

**Communal Forest Ownership:**

**An Option to Address the Underlying Causes of  
Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Ethiopia?**

**Proceeding of a workshop held at Chilimo Forest  
and Ghion Hotel  
November 25-27/2008**



**MELCA Mahiber  
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### Preface

The question of the protection of forest is rather a tricky one. Some foresters feel that management of the resource is a government responsibility to be carried out with the help of the people. Practically speaking, however, the inverse – that the people manage local forests with the help of the government – is far more realistic. It is my belief that the right to benefit from natural resources, such as local forests, ultimately rests with the local people and that constructive and sustained management of the forests are, likewise, their responsibility.

There are also four bridges that link local communities with their forest. The first is livelihood and practices. People have intertwined relationships with their forest because it is the source of their food, medicine, construction materials, income, etc. Because of this they have a stake in its protection. The second is their belief system and their worldviews. Large chunk of forests or a single tree is not cut because people think that it is a medium of communication with their God. It is not their god but there is no separation for them between themselves, the forest and God. So they have a stake in its protection. The third element is people's language and knowledge. People have words, phrases, stories, proverbs, etc. related to their forest. So when the forest disappears, the source of their knowledge and their language disappears. So they protect it. The last is people's norms and institution. People have do's and don'ts regarding their forest. They also have traditional management systems that govern their relationship both with the forest and with each other. So they protect the forest through these mechanisms.

I think we need to consider communal ownership of forests as one of the strategies for conserving forest eco-systems. It is not only that people will protect forests best if we give them the responsibility but it is also their constitutional and other internationally recognized and

nationally approved rights to do so. This proceeding is one of the efforts of MELCA to work with others towards this end.

MELCA has been working in Sheka Zone, Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) to contribute to the conservation of the Sheka forest Ecosystem for the past two years. There are a lot of changes seen on the ground as a result of our work and the work of both the local government and the local people. We have managed to increase the knowledge of local communities on their cultural and environmental rights, halt the spread of unplanned large agricultural investments, empower local communities and facilitate their registration as an association, improve environmental education, improve the livelihood of communities, enhance the awareness of large section of the public and significantly improve law enforcement. This will continue and we hope that communal ownership will be both the agenda of the local people and the government of Sheka. It is our hope that the experience in Sheka will serve as an example both nationally and internationally.

Happy reading!

Million Belay,  
Director, MELCA

**List of Acronyms**

EEPCO	Ethiopian Electric Power Company
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FUG	Forest User Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	German Development Corporation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PHE	Population Health and Environment
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Region

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Between November 25 and 27, a total of seventy-one representatives from various Non-Government Organizations, as well as Parliament and government ministries, and other industries met for a three day workshop to share ideas, experiences and visions about community forestry. The spectrum of participants emphasized the goal of creating awareness of community forests, and Participatory Forest Management, and ultimately drafting policies that will promote and protect such forest programs.

Departing from Addis Ababa early on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>, a convoy of participants set out to Ginchi, about 80 km from Addis Ababa, on the road to Ambo. The first two days of workshops were held in Ginchi and the nearby Chilimo Forest. The last day was held at the Ghion Hotel in Addis Ababa. The entire event was a compilation of lectures, discussions, question and answer periods, and a field trip to a community owned forest within Chilimo Forest.

Playing host to the event, MELCA Mahiber is a local NGO that was designed to support sustainable forestry in Ethiopia. MELCA has various programs that promote forest industry that enhances the livelihoods of individuals, and educates forest users on the benefits of environmental and ecological conservation, all with the aim of reducing poverty meanwhile protecting one of earth's greatest natural resources, forests.

As one of the sponsors, Global Forest Coalition (GFC) is an international NGO headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and Asuncion, Paraguay. GFC organizes workshops that coordinate Participatory Forest Management (PFM), addressing forest degradation, and recommends policy options to government bodies. GFC works with local NGO's, government agencies, industry and other businesses in participating countries. Andrey Laletin, PhD, attended the meetings as GFC's representative. Heinrich Boll

Foundation generously contributed to the workshops, and has sponsored the publication and distribution of this workshop summary.

The participants included six standing committee members of the Federal Democratic Republic of House of People's Representatives from the Natural Resource and Environmental Affairs standing committee (SC), Agriculture and Rural Development Affairs SC, Pastoralist Affairs SC, Information and Culture Affairs SC, Administrative and Legal Affairs SC, and Trade and Industry Affairs SC. There were also participants from Wondogenet Forestry College, the Civil Service College, the Ethiopian Federal Forestry Research Center, Federal Institutions, and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.



## **EXPLANATION OF COMMUNITY FORESTS, DEFORESTATION AND DEGRADATION**

Community Forests gather members of a community and empower them in exploiting the resources a forest provides, all the while protecting the forests and adding value to the environmental benefits provided by them. PFM is the system of management whereby a community forest is managed by the members of the local community, and not by some external, remote governing body. This system enables the members of the local community to be the direct beneficiaries of the forests. In putting the responsibilities of oversight in the hands of those that live and work in the forests, efficiency and forest development rise to greater levels than those of forests managed by outside organizations. All of this slows or eliminates the process of deforestation, and creates jobs and industry, thus eliminating poverty within these communities.

Deforestation is a continual process of loss of forest cover by conversion or continuous thinning which does not replace or replenish existing forest cover. Deforestation has many direct, immediate impacts. Some are very obvious, such as the loss of wood to be used for building and wood fuel. Trees within forests provide shade for some agricultural crops, and are also home to many birds and animals. Not so immediately, however, deforestation will create poor soil conditions, leading to erosion and eventually desertification. These poor soil conditions prevent agriculture processes that grow crops that feed people. More indirectly, deforestation allows and creates pollution which has led to the global warming phenomenon.

Forest degradation is a process that erodes the highest and greatest use of forests to a level that may inhibit its sustainability and ultimately result in deforestation. One of the most common examples of forest degradation is the replacement of natural forests with plantation forests, whereas native species are overtaken by exotic trees that do not support the natural ecosystem of a particular region.

## **CONTENT OF THE MEETINGS**

During the three day workshop, three papers were presented. The presenters used handouts, power point presentations, and there were sessions for open discussion. The titles of the presentations were:

1. *Analyses Of Drivers Of Deforestation & Forest Degradation In Ethiopia*, by Dr. Mulugeta Lemeneh, Associate Professor, Wondogenet Forestry College,
2. *Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Ethiopia: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges*, by Mr. Tsegaye Taddese, Coordinator, Bale Eco-Region Sustainable project.
3. *Communal Ownership of Forests: The Legal Regime*, by Mr. Mellese Damtie, Lecturer, Civil Service College.

