disadvantaged parties, since only the candidate with the highest number of votes in a particular constituency wins a parliamentary seat. Electoral systems such as this do not provide for a level playing field, and can give undue advantage to the party in power. This is especially the case when the government has complete control over the mass media and other state resources and uses the same to influence the outcome of the elections in its favour (as has happened in Ethiopia).

In several discussions with the authors, most opposition parties in Ethiopia have severely criticized the current single-member constituency system as being undemocratic and favouring the

⁵² Interview with Assefa Birr, NEB.

⁵³ Asnake 2001.

ruling party. They have repeatedly called for changes to the Constitution to allow for ‘proportional representation’,⁵⁴ which makes it possible to share parliamentary seats among different political forces in proportion to their electoral strength. In principle, with proportional representation, no political force or section of public opinion retains a monopoly; at the same time, none is excluded from representation. Hence, the system’s main virtue is said to be justice. Another advantage of this system is that voting takes place in a single round and the ‘politicking and bickering’, which often takes place in systems a second round of voting is held, is avoided.⁵⁵

Finally, inadequate voter education, voter apathy and the absence of a united and strong opposition are constraining factors in democratizing the election process in Ethiopia. Despite the consistently high voter turnout in many of the elections in Ethiopia, civic education remains weak and insufficient, especially in the rural areas.

6.2. Recommendations

On the basis of the above analysis, a number of recommendations for the donor community have been developed:

- Invest in local civil society institutions which can pursue civic-cum-electoral voter education on a long-term basis. Voter education on the eve of the elections is short-termist, and has very limited impact. Civil society institutions should be enabled to prepare for the next elections immediately after the end of the last one.
- Donors should provide assistance to build up domestic competence in election monitoring. There is support among political parties for the idea that election monitoring should be undertaken by both local and international organizations. Assistance should be provided to civil society groups, in particular those already active in voter education, to engage in election monitoring. In addition, donors should promote partnership between international election monitors and local civil society organizations active in election monitoring.
- International electoral assistance must be targeted at more voter education programmes focusing on principles of democracy, civil and human rights and the advantages of democratic elections for peaceful transfer of power. This can reduce apathy among the voting public. Such programmes can be conducted by independent civil society groups and election monitoring organizations and must target the police, election administrators, election observers and the voting public.
- International electoral assistance will be more effective in promoting free and fair elections if it is properly targeted at organizations with sufficient experience in monitoring and supervising elections. Such organizations must be required to account for and report on the use of donor assistance. Moreover, they should provide a full assessment of their contribution, including lessons learnt and future areas of intervention in the electoral process. Indeed, this must be stipulated as an essential condition prior to disbursing the assistance and will help to

⁵⁴ Interview with Ato Ledetu Ayalew, Secretary -General, Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP).

⁵⁵ IPU 1993.

make organizations more accountable and transparent in their activities and in their use of international assistance.

- Donor assistance must be provided to fund public debates and discussions on national issues involving the public and different political parties, especially in rural areas where the substantial majority of the electorate live.
- Donors must support changes to Ethiopia's electoral system in favour of proportional representation so that relatively disadvantaged and minority parties can secure adequate representation.
- In order to create a more diverse political landscape with effective political parties, donors should pay more attention to political party development. Without carefully balanced institutional support to and pressure on the main opposition parties, these parties will remain institutionally weak, ensuring the EPRDF another landslide victory during the 2005 elections.

III. International Human Rights Assistance

1. Background: History of Human Rights Violations

As noted earlier, neither the Imperial nor the *Derg* regime allowed opposition parties, an independent press, or civil society organizations (CSOs) except for some professional associations and NGOs; these latter were restricted to emergency relief, rehabilitation of victims of disaster and the provision of health and other social services to communities in need. Although, under both regimes, the formal constitutions provided a wide variety of civil liberties (including the rights to freedom of expression and of assembly), in practice none of these liberties was enjoyed by citizens. Both were highly authoritarian regimes and dissent or the public expression of independent opinion was not tolerated. Students were the only group who from the mid-1960s onwards gave voice to public discontent as well as to the need for reforms and social justice. Student demonstrations, which became frequent occurrences towards the end of the decade and in the first year of the *Derg*, were violently suppressed and many student leaders were placed in detention without the decision of the courts.

We do know that there were extensive human rights violations during the Imperial regime but their nature was somewhat different from that of the two subsequent regimes. While there were cases of illegal detentions, disappearances and torture, the most widespread form of injustice had to do with the illegal expropriation of property (especially landed property) of groups, communities and individuals.⁵⁶ There was large-scale dispossession of peasants and their eviction from the land, in particular in areas settled by minority nationalities. This was frequently the work of powerful landed interests as well as members of the royal family. The Imperial state expropriated large tracts of grazing land, forests and other resources from pastoralists and other communities on the dubious ground that these resources had no recognized owner(s) with legal title to them. In Ethiopia, as elsewhere in Africa, the claims of communities and individuals to land and other natural resources have been based on long-established and legitimate customary rights, but such rights were frequently disregarded in Ethiopia when it suited the government or powerful elements of the ruling class. There were also many cases of unjust treatment of people suspected of plotting against the government, and the expropriation of the property of dissidents or opposition groups was quite common.

The evidence regarding human rights violations during the *Derg* period is relatively well documented. The military dictatorship did not welcome international human rights organizations to investigate the human rights situation in the country, but a few, including Amnesty International, managed to get access to information on the basis of which they issued very critical reports detailing extensive human rights violations. Large-scale extrajudicial killings, mass arrests, and disappearances were reported on, together with the suppression of rights of free expression and assembly. The plight of prominent members of the royal family and of Ethiopian academics and dissidents who were imprisoned without due process and the right to appear before a court, were frequently highlighted.

⁵⁶ For this and the discussion of the *Derg* period below, see references in Chapter 1.

The so-called ‘Red Terror’, which the *Derg* unleashed in the latter part of the 1970s in an attempt to crush its opponents, was universally condemned by the international human rights movement as well as by many Western governments. The *Derg*’s massive resettlement programme which was under way from the early 1980s, drew strong criticism from a number of human rights groups, some of whom compared it to the forced labour camp system of the Stalin era.⁵⁷

There is broad consensus among Ethiopian social scientists and historians that the *Derg* was one of the most oppressive and despotic regimes in the country’s history. The regime came to power through peaceful means but was to stay in power through the indiscriminate and unrestrained use of violence and terror. The victims of repression were not, by and large, a particular group, community or class, but a cross-section of society, both rural and urban, civilian as well as members of the military and security forces. In the end, it was this violence and terror that was to alienate the majority of the population, undermine the *Derg*’s authority and finally lead to its ignominious collapse. A catalogue of its brutality against the citizenry of this country during the 17 years of its rule would be too long to list here but we provide below some of the most shocking cases of human rights violations perpetrated under the regime.⁵⁸

- Summary executions of over one hundred high-ranking government and military officials immediately after the *Derg*’s seizure of power; subsequent executions of several dozen members of the ruling class alleged to have fomented rebellions.
- Violent suppression of trade union, student, and other peaceful demonstrations in the mid-1970s in which many people were injured or killed, and large numbers arrested. In the demonstrations organized by one of the opposition groups in 1976, several hundred young people are reported to have been massacred by security forces.
- Intimidation, detention and torture of hundreds of civil servants and public enterprise management officials ‘suspected’ of bureaucratic red tape or economic sabotage, or alleged to have carried out counter-revolutionary activities.
- Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment without trial of men, women and children from all walks of life and numbering hundreds of thousands, before and during the Red Terror in the second half of the 1970s.
- Execution of thousands of people suspected of belonging to the opposition during the so-called Red Terror.
- Intimidation and harassment of followers of several Protestant denominations and the closure of many of their churches and religious institutions.
- Over 30,000 deaths of peasants involved in the government’s forced resettlement scheme in the years between 1984 and 1986; deaths due to hunger, disease and exhaustion during the relocation process and immediately after.⁵⁹
- Forced recruitment of hundreds of thousands of young men, in particular peasants, to fight in the various fronts opened up by ethnically based rebel insurgency in the 1970s. The ill-fated Peasant Militia offensive launched by the *Derg* in 1975 against the Eritrean rebels resulted in

⁵⁷ See Dessalegn 2003b.

⁵⁸ The list is based on personal experience of the authors; press reports during the *Derg*; and references mentioned in Chapter 1.

⁵⁹ Dessalegn 2003b.

disaster, and there were huge numbers of casualties, including deaths, among the militia, many of whom had been forcibly recruited.

2. Post-Conflict Human Rights Context

When the *Derg* was finally overthrown, there was public expectation that the country would make a fresh start and the atrocities and mass terror of the past would not be repeated. While there was considerable apprehension regarding the ethnic policies of the new regime, there was also hope that the kind of human rights violations seen in the past would not be repeated. The Constitution of the new regime, which came into force in 1995, guaranteed a wide range of human rights and freedoms, including the right of freedom of expression and of assembly, and respect for the rule of law. However, there has been wide disparity between what was guaranteed in the 1995 Constitution and the government's political decisions and the measures it has actually taken to deal with its opponents, real or imagined. As we shall see below, in the first years of the new regime, there were numerous cases of unlawful killings and arbitrary detentions, the rule of law was frequently ignored; political organizations not based on ethnic identity (such as pan-Ethiopian parties) were not allowed; and restrictions were placed on the establishment and activities of civil society organizations (CSOs). Some of these constitutional restrictions have been eased during the second period of the new regime, partly as a consequence of the Ethio-Eritrean war, and partly because of the conflict that occurred within the ruling party, and the purge of party and state officials that followed.

The human rights record of the present government has been very poor, measured by most accepted standards, though it must be said that mass atrocities on the scale perpetrated by the *Derg* have not been committed so far. Another important difference is that an independent press is now allowed, and civil society institutions, including rights-based advocacy organizations, which would have been unthinkable at the time of the Imperial or *Derg* regimes, are becoming part of the socio-political landscape. A third difference to be noted is that while not exactly invited to the country by the authorities, international human rights organizations have been able to send monitors to gather information and to report on the human rights situation in the country.

Organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Africa Watch have issued numerous reports on the government's record and the state of human rights in the country. Amnesty International in particular has published frequent reports since the mid-1990s highlighting numerous cases of illegal detentions, torture, threats to press freedom and the arrest of journalists, mass deportations of citizens of Eritrean origin (54,000 according to one of its reports), and disappearances (see the Amnesty International website). Similarly, Human Rights Watch, Africa Watch and the US Department of State have produced reports on the country at least once a year. The first two organizations argue, in the latest of their reports available, that human rights conditions did not improve markedly in 2002, and they go on to document a wide range of cases of violations. On the other hand, the report prepared by the US State Department points out that although the rights record remains poor, there have been improvements in a few areas.⁶⁰

One should note here that despite the fact that international organizations are now able to freely gather information, their reports are deficient in some respects and contain many inaccuracies. These organizations are understandably constrained by a number of factors, in particular their lack of a deep

⁶⁰ US Department of State 2003.

understanding of the political process in the country, which means they are unable to follow events closely or to assess the accuracy of information received and the credibility of informants. None of these organizations has local representation in Ethiopia, although EHRCO is affiliated to a number of them, and on many occasions they depend on the reports it publishes.

EHRCO has been monitoring the human rights situation in the country and issuing reports on rights violations since it was first established in 1991. The include frequent cases of extrajudicial killings, illegal detentions, disappearances, torture, unlawful expropriation of property, threats to freedom of the press and harassment and detention of journalists. The following table is based on a tally of reported violations which occurred between 1991 and 2000 and which appear in EHRCO's two published volumes.⁶¹

Table 3.1 Human Rights Violations 1991–2000		
<i>Type of violation</i>	<i>No. in period 1991–97</i>	<i>No. in period 1997–2000</i>
Extrajudicial killings	185	141
Torture	70	31
Disappearances	120	30
Illegal detentions	5525	1052

Source: EHRCO 1999, 2003

The table does not include what EHRCO describes as massacres that occurred on a number of occasions in different parts of the country, of which the worst were in the towns of Areka, Gonder, Tepi, Awassa, and in Addis Ababa following a peaceful demonstration by students. In all these cases, no measures were taken by the government against the security forces responsible for the human rights violations.

