



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

**THE ROLE OF ETHIOPIA'S DIASPORA DIPLOMACY AND ENGAGEMENT
SINCE THE MID-2018 POLITICAL REFORM IN ETHIOPIA: CHALLENGES AND
PROSPECTS**

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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ADDIS ABABA**

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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June 2020

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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June 2020

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ABSTRACT

One of the recent developments of political reform in Ethiopia is related to the diaspora's diplomacy and engagement. This reform has changed not only the relationship between the Ethiopian government and the Ethiopian diaspora, but also the method and culture of engagement. This research is concerned with the current reform and its impacts on diaspora diplomacy and engagement of Ethiopia. To this end, the study aimed at describing and analyzing the extent to which factors that contributed to diaspora's diplomacy and engagement of Ethiopia. Accordingly, in terms of research methodology, qualitative approach was employed. The study applied both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources of information were collected through a series of interviews with key informants. Apart from this, secondary sources of information were also collected from relevant literature, such as books, internet sources, journal articles, published and unpublished materials, news releases, amended laws and other documents. Qualitative method was used as data analysis technique.

The study identified the roles of Ethiopian diaspora for the changes and overall development of the country since the mid-2018 political reform in Ethiopia. The findings of the study show that approaches of diaspora engagement have changed, but, not without challenges as opportunities are far from properly utilized. Among the constraints, institutional issue, division among segments of the Ethiopian diaspora, and deficiency of management among diaspora stakeholders. On the other hand, the study findings identified prospects such as changes in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora, changes in attitude towards the Ethiopian diaspora, enhancement of the role of embassies and consulates for effective engagement of the Ethiopian diaspora, and the re-welcoming atmosphere for Ethiopian diasporas that would encourage them to enhance their constructive roles chiefly in politics and economy of Ethiopia. The findings of the study suggested that the Ethiopian diaspora politics is a reflection of internal politics of the country, and, consequently, the stance and support of the Ethiopian diaspora towards the government fluctuates swiftly. The findings also suggested that a successful transition to democratic system is vital for effectively engaging the Ethiopian diaspora and gain their unwavering consistent support and contribution to the advancement of Ethiopia. Based on the empirical discussions, the researcher argues that the political reform in Ethiopia have generally brought about optimistic impacts on the Ethiopian diaspora diplomacy and engagement.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADPC	African Diaspora Policy Centre
AIPAC	American-Israel Public Affairs Committee
AS	Addis Standard
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DD	Diaspora Diplomacy
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
DP	Diaspora Policy
ECSJP	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party/’Ezema’
EDA	Ethiopian Diaspora Agency
EDP	Ethiopian Democratic Party
EDTF	Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EMIPX	Emigrant Policies Index
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESFNA	Ethiopian Sports Federation in North America
FDDE	Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/’Medrek’
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
ID	Identification
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration

IR	International Relation
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NBE	National Bank of Ethiopia
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PILPG	Public International Law and Policy Group
PM	Prime Minister
PP	Prosperity Party
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TV	Tele Vision
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USIP	United States Institute for Peace
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays, most Nations in the world have acknowledged the significant position that their own Diasporas have in economic development. In Africa and Europe, for instance, the role of migrants and Diasporas in development routes have been more and more has drawn special attention. The Ethiopian government has formally recognized the key roles of the Diaspora to Ethiopia's growth over the past decades (Tariku, 2017).

There are other states in the African continent like Kenya, Ghana, Eritrea and others that are deeply involved in the practice of this diplomacy. This dual practice of diaspora diplomacy can cause conflicts and misunderstandings, or it can enhance the practice and the benefits of diaspora diplomacy (Makumi, 2012). By decreasing communication and travel costs, globalization has made it easier for migrants to form networks that link geographically distant populations to social, political, and economic developments in the homeland. These Diasporas are often mobilized and engaged in homeland politics in ways that shape processes of conflict and democratization (Svein, *et al*, 2009).

Levine (2011) elaborates that the swift growth of information technology engineered a public space for the participation of Ethiopians, both at home and abroad, in their homeland affairs. More particularly, such innovations made active civic engagement by diaspora Ethiopians possible.

In peace-building and reconciliation, during the post-conflict phase, Swain (2012) discusses that the diaspora, especially those in rich countries, can play a major economic role in the reconstruction of a country by offering financial support to disengage the effects of a conflict and to help bring about a process of disarmament and demobilization. Remittances from diaspora can help promote economic recovery and thus consolidate the foundations of durable peace. Private sector investments through remittances have particularly made serious

contributions to building the kinds of institutional mechanisms and services needed for sustainable post-conflict rebuilding and for the reintegration of the war-affected populations.

The Ethiopian diaspora community plays an influential role in the politics and governance of Ethiopia. Through their Associations, Ethiopians in Diaspora come together and voice their opinions on important issues affecting the governance and development of their country of origin.¹

In January 2018, Temin and Badwaza (2018) elaborate that the governing Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) declared that it would follow reforms in response to strengthened antigovernment protests that began in November 2015. In April, Dr. Abiy Ahmed was elected as its chairman by the EPRDF and was then elected by the Ethiopian Parliament as the Ethiopia's Prime Minister. Abiy did not waste time in accelerating the reform agenda, which included releasing political prisoners, and announcing plans to revise repressive laws.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

We can make reference that 'diaspora engagement policies' perception is based by the growing role of diaspora and the formation of numerous links among its members. Diaspora is more influential than ever. Diaspora engagement policies are a main channel through which migrant source states are interacting and networking with their diaspora. Such policies became development strategies of the governments engaging also different non-state actors. Diaspora engagement policies underline social status, political or religious beliefs, and the status and circumstances in the country of destination (Violina, 2017). The stance of the political institution in Ethiopia, towards the diaspora, plays a very momentous role in influencing the policy, institutional and legislative way of diaspora engagement and their capacity to homecoming and contributes in local development processes (Antony, 2014).

The Ethiopian diaspora community in North America, for instance, has a wide range of organizations and newspapers, maintains dozens of Websites, E-mail lists and influential

¹ Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia, Diaspora Policy (2013), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa

Blogs, broadcasts a number of weekly radio and cable television shows, and has a strong influence on the strategies and tactics of political actors back in Ethiopia. Most diaspora organizations and media focus on cultural, professional, and economic self-help initiatives rather than partisan politics (Svein *et al*, 2009).

Although there can be many sides to a country's diaspora strategy, it can be said that, by and large, a Nation tend to follow similar initiatives, with much in common in terms of philosophy and approach but there is no 'one size fits all' diaspora strategy. Clearly, countries differ greatly in terms of their macroeconomic circumstances, the history of their diaspora, their size, geography and general resources to successfully pursue a diaspora strategy. Also, as many of these initiatives have been enacted recently, it is early to assess them completely. Successfully engaging the diaspora is a long-term 'hearts and minds' business that requires determination and patience and there remains a wide gap between the promise and delivery of diaspora contributions (Kingsley and Nicola, 2011).

Diaspora engagement programs may also prepare the diaspora to effectively participate in peace processes by building the capacity and skill-set of the diaspora. Several organizations, including the African diaspora Policy Centre and United States Institute for Peace (USIP), provide training in conflict resolution and negotiations to members of the diaspora, recognizing their importance in promoting security and sustainable peace.²

Tariku (2017) argues that, although short of detailed description, Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front has its own strategies towards the Ethiopian diaspora. Until the 2005 elections, EPRDF did not take the diaspora as foe of the government. Even though there was a cold relation between the Diaspora and the EPRDF, the government has taken actions to encourage them to return home and take part in the socio-economic development endeavors that the country has embarked on.

The review of literature regarding the roles of the Ethiopian diaspora in Ethiopia's development efforts, and their relationship with the government of Ethiopia is scanty. Even

² Public and International Law and Policy Group /PILPG/, 2009; Engaging Diaspora Communities in Peace Processes, Assessment Report and Program Strategy

the few existed studies deal with and revolves around only to the diaspora's monetary contribution in the form of remittance. Hence, this research evaluates the varieties of untapped roles (social, economic, political, and image building) of the Ethiopian diaspora chiefly since the mid-2018 political reform in the country. The research examined major challenges and prospects in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora, and it analyzed the Ethiopian government responses in comparison with the challenges of diaspora stakeholders and views from contending political parties.

1.3 Central Argument

There has been negative relationship between the Ethiopian diaspora and the Government of Ethiopia over the past decades. The immense roles of the Ethiopian diaspora for the country's social, economic and political development have not been duly acknowledged, and due to the absence of appropriate regard to the Ethiopian diaspora, the Ethiopian government did not tap the massive potentials of the Ethiopian diaspora with effective and better engagements.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of the study is to examine the potential roles of the Ethiopian diaspora for the country's overall development, and to study the challenges and prospects in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora since the mid-2018 political reform.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- To examine the roles of the Ethiopian diaspora for the country's economic development
- To investigate the roles of the Ethiopian diaspora for the country's peace-building process
- To investigate diplomatic engagement efforts of the diaspora by Ethiopian government

- To examine the factors obstructing the diaspora's engagement in the country's development.
- To study the new atmosphere and prospects of engaging Ethiopian diaspora.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Core Research Question

The core research question of the Study is that what are the major essential roles played by the Ethiopian diaspora to accelerate the overall development of the country, and what challenges and prospects exist in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora, since the mid-2018 political reform in Ethiopia?

1.5.2 Specific Research Questions

It further attempts to answer the following specific questions

- What roles do Ethiopians diaspora play for the country's economic development?
- How important is the Diaspora in peace-building efforts of Ethiopia?
- What are the efforts of the Ethiopian government in engaging its diaspora?
- What are the major challenges that are faced while engaging the Ethiopian diaspora?
- What prospects do we have for effectively engaging the Ethiopian diaspora?

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Research Method and Design

Research method is associated with different types of research design. It can guide the execution of the research method and analysis of the data gathered (Bryman, 2012). The data collected through key informant interviews and documents analysis are largely qualitative. Thus, the study employs qualitative method of data analysis. In analyzing the data, an inductive and interactive is used to build pattern categories and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data in increasingly more abstract unit of analysis. Data is gathered through examining documents, observation and interviewing participants. In qualitative research, the researcher gives very much emphasis on learning and understanding the meaning what the informants or participants hold about the issue (Creswell, 2007).

Descriptive and explanatory research techniques were also used in this research. By application of descriptive techniques, the researcher presents a descriptive approach that sets up the overall framework to be followed throughout the study. By this descriptive approach the selection, arrangement, and identification of a possible theoretical direction started to take place before trying to answer the research questions and, through explanatory research techniques the researcher applied pattern-matching as several pieces of information are being related to some theoretical proposition (Hillebrand and Berg, 2000).

Creswell (2014) further affirmed that qualitative researchers collect data from multiple sources by investigating documents, by observing behaviors and by interviewing participants and key informants. It is very important to have a detail understanding to the issues investigated as it focused on specific cases. Qualitative research method is a form of research in which the researcher makes interpretation about what she or he observes and understands (Creswell: 2014).

1.6.2. Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Both primary and secondary data were employed in this research. In-depth unstructured interviews were conducted for selected experts from relevant Ministries and offices. In-depth interviews were held with an official from the newly established, Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, of the the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia (FDRE) with Mr. Mohammed Indris (Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia), from Ethiopian Diaspora Association with Mr. Abrham Siyum(the Association's Executive Director), contending political parties from Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice/'Ezema' Party with Mr. Eyob Mesafint (the party's International members head and a member of executive committee), from Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/'Medrek Party' with Professor Merera Gudina (the party's Chairman of that time), from Ethiopian Democratic Party/'EDP'' part with Mr. Wasihun Tesfaye (the party's Secretary).