### **Day One:**

The sun was just peeking above the horizon as workshop participants gathered in Meskel Square and boarded their bus en route to Ginchi. Arriving in Ginchi about one and a half hours later, they were briefed as to the days' events, and settled in to breakfast and informal introductions. Moving out from Ginchi, the group went into the Chilimo Forest guest house and conference center. They were met with a surprise, as the bridge on the road to the facility certainly could not have supported a large vehicle full of passengers. Pursuing the spirit of nature preservation, the vehicles were unloaded, and the remainder of the journey was endured on foot. The Chilimo Forest visitor facilities was built during Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, and are found in the tranquil setting of the forest, amongst old growth trees and the sound of birds.

### **1.1. Introduction**

Befekadu Refera, Program Coordinator for MELCA, delivered welcoming and opening remarks. Batu Meskelu, General Manager of Finfine Forest Enterprises opened the meetings. Andre Leletin also

delivered opening remarks along with the keynote address, and introduced Global Forest Coalition.

## **1.2. Presentation 1**

Dr Mulugeta Limeneh, Associate Professor from Wendo Genet Forestry College addressed the underlying causes of deforestation in Ethiopia. Using a Power Point slide presentation, he analyzed the drivers of deforestation and degradation in Ethiopia.

### **1.2.1. Overview**

Forests are extraordinary resources in that they provide for household income, maintain numerous ecosystems that support our planet, and provide for various economic sectors within society. Particularly in Ethiopia, forests are depended upon heavily. Ethiopia has, throughout its long history, been an agricultural society. Today, the forests within the country provide for the extensive livestock population, and protect the rugged landscape, and thus provide watershed and soil protection. As Ethiopia has a largely rural population, and a great portion of the people do not have access to electricity or other energy sources, 96% of energy in Ethiopia comes from forests, in the form of wood fuel, mostly for cooking and heating.

Because forest statistics in Ethiopia are unreliable, and there are no historical or contemporary forest records, there is little clarity in the forestry data, thus creating confusion for those involved in the sector. This has lead to the lack of attention given by policy makers. Now there is a drive to provide reliable statistics in order to create awareness and develop policies that will benefit forestry.

Between 1885 and 1985, there had been massive deforestation. According to the most reliable sources, in just 100 years, the amount of forest cover in Ethiopia had decreased to below 4%. Between 1985 and today, there has been further deforestation and degradation. Between 1990 and 2000, deforestation was sustained at an average

annual rate of about 1%. Some areas, such as the Awassa catchment, have seen rates as high as 2.5%.

Many factors contribute to this massive deforestation (see Table 1). Direct causes are those that harvest resources from the forest, or have an immediate impact on forests. The most obvious are harvesting fuel wood and logging. Clearing forests for agriculture and grazing, expansion of rural areas and villages into forest regions and forest fires are major factors in deforestation. There are also many indirect causes of deforestation that need to be addressed. Population growth and development often encroach on forest land, creating demand for the areas they are contained in, as well as a overstressing the resource capacity of forests, adding to forest depletion. This demand of space can be for living, or expanding agricultural crops. While both the poor and the wealthy contribute to deforestation, they do so for different gains. The poor often exploit forest resources for an absence of other choices. Left with seemingly no alternatives, the poor may migrate to forest lands, and rely solely on what is provided there. An increase in human population in forests will not permit reforestation, as the new inhabitants will use trees as building materials and wood fuel, with little regard to replacing what was used.

Poverty being as extensive as it is in Ethiopia, there is a large impact from this segment of the population on Ethiopia's forests. There are solutions; however, some of these may not be economically feasible. In order to relieve poverty, there must be sustainable development. Without this, people will tend to do what they must to survive, regardless of the environmental impact. Alternatives to destructive forestry practices can contribute to the livelihoods of people that rely on forests. Resettlement of course is another option. But there is often social resistance to being removed from one's home, and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Resettlement can be a viable option if the population is provided with a source of income, and basic services. Community ownership of forests will put the responsibility of forest management in the hands of those that dwell in them, as well as giving

the inhabitants the benefits of the forest. Aside from community forests, investment opportunities have presented themselves as opportunities for job creation and agricultural expansion. Coupled with local ownership of forests, this can facilitate an environment of poverty alleviation and environmental conservation.

Natural forests in Ethiopia belong to the state. Although the state owns the forests, it did not put in place an effective institution to oversee the use and management of the forests. Because of this, there is seemingly open access to forest exploitation – for wood, and even for conservation. The uncertainty of forest ownership lies in the idea that one day the forest land may be open to claims. Since individuals that rely on forest resources do not see a future in their livelihoods, they will tend to exploit the forests to their maximum potential. There is an idea that if an individual does not reap the benefits of the forest, someone else will, leaving them with nothing. In a society that lacks control over forest land, deforestation becomes a system of acquiring land. Forests owned and managed collectively by communities and the government can be the most effective method of forestry.

There were suggestions presented for multidimensional policy reform.

- Forestry should be made to support economic growth. Forestry should include both the economic as well as environmental sector.
- Forests should be developed and owned by individuals. Policies need to be in place to provide incentives for such ownership.
- Animal husbandry needs revolution and rapid evolution toward quality, improved and controlled grazing systems.
- Alternative energy provisions need to include subsidies for the high cost of electricity. This can include such things as the purchase and installment of solar panels.
- Effective institutional frameworks need to be put in place, including infrastructure and education.

### **1.3. Presentation 2**

The second case study concerned Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Ethiopia and its achievements, opportunities and challenges, and was presented by Mr. Tsegaye Tadesse. Tsegaye is the coordinator of Bale Eco Region Sustainable Management, FARM-Africa. He used a Power Point slide show and revealed several examples of PFM in Ethiopia and abroad.

#### **1.3.1. Overview**

There are several Participatory Forest Management (PFM) projects and programs in place now in Ethiopia, covering a total area of over 140,000 hectares (see Table 2). These projects can be found mostly in the Oromia Region, but also in Bale and Southern Nation Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS). Each PFM program involves all the stakeholders in the decision making process. There is an integration of traditional practices and modern techniques. Forest blocks are allocated to forest dwellers. Sanctions are put in place for those that do not comply with laws and regulations within the program. Revenue that is generated is shared between the Forest User Groups (FUG) and the government.

