Civil society discusses issues on Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam

Staff and management members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in Ethiopia discussed on the contribution of the civil society sector towards the construction of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam at the Sidist Kilo Meeting Hall on 24 May, 2011.

In his welcoming address to the gathering, Dr. Meshesha Shewareg, Executive Director of CCRDA and Chairman of CSOs Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam Coordinating Committee, said as part of the general public, the civil society has shown its vehement commitment for the successful implementation of the grand dam.

He said in an effort to organize their unilateral efforts towards this national cause, 10 consortiums of CSOs established a committee charged with the task of coordinating the contribution of the sector towards the construction of the dam.

According to Dr. Meshesha, the Committee, through its Resource Mobilization and Media Sub-Committees, has been undertaking various activities aimed at mustering and synchronizing CSOs resources specially from employees working in this sector towards the construction of the dam over Abay River without diverting development program funds.

Similarly, Dr. Yakob Arsano, Associate Professor of AAU, made a presentation on four major partnership modalities on the Blue Nile River among riparian countries. The briefings and presentations were followed by lively discussions among the participants.

The half-day meeting was officially closed by ILE Ato Wondemn Tekele, State Minister of Water and Energy, who expressed his heart-felt gratitude for the Coordinating Committee for organizing such an important meeting on this crucial national issue.

Over 1,000 staff and management members of CSOs/NGOs operating such an important meeting on this crucial national issue.

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Inside this Issue:

Policy Dialogue Workshop Held
Capacity Building Trainings Offered
Training on Strategic Influencing Conducted
Workshop Discusses Benefits & Costs of Nile Cooperation
CCRDA & Helvetas Sign Cooperation Agreement
CCRDA Executive Director Meets with Book Aid Official
Civil society discusses issues on Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam

The second round consultative workshop on harmonization of CSO networks for coordinated action in the facilitation of enabling environment and principled partnership was held here at the Secretariat on 11 May, 2011.

Opening the workshop, Ato Ali Siraj, Director General of Charities and Societies Agency, said the government of Ethiopia has put in place a legal framework to help CSOs actively involve in the nation’s development efforts and democratization process.

He noted that as Consortiums of Civil Society Organizations are umbrella networks, they are duty-bound to build the capacity of CSOs, help them accomplish their objectives in their respective fields of engagement, and set a good model and experience to the sector.

Ato Ali said the Charities and Societies Agency is extending its share for the consolidation of CSO networks. It re-registered 25 consortiums and newly registered 11 others after the enactment of the Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009.

The Agency is committed to intensify its all-rounded efforts in this aspect, he added.
About CCRDA

It is the first legally registered umbrella association of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Ethiopia. It has been the voice of the Ethiopian civil society for over 37 years now.

It grew from a mere relief coordinating office formed to respond to the humanitarian crisis of the 1973/74 famine to a complex organization engaged in a multi-dimensional development endeavors. Over the years, its services and membership have expanded by leaps and bounds.

It is credited for promoting collaborative working relationship between the government and the NGO community in Ethiopia. Its contribution towards enhancing the role of the civil society in the nation building process has been quite remarkable. Strengthening NGOs/CSOs execution capacity is one of the multitude tasks that it is well known for.

This organization is none other than the Consortium of the Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA), which is reputed for striving indefatigably for societal transformation and emergence of a vibrant civil society in Ethiopia.

Restructured from CRDA to CCRDA in 2009, the Consortium is ready more than ever before to redouble its efforts to build a robust Ethiopian civil society that is strong enough to influence and make a difference in the recent efforts of development.

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Policy Dialogue Workshop Held

A one-day policy dialogue workshop organized by the Food Security and Environment Forum of CCRDA on the value chain analysis of horticultural crops in Kombolcha Woreda, Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromia region, was held in Harar Town on 29 April 2011.

The general objective of the workshop was to foster a discussion platform for pertinent government line bureaus and offices at regional, zonal and Woreda levels to deliberate on how to utilize the findings of the research.

The workshop also targeted at communicating the major findings of the research and recommendations to important actors and decision makers in the region.