Let us look briefly at some of the most serious cases of violations discussed at length by EHRCO.⁶² The massacre in Areka (a small town in south-central Ethiopia) occurred on 14 July 1992 when security forces opened fire on a peaceful demonstration by demobilized soldiers demanding stipends which they had been promised but which they had not received. EHRCO quotes a report by a parliamentary fact-finding mission as saying that 31 people were killed and 29 wounded but it suspects the casualty figures were higher. The 1993 massacre in Gonder, a large town in north-west Ethiopia, also led to a large number of innocent civilians being hurt. The incident occurred when security forces fired into a peaceful assembly of worshippers at a church when they were trying to arrest a priest of the church. EHRCO put the casualty figures at 18 civilians killed and 17 wounded. The conflict in Tepi in south-western Ethiopia occurred in March 2002 when two ethnic groups clashed over political rivalry. In the ensuing violence, security forces, including soldiers and a special police force brought into the area by the authorities, opened fire indiscriminately, leading to many deaths and thousands of people being displaced from their homes. EHRCO lists the names of 24 people, including 4 security officers, as having been killed in the clash; some 4,738 people are believed to have been displaced. The violence in Awassa, a town in south-central Ethiopia, in which security forces opened fire on a peaceful crowd demonstrating against the local authority's decision to

⁶¹ EHRCO 1999 and 2003.

⁶² EHRCO 1999 and 2003.

relocate the seat of regional government elsewhere, led to the death or injury of scores of civilians and the arrest of over 35 demonstrators.

Addis Ababa has witnessed a considerable number of clashes between the authorities and different sections of the population, but for our purposes it is enough to cite two examples. The first incident was the violent suppression of a protest staged by business people in the city. The capital's business community was dismayed when in 1996 the government decided to raise rents of offices, shops, stalls and other business premises by a substantial margin. The government owns a majority of the city's commercial buildings, offices and houses for rent, and most people are tenants of the state. The business community decided to hold a peaceful demonstration to express its grievances on 17 May 1997. This was followed by a strike, which closed down most shops, trading centres and business offices a few days later. The government reacted angrily and used strong-arm methods to quash the protests. According to EHRCO, 84 alleged leaders were placed in detention and the licences of 52 of them were revoked as a retaliatory measure.⁶³ Many of those detained were not released until many weeks later. The second example concerns the violent suppression of students in Addis Ababa, in particular students at Addis Ababa University, in 1993, and again in 1997 and 2001. On each occasion, the government used violent methods to stop students and other young people staging peaceful demonstrations. In these incidents dozens of students were hurt and several hundred arrested. EHRCO reports, for example, that in the last incident, 10 people including students were killed, and over 200 students arrested.

The government's response to EHRCO's reports has changed over the years. Initially, it was one of hostility accompanied by attempts to silence the organization (see below). The government accused it of prejudice against the new political order and of being a political organization rather than an impartial human rights group. Later, it sought to belittle the reports by ignoring them and refusing to respond to the allegations. This soft approach was in part due to the change of leadership at EHRCO in the last few years of the 1990s and in part to the war with Eritrea. Table 3.1 above shows that the number of human rights violations decreased in the second period examined. We hesitate to regard this as evidence of improvements in the human rights record of the government, but it can be concluded that, although the overall record is still very poor, the second period has not been as bad as the first.

3. International Human Rights Assistance

3.1. Introduction

For many donors in Ethiopia, human rights are an integral part of their democracy and good governance programmes. Therefore it is not always easy to disentangle how much support has been provided for human rights activities *per se*. Human rights do not have defined boundaries in many cases and they are seen as a cross-cutting issue. For instance, there is a Human Rights Subgroup in the country, consisting of representatives of a large number of donor countries who meet regularly to discuss all kinds of human rights issues. The Subgroup is further divided into four sub-committees concerned with elections, the press, freedom of association and labour, and freedom of belief and conscience.

⁶³ EHRCO 1999: 276ff.

In addition, another donor body that monitors human rights in the country is a group made up of EU member states and the European Commission Delegation (ECD) in Ethiopia, which also meets regularly, at ambassadorial level or lower, depending on the gravity of the matter to be discussed. The embassy of the country which holds the EU presidency acts as the group's 'leader' and convenes meetings, sets the agenda, and often influences the debate. A presidency country with a strong concern for human rights may influence the EU to be more engaged with these issues. The EU group has more clout than the Human Rights Subgroup; however, it takes a long time to arrive at decisions, since the terms of any decision must be unanimously approved by member states.

It should be noted that the EU's engagement with issues of human rights and democratization was given the green light only after the Cotonou Agreement with the ACP countries in 2000. Previously, the EU was restricted in its mandate since its relationship was only with the government of a particular country and its designated areas of engagement did not include human rights and 'political' issues. Thus the EU was not able to intervene strategically in the democratization process taking place in Ethiopia and was limited to providing low-level support to a few minor initiatives. Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement now specifies that the EU and the governments concerned should engage in political dialogue that encompasses regular assessments concerning respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance. Moreover, the EU has also been mandated to work with non-state actors, under Article 4 of the Agreement.⁶⁴ Such actors include CSOs, the private sector, and others. This will obviously have an impact on resource allocation.

It is possible to identify several sectors or institutions with a human rights mandate that have benefited from donor assistance. Donor assistance to human rights has primarily been in the form of financial aid to advocacy organizations on the one hand, and financial support as well as training and technical support to government institutions on the other. Assistance has been provided for: a) preparatory work for setting up a government human rights commission and ombudsman institution; b) international human rights observation; c) preparatory work for the establishment of the 'Red Terror' trials; d) legal and institutional reforms; e) support to legislative bodies and training of legislators; and f) support to CSOs active in monitoring human rights, human rights protection and advocacy.

3.2. Assistance for Human Rights Commission/Ombudsman

Towards the end of the 1990s, the government made some positive gestures regarding the setting up of a human rights commission and the office of an ombudsman. Legislation was passed in the first half of 2000 creating both these institutions as autonomous organizations accountable to Parliament. In both cases, the chief officers are to be nominated by special committees and appointed by the Lower House for a term of office of five years.⁶⁵ This is meant to give the officials concerned some degree of freedom of action and some protection from pressure from the executive branch of government.

However, to date, both institutions exist only on paper. They are eagerly awaited by CSOs as well as by donors, who are keen to finance them in the belief that these domestic bodies would go some way towards improving the human rights situation in the country. Unfortunately, the government has shown a marked reluctance to move the process along and to facilitate the setting up of the offices concerned, and at present there is no indication as to when they will start operating. The government's

⁶⁴ EC 2000.

⁶⁵ FDRE 2000.

lack of enthusiasm has to do with the fact that it has no leverage over these two bodies, and that it is less than confident about its human rights record.⁶⁶

On the other hand, the government was quick to set up the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEAC). Newspaper columnists and others have alleged that the speedy establishment of this body had an ulterior motive: it was intended to be used as an instrument against opposition trends within the ruling party following the internal power struggle which led to many people being purged from the party. Some of the purged officials were later arrested on charges of corruption brought by the newly established Commission; some are still in detention today and their court cases are making painfully slow progress. The legislation which created the Commission in 2001 gives it wide powers to investigate alleged cases of corruption, to detain suspects without a court order, to summons persons in public office, public and private enterprises and receive testimony from them. The Commission is accountable to the Prime Minister and the chief officials are appointed by Parliament upon his nomination.⁶⁷ Since its establishment, the Commission has been actively engaged in investigating numerous public offices and enterprises, and has brought charges of malpractice and corruption against over 150 people, some of whom have been detained and all whom were still awaiting trial at the end of 2002.⁶⁸ So far, donors have not been keen to support the Commission. The organization's sole source of funds for its activities has been budget allocation from the government.

3.3. International Human Rights Observation

There were no domestic human rights organizations in the country and nor were there any attempts by local groups to monitor or record human rights violations during the period of the *Derg*. International human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, did publish reports accusing the regime of gross human rights violations but these were based on incomplete evidence, and left out many cases which ought to have been reported. Nowadays, the situation is different. Donors have a framework for monitoring human rights, international human rights groups are allowed to freely investigate violations in the country and there are a number of local human rights organizations active in the field.

The donor community employs several methods of monitoring the human rights situation. When serious violations occur, as in 2002 in Awassa in the south of the country, and in Tepi in the south-west (see above), the donors' Human Rights Subgroup as well as the EU send a fact-finding mission to gather information and to discuss the matter with all the parties to the incidents involved. The Subgroup does not make decisions or take any action, it only provides information to its members; it is then the responsibility of each donor or country to make its own decisions.⁶⁹ For its part, the EU can take specific policy measures if its member states agree to do so. Donors also monitor the human rights situation through the work of the international human rights movement. Finally, the donor community also relies on the work of local human rights groups, in particular the reports prepared by EHRCO.

⁶⁶ Local press reports.

⁶⁷ FDRE 2001.

⁶⁸ FEAC 2003.

⁶⁹ Interview with L. Williams of the British Embassy, and O. Blake of DFID, Addis Ababa. Ms. Williams argued that the fact that the Subgroup does not make decisions should not be seen as a weakness.

3.4. Assistance for the 'Red Terror' Trials

The EPRDF government arrested and brought charges against nearly 8,000 officials of the *Derg* regime for genocide, war crimes, and atrocities soon after it came to power. The officials included high-level government and security personnel as well as lowly state functionaries; a few, including Mengistu Haile Mariam, were tried *in absentia*. The court cases related to mass killings during the 'Red Terror' campaign of the mid-1970s, and war crimes allegedly committed in Tigray in 1987 during the *Derg*'s military offensive against the TPLF. These cases are still in progress in the federal and regional courts, though some of the accused have been freed or sentenced.⁷⁰ Assistance to the InterAfrica Group, a regional NGO with its head office in Addis Ababa, was provided by Amnesty International and other international human rights organizations to record the proceedings and provide transcripts and other pertinent information about the proceedings to the wider public.⁷¹

The trials were not received favourably by the public for a number of reasons: a) because they were seen to be politically motivated; they were seen as trials imposed by the victor on a defeated opponent ('victor's justice'); b) because the prosecution was carried out by the government's Special Prosecutor's Office, and the judges were government-appointed judges; neither during the *Derg* regime nor since has the judiciary been an independent institution; and c) because there were strong suspicions, which the government did very little to allay, that the outcome was already predetermined and most of the accused would be convicted anyway.⁷²

3.5. Assistance for Legal and Institutional Reforms

3.5.1. Structure of the Court System

An independent and effective judiciary is essential to democracy, good governance and respect for the rule of law. The Ethiopian justice system needs to be revised if donor intervention is to be effective in building the capacity of this sector as part of the broad programme to assist democracy and human rights.

At present, the judiciary in Ethiopia has a three-tier system: at federal level there is a Federal Supreme Court, a Federal High Court and a Federal Court of First Instance. In 2002, there were 111 judges serving in the federal court system: 14, 32 and 65 serving at, respectively, the Federal Supreme, Federal High and Federal First Instance courts. Of the total, 35 were women. The organization of courts at regional level is the same as that of the federal court system.

3.5.2. Appointment of Judges

The mode of recruiting and appointing judges is a critical factor in the effectiveness of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law and human rights. It can also determine the integrity and independence of the system in dispensing justice. The Ethiopian Constitution formally provides for an independent judiciary that is free from external influence in the administration of justice; to guarantee this, responsibility for the recruitment and promotion of judges in Ethiopia is shared between Parliament and the executive.

⁷⁰ Local press reports; US State Department 2001, 2003.

⁷¹ Interview with Jalal A. Latif, Executive Director, InterAfrica Group, Addis Ababa.

⁷² Local press reports.

At the federal level, judges are appointed by the House of People's Representatives upon submission by the Prime Minister of a list of nominees, which has been initially screened by the Federal Judicial Administration Commission. The same procedure is followed at the regional level, where the screening and selection is performed by the Regional Judicial Administration Commissions and the final appointment is approved by the Regional Assemblies. To be appointed as a judge, a person must: be aged at least 25, have had legal training, declare loyalty to the Constitution, consent to be a judge, and have a good reputation for diligence, a sense of justice and good conduct. In order to strengthen the independence and integrity of the judiciary, the Ethiopian Constitution provides for lifetime tenure for judges.⁷³

As noted earlier, the State Council of the Region appoints the president and vice-presidents of the State Supreme Court upon the recommendation by the Chief Executive of the Regional State (Art. 81(3) Federal Constitution). It is also provided that the State Council shall appoint the other judges upon the recommendation by the Regional State Judicial Administration Council. However, it is incumbent upon the State Judicial Administration Council to solicit and obtain the views of the Federal Judicial Administration Council on the nominees and forward these views along with its recommendations before submitting nominations to the State Council.

3.5.3. Judicial Reform

In 2000, the Ethiopian government launched a reform programme to improve the justice system and the process of judicial administration. Underpinning the programme is the conviction that a predictable legal environment with an objective, reliable and independent judiciary is essential to democratization, good governance and the protection of human rights. The reform programme is designed to establish a secure basis for the rule of law so that basic democratic and human rights are respected.⁷⁴

The aim is to remove impediments to access to justice at all levels, by making legal services less expensive and justice institutions more accessible, improving legal services by speeding them up, ridding them of unnecessary formalities, and smoothing out procedural anomalies. The reform programme also recognizes the importance of the justice system being responsive to the needs of the people.⁷⁵

The government's judicial reform programme is seen as an important measure to promote democracy and the rule of law, and has received considerable bilateral and multilateral assistance. It has three components: training, court administration reform and law reform and revision.

