

## The Impact of Monopolization of Foreign Relations by Federal Government on the Autonomy of Regional States in Ethiopia: A Comparative Analysis with Other Federations

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### ABSTRACT

Inherent in federal systems, competency is divided between the central government and regional states by the federal constitution. The two tiers of government exist independent of each other, i.e. they are autonomous, and power division exists on the basis of constitutional power allocation between the two. There is no hard and fast rule as to which tiers of government should be empowered with what type of powers. There are disparities among federations in dividing powers between the two levels of governments. Regarding the field of foreign relations too, it is common to see disparities among federations. Some federations have distributed power of foreign relation between the two tiers of government, while in other federations the power was granted to regional states whereas in others it was given to both tiers of government as shared power of competence.

Under the Ethiopian federal setup, federal and state powers are defined by the Federal constitution in which the latter grants power of foreign relation exclusively to the federal government. In Ethiopia, there was no constitutional and institutional set up that grant regional states to involve in foreign relations. The Federal Constitution under art. 51(8) which provides that foreign relation is the exclusive power of federal government (hereinafter FG), this ceases the power of regional states specifically on matters of regional importance given to them under the constitution. Since power of foreign relation is constitutionally given to FG as its exclusive power as a result the regional states autonomy is heavily affected. The monopolization of foreign relation by FG has impacts on the autonomous existence of regional states esp. in relation to self-determination of regions. Because, they do have divergent interests, the point is by what means those divergent interests of states are safeguarded in case of monopolization of foreign relation by FG. Furthermore, the monopolization of foreign relation by FG has also ramifications on the social, political and economy of the regions. Though the Ethiopian federal system, which was mainly designed to safeguard the right to self-rule of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, seems to have become an instrument of encroachment upon States autonomy because of federal monopoly in the spheres of foreign relations (art. 51(8) of FDRE Constitution). The fact that foreign policy is no more strictly about a relationship between sovereign states and that treaties cover a whole variety of subjects including social and economic fields, protection of human rights, education, labor conditions, etc...have only exaggerated the federal invasion of the regional states autonomy.

Therefore, this article strives to explore the impacts of monopolization of foreign relation by FG on the autonomous existence and self-determination of regional states in Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** Federal government, power allocation, Autonomy, Foreign Relation, foreign policy, international relations, Federations, self-determination.

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## INTRODUCTION

Every country of the world has the right and power to secure the goals of their national interest in international relations. It is the supreme duty of the states to satisfy the needs of her societies. Each nation wants to be self-reliant in all areas of activity. Nonetheless, really no nation can achieve cent per cent self-reliance and self-sufficiency. These are ideals towards which a nation can try to move. Therefore, the power of foreign relation is inevitable for a nation. Foreign relation is the management of relationships and dealings between more than two countries. Any results of foreign policy dealings and decisions can be considered as foreign relations. As a result, it is the relations between sovereign states which is the manifest result of foreign policy broadly in the field of international interaction and reaction. Under International Law, a state has the right to enter into relations with other states. This power to conduct foreign affairs or relations is one of the rights a state gains by attaining independence. i.e. the states under international law is sovereigns so no super authority that forces the state whether to conduct relations with one country say country 'X' or not. States are sovereign equals under international laws, so sovereigns can't order the other sovereigns unless it amounts to violation of the sovereign power of the state.

Countries have always been interdependent; such kind of interdependence between countries exists even after they have attained the high levels of development in their country. Interdependence between the countries has been the undeniable fact of international relations. It forces every nation to get essentially involved in the process of establishing and conducting relations with each other nations. As result, every nation in the globe establishes diplomatic, economic, trade, educational, cultural and political relations with other nations.

All countries of the world are parts of foreign relations due to the fact that our identities, religion and cultural backgrounds, places where we live and choices that we make. Even if we have no interests of making foreign relations with other nations, foreign relations are interested in us.

The Contemporary International Relations gives us deep cultural understanding that is a foundation for interaction with cultures with different values and beliefs. And we, as well as countries, need to communicate to survive. All countries in the world are dependent on the trade and exchanges with others they can make which in turn can be beneficial in various ways. When countries have mutual relationship with one another, the country's economic, social and cultural backgrounds are more likely to develop.

Foreign relations are based on the states communication. When there is no mutual agreement between the countries it has been confirmed that to lead to terrible consequences in the past. Having better international communication is inevitable because if there is better international communication it could

have prevented one of the most destructive wars that human kind has faced so far. Currently there is a rapid change of the world through any means. For instance a new countries becoming more powerful and significant on the international stage, the developing world continues to grow. The center of gravity has shifted in international affairs, moving towards Pacific which itself defines new roles for almost all major actors of the world. The global scene is more fluid than ever before in human history. All these changes are starting to have profound impact on foreign relations in the decades to come. That's what makes international relations so inspiring and interesting, not to mention important nowadays.

The field of foreign relations is becoming more and more relevant in every society these days. Effective communication between countries is a key for making beneficial relationships and ensuring a safer world as a result. To promote our world peaceful, to protect the environment and to overcome all the world's obstacle of development, the countries' relation is inevitable.

Inherent in Federal systems of government, is the existence of at least two tiers government which exists independent of each other and constitutional basis of power distribution made between the two tiers. For instance, the federal constitution of Ethiopia has distributed power to the federal and regional governments under art.51, 55 and 52 respectively. So power of foreign relation is amongst some of the powers to be allocated either to FG, RG or concurrently to both tiers of government. The power of foreign relations have to be divided between the regional states and federal government but since federal and state powers are defined by the constitution, the power of foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government under Ethiopian federal system. Some federations granted the power to make foreign relation to regional states whereas in others it was exclusively given to federal government. Under other federations such kind of power was granted as shared power between the two tiers of government.