*Table 1: PFM Sites in Ethiopia*

Project/Programme by	Region	Forest site	Area (ha)	# of groups
FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel	Oromia	Chilimo	4,944	4 groups, 8 coops, 1 Union
		Bonga	8,950	18 groups, 4 coops
	Oromia	Liban, Araro and Yabalo	80,066	3 sites
	Oromia	Bale Mountains	> 600,000	In the process of being setup
GTZ	Oromia	Adaba-Dodola	36,000	77 groups. 6 coops, 1 union
	Oromia	Mojo	2,000	65 groups
JICA	Oromia	Bolote Gara	1,252	2 groups
NTFP-RD	SNNP	Masha	7,645	7 PLCs
FAO	SNNP	Kafa Zone	?	In the process of being setup
Total			140,857	

**FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel PFM unit**

These PFM programs have had a positive effect on different aspects of the forests. In Chilimo, for example, there has been a 150% increase in regeneration density, as well as more modest increases in other areas, in contrast to noticeable deforestation in areas outside project areas. Demarcated areas have been maintained, showing a respect for forest boundaries. Seedlings have been raised in some of the areas, enriching replanting programs. These seedlings (both indigenous and exotic species) have helped to treat previously degraded forests. Through education, some harmful practices have been discontinued.

There has been an increase and a reappearance of wildlife in program areas, as evidenced by the occurrence in number and diversity of species surveyed over several years of project management. Owing in part both to improved demarcation methods and stronger enforcement of regulations, encroachments on forest land and unauthorized livestock grazing has been reduced. The protection of the forests by the users, and the rights of ownership has greatly reduced the incidence of forest fires. Because of the greater involvement of interested parties, there has been a reduction of the burden to the government. All of this is proof positive that PFM has a great impact on the environment, and as we will see, on civil society.

More studies and statistics are needed to quantify evidence of the impact of PFM on the livelihoods of members. In general terms, there has been an increase in employment in the form of guards, livestock providers, guides, and indirectly through village employment. There has been an increase in wood product revenue, all the while observing sustainable practices. Ultimately, as the programs evolve and develop, there will be emerging opportunities through trophy hunting, forest product certification, and carbon trading revenue. Beyond the direct economic impact, local owners are empowered and have increased their property ownership rights. The people within PFM projects have greater access to necessary services, and have thus reduced their vulnerability.

As individuals reap the benefits of the PFM projects, society as a whole will begin to prosper as well. There will be a realization of the rights of individuals within the local community, and a mutual respect will be built between these people and the forest authorities. Through this cooperation will develop organized action, and a forum for other endeavors. Because the local community has a role in facilitating and controlling their environment and source of livelihood, there will be a sense of tolerance and understanding amongst the people that will contribute to a stable society. Through benefit sharing, quality of life will improve as incomes increase. Community infrastructure has



improved in the form of schools, medical clinics and other facilities. Through existing PFM projects, it is clear that communities are capable of sustaining them, and that there are indeed benefits to both participants and the environment. There is further evidence of the success of PFM that can be found outside Ethiopia. Considering the results of protectionist practices prior to implementing PFM in Ethiopia, these new methods of sharing responsibilities and rewards are far more effective. With the potential of opportunities mentioned earlier, PFM will improve, and provide even more to the communities as time goes on.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of forestry, and community forest programs. With land use changes comes deforestation; with deforestation comes climate change and its impact on food security and human health. Millennium tree planting initiatives have had a positive impact to counter the negative effects of deforestation. However, PFM and community involvement in forestry generates the greatest amount of enthusiasm amongst participants, and thus has a greater impact, and one with a more lasting affect. Several government bodies, acting in cooperation with NGO's and independent institutions are working to establish PFM in various areas, and providing assistance and protection when and where necessary.

All of this progress is not without its hurdles and challenges. Some NGO's such as GTZ and FARM-Africa/SOS have phased out from projects that they had sponsored and oversaw, resulting in a decrease in forestry activity and less support and protection. There is a fear amongst community members and outside observers that things will not continue as they had previously. Creating exit strategies that will allow these programs to be self sufficient is imperative, particularly prior to the departure of outside support. Despite the enthusiasm, there has not been a single attempt to initiate PFM amongst any community; all PFM programs receive external support. Because of this, some view PFM as a "donor driven" idea, and it is not taken

seriously as an option for conservation. Amongst policy makers, there is very little support for forest management decentralization. There is sometimes difficulty integrating PFM into existing systems, resulting in phasing out of some projects, and disorganization.

The greatest obstacles may come from conflicts and the potential for conflicts that exist, and the absence of support from law enforcement. Insufficiently marked, not gazetted and improperly demarcated boundaries can encourage encroachment, and occasionally a free-for-all amongst outsiders. There is now a Federal Forestry Policy and a revised Forest Proclamation. These need to be elaborated in order to provide for communal forests. When law enforcement bodies do not provide sufficient protection for the communities, land use rights are infringed upon. Often there is a lack of knowledge of laws and proclamations, and communities cannot benefit from this legislation.

In order to strengthen PFM, the government, NGO's and other stakeholders must work together, evaluate current practices and implement improved methods. There must be a general consensus on the objectives of PFM among professionals and policy makers. It must be the aim of policy makers throughout Ethiopia to rehabilitate and maintain forests, and to improve the livelihoods of forest dependent communities. The central government must relinquish some of the control of forests to local communities. There must be not only laws and proclamations, but guidelines for implementation. NGO's and other sponsors must standardize and harmonize their approaches to PFM. Due to the high cost of advisors, parallel structures, and complex processes, there is a large financial impact for current projects; these costs must be reduced. Project supervisory agencies should work closely with their local community counterparts, and not act as employees of the communities. Finally, there must be an effective exit strategy in place, with timelines, in order to release projects from external support, and allow them to run exclusively by the participating communities. As more projects develop nationwide, there will be greater support amongst the PFM communities, which

will expand to integrate them with other regular forestry related activities.

### 1.4. Presentation 3

Mr. Mellesse Damtie is a lecturer at the Civil Service College, Law Faculty, in Addis Ababa. He brought a presentation analyzing the existing legislations, policies, and arrangements supporting communal ownership of forests, titled *Communal Ownership of Forests: The Legal Regime*.



Right to Left: Ato Befekadu Refera, Ato Tsegaye Tadesse, Dr. Mulugeta Limenih, Ato Mellese Damtie

#### 1.4.1. Overview

There are values in forests that are not limited to economic benefits. For some, there is a psychological and emotional attachment to the forests, as they may have lived there all their lives, or sense some security or serenity within the forest. For others, a respect for life is nurtured within forests. Forests are homes to countless species of land animals, birds, plants, and even microorganisms that many people count as precious forms of life. It is largely due to this, along with reaping financial rewards, that forest management by local communities is so successful. Many critics will agree that PFM is less

costly, more efficient and sustainable, and presents a long term solution to forest management. There are many examples of successful forest communities to support this.

