# When the Forest was Ours:

*Ownership and Partnership in a CDM Forestry Project in Southwestern Ethiopia*

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## *List of Acronyms*

| | |
|---|---|
| ADP | Area Development Programs |
| A/R | Afforestation/ Reforestation |
| CCBA | Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance |
| CDM | Clean Development Mechanism |
| CSA | Central Statistic Agency |
| CER | Certified Emission Reduction |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| DA | Development Agent |
| DOE | Designated Operational Entity |
| DNA | Designated National Authority |
| EC | Ethiopian Calendar |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Authority |
| EFAP | Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan |
| EHRS | Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study |
| ET | Emission Trading |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GHG | Green House Gas |
| HH | Household |
| ICA | International Cooperative Alliance |

ILO International Labour Organization

IMF International Monetary Fund

IUCN The World Conservation Union

JI Joint Implementation

KP Kyoto Protocol

MOP Meeting of Parties

NCS National Conservation Strategy

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NORD Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

ODA Official Development Assistance

PASDAP A Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty

PBS Protection of Basic Service

PDD Project Development Document

SCRP Soil Conservation Research Project

SD Sustainable Development

SNNPR Southern Nation Nationalities People Region

SIDA Swedish International Development cooperation Agency

UN United Nation

UNFCC United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNISCO United Nation Education, Science and Culture Organization

USD United State Dollar

WB World Bank

WVE World Vision Ethiopia

WVA World Vision Austral

# Introduction

## *1.1 Introduction*

Having an economy dependent on natural resource climate change impact is the biggest threat for the Ethiopian economy Ethiopian economy. According to CSA (1994) report, small holders farming activity which in some places also includes forestry is the dominant sector that accounts for 45% of GDP, 90 % of export product and 80% of employment opportunities in the country. Crop production is estimated to contribute on average 60 percent, livestock accounts for 27 percent and forestry and other subsectors constitute 13 percent of the total agricultural value.

Forestry has a significant role in the country's economy and particularly in rural livelihood. It is a source of energy, food, employment and income. It has a dominant share in the domestic energy supply. According to Damel (2001:5), 70% of energy is obtained from forestry while 8 % and 7% of it are obtained from dung and agricultural residue respectively. Tedla and Kifle (1999: 20) put it to 81.8% on fuel wood consumption and the rest shared by dung and crop residue. The share of forestry in the country's GDP varied significantly. Million (2001:2) indicated that if the various contributions of forestry - fuel wood and charcoal consumption, non-wood forest product utilization and the environmental benefits of forest - are considered, the contribution will be much higher than 10%. Berhanu etal (1988 cited in Million 2001:3) indicate forestry employment in public offices and industry reached 35,000 and in commercial wood fuel harvesting reached 400,000 persons or 50% of the employment opportunity in the sector.

Deforestation is one of the major environmental issues in the country since it is regarded as one of the main causes of the current land degradation. Estimates of forest cover, rate

and the extent of destruction is recorded differently in different literatures. For example Dessie and Christiansson (2008: 266) indicated that the forest cover of the country was 16% in 1972 and within 28 years, it reduced to 3%. On the other hand Badege (2001: 8) claim that 40% of the country's land was covered by forest reduced to 3% within a century. Damel (2001: 6) underlined the lack of reliable source of information on the range of the forest cover and the extent of destruction. He cited EFAP (1994) and IUCN (1990), which estimated the country's forest, cover to be 66% of the land including the Savanna woodlands, and in 1989, only 2.7% of this forest covers was left. He indicated that the rate of deforestation was estimated to be between 150,000 and 200,000 ha per annum. He predicted that with such a rate there will be nothing but a heavily disturbed forest land in inaccessible part of the country within a few decades. The 2010 FAO country report estimated that without taking into account reforestation which offset rate of deforestation, the rate of forest distraction in the country is 140,000 ha per annum. The same report states that "…. the total area under forest…… for the year 2000 and 2005 is 4,073,213 ha and 2,699,561 ha respectively……. From the total forest areas, it is assumed that Closed[1], Dense and Open forests cover 20, 17 and 63 percents respectively" (FAO 2010:7).

Forest destruction is one of the contributors of GHG emission, its contribution is estimated to be about 29% of emission from fossil fuel and cement production between 1980 and 1989 and 34% in the early 1990s ( Smith and et al 2005: 323-324). Therefore, addressing issues of forest destruction is part of climate change mitigation strategy. Conservation of tropical forest was later incorporated as part of the Kyoto Protocol, Joint Implementation namely Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). CDM projects aimed to

[1] Closed: crown cover of the upper stratum exceeds 80 percent
Dense: crown cover of the upper strata is between 50 to 80 percent
Open: crown cover of the upper stratum is between 20 to 50 percent

pave the way for international finance and technology transfer and it also aimed to create cost effective emission reduction for the developed countries. CDM has two stated objectives: lowering the cost of achieving emission reduction and also promotion of sustainable development (SD) of the host country (Ibid: 322).

In 2005, the afforestation and reforestation project (A/R CDM) with objectives of enhancing GHG removals by sinks and improving the livelihood condition of the local community started its implementation in Humbo *Wereda* of southwestern Ethiopia. National and local actors, including seven farmer's cooperatives, local and international non-governmental organizations and the World Bank have been involved as project partners. The project covered 2,728 hectares of land area which will impact the lives of 48,893 members of the community. By 2020, the project is expected to sink 33,685.2 tons of carbon. The project, which has achieved CCBA accreditation, is also aimed at supporting the local livelihood through employment creation and other development activities

The overall objective of this thesis is to understand the local, national and global actor's interaction and their influence in the project outcomes.

### *1.2. Background Information of the Study area*

Ethiopia is a country located in the Horn of Africa stretching 3 to 15 degrees North latitude and 33 to 48 degrees east longitude. The country is geographically diversified with the range of 4,620 meters above sea level, like mount Ras Dejen in the north, to the Afar Depression of about 110 meters below sea level. This variation in altitude resulted in the climatic, vegetation and soil varieties that the country is endowed with. The

country's plant species are estimated to be 6,500 to7, 000 of which 12 percent are endemic (Damel 2001:55). According to Damel, with an estimated annual loss of 150,000 to 200,000 hectares of forest land, what is largely left is a heavily disturbed forest in inaccessible areas of the country. The loss of forest cover has adverse affects on livelihoods of communities as well as on biodiversity. It is reported that Ethiopia has some 119 species on the IUCN Red List of threatened species, and eight of which are considered critically endangered (Damel 2001: 58).

According to Ethiopian development plan (PASDAP 2006) and the recently released Climate-Resilient Green Economy strategy (2011), agriculture will continue to be the engine of growth. The potential of agriculture, in its current structure, to lead into economic transformation and poverty reduction, has been debated for a long time now. Even those who agree on the importance of agriculture to Ethiopia's development still debate on the kind of agriculture needed and how much growth in agriculture is required for it to have significant role in poverty reduction. In spite of its importance to the national economy, agriculture is also the major source of vulnerability. As a result, farmers have always been the recipients of enormous volumes of food aid and other humanitarian assistance. The drought cycle and environmental degradation made most of Ethiopian farmers' dependent on food hand-outs.

Environmental problems such as land degradation, deforestation and soil erosion have dominated agendas in the county's socio-economic, political discussions as well as in multilateral and bilateral relations since the 1950s. Since then, various measures were taken to halt further degradation and to rehabilitate fertility of the soil albeit with no significant improvements recorded. Research on the area points out various reasons for the failure of those measures: the promotion of technology and practices that are not well

suited to the local situation, inappropriate socio-economic policies, and tenure insecurity are the predominant explanations (Tedla and Lemma 1999, Dessalegn 2003, Crummey and Nelson 2003, Aynalem 2009, and Dessie and Christiansson 2008).

There is no consensus on the causes of land degradation and deforestation in the country, but there exists a growing interest for research from wide varieties of discipline (both from natural and social sciences) indicating diversified causal factors. When it comes to the country's conservation policies and practices, they are mainly focused on the neo-Malthusians arguments. According to Dessalegn (2003:206-207) the writings of the expatriate environmentalists in the 1950s and 60s were the basis of a conventional wisdom for a long time even if they were not supported by empirical evidence.

In the 1980s, two important studies were prepared, namely The Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study (EHRS) conducted by FAO in 1986 and The Soil Conservation Research Project (SCRP), conducted, in 1988, by Hurni, advisor for Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture. The results from these seminal works are still cited by academics and policy makers although they exhibit problems that are related to the unreliability and ambiguity of data and methodological concerns. The soil loss rate estimation of these two studies indicates that most of Ethiopian highland farm land would go out of production within a century. EHRS estimates that nearly 2 billion tons of soil is lost annually when the SCRP study claimed the loss to be 1.5 billion ton per year (Dessalegn 2003: 207, Mahmud et al 2005:21, 31).

