

**ETHIOPIAN PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS ALLIANCE**

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**REPORT
2023**

2023

**CONSULTATION WORKSHOP: ROLE OF
ETHIOPIAN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
IN THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND PEACE
BUILDING PROCESS**

ORGANIZED BY: ECSF IN COLLABORATION WITH EPAA, NDI, AND DIALOGUE ETHIOPIA

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| ACSO | Authority for Civil Society Organizations |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| ECSF | Ethiopian Civil Society Forum |
| ECSOC | Ethiopian Civil Society Organization Council |
| END | Ethiopian National Dialogue |
| EPAA | Ethiopian Professional Associations Alliance |
| EPHA | Ethiopian Public Health Association |
| ERSA | Ethiopia Road Safety Association |
| NDI | National Democratic Institute |
| PAs | Professional Associations |
| CEHRO | Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations |
| IDPs | Internally displaced persons |
| PWD | People with Disability |

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2023.

WELCOME TO REPORT 2023.

Welcome to the October 12th, 2023 workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by ECSF, NDI, Dialogue Ethiopia, and EPAA. We explore the role of professional associations in Ethiopia's peace-building process through insightful presentations and discussions. Together, we emphasize the power of unity and expertise in shaping a peaceful and prosperous future for Ethiopia.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM

On October 12th 2023, a full day consultation workshop organized by ECSF, NDI, Dialogue Ethiopia, and EPAA with the theme of “Role of Professional Associations in the National Dialogue and peace building process” took place at The Hub Hotel, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This historic day blasted the door open for the contributions of professional associations in the peace building process of Ethiopia by igniting a much needed emphasis on the roles of professionals in the peace and security of a nation.

The day started with Keynote speeches and opening remark made by honored invited guests then proceeded to 4 insightful presentations by experts on precisely on the titles: “ National Dialogue: International Experiences and Best Experiences”, “Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission

participants, tasks undertook, and activities planned”, “The Role of CSOs in Ethiopian National Dialogue (END) Process”, “The role of Professional Associations in peace building/conflict resolution and inclusive development”. The presentations led to an extensive discussion with the audience with significant inputs forwarded vital to the peace building and conflict resolution process.

Multiple PAs sector group discussions and reflections on the contributions that can be made truly opened the path for sustainable evidence based solution strategies essential for the peace, security, and prosperity of Ethiopia. The consultation workshop awakened the dire need for the fragmented PAs to combine valuable minds to solve national issues professionally.

KEY NOTE SPEECH AND OPENING REMARKS



Mr. Yonas Woldesemayat

Vice President of EPAA, President of ERSA

After having given the introduction of the theme and program, Mr. Yonas notified the significance of the day's event in creating professional platforms for much needed dialogue for Ethiopia. He continued by highlighting to participants how the origin and development of professional associations was closely related to the expansion of modern education in Ethiopia in the late 1940s. After having mentioned a few of the earliest professional associations in Ethiopia, he noted their emergence as strong and unified associations to represent their members in various decision making forums of the country.

He rightfully put with the current 258 Professional Associations in the country, optimal contribution is still yet to be witnessed in a meaningful manner. He continued to elaborate how a policy as well as an environment burdened with contradictions, financial constraints, and poor sustainability has hindered their professional representation in the area of their expertise, hence its not surprising to see weak, fragmented, and splinter group professional associations formed. He referenced the recent Government Proclamation No. 1113/2019, Organizations of Civil Society's Proclamation that encourages professional associations to: protect interests of their members, promote professional conduct, and mobilize professional contribution of its membership to the community and the country.





Dr. Franklin Ouduro

Country Director at NDI

Dr. Franklin welcomed guests on behalf of National Democratic Institute (NDI) and appreciated the collaboration of ECSF and EPAA with NDI. He mentioned the experiences of PAs and Private Sector weak contributions to a country when in dire need of assistance, and expressed his happiness in the beginning of the Ethiopian PAs participation in the peace building process. And stated that in the 21st Century it's high time we all delivered our contribution for peace and stability, and emphasized on the day being the start of PAs contribution on the peace building process in Ethiopia. He elaborated on the work of NDI since its start of work in Ethiopia as mandated by ACSO in 2019 in supporting citizens participation in the electoral process and has been undertaking its tasks with a selected number of civil society organizations since then.

