

የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ
ሪፐብሊክ ኤምባሲ ስቶክሆልም
Embassy of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Stockholm

Det Udenrigspolitiske Nævn
UPN FT-del - Bilag 7
URU alm. del - Bilag 12
Offentligt

ቀን 16/02/05
Date
ቁጥር FDRE/diff/50/05
No.

ORIGINAL

Dear Sir/Madame,

I have the honour to send you herewith an Aide Memoire that further elaborates Ethiopia's Five-Point Peace Proposal launched at the end of November 2004 to put an end to the Ethio-Eritrea border impasse and bring a lasting peace to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

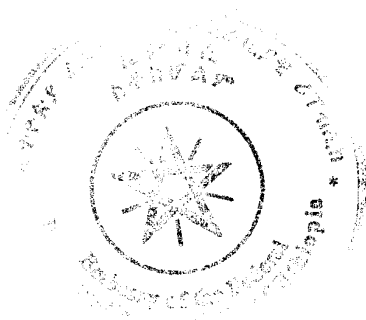
I would like to further mention that the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia strongly believes that the role of the international community has become more essential than ever before in urging Eritrea to sit for dialogue by welcoming Ethiopia's Peace Plan.

Accept, sir/Madame, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Encl. Aide Memoire

Stockholm, 09 February 2005


Berhanu Kebede
Ambassador





የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ
የውጭ ጉዳይ ሚኒስቴር

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ቀን
Date

ቁጥር
No.

Aide Memoiré
On Ethiopia's Five-Point Peace Proposal
Next Steps in the Peace Process

On 25 November 2004, Ethiopia made public a five-point peace proposal with the hope that the initiative may help remove the stalemate in the peace process. Eritrea, as it would be recalled, had refused until that time, to enter into a dialogue with Ethiopia despite repeated calls by the Security Council, the UN Secretary General, the AU and the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Despite the fact that the five-point Peace Proposal was specifically designed to, among other things, address all the concerns Eritrea had raised in its rejection of dialogue with Ethiopia, the Eritrean Government has categorically rejected the Peace Plan proposed by Ethiopia.

1. Why accept the decision in Principle?

One of the key points of Ethiopia's five-point Peace Proposal is that Ethiopia accepts the Boundary Commission's decision in principle and that dialogue should be initiated to implement the decision in a manner that promotes sustainable peace. Eritrea objects to this critical point and suggests that Ethiopia should accept the decision without precondition and that there can be no dialogue on demarcation.

ፋክስ ቁጥር
Fax No.

51 43 00

ጽ/ቤት 293

ጽ/ቤት 51 73 45

አዲስ አበባ - ኢትዮጵያ
Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

E-Mail: MFA.Addis@ethiopia.net

Ethiopia's acceptance of the Boundary Commission's decision is unequivocal and unconditional. However, there is a reason to why it chose to use the wording, accepting in principle. It was to distinguish it from the simplistic position that accepting the Boundary Commission's decision means, implementing it as is, whatever the consequences and without any dialogue on implementation.

No delimitation decision of any boundary can be implemented as is without adjustment. Among other things, the technical requirements of where to place boundary pillars normally requires some adjustment to the line on the map, and this adjustments however minor and technical require dialogue and consent of the parties.

In the case of the Ethio-Eritrea boundary demarcation, the process is likely to encounter not only such technical requirements for adjustment but also what the Boundary Commission itself has identified as the "anomalies" and "impracticalities" of the decision. The Boundary Commission has said that it can correct these "anomalies" and "impracticalities" only if the two parties give it the mandate to do so. In other words, the Boundary Commission itself recognizes that implementing the decision as is, is problematic but that any adjustment to correct them requires consent of the parties, and hence dialogue between the parties.

Dialogue between the parties is thus required not only because it is the normal procedure in the process of demarcation, but also because of the specific nature of the Boundary Commission's decision. The Boundary Commission's decision, not only does not preclude the need for dialogue to implement it, but also, specifically points out anomalies and impracticalities which can be overcome only with the consent of the parties and hence implies the need for dialogue

between the parties to bring about the required consent. Ethiopia's acceptance of the Boundary Commission's decision, in principle, and its call for dialogue is thus consistent, not only with the final and binding nature of the decision, but the only rational means of implementing it.

