

**Pastoralist
Perspectives of Poverty
Reduction Strategy
Program**

*Experiences and lessons from
Afar Region of Ethiopia*

February 2009

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Pastoralist Perspectives of Poverty Reduction Strategy Program

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Foreword

Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) is a local umbrella NGO working with the pastoralists and partners for advancement of the right of Ethiopian pastoralists, and represents collective voice of its member CSOs/ NGOs. Since its establishment in 1998 as a loose network for mere information exchange among few pastoral oriented NGOs, the Forum has undergone various developments both in terms of organizational and institutional settings. Building on experiences and lessons learned on pastoral advocacy and networking the Forum has since August 2004 transformed into a full-fledged local umbrella NGO.

In the course of the last ten years, PFE and partners have registered substantial performance. The tangible results obtained so far include pastoralism and pastoralist have become national agenda in which pastoral issues have been reported, discussed and debated at the level of parliament; pastoral institutions have been formed and formulated at the federal and the regional levels; the Ethiopian Pastoralist Day (EPD) has been recognized as a national day; inclusion of the plights of the pastoralist in the country's Five-Years Plan (2005/06-2009/10)- Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP); broadcasting a regular pastoral program in the Ethiopian Radio; and, the fact that pastoralism has been continuously attracting the attention of various actors can be cited amongst the few.

The interim-PRSP came out in Ethiopia in November 2000 and faced serious criticism by development partners due to lack of consultative and inclusiveness in its approaches. The document did not include issues of the pastoralists, except it mentioned pastoralism in a paragraph as a complex phenomenon difficult to understand. It was that time that Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) has embarked to advocate for the inclusion of the voices of the pastoralists in the Final PRSP. The Forum has since then been engaged in the PRSP processes and contributed *A Chapter on Pastoralism (Pastoral Poverty Reduction Strategy)* in consultation with pastoralist and partners to be included in the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) and the PASDEP. In terms of strategy both plans have partially incorporated the essentials of the Chapters on Pastoralism.

The Forum engaging further in the PRSP processes has recently designed a project with the purpose to contribute to efforts to enhance the capacity of pastoralist communities in Ethiopia to receive equitable benefit from poverty reduction strategies. As part of this project, the Forum commissioned a research study with the general objectives to improve the Afar pastoralist access to PRSP and enhance accountability among communities, governments and other development actors to achieve more equitable poverty reduction program.

We believe the outcomes of this study can be an input for development planers, researchers, and development practitioners in the region, and as initial findings for those working in nationwide in poverty reduction. Finally, PFE and Minority Rights Group (MRG) International would like to thank the Irish Aid, the Government of Finland, and CORDAID for financing this study. Our sincere thank goes to the Afar pastoralist and various bureaus and offices in the Afar Regional States for their unreserved supports to make this study real. The Consulting Firm, Dynamic Institute for Consultancy and Training-DICT, also deserves our thanks for conducting this study.

Tezera Getahun
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February 2009

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADLI	Agriculture Development Led Industrialization
ANRS	Afar National Regional State
APDA	Afar Pastoral Development Association
BoCB	Bureau of Capacity Building
BoDPP	Bureau of Disaster Prevention and Preparedness
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoFS	Bureau of Food Security
BoPARD	Bureau of Pastoral, Agriculture and Rural Development
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFID	Department For International Development
DICT	Dynamic Institute for Consultancy and Training
ETB	Ethiopian Birr(1USD equivalent to approximately 10 ETB)
I-PRSP	Interim-Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOs	Government organizations
HIV/AIDS	Human-Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PANE	Poverty Action Network of Civil Societies in Ethiopia
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty
PCDP	Pastoral Community Development Project
PFE	Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pastoralism is a livelihood system and a way of life for millions citizens in Ethiopia. Pastoralists in Ethiopia have been relegated in the waiting room of development by the successive Governments, development partners, and the public. Successive policies and strategies developed in the country have never addressed the interest of pastoralists.

Since recently, due to systematic advocacy works of the NGOs/CSOs and the political will of the Government, the pastoralists have started to receive the attention of many. The interests of the pastoralists have incorporated in the development plans in which the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program is the one.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a national strategic framework to combat poverty in Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). This initiative has direct linkage with the global policy framework, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Government of Ethiopia adopted PRSP in 2001 and has already completed the first phase and entered the second. The first phase is commonly known in Ethiopia as Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), while the second is Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), which is under implementation since Jan 2005.

Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) has been engaged in PRSP process since its inception. The Forum consulted pastoralists and partners and prepared a Chapter on Pastoralism that was submitted to the Government to be included in the national PRSP in which some of the elements of the chapter considered.

In 2008, the Forum initiated a project and commissioned a research study on the PRSPs of the Afar National Regional State with the purpose to contribute to efforts to enhance the capacity of pastoralist communities in Ethiopia to receive equitable benefit from poverty reduction strategies. The study was conducted in three sampled Woredas in Afar, which were Dubti, Buremudaytu and Awra. In the study, both conventional and non-conventional methodologies have been used.

The following paragraphs summarize the findings of the study and recommendations made.

Awareness and Knowledge about the PRSP in Afar

The study assessed the level of publicity or familiarity of the PRSP initiatives among the government officials at regional and local levels, NGOs and pastoral communities. The findings indicated that with the exception of key informants from the NGOs and some experts at regional level, all of the key informants were unfamiliar about the intentions of the PRSP initiatives and their implementation and M&E.

The knowledge gap was much more pronounced regarding the familiarity of the underlying assumptions, content, gaps and links between the Regional SDPRP-I and the PASDEP. Apart from reminding involvement at the initial PRSP consultations and referring to the region's five years strategic plan, most were lacking adequate knowledge about the policy documents. In support of the low level of publicity of the PRSP, one of the key informants from NGO stated that as opposed to the situation in Afar and other parts of the country in most African countries even the children on the streets, let alone higher political leaders, are very much familiarized with nomenclature as well as issues and concepts associated with PRSP documents.

Relevance, Benefits and Publicity of the Afar PRSPs

The PRS initiative of Afar is found to be a relevant approach to the empowerment of pastoral communities as compared with the past models that were centralized and deterrent to pastoralists. The underlying principles and process requirements deployed during the PRSP preparation were central to effectiveness and sustainability in reducing poverty in Afar. However, much emphasis has been given to a mere completion of PRSP documents at regional and Woreda levels.

The policy and plan documents appeared to be a replica than customization of the national level documents. This implies that the PRSPs did not exert profound influence in capacitating the regional/local governments to properly plan and act accordingly to reverse the poverty and vulnerability situations.

The PRSPs have not customized adequately in a way to revitalize the role of traditional pastoralist institutions in the mainstream development process which may contributed to less popularity of PRSPs in Afar. For instance, '*Dagu*', the Afar traditional communication system, could have been used to popularize PRSP among the communities.

Broad-based and Inclusive Participation and Partnership

Ownership of the PRSP, a fundamental principle of PRSP initiatives, is a function of broad-based and inclusive participation of the Afar pastoralists and partners. The study revealed that the level of ownership of PRSPs witnessed positive developments as well as shortcomings. The Afar PRSP initiative started with an unprecedented level of involvement of pastoral communities during the regional and Woreda consultations. The prioritized problems and interest of pastoralists that had been neglected during the Interim PRSP were incorporated to guide the interventions during SDPRP.

In fact, the regional government of Afar has been successful in preparing a policy document during PASDEP, which was a gap during SDPRP-I. However, formulation of the PASDEP was not based on adequate consultation with the pastoralists for identification and prioritization of their interest and concerns. The involvement of women and other marginal segments was disproportional and marginal. In support of this, review of consultation reports also showed that the level of involvement of women (20%) for Afar is found to be smaller than the national target of 30%.

Critics revolving around coverage and CSOs engagement were also important. Those pastoralists residing in the remotest and marginal areas were not covered by the

consultation. In addition the role of NGOs/CSOs in organizing separate consultation forums was limited. Besides, the participation of pastoralist has become invisible in successive stages of PASDEP, i.e. implementation and M&E.

Comprehensiveness

In terms of comprehensiveness, the PRSPs could not provide all-rounded responses for redressing the poverty and vulnerability situation.

Firstly, the underlying assumptions meant to rationalize the validity of the PRSP initiatives of Afar are not mostly supported by evidence based, comprehensive and intensive diagnosis of the poverty and underdevelopment situation of pastoral communities. Rather, the national level assumptions have been adopted into the regional plan.

Secondly, the regional PASDEP, like its mother document, envisages generating faster growth rates but the rate of growth taken as benchmark was not clear unknown. In fact, lack of benchmark data is a serious problem to substantiate the assumptions made in the plan documents.

Thirdly, most of the pillar strategies, sectoral and cross-cutting policies were replica of the national level. In effect, the documents didn't present, on board, the various alternative strategies for the growth of pastoral communities along with justification to opt for the best from existing strategies. Specifically, the viability of pastoralism as a strategy to reduce poverty and bring about sustainable development has been undermined both during SDPRP-I and the PASDEP.

Long-term and Result orientations

Result orientation and focusing on long-term goals are two of the fundamental principles of PRS initiatives. By focusing on poverty-oriented sectors, PRSPs are expected to clearly show the extent to which they reduced poverty. Besides, the need to link with broader goals like the MDGs and balancing poverty reduction with growth-generating endeavors make PRSPs long-sighted interventions.

However, regarding the Afar PRSPs, there are pronounced problems. The government has been continuously favoring the pro-poor sectors including education, food security and agricultural development, water, health and road. But, expenditure/resource allocation is only a means and by no means an end towards reducing the poverty of pastoralists. Seemingly, the regional government has been satisfied with output indicators and not outcomes, which is a problem masking the poverty reduction of pastoralists.

Similarly, long-term orientation is another problem. Due to lack of specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound targets/indicators, when and at what rate the region achieves MDGs are not yet known. Besides, convergence of the region's level of development to catch-up national level performances of pro-poor sectors is still uncertain.

Among the missing links is lack of a strict and region-specific Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation/PME system put in place for progress tracking. Review of the draft M&E system prepared by the regional BoFED, among others, is not a tailor made and participation of non-state actors as well as the role of traditional institutions was undermined.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- Adjustment of the existing PASDEP plan; establishing effective M&E system with complete set of targets/indicators and policy matrix; substantiating the analytical underpinnings on poverty diagnosis and alternative growth and poverty reduction strategies in the Afar context. Besides, conflict and peace-building mapping as well as on the role and capacity of traditional institution revitalizing the role of traditional pastoralist institutions in the mainstream development process;
- Institutionalization of purposive participation and advancing partnership are also imperative. In this regard, forging regional level GO-NGO forum is essential for benefiting from synergy and complementarities in the PRSP process. NGOs like PFE should also take the

initiative to advocate to the address these issues.