At the workshop, the research report on value chain analysis of horticultural crops in Kombolcha Woreda was presented by the consultant that conducted the research. The presentation was followed by discussions and the way forward sessions.

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Policy dialogue in session

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Cont’d to page 8

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Policy Dialogue Workshop Held...

( ...Contd. from p.8)

Participants of the policy dialogue called for the establishment of more research and development institutions in the sector to feed the necessary information to small holding farmers, traders, and all concerned actors in the value chain line.

The workshop further underlined the pressing need to review the existing marketing policy and strategy of the region and urged for the convening of a policy dialogue forum on the issue at national level to influence policy makers.

Twenty nine participants drawn from different sector bureaus/offices of the National Regional State of Oromia and non-government organizations operating in the region took part in the policy dialogue workshop.

It is to be recalled that Action-Aid Ethiopia undertook a research entitled “Value Chain Analysis of Horticultural Crops in Kombolcha Woreda, Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromia” in May 2008.

The present policy dialogue workshop is part of CCRDA’s efforts to popularize and promote the findings of the research among pertinent government and non-government organizations at various levels.

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Training on Strategic Influencing ( ...Contd. from p.7)

Strategic Influencing is based on research and analysis rather than guess work, according to the trainer. Mr. Chandler said strategic influencing can scale up the impact of a program through multiple effects and tackle the underlying causes of poverty.

In addition, he noted, strategic influencing can strengthen democratic process and provides an opportunity to make change.

Issues such as advocacy and public campaigning cycle, monitoring and evaluation of influencing, policy process and media in Ethiopia were discussed at the workshop.

Mr. Sarjant visiting CCRDA’s Resource Center

He said he learnt from his visit that CCRDA’s Resource Center is both a development and public library and pledged more support to the Center from Book Aid International.

It is to be known that Book Aid International has been the largest supporter of CCRDA’s Resource Center over the years.

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CCRDA Executive Director Meets with Book Aid Official

Dr. Mesha Shewerega, Executive Director of CCRDA, met and discussed with Mr. Robert Sarjant, Head of Programs and Operations in Book Aid International here at the Secretariat on 18 May, 2011.

Dr. Mesha delivered a welcome to Mr. Sarjant on the occasion that CCRDA encourages knowledge-based development as the two are intractably interrelated.

CCRDA strongly believes that sustainable development and societal transformation cannot be achieved without knowledge sharing and management, he said.

Cognizant of this fact, he added, CCRDA has adopted the task of facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information among its members as one of its core result areas.

Dr. Mesha Sehure used the occasion to urge Book Aid International to scale up its book donation to CCRDA both in quality and quantity, as the Consortium plans to replicate its Resource Center at the Secretariat to Regional Coordination Offices.

Mr. Sarjant said on his part that he was very much impressed by the resources and organized system of CCRDA’s Resource Center.

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Cont’d to page 8
Several relevant research papers were presented by professionals in the due course of the daylong workshop.

Several relevant research papers were presented by professionals and accountability in the operations of CCRDA and its members—reducing poverty and sustainable development.

Promoting GO-NGO partnership forums and fostering CCRDA's experience sharing.

In addition, the support is targeted at strengthening CCRDA's capacity through voluntary self-regulatory mechanisms.

Forms is yet another objective of the cooperation agreement.

The cooperation agreement was signed by Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA and Mr. Markus Ischer, Country Program Director of Helvetas-Ethiopia here at the Secretariat on 26 May, 2011.

According to the agreement, Helvetas Ethiopia shall make available 90% of the project fund; i.e., 778,000 Birr while CCRDA shall cover the remaining 10% of the project cost.

He also urged the Consortiums to enable their membership to maximize the benefit of the general public from their respective development engagements through ensuring both transparency and accountability in their endeavors.

On the occasion, Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA, made a presentation entitled “Challenges and Opportunities of Civil Society Networks in Ethiopia: The Need For Better Harmonization”.

Dr. Meshesha indicated in his presentation that there is uncoordinated and disharmonized operation in the current operating scene of CSO networks in Ethiopia.

Relation among CSO networks is presently marked by unhealthy competition, rivalry for influence and resources and duplication of efforts, according to the Executive Director.

