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### **Ethiopia: More for less; benefits of downsizing.**

As the highest populated landlocked nation in the world, Ethiopia has suffered thirty famines since 1535. A famine being defined as an extreme shortage, especially when dealing with food scarcity, and this string of famines has destroyed past populations of Ethiopia. In recent times the country has suffered five food scarcities alone, since 1958, and has been trying to survive their most current one. During these periods of food scarcities the political power has shifted numerous times in a relatively short period. Unfortunately despite Ethiopia's famous contribution of human existence viewed by scientists, problems of the past have repeated themselves throughout Ethiopia's extensive history. Though there may not be one specific cause that inflicted the multiple famines, one factor has the ability to both lessen the impact of another famine, and create resilience to additional problems that come with food scarcity, such as malnutrition and lack of healthcare. Reducing the amount of people that can be affected will hopefully diminish the chances of another famine. And though a plan of reduction in the population growth rate of Ethiopia would take a considerable amount of time more than other factors listed; I firmly believe that decreasing the urbanization of Ethiopia may have radical long term effects that can create many other opportunities for the Ethiopian people. I want to engage a plan that would involve some foreign aid, but would mainly consist of Ethiopians, and leaders of the Ethiopian culture, helping themselves. I suggest taxation on luxury items that would in turn help the Ethiopian government fund many vital areas, such as public incentives and education.

Farmers have failed to contribute to their local economy because they have not been able to feed their own families, let alone many others around them. Comparing the average household of Americans and Ethiopians, Ethiopian farmers have more mouths to feed and more responsibility. Schmanski II reports that an average Ethiopian family consists of 7.4 people (one father, one mother, and 5.4 children). This is almost triple that of an American household, which measures at 2.6 in 2007 (US Census Bureau). This household dilemma is due to cultural concepts that most Ethiopians believe in. Whether they are Christian or Ethiopian orthodox, both religions firmly believe strongly in multiplying. Additionally, many families have several children so that when the children become of age, they can help out on the farm. However, many Ethiopians do not comprehend the impact their choices have on the community as a whole. We could try to send in representatives from other countries such as Great Britain, France, and the United States, but I believe that local representatives and celebrities would have a bigger impact on the minds of their fellow countrymen. If we were able to hold town meetings, led by natives, all across the country we may be able to get Ethiopians to come up with their own ways to solving current problems. It is vital that natives believe they are the solution and that they can solve their problems through their own will.

The landlocked country of Ethiopia has little water available to them in most areas, and this shortage of water has broken down the economy by plummeting crop growth in a country that deeply depends on agricultural success. And even though Ethiopia is ironically considered to be the "water tower" of Africa, only 2.5% of the water available is exploited (Wikipedia). Ethiopia has 14 major rivers that flow through the country, along with some of the greatest water reserves in Africa. Many may believe that water scarcity is what led to crops not being planted, but in all actuality the poor irrigation techniques are what have led to the food scarcity. In Ethiopia, only 1% of available water is being used for power-production, and 1.5% is used towards irrigation. And despite several record breaking harvests over the last few seasons, more and more members of the country are joining those who are living on a year to year basis thanks to the extreme rapid increase in population growth. In the last 70 years the population has quintupled to exceed 84 million people. The crops have simply failed to keep up with the urbanization and demand of new age Ethiopia. We must develop better techniques when dealing with irrigation styles,

and try to use as much fresh water as we can to grow more crops. This will help speed up the process for allowing crop production to catch up with the population stipulation.

Stated by CIA World Fact Book, a further predicament that prevents farmers from producing enough crops is trying to work within the confines of less than 11% of available land. There is simply too much demand compared to the supply that is presently obtainable. And even with such a minute percentage of land available, 41% of Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from the agriculture side. Among that, just over 80% of all Ethiopians, who are employed, work in agriculture. It seems as though Ethiopia is expending their efforts in a losing battle. We must try to savor any chance that the Ethiopian economy might have by pumping more funds into technology research areas, such as irrigation and how to use more percentage of land.