- Women's empowerment needs especial attention. Planned interventions with clear strategies and indicators for socio-economic and political empowerment are vital.
- Putting in place M&E system warrants immediate attention. The draft M&E system should be revised to ensure broad-based participation and inclusion of pastoralists and their traditional institution and NGOs.
- Cultivating favorable awareness environment and filling the knowledge gap about the PRSP process also requires interventions;
- The benefits and costs associated with interventions should be properly mapped-out and consensus should be built among the different stakeholders including the pastoralist. The socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental impacts of the interventions should be properly assessed and deliberated on directly with all actors including the pastoralists.



Fig.1. Goat flock in Afar

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopian pastoralists are estimated about 13.7% of the total population of the country. They inhabit the arid and semi-arid parts of the country and they have been among economically and politically marginalized populations.

Poverty remains particularly intense in the pastoral areas, in terms of low income and food consumption and high vulnerability for the risk of sudden drops in income. The coverage of social services and infrastructure are among the lowest in the country.

Their traditional social, economic and political systems have been eroded. Above all, the lack of awareness and poor understanding of the pastoral way of life among the policy makers in the past has led to the exclusion of pastoralists' issues from policy development.

Policy makers in the past were favoring crop farming than pastoralism. They consider pastoralism as a backward system that needs to be changed. Such perceptions are generally ill-suited to the comparative advantages of the pastoral areas and their way of life. Consequently, Ethiopian pastoralists have experienced decades of deterrent policies and socio-political exclusion.

Pastoralist development is important for the sustainable growth of the Ethiopian economy and the achievement of the MDGs. Sustainable poverty reduction in the pastoral areas requires long-term, multi-sectoral, holistic and integrated development interventions which, in turn, necessitate the genuine participation and empowerment of the pastoral communities. Indeed, broad-based and inclusive participation is a central tenet of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) initiatives.

However, there has been a general concern regarding the adequacy and level of participation of the pastoral communities and their institutions in the past two PRS initiatives of Ethiopia. The Interim PRSP (I-PRSP) document developed in 2000 had been seriously criticized for its lack of consultation and inclusiveness and for overlooking the issues and concerns of the pastoral

communities. After a series of criticisms from the CSOs and academia, later in the final document, certain aspects of pastoralists' needs and concerns were included.

The first generation of PRSP in Ethiopia - SDPRP (Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program)-that came out in 2002 had also suffered from limitation. The chapter on pastoralism was only partially considered in the final document. In addition, there was no clearly indicated budget for the pastoral sector.

There was also no clear M&E system and strategy put in place with appropriate indicators for tracking progress. The second generation of the Ethiopian PRSP-PASDEP (Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty) has shown remarkable progress in terms of taking some measures that specifically targeted at the development of pastoral areas.

The plan particularly aims at achieving three objectives: improving pastoral livelihoods and asset bases, improving access to basic services and strengthening institutions, which relate to pastoral issues. However, concerns still remain in terms of broad-based-participatory process and inclusiveness. Besides, lack of participatory monitoring and evaluation system is still a glaring gap.

PFE has undertaken this initiative to commence the current study on the Ethiopian PRSP vis-à-vis the Afar pastoral group.

This study is aimed at therefore assessing the PRSP initiatives, in particular the SDPRP and the PASDEP, and their commencement through implementation to M&E.

The study employed desk-level review of pertinent documents as well as field work for the collection of original data from various sources. The current report presents the findings of the study along with the concluding remarks and recommendations. The PFE believes that the report will be a good source of information that would serve as inputs for constructively influencing the PRSP process in pastoral communities of Ethiopia.

The report is organized into five chapters. *Chapter One* presents the introduction to the study, and *Chapter Two* describes a glimpse at Ethiopia, Ethiopian pastoralists and the Afar Regional State. *Chapter Three* provides the extent of PRSP initiatives while *Chapter Four* reviews the Afar PRSP Initiatives focusing on the regional PRSP consultations, SDPRP-I, PASDEP and an overall evaluation of the level of effectiveness of the Afar PRSP initiatives. *Chapter Five* provides discussion of major findings followed by concluding remarks and recommendations.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to improve Afar pastoralist access to PRSP and enhance accountability among communities, governments and other development actors to achieve more equitable poverty reduction.

The study was sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the relevance of PRSP initiatives to reducing poverty and vulnerability as well as the level of publicity of PRSP documents in Afar;
2. Assess the extent to which the two PRSP processes involved the pastoral communities;
3. Review the extent to which the two PRSPs encompassed the interest of pastoralists;
4. Assess the extent to which the two PRSPs were implemented in the pastoralist areas and the extent to which implementation were successful or not;
5. Assess the extent to which women were disproportionately affected by lack of access in the two PRSP processes undertaken; and,
6. Forward doable recommendations that would serve as an input for developing sustainable and inclusive development strategies for addressing the problem of Ethiopian pastoralists.

Methodology

Methodological Framework

The study was conducted in three sampled Woredas, which are Dubti, Buremudaytu and Awra (Fig.3). The criteria applied for the selection included representation of urban/rural setting, pastoral/agro-pastoral livelihood, remoteness/accessibility as well as Woredas included/excluded during the PRSP consultations and Woredas targeted by the productive safety net program. Limitation of time and logistic matters were also considered. Dubti is in Zone one, predominantly agro-pastoral, PRSP Woreda and relatively approachable; Buremudaytu is in Zone three, a pastoral Woreda, not a PRSP Woreda, but very poor infrastructure; and Awra, which is in Zone four, is a pastoral Woreda included during PRSP consultation and remote.

The analytical framework of the study was underpinned in the overarching goal and objectives of PRS initiatives and more importantly in the two key features- the process and the five underlying principles of PRSP. The overarching goal of PRSPs is to sustainably reduce poverty with the key objective of assisting low-income countries in developing and implementing more effective strategies to fight poverty.

PRSPs have two key features: the five underlying principles, and process requirements. Regarding the principles, PRSPs should be: *country-driven*, involving broad-based participation; *comprehensive* in recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty; *results-oriented* and focused on outcomes that benefit the poor; *partnership-oriented*, involving coordinated participation of development partners and based on a *long-term perspective* for poverty reduction.

The PRSPs also involve process requirements to accessing resources: concessional lending and debt relief. This relates to the extent to which the process empowers countries/regions for planning, implementing, and monitoring public actions geared toward poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The effectiveness of a PRSP is determined by the application of the aforementioned underlying principles and process requirements (Figure 1.1). In view of the broader methodological framework and scope of the study, the following were among the focus areas addressed to achieve the study objectives:

1. The Afar PRS process vis-à-vis the five underlying principles: region-driven, results-focused, long-term, comprehensive, and partnership-oriented
2. Evaluation of the various PRSP documents against the priority needs/interest of pastoral communities and their institutions
3. Aspirations vis-à-vis progresses made thus far towards empowering the poor and women in pastoral communities
4. Direct/indirect contributions of the PRSP towards altering vulnerability and alleviating poverty in the Afar pastoral communities,
5. Assessment of achievements and gaps along with their implications to realizing the broader and long-term/ developmental goal of the PRSPs,
6. Review of good practices based on criteria like relevance, reliability, sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and ethically soundness.

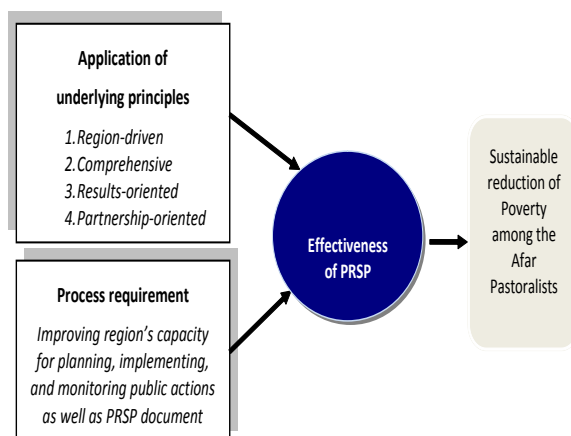


Fig. 2. Conceptual framework of the study
Source: Adapted from The World Bank (2003, The PRS Initiative: An Independent Evaluation)

Sources and Methods of Data Collection

Triangulated and participatory techniques of data collection and analysis were employed for the study in order to generate quality data from primary and secondary sources.

Pertinent policy and strategy documents and periodic reports at national, regional and Woreda levels on the PRSP processes were reviewed. In addition, primary data obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) complementing the secondary data sources. A total of 23 key informants from concerned governmental and non-governmental agencies were interviewed. Besides, 66 individuals representing pastoral communities and women participated in a total of six FGDs held in three study Woredas, Dubti, Buremudaytu and Awra.

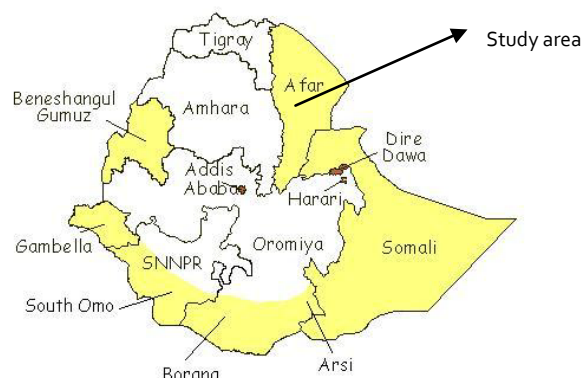


Fig. 3. The study area

Data Validation and Analysis

Appropriate techniques of analysis were developed and applied to validate, organize and analyze the data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Regarding the qualitative analysis, the information collected through in-depth interviews and FGDs were first organized in orderly manner in relation to the objectives of the study. Then, the information was categorized based on the similarity of the answers. Finally, the information put in patterns were displayed summarized in matrices or tables to look at possible relations.

BACKGROUND

The Ethiopian Pastoralist

The pastoral population of Ethiopia makes up roughly about 13.7% of the country's total population of 76.3 million. Pastoralist inhabits almost the entire lowlands of the country, which constitutes around 61% of the total landmass.

The pastoral population is heterogeneous in its ethnic composition and social structure, having some larger ethnic groups such as the Somalis, and Oromos with well over four million pastoral people each and the Afars having about 1.5 million peoples. The rest are Omotic pastoral groups such as the Hamar, Dassenech, Nygagaton and Erbore, and the Nuer and other groups in the western lowlands.