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia contains clauses relating to land ownership, and ultimately ownership of the natural resources contained on the land. Along with the Constitution, the Federal Government has issued proclamations in support of land ownership rights. Article 40 of the Constitution proclaims that land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and is not subject to sale or other means of exchange. That being said, communities should be protected in their access to forests in which they live. Proclamation no. 456 of 2007 authorizes communal ownership of forests, wherein rural land is given to local communities for livestock grazing, forestry and other social services. This proclamation sets a precedent for communal forestry. Other laws under the constitution do not recognize communal rights over land and forests as widely as the constitution. However, that does not mean that these laws prohibit the rights of communities to own and use forest resources through their customary ways of management.

According to Article 40 (3) of the Constitution, *“The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange.”* This provision clearly shows that land is the common property of the State and the Ethiopian people. That is the State and the Ethiopian people jointly own land and other natural resources. Even if the details of how the joint ownership is going to be governed are in a separate law, the Constitution, in Sub-Article 6 of same article provides that *“Without prejudice to the right of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples to the ownership of land, government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of*

*payment arrangements established by law. Particulars shall be determined by law.*” This clearly indicates that land is administered by the government in the interest of the Ethiopian people.

Despite the clauses and proclamations that seem to support communal forestry, there is a degree of legal uncertainty. Article 5(3) of the Constitution states “*Government being the owner of rural land, communal rural landholdings can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary*”. Proclamation no. 542 of 2007 (the Forest Proclamation) does not mention communal ownership of forests, only private and state ownership is mentioned. The Federal Rural Land Proclamation shows a sense of denying the communal land ownership to the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. Owing to the apparent discrepancy, courts must intervene and interpret the laws so as to uphold the Constitution and protect its citizens. It is absurd for a country that has recognized the right of its peoples, as distinct nationalities within a country, to secede, when it denies a right as simple as communal land ownership.

As various international human rights as well as environmental instruments recognize it, one of the cultural rights of local communities is the recognition of their attachment with land and territories, which includes the natural resources attached to land. One international convention states that “*Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard. Moreover, they have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.*” Ethiopia, even if did not ratify this document (amongst others), has never objected the respect of such rights. It has even incorporated these rights in its Constitution. It can, therefore be argued that Ethiopia has a moral obligation to implement the rights of local communities enshrined, at least, in the International Labor

Organization (ILO) Convention. Moreover, Ethiopia is party to the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which incorporates provisions related to the rights of local communities to their environment. Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obliges state's parties to recognize knowledge of local communities. The contents of this provision are read as follows: *"Each contracting party, subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices."*

Some regions have laws and proclamations that give protection to community forests. Oromia Region Proclamation no. 56 of 2002 recognizes the customary right of access to land for communities. Proclamation no. 72 of 2003 recognizes communal forest ownership. SNNPRS Proclamation no. 110 of 2007 acknowledges and defines the communal landholding system as under the common use of a local community. Furthermore, the local community has the right to use non-timber forest products (NTFP) under state owned forests. These regions have taken the lead in providing legal protection for communal forest ownership.

Environmental and biodiversity policies underline the significance of the role of local communities in the management and conservation of forests and biodiversity. Nonetheless, these communities and their communal forests come under the threat of reallocation and redistribution programs. There must be greater clarity in laws so as to protect all forests, whether state or community owned and managed, all the while also furthering the interests of other private parties to maximize land use to its greatest potential. Moreover, the Ethiopian laws seem to have adopted the principle of *terra nullius*, by which lands which are not occupied have no owner and the government can

give them to anyone whom it thinks necessary. As the word “*unoccupied*” is not defined under these laws, there is a fear that it may include community forests.

The only serious penalty from the federal government against an offender in relation to crimes against forests is for those who set fire in forests, and to forest resources. Forest advocates point out weak judiciary support for forestry and community forests. During the visit to the Chilimo Forest, the community chairperson was telling the group that the community has lost hope in the justice system and started to take their own actions against forest encroachers. However, Oromia forest law is imposing severe penalties on offenders who violate any of the prohibited activities under its proclamations.

Experiences from around the world show that forests managed and protected by the local communities are more productive economically, as well as ecologically. The same is true in Ethiopia. Even if forests are designated as “protected forests”, they are dwindling as the government is unable to effectively stop encroachers and expansion of agriculture into the forest areas. Private investors are not that attracted to join the forestry sector as it takes longer for a return on investment. Even if private investors involve in the forestry sector, it could be very difficult for them to develop the real forest; often they are only creating a monoculture plantation, referred to by many as “green deserts”.

There are several recommendations that should be considered to give communities the rights to their own lands, and allow them a degree of control over access and use of resources:

1. The concerned government organs such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Environmental Protection Authority and Institute for Biodiversity Conservation must work together in the spirit of coordination and organize local people in

customary or other forms of associations to develop community forestry. NGOs must also be actively involved in this work.

2. The legislative organs of the Federal Government and the Regional States must remove the concept of *terra nullius* from the legal documents as it could pose danger for big forests which are managed and protected by communities. Moreover, these organs must think of removing from the legal documents the ideas of confiscating community landholdings and community forests for the purpose of distributing them to private individuals.
3. Experience has proved that there is a gross reluctance in the justice administration institutions regarding offences on the country's precious forests. Courts of law particularly have a big responsibility in applying the law and fighting against deforestation and loss of biodiversity. They must do their part to protect this vital part of Ethiopia.

### **1.5. Question and Answer**

After the three presentations were completed, there was a brief break, where the participants were able to share their thoughts and observations, and see a bit of the forest where the workshop was held. A question and answer session followed, with input from participants, and the presenters responding.

#### **1.5.1. Overview of Question and Answer Session**

*How will MELCA Mahiber relate to other organizations to resolve deforestation?*

MELCA Mahiber has three major programs. The first concerns environmental education (SEGNI) and community work including soil and water conservation and tree nursery site management and rehabilitation of degraded areas. This program is conducted around Bale Mountains National Park and Suba forest. The second program is policy level forest advocacy, conducted around Sheka forest and also in the federal government. The third is advocacy work on "Seed



diversity and no Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)" Campaign. This program is conducted throughout Ethiopia. MELCA also cooperates with organizations to host workshops and training sessions aimed at promoting community forestry, community and environmental rights and on environmental related issues both at the federal and regional levels.

***What alternative is there to the use of wood fuel for the communities as a source of cooking and heating fuel? What can communities do in lieu of using wood fuel?***

Alternative sources of energy (renewable sources) can be used to produce electric energy to replace the use of wood fuel for cooking, heating, etc. The government should also subsidize the cost of electricity to make it affordable for rural communities. In order for renewable energy sources to be effective in replacing wood fuel, power generation sources must also be affordable and used properly. For example, with the current prohibitively high import duties on solar panels, solar energy cannot replace wood fuel because of its high cost of purchase and installation. Tariffs on equipment that benefits society must be drastically reduced or eliminated.

