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A Review of Ethiopian Agriculture: Roles, Policy and Small-scale Farming Systems

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Roles, Policy and Small-scale Farming Systems

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About the project:

Raising the Awareness of a European Multi-Actor Network Acting for the Enhancement of Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa (2010-2011)

(www.icu.it/agriculture)

This project, locally referred to as AAA – *Awareness on Agriculture in Africa*, is a collaboration between Malta, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Kenya, the DR of the Congo and Ethiopia, co-financed by the European Commission, to mobilise support in Europe for actions against severe poverty and food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) – one of the world’s poorest regions. The partners of this project will be providing in-depth information and capacity building to decision makers, members of academia, university students, members of farmers’ associations and members of the media, while also addressing the wider public.

Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to enough safe and nutritious food in order to cover their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life ~ Rome Declaration, 1996.¹

At present, more than 860 million people around the world do not have adequate access to food. On top of the severe food crisis of 2008, famine, drought, mismanagement and the inadequate agricultural and food policies, the rules of the unjust global market fuel the precarious food situation in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in Ethiopia, 85 to 90 per cent of food needs are met by imports, despite the fact that the majority of the workforce is active in the agricultural sector; heavy droughts and archaic means of cultivation prevent the country from stabilising its situation, leaving millions of people in food insecurity. Agriculture accounts for one-third of the region’s gross domestic product (GDP) and for 60 to 90 per cent of employment, however, the prevailing inefficient means of production, unjust policies (both in Africa and in Europe impacting on the African

¹ Food Security: understanding and meeting the challenge of poverty; European Commission, 2009, Belgium

markets) and the misuse of resources adversely affect the sub-Saharan population and aggravate its vulnerability.

KOPIN has engaged in a close collaboration with its Ethiopian partner organisation, the Emmanuel Development Association (EDA), on a field research that will provide resources for capacity and information trainings together with a publication on the subject. In line with its pioneering approach to international development cooperation and global education, KOPIN is the first Maltese organisation to engage in this way on the subject of food security and agriculture directly with a partner from Sub-Saharan Africa. KOPIN's work will contribute to the achievement of national targets in the eradication of global poverty given that four priority countries of Malta's Overseas Development Policy² are located in the Sub-Saharan region, namely Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia.

The main activities of the project will consist of developing and publishing case studies, information and educational workshops, internet-based information portal, a communication campaign in Europe and an international dialogue meeting.

Activities:

Research

KOPIN and EDA are developing case studies on agriculture and food security in Ethiopia, one of Malta's priority countries. The research looks at both the micro- and the macro-level of agriculture, with regards to small-scale producers and relevant policies, and provides a grass-roots' perspective to the subject.

Information and educational workshops

The outcomes of the research will be presented to a number of stakeholders and interested parties, namely: Maltese farmers' associations, academia, university students, decision makers, media representatives and the interested public during several workshops which will aim to improve knowledge on development

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<http://www.foreign.gov.mt/Library/PDF/Malta's%20Overseas%20Development%20Policy%20eng.pdf>.

problems in agriculture in SSA. They will stimulate both discussions about food security issues in Africa and appropriate actions to support the African initiatives already under way. Furthermore, it will also be looking at the impact of European agricultural and development policies on agriculture in SSA. Concrete plans for effective partnerships will be developed, which will also allow KOPIN to provide contents for global education activities.

Publication

The research conducted in Ethiopia by KOPIN and EDA, and the studies conducted by the other international consortium partners in Kenya and Congo will be presented by means of a publication. This publication will also present the project at large and will be distributed in all participating EU and African countries. KOPIN will disseminate a total of 1,000 copies in Malta some of which will be presented in person to decision makers.

Internet-based Information Portal

KOPIN and its project partners are currently in the process of developing an interactive web-space which will provide information on the project and its activities, such as the research, and serve as open forum for debate on food security and agriculture as well as on related European policies and decisions. The web-portal will be developed in nine languages and KOPIN will contribute to the English version, through which a much larger international audience will be reached.

International Dialogue

International experts and representatives of the project's target groups (academia, students, farmers, decision makers, media representatives) will be invited to Brussels, to exchange ideas and experiences, and to showcase methods and innovations relevant for agricultural development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The project partners will publish and disseminate a position paper on food security and agriculture to decision makers and stakeholders.

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Acronyms

ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
DA	Development Agent
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEDaC	Ethiopian Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation
MoFED	Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
Mol	Ethiopian Ministry of Information
MoRAD	Ethiopian Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Development
UN	United Nations

PART ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background

Agriculture is the backbone of the Ethiopian economy and therefore this particular sector determines the growth of all the other sectors and, consequently, the whole national economy. On average, crop production makes up 60% of the sector's outputs whereas livestock accounts for 27% and other areas contribute 13% of the total agricultural value added. The sector is dominated by small-scale farmers who practice rain-fed mixed farming by employing traditional technology, adopting a low input and low output production system. The land tilled by the Ethiopian small-scale farmer accounts for 95% of the total area under agricultural use and these farmers are responsible more than 90% of the total agricultural output.

The small-scale farmers produce 94% of the food crops and 98% of the coffee, the latter being the leading export item for the country. The private and state commercial farms produce just 6% of food crops and 2% of the coffee produce. These commercial farms use about 5% of the total cultivated land. Coffee, cotton, tea, fruits and vegetables are the major crops grown by the few commercialised state farms, although with very minimal return despite huge investments in them (Medic, 1999: 145). With these statistics, one can easily infer to what extent the small-scale farmers (who are all rural dwellers) are the key element in strengthening the effort towards agricultural growth and consequently to the overall economic growth.

The country has varied agro-climatic zones. The Government extension programme lists these as: areas of adequate rainfall; areas of moisture stress; and pastoral areas. On the other hand, farmers traditionally classify them as *dega* [cool], *woina dega* [temperate] and *qolla* [low land; warm climate]. This diversity makes it a favourable region for growing a variety of crops (Deslaegn, 2008:129).

The country is endowed with one of the broadest biodiversity in the world. It had earned the name “the Water Tower of Eastern Africa” for having more than ten rivers, each of which has irrigation potential. It also has the largest livestock population in Africa (est. 114 million), i.e. 2.5 per capita (Medic, 1999:146). As regards to the agricultural suitability of the country’s territory, some estimates indicate that more than 65% (78.9 million hectares) of the land is fertile for agricultural purposes (Haile Kibre, 1998:47).