3.5.4. Judicial Training

Over the years there has been a shortage of adequately trained and well-qualified judges, a situation that was made more acute in the early 1990s by the Prime Minister's mass dismissal of judges for alleged corruption. The shortage has resulted in court delays and a massive backlog of cases. More

⁷³ Article 79 states that no judge shall be removed from his/her duties before he/she reaches the retirement age determined by law except under some specified circumstances. Accordingly, the tenure of any judge can be terminated only: a) upon resignation subject to two-months' notice; b) upon reaching the retirement age of 60 years; c) where it is decided that he/she is incapable of properly discharging his/her duties due to illness; d) if he/she has committed a breach of discipline; e) if it is decided that he/she has a manifest incompetence and inefficiency; and, f) if he/she has transgressed the Disciplinary and Code of Conduct Rules for judges.

⁷⁴ MoJ 2002.

⁷⁵ MoJ 2002.

importantly, the delays and inefficiencies in the court system have had serious implications for the rule of law in the country and the right of the citizenry to be given quick justice.

To remedy the situation the government, in cooperation with foreign donors, initiated in early 2000 a judicial training programme. As part of this programme, the Federal Supreme Court, in collaboration with the Regional Supreme Courts and USAID, launched a project that included: training for judges to improve their capacity in all fields; strengthening institutional capacity by providing materials needed by judges in their day-to-day activities; and making preparations for the establishment of a permanent Judicial Training Unit (JTU). USAID provided nearly 500,000 USD for the training programme, which was conducted by Ethiopian and expatriate legal professionals. A breakdown of the costs and number of participants by region is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.2. Number of Participants in Judicial Training Programme 2000–2003

No.	Name of court	Number of trainees	Amount in USD
1.	Federal Supreme and High Courts, Addis Ababa Municipal Courts	150	7,944.44
2.	Afar Region Supreme Court and High Courts	64	68,921.52
3.	Amhara Region Supreme and High Courts	132	91,535.89
4.	Benishangul-Gumuz Supreme Court and High Courts	50	35,990.64
5.	Oromiya Region Supreme and High Courts	107	70,827.64
6.	Tigray Region Supreme and High Courts	50	39,981.88
7.	Gambella Region Supreme and High Courts	33	22,793.63
8.	SNNPR Supreme and High Courts	150	98,656.42
9.	Harari Region Supreme and High Courts	15	11,521.48
10.	Somali Region Supreme and High courts	50	34,298.00
Total		801	482,470.66

Source: Federal Supreme Court 2003

3.5.5. Court Administration Reform

The government has also launched a court administration reform project whose aim is to ‘contribute to the stability, security and sustained development of Ethiopia by promoting practices that will help achieve and sustain the rule of law’. The project explores ways and means of improving court management and administration systems throughout the country’s courts, to help reduce inefficiencies and delays and promote greater equity and judicial independence. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been a major funder of this project, having provided 3,850,000 USD (Canadian \$ 5 million). CIDA has commissioned the Canadian Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs as the implementing agency. Pilot projects have already been carried out at the Supreme Court and will be gradually replicated at the lower federal and the regional courts.

Upon the successful completion of this project, it is expected that new and improved court administration systems, with higher professional and operational standards, will contribute to more efficient disposition of cases and thus help to strengthen the of law in Ethiopia.

3.5.6. Law Reform

The government has established the Justice and Legal System Research Institute under the Ministry of Justice, and given it the task of undertaking a programme of comprehensive law reform and revision that will harmonize existing laws with the Constitution, thereby enhancing democracy and socio-economic development.⁷⁶

A number of foreign governments have provided assistance to enhance the capacity of the Ethiopian justice sector. For example, the French government has provided experts to assist the Ethiopian Ministry of Capacity Building in training prosecutors and facilitating legislative reform. The total cost of the programme was estimated at 500,000 USD and was to run until 2004. At the same time the Norwegian government was actively involved in enhancing the capacity of the Federal Prosecutor's Office by supporting a programme of training in human rights, good governance and the rule of law.⁷⁷

3.6. Parliamentary Assistance

As part of its democracy and governance project, the Canadian government has provided USD 3,850,000 (Canadian \$ 5 million) for improving the governance and accountability of the Federal Parliament of Ethiopia. Funded under the Donor Group Cooperation Framework, the Canadian Parliamentary Centre was selected as the implementing agency covering the period 1999–2004. The project targets four key areas: strengthening the parliamentary committee processes, particularly the finance, legal, and women's affairs committees; master plan, public consultation, and establishment of the Human Rights Commission and Office of Ombudsman; creation of a parliamentary centre for research and public consultation; and outreach programmes to enhance Parliament's dialogue and engagement with civil society to support democratization in Ethiopia.

3.7. Assistance to Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations (CSOs) that uphold the rule of law and play an advocacy role are new to the Ethiopian political landscape. Traditionally, the country has limited experience in involving non-state actors in the policy process. Successive governments in the past have pursued a state-centred political agenda and non-state actors were viewed with suspicion at best and with downright hostility at worst. Hence, their role in promoting democracy and respect for human rights has been extremely limited. However, over the past 10 to 12 years the country has seen a burgeoning of independent CSOs. The voluntary sector now consists of professional societies, women's groups, human rights and advocacy organizations, community organizations, indigenous and Northern NGOs, employers' associations, educational foundations, think tanks, and cultural societies. These organizations can operate only if they are duly registered with the Ministry of Justice. Detailed legal provisions and procedures for the registration of CSOs were already laid down in Article 479 of the Civil Code of 1960. The political system still needs to open up to civil society and to demonstrate a clear commitment to listening to alternative voices with regard to developments in public policy.

Ethiopia has comparatively fewer civil society institutions than many other African countries. Furthermore, many of these institutions have not developed their own independent programmes, and their capacity and resources are too limited to enable them to play a constructive role in advancing

⁷⁶ Mandefrot 2002.

democracy. Despite the hurdles, however, there are some CSOs, such as EHRCO, the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA), the Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEPRI), the Forum for Social Studies (FSS), and the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), to name only a few, that have emerged as non-partisan civil society institutions, acting as independent voices of the public, and that have had some indirect impact on the promotion of advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the country.⁷⁸ Human rights organizations in Ethiopia focus primarily on broadly based rights issues, by: promoting respect for the rule of law; protecting the rights of citizens, especially women; and enhancing civic awareness through civic education and human rights training. For the purposes of this study we may divide the country's human rights organizations into four broad categories based on their main spheres of activity and mandate. These categories are:

- those that monitor human rights violations and prepare public reports on them (eg, EHRCO);
- those that promote gender equality and defend the rights of women (eg, EWLA);
- those that generally enhance public awareness about civil liberties and promote respect for the rule of law by providing human rights training to officials in law enforcement agencies, etc (eg, APAP);
- those that undertake civic education, in particular voter education to enable citizens to make well-informed decisions during elections (eg, CLCBS).

We shall look closely at both EHRCO and EWLA since they are the most prominent human rights organizations in the country. Firstly, however, Action Professionals' Association for the People (APAP) should be mentioned, not only because it is another important rights-based organization but also because it has one significant feature in common with the other two. All three were at one time or another harassed by the authorities, and closed down or threatened with closure because of the kind of work they were doing. In none of these cases did donors raise their voice to remonstrate or show concern except perhaps for one or two Scandinavian donors.

3.7.1. APAP

APAP was established in 1993 by a group young people, some of whom had had legal training, as an organization dedicated to the promotion of public awareness about civil liberties and respect for the rule of law.⁷⁹ It is the second-oldest human rights organization in the country after EHRCO. Among its many activities are informing the public about existing laws and legal institutions that protect the rights of citizens, through the distribution of booklets and posters, and articles in the newspapers. The basic assumption is that dissemination of legal knowledge among the public will help citizens to be aware of their rights. APAP also provides human rights training to members of the judiciary and police officers, to make law enforcement officers aware of the rights of citizens and detainees and to improve the treatment of people under arrest or in detention. APAP has been conducting such training in various parts of the country for the past five years. Another important activity is the provision of legal services in collaboration with the Ethiopian Bar Association. APAP has set up a legal service centre that offers free legal services to poor people who cannot afford to pay for lawyers. It also gives

⁷⁷ Interview with Ato Mandefrot Belay, Director of the Judicial Reform Program.

⁷⁸ Dessalegn 2002; InterAfrica Group 2000.

⁷⁹ The discussion is based on unpublished APAP documents.

legal and other assistance to children and women who have been sexually abused. This is linked to its commitment to defend children and in particular children who have been forced into prostitution. APAP was closed down in 1994 by the government on the grounds that it was carrying out work beyond the mandate for which it was established. It took nearly two years of persistent struggle by the organization before it was allowed to resume its activities.

3.7.2. Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO)

EHRCO is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit-making, non-partisan and non-political organization established in 1991. Its basic mission is to monitor human rights violations in the country. For this purpose, it receives considerable financial support from the governments of Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK. For more information on its activities and objectives, see Annexe 1.

The government tried unsuccessfully to silence EHRCO from its earliest days. Initially it refused to approve the application for registration, alleging that EHRCO was a political organization and should be registered as such. A media campaign in the mid-1990s to brand EHRCO as an anti-government political movement and to discredit it in the eyes of the public backfired and may in fact have enhanced the organization's stature. Later, the government decided to establish its own human rights commission and ombudsman's office to compete with EHRCO, but these bodies have yet to start operating. In 1996, the state-owned Commercial Bank blocked EHRCO's account and the organization had to rely on public donations to cover its basic expenses and maintain its activities. The Council sued the Bank but the court was reluctant to handle the case. International donors, no doubt pressurized by the government, were unwilling to provide financial support or speak up on the Council's behalf. In mid-1999, EHRCO's application for registration was finally approved and its bank account was unblocked soon after. The move came as part of the government's effort to woo the voluntary sector following the war with Eritrea. Since its legal registration, EHRCO has become more active outside Addis Ababa and has been able to establish a number of branch offices in other parts of the country.

EHRCO was one of the few CSOs that were active in monitoring the 2000 elections. International assistance for its work came from the embassies of Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden. It organized public lectures and panel discussions on different topics throughout the country prior to the elections. It also launched civic and voter education programmes that focused on democracy and elections, criteria for fair and free elections, campaigning issues, and the role of the media in democratic elections.

The Council's main involvement in the 2000 elections was in monitoring and observing the election process. It was sharply critical, and described the elections as 'neither free nor fair'. The organization reported 182 election violations during the registration period, including arbitrary killings, illegal detentions, illegal dismissals of opposition and independent candidates from their jobs, or their transfer to other jobs, and harassment of candidates. In its damning assessment, EHRCO stated that 'the large majority of election officials, support staff, security personnel, and even the so-called people's observers were not neutral and objective because often they favoured ruling party/government candidates'.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ EHRCO 2002.

Many of the major diplomatic missions, including that of the USA, expressed criticism of EHRCO. It is quite telling that Western donor agencies which placed so much emphasis on civil society as the best hope for fostering democratization in Africa felt it prudent to kowtow to the government when it decided to take punitive measures against the country's one and only human rights organization.

While it is too early to judge at this point, there is no evidence that EHRCO's efforts have had any impact on the process of law enforcement and the conduct of government authorities. EHRCO does not provide legal assistance to the public: it does not represent aggrieved persons in court nor offer legal advice or support to those who may seek it. It is on the strength of its reports and documentation that it hopes to achieve its main objectives. Due in part to government hostility and harassment, EHRCO's activity has been confined to Addis Ababa and its range of functions is fairly limited.

3.7.3. EWLA

The Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association (EWLA) was established in the mid-1990s by a group of women lawyers to defend women's rights through the legal system, to raise public awareness about the plight of women, and to agitate for reforms promoting gender equality.⁸¹ EWLA receives financial support from a large number of donors, including a consortium of donors consisting of Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland, and also Oxfam UK, Canada, USAID, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung of Germany. For more information on EWLA's activities see Annexe 2.

EWLA was suspended and its activities halted in September 2001 by order of a senior government official in the Minister of Justice. The organization was in effect closed down although subsequent statements by the Ministry clarifying its decision made a distinction between suspension and closure. The reason given for its action was neither justified nor legally defensible but, given the judiciary's lack of independence and the fact that it is subservient to the Ministry of Justice, the Association was unable to get legal redress. It was the opinion of many that senior government officials disliked EWLA's support of women's rights and the challenge it was posing to decision-makers in this regard. EWLA is the most important organization in the country fighting for women's rights, and to close it down was effectively to strike a blow against women. EWLA remained closed for nearly two months despite the public outcry and despite the support it was gaining from CSOs and also the media, both private and government owned. The suspension order was finally lifted in October following a cabinet reshuffle and the appointment of a new Minister of Justice.