Livestock production, trading and *take-a-chance crop farming* (subsistence rain-fed farming) constitute the pastoral livelihood systems.

The pastoral communities have long been neglected and under pressure from successive governments, to change their livelihood systems to crop cultivation. Large tracts of pastoralist areas have been converted to commercial farms, national parks, and military camps from which the community has not benefited.

Profile of Afar National Regional State

Administrative, Socio-Economic and Demographic Background¹

With an estimated area of about 85, 410 km², the Afar National Regional State (ANRS) has an estimated total population of 1,493,409 out of which 57% are males (Statistical Abstract projection, Based on CSA, 2006). About 91.8% of the population is rural inhabitants. The major ethnic compositions are the Afar (91.8%), Amhara (4.5%), Argobba (0.92%), Tigrayans (0.82%), Oromo (0.7%), Welayta (0.45%), and Hadiya (0.013%).

¹ The data adapted from 2005 Profile of Afar National Regional State.

About 96% of the population are Muslim, 3.86% Orthodox Christians, 0.43% Protestants, 0.09% Catholics, and other religions (0.02%). Afar is predominantly (90.8%) spoken in the region, and it is the working language of the state with Amharic (6.68%) as the second language. ANRS is administratively divided into 5 zones, 32 Woredas (including 1 special Woreda), and 331 peasant/pastoral associations and 28 towns.

The land use pattern is: 14.8% of the total land area is covered by grassland; 31.5 % shrub land, 1.7% woodland and 0.11 % forest land. Whereas, water bodies and wet lands together account for 1.37% of the total land, the vast area of the region (49.6%) is an exposed soil, sand or rock. About 7% of the land in Afar region is also estimated to be cultivable land. The region has many perennial rivers that include Awash, Mille, Kesem Kebena, Awra, Gulina, Dewie, Borkena, Telalak, Mashugala and numerous seasonal rivers. While all the perennial rivers have a potential for irrigation, some like Awash Dewie and Telalak, are also suitable for hydro-electric power generation.

The region is one of the least developed regions in the country with 56% of the inhabitants living below the line of absolute poverty. The service and infrastructure condition is far below satisfactory.

Among the total population, only 42.4 % of the males and 23.4 % of the females were literate in 2004 (Welfare Monitoring Survey, 2004). Due to various socio-cultural and traditional practices females' participation and retention in education system in the region is low.

Health service coverage was only 29.6% in 2000 and it increased to 39% in 2005. (Regional Health Bureau Report). The health problems in Afar region include communicable diseases, malaria, respiratory diseases, and malnutrition, which are known to be the leading causes of mortality and morbidity. The majority of the population of the region has no access to potable water. About 35.7% of the households get drinking water from rivers and lakes, 15.72% unprotected well/spring, 4.17% protected well/spring, 36.83% public tap and 7.57% own tap.

Though livestock production is the base of livelihood for the Afar people, animal health service coverage is at its infant stage. The existing animal health institutions and health professionals are inadequate. The ratio of animal health institution to livestock is 1:360, 978. Moreover, the ratio of health professionals to animals is 1 veterinary doctor to 777,491 animals.

The road density of the region was only 21 km per 1000 km² in 2005. With uneven distribution of roads across zones, the total length of asphalt road in the region is only 684 km while the remaining 3049.3 km is gravel rural road of different standards.

The indigenous clan-based institutions are important in the socio-economic, political, ecological and cultural lives of the Afar pastoral communities. In general, the Afar people are socio-culturally homogenous. Despite the fact that the Afar has had sultanates resembling the feudal kingdom, the clan organization is the dominant one.

The clan system has three levels of segmentations: the clan family, the clan (*kedo*) and the lineage (*dula*). The clan families are three: *Wailma*, *Dabine* (Middle Valley), and *Asahimera* (Lower Plain). In the Afar society, the family is founded on cross-cousin marriage in which a boy marries his father's sister's daughters. The girls in such category (*absuma*) to the man are his potential wives and are considered as his reserves to such an extent that if any other man touches them, he will be penalized by customary law up to twelve cows.

A Preview on Poverty and Food Insecurity in Afar

In Afar Region, about 56% of the total population are classified as poor and around 275,000 citizens of Afar Region are chronically food insecure. In terms of absolute poverty, the Region is only better off than Tigray Region, which has a head count poverty ratio of 61%.

According to the HICE 2000 survey, households in Afar Region who spend between ETB 2,000 and 12,599 per annum account for 87%, which is more or less the same as the national average.

On the other hand, Somali Region, another pastoralist dominated region, has about 91.4% of households, whose expenditure is in the same range.

Review of domestic expenditures in relation to all payments revealed that Afar region has one of the highest figures in the country. The region exhibits the characteristics of poor regions i.e. high expenditure in relation to all payments against savings). Besides, the region scores the highest point in terms of source of income for livelihoods from agriculture (77.8%). Non-agricultural enterprise and wages and salaries account for 2.3% and 4.8%, respectively.

The national average for agricultural, non-agricultural, and wages and salaries is 73.5, 6.3, and 3.3%, respectively. Moreover, the percentage share of household income/expenditure spent on food 53.8% for the region.

The region is one of the lowest in the country in terms of households' saving status. Only 1.3% of the total average household annual income is saved in Afar, a figure only slightly higher than that of Somali region. Furthermore, more than 92% of the total population is food insecure in terms of calorie intake. The region had the second worst child wasting (11.8%), only next to Gambella (12%).



Fig. 4. Afar children attending mobile school

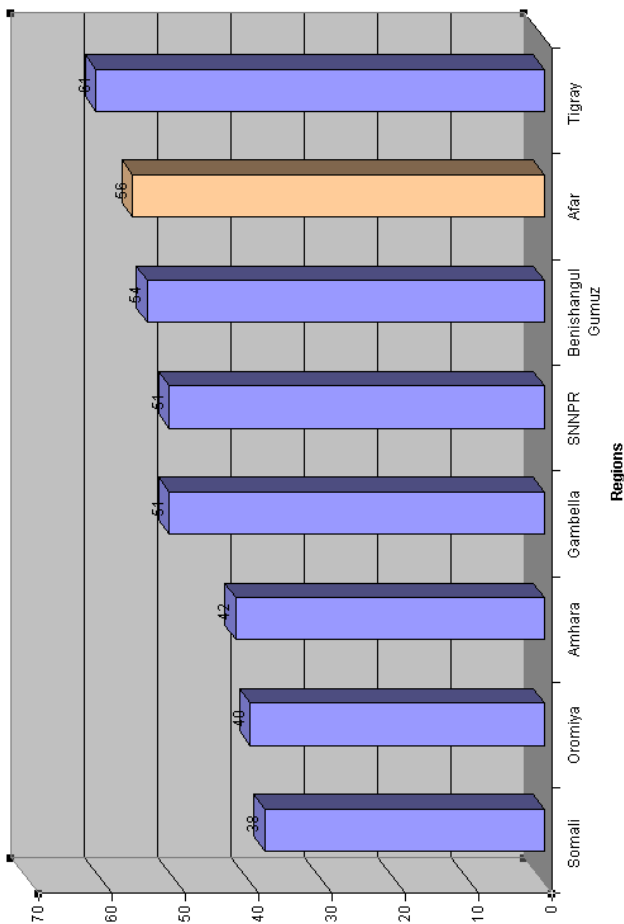


Fig.5. Poverty in Ethiopia by regions, 2000
Source: MoFED, 2000

OVERVIEW OF PRSP INITIATIVES: *Global and Country Contexts*

Global Context

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is the initiative of the big donors/lenders, World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Through this initiative, WB and IMF requested the least developed countries, particularly the heavily indebted countries to articulate their strategies for poverty reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The countries would then qualify for debt relief under the enhanced Highly Indebted poor Countries (HIPC). Another important condition of the PRSP initiative was citizen's participation in the preparation of the PRSP.

Eventually, PRSPs became country-level operational framework for prioritizing and realizing the MDGs. At the Millennium Summit held in 2000, a commitment was made by more than 147 heads of state "...to a common set of principles and targets that would bring all peoples to a minimum acceptable standard of development by the year 2015". Such commitment was enshrined in the adoption of 8 goals and 18 targets (MoFED, 2005).

The Ethiopian PRSP Initiatives: *Evolution, SDPRP and PASDEP*

In Ethiopia PRSP was initiated in August 2001. Prior to the PRSP initiative, the government already had a series of national strategy documents that dealt with poverty reduction. These include: the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), the Third Five-year Development Plan, and the National Food Security Strategy.

Box 3.1. The MDGs at a Glance

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015
2. Achieve universal primary education by 2015
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The PRSP made it possible to integrate these strategies into a unified development framework for endorsement by the wider society and the external assistance community. Hence, the PRSP was well received in government circles and secured high level of ownership at the central government level because of strong continuities between the existing policy agenda and the PRSP.

The consultative process for preparing the PRSP was broad-based, closely mirroring the federal and administrative hierarchy of the country - a major undertaking in view of the large size of the country and its population. During November 2001 to March 2002, the federal government conducted public discussions at the Woreda and regional levels. Those discussions were monitored by NGOs and the donor community. CSOs and the donor community also organized a series of public discussion and consultations.

Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP)

In 2002, the Government of Ethiopia committed itself to the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP). The SDPRP is the first phase of the PRSP covering the period 2002/03-2004/05 informed by the Sectoral Development Programs (SDPs) and linked to ADLI. The SDPRP existed in parallel with the constitutional mandated Second Five-Year Development Plan 2000-2005 which elaborated the policy and institutional measures needed to achieve the ADLI.

The SDPRP was built on four pillars. These are:

1. Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI)
2. Reform of the Justice System and the Civil Service
3. Decentralization and empowerment
4. Capacity building in public and private sectors

The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP)

The plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) represents the second generation of the PRSP process. In fact, the development policies and strategies pursued during SDPRP are the basis for the five-year development plan in PASDEP.

The PASDEP consists of eight pillar strategies. The pillars are:

1. Building all-inclusive implementation capacity
2. A massive push to accelerate growth

3. Creating the balance between economic development and population growth
4. Unleashing the potentials of Ethiopia's women
5. Strengthening the infrastructure backbone of the country
6. Strengthening human resource development
7. Managing risk and volatility
8. Creating employment opportunities

Stakeholder Participation

The preparation of the SDPRP involved an extensive consultation process, regarded as the first of its kind in the country, which brought in many actors at various levels to debate on policy priorities and strategies. Representatives of civil society moderated the consultations for SDPRP preparation at the district level. NGOs participated in the discussions on the draft SDPRP with the Government during the district, regional and federal consultations. The private sector was also participated in the consultations, and the national and Chambers of Commerce were the lead private sector organization involved in PRSP process.