Demographically, the country is the second most populous country in African after Nigeria. In 2007, Ethiopia had a total population of 79.22 million. The total fertility rate of the country is 5.9 children per woman; 3.3 for urban and 6.4 for rural women (estimates for the years 1995-2000). 83% of the population lives in rural areas, whereas only 17% reside in urban areas. However, a report³ by UN-HABITAT foresees an increase of 62% in the number of urban dwellers by the year 2025 for Addis Ababa. The same source also indicates that the age structure of the population is youth dominated, similar to other developing countries. 43% of the total population is under the age of 15. 48% of Ethiopian women are between 15 and 49 years of age (the *reproductive age*) (CSA, 2007). With such a predominantly young population the country has undoubtedly the

³ http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2010/12/urbanisation_africa

potential for fast growth (theoretically known as “population hidden momentum”). The same source also indicated that the dependency ratio (proportion of ages <15 and >64 to the total population) is high; 55.45% of the population is the productive part and the remaining 45.55% is the dependent part (*ibid*). From this data, it is possible to infer that such a high dependency ratio can easily hamper the efforts to develop.

Being aware of the above mentioned factor endowments – *huge labour force in the rural areas, relatively abundant agricultural lands, diversified agro-climatic zones and sufficient water resources* – the Government of Ethiopia has devised the current national development strategy called *Agricultural Development Led-Industrialisation (ADLI)*. ADLI takes agriculture as the engine of national economic growth. Through ADLI, the country envisions to end up with rapid and sustainable economic growth, independency from foreign food aid, ensuring maximum benefit for the local population in the context of a free, open market. As the Government has taken *the small-scale farmer and the local leadership (lower strata of the administration) as active and fundamental role players in the implementation process, building the capacities of the peasant farmers and the local leadership are the two most important assignments.*

This paper tries to assess and to identify the role of the agricultural sector in the Ethiopian economy at macro- and micro-levels. Eventually, it winds up with concluding remarks and identifies possible areas within which the voluntary sector could intervene in supporting the sector at both national and local levels.

1.2. The Research Questions

2. What are the roles of agriculture in the Ethiopian economy?
3. What are the major agricultural policy directions/principles and controversies?
4. How has the agricultural development policy affected the development efforts at both national and local level in terms of development outcomes and perceptions?
5. What are the major constraints facing small-scale farmers in earning their livelihood? Which coping mechanisms are in place or utilised by the Ethiopian small-scale farmer? Which are the strengths and opportunities?
6. What are the recommended areas for intervention by the voluntary sectors in the efforts to achieve national and local (at household level) development objectives?

1.3. The Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are to:

1. Identify and explain the roles of agriculture in the Ethiopian economy;
2. Highlight the main areas of the current Ethiopian agricultural development policy;
3. Outline the major constraints facing small-scale farmers in earning their livelihood, the coping mechanisms resorted to by the Ethiopian farmer, and the strengths and opportunities present in the agricultural sector; and

4. Identify some of the gaps within the development endeavours of the small-scale farmers.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

The study depends on existing literature and therefore the majority of the data used are a secondary source. Only two group discussions were conducted with 16 farmers (eight at each group discussion). Besides, only one district development agent (DA) and one higher expert of the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) were interviewed. It is worth pointing out, therefore, that the primary information might not be sufficient to triangulate with or verify the issues discussed in this paper. It can, however, be used to highlight insights on the farmers' real lives: constraints, coping mechanisms, potentials etc., and how they practice agriculture at grass-roots level.

The other limitation is that, due to dearth of information regarding the pastoralist community this sub-sector is not included; the study focuses solely on the mixed sedentary agriculture.

1.5. Methodologies of the Research

The research strategy or method is a case study. The unit of analysis is the Ethiopian agriculture within the wider context of the national economy as a whole.

Secondary data from various published materials take the lion's share of the evidence referred to.

In order to obtain some primary information, two successive group discussions were conducted with peasant farmers. The first group

discussion was held with eight farmers (male/female ratio: 5/3) of Asfachew kebele Administration, Tarma Ber District, North Showa Zone of the Amhara national regional state. The second group discussion was held with 8 farmers (m/f: 5/3) from the peripheral areas of Addis Ababa, District Nine.

In addition, a female Development Agent⁴ (DA) has been interviewed to give accounts on the current situation of the rural small-scale farmers. Similarly, discussion was held with one senior expert of the MoA on thematic areas such as the future directions of the agricultural development and possible gaps for intervention, especially at local level.

In addition, the researcher made a systematic observation by going physically through the nearby fields to triangulate with facts what was explained and stated during discussions. In all cases, guiding questions were used to gather the information.

In order to analyse the data and information gathered, pattern matching techniques (categorisation of similar concepts) and relating to the literatures and current prevailing discourses were applied. Data is presented using tables, figures and narratives.

1.6. Structure of the Paper

Part One of this paper introduces the overall picture of the Ethiopian agriculture; the questions of investigation; the research objectives; and limitations and methodologies applied to conduct the research. Part Two deals with the roles and constraints of the Ethiopian agriculture, the

⁴ Development Agents are community development workers who have been trained for around two years after completing grade 10. They have rural backgrounds and live within the community, well aware of the cultures and norms of the grass-roots people. Experience has shown that they can be very good facilitators in the community for any development interventions.

agricultural development policy, its objectives, directions and principles and the policy debates or controversies are explained. Part Three tries to explain the work of small-scale farmers. It describes the crop production and management methods, their potentials, constraints and challenges, and the coping mechanisms resorted to. It also gives the same insights on the animal husbandry aspect of their livelihoods.

Eventually, Part Four attempts to provide concluding remarks to the study and identifies the major areas where further action is required to support the agricultural sector.

PART TWO

The Place of Agriculture in the Ethiopian Economy: the Macro-Level

2.1. The Roles of Agriculture

Many agree that agriculture is the backbone of the Ethiopian economy. The Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (Medic), now called the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), twelve years ago (1999) revealed that agriculture contributes a lot in terms of export, employment and subsistence to the Ethiopian economy. It contributes 50% of GDP, 85% of employment (the rural population of Ethiopia), 90% of earnings from export, and 70% of raw material requirements for large and medium industries which are agro-processing (MEDaC,1999:145; WMU,2002:40).