***While introducing community forests, will indigenous people be involved in planning and development, or will these forests be directed from outside sources?***

As mentioned previously, the aim of community forestry is to place all responsibilities, control and benefits of the forests in the hands of the communities. It is imperative to incorporate indigenous knowledge in growing and developing PFM. As is seen through current programs and projects, these are also the most effective and efficient community forests.

***If the forests are not cut to place food crops, what will the communities rely on for a food source?***

It is critical that improved agricultural methods are practiced by communities to maximize the resources they have, including water,

soil, and the surrounding environment, be it forests or other landscapes. The higher use of resources will not only help preserve forests and other natural resources, but will also result in higher crop yields and more efficient farming.

***Agriculture is being expanded at the expense of the forests. It is not the government's position that this happens, and yet it does. Why?***

The main government policy is in line with agriculture, and supports it above forestry, as agriculture is and has been through history the major source of livelihood for the majority of Ethiopians. Forestry policy was initially formed under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, however this ministry has since been absorbed by the Ministry of Agriculture. When this happened, forestry policy became a lower priority than agricultural policy; the highest priority is food security through the expansion of agriculture.

***What is the problem with draining wetlands?***

Wetland conservation is vital for the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life-support systems. Wetlands perform these functions in various ways; some maintain and improve water quality, some regulate flows to reduce flooding and may augment late summer stream flows, and some recharge groundwater supply. Wetlands are important as reproduction and staging areas for migratory birds, as spawning and nursery grounds for fish, and as habitat for many invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and plants. Wetlands also play an essential role in maintaining and preserving genetic diversity for wildlife populations, providing key habitat for diverse fauna and flora. Wetlands are home to about one third of the wildlife species that have been identified as endangered, threatened or rare. Moreover, wetlands also support substantial tourism and recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, bird watching and nature photography.

In general, wetlands are almost as important as forests. They provide water filtration, and are a source of water for agriculture and livestock grazing during dry season. Ultimately, the presence of wetlands is a

significant part of an ecosystem, and draining them would cause an undue ecological imbalance.

***In Ethiopia forest law, there is a provision to take forest lands to be redistributed for expansion of other industries or housing. Is there a benefit in this for economic development?***

It is quite possible that there are economic benefits of deforestation to expand agriculture and housing, but the environmental and social impacts must be surveyed and studied to weigh the benefits. However, there is no extensive environmental impact assessment system in place in Ethiopia. At the end of the day, financial impact studies most likely have the greatest influence on government decisions. Beyond the immediate, direct economic impact of forests, and deforestation, there are many underlying factors that weigh in a forest's economic contributions to society. Forests are major sources of water and water retention, and host vast amounts of wildlife. Forests also prevent soil erosion and degradation, which directly benefit the agricultural sector.

***How much have our laws incorporated traditional ecological knowledge?***

The Constitution allows the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia a certain degree of self preservation and self rule. In reality, there needs to be more protection of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to sustain their own forests. Often, forest laws are concentrated within the Federal Government, which overlook some traditional forestry practices.

***What prevents widespread implementation of community forestry?***

At one time there was local ownership of forests. The government eventually redistributed these lands, removing the sense of ownership that once belonged to communities. At this point, people began overexploiting the resources of the forests in order to satisfy their immediate needs. Redistribution policies and trends of overexploitation must be reversed in order to implement community forestry.

*Is there much arable land available for agricultural expansion that will not negatively affect forests?*

This must also be addressed in environmental impact studies. Before deforestation occurs for any purpose, an alternative must first be sought and evaluated.

**1.6. Chilimo Community Forest Visit**

Setting high in the mountains above Ginchi, beyond the conference center where the workshop was held, is a community forest operated exclusively by the members of the local community. After a pleasant lunch and thorough discussions of the morning meetings, the workshop participants boarded their bus and enjoyed the view of the surrounding forest while the bus labored its way to the site of the



**Participants visiting the forest**

communal forest. Tessema Chekore, chairman of the forest, and other forest representatives welcomed the visitors, introduced the program they are involved in, and fielded questions.

**1.6.1. Overview**

The community owned portion of Chilimo Forest was established in 1994, under the administration and sponsorship of FARM Africa, which was alarmed by dangerously destructive practices in the forest.

Initially, FARM Africa gave training sessions in the community, in the hopes that education would prevent widespread destruction, and reverse some of the damage already caused. This eventually led to the formation of the communal forest, which now boasts 138 members; besides this one, there are twelve different cooperatives around Chilimo Forest. Two years ago, a set of bylaws and regulations were drafted and adopted by the community, and amongst the cooperatives. According to one, for every tree that is cut, fifteen trees are planted to replace it, and there is a follow up mechanism in place to assure that successful seedlings receive the nurture and protection they need. The forest block is divided into different groups, and divided in areas and managed by different cooperatives. Amongst the blocks there is one for eco-tourism, one for forest homes, and others. Currently, income from the forest for members and workers in the cooperatives ranges from 70-600 birr per individual. The forest has shown great success over the years, not only from income generation and job creation, but also from improvements in the quality of life and its very positive impact on the environment.

#### **1.6.2. Question and answer session**

*What are some of the challenges you faced during the establishment of PFM?*

Educating the community as to the benefits of a communally owned and managed forest, and trying to break old, destructive habits was a major obstacle. Preventing outside individuals from their continual exploitation of our forest also hampered our initial efforts.

*There has been a great effort along with great success in conservation and progress of the forest. However, as the visitors traveled to our site, we noticed much land that was still not covered by trees. What are you doing to spread the growth of the forest?*

As mentioned previously, the PFM has aggressive measures in place to promote new tree growth. There is an on-site nursery that raises

seedlings and a portion of these seedlings are placed in the open spaces you see in the forest.

***What have the cooperatives done to diversify the income of its members?***

Obviously, our forest receives income from direct wood product revenue such as wood for fuel, construction materials, among other things. We also promote eco tourism, which promises to be a growing industry. The nurseries raise a large number of seedlings, often more than we use here, and there are proceeds from the sale of these seedlings to outside parties. There are various crops that are raised, and these crop efforts are in line with the forest conservation measures we have in place. The diversity of crops are not only a food source for our communities, but are also sold to generate income.



**A Community member explaining about the need of the forest**

***What are some of the challenges the community has faced?***

There is poor legal implementation when illegal forest users are captured and put in front of judges and the police. The legal system demands eye witnesses and evidence which is not easily obtainable. Furthermore, there is a lack of willingness from judiciary bodies to implement the criminal code on illegal forest users. There has been little cooperation from government line departments in supporting the community forest initiatives.