Such alarming findings and the frequent droughts shape the environmental thinking of the Ethiopian state. According to Dessalegn, the legacy of expatriate pessimism promoted "a

policy framework that can only be described as ‘unilateral’ and ‘state centered’, with a strong tendency to exclude pluralist approaches” (Dessalegn 2003: 207). The state becomes the natural stewardess of the earth with its policy prescriptions that are predominantly occupied by the technicality of nature conservation. All the expatriate writings and research underline the cause as mismanagement of land by the land holders (Dessalegn 2003). Employing scientific conservation over indigenous experience became the right and preferable way of nature conservation. As Blaikie (1989) indicated, Ethiopia is one of the countries in Africa that applied and is still applying bench terrace construction disregarding the indigenous knowledge that is found to be the most logical method to curb land degradation; intercropping and relay cropping. It is known now that the characteristic of slope has less to do than the role of rain splash in determining the rate of erosion (Blaikie 1989: 22).

Ethiopian government sought to reverse environmental degradation and food insecurity both in its economic and conservation strategies. In general popular and academic narratives in Ethiopia ascribe environmental problems, which are manifested in deforestation and rural crisis, to the product of population pressure and backward agricultural technology (Crummey and Nelson 2003:91, Dessie and Christiansson 2008: 263, Guilloze and Bliss 2010:239 Dessalegn 2003: 208, Mohamed 1999:6). Such kind of problem identification draws its base from the global environmental narratives. These narratives made it possible for the global and national actors including nongovernmental organizations to intervene in the management of natural resources.

The policy making in African countries follows the dominant perspective in the international arena. This is evident in the Ethiopian policy concept. Ethiopia has now introduced its Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, which is going to replace the

Sustainable Development Strategy of the country following the global emphasis on such perspective. Crummey and Bassett (2003:12) indicate the subordinate role of African states to the bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, to which African states are indebted for funding and expertise. They posit that African environmental thinking is shaped by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies such as USAID, FAO, World Bank, United Nation Environmental Program, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Wide Fund for Nature. They also indicated the role of educational institute in shaping African experts:

> Most of African experts trained in environmentally related sciences were trained abroad and imbued, with their technical training, with the broader framework of meaning within which their mentors placed it. …….,its framework was self-consciously 'modern', isolated natural processes from human influence, interpreting the latter as inevitably 'degrading,' and arrogated to science the role of defining reality. It allowed no place for 'local', 'practical' knowledge, devaluing the latter in favor of the finding of 'science' (Crummey and Bassett 2003:12-13).

Environmental policy and practice in Ethiopia is shaped largely by aid agencies and urban elites. The environmental policy of Ethiopia is not proactive and it is rather driven by external interests. Ethiopian National Conservation Strategy or National Environmental Action Plan has been developed through the World Conservation Union's technical advisory role and the financial assistance of SIDA, ODA, UNESCO, and NORAD (NCS 1996 volume II, Keeley and Scoones 2003; 84, Mohamed 1999:6). The document comprises five volumes and it is claimed to be the first of its kind both in terms of covering multi-sectoral issues and in allowing a wide range of participation. The overall goal of the NCS is:

> To improve and enhance the health and quality of life of all Ethiopians and to promote sustainable social and economic development through the sound management and use of natural, human-made and cultural resources and the environment as a whole so as to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (NCS II 1996:28).

There is also clear statement in the conservation policy on the direct linkage between population and nature conservation. The policy stated that 40% forest cover of the country deteriorated particularly in the past three decades because of the fast growing human population. It further pointed out the relevance of the population policy objectives towards environmental conservation:

> Specific objectives of relevance to the NCS are:
>
> a Making population and economic growths compatible and thus the over-exploitation of natural resources unnecessary;
>
> b Ensuring spatially balanced population distribution patterns with a view to maintaining environmental security and extending the scope of development activities;
>
> c Improving productivity in agriculture and introducing off-farm non agricultural activities for the purpose of employment diversification;
>
> d Mounting an effective country-wide population information and education programme addressing issues pertaining to the small family size and its relationship with human welfare and environmental security; and
>
> e Maintaining and improving the carrying capacity of the environment by taking appropriate environmental protection and conservation measures (NCS II 1996:25)

The document further elaborates on the environment and the impact of population growth by citing different studies and their estimated impact over the years if the overall increase in population growth is left unchecked.

The policy also emphasizes the importance of local community participation in sustainable development and natural and cultural resource management. It advocates genuine participation of the community from project inception to the processes of monitoring and evaluation. It states the importance of defining the distinct decision making power of the community, resources management professionals and government institutions in order to have a genuine local participation. But in the entire policy document, there is no definition of the power of the community and resources management professionals. The document defines only the power and responsibilities of the national, regional and local levels government institutions.

The policy also indicates the importance of establishing community level environmental coordination committee and the need to have local community representative in the national and local environmental councils. The subsequent Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Proclamation stress the importance of local community involvement:

> Forest development, conservation and utilization plans shall be formulated to allow the participation of local communities in the development and conservation and also in the sharing of benefits from the development of state forests (Proclamation NO 542/2007)

It also recognizes the importance of local participation on the designation and demarcation of a state forest. Similarly, it emphasizes the priority of community's interest

in accordance with rural land administration law, in times of conflict over designation and demarcation of state forest. In its section three article 9 sub article 8, it stipulates:

> Conditions shall be facilitated whereby inhabitants within a state forest shall continue living in the forest, while participating in the development and conservation of the forest, in a manner that shall not obstruct forest development; or, based on a study and in consultation with the appropriate body, they shall evacuate the forest area and settle in other areas suitable for living (Proclamation NO 542/2007).

The participatory stance in the country policy agenda comes as the result of increasing emphasis of participation in the international arena, the need to couch project plan in the language of participation and the 1990s local farmer resistance and destruction of conservation work (Keeley& Scoones 2003:87). One can clearly see, both in the proclamations and policy documents, the transition from the top-down framing to a more participatory one. For Example, the Conservation, Development and Utilization of Forest Proclamation No.94/1994, which is repealed by Proclamation No 542/2007, gave the Ministry of Agriculture absolute power over the demarcation and designation of state forest. In its part two article 4 sub articles 5 it stated:

> If in pursuance of this article and article 7, the designation and demarcation of state forest, regional forest or protected forest is likely to result in eviction of peasantry, this can be effected only after the consultation and consent of the peasantry and subject to the assurance of their benefits (Proclamation No.94/1994).

Unlike the 1994 proclamation, the 2007 proclamation stresses and calls for the importance of facilitation for the inhabitants in the forest to continue living in the forest. It also pushes for participation in the conservation and development of the forest.

### *1.2.1 Research Area*

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has nine Member States, which are: Tigrai, Afar, Amara, Oromiya, Somali, Benshangul(Gumuz), Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Gambela Peoples, and Harari Peoples. The Research area is located in the Southern Nation Nationalities and People Region (SNNPR).The region has a population of more than 15 million constituting around 20 percent of the country's total population (CSA 2007). The region is divided into 13 administrative zones, 133 *Weredas* and 3512 *Kebeles*. The SNNPR is the most ethnically diverse region of Ethiopia. The languages spoken in the SNNPR can be classified into four linguistic families: Cushitic, Nilotic, Omotic, and Semitic, but the working language of the region is Amharic.

The research area is located in one of the administrative zones called *Wollaita*. The *Zone* is sub divided by 12 *Weredas*. The *Wollait*a zone is one of the SNNPR locations with high demographic pressure. According to Dessalegn (2007: 4), Wollaita is characterized by high population, poverty and destitution, limited urbanization, low level of rural livelihood diversification and frequent drought. In the years between 2003 and 2005, the regional government undertook resettlement measures in a bid to fight chronic food insecurity in the region. It was planned to resettle 40,000 households from *Wollaita* zone to other zones within the regional state (*UN-OCHA 2003)*.

*Humbo Wereda*[2], the research site, is one of the12 *Weredas* in Wollaita zone. It is found in South Western Ethiopia, 420km South- West of the capital Addis Ababa. It has 125, 441 total population of which 119,194 reside in the rural part of the *Wereda* (CSA 2007). The *Wereda* is multi-ethnic, *Wollaita* being the dominant group. *Wollaita, Sedama* and

[2] Wereda: is equivalent to District

*Amharic* are spoken as first languages by the groups. Agriculture is the main source of income for local communities in the *Wereda*. However, due to severe soil erosion, agricultural production has been negatively impacted. Maize, teff, haricot beans, chickpea, cash crops like coffee, cotton and the commonly consumed root crops are the main products in the area.