Haile Kibret, in *Land Reform: Revising the Public versus Private Ownership Controversy* (October 1998), revealed that the agricultural sector, due to its major contribution to the GDP, highly influences the performances of the other sectors of the economy. It, for example, accounts for more than 80% of employment, and 90% of exports. Ethiopian export commodities are agricultural outputs: coffee, hides and skins and seeds and nuts used for edible oil production. As these are the main sources of foreign earnings, they also automatically define the country's capacity to import other materials used in manufacturing. He also stresses that macro

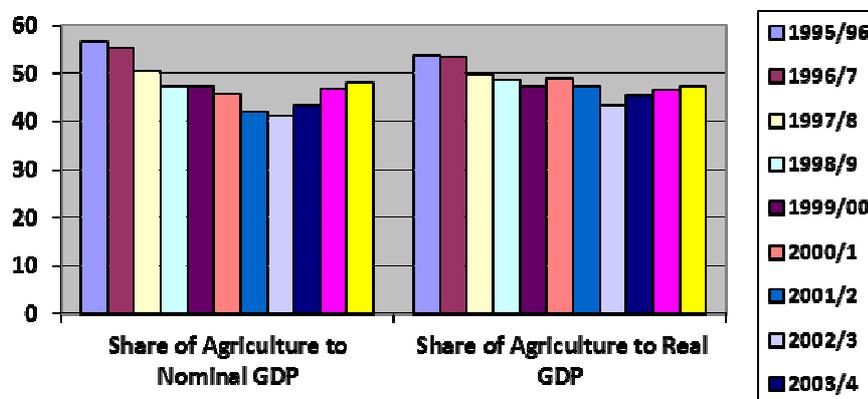
aggregates, like level of employment and inflation rates, are also influenced by the sector (*ibid*: 46-47).

The 2004 country's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report, as jointly compiled by the MoFED and the UN Country Team, confirmed these statistics and reports that the Ethiopian economy is fundamentally rural and agricultural. Agricultural employees account for more than 85% of total population and the sector contributes half of the GDP (*ibid*: 12). Nonetheless, recent sources indicate that there is a shift especially in agriculture's contribution to GDP.

The update estimates of the 1998 Ethiopian fiscal year (2005/06) and the 1999 forecast (2006/07) based on the 1999/2000 base year revealed that the GDP contribution (both nominal and real) of agriculture was taking a lion's share of the total GDP growth with 53.6% in 1995/6. This had started declining to reach 43.3% in 2002/3, then rising again to 27.3% by 2005/6. Table 1 below shows the share of agriculture to nominal and real GDP.

Table 1: Share of Agriculture to Nominal and Real GDP (199/6-2005/6)

Year	Share of Agriculture to Nominal GDP	Share of Agriculture to Real GDP
1995/96	56.7	53.6
1996/7	55.4	53.4
1997/8	50.6	49.8
1998/9	47.4	48.6
1999/00	47.4	47.4
2000/1	45.7	48.8
2001/2	41.9	47.3
2002/3	41.2	43.3
2003/4	43.4	45.4
2004/5	46.9	46.6
2005/6	48.1	47.3



Source: MoFED, Department of National Economic Accounting

The same report indicated that the GDP contribution of the major sectors for the year 2005/6 were 47 %, 13% and 40% for agriculture, industry and services, respectively. The national economy grew at an average rate of 10.7% for the three successive years of 2003/04 to 2005/06. For this period, the agricultural sector contributed 60% of the growth whereas the industry and the services sectors contributed 10% and 30%, respectively (MoFED, 2006: iv-8). One can therefore easily understand how agriculture has been playing the key role in speeding up the overall growth of the economy.

In the history of Ethiopia's import and export venture, coffee has been the number one export item dominating all other products originating from the country. It not only supports the whole economic growth of the nation but is also the source of income for millions of coffee growing farmers, thousands of coffee trading farmers, primary cooperatives and unions, financial institutions and transportation enterprises. Some of the Ethiopian coffee export destination countries include Germany, Japan, Saudi-Arabia, Belgium, America, Italy, France, the Sudan, England and Switzerland.

Oil crops take the second place of the agricultural exports of Ethiopia. Niger (*nueg*), sesame seeds, sunflower and ground nuts are also exported to Asia, Europe, America and Africa. Countries like China, Turkey, Israel, USA, Jordan, Greece, Switzerland, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Canada and Britain are the main export partners.

Pulses like white pea beans, chickpeas, peas, mung peas, lentils and beans have also been exported to Sudan, UAE, Pakistan, Yemen, India, South Africa, Germany and Singapore, besides other regions.

Horticulture items or vegetables and fruits like beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), lemon, tomatoes, potatoes, banana, oranges, onion, mango, avocado, cabbages, papaya and garlic are also exported to different countries.

In terms of livestock, the country stands tops the lists in Africa and ranks tenth in the world. However, animal husbandry has not managed to establish itself as a main contributor to the national economy as hoped for due to the use of backward technologies. It has been exporting different livestock like cattle, camels, sheep and goats, together with their meat, to different countries (*ibid*, 2007/8:239-45). The same source also shows that notwithstanding various constraints, the external trade has grown relatively better. Table 2 hereunder depicts the difference over 23 years (between 1984/5 to 2006/7).

Table2: Changes in Major Export Agricultural Commodities of Ethiopia (comparison of 1984/5 and 2006/7)

Agricultural Export Commodities	Volume (Tonnes)			Monetary Value		
	1984/5	2006/7	Diff. %	1984/85	2006/7	Diff. %
Coffee	73,834	176,390	239	ETB 446.3m	ETB 3.8bn	851
Oil Seeds	12,466	235,215	1887	ETB 15.6m	ETB 1.7 bn	10,897
Pulses	19,953	158,687	795	ETB 16.9m	ETB 624.2m	3,695
Vegetables & fruits	9,881	41,029	415	ETB 6.02m	ETB 145.45m	2,4161

Source: MoRAD

There is, however, a structural shift in the overall macro-economy and, hence, in the relative position of agriculture. The *Hand Book of the Ethiopian Macro-Economy (2010)* describes the projected composition of the Ethiopian GDP by taking the three broad divisions of the economic sectors: agriculture, industry and services. The table below indicates that the services sector involving real estate, whole sale and retail trade, accommodation, catering, financial services, education, etc. has taken the lead position in the economy. Table 3 shows structural shifts in the Ethiopian economy over three consecutive years and a forecast for the 2011/12 fiscal year in terms of the trends for the three sectors relative to GDP contribution.

Table 3: Structural Shift in the Ethiopian Economy

Fiscal Year GDP Share	Sector Contribution (%)		
	Services	Industry	Agriculture
2008/09	45.1	12	42.9
2009/10	46.7	13.2	40.1
2010/11	49.1	13.3	37.6
2011/12	46.97	12.83	40.20

Nonetheless, despite the recent structural shifts, agriculture still plays a key role for the growth in other sectors and the growth of the national economy as a whole.

