

ETHIOPIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION (EAF)

Introduction

Since about twenty years ago, Ethiopia has undergone a variety of transitions many of which have been traumatic and de establishing. Following seventeen years of social and political turmoil unparalleled in the history of the country, the Dergue regime gave way to a transitional government which has a historic opportunity to bring Ethiopians back together and lead them to democracy and development. Whatever may be the outcome of the overtures of this latest episode, even under the best of scenarios, Ethiopia would continue to experience a variety of intractable problems fro many years to come. However, no matter how Herculean the challenges, we all believe that Ethiopians would one day rise to the occasion and invent the institutional means to restore peace, democracy and development to all.

The proposal to establish the Ethiopian American Educational Foundation, which shall be know as the Ethiopian American Foundation (EAF) for short, is to make a tangible investment in the present and future generations of Ethiopians who would insure universal ideals of truth and excellence; fundamental ethos that have exemplified Ethiopia's institutions of higher education since their establishment in the 1950s. The aim of EAF is to establish a non-political organization to help restore the multifaceted role of higher education in Ethiopia by bringing to bear the collective effort of Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans, Americans and friends of Ethiopia from anywhere interested in revamping the principal functions of higher education in Ethiopia; teaching, research and public service. The organization would serve as a focal point to which contributions in ideas, time and resources from such constituencies would be challenged to help strengthen Ethiopia's institutions of higher learning and enable them to face up to the challenges of the 21st century.

It would take an attempt in good faith by all who share descent from this unfortunate but historic and proud nation and its friends in the United States and elsewhere to contribute in any way they can toward this objective. In pledging our best intentions and efforts to these ideals, we should remember and give gratitude to our heroic academic freedom and democracy in Ethiopia. The purpose of establishing the EAF is to be a part of this constructive effort in rebuilding Ethiopia. Recognizing that the process of Ethiopia's healing would require a multidimensional effort in the political, social, cultural, economic and educational realms, the establishment of EAF is to make a case for higher education and its principal functions.

Rational for the Establishment of EAF

The basic rational for the establishment of EAF is to help rebuild higher education in Ethiopia by making sustained financial, material and intellectual contributions in areas of priority needs. In order to fulfill this objective, EAF would organize itself as an institutional vehicle for use by Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americas, Americans and friends of Ethiopia from anywhere interested in supporting higher education to marshal financial

and material resources for the purpose of making a difference toward this objective in Ethiopia.

The establishment of such a foundation is particularly critical at this time. First, higher education in Ethiopia has been under dire straits for reasons that have their roots in political, human capital, and financial factors. It has suffered punitive measures from the various administrations for exercising its mission to speak out and defend liberty, democracy and plurality. Many of its faculty and students have suffered from years of attrition and instability and have left its ranks for a variety of reasons. Because of the country's economic conditions in the last two decades, budgets for higher education have been meager causing shortage of funds to sustain the university's principal missions, maintain and upgrade its physical plant and modernize its instructional and research equipment.

Second, traditional foreign sources of funds from overseas training, technical support and research funds, which have in the past made significant contributions to build higher education in Ethiopia, cannot be expected to increase their support commensurate with Ethiopia's growing needs, especially in these times of fiscal constraints in donor countries. It should be remembered that during the Dergue regime, a number of donor agencies and philanthropies had withheld their support from Ethiopia. It is unlikely that they would restore their pre-Dergue levels of commitment to Ethiopia of which many of us are beneficiaries.

Third, numerous educated Ethiopians who have left their country in large numbers beginning in 1974, are established in their chosen domiciles abroad, and most are capable and desirous to collaborate with and or assist their colleagues in Ethiopia to meet the challenges of maintaining the viability and integrity of higher education and hopefully pass a legacy of an intellectual environment which would at least be the same as, if not better than, what many of our generation of Ethiopians have enjoyed from the 1950s to the 1970s.

