NATO Parliamentary Assembly Delegation Meets with Ethiopian CSOs

A 15 member delegation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly met and held talks with representatives of the Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) here at the Secretariat on 28 October, 2010.

Speaking on the occasion, Lord John Sewel, head of the delegation said the major purpose of the delegation’s visit to Ethiopia is to get first hand information on the country’s endeavors towards alleviating poverty and ensuring food security.

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New CCRDA Board Starts Work

The newly elected board of the Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) has officially started its work.

The management of CCRDA and the board also made discussions on the presentations of each core team and on the general trends of CCRDA.

Certificates of gratitude and appreciation were handed out to outgoing board members on the occasion.

CCRDA Signed nearly 20 Mln. Birr Grant Agreement with MoH

The Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) signed a grant agreement amounting to 19.9 million Birr with the Ministry of Health (MoH) on October 26, 2010.

The grant proposal to access the Global Fund Malaria component was submitted earlier to MoH by CCRDA with the CORE Group-Ethiopia and other partners.

The grant proposal has been lucratively approved by MoH and the grant was signed accordingly.

The grant agreement was signed by Dr. Mekdesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA and H.E. Dr. Keseteberihun Admassu, State Minister of Health. **
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.

CCRDA/Sida PIPs Receive Library Materials in Donation

Three CCRDA/Sida joint program project implementing partners (PIPs) have received various library materials for their youth centers at a ceremony held here at the Secretariat on 4th November, 2010.

The three PIPs that received the donations are: OSHO Youth Center in Meki town of Oromia region, Anti-Malaria Youth Center in Dembecha town of Amhara region and MCDO Youth Center in Erer Gotha town of Somali region.

The library materials donated to the youth centers by Sida include 1,600 books, 6 shelves, 6 computers and 3 printers.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony, Dr. Meshesha Shehiarega, Executive Director of CCRDA, said the donation would help the youth centers to strengthen their knowledge building activities.

He noted that the CCRDA/Sida joint program, which was launched in 2004, now involves 22 PIPs engaged in various fields of engagement.

CCRDA/Sida program is being undertaken in seven strategically selected regions of Ethiopia including Amhara, Somali, Afar, Tigray, Oromia, Addis Ababa and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ States, according to the Executive Director.

He said over the last years about 50 million Birr has been spent on the execution of the CCRDA/Sida joint program, which was designed to reach out to 6 million people.

The joint program managed to achieve what has been planned in the project document, he said, adding that encouraging results were attained in the implementation of the projects.

Mr. Abdi Foam, Head of Sida in Swedish Embassy, handed over the donation to representatives of the PIPs and he expressed Sida’s commitment to continue supporting the multifaceted endeavors of the projects.

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A two-day training on knowledge and information sharing organized by the Publications and Information Management Core Team (PIMCT) of CCRDA was conducted here at the Secretariat from 14-15 October, 2010.

In his welcoming address to the training participants, Ato Tafesse Refera, Director of PIMCT, said the training is part of the Core Team’s multifaceted tasks aimed at facilitating and coordinating the exchange of information and knowledge among the membership of CCRDA.

The Core team, he said, also offers Information and Communication Technology (ICT) related trainings to CCRDA members and non-members with a view to helping them ensure the smooth flow of information, experience sharing and institutional learning in their respective undertakings.

Ato Tafesse indicated that the Core Team is exerting utmost efforts to organize and conduct similar trainings on ICT during the current operational year.

The two-day training that focused on face-to-face and online (web based) facilitation was given by Mr. Riff Fullan, information coordinator at Helvetas- Ethiopia, an international NGO that renders various forms of support to the civil society.

At Habte Beyene, Head Librarian at CCRDA, also gave a brief orientation to participants of the training on methods and technicalities of online fund raising.

Twenty five participants drawn from the Secretariat staff and CCRDA membership attended the training that included theoretical presentations and small group discussions.

New CCRDA Board Starts Work ... (Contd. from p.1)

The new board, which was elected on CCRDA’s Membership Assembly Meeting held in September, 2010, will serve the Consortium for a two-year tenure.

