**Ethiopia: The new PM of Ethiopia has a monumental Task at hand that requires nothing less than a Miracle to achieve**

By Tecle Abraham

The incoming PM of Ethiopia has by his inaugural speech sounded like he is ushering a new era in Ethiopia`s body politics. Like a good preacher reprimanding his flocks for not behaving the way the holy book instruct them to, the PM also described a lithany of misconduct and malbehaviour by his Woyane dominated EPDRF government albeit indirectly. But he shied away from specifying the legsilative and insituional measures he would enact to get rid of these ills. That notwisthtanding, many Ethiopians are pleased hearing his sermon and are hoping that this man is up to something and will deliver their wish. On the other hand many more are skeptical whether he can at all deliver. The latter knowing how the system is organized and functions make it clear that the PM, despite ist constitutional power, can not implement anything that is not to the liking of the Woyane deep State that has a considerable leverage on policy formulatiion and implementation. If that turns out to be true, then Ethiopia is heading for a deeper crises that will eventually resolve itself by the demise of the regime itself, unless the religious PM is helped by godly intervention to make miracles.

The current crises of Ethiopia traces its root to the complete break down of state structure following the Woyanes triumphant march supported by the EPLF into Addis and its consequent fundmentally different structuring of the country according the wish of Woyane. By this new structuring the Woyanes aimed to ensure the prominence of the Tigrai minority in the poltical, economic, military and media institutions hoping that would after 50 years crystalize *fait accomplie* into a reality that no one would be able to reverse it. This was predictated on the unfailling deference of the woyane created parties presumably representing the four major ethnic identities to Abiyotawi Democracy, an ideology so cleverly crafted to impute that for a developmental State a continous rule of this party is required to transform Ethiopia into a middle income country or in other words the creation of middle income class that has no appeal for ethnic affiliation. This is how Woyane ideologues cleverly veiled their own hidden agenda to establiish their dominance or at minmum their prominence in the countrys politicoeconomic strucutre regardless of their minority status.

This nefarious project, short of declaring a one party system, could only be realized by employing every *Machiavelian* means that avails iself to esnsure EPDRFs rule for eternity. This has been enacted at the electorate and at the opposition parties as well as civic societies activists level. Everyone is familiar of the infamous 1 to 5 incarceration of the society, whereby every citizen whether a farmer or emplyee is bondaged to the party to earn his living. At the opposition level, parties are prevented to open party officies, recruit members and in any way function adequately to put up a serious contention. When all that fail, outright election rigging,is a weapon of choice. Political party functionories, journalists, civic societies leaders were accused of promoting either *tebab* or *tmkhetgan* ideas, arrested and silenced with lengthy prison terms. To do all these violation of human and democratic rights with impunity, the Woyane lead regime introduced several institutional devices as well as draconian laws that has been faithfully and deligiently implemented by a judiciary put at the service of the party. These are the sources of all Ethiopia`s`misery that lead to the upheaval und mobilization of the Ethiopiian people fighting for their human and democratic rights.

It is against this complex and obviously intractable backdrop that the new PMs ability to deliver or otherwise on the demand for drastic change of the ethiopian people should be analysed. Even proceeding from the assumption that he is truly after a real reform, there are good reasons to be cautious.and lower the expectation bar. To begin with, Dr. Abiy is not expected to rock the boat completely. He is afterall the chairman of the EPDRF, which is still guided by Abiyotawi democracy. Actually, he has everything to owe to the party for all his political journey and ascedency, all he wants to do is introduce some form of reforms to appease the people rather than extricate the country from the prevailling crises and at the same time hoping to win back the support of his constituencies in view of the coming elections in 2020. Nevertheless, like all things in politics, it is not easy to remove long held vestegial interests. Yet it is even more problematic when it involves entanglement with hidden agenda of an entrenched minority regime that feels insecure with the coming changes. The PM has in general terms described the ills of the system including the constraints of freedoms to speech, organization and assembly, the lack of judicial indepependence indicating that he would do some sort of a reform. Coming from the Oromo people who have been at the forefront of the upheaval und resistance, he may share partly the resentment of his constituency, including ascendency to the helm of PM office, which he has to win after a hard fight against the Woyanes and their cohorts. He seems also to be more liberal than ideological, with an inclination towards liberal democracy, whatever that means in Ethiopia`s context.. Lastly but not least of all, he also understands the severe poltical, economic and security consequence of failing to make serious reforms to meet the main demands of the Ethiopian people as well as the regimes handlers in the west. For this reason, many people would like to give the new PM their goodwill and confidence.