EAF would like to enhance intellectual excellence, academic integrity, academic freedom, and cultural and political pluralism, qualities that have been the hallmark of Ethiopia's institutions of higher learning. The founders of EAF would like to recognize the noble contributions of and pay gratitude to those colleagues in Ethiopia who lived up to such principles no matter what the sacrifices. EAF's principal goal is to be a partner in the search for lasting solutions as Ethiopia's institutions of higher education try to cope with the increasing demands in teaching, research and outreach.

Potential Areas of Cooperation

The contributions of EAF can be channeled in a variety of ways. Two areas of need that may be targeted initially are training and research in higher education. The faculty, which has been painstakingly built since the early 1950s, has suffered from large scale attrition due to transfers to other units of government, retirements, political purges and emigration. The university has lost both structure and process characteristics of a stable

and functioning institution of higher learning. It would be impossible for EAF to replace what Ethiopia lost in terms of human capital over the last twenty years. Such an organization may not also match the external flow of funds from traditional donor agencies such as the USAID, SIDA, CIDA, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and other donors and philanthropies, who have contributed immensely in supporting higher education in Ethiopia. The role of EAF, at least initially, would be a modest one. It may include granting EAF student fellowships and financing a variety of academic programs for faculty such as sabbaticals, study leaves and short-term retooling and training programs in Ethiopia or abroad. EAF will also make it possible for closer collaboration between Ethiopian and US academics in research, teaching, graduate student training, sabbatical swaps, conferences, seminars, roundtables, publication projects, summer workshops, student fieldwork and a variety of similar undertakings.

Another area of need is the supply of instructional and research materials such as text books, periodicals, computers, laboratory supplies and field research equipment. Because of budgetary problems and foreign exchange constraints, such supplies have become very difficult to secure not only in Ethiopia but also all over Africa. There have been attempts by US institutions to assist in this area by sending copies of recent and old editions of publications, but this as important as it is cannot be expected to solve the fundamental constraint. EAF's activity in this area may include the support of libraries to restore, initiate and/or maintain subscriptions to essential periodicals of creative scholarship and purchase of new texts, reference materials, manuals, software and similar reading materials for immediate access by scholars and students. EAF may also extend equipment grants for departments to modernize and/or upgrade their teaching and research work. This may focus on critical need areas for computers and laboratory equipment.

Organization of EAF

EAF will be a non-profit organization devoted to support higher education in Ethiopia. The organization will be free of any religious, ethnic or political affiliation. It would be an open organization which would welcome the membership of and/or contribution from any one individual who would support the aims of the organization. The organization would be set up upon the approval of the statutes of the organization by the founding members of EAF. Membership in EAF would hopefully include the widest possible representation of persons of Ethiopian origin, Americans and friends of Ethiopia from anywhere who support the objectives of EAF. The EAF statutes will contain the objectives of the Foundation, membership responsibilities and administrative organization. The administrative structure will include a policy-making board of trustees elected by EAF members, an executive committee derived from the board of trustees, and a secretariat headed by an executive director appointed by the board of trustees. The secretariat (which is initially expected to be run by volunteers), would be located in the United States of America. Chapters of EAF may be formed in various locations in the United States, Ethiopia and elsewhere. The general membership would be informed and networked on a regular basis by an EAF Newsletter whose frequency would be determined by the EAF board of trustees.

Establishment and Maintenance of the EAF Principal Fund

In order to carry out the objectives of the EAF, the foundation will establish a principal fund whose dividends would be used to run EAF programs. The goal of the EAF would be to build such a fund over a five-year period from the date of establishment and begin to implement some of the projects using the earnings of the principal fund. Allocation priorities will be determined by the board of trustees or the relevant standing committee constituted by the board. The sources for building the fund are expected to include the following:

1. Pledges from founding members and lifetime members
2. Regular membership fees
3. Gifts, memorials and endowments
4. Matching grants
5. Fund raisers (e.g. national, regional and local cultural functions)
6. In-kind (material) contributions
7. Reinvested proceeds from assets already held by EAF.

