

# **Development Fund (DF)**

Civil Society and the Environmental Movement in Ethiopia  
Country Analysis

*Final Report*

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### List of Acronyms

<b>ABS</b>	Access and Benefit Sharing
<b>ADB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>ADLI</b>	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
<b>AMCEN</b>	African Ministerial Conference on Environment
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CRDA</b>	Christian Relief and Development Association
<b>CSE</b>	Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DBS</b>	Direct Budget Support
<b>DCG</b>	Dry land Coordination Group
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DPPA</b>	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency
<b>EACD</b>	Ethiopian Association for Combating Desertification
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>EIN</b>	Ethio- Environmental Network
<b>EMS</b>	Environmental Movement in the South
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority
<b>EPE</b>	Environmental Policy of Ethiopia
<b>ERA</b>	Ethiopian Road Authority
<b>EWNRA</b>	Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association
<b>FfE</b>	Forum for Environment
<b>GMOs</b>	Genetically Modified Organisms
<b>IBC</b>	Institute of Biodiversity Conservation
<b>ISD</b>	Institute for Sustainable Development
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
<b>IPR</b>	Intellectual Property Rights
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MoARD</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>MoFED</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
<b>MoME</b>	Ministry of Mines and Energy
<b>MoWR</b>	Ministry of Water Resources
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Program
<b>DF</b>	Development Fund-Norway

<b>NEC</b>	National Environmental Council
<b>NGO</b>	Non government Organization
<b>PASDEP</b>	Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty
<b>PFM</b>	Participatory Forest Management
<b>PGRC</b>	Plant Genetic Resources Center
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Program
<b>PSNP</b>	Productive Safety Net Program
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Aid
<b>SLM</b>	Sustainable Land Management
<b>SLUF</b>	Sustainable Land Use Forum
<b>SWC</b>	Soil and Water Conservation
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## 1. Executive Summary

Ethiopia-a country of physical, biological and socio-cultural diversity in the widest sense is confronted with huge environmental challenges that are linked to the recurrent crises that the country suffers from. Soil erosion and other forms of land degradation followed by deforestation and loss of vegetation cover are given prominence among environmental and natural resources issues.

Prompted mainly by the repeated incidences of natural disasters and wide-spread food crises in the country, several policy and institutional interventions were made by governments with varying degrees of success and effectiveness towards attaining the environmental objectives they were meant for. The issuance of the Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (CSE), the establishment of the Environmental Protection Authority of Ethiopia (EPA), and the development of several sectoral and cross-sectoral environmental policies and strategies were among the measures that reflected government concern and commitment.

The country has also been party to several international environmental conventions and protocols which include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Notwithstanding the legal framework and institutional development efforts, which were reinforced by the adoption of international conventions, implementation on the ground has been slow and ineffective.

Civil society participation and influence in the environmental agenda of the country which is dominated to a great extent by government actors and its institutions, has been minimal. However limited in scope and magnitude, NGOs and CSOs have made significant contributions through opportunities that were created for them intermittently. NGOs and CSOs which were originally established for relief and rehabilitation purposes were transformed fully or partially into environmental and/or development oriented institutions which in different ways endeavored to articulate and promote civil society opinion on environmental issues. Capacity limitations of various forms (mainly finance and professional competencies), unstable and mostly unfavorable relations with government and unfocused and inconsistent approaches have limited the positive contributions that could have been made by NGOs and CSOs. Under the political legacy in the country which puts policy development under the exclusive domain of the government and which does not encourage civil society participation, efforts have been made particularly during the processes that led to the formulation of the countries Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP), the Ethiopian Forestry Policy, the Population Policy and others to forward issues and present civil society opinion. Few environmental organizations which have taken cautious approaches and used different lobbying strategies that minimized or avoided confrontation have won sympathy and acceptance by the government. NGOs and CSOs with their closer contacts to communities had much greater role in shaping public opinion surrounding various environmental issues.

The international donor community which is involved in various fields of economic development assistance participates in the policy and institution building processes is also considerably involved in the environmental sector. The donor community takes a mainstreaming approach of the environment rather than direct action in the environmental sector and has still a long way to go in making use of its acceptance and leverage to influence environmental policy in the country.

Many fear that roles and contributions of NGOs and CSOs will be seriously hampered by the recently drafted proclamation on charities and societies if endorsed and enacted. The draft which defines all NGOs and CSOs receiving more than 10 percent of their funding from foreign sources as “foreign” and which at the same time restricts and curtails foreign NGOs from participating in governance, human rights and conflict resolution and a range of other issues may affect activities of CSOs working in environmental rehabilitation and protection. Individual and community ownership issues of land and natural resources, community organization and empowerment for natural resources management and protection which have far reaching implications on sustainability and protection of natural resources would be outside the domain of activities of CSOs if registered as foreign. The inevitable contradictions and issues surrounding accelerated economic growth and environmental protection, investment and environmental impact assessment will also be areas very difficult to be addressed by CSOs. The bureaucratic hurdles, and increased government control and interference into the internal and administrative affairs of CSOs as well as the harsh criminal and administrative penalties all discourage environmental CSOs.

However, with consistent efforts, systematic change of approaches, strengthened networking and capacity development, the role and contribution of NGOs and CSOs could increase. Development and environmental activities in which the government wants increased involvement of NGOs and CSOs should be strengthened and be used as means and entry points for undertaking environmental policy advocacy.

## **2. Introduction**

In line with the vision and mission of the Environmental Movement in the South (EMS), the Norwegian civil society mechanism for strengthening environmental movements in the south, this study is aimed at an assessment of the state of the environmental movement in Ethiopia which will provide baseline and basis for future cooperation and support. The study is mainly intended to provide an overview of the history, role and scope of civil society in Ethiopia as well as the overall legal framework with respect to environment.

The study made use of an extensive review of secondary sources of information to supplement information generated with the help of a pre-prepared semi-structured questionnaire. The generation of information focused on the relevant government agencies, civil society organizations engaged in environmental activities and

knowledgeable individuals (list of persons interviewed and organizations contacted are given in Annex 1).

### **3. Country profile**

#### **3.1. General**

With a total size of about 1,130,000km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of about 78 million, Ethiopia is the biggest country in the Horn of Africa. The climatic conditions vary from extreme aridity in the eastern lowlands to very humid in the southwestern midlands. Some of this variability can be accounted for by the extreme terrain conditions, ranging from below sea level in the northeastern part of the country to over 4000 masl in the Central Highlands. With climatic conditions ranging from equatorial desert to hot and cool steppe, the country is one of the major biodiversity hotspots of the world. The highland areas which receive substantial amount of rainfall have been under rain fed traditional agriculture for millennia. The highlands are the watershed for the surrounding lowlands providing water to people, livestock, wildlife and riparian vegetation in the lowlands within and outside the national borders. Ethiopia remains one of the ultimate rural areas of the world with 16 percent urban population according to a 2005 estimate. The natural resources and the environment are under growing intense pressure from the population that is growing at about 2 million people per year. Current focus of the government and its development partners is towards economic growth to which efforts and investments are channeled to.

The current government which took power in 1991 adopted a federal system of administration and carried out decentralization based on ethnic lines. Although human rights conditions showed improvement over the predecessor government under the “Derg” human right violations occur in the country (Sarah Vaughan et.al. 2003)

#### **3.2. The State of the Environment**

Soil erosion and degradation remains the number one environmental challenge the country is faced with. Increased horizontal expansion of agricultural production into marginal land as a result of population growth and increased livestock grazing accelerate deforestation and soil erosion in the central highlands. Formal and informal resettlements, commercial farming and fire are seriously threatening vegetation cover in the south and south west, while in the eastern and southern lowlands, commercial farming, rangeland enclosures, charcoal production; invasive alien species are exerting increased pressure on the natural resources and traditional livelihood systems. According to studies, soil loss from agricultural land reaches about 100 tons per ha per year. The current scramble for land for the production of large scale bio-fuels is adding to the pressure on the environment. Complex and fragile ecosystem equilibrium and interdependencies are being disturbed and ecosystems are seriously degraded. Community managed natural resources are increasingly falling into private hands.