Similarly, orientations on general trends of CCRDA and major activities of the Secretariat were given to the newly elected Membership Development Committee (MDC) and Organizational Development and Financial Management (OFDM) Committee Members.
NATO Parliamentary Assembly Delegation Meets …

To this end, Lord Sewel said, the delegation made a visit to various development projects in different parts of Ethiopia and held discussions with government officials as well as representatives of the donor community and funding financial institutions here in the country.

The delegation was interested to learn the role of the civil society in the nation’s development efforts and gather information on the challenges and opportunities in the NGOs operating space, he noted.

Accordingly, Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA, made briefings on the occasion on some of the challenges affecting the civil society sector in Ethiopia.

Dr. Meshesha said dwindling resources from donor partners especially after the global financial crisis has been severely affecting the operations of CSOs/NGOs here in Ethiopia.

The survival of some NGOs is at risk due to the financial meltdown, he said, adding that the civil society at large needs an urgent support and assistance to overcome this deficit.

Capacity limitation of CSOs/NGOs is another critical problem facing the civil society sector, as most of them are new born established after the change of government in Ethiopia in 1991.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, he noted, the civil society sector has continued to work towards the attainment of economic development and social progress in the country in tune with the various development policy frameworks designed by the government.

Exchange of views was made on the interaction of CSOs/NGOs with the government and donor organizations as well as on the development policies of the Ethiopian government such as the PASDEP and the newly designed Growth and Transformation Plan.

The opportunities and challenges of the newly formulated Charities and Societies Proclamation were also high on the agenda during the discussion session.

CCRDA management as well as several members of the Consortium have attended the discussion program. ***

CCRDA/Sida PIPs Receive Library…

Representatives of the PIPs remarked on the occasion that CCRDA/Sida joint intervention has significantly improved the lives of the communities residing in areas where the PIPs operate.

Sida’s support extended for the PIPs is directly reaching the intended beneficiaries, they said, adding that CCRDA is playing a remarkable role in coordinating and supervising the execution of the projects.

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Seminar on WASH Monitoring & Evaluation Held

A two-day seminar aimed at sharing monitoring and evaluation experiences and best practices in Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) sector was convened here at the Secretariat from 21-22 October 2010.

The seminar was jointly organized by CCRDA Water and Sanitation Forum, RIPIPLE, IRC, UKaid and International Water and Sanitation Center.

It was indicated on the opening occasion that monitoring has become at the top of the WASH agenda and a major national process is being rolled out to dramatically improve the availability of data for planning and decision making in the sector.

National and regional level government staff with an interest in monitoring WASH sector management, representatives of donor agencies motivated to help facilitate decision making based on sector data, and non-governmental organizations with an interest in monitoring and capacity building participated in the seminar.

Group discussions in progress

NGOs Contribution to Nation’s Dev’t Efforts Said Vital

The contribution of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to the development endeavors of Ethiopia has been significant over the years, an official of the Network of Civil Society Organizations in Oromia (NeCSOO) said.

The head, Ato Alemayehu Dero, said NGOs operating in Ethiopia have implemented 2065 development projects with an estimated budget of nearly 10 billion Birr between 2004 and 2008.

Ato Alemayehu made the remarks while delivering a presentation at a half-day panel discussion organized by the Membership Development and Networking Department of CCRDA here at the Secretariat on 25 October, 2010.

The financial contribution of NGOs to development efforts of the country has also been increasing over time, he said, adding that both local and international NGOs have made considerable contributions to the well functioning of Ethiopia’s economy.

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CCRDA Executive Director Pays Field Visit to PPRO Projects

Dr. Meshesha Shewarega, Executive Director of CCRDA, made a one-day field visit to various development projects being implemented by Participatory Poverty Reduction Organization (PPRO) in Limu Woreda of Hadiya Zone on 12 November, 2010.

The Executive Director visited crop fields developed by farmers and water shade management schemes undertaken through the active participation of the project beneficiaries.

Dr. Meshesha on field visit with Hadiya zone senior cabinet members

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Meshesha noted that the visit has enabled him to witness remarkable improvements in the execution of PPRO implemented projects.

