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ELECTION 2021



**PARTIES ON THE
CAMPAIGN TRAIL AS WAR AND ETHNIC
TENSIONS ROCK ETHIOPIA**

**COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF
POLITICAL PARTIES' PROGRAMS**



Wazema Radio

Parties on the campaign trail as war and ethnic tensions rock Ethiopia

After repeated delays, Ethiopia's sixth General Elections are scheduled to be held on June 21, 2021. The landmark poll comes against a backdrop of a raging war in the Tigray region and heightened ethnic polarization, instability and the COVID 19 pandemic in the country. The poll in the Tigray region is also postponed indefinitely due to the ongoing war.

Two major parties, the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), and longtime opposition and former rebel group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which mainly represent Ethiopia's largest Oromo ethnic group, are boycotting the regional and parliamentary elections, but the contest remains a significant step forward for Ethiopia and the legitimacy of Nobel Prize winner Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Abiy took power in April 2018 after three years of internal wrangling in the then ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which later merged into a single unified party and rebranded as the Prosperity Party. The elections will be the first real legitimacy test for Abiy and the Prosperity Party, since the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one of the former members of the EPRDF coalition, refused to join the Prosperity Party. Abiy has however managed to add five more regional parties to the Prosperity Party, which were affiliate parties of the former EPRDF.

Several other opposition parties with divergent ideological leanings will also be competing for the June 21 local, regional and parliamentary votes. The contending formations are currently busy selling their manifestos, advocating, among others, constitutional amendment, a liberal economic policy and a review of the multi-ethnic federal system. The ownership and administration of Addis Ababa, the capital city, is also ranking high on the parties' campaigns.

The independent media, *Wazema Radio*, has reviewed the political programs, election manifestos and the public pronouncements of the contending parties, with a view to helping the electorate and other stakeholders understand, particularly the stances of the contestant parties on some of the contentious issues in the political discourse. The review also serves as a reference for tracking the political trends in the parties..

This review has not attempted, nor is it intended to validate the conduct of the electoral process.

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Acronyms

EPRDF- Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

Ezema- Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party

EP- Enat Party

PP- Prosperity Party

FEP- Freedom and Equality Party

NAMA- National Movement for Amhara

NEBE- National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

Parties unveil manifestos as poll date inches closer

Introduction

Ethiopia will hold the sixth General Election on June 21, 2021. Political parties running for the regional councils and the House of Peoples' Representatives have unveiled programs and manifestos they hope will swing the vote in their favor. The programs outline the political, economic and social and foreign policies and principles the parties would implement if they formed a government.

Wazema Radio has conducted a brief comparative assessment of the agendas of the various political parties. At this time when Ethiopia is faced with multiple challenges, the broadcaster believes that the presentation of the parties' programs and ideological orientations is essential for posterity.

The parties sampled:

1. The Prosperity Party (the incumbent)
2. The Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party (Ezema)
3. The Freedom and Equality Party (FEP)
4. The Enat Party
5. The National Movement of Amhara (NAMA)

The five parties were selected because of the number of candidates they have fielded for the General Elections and also because of their national outlook. Except for NAMA, all the other parties are multi-ethnic and with nationwide appeal. They all joined the political landscape over the past few years. The Prosperity Party, in particular, is a remnant of the former Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and thus encompasses both the old and the new.

Criteria for comparison:

Wazema used five themes, listed below, for comparing the political and the ideological stances of the five parties:

1. Ethnic federalism
2. Economic policy
3. Foreign policy
4. Constitutional amendment
5. Ownership and Administrative Status of Addis Ababa City

The five themes were selected in the belief that they are among the main issues the electorate will give the greatest attention to in considering their choices.

Sources of information:

The report has used the parties' programs, the election manifestos and the official statements as the reference points. Speeches and pronouncements by the parties' leadership and representatives during election debates were also used as inputs for the report.