The overall environmental sensitivities of the different eco-climatic zones of Ethiopia are shown in the table below:

**Potential environmental sensitivities of the different agro-ecological zones**

<b>Eco-Climatic Zone</b>	<b>Potential Sensitivities</b>
<p><b>High Dega Wurch</b> Very high elevation areas (&gt;3200 m) in Wallo, Gonder and Gojam in Amhara; dominated by grassland landscapes; rainfall is 1000-1600 mm.</p>	<p>Regeneration of natural resources in the high elevation zones need to recognize the limited plant species adapted to these highland conditions and the slower growth rates, potential for rapid rainfall runoff and the vulnerability to overgrazing and other human uses.</p>
<p><b>DEGA</b> High elevation areas (2000-3200 m) in Tigray, Wollo, Gonder and Gojam in Amhara, and Harrege, Arsi and Bale in Oromiya; typically mixed coniferous shrubs and trees; rainfall is 1000-2000 mm.</p>	<p>The elevation changes, the relatively high rainfall and the potential high soil erosion rates present opportunities and constraints for environmental rehabilitation and management of increasing land use pressures in the Dega zone.</p>
<p><b>WEYNA DEGA</b> Mid-elevation areas (1500-2400 m) in the western half of Ethiopia covering Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Tigray; typically mixed temperate forests and shrubs and riparian and other vegetation associated with the Abbay River and Awash River; rainfall is 800-1600 mm.</p>	<p>The relatively high level of ecosystem productivity and biotic diversity provides for significant natural resources and the pressures of human uses, along with the presence of important and sensitive natural habitats but with generally high recovery rates if managed properly.</p>
<p><b>KOLLA</b> Low elevation semi-arid areas (500-1500 m) of western Tigray, western Gonder in Amhara, southern Oromiya and northern Somali; dry savanna landscapes; rainfall is in the range of 200-800 mm.</p>	<p>The semi-arid, dry savanna Kolla landscapes are vulnerable to deforestation and overgrazing, variable rainfall, slower rates of recovery and wildfire potential; soils are generally nutrient poor and moderate-high erodability.</p>
<p><b>BEREHA</b> Low elevation arid areas in Afar, Somali, Benshangul, Gumuz and Gambella and the western parts of Tigray and Gonder in Amhara, and eastern Oromiya (Harerege and Bale); arid and dry savanna landscapes; rainfall is generally less than 200 mm.</p>	<p>Moisture and nutrient limitations, poor water holding capacity of soils, high livestock grazing pressures and slow recovery rates present constraints in these mostly Arid landscapes that generally have low soil quality, high erosion potential and vulnerability to pastoral livelihoods.</p>

Climate change vulnerability analysis shows that climate change will have profound impact on economic and social sectors (natural resources basis, particularly biodiversity,

ecosystems, water, agriculture and human health) as the frequency and intensity of drought is likely to increase (EPA, 1997). According to development and humanitarian actors, the frequency and intensity of drought has been increasing over the last decade

With plant species number ranging between 6500 and 7000, and high level of endemism, Ethiopia is one of the world's biodiversity hot spots. The increased clearing of forests and vegetation cover as a result of resettlement and commercial farming are accelerating genetic erosion. Growing pressure due to population growth and subsequent encroachment of agriculture on to marginal lands has not only significantly reduced forest cover but also aggravated erosion and land degradation. Natural vegetation cover is limited to only church compounds and inaccessible areas. According to data provided by earth trends in 2003, Ethiopia had lost 40000ha of forest only between 1990 and 2000 which corresponds to a deforestation rate of 40000 ha per year.

Increased urbanization and industrialization is competing with agricultural production and causing increased clearing of vegetation as well as displacing farming communities. More and more forests are being cleared for charcoal production and timber extraction to satisfy the growing demands of urban dwellers.

In the newly changing land use systems of the south and south west of the country, ecological disturbances have resulted in to widespread soil acidity and termite infestation. In the cereal mixed farming systems of the north and central highland areas, physical degradation (soil loss and formation of gullies) and deterioration of fertility have reached proportions extremely difficult to reverse. Past and recent resettlement programs have resulted in dramatic change in access to and control over natural resources such as land, water, grazing and forest resources which in most cases have led to cultural clashes and natural resources mismanagement. The introduction of extractive cereal crop production culture and charcoal making by settlers in the new areas is adding to environmental threat.

Wet lands which are important parts of the complex environmental and socio-economic systems and are linked to hydrological systems to upstream catchments and downstream areas with several ecosystem and economic functions are under immense pressure. Lakes and other fresh water bodies which have also important functions in modifying micro climate in different ecological systems are silting up and drying out in the face of accelerated deforestation and degradation of natural vegetation cover in the catchments.

As a result of government policy implementation, traditional pastoral production systems have also come under enormous pressure. The natural resources and traditional rangeland management systems, and institutions are impacted by resettlements along flood plains, game park creation, and range land enclosure for cropping and private grazing. Dry season grazing areas of pastoralists and access to watering points in critical periods are becoming increasingly scarce and difficult and severely affected the rangeland and water management strategies of pastoralists

The huge public works implemented in the last two decades which mainly included Soil and Water Conservation and agro-forestry did not yield results to the desired degree. Poor design of the schemes; lack of capacity in the implementation structure and lack of ownership by farmers have led to destruction and poor maintenance of the structures. Security of tenure is another factor which exacerbated land and natural resources mismanagement. Fear of redistribution of rural land has prevented investment, maintenance and productivity enhancement in rural areas. The recent government reform attempts through land certification schemes in the different regions are intended to enhance ownership feelings and encourage investment in sustainable land management.

Ethiopia accepts the international water quality standards of the World Health Organization (WHO) but recent surveys reveal that the level of protection from risks being very low.

Ethiopia has one of the lowest levels of sanitation coverage, with less than 30 percent coverage according to recent UN estimate and air quality is deteriorating particularly in and around major towns.

Recent reports also indicate large accumulation of obsolete pesticides and very high risks associated with that.

Air quality particularly in and around major urban centers is continuously deteriorating mainly attributable to a sharp increase of second hand cars.

Invasive alien species such as *Prosopis juliflora* and *Parthenium hysterophorus* which are believed to have been accidentally introduced through aid shipments are spreading aggressively in many rangeland areas particularly in Afar and Somali regions

### ***3.3. Environmental Movement in Ethiopia***

The environmental movement in Ethiopia dates back to the first decade of the last century, at which time, some dedicated and foresighted Ethiopians such as Negadras Gebrehiwot Bykedign (1886-1919) started articulating concerns and trends in the degradation of natural resources and the environment. Commendable contributions were made in analyzing the political economy underlying dependency and environmental degradation in Ethiopia and in other developing countries with emphasis on the environmental impacts of indulging in trade activities that are based on the export of primary and natural products and importing high value manufactured products. First attempts to account for environmental degradation were also made along with near to precise predictions of the consequences that are being experienced by the current generation. This era of Menilik the 2<sup>nd</sup> was also an era government concerns particularly associated with the declining vegetation and forest cover were being expressed and some efforts started to be made through policy interventions and practical actions.

In recent times, prompted by major drought catastrophes and food crises in the 70s and 80s, environmental issues started gaining increased public and government attention.

Several environmental policies and legislations were issued and strategies designed which were also complemented by international environmental movements. Civil society participation with a combination relief and rehabilitation as well as environmental activities which mainly took the forms of awareness creation, soil conservation and reforestation also dramatically increased during this period

Driven by growing interest both in developed and developing countries for alternative (clean affordable and reliable) energy sources, the development of liquid bio-fuel has attracted attention and is gaining momentum. Ethiopia is among the several countries that have developed strategies and programs for the promotion of bio-fuel development. Although bio-fuels could not be considered entirely new for the country deriving most of its energy requirements from bio-mass, the development of bio-fuels offers new attractive prospects. Reducing dependency on fossil fuel with unprecedented price hike that has become unbearable and possible contribution to economic growth through income and employment opportunities are among the several factors underlying the increased attraction. The country also recognizes the possible contributions that could be made through bio-fuel development towards the attainment of global commitments that it has entered into through the endorsement and ratification of several international environmental conventions and also meeting MDG targets. However, regardless of the rhetoric of considering economic, social as well as environmental dimensions by the protagonists of bio-fuels, environmental groups such as the Forum for Environment and others have started expressing their environmental concerns and worries. Concerns regarding competition for land, water and other resources, habitat destruction, marginalization of pastoralists and small scale farmers and doubts on net environmental benefits (carbon reduction) are among the major ones. Although, it is argued that proper policies are put in place to ensure sustainability and environmental protection, many agree, the challenge lies in their implementation and enforcement.

#### **4. Assessment of major environmental Public Institutions**

This group of stakeholders include the federal and regional governments and the publicly funded institutions they establish to carry out their laws, policies, strategies and directives. These bodies are ultimately responsible for the welfare of the country's natural resources, the environment, and biotic and abiotic components contained therein. They influence how these resources are managed and utilised through legal and institutional mechanisms. The following are the major institutions with roles and mandates in environmental protection and management.