The researcher prepared open-ended questions that permit respondents to freely offer information on various matters related to Ethiopian Diaspora diplomacy and engagement mainly after the mid-2018 political reform (See Appendix I). The research has also used secondary data. Under this research, reading of books, journals, articles, publications, academic literature, and media reports like newspapers, online news, website blogs, and documents like agreements and amended laws were analyzed. The data collected through the series of interviews has thematically arranged based on the themes mentioned in the basic research questions which are framed at the beginning of the study. In a similar fashion, the data collected from the secondary sources have also sorted out. Eventually, the data has narrated thematically to the extent of meeting the research objectives set for the study. In doing so, the researcher used some descriptive statistical methods to summarize some data obtained from the primary and secondary sources to make it more informative and complete based on the kind of the data collected in this regard.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study gives important knowledge regarding the varieties of enormous roles played by the Ethiopian diaspora for overall development of the country, and explores constraints and new opportunities of the Ethiopian diaspora diplomacy and engagement. The research further looks at the relationship between the Ethiopian diaspora and the Government of Ethiopia, and the new glimpses of engaging the Ethiopian diaspora effectively. Accordingly, this thesis is timely and deals with current political changes in Ethiopia, and consequently, changes of engagement towards the Ethiopian diaspora. The research adds to the existing body of knowledge in the field of study and provides reliable information that could be used by development agents, diaspora organizations and agencies, researchers, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the like.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The political reform in Ethiopia has been perhaps the most decisive development in the politics of current Ethiopia. The roles of the Ethiopian diaspora have been immensely important in pressing the current reforms in Ethiopia. Due to this reality, an attempt has been made to extend the varieties of roles and impacts of the Ethiopian diaspora in the current Ethiopian reform, hence, the scope of the study is focused on the various decisive roles played by the Ethiopian diaspora, along with the constraints and new opportunities in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora particularly since the mid-2018 political reform in Ethiopia.

1.9 Limitations

Most relative data for this research came from key informants of a government and competitor parties officials, and head of diaspora organization of Ethiopia. The study is therefore, limited to show the views of each individual diaspora. However, this information gap is filled with exertion of time and resource, the researcher, collected all the possible and reliable data for the study from Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contending political parties, and Ethiopian Diaspora Association.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study contains four chapters. The first chapter consists of the background of the study, problem statement, general and specific objectives of the study, general and specific questions of the study, method and research design of the research, scope of the study, significance of the study and the organization of the study. The second chapter focuses on review of related literature and conceptual frameworks, diaspora policies in theory and practices, issues and roles of the diaspora, and discussing their potential roles in the peace-building process, economic development and image building, particularly discusses African and Global best experiences of tapping the diaspora's potentials . The third chapter emphasizes on the details of Ethiopia's diaspora diplomacy and engagement since the mid-2018 political reform. The fourth chapter examined mainly the challenges and prospects of Ethiopia's diaspora diplomacy and engagement since the mid-2018 political reform in Ethiopia, and followed by conclusion as the last part.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Perspectives

2.1.1. Defining the Concept of Diaspora

While the word diaspora has Greek roots, literally means scattering or planting of seeds, greater part of the researchers attach the definition itself with the Jewish diaspora. Since the term was originally used particularly when discussing the Jewish diaspora of the World, which was often stigmatized and well-known, the term traditionally had a more negative and victimized tone that referred to the scattering from the original homeland. It was connected in the public opinion with the notions of essentially forced exile and scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world (Bagramyan, 2006).

On the other hand, Baubock and Faist (2010:150) explain that a diaspora is identified as a social collectivity that exists across state borders and that has succeeded over time to 1) sustain a collective national, cultural or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and 2) display an ability to address the collective interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organizational framework and transnational links.

But in modern days, Nordien (2017) states that Diasporas are global communities made up of individuals who come together in a 'community' far from 'home'. They are bound together by a common memory, a desire to return and a commitment and dedication to the country of origin. These individuals share a collective identity, group consciousness and solidarity.

Following is a list of the general features of diasporas based on Cohen (2008:17)

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;

2. Alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements;
4. An idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. The frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation, even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland;
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate;
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility of another calamity might befall the group;
8. A sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even when home has become more vestigial;
9. The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

2.1.2 Diaspora Diplomacy

The application of diplomacy is understood as the administration of relations between groups, and how this is expressed in the course of practices of communication and representation. With the increase of digital communications, the tools of diplomacy have expanded to include social media that instant communication with a wide range of viewers at home and in a foreign country has become ordinary. In diaspora and diplomacy, the focus has been on how sending states join their diaspora to lobby for the national interest, facilitate

bilateral mediation, or as a resource for information gathering by intelligence agencies. Diasporas are also seen as a means to cultural and public diplomacy, such as by promoting relations and understanding that goes beyond the formal initiatives of the state (Ho and McConnell, 2017).

Trent, (2012) argues that diaspora diplomacy is a valuable process in international relations. Because the diasporas' political view provide background for shaping policy at home and negotiating it abroad. Diasporas are constituted by a convincing sense of moral responsibility. Moral responsibility makes them agents of change and important stakeholders in domestic and international relations of governments. Diasporas have commitment both to their adopted, or host countries and to their countries of origin. Government engagement with the diaspora in the politics, and programs of domestic and foreign policy can be beneficial to democratic pluralism and reduction of ethnic tension at home, as well as, to overall socioeconomic progress in countries of origin.

Diaspora diplomacy, as a result, directs attention to a mode of diplomacy that challenges the distinction of insider and outsider, and involves some processes. Formal diaspora strategies symbolize systematic approaches through which states engage the diaspora in order to endorse soft power. Soft power is enacted through cooperation rather than force, such as by influencing the opinions and therefore the foreign policy decisions of bilateral partners or international organizations. Their diaspora focused offices and agencies host diaspora conferences within their respective countries and send missions abroad to engage with their diasporas. Diasporas are perceived as a ready catchment for embassies and diaspora related ministries to seek advice and for mobilization (Ho and McConnell, 2017).

The Internet and new communication technologies have facilitated the functioning of diaspora as significant tools of public diplomacy and image promotion on a global scale. Previous studies have shown that contemporary Diasporas tend to use traditional and virtual means of communication as contact zones, spaces where they can display their identities, cultures, creativity and professions, among others. The use of diaspora diplomacy may be considered part of a wider change in the globalized international affairs. Contemporary

diplomacy includes the action of official or governmental institutions, multilateral organizations but also non official actors such as non-governmental organizations, media, political parties, universities, and religious organizations (ibid.).

2.1.3 Diaspora Engagement

On the other hand, Ongayo (2014) explains the role of diaspora to development in countries of origin, and residence is both an individual and collective responsibility whose signs vary clearly among diverse groups. It is influenced mainly by background features such as the drivers of migration, experiences during migration, the position of migrants and the degree of integration in the country of residence.

Governments employ a variety of methods to engage with their diasporas and use different institutional forms at different governmental levels. Engaging with diasporas is a complex process that cuts across many themes and sectors (economic, political, cultural and social), and diaspora issues are of concern to a range of national institutional bodies, as well as to different levels of government (Frankenhaeuser and Noack, 2015:7).

Heleniak (2011) explains diaspora engagement should begin with goal setting. Governments have to think through how they want their citizens or others of origin from their country residing abroad to be able to contribute to growth in the origin country.

Diasporas engage in different areas of interest and in various ways. These range from philanthropy, development and humanitarian assistance, political debates and civil society engagement, know-how transfer, trade and tourism, remittances, investments and business creation. Consequently, the various ways of promoting these contributions span many different policy areas (Frankenhaeuser and Noack, 2015).

The increasing interest in diaspora engagement between countries over the last ten years shows to an emerging global development. That development is for countries to increasingly recognize and seek to improve the role of diaspora in development. To engage means to involve, include and even affect someone. In the case of diaspora engagement, it is usually supposed that it is a state or government that needs to engage a group of people living

outside the country of origin, or who are migrants or children of migrants, and who share a similarity or maintain ties to it. To engage can also mean to begin and continue an activity, to take part in or give attention to something, so in this context diaspora engagement interpret in to distinguishing and involving the diaspora in development activities (Frankenhaeuser and Noack, 2015).

Many governments have expanded their diplomatic presence to places with large diaspora populations. Some consulates help connect migrant communities through cultural events and community gatherings. A number of network organizations offer educational trips and convene business events for their members. Some organizations are headquartered in destination countries, often in metropolises where members of the diaspora work and reside, while others are stationed in countries of origin (ibid.).

Diasporas who look for to engage and take part equally in the country of residence and the country of origin tend to take advantage of their legal status and the political opportunity in the country of residence, in order to undertake global activities. This is because diaspora groups operate as social fields that connect together the country of residence and the country of origin (Ongayo, 2014).

Therefore, Governments employ a variety of methods to engage with their diaspora, and use different institutional forms at different governmental levels. These policies, often referred to as ‘diaspora engagement policies’, range from securing the rights and the protection of diaspora members and strengthening a sense of national identity, to encouraging stronger links to the origin country and contributions to social and economic development. Engaging with diasporas is a complex process which is divided across many themes and sectors (economic, political, cultural and social), and diaspora issues are of concern to a range of national institutional bodies, as well as to different levels of government. In this respect, analyzing the situation, identifying the right stakeholders, and supporting inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination and cooperation are of essence to support the development of comprehensive, sustainable and future-oriented diaspora policies (Frankenhaeuser and Noack, 2015).

2.1.4 Diaspora Policy

Ancien, *et al* (2009) argue that a diaspora policy is a sound and systematic policy initiative or series of policy initiatives aimed at developing and managing relationships with a diaspora. These policy initiatives are diverse in nature. Given the different reasons for migration, the scale, history, geography, and nature of individual diaspora, why homelands wish to engage with their diaspora, it is no surprise that how different nations have formulated diaspora policy varies very significantly.

The absence of a well-formulated and applicable diaspora policy is a barrier to diaspora engagement. A policy framework is essential to link national development needs with diaspora resources and to guide respective activities more systematically. A clear national policy that is developed and widely communicated, will serve as basis for implementing a government's diaspora related activities. All relevant stakeholders including diaspora communities, concerned local establishment, international development partners, and government policy makers are to be involved when drafting a national diaspora policy (Agunias and Newland 2012).

On the other hand, Gamlen (2008) explains a method in diaspora policies: "diaspora building and diaspora integration". It is a process of credit and recognition by sending countries of the diaspora that has been put in place, which goes along with cultivating the diaspora's identity. Thus, in order to build their diaspora, countries of origin celebrate national holidays abroad, honor diasporas with awards, provide national language and history education. In order to recognize the diaspora, they commission studies, expand their consular network, maintain a diaspora program.

While many governments in Sub-Saharan Africa acknowledge the importance of diaspora engagement in development, many still lack the capacity to design effective policies and implement them on a meaningful scale. The lack of a well-formulated and applicable diaspora policy is a barrier to diaspora engagement. A policy framework is essential to link national development needs with diaspora resources and to guide respective activities more systematically. A clear national policy that is developed and widely communicated, will

serve as basis for implementing a government's diaspora-related activities. All relevant stakeholders including diaspora communities, local institutions concerned, international development partners, and government policy makers are to be involved when drafting a national diaspora policy (Utouh and Mutalemwa, 2015).

Scholars and international societies have lately emphasized how states develop policies to engage their diaspora in the state of origin, guiding new diaspora membership practices and facilitating the international political involvement of diasporas. The idea of diaspora policies, thus, includes but is not limited to dual nationality, remittance facilitation or external voting policies, which are policies that have been used before as indicators of states' interest and engagement with diasporas (Pedroza and Pau, 2017).

Awareness creation can be improved by ensuring that diaspora policies, both in developing and developed countries, act with each other to harness the great resources that skilled diaspora represent for international development (Seguin, *et al* 2006).

As far as the diaspora policies of home countries are concerned, Tigau, et al (2016) argue that China for example, appears to be far ahead since it started to engage with its diaspora as early as 1978 and has introduced various activities to engage and attract to return its diaspora. It has also managed to accumulate tangible benefits in terms of the entry of the latest in science, technology, knowledge and information. Chinese students are encouraged to study abroad and then to return in order to build China as an advanced modern nation. China's success in being able to attract investment from its diaspora has also been outstanding.

