The Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations


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Voluntary Sector (Umbrella Organization/Network & Resource NGOs)

Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE)
Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA)
Civil Society Campaign Against Famine in Ethiopia (SC-CAFÉ)
Consortium of Reproductive Health Association (CORHA)
Initiative Africa (IA)
Pastoralists Forum (PF)
Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF)
Forum for social Studies (FSS)
1. Introduction

Civil society recognises the importance of the SDPRP process in Ethiopia and seeks to contribute at all stages. Initially this was through a taskforce based within CRDA. However organisations involved felt that a more permanent structure would increase the level of engagement possible. Hence, the Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE) was established in March 2004 involving more than forty NGOs/CSOs who work on a diverse set of issues in different parts of the country. PANE represents, therefore, a network of civil society organisations that have to come together to work for poverty reduction in Ethiopia.

The network brings a wide range of experience to the poverty reduction process as its members have first hand knowledge through work directly with communities in Ethiopia, which informs the comments in this recommendation. The overall purpose of the Network is to coordinate the involvement of civil society groups and empower citizens for active participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of pro-poor policies, with the intention of bringing rapid and sustainable changes in the welfare of the people.

PANE as the poverty wing of the civil society sector works collaboratively with other arms such as the CRDA through which it acquired the opportunity to respond to the SDPRP Annual Progress Report (APR) 2003/2004. Given that PANE is now officially registered acquiring the necessary license from the Ministry of Justice, it aims to have active and direct interaction with the government. The following recommendation was developed through consultations and discussions among the PANE membership and discusses some of the key issues raised by the APR. It also looks forward to the development of the SDPRP II and considers how this review could inform that process.

A central issue that is reflected throughout this recommendation is the hope for increased partnership between civil society, the government and our international partners in the SDPRP process. The challenge of reducing poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in Ethiopia is considerable. The possibility of achieving this would be greatly increased if all actors can work together as equal and fully engaged partners. Civil society already plays a key role in poverty reduction in the country, making valuable contributions in health, education, water, agriculture and many other sectors. For example, about half of food assistance and almost half of non-food humanitarian assistance came through NGOs in 2003. This role could be furthered strengthened by working even more closely with the government to exploit synergies and avoid duplication. Through their closer links to communities civil society organisations can also provide strong qualitative evidence of the impact of policy at a grassroots level.

This recommendation first considers the process of the SDPRP. It then reviews the issues in the APR including public expenditure, rural development, HIV/AIDS, gender, and urban and pastoralist issues. It also makes recommendations in two areas — for changes that will strengthen the Annual Progress Report itself and suggestions for the process of the development of SDPRP II.
2. The Process of the SDPRP

The development of PANE represents the commitment from civil society to engaging with the SDPRP. PANE is mandated to represent civil society groups in interaction with the government and donors concerning poverty reduction endeavours and as such welcomes greater involvement in the implementation and monitoring of the SDPRP that the new structure will facilitate. Regular meetings between civil society and government would facilitate the sharing of information and ideas on the implementation of the SDPRP and ensure continuous commitment from all actors. This would best be achieved through a permanent structure with members from the relevant government departments, civil society and donors. Similar structures at a regional level would also be valuable to develop implementation at this level.

**Recommendation:** The participation of civil society is institutionalised through the formation of a permanent structure and regular meetings with the relevant government agencies and donor partners involved in SDPRP implementation. In particular, PANE calls for the government to arrange its formal representation in existing Welfare Monitoring System structures as well as in policy studies and initiatives.

2.1 Decentralisation and the SDPRP II.

Numerous studies have found that poverty reduction is more effective with the participation of the poor themselves\(^1\). One of the major thrusts of the first SDPRP was to ‘deepen and strengthen the decentralisation process to shift decision making closer to the grassroots population to improve responsiveness and service delivery\(^2\). If this process is, to be affective then the SDPRP itself needs to be decentralised with people at different levels of government feeling ownership of the process. However knowledge of the SDPRP and the Millennium Development goals, which the strategy aims to achieve, is limited in the regions.

In 2004 PANE felt that there was a need to broaden knowledge of the SDPRP as a first step to greater community engagement. To enhance this PANE organised 5 regional workshops in partnership with the government and the UNDP in Afar, Dire Dawa, Omoria, SNNP and Tigray. A number of these workshops demonstrated effective partnership between civil society, government and donors with facilitation from PANE, MOFED and the UNDP on behalf of the DAG.