I. Ethnic Federalism

The Prosperity Party, Ezema, NAMA, the Enat Party and FEP, have incorporated in their political programs, the ethnic federalism that Ethiopia has been built on for the past 30 years. They have indicated whether they would uphold, improve or discard the current ethnic-based federal system, should they win the coming General Elections. However, all the parties agree that the structure of the state should be a decentralized or federal one. Equally, all the parties do not have differences with regards to the division of Ethiopia into regions or decentralized units, with rights to self-administration. Their divergence is on the type of decentralized or federal system to be embraced.

The Prosperity Party, that has inherited the ethnic-based federal arrangement from the EPRDF, states that its aim is to build a multi-national unity, where ethnic or religious differences will be treated equally. The party says that it would build a genuine multi-national federal system that recognizes and respects the rights of all the nationalities and peoples to self-rule. According to the Prosperity Party, the existing ethnic federal system has only implementation problems, but not the principles and ideology it is built on. The party believes that individual and group rights should not be prioritized and none should prevail over the other. It asserts that ethnic identity is the dominant governing element of the country's politics, and insists the party aims at balancing the ethnic and the national identities.

Ezema has a strong stance on the ethnic-based federal system, stating that the source of Ethiopia's predicaments is the system's structure. The system, Ezema says, has caused grievances and conflicts among the ethnic groups, occasioned extreme ethnic nationalism and the uneven distribution of wealth; hence, posing a threat to Ethiopia's national security. Therefore, if Ezema takes power, it would replace the ethnic or linguistic-based federal system with a decentralized option, not based on either ethnicity or religion. Ezema has clearly indicated that it champions citizen-based ideology rather than ethnic politics and, that it stands for change in the federal order. The party says that if it forms a government, it would restructure it, based on considerations like the geographical location, populations, development and administrative convenience, language, culture, common psychological ties, history, resources as well as national consensus.

Because Ezema's anchor ideology is to champion national, and not ethnic politics, it will transfer the constitutional sovereign power of nationalities to the Ethiopian people in general. In contrast to the Prosperity Party, Ezema believes that group rights emanate from the individual rights.

The Enat Party, like Ezema and other parties, has indicated that it is a proponent of a decentralized administration or a federal system. It, however, gives priority to the country's unity. Like Ezema, the Enat Party indicates that the current federal system is a source of conflict, and if given a chance, it will create a new and inclusive decentralized administration or federal system based on criteria such as geography, population settlement, development and administrative convenience, culture, history, the consent of the people and other social bondages and the public's interests and views. The party also promises to consider appropriate indigenous governance systems in reorganizing the state. It is therefore fair to say that the Enat Party is different from the others, in terms of giving special consideration to indigenous systems of governance. The party, however, has similar political objectives with Ezema in terms of its stance on the ethnic-based federal system and the individual rights as pillars of all the other rights.

Just as the Enat Party believes in the principle of "One People, One Ethiopia," it also believes in the equality of human beings, rather than clans and ethnicity. In contrast to the Prosperity Party and the Freedom and Equality Party, Enat opposes the designation of the Ethiopian people as nations and nationalities. The party has clearly indicated in its program that, like Ezema, it stands for citizen politics for all Ethiopians, regardless of ethnicity, language and religion.

The Freedom and Equality Party has also stated that it advocates a federal system, like the other parties. The party indicates that nations and nationalities are the bases for the country, and that the existing federal system, based on ethnicity, is not a problem *per se*. Rather, it wants to build a strong multi-national federal system that respects ethnic groups' rights to self-administration. Unlike Ezema and the Enat Party, FEP believes that the conflicts and the population displacements in the country do not emanate, necessarily from the ethnic-based federal system, but rather from the failure of the system to forge a national consensus and the poor implementation of the constitution. The party even maintains that the current federal system has not implemented ethnic federalism properly. In this regard, it is reasonable to say that FEP's stance on this issue has some similarities to those of NAMA. It also has similarities with the Prosperity Party in that it aims to make the ethnic-based federal system a genuine multi-national federal administration.

Like the other parties, FEP says that apart from ethnicity and language, it wants the state structure to also consider administrative convenience, the people's interest, culture, geography and other common values. It criticizes the current system for its inability to protect individuals and minority groups.