Under the Ethiopian federal structure the power to conduct foreign relations was granted to federal government exclusively. Accordingly, art. 51 of FDRE Constitution which enumerates the exclusive powers of FG, under sub-article 8 of art.51 the power to formulate and implement foreign policy was granted to FG as its exclusive power. There was no constitutional and institutional set up that grant regional states to involve in foreign relations in Ethiopia. Under, FDRE Constitution art.51 (8) which declares that foreign relation is the exclusive power of federal government; this ceases the power of regional states specifically on regional state matters/matters having local importance. Since the foreign relation is constitutionally given to federal government as its exclusive power, the regional states autonomy is heavily affected due to the monopolization of foreign relation by FG. Because foreign policy is not more strictly about a relationship between sovereign states, and that

treaties cover a whole variety of subjects including social and economic fields, protection of human rights, education, labor conditions, etc...have only exaggerated the federal invasion of the regional states autonomy. The way Ethiopian federal system designed was mainly to safeguard the right to self-rule of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, seems to have become an instrument of encroachment upon States autonomy because of federal monopoly in the area of foreign relations in general. The monopolization of foreign relation by FG thus has impacts on the autonomous existence and in relation to self-determination of regional states. Because, regional states in Ethiopia do have divergent interests and by what means those divergent interests of states are safeguarded in case of monopolization of foreign relation by FG. In addition, the monopolization of foreign relation has also implications on the socio-political and economic effects of the regional states because the relations established results in conclusion of treaties having with widespread coverage all over the country including the regions. Hence, foreign relation encompasses a lot of issues. For example, international relations draws from the fields of politics, economics, international law, communication studies, history, demography, geography, sociology, anthropology, criminology and psychology. The scope of international relations encompasses issues such as globalization, diplomatic relations, state sovereignty, international security, ecological sustainability, nuclear proliferation, nationalism, economic development, global finance, terrorism, and human rights. Perhaps the most significant concept behind that of power and sovereignty, national interest is a state's action in relation to other states where it seeks to gain advantage or benefits to itself. Hence, it is proved that federalism resulted in accommodating diversities by adopting self-rule and shared rule concepts. But the shared rule not always resulted in respecting the interests of the regions because the interests of regions are not identical. That is why monopolization of foreign relation heavily affects the autonomy of the regions, and the author suggests that the promotion of regional states involvement in the foreign relations through various mechanisms, at least with the consent of FG if not, in a way which allows them to involve in foreign relations.

## OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN RELATIONS UNDER FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

### Conceptual overview of Foreign Relations

Foreign relation is an agreement between two or more countries to pursue a set of goals agreed upon objectives needed while remaining as an independent organization/entity. Thus, foreign relations are all about the management of relationships and dealings between two countries. Any results of foreign policy dealings and decisions can be considered as foreign relations.

Diplomacy is affected by the radical changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Shocks within the international order, the revolution of internet-based global communication, and legitimacy problems of liberal governments seem to necessitate a fundamental re-orientation of foreign policy tools. Otto von Bismarck, first

chancellor of the German empire of 1871, described diplomacy as the never-ending negotiation of reciprocal concessions between states. If that is the case, then today we face the question of the purpose of such a time-consuming art of managing international relations. Foreign relation is the relation made between the countries to fit fully their economic, social and political interest. The economic development, social development, environmental protection of the world is only successfully achieved through countries mutual relationship.

The dynamic development of foreign relation is started in Europe with the establishment of the concept of sovereign states after the Peace treaty of Westphalia concluded in 1648. The new arrangement re-defined the political map of Europe after the end of Thirty Year's War. The agreement on the concept of sovereignty was the basis on which modern states were established and sovereign states pursued their interests in the international sphere. The principle of sovereignty of a state was further developed by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The Treaty of Utrecht is thought to reflect an emerging norm that sovereigns had no internal equals within a defined territory and no external superiors as the ultimate authority within the territory's sovereign borders. Those principles reinforce the modern international legal and political order. At a later stage the concept of sovereignty was further re-defined by the French revolution in 1789. The French Revolution contributed the idea that the citizenry of a state, defined as the nation, that were sovereign, rather than a monarch or noble class. A state wherein the nation is sovereign would thence be termed a nation-state, as opposed to a monarchy or a religious state; the term republic increasingly became its synonym.

After the treaty of Westphalia and the end of the First and Second World War, the international system has witnessed an increasing growth in the development of nation states. The end product of this development is thus, the creation of an interaction between these nation states. In addition, the establishment of United Nations and the process of decolonization that has liberated many states into sovereign entities have further provided the impetus to interrelationships among states. Such has resulted into the formation of 'foreign policies' with the aim of determining and identifying the decisions, strategies, and ends of interaction of a state with another. Furthermore, the modern world of "globalization"; the "widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness" has increased this interrelationships or interactions among states. Hence, there is unanimity among scholars on the necessity of a "foreign policy" for each state, since no states will like to function in complete isolation. This made scholars like Feliks Gross, to say that even a decision to have no relations with a particular state is also a foreign policy. A state without a foreign policy has been compared to a ship in the deep sea without any knowledge of directions. Thus, foreign policy leads a state in fulfilling its national interests and acquiring rightful place among comity of nations.

All the countries of the world own their sovereignty. This concept brought about the Foreign Policy as an instrument to promote the states interest being the borders and the decision making of the foreign Policy started to be opened to more

internal policy-makers. In doing so, they take into account the national interest of the nation, the internal and external environment, the national values, the foreign policy goals and decisions of other nations and the nature of international power structure.

A country's foreign policy consists of self-interest strategies preferred by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve goals with in its international relations milieu. The countries enter into foreign relation with other countries to promote their own national interest and for common benefit of their government. In contemporary times, due to the deepening level of globalization and transnational activities, to develop their own countries economic, social, cultural, investment, industry, and technology the countries have entered into several multilateral and bilateral relation. At this time, foreign relation is so much inevitable for the promotion of world peace, economic development, social development and environmental protection globally and nationally.

### **Dynamics of Ethiopia's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy**

The Ethiopian government had foreign relations with various African and other continental countries for a long period of time to promote the countries development and secure their national interest. Ethiopia's foreign relations with countries near and a far, and the country's foreign policy and diplomacy can best be characterized as a process of change and continuity in which various determinants are involved. The country's foreign policy and diplomacy has passed through three stages of foreign policy dimensions each characterized by different policy determinants and objectives. These includes; Ethiopia's foreign policy and diplomacy during the imperial regime (1931- 1974), then during the totalitarian regime of Derg (1974- 1990) and during the advent of a democratic federal state (1991- present). The main issue of foreign relation during the imperial regime is resolving international disputes through peaceful negotiation without any resort to war. This is successfully achieved by having strong collective security, and militarily. Major diplomatic activities were carried out by the emperor himself through charismatic personal diplomacy, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played second fiddle in formulating and implementing foreign policy objectives. There was no meaningful connection between the domestic policies of the regime and its foreign policy and diplomatic objectives. In fact the emperor's domestic policies totally contradicted with the country's foreign policy. During the Derg era, the nation was at loggerheads with the neighboring countries despite the government's official commitment to peaceful co-existence. Similar to the feudal regime before it, the government followed totally incompatible policies in its domestic and foreign policy. Internally the Derg regime was repressive, to say at least, and at the international level, the country sided with the socialist countries that were led by the former Soviet Union. In a similar manner, the military government had no specific policy document that could have explained the foreign policy and diplomatic objectives of the government.