Although some donor countries, in particular Norway, showed concern and raised the matter with government authorities, there was no concerted effort on the part of the larger donor community to convey its concern to the government regarding the unjust treatment of EWLA.

4. Impact of International Assistance on the Human Rights Sector

There has been significant bilateral assistance to the justice sector in Ethiopia for the training of judges in order to improve the overall efficiency of the judicial system. A total of 801 judges from the Federal and Regional Supreme and High Courts have benefited from the training programme mentioned above. USAID, the major funder, actively cooperated with the Federal Supreme Court's Judicial Training Unit (JTU) in conducting the training project. The project was well coordinated by USAID

⁸¹ The discussion that follows is based on EWLA documents.

and the JTU and the training effectively institutionalized; it can be regarded as having been very successful in enhancing the capacity of the judiciary to uphold human rights.

For a number of reasons, however, bilateral assistance has had little impact in terms of promoting the rule of law in general or enhancing the independence of the judiciary in dispensing justice. Despite formal constitutional guarantees for its independence and integrity, the judiciary in Ethiopia is in practice subservient to a domineering executive. At present, judges are nominated by the executive branch of government and their appointment is made by a legislature made up of members of the ruling party. This practice has affected the court system's integrity and its independence from the influence of the executive and the legislature.

As regards parliamentary capacity-building, an assessment of the Canadian-funded project mentioned earlier suggests there have been positive outcomes: parliamentary leaders have become more committed to institutional development; MPs are more aware of what they should be doing; committees are emerging as effective working bodies; the physical infrastructure has been upgraded; and there is increasing awareness among groups in civil society and donors about the importance of parliament as an important venue for the discussion of national issues.⁸² Therefore, international assistance to parliamentary capacity-building has improved the administrative and institutional structure of the legislature. However, it has not transformed Parliament to the extent that it can hold the executive accountable or become an active partner in public policy-making.

Formally, the Ethiopian Parliament is independent of external influence in its legislative functions, and has the power of legislation on all matters assigned by the Federal Constitution (Art. 55(1)). In practice, however, Parliament is a dormant institution and its role as the forum for debating issues of national importance independent of the influence of the executive is very limited. It has largely functioned as an appendage of the executive thanks to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the members of parliament are members of the EPRDF ruling party, which controls both the legislative and executive branches of government.

Concerning the impact on CSOs, there are a number of points to be highlighted. There has been significant financial aid from international donors for the promotion of democratization and human rights in Ethiopia, and most of the country's CSOs, including human rights and advocacy groups, would not have been able to survive without this assistance from donors. Moreover, it has enabled them to expand their activities and their outreach and thus gain a wider audience. Thanks to the work of the half a dozen or so human rights organizations, there is a relatively greater awareness of human rights issues among the public, at least among the urban public, on the one hand, and among the diverse set of civil society groups on the other. Many issues related to human rights are discussed in the private press, and drafts of government legislation are frequently scrutinized from the constitutional point of view. Some human rights groups have prepared short briefs on the constitutional rights of citizens which they have distributed to the communities they work with as well as the wider public. Public education on human rights and the constitution has also been aired on local FM radio.

There is even some indication that the government has become rather more attentive to human rights issues. It is still not willing, however, to take measures against the security forces which have perpetrated serious human rights violations. In the Awassa case, a few local government officials were removed from office and this was taken by the donor community as a sign that the government was

⁸² Nakamura 2001.

responding to donor pressure. But this was a minor measure compared with the scale of the violations. Plans are in the pipeline to provide human rights training to the police and other security forces as part of their basic training but, so far, this type of training is undertaken only by human rights groups.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

Despite the relatively positive impact that international assistance has had in some cases, a number of international human rights groups have alleged that the response from some of the big donor countries, in particular the USA, to gross human rights violations perpetrated by the government's security forces has been muted and disappointing.⁸³ The significance of Ethiopia to the US war on terrorism has grown following the al-Qaeda attack on New York and the Pentagon in September 2001. Organizations such as Human Rights Watch have argued that Ethiopia has now become a partner and 'frontline state' in the war against international terrorism, and so the USA does not wish to antagonize the Ethiopian government over the issue of human rights. Officials at the State Department in Washington and the US embassy in Addis Ababa declared to the authors that the USA has no leverage over Ethiopia. The USA continues to provide extensive humanitarian and development assistance, but it has not insisted on holding the government accountable with regard to human rights. Human Rights Watch quotes 'a senior State Department official' as saying that the 'the country's human rights record is "not a factor" in the bilateral relations' between the two countries.⁸⁴ Pausewang *et al.* argue that the USA has been an apologist for the country in respect of its human rights record. The US Embassy in Addis Ababa has continued to insist that the new government 'was better than the military dictatorship... and having started from scratch, needed time to develop a more democratic society'. America's aim of maintaining stability in the Horn of Africa, they note, has made it 'overlook severe violations of human rights and excuse outright manipulation of elections...'.⁸⁵

In contrast, Human Rights Watch credited the EU with demonstrating 'an increased willingness to take a stand against human rights violations in Ethiopia' in recent years.⁸⁶ In an interview the authors had with the political officer of the EC Delegation in Ethiopia, we were informed that the EU has formally taken a 'démarche', as he called it, on a number of human rights cases, requesting the government for an explanation concerning rights violations by security forces in the Awassa and Tepi incidents, and demanding an independent investigation of the matter. On the other hand, other donors have not taken any determined measures to hold the government accountable on cases of serious human rights violations. A few donors have made some effort to convey their concern to the

⁸³ HRW 2003 and Africa Watch 2002.

⁸⁴ HRW 2003:42. A similar message was heard at a luncheon on 10 December 2003 when half a dozen heads of civil society organizations had an informal meeting with Mr Brian Goldbeck, the newly appointed Counsellor for Political and Economic Affairs at the US Embassy in Addis Ababa. Asked about the evident lack of active concern on the part of the USA regarding human rights and democratization issues in Ethiopia, Mr Goldbeck replied that his Government was not down-playing the importance of these issues but had only adopted a different approach and was pursuing them with the Ethiopian authorities through informal channels, behind the scenes and without attracting publicity. He also stated that his Government did not have a 'political problem' with Ethiopia.

⁸⁵ Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen 2002:43.

⁸⁶ HRW 2003:43.

government but none has shown any willingness to take a public stand on abuses carried out by the security forces. The following are more specific observations that arise from the analysis outlined in this chapter:

- Donors have provided only financial assistance with, on occasion, some training and technical support. The initiative and ideas have come mainly from domestic organizations or the government.
- Financial assistance to human rights and other civil society organizations has had important consequences: they have been able to sustain their activities, to expand the scope and geographical reach of their work, and to reach more people and extend their influence.
- As a general rule donors have acted individually, and occasionally their individual interests have overridden their stated commitment to human rights. This has meant that they have not taken measures when they should have, in particular with regard to serious human rights violations by government security forces. The exception to this has been the EU, in respect of the Awassa and Tepi cases.
- Donor decisions may in certain cases be influenced by personalities, for example, in the case of officials who feel strongly about human rights and are actively engaged in promoting them.
- OECD donors frequently operate in a consortium, the Human Rights Subgroup, in respect of human rights issues in the country. However, this body has no corporate identity and cannot make decisions or take measures on behalf of its members. It can only provide information to the members and it is up to each member state to take the appropriate measures. Donors we interviewed said this was a strength, but we have our doubts about this.
- Donors' decisions and actions are inconsistent; there is no coherence in their policy-making. On some occasions donors have bowed to pressure from the government and failed to take measures in support of human rights organizations: the harassment and/or closure of EHRCO, EWLA, and APAP passed in silence or with only a few donor governments showing concern. Moreover, many of the big donors have declined to hold the government accountable for serious cases of human rights violations by the security forces.
- The government's decisions in some human rights cases have run counter to the opinion of donors, yet without provoking any serious response from the international community. A case in point is the delay in the establishment of the Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman to which the government had said it was committed.

5.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations may help to improve future human rights assistance to Ethiopia:

- The establishment of the Human Rights Commission and Office of the Ombudsman will be important for improving the human rights climate of this country. Donors should therefore put pressure on the government to establish these offices as soon as possible.
- The donor community should see to it that its human rights coordination bodies engage with civil society organizations as well as with the government.
- Donors should use their leverage and all other available opportunities to hold the government accountable when human rights violations are committed in the country. They should put pressure on the government to take concrete measures against individuals or groups, including the security forces, that were responsible for the violations.
- Donors should support institutional reform programmes to strengthen the system of checks and balances between Parliament and the executive branch of government.
- Donors should support programmes designed to strengthen the rule of law by training judges and to improve the court administration system for speedy disposition of cases according to professional legal standards.
- Capacity-building in the form of training of judges and improving the administrative infrastructure must be accompanied by fundamental institutional reform that includes the introduction of a transparent appointments procedure for recruiting new judges, as well as an effective system of checks and balances between the executive and the judiciary, in order to achieve judicial independence.
- Assistance for judicial reform must be delivered as an essential component of a total assistance package. This may include projects such as human rights education for legal personnel, prosecutors, police and prison staff; programmes to expand legal education at the national level; and the establishment and strengthening of an Ombudsman's office and independent human rights monitoring organizations in the country.

IV. The Media and International Assistance

1. Introduction

Ethiopia's media has undergone dramatic changes since the early 1990s following the fall of the military government and the establishment of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). At the time of the Imperial and *Derg* regimes, the government was the sole owner of the means of public information and used the media to extend its power and legitimacy, to control the population, and to stifle public awareness. The *Derg* in particular employed the radio as a weapon of intimidation and terror: it was through radio broadcasts that the public heard about the executions of public officials, intellectuals and political activists who were accused of sundry acts of sabotage and conspiracy against the 'socialist revolution'.

At the time of the Imperial regime, the media consisted of, at first, about a dozen state-owned newspapers, and the national radio; television transmission began only in 1964. All print and broadcast media was owned by the state, except one independent monthly magazine, and a private radio station established in 1963 and operated by the World Lutheran Federation. That station's coverage of international news was comprehensive and of a high standard but it exercised caution and self-censorship when dealing with local news and issues. This was the only private broadcast station ever to have operated in the country; it was finally nationalized by the *Derg* following the Revolution. Under the Imperial regime, news, commentary and public affairs programmes were heavily censored, and journalists and broadcasters could not express their views or report public opinion which could be interpreted in any way as being critical of the government or the Emperor. Censorship affected not just the media but all types of creative work as well.

One of the first acts of the *Derg* when it seized power in 1974 was to ensure that the media was firmly under its control and that it, and the censor, would serve the Revolution faithfully. The difference between the *Derg* and the Imperial regime in this regard was one of form only. While the latter believed press freedom did not exist except in the minds of the enemies of the country who were intent on destroying its 'Solomonic dynasty and Christian tradition', the *Derg* considered press freedom to be an example of bourgeois subterfuge and an imperialist tool designed to oppose socialist revolutions. It was a little while before the media, especially the print media, which during the days leading up to the Revolution had enjoyed a taste of freedom, was finally gagged by the *Derg*. Four independent monthly magazines were being published during the early, 'transitional' period of the *Derg*, but all four had ceased publication by 1976 because the political environment was becoming prohibitive, and the threat of detention or worse was hanging over the editors and their staff.

The political context at the time of the change of government, and the environment in which deregulation of the press took place, have had a lasting impact on relations between the media and the government, and it may well be worth recapitulating briefly some of the major issues here. The political agenda of the new government when it seized power was to restructure the country's political, economic and social system along ethnic lines. Ethnic identity was to be the main criterion defining an

individual and his or her relations with the state. Public employment, educational, economic and other opportunities, and political engagement, were all to be based on ethnic criteria. Pan-Ethiopian or issue-based political parties were not allowed to register; only ethnic parties were recognized. The military, police and other security forces were reorganized on an ethnic basis. The end result was that the country's political landscape was radically changed and there was immense upheaval within the civil service and other public institutions in the first years of the transition period.

This chapter will discuss the institutional changes in the media brought about by the new government, the state of the media at present, and the nature and impact of international assistance to the media. As we shall try to show, international assistance has had only limited impact and the free press in particular continues to evolve primarily because of factors peculiar to the present political landscape. The limitations of international assistance cannot be explained without a clear understanding of the context in which the media operates in post-conflict Ethiopia.