The initial idea for the formulation of Diaspora policy is the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia foreign affairs and national security policy and strategy document. In this policy document stated that Ethiopians in the Diaspora could play a significant role in carrying out research and investing at home. In addition, they could be successful in lobbying for Ethiopia and try to influence their country of residence to help with our country. Aware of the key roles played by Ethiopian residing abroad, the government should take initiatives in creating

the most conducive environment for them to play constructive role (FDRE Diaspora Policy, 2013).

In the past decade and a half, diasporas' contributions to social and economic development in their countries of origin have gained great attention by international and bilateral development agencies worldwide (Warnecke 2010). In many cases of authoritarianism and conflict, lack of freedom in the homeland limits space for political discussions and diaspora debates fill the space and supply many of the ideas and models for action adopted by the homeland opposition. Diaspora networks, therefore, can serve as caretakers for political debates and shape which political ideas are considered legitimate in the homeland (Lyons, 2009).

The political establishment in Ethiopia towards the diaspora plays a major role in determining the policy, institutional and legislative direction of diaspora engagement, and their ability to return home and participate in local development processes. Diasporas in general develop social networks both to retain identity and to promote community self-help programs for finding jobs, housing, and managing immigration issues in their host-lands. They often form religious communities, schools to maintain homeland languages and cultural practices among children, and other social clubs to celebrate religious holidays or to mark other symbolically important dates. These social networks often are used to mobilize the diaspora in support of a party engaged in homeland conflict. Annual events such as the Ethiopian soccer tournament in North America bring thousands together not only to participate and socialize, but also to discuss politics of their country of origin (Warnecke, 2010).

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives

2.2.1. International Relations Theories and Diaspora

Theoretically, Shain and Barth (2003) argue that diaspora challenge the traditional state institutions of citizenship and loyalty by resting at the nexus of domestic and global politics. Above all, they are regarded as a force in identity formation. Since the diaspora live outside this but assert a legitimate stake in it, they challenge the usual meaning of the state, as challenges of its traditional borders, as conventional carrier of cultures, and as sign of communities without territory. Diasporas also function as ethnic lobbies in liberal host lands and as promoters of a multicultural foreign policy.

Thus, the diaspora is primarily considered a consequence of such processes; simple intervening entities in the power play of and within nation-states. The greater part of the early literature on diaspora in political science thus implies that diasporas have limited causal impact on the social and political world and are therefore narrowly studied as “actors” in international relation (Craven, 2018).

Despite the increase of interest in the issue of migration, international relation scholars have historically ignored population movements in international politics. The discipline’s failure to systematically examine migration flows is somewhat of a secrecy given the fact that migration often defined as the movement of people across national borders is an international happening. Thus, while on the surface, one might consider migration to be a natural and logical research topic in international relation, it has ultimately failed to emerge as a core issue area (Mitchell, 2012).

On the other hand, Baron (2014) discusses that customarily, security in international relations and security studies were understood to refer to the problem of war and interstate violent conflict. When identity was thought about in regard to security, the most logical place to look was in terms of national identity. Consequently, the literature on identity was primarily concerned with the security dynamics of the identity narratives of national interest.

2.2.1.1 Constructivism

According to Shain and Barth (2003), Constructivism seeks to account for actors' identities, motives and preferences, while liberalism deals largely with explaining their actions once the preferences are settled. Diasporas have both the motive and the opportunity to exert influence on the identity construction process, especially in its foreign policy aspect. Constructivists dealing with this political process should factor in diaspora as actors highly motivated and able to engage in the competition over identity construction.

2.2.1.2 Transnationalism Theory

Increases in information technology, improved openness to communication through the internet, and other reasonable modes of transportation have made possible the quick movement of information, assets, citizens, and power to non conventional areas of the globe. Nowadays, such areas include sets of refugees initiating from the same country who have formed transnational movements. Transnational migration theory's point is on the role of countries and if we can wrap up from transnationalism that the task of the countries has turned down (Johnson, 2012).

Baubock and Faist (2010) discuss that transnational migration studies can add to social theories that clarify the common foundation of the global, national and local. Migration research can give a total outlook on power that enlightens the link between the modern opposing narratives about migrants that either as a threat or celebrate them. Migration can be discussed as component of wider global procedures inside which countries are included and to which they add. Migration theorists can observe the traditions in which the migration process is shaped. The guiding principle for diaspora engagement, mainly when it involves the development of nationality, and nationality policies undoubtedly change between kin and migrant states, but the policies cause similar levels of contestation over changing the limits of the political community. Policies must reach far away to offer populations through practical motivation to keep devotion that match to what those populations most likely look for from the home Country (Baubock and Faist, 2010).

Transnationalism forms a larger amount of link among persons, communities and societies across borders, making changes in the social, cultural, economic and political settings of societies of origin and destination. A transnational view on migration is more and more significant because of the forces of globalization and their effect on ability to move. Now to be connected to national borders is possible without great effort. The faster expansion of routes, transport, trade and information networks throughout globalization has reinforced the links of migrants to two or more places (IOM, 2010).

Transnational connections shaped by migrants may serve as mediums for social and cultural interactions among societies through arts, music, movies, amusement and food, and visiting the attractions. Transnational relations can also be financial in character, together with remittances as well as investment and trade and besides expresses itself in the transmission of ideas. Migrants could also impact main thoughts in home and host countries in more clever ways, for example by communicating different observations regarding societal and political norms and practices in their home countries, and migrants can experience their transnational life as a basis of personal improvement and progress such as learning, skill and way of life chances and foreign language skills can be improved (ibid.).

The guiding principle for diaspora engagement, mainly when it involves the development of nationality, and nationality policies undoubtedly change between kin and migrant states, but the policies cause similar levels of competition over changing the limits of the political community. Policies must reach far away to offer populations through practical motivation to keep devotion that match to what those populations most likely look for from the home Country (Baubock and Faist, 2010).

2.2.1.3 Liberalism

Liberalism rejects the conventional assumptions that states are both the primary actors in international affairs and that they are unitary. Instead, it recommends that the primary actors in international politics are individuals and private groups who struggle to promote different interests. The state, then, is not an independent actor rather a demonstrative of the brief

coalition that captured it. According to the liberal approach, the degree of influence that domestic actors may apply on foreign policy depends on the strength of relations between the state (political institutions), and its society (social organizations). The weaker the former and the stronger the latter, the more influence various groups will exert on governmental policies (Shain and Barth, 2003).

By applying liberal insights about the dynamics of domestic politics, liberalism helps us better understand the influence of diaspora on homelands. Diasporas, thus, enjoy a privileged status of exercising influence as an interest group in both the homeland and the host land, often affecting homeland because of influence in the host land. In any case, as interest groups, diaspora may use whatever blow they can in order to advance their interests. Like other interest groups, they use their financial resources, especially since members of the diaspora are usually richer than their counterparts at home. Aside from using indirect influence through donations to various civil society projects, they exert more direct influence through political contributions to parties or candidates of their choice. In many cases, their financial contribution is observed as justifying a political expression (ibid.).

2.3. The Role of Diaspora Diplomacy in Promotion of Peace and Stability

Diaspora patriotism varies in time and space, and the patriotic flame is ignited by a variety of source and destination specific triggers. But states can play a role in building and expanding diaspora social and cultural networks (Boyle and Kitchin, 2013).

Freitas (2012) explains that as the diaspora is believed to channel norms, beliefs and ideas from ‘one side to the other’, their role as paths of cultural expressions and political claims was examined. Evidence from research and policy initiatives indicate that diaspora groups may indeed at times have an influence on the processes of social and political transformation in both their countries of origin and their host societies. Mobilization, lobbying and advocacy are some of the activities most commonly linked to the diaspora as global political actor.

Diaspora efforts cannot succeed when the basic elements of good governance are not integrated into development planning. Governments are also more likely to succeed in setting realistic but ambitious goals for diaspora engagement if they consult with diaspora members when setting these goals (Agunias and Newland, 2012).

Countries interested in their diaspora's potential take different approaches in addressing the resources of their diaspora, depending on their needs and capacities. Conflict-affected countries, for example, are often interested in tapping their diaspora's potential to attain economic reconstruction and sustainable peace. Conflict-affected countries face important challenges in constructing effective and sustainable diaspora engagement policies (Fransen and Melissa, 2011).

A study by Vanore, *et al* (2015) explain in their study the direct relation of the diaspora and peace-building , that the diaspora can contribute very directly in the rehabilitation of political institutions by running for election or accepting unelected roles in the administration, for example. Many instances of political leaders coming from the diaspora during or following conflict time, including Mohandas Gandhi (India), Hamid Karzai (Afghanistan), and Mikheil Saakashvili (Georgia). In Somalia, significant shares of leaders of state institutions in 2011 were former members of the diaspora.

The diaspora may contribute to peace and the resolution of conflict through the provision of financial, material and political support that can place pressure on parties to engage in negotiations to bring about a political solution (Hazel and Paul, 2007).

Another important way in which the diaspora can support post-conflict peace is through support of a diverse and inclusive civil society, including by contributing to civil society organizations (CSOs) that support community development and partnership. In some instances, the diaspora can be influential in opening and sustaining CSOs that have a strong focus on community development during and after conflict. Members of the Kurdish diaspora in the United Kingdom exemplify this well. A former advisor to the UK and Iraqi governments on issues such as governance, democracy, and civil rights established a grass-root NGO to facilitate peace-building efforts in Iraq through information interchange (*ibid.*).

Mohamoud (2006) argues that diaspora entertains diverse political views and brings different strategies of engagement to the politics of their homelands. For example, diaspora proactively support positive political forces in the homeland by bringing valuable new political ideas and practices that help the promotion of democratic political life in the homeland.

Diasporas also operate as ethnic lobbies in liberal host lands and as advocates of a multicultural foreign policy. They campaign to democratize authoritarian homeland regimes and are a force in the global economy assisting and changing the character of homelands' economies. More generally, diaspora are increasingly able to promote transnational ties, to act as bridges or mediators between their home and host societies, and to transmit the values of pluralism and democracy as well as the "entrepreneurial spirit and skills that their home countries so sorely lack". Yet, diaspora influence is not always constructive. Diaspora activists may be a major source of violence and instability in their homeland. As actors in conflict, just as diaspora can be advocates of peace processes, so too can they also be spoilers (Yossi, 2007:128).

To further substantiate his view, Mohamoud (2006) elaborates examples when diaspora played key roles, diaspora contributes positively to the peace dialogue by making their expertise available to the conflicting parties in the homeland in order to help them settle their differences through negotiation. An example cited is the prominent role played by the Somali diaspora in the Nairobi peace negotiation between the political groups in 2003/2004. Somali diaspora made their expertise available to help enhance the expression and negotiating capacities of the local protagonists. Moreover, during the post-conflict reconstruction period, the diaspora, due to their generally advanced educational levels, can assist the new governments in drafting treaties, agreements and constitutions, identifying policy priorities for social, economic, and political reconstruction, and formulating strategies for implementation.

Swain (2012) argues that as a result of globalization, the diaspora have built huge international networks, with a potential to contribute to peace, reconciliation and development. Improved communications, transport, and finance have allowed diaspora to act internationally without the blessing of their host states. This newly found freedom strengthens the weight of diaspora as political agents in several ways. A positive outcome is an improved ability to promote peace, resolve conflicts and create economic opportunities at home. Policy-makers in the host states are, however, also fairly concerned about their diminished ability to pressure immigrants and their descendants to sever ties with their homelands and become fully introduced in their new environment. Diasporas spread throughout the world are able to maintain ties through publications, websites and chat groups on the Internet.

2.4. The Role of Diaspora Diplomacy in Reconciliation and Nation-Building

Kriesberg (2007) explains the units and components of reconciliation, it happens among several diverse types of parties, ranging from individuals to countries, and it arises between persons and groups from hostile sides, at the grassroots, middle range, and elite levels. Reconciliation may be expressed at the interpersonal grassroots level, in friendships, marriages, and private conversations, or free work relations. Some persons may claim to be and are considered as representatives of larger units. In fact, some of them can make commitments for those entities. In such cases, people typically speak of reconciliation between countries and peoples, or between political and religious organizations, or between cities, regions, and neighborhoods.