He added that lack of consultation and focus on institutional mandate as well as unilateralism and antagonism over resources and influence are the other features of consortiums in the country.

The aforementioned problems, he emphasized, have resulted in several adverse effects such as blockage of principled partnership among networks, increased coordination deficits and limited organized efforts for finding common grounds and consensus.

Increased unilateralism and individualism as opposed to wider consultation and consensus building are yet other ramifications caused as a result of lack of harmonization among consortiums, Dr. Meshesha argued. Fear of losing identity and being dominated by bigger networks, egocentric mentality and conflict of interests are among the reasons for lack of harmonization among CSO networks, he said.

However, he added, there are emerging opportunities in this scenario such as the growing dissatisfaction of networks with the existing modes operadi and increasing will to embrace multilateralism and coordinated approach.

Donors push for more coordination and harmonization, government’s recognition of the need for synergy among CSO networks and the emergence of new breed of consortium leaders are another encouraging developments.

According to Dr. Meshesha, harmonization among CSO networks facilitates inter-consortium networking, cooperation and collaboration. It also helps to legitimize and build favorable image of the sector.

“Harmonization brings forth visionary & transformational leadership” – Dr. Meshesha

In addition, he said, harmonization promotes, among other things, transparency, accountability, complementarity, resource sharing, avoidance of duplication of efforts and smooth communication with donors, the government and other stakeholders.

Cont’d to page 5

Dr. Meshesha presenting his paper

The Director General called on CSO networks to work with the Agency jointly and unilaterally in introducing and promoting the provisions of the new CSOs legislation and the subsequent directive No. 168/2009.

Mr. Ram Risal, the incoming Country Program Director of Helvetas-Ethiopia, on his part expressed his commitment and readiness to build on the already strong rapport between CCRDA and Helvetas and further take the ties to the highest level.

Dr. Meshesha also reiterated CCRDA’s keen desire and readiness to further bolster its cooperation and partnership with Helvetas-Ethiopia in various fields of engagement.

The research findings indicate that the major challenges in the horticulture sector are production, marketing, and policy constraints. The participants discussed on the findings of the research with special emphasis on what has been done by the government and other actors such as traders, producers and NGOs to tackle the stated problems.

The participants also noted with concern that it is brokers, not farmers, who are still playing a dominant role in price setting of horticultural products. They, hence, emphasized the need to create an enabling environment for the farmers to organize themselves in cooperatives and set prices for their products.

It was also indicated at the workshop that quality issue of horticultural products and standards to measure the quantity of the products should be given due attention to benefit the farmers and make Ethiopian products competitive in neighboring countries’ market.

Discussions on the report

Cont’d to page 9

Presentations of study papers

CCRDA & Helvetas Sign Cooperation Agreement

CCRDA and Helvetas, a Swiss based NGO, have signed 778,000 Birr worth cooperation agreement to finance a phase II project aimed at promoting membership quality and enhancing forums engagement in CCRDA.

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Cont’d to page 5

Dr. Meshesha presenting his paper
During the first day of the retreat program, both management and staff members vigorously reviewed the 2010 annual performance of CCRDA based on the presentations made by each core team directors.

The third day of the retreat program took staff of the Consortium to a project site visit in Bicheftu town. Here, staff visited the activities and facilities of Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JCCDO), one of CCRDA’s member organization.

The staff also used the retreat program to socialize, build their team spirit, further strengthen their internal relationship and renew their commitment and sense of belonging to their Consortium.

The 3-day retreat program came to an end with award ceremony of staff, who showed outstanding performance in fund raising, resource mobilization undertaking additional assignment beyond their normal responsibility, 5th program plan formulation and image building.

Dr. Meshesha chairing staff discussion

Core Team Directors presenting performances of their respective CTs

Group discussions and presentations

It was indicated on the occasion that 2010 annual performance of CCRDA was highly satisfactory in light of the big achievements attained by the Consortium both in terms of physical and financial accomplishments.

The staff also thoroughly discussed CCRDA’s 5th Program Plan (2011-15) and the Annual Operational Plan of 2011.