Ethiopia thus had every reason to expect that Eritrea would understand the meaning of Ethiopia's Peace Plan and express its readiness for dialogue. Indeed, the Eritrean government had told a number of interlocutors that if Ethiopia were to accept the decision in principle Eritrea would be willing to engage Ethiopia in dialogue with the view to making necessary adjustments in the implementation process. In one instance, the Eritrean government is said to have suggested that Ethiopia need not make its acceptance public for dialogue to start. Ethiopia is thus puzzled as to why Eritrea should reject Ethiopia's public and unequivocal acceptance of the decision.

2. Why Normalization?

It is very well known that Ethiopia and Eritrea had excellent relation between 1991-1997 despite the fact their common boundary was neither demarcated, nor delimited. The root causes of the conflict between them have to do as much with the boundary as with their economic and political relations. While demarcating the boundary in a manner that promotes sustainable peace is a vital element of the solution to the dispute, it is far from being sufficient to ensure peace. A demarcated boundary is no guarantee for peace if the relations between the two countries is characterized by high levels of tension. The tension cannot be removed unless its root causes are addressed. Demarcation without normalization may indeed increase the risk of war in the sense that the UN mission will not be around after demarcation to serve as a cushion in reducing tension between the two countries.

Ethiopia is interested in lasting peace. Demarcation of the border is important not as an end in itself but as an important step to stability and lasting peace. Normalization is essential to complete the process of dispute resolution, which is why the second key element of Ethiopia's Peace Plan was the call for dialogue to achieve normalization of relations between the two countries.

Ethiopia had no reason to expect that dialogue on normalization would be unacceptable to Eritrea. As everyone knows, Eritrea stands to gain from it at least as much as Ethiopia does. Indeed, the Eritrean Government had indicated through interlocutors that once the impasse on the Boundary Commission's decision is overcome it would be eager to start dialogue on normalization. Ethiopia is thus puzzled by Eritrea's rejection of dialogue on normalization, and its argument that as a sovereign nation it chooses with whom to have normal relations and that normalization of relations with Ethiopia is something that it is not willing to consider at this time.

Eritrea had routinely complained about what it considers to be Ethiopia's attempt to sideline the Boundary Commission and seek an alternative mechanism to demarcate the boundary. Ethiopia's Peace Plan addresses that concern fully. Ethiopia has not only declared that it accepts the Boundary Commission's decision in principle but that it will fulfill all its obligations to the Commission. In this regard, it has agreed to pay all its dues and appoint field liaison officers on the basis of the instructions of the Commission. Indeed, Ethiopia has already begun to implement these unilaterally.

Eritrea's rejection of Ethiopia's Peace Plan is thus puzzling not only because the plan addresses all concerns that Eritrea had expressed with regards to Ethiopia's previous position, but also because Eritrea had indicated to more than one interlocutor that it

would be ready for dialogue if Ethiopia were to do what it did through the Peace Plan. One cannot help wondering if Eritrea is shifting its goal posts because it is not interested in peace and stability in the region.

3. Ethiopia will persevere.

Ethiopia proposed the Peace Plan because it felt it was the right thing to do. It is convinced that it was appropriate for Ethiopia to break the ice and meet the Eritrean government more than half of the way to peace. While Ethiopia is disappointed that Eritrea has so categorically rejected the Peace Plan, it does not believe that the rejection constitutes the end of the Peace Plan or of the struggle for peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Ethiopia, has received reports and analysis that suggest that government circles in Eritrea believe it is in their interest to precipitate a crisis by carrying out an invasion of Ethiopia. While these analysts differ on whether such an invasion is likely to be limited in scope, or would be an unlimited one, all agree that the Eritrean Government believes such an invasion would help it divert the attention of its people from the acute social, political and economic crisis in Eritrea onto "an external enemy" and thus shore up its diminishing hold on Eritrea. There are indications, that Eritrea also believes that by so provoking Ethiopia, it can bring about the isolation of Ethiopia in the international community and thus weaken the very encouraging social, economic and political progress that Ethiopia has made over the past few years. The Eritrean government intends to bring Ethiopia to the level of international isolation that it finds itself in.

The international community has played a vital role in the peace process so far. Ethiopia believes that the role of the international

community is now more essential than ever. The international community can help by welcoming Ethiopia's Peace Plan and by calling for immediate dialogue to implement the Boundary Commission's decision and to bring about normalization. No matter how many times the Eritrean Government rejects dialogue the international community must insist that dialogue is the only path to peace. The international community must also make it unambiguously clear to all sides that violence is totally unacceptable and that any side which resorts to violence will be held accountable for the consequences of such an irresponsible act.