Aside from that, I think we need to come at this problem from another angle. Creating policies that act against population growth of Ethiopia may have a reversing effect on the current threatening route of a collapsing civilization. From my research, I have found many startling facts that have alluded to one specific problem. The demand brought on by the enormous population has made the job of feeding the people even more difficult. Constructing public initiatives to control, and slow down the population growth rate may be the best solution to solving the food scarcity. You can break down my solution into the idea of the simplest diet. Within a diet it becomes necessary to burn more calories than you consume, the goal being to become a healthier person. However, you do not want to be extreme in your efforts, so that you reach your goal in an unhealthy way. Using that logic I want to make Ethiopia become a healthier nation, we need not stop urbanization in Ethiopia, but rather slow the process down so that crop production can catch up with the high demand. Passing laws, that in time, will slow down the rates of childbirth can help lead to less starving people. Even if we had reduced the size of the average family to 6.4 back in 1999, there would be, at this time, 6 million less hungry and suffering people today. Nonetheless, policies that are put in place will have no effect if no one will follow them. Public initiatives have been tried in other countries such as China and India. Unfortunately, these initiatives have led to many deaths from acts of parents killing their children. That is why it is extremely vital that the policies become clear on exactly how the initiatives would work. There must be strict forbiddance and distinct regulations to detour the population from committing any acts of violence, or breaking any other laws.

To keep the peace within these policies there would be many concepts that would need to be expressed to the public beforehand. Regulations such as a waiting period before the public initiative would be set in place. One way to diminish any possible murdering of unborn children would be to put a one year waiting period; this would give everyone who may be pregnant a chance to finish their pregnancy without having to worry about whether or not their child would cause them a loss of the rewards from the initiative. Now, because there would be many families that had already birthed more children than desired in the public initiative, we would need to create a second initiative that allows those to receive benefits for the family not to produce another offspring. In addition to having both initiatives work against any acts of violence, it would be necessary to conduct a detailed census of all families and members of those families. This would give us the data needed to keep track of the population and make sure that population growth was not decreased in a harmful manner. Along with the principal survey, there would need to be follow-up surveys to continue the data analysis and to stay with the desired result of slowing down the population growth rate. On a side note, this would lead to a more jobs in Ethiopia to help those who are not working; assisting in the efforts to also reduce the percentage of Ethiopians living on less than a dollar a day. One of the public initiatives would reward, in either food or money, those who decide to have no more than four children. And for the families that already have more than four children, the second initiative would reward the family for ceasing to birth anymore children. These initiatives together will provide many Ethiopian people with relief, as they are helping their own country simultaneously. With the assistance from outside organizations concentrating on technology and education, Ethiopia has a chance to turn into a respectable country that can lead the way for other east African nations.

As much as my plan for public incentives may sound complete there is a small issue that we need to face; where would we get the money for the public initiatives? I believe the answer lies in Ethiopia's spending. How do Ethiopians choose to spend their money? Well according to the 2005 International Comparison Program Ethiopians spend 54.5% on Food and non-alcoholic drink, 6.1% on clothing, 3.5% on education, 2.1% on their health, and 0.6% on recreation and culture. What's left is 33.2% on luxury items. And there is where we can find the answer to Ethiopian's money problems. At first many people would jump to the conclusion that I mean to cut a drastic part of luxury spending. However, my plan of action would require only a tax on luxury items. The arrangement would consist of a 6% tax on luxury items. And if the relatively high luxury spending continues in Ethiopia, this plan will bring the country just over 629 million dollars of extra funds a year. These extra funds have the opportunity to aid many areas of concern for Ethiopia. This money could be used to fund the public incentives, and can fund contraceptives for all the women in Ethiopia. According to the Guttmacher Institute it would take 180 million dollars per year to fund women with contraceptives, leaving 449 million dollars left. With the funds that are left Ethiopia can split it to aid both the public initiatives and use the left over money to provide themselves with better technology for farming. 629 million dollars per year can add up quickly, and putting more money into the economy can do a lot more than aid in feeding the Ethiopian people, it can help make numerous opportunities for new jobs to open up.

The Ethiopians need jobs and education will become a defining factor in ensuring confidence in the new deal. On the other hand, the medical field could use more employees as well. In Ethiopia, there are only 2.6 medical doctors per 100,000 people. From that statistic alone you can see how difficult the healthcare problem would be, and is. This number is already startling to begin with, but one thing you must take in is that number is actually decreasing due to better opportunities being presented in western civilization. And though there are medical schools in Ethiopia, such as Addis Ababa Medical College and Abay Health College, the idea of health clinics are considerably rarer. There are 119 hospitals (12 in Addis Ababa alone) and 412 health centers in Ethiopia, and this is quite astounding for a country in Eastern Africa. But the fact still remains that there is about 1 hospital per 650,000 people. In America we have an estimated one registered hospital per 54,000 people. In addition, medical supplies in Ethiopia are down to the bare minimum in some hospitals. Many curable diseases are overlooked in Ethiopia due to the lack of technology. And the average life expectancy in Ethiopia is 45 years, which is relatively low compared to the countries around it. For example, Somalia's women have an expectancy of 51 years, and the men have an average life span of just over 48 years (Wikipedia). This may be why leaving Ethiopia for search of a better life has become so popular. Migration to urban areas is usually motivated by the hope of better lives, wealth, and eagerness to work. And this develops into more extreme cases, especially when speaking about the poorer side of Ethiopian culture. Daily life is a struggle to survive, whether you are old, or young. According to a 2005 survey conducted by PovcalNet, 39% of the population in Ethiopia is living on less than 1 dollar per day, and only 65% of rural households in Ethiopia consume the World Health Organization's minimum standard of 2,200 kilocalories of food per day. In this landlocked country, 47% of children less than five years old are underweight (Nguyen et al.). Most poor families, which make up about 75% of Ethiopian people, share their sleeping quarters with livestock, and 40% of children sleep on the floor. Even more unfortunate, the nighttime temperatures average around 5 degrees Celsius (41 degrees Fahrenheit) in the cold seasons. Imagine these conditions while keeping in mind that the average size family is between six and seven people. And I urge you to look around in your bed sometime.