- Environment Protection Authority (EPA): this federal institution is the main agency that has great responsibility for developing the appropriate policies, regulations and guidelines for the protection of the environment in the course of agricultural, industrial and other sectoral development activities. As such, it has both the legal power to ensure that development activities confirm to standards set forth in such policies, regulations or guidelines. The Authority itself is in the process of building its own capacity and supporting regional environmental bodies in the regions. The authority represents the country in all international environment related engagements and serves as focal institute for the implementation of international conventions such as the UNCCD.

EPA, since its establishment in 1995, has been executing its duties under its jurisdictions. The Federal agency is organized into nine technical departments and four service units, with an overall staff of 167.

Regional EPA offices have been established in almost all of the regions and where they have not been established, other bureaus are designated to manage environmental affairs and coordination with the federal EPA. The regional EPA bureaus operate independently of the Federal EPA, reporting to regional governments.

The EPA values the participation and contribution of civil society organizations and has taken several deliberate actions towards this. It is currently preparing several projects in which NGOs and CSOs can pick from and implement depending on their capabilities and comparative advantages. The EPA believes that capacity limitations affect the environmental movement and in particular the local NGOs and CSOs.

The EPA particularly sees significant contributions that could be made in public awareness creation and mobilization of communities for impact assessments at local levels. This according to the EPA could only be made possible if NGOs and CSO build the requisite capabilities at local levels. They need also to change their traditional approach of “Environment and Development” towards “Environment for Development” to make realistic contributions. The EPA also expects NGOs and CSOs to make concrete contributions to the environmental agenda by generating policy ideas and drafting environmental policies along with implementation modalities instead of expecting policies from one direction. Most according to the EPA have passion and commitment to environmental causes which however is not enough to get the job done. They need to build and improve on their professional competencies, build their capacities and radically change their approaches in addressing environmental issues and undertaking policy advocacy.

*Ethio- Environmental Network (EIN)* is an information exchange platform for the monitoring of the environment established through EPA initiative. The EIN is intended to operate at federal and regional levels. Environmental information management is the business of the platform and it carries out activities in the areas of public awareness creation, policy advocacy, and capacity development. Although still at the formative stages of development, the network is trying to address issues related to environmental information. NGOs/CBOs and all other stakeholders are believed to contribute to and benefit from the system of information exchange and management that is under process of development. NGOs/CBOs and other environmental stakeholders are constrained by capacity limitations of different forms and also lack of awareness on the values and utility of environmental information.

Although there is political commitment at higher levels of authority, no clear policy provisions and guidelines have so far been issued regarding environmental information. The EIN is endeavoring and lobbying towards converting Chapter 40 of

the UN Agenda 21 on environmental information into regional conventions and development of policies in environmental information.

The EIN considers low level of awareness of the different stakeholders to be the major constraint followed by the very wide gap between existing policies and legislations and their conversion into practicable laws to be practiced. The EIN is playing lead role in influencing policy processes towards environmental information.

The support the network enjoys from the UNEP and the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and also from the government as part of the EPA as its comparative advantages. EIN has yet to pass through considerable processes of building and consolidating the network and also its own capacity in ICT, sustainable source of funding and organizational alignment before it could make significant contributions.

- The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development the MoFED is the central organ of the federal government responsible for the overall co-ordination and supervision of publicly funded development programs. It approves physical development plans and allocates the required budget for implementation including for monitoring and evaluation of activities by all government implementing agencies. Although mainly in an indirect way, it plays a significant role in influencing environment related activities
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD): this public organization is the main organ of the federal government responsible for activities related to agricultural and rural development in the country. It should have the actual and potential powers to regulate agricultural development through the introduction of appropriate laws and guidelines to ensure that such developments do not affect the long-term interest of the country in terms sustainable utilization of natural resources and environmental protection.

MoARD is responsible for a range of responsibilities including agricultural production and research, food security, poverty reduction, natural resource management and rural development programs and activities. The regional Bureaus of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development are directly involved in delivery of programs with woredas, in keeping with the decentralized strategy and the government's Agricultural Development-led Industrialization policy.

The Bureaus of Agriculture and Rural development: these organs are responsible for monitoring actual implementation of agricultural and rural development activities at regional levels.

The Ministry under its Environment and Social Framework and the SLM program being developed under its auspices, has vital role in the environmental movement. The ministry currently examines and approves projects prepared by environmental authorities for implementation and collaborates with NGOs and CSOs at local levels

in implementing environmental policies. The Ministry strongly emphasizes the increased participation of NGOs and CSOs particularly for the realization of the SLM program.

- The Ethiopian Road Authority (ERA): transport networks can be considered as one of the crucial requirements for economic and social development in any country. Because of difficult terrain characteristics as well as poor economic capacity, Ethiopia is said to have the lowest density of road transport network among the countries of the world. The current huge road construction programs and activities that are under implementation by the Authority may have significant bearing on the environment
- The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR): The conservation and the rational development of the water resources of the country are also a prime concern to the Federal as well as the regional governments. Water resources development and hydropower projects mostly those involving the inundation of large areas of grazing and agricultural land could have far reaching consequences on natural resources and local environments.
- Investment Authority of Ethiopia: this is a federal institution charged with the task of promoting and licensing investments for development activities in various sectors, including agriculture. As such, it should have the powers to ensure that such development activities do not seriously jeopardize the long-term interest of the country with respect to the environment and natural resources. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a requirement for issuing investment licenses
- Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission: the Commission is charged with the task of taking all measures necessary to advance the development of scientific and technological research in all sectors of the national economy. It has the legal powers and means to develop policies, strategies and guidelines for ensuring environmental safety and enhancement is incorporated in all research endeavors.
- Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research: as the name implies, EIAR is charged with the task of developing and implementing research programs and projects in all areas of agriculture for the development and dissemination of improved technologies and management practices that enhance agricultural production and productivity.
- Educational institutions: these are all teaching institutions that have the mandate to provide both academic education as well as skill-oriented training. They have the responsibility to inculcate awareness, in the minds of their students, to the need for the protection of the environment and rational utilization of natural resources
- Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC): this is the institution charged with the task and legal powers for, ensuring the conservation and rational utilization of the rich biodiversity in the country. It does this through the development and implementation of *in situ* and *ex situ* mechanisms and processes in appropriate locations across the

country. It also has the lead responsibility to link as well as collaborate with national and international organizations that have similar mandates.

IBC is the only mandated government institution in the country for conservation, sustainable utilization and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). The institute operates mainly at the federal level but also carries out activities in the various regions. It has policy guidance, regulatory as well as direct implementation functions. Its areas of core business are mainly biodiversity conservation which extends into environment, natural resources, forestry development and protection as well as agriculture and rural development.

The IBC considers climate change, erosion of land and biodiversity degradation to be the major environmental challenges that the country is confronted with.

The Institute had lead role and active participation in the formulation and facilitation of the biodiversity policy, biodiversity strategy and action plan and access and benefit sharing proclamation and breeders' right.

The institute deliberately seeks and encourages the participation of NGOs and CBOs and believes that they have considerably contributed to its success in various areas. Although difficult to judge their participation during implementation, they are active in the processes of policy formulations. The IBC believes NGOs and CSOs through their closer contacts to communities could play significant role in the popularization and implementation of environmental legislations and conventions if they align their efforts with that of the government. Awareness and capacity of NGOs and CBOs limit very much the positive roles they could play and alleviating constraints in these areas would enhance their effective participation. The IBC is open for sound and applicable advices and opinions coming from NGOs and CBOs. The IBC believes NGOs and CBOs could best influence policy processes by becoming models in what they undertake in terms of demonstrating good environmental practices and showing directions.

Biodiversity being the major component of the environment in Ethiopia, the institute has prominent role and is principal stakeholder for the institutionalization of major policy guidelines and legislations. With regard to international conventions and protocols, the IBC has been principal actor in the bio-safety protocol and is national focal point for CBD, international treat for food and agriculture as well as for the crop biodiversity trust.

The institute is guided by the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) it has developed and derived its five year operational plan from. The BASP is intended to be reviewed in view of emerging climate change realities.

Regardless of efforts made so far, the gap between available environmental legislation and implementation on the ground is still huge. According to the IBC

capacity and resources limitations are the two major underlying factors for this state of affairs.

- **National Seed Industry Agency:** this organization was established to develop and implement plans and programs that enhance the production and supply of high quality seeds of crop varieties. Obviously, seed systems development connotes the identification, multiplication and supply of crop varieties that have high yielding potentials supplemented with other desirable traits. This aim could be achieved through schemes involving public and/or private organizations; including smallholder-farming communities. This has the inherent potential for genetic erosion by facilitating the replacement of traditional land races through the introduction of exotic varieties.

## **5. Legal framework for Environment**

### ***Legal basis***

Environmental concerns and the need for sustainable utilization of the natural resources are enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia approved in 1995. It reflects a view of environmental concerns in terms of fundamental human rights, and provides a basis for the formulation of national policies and strategies on environmental management and protection.