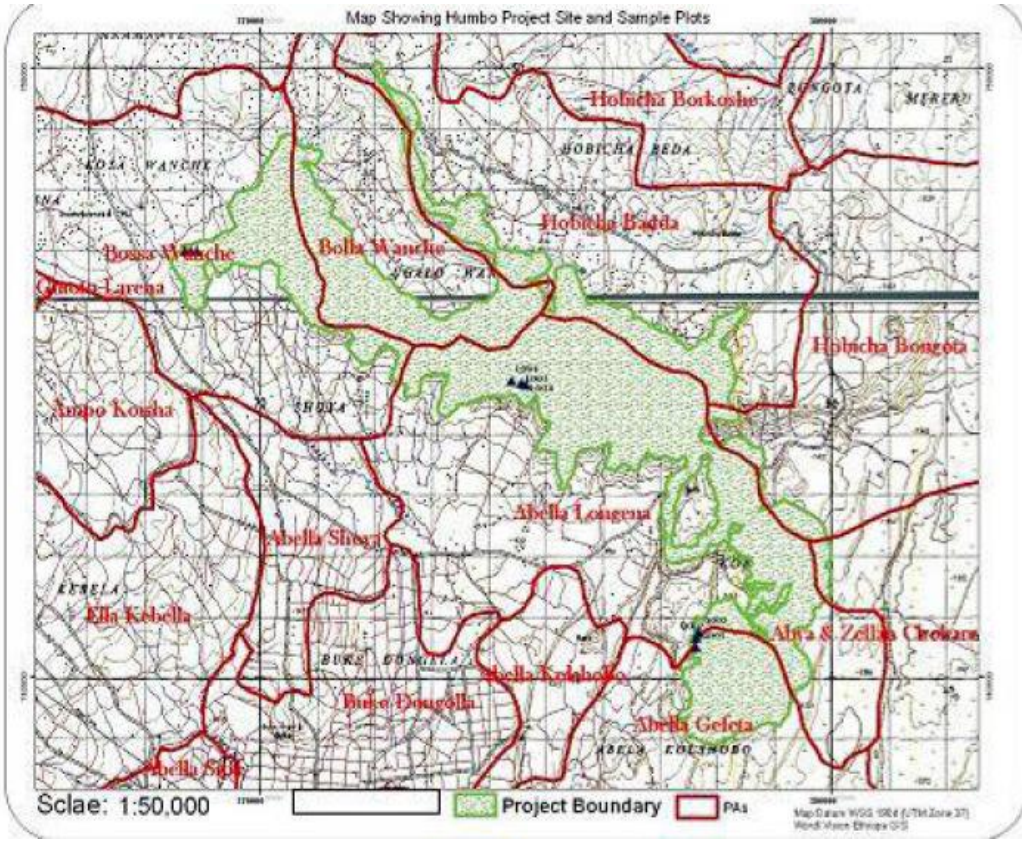
According to Dessalegn (2007: 10), "Wollaita is a land of micro-holding," holdings that are less than 0.5ha. According to the project document of WVE, most of Humbo farmers have 0.25 ha of land, which clearly indicates the fragmented nature of the landholding in the area. For Dessalegn, the land holding in the area is a micro one which he defines as follows

> Micro-farm systems are those in which a household's basic farm assets (Oxen, land, labor, and livestock) have become insufficient, and peasants become trapped in production for sheer survival. Such system cannot support the basic sustenance needs of the family, cannot create asset or reserves, and are highly fragile. They tend to easily collapse under even minimum pressure, such as for example a mild drought, limited rainfall variability, or moderate market fluctuation (Dessalegne 2007:10).

Landlessness is also a major problem in the region, particularly for young people. With the growing young population, landlessness will become a significant problem in the region. The resettlement and the redistribution of communal land were also meant to address such issues in the region. Those who have micro-holding and who are landless usually survive through sharecropping arrangements (My informants, Dessalegn 2007). Actually sharecropping is done by both landless and the better-off as another way of income diversification.

The project with which this thesis is concerned started its operation in *Humbo Wereda* in 2005. The overall goal of the project is; " the sequestration of carbon in a bio-diverse native forest and contributing toward alleviation of poverty in the *Humbo* and *Sodo* districts with flow of benefits in the area of education, health and food security." (WVE 2006, WVE 2007). The project is located in seven *Kebeles* of the *Wereda*: *Abela Gefeta, Abela Shoya,Abela Longena Bola Wanche, Bossa Wanche, Hobicha Bada and Hobica Bongota Kebeles.* The project area covers around 2,728 ha of degraded communal land. *Humbo Wereda* has diversified agro-ecological condition ranging from semi-arid (kola) to a tropical humid and sub-humid climate types. These varied agro-climate conditions made the area to be endowed with production of different commercial and food crops and diversified flora and fauna.

Figure 1:A/R CDM Project Area (PDD 2008)




The project is the first A/R CDM project to be implemented in the country and the largest in Africa. It is a community managed forestry project working to rehabilitate the degraded forest through farmers' managed natural regeneration mechanisms. International and local stakeholders are involved to achieve both the environmental and developmental objectives of the project. WVE and national, regional and local governmental offices are involved as partners. The farmers in the seven *Kebeles* are organized in to 7 cooperative societies to manage the forest. WVA is involved as a financer of the project. WB signed an agreement to buy half of the carbon credit that the project produced. Up to 2012, the community received the first round payment of

34,189USD. Based on the amount of the carbon captured the cooperatives share the payment, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Cooperative Carbon Credit Payment Distribution

| Name of the cooperatives | Forest Land size/ha | Cooperative members in 2009 | Amount paid to the co/ USD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Abela Longena Gaamo Salu Mt. Forest Dev't and Protection cooperative society | 1043.45 | 820 | 12,138.123 |
| Hobica Bada Woito Mt. | 372.77 | 735 | 4,623.524 |
| Bola Wanche Gamo Mt. | 343.60 | 544 | 4,204.563 |
| Bossa Wanche Kacha Mt. | 341.96 | 620 | 4,305.45 |
| Hobicha Bongota Oda Mt. | 340.04 | 724 | 4,346.10 |
| Abela Gefeta Hoko Mt. | 176.42 | 420 | 1,425.84 |
| Abela Shoya Sere Mt. | 109.73 | 400 | 1,405.805 |

## 1.3 Research Rationale

CDM projects have been challenged by their twin objectives of achieving development needs of the host countries and global environmental problems. Ignoring one objective of CDM over the other means ignoring the trade-offs of such projects. The success of a particular CDM project depends on negotiation of trade-offs and inclusion and exclusion of groups on decision making processes regarding resource use and benefit sharing (McShane 2005). Projects that target long term global benefits of forest conservation are traded off against short term economic benefits. Developmentalists argue that the tangible benefits of current land use change outweigh the potential future benefits (Andersen et al 2002). It is therefore important to understand the impact of global and local actors'

interaction and competition in their bid to control forest resources to promote their differing interests in relation to the twin objectives of CDM projects.

A CDM project involves global, national and local actors. The interest and expectation of these actors are different. These actors have different levels of knowledge and capacity in terms of finance and technology, which will influence the project outcomes. There is a clear power asymmetry among these partners which will impact planning and implementation. At the global level, the GHG aspects of the CDM have comprehensive review procedures that ensure offsetting quality and global institutional structure that specifically deal with GHG issues but yet few instruments for social and environmental sustainable development benefits. According to Gillenwater and Seres (2011), the contributions of CDM project towards sustainable development are difficult to assess until specific criteria are developed at the global or national levels.

Since CDM objectives combine both the global and local interests for a single project outcome, looking at the everyday interaction of stakeholders will help in understanding the structural power at work. Such discussions are hoped to throw light on how local and global interests are negotiated, how decisions are made and which power in general seems to dominate in shaping the actions and interactions of actors that are involved in project implementation. Having as my objective to learn about the interactions and local, national and global actors in the project outcomes, I will try to answer the following underlying questions.

What are the interests and expected benefits of the local, national and global actors?

Who, how, and what determines access to forest resources in the project?

### *1.4 Significance of the research*

The Humbo afforestation and forest regeneration project entails global, national and local importance. Understanding the interaction of actors in the project will help identify opportunities and challenges that climate change presents for the twin objectives of conservation and enhancing the well-being of local communities.