Steps to Establish EAF

In order for such an organization to be successful, sustainable and long-lasting, a considerable amount of concerted groundwork is needed to explain to Ethiopian compatriots and friends of the timeliness, need and viability of such an undertaking. If we can establish a reputable and credible organization that has clearly stated objectives and institutional means to achieve them, many Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans, American, and friends of Ethiopia from elsewhere would be willing and able to support such an organization. They would do so especially if they are convinced that this is an organization accountable to every member while being governed by democratic principles, and that each member may make direct input to the governing principles, deliberative organs, administrative bodies, and programmatic activities of the organization. The founders of EAF will make sure that the organization's statutes reflect such expectations of its constituent groups and memberships. The process of its establishment should also benefit from the widest possible participation and from the collective wisdom of all those who identify with the ideals and objectives of the organization.

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East Lansing, MI
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ETHIOPIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION

Statutes

1. Preamble

We Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans and American friends of Ethiopia, desirous of playing a role in Ethiopia's socioeconomic development, have decided to establish a non-profit foundation called the Ethiopian American Educational Foundation which shall be commonly referred to as Ethiopian American Foundation (EAF). EAF (which is also referred to as "the Foundation" in these statutes) will be a non-profit philanthropic organization primarily devoted to aid higher education in Ethiopia. The organization will be free of any religious, ethnic or political affiliation. It would be an open organization which would welcome the membership of and/or contribution from any individual or organization who supports the aims of the organization.

2. Objectives

The aim of EAF is to support and enhance the functions of higher education in Ethiopia by bringing to bear the collective effort of Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans and American friends of Ethiopia. The principal function of the organization is to serve as a medium through which contributions in ideas, time and resources from Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans, American friends of Ethiopia (sometimes referred to as "constituent groups") can be channeled to help strengthen Ethiopia's institutions of higher education and enable them to face up to the challenges of the 21st century. The specific objectives of the foundation shall be as follows:

2.1 To create an institutional framework to enable constituent groups to make sustained financial, material and intellectual contributions in areas of priority needs of higher education in Ethiopia.

2.2 To build capital assets the interest of which will be used to support projects and activities in accordance with approved procedures. Sources funds and assets shall include the following:

2.2.1 Pledges from members.

2.2.2 Membership fees.

2.2.3 Gifts and endowments from individuals who endorse the ideals of the EAF.

2.2.4. Matching grants from philanthropies who share the objectives of the EAF.

2.2.5. Fund raisers organized by EAF Chapters, members or friends of the Foundation.

2.2.6. In-kind (material) contributions from individuals and organizations whose objective and gifts are congruent with EAF objectives and needs.

2.3 To help train students by granting competitive scholarships to be used at any of the accredited institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia and overseas.

2.4 To help finance a variety of academic programs for faculty from constituent groups in such areas as sabbaticals, study leaves, consultancies, conferences, short term residencies, research and publication projects.

2.5 To facilitate collaborative work between academics in Ethiopia and the United States in areas such as research, teaching, student training, sabbatical swaps, conferences, seminars, publication projects, summer workshops and similar undertakings.

2.6 To extend grants to supply critical shortages in teaching and research materials with particular focus on books, periodicals, reference materials, manuals, software, computers, laboratory supplies and field research equipment.

2.7 To establish student internship and exchange programs to enable Ethiopian, Ethiopian American and American college students to participate in programs such as junior-year in Ethiopia and the United States, summer field work, dissertation research, language internship, short-term special programs in the humanities and social science and similar activities.

2.8 To help organize and support voluntary activities in Ethiopia by constituent groups who would like to make specific contributions in time and resources channeled through technical services projects in such areas as pilot (demonstration) medical procedures, pilot engineering projects, teaching, research and consultancy, where possible, in collaboration with counterpart Ethiopian scholars and university students.

2.9 To support any ideas, forums and activities that are deemed relevant and useful to enhance the principal missions of Ethiopian higher education in teaching, research and outreach.