The diaspora can also directly support the peace process by providing instrumental funding for peace conferences and other events that bring together delegates from warring parties or clans. In Somalia, for instance, the diaspora redirected significant financial resources to peace conferences and mediation events to reduce both intra- and inter-clan conflicts in Punt Land and Galmudug, after 2001. The diaspora also used remittances to fund payments and compensations for killings that help ease tensions between clans. A rise on the

compensations were used to discourage killings, as even families receiving remittances would be unable to provide such compensation (Hammond, *et al* 2011).

Reconciliation, therefore, has four dimensions and scopes that are important for conflict alteration: truth, justice, respect and security. Reconciliation does not mean that all these dimensions are addressed inevitably in the same way. They also do not have the same meaning for everyone. Some dimensions can even oppose each other. However, attaining high levels of reconciliation among all the dimensions is essential. The third aspect is that of the degree of reconciliation, which can vary in magnitude and intensity. If there is a high degree of reconciliation, this means that there are many members of society contributing to the process. Fourthly, reconciliation is often not symmetrical, which means that reconciliation is not an equal process. One side may have had more losses than the other side or one side may need to forgive more than the other side. Gaining more symmetry means that the two groups involved are moving towards greater equity (Kriesberg, 2007: 6-7).

2.5. Essence and Rationale for Engaging the Diaspora

Nowadays, there has been evolving studies on and recognition of the positive role that diaspora could play in post conflict situations. Outside the providing funding and support to financial retrieval, there have been inadequate inquiries on other possibly constructive roles that the diaspora can play in the outcome of violence and massive abuses (Horst, *et al*, 2010).

Boyle and Kitchin (2013) argue that diaspora may play numerous roles; advocates, activists, agitators, and ambassadors within diaspora communities can exploit their knowledge, contacts, linguistic skills, and cultural insights to promote peace and security in their homelands and to enhance the strategic, diplomatic, and foreign policy objectives of their countries of origin. Of course, there exists much debate over the degree to which the diaspora contribute more to conflict and political anarchy in homelands than to conflict resolution and progressive governments.

It has repeatedly been stated that the diaspora are neither homogeneous nor static entities, but composed of rather diverse and dynamic groups and factions, and ethnic, religious, political and other identities and affiliations. Likewise, the social, political, and economic framework conditions that influence and shape the perceptions and activities of diaspora communities on different levels are complex and subject to permanent change. Accordingly, the engagement of diasporas in peace processes has to be assessed by looking at the dynamic interaction between these factors diasporas' own attributes or features, including their historical development, composition, aims and activities, and the ensuing context conditions as well as political opportunities in countries of origin, residence and at the international level (Warnecke , 2010).

On the other hand, Abdile (2011) explains that the various roles and positions of diaspora members are perceived differently by the members of local communities. From an economic point of view, some locals perceive diaspora returnees and their families as grabbing local resources and predict that the more diaspora members that return to the homeland, the more difficult it will be for locals to compete for jobs and other services with the economically. Locals' negative perceptions of the diaspora are not only limited to resource sharing. Cultural differences have also emerged as a key concern for locals.

Despite the negative perceptions held by some locals in the country of origin towards certain type of diaspora, many of these same local people have positive perceptions of the diaspora in other aspects and conditions. The role of remittances as a tool for poverty reduction, and an opportunity for development in countries of origin have got a fascinating change in attitude. Diaspora members are also seen as people who could bring fresh and innovative ideas that can help accelerate development, institutional and peace-building initiatives (ibid.).

Ireland, for example, has profited from advocacy work done by its diaspora. Once a contributor to conflict and an obstacle to harmonious relations between Britain and Ireland, the Irish diaspora has come out as an influential partner for peace. In the 1990s, for instance, Irish America worked closely with the Clinton administration in the United States and political parties in Northern Ireland to make important contributions to the Northern Ireland

peace process. Then, it has played a role in channeling investment into Belfast, Derry, and border regions to support peace building (Boyle and Kitchin, 2013).

2.6. Determinants of Diaspora Attitudes in Conflict Resolution in the Homeland

Homeland and host-land governments are important actors that can influence the behavior of diaspora groups, with implications for political decision-making processes, affecting both countries. It may be that maintaining a keen interest in issues affecting their country of origin is a way for diaspora communities to reinforce their core values and beliefs, as well as, to preserve their identity in the shadow of globalization. Diasporas aim to create opportunities and foster cooperation between their homeland and host country. In other words, ‘ the diaspora is in fact increasingly building bridges between their home and host societies’, or ‘often play a role as a distinct third level between interstate and domestic peace-making’ (Swain, 2012).

Fransen and Melissa (2011) argue that there are many channels through which diasporas can exert influence on their home countries. The most obvious channel is monetary support by means of either collective or individual remittances. Most early diaspora policy initiatives focused on the facilitation and enhancement of remittances flows. In addition, the influence of diaspora on economic processes through investments, market innovation, and the outsourcing of production is currently a major driving force of diaspora involvement for many developing countries.

A diaspora community’s attitude towards potential peace deals involving its kin state stems from the interrelated concerns of identity and interest inside and outside the homeland. Main concerns can be identified that influence diaspora postures toward conflict resolution efforts in their homeland. First, a concern to maintain their ethnic identity as they regard of it the ethnic identity of diaspora group is made up of elements that are shared with their people in the homeland (historical, social, and cultural ideals) as well as other elements that are unique to the diaspora and derive its separate experiences; Second, competition with the homeland for leadership of the transnational community. The third is diaspora’s other political interests and goals in its host state. Settlement of a homeland conflict may threaten long-cherished

political institutions in the diaspora community. Some have argued that if the Arab-Israeli conflict were resolved peacefully, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) would likely see its mission greatly reduced, along with its membership, its funding and its level of attention from elected officials in the United States of America. The fourth is related about political and social status in the host society (Shain and Barth, 2003).

2.7. Factors Affecting Engagement and Efficiency of the Diaspora

Different policies include facilitating return diaspora, and providing investment incentives for members of the diaspora. States have also begun encouraging the exchange of skills and ideas between diaspora members and their country of origin in coordination with partners in private or civil society. Diaspora populations are often interested in contributing to development strategies in their countries of origin, but they may choose varying forms of engagement based on their capacity and the political and economic environment of the state concerned and Proactive policies of origin countries are important (Black, 2008). The main power of the argument of diaspora engagement policy is that specific types of policy intervention can enhance flows of remittances, investments, knowledge transfers and political influence through diaspora groups back into their homelands. Many countries have implemented policies to facilitate and capture remittances (Gamlen, 2008).

The following table illustrates factors influencing diaspora engagement.

	Country of Residence	Country of Origin	International Level
Diaspora Characteristcs	<p>Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations; gender, generation and social class; internal divisions, conflicts and fragmentation</p> <p>Networking capacities</p> <p>Capacity and level of professionalism</p> <p>Perceptions of peace and conflict</p>	<p>Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations</p> <p>Networking, alliances, partnerships and relationships between institutional stakeholders and the diaspora</p>	<p>Transnational networks</p>
Context	<p>Historical links towards the country of origin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Migration history and composition of migration flows - Legal framework (citizenship, residence permit) - Integration policy and perception of migrants by resident society -Funding structures and opportunities for cooperation with local NGOs or institutions -Foreign policy towards country of origin; bilateral relations -Level of socio-economic Integration 	<p>Major lines of conflict (sources, parties, etc.)</p> <p>Existence of (functional) government structures and level of decentralization</p> <p>Diaspora-targeted policies and practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Local views on diaspora and their role -Issues of access (entrance, security, resources) -Clan, ethnic, religious and regional affiliations -Existence of a civil society and availability of local partners 	<p>International relations; including major shifts and windows of opportunity</p> <p>Activities, openings or programmes by international/multinational organizations or bodies</p>

Table 1: Warnecke (2010:102) factors influencing diaspora engagement.

On the other hand, Shain and Barth (2003) explain that, in order for a diaspora to exercise influence on a homeland foreign policy, there should exist motive, opportunity, and means (a diaspora should both want to use influence and have the capacity to do so). This capacity depends on the ability to organize members of the kin community as an influential group (which depends in part on the nature of the host land regime) and on the openness of homeland's political system to diaspora influence. Therefore, the factors affecting the efficiency of the diaspora influence include: the level of diaspora motivation, nature of the host-land, and strength of relations between diaspora and homeland.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHIOPIA'S DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT SINCE THE MID-2018 POLITICAL REFORM IN ETHIOPIA

3.1. Historical Background

Globalization has shaped how courses of migration, exile, and the patterns of diaspora and other transnational networks function. By lessening communication and travel expenses, globalization has made it simpler for migrants to form groups that link geographically far-away populations to social, political, and economic developments in their homelands. Those forced across borders by conflict or oppression commonly have a detailed set of painful memories and hence create specific types of “conflict generated diasporas” that retain highly prominent ties to the homeland. The diasporas are often mobilized and engaged in homeland politics in ways that shape processes of conflict and democratization (Lyons, 2009).

According to Ongayo (2014:6) migration in Ethiopia is influenced by four major factors; namely

1. Conflict
2. Political condition
3. Poor economic prospects, and
4. The deterioration of the environment in some parts of the country

3.1.1. The Imperial and *Derg* Periods

Ethiopia's political chaos in the 1970s added her to the list of countries suffering an enormous flow of population through migration. In 1974, Ethiopia had the smallest proportion of population living abroad of any country in the world. The painful displacements of the *Derg* regime made the country with the highest proportion of its citizens living abroad just five years later (Levine, 2011).

It is also remarkable that the migration of Ethiopians to the United States increases whenever there is a regime change in Ethiopia. This happened following downfall of the imperial regime in 1974, as well as, the collapse of the military regime in 1991 (Kassaw, 2017).

A large number of Ethiopian immigrants have obtained permanent resident through family reunification, diversity visa programs or as refugees. Historically, Ethiopian immigrants have come in waves (ibid.).

Because of the dictatorial *Derg* regime that began in 1974 thousands fled the country, mostly as refugees, and later, between 1982 and 1991 there was a new wave of migration to the West for family reunification. In general, from 1974-1991 Ethiopians fled to escape the *Derg's* Red Terror and later largely included family reunification to the West.³

3.1.2. The Period between 1991 – 2018

To differentiate among the numerous Ethiopian diaspora actors, a study by Hoehne, *et al* (2011:84), group members of the Ethiopian diasporas into four categories based on the nature of their political engagement with homeland affairs. First, “centrists” who vigorously contest the legitimacy of Ethiopia’s ethnic federalism designed and implemented by the EPRDF; second, ‘nationalists’ who bitterly resent what they consider EPRDF’s ‘backsliding’ from democratic federalism into a state controlled system by a dominant ethnic group; third, pro-government diaspora supporters who act as a transnational political constituency; fourth, religious diasporas whose members contest the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front’s top-down prioritization of ethnic identity and the continued inequalities.

The Ethiopian diaspora, therefore, played a number of critical roles in the historic political events in 2005. The diaspora’s ability’ to frame political debates and act as caretaker for opposition strategies made diaspora support for engagement in electoral competition essential for the May 2005 elections. The Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic

³ International Organization for Migration/IOM (2018, November), ‘*Mapping of Ethiopian Diasporas Residing in the United States of America*’. Country Report, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Front identified diaspora ‘extremists’ as responsible for much of the political crisis in Ethiopia (Lyons, 2009).

There are numerous Ethiopian political organizations that have worsened the division of Ethiopian diaspora members. Such political organizations are formed based on their community and ethnic group, leaving no room for national harmony. Prior to the current Ethiopian regime, there was very little ethnic division among Ethiopians. For instance, Ethiopian Sports Federation in North America/ ESFNA in the United States, once known to be the greatest unifier has now become a symbol of separation (Kassaw, 2017).

