

Issue No 51  
December 2016

# FSS Update



An e-newsletter to facilitate networking and information exchange among members, friends, partners, CSOs and researchers

## In this Issue

### Organizational Affairs

-FSS General Assembly held its 18th Annual Meeting.

-FSS Launched New Media and Communication Project



### Public Dialogue Workshops

-Role and Extent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Ethiopian Economy

-Some Reflections on Rural Vulnerability and Development in Ethiopia

-Building a Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE): Challenges and Prospects

-Role of Private Sector in the Development of Tigray Regional state



### Research Dissemination Workshops

-Land, Landlessness and Rural Poverty in Ethiopia

-Natural Resource Use, Management and Livelihoods in Dry Land of Ethiopia

-National Conference on Multiple faces of Khat'

## Notes from the Editor!

This e-newsletter which comes every six months features important FSS'

accomplishments, including research outputs and research dissemination conferences, public dialogue workshops, and media and outreach programs. The aim is to update and keep in contact with members and friends, partners, FSS' kindred civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, including the public and the media.

## FSS Launched New Media and Communication Project

Forum for Social Studies has launched a new media and communication project as part of its efforts to create impact and strengthen its visibility as a policy think tank with a meaningful contribution to the policy making process in Ethiopia. The media project is being implemented with financial assistance from the National Endowment from Democracy (NED).

The media project runs for a year and involves 52 30-minutes' weekly radio programs on Sheger FM 98.1 (every Sunday from 5:30-6:00pm) and 12 half-page newspaper articles monthly on the Amharic Reporter Newspaper.

The media project is FSS' first ever project which focuses on and aims to exploit the media as a tool in efforts to inform and influence public policy in Ethiopia.

## I. ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS

### FSS General Assembly held its 18th Annual Meeting

Forum for Social Studies (FSS) held its 18th Annual General Assembly Meeting on 26th March 2016 during which a number of pertinent issues outlined in the agenda were discussed.

As per the agenda, which was read out to the members, the meeting approved the minutes of the 17th GA meeting with some remarks on same. The Activity and Audit Reports of the 2015 budget year were presented to

the GA and both were unanimously approved after some discussion of certain issues and small changes on the contents and structure of the reports.

The GA also discussed FSS' Plans for the year 2016,



and approved same. The meeting unanimously elected Dr. Gebre Ynitso as a new Executive

Board member to replace Dr. Aklilu Kidanu whose term has expired after serving for two terms with dedication and commitment as a member and the Board's chairperson.

## II. PUBLIC DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS

FSS successfully conducted a series of public dialogue workshop on relevant and timely development issues as indicated below: .

### 1. The Role and Extent of Foreign Direct Investment in the Ethiopian Economy

The dialogue on the above topic was conducted on Friday March 25, 2016 at Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa. Dr Alemayehu Geda, a professor of Economics at Addis Ababa University and renowned scholar in the field, presented a discussion paper on the topic.

In his presentation, Dr. Alemayehu outlined the extent of FDI in Ethiopia and its contribution to the country's economic development over the past 10-15 years. He said that during this period Ethiopia emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and even the world, with a double digit growth which attracted foreign direct investment to the country.



Following Dr. Alemayehu's presentation, two discussants, namely Ato Teshome Beyene, former Secretary General of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Yitbarek Takele a senior lecturer at the College of Business and Economics(CBE) at Addis Ababa University (AAU), reflected on the presentation, and provided suggestions/comments to improve the research paper and enhance its contribution to economic planning and decision making.

Around 90 participants drawn from various sectors, including government officials, representatives from the National Bank of Ethiopia, the private banking sector and higher learning institutions, the media and members of the public attended the event and took part in the discussion.

### 2. Some Reflections on Rural Vulnerability and Development in Ethiopia

This public dialogue on the topic cited above was conducted on Friday, May 27, 2016. Ato Dessalegn Rahmato, who is the distinguished Ethiopian scholar and specialist in the field of agrarian economy and land tenure issues, presented a discussion paper titled: *Reflections on Rural Vulnerability and Development*, to a multi-stakeholder audience, including representatives of government offices, CSOS, higher education institu-

tions, individual researchers and academics, the media and members of the general public. In his presentation, Ato Desalegn provided a brief definition of vulnerability and its manifestations in the Ethiopian rural context.