The establishment of a federal democratic system in Ethiopia in 1995 ushered a major paradigm shift in the dynamics of the country's foreign policy and diplomacy. Unlike the past regimes of the imperial and derg foreign policy, the new foreign policy of Ethiopia is based on promoting the national interest of the country. The country's foreign policy objective is to achieve the sustainable development of the world and our countries by promoting socio-economic development and environmental protection. The country's foreign policy emanates and is based on the domestic policies of the country. There is full and sound compatibility between the two policies shows the complementarities between domestic and foreign policy objectives. The main goal of the current foreign relation is for the protection of national interest and respect of countries sovereignty. It is also there to promote mutual respect and equality of the states. The foreign policy of Ethiopia focuses on sustained economic development, prosperity, promotion of democracy and peace as the pillars of the nation's objectives of foreign policy and diplomacy. Unlike the imperial and derg foreign policies, the current foreign policy is to ensure foreign relation policies based on mutual interest and equality of the states as well as those international agreements to promote the interest of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's currently developmental democratic diplomacy is conducted by devoted professionals, who put ahead the national interest of the country through a strategy of economic diplomacy. The dynamics of Ethiopia's foreign policy and diplomacy is still unfolding with speedy momentum to ensure that Ethiopia would become a mid-level developed country by 2025.

### **Overview of Federalism and the Power Allocation under Federal setup**

Federalism is the system of government in which power is divided between the central and regional governments; in the contemporary type of federalism, both the central government and the regional states possess a large measure of sovereignty and autonomy on their spheres reserved for them.

Federal system of government is basically a form of government based on the decentralization of powers between various levels of governance; say the Center and the regional state. This is a form of government which is based on the equal distribution of powers between the Center and the regional states. The constitution of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia is so designed that powers are distributed on the basis of national and state interests. The central government has not much to do with the affairs of the state as long as it does not coincide with the interests of the whole nation/country in general. Both level of government have their own area of work and functioning. Federalism is a hierarchical system of government under which two levels of government exercise a range of control over the same geographic area. This system of exclusive and shared powers is the opposite of "centralized" forms of governments. The main difference between the federal government and the state governments in federal system of government is based on the scope of their legal powers. The division of power between the central government and the regional state is one of the hallmarks of federations. The federal system is so designed to

enable both the federal government and the states to enact law, to execute and adjudicate it. Legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers are allocated based on the idea that there should be some correspondence with the scope of legislative, executive, judicial and financial powers. It is considered essential for governments to possess the executive and judicial authority and the financial resources to implement the function within their legislative competence. The constitutional allocation of legislative power is defined on the basis of three categories, namely exclusive powers (of the federal government and/or of the states), concurrent powers and residual powers. Under the US, Swiss, German and Ethiopian federations, the federal government is granted enumerated powers. In some of these federations the federal constitution defines the federal power in a limited fashion while in others the constitution defines it broadly. In all of these federations the residual power belongs to the states. In USA, the federal government is expressly given the power to make and veto laws, oversee national defense and foreign policy, impeach officials, impose tariffs and enter into treaties.

The federal government, through the Supreme Court, also has the power to interpret and revise laws and intercede when one state is impeding on the rights of another. The other examples of the duties of the federal government includes implementing and enforcing immigration laws, bankruptcy laws, Social Security laws, discrimination and civil rights laws, patent and copyright laws and laws pertaining to tax fraud and money counterfeiting.

The states' legal jurisdiction is going to cover all other matters, as defined by the 10th Amendment. Further, each state has the ability to govern these matters differently. Because of the broad definition of the states' rights and the federal government's rights, it is frequently subject to interpretation and review. However, some of the subjects that are covered under state laws comprises of criminal cases, divorce and family issues, welfare and Medical aid, estate laws, real estate and property laws, business contracts, personal injury, medical malpractice and workers' compensation.

The states draw their powers from the 10th amendment of the Constitution, which grants them all powers not specifically granted to the federal government, nor forbidden to them by the Constitution. For instance, while the Constitution grants the federal government the power to levy taxes, state and local governments may also levy taxes, because the Constitution does not prohibit them from doing so. In general, state governments have the power to regulate issues of local concern, such as drivers' licenses, public school policy, and non-federal road construction and maintenance.

The Ethiopian Constitution in general follows that of the United States forms of distribution of powers. Pursuant to article 50(2) of FDRE constitution, "the federal government and the states shall have legislative, executive and judicial powers. Hence, the Ethiopian federal system appears to reflect some aspects of coming together as well as holding together. Although it is a fact that none of the constituent states existed as autonomous entity, owing to the aggregate nature of the federation, the federal government appears to be one with

enumerated and limited powers and the states hold residual powers. The Constitution also comprises a brief account of some states powers in addition to the residual power.

The federal powers under the Ethiopian federal constitution, is composed of the power to protect and defend the constitution; formulate and implement the country's policies, strategies and plans in respect of overall economic, social and development matters, establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for public health, education, science and technology as well as for the protection and preservation of cultural and historical legacies; formulate and execute the country's financial, monetary and foreign investment policies and strategies; enact laws for the utilization and conservation of land and other natural resources, historical sites and objects; establish and administer national defense and public security forces as well as a federal police force; administer the national Bank, print and borrow money, mint coins, regulate foreign exchange and money circulation; it shall determine by law the conditions and terms under which states can borrow money from internal sources; formulate and implement foreign policy; negotiate and ratify international agreements ,regulation of air, water and sea transport and major roads linking two or more states, as well as for postal and telecommunications services; levy taxes and collect duties on revenue sources reserved to the federal government; determine and administer the utilization of the waters or rivers and lakes linking two or more states or crossing the boundaries of the national territorial jurisdiction; regulate inter-state and foreign commerce; administer and expand all federally funded institutions that provide services to two or more states; deploy at the request of a state administration federal defense forces to arrest a deteriorating security situation within the requesting state when its authorities are unable to control it; enact all necessary laws in order to give effect to political rights provided for in the constitution; declare and lift national state of emergency and state of emergencies limited to certain parts of the country; determine matters relating to nationality; determine and administer all matters relating to immigration, the granting of passports, entry into and exit from the country, refugees and asylum; patent inventions and protect copyrights; establish uniform standards of measurement and calendar; enact laws regulating the possession and bearing of arms.