2.2. Major Constraints faced by the Ethiopian Agriculture

The Ethiopian agriculture has been suffering from various external and internal problems. It has been stagnant due to poor performances as a result of factors such as:

- Low resource utilisation (e.g. the proportion of cultivated land compared to the total amount of land suitable for agriculture and the amount of water available for irrigation is far below the capacity and thus compels the sector to be rain fed);
- Low-tech farming techniques (e.g. wooden plough by oxen and sickles);
- Over-reliance on fertilizers and underutilised techniques for soil and water conservation;
- Inappropriate agrarian policy;

- Inappropriate land tenure policy;
- Ecological degradation of potential arable lands;
- Increase in unemployment rate due to increase in the population (Haile Kibret, 1998:47-51).

Yonas Ketsela in *Post-1991 Agricultural Policies: The Role of National Extension Program in Addressing the problem of Food Security (2006)* has summarised the main structural constraints for the Ethiopian agriculture. These, among others, include the following:

- Archaic mode of production and low uptake of technological innovations, which in turn yield low levels of productivity;
- Degradation of land and other natural resources due to intense cultivation and overgrazing;
- Recurrent drought, civil strife and political unrest;
- Poor policies such as land ownership, land titles, land fragmentation, credit system and land and crop insurance mechanisms are not available or are very limited; and
- Neglect and lack of agricultural investment.

These constraints, coupled with the rapid population growth, have significantly contributed to the problem of food insecurity since the 1960s. For Ketsela, the total population under the national poverty line, hence facing dramatic food insecurity, is estimated to be 50 to 60% (*ibid*: 27-29).

Nonetheless, readers should take caution to use such a figure or percentage as many recent reports revealed that the current total population under the national poverty line is estimated at 29% and is forecast to be 22% by the end of the year 2015. The Ethiopian Government has underlined, in its

agriculture development policy, a lack of appropriate policies and strategies as the ultimate reason for the past stagnation of the sector. The driving force for the government to issue the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) policy therefore is to alleviate these problems (MoI, 2002: v-vii).

The external market is a binding constraint for the positive development of the country's macro aggregates due to deterioration of trade (especially coffee) and the rising level of imports combined with the volume of exportable goods (MoFED & UN Country Team, 2004:13).

2.3. Overview of the Ethiopian Agricultural Development Policy

2.3.1. Policy Objectives, Principles and Strategic Directions

Ethiopia's current overall economic development objective has four elements: i) rapid economic growth; ii) maximum benefits to the Ethiopian people from this growth; (iii) dependence on food aid is eliminated; and iv) the country's emancipation in the global economy from the position of being mere recipient to be active partaker in the global integration process. An independent, free market economy and a democratic system of governance are understood to be the underpinnings of the efforts to realise the four elements of the objective. The Government's strategy is to achieve these development objectives through an agriculture-centred rural development programme. The rationales for choosing such a strategy are based on the rural nature of most livelihoods in Ethiopia and the dominance of agriculture in the Ethiopian economy.

The strategy acknowledges that the main resources of the country are land and labour while there is a critical shortage of capital. This factor takes on further significance with 85% of the population living in the rural areas. By fostering agricultural development, hence, it will be possible to create strong rural-urban linkages, an increase in capital available for re-investment and sustain foreign exchange earnings. The assumption is that agriculture will be able to contribute to the development of other sectors. Thus, it is more realistic to assume that the role of the agricultural sector has a comparative advantage as opposed to the other sectors when considered as the engine for economic growth in the country.

The strategy is also expected to bring about **enhanced benefits for the people**. The prime source of growth is output created through the employment of labour and land resources deployed by the working people themselves. Thus, the Government's policy plans this to combine this to health augmenting and skill upgrading efforts of education and training.

The strategy is also taken as means of eliminating the Country's food aid dependency as it is believed to increase the purchasing power of the majority of the population and to promote an internally interconnected national economy. This means that it will both promote national economic development, i.e. expand the domestic market, minimising the country's vulnerability to external shocks. The end results include minimised dependency on foreign aid, enhanced participation in the global economy and promoted economic independence.

The strategy is also expected to bring about a **free market economy** which is regarded as a governing principle of and a suitable context for achieving the above mentioned development objectives. The free market economy however would need to be based on a broad economic activity.

And thus, the strategy is geared to productively engage the majority of the Ethiopians in the economy. If the majority of those Ethiopians within the productive age bracket are involved productively in the economy, this will be one of the first steps on the way to developed free market economy (MoFED, 2003:5-11).

The ADLI strategy is also supposed to be implemented following a number of strategic focus areas:

- Labour-intensive technologies and strategies;
- Proper utilisation of agricultural land;
- Basing on and utilising the existing indigenous farming technologies;
- Taking different agro-climatic zones into account;
- Integrating agricultural and rural development programmes;
- Building an agricultural marketing system (involving the promotion of agricultural exchange through grading agricultural products, provision of market information, improving and strengthening the participation of private capital in agricultural marketing, and promoting the setting up of cooperatives);
- Improving rural finance systems;
- Encouraging private agricultural investors;
- Expanding rural infrastructures (education, health, water supply, etc); and
- Expanding agricultural non- development activities.

The policy also stresses that no matter how well policy and strategies are designed, they cannot bring the desired effects unless they are implemented effectively through efficient leadership. As a result, two key forces are considered as crucially important: the local leaders and the peasant farmers. Thus building the capacities of the local leaders and the active mobilisation, as well as popular participation of the small holder peasants, are considered as core elements of the strategy (MoI, 2001:5-280).

2.3.2. Policy Debates: Controversial Issues

As regards to the current agricultural development policy of Ethiopia, two major issues have been controversial and point of debate: the land holding system and tenure security; and the role given to the small-scale farmer to be the main contributor for the achievement of the development objectives expected from the agricultural sector.

Questions most often raised involve:

- Can the small-scale farmer, with fragmented and small sized plots, applying backward technology, be responsible for attaining the intended development and food self-sufficiency?
- Can the current land tenure and ownership system encourage land holders to make land augmenting investments on their farm plots?

2.3.2.1. Land Tenure Policy and its Effects

Ethiopian scholars agree that land tenure and related issues feature regularly in the political as well as economic history of the country. According to Tafesse Olika (2006), land has been and remains a central problem to the development of the agricultural sector, and hence the issue of the landholding systems was at the core of Ethiopian politics. Land tenure systems in Ethiopia are to be seen within the context of three different systems of regimes in the past: the feudal system, the military government and the current federal democratic state.

In the Imperial regime, land holding systems were divided into three: the *rist* which meant access to land based on one's lineage; the *gult* allocated

to the Orthodox Church and the **crown (state)** holding systems. According to Tafesse Olika, during the imperial regime two contradictory landholding systems were noticed: tendencies of *privatisation and nationalisation* of land. Not only the land plots but also the peasants (tillers) were supposed to belong to the state or the king. Peasants were not allowed to leave on their own will the land they used to till.