However, despite the wide geographic and institutional coverage of the consultation to allow participation from different walks of life, several critics reported that the final document did not sufficiently incorporate most of the views from the consultation process. Many people argued that the contribution of the consultation was insignificant in terms of the actual plan. According to Teshome (2006), for instance, "the contributions were no more than endorsing the policies and strategies the government has been pursuing well before the PRSP initiative".

The experience in the development of the second generation PRSP, PASDEP, showed a limited consultations process to involve board-based stakeholder participation and inclusive processes. Hence, the PASDEP failed to build on the experiences of the first PRSP, SDPRP as many critics noted, the PASDEP development process more of a 'desk top policy', which relied on review of secondary data from government and other studies.

These include: data from welfare monitoring, household income and expenditure surveys and data from the participatory poverty assessment. Thus, unlike the previous plan – SDPRP–there was limited regional consultation in the PASDEP development process.

THE AFAR PRSP INITIATIVES: *Progress, Achievements and Gaps*

Initial PRSP Consultations

The PRSP in Afar, as elsewhere in Ethiopia, was initiated in the year 2001/2. Woreda and regional consultations were conducted at the stages of initiation and formulation of the initiative. The PRSP consultations, held from September to March 2001, were intended to ensure popular participation, ownership and comprehensive development interventions that focused on reducing poverty among the Afar pastoralists.

The Afar Regional PRSP Secretariat was established in 2002 based on the guidelines developed by the Federal Government (MoFED) for the establishment of institution.

The secretariat consisted of steering and technical committees established at a regional level. The committees were entirely from government sectoral offices and dedicated to fulfill the requirements for conducting the Woreda and regional consultations.

The Woreda consultations covered six Woredas i.e., 20% of the total 29 Woredas of the region. The Woredas were selected purposively based on some criteria to ensure representation that could reflect regional picture. The criteria included: zonal distribution/representation; pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood base, existence of small-scale income generating activities, level of urbanization, and prevalence of conflict.

Accordingly, Dubti, Berehale, Gewane, Argoba, Awra and Fursi Woredas were selected to reflect the regional picture. A total of 300 inhabitants of the six Woredas; i.e., 50 persons per Woreda, took part in the consultations. Out of the total number participants, nearly 20% were reported to be females, while 80% were males.

The participants were drawn from pastoralists, elders, government employees of sectoral offices, CBOs/NGOs, private investors and associations that represent youth groups.

The regional level consultation was conducted involving different stakeholders to deliberate on the consolidated Woreda reports that were supposed to serve as inputs for the formulation of PRSP, i.e., SDPRP-I. Specifically, representatives of the government from regional, zonal, and Woreda tiers; NGOs; clan leaders; and private investors participated in the consultation. Although data on the number and composition of the participants could not be accessed, first-hand information indicated an estimated size of 300 participants.

Meanwhile, review of the consolidated Woreda and regional level reports showed that the discussions focused on a number of issues and factors associated with poverty in the region/locality. Accordingly, poverty was defined to refer to the inability to feed, educate and medicate household members; undiversified livelihood situation and excessive dependence on relief or remittance income due to depletion of assets.

The most noticeable manifestations included: lack of food, declining income, depleting assets, recurrent drought, wide spreading conflict, degradation of grazing land, poor social service and infrastructure, illiteracy and poor public awareness.

Women youth and elders are among the most vulnerable groups in the pastoral communities. Moreover, those pastoral communities along the Awash basin are vulnerable as state-owned farms along the river mostly displace them from their lands and disrupt the migration pattern, which is integral to pastoralism. In addition, the structural causes of poverty were also identified. Undiversified livelihood, gender inequality HTPs, and poor access to services and infrastructure were, in order of importance, the factors that induced and/or aggravated poverty in Afar.

Besides, the key areas that need the focus of future interventions were enumerated. These areas include: human health, livestock development, agriculture development, water

development, education and saving and credit facility. The need to ensure genuine and all inclusive participation of the people at all levels and in different stages of the interventions was also vended during the consultations.

Moreover, the following priority measures were suggested for PRSP programs:

1. Improve access to water and grazing land
2. Conflict resolution
3. Improve access to social services health and education services
4. Improve infrastructure conditions including physical infrastructure like road, communications, marketing, and saving and credits
5. Improve governance condition. institutional capacity and popular participation

CSOs Engagement in the PRSP Process

CSOs made invaluable contributions in incorporating the interest and views of pastoralists in the policy arena. In this connection, the interim PRSP, which came out in Ethiopia in November 2000, encountered serious criticism from CSOs on the grounds of lack of consultation and inclusiveness? This document did not include pastoralists' issues, apart from mentioning pastoralism as a complex phenomenon that is difficult to understand. It was at that time that the Pastoralists Forum Ethiopia (PFE) began to advocate for the inclusion of pastoralists' voices in the country's final PRSP.

PFE carried out a number of activities, including:

- Organizing a national conference on Pastoral Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy in May 2001
- Facilitating and coordinating the Fourth Ethiopian Pastoralist Day under the motto *special attention to the Pastoral poverty Reduction Strategy* in January 2002
- Organizing consultation workshop for the pastoralists and stakeholders
- Translating concerns and strategies from these consultations into a chapter on pastoralism (Pastoral Poverty Reduction

Strategy) which was submitted to the government for inclusion in the PRSP.

The advocacy strategy of PFE included alliance-building with the government and NGOs as well as participating in all levels of the government's PRSP consultation process. As a result, the final PRSP came out in September 2002 including a six-page chapter on pastoralism and pastoral poverty reduction strategy and partly incorporating PFE's proposals.

Achievements, Gaps and Challenges during PRSP Consultations

The study findings uncovered a number of achievements and gaps in the Woreda regional PRSP consultations of Afar. Regarding the achievements, for those in the government business, the consultations were unprecedented and a key to the empowerment of pastoralists who suffered from exclusion and top-down approaches of development interventions. Accordingly, the consultations ensured the active participation of all segments of the pastoral communities focusing, among others, on livelihood, gender and advancing partnership of the government with other actors -the private sector and CSOs/NGOs at the stage of initiation.

Partly in support of the aforementioned view, key informants from non-state actors appreciated the relevance of the consultations for a sustainable poverty reduction among pastoral communities. It was described as the first of its kind to involve the communities for localizing the meanings, causes as well as manifestations of poverty and for the identification and prioritization of priority interest and problems of the communities. Besides, CSOs engagement during the formulation of PRSP documents was credited.

However, majority of the key informants outside the government were critical to the process and emphasized the challenge of lack of political commitment in the part of the regional/local governments that hindered the genuine and all-inclusive participation of pastoral communities.

In this regard, consultations were somehow defective as those from the government were dominant and the real poor and marginalized had limited chance to articulate their interest and priority problems.

The involvement of women and other marginal segments was disproportional and marginal. In support of this, review of consultation reports also showed that the level of involvement of women for Afar (20%) was found to be smaller than the 30% national target. Moreover, women were mostly represented indirectly through their associations, critics revolving around coverage and CSOs engagements were also important. The pastoralists who reside in the remotest and marginal land were not covered by the consultation. In addition, the role of NGOs CSOs in organizing separate consultation fora was limited compared to the situation in other regions.

In addition, inadequate sensitization works to create awareness on the purpose and implications of the PRS initiative for the communities was another gap. Most were found to argue that the consultation could have laid the foundation for empowering traditional institutions in establishing a strategic communication to disseminate PRSP information. For instance, *Dagu* could have administered to popularize the PRSP.

Furthermore, there was no system or institution that have continued to mobilize communities and stakeholders for enhanced levels of partnership and participation in PRSP. The institutional arrangements, namely, the PRSP secretariat and Steering and Technical Committees were found non-functional since the completion of consultations. Also, non-state actors were not represented in these institutions.

Finally, limited capacity and experience of the regional government to organize and coordinate such discussion fora; limited number of NGOs in the region during PRSP consultation stage and scattered settlement pattern and poor infrastructure condition were among the roadblocks for reaching out more pastoral communities with PRSP consultations.

The Regional SDPRP

SDPRP in Afar covered three years from 2002/3 to 2004/5. According to the interviewed key informants, the national SDPRP document served as a reference for the region's three years development interventions and for its expenditure decisions. The priority problems and issues identified during the consultations also served as guideline in making important decisions by the government. Nonetheless, there was no regionally owned SDPRP plan document developed based on the consultations and contextualizing the national SDPRP document.

A review of the national SDPRP document revealed that the policy document devoted only a sub-section for pastoral development. Criticizing the deterrent and short-sighted policies of the past, the SDPRP highlights the constraints and the necessity for integrated, co-coordinated and scrutinized development efforts and programs in pastoral communities. Besides, the need for grass-root participation in the design and implementation phase of projects and programs was highlighted.

Furthermore, the following objectives, strategies and technical interventions are stipulated in the SDPRP.

Objectives of pastoral development

The objectives set out to improve food security and enhancing income earning capabilities of pastoral communities are:

- ✚ To improve livestock productivity through irrigated pasture, environmental rehabilitation, and improved animal health services.
- ✚ To explore market outlets and integrate livestock production into the national economy

Strategies of pastoral development

The following strategies will be adopted for pastoral development:

- ✚ Sedentarisation of nomadic pastoralists on voluntary basis.
- ✚ Consolidation and stabilization of those already settled or semi-settled through

improved water supply, pasture, and social services.

- ✚ Careful selection of viable and reliable river courses for future sedentarisation based on irrigation and link these places through roads and other communication lines.
- ✚ Provision of mobile social services including health and education holistically for those that continue to be mobile.

Technical interventions in pastoral development

The technical interventions stipulated in the SDPRP include:

- Improve water supply and irrigation development
- Livestock and range resources development
- Strengthening infrastructures and institutional support

Progress and Challenges

The progresses made and challenges encountered during SDPRP are discussed below based on the assessment report by the regional government.

Financial Resource Utilization: Expenditure favored pro-poor sectors

In consistent with the national government, during the SDPRP period, the government resource allocation and implementation was geared towards investments on development and pro-poor sectors: education, health, agriculture and food security, clean water supply and road construction. Indeed, the spending on poverty-oriented sectors increased to 60.9% in 2004/5 from 47.5% in 2001/2.