3. Membership

3.1 *General Membership:* Ethiopians, Ethiopian-Americans and American friends of Ethiopia, who uphold the objectives of the EAF, shall be entitled to membership of the Foundation. Members in good standing are those who continue to support the objectives of the Foundation and fulfill their membership obligations by paying their annual dues or meet the requirements for lifetime membership.

3.2 *Membership Chapters:* Members in the United States that reside in principal cities where a significant number of the constituent groups live, may be organized in Chapters in accordance to relevant bylaws issued by the Foundation. Such Chapters may be headed by an elected Chapter Convenor whose responsibility would be to coordinate Chapter activities and liaise with the Foundation headquarters.

3.3 *Chapters in Ethiopia:* Membership may be extended to individuals in Ethiopia who support the objectives of the association. Members in Ethiopia may have local Chapters in cities or Universities. These Chapters may be coordinated by Chapter

Convenors whose responsibility would be to serve as focal points for communication between Chapter members and the Foundation secretariat in the United States. Chapters and memberships in EAF in Ethiopia will be governed by the relevant bylaws issued by the Foundation.

3.4 *Chapters in other Countries:* EAF Chapters may be formed in other countries in accordance with relevant bylaws and upon approval of the EAF Secretariat in the U.S.A.

4. Organization of EAF

The organizational framework of EAF shall be composed of the following:

4.1 *Board of Trustees:* The Board of Trustees (Board) shall be the policy-making body of the Foundation. It shall be composed of members elected from a national slate of nominees drawn from a duly constituted roster of all Foundation members in good standing.

4.2 *Executive Committee:* This shall be the executive body of the Foundation whose function shall be to deliberate and approve programs in accordance with the general policy guidelines from the Board of Trustees.

4.3 *Secretariat:* The Foundation Secretariat shall be the central headquarters of the Foundation. It shall be located in the United States initially in the city where the Executive Director resides.

4.4 *Executive Director:* This shall be the chief administrative officer whose function shall be to implement programs and projects that have already been approved by the Executive Committee.

4.5 *Chapters:* Chapters may be formed where requested by members in principal cities and/or universities in the US, Ethiopia and other countries in accordance to the relevant bylaws of EAF and with endorsement from the Executive Committee of the Foundation and with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The function of Chapters shall be to serve as focal points for coordination of Foundation activities.

4.6 *Chapter Convenors:* Each Chapter shall have an elected Chapter Convenor whose responsibility shall be to liaise with the Foundation Secretariat and to initiate, lead and coordinate local Chapter activities.

5. Composition and Function of the Officers of EAF

5.1 Board of Trustees

5.1.1. **Composition:** The Board of Trustees (or Board) shall have no more than 21 and no less than three members. Initially, the Board shall be composed by a two-step mail balloting. First, the membership at large shall send nominations of candidates

for the Board. A slate between 10 and 40 candidates shall be obtained from a roster of nominees who shall be ranked by the number of nominations each receives. In case of a tie, listing sequence shall be by alphabetical order A-Z in one election year and Z-A in the following, and so on. A second mail balloting shall be conducted to elect the desired number of Board members. The top vote getters will be declared winners. In case of a tie in the second balloting, the same procedure shall be used as in the first balloting described above. Members of the Board shall serve for four years except for the initial period in which the smaller of number of nearly 50 percent of the members will serve for two years only in order to afford overlapping of new and incumbent members. The members that will serve for two years shall be identified by lot. Balloting for Board membership will be biannual. Incumbents are eligible to be reelected only for two more consecutive periods.