Since its so-called landslide victory in 2015, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front held every seat in parliament. It has been brutally repressing opposition by detaining, harassing, and prosecuting individuals under its misguided Anti-terrorism Proclamation of 2009. When protests attempted to air out their grievances, the government has responded by declaring a state of emergency, which gave it broad powers to deploy the military, restrict the media, restrict the internet and controls communications.⁴

In general, after the defeat of the *Derg* in 1991, Ethiopians have migrated either to escape violence among some of the country’s numerous of political repression, or to pursue economic opportunities.⁵

3.2. Ethiopian Diaspora Diplomacy since the Mid-2018 Political Reform in Ethiopia

Ethiopian immigrants are enthusiastically involved in political, social movement and philanthropy activities, particularly in Washington DC, Los Angeles and New York areas in the United States of America. A number of organizations that lift up Ethiopian socio-economic and political issues faced by the community in the United States of America and

⁴Cultural Survival (2018), “*Observations on the State of Indigenous Human Rights in Ethiopia: The 33rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review*”, October 2018

⁵Vallis Group (December 31, 2018). ‘*Ethiopia, Africa’s Oldest Independent Country, And The Root of The pan-African Colours, Is Still Growing As A Monumental Spearhead In The African Community and Throughout The Rest Of The World*’. Ethiopia Country Report, Vallis Group Limited.

their home country. They persist to appreciate their home countries and support friends, family and even political movements.⁶

Prime Minister Dr. Abiy hurriedly began a tour of the country, conducting town-hall meetings and listening to citizens whose voices were rarely heard. He also announced plans to amend the existing Constitution to include term limits for prime ministers, encouraged exiled opposition politicians to return home and participate in politics, and suggested ending government monopolies in key economic sectors, including telecommunications, energy, and air transport. He went further by meeting with leaders of over 50 opposition parties and declaring that a strong multiparty system based on the rule of law and human rights was essential for Ethiopia. On a trip through the United States, with stops in Washington DC, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles, he engaged with exiled opposition leaders and other members of the diaspora in an effort to show his government's commitment to reconciliation. For Ethiopians in the country and abroad who are familiar to an authoritarian Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front's government that prioritizes economic growth and stability over political and civil rights, the speed and extent of these changes are exciting (ibid.).

3.2.1. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's Major Areas of Diaspora Engagement

Mardari (2017) explains diaspora engagement can be said as governmental or non-governmental actions focused on emigrants and their children channeling measures aimed to control remittances, develop migrants return programs, launch symbolic requests toward diaspora, in order to maintain the emigrants loyalty and linkage with the origin country, balancing and managing the many ways in which states impact on, and are impacted by.

3.2.1.1. Peace-building and Reconciliation Efforts

Diasporas often support homeland struggles against neighboring countries, kin communities, fights and struggles to acquire statehood. Their help may be vital to nation building and state consolidation in the homelands, making the views of the diaspora regarding national conflict a heavy factor in the debates and considerations of homeland leaders. Given their

⁶ International Organization for Migration/IOM (November 2018), '*Mapping of Ethiopian, Diasporas Residing in the United States of America*'. Country Report, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

importance, and since they are enduring feature in the imperfect nation-state system, diasporas now receive growing attention from decision makers around the World (Yossi, 2007). On the other hand, Makumi (2012) discusses that an active resource for the development of any country is its people both at home and those living abroad. While some effort has been put in place to build the capacity and empower citizens at home to contribute to national development, not much effort and resources have been put in place to mobilize nationals abroad towards development of their home country

Temin and Badwaza (2019) describe that, while enormous challenges persist, the ongoing political opening in Ethiopia offers an opportunity for the expansion of democracy and respect for human rights in a geopolitically important state, and is already having significant implications for peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Managing massive expectations, maintaining stability, and instituting a political order in which the country's divergent political groups and ethnic communities are meaningfully represented and at peace with each other are key tests that will determine the trajectory of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's courageous political experiment. With strong citizen engagement and international support, there is reason to believe that the challenges are defeated.

Socialized with liberal values in Western societies, the diaspora might be expected to be interested in promoting such values in their homelands. Indeed, this often occurs in the transnational space. Diasporas teach their extended families and friends about democratic practices, such as how to vote for local government and to develop gender equality. The diaspora is an essential entity with a big financial and societal capacity whose contribution is positive and substantial in peace building efforts (Hailay, 2015).

In his effort of engaging the diaspora, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed also toured Europe. There was a gathering of Ethiopians from across Europe in Frankfurt, Germany on 31st October, 2018 which turned out to be the best moment of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's tour of the continent. The Prime Minister went on to assert the essence of the meeting with confidence and commitment, putting the interests of Ethiopians at the centre. Diaspora representatives from communities across Europe raised questions to the Prime Minister on

his government's plans for durable peace in Ethiopia, national unity, reconciliation, democratization, and the Constitution, and Prime Minister Abiy provided answers to questions raised by the Ethiopian diaspora.⁷

Danish Immigration Service (2019⁸) elaborate that, after the selection of the new Prime Minister, the situation for the diaspora has been less threatening and that members of the diaspora are less worried for their safety than before because of the significant changes in political situation. The diaspora movement has played a key role in pushing for the release of certain prisoners. The diaspora community is composed of a certain number of hardliners with no room for any middle ground. Their fundamental positions might be explained by the fact that some of them have been victims of torture and persecution in Ethiopia and forced to leave the country. After Prime Minister Dr. Abiy assumed power, it is now possible to access all YouTube channels and TV programs issued by member of the Diaspora community. This also includes their websites. The discussion about political issues, as well as, about corruptive practices is freer and ordinary people are more willingly engage in political discussions.

Therefore, strong EPRDF opponents, who not long ago were called extremists, rebels and anti-peace elements by the government organized pro-government demonstrations in Washington DC, United States of America to show support for the reformist prime minister and his reconciliatory message. There has been international support for his political and economic reforms and repeated calls for the changes to be sustained and institutionalized.⁹

3.2.1.2. Establishment of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF)

Maisoon, (2013) discusses that communication inside and between members of a diaspora and their local population is a focus of worthy of interest for communication scholars. Social

⁷Embassy of Ethiopia in London (2018). '*Ethiopian News Monthly Publication, Embassy of Ethiopia*'. October 2018, London, UK. <https://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Summer-2018-Newsletter.pdf>

⁸ Danish Immigration Service(DIS) (2018). '*Ethiopia Political Situation and Treatment of Opposition*'. Country Report, Country of Origin Information (COI), Report based on interviews in Ethiopia, September 2018, Ministry of Immigration and Integration, The Danish Immigration Service

⁹*Aljazeera* (June 30, 2018). '*Why I'm Coming Back home to Ethiopia After 16 Years in Exile*'. Accessed from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/coming-home-ethiopia-16-years-exile-180629110411115.html>

media and digital technology in particular provide opportunities for collaboration between Diasporas and their native countries and for political changes through the formation of new spaces and communities for exploring emotionally-charged issues in creative ways. Social media used by members of diaspora may change the meanings of community, political practices and processes, and citizenship. In fact there are numerous studies which discuss people who have experienced diaspora and how they use social media. On the other hand, Kingsley and Nicola (2011) argue that viewing the diaspora as a national benefit and asset is undoubtedly not a new phenomenon. Diaspora strategies that extend across a range of social, cultural, political, educational and financial dimensions are now being implemented by both developing countries and developed countries, including New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Israel, Ireland and India, to name but a few.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) Advisory Council announced the launch of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund on October 22, 2018, and the Council has been highly aware of the eagerness of diaspora Ethiopians to respond to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's call for USD\$1 a day to help support critically needed social projects in Ethiopia. In establishing the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund, the council had to include a non-profit aid organization, create a bank account, negotiate with online payment systems and other funding platforms, go with various regulations and establish governance, management and application procedures for maximum accountability and transparency. The primary objective of the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund is to improve the lives of poor and disadvantaged people of Ethiopia through people-focused, innovative and result-oriented social and economic development projects. The Fund aims to finance projects that meet critical needs selected based on their potential to make the highest positive impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups and communities.¹⁰

The establishment of Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund comprises of a Board of Directors to supervise the operations of the Fund in-country, a Global Advisory Council to mobilize global support and advise on strategic directions, a Secretariat that includes the Executive

¹⁰ Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) Advisory Council, March 25,2019,Accessed from <https://www.ethiopiastrustfund.org>

Director and key staff to manage the setting up for and distribution of funds, and implementing agencies who will be recruited based on a proposal submission process. These are eventually accountable to the Prime Minister's Office.¹¹

3.2.1.3. Creating Favorable Atmosphere for Ethiopian Diaspora to Engage in the Banking Sector

Williams (2018) argues that a coordinated response to mobilize the diaspora to create a positive impact on the economy with the aims being to better coordinate policy, reduce the risks associated with investment, increase support, improve the institutional environment and involve the diaspora in policy making. Through the effective coordination and implementation of policy, governments are seeking to improve economic growth through increased investment and increased levels of remittances, the transfer of knowledge to the country of origin, enhancements in human and social capital, and a more skilled workforce, all of which can be impacted by effective mobilization of the diaspora and return the economies to the 'norm' of positive growth.

Governments encounter certain capacity constraints within state structures and institutions, and these constraints outline the development challenge they face. African governments can harness the African diaspora resources to enhance development outcomes in Africa. African governments have been proactive in recent years in reaching out to their diaspora communities. Ruling and opposition parties actively raise funds in the diaspora, in running their home countries (Chikezie, 2011). Targeted policy interventions and institutional support can make diaspora activities sustainable and maximize the benefits for countries of origin. Establishing an enabling regulatory environment to harness and expand the impact of diaspora contributions in countries of origin, ensuring policy coherence at national and local levels in relation to diaspora engagement strategies, and favorable frameworks for facilitating and harnessing diaspora remittances are very important (Taylor, *et al*, 2016).

¹¹ Addis Standard (January 04, 2019). '*Ethiopia Diaspora Trust Fund: A great idea in Need of a Reset*'. Accessed from, <https://addisstandard.com/oped-ethiopia-diaspora-trust-fund-great-idea-need-reset/>

The Ethiopian Diaspora Agency was publicly launched on 1st March/2019, with the intention of creating an enabling environment for the Diaspora to maximize knowledge and skills transfer and promoting trade and investment. Special attention will be given to efficient data management in order to identify the exact number of Ethiopian Diaspora in the world and the countries where they live. The Agency will ensure the protection of the rights and dignity of Ethiopians in the Diaspora and provide the right tools, so the Diaspora actively engages in the country's development activities. The agency will be accountable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and manage its own budget and financial activities.¹².