Under article 51 which specify the powers of the state are included the following sub-article:

Sub article 51.1 “it shall enact laws for the utilization and protection of land and other natural resources....”

Article 44 guarantees the right to live in a ‘clean and healthy environment’

Under article 92 on environmental objectives, the following are included:

Sub article 92.2 “the design and implementation of programs and projects for development shall not damage or destroy the environment”

Sub article 92.3 “people have the right to full consultation and to the expression of views in the planning and implementation of environmental policies and projects that affect them directly.

### ***Macro Economic Policy***

The Agriculture Development Led Industrialization (**ADLI**) provides the basis for the economic development of Ethiopia. Primary focus is made on enhancing production and productivity through improved production technology, services and increased use of inputs. “Reversal of the ongoing ecological degradation of the country” has also been mentioned but with less emphasis. The PASDEP and its predecessor the Sustainable Development and poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) draw on the CSE and EPE. In practice there has been very wide gap between environmental provisions made in these medium –term policies whose major emphasis was accelerated economic growth, and their implementation.

### ***Rural Development Policy***

The rural development policies, strategies and instruments document (2001) only tangentially and in connection with economic development aspects make provisions for environmental protection and sustainable natural resources utilization and management.

### ***Agricultural Development Policy***

MoARD at the federal level and the Bureaus of Agriculture and Rural development at regional levels are mandated for the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and strategies in agriculture. The proclamation defining powers and duties of the ministry (Proclamation No. 4/1995) clearly state its responsibility in protecting the natural environment (article 12). Until very recently, not much has been undertaken both at federal and regional levels towards developing policies and guidelines for the protection of the environment. However, draft policies on: rural land utilization and administration; soil and water conservation and development; forests, wildlife protection and development; crop production and protection; and animal resources development were prepared.

### ***Environmental Policy***

In a bid to lay the foundation for addressing environmental problems, the government initiated the Conservation Strategy Process of Ethiopia (CSE) into the national policy arena. The first phase of the CSE process was (1989-90) and focused on identifying key environmental issues and development of a framework for the CSE. The second phase (1990-94) was devoted for the development of environmental policy, institutional development and investment program while the third phase was for the preparation of regional conservation strategies in the regions. The CSE originally hosted in the planning ministry, then transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection until it finally came under the umbrella of the EPA.

Government's environmental concern and commitment were further reflected in the establishment of the then Plant Genetic Resources Center (PGRC), currently known as the IBC in 1976. The EPA was established as an autonomous public institution in 1995 with the objective stated as: "to ensure that all matters pertaining to the country's social and economic development activities are carried out in a manner that will protect the welfare of human beings as well as sustainably protect, develop and utilize the resources base on which they depend for survival". Under article 6 on powers and duties are stated:

Sub article 6.1: "to prepare environment protection policy and laws; and upon approval, follow up their implementation."

Sub article 6.2: "to prepare directives and systems necessary for evaluating the impact of social and economic development projects on the environment; follow up and supervise their implementation."

The government then formulated and approved the Ethiopian Environmental Policy (EPE) which provided framework for further development of detailed and sector specific policies, strategies and implementation laws, regulations, plans and programs. Containing guiding principles, and a short compendium of sector and cross sector policies, the EPE constitutes Ethiopia's official environmental policy. Sector specific institutions or policies which included: the water resources management policy, the biodiversity strategy, land administration and land use policy as well as the establishment of environmental units in the agencies responsible for roads, power and water were prepared based on the EPE.

### **The legal provision for biodiversity conservation**

Proclamation No, 120/1998, establishing the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research (IBCR) provides and ensures the appropriate Conservation, research, development and sustainable utilization of biodiversity of the country. Article 6, sub-articles 1-20 of the proclamation in "Powers and Duties" provides comprehensive legal framework in biodiversity conservation research, development and overall coordination and responsibility to IBCR.

The Seed Proclamation 206/2000 is another legal provision for biodiversity conservation. Article 25 sub-articles 4-6 make provisions for safeguarding loss of genetic resources through adulteration and replacement from external sources. The proclamation also protects loss of biodiversity through unjust exportation of genetic material to foreign countries without corresponding reward from the recipient end.

### **The Federal government in 1998 approved the National Policy on Biodiversity Conservation and Research.**

The preamble section of the document basically focuses on elaborating:

- Ethiopia's rich plant, animal and microbial genetic potential and the threat of genetic erosion;
- The unregulated fashion of genetic material exchanges in the past which has resulted both in the introduction into the country of unverifiable genetic material and the loss of benefits that accrue from such exchanges;
- The need for government policy and guidelines to control genetic erosion of the country's biodiversity and the uncontrolled introduction of alien species.

There are nine objectives enumerated under Proclamation No.120/1998. The main thrust of these objectives is to conserve and rationalize the utilization of the rich biodiversity available in the country. However, the document also underlines the need to repatriate earlier collections from other countries as well as the need for establishing means and procedures for ensuring equitable sharing of benefits from future international collaborations...

### **Investment policy**

The investment proclamation No. 37/1996 and subsequent amendments were aimed at promoting investment to accelerate the economic growth. Some of the relevant articles are:

Part two article Issuance of investment permit

“Upon receiving an application for investment permit, made in full compliance with the provisions of Article 13 of this proclamation and after ascertaining within 10 days that the intended investment activity would not be contravening the operational laws of the country and that, in particular, it complies with conditions stipulated in environmental protection laws, the appropriate investment organ shall issue an investment permit to the applicant.” For such policies to have impact, the provisions made for the environmental authority to ensure the environmental soundness of projects should be put into practice, which is not the case so far

Environmental Impact Assessment

Investment project applications to the Investment authority in most cases were not required to incorporate an EIA report. Certain project applications, mostly industrial projects are required to deliver environmental clearance permission from the EPA.

Environmental Impact Assessment (proclamation 299/200) specifies activities and projects that will require an EIA which should be submitted by the proponents of the project following a format specified in the legislation. The EPA will review the EIA and before approving the project.

**The Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) Environmental policy**

ERA has established in 1998 an Environmental Management Branch (EMB) under its Planning and Programming Division. The Section is responsible for the setting and implementation of ERA environmental policy in support of the national level requirements for executing sustainable development practices among all line agencies.

The standard Environmental Methodologies and Procedures Manual of ERA, has been prepared by the EMB in full recognition of the accelerated deterioration of the natural resources base of the country particularly in key areas such as deforestation, soil erosion, loss of domesticated plants, loss of the unique flora and fauna and in line with the environmental policy of the EPA as well as the guidelines<sup>1</sup> prepared for the transport sector. The manual contains, standard methodologies and procedures for the incorporation of environmental impact assessment process in the operations of the ERA by implementing the national EPA and EIA process through the adoption of standard methods contained in this manual, the current environmental requirements of major

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lending institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the European Union (EU) and the African Development Bank (ADB).

### **Water resources development policy**

Like many of the policy documents, the Ethiopian water resources management policy also provides very general policy statements on environmental and natural resources conservation such as the following:

#### Article 1.2 item No.4

“Managing and combating drought as well as other associated slow on-set disasters through *interalia*, efficient allocation, redistribution transfer, storage and efficient use of water resources”

#### Article 2.1 item No.5

“Ensure that water resources management is compatible and integrated with other natural resources as well as river basin development plans and with the goals of the sectoral developments in health mines, energy, agriculture, etc.”

#### Article 2.2 sub article 2.2-2 items Nos. 1&2

“Incorporate environment consideration and protection requirements as integral parts of water resources management”

“Encourage that environment Impact Assessment and protection requirements serve as part of the major criteria in all water resources projects.”

#### Article 2.3.2 item E-1

“Minimize and mitigate as much as possible the negative environmental impacts associated with irrigation development.”

The considerations and provisions in the above mentioned policy articles are all positive towards the conservation and protection of natural resources. Without the necessary detailed guidelines, implementation details and institutional arrangements the policies remain ineffective up to now.

#### Article 2.3.2.1

“The overall objective of the irrigation policy is to develop the huge irrigated agricultural potential for the production of food crops and raw materials for the industries on efficient and sustainable basis and without degrading the fertility of the production fields and water resources base.”

This overall policy objective drawn in line with the national economic development plan and strategy understandably is aimed at bringing under production of the large

unutilized land and water to contribute to the country's economic growth and self reliance in food production. Its attempt to incorporate an element of natural resources conservation, which is very limited in scope to only the protection of land from fertility degradation, sends however very wrong signals. In light of the fragility of the natural resources and the environmental base of the country, it would have been much appropriate to bring into attention the need for the protection of all natural resources and the environment that irrigation schemes could affect.