During the second day of the retreat program, in-depth group discussions were held on the main achievements in 2010, major challenges and their sources as well as remedial actions for the problems.

The group discussions focused on 2010 overall performance and performance management, resource mobilization, image building, relationship management, program management and reporting, system related issues as well as organizational structures and staffing.

Each discussion group also identified three major strategic focuses that should be given priority in the implementation of the 5th Program Plan.

Day two of the Program also included capacity building training on HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in the activities and programs of CCRDA.

A 4-day training on strategic influencing was held here at the Secretariat from 10-13 May, 2011. The training was jointly organized by the Water and Sanitation Forum of CCRDA and the WASH Ethiopian movement.

Mr. Ian Chandeler, a private consultant from U.K., gave the training in which 25 participants took part. Delivering the training, Mr. Chandeler said strategic influencing is a process aimed at achieving specific outcome, not just raising awareness of problems.

Meritorious workers being awarded & thanking leadership for recognition

He said “the Nile needs to be wisely and equitably used. It is here that Nile cooperation is believed to be the only choice in the region to solve the multitude of problems prevalent in the basin.”

Ato Mengesha went on to say that without Nile cooperation, there are serious risks in terms of unsustainable exploitation of Nile basin resources, inequitable and unilateral access, increasing regional rivalries and even potential and actual conflicts, thereby increasing poverty.

Stressing equal significance of the Nile waters for both up streamer riparian states and down streamer riparian states, Ato Mengesha noted “The Nile may be the only significant source of water for the downstream riparian states. Equally, the upstream states have large rural populations that depend on subsistence agriculture which is highly affected by variable and unpredictable rainfall.”

He added that “the Nile needs to be wisely and equitably used. It is here that Nile cooperation is believed to be the only choice in the region to solve the multitude of problems prevalent in the basin.”

Ato Mengesha (to the right) welcoming workshop participants

Opening the workshop, H.E. Ato Kebede Gerba, State Minister of Water and Energy, said the government recognizes the role that the Nile Basin Discourse has been playing in the Basin and encourages the NBDD to continue its efforts in advocating against the unjust status quo prevailing in the utilization of the Nile river system.

H.E Ato Kebede Gerba (right) addressing the workshop

The 2nd national multi-stakeholder workshop organized by the Ethiopian Nile Basin Discourse Forum under the auspices of CCRDA was held at Desalgne hotel on 14 April, 2011 under the theme: “Benefits and Costs of Nile Cooperation to Ethiopia”.

The major objective of the workshop was to update stakeholders on the current program of Nile Basin Discourse (NBD), Nile River Basin cooperation processes, the Institutional Strengthening Program (ISP), and developments in the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) Region.

The workshop was also designed to identify strategies for NBD and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to promote community participation and protect and maximize social benefits from the sub-regional projects.

Welcoming the participants, Ato Mengesha Workneh, Vice Chairman of the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum, said the Forum was established in 2005 to involve the stakeholders on the current program of Nile Basin Discourse to Ethiopia”.

The forum was also designed to identify strategies for NBD and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to promote community participation and protect and maximize social benefits from the sub-regional projects.

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H.E Ato Kebede Gerba (right) addressing the workshop

The State Minister also urged the civil societies to utilize international forums and regional discourses to promote Ethiopia’s interest emphasizing on equitable utilization, exclusive nature of existing agreements; need for international community to play an impartial and fair role.
Capacity building trainings on Monitoring and Evaluation as well as Organizational Development were given to CCRDA members by in-house trainers from April 18 - 21, 2011.

The training on Monitoring and Evaluation was aimed at enabling CCRDA member organizations to effectively manage their organizations using viable monitoring and evaluation systems as a basis for good planning, budgeting, organizational development and all above all learning and application.

It was indicated during the course of the training that Monitoring and Evaluation is a management tool that helps to come up with possible solutions for the problems occurring while and/or after program implementation.

Some 36 trainees drawn from CCRDA member organizations attended the training given jointly by Ato Teshome Shibru, staff of the Consortium’s Membership and Development Core Team and Tewodros Wendineh, an expert at Water Aid.