The proclamation to offer for banking business No. 592/2008 stated that foreign nationals or organizations fully or partially owned by foreign nationals are not permitted to open banks. Hence, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's Council of Ministers during its extraordinary meeting agreed the Draft Banking Business Proclamation, allowing Diaspora to establish banks in Ethiopia. The new banking business bill would create an opportunity for Ethiopian born foreign citizens not only to buy shares of existing banks but create their own new banks in the country. The amended proclamation also helps the existing banks to mobilize finances from not only local sources but overseas sources with the goal of growing the country's economic development.¹³

Hence, Ethiopia's parliament passed a bill to open up the country's financial sector to an estimated five million of the country's citizens who have taken other nationalities, including allowing them to buy shares in local banks and start lending businesses. The changes are part of economic reforms initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed when he came to power last year, partly aimed at enhancing the country's foreign exchange reserves, which had dropped severely low.¹⁴

¹²Embassy of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, London UK (April 01, 2019). ' *Diaspora Agency Launched*'. Accessed From <https://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/diaspora-agency-launched/>

¹³Capital Ethiopia (May 06, 2019). ' *Financial Sector Opens to Diaspora*'. Accessed from <https://www.capitalethiopia.com/featured/financial-sector-opens-to-diaspora/>

¹⁴Reuters News Agency (July 31, 2019). ' *Ethiopia opens up Banking Sector to its Diaspora*'. Accessed From, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-banks-idUSKCN1UQ1OG>

3. 2.1.4 Foreign Exchange Enhancement and Investment Attraction Efforts

Ethiopia is one of the world's largest unused markets, and there is an increasing belief that privatization of state-owned enterprises could be one of the ways to attract potential investments and stimulate the economy. The Ethiopian government has resisted liberalizing key sectors to foreign and local investors, but the executive committee of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the ruling party, publicized a plan to partly liberalize key economic sectors in June 2018. There are plans to offer minority stakes in airlines, power and telecoms to global investors. In addition, the possibility of railway projects, hotels and key manufacturing industries, have become a good reason to enhance investors' confidence and in turn, the possibility of attracting investments.¹⁵

Ethiopia's affiliation with the Gulf States has also much improved over the past year, with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates playing a role in brokering peace with Eritrea to advance economic integration in the Horn, and several new agreements on economic and military cooperation, including the United Arab Emirates/UAE promising \$3 billion in aid and investment.¹⁶

¹⁵World Economic Forum (September 06, 2019). '*Ethiopia is Africa's new growth engine – here's why*'. Accessed From, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/09/5-reasons-why-ethiopia-could-be-the-next-global-economy-to-watch/>

¹⁶Soliman, Ahmed and Abel Abate (April 12, 2019). 'Can Abiy Ahmed Continue to Remodel Ethiopia?' <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/can-abiy-ahmed-continue-remodel-ethiopia>

Degol and Tsegaye (2018) discuss that the National Bank of Ethiopia and the International Monetary Fund/ IMF agreed that Ethiopia's foreign exchange reserves cannot finance imports anymore added to the country's outstanding external public debt. Ethiopia, a primary commodity exporting country, is yet to generate adequate resources for financing the Sustainable Development Goals/SDGs, pay its debt and complete the ambitious mega projects such as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the multitude of unfinished sugar and fertilizer factories, which themselves have exhausted the foreign exchange reserves. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed may succeed in galvanizing the diaspora community to send money. However, ensuring innovative and sustainable flow of development finance may require an element of further rigorous investment strategy beyond the call to patriotic sentiments alone.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA DIPLOMACY AND ENGAGEMENT SINCE THE MID-2018 POLITICAL REFORM IN ETHIOPIA

4.1. Challenges

After the Ethiopian reform of mid-2018, the Ethiopian diaspora diplomacy and engagement have reached at a crucial stage, but with some limitations. Among the weaknesses that have been witnessed are institutional and framework challenges, division among segments of the Ethiopian diaspora, lack of synchronization among diaspora stakeholders, and disputable laws towards the diaspora.

4.1.1. Institutional and Framework Challenges

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's tour in September and October 2018 to Europe and America to invite Ethiopia's diaspora to engage in their country have created immense initiation and excitement among the Ethiopian diaspora and international communities in general. This tour was assumed that it will be a beginning to alleviate gaps between the diaspora and the Ethiopian Government. Nevertheless, it should have been institutional and strengthened.¹⁷ Lately, in January 2020, Prime Minister Abiy's main message to the Ethiopian diaspora in South Africa, for instance, was to persuade them that Ethiopia is changing at his leadership.¹⁸

Abrham explains his worries regarding institutional challenges that Prime Minister Dr. Abiy's engagement is historical, but what about next should be extremely important. It brought hope, but also was assumed that the discussion would continue, for permanent institution, the diaspora may have direct participation in their own country. Ethiopia does not have a diaspora's champion who addresses the various questions of the diaspora. Ethiopian diaspora association's question is that the diaspora should be institutionalized at a ministry

¹⁷ Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, interview conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

¹⁸ Abiy Ahmed woos the Ethiopian diaspora in South Africa. Accessed from 13 January 2020 <https://mg.co.za/article/2020-01-13-abiy-ahmed-woos-the-ethiopian-diaspora-in-south-africa/>

level, not at an agency level, and then should directly report to the office of the Prime Minister. This arrangement will help contribute greatly for Ethiopian diaspora participate efficiently in all endeavors of development activities in the country.¹⁹

Therefore, it is safe to argue that having a strong diaspora institution plays a fundamental role for effective engagement of the diaspora, Ethiopia must have one. Particularly, when Ethiopia needs tap all the potential of its diaspora's economic and technical resources, the existence of such strong diaspora institution that deal with all affairs of the Ethiopian diaspora professionally, is necessary.

4.1.2. Division among Segments of the Ethiopian Diaspora

Initially, the Ethiopian diaspora have given a popular support to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration. Lately, however, when they assume the Government the extent they needed to work, and then the diaspora began retreating, protest, accusation and opposing the new administration. Nevertheless, the extensive support Dr. Abiy earned in North America and Europe has a tremendous positive effect for his new leadership. The world, particularly the Western world, expects a democratic transition. Ethiopian diasporas were divided and when some of the diasporas returned to their homeland; in turn this division of the diaspora have brought undesirable influence on the government. The Ethiopian diaspora's politics is the reflection of internal politics of the country, positively or negatively. Since the diaspora is the reflection of the domestic politics, it appears the support for Dr. Abiy's Administration is diminishing. Some of the diasporas are here, and they are not going to give the same support tomorrow, the support they provided today.²⁰

Furthermore, views about Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is divided on political grounds, that is, the expectation was that he would unite Ethiopia and bring about peace, security and unity. Against the anticipation of Ethiopians, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration proved

¹⁹Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, the interview was conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

²⁰Professor Merera Gudina, Chairman of Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/Medrek Party, the interview was conducted on April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa.

to be either incapable or reluctant to achieve those ideals. More than three million Ethiopians were displaced locally due to ethnic based violence, and security problem has become common across Ethiopia, even in the capital Addis Ababa which is known as Africa's city of diplomats. The opposition in the diaspora could be seen in the above context. Nowadays, those who oppose to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (some of the figures were devoted supporters about a year ago) protested in Washington DC against his administration.²¹

On the other hand, currently it may appear the mobilization of the diaspora for Dr. Abiy decreasing based on Social Media, it needs further researcher to conclude. Yes, few diasporas objected, but, he has still got support from the majority of the diaspora. The government's recent engagement of the diaspora was a temporary movement and heat. Because, if we see the Trust Fund, for instance, we couldn't mobilize enough finance as originally thought. Even worse, some of the diasporas have staged protests against the government as old days. Another phase of headache regarding the diaspora's division is being witnessed, open ethnic based divisions, using the social media and other platforms. Therefore, a strong institution is a must.²²

In the past, the Government of Ethiopia also tried to choose and side with some sect of the Ethiopian diaspora for its own benefit. Only after the reform that some changes have been witnessed even though it is not enough. Understanding the potentials of Ethiopians living abroad is one thing, and tapping that potential is another great step that may involve numerous actors both within Government and outside the Government.²³

As Shain and Barth (2003) argue in their study, Constructivists claim the diaspora as actors highly motivated and able to engage in the competition over identity construction. Hence, it is safe to argue that, this has been witnessed in the various segments of the Ethiopian

²¹ 'Arrest as supporters and opponents of Abiy Ahmed clash in Washington DC' July 18, 2019 Accessed from <https://borkena.com/2019/07/18/arrest-as-supporters-and-opponents-of-abiy-ahmed-clash-in-washington-dc/>

²²Eyob Mesafint, is International Members Head and Member of Executive Committee of Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party, the interview was conducted on October 03, 2019, Addis Ababa.

²³Wasihun Tesfaye, is Secretary of Ethiopian Democratic Party/EDP, the interview was conducted on April 18/2019.

diaspora communities, and the existence of efficient institution that would serve the diaspora with a relatively greater national consensus is very important. Moreover, strengthening democratic institutions have a greater significance since the diaspora' politics seems, one way or another is the manifestation of domestic politics of Ethiopia.

4.1.3. Lack of Synchronization among Diaspora Stakeholders

Until recently, diaspora engagement activities have been normally uncoordinated, with governments in the country of origin targeting and interacting with the diaspora in direct and indirect ways. Indirect forms include general improvements to the institutional environment in an economy. Improvements in institutions are clearly important for lower income economies, not simply for attracting more diaspora investment, but more generally to secure growth and slow down outward migration (Williams, 2018).

It is important to consider the diaspora as a decisive stakeholder since they are citizens of Ethiopia. In the past, due to lack of proper policy and frameworks, the diaspora roles turned to negative rather than be positive. By handling properly, and in a way it helps and contribute to Ethiopia, it is possible to change that role. Otherwise, the diaspora may become victims of others agenda. First of all, it is important to hold a firm believes that Ethiopian born diaspora as important stakeholders. Nevertheless, they seem to be forgotten parts of the society. They are considered as Europeans or American citizens, even when they want to invest, and they are not allowed to engage in finance and banking sectors, the laws related to the diaspora are not inclusive, in general. Global experience shows that the diaspora is playing pivotal roles (particularly remittances) in their country's economy: India, and the Philippines are good examples.²⁴

4.1.4. Challenges in the Country of Residence

The main challenge in the country of residence is the degree to which the Ethiopian diaspora community achieves prominence and visibility, is recognized by host-country institutions,

²⁴ Wasihun Tesfaye, is Secretary of Ethiopian Democratic Party/EDP, the interview was conducted on April 18/2019.

and is able to access the necessary political opportunity structures. There are also challenges in terms of decreasing resources, especially for those groups that depend on grants. At the same time, there are also challenges from within the diaspora communities. Fragmentation and lack of a common voice cause a challenge, especially in relation to policy issues affecting the community and the country of origin that require collective organizing, lobbying and advocacy. Equally, the ability of Ethiopian diaspora organizations to secure the resources needed for global engagement also depends on their legal status (i.e., whether they are foundations or associations), since the legal status chosen at the time of their foundation determines the types of resources they can apply for (Ongayo, 2014).

Diasporas have a tendency to have special strengths and weaknesses in their prospect for engagement as development players. Their potential strengths lie in their understanding of power, politics, and the potential for peace building. At a political level, they may provide representation to people without voice in their country of origin a positive challenge to the government of origin if guided professionally (Townsend and Middernacht, 2014).

4.1.5 Challenges in the Country of Origin

Ongayo (2014) also explains problems in the country of origin, Ethiopian diaspora organizations, encounter challenges caused by factors relating to the political environment. Observations in Ethiopia suggest that the situation in the countries of origin together with the type of issues by diaspora organizations can sometimes lead to serious implementation challenges if the issues turn out to be unacceptable to the regime. Depending on their political affiliations, Ethiopian diasporas find it difficult to go back and undertake activities either in their respective regions of origin or elsewhere in Ethiopia. This is because the 2009 Non-Government Organizations/NGOs Act limits the geographical coverage of an organizational activity. Under this law, NGOs were allowed to operate only in chosen locations and regions. This prevents them from providing services in regions other than that specified in the permit.

The Ethiopian government should have a strong relation with association like Ethiopian Diaspora Association, as diasporas are best be reached through the association. And strong

relation with the returned diaspora helps engage overseas Ethiopia's diaspora. Civic societies working around diaspora should be taken into consideration, consulted, and should be given a special support so that their mission is accomplished. There is no as such diaspora's participation when the diaspora agency was established, nor diaspora wing establishments. Truly speaking, the Ethiopian diaspora around the World see the diasporas who have returned to homeland, and if they are happy then they tend to engage more, and if not they will be discouraged to come and engage.²⁵

Therefore, it is fair to argue that building partnerships and developing mutual trust between the Ethiopian government and all diaspora stakeholders and associations is vital for better engagement of Ethiopian diaspora around the world. Due to expertise and other resources, diaspora associations play decisive roles. If all the stakeholders of the Ethiopian diaspora work together effectively, and harmoniously, then, they could play a substantial role in influencing diaspora contributions to development and growth of Ethiopia.