List of some sectoral policies issued following the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (EPE)

No	Policy	Year
1	The National Population Policy of Ethiopia	1993
2	The National Fertilizer Policy	1999
3	The National Science and Technology Policy	1998
4	The National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management	1997
5	The National Policy on Biodiversity Conservation and Research	1998
6	The Ethiopian Water Resources Management Policy	1999
7	The National Health Policy	1993
8	The National Energy Policy	1993
9	The National Agricultural Research Strategy	1993
10	The National Drug policy	1994
11	The National Health Science and Technology Policy	1994
12	The National Land Use and Land Administration Policy	2005

Despite achievements made in policy formulation and institution building there were major shortcomings which include:

- Gaps between policies and their implementation
- Very limited stakeholders (other than the government) participation
- Challenges in mainstreaming (sector policies integrating environmental considerations)
- Limited penetration of CSE activities into rural areas and into the thinking of senior politicians.

## 6. International conventions

The adoption of several multilateral environmental conventions has strengthened the environmental legal framework. The following are the major conventions adopted:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- The Basal Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes;
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;
- The Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol for the Protection of the Ozone Layer;
- The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; and
- The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Ethiopia has played active and lead role in the UN conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in 1992 with considerable contribution in not only presenting the environmental challenges of the country but also articulating the situations in and positions of “the south”. Ethiopia took several measures and actions after ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The UNCCD and its institution and policy process and program development have brought significant strategic and developmental moves in the overall development programs of Ethiopia. Fundamental actions were taken which included the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) and designating the Ethiopian Environmental Authority (EPA) as a coordinating body for the implementation of the UNCCD. A steering committee has also been established for the implementation of the NAP under participation of all stakeholders, including government, development partners and civil society. Mainstreaming the NAP in relation to environmental issues is of greater concern. The NAP has vital place in the CSE, EPE, MoARD, MoWR, etc. Higher learning institutions, regional environmental agencies, the Ethiopian rural energy all have given greater emphasis to the realization of the NAP under their respective programs. The government through the EPA facilitated the creation of NGOs/CBOs Coordination Committee for Combating Desertification (ENCCD) as mechanism for addressing the problem of land degradation and desertification. The Dryland Coordination Group (DCG) of Ethiopia in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, with financial support of NORAD has been engaged in capacity building of institutions for the effective implementation of UNCCD.

The Ethiopian government places premium on environment and makes it a central point in its policy and strategy formulations. The Macro economic policy framework as provided in the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization policy (ADLI); the Conservation Strategy of Ethiopian (CSE); the National Food Security Strategy (NFS); the policy on pastoral development; the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End poverty (PASDEP); are policies with direct relevance to the UNCCD.

A policy on pastoral development has been issued in a bid to fill policy gaps that have led to the neglect of drylands and pastoral communities that have contributed to the environmental and natural resources degradation in these areas. As part of the NAP implementation process, emphasis has been given to the development of pastoral communities in the country. The WB funded pastoral development program is actively working in the area of pastoral community development through the integration of dryland research and extension. The country's land use and land administration policy is currently under comprehensive review and reform. The deficiencies in the policy, particularly with respect to addressing tenure security related issues in dryland and pastoralist areas has considerable bearing on natural resources and the environment.

Ethiopia's engagement in Sustainable Land Management Program (SLM) is based on the priority it attaches to reverse natural resources degradation and to combat desertification. The proposed SLM program is designed through a process led by the Government of Ethiopia, with support from the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral organizations. One of the outcomes of this process is the establishment of an institutional mechanism for coordination, which is already providing leadership at the federal level for the development and implementation of this program and other SLM interventions in Ethiopia.

The development objectives of this proposed government program in SLM are to reduce land degradation in agricultural landscapes and improve the agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers which are in line with the global environment objectives to reduce land degradation and protect and/or restore ecosystem functions and diversity in agricultural landscapes.

The SLM program, although initially focuses on the so called "potential areas" (experiencing less moisture stress), complements the IDA financed Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) which is focusing on conservation measures in drier and moisture stress food insecure areas.

Biological diversity was also high in the agenda of at the UNCED in Rio in 1992 and considered to be key component of the environment. Ethiopia which was considered as one of the richest genetic resources centers in the world made significant contribution to the conference and at the same signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The government has legally established an institute through a proclamation that provided for the establishment of the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research (IBCR) in 1998. The government has also issued policy directives on the conservation of biological resources

## **7. Civil society**

### **7.1 Historical developments**

The NGO sector in Ethiopia was taken to be the main expression of civil society. There were only very few NGOs which were active in social welfare issues (vulnerable social groups such as disabled and orphans) in the country. The first generation NGOs included church organizations, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, charitable organizations, Save the Children /UK, Sweden/Norway, which worked very closely with the government.

Following the 1973/74 drought and associated huge relief operations the number and activity scope of NGOs dramatically increased. The 1984/85 drought also added to the volume of famine relief as well as influx of NGOs. With exception of the few “first generation” organizations, there were no local (Ethiopian NGOs). The number started to grow following the 1991 change of government.

During the communist era (1974-1991), although under strict control, NGOs were tolerated and were used as means of channeling development assistance resources from donors mainly for post-famine recovery and rehabilitation projects. The proportion of total development assistance has been and still is very high. Significant proportion of these funds is provided by the public purse of donor countries.

NGOs played vital gap-filling roles using the international resources which governments tried to portray as public welfare provided by the government. NGOs also accepted terms and conditions that precluded advocacy and expanded into huge development organization widening their scopes of operations and coverage.

Government policy and attitude towards NGOs has been and still is that of control and oversight of their operations with increased encroachment on their autonomy.

The number of local NGOs increased significantly following the 1991 change of Government and the liberal economic and political environment created which promoted some grass root participation. This however gradually gave way to a series of attempts of tightening control and imposition of stricter regulations. Government actions took forms of introducing re-registrations with attempts of screening out NGOs considered unreliable and hostile and/or instructions to align their activities with development instigated by the government. The government also considers the huge development assistance funds channeled through NGOs compete with Direct Budget Support (DBS) that could be provided to the government.

Tension between NGOs and the government started to grow starting as early as 1993 re-registration attempt, followed by the 1994 survey on NGO, issuance of the 1995 guidelines, the 1995 re-registration and change of registration authority from the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) to the Ministry of Justice. It is worth noting that amidst these restrictive reforms, the number of local NGOs has steadily been climbing. Although, not yet endorsed by the Parliament the recent draft proclamation on local NGOs is the latest in the series of restrictive reforms.

NGO/government relation are still strained by the cumbersome registration procedures, frequent and detailed reporting and outlook difference over crucial issues such as grass root participations and legitimacy of regional development association which NGOs consider to be closely affiliated to the government.

The long promised promulgation of a new NGOs legislation has not yet materialized and the process is considered not to be transparent. The extensive consultation that took place during the formulation of the Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper PRSP in 2002 marked the zenith of government NGO relations.

## **7.2 Current overview of environmental NGOS/CSOs**

There are about 419 NGOs out of which 128 are international. Most of the NGOs are rural based and are engaged in integrated rural development activities, including agriculture and environment. Only few of the NGOs believed to have environmental rehabilitation and conservation as their core business are covered under this assessment. Concerns of NGOs have grown following the issuance of the recent proclamation on charities and societies. Some of the critical issues include:

- The proclamation does not allow local NGOs and CSOs to receive more than 10 percent of their income from foreign sources and the international NGOs are prevented from working on human rights, governance, conflict resolution and judicial reform.
- The proclamation permits excessive government interference in the function of CSOs and NGOs through the power to carry out random investigation. CSOs and CBOs must provide the government with seven days notice of any general meeting
- Create a web of exhaustive reporting procedures; proclamation gives the government a convenient way to intimidate NGOs and CSOs
- Once an NGO and CSO is denied registration, or fails to apply, the organization is then declared unlawful. If members and supporters continue their involvement with NGOs and CSOs they risk severe punishments including three to fifteen years in prison.
- CSOs and NGOs have limited rights to appeal against decision taken under the proclamation. For example: if an NGO and CSO are denied registration, it will not be able to ask for judicial review of facts on which the government has based its assessment.

### *The Ethiopian Association for Combating Desertification (EACD)*

The EACD is an association which came into existence through civil society initiative. Realizing the importance of wider and active civil society participation in the

implementation of the UNCCD and the NAP, NGOs and CBOs which are active in environmental issues got together to form a national network for combating desertification (EACD). The process at formative stages and later on was patronized and supported by the EPA which is the focal point and national coordinating body for the UNCCD and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). EACD also serves for NGOs as the IGAD sub regional Rio focal point in the sub region. EACD is accredited officially by the UNCCD 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Party (COP) in October 2005.