NAMA, like the Prosperity Party and FEP, favors the existing ethnic-based federalism in principle. NAMA's stance is that ethnic politics is not a problem in itself, and even believes that the right to self-administration of the various ethnic groups, has a significant place in the present-day Ethiopia. Even if there is a need to fully replace the ethnic politics and the accompanying federal system, NAMA argues that it won't be achieved in the short term. However, the current system is not a real ethnic federal one in terms of content and

implementation, NAMA maintains. This stance mainly drifts it closer to FEP. Additionally, NAMA has clearly indicated that the sovereign constitutional power should be given to the Ethiopian people, rather than the ethnic groups. Hence, it is logical to say it is similar to the Enat Party and Ezema in terms of making the Ethiopian people the real owners of the country's sovereign power.

NAMA wants the federal system to be reorganized in a manner that respects national unity and the people's peaceful coexistence. Therefore, like many of the other political parties, it has stated in its program that the federal system's structure needs to consider geographical location, development and administrative convenience, historical land ownership, settlement and the consent of the people, geography and language as criteria. However, it is different from the other parties on its position on the inclusion of the "historical territorial ownership" into the criteria for reorganizing the federal system. It is possible to understand that the reason for this is its belief that the Amhara people, its main constituency, have "historical territorial possessions" in Ethiopia. It maintains that the current federation's regional structures have given the "historical" and the "inherited" lands of the Amhara to other regions, through political decision that didn't involve representatives of the Amhara, and made the latter, living outside their ethnic-region, secondary citizens within their own country. Hence, the party says the federal system has to be reorganized to ensure the Amhara people's rightful participation and representation in the federal system. If disputes arise out of the new federal restructuring, NAMA maintains, they could be resolved through a referendum.

II. Constitutional Amendment

Since the constitution was made the supreme law of the land in 1995, it has not been subjected to any major amendments. Based on this, all parties have included constitutional amendment in their political programs. But they differ on the scope and the type of amendments they desire. While some want major changes, others prefer minor changes, but none has the objective of scrapping the constitution entirely. It seems that parties that say they would make various amendments believe that suspending the constitution in its entirety could be inimical to the country. Although it mentions that the door to constitutional amendment is not closed, the Prosperity Party does not have the idea of amending the supreme law in the near future.

If Ezema takes power, the articles it says it would amend are many and basic. Many issues that the party has raised in its program require constitutional amendment. Ezema maintains that the right to secession and the sovereign power, vested in nationalities, should be removed from the constitution. In general, according to Ezema, bringing about basic political, social and economic changes in the country, calls for constitutional changes. However, understanding that the task of amending the constitution through constitutional procedures would be challenging, Ezema says it would consider a referendum, and if granted approval, would present its proposals to an independent constitutional commission.

From the outset, FEP believes that the constitution was framed in a manner that offers answers to the long overdue class and ethnic questions in the country. However, it indicates that the constitution needs to be in tandem with the changing national and international situations, and if the current supreme law is not amended, it could face the risk of being changed by force. Therefore, the party clearly indicates that it will struggle for a constitutional amendment, or would amend it if it takes power. According to the party, the articles that need amendment are those that erode peace and security and those that encourage secession. It says they should be amended in a manner that brings about national consensus, but in a way that safeguards the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also says that the constitution should be amended to make it responsive to the political views of the majority, the differences caused by the structuring of the regions and boundaries and be free from being a program of the ruling party. It further proposes that articles that can be easily changed based on the general level of development, be eliminated from the constitution. FEP has promised to put up the right of nations to secede from the federation for public discussion. This, it says, would make the constitutional amendment process participatory from the very beginning to the end.

Like Ezema, the Enat Party has indicated that it is committed to amending the constitution by a referendum. If the party assumes power, it says that constitutional amendment would be its priority. The Enat party says that the constitution should be amended in a manner that reconciles the benefits and interests of all the people and lasts for a longer time. The supreme law should not become a single party's ideology and program.

NAMA wants constitutional amendments focusing mainly on the interests of the Amhara people that it represents. Indicating that the constitution lacks legitimacy among the Amhara, the party has unveiled a document consisting of 15 amendment proposals. It states that the constitution has divided the Amhara people's historical territorial possessions and does not respect their identity, language, culture and economic rights; it is not in tandem with the contemporary times and its spirit is based on an anti-Amhara narrative. Although NAMA fully recognizes the rights of nations and nationalities, it has clearly indicated that it would struggle to scrap the right of nations to secession from the constitution, just like FEP, Ezema and the Enat Party.