Ato Dessalegn looked at the major drivers that aggravated the state of rural vulnerability and food insecurity in Ethiopia. He observed "Despite major strides towards development over the last 15 years, the economic growth has not translated into addressing the problem of food insecurity, and a significant size of the population remains vulnerable". According to Ato Dessalegn, the reason for this was that economic growth was one thing, and reduction of vulnerability was another issue. He also observed that in the past 15 years, there has been considerable economic growth and reduction in income poverty as shown by key economic indicators. However, since economic growth is not the same as economic development, food insecurity and rural vulnerability still remained formidable challenges.

Following the presentation, two designated discussants, viz. -Dr. Alula Pankhurst and Dr. Amdissa Teshome, reflected on the presentation and the conclusions drawn by Ato Dessalegn. Both scholars offered their insights on Ato Dessalegn's presentation and provided suggestions and comments to improve the research paper and also provided more inputs to influence policy making regarding rural development and tackling vulnerability in Ethiopia.

Participants drawn from government offices, various stakeholder organizations, members of the public and the media attended the event and participated in the discussions.

### 3. Building a Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE): Challenges and Prospects

FSS organized this public dialogue workshop on the topic cited above on Friday 29th July 2016 at Ghion Hotel. Dr. Mulugeta Mengist Ayalew, special advisor to the Prime Minister's Office on climate change policy and law and a senior researcher and academic in the areas of climate change and environmental law, presented a discussion pa-

per on the topic after which debates and discussions were held by the attending participants.

Dr. Mulugeta started his presentation by defining the concepts of green economy and its relation to sustainable development (SD). He said sustainable development was right at the intersection of economic development, social development, and quality environment. He argued that the idea of Sustainable Development (SD) is about enabling the current generation to exploit the same range of resources and benefits without affecting future generations.

Dr. Mulugeta pointed out some of the challenges for building a CRGE in the Ethiopian context. He identified the initial cost of green economy; institutional problems and lack of coordination among various interrelated sectors, such as the Institute of Biodiversity, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Ministry, and Ministries of Water, Electricity and Mines, to be the main ones.

Following Dr. Mulugeta's presentation, Professor Woldeamlak Bewket, Professor of Environmental Studies and Dean of the College of Social Sciences at Addis Ababa University and Ato Negusu Aklilu, a climate change advisor, and freelance consultant, forwarded their perspectives on the topic. They also offered suggestions and comments on further refining the policy recommendations and practical steps that need to be considered in environmental policy making in Ethiopia.

#### 4. Role of Private Sector in the Development of Tigray Regional State:

FSS organized this public policy dialogue on the above title in Mekelle on September 6, 2016. This is the first ever public dialogue organized by FSS in the region. The workshop was organized in cooperation and with the full support of Mekelle College of Business and Economics, for which FSS remains grateful.

Dr. Zenebe Gebreegziabher, an Associate Professor in Mekelle University, College of Business and Economics presented a discussion paper on the topic to an audience of participants drawn from various Regional bureaus, members of the private sector, higher education institutions and representatives of the media. Dr. Zenebe started his presentation with a brief discussion on the economic theories dealing with the private sector, and outlined the necessary elements for a vibrant private sector to be an effective partner in development. He cited requisite policy frameworks and adequate infrastructure as essential prerequisites in enhancing the pivotal roles that a private sector can ideally play in any given country and its contribution to the economy.

Two discussants, viz. Ato Michael Reda, an independent economic and strategic adviser representing the private sector and Ato Anteneh Zewdie, Investments Promotion Core Process Leader with the regional Bureau of Trade

and Industry, forwarded comments that would help enrich the paper so that it could serve the purpose in terms of providing an input to inform and influence regional policy on the subject under discussion. The two discussants forwarded their comments from the points of views of their experiences and positions.