Understanding institutions and their role in achieving the twin objectives of local development and global environmental concerns can also help facilitate institutional and policy improvement at the national and local levels. It will also help the implementing organization to understand local perspectives on the project in particular and the forest resource in general. This research is also hoped to serve as a specific work for large scale comparative studies on the issue.

## 2. Research Method

The research employed a combination of data collection methods including secondary literature review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions with relevant authorities and local communities and participant observation. Secondary materials that include project documents, bylaws, letters and communiqués between the different actors are used and analyzed. Published and unpublished materials were also consulted to enrich the data from primary sources.

### *2.1 Field Work Duration*

I have been in the field from June 20/2011 up to January 20/2012. My field work started from the national Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for both securing research permit and accessing the policies and proclamations at the national level. Having established three bases; Addis Ababa, *Sodo* town and *Abela Faricho*, I spent seven months interviewing, reading and documenting corresponding letters, policies, proclamation and bylaws.

Government being one of the actors in the project under study, there is a need to see the role of each level of administration from national to local ones. As the capital and seat for the federal government, and also the base for national and international organizations, Addis Ababa is natural to be one of the bases for this research where I had my interviews with relevant subjects from the head offices of World Vision Ethiopia and World Vision Australia, and the World Bank.

*Sodo*, the zonal town and less than 11Km away from the *Wereda* town of *Tebela (Humbo*), was a conducive and relevant place to be a center for my research. It is also where all zonal government offices are based. Availability of frequent bus transport to

Humbo town, better accommodation compared once again to *Humbo* town and its proximity to some of the *Kebeles* such as *Hubicha Bongota*, *Hobicha Bada, Bola* and *Bosa Wanche* made me choose *Sodo* over *Humbo* town.

At *Kebele* level, my decision to base in *Abela Faricho* basically related to access to WVE/ ADP and its relative proximity to the three *Kebeles* ;*Abela Longena, Abela Shoya* and *Abela Gefeta.* There is no access road or transport system to get to the *Kebeles*. The local people in some of these *Kebeles* use motorbike commonly known as *Bajaj*. On market days, there goes one bus to some of these *Kebeles* . From *Abela Faricho* I often took a motorbike ride to get to the three *Kebeles* mentioned above. Being on the motorbike without helmet is dangerous enough. Add the recklessness and lack of experience on the part of the drivers, the decision to use them was clearly suicidal. After three scary rides to *Abela Longena* with the help of a WVE staff, I managed to get a good deal with one motorbike owner. I have physically been in four of the *Kebeles*; *Abela Longena, Abela Shoya, Ablea Gefeta and Hobicah Bongota. For the others,* I arranged cooperative executive bodies to meet me at Humbo town. And I covered all their expenses.

### *2.2 Semi structured interview*

Methodologically, the thesis has adopted a qualitative approach. Informants were selected taking account of gender, with a view to especially access women - who are often differently affected by conservation projects. They elicit a different and often difficult story in relation to knowledge and involvement in the project formation, development and implementations. Leaders and experts of the national, international and local institutions were recruited as informants. In the process, I made sure that the various interest groups have been represented.

From the international actors, I interviewed World Bank (WB) and World Vision Australia (WVA) representatives. Informants from national to local level government organization who have been directly involved in the project both as implementers and regulators and World Vision Ethiopia (WVE) local and national experts and coordinators were also interviewed before and after my interviews with other stakeholders. Out of the Seven Cooperative Societies, I was able to interview six of the executive bodies of the societies. I also held an in-depth interview with 10 household members at Abela Longena *Kebele*. On market days, training times, and also through the collaboration of the Agricultural and Natural Resource Office Women's Affairs Desk 20 individuals from six *Kebeles* were interviewed for more than an hour each. Five among the elderly members of the communities were also interviewed to obtain historical accounts.

*Wollaita* and *Amharic* were used to interview the subjects. Depending on the situation, translators were also used. I had two translators, one for each of my two bases in the area, *Abela Faricho* and *Sodo towns*. The translators were selected based on their language skills, knowledge of the area and most importantly based on social acceptance. Some of my informants understand Amharic very well but they were more comfortable to communicate in their mother tongue while they still had control over the translation. Most of the interviews are recorded but when individuals were uncomfortable, I had to depend on my notes.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I was considered a journalist by the local community, because of my voice recorder and camera. But later, my informants came to understand that I am a student and do not represent government or non- governmental organizations involved in the project implementation. My informants seemed to have assumed that as a

student from Western University, I have better access and position to present their grievances both at national and global levels.

### *2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)*

Three focus group discussions were organized with various groups of the communities in order to obtain qualitative data as well as to validate and probe crucial points of already obtained data. I took advantage of events created by Agricultural and Natural Resource Office Women's Affair desk to talk to a group of women who otherwise would have been impossible for me to organize. From their gatherings, I managed to get women from the six *Kebeles* under study and all but one were members of the cooperatives.

One FGD was held exclusively with executive bodies of cooperatives. It was designed to have all the executive bodies of the cooperatives at *Humbo* town but only four attended. The other focus group is that of seven community members from *Longena Kebele,* which I used to validate the information that I got from individual HHs.

### *2.4 Participant Observation*

I planned to attend national meetings, separate or joint, and review meetings at local levels. However, the review meeting with local stakeholders, usually organized every year, were not organized due to of financial constraints. But I was able to attend trainings and one local government evaluation meeting with the cooperative society which becomes part of my analysis. The training and evaluation sessions helped me observe interactions among communities and other stakeholders.

### *2.4 Ethical Issues*

In the course of my fieldwork, I clearly communicated the purpose of my research for all my research subjects in a simple language that they can understand. I did tell them that participation in the research is purely a voluntary decision and that they could withdraw

whenever they wanted to. I made it clear that contributing to my research would not in any ways affect or compensate their role in the project activity. I guaranteed confidentiality of the collected information and also anonymity to some of my informants. It is not possible for me to provide anonymity to those informants at the government offices and NGO experts even if I believe that it will have some implication for them. The problem is that even if I wanted to protect them, it is not possible to do so because it is not difficult to trace the experts and authorities in these offices based on the information I discuss. Therefore I did not promise to withhold their names and they did not ask for it either.

### *3. Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)*

Governments all over the world realize that the continuance of growth depends on the availability of natural resources. This is clearly reflected in the Brundtland report in which they asserted: "We have in the past been concerned about the impacts of economic growth upon the environment. We are now forced to concern ourselves with the impact of ecological stress upon our economic prospects (WCED 1987:5)". Since 1987, environmentalism has been couched in the language of sustainable development. The ecological problem and Third World poverty have been merged in the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report and the 1992 Rio Declaration. Wolfgang Sachs (1992) argues that the main concern behind this merging process was not grounded in an overall concern about nature or the negative impacts that the growth paradigm had on poverty-issues. The merger rather mirrored the growing concern over the economic prospects for the future.

The Brundtland Commission document defines sustainable development as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987:43). To meet human needs was the central objective of development, and "meeting essential needs depends in part on achieving full growth potential, and sustainable development clearly requires economic growth…" (ibid: 44). It is obvious that economic growth involves a change in the physical ecosystem. The reconciliation between development and environment meant, in practice, that the importance of growth could still dominate and, as a result, ideas about non-growth were left out of the discussion.

The issue of reviving growth gave emphasis to developing countries where economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental concerns are closely related. For a long

time, environmental problems have been attributed to the impact of industrial man, but later, with the spreading of deforestation and desertification, the poor become part of the equation. And they are identified as an agent of destruction. Theories within SD consider underdevelopment to be the cause of poverty and environmental degradation which necessitate development as a way out. Development seems, nevertheless, to be desired through increasing global integration, liberalization of trade and industrialization disregarding the historical and structural causes of poverty and environmental degradation (Sachs 1992:29).

Economic growth and environmental protection are at the heart of the SD thesis. These competing objectives merge in providing a possible agenda to be achieved through technology and market fix. Science and technology being, in theory, objective and value free opened the way to technocratic solution for environmental problem. The scientific claim that established environmental hazards as a global problem also makes it possible for some actors to seek global solutions (Sachs 1992:29-30). For SD, powerful interests and primarily representatives of nation-states are institutionally empowered to speak and act. "By definition, only international institutions and national government were up to the task in hand" (Hildyard 1993:25). And the assumed universal applications of market mechanism through internalizing external costs gained prominence in the international platform.