Similarly, the training on Organizational Development was tailored to enhance member organizations’ capability to develop and execute the right ways and means to cope up with the changing political, legal, socio-economic and technological environments.

It was noted on this training session that Organizational Development is a complex strategy aimed at changing the belief, attitudes, values and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges and to the change itself. Organizational development is not an alternative but a means of attaining mission, vision, goal and objectives of organizations.

Fifteen trainees took part in the training session on Organizational Development offered by Ato Seife Bekade and Ato Yihalem Bahile, staff members of CCRDA’s Capacity Building Team.

It is to be recalled that the training programs offered by CCRDA were heavily dependent on external resource persons, who have limited familiarization of the NGO sector.

Previously, the training programs were facilitated without giving a room to utilize the internal expertise of CCRDA and its members. However, effective from this year, the method in which CCRDA has been using for its training programs has undergone various changes.

The current CCRDA’s strategic plan and its latest Comprehensive Capacity Building Package (CCBP) vividly accentuated that it is imperative to involve the professionals of the Secretariat and its member NGOs in the facilitation of different training courses as resource persons by considering their areas of educational background and interest.

A good number of the internal staff of the Secretariat and its member NGOs of CCRDA has shown their keen interest to take part in facilitating training courses. Accordingly, the trainings on Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as on Organizational Development are the first of their kind to be conducted by using the internal staff of CCRDA.

Ato Seife (center) & Ato Yihalem (right) conducting the training

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The presentation acquainted members of the network with the impact of climate change on the MDGs and PASDEP implementation in Ethiopia. This was a research report, which was undertaken by PANE two years back in 2009.

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According to information obtained from the Forum the workshop created an excellent opportunity for member organizations to share and learn new technologies in the sector.

Two presentations were made in the due course of the workshop. The first presentation highlighted the status and challenges of food security in Benishangul-Gumuz region.

According to the presentation, the major emergency food security hazards in the region include, among others, erratic rainfall, plant and livestock diseases, deforestation, land degradation, increased soil acidity and wild fire.

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**Forum Organizes Workshop on Food Security ...**

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According to the presentation, the major emergency food security hazards in the region include, among others, erratic rainfall, plant and livestock diseases, deforestation, land degradation, increased soil acidity and wild fire.

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**Capacity Building Trainings Offered**

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During the first day of the retreat program, both management and staff members vigorously reviewed the 2010 annual performance of CCRDA based on the presentations made by each core team directors. Remedial actions for the problems.

It was indicated on the occasion that 2010 annual performance of CCRDA was highly satisfactory in light of the big achievements attained by the Consortium both in terms of physical and financial accomplishments. The staff also thoroughly discussed CCRDA’s 5th Program Plan (2011-15) and the Annual Operational Plan of 2011.

The third day of the retreat program took staff of the Consortium to a project site visit in Bishoftu town. Here, staff visited the activities and facilities of Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JCCDO), one of CCRDA’s member organizations.

The staff also used the retreat program to socialize, build their team spirit, further strengthen their interpersonal relationships and renew their commitment and sense of belonging to their Consortium.

The 3-day retreat program came to an end with a closing ceremony of staff, who showed outstanding performance in fund raising, resource mobilization undertaking additional assignment beyond their formal responsibility, 5th program plan formulation and image building.

Day two of the Program also included capacity building training on HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in the activities and programs of CCRDA.

The major challenges and their sources as well as organizational structures and staffing were discussed. Group discussions and presentations were held on the main achievements of 2010.

During the second day of the retreat program, in-depth group discussions were held on the main achievements in 2010, major challenges and their sources as well as remedial actions for the problems.

The group discussions focused on 2010 overall performance and performance management, resource mobilization, image building, relationship management, program management and reporting, system related issues as well as organizational structures and staffing.

Each discussion group also identified three major strategic focuses that should be given priority in the implementation of the 5th Program Plan.

Training on Strategic Influencing Conducted

A 4-day training on strategic influencing was held here at the Secretariat from 10-13 May, 2011. The training was jointly organized by the Water and Sanitation Forum of CCRDA and the WASH Ethiopian movement.