Performance of the pro-poor sectors

During SDPRP, Implementation of programs under the major poverty-oriented sectors, viz. education, agricultural development and food security, health and HIV/AIDS, water, and road are presented in this section. However, the available data is not only inadequate but also for some sectors it is either totally missing to show time-bound outcomes as a result of the various interventions.

In general, comparison of the regional and national level performances between 2001 and 2005 showed perceived disparities. As depicted in Figure 2, the regional lagged behind the country level averages for the pro-poor sectors of education, health, water and road. Furthermore, the progress and achievements of the pro-poor sectors during SDPRP-I is briefly discussed below.

Education: During SDPRP_I education had remained the leading poverty oriented sector in terms of receiving a proportionally large amount of finance. In effect, the coverage of primary school education (GER) significantly increased by 83% from 11.5% to reach 21% at the end of SDPRP-I period. But, the GER for females increased by 49% only from 11.1% to 16.57% during the period. Mean while, the coverage at national level increased from 61.56% to 79.8% (70.9 females and 87.3 males).

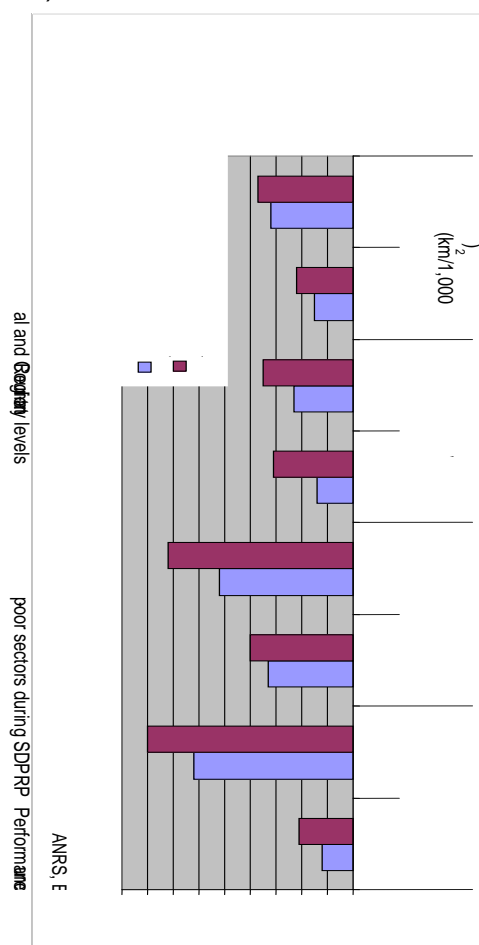


Fig. 6. Performance of selected pro-poor sectors at regional and country level

Thus, despite the significant increase in the General Enrollment Rate (GER) in the region, a wider gap still exists compared with the national figures as well as achieving the MDG of 100% GER by 2015. In fact, the enrolment ratio of Afar region is found to be low. The achievement in the education sector was largely attributed to the introduction of mobile education system and to the significant increase (45%) in the number of primary schools.

Unlike the progress in primary education, however, the coverage of secondary school education increased from a GER of 2.97 in 2001/02 to 4.2% in 2004/05. The disparity is still wide compared with the coverage at national level, which was 29.2% in 2004/5. The number trainees in TVET increased from 23 to 326 during SDPRP-I.

There were also challenges for the education sector. Children's, especially girls', education is least valued. The other problems include high drop-out rate, poor quality of education, as well as problems associated with curriculum and lack of interest among the natives to the teaching profession.

Agricultural development and food security:

security: Agricultural development and food security is the second, next to education, most important pro-poor sector in terms of government's spending during the SDPRP-I period. All of the 29 Woredas in the region are categorized under the 267 chronically food insecure Woredas of Ethiopia. The regional government expressed achievements in areas of small-scale irrigation expansion, pastoral livelihood diversification and enhanced livestock productivity. Nonetheless, the reported achievements were based on outputs rather than outcomes.

Health: The coverage of health increased from 33% to 40% during SDPRP-I. The health coverage and the progress 21% increment during SDPRP-I were way behind the country status and progress. For example, the coverage of health at national level increased by 38% from 52% 2001/02 to 72% in 2004/05. In addition, contraceptive prevalence rate increased by 88% for the country as compared with a 40% increment for the region.

The challenges encountered during SDPRP-I for the health and HIV/AIDS sector include: health extension service was not started, poor capacity of the region for meeting the demand of health service, lack of mobile health service delivery system, and unavailability of health professionals.

Water resource development: Access to clean water increased from 14% in 2001/02 to 31% in 2004/05. However, like in the other pro-poor sectors, the water sector also lags behind the national average and the universal access plan, i.e., access to all by the year 2002. At the national level, the provision of access to clean water supply had increased from 23% to 35% in rural areas and from 74% to 80% in urban areas during the period 2001/02 to 2004/05.

Road: During the SDPRP period, priority was given to new road construction and major rehabilitation/upgrading/maintenance works. Accordingly, in 2001/02 there was 1370 km road network, which increased to 1,449 km in 2004/05. The regional road density increased from 15 km/1,000 km² to 22 km/1,000 km²; whereas the national density increased from 32.3 km/1,000 km² to 33.6 km/ 200 km² during the same period (SDPRP-I).

Performance of cross-cutting and others sectors: Finally, performances of cross-cutting sectors including governance, gender and population were also reported though not quantified to indicate outcomes. Regarding decentralized governance, improving the capacity of districts and the introduction of unit costing approach for prioritization and costing of poverty oriented sectors were important.



Fig. 7. Camel is a key asset for the pastoralists

Summary of Major Achievements and Gaps in SDPRP

Achievements

Attempt was made to reflect, in the SDPRP-I, the interest and priority problems of pastoralists. Non-state actors, particularly NGOs, in the region engaged during policy formulation and their feedback and comments were considered.

The selection of priority areas or poverty sectors and some indicators at regional levels was guided by the information obtained from the initial Woreda consultations. That was also evidenced in the government's expenditure to pro-poor sectors that showed increment during the period.

Assessment of poverty sectors was done by the government at the end of SDPRP. The performance of most of the poverty-oriented sectors particularly in education, water, health and road was reported to be remarkable, though lack of benchmark data inhibited comparison of the accomplishments vs. the plan. Moreover, cross-cutting sectors like governance, gender and population were reported to show improvements though specific data were not included.

Gaps

Despite the achievements, many important gaps were identified during SDPRP-I. To start with, the role of the communities was largely limited to the consultative meetings. "Business as usual" continued and participation of the masses was not witnessed. The implication of this in impending community empowerment is clear. Moreover, no regional plan prepared that would contextualizes the country level SDPRP. There was also no M&E system put in place for tracking the progress. Benchmarks or reference points were not set at the beginning. Hence, it was very difficult to evaluate the success or failure of achieving targets.

In fact, progress reports for the pro-poor sectors were output-oriented, not outcome-oriented. Moreover data was not available regarding progress and achievements for the food security and agricultural development sector.

In addition to the aforementioned gaps, government institution, rather than sectors, were given due attention. As a result, the evaluation report focused mainly on the activities of government agencies rather than on their integrated efforts on reducing poverty. Moreover, to what extent the PRSP process improved the capacity of the institution's implement and monitor and evaluate their actions was not reported.

In addition, the impact of the PRSP in reducing the poverty, i.e. the proportion of the poor extricated from the poverty trap as a result of the intervention, was not quantified. The other problem was that only government institutions were involved in the process. Other actors like CSOs and NGOs, and bilateral and multilateral organizations were not involved in a sustainable manner during implementation and M&E of SDPRP. Consequently, the partnership relationship that appeared at the stage of initiation started to deteriorate hindering the successful implementation of PRSP and affecting the reliability/credibility of progress reports.

Furthermore, the top-down approach of planning continued to dominate albeit attempts made to reflect the interest and priority problems of the pastoral communities obtained from the Woreda consultations. Sectoral planning at regional level, with lack of integration to focus on the ultimate goal of reducing poverty, was practiced both at regional and Woreda levels. The regional plans failed to incorporate the priority interest and problems of all Woredas and disparities among the Woredas in the level of development and poverty situation were not addressed in the regional PRSP document.

Finally, the institutional arrangements for PRSP initiatives -the PRSP secretariat and its Steering and Technical Committees -were non-functional during the SDPRP-Implementation and M&E. There was no arrangement put in place to coordinate and follow up the PRSP process.

Most of the above gaps were also among the main issues raised by workshop participants for consideration in PRSP II. Admittedly, the need for re-orienting formulation of

development programs and projects with the settlement pattern of pastoralists was emphasized.

The low level of participation of pastoralists in various development endeavors was also identified as a glaring gap. Besides, the low level of participation of girls in education is peculiar to the emerging regions like Afar. Limited community ownership of development outputs and lack of coordination are also relevant to the PRSP process of Afar.

The Regional PASDEP

Ethiopia's reiterated commitment toward pastoral community development during the PRSP initiatives is also reflected in the national PASDEP document. Accordingly, pastoralist Livelihoods and Development is one of the seventeen sectoral policies, Strategies, and Programs of the PASDEP. A range of tailored program and policy responses to pastoralist areas and the people are specified under improving pastoral livelihoods and asset bases, addressing inadequacy/lack of basic social services and addressing institutional issues related to pastoralists focusing on Gender development and putting in place land tenure and institutional policy.

The Afar region, in 2005, customized the national PASDEP and designed the second generation of PRSP entitled as the regions five-year strategic plan. There are eight key sectoral policies, programs and targets identified in the Regional PASDEP taking the year 2005 as a benchmark and in view of the targets for the national PASDEP. These include:

1. Agriculture with two sub-sectors: livestock resource development and crop production
2. Food security and vulnerability
3. Private sector development with three sub-sectors: enabling environment for private sector development, tourism and mining
4. Energy
5. Water resource development and access to water and sanitation;
6. Road
7. Health
8. Education

The cross-cutting sectors of the regional PASDEP are: gender; addressing the population challenge; HIV/AIDS; environment and decentralization and capacity building, which focuses on the reform of the justice and legal system district level decentralization urban governance; civil service and capacity building; tax, and IEC development as sub actors.

Financing the plan is also properly addressed in the regional PASDEP. A total of nearly ETB 7.9 billion is required to finance the five years PASDEP plan, out of which ETB 6.3 billion is planned to be secured during the period. The sources of finance for mobilizing the expected ETB 6.3 billion include: budge/subsidy from federal government, program funds including for food security PSNP, PCDP and PSCB, regional income/revenue and community contribution; in their order of importance.