4.1.6. Disputable Regulations towards the Ethiopian Diaspora

Abrham elaborates the difficult regulations for Ethiopian diaspora to engage in the finance sector that the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund came through the Office of the Prime Minister and higher bodies who supervise the trust fund are assigned through the Prime Minister's office. We see lack of coordination, this is an example. If the finances sector were open, then remittances would increase. Usually, the diaspora is needed for remittances but not allowed to involve in politics, the bank stakes diaspora bought were revoked. For instance, the diaspora deposits by USD, but the government provides the depositor, the diaspora, in *birr* and this creates lack of confidence and threat on the diaspora. Had the government allowed withdrawing money deposited by the diaspora, diaspora definitely would have chosen to deposit in their own country. And imagine what would be the government's United States Dollar deposit, reserve. The reason why the diaspora failed to bring Dollar in to the country

²⁵ Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, the interview was conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

as expected is because the government is not paying in United States Dollar, foreign currency issue should have been alleviated.²⁶

Frustration in investment, for example, (those diaspora who bought a bank share at some time in the past was taken by the government, Ethiopian diasporas are asking and worrying what if the government takes their homes, and what guarantee do they have. Diasporas are not sure if they have some factory, is the Ethiopian Government sometime in the future taking from them what do they have as a guarantee. The Ethiopian diaspora can make huge impact for development of the Country. But, the Ethiopian diaspora need grounded assurance.²⁷

This problem seems to have been resolved recently. The Council of Ministers during its extraordinary meeting approved the Draft Banking Business Proclamation, allowing Diaspora to establish banks in Ethiopia. Experts at the National Bank believe that the government's current strategy is creating a feeling of ownership in the Diaspora community. The new law is considered the start of opening the financial sector to foreign shareholders, which has been one of the two major areas that members of World Trade Organization wanted Ethiopia to open.²⁸

Wasihun explains the necessity for better rights to Ethiopian diaspora not only economic but also political right, as well, is vital. Now, what is going on is that the Ethiopian government needs their remittance, but with less favorable environment for the diaspora's benefits in return. Previously, the diaspora of Ethiopia have been considered as enemies rather than a strategic partners, let alone as citizens.²⁹

On the other hand, Abrham also believes that there are various questions that the diaspora raises: dual citizenship, regarding restrictions on the diaspora which prohibit them involving

²⁶Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, the interview was conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Capital Ethiopia (May 06, 2019). ' *Financial sector opens to Diaspora* '. Accessed from <https://www.capitalethiopia.com/featured/financial-sector-opens-to-diaspora/>

²⁹Wasihun Tesfaye, is Secretary of Ethiopian Democratic Party/EDP, the interview was conducted on April 18/2019.

and participating directly. These, at least, are the very fundamental issues that should be resolved, and given due priority.³⁰

However, the newly adopted Proclamation provides good news to domestic Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from this unrealistic burden. At the first place, the Proclamation narrows down the classification of CSOs into two categories, Ethiopian and foreign, merging the previously separate Ethiopian and Ethiopian resident CSOs under one category. Pursuant to the definition given under the new law, domestic CSOs are formed under Ethiopian law by Ethiopian nationals or residents who hold foreign passports. A drafting committee has prepared a new CSOs law, which has been adopted by Parliament and replaced the 2009 Proclamation, guiding in a new era for civil society in Ethiopia. The drafting process of the repealed law, which failed to adequately involve relevant stakeholders and the new civil society's law is finally adopted by the House of Peoples Representatives on February 5, 2019. The first major improvement made by the new law addresses one of the highly criticized rules of the previous law, which relates to the restriction on source of funding³¹

Ethiopian Human Rights Council explains that, hence, the House of Peoples Representatives adopted the revised Civil Society Proclamation 1113/2019, which repeals the Proclamation No. 621/2009. The funding constraints are lifted, and the powers of the CSO Agency are also limited in particular by the introduction of the right to appeal against the refusal of registration. This will allow all organizations, local and international, to work on human rights-related issues, and has already opened the door to several organizations which will now be able to end their exile.³²

Accordingly, it is reasonable to argue that as the Country aspires to move into a more open approach to the political participation of all sectors of society, it is indeed essential to have

³⁰ Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, the interview was conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

³¹ *Reporter Ethiopia* (February 16, 2019), *Does the revised Ethiopian civil society proclamation deliver the promise of reform?* Accessed from <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/article/does-revised-ethiopian-civil-society-proclamation-deliver-promise-reform>

³² *Ethiopian Human Rights Council/EHRCO* (2019), *Ethiopia: A new era for human rights organizations?* Retrieved from (<https://ehrc.org/2019/02/ethiopia-a-new-era-for-human-rights-organisations/?lang=en>)

conversations on more formal and legally established ways for diaspora engagement in the political process. The Ethiopian diaspora may contribute positively, significantly to the trade, industry, and economic improvement in Ethiopia. The financial sector of Ethiopia has become open for Ethiopians living abroad since Ethiopian Parliament passed a bill to open up the country's financial sector recently, and it a better move with regard to revising a proclamation of Civil Society Organizations by the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia. In addition, in recent times, it seems the government of Ethiopia is expecting the diaspora of boosting the performance of the financial sector of Ethiopia by signaling flexibilities.

4.2. Prospects for Ethiopian Diaspora Diplomacy and Engagement

Despite the challenges, Ethiopian Government, diasporas, and other stakeholders have some opportunities that would help them further reinforce the diasporas diplomacy and engagement for the development of Ethiopia. The coming of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to political power and the reforms measures his administration have taken so far have contributed positively to diaspora diplomacy and engagement of Ethiopia. Among many other opportunities; changes in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora, changes in attitude towards the Ethiopian diaspora, establishment of the Ethiopian diaspora agency, and enhancement of the role of embassies and consulates for effective engagement of the Ethiopian diaspora, and the welcoming atmosphere for Ethiopian diasporas that would encourage them to enhance their political, economic, and image building roles in the affairs of their country.

4.2.1. Changes in Engaging the Diaspora

The Ethiopian diaspora, nowadays, is estimated to be 3 million citizens with a sizable population in Djibouti and Kenya. Ethiopia's efforts towards mobilizing its diaspora can be exemplary in Africa. Ethiopia used to have a diaspora Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. Diaspora cases were also handled in sector offices of Investment Agency and Ministry of Culture and Tourism having their own diaspora desk. Nevertheless, the effort and outcome are paradox for the last Fifteen years. In order to fill this gap, the establishment of another agency was necessitated and the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency was established

under proclamation number 432/2011 E.C. which is autonomous, yet accountable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.³³

On the other hand, Professor Merera Gudina argues that until the so called ‘*Qerroo*’ movement came in to being, the diaspora in Ethiopia used to play extensive political and economic roles. The diaspora used to control and own medias that cemented their voices. The diaspora and their media, initially, not only they have endorsed and supported, but also transcended Dr. Abiy to a status of a prophet and savior. Even formerly, some diaspora supported the government for various benefits before the reform. But this, after the mid-2018 political reform, is different. The moment created unity among the diaspora, even for temporary. That was great opportunity for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.³⁴

Hence, it is fair to argue that the Ethiopian Government, particularly after the mid-2018 political reform of Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front, has shown an enthusiasm to engage the Ethiopian diaspora in developing the country. Credible diaspora communication strategy is essential for an effective engagement of Ethiopian diaspora. The Government has made significant progress in reaching out and engaging with the Ethiopian diaspora by expanding, extending its engagement activities and improving its communication. The recent economic reforms announced by the Ethiopian government will significantly change the way the Ethiopian diaspora invest and work in Ethiopia. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s visit to the United States and Europe to meet with members of the Ethiopian diaspora communities have created a great initiation among the Ethiopian diaspora. Diaspora Ethiopians have a great influence on the political, social, and economic development of the country. Tapped efficiently, the Ethiopia diaspora could play a

³³Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, interview conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

³⁴Professor Merera Gudina, Chairman of Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/Medrek Party, the interview was conducted on April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa.

Qerroo, is a Youth Movement for Freedom and Democracy, particularly since 2016, a movement and struggle of young **Oromos** for better political and economic freedom in Ethiopia. The role of the *Qerroo* was paramount in bringing the autocratic Ethiopian government in its knees finally in 2018. (Gardner, March 13, 2018), 'Freedom!' the mysterious movement that brought Ethiopia to a standstill. Accessed from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/mar/13/freedom-oromo-activists-qerroo-ethiopia-standstill>

constructive role, to share the knowledge, experience, values, and practices they have acquired.

4.2.2. Changes in Attitude towards the Ethiopian Diaspora

Since the mid-2018 Ethiopia's reform, according to Mohammed (2019³⁵), the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency is working tremendously regarding attitudes and perceptions towards the diaspora. The relation between the Ethiopian diasporas and Ethiopian embassies have been significantly changed; communities social events were done in the embassies compound, trade fairs conducted repeatedly, and other social events were undertaken significantly where the diasporas previously had been staging several protests before the reform. The Ethiopian diplomats, who had been restricted in the premises of the embassies compound, have now gained confidence due to the reform in Ethiopia. Significant increase in diaspora volunteerism to provide various services has also been witnessed after the reform.

I argue that there is a growing recognition that the diaspora make meaningful contributions to development efforts in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Government's diaspora policy declaration to effectively engage with its diaspora was the first crucial step in its effort of the country's diaspora engagement. The Ethiopian Government has recently shifted from labeling diasporas in a negative light to celebrating diasporas as national champions. Furthermore, it can be said that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Government has engaged the diaspora with new energy, enthusiasm, and attitude, for the overall growth and development of country.

4.2.3. The Role of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency and Consulates for Diaspora Engagement

4.2.3.1 Ethiopian Diaspora Agency

An increasing number of countries have established institutions to facilitate ties with their diasporas more systematically. The number of countries with diaspora institutions has increased, especially in the past ten years, and spans multiple continents. By establishing a separate, ministry-level diaspora institution, a government recognizes that traditional

³⁵Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, the interview was conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

ministries such as labor and foreign affairs cannot manage the expatriate portfolio in all its dimensions. National bodies established to address diaspora issues are found in both destination countries as well as countries of origin. These diaspora institutions are of roughly six types, depending on whether they function at a ministry, sub-ministry, national, or local level; are part of a consular network; or are a quasi-governmental institution. Understanding the differences between these types is useful: an institution's position within the government hierarchy in many ways affects its influence within and outside the government, as well as its mandate and effectiveness. An increasing number of developing countries have established ministries whose explicit purpose is to address the needs of diaspora populations (Agunias and Newland, 2012).

Unless a successful democratic transition is conducted, the mobilization and engagement of Ethiopian diaspora will remain a temporary rather than a lasting reality. Hence, the diaspora support appears to be a zigzag. In general, Dr. Abiy is not getting the same support he got a year ago, particularly in Oromia and Amhara regions. And this truth is not only for the diaspora but also other citizens of Ethiopia. Even though the diaspora may have its own agendas, we can say it is the reflection of the country's internal politics. When Ethiopian internal politics becomes positive and optimistic, the diaspora attitude becomes positive and optimistic, as well, and vice versa.³⁶

On the other hand, Abrham argues that an establishment that serves the diaspora interest should be presented and discussed. Since they well aware of the diaspora's psychology, people who lead such an establishment should be from the diaspora themselves. The Ethiopian diaspora association will advise the government and try our best to look these gaps. The diaspora first of all need the country's stability. If such the government's efforts not institutionalized, it will be remained only a temporary movement or campaign.³⁷

³⁶Professor Merara Gudina, Chairman of Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/Medrek Party, the interview was conducted on April 24, 2019, Addis Ababa.

³⁷Abrham Siyum, is Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Diaspora Association, the interview was conducted on April 30, 2019, Addis Ababa.

However, Mohammed defends this criticism that since recently, from the establishment of the Ethiopian diaspora agency to broad engagement of the Ethiopian diaspora, and huge efforts were undertaken including regarding diaspora guidelines and proclamation, diaspora bank account, and others.³⁸

4.2.3.2. Consulates

According to Agunias and Newland (2012), the role of consulates in diaspora engagement remains the most important mechanism for diaspora populations. Consulates are in a unique position to measure diaspora needs and partner with other actors in the private and public realm. They can play a key role both for countries with well-established diaspora policies, where consulates are given special recognition and resources, as well as those with frail policies, where consulates seem the sole link to diaspora populations. More than ever, governments are instructing their consulates to interact with emigrants more systematically. The services offered at consulates vary, ranging from language instruction to notary services, from issuing identity cards to organizing discounted tour packages to the homeland, both for business and leisure. Many consulates provide information on developments at home, particularly in the business sphere, as well as programs on culture, education, and economic development.