These workshops focused on explaining to the wider public the SDPRP process, sensitisation on the Millennium Development Goals, civil society’s role in the process and monitoring and evaluation systems of the SDPRP. Participants at the workshop were keen to learn more about the SDPRP process and the MDGs, despite an initial low level of awareness in regional government structures and civil society\(^3\). There were commitments to continue engagement and work towards developing monitoring systems at a local level.

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\(^1\) see for example,
\(^2\) SDPRP, P41
\(^3\) One example of this is the shortage of SDPRP documents in regional government offices.
Comments from participants at these workshops highlighted the need for the strategy to be understood especially at woreda level to enable the full participation of the people. One of the issues highlighted as a problem for decentralisation is the lack of capacity at the local levels of government. Partnership with civil society organisations may help towards overcoming these constraints. As a result of the workshops PANE has formed regional ad hoc committees to facilitate civil society engagement in the SDPRP process at regional level in partnership with the government and other stakeholders. PANE aims in future to have permanent structure at regional level.

**Recommendations:** Awareness and ownership of the SDPRP process strengthened and intensified at regional and woreda levels involving all stakeholders. Existing structures at regional and woreda levels should also be strengthened and upgraded to allow active civil society participation in the current and upcoming SDPRP processes.

**2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the SDPRP is essential to measure progress, identify problem areas and ensure accountability to all stakeholders. Although PANE welcomes new and continued initiatives such as the SDPRP M&E Action Plan, household surveys, the Participatory Poverty Assessment and the ICT developments mentioned in the APR, it is extremely concerned by the lack of a framework that allows active engagement of civil society in these initiatives and processes.

It is believed that PANE’s engagement in SDPRP M&E will facilitate generation of especially qualitative and grass root level information on welfare status and trends as well as impact of policies and programs. The APR does provide data on the essential sectors in the SDPRP. However without a clear system for establishing how this data was sourced and compiled the usefulness is limited. In addition, lack of disaggregation by region makes it extremely difficult to isolate where there are problems in implementation.

PANE has placed a high priority on the monitoring of poverty reduction in Ethiopia in order to inform its engagement with the SDPRP process. In order to contribute to this PANE has conducted a Citizen Report Card survey in a number of regions, through financial support made available by the UNDP (on behalf of the DAG) and ActionAid Ethiopia. The report card methodology surveys the experience of the users of public services to assess quantitative and qualitative information on users awareness of, access to, use of and satisfaction with public services, providing a ‘bottom-up’ perspective, through questionnaires delivered directly to the end users of services. Questionnaires have been distributed to over 3,000 households examining users’ opinions on pro-poor public programs focussing on water and sanitation, primary health, primary education and agricultural sectors. PANE will make efforts to ensure it is properly disseminated when the data set and the analyses are ready.
Recommendation: Two way information flow and coordination and interaction in initiatives and possibly in implementation of studies between the government and civil society groups should be encouraged. PANE, the WMU and donors ensure that the data from the Citizen Report card and PPA is fully utilised to inform future strategies.

Citizen’s Report Card’s represent one way that community perspectives can be incorporated into the SDPRP process. Another is to develop community level structures to help monitor local budgets to ensure that local priorities are reflected. This is being developed by NGOs in Oromia region (see box).

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<th>Monitoring through Community Involvement</th>
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<td>Help Age International, Rift Valley Children and Women Development Association and Hundee Oromo Grassroots Initiative have worked with communities, and particularly older people, in Oromia National Regional state to develop a system that enables communities engagement in the planning process. In the pilot woredas, communities have selected monitoring committees of older people. These committees then ranked the community’s priorities and developed indicators for measuring performance such as budget allocation and utilisation at a woreda level. Meetings were then held with the woreda authorities to compare woreda plans to the indicators. In one of such a meeting, for example, the community’s main priority, water, was not prioritised in the woreda budget. As a result of these meetings the woreda officials committed to including the community’s priorities in the development of up-coming budgets. The project is providing further training for the government and the community monitors to facilitate this.</td>
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The examples of budget monitoring and Citizen’s report cards show the valuable contribution that civil society can make to the monitoring and evaluation through bringing in information from the community level. In the design of the SDPRP II this should be incorporated into the design, monitoring and evaluation system.

