

UPDATE

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CRDA Expands Regional Representation

CRDA opened its fourth Regional Liaison Office (RLO) in Amhara Regional State on July 25, 2006.

The foundation meeting was held on the same date in Bahirdar at Summerland Hotel. More than 50 representatives of CRDA member and non-member NGOs operating in the region attended the meeting.

The main reason for the establishment of a Regional Liaison Office in the Region is to promote an enabling environment for the civil society organizations in general and CRDA member NGOs in particular: those operating in the Region. The major roles of the Regional Liaison Office will be to:

- create and facilitate an enabling environment for NGOs operation in the Region,
- facilitate networking and advocacy activities for NGOs operating in the Region,
- facilitate a two way information exchange between member organizations and the CRDA, and
- serve as CRDA focal point at the Region.

A regional plan of action as part of the three-year program plan (2005– 2007) of CRDA was presented as a way of introducing specific activities of the Regional Office.

To ensure meaningful representation at regional level and effective lobbying and advocacy, participants established a Regional Platform composed of close to 80 Civil Society Organizations operating in the Region. A Steering Committee consisting of seven standing and two reserve members was also formed to oversee activities of the Platform. The Steering Committee will provide strategic leadership and represent CRDA and/or its members as well.

During its next meeting, the Steering Committee will elect its chair and vice chair persons, and CRDA's Zonal Focal Offices.

The members of the Steering Committee are:

1. World Vision Ethiopia
2. Anti Malaria Association
3. Save the Children/UK
4. Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
5. Cheshire Foundation
6. Food for the Hungry International
7. Agri Services Ethiopia,

and the reserve members are:

8. Ethiopian Orthodox Church Child Care Center
9. INTRA Health International.

During the meeting participants discussed the significant benefits gained so far from CRDA's Regional Liaison Offices in other regions especially experiences or achievements so far gained in the area of policy advocacy with the government. The mechanisms used by CRDA to build the capacity of local member NGOs was also another issue raised during the discussion.

Following the meeting, CRDA met with the Food Security Coordination and Disaster Prevention Office of the Amhara Regional State and discussed how to introduce the establishment of CRDA RLO in the region and modalities of collaboration.