### III. RESEARCH DISSEMINATION WORKSHOPS

FSS successfully conducted the following research dissemination workshops as indicated below:

#### 1. Land, Landlessness and Poverty in Rural Ethiopia

This research dissemination workshop on the topic cited above was organized at Desalegn Hotel on July 15, 2016, and its intent was to disseminate the findings of four research works completed as a culmination of a two-year project implemented in four regions: Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, and Southern Nations Nationalities and People's (SNNP). The research project financed by USAID through its project called Land Administration to Nurture Development (LAND) was implemented as part of a program of research and public dialogue under the theme: Land, Landlessness and Poverty in Rural Ethiopia.

The research was carried out in four regions, including Land, Landlessness and Poverty in the Amhara Region, by Dr. Tadesse Amsalu, Bahir Dar University; Land, Landlessness and Rural Poverty in Oromia Regional State by Dr. Fekadu Adugna Addis Ababa University; Land and Rural Livelihood Security: A Case Study in SNNPR by Dr. Teketel Abebe Private Consultant; and Land, Landlessness and Poverty in Tigray Regional State by Dr. Gebreyohannes Girmay, Mekelle University.

Among other things, the findings of the four research projects revealed that land, the major productive asset and the most important main stay for poor farmers, is increasingly becoming a scarce resource as a result of the ever growing demand for it from domestic and foreign investors, including as a result of urbanization, industrialization and the growing sub-divisions of plots in response to growing population pressure. Moreover, some provisions of Ethiopia's existing policies and the legal frameworks of rights to land including the tenure systems and land administration were said to be contributing to the problem of increasing landlessness among subsistence farmers and thus not helping the country's poverty reduction efforts, the studies found.

The researchers recommended that the country needs to revisit current land policy and governance issues if rural

poverty and vulnerability are to be resolved. Ato Desalegn Rahmato, who served as the Principal Coordinator of the 4 research projects, observed that what made poverty and vulnerability especially acute in this country is the increasing shortage of arable land for most farming families and the growing sub-divisions of plots in response to growing population pressure. “It is therefore imperative that there is wide, evidence-based, public debate on the subject of land and rural livelihoods,” he added.

A lively discussion and debate was held after each presentation during which participating stakeholders reflected on a number of issues and forwarded valuable inputs that can inform policy. FSS will publish the results of the findings at a later date for dissemination to policy makers, academics/researchers, kindred civil society organizations and the wider public.

## 2. Natural Resource Use, Management and Livelihoods in Dry Land of Ethiopia

This has been a two-year policy research and publication project under the title ‘Natural Resource Governance, Access and Management in Drylands of Ethiopia’ that has been funded by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Two research dissemination workshops –one in Assosa, Benshangul-Gumuz region and Addis Ababa, were organized as a culmination of 4 research projects carried out by FSS.

The Assosa half-day workshop was organized in collaboration with the Regional Bureau of Environmental Protection, Forest and Land Administration on 26 April 2016. The Addis Ababa workshop was organized on 30th June 2016.

The workshops were intended to create opportunities for FSS researchers to present their findings to the relevant stakeholders who directly or indirectly were involved with drylands resource management and forestry. The main aim was to create the venue for discussion and deliberation by the stakeholders on the research findings and soliciting inputs to enrich the recommended courses of action and policy inputs.

The final outputs of the 4 research works under the IGAD project will be duly edited by incorporating the inputs from the workshops and published for distribution to policy makers and other stakeholders, as well as the public.

## 3. National Conference on ‘Multiple faces of *khat*’

Forum for Social Studies (FSS) organized a two-day national conference that aimed to explore the multiple aspects of *Khat* from different perspectives from April 14 to 15, 2016 at the Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa. The conferences held under the theme “Multiple Faces of *Khat*” came as a culmination of a two year research project supported by the Ethiopia Civil Society Support Programme’s Strategic Partnership Grant (CSSP- SPG) scheme.