The projects have been scaled up to the surrounding areas benefiting additional farmers, he said, adding that such encouraging endeavors should be further bolstered in the years ahead.

Dr. Meshesha enjoying the fruits of PPRO embraced farmers

Dr. Meshesha also stated that he happily observed the gradual detachment of farmers from dependency on single produce and the steady adaptation to crop diversification. He applauded the trend as a step in the right direction.

“The visit has helped me to see the robust interaction and cooperation between the implementing organization (PPRO) and concerned government structures in the Woreda in the execution of the projects,” Dr. Meshesha said. “This clearly shows a strong unity between the two actors for a common development cause.”

The participation of women in the realization of PPRO projects has grown immensely, he said. This, he stressed, is another encouraging move that should be pursued with more vigor in the future.

He also called upon beneficiaries of the project to give due attention to the issues of environmental protection and reproductive health with special emphasis on family planning.

“Hard work- the only way out of poverty”: Dr. Meshesha

In a ceremony held at the end of the field trip, Dr. Meshesha and cabinet members of the Hadiya Zone handed over awards to 44 farmers who displayed outstanding performance in their production and productivity embraced under PPRO project.
CoC ensures transparency & accountability in NGOs

The Code of Conduct (CoC) for NGOs in Ethiopia helps to ensure transparency and accountability in the operations of civil society and non-governmental organizations, Deputy Director of the CoC Committee said.

The Deputy Director, Ato Mareligne Damtew, made the remarks while delivering a presentation at a panel discussion held on NGOs Code of Conduct on 15 October, 2010 here at the Secretariat.

Making presentation on “the relevance of the national NGO Code of Conduct in the post re-registration period”, Ato Mareligne said the CoC is aimed at improving the quality of NGOs services by helping them adopt high standards of conduct.

Improving communication between the NGO community and the various stakeholders as well as upgrading their performance are also some of the other purposes of the CoC.

Without accountability to donors, NGOs funding sources may dry up, he said, adding that failure to have accountability to regulators may result in revocation of certificates.

Likewise, he said, operational capacity may be eroded and credibility be undermined due to failure not to be accountable to staff and members respectively.

Some 34 participants attended the panel discussion organized by the Membership Development and Networking Core Team.

It is to be recalled that the Code of Conduct (CoC) for NGOs in Ethiopia was endorsed on March 5, 1999 by 165 international and national NGOs as founding signatories. More Signatories have joined since then and the number of signatories of the CoC now stands at 381.

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New CCRDA Board Starts Work ...

(...Contd. from p.3)

New members of CCRDA were also briefed on the activities of each core team within the Secretariat as well as duties and responsibilities of CCRDA proper in an orientation session held on 24 November, 2010.
Core Team Organizes Panel Discussion on Older Persons

The Urban Development Forum under the Membership Development and Networking Core Team of CCRDA organized a panel discussion on the issue of Older Persons here at the Secretariat recently.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and Cordaid were the co-organizers of the panel discussion, which brought together 22 participants drawn from pertinent governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Opening the panel discussion, Ato Regassa Aboma, Director of Membership Development and Networking Core Team, appreciated the initiative taken by MOLSA to bring the issue of older persons to the forefront.

Ato Regassa also praised MOLSA for its increasingly proactive engagements in the social affairs and reiterated CCRDA’s readiness to bolster its partnership with the Ministry to address the problems of older persons and other societal challenges.

Such panel discussions, he said, are instrumental to exchange knowledge, information and best practices on various thematic development issues.

Representative of the Federal HAPCO also presented a study paper under the topic “HIV/AIDS and Older Persons” at the half-day panel discussion, which coincided with the 20th International Day of Older Persons.

Ato Damtew (right) delivering his presentation

Similarly, the Membership Development and Networking Core Team organized a half-day panel discussion on the Food Security Program of Ethiopia.

Partial view of the participants

It was stated on the occasion that the objective of the panel discussion was to share information on the food security program of Ethiopia, draw lessons from practical experiences and seek ways of harmonizing the day to day activities of NGOs with the given policy frameworks.

