

A democratic government for a sovereign Ethiopia

Drawing the appropriate lessons from past experience and the present situation in the country, Me'isone has defined a new political programme which we hope will contribute towards peace, democracy and development in Ethiopia.

The political programme and proposals for transitional arrangements were defined at a conference held in July 1989.

The amended programme clearly came out in favour of a multi-party democracy, national independence and unity based on equality and the free will of all the peoples of Ethiopia.

- **POLITICAL PLURALISM:** Against the one party dictatorship that now prevails in Ethiopia, the programme calls for establishment of a representative government based on free, direct and fair elections. The government shall hold office only for the period designated by the constitution and should respect the constitutional rights of the opposition and minorities. Parliamentary representatives shall be elected by the people from among candidates of various parties.

- **MIXED ECONOMY:** Within the framework of a democratic constitution, Me'isone's programme calls for implementation of economic policies geared to the needs of the vast majority of the Ethiopian people and aimed at promoting rapid economic development and social justice. This entails the introduction of a mixed economy which will allow for a rational and pragmatic use of the country's human and natural resources in order to stamp out mass famine, poverty and disease in the shortest possible time. A careful balance will be struck between the public and private sectors, planning and private initiative. Activities which are best left to the public sector will be determined by law approved in parliament and all others will be managed by the private sector.

- **NATIONAL UNITY:** Me'isone being an organisation composed of members drawn from different nationalities, it has always struggled for the right to self-determination and for unity based on equality and voluntary integration. Based on this principle, the organisation calls for an end of the various armed and political conflicts that are now bleeding the country and for peaceful democratic solutions which should take into account the legitimate interests and aspirations to self determination of all nationalities.

- **FOREIGN RELATIONS:** Me'isone's programme continues to uphold a policy of non-alignment as the guiding principle for Ethiopia's foreign relations. Within

this framework, Me'isone will work towards promotion of the country's legitimate national interests, sovereignty and honour. There will be an end to all foreign military presence and treaties which violate Ethiopia's national independence will be abrogated.

Particular attention will be given to fostering understanding and cooperation with neighbouring countries. A democratic government in Addis Abeba will work towards peaceful solution of all outstanding problems in the Horn of Africa and the termination of all armed conflicts that have devastated the region over the past decade.

- **TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:** It is a fact that the political, economic and social order envisioned for the future of Ethiopia by different opposition groups varies. However, so long as they are opposed to the present regime and so long as they stand for democracy, national sovereignty and the right of nationalities to self-determination, there is no reason why they cannot transcend their differences and cooperate in the common struggle. We believe that it is possible to discuss and to reach an agreement on the transition period in which all organisations can cooperate while retaining their long-term programmes. We also believe that such an agreement among democratic opposition offers the only way that is left to Ethiopia if we are to avoid the dangers of ever-increasing chaos and instability and to ensure peaceful transition to a democratic society.

That is why Me'isone deemed it necessary to prepare a programme for a transition government whose tasks would be to see to it that Ethiopia evolves towards a viable society through a peaceful and democratic process. The principal objectives of this programme forwarded to all opposition groups are : to bring all fighting to an end and ensure peace, to enact laws that will ensure full democratic and human rights of all citizens, to organise free elections for a Constituent Assembly which will draw up a new constitution enstating a new national parliament to be democratically elected.

Me'isone believes that discussions among the country's democratic forces on the transitional arrangement and an agreement on a clear perspective concerning the immediate objectives of the struggle would contribute in more than one way to breaking the deadlock in Ethiopia today. This does not mean, however, that these proposals should be taken as the only possible arrangement. Other organisations have come out with their own transition programmes. Me'isone has therefore clearly stated that it is ready to make a positive contribution in discussions aimed at defining a more elaborate document which takes into account the political and ideological diversity of all concerned.