CDM is one of the market mechanisms that are created to help developed countries reduce their emission through investment in developing nations. In 1997, industrialized countries signed binding agreement to reduce their green house gases to the level of the 1990 emissions but eased the task through emission trading, which is called "carbon offsets". CDM is one of the flexible mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol/KP/. The

majority of the developed countries (Annex I Countries)[3] have become committed to target emissions through the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which entered into force in 2005. Countries agreed to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases below the 1990 levels. The Protocol sets specific emission reduction targets for industrialized nations. It provides flexible mechanisms for developed countries to achieve their commitment: Emission trading (ET), Joint implementation (JI). It allows developed countries to invest in other developed and developing nations, which is counted towards its Kyoto target.

CDM has dual objectives of cost effective emission reduction and promoting sustainable development in developing countries through technology transfer, capacity building and financial resource transfer (Kolshus etal 2001:1). CDM is presumed to be a mechanism from which both the investor and the host country benefits, a "win-win" situation. CDM is a mechanism:

> that assist Parties not included in Annex I in achieving sustainable development and in contributing to the ultimate objective of the Convention, and to assist Parties included in Annex I in achieving compliance with their quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments under Article 3" (UN 1998 article 12 paragraph 2:11).

Behind the idea of CDM lies the economic principle of cost effectiveness, that the least cost options should be exploited where ever they may be located. Since cost effectiveness is the main focus of CDM, its priority lies more in GHG abatement than sustainable development of the host country. The Marrakesh Accord that sought to design a system affirms that the sustainable development aspect of CDM is the "host Party's prerogative" (UNFCC 2002:20). According to Sutter and Parreno (2007:76), the trade- off between the

[3] Annex I countries are defined as Parties to the Convention (UNFCCC) which are also listed in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol. These are the industrial countries and some of the countries with economies in transition (EITs).

two objectives favors the cost efficient emission reduction since there are no international sustainable development standards that could be an incentive to invest.

According to article 12 paragraph 5 of the KP, a CDM project has to satisfy the following criteria:

a) Voluntary participation approved by each Party involved;

b) Real, measurable, and long-term benefits related to the mitigation of climate change; and

c) Reductions in emissions that are additional to any that would occur in the absence of the certified project activity (commonly known as the ‘‘additionality’’ criterion) (UN 1998 article 12 paragraph 5:11).

CDM projects include: energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, afforestation and reforestation, sustainable agricultural practices, reduction in methane emission, waste management, reducing emission of GHG from chemicals that are not part of the Montreal Protocol (UN 1998 article 2 paragraph 1a:1-2).

### *3.1 How does CDM work*

***At the international level***: there are modalities and methodologies that are intended to systematically register, approve, measure and evaluate emission reduction. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP) has the authority over CDM. It is the higher body that provides guidance to the Executive Board. The Executive Board is fully accountable to COP/MOP and it is in charge of approving methodologies for calculating emissions reductions, maintaining a registry of projects, issuing CERs, and accreditation. It has ten members: one from each of the five United Nation regional groups, two other members from parties included in Annex I, two from non-Annex I countries and one from the small island developing

countries. Members are elected to serve for a maximum term of two years. Designated Operational Entities (DOE) are accountable to COP/MOP through the executive board. DOE are the body that validate proposed CDM project activities, verify and certify emission by sources of GHG (UNFCC 2002:26-32).

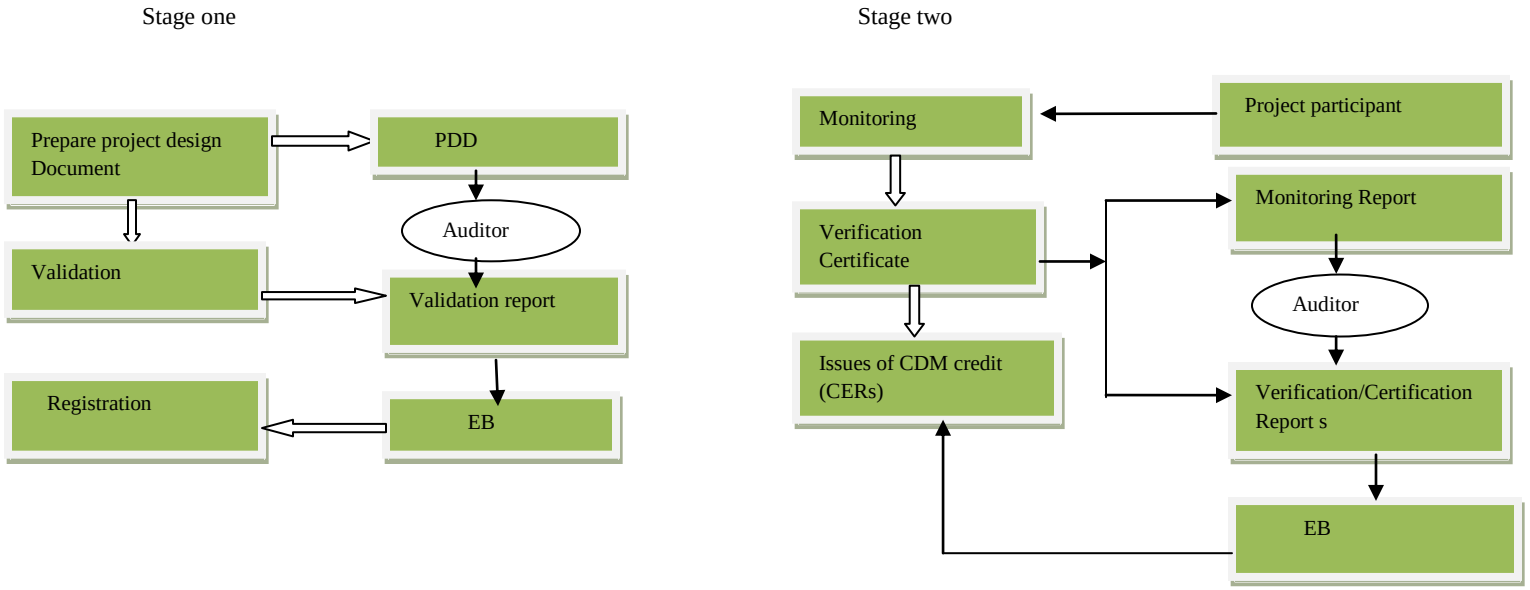
***At the country level***: Two things are deemed important at this level: the Designated National Authority (DNA) and voluntary participation. Designated National Authority (DNA) is responsible for approving any proposed projects and ensuring that they contribute to the country's sustainable development. It is also responsible for confirming that the participants are involved voluntarily (UNFCC 2002:32). According to Bhattacharyya (2011:628), the DNA can also be responsible for co-coordinating the formulation of sustainable polices, environmental and investment regulations. Furthermore, it can provide a guideline for national CDM project approval criteria, help manage risk associated to the CDM project and also help in promoting and marketing of this project. Since the SD activity of CDM project is given to the national government, there are no criteria or rules of procedure that ensure the CDM projects' contribution toward sustainable development of the host country.

***At the project level:*** At this level the project design document (PDD) that strictly follows the modalities and methodology approved by the CDM executive body is given paramount importance. And local stakeholders' participation also gains status both in KP and Marrakesh Accord. The Marrakesh Accord defines stakeholders as: "…the public, including individuals, groups or communities affected or likely to be affected, by the proposed clean development mechanism project activity" (UNFCC 2002:26). In the CDM project, participants include developers of the project that are responsible for developing the Project Design Document (PDD) and also in charge of monitoring the project. They can be government bodies, private sector entities, financial institutes, NGOs. There are also investors that purchase the emission credit (Bhattacharyya 2011:629).The PDD must contain: the general description of project activity, application

of a baseline methodology ,duration of the project activity/crediting period, application of monitoring methodology/plan, estimation of GHG emissions by sources, environmental impacts, and comments of stakeholders. Meeting additionality and sustainable development requirement need also to be established in the PDD (Bhattacharyya 2011:630).

Many researchers argue that the technicalities of the CDM project are cumbersome and costly (Bhattacharyya 2011, Kolshus etal 2001, Paulsson 2009 and Gillenwater and Seres 2011). To get verified CERs, the CDM project has to pass through a long process of auditing and verification. Since CDM depends on Market mechanisms, the burden of fees on administration and adaption will make it less attractive to investment (Kolshus etal 2001:4). Gillenwater and Seres (2011) indicates the process by way of a chart:

Figure 1: *CDM process and institution*




### *3.2 CDM and Forest Conservation*

As indicated elsewhere, the Marrakech Accord sets out the modalities and methodologies for *CDM* projects with the exception of those involving forestry projects. With regard to

the forestry projects, it restricts them to afforestation and reforestation undertakings and also sets a limit on their use in that it should not, "…..exceed one percent of base year emissions of the party, time five;" (UNFCC 2002:22). Procedures and modalities of CDM A/R projects came into effect in 2003 at the meeting of COP 9 in Milan. Up to 2006, not a single A/R CDM project had been approved because of the methodological problem (Haupt and Lupke 2007:2). For the forestry sector, CDM provides a financial and technology transfer from Annex I countries to support forest conservation in developing nations.