The main objective of the conference was to deliberate on the multiple faces of the stimulant leaf – *Khat*. The conference deliberated on two major FSS-commissioned research reports and another 13 papers selected from several abstracts submitted to FSS following calls for scholarly paper presentation by researchers.

The two commissioned research reports dealt with the socio-economic impacts of *Khat* addiction in two regions Harari People’s and Benishangul-Gumuz regions and child/youth employment in the *Khat* ‘industry’ and its implications on their education in the SNNPR and Oromia Regional States.

The other research papers dealt with a wide array of topics evolving around the production, distribution, marketing, and consumption of *Khat*. In addition to the research papers, FSS partner civil society organizations, namely, the Benishngul Gumuz Development Associations Network (BGDAN) and the Youth Network Harari Region Branch Office (EYNHB) who have been implementing intervention programmes on the prevention and mitigation of the impacts of *Khat* shared their experiences with the audience. The papers presented at the conference generated lively discussions on the economic contribution of *Khat* and its adverse socio-economic impacts.

In the main, the conference also discussed options that could help prevent and mitigate the adverse impacts of *Khat* addiction. At the end of the national conference, a panel discussion was held to wrap up the main findings of the conference and also highlight future course of action by government and non-governmental actors on the prevention and mitigation of *Khat* related problems.

The panelists recognized the complex nature of *Khat* issue, and reached a consensus on the need to develop policies

## IV. UPCOMING PROJECTS

### 1) Dissemination of FSS research and public dialogue outputs through the media II

This project proposal has been presented to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and is a follow up of the similar project implemented in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The main objective of the project has been to disseminate results of FSS activities, including policy research and the flagship public dialogue programs, to a wider public through the local print and electronic media. The new project will allow FSS to continue to do this in the next year. A project proposal has been prepared and submitted to NED and it is expected that the decision will come during the first week of January 2017.

### 2) Sustaining policy dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement on Khat and its socio-economic effects

The project is a follow up of an earlier research and national conference project under the theme 'The Social and Economic Impact of Khat consumption: An action plan for intervention to help affected groups'. The research and publication project was carried out with the financial assistance from Civil Society Support Program (CSSP). Two FSS sponsored research works on the socioeconomic impacts of Khat and 13 research papers revolving around the issues of Khat were presented at a national conference organized by FSS. This project is a follow up to that, and is intended to engage policy makers and legislators as well as civil society organizations working on rehabilitating those affected by Khat addition and develop action plans and policy recommendations for regulating and monitoring the production, consumption and marketing of the substance. Simply put, this project aims to sustain policy dialogue and create capacity on the prevention of Khat and substance abuse, and also provide policy inputs for

its regulation and monitoring of effects on society, particularly on women and children. The full project has been submitted to CSSP within the framework of their strategic investment grant scheme, and decision is being awaited.

### 3) Research and Public Policy Dialogue on Current Development Issues in Ethiopia

In this project, FSS aims to organize a national conference on development policies and the associated opportunities and challenges in Ethiopia. It is planned that about eight research papers will be presented and debated upon at a national conference that aims to bring together an audience of stakeholders for debates and discussions on current development issues. The full fledged proposal has been submitted to the European Commission Delegation to Ethiopia Civil Society Fund II, and results are expected the first week of February, 2017.

### 4) Socio Economic Assessment: "Addressing the root causes of migration in Ethiopia"

The research project aims at conducting a comprehensive and detailed socioeconomic assessment with a view to building a deeper understanding of causes and possible solutions to stem illegal migration in Ethiopia. A project proposal has been prepared and submitted to the International Labor Organization (ILO), and it is expected that the funding will be made available soon as the request for the research to be undertaken has been the initiative of the ILO. According to the proposal, the assessment will be carried out in Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Tigray regions, and will cover potential migrants and returnees as well as households. The assessment will employ different research techniques, including FGDs with returnees and potential migrants, the youth, households and selected members of the community as well as interviews with key federal and regional government officials intimately involved with the management of migration. In addition, the assessment will also make use of extensive secondary data.

## LATEST PUBLICATIONS