To better engage the Ethiopian diaspora, trained diaspora diplomats have also been placed in Ethiopian Embassies in the United States of America, and the United Arab Emirates where relatively the majority of Ethiopian diaspora's reside. The Ethiopian diaspora agency will continue to have in other Ethiopian embassies where the Ethiopian diaspora population is high.³⁹

For instance, to reinforce the efforts of the government, the Ethiopian Ambassador to the United States, Fitsum Arega, called American investors in California State to engage in business ventures in Ethiopia. He outlined the numerous opportunities for investors,

³⁸ Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, the interview was conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

³⁹ Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, the interview was conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

entrepreneurs and companies to benefit by engaging in Ethiopia which is experiencing an economic reform under the new administration of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed.⁴⁰

Therefore, it is fair to argue that for a successful diaspora engagement, it should be assisted by an effective policy framework and strategy. I observe that the Ethiopian Government's strategy for diaspora engagement needs to include goals, mapping diaspora geography and skills, creating a relationship of trust between diasporas and the Ethiopian Government. The very important move in engaging the diaspora started with the adoption of the necessary policy framework. I suggest that the Ethiopian diaspora agency, and diaspora communities should work together and I also acknowledge the establishment of an independent agency that actively deals with the affairs of the Ethiopian diaspora after the mid-2018 political reform in Ethiopia.

4.3. Political, Economic, and Image Building Roles Played by the Ethiopian Diaspora

4.3.1 Political Roles

In all walks of life, the diaspora has an indispensable role, and Ethiopia is the diaspora's country, too. The diaspora may have a unique experience and special abilities due to its exposure to the civilized communities: be it in education wise or socially since they live mostly in developed countries, they have the exposure and practice to democratic system, Politically, the diaspora played a very important role in the changes happening in Ethiopia and has always been echoing the voice of Ethiopians due mainly to their better liberty; they have echoed Ethiopia's issues and oppressions to the world.⁴¹

The diaspora's roles and the Government's engagement level that the Ethiopian diaspora engagement and investments have increased since recently. The government engages the diaspora in respectful of any political attitude and impartial way. The government provides

⁴⁰ Tadias News (June 20, 2019) 'In the West coast, Ethiopia Appeals to Diaspora, African Americans to Invest. Accessed from <http://www.tadias.com/06/20/2019/in-the-west-coast-ethiopia-appeals-to-diaspora-african-americans-to-invest/>

⁴¹ Eyob Mesafint, is International Members Head and Member of Executive Committee of Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party, the interview was conducted on October 03, 2019, Addis Ababa

due regard towards diasporas' political participation right, institutionalization and democratization. Sometimes, seeing the diaspora' resistance positively with tolerance is important as diaspora wish to see their country democratized, developed, secured, prosperous where all kinds of human and democratic rights are respected. Ethiopian diaspora have no potential threats or crimes; only visa and passport issues.⁴²

Here, it is fair to argue in relation to the study by Shain and Barth,(2003) that liberalism theorists, who not only reject the customary assumption that states are the primary actors in international affairs, but also they rather propose that the primary actors in international politics are individuals and private groups such as the diaspora who struggle to promote different interests. Therefore, Ethiopian diaspora not only connect in sending remittances but also actively involving and playing their political roles.

4.3.2 Economic Roles

Economically speaking, the greatest source of foreign currency is by the Ethiopian diaspora as a form of remittances: It is possible to say that the foreign currency we get from the diaspora is much greater than what the Ethiopian Government gets from its export. The diaspora plays an irreplaceable role from sending money to families to raising funds to support projects. Investment wise, the diaspora has not been so invited and excellent environment has not been made to benefit themselves and the country.⁴³

To support this argument, the diaspora as an influential actor who has immense roles. It is not only the power that owns money, but also it has better knowledge, education, and economy since most Ethiopian diaspora live in the developed countries. Hence, the diaspora has positive or negative impacts on the affairs of Ethiopia. Particularly, the Ethiopian diaspora's role of remittances and foreign exchange deposit to the country's economy is paramount. It is not possible to underestimate the role of the diaspora even before the reform.

⁴² Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, the interview was conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

⁴³ Eyob Mesafint, is International Members Head and Member of Executive Committee of Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party, the interview was conducted on October 03, 2019, Addis Ababa

This influence and involvement of the diaspora is due to their better education and financial or economic capabilities.⁴⁴

4.3.3 Image-Building Roles

Seguin *et al*, (2017) elaborate that diaspora diplomacy is highly related to the increasing involvement of the international community in the global affairs, giving space to citizen diplomacy, which mixes national and international topics of interest. In our present globalized international atmosphere, ordinary people have become increasingly important and they get easily involved in public diplomacy to promote the image of their countries of origin. The practice of diaspora diplomacy is comparatively new, while diplomacy has customarily focused on creating relationships. It was only in late 20th century that nations required creating, and influencing relationships with Diaspora communities.

The idea of ‘Citizen centered diplomacy’ which the Government of Ethiopia after the mid-2018 political reform introduced and gave due emphasis, and the Ethiopian diaspora agency takes a leading initiatives for the Ethiopian diasporas to be image builders since they can go to the grassroots level. Citizens reach out many places and cities where the Ethiopian embassies are unavailable. Therefore, the government believes they can play a pivotal role in this regard.⁴⁵

I argue that Ethiopians living abroad can be best image builders for Ethiopia. The Ethiopian diaspora at large has been contributing to the country's political, economic and social development that has to be strengthened further as the diaspora has prominent and magnificent role in overall development of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian diaspora’s roles, if managed and utilized efficiently, could be magnificent energy to the overall development of Ethiopia.

⁴⁴Wasihun Tesfaye, is Secretary of Ethiopian Democratic Party/EDP, the interview was conducted on April 18/2019.

⁴⁵Mohammed Indris, is Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, the interview was conducted on April 09, 2019, Addis Ababa.

All in all, it is reasonable to argue that political space in Ethiopia has been widened from time to time since the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic front' (now Prosperity Party), reform in the mid-2018. Relatively, it has become an inclusive and participatory to any citizen at home or abroad. In this regard, Ethiopian Diaspora community has also been engaged in their country's political affairs since the reform began to take place. It is important therefore that, the diaspora community to build the Country's image, in the economic and political process flourishing in Ethiopia and continues their cooperation and collaboration in order to further support peace, stability and development in the country.

CONCLUSION

Many have been perceiving the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (now Prosperity Party) led political reform of the mid-2018 as a great prospect for Ethiopia to engage and tap its diaspora potentials more than ever before.

Findings of this study have shown that there are numerous challenges and limitations that would affect the efforts of engaging the Ethiopian diaspora. First, absence of efficient and reliable diaspora institution, and framework related challenges. The Ethiopian diaspora diplomacy and engagement have had numerous challenges. Among the basic challenges; capacity and resource constraints, as well as, structural issues. Second, the divisions that have become clear among various segments of the Ethiopian diaspora. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate diversity of the Ethiopian diaspora, but the division of the diaspora on basic national agendas is seen as a main undesirable challenge.

Third, lack of synchronization and working together among diaspora stakeholders both within the Ethiopian government structure and diaspora organizations. Diaspora engagement activities lack coordination. The study's findings suggest that although the government tries to engage Ethiopian diaspora effectively at its best, non-governmental diaspora organizations are not equally running as the lead partners in the efforts of effectively engaging the Ethiopian diaspora.

On the other hand, this study identified various prospects that incite new hopes in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora. The first major step is the changes and reforms that have been taking place which helped change the culture of engaging the Ethiopian diaspora. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's new administration has shown strong enthusiasm and created new beginning in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora.

The government, after the mid- 2018 reform, have been taking various promising steps towards diaspora engagement. The release of political prisoners in Ethiopia, review of oppressive laws, the relative freedom of speech, and the media are among the steps through which the government has shown its readiness and commitment to engage and then tap its

diaspora. The government is also working to alter existing attitude towards the diaspora, and seeks to view the Ethiopian diaspora as a valuable asset rather than enemies. A diaspora agency was launched with the aim of engaging the Ethiopian diaspora better and systematically. Ethiopian Embassies and Consulates have been given a priority task to skillfully engage the Ethiopian diaspora.

As time went by, the relations between the progressive Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed's administration and some segments of the Ethiopian diaspora have been deteriorated reducing its original nature of heated, strong, and passionate support. If their engagements are handled systematically with strong institutions, this study argues that, the Ethiopian diaspora can play more direct and immense roles for the country's social, economic, and political transformation particularly at this very critical time.

Findings of this study suggest that a lot more efforts remain to be done. Hence, the Ethiopian reforming government, beside paving the way to a successful democratic transition, it has to work to solve the challenges of diaspora engagement; chiefly keeping the positive starts, taking the good experiences of countries that successfully engaged their diaspora, and by creating strong institutions capable of curbing attitudinal challenges that would invite Ethiopian diaspora to enhance their political, economic and image building roles in the affairs of their country.

Moreover, we learn that the Ethiopian diaspora initially gave their unwavering popular support to Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. But, once they realized that his administration didn't work or go to the level they needed him to work, they began retreating, protest, accusation, and some began criticizing and opposing the new administration. The Ethiopian diaspora's politics is the reflection of internal politics of the country, positively or negatively. Even the Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund is not going to the level initially intended to go. The differences among the Ethiopian diaspora have continued to grow. Hence, a successful democratic transition in Ethiopia is highly critical to truly and successfully mobilize, and engage the Ethiopian diaspora.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix I: Informants Interviewees

No	Name	Name of Institution	Position	Interview date	Place
1	Abrham Siyum	Ethiopian Diaspora Association	Executive director	April 30,2019	Addis Ababa
2	Eyob Mesafint	Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice/'Ezema' Party	International Members Head and Member of Executive Committee	October 03,2019	Addis Ababa
3	Mohammed Indris	Ethiopian Diaspora Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia	Deputy Director	April 09,2019	Addis Ababa
4	Professor Merara Gudina	Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia/ Medrek Party	Chairman	April 24,2019	Addis Ababa
5	Wasihun Tesfaye	Ethiopian Democratic Party /EDP	Secretary	April 18,2019	Addis Ababa

Appendix II: Interview Guideline

To: Diaspora Agency of Ethiopia under Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia

1. How do you see the current relation between the Government of Ethiopia and the Diaspora?
2. What major important roles are played by the Ethiopian diaspora to hasten the overall development of the country and the government's diplomatic engagement in this regard?
3. What is the role of diaspora communities in advancing Ethiopian foreign policy objectives?
4. How can the Ethiopian government promote peace and reconciliation through active participation of the diaspora?
5. What are the challenges and prospects in engaging the Ethiopian diaspora, particularly after the 2018 reform?

To: Ethiopian Diaspora Association

1. What are the aims of the Ethiopian diaspora association and what can be expected?
2. What is the extent of the recent engagement of the Ethiopian government in an effort to harness the diaspora's potential?
3. How do you see the magnitude of the effects and roles of the diaspora in the country's social, economic and political development?
4. What is the extent of the Ethiopian government's efforts to create favorable environment for the diaspora in the process of transforming the country?
5. What are the current major challenges and opportunities of the Ethiopian diaspora?

To: Contending political Parties

1. How do you assess the diaspora's position in Ethiopian politics?
2. Could you explain the diasporas roles in the recent Ethiopian politics and the changes taking place, and the current relation of the diaspora with the reforming Ethiopian government?
3. Why is the role of the diaspora so important for Ethiopia, especially now?
4. What is your impression about Ethiopian government in creating positive atmosphere to tap its diaspora?

Table 1: Factors influencing diaspora engagement