

FSS Update



የሚገናኙ ጥናት መድረክ

Issue No. 29

August 2008

An email newsletter

to facilitate networking and information exchange among CSOs and researchers

In This Issue:

- Public Lecture on Identity and Citizenship in Africa, p.1
- Mekelle CSO Dialogue and Training on Advocacy, p.3
- CSO Dialogue and RiPPLE Policy Engagement Meeting, p.3
- National Workshop on Bio-fuel Status in Ethiopia, p.4



Just off the Press



Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs



Edited by Taye Assefa

Public Lecture on Identity and Citizenship in Africa

The Heinrich Boell Foundation and Forum for Social Studies jointly organized a public lecture on the topic of **"Identity and Citizenship in Africa: Negotiating the boundaries that divide and unite us"**, which was held at the Ghion Hotel on 15th August 2008. The Guest Speaker was **Dr Akwasi Aidoo**, Executive Director of Trust Africa, an African foundation based in Dakar and that hosts dialogues, makes grants, and provides technical assistance to African institutions so as to promote peace, economic prosperity and social justice in the continent.



Following a brief introduction on the significance of the issue of identity and citizenship in Africa and a short profile of the Guest Speaker by Prof. Bahru Zewde, Dr Aidoo started his lecture by expressing his dream of *a visa-free Africa for all Africans*, whose

realization Ethiopia could pioneer as a veteran champion of Africa's liberation and unity.



Clarifying the two key concepts of his topic, Dr Aidoo said that "Identity is the ensemble or totality of all the attributes that express who and what we are as individuals," while citizenship is "one of many identity attributes that all individuals possess or should possess". Further he said that identity represents the terrain on which the state seeks to exercise its control on people, and the one alienable identity attribute that the state is able to "manipulate" more easily is citizenship. Regarding the strategies used to address the contradictions around issues of identity and citizenship, he said that ultimately, the manner in which bonding (cohesion within identity groups) and bridging (linkages and interactions between identity groups for collective good) are managed will determine the extent to which a nation thrives.

Africa is a continent of nations characterized by a wide diversity of ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities that require careful and effective balancing between bonding and bridging. Dr Aidoo thought that it is the mismanagement of these strategies that has contributed to the many alienations and conflicts in, for example:

- South Africa (the apartheid system and the recent xenophobic attacks) and

Address: FSS, P.O. Box 25864 code 1000, A.A., Tel. (251-11) 629 7888/91, Fax: (251-11) 629 7889
Email: fss@ethionet.et Web: www.fssethiopia.org.et

Zimbabwe (White minority rule and ethnic massacres in Matabeleland) in Southern Africa;

- Rwanda (the genocide of 1994), Sudan (Arabization in the South and genocide in Darfur), Somalia (clanism and Islamism), and Kenya (ethnic conflict) in Eastern Africa;
- Nigeria (the Biafra War) and Ivory Coast (Ivoirité and civil war), Mali and Niger (Tuareg armed rebellions) in Western Africa
- Algeria (discrimination against the Berbers) in Northern Africa.



While discrimination and conflicts around identity and citizenship are not exclusive to Africa, it is often the case that the authoritarian rules in many African countries provide little room for accommodating pluralism. Very often, resource scarcity is used by the state as the justification for articulating citizenship around a narrow set of identity attributes, which in turn leads to exclusion, rivalry and conflict.

According to Dr Aidoo, colonialism, through its deliberate policies of “indirect rule” (the British), and assimilation (the French and Portuguese), cemented our divisions. The newly independent states, in their nation-building project, tended to downplay or even “deny” the existence of ethnic differences and tensions. Single-parties were imposed with the excuse of avoiding tribalism.

This strategy of bonding when bridging was the required approach, had the effect of promoting cultural nationalism which became the norm. In distinction to this, Dr Aidoo also noted the existence of positive uses of cultural resources as a bonding and bridging strategy. A case in point was Tanzania, where President Nyerere’s government succeeded in promoting Kiswahili as an effective national language.

A second strategy which has proved to be problematic is that states have tended to prioritize national citizenship over every other identity attribute, as the primary pivot for achieving national bonding. Citizenship is simply reduced to legal certification.

Dr Aidoo also identified two broad trends that present new opportunities for bridging. One is globalization, which through the formation of the Diaspora and the electronic forums (such as list serves, blogs, interactive websites, etc.) has tended to broaden our horizon and create new communities transcending narrow identity boundaries. Thus, the Afri-

can Diaspora has become a critical pillar in our pan-Africanist architecture and serves as an effective bridging experience while the internet platforms have been generating virtual communities and centers of civic engagement and bridging across borders.