2. Context

2.1. Regulatory Framework

One of the first acts of the TGE in 1992 was to approve a press law, which turned out to have a dramatic impact on the country's media. A small number of news magazines had already started to appear soon after the fall of the *Derg* and before the press law was initiated, but the new legislation, allowing citizens or businesses to publish and distribute private newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals and other news sources, accelerated the process of deregulation. The press law abolished censorship and allowed any Ethiopian citizen or group to carry on press activity, provided that they registered and obtained a licence from the regulatory agency, the Ministry of Information (MoI), or one of its regional bureaus. Obtaining a licence was made easy and simple, requiring only the submission of the names of the chief and deputy editors, the name of the publication and the address of the publisher. The law also provided rights of access to information, in particular the right of the press to seek and obtain news and information from any branch of government.⁸⁷ The allocation of radio waves to private investors was postponed for later legislation, which was finally introduced in the form of the broadcasting law of 1999. This law privatized the airwaves, allowing individuals and groups to own and operate private radio and television broadcast services.⁸⁸ However, implementation of this legislation and privatization ['deregulation' rather than privatization]of the broadcast media has been delayed partly because the licensing agency has not yet been established but, more importantly, because the government is apprehensive about losing one of its most important weapons of political control and manipulation.

There is broad agreement, especially among people in the media, that the press law of 1992 has opened the door to the growth of the private press in the country.⁸⁹ The 1995 Constitution guarantees freedom of the press as well as of expression; there had been similar provisions in the past but their impact on the media had been negligible. It was the press law which established the ground rules for

⁸⁷ TGE 1992a.

⁸⁸ FDRE 1999.

⁸⁹ See EFJA 2003; Mairegu 2003.

the emergence of the privately owned press.⁹⁰ The immediate effect following the legislation was the proliferation of a wide diversity of newspapers, news magazines and other publications in Amharic and other local languages as well as in English. According to WAAG Communications, the licensing department of the MoI has issued licences for 182 magazines and 543 newspapers in the last ten years.⁹¹ At present there are over 65 independent public affairs and general-interest newspapers on the market, of which some 35 have been published continuously for five years or more. The number does not include newspapers specializing in sports, sex or religious matters. In addition, a large variety of commercial, cultural, and educational publications periodically flood the market and then disappear. The end of censorship has also made it possible for civil society institutions, and in particular human rights and advocacy organizations, to publish and freely distribute reports, studies, conference proceedings and public education materials.

The state still controls four national and at least five regional newspapers as well as most of the broadcast media. A new development since the present government came to power is media ownership by the ruling party and its regional affiliates. Media owned by the ruling parties includes one national and one regional radio station, and about seven newspapers. A few of the independent parties publish their own newspapers but these have very limited circulation. Table 4.1 below provides an overall picture of the state of the media in the country today.

Table 4.1 Media Situation in 2002

<i>Media</i>	<i>Govt-owned</i>	<i>Party-owned</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Community</i>
Radio	1 national; 2 FM local; 1 educational; 2 regional	1 national; 1 regional	None	None
TV	1 national; 1 educational*	None	None	None
Newspapers	4 national; 5 regional	7 by govt parties; 3 independent	65**	Unknown number
News Service	1	1	None	None

*Note: * Transmitted through state TV. ** Not including sports and religious papers.*

Source: MoI 2002 and 2003; WAAG Communications 2003; Mairegu 2003; Brook 2000

There is one broadcast service that is different from the rest of the broadcast media. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has been running a distance education programme over radio and television for more than 40 years. Its Educational Media Agency (EMA), which manages the programme, has been engaged in literacy campaigns, and formal and informal education programmes, covering the entire country. It has its own studios, and over a dozen radio transmitting stations in various parts of the country, and broadcasts programmes in 16 local languages as well as in English; its television

⁹⁰ For an extended discussion of the growth of the media and the private press since the early 1990s, see Shimelis 2000, 2002; Brook 2000.

⁹¹ WAAG 2003.

programme is transmitted through Ethiopian TV. By all accounts, EMA is providing a unique and invaluable service.⁹²

2.2. Media Problems

2.2.1. Listening Audience is Limited

Before we examine the problems of the media in greater depth, a brief discussion of the overall conditions facing the media is in order. By far the most important media in terms of its reach and impact is radio. Due to poverty, however, and inadequate marketing and transport facilities, only a small percentage of the population listens to radio broadcasts, especially in the countryside. According to the last census, only 10 per cent of rural households and 50 per cent of urban households have radio sets. Television ownership is much smaller, and exclusively restricted to urban households, of which a mere 7 per cent were found to own TV sets.⁹³ Radio Ethiopia, the government radio station, broadcasts in eight local languages, and in English, French and Arabic, with a total broadcast time of 285 hours per week.⁹⁴ Its main news and current affairs programme are broadcast in three of the country's main languages, namely Amharic, the official language of the country, and in Oromifa and Tigrigna. Discriminating listeners will search for foreign radio broadcasts but, according to a recent audience survey, these draw only a small percentage of the radio audience.⁹⁵ This same survey found that half of the respondents were dissatisfied with Radio Ethiopia, giving as their main reasons bias and one-sidedness in news reporting, and poor quality of its other programmes.⁹⁶

2.2.2. Limited Readership

Newspaper readership may be described as miniscule compared with the extent of the radio audience in the country, though there are no accurate figures available. According to the audience survey noted above (carried out in five major towns), only 9 per cent of respondents preferred newspapers as opposed to other media for news and information; the comparable figure for radio was 74 per cent.⁹⁷ Another recent survey of urban households found that 45 per cent of respondents had never read a newspaper in their lives.⁹⁸ Low newspaper readership is first and foremost a result of low literacy rates and poor reading habits on the one hand, and poverty and low incomes on the other. Adult literacy rates in 1998 were 42 per cent for males and 30 per cent for females (country-wide), the rates being lower in the rural areas. Secondly, most households cannot afford to buy newspapers on a regular basis, especially when the papers do not provide any tangible benefit in return.

2.2.3. Limited Influence on Daily Life

There are also other dimensions to the problem of the media in general. Unlike many other countries, the media in Ethiopia has no real impact on the lives of the great majority of the people. It does not provide reliable information, plays a very limited role in public education, and offers very little entertainment value (except to young people in the urban areas who find amusement in the music and

⁹² Brook 2000.

⁹³ CSA 1999a.

⁹⁴ MoI 2002.

⁹⁵ Berhanu 2000.

⁹⁶ Berhanu 2000.

⁹⁷ Berhanu 2000.

⁹⁸ Dessalegn and Aklilu 2002.

soap operas broadcast on national or FM radio). Insofar as the print media is concerned, almost all the papers published since the press law of 1992 are based in Addis Ababa, the capital, and reflect the narrow interests of the Addis Ababa highly educated classes. Moreover, most of the papers are available only in the capital and the satellite towns around it.

2.2.4. Economic Constraints

The fact that there are such a large number of papers on the market has meant stiff competition, low sales and limited advertising revenue. According to the MoI, fewer than 10 per cent of the papers currently in publication have a circulation of 8,000 or above; no more than five have a circulation of over 10,000. As Table 4.2 indicates, of the five main weekly papers shown, only one derives good income from advertising. Advertising revenue is limited for many, and negligible for the majority. As Shimelis Bonsa has shown, many press ventures are economically unviable and operate under extremely difficult financial circumstances.⁹⁹ Some papers are run on a shoestring budget and remain virtually one-man operations. Several papers have been able to survive only because they have been subsidized by ‘patrons’ of one sort or another (frequently political groups in exile), or by donors and NGOs (see below). Numerous papers have come and gone over the last ten years. According to WAAG Communications, 19 magazines and 74 newspapers have ceased publication for a variety of reasons over this period.¹⁰⁰

Table 4.2 Sample of Five Independent Weekly Newspapers

Name of paper	Circulation	Av. no. of pages	Av. advert. space (%)
Addis Admas	29,000	20	18
Addis Zena	5200	24	16
Menelik	8000	16	14
Reporter (Amharic)	18,500	32	45
Tobyia	5200	20	18

Source: MoI 2003; recent issues of the newspapers. Circulation figures are actually the print runs of each paper and are given by MoI as of June 2003.

2.2.5. Low Quality and Low Level of Professionalism

Moreover, the quality and level of professionalism of the private press has been a source of concern to many readers, supporters of press freedom, and donors. Many of the papers display the worst excesses of the tabloid press. A recent statement by the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists’ Association (EFJA), the main organization for independent media people, makes a number of significant criticisms of the free press. There is, it says, a lack of professional ethics in reporting and news management. Often, stories are written without any basis in evidence, or on the basis of insufficient information. There is alarmist reporting, and reporting that is completely false. News reports often tell only one side of the story and provide no balance at all. Many of the papers suffer from a lack of professionally trained staff; in fact, there are few trained journalist working for the private press and in some cases, newspapers are managed by people who have had very little formal education. Financing is another

⁹⁹ Shimelis 2000.

¹⁰⁰ WAAG 2003.

major problem raised by the EFJA: many papers are not profitable and the need to economize severely hampers news-gathering and reporting. There is also a lack of cooperation and goodwill among journalists working for the free press and between the free press and the government press.¹⁰¹ Finally, and rather interestingly, unlike in some countries, sex and violence have limited sales value in this country. On the contrary, what the capital's educated classes find exciting is political sensationalism: the rise, fall or defection of officials within the ruling elite, conflict among them, embezzlement of public funds and so on.

The Prime Minister on one occasion described the private press as the 'gutter press'. To be fair to the press, the picture is a bit more complicated. While it is true that many of the papers that appeared with deregulation (and still appear today) were of an abysmally low quality, some have made efforts to maintain a respectable standard, and there has been noticeable improvement over the years, and a small number of papers have grown to win public confidence. Survival in the marketplace has become tougher, readers have become more discriminating, and sensationalism no longer sells papers. For these reasons, and paradoxically because of government pressure, the quality of newspaper production as well as of journalism has improved. The EFJA report noted earlier states that, despite its many weaknesses and constraints, the private press has established its identity and achieved a lot. The private press has a better record than the heavily subsidized government press in terms of public education; it has established a track record in investigative reporting, exposing policy failures and inefficiency and corruption in public office. It has been better, the report says, at presenting the diversity of views within society, and is beginning to serve as a watchdog on behalf of the public interest.¹⁰²

The proliferation of the private press and the competition created as a result has brought about some improvement in the state-owned media. The public media now reports on inefficiency and malpractice in government agencies, and has offered debates in which critics of the government have participated. Occasionally, it reports on the activities of opposition political parties, which would have been unthinkable some ten years ago. Moreover, civil society organizations (CSOs) can now buy airtime on FM Radio Addis, a recently established FM radio station owned by the government, and transmit their own programmes. Over the past three years a number of human rights groups, policy research institutes, and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce have taken advantage of this opportunity to broadcast public education programmes.

2.3. Relations Between the Media and Government

From the very beginning, relations between the independent press and the new government were on a collision course. The government did not preach reconciliation in the period after it seized power; on the contrary, its propaganda was inflammatory, and the state media was used to exacerbate ethnic conflict. Ethnic politics were strongly resented by a large section of public opinion, especially in the urban centres. Ethiopian towns are an ethnic 'melting pot' containing people with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds living together, if not in harmony, at least tolerant of each other. Ethnic politics were now seen as undermining the ideal, held by many people, of 'unity within cultural diversity'. Moreover, the new government, flushed with its victory over the *Derg* and its huge but ineffective

¹⁰¹ EFJA 2003.

¹⁰² EFJA 2003.

military apparatus, was in no mood to enter into dialogue with any group or party over any issue at all. In short, reconciliation and dialogue were not part of the government's lexicon.

The independent press for its part was equally aggressive. Most newspapers that were launched following the deregulation were strongly critical of the new government. Indeed, quite a number of them were established for the main purpose of attacking it and exposing the failings of ethnic politics. Of the 65 independent papers that are published at present, less than five per cent may be described as sympathetic to the government. To many in the emerging press, and to a good section of urban public opinion, it was a minority government, dominated as it was by the the Tigrian-based TPLF, and hence illegitimate. Pan-Ethiopianists believed the government had brought the country, with its long history and culture, into disrepute.

The conflict between the state and the press was thus deep-rooted, and continued to grow as the government's ethnic programme came to infuse many aspects of public and private discourse and as improvements in the economy, in particular in the reduction of poverty, and in governance and administrative efficiency failed to materialize. There have been several costly government blunders, especially over the mishandling of Ethio-Eritrean relations which led to the war, and then over the peace process and the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission. These blunders provided ammunition to the hostile press. Under these circumstances, any donor initiative to promote dialogue or reconciliation in any sphere at all was bound to fall on deaf ears.

A persistent problem facing the free press is government discrimination and harassment. There is open and deliberate discrimination of the free press by the government which has taken the form of refusing to give information to it and not inviting any of the papers to attend press conferences or newsworthy official events. Although the 1992 legislation acknowledges the right to information and states that the press has a right to information from government agencies, this is denied in reality. Press conferences given by the Prime Minister during the last ten years have always excluded the private press. The government media and that of the ruling party are given preferential treatment. Even donors were initially reluctant to provide information and news releases to the private press. This has contributed to poor journalism in the private press because, in the absence of news, journalists have turned to the city's active rumour mill and have even occasionally made up their own, often sensational, stories. There has been some change in the last few years, and some government agencies are now beginning to open up to a select number of private newspapers and provide them with information.