The power of regional states is those powers not given expressly to the federal government alone or concurrently to the federal government and the states, is reserved to the states. The States shall have the following powers under the constitutions which comprises of the power: To establish a State administration that best advances self-government, democratic order based on the rule of law; to protect and defend the Federal Constitution; To enact and execute the state constitution and other laws; To formulate and execute economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans of the State; To administer land and other natural resources in accordance with Federal law: To levy and collect taxes and duties on revenue sources reserved to the States and to draw up and administer the State budget; To enact and enforce laws on the State civil service and their condition of work; in the implementation of this responsibility it shall ensure that educational; training and experience

requirements for any job, title or position approximate national standards; To establish and administer a state police force, and to maintain public order and peace within the State.

Generally, under article 51 of our constitution the federal powers is expressly mentioned, and under article 52 powers not given expressly to the federal government alone or concurrently to the federal government and the states, are reserved to the states. The power of conducting foreign relation which is exclusively reserved and allocated to the federal government of Ethiopia under the constitution.

## The Significance of Foreign Relations

Foreign relation is indispensable for any countries of the world between countries to countries for the mutual benefit and to promote mutual interests of the states. It includes vast range of subjects ranging from language, culture to technology. Diplomatic relations are always aimed at maintaining good and positive relationship. Foreign relation is very crucial in ensuring the development of all countries. The domestic needs of one state can be fulfilled through conducting and establishing mutual relations with other countries of the world. Because no countries in the world which is self-reliant and self-sufficient, so that the mutual relationship between countries is indispensable. Being self-sufficient is just a concept. No country can ever become self-reliable and self-sufficient. Resources are spread over the globe unevenly. These resources can be utilized only through efficient policies. When we see our world day to day activities all countries are interdependent. Foreign relation includes the activities between the countries to develop their own countries and promote sustainable development of the whole world. How the global resources are expected to be utilized collectively, to ensure global development as well as national development. In this context, there is a pressing demand to reform United Nations organizational structure in a way which furthers those interests to be balanced across the globe. On other hand, global problems like Global warming, Poverty, women empowerment, violence demands global coordination and collaboration. The new era in foreign policy is all about coordinating all countries which demands skillful policy and rules. Foreign policy is so important to achieve national goals. Global issues can be solved only through multilateral coordination, arrangements and groupings. The specific significance of the Ethiopian foreign relation is the attainment of speedy economic development, democratization and peace to the survival of our country which finds itself in a state of object poverty and backwardness. Our Foreign relation can only have relevance if it contributes to the eradication of poverty and if it promotes speedy economic development, democracy and peace building. Foreign relation promotes effective trade policies between nations, both in terms of importing natural resources and finished products not available in one country and in terms of gaining access to the larger market afforded by exports to foreign countries.

Foreign relation is also inevitable to maintain the global balance by avoiding conflict through agreement, by ensuring development of technology between the states and to create an economic environment favorable to the world through sustainable development goals. The other importance of

countries relation is preventing of war and violence, and fortifying relations between two nations. Therefore, without foreign relation, much of the world's affairs would be obliterated, various international organizations would not exist, and at the end of the day the whole world would be at a constant state of war. That is why certain countries of the world exist in harmony is for their diplomacy. So by representing a state's interests and conducting negotiations or discussions designed to identify common interests as well as areas of disagreement between the states, for the purpose of achieving the state's goals and avoiding conflict, foreign relation is very imperative. Relation between two representatives are a key component in diplomacy, because in doing so the representatives find a common interest of their own. Finding a common interest is vital in conducting negotiations because with a common interest representatives are able to devise a solution that is in the interest of both sides. The other importance of the relation between the state is gathering of information and subsequent identification and evaluation of receiving state's foreign policy goals, expansion of political, economic, and cultural ties between the countries and facilitating or enforcing vehicle for the observation of international law. It is the representative's business to promote and protect the country's national interests and keep ties with other countries openly.

## THE IMPACT OF MONOPOLIZATION OF FOREIGN RELATION BY FG ON THE AUTONOMY OF REGIONAL STATES IN ETHIOPIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.

### Overview of Ethiopian foreign relation

The foreign relations of the modern Ethiopian state were driven by the government's quest to establish this multi-ethnic polity as a viable nation-state and to maintain its territorial integrity. The strategic pillars of Ethiopia's foreign relation positioning globally, regionally and locally are based on the principles of respect for national sovereignty, non-alignment, pursuance of mutual benefits and the creation of peaceful environments conducive for internal and regional development and progress. These policies have yielded dividends for the country in terms of safeguarding its national interests economically, politically, diplomatically and militarily, which are the outcomes of pursuing a "Win-Win" foreign policy. The favorable multi-polar world order and the relatively less hostile regional geo-politics have provided the background for the success of its foreign policy. Still, Ethiopia also needs to develop strong and dynamic policy alternatives that are consistent with its strategic pillars, the main aim of foreign relation is to protect national interest and to make our country more and more strong by all means economic, social, political in the world. This is the main strategic pillars of Ethiopian foreign relation and with the changing global, regional and local power alignments in order to strengthen and sustain its hitherto successful foreign policy. It is imperative that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and

