The Oromo people is the largest of the Cushitic speaking groups of people in Africa and also the largest ethnic group of Ethiopia. The Region has common border with all Regional States of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, except Tigray National Regional State. The capital of the Oromia is Finfinne.

The Oromo people, like the other peoples and nationalities of the country, have immense tangible and intangible heritages which have been created over centuries in the interactions of the people with natural and social environments and which stand as the manifestations of the identity of the people.

They share common language, history and descent, and once shared common political, religious and legal institutions. What makes the region even more special is that these cultural and natural resources are managed within an ancient traditional governance system, the Gada system, which is rich in democratic principles and with its roots spread throughout the Oromia area.

What is Gada

The Gada system is a time-honored age and generation-set system practiced among the Oromo people who regarded the system as their common heritage and as one of their major identity makers. The gada is crucial organizing structure among the Oromo people and its social, political, ritual and legal aspects provides the framework for order and meaning of life. Gada organizes society via councils (yaa’aa), laws and injunctions, outlining rights and duties of its members. The Oromo recognized the Gada System as part of their cultural heritage and as a contemporary system of governance that functions in concert with the modern state system. The system has long been practiced by the Borena, Guji, Karayu, Tulama, Arsi, Ittu, Humbana, Afran Qallo, Akichu, Macha, and Gabra clans of the Oromo Nation.

Major Oromo clans have established the centres of their Gada at several places based on their territorial settlement. The Borana are known by a generation set Organization, which is believed to guide every aspects of their life, called of the gada system and Borana people are notable for their historic Gadda political system.

Political Participation is open to all Borana, decisions are taken under the guidance of the ritual leaders, the Abba Gada and the councilors. Attending power transfer ceremonies, rites of passages from one grade to another and other gatherings are meant to be as transparent as possible. The Gada System distributes power across generations and down to community members and creates strong link between successive generations. Oromo philosophy, art and calendar are based on Gada as an expression of Oromo civilization.

This begins when sons join the system as members of Gada class (generation class or set) forty years after their fathers and continues passing from one Gada grade to the next every eight years.
The class forms its own internal officials (adula hayyus) and its own assembly (ya'a). Regarding persons with special responsibilities, the Abba Gada, the elected chairman of the class leadership presides over the assembly.

The Gada men and Yuba’s duties also includes transferring knowledge and skills associated with the functions of the democratic Gada System to the members of succeeding grades.

The laws, norms, values, and ideals of the Gada System are compatible with existing international human rights instruments.

The Gada councilors must pass through a rigorous training for years about the laws and the customs of Borana, and the wisdom of leading a society before they take the position of authority in Gada.

The recent Abba Gada of Borana from 2009-2017/20017-2025

Gadaa classes

The gadaa classes are recruited on the basis of genealogical generations. The following are the Gadaa grades and their descriptions.
Grade 1: Daballe from age 1-8

Dabale is the first of all grades and it is always occupied by a class of people sharing a common identity by virtue of the fact that they are all the sons of the gadaa class who are in power as leaders of Borana society as a whole. The dabballe stand out in Borana society because of their striking hairstyle, known as “guduru”.

Grade 2: Junior gamme (gamme didiko) from age 8-16
The transition ceremony by which the sons pass from the dabballe into gamme grade. The dabballes’ shave their hair and given names. In the gamme hairstyle, the hair is shaved in the middle, and the rest is allowed to grow long and cure with a regular treatment with better.

**Snior gamme (gamme jajjaboo)**

At this stage, they are in up-coming period of their life cycle capable of herding and also competing with peers and have to wait further eight years before they come a **Kuusaa**.

**Grade 3: Kuusaa, junior warriors  age16-24**

The gamme to **kusa** transition rites takes place at the shrine of Dhaddacha Dhera in the vicinity of Arero. At this place the father will shave the hair of his son/s. The transition rite thus came to an end and the “Kusa” proceeded with the Lallaba ceremony, the grand event in which the “election results” were announced to the assembled representatives of all Borana clans.
Grade 4: Raabaa age 25-32

At this stage the raba’s tend to learn art of governance and this time is When they gate marry. The raba grade has mostly defense responsibility.

Grade 5: Doorii age 33-40

This Dori Grade is where males expected to have sons and could start procreating so as too soon acquire the aspired and respected status of fatherhood; with crucial responsible household-head. The Doroma; when they were planning to take power in the next Gada period. The remarkable stage where the Dori’s gained arts of leadership and philosophy.
Grade 6: Gada age 41-48

Gada Grade is the stage of full political maturity and became the ruling party for the following eight years. This is the peak of social and political career of Gada and the optimum age of having maturity skill and capacity of holding and practically showing societal responsibilities.

Grade 7: Yuba age 49 and above

The Gada retires and becomes a Yuba elders: the most important responsibility of retired Gada class (Yuubaa) is to oversee the ceremonial activities of the luba in power. The Yuba still takes over advisory functions and act as mediator, ritual experts and peacemakers.