The threat to press freedom posed by government hostility to the private press has been serious for quite some time and still remains a danger. There has been harassment and victimization of independent journalists, and although the number of victims has decreased and the harassment has become less frequent over the years, it cannot be assumed to be a thing of the past. Table 4.3 shows the number of journalists who were victims of government harassment in 1994, as reported by EHRCO; no comparable figures are available for later years. According to the head of the EFJA, about 200 journalists have been detained, some more than once, in the last five years. About 35 to 38 face legal cases which are still are pending.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Interview with Kifle Mulat, President of EFJA.

Table 4.3 Threats to Press Freedom 1994

<i>Outcome of action against journalists</i>	<i>Number of journalists</i>
Detention without charge	2
Sentenced 6–24 months in prison	7
Fined (varying amounts of money)	13
Released on bail	21
On appeal or in litigation	15
Suspended jail sentence (12-18 months)	6
Acquitted by court	9

Source: Based on EHRCO 1999:124

The recent decision by the government to draft a new press law to replace that of 1992 has been interpreted by many, including people in the independent media as well as CSOs, as an attempt to muzzle the media, and in particular the country's fledgling private press. The draft legislation is highly restrictive in terms of access to information, reporting, financing, and the distribution of newspapers. There have been numerous articles in the private press criticizing the draft law and calling for significant revisions. EFJA has taken a very active role in defending the rights of the free press and expressing its opposition to the new law. CSOs have also expressed their concern: a free press is of central importance to the work and growth of civil society. There have been attempts to promote dialogue on the issue between the government and the private media, in the form of a number of public conferences, in some cases to be financed by donors such as the EU, DFID and the Austrian Embassy, but these attempts have come to nothing. The government has refused to make any compromise and the press has understandably been sharp in its criticism. The international free press movement, as well as African press organizations, have sent strong messages of support to the EFJA and of protest to the government. Despite the public outcry, however, the draft legislation has been submitted to the Council of Ministers, the first step on its way to Parliament.

3. International Media Assistance

3.1. International Assistance to the Media for Election Coverage

Both the electoral law of 1993 and the broadcasting legislation of 1999 stipulate that candidates – whether individuals and political organizations – contesting elections are entitled to equal and free access to the public media. However, it is not easy to monitor whether or not these laws have been fully implemented. Candidates have to request access to the media but not all candidates were aware during the last elections that they were entitled to this right. Nevertheless, the findings of one study show that the free airtime allotted for the 2000 elections was used mostly by independent opposition candidates; only three opposition political organizations out of a total of 50 took advantage of their media access rights.¹⁰⁴ The study goes on to show that government candidates, in contrast, made maximum use of the free airtime allotted to them, and used it more effectively. Polhemus states that

¹⁰⁴ Berhanu and Meleskachew 2001.

one of the ‘improvements in the 2000 elections was greater and more systematic access to the state-owned media for the opposition than there had been previously’ but that many opposition groups did ‘not make optimal use of the access they did gain’.¹⁰⁵

The picture is quite different and complicated when it comes to the private press. In Ethiopia, elections do not make hot news, nor do they sell newspapers. During the last elections, none of the candidates on either side of the political divide had a notable media personality, and none of them offered ideas, programmes or visions that excited the public imagination. In fact, Ethiopia’s elections have been tedious affairs: dull campaigns, limited newsworthy events, and a lack of media flair on the part of most campaigners. There was also a widespread belief, shared by many in the press, that the outcome of the elections was a foregone conclusion, and that the contest was not being fought on a level playing field. Hence many papers were not keen to provide wide coverage. Important events during the campaign and press conferences called by opposition groups were reported, but otherwise the private media gave little coverage to the elections, except in any case of scandal and malpractice, which it seized on eagerly.

There has been very little donor support targeted at election coverage in the government media, apart from the training of journalists. The private press also received international assistance for training journalists in covering elections, as well as financial support given to selected newspapers so that they could publish articles relating to voter education and provide expanded coverage of the campaigns of opposition candidates. Support from donors was the only way in which the private press benefited financially from the elections, because they did not benefit commercially. Opposition candidates had limited resources to spend on media exposure, and whatever funds were spent on advertising by them went to state radio and television because these reach a wider public than newspapers, public or private.

3.2. International Assistance for Training of Journalists

Numerous programmes initiated and/or supported by donors during the past ten years to provide skills training to journalists in the last ten years. Most of these have been short courses, ranging from half a day to a week, in which trainers brought from outside (and occasionally, local trainers) have given lectures on basic professional skills. Almost all the major donors in the country have supported one or more programmes of this kind, at one time or another. The courses are offered free of charge to journalists working for the private or government media; nevertheless, not all trainees are actually paid to attend the courses. The instructions are often given in English, but the majority of trainees do not use English in their work (only a small number of English-language newspapers are published in the country) and have very limited understanding of the language.

Many veteran journalists, some of whom have been involved in training programmes as trainers or resource people, are very dissatisfied with what is being provided by donors. There is no coordination or continuity: each course starts from scratch, involving new trainers and new trainees. The trainees are selected randomly and therefore in many cases inappropriately. Moreover, trainers from abroad do not understand the reality facing local journalists, and thus the training is often not relevant to their needs¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁵ Polhemus 2002.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Teferi Wossen, WAAG Communications.

Although one or two courses in journalism are offered at Addis Ababa University, and lately also at Unity College, a private college in the capital, there is no school of journalism in the country. The government's Mass Media Training Institute (MMTI), established at the end of 1996, is the only institution that provides professional training and offers a diploma in journalism. However, as a government-financed body, its courses are attended by journalists working in the media run by the government and the ruling coalition party.¹⁰⁷ Until recently, the privately owned media has not shown any great interest in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the MMTI. According to a senior official at the Institute, journalists from the private press are welcome to enrol as trainees but the response has not been encouraging.¹⁰⁸ Because of this lack of response, few donors have shown any interest in supporting the Institute.

3.3. Other Support to the Private Press

Selected newspapers have benefited from what, for lack of a better term, we have called financial 'subsidy' by donors and NGOs. This 'subsidy' takes the form of payment to one or more newspapers to publish articles on a specific subject to serve as a means of public education. Donors or NGOs with an interest in a particular issue of public concern will pay a newspaper to publish articles on the topic, prepared either by themselves or by the newspaper itself. The issues on which papers have run public education articles include HIV/AIDS, the environment, human rights, violence against women, pastoralism, and professional ethics of journalism. Sometimes, however, the donors' choice of newspapers to support in this manner is made on the basis of inadequate information and reflects a lack of sound judgement.

3.4. Assistance to Regulatory Reforms

Privately owned newspapers are the main alternative to media controlled by the government or other political organizations, and they were up and running long before international assistance programmes were on offer. One area in which some donors are showing keen interest is the deregulation of the electronic media. ['of radio and television'] Ethiopia must be one of the few African countries to have not allowed privately owned radio and television. The broadcasting legislation of 1999 established the ground rules for the licensing of private radio and television and many hoped that the private-sector broadcasting would soon become a reality. However, the public, the private sector and donors have all been disappointed, because the government is dragging its feet and continuing to delay implementation of the legislation. A number of business interests have drawn up plans and invested resources in preparation for the entry of the private sector, but they have been frustrated by the delay. Donors such as Norway and foreign broadcasting organizations such as the BBC have invested time and money in helping local media interests prepare for the birth of private radio and television stations.

The government is apprehensive that private radio and television will undermine its monopoly on the airwaves as well as its political power. The Broadcast Agency, which is mandated to issue licences, monitor and regulate radio and television transmissions, has been operating for over a year but so far no licences have been issued. In an interview with the deputy manager of the Agency, we asked why the licensing process has been delayed for so long; his response was that the Agency has

¹⁰⁷ Brook 2000.

not yet been able to employ trained staff capable of carrying out the tasks entrusted to it under the legislation. Up to now, he said, it has filled only 60 per cent of its staff needs. He pointed out also that it does not yet have enough technical capability to regulate private broadcasters. He went on to note that there are inconsistencies between the broadcasting law and the newly drafted press legislation, and these need to be ironed out before licences are issued.¹⁰⁹ The Agency has not so far been a beneficiary of any international assistance.

Several donors, including Norway, the Netherlands and DFID, have shown keen interest in the deregulation of the broadcasting media and have from time to time raised concerns to the government over the delay in issuing licences.

In general, not much donor support has been targeted at media legislation. The government is in the process of finalizing draft legislation on freedom of information, the background work for which was prepared by international consultants paid for by donors. The controversial press law that has finally been submitted to the Council of Ministers was the work of the government alone and, apart from paying for some conferences to discuss the draft legislation and to try to promote dialogue between the press and the government, donors have had no hand in its content. It should be noted that few donors have shown concern about the draft law, at least not in public, and this is surprising considering the fact that both the private press and general public believe that, should the draft be finally approved and become law, the government will have struck a savage blow against press freedom.

3.5. Support to Media Organizations

Unlike many African countries, Ethiopia has media few organizations. According to a recent study of broadcasting in Eastern Africa, for instance, there were more than a dozen journalists' associations in Kenya in 2000,¹¹⁰ whereas in Ethiopia there are only two associations serving journalists, of which one is virtually inactive. Obviously, the reason for this has been the underdevelopment of the media, and the fact that until some ten years ago the media was a government monopoly. Even after deregulation, the government's hostility towards the private press has impeded progress and professional development.

The two associations that do exist at present are the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists' Association (EFJA) and the Ethiopian Media Women's Association (EMWA). The latter organization, which was legally established in 1999, and whose aim is to promote the interest of women working in the media, is in the process of defining its role and therefore has not been actively engaged yet. It has held a few workshops and issued a couple of newsletters but so far it has not undertaken any public programmes or advocacy initiatives. It was established thanks to initial support from the Netherlands Embassy. EFJA¹¹¹ was set up in 1992, following deregulation of the media; however, according to the Association's president, because of the government's hostility, it took nearly ten years to get it registered under the law. Despite government pressure on the Association and the free press in general, a small number of dedicated members managed to keep the organization running. In Ethiopia, it remains extremely difficult to function as a civil society organization without registration. An

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Ammanuel Abdissa of MMTI

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Desta Tesfaye.

¹¹⁰ Wanyeki 2000.

¹¹¹ Based on EFJA 2003, unpublished documents, and interview with Kifle Mulate, president of EFJA.

organization cannot open a bank account or receive funds from donors unless it is legally registered. For more information on EFJA, see Annexe 3.

EFJA took a very active role in the recent campaign against the government's draft press law. As noted earlier, the new press law created a public outcry, and the rather half-hearted attempts to create dialogue between the government and the press soon failed. The Association made a detailed criticism of the draft law, and drafted an alternative press law which it presented to the government for discussion. EFJA has frequently argued that the government's approach to the free press has been punitive and restrictive; the state has used the threat of punishment to control press activity. A better alternative, according to the Association, would have been constructive engagement which would have benefited the press and, at the same time, addressed the main concerns of the government.

EFJA has also criticized the government for restricting investment in the private media and is unhappy with the long delay in implementing the 1999 broadcasting law and in the licensing of private radio and television stations, as promised by the legislation. A bone of contention between the government and the independent press is whether, under the draft legislation, the government has a mandate to establish a Press Council. The new draft states that the government shall establish such a Council, but the argument of EFJA and the private press in general is that it is people in the profession who should create a Press Council, which would be accountable to them. The Association has drafted a proposal for the establishment of an independent Press Council, which was being discussed among its members at the time of writing.

In November 2003 EFJA was suspended by the government, allegedly for failing to renew its registration. The suspension is being contested by the Association, and international press organizations have sent protests to the government over its action.

4. Impact of International Media Assistance

The level of international financial and technical assistance to the media has been relatively small. Consequently, the impact of donor assistance on the media, in particular in terms of the progress made by the independent press, has been by and large quite limited. The state of the media in Ethiopia today, including that of the free press, has been largely a product of the country's own making and the consequence of domestic political, social and economic processes. Individual initiative, public choice, competition and market forces, together with state action, have been responsible for the achievements and failures of the media in general and the private press in particular.

Donor assistance has concentrated mainly on training programmes for journalists; these programmes have included visits arranged for journalist to foreign countries, and exchange of experiences among media people in the Horn of Africa. Assistance has also taken the form of financial support to selected newspapers to publish articles on the elections and other issues. And finally, international press organizations such as the International Press Institute and International Freedom of Expression and Exchange have provided financial assistance to EFJA as well as moral support to the cause of press freedom in Ethiopia. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported on the arrest, detention and harassment of journalists on many occasions.