Recommendations: The monitoring and evaluation system of SDPRP II includes the participation of all levels of government, civil society and comm units themselves, in particular, the government should envisage active participation of civil society groups in the SDPRP M&Estructure and action plan.
2.3 The Development of SDPRP II

PANE has concerns over the timeframe available for the production of the SDPRP II. 2003/04 has seen several large policies introduced and many new initiatives launched. While these changes are positive steps PANE is concerned that all the impacts of these policies are not yet being felt and a range of studies are still under way which provide information which will be important in the development of future strategies. These include the monitoring and evaluation system that is still being developed, the Productive Safety Nets program that has only just started and wereda capacity building that is still at early stage. Also information that would be helpful for the second SDPRP is still being developed such as gender disaggregated data and the Participatory Poverty Assessment. In the current timescale it will not be possible to incorporate information and learning from these initiatives in the planning process.

Before major policy decisions are included in SDPRP II there also needs to be a thorough analysis of the impacts of those decisions on the poor. The World Bank, IMF have made repeated commitments to since 1999 to carry out Poverty and social impact assessments on all key reforms in their programmes. In Ethiopia these have been planned for the public expenditure prioritisation, road construction and tax policy and administration reform. It would be useful to publicise the process and findings of these assessments and ensure a wide group of stakeholders participate. Their application should also be extended to all major policy decisions, such as Ethiopia’s joining of the World Trade Organisation.

Recommendation: Government should consider actively involving civil society groups in the SDPRP II design process beginning from preparatory phase including time-plan, consultation process and development of the strategy. The DAG should work with the relevant government ministries and civil society groups to implement Poverty and Social Impact Assessments of all major policy decisions to be included in the SDPRP II before they are implemented to inform decision making.

It is critical that adequate number and composition of representatives of various stakeholders are involved in the formulation of SDPRP II to ensure ownership and successful implementation. It is particularly important to ensure the voices of groups who may be marginalized or who have special needs are heard, such as pastoralist groups, women, people living with HIV/AIDS and young people to ensure that the SDPRP II adequately reflects their needs. The APR states that there will be a major round of consultation in the preparation of SDPRP II. However, if this process is going to contribute meaningfully to the strategy development it will need an adequate timeframe. PANE has concerns that this appears difficult given the remaining time available to develop the strategy.

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4 In January 2002 the World Bank President stated that PSIA would be mainstreamed into all Bank operations in 6 months. The IMFC also stated in its 2002 communiqué that PSIA should be implemented systematically within all PRGF programmes.
Given all these concerns PANE feels that the time frame for the SDPRP II development should be extended until June, 2006. An interim SDPRP could be compiled based on the existing SDPRP to cover the period between July, 2005 and June, 2006. A one-year period between SDPRP I and SDPRP II have numerous benefits. It would allow for all the recent policy changes to be consolidated and assessed, it would allow the full development of the monitoring and evaluation system and the incorporation of the evidence it produced and it would allow for full Poverty and Social Impact Assessments to be carried out on areas of major policy change. The SDPRP II could then be strengthened by the incorporation of all lessons learnt.

Civil society and regional structures could also be fully consulted and a full dialogue on policy choices could be carried out. The SDPRP is not a static process but one that evolves as this year has shown. However a strong initial planning process can only add benefits in terms of increased direction and ownership. PANE recognises that an interim year may provide difficulties in terms of funding cycles. However they would ask donors to provide the flexibility to enable disbursements to continue through the year in the recognition of the continued commitment to poverty reduction in Ethiopia. The recent needs assessments for the Millennium Development Goals could provide a basis for budgeting throughout this year.

**Recommendation:** An interim SDPRP and a one-year period is considered between SDPRP I and SDPRP II to allow for consolidation and incorporation of lessons learnt in the revised strategy. Donors should provide the flexibility in funding to allow this. Most importantly, SDPRP II should be based on inputs received during consultation process.

Given the short time available for detail comment on the APR II, PANE will not endeavour to make in-depth analysis of the progress report and provide exhaustive comments. PANE rather aims to contribute in detail civil society perspectives on welfare trends and sector performances as input to SDPRP II. Hence, the following constitutes only indicative remarks on some selected issues that PANE would like to take the opportunity and make its comments. These are in areas of public expenditure, the rural and agricultural sector and food security, HIV/AIDS, gender, urban issues and pastoralism.