Presenting a paper at the panel discussion, Ato Damtew Alemu, Awareness and Advocacy Expert with MOLSA, said older persons can play a considerable role in the development efforts of Ethiopia, as they have an accumulated wisdom, knowledge and experience.

The government of Ethiopia has been taking tangible measures to tackle the adverse effects of older-age under the campaign “Age Demands Action”, according to the expert.

Ato Damtew urged the Civil Society Sector to actively involve in the efforts geared towards addressing the problems of older persons, as the constraints cannot be solved single-handedly by the government alone.

Two study papers under the themes “Food Security Program Design and Implementation” and “The Role and Contributions of CSOs for Ethiopian Food Security Efforts, the Case of SOS-Sahel” were presented during the course of the half-day panel discussion.
NGOs Contribution to Nation’s Dev’t ...
(Contd. from p.5)

NGOs in Ethiopia have been involved in various fields of engagement including education, agriculture, health, food security, environment, water and pastoral development, human rights and civic activities as well as justice and peace.

He said due to their growing contribution and raising number NGOs in Ethiopia have been enjoying increased recognition from the government.

In the situation of high incidence of poverty and multi-faceted socio-economic problems, government actions alone cannot lead to sustainable development, he said, adding that NGOs will continue to have a paramount significance in the fight against the daunting poverty.

Further discussions on the GTP

Particularly, Alemayehu said, there is a pressing need to enhance the role of NGOs in the nationwide efforts geared to achieve the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

Thirty-seven participants attended the panel discussion held under the theme “PASDEP against the MDG and the role of CSOs in its implementation”.

Similarly, Dr. Meshesha paid a week-long field visit to CCRDA/Sida financed PHF projects in North Shewa Zone, Oromia Zone of Amhara region, Mekele town, Central Tigray Zone, Gondar town and Finote Selam Woreda.

Some of the Visited Projects in Pictures

Seedling nurturing & water harvesting projects by ADHENO

Visit to ReST implemented projects

A glimpse at EOC-DICAC Implemented Projects

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CCRDA Executive Director Pays Field Visit ...
(Contd. from p.6)

PPRO is a Sida/CCRDA financed project launched in 2004 with a seed money of 200,000 Birr. The project is being implemented in nine Kebele peasant associations of Limu Woreda, Hadiya Zone. The number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project has reached 12,000 at present.

Dr. Meshesha awarding agricultural tools to a meritorious farmer
Panel Discusses Health Sector Development Program

A panel discussion organized by the HIV/AIDS Forum under CCRDA’s Membership Development and Networking Core Team dwelt on Ethiopia’s Health Sector Development Programs.

Opening the half-day discussion held at CCRDA Secretariat on 23 November, 2010, Core Team Director Ato Regassa Aboma, said his core team has been organizing several panel discussions with a view to creating and promoting awareness on selected thematic/topical issues of the country.

Ato Regassa addressing the panel discussion

The panel discussion on Ethiopia’s Health Sector Development Programs is the 23rd of the 25 panels that the Core Team planned to conduct both at central and regional levels this year, Ato Regassa noted.

Dr. Tewodros delivering presentation on HSDP

Dr. Tewodros Bekele, from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, made presentation on Ethiopia’s 3rd and 4th Health Sector Development Programs (HSDP III and IV).

Similarly, Ato Abebe Bekele, Program Development and Management Core Team Director with CCRDA delivered presentation on the situation of Reproductive Health and Family Planning in Ethiopia.

Training on Financial Management & Accounting Conducted

A three-day training program on financial management and accounting in the context of the newly issued Charities and Societies Proclamation was held here at the Secretariat from 23-25, 2010.

The training organized by the Taskforce on Enabling Environment for Civil Societies in Ethiopia brought together 20 trainees drawn from various CSOs/NGOs.

Several financial management and accounting topics including preparation and presentation of budget, financial statements, balance sheets, income and expenditure statements were covered during the course of the training.

Financial systems of distinguishing, allocating and budging administrative and operating expenses as well as methods of preserving accounting documents and financial statements in light of the new law were also issues of discussion during the training program.