One can possibly say that it is the Prosperity Party that does not have a clear position regarding constitutional amendment. While recognizing that various questions were being raised on the constitution, the party says the supreme law should not be amended in a rush, but only in a stable and suitable situation. But the party has not mentioned in its program the provisions that it would prefer amended nor the kind of stable and suitable situation conducive to amendment. The Prosperity Party says that it is possible to apply the amendment articles provided in the constitution or other international practices, during the constitutional amendment. This position is different from that of Ezema and the Enat Party that says they would seek a referendum for a constitutional amendment. In general, what makes the Prosperity Party different from the rest is that it

does not have a clear-cut position on whether it will amend the constitution if it wins the election and assumes power for the next five years.

III. Economic Policy

The parties' economic policies include sub-sections such as the agriculture, industry, manufacturing and service sectors, land ownership and natural resources, urban development, infrastructure, the role of the government, the private sector and foreign investors in the economy, as well as finance and budget. Only the parties' main economic principles, and especially the issue of land ownership, are used for comparison in this report.

All the parties in this report are proponents of a market-driven economic philosophy. The parties have similar principles and positions on many economic issues, but all of them allow state intervention in key economic sectors that the private sector does not invest in. Equally, all of them want manufacturing to be the main driver of the economy. They also prefer a structural transformation in the economy. Besides, all of the parties prioritize import substitution. More or less, all of them say ensuring some level of social justice is also their economic objective.

Ezema has indicated that its economic policy is derived from its ideology of social justice. And the objective of its social justice ideology is ensuring the citizens' economic freedom and fair benefits. While advocating a market economy, the party maintains that it would craft a new policy to protect people that are marginalized by the same and exposed to poverty. For Ezema, it is the private sector that is the driver of the economy. However, it allows the government's intervention to stabilize the market in the times of significant shortage of jobs, economic decline, inflation and budget deficit. It is the belief of Ezema that the government should independently, or in partnership with the private sector, invest in sectors that require huge capital outlays, have questionable feasibility, and requiring longer period for return on the initial capital. Ezema also allows for the government to establish and administer state enterprises.

Ezema believes that the use of land and natural resources should be carried out in respect of the free market principle and in a manner that ensures the nation's sovereignty. By assessing the current land policy's impact on the economic development, the party has clearly indicated that land ownership could be put under the government, the community and the private sector. The unsettled lands, parks and the public utility spaces can be put under government ownership. Ezema allows land under the government to be transferred to the private sector, or leased to foreign investors through transparent criteria and at free market prices. Stating that the reason for lack of growth in the country's agricultural sector is the lack of proper land policy, Ezema wants citizens to have the right to possess and own, lend or rent, purchase as well as sell land. This is a major departure from the land policy consecutive governments have been implementing for the past 45 years i.e. since the 1974 Ethiopian socialist revolution.

Like Ezema, the Prosperity Party is also a proponent of the market-driven economic policy. The party has disclosed that it would work for the development of quality infrastructure by the government, the private investors and partnership of the private and public sectors. Indicating that its objective is to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy, it has promised to work hard to transfer the state-owned enterprises to the private sector.

The Enat Party, pointing out that its economic philosophy is free market as the rest of the parties, it allows state intervention in the key economic sectors. It also believes the government has the responsibility of building mega infrastructures. The party prioritizes people and areas given little attention in the past in building infrastructural projects. It also says it would formulate economic policies that can provide special benefits for the minority sections and those historically subjected to discrimination and marginalization. The Enat Party has some similarities to Ezema in terms of its economic outlook that it would also ensure social justice and fair distribution of wealth. It says that it would change the problematic land policy and devise an alternative to categorize land into three as; government, private and communal property, and ensure the right to ownership of farmers.