The Association operates at the federal and regional levels and its core business is the popularization of the UNCCD/NAP and facilitation of their implementation through collaborative work with the EPA and other stakeholders; strengthening participation and networking among its member organizations; building capacities of members and other environmental actors; promoting public awareness; and facilitating information flow and exchange.

EACD works very closely with other environmental NGOs and has particularly very close collaboration with the Dryland Coordination Group (DCG) of Norway which is its major source of funding. Although the association benefits from membership contributions this is insignificantly very little.

The EACD as national focal point/network for the implementation of the UNCCD/NAP with about 29 NGOs as members have conducted national conferences to promote awareness and facilitate implementation. These efforts have not only contributed to increased awareness on desertification and its root causes as well as the basic elements of the UNCCD/NAP but also strengthened networking and partnership of members and stakeholders.

Participation in the different international and regional workshops such as the Conference of the Parties (COPs) and the IGADD has contributed to follow developments and keep itself and NGOs in the network updated on recent developments. The EACD also participates in national committees and consultation workshops for the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the UNCCD/NAP. The organization also actively participates in community mobilization for occasional tree-planting and environmental campaigns.

The close working relationship and access to the EPA and through that to policy processes gives it special opportunity to influence environmental policy, although this opportunity has not yet been adequately tapped. The capacity building project recently launched for regional policy makers, civil society organizations and research organizations is a move in the right direction that needs to be strengthened.

EACD is constrained in undertaking its major activities of awareness creation and capacity development by lack of adequate funds and shortage of permanent staff for routine activities. There is a huge gap between what the organization has been able to actually deliver and what it aspires to achieve as reflected in its intended list of activities.

Although EACD believes that there is ample room for environmental advocacy in environment in general and with respect to the UNCCD/NAP in particular, the extended delay in the endorsement of the National Action Program which provides the basis for the UNCCD country implementation is posing a serious challenge.

EACD perceives prevailing government registration and reporting requirements to be cumbersome and complicated and is very much concerned that the recent draft proclamation on charities and association will have devastating impact if approved and enacted. Articles of the draft proclamation restricting the funding that could be generated from foreign sources to only 10 percent and the discretionary powers vested upon the Charities and Societies Agency (CSA) to refuse, to accord legal recognition to CSOs, to disband CSOs that have already been legally recognized, to subject CSOs to intrusive surveillance and to interfere in the internal management including firing and hiring of staff particularly worrisome.

#### *The Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD)*

ISD which started its operations in the Tigray region in 1996 pursue its environmental activities with the purpose of increasing production of farmers and their communities by rehabilitating their environment. Its area coverage has gradually expanded to include about 57 communities in Tigray and three other regions. IDS are active at three levels of operation (Federal, regional and local). Awareness creation and enhancement and capacity development the different levels are the major areas of activities. One of its few partners in Ethiopia with which it has forged close working relationships is the EPA. Some 15 international organizations support IDS financially whose annual budget is in the neighborhood of 3.5 million Birr. Some of its sponsors are the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Cordaid (Netherlands), Third World Network (Malaysia), Finland Embassy, Comic Relief (UK), Horn of Africa Environmental Network (based in Ethiopia).

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), bio-safety, Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), and community rights and trade are thematic areas in which IDS engages itself in addition to its major programs of sustainable community development, cultural biodiversity and facilitation of information exchange on environmental issues. The organization carries out formal and informal policy advocacy work along with public awareness creation on critical biodiversity issues, Access and Benefit sharing (ABS) and popularization of other elements of the CBD.

Its work on natural fertilizers (particularly efforts of popularizing the use of compost) and soil and water conservation has obtained wide spread acceptance and applicability by farmers in the areas of intervention and are taken up by the MoARD which will facilitate their up-scaling. Its efforts in promoting urban agriculture and efforts of changing public opinion regarding waste disposal and their recycling are also showing signs of success in supporting livelihoods and improving the environment. ISD has influenced views and opinions of policy makers and communities with regard to sustainable means of production and productivity enhancement and rehabilitation and protection of the

environment. The activities of the organization could be seen as efforts of achieving local economic development at the same time protecting and rehabilitating the environment.

ISD believe that there is space and conditions are favorable to carry out environmental advocacy in the country and consider having comparative advantage due to its close contacts to the EPA and strong human resources base. The recently drafted proclamation on charities and societies it believes will mainly affect the status of the organization from local to international and sees reporting and registration requirements not to be complicated and cumbersome. ISD recognize the gap between environmental policy provisions and their transformation into practicable laws and that a lot of effort has to be directed towards this. ISD are particularly supporting the popularization and implementation of the agricultural extension and educational policies. ISD are familiar with many of the international conventions that the country has signed and ratified which include: the Bio-safety Protocol the Rotterdam Convention and, the Stockholm Conventions and others. The ISD considers the increasing concern by the government for environment as an opportunity and the relatively slow international response to worsening climate change as a threat.

#### *Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF)*

SLUF is an umbrella organization of like minded organizations established with the aim of promoting improved natural resources management and sustainable land use practices. SLUF's programs and strategies are defined by its member organizations and activities and interventions are developed and planned through a fully participatory process.

SLUF is currently engaged in two major programs: 1) capacity development of member organizations which among others includes working towards policy dialogue and development through lobbying and advocacy in areas pertaining to sustainable land use; 2) Delegated fund management through Swedish SIDA support. Forum for Environment and the Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association, which intensively work on environmental advocacy have benefited from the fund.

SLUF has managed to develop a data base and information exchange system from which NGOs could benefit from and contribute to and this will definitely bridge the information gap until a nation-wide system is developed and made operational.

SLUF believes that there is room for policy advocacy if care is taken not to carry out such activities in combination with other sensitive issues related to democratization civil rights etc. Policy advocacy is also constrained by the inevitable conflict with existing land use and land administration policies in which there is little readiness for discussion and dialogue. SLUF has organized a series of workshops for policy makers and disseminated research reports to favorably influence environmental policy.

SLUF believes the kind of support it gets from the SIDA, would greatly enhance its activities and enable it channel support to several NGOs to effectively carry out environmental advocacy and public awareness creation on critical environmental issues.

The preservation of indigenous agro forestry practices, wetlands and closed areas are priority areas of emphasis for SLUF. SLUF considers attitudes towards population growth and pressure and deeply entrenched traditional land use systems to be major areas in which public opinion should change in order to preserve the environment.

The organization was involved in the ratification of the RAMSER convention and had active role in the preservation of the Sheka forest through involvement and support to the wetlands advocacy and lobby group. Through its support and facilitation the organization has effectively contributed to the preservation of indigenous agro-forestry practices, wetlands and closed areas and effectively supported communities affected by degradation of natural resources. SLUF sees its competent experts' base as comparative advantage and shortage of funds as critical bottleneck.

#### *The Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association (EWNRA)*

EWNRA is a local NGO established in October, 2000 following a three year field based research carried out in Illu Abba Bora zone of the Oromia region. The organization operates at the federal, regional and local levels, although its activities at higher levels is only limited to policy advocacy and awareness creation. It considers the environment and natural resources and as its core business in which it carries out side spectrum of activities including, policy advocacy, public awareness creation, service provision as well as capacity development. EWNRA has strong working relationships with the Agriculture and Rural development institutions at all levels and also the EPA and MoWR at the federal level. It collaborates with other NGOs such as the FfE, MELCA, the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural Resources History Society in environmental advocacy for the protection of wetland ecosystems. It is a member of the umbrella organizations such as the CRDA, SLUF and the Hom of Africa regional environmental center/ network.

The organization has been focusing on awareness creation on wetlands, forests and watersheds and capacity development in which it has scored a number of commendable achievements. Bringing wetlands related environmental issues to the attention of many was considered as one of its major achievements. Pursuing the same line of activities, it has now intensified policy advocacy activities mostly in collaboration with other institutions which it believes has immensely contributed to better understanding and appreciation of wetland related environmental issues by policy makers and institutions. EWNRA has particularly increased its efforts to push for wetlands policy development and ratification of the RAMSER convention. It also actively participates in advocacy in the areas of improving existing EIA and bio-fuel development regulations. Although with little success it has also facilitated and supported advocacy towards the recognition of community ownership of forests as one form of ownership in the national forest policy to ensure sustainability. It actively participates and supports the following forums:

- The Sheka Forest Alliance Network
- The Participatory Forest Management Group
- The Water and Sanitation Group
- Agriculture and Rural Development Forum
- Association of Citizens Solidarity for Campaign against Famine in Ethiopia

- Climate Change Forum (under establishment)

EWNRA is part of the advocacy group on the improvement of the EIA.

EWNRA has involvement in the popularization of the UNCCD in the Amhara region and is closely following up all environmental conventions which the country has signed and ratified (CBD, UNFCCC, etc.)