threats are continuously, robustly analyzed and articulated with a view to strengthening the strategic pillars and further developing additional, smart policy options. The pitfalls that Ethiopia could and should avoid are short-term, opportunist, interventionist policies that are based on support to one or another anti-people, anti-nation building, factionalist forces in countries experiencing civil wars, or regime failure. Falling to such temptations would lead to immersion in civil wars and provide justifications for intervention by Ethiopia's regional adversaries. Moreover, such an approach is a recipe for "Win-Lose" policy options at best, or "Lose-Lose" policy outcomes at worst. The lessons of the second half of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first century are that regime-changing and interventionist foreign policies are deemed to fail, even by the economically and militarily strongest powers. It is, however, vitally important to underline that, ultimately, a country's foreign policy is as good and strong as its domestic policy. A principled, pro-people, pro-nation-building, pro-democracy, pro-development and pro-peace anchored strategy buttressed by dynamic, robust and smart policies is and should be the foundation for an effective and sustainable Ethiopian foreign and defense policy. Traditionally, it was conceived that federalism shapes only the internal functioning of a political system and foreign relation is conceived as exclusive power of federal government. However, such long last assumption dormant exclusive power of foreign relations by the federal government in federal polity confronts challenges from the regional states. Regional states usually have strong desire for decentralization of foreign relation competency. Nowadays, notwithstanding that foreign relation competency is constitutionally assigned to the federal government in most of federations, they are highly involved in foreign relations. Regional states involvement in the foreign relations activities assumes two forms; Regional states involvement in federation in foreign relations through their representative (usually through the second chamber) and the constituent diplomacy. In the former case, sub-nationals seek representation and consultation on formulation and implementation of federation (country's) foreign relations, while in the case of constituent diplomacy, sub-national units seek to influence the formulation of national policies as primary actors using their own resources and machineries.

The main purpose of the regional states involvement in foreign relations in both cases is more or less the same, and that is, involving in the major decisions, including treaty making in effecting the economic, social, cultural, trade, investment and technology. For the development of countries in general and regional states specifically the involvement of regional states in foreign relation is very imperative. The constitutional powers of exclusive power giving for regional states also protect by making the power as shared power regime; sharing powers of foreign relation to the regional states.

Obviously, some federations have granted the sub-national units involvement in foreign relations under the federal constitutions to which they belong. While other federations the sub-national units are constitutionally outlawed from foreign relations activities. However, some federations rather than claiming the use of equivalent legal instruments to involve in constituent

diplomacy, sub-national units have preferred to be effectively associated with the way their state conducts its international relations. Whereas, in most federations, sub-national units are keen on constituent diplomacy and involved in their foreign relations.

Under the Ethiopian federal set up, foreign relation is federal government's exclusive power. There is no constitutional and institutional set up that enables regional states to participate in neither foreign relation nor does the federal constitution allows the regional states to involve in their foreign relation. The federal government is given exclusive power even domestically it is the exclusive power of federal government as far as foreign relation is concerned.

### Constitutional Basis of the Ethiopian Foreign Relations

The constitutional provision and basis of federal and state powers are one of the determinant factors and varying nature of foreign relations because it provides the extent and areas of powers between the two orders of government. Additionally, under the experiences of various federations, it showed that the constitutional basis of foreign relations varies from federation to federation while from its nature, federal system not only stands for the distribution of powers between federal and state governments, but also requests relations between the two in order to ensure coordination and effective achievements of powers and responsibility divided under the constitution. In such situation, some federations develop the basis and principles that govern the foreign relations in their constitution exclusively to the federal government while others develop regional states participation in foreign relations by the constitutional provisions concerning the regional state matters.

In nutshell, the 1995 FDRE constitution fails to incorporate both constitutional and institutional mechanisms to secure the regional governments' involvement in foreign relations. The worse thing is, the absence of constitutional limitations which obliges the federal government to take into account the interest of regional states while designing the foreign policy. The only limitation on the federal government is only to take into account the country's foreign relations principles which are set under article 86 of the FDRE Constitution. Those principles are;

"To promote policies of foreign relations based on the protection of national interests and respect for the sovereignty of the country. To promote mutual respect for national sovereignty and equality of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. To ensure that the foreign relation policies of the country are based on mutual interests and equality of states as well as that international agreements promote the interests of Ethiopia. To observe international agreements which ensure respect for Ethiopia's sovereignty and are not contrary to the interests of its Peoples. To forge and promote ever growing economic union and fraternal relations of Peoples with Ethiopia's neighbors and other African countries. To seek and support peaceful solutions to international disputes."

The common thing according to the author “rather than leaving the issue totally to the informal tools, it is better to take the middle meaning that there should be some room for evolution from informal practice and some general guidelines in the constitution.” The common understanding in Ethiopia is however, the constitution or other legislations are not adequate concerning the issue of foreign relations and there is little guidance on how to manage foreign relations. It is less treated subject under the federal setup of the country. The constitution tries to highlight under article 51(8) about the powers of foreign relation by expressly giving and making it the exclusive power of the federal government. But this should not be taken as a guiding rule for the existence of cooperative relation in achieving the national goals and programs because; at least there must be some formal systems that shape the cooperation of regional state with federal government on matters of foreign relation specially on the matters of regional states. Otherwise, it will be unfairly manipulated by federal government. However, though the relationships between the federal government and the states are fairly regulated by the constitution and not adequately stated constitutionally, there are many provisions that require both federal and states intergovernmental relations. The subsequent paragraph tries to assess the formal or legal basis or provisions that require relations of both orders from the four corners of the constitution. The focus here is the foreign relations.

The constitution explicitly lists down the federal powers, the state powers, concurrent powers, and leaves residual powers to the states. The principle of mutual respect between federal and state governments is explicitly stated. Mutual non-interference in one another's affairs in matters that is exclusively under the jurisdictional competence of each other is recognized under the constitution article 50 (8). Interstate equality in terms of rights and powers is clearly stipulated under article 47(4). The fact that the states have legislative, executive, and judicial competence is readily recognized.

In general, principle of power allocation the constitutional ambiguity, fiscal relations, public policy interdependence, investment and trade, infrastructure management, environmental protection, policing and security, spillover effects and the sharing of resources are some of the issues that necessitate the forum of federal-states intergovernmental relations.

