GO-CSO Partnership in Ethiopia Said on the Rise

The development partnership between the Ethiopian government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is steadily growing more than ever before, Executive Director of the Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) said.

The Executive Director, Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, said the GO-NGO partnership has continued in a strengthened manner both at the federal and regional levels.

Dr. Meshesha addressing the conference

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CCRDA Embarks on Enhanced Media Engagement to Voice Concerns of CSOs

The Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) is currently undertaking strengthened media engagement activities with a view to promoting the causes of CSOs/NGOs and increase their visibility.

As part of such aggressive media engagements, the Consortium organized on 23 December, 2010 a consultative workshop in collaboration with Radio Fana and Action Aid.

Dr. Meshesha opening the consultative workshop

Members Commend Leadership for Maintaining Strong Partnership with Government

National, international and faith-based member organizations of CCRDA have praised the incumbent leadership of the Consortium for establishing and maintaining strong relationship and partnership with the government of Ethiopia.

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CCRDA News Letter—Vol. 2 No. 8

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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 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.

CCRDA Embarks on Enhanced Media Engagement... (Contd. from p.1)

Over 150 participants drawn from the civil society sector and various government organizations attended the one-day consultative workshop held at Radio Fana building under the theme “Current Issues in the Implementation of Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009: Successes and Limitations”.

Speaking at the workshop, Dr. Meshesha Shewareg, Executive Director of CCRDA, said the dialogue forum was one of the clear indications to the consolidating GO-NGO partnership in important national issues.

He said the workshop showed the commitment of the government to involve the civil society sector in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of important policies and directives such as Proclamation No. 621/2009.

The forum also proved that the GO-NGO relationship is moving fast from confrontation to that of cooperation and mutual trust, according to the Executive Director.

The fact that the consultative forum was held at the historic point of time when all the nation is braced up to implement the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan makes the workshop timely and appropriate.

Ato Ali Siraj discussing implementation of CSP No. 621/2009.

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GO-CSO Partnership in Ethiopia Said on the Rise...  (...Contd. from p.1)

Dr. Mesheha made the remarks at a one-day national conference held at CCRDA auditorium on 28 December, 2010 to discuss on ways of further promoting partnership between government organizations and CSOs/NGOs.

He said collaboration and partnership between Government and Non Government organizations are much more essential for achieving the common vision of combating poverty and ensuring sustainable development in Ethiopia.

The government, Dr. Mesheha said, has been taking several encouraging steps to bolster the GO-NGO partnership. For instance, he said, it has facilitated CSOs access to multilateral and bilateral development facilities such as PBS/Social Accountability, the Global Fund and PEPFAR.

It further allowed the inclusion of two representatives of the civil society sector in the Charities and Societies Agency (CSA) Board and held a consultation with NGOs on the five-year national Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

All these, Dr. Mesheha said, demonstrate the government’s ardent commitment to forge amicable relationship and strong partnership with the civil society sector.

He, however, said further concerted efforts are still required to take the existing GO-NGO partnership to the desired level. The Executive Director underlined the pressing need to establish formal and regular GO-NGO Forum to this end.

He also emphasized the importance of rigorously evaluating and assessing the actual effects of the Charities and Societies Proclamation. Delay in the operationalization of the Charities and Societies (CSA) Board should be addressed as a matter of exigency, he noted.

The occasional unfriendly treatments of CSOs by some staff of the Agency and Regional Bureau functionaries have also to be dealt with effectively. The hazy situations surrounding issues related to expatriate taxation and requirements for work permits should be cleared, according to Dr. Mesheha.

In his presentation on the post Charities and Societies Proclamation, Director of CSA, Ato Ali Siraj, said cognizant of their growing and active socio-economic interventions in Ethiopia, the federal government has attached increased recognition to CSOs.

Not only recognition, he said, the government is also supporting the flourishing of the civil society sector by creating enabling legal and operational environment.

To this end, he added, the government issued the Charities and Societies Proclamation in 2009 with a view to ensuring the rights of citizens to be organized and form associations as enshrined in the constitution.

The proclamation is also designed to ensure transparency and accountability in the operations of the civil society sector, he said, adding that some 1655 NGOs have re-registered pursuant to the provisions of the newly issued Proclamation. In addition, over 355 NGOs have newly been registered since the introduction of the law.