Mr. Ian Chandeler, a private consultant from U.K, gave the training in which 25 participants took part. Delivering the training, Mr. Chandeler said strategic influencing is a process aimed at achieving specific outcome, not just raising awareness of problems.

Mr. Chandeler offering the training Cont’d to page 9

Workshop Discusses Benefits & Costs of Nile Cooperation

Mr. Ato Mengesha being thanked for his contribution Cont’d to page 8

The 2nd national multi-stakeholder workshop organized by the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum under the auspices of CCRDA was held at Desagne hotel on 14 April, 2011 under the theme: “Benefits and Costs of Nile Cooperation to Ethiopia”.

The major objective of the workshop was to update stakeholders on the current program of Nile Basin Disourse (NBD), Nile River Basin cooperation processes, the Institutional Strengthening Program (ISP), and developments in the Eastern Nile Subsidiary Action Program (ENSAP) Region.

The workshop was also designed to identify strategies for NBD and the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to promote community participation and protect and maximize social benefits from the sub-regional projects.

Welcoming the participants, Mr. Ato Mengesha Workneh, Vice Chairman of the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum, said the Forum was established in 2005 to involve the public in the cooperative development and utilization of the Nile water resources.

Opening the workshop, H.E. Ato Kebede Gerba, State Minister of Water and Energy, said the government recognizes the role that the Nile Basin Discourse has been playing in the Basin and encourages the NBD to continue its efforts in advocating against the unjust status quo prevailing in the utilization of the Nile river system.

H.E Ato Kebede Gerba (to the right) addressing the workshop

Stressing equal significance of the Nile waters for both upper and lower riparian states and downstream riparian states, Ato Mengesha noted “The Nile may be the only significant source of water for the downstream riparian states. Equally, the upstream states have large rural populations that depend on subsistence agriculture which is highly affected by variable and unpredictable rainfall.”

He said “the Nile needs to be wisely and equitably used. It is here that Nile cooperation is believed to be the only choice in the region to solve the multitude of problems prevalent in the basin.”

Ato Mengesha went on to say that without Nile cooperation, there are serious risks in terms of unsustainable and unilateral access, increasing regional rivalries and even potential and actual conflicts, thereby increasing poverty.

The State Minister also urged the civil societies to utilize international forums and regional discourses to promote Ethiopia’s interest emphasizing on equitable utilization, exclusive nature of existing agreements; need for international community to play an impartial and fair role.

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CCRDA and Helvetas Sign Cooperation Agreement

CCRDA and Helvetas, a Swiss based NGO, have signed 778,000 Birr worth cooperation agreement to finance a phase II project aimed at promoting membership quality and enhancing forums engagement in CCRDA. The cooperation agreement was signed by Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA and Mr. Markus Ischer, Country Program Director of Helvetas-Ethiopia here at the Secretariat on 26 May, 2011. According to the agreement, Helvetas Ethiopia shall make available 90% of the project fund; i.e., 778,000 Birr while CCRDA shall cover the remaining 10% of the project cost.

Dr. Meshesha presenting his paper

The general objective of the project is to contribute to enhanced role and performance of NGOs in Ethiopia in their efforts towards reducing poverty and sustainable development. The project is also specifically aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in the operations of CCRDA and its membership through voluntary self-regulatory mechanisms.

In addition, the support is targeted at strengthening CCRDA’s thematic forums through networking and collaboration among the Consortium’s members for a constructive policy dialogue and experience sharing.

Promoting GO-NGO partnership forums and fostering CCRDA’s presence at regional levels in Northern, Eastern and Central platforms is yet another objective of the cooperation agreement.

The cooperation agreement shall be effective starting from 26 May, 2011 to December 31, 2011.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Ischer the outgoing Country Program Director of Helvetas-Ethiopia, said his organization has enjoyed a close and excellent relationship with CCRDA over the years.

The Director General called on CSO networks to work with the Agency jointly and unilaterally in introducing and promoting the provisions of the new CSOs legislation and the subsequent directive No. 168/2009.

He also urged the Consortiums to enable their membership to maximize the benefit of the general public from their respective development engagements through ensuring both transparency and accountability in their endeavors.