He emphasized the efforts made by NDI to ensure inclusive citizens' participation. In this regard, he highlighted support given by NDI to CSOs by creating platforms for young members to engage in the dialogue process in a more constructive manner. He mentioned few of the organizations such as: The Coalition of Women's Voice in the National Dialogue by opening a series of consultations over 6 regions of Ethiopia over the past year reaching to over 2000 women, Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations (CEHRO) to reach out to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in maintaining their participation in being part of the solution with series of engagements in 5 regions, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) which recently led to the current to the MOU signing with National Dialogue Commission to ensure inclusivity in the dialogue process. He expressed his hope in having the PAs leaders attending to strengthen their participation in a constructive and meaningful way and wished for a constructive event ahead.

Dr. Alemayehu having addressed the guest of honors for the day and participant guests, opened his speech by briefing the several hurdles passed over the past few years in achieving the establishment of the Ethiopian Professional Associations Alliance (EPAA), its realization and registration by the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO).

He expressed the concern by most professional associations on the system which is not as empowering to professional associations as expected which is worsened by the lack of proactive mobilization by the associations themselves and emphasized how the issues and agendas of a national concern in the country are all not beyond the level of knowledge of Ethiopian professionals.

In this regard, he raised EPAA's dedication in bringing the fragmented and tear drops efforts of professional associations into a concerted, meaningful and intense contribution and role for the development of the nation at large already with more than 65 diverse member Professional Associations having registered. He mentioned although EPAA is at its infancy stage, as part of advancing its mission, it has been engaged on various public agendas in close collaboration with its strategic partners including but not limited to the government and non-state actors both local and international.

He conveyed his hope in the consultation workshop for the day in creating an opportunity and serving as a glimmering point to the key role to be played by professional associations on the National dialogue and peace building process and beyond.

Finally, he called on everyone to exert additional efforts to continuously develop institutional capacity and strengthen member professional Associations' base, to the advancement of national development and declared the workshop officially opened.



Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen

President of EPAA, Executive Director at EPHA

PowerPoint Presentations



WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

59 participants (14 females and 45 males) attended the round table discussion out of which 2 were PWDs. Participants were represented from various PAs such as Teachers, Accounting, Journalists associations, OXFAM, ENDC and media representatives from EBC and FBC.

Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen

President of EPAA, Executive Director at EPHA

Title : National Dialogue: International Experiences and best experiences

Mr. Ayalew began his presentation by getting the audience accustomed to the different names dialogue processes have in various countries. He went on to define the meaning of what national dialogue is and briefly discussed its historical proceeding along with its triggers. He explained in detail the characteristics of national dialogue and mentioned the participating actors with their expected roles. He enlightened the audience on the three phases of national dialogue (preparation, process, and implementation) and highlighted the success records that have been reached so far. He further explained in detail the political context and process factors which are constraining as well as enabling the national dialogue which are critical for previous analysis and future planning. He finalized his presentation by discussing the lessons learned in the past from the path national dialogue has taken in the political context as well as the process factors.

Key Points of Presentation

National Dialogue triggers

- Popular uprising
- War and armed conflict
- Exclusive elite deal

Characteristics of National Dialogue

- Mandate
- Authority
- Participants Size
- Duration
- Setup and Procedure
- Selection of participants
- Decision making procedures
- Ratification of decisions
- Mediators, Facilitators and Convenor

National Dialogue Participating actors

- Government
- Political parties

- Civil society
- The military
- Non-state armed actors
- Business actors
- Women
- Youth
- Faith based organizations
- Elders and traditional leaders.

Constraining and Enabling factors to the National Dialogue

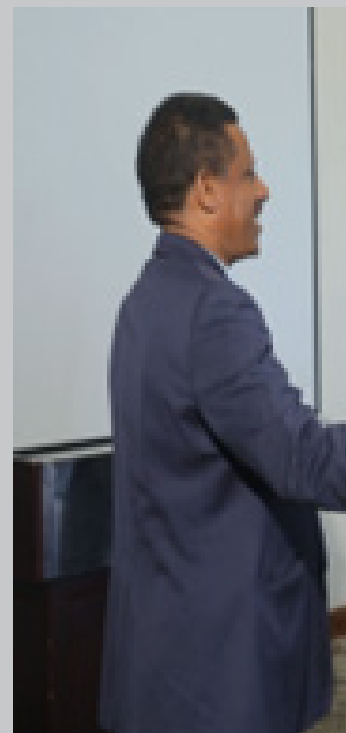
Political context factors

- Political will
- Public buy-in
- Influence of external actors and national ownership
- Existing culture of dialogue
- Links to other transitional processes
- Violence