3.1 Public Expenditure

The increases in public expenditure are welcome as well as higher proportion of the budget spent on pro-poor programs. However, the headline figures give a limited indication of the prioritisation process. It would be useful to see the sectoral figures disaggregated to show the percentage spent on key areas for poverty reduction within each sector. For example what percentage of the education budget was spent on primary education, which has the greatest impacts for poverty reduction. There are also no figures for HIV/AIDS spending.

Recommendation: More disaggregated data is included in the APR, showing a further breakdown of spending within sectors and an indication of spending on HIV/AIDS.

Ethiopia has also benefited from debt relief totalling US$2 billion (in net present value terms) of as part of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries scheme, including ‘topping up’ debt relief to ensure sustainability. For transparency purposes it would be useful to have an indication of how the savings from the HIPC scheme have been allocated. Despite these savings, Ethiopia is still facing an average of US$116.7 million debt service from 2002/03 to 20012/13\(^5\), whereas huge resource is needed to reach the MDGs. Debt relief is still an urgent priority given the huge challenges of poverty in the country. The call for complete debt cancellation should continue and donor partners should work within their own governments or organisations to achieve this.

Recommendation: Ethiopia is granted full debt relief to provide the resources to achieve the MDGs.

One concern that the APR raises is low disbursement by external donors, which has affected sectors like health. This is partly related to the fact that donor resource flow is unpredictable. Hence, donors need to ensure that they deliver the aid they promise.

\(^5\) The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia — Enhanced Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries-Completion Point Document’ IMF, April 2004, p52
Concerning the health sector, the government should place more emphasis to the sector given enormous problems the country is facing in this regard. The amount the government put into capital projects in the health sector actually fell in from 2002/03 to 2003/04. Health is a key area for poverty reduction and given the high incidence of infant and maternal mortality adequate spending is urgently needed. If donor cannot provide the finance in a timely manner then flexibility should be developed within the budget to draw in resources from less urgent priorities.

**Recommendation:** Donors should ensure more predictability of resource flow and improve disbursement performance. The government should also streamline more its priorities according the necessary focus to issues such as health and build its capacity to absorb external resource inflow.

### 3.2 Rural Development and Food Security

Rural development, agriculture and food security are all central to poverty reduction in Ethiopia given the large rural population. The increases in the resources allocated to agriculture are therefore welcomed as a positive step. The year has also seen a major new initiative on food security which is also a testament to the government's commitment to this area.

The increases in agricultural growth of 14% and food grains of 39% over the previous year are welcome developments. However as the APR establishes it is difficult to isolate the effect of policy in this growth as agriculture is affected by many factors, not least the weather. Although the size of population needing food assistance this year has fallen due to good rains, many still remain vulnerable. Ethiopian agriculture remains a low-input, low-output system and food crop production per capita remains low at 165.3 kg/person\(^6\). Higher yielding technologies exist but the take up rate of these and inorganic fertiliser is low. Use of fertilizer represents a risk. If rains fail then farmers may have to sell assets to pay for the fertilizer. Helping farmers protect themselves against such risk through insurance or support with debt repayments may help to boost the use of fertilizers. Farmers should also be encouraged and assisted to use increasing levels of organic fertilizer.

**Recommendation:** *Structures are developed to reduce the risk involved for farmers in using increased levels of modern agricultural inputs. In addition, farmers should be encouraged and assisted to use organic fertilizer.*

In order to ensure farmers are aware of new technologies and best practices extension services are vital. The reported increase in the households covered by extension packages is welcome, although a break down by region would be useful. The shift to technical support is also beneficial. However, the report identifies that in order to assess the effectiveness of these services indicators on the outcomes for farmers are needed. Methodologies such as the Citizen’s Report Card piloted by PANE, may be a way to capture this information and improve the effectiveness of the services offered.

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**Recommendation:** Methodologies such as the Report Card should be considered by the Ministry of Agriculture in order to capture the outcomes of extension work from farmers in qualitative terms.

Extension packages should also be developed which specifically address the needs of pastoralist groups. Pastoralists depend mainly on livestock so extension packages should be developed to enhance animal production.