Like the other parties, FEP is a champion of a market-driven economic system, and allows state intervention in areas that may so require. It believes that the government should construct mega infrastructure developments by itself, or in partnership with the private sector. FEP states in its program that it would create a fair distribution of resources among citizens and regions, just as Ezema and the Enat Party.

FEP believes that land ownership and property rights are linked to politics, culture, population, and environmental protection. Stating that both urban and rural land belongs to the Ethiopian people, it maintains that the responsibility of administering the resource should however be given to the government. Although it does not allow the transfer of land through selling, it promises in its program that it would grant farmers the right to lease their land. But it indicates that it would pursue a policy that considers the country's development regarding the right to transfer land. The party says it would ensure the right to land use by farmers and the urban dwellers, constructing residences and also protect their interests by law.

Like the other parties, NAMA's economic principle is a market-driven economy. The source of the party's economic principle is that the current policy has intentionally thwarted the development of the Amhara people. The party has indicated in its program that, in order to promote trade and foreign investment, public enterprises could be transferred to private investors, if it deems it necessary. It also believes that the government can stabilize the market and engage in development works that require huge budgets. It also maintains that the government can put tax revenues from big companies into investments that could benefit the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Like the other parties, NAMA wants to classify land ownership into private, government and communal. In a manner that does not contradict the party's principle that the owner

of Amhara's historical land is the Amhara people, the party's policy allows the transferring of rural and urban land to a third party through sale, exchange, or inheritance. NAMA wants to put land under protected forests, parks, mountains, lakes and rivers under government ownership.

IV. Foreign Relations Policy

The parties do not have fundamental differences regarding foreign policy principles and priorities. All of them seem to champion a foreign policy that looks outside from the inside. All of them state that they would prioritize the citizens' and the country's national interests. Ezema's foreign policy believes that the basic threats to national security emanate from the country's internal problems. The party has disclosed that it would formulate a foreign relations policy that would enable Ethiopia establish relations with countries that help protect its national interests and defend itself against its opponents. The policy Ezema details to pursue regarding neighboring countries will be based on mutual benefits, development and peace, as well as common economic development adding that the mutual relationship could extend to forming a common defense force. Explaining that various global super powers have different interests in the Horn of Africa and that the region's countries have shifting alliances, Ezema says it would formulate separate foreign policy for each country. It also states that it would take up a policy that enables Ethiopia contribute to the African Union's strength, and for it to play roles in making the United Nations a forum of international justice, as well as enabling the country work closely with international organizations on peace, human rights, environmental protection and development.

Apart from economic benefits, Ezema takes the right of access to international waters as a matter of national security and national survival. The party believes that dependence on a single neighboring country's port exposes Ethiopia to national security threats. Based on this, the party states in its program that Ethiopia needs an access to the international waters and port that it owns and administers, and it would struggle for the country to secure this through legal and diplomatic means.

The Prosperity Party, on its part, has indicated that it would formulate a centralized foreign policy that reflects the country's unity and the dignity of its people and protects national interests. The aims of the party's foreign policy are ensuring national dignity and strengthening pan-Africanism, giving special emphasis to cooperation and mutual benefit and increasing the number of partners, ensuring national interest by pursuing diplomacy not aligned to any of the global poles, ensuring freedom of policy, ensuring mutual benefits by giving due attention to neighboring countries and creating regional development, economic and peace linkages, in order to base the use of cross-border rivers on international principles, and getting better port use rights from neighboring countries.

The Enat Party has a program that states the country's foreign relation principle is based on its capacity to bring about democracy, lasting peace and sustainable development. Like the other parties, Enat says it will formulate and implement a policy that protects the country's sovereignty and national interests. By stating that the international community

understands Ethiopia's quest for access to the international waters, the Enat Party believes, like Ezema, that the issue is a legal question linked to national survival and sovereignty. The party has proposed to strive to resolve the issue peacefully and through agreements with neighboring Eritrea. The party also has detailed, in its program, that it would be committed to eradicating international injustice, to relieve developing countries of external influences and to form a relationship based on mutual benefits.

