# ERITREAN OPPOSITION TO DICTATORSHIP CONFERENCE
# EAIM (AMARE GEBREMARIAM GEBRE)

**OVERVIEW,** This piece of study was organized and given to the then ENA and now EDA to help the proposed conference at that time and we are revising and reposting it today because we think it is still relevant. We prefer to call it Eritrean Opposition to Dictatorship Conference because we think the scope and mandate of this conference is limited to set a program and strategy up to the downfall of dictatorship and the formation of the temporary or caretaker government. Then a National Conference is organized to form transitional government that leads us to democratic elections with full fledged constitution.

## DEFINITION

This conference is a meeting for consultation, exchange of information, discussion organized and attended by political organizations, political movements, civic societies, religious organizations, democratic elements.....etc especially to discuss contemporary political crisis in Eritrea, differences of approach to tackle the crisis and formulate common policy.

## OBJECTIVES

An opposition forces conference allows all Eritreans with democratic ideals to participate in planning Eritrea's political future and create a level of national consensus. A conference can be Eritrea's preliminary move towards limited democracy, laying foundation for more inclusive institutions and democratic mechanisms. A successful conference harnesses and directs popular support for improving united approach to get rid of dictatorship and encourage creation of social and political institutions. A national debate has a significant impact on forming a new political culture and persuading diverse groups to participate in the political decision-making process. An opposition conference is expected to extending dialogue through out Eritreans wherever they reside.

## CONFERENCE GOALS

- Analyze, discuss and debate the political crisis in Eritrea.
- Raise public awareness on how the Eritrean lively hood is deteriorating every day, every hour, every minute.
- Develop shared and complimentary national strategies to advance the public and political debates to rectify the crisis and erect democratic political process.
- Encourage and exchange collaboration among Eritrean political organizations, movements, civic societies, academics, professionals and scholars.
- Engage Eritrean intellectuals, professionals, scholars to apply their knowledge and share their expertise with political and media practitioners and key decision-makers.
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## ORGANIZERS

The Eritrean Democratic Alliance EDA has already taken the initiative and formed a committee and the committee has worked on the conference issue for some time. We feel the EDA is so amorphous and weak and this committee organized by EDA is not strong enough to lead the conference to the expected success. So to rectify the deficiency we suggest the at least three individuals from each of the following zones that is North America, Australia,. Europe and the Middle East are elected or select and added to the committee. The Committee can invite international organizations and political parties to facilitate logistics.

## SUGGESTED AGENDA

- Upgrading the EDA charter and organize the EDA to assume the task of vanguard.
- Why and how democracy in Eritrea.
- Centralized administration versus decentralized administration in Eritrea. Federalism or Unitary type of administration. Official languages and the political right of nationalities.

- The army of the opposition versus the national army
- The issue of refugees.
- Economic policy and foreign policy.
- Land ownership and land reform.
- The road to reconciliation.
- The fate of the dictatorial regime's leaders and the so- called military generals.
- Unity in diversity. How?
- The boarder issue with our neighbors.
- Political prisoners- general amnesty or what?
- The economic and cultural gap.

## PARTICIPANTS.

Participants should include representatives of all opposition political organizations, movements, civic societies who don't have political affiliation or relationship with the dictatorial regime. Religious organizations, professionals and prominent individuals should be encouraged to participate. International observers can be helpful to assure the conferences process and results. A form should be drafted and posted in the web-sites so us participants could fill the forms and send it to the organizing body instead of selective invitation.

## DEFINING THE CRISIS AND ACTIVITIES.

Organizers must draft agenda prioritizing the issues received from would be participants and clarify conference goals and issues to be discussed to all the participants to minimize confusions and unfruitful discussions. The host or moderator body of the conference can consolidate follow-up group after the conference to make arrangements for and build on- any consensus reached for future political development such as;

- Constitution drafting committee.
- Party guidelines and election process drafting committee.
- Administration guideline drafting committee.
- Economic and foreign policy guidelines drafting committee.
- Committees are expected to lead us to chain of sub-conferences.

Media involvement is important during the conference to monitor and report on the events. Certain experts or individuals who are knowledgeable on certain issues of the agenda can be invited to present a study of thought.

## CONFERENCE FORMAT.

- Plenary session—speeches from research papers 2-3 papers for some issue of the agenda items.
- Workshops- groups discuss one agenda item assigned to them and present to the session their main point of consensus.
- General panel discussion on some items of the agenda expecting to reach consensus.

## ORGANIZERS PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES.

- Have in mind target audience.
- Decide the main theme of the conference (e.g. The birth of democratic Eritrea)
- Establish target speaker list.
- Write draft conference brochure.
- Produce final timetable on conducive place and date.
- Set post event value creation (written materials, videos, cassettes, books----etc.)

## COST CONSIDERATION.

Most of the cost 0f the conference must be carried by conference participants. Participant's application fee should be set on the drafted form. The organizing committee of the conference should try to have good estimation of cost and distribute it to participants.

Cost of conference starts during preparation, then accommodation, follow-up functions, technical assistance, facilitation and logistical support. Foreign financial assistance is often necessary to organize a national conference.

## EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS GRASP OF THE CONFERENCE CONTENT.

- Mentality change after many years of bickering and dictatorship.
- Develop the ability to compromise.
- The importance of consensus after even bitter debate.
- Cooperation for the sack of erecting democratic Eritrea.
- Working language of democratic decision- making and flexibility.
- Transparent structure.
- Efficient and transparent financial mechanism.
- Open, clear communication culture.
- Unity in diversity

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GLORY TO OUR MARTYRS
VICTORY TO THE OPPRESSED

** Send your comments and suggestions to ama766@comcast.net