Forest conservation is one of the most controversial areas of GHG abatement strategy, but it has a significant contribution of GHG emission into the atmosphere. The controversy of forest conservation very much rests on the socio-economic importance of land use and forests in general. The opponent of CDM forest projects contend that they lead to a massive development of plantation or protected area and exclude the local community from forest benefits. There is also a dilemma on the implication of forest conservation on efforts toward permanent reductions in energy consumption. Issues related to monitoring, leakage and permanence have also created controversies (Paulsson 2009:75). Under the KP, only afforestation and reforestation programs are eligible due to effects that might create permanent energy reduction and measurement difficulties for other undertakings. Forest protection was excluded from CDM and it was contested up until the meeting of COP 13 in Bali came into being. In Bali, however, a program called "Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" was initiated with the hope that technology could solve issues of measurement (Cle'mencon 2008 cited in Paulsson 2009:75 Smith and Scherr 2002:2).

The CDM A/R project has to provide the baseline and the project scenarios. The baseline scenario can be based on historical and existing (economic consideration or legal

requirement) carbon stock change, but the project owners can choose any approach that is appropriate for the case. The project scenario is basically the difference between the baseline and the project achievement through A/R activity, which is the net carbon stock. The actual net carbon stock is what is gained after deduction of the leakage (which is the emission caused by project activities, for example, from vehicles used to transport seedlings or from the shifts in grazing land because of the displacement of grazing land), which is the actual tradable amount. CDM projects also need periodic monitoring of carbon stock, and, therefore, adequate monitoring and evaluation tools have to be in place (Haupt and Lupke 2007: 2, Kagi and Schone 2005:4-5).

For a CDM A/R project to be eligible, it has to prove that the land has degraded or has no forest cover since 1982. Also there needs to be evidence that, either because of economic unattractiveness or without the income from carbon credits, the legal, technological and ecological barriers would not be overcome. There is also a need for the host country to ratify KP, establish a DNA and also set out criteria for sustainable development. The DNA has to confirm that criteria-based impact assessments be done for socio-economic and environmental implications, those including impacts on biodiversity and the natural-ecosystem. If the project affects the socio-economic condition, a mitigation strategy needs to be designed (Kagi and Schone 2005:5-6, Haupt and Lupke 2007: 3).

At this juncture, I believe it is important to identify what kind of forest protection activities CDM project may apply for. Smith and Scherr (2002:4) explicitly indicate the possible project type and how the carbon fund may be used accordingly. See Table 2. They indicate the possibility of A/R CDM project open to the development of plantation or protected area with the exclusion of local community. And at the same time it can also be stands for the benefit of local community through multipurpose forest management.

Table 2: A/R CDM Project type

| Forest project type | Approach | Use of carbon payment |
|---|---|---|
| Large scale industrial pulp or timber plantation | Establish plantation of fast-growing trees for industrial use in deforested and degraded area | To cover up-front cost of developing new industry |
| Agro-forestry, community forest plantation | Increasing tree-growing and forest cover on farm or associated non-farmed lands to supply tree products or ecosystem services( wind break, filter, strips, fodder bankes border planning ,woodlots, stream bank planting | To provide technical and marketing assistance, to subsidies tree establishment, to pay farmers for carbon benefits produced, to increase local organizational capacity to manage and implement carbon contract |
| Forest rehabilitation and regeneration | Rehabilitate and regenerate severely degraded natural forest on community land or farms, to supply products and eco-system services; once regenerated, develop sustainable forest management system with local community | To provide training , local organization and planning to pay costs of forest protection and management to compensate users excluded from regenerating forest |
| Strictly forest protected area | Remove potential threat of deforestation, and manage area so as to minimize human impact | To compensate sources of deforestation threat,. To pay costs of forest protection, to develop income sources outside protected forest, to reduce leakage |
| Multiple-use community use within protected forest | Remove potential threats of deforestation and developed sustainable forest management system with local communities (timber, NTFPs[4], hunting, ecotourism) within the protected forest | To compensate sources of deforestation threat, to develop local technical business capacity for managing protected forest |

*Source:* Adapted from Smith and Scherr (2002)

[4] NTFPs: Non-timber forest product

## *4. Theoretical Framework*

### *4.1 Political Ecology*

During the course of my fieldwork, I found out that political ecology is very important for the problem at hand. Its particular emphasis on actors at each level, from local to international institutions, and the focus on marginalized groups, makes it relevant for my research focus in general and research findings in particular. Owing to its focus on the political ecology of actors, it also addresses issues of power by exploring how the relative power of actors is negotiated and exercised in competition for resource access and use. These elements, therefore, make political ecology relevant to my research.

According to Paulson et al (2005:28), all kinds of human interaction have political elements that are used to secure differential access to resources through a differential level of position, knowledge base and representation. He further indicates that political issues encompass everyday life interactions. Different actors represent different interests, and hence each will likely promote their own agenda. Bryant and Bailey (1997:25) emphasize that the interaction of actors is the very bits and pieces of politics. Political ecology uses the basic tools of political economy in analyzing social relations of production and questions of access and control over resources in order to understand an environmental problem. However, there is a wide variety of approaches in political ecology.

Agrawal (2005:210) classified these varieties of approach of political ecology into three thematic groups. The first one is the focus on social marginality and access to resource. The second one is the desire to study the political cause and effect of resource allocation. And the third relates to the underlying attention given to the cultural, socioeconomic and political contexts that shape the human use and control of resources. Schubert (2005:17),

on the other hand, provides us with his own distinct categories of political ecology approaches:

- "*a post-structuralist, mostly deconstructivist approach that questions predominant discourses of environmental change and policies;*
- *the analysis of concepts of 'people' and 'nature', mainly the analysis of gender as a constructed category interactions and*
- *Defining a more rights-based body of research concerned with questions of access, rights, entitlements and environmental justice*."

Also Bryant and Bailey (1997: 21-24) come up with five approaches. The first approach is placed in understanding the human impact on the physical environment within the political-economic perspective. The second approach attempts to understand how discourses are developed and used to promote specific interest of actors. The third approach is concerned more with regional variability. The fourth one is an approach which sees environmental questions in the light of socio-economic characteristics, class, ethnicity, or gender while the fifth approach puts emphasis on the interest and actions of the different types of actors in understanding political- ecological conflicts.

All classifications of political ecology approaches seem to agree on the centrality of examining social structures at various levels and the analysis of actors, their interest and discourses that they develop and promote in a bid to access natural resources. Robin's (2004:12) definition of political ecology summarizes almost all the classifications provided above:

> As critique, political ecology seeks to expose flaws in dominant approaches to the environmentally favored by corporate, state and international authorities, working to demonstrate the undesirable impacts of policies and market conditions, especially from the point of view of local people, marginal groups, and vulnerable populations. It works to 'denaturalize" certain social and environmental conditions, showing them to be the contingent outcomes of power, and not inevitable. As critical historiography, deconstruction, and myth-busting research, political ecology is a hatchet, cutting and pruning away the stories, methods, and policies that create pernicious social and environmental outcomes.

Despite its wide use and acceptance, political ecology is criticized for overemphasizing politics and underemphasizing ecology. Some argue that the field become so politicized and is carried away with social sphere with insufficient focus on ecological system. The power struggle over resource access and representation takes central stage while the environmental aspect receives little attention (Mulder & Cooppolillo 2005:176, Walker 2005:78, Bryant &Bailey 1997:6).

In our world, people are sharply divided by differentials of power, knowledge, technology and wealth, and the decision and actions of some have more value than others. Due to disparities of resource possession, some benefit more than others. And not all knowledge or technologies have equal footings. It is important to stress the fact that the existence of a wide asymmetry of power does not mean that all powers are independent; all power relations manifest autonomy and dependence. There is equally the need to recognize that even the weak actors have some power (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 25). How and why the unequal social and political power affects both environment and

people's livelihood is what political ecology seeks to understand. In doing that, political ecology looks into how knowledge and technology are at the service of the powerful.

According to Wolf (1990:592), power is concerned with producing and sustaining one version of truth against another potential truth. And this truth is produced and sustained in the form of scientific discourses. Throughout this thesis, power is presented in the context of structural power, which, according to Wolf, is: "…the kind of power that shapes the social field of action so as to render some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible or impossible" (Wolf 1990:587).