The same source also indicated that the Derg–socialist regime, after assuming power by military force in 1974, promulgated the **1975 ‘Land to the Tiller’ Proclamation**, aiming to weaken the feudal landlords who were in favour of the imperial regime, to respond to the students’ protest which had *‘Land to the Tiller’* as a slogan and to cool down the peasantry upheavals against the land holding systems of the imperial regime. The peasantry was given the **right of use without any transfer rights**. Land was not to be sold, mortgaged, or leased (*ibid*: 1-6).

The current land policy is one element of the 1995 FDRE constitution (art. 40). It vests the right to ownership of rural and urban land exclusively on the state and collectively in the peoples of Ethiopia. Only use, and not ownership, rights are guaranteed. As land is the common property of the “Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia”, it cannot be sold, exchanged and mortgaged. On the other hand, it gives the Government the right to expropriate the land for public purposes and to give to private investors one the right of use on the basis of payment arrangements. On the other hand, *“the provisions grant the peasants the right to: i) obtain land without permanence; ii) the protection against eviction from their possessions; iii) enjoy full rights to improvements one brings about on the land by labour and/or capital: including the right to alienate, to bequeath, to remove ones property when one’s usage rights expire, to*

transfer his/her title or claim compensation for it.” (ibid: sub. art. 3,4,6,7, & 8; Desalegn, 2008:141).

Although the policy is said to be better than the previous ones in defending the rights of the small-scale farmers as development partners, as opposed to the previous ones where the peasants were considered as mere subjects of the ruling parties, it is highly criticised for not giving adequate ownership rights to the farmers (Tesfaye Olika, 2006:13).

Desalegn Rahmato (2006) has summarised the fundamental criticisms of the current EPRDF land policy – corroborated by many other writers – as follows:

- i) the policy promotes insecurity of tenure because it allows, among other things, periodic redistribution (or at least the threat of such redistribution);*
- ii) it is inefficient because it limits land transactions and has inhibited the emergence of a dynamic land market;*
- iii) it promotes fragmentation of land and growing pressure on land resources because it discourages rural people from leaving their farms for other employment opportunities;*
- iv) it inhibits dynamic differentiation within the peasantry as well as the emergence of an enterprising class; and*
- v) it gives the state immense power over the farming population because land is state property (ibid: 1).*

In the light of these points, the current land policy has been criticised by most members of the academic circle and the opposing political parties.

Some proponents asserted that unless the current land tenure system is changed or at least modified, the hitherto structural constraints that have

been retarding the growth of the sector cannot be removed. Tafesse, one of the advocates of private land ownership, applies some criteria to disprove the current land tenure arrangement system. The first has to do with *security of tenure*. This involves the right to use land without fear of any form of eviction for political or any other petty reasons. Thus, tenure security would mean the absence of uncertainty that prevents the farmers from investing in the land to enhance productivity. The second criterion is *clarity of title*. This means farmers' rights and obligations to the land are not clear. Doubts include: do farmers have the right to improve their holdings? To what extent can one farmer exclude others from using his/her plot? To what extent can the system guarantee permanent boundaries of plots of land? Tafesse Olika author also mentions a third criterion which has to do with *farmers' freedom to use land as a guarantee (or financial collateral) to secure credit from banks* which might help to invest on land for better productivity and agricultural development (*ibid*, 2006:16-17). For the author, the current land tenure arrangements in Ethiopia are not fulfilling these requirements. He therefore calls for reformation.

Workneh Nigatu (2006) in *Land Tenure and Technological Improvement in small-scale Agriculture in Ethiopia* argues that tenure security and the size of farm lands are two most important determinants of farmers' application of improved technology which in turn is the determining factor of farm productivity and production. He stresses that farmers' decision on improved production input use, land management practices and farm enterprises patterns depends on "land tenure systems which may affect the future returns from current investment on land improvement". He also argues that *with insecure land tenure and transaction*, farm households may have less incentive to invest in improved technologies and land management practices because it takes a longer time to reap benefit from

suitable land management practices. However, farm households may also increase investment on land if the investment has the probability to increase secured tenure for them. Nonetheless, in his opinion, in the Ethiopian context, it is the land tenure security that precedes farmers' intensity of land augmenting investment, and not vice versa and thus he firstly calls for measures to improve the tenure security.

In addition to land tenure security, the farm size of a household determines the extent of improved technology applied to the farm plots. Application of suitable land management like crop rotation, agro-forestry, inter-cropping and soil erosion control are generally negatively influenced by the fragmentation of farm land and a decrease in its size, as these techniques need relatively larger farm sizes. Because small-scale farmers face a challenge of higher overhead costs of application of technology per unit of land area, they tend to avoid risk as they have low incomes and operate in a risk-prone and precarious environment. Consequently, farmers with smaller farm sizes are the ones who, in most cases, are vulnerable to food and income insecurity. The author also stresses that the lesser the size of the farm plots, the lesser extent the farmers apply improved technologies (*ibid*: 150-153).

The author substantiates his arguments by taking a case study of four districts of the South Wollo Zone Administration, which is located in the northern highlands of Ethiopia. From this study he asserted that because the farm plots owned by the peasant farmers are very small, the farming households could not apply improved technologies. The status of the use of improved crop seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation water were found to be minimal. 420 farmers were asked whether or not they use fertilizer. In the 2000/01 cropping year, only 16.67% asserted that they applied fertiliser whereas in the following cropping year, only 5.68%

applied it. In the case of improved crop seeds, in the years 2000/01 only 0.94% used these whereas in the years 2001/02 only 6.60% used these (*ibid*: 154-56).

In short, he claims that the existing public ownership land tenure system in Ethiopia, which derives from official allocation by the local governments and through transfer or transaction of land usage rights, holds back the opportunity of land transaction and the use of technologies.

The Government has tried to ensure tenure security for farmers by applying user right registration and certification where the duration of registration lasts for 20-30 years (MoI, 2001: 82).

The very intention with such registration and certification was to:

- secure rights of tenure to peasant farmers and protect the rights of vulnerable groups such as women;
- reduce land disputes and litigations;
- facilitate land use planning and management of community and state land;
- increase investment by small holders on their plots; and
- provide better opportunities for access to credit services.

However, according to Desalegn Rahmato (2008), the peasants perceived the certification as a means of the right to compensation in the event of dispossession and as a good proof for claim of a given plots of land in the event of land disputes. This means that eviction, dispossession and disputes are inevitable (*ibid*: 144-145).