In a presentation he delivered at the Conference, Dr. Kassahun Berhanu, Associate Professor in Addis Ababa University, said there has been exponential increase in the size, type, fields of engagement and geographic distribution of CSOs/NGOs in Ethiopia following the change of government in 1991 and the attendant introduction of a series of liberalization reforms.

He added most of the CSOs/NGOs in Ethiopia are engaged in service delivery and socioeconomic development endeavors.

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Members Commend Leadership for Maintaining Strong Partnership with Government...

The members made the remarks at consultative meetings organized by CCRDA on December 7, 9 & 10, 2010 here at the Secretariat.

The members profusely appreciated the current leadership of CCRDA for taking GO-NGO relations from one of confrontation to that of cooperation.

Reacting to the presentation of Dr. Meshesha Sheewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA on the latest performance of the Consortium, the members congratulated the leadership for striding fast from crisis management to giving strategic direction to its membership.

“Our vision is to see vibrant CSOs that contribute to the growth & prosperity of Ethiopia” - Dr. Meshesha presenting performance of CCRDA

The members noted with satisfaction that thanks partly to the relentless efforts of CCRDA’s leadership, the government is increasingly recognizing the civil society sector as reliable development partner.

Participation of members in the consultative meetings was high

They said the fact that CCRDA’s leadership has been elected to the Board of the Charities and Societies Agency is one practical proof for the ever-growing ties between the government and the civil society sector.

The efforts exerted to clear some hazy situations in the GO-NGO rapport should be pursued with more vigor, they said and stressed the need to promote systematized, organized and regular dialogues with the government.

Representatives of the membership further noted that they are extremely happy to see CCRDA back on track especially in coordinating, supporting and financing the various development interventions of its members.

Local NGO members congratulating CCRDA on its success

“This is what we have been yearning for to see,” they said adding that “the highly motivated spirit on the part of CCRDA further inspires us to renew our commitment and sense of belonging to the Consortium.”

The members also expressed their satisfaction in observing that CCRDA is currently involved in effective and productive media engagement to reverse the distorted attitude attached to the civil society sector.

“The Consortium is in a much better condition than ever before”.
Ato Mengesha Workneh from International Rescue Committee

The members indicated that CCRDA is in a much better condition than before in terms of financial status and implementation of programs and urged the leadership to keep on moving forward in its encouraging endeavors.

“We encourage CCRDA to keep on moving forward” –
Ato Dawit from Norwegian Church Aid

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CCRDA Embarks on Enhanced Media Engagement... (...Contd. from p.2)

The Executive Director praised Radio Fana for hosting such a significant media event, where representatives of GOs and NGOs met face-to-face to discuss on the development agenda of their country. He also thanked Action Aid for the gracious financial support it extended for the organization and facilitation of the media engagement.

Ato Ali Siraj, Director of the Charities and Societies Agency (CSA), delivered a presentation on the implementation of the new proclamation; successes achieved and challenges encountered.

A presentation on GO-NGO cooperation in the execution of various development projects was also made at the workshop by Ato Mekuria Mekasha from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

GTF Program Implementing Countries’ Delegates Pay Visit to CCRDA

Representatives of the Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) implementing countries paid a half-day visit to CCRDA on 9 December, 2010.

The delegates were mainly here in Addis Ababa to attend the GTF annual regional meeting convened from 7-9, December 2010.

About 25 participants of the meeting visited CCRDA as part of experience sharing endeavors to witness in person the implementation of the Water and Sanitation Forum (WSF) hosted by the Consortium.

Delegates being briefed on CCRDA’s general activities

The delegates were briefed about CCRDA’s historical profile, present status and its current major areas of engagement by staff of PIMCT. They also attended a presentation on the progress of the activities of WSF by Ato Ayichalim Goshu, Governance and Transparency Fund Program Manager.

Ato Ayichalim speaking on activities of WSF

In his presentation, Ato Ayichalim stated that GTF started in 2008 for 5 years until 30, Sept 2013 with a total budget of £5 Million. The program, he said, is being undertaken in 14 countries and 27 CSOs and Networks in Africa, Asia and Central America.

GTF aims at improving accountability and responsiveness of duty bearers in WaSH through strengthening the capacities of the CSOs and CSO Networks, according to Ayichalim.

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CSOs representatives actively participating in the workshop

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Training on Online Resource Mobilization Held

A training that focuses on ways, approaches and technicalities of soliciting funds for development projects from Internet sources was conducted here at the Secretariat on 9 December, 2010.