Assumptions and Risks are also pointed out in the document. The assumptions include:

- o Revenue generating capacity of Woredas improves budget transfer by the federal government, during SDPRP-I, increases by 10%
- o Implementation of the food security program continues with the launching of the PSNP during the PASDEP. In addition, peaceful environment, preparation of Woreda development plans in line with the PASDEP and committed and responsive civil service are among the assumptions.

Regarding the risks, in addition to the likelihood of occurrence of drought, fear of generating the anticipated revenue, lack of commitment among local governments, poor human resource and focusing on routine than strategic goals by government bureaus are among the risks that would impede the successful implementation of the plan.

Under the section of Monitoring and Evaluation, the PASDEP promises the design of M&E system in order to ensure its proper implementation. Accordingly, mid-term and final evaluations of the PASDEP would be conducted at the middle and end of the plan.

In the mean time, the regional BoFED would be the lead agency for M&E that relies on the SDPRP-I review report, the EDHS and regional data bank as the source information. There is also a policy matrix for the PASDEP.

Progress and Challenges

The summary on the progresses made and challenges encountered as of mid-PASDEP period are summarized below based on the evaluation report by the regional government.

Financial Resource Utilization: Expenditure favored pro-poor sectors

Like the SDPRP-I, the PASDEP continued to favor pro-poor sectors of education, health, water, pastoral agriculture and rural development and rural road sectors. The planned capital expenditure of the regional government is presented in the table below compared with the expenditure for 2004/5, which is the end of SDPRP-I.

Review of the planned expenditure further showed that pastoral agriculture and rural development takes the lion's share followed by water and education sector, respectively.

Performance

Performance during the PASDEP revealed that there are achievements in the poverty-oriented sectors of education, health, water, and road. Nevertheless, like the SDPRP-I review report, the performance of the food security and agricultural development sector was not reported. Moreover, the review report could not clearly indicate the achievements against established indicators.

As the review report was not yet approved, details of the achievements are not elaborated in the current study. However, it is difficult to tell to what extent the PASDEP has been successful in achieving the goals and objectives at the end of its life time. By how much poverty and vulnerability has been reduced is not still clear. How many of the 250,000 food insecure households have improved is not yet clear. The PSNP was just launched while this study was conducted.

Summary of Major Achievements and Gaps

Review of the regional PASDEP in view of the national one showed that the former is similar to the latter both in terms of analytical underpinnings and structure of the document. Not only the rationale and justifications but also the sectoral policies, strategies and programs appear to be similar. Preparing such a regional level strategic document, in consultation with stakeholders NGOs, is a step ahead in terms of ownership of policies and programs.

Nevertheless, the plan did not consult the people and it failed to provide alternative strategies; for example, viability of pastoralism, for growth and development. In addition, apart from highlighting the MDGs and challenges in relation to achieving them, the plan does not clearly indicate when and how to achieve MDGs. Moreover, the targets established, in relation to the national PASDEP, are unrealistic and not based on evidence.

The targets or success indicators for the plan are also incomplete. For example, the GDP growth rate for agriculture, which is the engine of the envisaged growth and development, is not specified or unknown. In addition, the plan fails to clearly establish the linkage and synergy among various poverty-related interventions like PSNP and PCDP as well as the implication of the on-going external interventions by the Federal government like the Tendaho Agricultural Development Enterprise. The level of awareness on the PASDEP among different stakeholders and even the sectoral offices of the government is far below satisfactory.

Furthermore, lack of PME system, the pervasive problem of good governance, conflict and exogenous risks such as interference from the central government are not mentioned in the PASDEP. Above all, there are no mitigation strategies to avert the identified risks, showing a design related gap of the PASDEP. The M&E system of the PASDEP recognizes the need for proper tracking of the process. However, the M&E of the PASDEP, like the SDPRP-I, suffers from a multitude of drawbacks and limitations.

For instance, while it is in the midst of implementing the PASDEP, the region is still in the process of drafting M&E system.

Lack of specific, measurable attainable and time bound indicators has persisted as the major challenge of the region's PRS initiatives. In effect, the mid-term review heavily relied on outputs reported by the government's sectoral offices during the period. In other words, the mid-term reviews focused only on the performance of sectors rather than on the benefits of the interventions towards checking poverty and vulnerability.

In recognition to the gap, the regional government is to make some amendments in the regional PASDEP. Another important limitation is that the PASDEP, as usual, neglects the role of CSOs, particularly and indigenous institution in complementing the M&E system. Not only the PASDEP also but the draft M&E document dethrones the role of CSOs for a participatory M&E system. Financing the plan is also another problematic aspect.

Around ETB 7.8 billion is required to implement the five year plan, whereas nearly ETB 6.3 billion was expected to be obtained during the five years period. The rest is on account of the contribution of partners in the region. Tracking the PASDEP financing so far indicated that the plan has been suffering from serious budgetary constraints.

Besides, the expenditure at the end of SDPRP-I is by far below the average annual expenditure during the PASDEP. That implies the plan is either exaggerated or the region couldn't secure or mobilize the financial resource as per the plan. Moreover, the actual expenditure as reported in the mid-term review revealed that there is a serious budget gap. These facts are further substantiated by the following findings shared by key informants during the study.

Achievements

Unlike the case of SDPRP-I, there is a regionally-owned PASDEP document available. For those informants in the government offices, the PASDEP provides a strategies direction or serves as a comprehensive

development framework for the region providing a direction to helping pastoralists settle permanently along the Awash river basin, hence a strategy for a long-term and viable livelihood option. Benchmarking (setting targets) were considered at the beginning. What went well and went wrong was considered.

Based on the goals and programs indicated above, a set of indicators were used to achieve targets on sectoral bases. The unit cost approach and method of allocating budget and setting targets was used. As a result regional targets and their eventual goals were set using the method and their budgets were not given on lump-sum basis. Efforts were made to put policy frameworks as to MDGs and other poverty-related sectoral goals like health, education, and water sector development programs.

Gaps

The study findings uncovered the following shortcoming in the region's PASDEP. Participation of the pastoral communities was still minimal. Monitoring & Evaluation system was not yet in place. The indicators developed were not complete and they were, in most cases, direct replicas of the national level PASDEP. In this regard, they are more of incomplete goals/targets in the policy matrix. There is incompatibility of indicators with the regional perspective. Therefore, the targets set are inflated and ambitious. Although NGOs and other CSOs took part in the consultative meetings, their participation was their participation was limited to meetings. As a result, their involvement was not sustained to engage at the stages of implementation and M&F.

The planning process continued to be sectoral development planning with top-down approach. Planning was regional-based instead of Woreda, hence it failed to reflect local realities and existing disparities in the levels of development of the Woredas further crippling the future ability of local level planning. Focusing on government institution rather than poverty sectors was also another problem.

This led to the relegation of other stakeholders like NGOs and CSOs, and eventually the community itself.

Although food security was one of the critical issues identified by the strategy, there was no concrete and realistic strategy to address the issue. Some of these programs were considered during the preparation stage. But programs like PCDP and PSNP were not strongly integrated in the strategy. However, indicators were not attached to the programs.

There was a problem of focus as the contribution of the programs or sectoral programs to the reduction of poverty were not articulated. The PSNP was not yet started. In addition, lack of strong institutional arrangement that represent all actors also continued during the PASDEP.

The challenges to the success of PASDEP were lack of effective M&E system coupled with incomplete set of indicators and blurred implementation strategy; lack of baseline survey was aggravating the problem; and, lack of clear-cut understanding of the PASDEP was also an impediment/limitation. Besides, unsustainable and below expectation level of commitment on the part of actors was also found to deter implementation.

Evaluating Effectiveness of the Afar PRSPs

This section presents analysis of the findings from primary sources on the level of effectiveness of the Afar PRSP initiatives so far. The analysis focuses on the level of awareness, relevance and application of the underlying principles in the PRSP process as well as the contribution of the PRSPs to building the capacity of regional and local government to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate development interventions in the pastoral communities of Afar.

Awareness and Knowledge about the PRSP

The study assessed the level of publicity or familiarity of the PRSP initiatives among the government officials at regional and local levels, NGOs and pastoral communities. The findings indicated that with the exception of

key informants from the NGOs and some experts at regional level, all of the key informants were unfamiliar about the intentions of the PRSP initiatives and their implementation and M&F.

The knowledge gap was much more pronounced regarding the familiarity of the underlying assumptions, content, gaps and links between the Regional SDPRP-I and the PASDEP.

Apart from reminding involvement at the initial PRSP consultations and referring to the region's five years strategic plan, most were lacking adequate knowledge about the policy documents. In support of the low level of publicity of the PRSP, one of the key informants NGOs stated that, magnificently, as opposed to the situation in Afar and other parts of the country, in most African countries even the children on the streets let alone higher political leaders, are very much familiarized with nomenclature as well as issues and concepts associated with PRSP documents.

The PRSP Process: Relevance/Benefits and Application of Underlying Principles

The study results showed that the PRSP process is a relevant approach towards reducing poverty although there is little evidence to support that the process, thus far, meaningfully benefited overwhelming majorities of the Afar pastoral communities. Moreover, the principles of regional ownership and partnership issues were found to be encouraging although the initiatives thus far could not be successful in terms of result-orientation and focusing on long-term goals.

Relevance and benefits of the Afar PRSP

As depicted in Figure 4.2, most were found to agree that PRSP is a good model, particularly when compared against the past biased and top-down approaches that failed to address poverty in pastoral communities. Accordingly, PRSP promotes the mentioned participation of people including pastoralists is a *sin qua non* for the initiation and undertakings of development interventions that are of relevance to pastoralists.

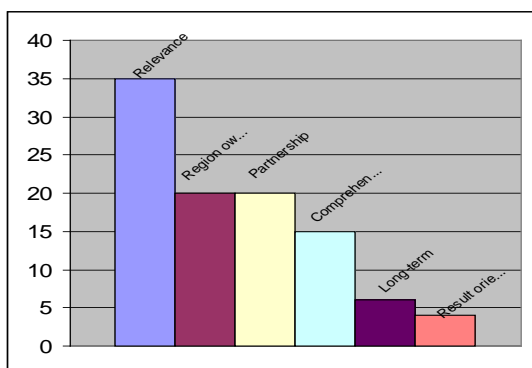


Fig. 8. Relevance and Underlying principles of PRSP in the context of Afar: Source: ANRS, Performance of Pro-poor sectors in BoFED (2005:6-9)

The relevance is also substantiated by most of the informants who emphasized that the PRSP process added value to the ongoing efforts of decentralized governance and capacity building by way of urging local administrations to plan and implement various interventions. But, there were also different views claiming that the process could have added value towards strengthening pastoral institutions, had it recognized their role in community mobilization, planning, implementation and M&F.