The underlying assumptions and justifications of the Government for its public ownership policy of land include the following socio-economic equity issues:

- Every rural individual has the right to a plot of land sufficient for his or her livelihoods and should claim the right in his or her *kebele* or locality (economic reason). If land is privately owned, it is impossible to fulfil such a right but rather can create peasant dispossessions through distress sale or evictions. This might create high concentration of land in the hands of few (particularly the urban upper middle class) with concomitant effects of widespread poverty and landlessness;
- State ownership will help do away with the problems of landlessness among farming communities, though this assumption is criticised by many opponents as many rural people are landless. The government has been employing some instruments to tackle the problems of landlessness. These include periodic redistribution; expropriation of land from those who fail to fulfil some obligations and transfer of landless ones; and, more recently, privatisation of the hill sides;
- Promoting social equity among the rural dwellers. Land ownership by the state is also thought of as a means to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor rural people; thereby, the disparity of wealth and property which is the cause of antagonism and class conflict will be minimised (*ibid*:140-144).

2.3.2.2. The Small-scale Farmer: Responsible for Food Security

The most common definition of food security is that of the World Bank: *'access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life'*. In an elaborated way involving the dimensions of availability, access and stability, the World Food Summit in 1996 defined it as *'a situation in which all households have both physical and economic access to adequate food for all members , and where households are not at a risk of losing such access'*. The factors in the notion of food security are *sufficiency* (adequate supply of calories and other intakes such as proteins and micronutrients); *time* (chronic or transitory) and *access* (ability of households to acquire food supply). *Food self-sufficiency* has a different meaning than food security as the former chiefly focuses on domestic production whereas the latter incorporates international specialisation and comparative advantage (Yonas Ketsela, 2006:33-35).

Addressing the ever persistent food security is one of the major goals of the country. The effort is to make the country self-sufficient through increased food production and higher farm productivity, with a final result of ending the country's dependence on external food aid. The current development strategy of Ethiopia, ADLI, takes the small-scale farmer as a key responsible actor for realising the rural and agricultural development policy (Desalegn, 2008: 135-136). According to the public officials, all that is required to make the small-scale farmers able to produce more is to help them to adopt improved technology and modern land use strategies (Tesfaye Olika, 2006:12).

However, this rural centred agriculture-led development strategy is strongly criticised. Desalegn Rahmato (2003) asserts that the Ethiopian

agriculture has virtually exhausted its potential and is incapable, in its present form, to serve as an engine of growth and development. His argument is based on the assumption that:

- The small-scale farmers are taken as primary responsible actors for the intended growth and development. Nonetheless, they themselves are inflicted with destitution and food insecurity. They are also burdened with insecure holdings, tiny plots and undemocratic extension services.
- It is impossible to attain food self-sufficiency on the strength of domestic agriculture. He stresses that only a few countries were proven to be successful in feeding their population from domestic production; most countries rely on international markets. As a result, he argues for other alternatives like opening up employment opportunities for the rural households, diversifying their sources of income, and expanding people's capabilities (*ibid*: 1-13).

PART THREE

The Micro-Level Structure of the Ethiopian Agriculture

This section of the paper intends to cast some highlights on the real lives of the farming households at grass-roots levels. Two consecutive group discussions were held with farmers. The first group discussion was held with farmers living in the Amhara National Regional State, North Showa Zone, Tarmaber Woreda, Asfachew kebele Administration. The second group discussion was conducted with farmers of District Nine (one of the peripheral areas of the City Administration of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia).



3.1. Crop Production and Management

Crop production and its management in the specific localities as well as throughout Ethiopia demands much labour and time, and in some cases might call for machines and advanced technologies. The process involves at least land preparation, planting, weeding, soil fertility management, storage and proper crop use.

❖ Major Crops and Benefits

Participants in the rural area (in the Amhara National Regional State) put the major crops in order of their importance. Food crops include teff which is the staple source of food in Ethiopia, sorghum, chick peas and maize. The cash crops include mung bean (locally called *masho*, which is recently gaining popularity as the most favoured cash crop in the area) and sesame seeds. Cash crops are the most important gap fillers for households when they are in demand for cash to purchase, for example, industrial products. The mung bean could be as expensive as ETB 1,500 per 100kgs. Nonetheless, according to the research participants, the food-cash dichotomy is no longer unassailable in that the food crops may be sold for attaining different objectives. Teff, *the* traditional staple food of Ethiopians, is also sold to generate cash in order to, for example, substitute oxen or when a household needs to rent more land.

In rural areas of Addis Ababa, the major crops grown are wheat, teff, chickpea, mamoncillo (*guaya*), lentil and *abish*, which is one of the locally known spices. Teff and wheat are intended mostly for food consumption, but are also being sold when households are in need of cash. White teff is mostly used for selling purposes whilst red-brown teff mixed with wheat is most often used for food consumption within the household.

In short, crops are serving as important sources of food and income for the rural households at both localities of this study.

❖ Agronomic Practices – Challenges and Coping Mechanisms

According to findings from a case study conducted by the Sheno Agricultural Research Centre (2002) at Kewet Woreda – which is just ten kilometers from the area where one of the case studies presented in this paper – the type of crops grown and the cropping activities are determined by the onset and distribution of the rainfall, nature of the soil, the priority given to the specific crop, the fertility of farm plots and the requirements of the crops. One crucial element in the process of crop production is land preparation as it is decisive in obtaining good harvest. Establishing a good crop, increasing yield per hectare, reduced weed pressure and improved soil moisture retention all depend on good land preparation or tillage. Farmland is prepared using the traditional ploughing instruments. Row planting is not easy for the farmers as it needs more labour than broadcasting, and therefore, many apply the latter alternative. These and other activities, like weeding and soil fertility management, are highly demanding for labour (*ibid*: 31-35).

The group discussion participants (who live in the rural area, i.e., Asfachew Kebele Administration) pointed out some major constraints or challenges they face during the process: the stages from land preparation to harvesting. The households have developed coping mechanisms to alleviate shortage of farm labour. These mechanisms are traditionally called **woenfel** and **debo**. The former refers to the exchange of labour between neighbouring farmers based on an agreement where they collaboratively work for each other in turn during, for instance, land preparation, weeding or harvesting. *Debo* refers to the organisation of labour force among neighbours, relatives or kinsmen for the same purpose. As the *debo* demands the hosting farming households to prepare a sort of feast involving drinks and foods which might be costly for the poor farmers and many are not able to use this method. Farmers who lack labour force also engage in share-cropping where one gives his/her land to others who have relatively abundant labour force. Those who are better off hire day labour forces.