EWNRA doesn't find existing registration and reporting requirements to be complicated and cumbersome, and that there is ample room for policy advocacy. However, it fears this is to change if the currently drafted proclamation is endorsed and enacted. In fact, it considers the draft proclamation devastating if endorsed in its current form.

Financial limitations and shortage of professional staff are challenges which are also directly linked to financial capacity challenge the organization's ability to effectively realize its objectives. The current international focus on climate change is seen as an opportunity that should be effectively tapped to promote national environmental activities and programs.

#### *Forum for Environment (FfE)*

FfE is a leading environmental advocacy organization, which tries to positively influence environmental policy. As an umbrella or platform organization it facilitates and promotes efforts of different activist groups in environment.

After its foundation in 1997 as an independent entity, under the Environmental Development Action in the third world (ENDA-Ethiopia), it was then registered separately in 2003. Climate change, freshwater, air pollution, cut-flower industry, renewable energy and forests/protected areas are the thematic groups that constitute FfE's activity portfolio. Several independent groups in the 7 regions which receive seed funds are active in mobilizing around the different environmental issues. Research and publication and facilitating public forums are the other activity areas of the FfE.

FfE has made efforts to closely work with the government with the objective of facilitating its environmental advocacy work. Although FfE has fared relatively well with respect to "collaborative" advocacy, challenges are faced in addressing sensitive Environmental issues, in which case the organization opts to different lobbying strategies to avoid confrontations. Operating at the federal level by at the same time maintaining close working relations with NGOs and CSOs operating at local levels give FfE advantages in pursuing its environmental objectives.

As a platform for advocacy and communication for Ethiopian environment, the forum initiated a consultation process to follow up developments and progress since the Rio events of 1992. The forum has published books and news sheets to inform the public on the outcomes of the consultations which has immensely contributed to public awareness. During the preparation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy paper for Ethiopia (I-PRSP), the forum organized a meeting and elaborated the outcomes to be sent to the

relevant bodies involved in the process. The forum participated in meetings held as part of the preparation for Rio+10 (Pan African conference (PAC) and prep Coms. The PAC was an initiative to facilitate the preparation of the African Civil Society for the Rio+10.

Prompted by global land national concerns, FfE is currently undertaking a rapid assessment of bio-fuel development in the country with the objective of determining actual and potential environmental impacts. Particular focus is made how the national bio-fuel strategy to pursue bio-fuel development only in degraded and marginal areas is adhered to. In the process, the organization has brought to the attention of the public and appropriate government organizations that protected areas and fragile ecosystems are being threatened. FfE tries to enhance the capacities and awareness of government officials and private sector actors with regard to bio-fuel development through facilitating and supporting experience exchange visits.

The organization in association with the Ethiopian Wild-life Conservation Authority has initiated environmental movements in regions such as Gambella and has succeeded in achieving re-demarcation of protected areas for better eco-system preservation.

Through its consistent campaign, it has also succeeded in the re-demarcation of the Babile protected area.

In association with the rural energy development and promotion center, and the SNV it is supporting and facilitating the national bio-gas program through promotional, awareness creation and experience exchange interventions.

With regard to combating pollution FfE in collaboration with pertinent government bodies actively supports the UNDP clean fuel and vehicle program and has successfully campaigned towards the reduction of pollution. In association with the national flower alliance which came into existence through FfE initiative to sensitize the public and government bodies on social and environmental impacts and supports research training and advocacy in the area.

FfE's carefully designed strategies and popularity gained from actively and effectively participating in different environmental forums has given the organization special place and acceptance by government institutions and policy makers. FfE is now a member in the National Environmental Council (NEC) which gives it the opportunity for more advocacy work and representation civil society opinion.

Because of its broad based support it obtains from donors, financial limitations are not considered as constraints affecting its operations. However, only project based financing supports and lack of core funding mechanisms has affected continuity and consistency of environmental activities to make efforts more fruitful and make significant impacts.

The organization does not consider existing government registration and reporting requirements not to be cumbersome and complicated. The current proclamation if approved as it is will have a lot of negative effects on the operations of the organizations

and would obviously lead to a re-registration as local international NGO. Space for policy advocacy is not considered to be much that even organizations like the FfE with established links and working relationships with many stakeholders including the government, have to craft their advocacy techniques and strategies carefully in order to avoid confrontations. One big challenge for environmental work is considered to be the lack of coordination among different government institutions. Both the MoARD and MoME are involved with issues surrounding bio-fuel development which has led to considerable confusion and misunderstanding and this has also affected advocacy work. FfE strives to change the wide-spread public attitude of considering environment as secondary and luxury. FfE is intensively campaigning for the improvement of EIA and is carrying out commendable lead role in the green award program and advocacy in relation to the floriculture development.

Misinterpretation of genuine environmental work by some officials and interest groups as counter productive and obstacle to developmental efforts are the greatest risks that threaten the activities of the organization.

Although FfE has a strong professional base the number of experts is not commensurate to the volume of work that needs to be undertaken.

#### *MELCA Mahber*

Founded in 2004 by like minded environmental practitioners and lawyers, the organization has developed an organizational identity around inter-generational learning and community empowerment. MELCA is active in three major activity areas in its environmental work. Social empowerment through group and nature interaction focusing on traditional knowledge of biodiversity and conservation and fostering leadership is the first, while advocacy work particularly in the Sheka forest area constitutes the second activity area. The third area of activity which it undertakes in collaboration with the African Biodiversity Network deals with organizing workshops and meetings towards raising awareness on seed diversity risks associated with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

The organization intends to extend its environmental advocacy work that it carries out at community, woreda and zonal levels to regional and federal levels. It tries to engage lawmakers at federal and regional levels on different environmental issues.

MELCA has recently conducted research on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and prepared short policy briefings in the Amharic and English languages. The various activities it undertakes including tree nursery site management, soil and water conservation, plantation capacity development in eco-mapping have significant influence at local levels in which they are implemented. Its activities carried out in the Bale National Park area and the Menagesha- Suba forest by focusing on school children and local communities have shown the importance as well as the possibilities of intergenerational transfer of ecological knowledge. Such approaches however would only have meaningful impact and influence if scaled-up.

The organization finds existing registration and reporting procedures to be cumbersome and complicated. MELCA believes that there is some room for environmental advocacy as long as one takes care not to cross the line into sensitive areas or mix environmental issues with other sensitive elements such as human rights, democratic rights etc. The current draft proclamation regarding NGOs and CSOs will have a devastating effect if approved as it is. We will not be able to continue operating as local environmental NGO even if the government has declared environmental advocacy as an area that will continue to be supported. Issues such as land and natural resources ownership (private and communal) and management which have far-reaching implication on the environment could easily be taken out of the domain of environmental activities if registered as international NGO.

“Culture and Biodiversity” is the main theme around which MELCA’s environmental activities are built. MELCA is focusing on inter-generational transfer of ecological knowledge from elders to the younger generation. The organization finds the deeply entrenched belief both by the wider public, government and others that environmental concerns to be luxury and actions towards environmental preservation as counter productive and unnecessary to be a major challenge that should be systematically tackled. MELCA has made several efforts directed towards this and scored encouraging results that need to continue reinforced. The other wide-spread public opinion is the belief that natural resources are infinite which should also be addressed.

MELCA believes that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) proclamation of the Federal Environmental Protection Authority, the new investment proclamation to have some inconsistencies which make the implementation of existing environmental laws very difficult. The organization in association with other NGOs is striving towards the improvement of the EIA.

MELCA is aware of all environmental conventions and protocols which the country has signed and ratified and supports their popularization and implementation.

#### *Heinrich Boll Foundation*

Heinrich Boll Foundation is a foundation supported by the Green Party in Germany. The Foundation has been operating from its regional office in Nairobi and was supporting local NGOs and CSOs in the country engaged in the areas of Gender, Environment, governance and democratization. Since February 2006 the Foundation has started operating from within the country after establishing an office in Addis Ababa. The Foundation has been providing project based support to individual organizations and networks and associations. ENDA, FfE, ISD MELCA Mahber, PANOS Ethiopia are among the major institutions obtaining support from the Foundation. The EPA and other relevant government bodies also benefit from the Foundation support. Due to the controversies created with the registration of certain NGOs, the Foundation had to discontinue its direct assistance to certain organizations including the FfE and ISD.

The foundation appreciates the legal and institutional developments but believes a lot has to be yet undertaken towards their implementation. It also believes that efforts being made towards increased civil society participation by different stakeholders should be matched by growing readiness and opening up on part of the government and its institutions to provide space for increased civil society participation. It also believes that capacities of NGOs and CSOs need to develop in many aspects to be effective.