Process factors

- Representation, number, and selection of actors
- Decision making mechanisms
- Choice of facilitator(s)
- Duration
- Support structures
- Coalition building and joint positioning

HEALTH BREAK AND NETWORKING





PowerPoint Presentations



Dr. Moges Demissie

Programme and Development Advisor at ECSOC

Title: The Role of CSOs in Ethiopian National Dialogue (END) Process

Dr. Moges gave an insightful presentation to the audience on the role of CSOs in the Ethiopian National Dialogue Process. He started by a brief explanation of the conceptual definitions as well as scope of National Dialogue and CSOs. He then continued to discuss to the audience the perceived roles of CSOs in the END and compared the engagements of the CSOs in the END so far. He further enlightened the audience by briefing activities being carried out by ECSOC in regards to an alignment with the END process and shared the challenges faced by CSOs in the efforts of contributing to the END. He then concluded his presentation by addressing the way forward to overcome challenges faced for an optimal and sustainable contribution to the END.

Key Points of Presentation

Expected roles of CSOs in the END

- Developing civic capacities and collective actions
- Education, awareness raising/mobilization
- Research and policy advocacy
- Provision of constructive criticism
- Provision of oversight/Watchdog
- Advice and facilitation of institutional cooperation

Challenges for CSOs for engagement in the END

- Political and ethnic polarization /dialogue space
- Presence of armed groups movement
- High public expectations/not enough capacity and engagement
- Weak information on the national dialogue
- The need for large amount of resources and logistics
- Widespread perception that the END is affiliated with the government

Way forward by CSOs and ECSOC

- Hasten awareness creation activities
- Better coordination of CSOs ND activities
- Mobilization of constituencies, campaign and support for the END
- Better communication and information sharing from the Commission
- Cooperate on joint resource mobilization
- Prepare an online platform for information exchange
- Influencing actors who boycott the process
- Deploy skilled human resource (facilitators)
- Advocate for corrective measures

PowerPoint Presentations



Dr. Gezahegn Kebede

Oxfam International Country Director, ECSOC Executive Committee Member

Title : The role of Professional Associations in peace building/conflict resolution and inclusive development.

Dr. Gezahegn began his presentation with an emphasis of the vital roles CSOs play in a nations peace building process in track one negotiations, advocacy, as well as monitoring. He highlighted the main functions played by CSOs in the peace building process and discussed the recognized contextual factors that limit as well as strengthen CSOs ability in fulfilling their peace building roles. He further explained the conceptual scope of peace building, its process, its aims, as well as its part in the development of a nation. He briefed the audience on the PAs span of context, their justified contribution, and valuable roles they play in peace building and conflict resolution . He concluded his presentation by discussing the meaning of inclusive development, its aim in bringing better outcomes, and the experiences of multiple countries in its implementation.

Key Points of Presentation

Role of PAs in peace building and conflict resolution:

- Advocacy
- Research
- Protection
- Monitoring
- Facilitation
- Social mobilization
- Service delivery

Major political context factors play a decisive role in influencing the outcomes of National Dialogues:

1. National elites' resistance or support
2. Public support or frustration
3. Support or resistance of regional and international actors
4. Existing culture of dialogue
5. Experiences from prior negotiations
6. Violence

Discussion



What is the strategy of the government to ensure trust building in the midst of civilians continuously losing their lives? How does the Commission plan to withstand such challenges?



We need to urgently address the critical issues of inflation threatening the basic needs of life leading to the loss of public servants to the country.



PAs need to participate in all phases of preparation, process, and implementation of the national dialogue process to ensure the peace building progress and sustainability.



The main problem of the country is with good governance and rule of law. The country is in dire need of professional recommendation to sustain peace and resolve conflicts.



PAs need to disseminate information and create awareness among their members regarding the national dialogue process.