5.1.2 **Function:** The function of the Board shall be as follows:

5.1.2.1 Elect the Executive Committee of the Foundation.

5.1.2.2 Appoint the Executive Director of the Foundation.

5.1.2.3 Evaluate the performance of the Executive Director.

5.1.2.4 Formulate policies of the Foundation.

5.1.2.5 Manage the Foundation funds.

5.1.2.6 Receive gifts and endowments on behalf of the Foundation.

5.1.2.7 Approve the annual budget of the Foundation.

5.1.2.8 Receive and approve the annual report of Foundation activities and disbursements.

5.1.2.9 Amend the Statues of the Foundation

5.2 *Executive Committee*

5.2.1 **Composition:** The Executive Committee (or EC) shall consist of the Chairperson, vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary of the Board of Trustees and one at large member elected by the Board from the Board of Trustees. Tenure by members on the EC shall correspond to their respective tenure on the Board. The Executive Director of the Foundation shall serve as ex-officio (non-voting) member of the Executive Committee.

5.2.2 **Function:** The function of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- 5.2.2.1 Supervise the management of Foundation accounts and investments.
- 5.2.2.2 Disburse funds in accordance with policies and priorities set by the Board.
- 5.2.2.3 Determine membership dues and fees.
- 5.2.2.4 Approve contracts and agreements.
- 5.2.2.5 Review operating budget submitted by the Director for subsequent approval by the Board.
- 5.2.2.6 Approve disbursements for budgeted items.
- 5.2.2.7 Assign tasks to the Executive Director.
- 5.2.2.8 Oversee the activities of the Foundation Secretariat
- 5.2.2.9 Approve the formation of Chapters of the Foundation in the US and Ethiopia.
- 5.2.2.10 Organize Board elections.
- 5.2.2.11 Prepare a slate of nominees for appointment to Executive Director.
- 5.2.2.12 Create Standing Committees for the purpose of organizing Foundation tasks that require deliberation and study.

5.3 Executive Director

5.3.1 Appointment: The Executive Director (or Director) shall be appointed by the Board for five-year periods at a time. He/she may be reappointed for another term by the Board of Trustees.

5.3.2 Function

- 5.3.2.1 Chief executive officer of the Foundation.
- 5.3.2.2 Implement approved projects.
- 5.3.2.3 Hire staff of the Foundation Secretariat.
- 5.3.2.4 Conduct negotiations, agreements, correspondence and protocols on behalf of the Foundation in accordance with guidelines set by the Board.
- 5.3.2.5 Serve as ex-officio member of the Board and the Executive Committee.

5.3.2.6 Initiate, develop and screen programs and projects for consideration for approval and funding by the Board.

5.3.2.7 Any duties that may be assigned by the Executive Committee.

5.4 Chapter Convenors: Chapter Convenors shall be elected from and by Chapter members in accordance with relevant bylaws of Foundation.

6. Meetings and Proceedings

6.1 Board of Trustees: The Board shall meet once a year in June. The Board shall elect its Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary at its annual meeting. The Executive Director shall be an ex-officio member of the Board. Board meetings shall be open for attendance to all Foundation members in good standing. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedures. Until such time that the Foundation has a permanent headquarters, the venue of Board meetings shall be in the city where the Executive Director resides.

6.2 Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall conduct quarterly meetings during the year with one of such meetings corresponding with that of the Board. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary of the Board shall also serve as Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary of the Executive Committee. The Chairperson or, in his absence, the Vice Chairperson may call a special meeting of the Executive Committee upon the written request of three members of the Executive Committee.

7. Auditing

The books of the Foundation shall be audited annually by an independent auditor retained by the Board of Trustees.

8. Amendment of the Statutes for EAF

The EAF statutes may be amended by a two-third majority of the members of the Board of Trustees.

9. Dissolution of the Organization and Dispensation of Assets

The Board of Trustees of EAF shall dispose of the Foundation's assets in a manner that would serve the explicit objectives for which the EAF was established.

10. Ratification of Statutes

These statutes are ratified on the 17th day July, 1993 in Grand Rapids, Michigan by the founders of EAF and duly registered as a non-profit organization in the State of Michigan, Department of Commerce, Corporation and Securities Bureau, Lansing, Michigan.

July 1993
Grand Rapids, Michigan
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