Donor support has been provided without a clear understanding of the realities facing the media in the country. In the first place, few staff members in the donor community speak or read Amharic or other local languages, so their views of the state of the media have been shaped by the small number of English-language papers that are published and the limited English programmes broadcast on radio

and television. The English-language media is not a true reflection of the state of the rest of media in the country. There has been a tendency on the part of the donor community to offer support which is either not quite relevant or else inadequate. Moreover, the type of assistance that has commonly been offered has largely been oriented towards short-term outcomes. Long-term investment in institution- and capacity-building has not been given serious consideration.

Although no accurate figures are available, training of journalists has been the area where donors have made considerable investment. There have been numerous training programmes sponsored by donors, but without any coordination or follow-up. The assumption behind these programmes has been that if only media people were given some crash courses in the basics of their profession, the quality of journalism would markedly improve. But the problem is much more complicated than that. It is true that journalists need more training but this is not the main reason why the quality of reporting and news management is so poor in the country. Journalists in the public sector cannot operate freely or in accordance with professional standards because their employers make heavy demands on them. Journalists in the private sector are influenced partly by the conditions of stiff competition in which their newspapers operate, and partly by the fact that the papers they work on have definite political agendas. Equally significant has been the fact that the free press has been denied access to information from government sources, and it is routinely excluded from all official press conferences. Moreover, the journalists who take part in the training programmes are not the ones who make the important decisions: they do not have the power to initiate changes in standards, quality or style.

More significantly, short-term training is not what is needed. The training given in each programme is different, with different instructors and different participants. We have also noted earlier that there is a language problem (the instructors do not speak the local language and the trainees have a poor grasp of English), that the instruction given is frequently not relevant to the needs of the trainees, and that on occasion inappropriate people are selected as trainees. In brief, the investment in training programmes is wasted investment.

Donor support to election coverage may be faulted along similar lines. Until electioneering becomes relevant and interesting to the public and until the opposition candidates learn to make sound and creative use of the media, the press will find it difficult to devote space to elections, which in the past have been dull and uninspiring. Even with improvements in the campaign process, the main beneficiaries will be the broadcasting media and not the private press. Moreover, it should be the candidates and political parties who should decide which media outlet and which newspaper will serve their purposes best.

Regarding indirect subsidies to the press, several important issues need to be carefully considered. To begin with, the practice of paying newspapers to publish public education material has a negative side effect. It has helped some struggling newspapers stay afloat, while the public interest would have been better served if they had been left to close down. There are far too many papers being published at present. Almost all the papers are based in the capital and, apart from a few, they do not have a market outside the city. The purchasing power of the city's residents cannot properly sustain more than a handful. Many of the major capital cities in Europe or North America have no more than half a dozen or so papers, but the market in Addis Ababa is flooded with newspapers and news magazines. This oversupply is one of the reasons for the poor quality of the press. Subsidizing papers serves no useful purpose, and donor interventions have prevented the normal workings of the market place. Moreover, sometimes the choice of which newspaper to 'subsidize' has been made on the basis of

poorly thought-out criteria or without adequate knowledge, and thus the ‘wrong’ papers have been supported.

As far as enabling legislation is concerned, the record of international donors leaves a lot to be desired. The first requirement is for donors to make the government understand that they are firmly committed to press freedom, and they should express strong concern when it threatens press freedom. By and large, donors in this country have failed to do this. A good example is the response to the restrictive press law drafted by the government recently. The donor’s subcommittee on the press, which is a subcommittee of the Human Rights Subgroup (referred to earlier), did discuss the matter at some of its meetings but, since it has no power to make decisions, it could only pass on information about the law to the donor embassies concerned. Some donors, for example the Netherlands and Norwegian Embassies, did express their concern to the government through their respective ambassadors; however, they were not actively supported by donors that have greater leverage over the government. Donors have paid less attention to the media than to other elements of the democratization process.

5. Recommendations

In view of the discussion presented above, we believe the following recommendations to donors are pertinent.

- Donors should take more effective measures to defend press freedom in this country. This means expressing their strong concern about laws and public decisions that threaten the free press.
- Donors should exert sufficient pressure on the government to deregulate the broadcasting media as promised by its own broadcasting legislation of 1999.

There is a strong need for capacity-building in the media, particularly the independent media, and for improvements in the quality of journalism. Short-term training programmes for journalists have not proved very effective in achieving that goal. Therefore, there is a need to:

- support independent media organizations to enable the free press to protect its rights and the rights of journalists on the one hand, and to help improve the quality of journalism on the other;
- invest in media training institutions rather than in short-term training programmes: the recent initiative to establish a school of journalism at Addis Ababa University taken by Norway is a step in the right direction;
- provide technical support and training to the Broadcast Agency to help it provide a licensing service quickly and efficiently; this will reduce the delay in implementing the relevant legislation and in allowing private broadcasters to operate;

- invest in civil society institutions working with journalists, such as EFPA and EMWA, to build up capacity so that domestic media organizations become responsible for promoting professional and responsible conduct among Ethiopian journalists.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, we shall try to present the main findings of our study and suggest some recommendations for consideration. The chapter will have two sections: the first will be a broad discussion of what we shall call the framework within which, knowingly or unknowingly, donor assistance has been provided; the second will present recommendations in the light of these discussions regarding the sectors which have benefited from international assistance and which we have discussed in the previous chapters. The broad recommendations are presented for discussion, and are not meant to be a blueprint for change.

1. Constraining Context

As the discussions in the preceding chapters have shown, donor assistance to the democratization process in Ethiopia has been comparatively limited. In contrast, donors have invested heavily in the humanitarian and relief effort on the one hand, and in the socio-economic development sectors on the other. Assistance to both these sectors has been growing in the last 10 years and, in particular, aid to the humanitarian sector has increased markedly in this period. Indeed, donor assistance in support of food has been continuing since the second half of the 1970s. In addition, donor support to the electoral process has been quite significant, but support to the media has been relatively low.

On the other hand, financial support to civil society, especially domestic human rights and advocacy organizations, has been instrumental in the growth of the voluntary sector in the country. Without such support, Ethiopian civil society would have faced more difficult and trying circumstances, and its achievements, especially in the areas of human rights monitoring, training and advocacy would have been far more limited.

An important finding of our study is that, even though the successes registered so far in the area of democratization would have been impossible without the financial support provided by donors, the impact of this international assistance has been nevertheless limited in terms of enduring results. The achievements to date in the areas of elections, human rights and press freedom have been mainly a product of domestic initiative, domestic organizations, struggles by stakeholders, and an increasingly complex political reality to which the government has had to respond. However, the financial support given by donors has played a significant role in that it has provided the resources that enabled civil society, the democratic stakeholders and the government to take important initiatives and to respond to emerging realities. Nevertheless, international assistance would have had greater impact had it not been for the following constraints and structural weaknesses of donor–government relations.

To begin with, donors rarely speak with one voice, and there is a lack of coordination in their assistance programmes on democratization and governance, apart from those concerned with electoral support. Donors do speak with one voice when they wish to, however, and a few examples will illustrate this point. There was near unanimity among donors during the Ethio-Eritrean war: they supported Eritrea and criticized Ethiopia on the one hand, and froze all development assistance to the latter until the peace treaty was signed in December 2000. Most donors have insisted that Ethiopia

should accept the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in order to reform its economy. Finally, many donors have adopted what is known as direct budget support (DBS), in contrast to their previous project approach. In the case of DBS, donors channel their aid directly to the state treasury for the government to use in accordance with its plans and priorities. The government is obliged only to provide the donors with reports of progress based on a broad set of indicators. While this may make it easy for the government to plan and implement programme activities, there is concern that DBS will reinforce both government bureaucracy and the dominance of the ruling party. It will in the long run undermine democratic change, by making the government accountable to the donor community instead of to its own citizens.

Moreover, donors often fail to harmonize their decisions with regard to human rights, issues of press freedom and responses to government failings in these areas. This has had a damaging effect on sustainability of programmes, institution- and capacity-building, and accountability on the part of public authorities. The working consortia formed by different groups of donors, for example the Human Rights Subgroup (see Chapter 3), or ad hoc groupings set up to support the election process, are by and large forums for discussion and information exchange. Such consortia are not corporate bodies, that is, they do not have the power to make decisions on behalf of their members but only to provide information. The EU is the exception in this regard: it can make decisions and take measures once a common agreement is reached by all member countries. However, the EU's decision-making process is cumbersome and very lengthy, and the decisions finally arrived at will have been substantially revised (and watered down) from the original version in order to accommodate every member's wishes.

There are many forums in which either donors by themselves or donors and government officials meet regularly to discuss economic, political and other issues. On the other hand, there are no forums where the voice of civil society and individual citizens' voices are heard. The donors-only forums include the OECD Ambassadors' Group, and the Development Assistance Group (DAG), which meets monthly and consists of all donors represented in the country. Then there are the Government-Donor Coordinating Meetings. The only forum where a few NGOs have been allowed to participate (and mainly because of their work on HIV/AIDS programmes) is the Sector Development Group, which brings together government, donors and NGOs.¹¹² This state of affairs tends to foster dialogue between donors and government only, with the result that the government feels it is accountable to the donor community and not to its citizens. Given such a framework, dialogue with and accountability to citizens groups and the public are not given importance by either the government or donors. This does not encourage responsible governance and democratic principles.

Secondly, few donors have sufficient leverage over the government to hold it accountable if and when there are failings on its part, or if government actions violate democratic principles. The donor group may be divided into three: a) the majority of donors, which individually provide a small percentage of the total aid to the country; b) donors that are part of the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions; c) a small number of donors whose assistance makes up a substantial portion of total aid to the country. The first have limited leverage over the government. For instance, the Netherlands Embassy and the Norwegian Embassy both account for about 5 per cent of the total aid; the UK provides much less. Such countries, individually, are not in a strong enough position to put pressure on the government on any substantial issue. Among the Bretton Woods institutions, the

¹¹² See UNDP 2001 for other coordination groups.

World Bank provides a substantial percentage of the assistance given to the country; however, the Bank's support goes primarily to socio-economic development, and as a consequence it tends to have a low profile in matters concerning governance and democratization. Donors within the UN system do not make coordinated decisions, nor do they harmonize their activities. Each donor in this group is a small actor in terms of its impact on the government or the country's needs.

Exceptions are the USA and the EU. The USA is by far the largest donor in all categories of assistance and thus the only country with potentially sufficient power to influence the decisions of the Ethiopian government. The EU is also an important provider of aid and if we add to this the assistance provided individually by its member countries, the EU's influence can come to rival that of the USA. Moreover, the EU is the largest provider of food aid to the country and food aid has become the Achilles heel of the Ethiopian government. What this means is that a majority of donors are not powerful enough to influence the pace or conditions of democratization and good governance.

Thirdly, international assistance is rarely free of politics. In the case of individual countries, each donor is driven by the national interest of its own government. Moreover, the dynamics of geopolitics, the desire to promote stability and peace in the Horn of Africa, and the war on international terrorism have led big donors such as the USA to befriend the Ethiopian government, to refrain from raising issues of democratic performance and to decline to use their influence on matters that the government may feel sensitive about.

Fourthly, democratization and the culture of good governance are long-term processes and cannot be constructed overnight. International assistance has frequently been invested in projects or activities that bring or show quick results or benefits, when what is required is investment in long-term programmes. Building institutions and capacity in existing institutions has not been given the importance it deserves by donors. The disproportionate focus on elections rather than wider democratization issues has not advanced the democratic process. Moreover, related to this is the failure of donors to make strategic interventions – that is, with long-term and multiple benefits – in the areas of elections, human rights and the media.

Lastly, in many instances, donors have made decisions without sufficient understanding of the country, its needs and the dynamics of democratization. Quite often, donors are interested in promoting programmes that are currently in vogue and that have been designed without taking into account the specific realities of the country. Such programmes come with preconceived ideas. A related point is that on occasion, particular dynamic and proactive donor personalities have had a significant impact on programmes and on relations between donors and the government. However, the rapid turnover of staff in the donor community has had a damaging effect on continuity and sustainability. Many of the staff we interviewed for this study had been in their post for a period of just a few months to a year, while experienced staff had been transferred to other countries. This means a considerable loss of local knowledge, and of expertise in managing aid and monitoring progress.

2. Recommendations

2.1. To Donors and the Ethiopian Government

The absence of effective monitoring instruments and follow-up activities in respect of assistance programmes has meant that a full assessment of the impact of international democracy assistance

cannot be undertaken. In order to identify best practices and lessons learnt, there is a need for more evaluation and an effective assistance monitoring framework, spelling out clear objectives and indicators to assess progress.

At present, and as noted above, the dialogue on assistance is between donors and government only. This needs to be changed by establishing a new forum, allowing tripartite dialogue between the government, donors and civil society.