Attempt was also made to assess whether the PRSPs in Afar have been beneficial/strong or costly/weak. Unlike the relevance of the PRSP approach greater consensus was not reached regarding the fact that the PRSPs have practically been strong and beneficial to the poor. Meanwhile, discussions made with pastoral communities including women groups corroborated the above findings. Highlighting positive developments in exercising self-rule, most of the discussants did not agree that the various interventions as a result of PRSPs have been strong and beneficial to the pastoralists.

Other community groups in Buremudatu and Dubti Woredas revealed that if the interventions are beneficial, it is only to the few members of the communities who assumed public offices or those who were close to the government authorities.

Similarly, clan leaders in the study Woredas made a trend analysis of the levels of poverty, access to services and facilities, drought in their respective communities.

The results indicated that there are improvements in terms of access to social services and facilities as well as proximity of the government administration to the people. However, the gravity of poverty is on the increase as manifested by chronic shortage of food and water. Pastoralists are still prone to risk and vulnerability. Recurrent drought and conflict are still pervasive. Hence, even though there are positive developments as a result of interventions during the past five to ten years, there have been so tiny viewed against what has been promised to the people as well as to the prevalence of the problems.

Comparison of Woreda development plans with the regional PASDEP also provided little evidence as to whether the plan, in practice, serves as a regional level comprehensive development framework in guiding the planning, implementation, M&E of development interventions at Woreda levels.

Applications of underlying principles

The regional PRSP process was also evaluated against the application of the standard principles, i.e., region-driven, results-oriented, comprehensiveness, long term and partnership issues. The study findings indicated that there are some achievements as well as a host of shortcomings in relation to the implementation of the underlying principles in the Afar PRSP.

Ownership or region-driven: The ownership or region-driven nature of the PRSP process in Afar was also assessed focusing on the criteria of preparing tailor made policies and strategies ensuring broad based participation and/or inclusiveness in the process. The findings revealed encouraging developments and serious problems. Accordingly, the regional government has gradually managed to prepare its own version of the PRSP, i.e. the PASDEP Moreover, initial consultations with the people and incorporating the views and comments of NGOs were also appreciated.

However, the level of ownership tended to vary at the different phases of PRSP: consultation, formulation, implementation, and M&E. Accordingly, albeit some of its limitations, the PRSP was initially driven and managed by the regional stakeholders: Regional Woreda governments, NGOs and communities. However, it has not been sustained and the role of the people and non-state actors at the stages of implementation and M&E gradually become invisible.

Focused discussions also indicated that the consultations enable them to identify and prioritize the problems and interest of pastoral communities. In one of the four FGDs, however, the discussants doubted that the participants of the then consultations truly represent the interest of the pastoralist. Moreover, for most of the key informants and discussants, the role of pastoral institutions in poverty reduction and sustainable development in Afar is crucial, but undermined.

The 'Dagu' system could also be used for disseminating information at the stages of initiation, formulation, implementation and M&E of PRSPs. But, ongoing interventions have either neglected or weakened the institutions.

Partnership orientation: In general, the study findings showed that partnership has witnessed improvements in spite of limitations. The role of NGOs in organizing public forums/consultations was minimal. Most of the NGOs observed improvements in the GO-NGO partnership and collaboration in Afar. The federal and regional governments as well as NGOs are giving more attention to pastoralists. The Ethiopian Government set up Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee in Parliament, which oversees pastoral issues in the country.

The commitments and steps towards their subsequent actualizations, on the part of the regional government, is quite impressive. In this regard, a partnership arrangement between the government and NGOs (CARE and SC-UK) for implementing the Pilot Productive Safety Net Program is worth mentioning.

The government is also to co-finance a small-scale irrigation project designed by SDD following the latter's successful implementation of similar project in another Woreda.

Albeit the above noticeable achievements, there are gaps that impede the advancement of partnership. The engagements of NGOs/CSOs in the PRSP process had been either inadequate or limited to the stage of policy consultation, albeit recent developments to involve them in implementations.

Moreover, like the situation at federal level, there is no CSOs representation in the institutional arrangements for PRSP: steering and technical committees. The regional government has not involved CSOs in the midterm review of the regional PADSEP. Finally, although the regional PRSP process opened up rooms for policy dialogue, NGOs rarely come up with alternative strategies, for instance, on the viability of pastoralism as opposed to sedentarism in Afar and its compatibility to trade than to industrialization.

Comprehensiveness: Consensus was reached concerning comprehensiveness of the SDPRP-I document mentioning attempts to reflect and redress priority problems and interest of the pastoral communities. There were also negative or polarized responses regarding the PASDEP. For some interviewees outside the government business, the PASDEP could not provide adequate diagnosis of the causes of poverty in the pastoral communities of Afar, and hence lacks validity. In addition, the policy/strategies have not been continuously adjusted to reflect changes in priority problem and interest of the localities.

Consequently, critical issues and/or problems should have emerged from Woreda development plans and the regional plan documents should have been revised to incorporate the disparities and dynamism across Woredas. The other key issue was that feedback from the private sector about its participation as well as region-specific challenges to the sector was not properly articulated.

Content analysis of PRSP documents also indicated the aforementioned gaps. The present PASDEP took for granted that the problems and interest of the people identified six years ago, from 6 of the 29 Woredas of the region, were still of similar relevance to the policy formulation. Moreover, the documents failed to incorporate critical problems including recurrent conflict and natural resource degradation as well as to focus on the vicious cycle of bad governance as the structural cause of poverty and a roadblock to efforts for the alleviation of poverty among the pastoral communities of Afar. Alternative strategies of growth and poverty reduction were not fully explored including the viability of pastoralism and trade.

Moreover, qualitative data generated directly from the poor as in participatory poverty assessment, were unavailable. Analysis of nature and determinants of poverty were not harmonized to underpin the validity of the plan and selected strategies. Besides, the growth and distributional impacts of past policies and programs was not assessed and the linkages to proposed strategy clearly indicated. In general, review of the regional and national PASDEP documents provided evidence that, in most of the cases, the former is a replica than contextualization or customization of national policies to fit into regional and local realities. Furthermore, exogenous interventions by the Federal Government including the Tendaho State Farm were mostly criticized for their failure to clearly show and/or ensure benefits to the Afar pastoralist. Most of the critics revolve around issues of environmental friendliness, viability to pastoral way of life as well as economic benefits to the localities.

Long-term orientation: The study findings, both from primary and secondary sources, indicated that there is little evidence regarding the long term orientation of the Afar PRSP initiatives. In both SDPRP and PASDEP documents, the regional and local governments have been responding to the immediate problems of the people with unparalleled focus to improving poverty-oriented sectors. Nonetheless, the trends in expenditure for the sectors by the regional

government lacks consistency as viewed against the ever increasing amount of resource allocated to prop-poor sectors by the federal government. As depicted in Figure 6, the federal government expenditure for the prop-poor sectors had been consistently increasing during the three SDPRP years, whereas the region's expenditure witnessed a decline in 2004/5 from the previous year 2003/4.

The performance of pro-poor sectors, in particular the agriculture development and food security sector, did not match the ever increasing resource allocation. Moreover, to what extent the PRSPs succeeded in lowering the poverty index (56% in 2004) and the proportion of food insecure households in the region (estimated at 250,000) was not reported thus far.

In addition, the PRSP documents, at least gradually, could not strike an appropriate balance between the promotion of growth and poverty alleviation. The private sector's development is still at its rudimentary stage albeit some improvements.

Furthermore, the reviewed PRSP documents did not provide adequate road-map for achieving long-term goals and targets, for instances, MDGs and country level targets. Whereas, the long term targets were totally neglected during the SDPRP, the PASDEP is found only to mention about the targets with no linkages made between the regional and MDGs targets. Consequently, when and how the region would be on track to achieve the MDGs and catch-up with the relatively better-off regions of the country is not clearly indicated.

Result-orientation: the multitude of problems associated with result-orientation were: First, the regional PRSP documents do not have realistic targets and action plans, which is a vital necessity for progress tracking. The SDPRP-I had no indicators and targets at all against at all against which the reported progresses can be gauged. The problem also persisted during the PASDEP. Targets and indicators set in the PASDEP are seemingly ambitious and unrealistic. There is also lack of a complete policy matrix (M&E system) that directs implementation and facilitates M&E.

Third, in the review tradition of Afar, focusing on outputs than outcomes has been customary. It is with such serious defects that the Regional PASDEP had been implemented for two and half years. Therefore, it is very difficult to assure that the two PRSPs of Afar have brought about tangible benefits in transforming the traditional pastoral agriculture and in ensuring food security for the poor and vulnerable pastoralists throughout the region.

The M&E practices, so far, were not participatory. Hence the engagement of CSOs and the people have been at undetectable level. Moreover, there has been no evidence as to whether the results form M&E feedback into the policy formulation process. For instance, while formulating the regional PASDEP, how to scale up achievements and redress gaps in this second generation of the PRSP was not properly communicated.

However, discordant responses were obtained as to whether the PRSP initiatives have been to the benefits of the poor pastoral communities. On the one hand, the regional and local governments were mostly mentioning and/or reporting the outputs of PRSP initiatives while explaining how beneficial have the initiatives been to the poor pastoralists of Afar. On the other hand, for the rest of interviewees including experts and NGO representatives as well as for the communities, the PRSP process has not been focused on outcomes that were helpful in extricating the poor pastoral communities from existing problems or poverty and food insecurity.

In addition to the above, there were both improvements and shortcomings associated with the intermediate effects or outcomes of the Afar PRSPs. In general, clarity and openness of the socioeconomic debate has witnessed significant improvements. This is followed by advancements in the level of regional ownership of policies/strategies. Improvements in the budget process and allocations were also appreciated.

MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevance, Benefits and Publicity of the Afar PRSPs

The PRS initiative of Afar is found to be a relevant approach to the empowerment of pastoral communities as compared with the past models that were centralized and deterrent to pastoralists. The underlying principles and process requirements deployed during the PRSP preparation were central to effectiveness and sustainability in reducing poverty in Afar. However, the findings suggested that too much emphasis has been given to a mere completion of PRSP documents at regional and Woreda levels. Mostly, the policy and plan documents appeared to be a replica than customization of national level documents. This implies that the PRSPs did not exert profound influence in capacitating the regional/local governments to properly plan and act accordingly to reverse the poverty and vulnerability situations. The PRSPs have not customized adequately in a way to revitalize the role of traditional pastoralist institutions in the mainstream development process.