Some 26 participants drawn from CCRDA’s membership attended the daylong training organized by the Publications and Information Management Core Team (PIMCT).

Technical assistance in browsing the internet to mobilize resources, researching donors through published directories, electronic resources for researching the web as well as regional and worldwide web portals of donors were some of the major topics covered by the training.

Welcoming the participants, Ato Tafese Refera, PIMCT director, indicated that the training is part of the efforts targeted at implementing CCRDA’s core objective of facilitating dialogue and the exchange of information among members.

Ato Tafesse, PIMCT Director, addressing the trainees

The present training, he said, would help members to acquire practical skills on how to effectively utilize the Internet to mobilize the much-needed funds for the execution of their development projects/programs.

PIMCT staff giving technical support to the trainees

Training on CoC, Accountability Conducted

An international training and experience sharing workshop on NGO code of conduct and accountability was held here at the Secretariat from 13-15, December, 2010.

Ato Seife Fekade, Capacity Building Team Leader introducing training agenda

The three-day training in which 30 trainees participated was organized by the Capacity Building Team of CCRDA in collaboration with Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP).

The workshop was designed to introduce participants to the concept of accountability, how it relates to humanitarian work, and how to adapt the concept into their organizational context, as well as share experiences on the current Code of Conduct signed by the majority of Ethiopian NGOs.

Conducting the training, Mrs. Ester Dross, a consultant at HAP, noted that accountability is the means by which power is used responsibly, it, she said, is about the right to say and the duty to respond.

According to Dross, an accountable organisation manages the quality of its products and services, and strives to continuously improve these for the benefit of its customers, clients or concerned segment of the society.

Mrs. Ester Dross offering the training

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Training on CoC, Accountability …
...Contd. from p.6)

It is to be known that CCRDA regularly organizes and conducts tailor-made training programs in the areas of, among others, organizational development and management, gender and development, project management as well as advocacy, lobbying and communication skills.

Members Commend Leadership for Maintaining Strong Partnership with Government...
...Contd. from p.4)

Issues related to the Charities and Societies Proclamation, observance of the national civil society code of conduct, provident fund and protection of basic services were some of the subjects raised and extensively discussed during the separate consultative meetings.

The consultative meetings also discussed at length on the 5th Program Plan of CCRDA, which would be the Consortium’s guiding compass for the next five years starting from 2011 to 2015.

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GTF Program Implementing Countries’ Delegates ...
...Contd. from p.5)

He said WSF joined the GTF program as a partner to Water Aid in Ethiopia and started implementation in 2009/2010 targeting at three outputs namely: strengthening the functioning of WSF and its members; enhancing the engagement of WSF and its member organizations in sector dialogues; and increased collaboration between WASH service providers and end users.

Delegates coming from Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and the UK, visited various facilities of CCRDA including the Resource Center.

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Ancient Town of Lalibela Benefiting from FFF Financed Projects

The various development projects being undertaken by Futaro Fund for Forests (FFF) are benefiting residents of Lalibela Town, North Wollo Zone of the Amhara regional state.

In a field visit to FFF financed projects from 19-21, December 2011, the Publications and Information Management Core Team staff observed that FFF has been working in Lalibela for 12 years focusing on natural resource conservation, ecological recovery, tree planting, environmental education and sanitation system management.

With the cooperation of the local people, the Ethiopian government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), FFF has greatly contributed to improve the lives of the people in Lalibela.

Under its sanitation program, FFF has been undertaking community participatory projects aimed at improving the sanitation of the town. In this regard, FFF has, among other things, prepared garbage collection holes and plastic burning drums.

Residents cleaning their areas
It also organized nine sanitary groups in each village and selected group leaders. The groups have been provided with a series of trainings on dry waste management. In addition, FFF has installed 80 steel-made dust bins across the town for the disposal of organic and inorganic wastes.

FFF is also engaged in large scale reforestation programs since 2004 with a view to expanding forest coverage in five Kebeles of Lalibela town and five Kebeles of Bugena Woreda. Under this project, FFF identifies degraded areas, makes them green and eventually hands over them to the community or concerned government bodies.

Forest developed by FFF at Medge
Under its reforestation project, FFF also helps the expansion of nurseries for the production of seedlings. The farmers assigned at the nurseries cultivate various fruits and vegetables, which they distribute to hotels and market places in the town.