The most common mechanism to mitigate shortage of capital which hinders the farming activity is **idir**⁵, which is a traditional, informal economic as well as social organisation among neighbours and relatives. It is a social entity as it is intended to conduct burial ceremony and it is economic as it is used as a means to save money regularly by members which will be used during the time of adversities like crop failure. **Irtiban**, is another, locally organised, social arrangement to mitigate economic

⁵ *Idir* was initially a burial association for mutual support in relation to deaths and funerals. The leadership of this organisation is selected by the local people themselves. The organisation may have its written or oral rules defining procedures of its operation. In most urban areas, *idir* has a legal statute defining the conditions of membership, contribution and payment.

distress, e.g., during livestock death or crop failure, although it is becoming less common these days.

Shortage of land is caused by the distribution of the land among parents and older children, which leads to fragmentation and diminishing plot sizes. Moreover, and more dramatically, rapid population growth is still the centrepiece of rural poverty, and no good solution is found thus far. Land rental for a fixed period of time (duration and size depend on the land laws of the respective regional state) is one of the solutions to mitigate land shortage only for those who have the financial means and can employ the necessary labour force. Nonetheless, small sized farming land, according to the participants of the focus group, remains a serious cause of rural unemployment.

Lack of farm oxen is another constraint faced by the farmers whilst engaged in agronomic practices. This used to force farmers to effect distress sales of their food crops, should they happen to have harvested any, against their plans in order to simply buy farm oxen. Others also arrange what is traditionally called *mekenajo*, which involves exchange of farm oxen between farmers who own one animal only.

The farmers apply two types of fertilisers: chemical fertilisers, i.e., urea and diammonium phosphates (DAP), and compost from animal dung and crop residuals. According to the interviewees, both types of fertilizers show similar results in increasing productivity per hectare. However, the organic fertiliser serves for three years once applied which is by far better than the chemical fertiliser. According to the farmers, the preparation of compost is a labour intensive task and therefore they arrange *debo* or *wonefel* as deemed necessary and depending on their financial capacity. The chemical fertiliser is expensive and many farmers cannot afford its purchase at a full

price at once. Therefore, the District Offices of Agriculture⁶ take responsibility to avail fertiliser from enterprises or parastatal organisations at half the market price during the first instalment.

Seed supply is another critical issues that the farmers have to deal with. As there are no cooperatives or unions which can supply improved seeds, the farmers themselves apportion and retain seeds from the produce.

The group participants from the peripheral areas of Addis Ababa mentioned many constraints including the small and diminishing size of farm lands; inadequate extension services and follow-up by the respective office of agriculture; soil infertility; outdated mode of production; and lack of correct agricultural information. Inadequacy of land is due to the increasing encroachment of public and private investments, as the Government is legally endowed with the right to confiscate the land for investment purpose. Besides, the large family sizes and rapid population growth are severe causes for land fragmentation and diminishing. Soil infertility is due to over-exploitation of the cultivated land. For a farm plot to give good yields, one has to apply a high quantity of fertiliser which however is very expensive. Since the land gives out a low yield per hectare, many farmers try to take advantage of living near the mega city of Addis Ababa. They try to look for wage labour to subsidise their families' livelihoods. According to the farmers, due to inadequate extension services given by the office of agriculture coupled with a poor attention to weather forecasts, many face the risk of crop failure as a result of unexpected rain.

⁶ District Offices of Agriculture are part of the Ministry of Agriculture at Woreda (District). A district comprises over one hundred thousand people. DOAs coordinate and support agricultural extension services in rural areas. They enforce government agricultural policies and give trainings and distribute research highlights to local farmers.

According to the comments of an agricultural development agent, unlike those who live in the rural areas, farmers in Addis Ababa try to mitigate shortage of labour by employing daily labourers based on negotiated wages during the times of land preparation, weeding, threshing and so on. This is possible due to the fact that they live near the capital city where many young rural-urban migrants are seeking job opportunities. Intensely prolonged or short-lived rain, different pests and the shortage of land are also some of the constraints faced by the farmers in the course of crop production.



Picture 2: Small-scale farmers harvesting teff, the staple food of Ethiopians

❖ **Post-Harvest Management**

Formerly, the farmers used to store their produce in *gotera/rique* or the equivalent, meaning barn. However, today, the most common form of storage system is indoor, where the harvest is stored in industrially produced sacks. According to the participants, this is due to decreasing productivity and production and, thus, there is no need of constructing a barn. Insects and rodents are threats at this stage, for which the farmers often purchase pesticides from local merchants, in order to protect their produce.

As the amount of produce is generally minimal for farmers who are living at the peripheries of Addis Ababa, storage is not as such an area of concern. Given they are near to one of the many market centres in Addis Ababa, they easily sell when any signs of damage or infestation due to pests occur during storage.

❖ **Marketing and Market Information**

The Sheno Agricultural Research Centre (2002), currently called Debre Birhan Agricultural Research Centre, conducted a research on the Kewet woreda District, in the Amhara National Regional State. Findings indicate that households usually sell their crop by transporting it to the nearest small towns or stations, using pack animals, on the back of people or by means of public transport; the latter is a very rare case due to high transportation costs and a lack of availability. The case study areas have a biannual harvest time (twice a year), traditionally called *meher* (following the big rain) and *belg* (following the small rain). Most crops are sold immediately after the big harvest time (*meher* – ranging from December to January). This is because by this time farmers are expected to effect payments associated with the holidays, pay credit (related to fertilisers,

seeds, etc), pay taxes and other social obligations. Market price fluctuation and lack of information are causes for disadvantages to the producers in the selling-buying process (*ibid*: 10-13).

Group participants clearly revealed that producers are not fairly benefiting from the prevailing market arrangements. The farmers' transport of their goods from the areas of production, i.e. farm sites, to the nearest market areas or sites on pack animals and/or on the back of other household members. Their customers are households in the nearest towns or local retail traders. According to the research participants, the prevailing marketing arrangement is working against them in that they have no negotiation power while selling their produce to the traders. This is for three reasons: i) farmers are not organised and sell their produce individually, whereas the traders are relatively well organised. Thus the traders always take consensus among themselves to cut the prices of each crop; ii) farmers are often pushed for distress selling as they need to purchase industrial materials for household consumption or to buy livestock like oxen; iii) the farmers are not informed of how much similar farm commodities are sold elsewhere and thus cannot make informed decisions. According to the participants, therefore, it is the traders who set the market price and the producers sell at farm-gate prices, many times without including the transportation cost and the like. They also do not negotiate or bargain to set the prices of their produce.