But many others who know well how the power of the primeminstership is exercised and the intricacies of the EPDRF politics doubt whether he can introduce drastic reforms irrespective of his intention. And there are several good reasons to mention. First and foremost, his reform agenda and extent of reform is dictated by the decision of the party rather than the will of the PM. That was not lost even to the PM, when he shied away from articulating concretly his reform agendas and rather instead dwelling on impressing the parliamentiarians and his partys executive memebers on general ills of its government. Secondly, from what we can tell from the proceedings of the executive committee, there are many who don`t share his reform agenda. Thirdly, he will not have free hand in consitituting his cabinet with like minded ministers who share his reform agenda, while hitherto the the EPDRF modalities has been quota based respresention . Indeed as Professor Merara has rightly pointed out, his greatest challenge will be dealing with his party, not only with the Woyanes but also with other hard line ideologue of the abiyotawi democracy. His limited expereince and poltical weight should also be factored in, whether he can win the internal strugggle.in order to execute his reform agendas. Of course,time is on his side. He can make use of the the pressure from the people of Ethiopia and international community, to convince the hard liners that there is no other way. But that finally rests on his Leadership quality, about which we know little, except what is heard during his inaugrual speech.

The reform process of course can not be imagined without the full participation of all the stakeholders from inside and outside the country, if the reforms are to mean anything. To start with, the modalities of consultation and discussion should be agreed upon not dictated by the ruling regime. That should not be at all an issue, if the PM is really committed for reform. However, regarding the pariticipation and representation of the oppossition, could turn out to be problematic, if the PM is unable to show leadership and committment. Apart from the opposition parties residing inside the country, there are several genuine opposition parties residing outside the country, some of whom taking up arms against the regime. The minority regime has condemned many of these legitimate armed oppositon groups including the OLF, ONLF, PG 7 as terrorist groups. Of ourse there are many others representing various ethnic groups including the Sidama, Gambella, Amara, Afar, Tigras TPDM. Many of these armed opposition groups have intensified their operation in tandem with the uprisal of the ethiopian people and it is unthinkable to hope for the transformation of the country without ensuring the full participation of these groups in the reform process. And there are many more civic societies and associations in the diaspora that should be involved. The PM has implied by his inaugural address, the importance of involving these stakeholder, however how he go about it procedurally will be a crtical factor.

It is self evident that the PM is tasked with a transformation that looks like an impossible misssion. Whatever changes he may enact will not be far enough for many and too far for some diehard within the party. The pace of changes will be also another factor of contention. No doubt the PM needs all his leadership quality, intelectual wisdom, energy and probably a bit of miracle to meet the essential demands of Ethiopians nothwithstanding the challenges. His personality, unlike his predecessor, has something special. In addition to his religious affiliation, he seems ambitious with an inclination towards the wests liberal way of exercising politics and thereby want to impress the west by introducing new thinking in his Party. In the process, he may turn out to be like Mandela, if he can find some one in the incarnation of De Klerk from the rank of Woyanes or he may end up rocking the boat like Grobachev or worse another disappointing hypochrite. Whichever way he will turn only one thing is certain. Whatever Dr. Abiy does only end up being a cataylst for increasing the momentum of the struggle for freedom. The Dynamics of the struggle is going to produce further frictions and fractures within the EPDRF, along and within ethnic members of the organization. Coupled with the increasing determination of the ethiopian people to fight for their right; through peaceful as well as through armed struggle, the demise of the minority regime will be realized sooner than many think. As Dr. Mohammed Hassan, a prominent Ethiopian scholar on Ethiopia said it rightly:- Woyane is finished and one can only hope that the Woyanes would not play until the *gebetta* is finsihed as the eritrean proverb goes.