Farmers enjoying the fruits of their labor

Under its environment protection project, FFF has organized environmental clubs in three elementary schools in Lalibela town; namely: Neakutelab, Gehergie and Lalibela primary schools.

Through these clubs, it has been providing practical education to students under the motto “Greener and Cleaner Lalibela”. Students in the three schools cultivate tree seedlings and vegetables under the instruction of their teachers.

Students at Gehergie Primary School Watering Tree Seedlings

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CCRDA’s 5th Program Plan Formulation Nearing Finalization

The formulation of CCRDA’s fifth program plan that runs from 2011-2015 is nearing completion and will be presented to membership for discussion and approval.

According to information obtained from the Program Planning Technical Committee, the 5th program plan shall serve as a guiding compass for the overall operations of the Consortium during the next five years.

The Planning Technical Committee undertook a wide range of activities including updating of information, environmental scanning, SWOT analysis, rapid assessment, ToR development and benchmarking exercises in the course of the planning process.

Based on the background documents at hand, a series of discussions were held with the consultant, CCRDA’s Management and other stakeholders to determine the process, time frame, deliverables, and other related issues.

During its environmental scanning endeavor, the Committee reviewed occurrences since the formal approval of the Strategic Plan for the Organizational Repositioning of CCRDA in December 2009. In this regard, the Committee attempted to assess internal and external political as well as socio-economic environments.

The Committee also undertook rapid assessment of the activities of each Core Team with special emphasis on their performances in line with the 2008-10 program plan from planning, resourcing, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation perspectives.

In the due course of the planning exercise, lessons and best practices were drawn from similar national, regional, continental and international umbrella NGOs, according to the Chairman.

In order to make the plan more realistic and practical, available resources including secured, pledged and potentially attainable were identified. The Technical Committee also summarized and consolidated the inputs that it obtained and formulated six strategic objectives of the Consortium.

It is to be recalled that the 4th Program plan of CCRDA that started in 2008 came to an end in 2010.

Training on Online Resource ...

(...Contd. from p.6)

The training was offered by Ato Habte Beyene, Head Librarian with PIMCT. It is to be recalled that the Core Team organized a two-day training on face-to-face and online facilitation from 14-15 October, 2010.

We’ve to scale up our IT skills for effective online resource mobilization: Ato Habte

Panel Discusses Trends of Rural Energy Resources in Ethiopia

A panel discussion organized by FSEF CCRDA on December 14, 2010 here at the Secretariat discussed at length on the Challenges and Opportunities of Rural Energy Resources in Ethiopia.

Opening the panel discussion, Ato Teshome Shibru, Forum and Networking Team Leader of CCRDA noted that the Consortium has been organizing a series of panel discussions on topical development issues since 2009.

Ato Teshome stated that rural energy is one of the topmost development agenda, which has to be embedded and well-integrated into the NGOs/CSOs rural development projects.

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He said rural energy is an essential link to ensure sustainable development and social transformation particularly in the rural settings.

Ato Tesfaye indicated that energy resources in Ethiopia includes, among others, woody biomass, crop and animal waste, hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal, natural gas and coal.

The total reserve for woody biomass in the country is 767 million tons and its exploited potential is 40 million tons/year, he said adding that out of the 45,000 MW potential of hydro power, only 2000 MW (4.4 %) has so far been exploited.

According to the Project Coordinator, out of the 5,000 MW potential of geothermal in Ethiopia, only 7.3 MW (1.0 %) has been tapped so far.

Ato Samson Tolosa, Deputy Director of GTZ Energy Coordination Office, also made a presentation entitled “The Experiences of NGOs on All Types of Alternative Rural Energy Resources and Associated Technologies in Ethiopia.”

Concerning opportunities for cooperation in the energy sector, he said, there are existing and emerging conducive framework conditions in the country.

He said among these opportunities are policy issues and stakeholders dialogue, electricity feed-in law, biomass energy strategy, as well as the revised energy policy of Ethiopia and formation of national associations for solar energy and hydropower.

Ato Tesfaye Alemayehu, Household Energy Efficiency Project Coordinator in the Ministry of Water and Energy presented a paper on the theme “The Challenges and Opportunities of Rural Energy Resources and Associated Technologies in Ethiopia.”

Another paper was also presented by Ato Samson Atsbha, Acting Head of Bio-energy Department in GTZ Energy Coordination Office under the title “The Experiences of NGOs on Biomass Energy Resources and Associated Technologies.”