Female headed households, who do not have adult male relatives in their household, are disadvantaged in that they face challenges as most women cannot go far to market areas. Law recognises the equality between women and men. However, traditions will not change overnight. Women still experience enormous difficulties to benefit from their gained rights. Rural farming is laborious and tiresome. Women caring for their children could

not work at the same time on the farms. They lack capital and other agricultural assets. Even if they own land most of them rent it to other people receiving very little payment. Moreover, means of transportation in rural Ethiopia are very limited. Farmers travel usually some three to four hours on foot to reach markets. Women cannot leave their small children unattended for such a long time in order to go to the market places. Their movement is restricted thus holding them back from participating meaningfully in the commercial aspect of agricultur.

As regards to the farmers living in the area of Addis Ababa, however, marketing is different from those living in the Amhara National Regional State. As the farmers are well informed (even though still unorganised) of the currently prevailing market prices, they generally manage to sell their produce at higher prices. According to the interviewees, they sell after a clear and strong bargaining process with traders as well as with household consumers. Nonetheless, they have constraints as the yield per hectare ratio of their lands is low due to over-cultivation.



Picture 3: Sorghum, common variety to warm agro-climatic zones

3.2. Livestock Management, Benefits and Threats

In the Amhara National Regional State (the rural setting for the case study) the livestock includes cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and poultry. Cattle are sources of draught power, threshing and milk products. Sheep and goats are an important source of income during times of economic stress and cater for the urgent needs of households. Donkeys are kept for transportation while poultry is raised for food as well as for the purpose of selling. However, shortage in feedstuff, animal diseases and price fluctuations are the main challenges to the farmers. The participants revealed their recent experiences where the price of an average ox in August was ETB 6,000 but went down to ETB 4,000 two months later, in October 2010. The 33% decrease in price for an ox within the space of two months was caused by the outbreak of a severe animal disease. The local

veterinary institutions supported the farmers but many oxen died of diseases such as anthrax.

While these findings were true with the case of farmers living in the Amhara National Regional State in the rural land of the North Showa Zone, participant farmers from Addis Ababa's peripheries revealed that only oxen for farming and donkeys, few in number, are being held in the area, given the limited capacities to hold cattle in the area of Ethiopia's capital city. Thus, the risk of animal diseases is unlikely to be taken by the community.

3.3. The Land Policy and its Effects at Grass-roots Level

As discussed in the above sections of this paper, land tenure systems are one of the critical factors for growth and development in an agrarian society like Ethiopia. Irrespective of whether or not based on knowledge or mere worries, the current public ownership policy of Ethiopia is criticised by many scholars, opposition parties and some external development partners. Critics stress that this kind of land tenure would create less tenure security with the farmers as these would have less possibilities to increase their capacity to investment in order to enhance production.

- ✓ In the Addis case, the participants revealed that the Government can confiscate the land for private or public investment following compensation to the farmers. Compensation as a principle is common for all regional states and administrations.
- ✓ Farmers can bequeath the right of use to their children. However, as to whether or not the heirs or children can pay tax for the bequeathed land plots in their own name, which has a pseudo-ownership implication was found to be self-refuting. In one local administration it was possible while in another it was not possible. However, according to a staff member of the land administration, it was possible until

recently but is now prohibited due to new instructions from superior institutions, in response to some temporary problems.

- ✓ There is no land registration and certification services for farmers in the Addis Ababa area. As a result there are regular land disputes among adjacent farmers due to the confusion about the demarcation lines between farm plots.

According to the participants in the Amhara State (those who live in rural areas):

- ✓ There is land registration and certification. It helped avoiding conflict between farmers and signified gender equality: the photos of both husband and wife are attached to the certificate;
- ✓ Farmers believe that farm lands belong to themselves, at least in terms of the right of use, although this position calls for further investigation with regards to the extent to which they would hold security of tenure;
- ✓ According to the research participants, the land certification does not specify the duration of the right of use of the land or of the contract between the state and the farmers. The possible impact of such non-specified duration of the land certification on the farmers' sense of security and associated development endeavours also call for investigation.

PART FOUR

Concluding Remarks and Recommended Areas of Intervention

4.1. Summary and Conclusions

From the research conducted for the purpose of this paper it can be concluded that Ethiopia is endowed with immense natural resources: large agriculturally suitable land; varied agro-climatic zones favourable to varieties of lives; immense water which can be used for irrigation and power generation; and a relatively huge and cheap labour force. Despite such endowments, however, the country's economy was stagnant due to its major sector, agriculture, which has been hampered due to ill designed policies, natural calamities and backward peasantry farming techniques with a low input-output ratio.

Irrespective of the size as compared to the devolved and developing large nations, Ethiopia has been cited to be one of the fastest growing economies in the world. For the first time in the country's history, the Ethiopian economy has begun to be led by the services sector which heralds a structural shift that allows for sparks of hope to develop.

As agriculture is still the dominant sector of the economy, the overarching national development strategy is rural-centred and focusing on agriculture-led industrialisation. The policy has been and still is a point of controversy for the Government and its allies on the one hand and the academic circle as well as other opposing sectors of civil society, on the other. The Government claims that growth is the result of a sound development policy (the ADLI), whereas the opponents attribute such successes to the naturally favourable conditions like good harvest due to adequate rain. The ADLI strategy considers the small-scale farmers and the local administration as the two important forces in attaining the goals. Therefore, the Government intends to support the small-scale farmers through integrated packages of agricultural extensions to raise the yield per hectare ratio; moreover, it also tries to capacitate and train the local leadership.

Despite many areas of the economy have made progress, the livelihoods of the small-scale farmers are still constrained by many impeding factors. The salient constraints include small and diminishing farm lands due to large family sizes and rapid population growth; soil infertility with decreasing yield per hectare ratios; on-field and post-harvest crop pests; unpredictable patterns of rain; low inputs and backdated technologies that lead to low outputs; shortage of capital; reduced market access; lack of marketing information; outbreak of animal diseases and shortage of animal feeds with declining price structures. Whether or not the public ownership land policy has negatively or positively affected the agricultural sector needs further study. The land certification book has helped the farmers of the Amhara National Regional State by settling disputes among adjacent farmers, whereas those who live in the peripheries of Addis Ababa do not obtain such certification, which leads to frequent conflicts between the farmers.

4.2. Recommendations to the Voluntary Sectors

The intervention areas to support the agriculture sector can be categorised into the following three actions:

1. Support the successful implementation of the current national agriculture development policy with financial provisions, especially through collaboration with international funding agencies;
2. Support the sector by building the capacities of the local (districts and keels) offices of agriculture through trainings for developing extension experts and leaders and by providing logistics support;
3. Supporting the small-scale farmers by providing functional, practical and productive education and improved agricultural technologies as well as supplies and improving access to markets.

These recommendations were given by the farmers, themselves, as well as by a higher expert from the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture.

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