PAs need to strengthen their direct and indirect beneficiaries to sustain the dialogue process constructively.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PLENARY REFLECTIONS

The audience was grouped among four sectors of professional association and proceeded to discuss on the key points of :

1. The Role of Sector PAs in Peace building and conflict resolution
2. Role of EPAA in ensuring PAs contributing to the National dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution



Group 1: Health

Key Points of Presentation

The Role of Health Associations in Peace building process and conflict resolution

- Health associations need to lead by example by forming an alliance for strong and sustainable contribution to peace building process
- Increase societal awareness creation
- Advocacy and diplomacy for peace by promoting as well as implementing with ethical, competent, disciplined health service delivery
- Increase societal and stakeholder engagement platforms to reflect and discuss the grave consequences of conflict in a country (physical, mental, societal, educational, economic..)
- Engage in research, monitoring, and evaluation to take action with evidence based approach for sustainable progress

Role of EPAA in ensuring PAs contributing to the National dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution

- Ensure the implementation of code of conduct of each PAs
- Advocacy of every PAs on peace building engagement
- Adopting inclusive capacity building to PAs
- Coordinating national and international platforms for experience sharing of PAs contribution in peace building and conflict resolution
- Monitoring, evaluation of PA, and timely information dissemination to establish trust building.



Group 2: Education

Key Points of presentation

The Role of Education Associations in Peace building process and conflict resolution

- Solve collaboratively the key issues of Ethiopia's education system
- Engage actively and cooperate with stakeholders
- Discuss issues concerning inclusive language use in the education system
- Strengthen capacity training and employment of professionals in the sector

Role of EPAA in ensuring PAs contributing to the National dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution

- Stakeholders collaborative work engagement
- Solve problems of capacity training and employment issues of the education sector
- Coordinate extensive discussion on education system formation approach and education policy formation



**Group 3: Business and Economics
Key Points of Presentation**

The Business and Economics Associations in Peace building process and conflict resolution

- Work on professional ethics and anti-corruption using innovative information technology system
- Creating awareness on national dialogue among members
- Give emphasis on inflation and market price
- Provide skill based job for unemployed and those who can not join universities
- Challenge bureaucracy and provide good governance

Role of EPAA in ensuring PAs contributing to the National dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution

- Strengthening PAs
- Recommending professions with the right protocol to support the national dialogue
- Improving civil service and human capital improvement

CLOSING REMARKS



Group 4: Social Sciences

Key Points of Presentation

The Social Sciences Associations in Peace building process and conflict resolution

- Systematic agenda identification
- Advocating for minorities
- Awareness creation (Stakeholders, capacity building and training)
- Research, monitoring, and evaluation
- Facilitators, conveners, participants

Role of EPAA in ensuring PAs contributing to the National dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution

- Coordination (Code of conduct, promotion representation)
- Engagement with NDI & ECSOC, actors (Collective voice, exposing challenges)
- Resource mobilization and support (Technical and financial)



Mr. Yomas Woldesemayat

Vice President of EPAA, President of ERSA

Mr. Yonas thanked the collaborating institutions that organized the consultation and workshop. He commended the audience for active engagement in the workshop and remarked the role of professional association in the national dialogue of Ethiopia to help achieve the goals of peace building and conflict resolution is paramount. He emphasized how PAs backed with their evidence based studies and solution based strategy can assist in ensuring the fate of Ethiopia. He made note to PAs to strengthen their contribution to this national responsibility and prepare their association for sustainable partnership in the national dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution. And conveyed his hope for more productive consultations workshops ahead in each sector of PAs.

RECOMMENDATION ACTION POINTS



Mr. Mesud Gebeyehu

President of ECSF

Mr. Mesud gave his closing speech by forwarding his appreciation to the partnering organizations of the consultation and workshop. He applauded the audience for active participation and fruitful action points forwarded which are valuable to EPAA and individual PAs. After emphasizing on the lack of contribution of PAs in national issues, he officially closed the workshop by asking PAs to awaken from passive commitment and defend their profession as well as their contribution to the dialogue of peace building and conflict resolution process.

- PAs need to engage in systematic agenda identification of national issues to come forth with evidence based solutions for sustainable peace and security.

- PAs need to be actively involved to advocate in the peace building and conflict resolution of Ethiopia.

- Capacity building and resource mobilization is crucial in awareness creation, research, monitoring, and evaluation which are the main aspects of work PAs engage in to contribute to the peace building dialogue.

- Engagement of PAs with NDI, ECSOC, ECSF, and other stakeholders as well as actors is vital to sustainably solve the peace and security issues of the country.

- Organizing national and international platforms for experience sharing of PA's contribution in peace building and conflict resolution is a good strategy to shorten the time of implementation of peace building process.