The second major trend is democratization. A conducive environment that nurtures the non-profit sector (popularly called NGOs or civil society) has great potential for bridging across the identities that divide us. Likewise, the business sector is probably one of the most integrated sectors in our countries, in terms of pooling entrepreneurs together in both collaborative and competitive relationships. The growth of a veritable middle class in many of our countries is also a good sign that primordial bonding would yield in their dominance to cosmopolitan bridging.

Discussing the way forward to enhance bridging, Dr Aidoo suggested the following points for consideration:

- regional integration, and allocation of more resources and efforts to strengthening regional institutions such as the African Union;
- a visa-free Africa for all Africans, which can make expulsions of Africans a thing of the past;
- Creation of a conducive environment for the growth of the non-profit sector, the private sector, and the middle class, which are the anchors and vehicles for bridging as well as for poverty alleviation, without which we can have no resolution to the countless devastating contradictions around identity and citizenship;
- introducing innovative approaches for using the Diaspora as a stimulant for forging our African identity and citizenship;
- promoting more artistic expressions and cultural exchanges across our land;
- continuous research, analysis, and dialogue to build the knowledge about the factors that make us African (e.g. regional institutions) as well as those that stand in the way (e.g. xenophobia).



Following the lecture, members of the audience reflected on some of the issues raised by Dr Aidoo, expressing their appreciation of the idea of a visa-free Africa. Some members pointed out that this approach paved the way for mobility of resources and would enable countries to share surplus resources such as skilled labour. Other members pointed out that expanding markets helps not only to enhance economic growth but also to bring together people across boundaries. There were also suggestions that we should pay attention to the way grassroots communities make identities. De-ethnicizing the state was also suggested as a means of promoting harmony in diversity.

Mekelle CSO Dialogue and Training on Advocacy

The Forum for Social Studies conducted a five-day dialogue and training session on advocacy in Mekelle town starting on 28th July 2008. Participants were drawn from civil society organizations, Mekelle University, government bureaus and the Regional Council.



On the first day, presentations were made on the results of studies on rights-based advocacy by CSOs in Ethiopia (by Dessalegn Rahmato) and on the legal framework for regulating civil society organizations in Ethiopia (by Tsehai Wada). To facilitate the discussions, FSS provided copies of the second draft of the recently issued Charities and Societies Proclamation. Issues raised during the discussions of the presentations included the role of civil society in development and the democratization processes in general and the 2005 electoral processes, the pros and cons of mandatory registration and foreign funding of CSOs, dynamics of rights-based advocacy and service delivery, government rationales and considerations in the drafting of the new legislation, possible impact of the new proclamation on development associations, etc.

Following the half day discussions, the training on advocacy proper started. Using the training manual prepared in col-



laboration with Pact Ethiopia, Ms Aynalem Asheber, FSS Program and Administration Officer, and Ato Debebe Habtegebriel, a legal expert, facilitated the training. The contents

of the training included the principles, types, methods, challenges and relevance of advocacy and practical exercises aimed at developing skills in identifying and executing advocacy tasks. At the end of the training, participants expressed their appreciation of the discussions and training organized by FSS and declared their interest in participating in future trainings of this sort.

The Mekelle dialogue and training was part of a series organized by FSS with the support of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) programme. Logistical support in identifying the participants and arranging the venue for the Mekelle training was provided by UNMEE's Mekelle Office. FSS had previously organized a similar training program in Hawassa, Bahir Dar and Jimma.

RiPPLE Policy Engagement Meeting

A half-day policy engagement meeting focusing on water supply and sanitation (WSS) was held on the 14 of August 2008 at Global Hotel, Addis Ababa. The policy engagement meeting was organized by RiPPLE, a five-year Research Programme Consortium (RPC) funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The programme aims to advance evidence-based learning on water supply and sanitation focusing specifically on issues of financing, delivery and sustainability and the links between sector improvements and pro-poor economic growth.