To understand how power manifests itself, one has to understand the mechanisms of power, the point it touches individuals' ways of thinking, actions and everyday lives (Foucault 1972:59, 93). Foucault argues power works at the level of desire and knowledge. It enters and forms the social interaction through the production, accumulation and circulation and functioning of discourse.

> Production of environmental intervention is intimately connected to the production of environmental knowledge, both of which are intrinsically bound up with power relations (Guthman 1997:45 cited in Bryant 1998:88).

This shows that the construction of environmental problems and their solutions by powerful actors is very much an act of politics that may or may not have scientific backing. In various developing countries' soil-loss crisis that is largely blamed on mismanagement by local people is developed based on uncertain and ambiguous evidence (Thompson and Warburton 1986: Ives and Messerli 1989: Tiffen etal 1996: Rocheleau etal 1995: Zimmereer 1996; Guthman 1997 cited in Bryant 1998:88). Scholars

like Sachs (1993:20) argue that environmental problems have become a matter of Northern security. Therefore "……a higher level of observation and intervention has to be installed, in order to control the consequences of the control over nature". Escobar (1995) uses the term "colonization of reality" and explains how "certain representations of reality become dominant and shape indelibly the ways in which reality is imagined and acted upon". By taking Foucault's insights, Escobar sees how the dominant discourse "produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible" (Escobar 1995:5).

The strength of political ecology as an analytical framework for my research objective relates to its particular acknowledgment of the battlefield of power and knowledge when the various actors engage in accessing natural resources. There exists a wide range of divergent as well as overlapping values when different group exercise natural resource management and use. It is important to look into and understand the formulation, negotiation and implementation of rules, procedures and laws in order to understand how different actors try to legitimize their action. Understanding of relationships of actors requires analysis of the implication of competing representation of the global and the local for physical landscape and livelihood. By taking political ecology as my analytical tool, I hope to describe the relationships of the various stakeholders that are involved in implementing the A/R CDM project in south western part of Ethiopia.

## *5. Who Owns Humbo Forest?*

The question of ownership in this study is a very interesting and controversial one. The legally recognized owners[5] of the forest resources claimed that the land has been taken by the state and that the state is now the owner of the resource. In this chapter I will try to address who the owners of the forest are: When does an ownership claim become an issue? Why do the communities have a counter claim on the legal entitlement? What does owning the forest mean to the various stakeholders?

### *5.1 Land Tenure in the research setting*

As the main basis of the national economy, the legal entitlements of land have passed through lots of changes. Since land tenure is not the main subject of this study, I will not go through those historical developments, but I will briefly discuss the federal and regional laws that stipulate access, control and transfer rights of rural land[6]. In Ethiopia ownership of land is vested in the state and the people. The current land tenure system allows private, communal and state ownership. According to the rural land proclamation private land means the land that is given by law for individuals to have the right to use the land. Any citizen of the country who is 18 years of age and wants to engage in agricultural activity has the right to get rural land. Communal land in Ethiopian legal context is the land given by the state to local community for grazing, forestry and other social services. In the same proclamation communal land stated to be transferred as a private holding depending on the necessity. State land holding refers to forest and wildlife protection areas, state farms, mining lands, lakes, rivers and other rural lands that are not held by individuals or communities (Proclamation No.456/2005).

[5] Ownership in Ethiopian legal contexts means the right to use the resources from the land, or what is called usufruct right.

[6] The land rights referred to here is only in regard to rural land and does not represent the urban land tenure system in the country.

In the Federal Proclamation, individual land holders have the right to rent out part of their holdings and transfer his/her holding right to any family member. It also provides the regional government comprehensive rights on redistribution of holdings and its administration. Regional states would enact their own land administration and land use laws within the frameworks of the federal law. The regional states[7] determine the minimum size of holding, for example in the research area of the SNNPR, the state determined the minimum size to be not less than 0.5 hectare per household. Under this proclamation the regional state has the right to establish new institutions for land administration, which in practice is the rural *Kebeles*[8] and agricultural bureau.

It is important to see here how communal land holding and land conservation treated in both the federal and regional legal frames operate. Both the federal and regional laws recognize the right of the community to use communal land for socio-economic activities. Especially the regional law clearly states that the rights of the community to have communal land for grazing, social and cultural affairs are reserved. In both these legal documents the usufruct right of the community has conditionalities. The conditionalities relate to the constitutional rights of citizen access to land, governments developmental projects, and environmental issues that are related to soil and forest conservation. The regional law for instance states that:

> Privately unoccupied land as well as lands under the possession of community or government which are potential for agriculture shall be re-

[7] This regional law is the Southern Nation Nationality and People state/SNNP.

[8] Rural *Kebeles* are the lower level of administration in the country. They are organized so that they are responsible for addressing social, economic, political, and even judicial issues.

allocated to landless youths and peasants who have less farmland (Proclamation No.110/2007 article 13 sub articles 3).

Article 3 of the Federal land and article 5(sub article 14) of the Regional Proclamation clearly indicates the power of both levels of the state to deny any claim related to communal land by stating that the government, as the owner of all the rural land, can transfer communal holdings to private holding whenever it is believed necessary to do so. Later in this chapter I will discuss how the interpretation of such law creates a conflict situation in the research area. Article 9 (sub article 4) of the regional proclamation also indicate that the state can transfer communal possession to landless youth and peasants: "privately unoccupied land as well as lands under the possession of community or government which are potential for agriculture shall be reallocated to landless youth and peasants who have less farmland."

The other conditionality relates to the soil and land management. The regional proclamation has elaborated articles under section 3which determines the proper use of steep slope, gully and wetlands. The articles under this section determine the management of rural land based on its slope: for instance any rural land with the slope more than 60 degrees only be used for tree plantation and forage production. Such lands are not allowed for crop plantation or for free grazing. Sub article 7 stated land that is steep slope and degraded shall be protected from human and animal contacts until it is rehabilitated.

The regional proclamation also provides responsibility of implementation, coordination, establishment of institution at different levels and establishes a better system of rural land administration, upon the regional bureau of agriculture and rural development. The regional, zonal and *Wereda* level agricultural bureaus are the ones that involve in the

project activities, which will be discussed throughout the chapters regarding government involvement, and partnerships both with the local community and the local and international nongovernmental organizations.

### *5.2 Who owns Humbo forest?*

Who owns Humbo forest is the question I kept asking the various stakeholders involved in the Clean Development Mechanism project entitled "Humbo community managed natural regeneration project". All stakeholders involved, except the local community, had the identical answer; they claim that the local communities are the owners, but the local community disagreed on such an assertion. For them the land was taken by one of the stakeholders, that is the state. They know that they are the owners on paper but for them ownership means more than having the legal right on paper. It is more focused on access rather than the legal entitlement. One might ask, what is the difference between owning the resource and accessing it? It seems once you have the legal right, it is practical to have access right. In the case of Humbo forests, accessing the resource is determined by other rules and regulation which seem to have less to do with the community interest and expectations.

The start of the community managed natural regeneration project brings with it issues of ownership of the communal land in the project area. Before the project started up, ownership was not an issue of concern for the local community, even though they did not have legal documents to show for it. According to the local community, what gave them secure ownership was free and unregulated access to the resource for generations.

There is, however, a widely held prophecy which is of interest for this study. This long-standing prophecy concerns change in land ownership in the project area. The local community believed that the prophecy would come true in the name of a conservation project. The prophecy has an elaborate explanation of how the land that has sustained social and economic needs for generations is taken by the most powerful authorities that the local community has no bearing on. Most believe that this powerful authority is the national government. Some of my informants say the global government, which comes by the name of World Bank, is the one responsible in taking that land away from them; the World Bank as a financer involved in this project. I will come back to the details of its involvement later in the chapter. In this prophecy there is a warning for the local community to look for alternative food sources, since they no will longer have the privilege of eating meat and dairy products.