## **8. Donors and Development Assistance**

The donor community in Ethiopia is active in different ways in the field of environment. Multilateral agencies such as the EC, WB, and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations FAO are active in supporting environmental programs, while bilateral development assistances by the German Development Cooperation (the GTZ), NORAD, the Dutch Government, JICA, sida and others are also engaged in different environmental related programs. The United Nations World Food Program (UN-WFP) has carried out huge SWC activities, complementing activities of the MoARD, in the different parts of the country by combining relief measures with public asset development and environmental rehabilitation. The MERET project implemented through the MoARD structure was one of the projects oriented to support the transition to sustainable livelihoods. Not only have these activities contributed to the development of appropriate techniques and approaches but also increasing public awareness on environment. FAO has contributed through several interventions which included the Ethiopian highland reclamation study which provided reliable data on the nature of land degradation in Ethiopia.

The Norwegian, Finish and German governments are among those who have added environmental rehabilitation and sustainable development in their core business. The European Community (EC), the World Bank (WB), USAID, and DFID support focuses on economic growth and social safety in the central and densely populated areas of the country following mainly a systematic mainstreaming strategy of environmental issues in the various sectors of intervention. This predominant view among donor communities that environmental issues should be mainstreamed into major economic sectors (transport, energy, etc.) has led to an underestimation of the urgency environmental crises and thereby preventing immediate direct interventions in restoration of the environment. Although the current situation calls for upgrading the environment to a focal sector of intervention, no action has so far been taken in this direction on the donor side.

Farm-Africa-SOS Sahel, World Vision Ethiopia and the Lutheran World Federation are among the major international NGOs active in supporting in the conservation of natural forests and building capacities of local communities in natural resources management and their sustainable utilization

Donor support is generally clustered around five main themes: forestry, biodiversity, water and sanitation, land and SWC and climate change. The GTZ NORAD, Dutch government, JICA and the World Bank and the EC support Participatory Forest Management (PFM) which encourages participation and ownership by local

communities. The German government has been actively supporting and strengthening the IBC and recently in collaboration with the Dutch support the regional ABS capacity building. Several donors including the Sida support the land certification program of the government which is believed to contribute to the reversal of land and environmental degradation in the country. The PSNP program which is supported by major donors focuses on natural resources management (SWC, water harvesting, reforestation) which are believed to contribute to the restoration of community assets and the environment. The Sustainable Land Management (SLM) which is at a country engagement process under the auspices of the MoARD is another area strongly supported by the donor community.

The Donor community which is also actively contributing to policy and institution building processes in the country has considerable acceptance and leverage to influence environmental policy in the country which it has not adequately made use of.

The donor community by and large does not support the resettlement program of the government.

## **9. Influence of the environmental movement**

### ***9.1. Influence of the environmental movement on Policy***

Policy advocacy in an organized and focused manner is not only a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia, but also very limited in scope and intensity. Large scale relief prompted environmental activities which have taken the forms of mainly soil and water conservation activities and replanting campaigns initiated and implemented by multi lateral UN agencies and other NGOs had some influence on policy and strategy formulations. These efforts have helped in better understanding and appreciation of natural resources and environmental issues by policy makers. Significant participation and contribution was made by NGOs and CSOs during the preparation process of the Ethiopian Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) with government invitation and request. Some NGOs such as the Forum for Environment are currently active in making the voices of the civil society heard with regard to the controversial issues surrounding the regulation of bio-fuel development efforts in the country. MELCA, the Ethiopian Forestry Association and FfE have intensively participated during the formulation process of the Ethiopian forestry policy in which they have managed to infuse civil society opinion. Generally, pro-active role played by NGOs and CSOs in environmental policy advocacy has been and still is minimal. Frequently changing and by and large unfavorable relationships between successive governments and civil society organizations and limitations that arise from lack of organized, professionally backed and focused approaches have constrained effective policy advocacy in the country.

Although, major government environmental institutions such as the EPA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development recognize the significance of broader civil society participation in general, they believe this has not been developed to the desired degree. These organizations particularly recognize the positive roles that NGOs and CSOs could

play in the popularization and implementation of environmental legislations and international conventions to which Ethiopia is a party. Most believe also that they are important to narrow the capacity gaps at local levels. Recognition of NGOs and CSOs as significant partner in the generation of policy suggestions and ideas is not wide spread. In conclusion, government is reluctant to allow real civil society participation in policy making. There is however scope for “collaborative” (not confrontational) advocacy from NGOs and CSOs.

### ***9.2. Influence of the environmental movement on public opinion.***

NGOs and CSOs with their closer contacts and access to communities had significant contributions in influencing public opinion. With their activities that combined relief/rehabilitation with environmental protection they have shaped opinions and attitudes of communities towards natural resources and the environment. Awareness creation and campaigns on land and forest degradation have dominated activities of NGOs and CSOs in the past which gradually increased to embrace other issues such as climate change biodiversity and others. Some NGOs are making aware communities about the potential damages of increased emphasis given to investment and economic development activities that have disregarded sustainability of natural resources and the environment. Media, which is under strict government control, could not be used for environmental awareness campaigns. NGOs and CSOs have served and are still serving as additional appendages of the extension and have been very effective in introducing and promoting sustainable natural resource management and agricultural production practices and systems from formal research as well as those gained through direct practical work of different actors. They play also vital role in introducing and adopting successful international know-how and innovations.

## **10. Major findings and Recommendations**

### ***10.1 Findings***

- A very good legal framework put in place towards addressing the complex environmental challenges could not be implemented due to mainly lack of capacity, weak institutional development, lack of financial resources and requisite professional capabilities.
- Civil society although showed some growth in recent years remains small and environmental policy advocacy is at juvenile stage to significantly influence environmental policy in the country.
- NGOs and CSOs that are engaged in environmental preservation, rehabilitation and policy advocacy are very few in number when seen against the huge environmental challenges of the country and the volume of task that should be accomplished.

- Impacts on public opinion and policy are results of a wide range of environmental rehabilitation and conservation work often carried out in combination with relief and developmental endeavours.
- Relationships with government with acts of tolerance and confrontation have significantly affected the growth and role of civil society in the environmental movement in general and environmental policy advocacy in particular.
- Environmental NGOs and CSOs often choose lengthy and indirect lobbying strategies and approaches on issues considered to be sensitive in fear of direct confrontation which could cost them their very existence. The chances to inadvertently cross the lines into areas that could lead disappointment of government partners are particularly very high in advocacy work and this has created reluctance to full-heartedly participate in the environmental policy discourse.
- NGOs and CSOs and their networks lack even the basic capacities, capabilities and resources base to carry out their activities effectively. Their human resources base particularly is no where near to enable most of them to undertake what they ambitiously claim to accomplish.
- Poorly articulated and presented environmental cases and arguments emanating from lack of capacity, specialization and focus have contributed to the neglect and disregard of NGOs and CSOs by others to be taken as serious partners whose views and opinions count
- The mostly project based intermittent financial support NGOs and CSOs obtain does not allow them to undertake activities in consistent and uninterrupted manner to be more effective.
- The donor driven tendency of many to take up a wide spectrum of activities has greatly undermined their specialization and focus in areas in which they command comparative advantage.
- Although most NGOs and CSOs consider existing government registration and reporting requirements not to be so complicated and cumbersome, almost all see the recently issued draft proclamation as an impending disaster.

## **10.2 Recommendations**

- The contribution and potential positive impact of environmental NGOs and CSO as well as civil society at large in the environmental moment is immense which need to be promoted and supported strongly.

- In the short and the medium-term, the approach of conducting environmental advocacy along with other relief and development activities will have to be pursued with gradual deliberate actions towards specialization.
- Institutions need to be encouraged and supported to develop cutting edge know-how and skill in environmental preservation and protection work in general and specialized areas such as environmental advocacy.
- Reliable and predictable finance is basic to undertaking environmental work in consistent and effective manner.
- Reaching out wider public is vital which heavily depends on capacities with respect to means of communication and publications that need to be strengthened.
- Information exchange and networking within the NGO, CSO and community and with other environmental stakeholders will provide foundation for effective performance of existing institutions and attract new entrants into the sector.
- There is a wealth of international experience from which local NGOs and CSOs could draw lessons and adapt to their activities in the country which should be explored and tapped.
- Platforms and networks should be strengthened to gain additional strength and make civil society voices heard.
- NGOs and CSOs need to be encouraged to increasingly build their capacities at local level where the actual work is done and provide basis for effective policy advocacy.
- The challenge in Ethiopia is striking the balance between environmental preservation and accelerated economic growth. Actors in the environmental movement need to acknowledge these challenges and increase their readiness and competence to live up to these challenges.

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