## **Day Two**

Gathering for dinner at their hotel in Ginchi, the workshop participants shared their experiences and thoughts of the day, and as the sun set and the night grew cold, the first day of meetings drew to a close. The morning of November 26 was welcomed by all as they ate breakfast and focused their thoughts on the group discussions that would highlight the second day of workshops in the Chilimo Forest. Having trekked back to the visitor's center in the forest, the participants broke out into four groups, and prepared a presentation for the entire group at the conclusion.

### **2.1. Group One Discussion Overview**

*What are the underlying causes of forest destruction and land degradation, and what message can be delivered to decision makers?*

There is a great deal of pressure from rising populations and overpopulation on forests. In order to reduce the impact, there needs to be greater family planning services, such as formal education of female services. These services to women must also be accessible to the users. Population issues must be integrated with environmental policy.



**Participants on discussion**

Because impoverished populations rely so heavily on natural resources, there must be greater diversity of income streams to reduce the demand of forestry amongst the poor. Aside from wood products, there are other sources of income from forestry, such as honey, wildlife and tourism, and there must be efforts to assist the poor in exploiting these alternatives. As is sometimes the case, communities within forests are resettled, creating an absence of generating income. When resettlement is necessary, the resettled populations should be offered alternative forms of income generation, and reeducation programs should be in place to assist.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) should be undertaken prior to investment projects within forest areas. Although investment is necessary for economic development, there should be measures in place to be sure that investment does not create undue damage to forests, and create long term devastation that will be a detriment to future benefits derived from forestry. An effective EIA policy must be in effect to evaluate all aspects of investments, and their related impact on the environment. Along with this, there must be a thorough inventory of forests, containing types and density of trees as well as wildlife species.

## **2.2. Group Two Discussion Overview**

*What potential and good practices can address the underlying causes of deforestation, according to the experiences of the Chilimo Joint Forest Management Center and the local community?*

A strong community commitment to conservation and protection of forests can deter deforestation. This commitment can be attained through efficient and transparent leadership, along with an effective associational structure within community forests. Diversified livelihood practices such as horticulture and traditional irrigation, and credit provisions will develop enterprise within communities. When community forests distribute resources fairly and utilize resources properly, unnecessary and wasteful destruction of forests will be a



thing of the past. Training, education and sharing experiences will strengthen communities' abilities to preserve forests, and ultimately, their livelihoods. Aside from this, NGOs need to implement a strategy to phase out of community forests, and develop a time line that gives sufficient time to relevant stakeholders to take over complete control of PFM projects.

### **2.3. Group Three Discussion Overview**

*How can advocacy be strengthened to influence government to address forest degradation and deforestation, as well as community forest ownership in Ethiopia?*

First of all, and maybe most importantly, there must be a greater awareness that forest resources can be exhausted if not used sustainably.

Guidelines, rules and regulations must be prepared in a way that incorporates community forest provisions. Forest policy should be reviewed in light of community forests. There are countless examples of achievements and opportunities along with challenges from existing community forests, and lessons to be learned from PFM projects. Brochures and policy briefs can compare community forests with alternatives in terms of maintaining healthy functioning forests. This includes information regarding income generation activities and energy saving technology.

Governments can work together with PFM in managing community forests, all the while recognizing traditional cultural aspects of forestry in policies, strategies, programs and projects. It should be stressed to policy makers that forests provide a significant means to poverty elimination.

The Sheka Community Forest is one of many success stories of traditional community forest preservation. There had been a

traditional community forestry arrangement in place prior to intervention. The community leadership was attached to the forest through their culture and spiritual practices. The Sheka community had been based on nature through their medical practices and income sources. The Derg regime had disturbed the community, and had removed some of this adherence to traditional practices; the community, however, recovered these practices after the downfall of the regime. MELCA is working for the revival this traditional natural conservation system with the cooperation of the Sheka local community and clan leaders. This experience may give a lesson for forest advocacy in other parts of the country.

#### **2.4. Group Four Discussion Overview**

*Identify points that are important for strengthening existing legislation, policies and arrangements that support communal ownership of forests.*

The Constitution of Ethiopia gives very loose provisions for communal forests through its granting of self-preservation of the diverse groups of people within the country. Regional and local governments can have greater influence over community forests by enacting land administration policies that cater to their constituency. This can include arrangements in enterprises, management of forests, and organizing the community and forest associations. Applying customary laws that suit traditional practices can achieve greater success on the local level, in contrast to broad, national applications. NGOs can contribute by hosting workshops for stakeholders such as police, public prosecutors, judges and legislators. An effort to mainstream environmental issues into all sectors will provide the attention forestry needs to show its value in society. Integrating traditional ecological knowledge into school curriculum will provide students with lessons in culture and the historical significance of forestry in Ethiopia.

## **2.5. Group Discussion Presentations**

At the conclusion of the group discussions, and presentations of highlighted points, time was allotted to formulate a resolution to propose policy to be delivered to policy makers.

### **2.5.1. Workshop Participants Composing the Resolution**

#### **I. From The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, House of Peoples Representatives:**

1. Natural Resource and Environmental Affairs standing Committee members
2. Agriculture and Rural Development Affairs standing Committee members
3. Pastoralist Affairs standing Committee members
4. Administrative and Legal Affairs standing Committee members
5. Trade and Industry Affairs standing Committee members
6. Information and Cultural Affairs standing Committee members

#### **II. From Wondogenet and Civil Service Colleges:**

Lecturers

#### **III. From Ethiopian Forestry Research Center:**

Manager

#### **IV. From Federal, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regions:**

State Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau Heads

#### **V. From Oromia Forest Supervisory Agency and Finfine Forest Enterprise:**

Bureau Managers

**VI. From Bale, Sheka, Sebeta and Holeta**

1. Agriculture and Rural Development office workers
2. Community forest representatives

**VII. Representatives from six Non-Governmental Environmental Organizations**

**2.5.2. Proposed Workshop Resolution**

1. Intensive awareness raising activities should be organized for law executers, implementers and judiciary bodies on policies, proclamations and regulations with regard to forest and natural conservation both at the federal and regional levels.
2. Currently, population pressure is a threat to environmental conservation in Ethiopia. In addition to this, some environmental conservation initiatives are not coordinated with population and health measures. Hence, it would be conducive to integrate population, health and environment (PHE) activities, and follow up the implementation process.
3. The forestry sector plays a great role in poverty alleviation and remains one of the best options for the economic growth of the country (GDP). In addition to this, a strategy should be developed to intensify community and government joint forest management and show its vast economic value when jointly administered by local communities.
4. Investment activity must be aligned with and complement non-timber forest resources like eco-tourism or forest agriculture.
5. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) must be conducted for investment that is planned around forest areas