The unavoidable overlap of division of power also necessitates intergovernmental relations. The provision that deals with delegation of some administrative powers like authority to the states is one way of cooperation and basis of intergovernmental relations between the federal and states. However, delegation may not always create the opportunity to discuss the manners and possibilities of enforcing the power in question. And, delegation is not an appropriate tool of cooperation since it is a blessing from one of the parties which is the federal government in this case. As per the preamble of the FDRE constitution that is aimed to express ‘building political as well as one economic community’, it is possible to argue as a basis of federal-states relations. It reads ‘We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia strongly committed, in full and free exercise of our

right to self-determination, to build a political community founded on the rule of law and convinced that to live as one economic community is necessary in order to create sustainable development.” This assertion is more of an assignment of responsibility to the federal as a facilitator of common destiny and unity with the view of realizing the creation of one economic community on between the various nationalities. In this regard one can also mention the federal government's responsibility of strengthening equality, unity and fraternity among the nations, nationalities and peoples which requires an entrenchment of cooperative relations between both orders of government. The principle of federalism itself describes unity through self-rule and shared rule and the preamble of the constitution is the starting point that requires both spheres of intergovernmental cooperative relations. Thus, the phrases in the preamble of the constitution can represent a constitutional basis of the intergovernmental relations. It expresses unity through self-rule and shared rule which necessitates the relations between federal and states. One can also argue that from its nature divisions of power made in the constitution highly necessitate the relations even if it is difficult to decide the extent of relations. It also appears that, the constitutional provisions that deal with the issue of finances or fiscal explicitly recognize the inevitability of federal-state relations. For instance, the allocation of federal grants to states emergency, rehabilitation and development assistances and loans as stated by article 94 of the FDRE constitution is the clear provision of the issue under consideration.

More significantly, the federal subsidies or the equalization grants as indicated in the powers and duties of the House of the Federation are also another possibility of federal-states relations in Ethiopia. Regarding our issue at hand, foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government, there is no power left to the regional states. In Ethiopia, foreign relation power is explicitly recognized as the exclusive power of federal government in the constitution (Art 51(8) and art. 55(12)). Thus, it is possible to conclude that the Ethiopian constitution has articles that demand the foreign relation exclusively given to the central government. Constitutionally, there are areas that necessitate foreign relations for the regions but the Ethiopian constitution does not provide adequate hint on how to manage these relations. Nor, does the constitution provide institutional framework or guiding principle that show the way for managing foreign relations. This leads a federal government to exclusively exercise power on the matters of foreign relation since there is no constitutional and institutional set up that enable regional states to participate in federations' foreign relation nor does the federal constitution allow the regional states to involve in their foreign relation.

The federal government is given exclusive power even on the domestically residual power of regional states as far as foreign relation is concerned. This creates impacts on regional states which in turn hinders the autonomy of regional states in the long term. The absence of adequate guiding rule of the constitution for foreign relations forums in the achievement of national goals and programs creates its own influence on the regional states autonomy. Principally speaking, there has to be at least some formal systems that shape the cooperation phases.

Otherwise, it will be unfairly manipulated by one order of government which is usually by the federal government and its institution in setting an agenda that influence states institution to implement which is also visible in the Ethiopian context. Thus, we have note that it is one gap that leads Ethiopian federal-states relations to be informal than formal. Thus, because of this and others, too much is expected from this institution established to coordinate federal-states intergovernmental relations, foreign relation in giving its shape otherwise, the autonomy of the states will be affected heavily.

### Institution of the Ethiopian Foreign Relations

All most all federations also directly through their constitution or indirectly through legislation establish the institution that manages and coordinates foreign relation between different spheres. The general principles and common understandings is that the institutions of foreign relations are basically formed to achieve the purpose of the relations between the states and to carry out common or shared programs. Hence, foreign relation is establishing formal institutions to improve country's collaboration, it will be essential to ensure that it is open, transparent, accessible and responsive in order to avoid any public sense that will contribute to a democratic deficit. This would involve establishing an institution made up of individuals with policy expertise that are not influenced by political views and other factors.

The practice of the current institution of foreign relations in Ethiopia is through the Ministry of foreign Affairs towards the generally accepted principles. In Ethiopia, in addition to the stated principles on necessity of institution, due to different reasons such as absence of adequate provision of foreign relations, formal distribution of powers that follows the dual arrangement of federal and states government and not empower the regional states to participate in foreign relations and others, the institution of foreign relations between the state is more than ever significant.

Theoretically speaking, Minister of foreign affairs became more formal and legalized institution organized to serve as focal point in creating good foreign relationship and cooperation based on mutual understanding and partnership. Still its practical effectiveness towards its mandate as institution of foreign relations in the Ethiopian foreign relations between different spheres is the issue. The general principles and common understandings is that the institutions of foreign relations are basically formed to achieve the purpose of the relations between the countries to carry out common or shared programs.

The main goal of the institution of foreign relation is to promote policies of foreign relations based on the protection of the national interests and respect for the sovereignty of the country. Accordingly, article 25 of proclamation No. 471/2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs establishment proclamation, which is established as a branch of federal executive institution through federal proclamation the institution of foreign relation in Ethiopia that stands to protect the national interests of Ethiopia. The Ministry of foreign Affairs (herein after MOFA) has been formally established to facilitate the relations between our countries with other countries of the world. Since the

ministers of foreign relation is the power of federal government, the institutional powers of foreign relation is also exclusively given to the federal government in Ethiopia.

There are critics even from its nature. Under the general principles, the constitutional and institutional power of foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government. The attachment of the constituent units in this organ is highly unlikely and also unfeasible if we argue from the general principles point of view. Therefore, from the concept of foreign Relations institutional principle itself, MOFA should not be the appropriate institution. The current design through MOFA provided the federal government a dominant role in determining how the relations aspect should look like. From the very foundation, it seems as a mechanism of controlling the powers of foreign relation by the federal government through this institution.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall have the powers and duties to, safeguard the interests and rights of the country in connection with its foreign relations and ensure that they are respected by foreign states; ensure that the country's good relations with neighboring countries are strengthened. In Ethiopia, there is no way in which states can be represented in ministry of foreign affairs institution because it has been originally established as a federal executive. Thus, the issue is that to what extent the interest of states can be protected in this institution, being a federal executive. Additionally, unlike some other federations, the task of practicing nationwide intergovernmental relations is assigned to a department (director) within the Ministry Generally, it is stated that the effectiveness of this institution is at infant stage, if not limited to some extent. Thus, coming back to the link between institution of foreign relations and state autonomy, in other countries federations experience, institution(s) established through constitution or legislation to manage and give shape for foreign relations play vital role in determining the relations, protecting the autonomy of states in the activity of relations between orders of government. This is so because of it is separate institution in which both orders of government are represented and cannot be influenced by either level of government. It also protects the interest of states and federal government. If this is not, foreign relations will influence autonomy of states in the cover of institution that is established to manage these relations. In Ethiopia, because of the constitution not gives any powers for the regional states and institution also denied the states foreign relation this heavily impact the regional states autonomy specifically on their matters that is assigned to them having regional/local importance.