**Recommendation:** Extension packages are developed that specifically address the needs of pastoralist communities.

A major development this year has been the launch of the new Coalition of Food Security. The move to a more long-term approach to address chronic food insecurity is welcomed. However donors need to ensure they deliver the resources pledged if the benefits of a multi-year approach could be fully exploited. The approach also requires accurate information for the public in order not create confusion around the true numbers still facing food insecurity, whether chronic or acute. Reporting just on the acute could mislead many people that the problem is becoming less significant.

The coalition approach taken by the government is a useful approach and recognises the contributions of different actors. However, PANE feels the process would be strengthened by the inclusion of civil society actors in all aspects of the program, particularly in monitoring and evaluation system. Involvement of NGOs would allow for greater efficiency and allow NGOs to bring their direct experience of communities to the process to inform all actors’ decision-making. Many NGOs work in food insecure areas and without information on the safety nets program there is a danger they may duplicate efforts or not take advantage of synergies.

**Recommendation:** The possible synergies between NGOs and government’s work are exploited through coordination at all levels in general and at a local level in particular.

There also needs to be recognition from all actors involved in food security that not all food insecure people have access to land. There are an increasing number of young people who are facing this situation and programmes, also need to be developed to address this growing need. Hence, considering declining size of land holding, land degradation, soil erosion in conjunction with growing population pressure macro rural growth policies and strategies need to be revisited.

Looking towards the development of the second SDPRP II the impacts of the new coalition policies and the general rural development policies need to be fully explored. The Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment for the Rural Development and Food Security Sector begins this process but a wider debate, informed by participatory assessments with rural communities is needed to fully explore the complex links in the rural sector. It should also be recognised that the rural environment does not sit in isolation from the urban economy. The links between the two sectors need to be addressed to fully understand all the factors influencing both.
Recommendation: A forum based on the current coalition and instituting regular discussion platforms to allow broad based participation should be convened to discuss the future of rural policy with inputs from all relevant bodies.

3.3 HIV/AIDS

After new analysis, the annual progress report quotes a revised prevalence rate of 4.4% of the population, reduced from 6.6% in 2002/03. Any indication that less people are affected by HIV/AIDS is welcome. However the majority of this change is probably attributable to changes in the measurement methodology rather than policy intervention. The APR points out the high pressure the epidemic is putting on health services and PANE members themselves are seeing the impacts in the communities where they work, such as orphans and those who are sick. Therefore it is vital to see this reduced prevalence rate as an encouragement for further work rather than an argument against it. Indicators to determine the success of policy measures on reducing the spread of the epidemic also need to be developed so their impact can be determined.

The increased ARV distribution is welcome, as is the Ministry of Health’s announcement of the expanded ARV program\(^7\). ARVs can have a dramatic effect of prolonging life but as the MOH outlined in its announcement of the ARV programme, poor infrastructure and nutrition will be a major challenge to the program as will the costs of tests and transportation that users still must incur. ARVs must be carefully administered and supported by the correct nutrition or they will not be able to prolong life. A discussion of how the government and NGOs intend to support ARV treatment and how all civil society organisations and government departments could contribute to these efforts by working in synergy on related issues would be useful.

Recommendation: HAPCO should outline the support structures around ARV distribution and should liaise with all NGOs working in this area where possible.

Details of the resources allocated to HIV/AIDS and their utilisation is lacking from the APR, making analysis difficult. The international community is allocating increasing resources to the fight against HIV/AIDS through initiatives such as the Global Fund and it is essential that Ethiopia utilise these resources fully in order to ensure the epidemic does not have the devastating impact that can be seen in parts of southern Africa. In particular it would be useful to see an analysis of how the Global Fund and other donor resources are contributing to the fight against HIV/AIDS and assess if there are ways they could be more efficiently utilised.

Recommendation: The APR includes an analysis of all resources available for combating HIV/AIDS and their utilisation so far, broken down geographically. The government should also ensure that structures to support adequate utilization of global funds with participation of civil society organizations are put in place.

\(^7\) Government Launches Free ARTs Today’ The Daily Monitor January 24 2005
HIV/AIDS is identified as a crosscutting issue in the SDPRP. This is in recognition of the fact that HIV/AIDS could have implications for all other sectors for poverty reduction. For example, increasing number of orphans may increase drop out rates in schools as children are forced to look after siblings or earn money after the death of a parent. The links between food security and HIV/AIDS are particularly relevant, as poor nutrition will increase the opportunistic infections from HIV/AIDS, while hunger may increase people’s vulnerability to the disease. The SDPRP document identifies HIV/AIDS as a factor in vulnerability. In the production of SDPRP II HIV/AIDS should be fully mainstreamed and considered in every sector, not just as an independent issue. How the placing of HAPCO under the Ministry of Health could affect the multi-sectoral response that is needed to address the problem of HIV/AIDS needs to be also investigated and appropriate measures and structures instituted. Relevant bodies and ministries need also to develop appropriate indicators how progress from different dimensions can be monitored and improved.