On the occasion, Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA, made a presentation entitled “Challenges and Opportunities of Civil Society Networks in Ethiopia: The Need For Better Harmonization”.

Dr. Meshesha indicated in his presentation that there is uncoordinated and disharmonized operation in the current operating scene of CSO networks in Ethiopia.

Relation among CSO networks is presently marked by unhealthy competition, rivalry for influence and resources and duplication of efforts, according to the Executive Director.

He added that lack of consultation and focus on institutional mandate as well as unilateralism and antagonism over resources and influence are the other features of consortiums in the country.

The aforementioned problems, he emphasized, have resulted in several adverse effects such as blockage of principled partnership among networks, increased coordination deficits and limited organized efforts for finding common grounds and consensus.

In addition, he said, harmonization promotes, among other things, transparency, accountability, complementarity, resource sharing, avoidance of duplication of efforts and smooth communication with donors, the government and other stakeholders.

However, he added, there are emerging opportunities in this scenario such as the growing dissatisfaction of networks with the existing modes operadi and increasing will to embrace multilateralism and coordinated approach.

Donors push for more coordination and harmonization, government’s recognition of the need for synergy among CSO networks and the emergence of new breed of consortium leaders are another encouraging developments.

According to Dr. Meshesha, harmonization among CSO networks facilitates inter-consortium networking, cooperation and collaboration. It also helps to legitimize and build favorable image of the sector.

“Harmonization brings forth visionary & transformational leadership” - Dr. Meshesha

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Policy Dialogue Workshop Held...

(...Contd. from p.8)

Participants of the policy dialogue called for the establishment of more research and development institutions in the sector to feed the necessary information to small holding farmers, traders, and all concerned actors in the value chain line.

The workshop further underlined the pressing need to review the existing marketing policy and strategy of the region and urged for the convening of a policy dialogue forum on the issue at national level to influence policy makers.

Twenty nine participants drawn from different sector bureaus/offices of the National Regional State of Oromia and non-government organizations operating in the region took part in the policy dialogue workshop.

It is to be recalled that Action-Aid Ethiopia undertook a research entitled “Value Chain Analysis of Horticultural Crops in Kombolcha Woreda, Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromia” in May 2008.

The present policy dialogue workshop is part of CCRDA’s efforts to popularize and promote the findings of the research among pertinent government and non-government organizations at various levels.

Training on Strategic Influencing (...Contd. from p.7)

Strategic influencing is based on research and analysis rather than guess work, according to the trainer. Mr. Chandelier said strategic influencing can scale up the impact of a program through multiple effects and tackle the underlying causes of poverty.

In addition, he noted, strategic influencing can strengthen democratic process and provides an opportunity to make change.

Issues such as advocacy and public campaigning cycle, monitoring and evaluation of influencing, policy process and media in Ethiopia were discussed at length in the due course of the training program.

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CCRDA Executive Director Meets with Book Aid Official

Dr. Meshecha Shewareg, Executive Director of CCRDA, met and discussed with Mr. Robert Sarjant, Head of Programs and Operations in Book Aid International here at the Secretariat on 18 May, 2011.

Dr. Meshecha told Mr. Sarjant on the occasion that CCRDA encourages knowledge-based development as the two are intractably interrelated.

CCRDA strongly believes that sustainable development and societal transformation cannot be achieved without knowledge sharing and management, he said.

Cognizant of this fact, he added, CCRDA has adopted the task of facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information among its members as one of its core result areas.

Dr. Meshecha used the occasion to urge Book Aid International to scale up its book donation to CCRDA both in quality and quantity, as the Consortium plans to replicate its Resource Center at the Secretariat to Regional Coordination Offices.

Mr. Sarjant said on his part that he was very much impressed by the resources and organized system of CCRDA’s Resource Center.

Mr. Sarjant visiting CCRDA’s Resource Center

He said he learnt from his visit that CCRDA’s Resource Center is both a development and public library and pledged more support to the Center from Book Aid International.

It is to be known that Book Aid International has been the largest supporter of CCRDA’s Resource Center over the years.