Hence, there are no constitutional and institutional powers that are given for regional states involvement in foreign relations, by their own and latter let states to participate on it for its implementation. Thus, the existence of institutional gap in federal-states relations that has its own contribution in weakening autonomy of states. Well, the proclamation No. 471/2005 also affirms the exclusive power of federal government over foreign policy through its foreign minister which is empowered to conduct foreign relation, other ministries may

also involve in designing foreign relations with their respective function.

### Comparative Overview of Foreign Relations among Selected Federations

For a long period of time, foreign relation has been the responsibility of central governments. In countries with a unitary government, this state of affairs is relatively unproblematic because most powers belong to center, and most public policy is conducted by, the national government. In federal countries, constitutional powers and responsibility for the conduct of public policy are shared between the federal governments and constituent units (e.g. states, provinces, cantons), with each order responsible for a set of functions assigned to them. But in federal countries too, foreign policy has for a long period of time considered as the constitutional responsibility of the national government because the representation of a country's general collective interests, especially in matters of high politics such as diplomacy, defense and national security, was seen as transcending the division of powers due to the need to present a common front towards foreign states. In today's world, about 40 percent of the world populations are under federal system of government.

The dramatic increase in international transactions in recent decades, commonly referred to as "globalization," has prompted constituent units to become players, even if minor players, on the international stage. In all countries of the world, parties and politics affect the conduct of foreign relation, as it does other public policy sectors. Of crucial importance in understanding constituent unit foreign relations is the constitutional context in which they are conducted.

Hence, it is proved that there are variations among federations on the issues of powers of foreign relations, whether it's federal or states competence. Under the unitary systems of governments these issues are not likely to be aroused under it. Because the unitary form of governments, it is the need for centralizations of foreign powers in the hands of the central government was the driving force behind the older federations in their bid to transform themselves from a confederation to federal polity. In fact, one of the reasons for establishing a federation was the need for having unified foreign relations. Thus, federation's foreign relations are the exclusive powers of the federal government. For instance, under the older federations of the world like that of USA, there is a constitutional provision expressly conferring power of foreign relations to the federal government and prohibiting the states from exercising foreign relations and if they have to exercise, only do that with the consent of the federal government. This implies that even in exceptional cases of the states/units having such power depends on the consent of the federal government, which still reaffirms that foreign policy is an exclusive domain of the federal government under the USA federal setup. Hence, the states have no saying regarding the issues of foreign relations without the consent of federal government. The position is justifiable in terms of 'external unity and internal diversity' that is to stand together against the world outside in a potentially threatening international environment, while safeguarding diversity within

the federation. This is the basis of the dominance of foreign relation by the central government in the traditional federations.

While under some federations like that of Germany, the states have obtained formal representation in international forum, especially when the matter concerns the interest of the states themselves. Thus, what is crucial in the treatment of foreign affairs is the issue of defining the role of units in shaping foreign policy as well as the impact of foreign policy rather than formal division of powers between the two tiers of government. Hence, the control of foreign relations includes among other things treaties concluded between the federal government and foreign states.

Under the contemporary federal systems of the world, treaties cover a whole variety of subjects including social and economic fields, protection of human rights, education, drug control, international criminal matters, labor conditions and if the federal government has exclusive power over conclusion and execution of treaties, then it can use this power to legislate laws on subjects including those that are within the competence of the states, thereby invading the exclusive competence of the states. Consequently, the conflict arises between the two levels of government on their areas of concern reserved for both of them under the federal constitution. To put it differently, if foreign affairs is exclusively federal like the older federations, then there is a fear that the exclusive powers of states may become shared foreign relation, concurrent over time because the federal government may by its treaty making power enter into the spheres of states and which in turn affect the constitutional division of power. There is assertion that the making of treaty between the federation and another state is principally within the domain of international law, and the execution of the treaties is under the domestic sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to identify as to whether the federal constitution confers both powers, i.e. the making and implementation on the same organs, or if it is shared power.

Broadly speaking, the federal constitution provides two approaches in dealing with foreign affairs. Various countries like USA, India and Ethiopia give the power of foreign relation exclusively to the federal government, while that of Germany and Switzerland have introduced some departure from this approach and designed the mechanisms for the regional states participation or to have some said when a treaty has impact on matters within states jurisdiction.

The Ethiopian federal setup has incorporated the first approach which reserved and granted the power of foreign relations exclusively to the central government and no power is left/reserved for the regional states which is expressly provided under art.51 (8) of FDRE constitution: which provides that "the Federal government shall formulate and implement foreign policy; it shall negotiate and ratify international agreements." In addition, art. 55(12) of the same law also provides that, "it shall ratify international agreements concluded by the executive." Under the Ethiopian federal set up the power of foreign relation is constitutionally the exclusive power given to the federal government.

The USA constitutions counterparts like the Ethiopian constitution; the power of foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government.

“No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit ; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.” “No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing it's inspection Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Control of the Congress.” “No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.”

As a result, according to USA Constitution art. I Section 10 the power of foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government.

Under the Indian federation, the power of foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal government. Accordingly, art.253 of Indian constitution states that,

“Legislation for giving effect to international agreements notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Chapter, Parliament has power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries or any decision made at any international conference, association or other body.”

Generally, among the selected federations, the Ethiopian, USA, and Indian federal set up have granted power of foreign relation exclusively for federal government. Germany and Switzerland have introduced some departure from those approaches in which the mechanisms are designed for the constituent states to have some said when a treaty has impact on matters within state jurisdiction. Art.32 of Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany provides that;

“Relations with foreign states shall be conducted by the Federation. Before the conclusion of a treaty affecting the special circumstances of a Land, that Land shall be consulted in timely fashion. Insofar as the Lander has power to legislate, they may conclude treaties with foreign states with the consent of the Federal Government.”

Germany basic law gives power of foreign relation to states/units especially on the matter of their jurisdiction.

Under, the federations of Switzerland just like that of Germany the power of foreign relation is given to the Cantons to protect their interests. Section 1 provides about Power of foreign Relations with Foreign States. Art. 54 Foreign relations;

“Foreign relations are the responsibility of the Confederation. The Confederation shall ensure that the independence of Switzerland and its welfare is safeguarded; it shall in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful co-existence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources. It shall respect the powers of the Cantons and protect their interests.”