3.4 Gender

Women play a vital role in production activities in addition to shouldering reproductive roles. However, they are denied recognition of access to resources and are victims of cultural attitudes and harmful traditional practices that relegate them to subordinate position.

Women’s share in the formal employment sector does not exceed the 30 percent mark. Around 90% of those employed in fact are concentrated in low paying jobs. Women are a small minority in the civil service and they are seriously underrepresented in the legislative and judiciary branches of the state. In the Federal Parliament, the highest decision making body, women hold only 7.7% of the total seats. The intention of the government to raise this number significantly in the current election is highly welcomed and appreciated. The APR also makes clear the commitment of the government for increased funding of gender promotion.

**Recommendation:** Generally, gender should be mainstreamed and the feminine side of poverty needs to be given high attention. The government should give due emphasis to accelerate the successful implementation of different instruments that exist to promote women issues. These include international policies, conventions and protocols to eliminate discrimination against women as well as national policies expressed in the Constitution, the National Women’s Policy and legislative policies that have promoted gender equality.
3.5 Pastoralism

Organisations who are concerned with pastoralist issues were encouraged when these were given a place in the SDPRP. The government’s efforts to consult with CSOs and NGOs and the inclusion of a chapter on pastoralist issues as a result of this process was seen as a great step forward. However there were concerns that no budget was attached to the chapter on pastoralists.

Pastoral development was not included in the first APR, and despite concerns raised about this, it has also been omitted from the second APR. This makes it difficult to know where achievements have been made in this sector.

In light of this PANE urge that pastoralist issues receive proper attention in SDPRP II. In general the pastoral way of life needs to be recognised in a similar context to the crop farming system as it is a means to an economic livelihood for many. Specific measures should include developing pastoral land use systems, promotion of the representation and participation of Pastoralists in decision making processes and developing community based social services.

Recommendation: SDPRP II includes specific measures for poverty reduction and the promotion of rights in the pastoralist community, developed through consultation with pastoralists groups.

3.6 Urban Issues

Although most of the population lives in rural areas, 18% now live in an urban context and this figure is rising rapidly. Particular challenges in this area include a shortage of housing, high rates of unemployment and environmental degradation. The APR did not specifically address urban issues so it is difficult to establish progress in this area. The fiscal decentralisation strategy is a positive step for creating accountability at a national level but accurate monitoring of urban issues is also needed. Specific indicators may be useful. Systems developed by the UNCHS could be a useful model for this if adapted to the Ethiopian context.

Recommendation: Specific indicators are developed to monitor urban issues particularly focussing on trends in welfare situation, employment opportunities, and housing.
4. Conclusion

PANE is pleased to be able to engage with the APR process and hopes the process will be an in-depth and meaningful one. The magnitude and depth of poverty problem in the country is so huge and enormous that it cannot be handled by the government alone. While PANE appreciates the commitment expressed by the government to poverty reduction in the country and to the various endeavours the government is trying to successfully implement, it earnestly requests genuine and trusted partnership to combat what is our common enemy (absolute poverty) and relieve our society from this age old sufferings. In this respect, it is hoped that the issues raised in this report are fully considered in the finalization of the APR and in the SDPRP II processes.

PANE calls for the government to institutionalize civil society groups’ participation in all the SDPRP processes. A more active role by civil society groups in the preparatory and design of SDPRP II is important for strengthening national ownership and successful implementation. It is for this reason that PANE would urge an interim year to allow all relevant information to be assimilated and lessons fully absorbed from SDPRP I. The work of poverty reduction would still continue during this year but the resulting plan would provide stronger direction in future years.

PANE also would stress the valuable contribution that civil society is making to poverty reduction in Ethiopia. It feels that this work could be enhanced further through stronger partnership with the government and donors at all levels of government. Let this APR be the beginning of a regular and institutionalised engagement that will allow the strengths of all parties to be fully utilised.