There is little evidence as to whether the PRSP initiatives have practically benefited the pastoralists to the level expected. Indeed, poverty and vulnerability are still pervasive and persistent in Afar. There are encouraging improvements in areas of social services, mainly education and health. Besides, the PRSPs have partly added value to the ongoing decentralized governance system in Afar.

Most of the problems and interest of pastoralists identified during PRSP consultations in Afar still appear to be the priorities of pastoralists. Most importantly, undiversified livelihood, poor access to water and recurrent conflict continued to threaten the lives of Afar pastoralists.

Interventions by the federal government did not seem benign to the pastoralists. Women empowerment is still unfulfilled commitment. Even in the areas of education and health, relatively improving sectors, women have not received gained benefits.

Moreover, lack of good governance as mostly manifested, among others, by lack of accountability, transparency, rule-of-law, and participation usurped pastoralists of meaningful benefit from the initiatives so far.

Findings also revealed that there is abysmal lack of knowledge and awareness about the preparation, nature and process of the policy documents, both in the circle of the regional and Woreda level government as well as among the public and most of the development partners is a concern.

Broad-based and Inclusive Participation and Partnership

Findings showed that regional ownership, a fundamental principle of PRSP initiatives, is a function of broad-based and inclusive participation of people-the Afar pastoral groups. Ownership, in turn, is a key determinant to the effectiveness of the PRSP initiatives and/or to the empowerment of pastoralists that suffered from deterrent policies and strategies of the past. In general, findings indicated that the level of ownership of PRSPs witnessed positive developments as well as shortcomings.

The Afar PRSP initiative started with an unprecedented level of involvement of pastoral communities during the regional and Woreda consultations. Consequently, the prioritized problems and interest of pastoralists neglected during the Interim PRSP were incorporated to guide the interventions during SDPRP-I. In fact, the regional government of Afar has been successful in preparing a policy document during PASDEP, which was a gap during SDPRP-I. But, the formulation of the PASDEP was not based on consultations with the pastoralists for identification and prioritization of the interest and concerns of the pastoralists. Besides, the participation of pastoralists has become a luxury business in successive stages of PASDEP, i.e. implementation and M&E.

Moreover, the participation during initial consultation was also criticized for defects pertaining to purposiveness, validity, and institutionalization. Specifically, participation was more for procedural purpose than for a

genuine empowerment of pastoral communities, which entails sufficiently capacitating localities to execute and evaluate local development plans, improve their management capabilities, and engage in securing, planning and management of financial resources that ultimately determine impacts to be sustainable.

The validity of PRSPs to show regional realities has also been questioned. The pastoralists as well as women were not directly and adequately involved in the consultations. Besides, indigenous institutions like the 'Dagu' system played little role in the popularization and participation process. Regarding institutionalization, it was observed that an all-inclusive institutional arrangement for purposive and continued participation is missing in Afar.

As far as partnership is concerned, CSOs engagement in the PRSP process of Afar is perceived to be encouraging and at times exceptional when viewed against the historically marginal role of Ethiopian NGOs in policy advocacy. The views and comments of NGOs were relevantly incorporated in the SDPRP-I and PASDEP, albeit limited engagement during implementation and M&E stages. Recent developments, however, indicated that the regional government is partnering with NGOs in the implementation of food security related programs of PASDEP.

Comprehensiveness

The PRSP initiatives of Afar are with limitations in providing comprehensive responses to the poverty and vulnerability situations. In relation to this, the regional PRSP documents were found to suffer from a number of analytical gaps that mainly resulted from the ownership-related problems discussed above.

Firstly, the underlying assumptions meant to rationalize the validity of the PRSP initiatives of Afar are not mostly supported by evidence-based, comprehensive and intensive diagnosis of the poverty and underdevelopment situation of pastoral communities. They rather take for granted that the national level assumptions also apply to the region.

Secondly, the regional PASDEP, like its mother document, envisages generating faster growth rates during its period; yet the present rate of growth is unknown. In fact, abysmal lack of benchmark data is a serious problem to substantiate the assumptions made in the plan documents.

Thirdly, most of the pillar strategies, sectoral and cross-cutting policies are exactly the replica of those proposed at the national level. In effect, the documents didn't present, on board, the various alternative strategies for the growth of pastoral communities along with the justification for selection of one as the best from existing strategies. Specifically, the viability of pastoralism as a strategy to reduce poverty and bring about sustainable development has been undermined both during SDPRP-I and the PASDEP.

Long-term and Result orientations

Result orientation and focusing on long-term goals are two of the fundamental principles of PRS initiatives. By focusing on poverty-oriented sectors, PRSPs are expected to clearly show the extent to which they reduced poverty. Besides, the need to link with broader goals like the MDGs and balancing poverty reduction with growth-generating endeavors make PRSPs long-sighted interventions. However, regarding the Afar PRSPs, there are pronounced problems.

The government has been continuously favoring the pro-poor sectors including education, food security and agricultural development, water, health and road. But, expenditure/resource allocation is only a means and by no means an end towards reducing the poverty of pastoralists. Seemingly, the regional government has been satisfied with output indicators and not outcomes, which is a serious problem masking the poverty of pastoralists. No evidence was available on the performance of food security and agricultural development sector, which is vital for reducing poverty and vulnerability in Afar. Furthermore, there is a tendency to equate governmental institutions/sector offices with the poverty-oriented sectors.

Properly integrating the poverty reduction strategy with other regional and federal level initiatives including PSNP and the Tendaho Agricultural Development Enterprise is also a critical issue that deserves attention. Lack of planned interventions and absence of specific targets and indicators as well as progress reports in relation to gender development are also observed in the PRSPs of Afar.

Similarly, long-term orientation is another problem. Due to lack of specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound targets/indicators, when and at what rate the region achieves MDGs are not yet known. Besides, convergence of the region's level of development to catch-up national level performances of pro-poor sectors is still uncertain. The region has continued to excessively depend on external assistances and/or subsidy. And, in spite of its huge potentials, the region could not attract private investment that would generate growth and create employment opportunities.

Among the missing links is lack of a strict and region-specific Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) system put in place for tracking progress. Review of the draft M&E system prepared by the regional BoFED, among others, is not a tailor-made and participation of non-state actors as well as the role of traditional institutions like the 'Dagu system' was undermined.

Concluding remarks

- ✚ The PRSP as a policy instrument of global policy framework to combat poverty has reached the region and further down to community. It is a relevant approach to reducing poverty and vulnerability, if properly customized to fit into regional or local realities. It can also add value to augmenting the ongoing decentralization scheme in the region.
- ✚ The level of effectiveness of PRSP initiatives in Afar have been found below expectation as the initiate has not yet brought about measurable benefits to the pastoralist. The PRSP process has not yet made significant improvements in augmenting the planning, implementation, M&E capacities. Hence, the process added

little value towards the empowerment of the pastoralist in Afar. That is, the contribution of the initiatives towards ensuring the genuine and continued participation of pastoral communities as well as non-state actors in the process has been sporadic.

- ✦ Regional ownership and partnership witnessed noticeable achievements. Nonetheless, the process was not inclusive, sustained and the role of the people and CSOs at the stages of implementation, M&E of PRSPs was marginal.
- ✦ The initiatives lack comprehensiveness. The priority problems and underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability identified during consultations are still persistent and prevalent. Viability of pastoralism not properly addressed.
- ✦ Empowerment of women is still among the unfulfilled commitments. Problems of good governance and recurrent conflict not systematically and adequately addressed.
- ✦ Lacked focus on long-term goals and results. Interventions and programs on food security were not properly integrated to focused and concerted efforts to reducing food insecurity and vulnerability.

Recommendations

- ✦ Adjustment of the existing PASDEP plan is importance. The region is advised to undertake a comprehensive baseline survey prior to revising the PASDEP and its targets/indicators. Establishing effective M&E system with complete set of targets/indicators and policy matrix. The revision should also appreciate intra regional disparity, and continued consultations with the pastoralists and involvements of CSOs are crucial. Equally important is substantiating the analytical underpinnings on poverty diagnosis and alternative growth and poverty reduction strategies in the Afar context. To this end, NGOs can complement government's efforts through policy research and analysis regarding the viability of pastoralism vs. sedentarism and trade/service sector

development vs. industrialization. Besides, conflict and peace-building mapping as well as the role and capacity of traditional institutions of pastoralists for effectiveness of the PRSP process should be assessed.

- ✦ Institutionalization of purposive participation and advancing partnership are also imperative. The regional and local governments should conceive participation of pastoralists both as a means and an end in itself. The role of pastoral institutions, not only selected leaders, for purposive and continued participation is central. In this regard, the potential of indigenous institutions should be identified along with capacity gaps and subsequent interventions. The integration of multi-actors throughout the PRSP process so critical that the regional government should address instantly. To this end, forging regional level GO-NGO forum is essential for benefiting from synergy and complementarities in the PRSP process.
- ✦ Women's empowerment needs special attention. Planned interventions with clear strategies and indicators for socio-economic and political empowerment of women are vital necessities.
- ✦ The draft PME should give due attention to foster the participation of the society in the process, so that measuring their impact and progress can be identified. PME helps keep knowledge up to date and ensures the participation of stakeholders and the people. The need for documentation of good practices and lessons learned in the process should be incorporated in the draft M&E system. Moreover, NGOs involvement in the process and the role of traditional institutions should be incorporated.
- ✦ Cultivating favorable awareness environment and filling the knowledge gap about the PRSP process in general and the PASDEP in particular. This could be possible through community radio programs, 'the Dagu' system, and as necessary by organizing discussion forums. Care must be taken while allocating resources towards these activities as per diem is becoming a

disincentive rather than facilitating development.

- ✦ Speedy finalization of the regional land use and administration policy with due emphasis to the mobility pattern, communal ownership, women's access to land and other issues pertinent to pastoralism.
- ✦ The benefits and costs associated with exogenous interventions, specifically the Tendaho Agricultural Development Enterprise, should be properly mapped out and consensus should be built with varied stakeholders including the pastoralists. In this connection, the socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental impacts should be properly assessed and deliberated on, directly, with all actors including the local pastoralists.



Fig. 9. Camel milk securing food for pastoralists



Fig 10. Pastoralist on action research in Afar

