Twentieth Annual International Law and Religion Symposium

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Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia At a glance

- Located at the Horn of Africa
- Population: 90 million(Second most populated nation on the African Content)
- Area: 1.14 million km²
- Capital City Addis Ababa, seat of the Federal Government, AU, UNECA
- Geographical Location......within 15° North of the Equator,

Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia At a glance

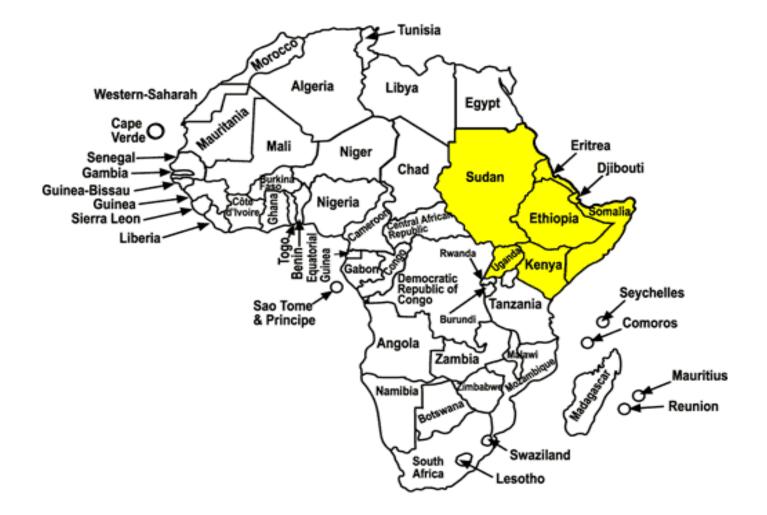
- Engaged in five years cycle Growth and Transformation plan(2010/11-2014/15)
- Recorded an average double growth of 11% in the last 10 years(among the fast growing 10 countries worldwide)
- Golden Investment opportunity for massive commercial agriculture and Industrial and infrastructure projects

Vision of FDRE

 "To see Ethiopia become a country where democratic rule, good governance and social justice reigns, upon the involvement and free will of its peoples; and once extricating itself from poverty becomes a middle income country by 2025"

GTP Pillar strategies(2010/11-2014/15)

- Ethiopia's strategy for sustaining the rapid and broadbased growth path hinges on the following pillars:
 - Sustaining faster and equitable economic growth
 - Maintaining agriculture as a major source of economic growth
 - Creating favorable conditions for the industry to play key role in the economy
 - Enhancing expansion and quality of infrastructure development
 - Enhancing expansion and quality of social development
 - Building capacity and deepen good governance
 - Promote women and youth empowerment and equitable benefit



Religion in Ethiopia(2007 census)

Religion	Percentage of the population	Population
Christianity	62.8%	46,420,822
Orthodox	43.5%	32,154,550
Protestant	18.6%	13,748,842
Catholic	0.7%	517,430
Muslim	33.9%	25,058,373
Traditional	2.6%	1,921,881
Others	0.6%	517430

History of tolerance and coexistence in Ethiopia

- Religions of Indigenous, Judaism, Christian, and Muslim have long history of coexistence in Ethiopia
- No history of war during their introduction or expansion
- Christian(4th century) and Muslim(7th centaury) followers have been together for the last 1400 years
- However both Christian kings and Muslim Sultanates used religion for their own ends (Power maintenance, territory expansion and trade span expansion)

Diversity accommodation by Governments before 1991

- Emperor declared and implemented state religion(November 1955 constitution)
- Denied the recognition and protection of all diversities including Religion
- Slogan of One Nation, One Language, and One Religion
- Military regime was against all religions with the belief that religions are anti development and anti revolution(September 1987 constituition)
- Both governments were anti-democratic by any parameter and religion was not an exception

Diversity Accommodation by FDRE After August 1995

- FDRE Constitution(Governing Principles)
 - Sovereignty of the people guaranteed
 - Constitution is a Supreme law of the country
 - Human and Democratic Rights ensured
 - State and Religion Separation declared
 - Conduct and Accountability of the government ensured
- Completed two decades since its implementation

FDRE Constitution and the last two decades performance (1995-2013)

- Article 11: State and Religion is separated. One can not interfere with the other. Ensures secular government!
- Article 25: Religions equality declared before the law without discrimination. Government has no discriminatory rules and regulations!
- Article 27: Religion and belief freedom is guaranteed and protected.
- All three provisions package comprehensive religion related human and democratic right
- Article 90/2: Government and public Education is free from any political, cultural and Religious influences
- The only requirement for any religious practice in Ethiopia is to observe the constitution

Draft Legislation to register Religious Institutions

- Registration and renewal process shall not undermine the strict observance of constitutional provisionsreligion freedom, religion equality and State and Religion separation
- Process of developing registration legal framework must be consultative including all stakeholders with particular attention of religious organizations
- Role of Interreligious council was crucial
- Content includes but not limited to various Requirements to registration, adoption of bylaws, Duties and responsibilities, activities that may result in losing of legal personality and prohibited issues

Advantages of Registration

- Advantage for Religious Institutions
 - Legal Personality to acquire and hold property
 - Legal personality to contract services
 - To sue and to be sued
- Advantage for Government
 - Legal engagement facilitated
 - Unlawful practices (based on the constitution)can be tracked for the benefit of nations security and safety and religion itself
- Advantages for the followers
 - Accountability and transparency
 - Collective and Institutional leadership

Challenges

- Religious Institutions registration may not be taken positively by some organizations for different reason (Simply new experience, Suspicion of Interference by few and Hidden agenda by few other groups etc.)
- Renewal period and Interim follow up mechanism(periodical reports, supervision, review of alignment with agreed principles)
- Accommodating Organizational Structure differences
- Dilemma of Critical minimum number required for registration

Thank you so much!