In addition, Art. 55 of Swiss Constitutions provides that the Participation of the Cantons in foreign policy decisions;

“The Cantons shall be consulted on foreign policy decisions that affect their powers or their essential interests. The Confederation shall inform the Cantons fully and in good time and shall consult with them. The views of the Cantons are of particular importance if their powers are affected.”

In such cases, the Cantons shall participate in international negotiations in an appropriate manner. Additionally, art. 56 of Swiss constitution govern the Relations between the Cantons and foreign states;

“A Canton may conclude treaties with foreign states on matters that lie within the scope of its powers. Such treaties must not conflict with the law or the interests of the Confederation, or with the law of any other Cantons. The Canton must inform the Confederation before concluding such a treaty. A Canton may deal directly with lower ranking foreign authorities; in other cases, the Confederation shall conduct relations with foreign states on behalf of a Canton.”

Generally, the Germany and Switzerland federal system gives the power of foreign relation to the regional states when the matters of those regional states are at hand and concern is there or at stake.

### **Impact of Monopolization of Foreign Relation by FG on the Autonomy of Regions**

Under the federal system of government, sovereignty is divided between the two orders of government on the basis of advocating unity without affecting the diversity of constituent units or regional states. Accordingly, matters which could fit with pursue of unity shall be given to the central government whereas those powers that are capable of reinforcing the sub-national units autonomy go to the sub-national government.

Certainly, if foreign relation is monopolized by the central government, the Regional states autonomy will be at risk in that, the central government under the guise of foreign relation takes over the power of regional state, i.e., by making treaties with other countries on the matters which are domestically under the exclusive powers of regional state or matters having regional importance. In such scenario, the regional states' powers will be the shared powers between the regional states and the federal government or simply the exclusive powers of the federal government. On the other hand, each regional state may have different financial or social priorities in matters within its constitutional jurisdiction. Nevertheless, these priorities might be preventing if the federal government committed itself internationally to a contrary course of action without at least

consulting the regions. One undeniable fact is that foreign relation may result in policy segmentation. Segmentation of policy in federation is a necessary evil and must be accepted. Federalism is multi-level in character and rarely able to speak strictly with one voice in every situation.

To protect the regional states autonomy, the domestic division of powers between the two tiers of governments should equally apply in the foreign relations too, though cooperation is necessary. This is because federated entities are able to keep their political significance according to their constitutionally granted rights only if they participate effectively in foreign relations. Regional states voice their view in foreign relations for many reasons; one major reason is economic, mainly connected with trade. It concerns especially the export of goods and services; inward investment for economic development, employment expansion and tax-base growth; and tourism –all of which are highly competitive globally. A second major reason is cultural, whether such activities be merely friendly goodwill cultural exchanges popular with many citizens, or more concerted efforts to achieve global recognition of a region's distinct cultural or national identity, or desire to connect with compatriots abroad. A third reason is cross-border housekeeping, namely, the need to resolve numerous cross-border issues, such as wandering cows, automobile traffic and water pollution, between contiguous regions divided by an international border. Since the Ethiopian powers of foreign relation is constitutionally and institutionally exclusively given to the federal government, the regional states autonomy is at risk. They have no any power to participate in foreign relations. To develop and conduct their social, trade, economic, technology, science, education, tourism and culture it is better for the regional states to participate in foreign relation. The monopolization foreign relation by federal government has impacts on the regional states autonomy by denuding their foreign relations to develop them-self. Many federal states permit their constituent governments only to enter into treaties, compacts, contracts, or agreements, not with foreign nation states, but with constituent regional or local governments of other nation states. This is because the so called low politics areas are under the exclusive area of sub-national units in most of federation and there is no way in which component units enter into compact with foreign nation state.

The newly emerged Ethiopian federations did not allow the regional states to participate in foreign relation. Under article 51 of FDRE Constitution, the exclusive powers of federal government are enumerated and article 52 of the same document lists down the regional states exclusive powers/residual powers. Accordingly, article 51(8) states that “Federal government shall formulate and implement foreign policy; it shall negotiate and ratify International agreements.” Pursuant to art.55 (12) of FDRE Constitution, ratification of any international treaty is the power of house of people representative.”

Thus, from the wording of the constitution itself, it is clear that only federal government is empowered to conduct foreign relation and there is no room left for regional states under the constitution to empower regional states with foreign relations

competency. In the federation, the power of both tiers of government shall emanate only from the federal constitution. From the above FDRE constitution provisions, it is clear that regional states have no say on foreign relations of under the Ethiopian federal setup, and regional diplomacy (constituent diplomacy) is not recognized.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Under the federal systems of government, there is constitutional distribution of power between the autonomous and independent tiers of government, i.e. federal government and regional states, is inherent in almost all federations by the federal constitution. Perhaps there is no hard and fast rule as to which level of government is empowered with what type of powers; various federations of the world vary in dividing the powers between the two tiers of government. In the field of foreign relation too, it is common to see disparities among the world federations. As a result, it can be concluded that there is no single system of analysis that can capture all the detail and nuance of foreign relations because of ‘no pure model that fits for all. In some federations, foreign relation is exclusively given to the federal, while in other federations regional states have constitutional power to participate in foreign relations as an extension of domestic competency or through representation in the federation in foreign relations.

For the long period of time especially in unitary system of government, central governments domination over foreign relation is the right approach to promote and protect the interest of the countries in general. Currently, in most of federations, the federal constitution recognized the power of regional states to participate in foreign relations. They usually take part in international conferences dealing with matters under their competency, conclude agreement, and open offices abroad representing their particular interest; hence federalism stresses the two levels of government's autonomy and independence in their own areas of competence.

Under the contemporary Ethiopian federation, there is no constitutional and institutional power of foreign relation which gives regional states. The Ethiopian constitution has not provided any provision how to manage the inevitable relations nor institution that manage the foreign relations between states and federal orders of government. This showed that the powers of foreign relation are exclusively monopolized by federal government in Ethiopia. When powers of foreign relation are monopolized by central government its impact on the autonomy of regional states is many fold. Therefore, the granting of foreign relation in the Ethiopian context to the FG affects the constitutionally recognized autonomy of the regional states in relation to their self-rule regime.

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