Once again, no plan of action will be helpful if no one will follow the regulations set in place. This means that we must educate both the youth, and the elderly of the nation. Though there are only 70 secondary and elementary schools, mainly concentrated around the capital Addis Ababa, it is crucial to spread the knowledge of both initiatives, and the full set of regulations that are associated with them. If we cannot change the minds of the elderly, we may be able to reach out to those still in school. Educating our youth for the betterment of the world is a prime example of what long term success would look like. And as I stated earlier, this plan of action may take more time, but it has the power to create a longer lasting

triumph in Ethiopia. And above all, hopefully there will be some other opportunities that can make Ethiopia become the leader of Eastern Africa in the efforts of solving world hunger issues.

Urbanization had grown to full scale for the nation of Ethiopia and this factor has only gotten worse since the early 1930's. We have utilized statistics, such as population density and the overall population of the country, to determine how Ethiopia is progressing in regards to urbanization. And even though space has not yet become a problem, Ethiopia has fallen into another famine due to high demand brought on by the rising population. The only trend that is obvious so far is that the population will only continue to increase. The Ethiopian people try to use the technology they are provided, but they struggle to continue to develop better technology that meets the new found standards of crop production. And as long as the demand continues to exceed the technological advances, the problems Ethiopia faces will gradually get worse. Many obstacles prevent economic success in the Ethiopian nation, such as lack of funds, and the growing interest of western civilization to college graduates in Ethiopia, and those two go hand-and-hand. Because the majority of college graduates at least consider the possibility of traveling to the land of plenty, helping their own country has become an afterthought. And along with any foreign aid, it will take the aide of natives, who are more connected to the problem, to solve this dilemma.

The United Nations needs to get involved and send relief, consisting of food and clean water, to help keep the current population as healthy as possible. Education of available technology and my proposed public initiative will go far, but might not be as apparent right away. For now, the current well-being of the public in Ethiopia needs to be tended to immediately. However, the relief must be weaned off the people after a certain time of success so that the Ethiopians may learn to provide their own resources. We do not need another nation that is dependent on an organization, or another country. If relief becomes permanently provided for the Ethiopians, they may decide not to follow the public initiative. And though it may be our civic duty to help those in need, it is also very crucial that they "learn to fish". Organizations such as Red Cross and Salvation Army can be utilized to provide initial relief, doing things such as sending nonperishable food items and monetary donations. We can then let Ethiopian officials distribute the donations to their people, since they We need to make Ethiopia a model for other east African countries. And when it comes to focusing on the Millennium Development Goals, my solution will incorporate a few of them. Primary education will become an essential focus in decreasing the population growth rate. With that, a more educated youth will create a populous that is more aware and knowledgeable about real issues, such as HIV/AIDS and how to develop better environment that can produce more crops. All of this, in turn, will hopefully improve the agricultural production and can provide relief from food scarcity. We need to take the road that may be longer, but will get us to a final destination that both the Ethiopians and east Africans, in general, will be encouraged to find relief in as well. Ethiopia is just one country fight famines, but I believe it may grow to be a model of what any country can become.

There are many solutions to any problem, and defeating the Ethiopian famine is no exception. However, when choosing a plan of action, we must consider the longer term goals and how our actions strive for the desired objective. And whatever solution the Ethiopian government decides to use, they must choose so based on several crucial factors. They need to consider the climate and how it can be used to their advantage, and how they are able to develop improved technology. The Ethiopian government needs to adopt more efficient irrigation techniques, and create public incentives for college graduates. These focus points, along with keeping in mind the MDG's, we can lead Ethiopia to a better environment. My public initiatives are merely a way to speed up the process, by allowing technology to catch up with the demand of a rapid growing population. Foreign aid and help from the natives is the only way we can fight the famines. Let us be part of the solution to overcome this dilemma.

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