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About CCRDA

It is the first legally registered umbrella association of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Ethiopia. It has been the voice of the Ethiopian civil society for over 37 years now.

It grew from a mere relief coordinating office formed to respond to the humanitarian crisis of the 1973/74 famine to a complex organization engaged in a multi-dimensional development endeavors. Over the years, its services and membership have expanded by leaps and bounds.

It is credited for promoting collaborative working relationship between the government and the NGO community in Ethiopia. Its contribution towards enhancing the role of the civil society in the nation building process has been quite remarkable. Strengthening NGOs/CSOs execution capacity is one of the multitude tasks that it is well known for.

This organization is none other than the Consortium of the Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA), which is reputed for striving indefatigably for societal transformation and emergence of a vibrant civil society in Ethiopia.

Restructured from CRDA to CCRDA in 2009, the Consortium is ready more than ever before to redouble its efforts to build a robust Ethiopian civil society that is strong enough to influence and make a difference in the recent efforts of development.

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Civil society discusses issues on Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam

Staff and management members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in Ethiopia discussed on the contribution of the civil society sector towards the construction of the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam at the Sidist Kilo Meeting Hall on 24 May, 2011.

In his welcoming address to the gathering, Dr. Mesghesa Shewerega, Executive Director of CCRDA and Chairman of CSOs Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam Coordinating Committee, said as part of the general public, the civil society has shown its vehement commitment for the successful implementation of the grand dam.

He said in an effort to organize their unilateral efforts towards this national cause, 10 consortiums of CSOs/NGOs operating such an important meeting on this crucial national issue. Over 1,000 staff and management members of CSOs/NGOs operating in Ethiopia attended the meeting.

Opening the meeting, Ato Ali Siraj, Director General of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in Ethiopia discussed on the contribution of CSOs/NGOs operating in Ethiopia attended the meeting.

Ato Ali profusely thanked CSOs Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam Coordinating Committee for voluntarily taking the initiative to coordinate and mobilize the civil society’s contribution towards the realization of the dam. He noted that as Consortiums of Civil Society Organizations are umbrella networks, they are duty-bound to build the capacity of CSOs, help them accomplish their objectives in their respective fields of engagement, and set a good model and experience to the sector.

Similarly, Dr. Yakob Arsano, Associate Professor of AAU, made a presentation on four major partnership modalities on the Blue Nile River among riparian countries. The briefings and presentations were followed by lively discussions among the participants.

The half-day meeting was officially closed by ILE Ato Wondemu Tekelle, State Minister of Water and Energy, who expressed his heart-felt gratitude for the Coordinating Committee for organizing such an important meeting on this crucial national issue. Over 1,000 staff and management members of CSOs/NGOs operating in Ethiopia attended the meeting.

Ato Ali opening the meeting

Ato Ali said the Charities and Societies Agency is extending its share for the consolidation of CSO networks. It re-registered 25 consortiums and newly registered 11 others after the enactment of the Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009. The Agency is committed to intensify its all-rounded efforts in this aspect, he added.

Ato Ali (left) making opening remarks

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Workshop Discusses Harmonization of CSO Networks

The second round consultative workshop on harmonization of CSO networks for coordinated action in the facilitation of enabling environment and principled partnership was held at the Secretariat on 11 May, 2011.

Opening the workshop, Ato Ali Siraj, Director General of Charities and Societies Agency, said the government of Ethiopia has put in place a legal framework to help CSOs actively involve in the nation’s development efforts and democratization process. He noted that as Consortiums of Civil Society Organizations are umbrella networks, they are duty-bound to build the capacity of CSOs, help them accomplish their objectives in their respective fields of engagement, and set a good model and experience to the sector.

The general objective of the workshop was facilitating the sharing of experience and good practices among members of the food security and environment network and other like-minded actors in the region.

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CCRDA NEWSLETTER

Consolidation of CSO Networks

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Forum Organizes Workshop on Food Security & Environment

An experience sharing workshop for Food Security and Environment Network member CSOs and NGOs operating in Benishangul Gumuz National Regional State was conducted in Assossa Town from 5th - 6th April, 2011.

The workshop was organized by the Food Security and Environment Forum of CCRDA.

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