The policy engagement meeting was called to discuss issues related to the process of constructing policies in Ethiopia, and find better ways of collaboration and influencing policies in the country. Following brief introductions about RiPPLE and its main activities, three papers on the main activities of the Consortium in the areas of action research on water and sanitation, capacity building and the establishment of a Learning and Practice Alliance (LPA) with platforms at wereda, regional and national levels, were presented by RiPPLE staff and discussions on the issues presented and on ways of establishing interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts so as to better influence policies related to water, sanitation and hygiene in Ethiopia were held.

The presentations and the discussions which followed dwelt on the [cycle of money into water \(how can better water and sanitation services be planned, financed and delivered\)](#) and [water into money](#) (how can improved water and sanitation services contribute to poverty reduction and pro-poor growth). Core issues raised during all the presentations and discussion sessions include [governance and planning](#), water [financing](#) and [growth, communications](#) and [capacity building](#). It is believed that policy engagement and advocacy works in the areas of financing and delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) that is more equitable and sustainable, will help improve human security and contribute significantly to pro-poor growth through linkages to assets, income and health.

30 participants drawn from research institutes and CSOs/NGOs attended the meeting.

National Workshop on Bio-fuel Status in Ethiopia

A national workshop to assess the status of bio-fuel production in Ethiopia was held from 24-25 July 2008 at the new postgraduate building of the Science Faculty at AAU. The national workshop was organized by the biotechnology program of Addis Ababa University.

Energy plays a crucial role for economic development of a country. In most developing countries most of the energy consumption is for household use, much of it being derived from biomass. For example, in Ethiopia biomass accounts for 95% of the total energy demand while imported petroleum and electricity supply 4.3% and 0.7% of the requirement, respectively. Such dependence on traditional biomass is primarily responsible for the rapid acceleration of deforestation and environmental degradation. On the other hand, although petroleum accounts for a small fraction of the energy demand, it consumes on the average about 50% of the export earning of Ethiopia. This and the recent soaring prices of oil and food forces poorer tropical countries like Ethiopia to look for alternative and sustainable sources of energy. In this regard, biofuels are regarded by many as having enormous potential in replacing imported oil and oil products to meet the growing demand for household consumption, for transportation and industrial uses.

In the two-day workshop, research reports on the strategy of biofuel development in Ethiopia, potential of biofuel production, policy and institutional gaps and environmental and socio-economic issues related to the production and use of biofuels in Ethiopia were presented and discussed in detail. Most reports and government and institutional representatives showed optimism in that Ethiopia has a huge potential for the production of liquid biofuels (bio-diesel and bio-ethanol) for application in the transport sector thereby promoting self-sufficiency in the energy sector through import substitution and export of bio-diesel.

Despite the stated reasons for promotion of biofuels in Ethiopia, such as rural development through employment, agricultural diversification and energy

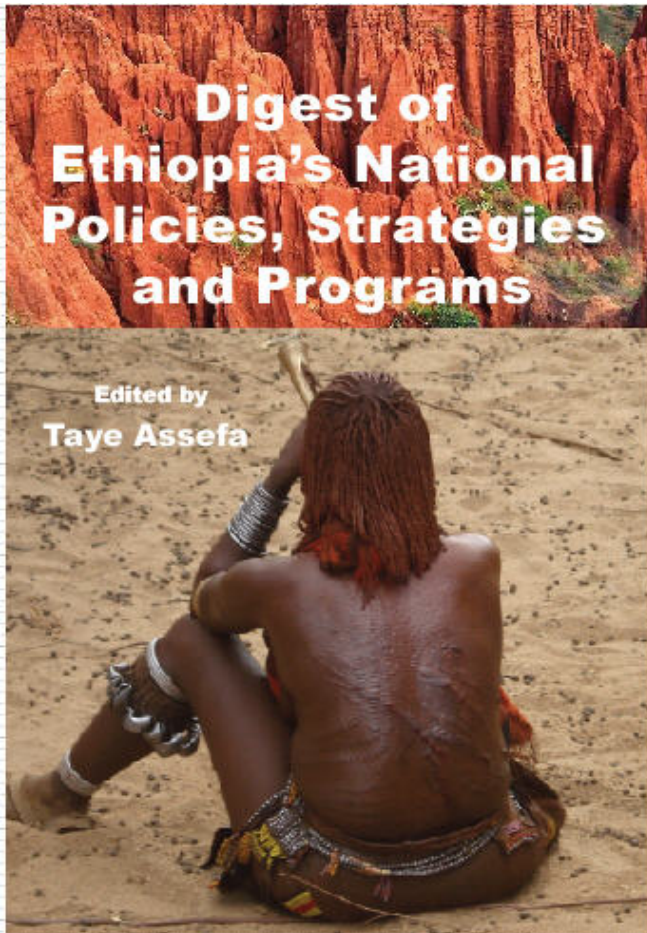
security, environmental sustainability and social advancement which are indicated in the biofuel development strategy of Ethiopia, the production of biofuels (itself an energy-intensive production system) and its economic, social and environmental contributions are hotly debated and even contested. The central questions of liquid biofuel production and efficiency must be considered from a comprehensive perspective.