FEP says the aim of its foreign policy is to help achieve Ethiopia's internal political, economic and social plans. Mentioning the importance of a peaceful region to ensure sustainable internal peace, it says it would formulate a policy that resolves cross-boundary problems, threats and challenges in common. It details that it will implement a policy based on non-interference of states in internal affairs, mutual trust and respect. It will help Ethiopia ensure its national interests, through the African Union and the United Nations, as well as one that would provide support to the continental free trade area in which Ethiopia is a member.

The party explains that it would prioritize relations with countries that have advanced economies, diplomacy, military, and technology. Indicating that Ethiopia's inclination towards a few global powers affects its national interest, the party declares that it would correct this tendency if it takes power. The party says it is committed to deploying skilled and experienced diplomats in order to conduct effective diplomacy in order to defend the threats emanating from the Horn of Africa. It says it would strengthen Ethiopia's military and security structures.

NAMA, on its part, has stated that its foreign policy principles are based on safeguarding national and the peoples' interests. It also discloses that it would work for the amendment or cancellation of international treaties and agreements that do not protect Ethiopia's national interests. NAMA believes that the country's former sea outlets were illegally transferred to another country in 1991. Therefore, by stating that Ethiopia has the right to restore its sea outlets through peaceful and legal means, it maintains that a foreign policy that could realize this should be formulated.

V. Ownership and Administration of Addis Ababa

The fact that Addis Ababa is wholly located within the Oromia region, is the seat of the Oromia region, and that of the federal government, and the special interest the constitution grants to Oromia and that it is the economic and political base of the country, has made it a center of various contending political interests. Hence, the unresolved questions of its ownership.

Controversies linked to the boundary between the city and the Oromia region, and the question of the city's self-administration are also key questions. In fact, the constitution granted the city a self-administrative status. However, as it is accountable to the federal government, it could not fully implement this. There are political forces that present various alternatives for what the constitutional administrative structure of the city should be. It can be said that the intensification of the question of the city's ownership, as well as

administrative problems and controversies, have resulted in the formation of the new Balderas for True Democracy Party over the past few years- a formation focusing on Addis Ababa and struggling for the city's self-government, equal to other regions of the federation. In this year's national elections too, the city's ownership and the status and other administrative controversies, have become main agenda.

FEP has given an extensive analysis in its manifesto, concerning Addis Ababa's ownership and administrative status, referencing theories and experiences of other countries. It also lists the pros and cons of the administrative models in various federal states. The party states that the interests reflected in the city are of the residents' demand for self-administration, the interests of the federal government and those of the region bordering the city.

The main principle of the party's solution to the issue is making the structure of the city reconciliatory of the interests of the inhabitants, the federal government and the people of Ethiopia, as well as focusing on resolving the multi-faceted problems of the residents. The party wants the city to be placed under a legal framework in consideration of the city's residents, all Ethiopians, the farmers around it and the continental interests, given that Addis Ababa is also the seat of the African Union. Therefore, the party believes that the administrative question should be resolved in a manner that benefits the residents and allows a strong federal government. If the party takes power, it has promised to formulate a system that will make the farmers around Addis Ababa become residents of the city, without displacing them, or find a means to sufficiently compensate them. It will also place a legal framework for the farmers in the neighborhood, to consider the city's expansion as an opportunity, rather than a threat.

The other solution the party puts as an alternative is establishing two or more capital cities in other regions to diffuse the political and the socioeconomic burden that Addis Ababa carries.

The Enat Party concedes that Addis Ababa belongs to all Ethiopians, and it believes no one can raise a special question over the ownership of the city. Also, the party does not accept the "special interest" of the Oromia region on Addis Ababa that the constitution grants. As the party intends to make basic changes to the constitution if it takes power, it says it would scrap this "special interest" clause from the supreme law.

The Enat Party states that one of the problems with the City of Addis Ababa is its accountability to the federal government, and its lack of representation in the same. Therefore, it believes that, in the current administrative structure, the city's residents' political and self-administration rights are grossly limited. The groundbreaking solution the Enat Party offers as possible answer to the questions of the city's ownership and its administrative controversies, therefore includes making Addis Ababa a separate regional state of the federation having equal powers with other regional states.