2.2. To the Ethiopian Government

- The government should press for coordination and harmonization of donor assistance in all sectors. This will promote sustainability and continuity of assistance initiatives.
- The government should encourage the participation of local human rights organizations in election monitoring. In the long run, Ethiopia should build up indigenous competence in monitoring its own elections.
- The National Election Board should include among its members representatives of independent and non-partisan civil society organizations and personalities.

2.3. To Donors

- Donors should use effective mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the impact of assistance to democracy and good governance.
- Donors should invest in a larger number of advocacy organizations in the country, including also independent labour unions, professional associations, and faith-based organizations engaged in programmes promoting democratization, good governance and human rights.
- Assistance programmes should be based on sound knowledge of the realities of the country. Donors should minimize the loss of local knowledge and aid management expertise caused by staff turnover.
- And finally, donors should invest in the long term by targeting key domestic electoral, human rights and media institutions, while putting less emphasis on programmes with short-term results or benefits. The short-term approach may be seductive but will not have lasting value. Democratization is a long-term process.

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[NOTE: Following customary usage, Ethiopian authors are listed by first name.]

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Newspapers Consulted

Government papers

Addis Zemen (Main government daily – Amharic)
Ethiopian Herald (English daily)

Independent papers

Addis Admas (Weekly – Amharic)
Addis Tribune (Weekly – English)
Addis Zena (Weekly – Amharic)
Menilik (Weekly – Amharic)
Reporter (Weekly – Amharic)
Tobyas (Weekly – Amharic)

Annexes

Annexe 1. Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO)

The founding members of EHRCO are Ethiopians from all walks of life – academics, professionals and business people who are committed to the cause of human rights, rule of law and democracy. EHRCO's membership spreads to other parts of Africa, Europe, the USA and Canada, and there are several EHRCO support committees in major cities of Europe, the USA and Canada. In addition, EHRCO exchanges reports and information with international and continental human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, Africa Watch, World Organization Against Torture and the International Federation of Human Rights.

EHRCO has three fundamental and inseparable objectives:

1. To strive for the establishment of the democratic process;
2. To promote the rule of law and due process;
3. To encourage the respect for, and to monitor violations of, human rights in Ethiopia.

EHRCO also has other objectives, including the following:

- encouraging Ethiopia's acceptance of all international conventions, covenants, charters and declarations that are concerned with human rights;
- organizing seminars, workshops, panel discussions and lectures in order to promote the respect for human rights, the rule of law and the democratic process; and,
- publishing and disseminating periodicals, newsletters and books in order to elucidate and advance the cause of human rights and the democratic process.

Annexe 2. Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA)

EWLA's main activities consist of legal aid to women, public education and advocacy for legal reforms, and research and documentation. The organization has three main branch offices outside Addis Ababa (in Assossa, Bahr Dar and Nazret), and operates through 11 committees at the regional level, and 12 voluntary committees at the zonal and *woreda* levels distributed throughout the country. Committee members are given a short para-legal training and encouraged to take an active role in protecting women's rights in their own localities.

EWLA has a legal aid programme, which is one of the most fundamental of EWLA's activities. It provides a wide variety of legal advice and counselling to women, including court representation by EWLA lawyers. The service is offered free of charge to all who come seeking help. While the overwhelming majority of EWLA clients are women, a few men have also sought legal aid, not for themselves but on behalf of their female relatives. About 85 per cent of the cases brought to EWLA involve marital conflict, and the rest consist of rape, abduction, robbery and theft, and assault and battery. Over 4,000 women have received legal aid since EWLA began the programme in 1996; most of them were from poor and disadvantaged social backgrounds. Many of the women who sought EWLA support had heard about the organization through EWLA's public education programme transmitted over the broadcast media, or by word-of-mouth, or through the organization's advertising campaign. EWLA has had some notable successes in court and this has enhanced its stature among women. Many women are now aware that they can turn to EWLA if they feel they have been victims of gender-based injustice. In this respect, it is filling an important gap and providing an invaluable service.

The main aim of the public education programme, another important component of EWLA's activities, is to help bring about change in public attitudes towards women. The programme consists of several activities carried out in the capital and the regions, including workshops and seminars involving law enforcement officials, judges, women and concerned individuals; educational material broadcast on radio which is particularly aimed at encouraging women's rights activists; and leaflets and posters. The programme has been instrumental in gaining EWLA wide publicity and raising EWLA's profile especially among women who have been victims of marital injustice and gender discrimination. EWLA has also invested considerable effort in legislative reform. While the goal is to bring about the amendment of laws discriminating against women, the main focus so far has been on the reform of the Family Law which was enacted in 1960 during the Imperial regime but which was still in the statute books until the second half of 2000. EWLA submitted a draft amendment of the Law to the federal and regional legislative bodies in 1996, but it was not until July 2000 that a new Family Law was finally enacted. While the organization did not succeed in getting all its recommendations accepted by Parliament, the new law provides significant improvements on the earlier one.¹¹³ It is to the credit of EWLA that the reform of the Family Law became a public issue and that the government

felt compelled to revisit the legislation. EWLA was also actively engaged in promoting female candidates in the parliamentary elections that took place in May 2000.

¹¹³ EWLA 2000.

Annexe 3. Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA)

EFJA is a membership organization; membership is open to those who are engaged in the private media. Journalists working for the state-owned media do not have their own association because their employer has prohibited them from establishing one. At present, EFJA has 166 members and the number has been growing, especially in the last two to three years thanks to some easing of government pressure on the press following the Ethio-Eritrean war. The Association is still in the process of building its own capacity and some of its administration is carried out by volunteers; each member is expected to contribute one day of work a week to the Association. The General Assembly of members appoints the Executive Committee, which carries out the Assembly's decisions and policies. The President is the head of the Executive.

EFJA's major source of financial support has been the international free press movement. The Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI), and the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), have been its main source of funds so far. The organization is a member of IPI and has benefited considerably from this. Other international press organizations, including the London-based PEN International, ARTICLE 19, and a number of Africa-based associations, have offered moral support. Unfortunately, although donors based in Ethiopia have shown a good deal of interest in the Association, they have not offered it any financial support.

EFJA's main responsibility is, broadly speaking, to promote the growth of the free press in the country and to defend press freedom. Despite its lack of sufficient clout, it has attempted to support members who have been harassed or put in detention on account of what they have written or published in their papers. The Association, through its international connections, campaigns on behalf of journalists persecuted by the government. Its other main purpose is to promote improvements in the quality of journalism in the country. To this end it has drafted a code of professional ethics for members and has held public discussions on it. It is also keen to improve the management, design and marketing of newspapers in the private sector.

Annexe 4. People Interviewed

Abera Haile Mariam, Senior Staff, APAP, Addis Ababa, 18 July 2003

Abebe Taye, Public Relations and Documentation Officer, EHRCO, 21 July 2003

Akalewold Bantirgu, Coordinator, CRDA IMP and NePRAD Departments, 21 August 2003

Ammanuel Abdissa, Senior Staff Member, Mass Media Training Institute, Addis Ababa, 8 August 2003

Amare Aregawi, Chief Editor, *Reporter* Newspaper, Addis Ababa, 23 July 2003

Assefa Birru, General Manager, National Election Board, Addis Ababa, 28 July 2003

Azeb Haile Sellasie, Expert, Press Licensing and Regulatory Department, Ministry of Information, Addis Ababa, 6 August 2003

Bekele Alemu, Governance Unit, CIDA, Canadian Embassy, Addis Ababa, 30 September 2003

Oliver Blake, Governance Adviser, DFID, Addis Ababa, 28 August 2003

Desta Tesfaye, Deputy Manager, Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency, Addis Ababa, 19 August 2003

Brian Goldbeck Counsellor, Political and Economic Affairs, US Embassy, Addis Ababa, 4 December 2003

Hailu Shawel, President, All-Ethiopia Unity Party, 24 July 2003

Jalal Abdle Latif, Executive Director, InterAfrica Group, Addis Ababa, 21 July 2003

Kifle Mulat, President, Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association, 15 August 2003

Ledetu Ayalew, Secretary-General, Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), 18 July 2003

Mekonnen Wondimneh, Expert, Civic Education and Training, and Acting Head, NEB, Political Parties Registration, July 28, 2003

Mandefro Belay, Director, Judicial Reform Programme, 28 July 2003

Melaku Tegegne, Director, PANOS Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 20 August 2003

Meselkachew Amha, Editor, *Addis Zena* Newspaper, 18 August 2003

Janette Moritz, Programme Specialist, UNDP, Addis Ababa, on several occasions in August and September 2003

Original Wolde Giorgis, Legal Adviser, EWLA, Speech to Workshop on Gender and the Law, 15 August 2003

James Polhemus, Former Head of Governance Department, USAID-Ethiopia, Oral Information, Addis Ababa, 17 May 2003

Inge H. Rydland, Deputy Head of Mission, Norwegian Embassy, Addis Ababa, 28 May 2003

Sahelieselassie Abebe, General Manager, Center for Local Capacity Building and Studies, 5 August 2003

Taye Belachew, Journalist and Head of Publications, *Toby* Newspaper, Addis Ababa, 11 July 2003

Teferi Asfaw, Public Relations Officer, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, and Project Coordinator, Vote Addis Project, 2000/01 Elections

Teferi Wossen, Manager, WAAG Communications, Addis Ababa, 22 August 2003

Teshager Asfaw, Commercial and Political Officer, Netherlands Embassy, Addis Ababa, 19 August 2003

Wolfram Vetter, Second Secretary (Political Affairs), Delegation of the European Commission in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 5 September 2003

Cecil Vink, Second Secretary, Netherlands Embassy, Addis Ababa, 19 August 2003

Laura Williams, Second Secretary, British Embassy, Addis Ababa, 28 August 2003

Yetenayet Andarge, Staff member, EWLA, Addis Ababa, 20 August 2003

Annexe 5. Workshop Programme and List of Participants

Forum for Social Studies (FSS)

Workshop on

Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies

Tuesday, 28 October 2003 SEMEIN HOTEL, Addis Ababa

Schedule

9.00 - 9.30	Registration
9.30 - 9.40	Welcoming Statement Dessalegn Rahmato, Forum for Social Studies
9.40 - 10.00	Overview of the Democratic Transition Research Project Jeroen de Zeeuw, Clingendael Institute, The Hague
10.00 - 10.30	Coffee Break
10.30 - 10.40	Research Methodology Dessalegn Rahmato, FSS
10.40 - 11.00	Democratization and Donor Impact: Elections and Legal Reform Meheret Ayenew, FSS and AAU
11.00 - 11.20	Democratization and Donor Impact: Human Rights and Media Dessalegn Rahmato, FSS
11.20 - 12.20	General Discussion
12.20 - 12.30	Summing Up
12.30	LUNCH at Semein Hotel (everyone is invited)

End of Workshop

List of Participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>
Abera Hailemariam	APAP
Suzanne Verstegen	Clingendael Institute
Jeroen de Zeeuw	Clingendael Institute
Muluneh Gebre	Addis Tribune
Negash Gessesse	EHRCO
Admassu Gebeyehu	Ethiopian Democratic Party
Melaku Tegegne	PANOS
Shimelis Assefa	Embassy of Ireland
Mandefro Belay	Judicial Reform Programme
J. Astil-Brown	British Embassy
Kassahun Berhanu	Addis Ababa University
Cecile Vink	Netherlands Embassy
Teshager Asfaw	Netherlands Embassy
Bizuwork Belete	SafeWorld/IAG
Getachew Sinnu	PANOS
Fassil Yenealem	<i>Addis Zena</i>
Tamire Geda	EFJA
SahleSelassie Abebe	CLCBS
Bazegenawork W/Medhin	CRDA
Feleke Tadelle	SCF UK/Canada
Teferi Asfaw	Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce
Amanuel Abdisa	Mass Media Training Institute
Dawit Balcha	<i>Addis Admass</i>
Zenebework Tadesse	FSS
Dessalegn Rahmato	FSS
Meheret Ayenew	FSS

About the Authors

Dessalegn Rahmato graduated from Northeastern University in Boston (USA) with a degree in Comparative Politics. He has been a lecturer at various universities in New York and a senior research fellow at the Institute of Development Research (IDR) at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. His research interests lie in agrarian studies (land tenure, peasant agriculture), food security and poverty, environmental studies and issues relating to civil society and democratization. Since 1998, Dessalegn has been the Manager of the Forum for Social Studies (FSS).

Meheret Ayenew holds a PhD in public management and policy from State University of New York at Albany and a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. Among other posts he has held, he has been the programme coordinator of the Graduate Programme in Regional and Local Development Studies at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Currently, Meheret is assistant professor in the Department of Management and Public Administration within the faculty of Business and Economics at Addis Ababa University, as well as a member of the Forum for Social Studies (FSS).