6. To recognize the current state of Ethiopian forests, a forest inventory should be conducted. After the inventory, based on the results, it is possible to organize the forest management plan for sustainable conservation and utilization.
7. At both the federal and regional levels, there must be an emphasis on having stable and workable organizational structures.
8. For those investors who are interested in the forestry sector, special incentive mechanisms for conservation efforts should be provided. These incentives would follow the EIA process.
9. Forests that are administered by local community and by participatory forest management members should be provided rights and technical as well as material support for conservation and sustainable utilization.
10. Policies, proclamations and regulations that are formulated both at federal and regional level should be prepared and put in practice immediately. Regulations and guidelines that are in place must be enforced, and affected communities should be made aware of them.
11. The role of traditional ecological knowledge and customary laws that are important for conservation of forest should receive legal recognition and enforcement by respective government organizations to encourage the best implementation.



**Participants of the Workshop**

### Day Three

Two long days of meetings, lectures, question and answer sessions, field observations, and sharing drew to a close in Ginchi. A group of tired participants said goodbye to the forest, boarded their vehicles and drove back to Addis Ababa. The third day of the workshop would convene at the Ghion Hotel, a landmark in the heart of the Ethiopian capital. Along with most of the participants from the first two days of meetings, new members would join for some presentations, a review of the previous two days, and the presentation of the Workshop Resolution that was formed the day before.

Befekadu Refera welcomed the participants and introduced the workshop as well as the itinerary for the day. His Excellence Mr. Getachew Tselko, the FDRE House of People's Representatives Agriculture standing committee chairman gave opening remarks, and



**Right to Left: Ato Getachew Tselko and Andre Laletin**

expressed hope for the resolution brought by the workshop. Prof Andre Laletin introduced the Global Forest Coalition, and shared with the guests the impact the organization has through workshops that are held around the world. He also expressed great hope that the results of the workshop will be distributed and the workshop resolution will be formed and enforced.

The first three sessions of the third day were the presentations given the first day of the workshop: The underlying causes of deforestation in Ethiopia; Exploring the merits and setbacks of existing PFM; and analyzing existing legislation, policy and arrangements supporting communal ownership of forests. The content of these presentations can be found in the contents of day one. Following this, there was extensive discussion and a question and answer session.

### **3.1. Discussion on Presented Papers and Question and Answer session**

Mr. Tesfaye Teshome from the Civil Service College expressed his appreciation for MELCA Mahiber for their service to the community and forestry, and urged them to institute expanded environmental and family planning programs. This would compliment the current programs in place, and would strengthen their support for forestry. He continued by emphasizing the need to improve the use and distribution of electric power as a means to substitute wood and bio mass fuel by the majority of the population.

Dr Girma Amente (Oromia Forest Supervisory Agency Manager) also thanked MELCA for their efforts and for organizing the workshop. Dr Girma stressed the need for definitive forestry statistics to evaluate its impact on the GDP of Ethiopia. There must be a satisfactory method for collecting and analyzing data in order to influence legislation. There is a general discussion on the environment, but needs to be refined in order to address specific concerns. For example, Ethiopian Electric Power Company (EEPCO) exploits the hydro electric potential in Ethiopia. While water is a major source of electricity, EEPCO does nothing to contribute to the preservation of the environment with a vision of a lasting source of electric power. Furthermore, tea and other crop plantations are often placed within the bounds of natural forests. Some of these crops degrade existing forests; they must therefore be placed on communal lands, or existing farms and crop areas.



Mr. Tadesse Galgelo (from the House of People's Representatives) asked how a resettlement program would best suit forestry. There is plenty of tree planting activity, yet there is a problem with many of these seedlings growing. Mr. Tadesse asked the presenters why the tree growth is a problem.

Mr. Girma Kelboro (Wendo Genet College of Forestry) pointed out that the Oromia Forest Enterprise is the regional agency authorized to address forestry. The Enterprise has some priority areas, but some of the areas lie outside of the agency's scope of support. What support can the Enterprise deliver to these areas? Also within the Enterprise's jurisdiction are other forestry organizations. What relationship do these parties have with one another, and how can they work with other non-forestry organizations?

### **3.1.1. Responses from Presenters**

Federal forestry law differs greatly from Oromia Region law in that the Oromia Region has prioritized forestry, and has given a lot of support to communal forests and PFM. The Region has very positive experiences in communal forests, and seeks to reap the benefits they provide. The federal government has only two definitions of forests-individual and state owned, giving no provision for community forests. That being said, the Oromia Region is not without their limitations. There is only a small portion of the population involved in community forestry, although the region has plans to expand this involvement.

There have been numerous workshops focused on the value of natural forests, not only economic value, but also social and environmental value. Policy makers and legislators are invited to these workshops, but often they do not attend. Forestry advocates are the organizers, but the policy makers are the people that have a direct impact on the legislation that affects forestry, and involved communities. The forestry advocates are trying to present the value of forests in all

aspects in order to influence administrators to add value to them. As a general rule in Ethiopia, land use policy is vague. There are many areas within the country are not utilized for their maximum potential, whether it is forestry or agriculture. More clearly defined land use policy is imperative in suiting all sectors of society affected by the environment. Land use planning covers aspects from forestry to investment to grazing and beyond. Furthermore, there must be policies that align with traditional practices of different peoples in order to preserve their way of life, as well as utilize their methods of conservation. All of these regulations, proclamations, laws and policies must be thoroughly evaluated, and studied through practical measures.

One of the major problems with the tree seedling planting program is the overemphasis on planting, with little emphasis on the growth of trees. Planting seedlings is a noble practice, but without care, the majority of seedlings will never mature, vast areas of seedlings will fall prey to the elements, and potential forest areas will never be realized. Teaching communities the value of mature trees and forests will encourage them to nurture the seedlings to maturity, creating the desired end result- a natural forest.

In response to questions about the Oromia Forest Enterprise, it was noted that the Enterprise is working closely with various NGOs, MELCA included. It is also seeking cooperation with other sectors of the government for mutual support. With this network of support and cooperation, the Enterprise ultimately hopes to extend its influence over a greater geographical area, and spanning a greater breadth of society.

### **3.1.2. Afternoon General Discussion**

The meeting broke for lunch, and yet another opportunity for the participants to socialize and share their thoughts and ideas. The afternoon of the second workshop offered a time for one last general

discussion and question and answer session about the presentations and the resolution.