If Ezema wins the election in Addis Ababa, it has prepared a covenant document by which it would resolve the city's problems. Ezema believes that the city was built by people from

across the country and still live in it. Therefore, to the question of who owns Addis Ababa, the party's reply is that it belongs to its residents. The party states in its covenant document that it would put in place a system for the city's genuine self-administration and it would guarantee every piece of this element. While the party strengthens and widens Addis Ababa's self-administration powers, it wants its constitutional administrative structure, i.e., its accountability to the federal government, to remain unchanged.

Ezema believes that the fact that the city does not have clear administrative boundaries with the Oromia region has limited its overall development. The claim the Oromia region has over Addis Ababa has, in particular, caused a security threat to the city, the party says. Therefore, the party has indicated in its covenant document that it will work with the federal and the Oromia regional governments for Addis Ababa to have a legally defined administrative boundary. But the party's solutions will ensure the benefits of the residents and the city, as well as consider its being the seat of the federal government. It has also stated that it plans to make farmers around the city beneficiaries of the Addis Ababa's development. Yet, it has indicated at various occasions that it does not accept the "special interest" clause the constitution grants to Oromia region. It says it will remove this article from the constitution through an amendment, should it take power.

NAMA, like the Enat Party, has proposed a fundamental administrative structure regarding Addis Ababa. If NAMA takes power, it will struggle to make Addis Ababa a self-administering city state, as stated in its manifesto. The reasons the party has given for this structure include the city's being the seat of the federal government and the African Union, its location, the demographic composition, and the national and international role it plays. Supporting Addis Ababa's status as the seat of the federal government, NAMA states, it will make the city have a government equal to regional states of the federation and get proper representation within the federal parliament. NAMA does not accept the "special interest" accorded to Oromia by the constitution and states that it will remove the article through a constitutional amendment. Like FEP, NAMA wants Ethiopia to have an additional capital city, and it recommends Dire Dawa, a city accountable to the federal government like Addis Ababa, but also claiming that the Amhara people are not properly represented in the Dire Dawa city administration.

The Prosperity Party's position on Addis Ababa, does not differ much from that of the previous EPRDF administration. According to the party, Addis Ababa is the capital of all nations and nationalities. The position of the Prosperity Party regarding the city's administrative structure, is maintaining its existing accountability to the federal government with the same self-administration powers it currently enjoys. Unlike the others, the Prosperity Party however accepts and wants to ensure the implementation of the Oromia region's "special interest" on Addis Ababa granted by the constitution.

Bearing this in mind, it is difficult to say that the Prosperity Party has a clear and final position on the ownership of Addis Ababa and its administrative controversies, even though there are political forces within it which hold that the city belongs to the Oromo

people. They reason that is being given is that it is located at the center of the Oromia region and also it historically belonged to the Oromo. This position repeatedly comes from the Oromia branch of the Prosperity Party.

Conclusion

The parties, in general, have both similarities and differences in the main principles of their programs. The similarities are mainly in the economic and foreign relation policies, and in the need for constitutional amendment. While the Prosperity Party, NAMA and FEP have striking similarities, Ezema and the Enat parties are more distinct.

The report also shows that, although the parties agree on the decentralized or federal structure of the state, they differ on whether the ethnic federal system is good or not. Ezema and the Enat Party view the ethnic-based federal system as a source of the country's problems, and argue that it needs to be reviewed. Except for the Prosperity Party, the others want the reorganization of the federal system to include criteria such as geography, settlement, culture, common psychology, history and the convenience for development and administration. As FEP, NAMA and the Prosperity Party believe that nations and nationalities are the bases of the country, they don't want to leave out the right of nationalities as the main principle of the federal system. Because all parties aspire to establish a decentralized or federal system, they also don't have a place for a centralized state model.

Like the type of federal system that the country should adopt, the parties also have marked similarities and differences on the issue of the ownership and administrative status of the capital Addis Ababa city. In this regard, the Enat Party and NAMA share similarity in their groundbreaking proposals i.e. elevating the current status of the city to a regional state and city state level respectively. On the other hand, Ezema and Prosperity Party are similar in their stances i.e. maintaining the current self-administrative status and accountability of the city to the federal government.

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