1. A consideration of national food security and people's food sovereignty,
2. A consideration of whether it takes more energy to produce (to grow, process, transport and deliver) the ethanol or bio-diesel than what we can get out of ethanol or bio-diesel when we burn eat,
3. Evaluation of whether the production of such energy crops presents a significantly lower direct and indirect environmental and social cost than fossil fuel production,
4. Associated ecological and social costs incurred in its production, distribution and consumption,
5. Land use conflicts, encroachment of indigenous communities and traditional land use rights.

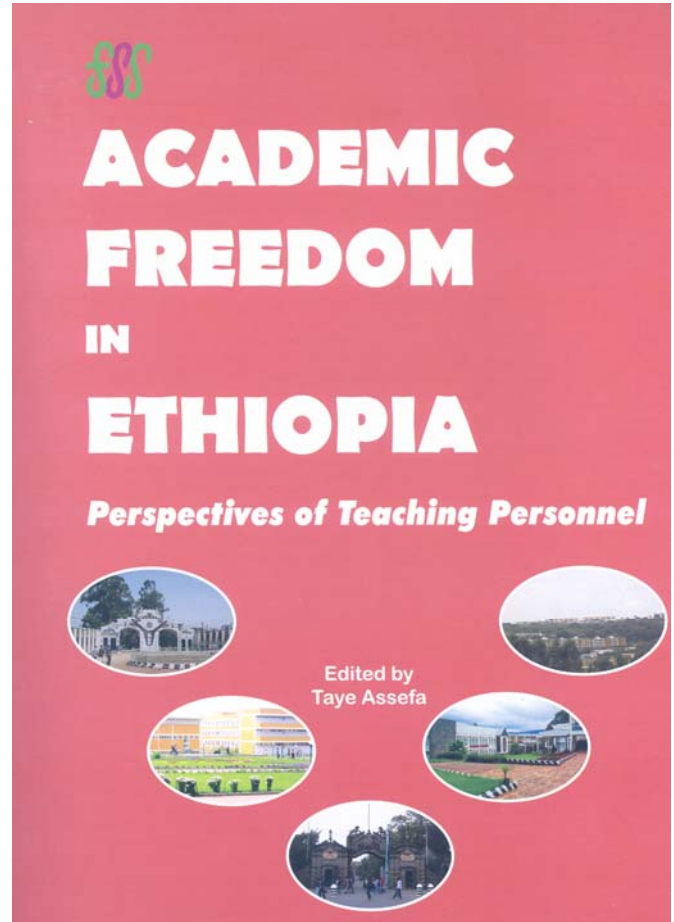
Much of the shift towards biofuels systems is occurring without careful consideration of the social, economic and environmental implications of such systems here and around the world. Fast tracked and comprehensive research is critical. In many cases, new levels and forms of cooperation across a wide range of disciplines and new analytical tools are needed to help decision makers in the realm of biofuels effectively evaluate the micro and macro level impacts of their actions on society, the economy and the environment.

Some 50 participants drawn from parliament, government, higher education and research institutions, CSOs and the UNEP attended the two-day workshop.

New Publications from FSS



This digest briefly reviews a selection of major policies, strategies and programs adopted by the Government of Ethiopia in the post-1991 period. It provides an overview of the salient features and elements of the policies, strategies and programs, gaps in their conceptualization, achievements and challenges in their implementation and the way forward. The reviews cover the Social sector (e.g., food security, population, education, women), Economic sector (agriculture, finance, energy, industry, trade and investment, water, environment), and Governance sector (civil service, justice system, and urban development).



This book examines the status of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and teaching personnel in Ethiopian higher education institutions. It provides the results of case studies of seven major public universities and four private colleges using the UNESCO General Conference's November 1997 "Recommendation concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel" as a benchmark. It also presents three other studies focusing on crosscutting issues such as teacher assessment, social dialogue and TESO, and impacts of massification.