



# Kinijit International Council

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## The Road Ahead: One Kinijit One Voice

From the Executive Committee, Kinijit International Council, September 4, 2007

### Scenario I: One Kinijit One Voice:

The concept, vision, political program and goals of Kinijit are now embedded in the political culture of the broadest spectrum of Ethiopians: children, students, women and women from all nationalities and religious groups. It is truly a national political organization that has been able to appeal a broad audience, especially to the young generation of Ethiopians who appreciate its democratic vision and the dedication of its leadership. In essence, it is transformational. Its capacity to shatter the myth of ethnic division and hatred by embracing representatives and members from Ethiopia's mosaic makes it a visionary political organization with potential to bring the Ethiopian people together in a peaceful and constructive manner. The popular term-- the "Kinijit spirit"-- is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the Ethiopian people. What this "spirit" requires is unwavering dedication and commitment to translate vision into reality no matter the costs and the long road ahead.

As part and parcel of solidifying and strengthening the "spirit of Kinijit" and the momentum of the May 15, 2005 elections, the most ideal political scenario that will pay huge dividends in the years to come, and that will energize and embolden the Ethiopian people and strengthen their trust and confidence in political leadership will be to maintain and sharpen a unified and stronger Kinijit with intact leadership and direction. This will send the most powerful signal to the leadership of the ruling party, the Ethiopian public, supporters in the Diaspora and the international community. It will make Kinijit an unstoppable political force that will shape and transform Ethiopian society for the better. The euphoria on the part of the Ethiopian people welcoming the release of political prisoners echoes the political foundation of Kinijit and the popular support that it continues to enjoy.

In adhering to One Kinijit One Voice, the leadership must be ready and willing to address internal organizational and leadership style issues with openness and readiness to resolve differences in a democratic manner. It must show that it is dedicated to apply democratic standards within its own organization that it demands from the ruling party and from others. **The principles of inclusion, mutual respect, unconditional equality, acceptance, treatment and participation by all Ethiopian citizens who believe in a unified and democratic Ethiopia will govern behaviors and actions.**

Leaders and supporters of Kinijit within and outside the country must realize the enormous costs associated with potential division, acrimony and partisanship. As we move towards the new Millennium, Kinijit leaders must appreciate that the struggle for



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democracy is every ones business; that what is at stake is nothing less than a legacy for this and the coming generation. There is therefore a moral obligation to do the right thing for the Ethiopian people regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation.

## **Scenario II: Dissension and Factionalism with Kinijit:**

At this time, the ruling party and its supporters seem to enjoy the 'feud' that seems to be brewing within the CUDP within and outside the country. It will be naïve to dismiss the potential dangers and costs of this development. The EPRDF and certain foreign governments will continue to plant seeds of dissension within the ranks of the CUDP leadership within and outside the country. It is vital that veteran leaders of the CUDP realize the long term harm and damage of not resolving differences through open, direct, honest, and democratic dialogue quickly and responsibly. To prolong the innuendos, accusations and counter accusations will only serve the political interests of the ruling party. The leadership must be willing to deal with intransigent and self serving individuals and groups within Kinijit without hesitation. The Ethiopian people must be kept fully informed about the processes and methods used to address strategic differences openly and quickly. Ultimately, they are the key and only judges of who stands with them and against them. Addressing and resolving dissension and factionalism within the CUDP successfully will send a most compelling message to the Ethiopian people, the Diaspora and the international community that Ethiopians have produced leaders with the capacity and readiness to resolve internal differences for the benefit of their society. This will show that leaders realize that their moral and social obligations to their society far exceeds individual and group partisan interests and egos.

## **Scenario III: Return to Pre-Kinijit Political Groupings:**

The worst political scenario that will create havoc within Ethiopian society and in the Diaspora is resorting back to the pre-Kinijit political organization of fractured political parties that have similar ideological leanings in shaping the country's future. The compelling reasons that required the formation of the CUDP are unchanged. Nothing in the ideological and political landscape of Ethiopia has changed. In fact, the reasons for which the entire leadership of the CUIDP languished in jail for close to two years and, the reasons that forced the ruling party to send to prison close to 100,000 innocent Ethiopians to jail at one point or another following the May 15, 2005 elections and, to kill, maim, force to flee, thousands of Ethiopians remain intact. The ruling party is as intransigent today as it was then. There has been very little accommodation of democratic dissent in the country. On the contrary, repression, fear and retaliation continue unabated. For these reasons, dismemberment of Kinijit is tantamount to committing political suicide. Such a development will diminish the sacrifices made in human lives, in property, in precious time spent by those who were in jail. More



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important, it will shred to pieces the confidence and trust that the Ethiopian people have in new political leadership. It will take years to build confidence and trust among Ethiopians. It will be hard to speak on behalf of constituent parties instead of the “spirit of Kinijit” with one voice for one strategic goal, namely, a peaceful transition to democratic and all inclusive political and economic governance. It will be a set back at a time when we should be celebrating the new Ethiopian Millennium with a determination to usher in a new era for social, political and economic justice for Ethiopia’s mosaic.

Against this background, the option of dismantling Kinijit as an Opposition party will be the single most unwelcome set back for the Ethiopian people and their supporters in the Diaspora. Imagine the huge benefits for the ruling party; imagine the marginalization of the constituent parties that formed Kinijit.

In the event that this happens, those that believe in One Kinijit and One Voice must expose those leaders and groups that contributed to the dismantlement of Kinijit; identify members and sympathizers that still believe in One Kinijit and One Voice; pursue the vision and political program of the organization; reach out to other democratic leaning organizations and individuals; and make a huge effort to expand, deepen and broaden the political base of Kinijit so that it will emerge as a formidable and unstoppable force.

## **Our Collective Commitment:**

We take differences of opinion, style, competition for leadership, voice and, influence as constructive and as part and parcel of the democratization process. They enrich all of us; they help us to innovate and change for the better. What we would like to guard against are the debilitating and corrosive tendencies of the politics of innuendo, unfounded rumors and accusations (yequenena politics). What we would like to guard are seeds of division along sectarian and veiled tribal and self serving lines that will potentially derail the momentum that Kinijit has created. We are totally convinced that the Ethiopian people are on the side of the democratic movement. We are also convinced that that political leadership and direction have to originate and emanate from within the country and not from abroad. Accordingly, we will abide and be guided by instructions and guidance from the Kinijit political leadership in Ethiopia and support its vision, programs and goals without hesitation. In line with this, we will work closely and collaboratively with all Ethiopian individuals and groups throughout the Diaspora who believe in one Kinijit and One Voice.

We have absolutely no doubt that One Kinijit and One Voice will prevail. It is this doctrine that will enable the Ethiopian people to achieve freedom, equality of treatment and opportunity for all citizens, the rule of law, individual human rights, economic and



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social justice, representative democracy and rapid economic and social development and growth. We have no doubt that, through a peaceful transition to representative democracy, Ethiopia will have a solid foundation to make poverty history within a short period of time. For this reason, it is in every one's interest to pursue the "spirit of Kinijit," a momentum that moved a nation for the first time in its modern history.