### **3.1.3. General Discussion Overview**

As there is much discussion regarding the impact of investment on forestry, members of the investment community should have a role in forestry workshops, His Excellence Mr. Seid Mohammed from the House of People's Representatives pointed out. There is valuable input they can share, and the potential for a harmonious working relationship exists between the forestry sector and the investment sector. Befekadu Refera clarified that investors have participated in previous workshops, and a keen interest and willingness was shown on their part to integrate their business pursuits with environmental conservation efforts.

Dr Mulugeta reiterated the poor statistical data surrounding forestry. There is a general idea of sizes of forests, and the species they contain. Precise data is unavailable, due to a weak database structure, and little support from authorities to pursue the collection of statistics. Strengthening forest statistics will provide necessary information for advocates to push for greater conservation measures. Generalities are often unconvincing.

Watershed areas are a significant part of ecosystems. As mentioned earlier, watersheds work in tandem with forests in carbon storage, water retention, and providing for agriculture and wildlife. Because of the unique working relationship between watersheds and forests, watersheds should be included in forestry policy. The same strict adherence to policy regarding trees and wildlife should also apply to watersheds.

Following the general discussion, Mr. Befekadu Refera briefed the participants of the two days workshop that was conducted around the Chilimo forest. In his briefing, he explained the papers that were

presented during the workshop, about the Chilimo forest community trip, about the group work that was discussed on four main issues and their presentations. Finally, he gave a general overview of the group presentations. After this briefing, Mr. Melese Damtie presented the Chilimo workshop participants draft resolution. Following his presentation, there was a general discussion on the drafted workshop resolution. After a thorough discussion on the workshop resolution, the workshop resolution, with minor changes, was accepted by all the workshop participants. Finally, the workshop participants gave the mandate for MELCA Mahiber to present the workshop resolution to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia House of People's Representatives relevant standing committees and to follow on feedback and progress.

#### **3.1.4. Conclusion**

The overall response to the resolution, and the contents of the presentations and discussions was very positive. Plenty of information was disseminated, and the message was clear. There must be stronger conservation efforts, and those with the authority to pass legislation must be actively involved in forestry. An optimistic outlook exists in pursuing forest friendly policy. Ethiopia contains great natural and ecological wealth. These resources can be utilized for socioeconomic development. Most importantly, they can be used for generations to come if used sustainably.

In his closing remarks, Prof Andrie Laletin emphasized protecting natural forests, and warned against the overuse of plantation forests. He also expressed the urgency of removing forestry from the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, and developing a separate ministry for natural resources and environmental protection. Prof Laletin was pleased to learn that Ethiopia does not sell land, and that all land is owned by the government, only to be leased to private holders. This is a great means of protecting forests, particularly if the host government prioritizes its natural resources, and sees forest

conservation as a key to economic development and poverty alleviation.

**Annex 1: List of Participants**

From the first workshop held in Ginchi and the Chilimo Forest  
(November 25 and 26):

<b>Ser. No.</b>	<b>Name of Participants</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1.	Tesfaye Teshome	Ethiopian Civil Service College
2.	Mellesse Damtie	Ethiopian Civil Service College
3.	Dr. Woldeyohanes Fantu	Forestry Research Center
4.	Dr. Mulugeta Lemenih	Wondo Genet Forestry College
5.	Girma Kelboro	Wondo Gener Forestry College
6.	Almaw Alamirew	House of People's Representatives
7.	Rehina Aman	House of People's Representatives
8.	Teshome Eshetu	House of People's Representatives
9.	Oliver Ahmed	House of People's Representatives
10.	Abdu Adem	House of People's Representatives
11.	Getachew Tselko	House of People's Representatives
12.	Yohanes Letise	House of People's Representatives
13.	Asmarech Haile	House of People's Representatives
14.	Workelegn Assefa	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
15.	Ketema Beyecha	Wolmera Woreda Agricultural & Rural Dev't
16.	Sultan Seid	Community Member from Bale
17.	Tsegaye Mosissa	Awas Woreda Agricultural and Rural Dev't
18.	Alemayehu Awash	Masha Woreda Agricultural and Rural Dev't
19.	Gufla Fitiwe	EWNHS

MELCA Mahiber

20.	Sedoka Shoma	Finfine Forest Enterprise
21.	Batu Meskelu	Finfine Forest Enterprise
22.	Motuma Tafa	Finfine Forest Enterprise
23.	Alemayehu Haile Selassie	Finfine Forest Enterprise
24.	Tilahun Gessesse	Finfine Forest Enterprise
25.	Tesema Jenber	Chilimo Forest Director
26.	Abera Teteshu	Chilimo Community PFM Chairman
27.	Negussie Birhanu	Huletegnal Suba Community Chairman
28.	Fikadu Assefa	Private
29.	Rahel Asrat	Sustainable Land Use Forum
30.	Shibiru mamo	Community member (Andracha Woreda)
31.	Ambo Abeltata	Community member (Masha Woreda)
32.	Prof. Andre Laletin	Global Forest Coalition
33.	Zewditu Tadesse	Oromiya Justice Office
34.	Tsegaye Tadesse	Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Magt. Programme
35.	Dominic Cottorone	AEC
36.	Keriya Yasin	MELCA Mahiber
37.	Befekadu Refera	MELCA Mahiber
38.	Ababayehu Kassaye	MELCA Mahiber
39.	Shimelis Tegegne	MELCA Mahiber
40.	Ewnetu Tesfaye	MELCA Mahiber

<b>From the second workshop held at Ghion Hotel (November 27) (Those not attending the first workshop)</b>		
<b>Ser. No.</b>	<b>Name of Participants</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1.	Bekele Kefyalew	Oromiya Agriculture & Rural Dev't
2.	Captian Hamis Balla	House of People's Representative
3.	Legesse Taffa	EWNRA
4.	Seid Mohammed	House of People's Representative
5.	Goa Fanta	House of People's Representative
6.	Aliye Sufiayn	House of People's Representative
7.	Tadesse Gelgelo	House of People's Representative
8.	Fikre Mekuria	Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Dev't
9.	Abebe Desalegn	WIC
10.	Dr. Girma Aments	OFESA
11.	Kassaye G/Silassie	Walta Information Center



**Annex 2: Media Coverage**

Walta Information Center ([www.waltainfo.com](http://www.waltainfo.com)) graciously published their coverage of the workshop online. Walta acknowledge the presence of the honored members of the House of People's Representatives, as well as the participants from government agencies and NGO's. The online coverage included a summary of Getachew Tselko's (HPR Agriculture and Rural Development Affairs standing committee member) address, and part of an interview with Befekadu Refera (MELCA).

The news must be inserted here