For generations the project area has been grazing land, a land that most depend on in times of crisis, like drought, and it is a source of income for so many. Most youth pay for their education by working on this land, particularly during their summer vacation. This land has a special relation when it comes to women. Like all individual residents in the seven *Kebeles*, women generate income from the communal lands by making charcoal or selling firewood. For them this income is such that the husband has no control over or knowledge of it, so that basically, it is a source of independent income that they can buy anything with. Women in the area also have medicinal knowledge which is useful in an environment where modern medicine is a luxury. Traditional doctors in this area treat both humans and animals. While I was doing my fieldwork I asked about traditional doctors in all the *Kebeles*, *and* what fascinates me most is that women are the only practitioners of traditional medicine. I was able to talk with three of the practitioners who explained what losing access to the forest means to them;

> Even when selling charcoal and firewood was cheap, we used to earn more than 20 to 30 birr ($1 to 2USD) per week. Now, when there is a price hike every day, we could have benefited more than we used to. Now-a-days a single sack of charcoal has a market value of 100 birr ($6 USD). One can produce more than a sack in a week time, depending on the number of able persons in the family. We are also forced to sell our goats, fearing the penalty placed by the cooperatives in the event of the goats found inside the forest. A single goat has a market value of 1000birr ($57 USD). From the forest we not only have income, but our health and the health of our domestic animals depended on it. So we are losing every aspect of our way of life because of this particular project. We used to help cure a sickness that is even difficult for modern medicine to cure. Now we do not have access to those medicines (WK2)[9].

In a community where more than half of the total population is considered food insecure[10] losing even a small portion of land or any sort of sustenance has a detrimental effect. According to the *Wereda* agricultural bureau report half of the total population in the *Wereda* own less than one hectares of land. Adding climate variability in the region, most farmers live in a constant struggle to feed their families all year round. The area is prone to natural disasters like drought, cyclically every three to five years. So the forest is one of the coping mechanisms that the communities have used since the 1970s.

[9] For the sake of my informants' general wellbeing, I agreed to ensure their anonymity. In the place of their names I use a simple letter coda which describe their sex and the role they have as an informant: WK= Women Key Informant, with the number used to differentiate one informant from another one.

[10] According to the *Wereda* agricultural bureau report 69,872 individuals from the total population of 125,441 receive aid under the safety net program.

For most small holders the forest means an alternative income resource, in addition to a pasture for their domestic animals. For youth and the landless, the forest provides a source of hope and sustenance while they await the opportunity to be a land holder. As I indicated at the start of this chapter, communal lands are for redistribution to landless farmers when the need arises. Forests are also the only energy resource that villagers have for cooking and keeping the house warm. Forests contribute 70 percent of the energy demand in the country (Damel 2001:5). Collecting firewood takes most of the women's and children's time, apart from fetching water. The farther the forest areas from the villages, the more burdened the women and the children will be. An increasing scarcity of firewood not only affects families' time but also children's schooling. Research done by the Ethiopian Development Research Institute indicated that "a 50 percent increase in collection intensity reduces the likelihood of child schooling by approximately 12 percent" (EDRI working paper, 2012: VI), with girls as the most heavily affected group. The forest also provides the basic materials that the villagers need to build their house and storage places.

Access to the forest for farmers has a different meaning than for the other project stakeholders. For the community, use values of the forest are more relevant, unlike the environmental values which the other stakeholders value dearly. According to the non-community members of the project owners, the project provides wide varieties of opportunity than the non-project period. The project provides better pasture, reduces soil erosion and flooding, maintains the supply of water sources, and increases the agricultural productivity and income stream through sustainable management of forest resources.

The project objectives and what it is in practice managing to show as outcomes are successes that any observer will appreciate and acknowledge. The question, however, is how the other main stakeholder, the community, looks at it? What does it mean for them? And what does it cost them? By looking at how, what and who determines access to the forest, I will try to answer such questions.

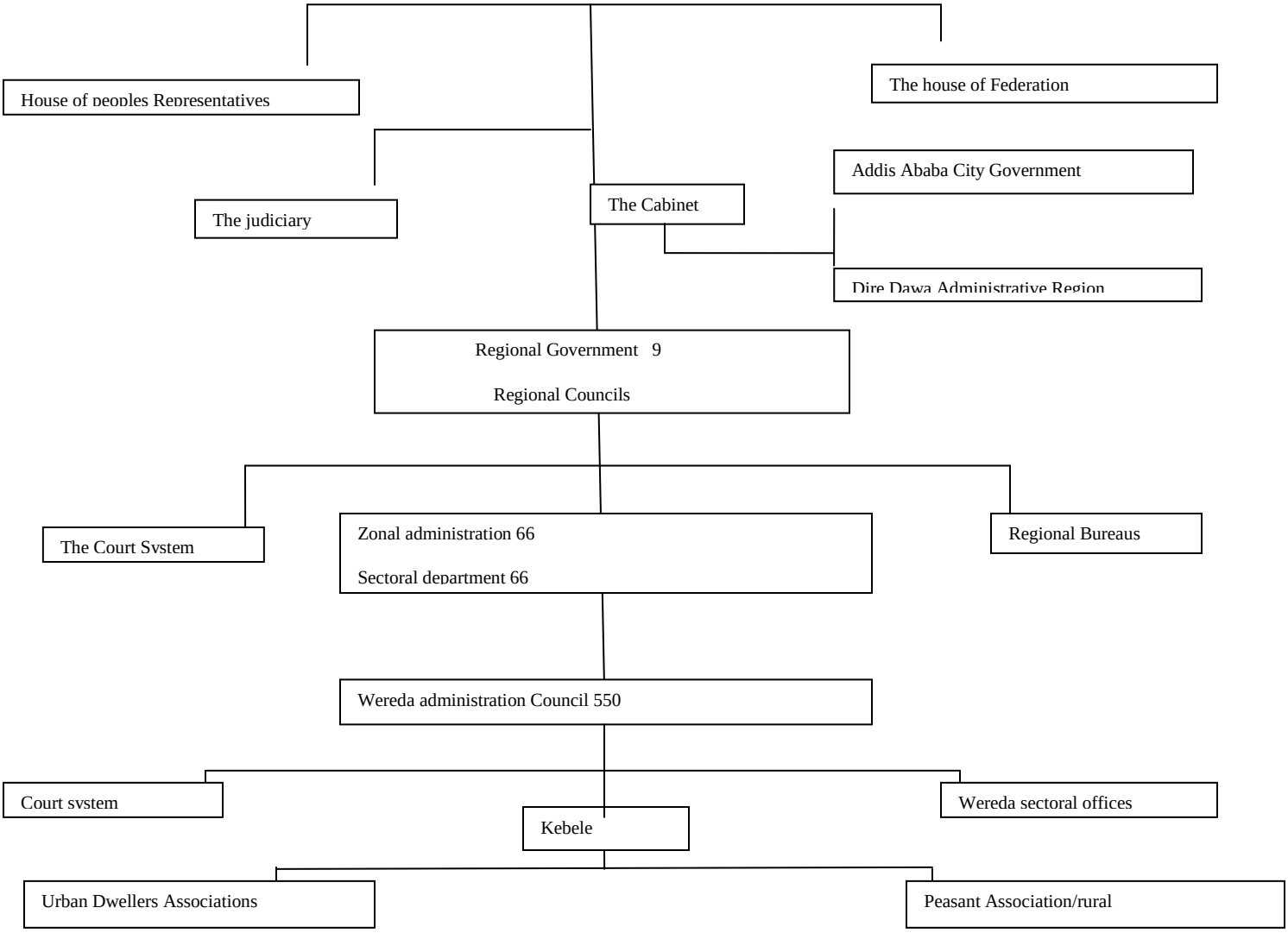
### *5.3 Institutional Arrangement*

It is best to begin by describing who is who before analyzing the details of the everyday activities and interactions of the different stakeholders within the project.

#### *5.3.1 National, Regional and Local Government Institutions*

Ethiopia has a federal system of government composed of nine states and two city administrations which are delimited on the basis of settlement patterns, language, and identity. Power is decentralized through administrative arrangements that transfer responsibilities from federal to a local level of decision making. The key government institutions consist of line ministries and bureaus at the federal and regional levels respectively. The regional bureaus are further decentralized to *Wereda* and *Kebele* levels. In this particular project, bureau from federal to the lower *Wereda* level are involved both as partners and regulatory bodies.

Figure 2 .Power structure of the country




*Source: Mehrete (2002:137)*

Government Policy on Natural Resource and Environment delegates the Ministry of Agriculture to be responsible for issues related to forestry and wildlife. Water is delegated to Ministry of Water Resource, and Environmental Protection Authority delegated to issues of environmental protection. In the national policy, avoiding conflict

of interest is one of the guiding principles' when it established these institutional frameworks. Practically, however, it seems there are conflicts of interest and it becomes obvious in the regional bureaus and farther down the line. For a long time, and still now, the presence of agricultural and natural resource bureaus both in the regional and local level are strong when compared to the newly established environmental bureaus[11]. There have been frequent restructuring in the region to give the environmental office a better structure and independence. The recent restructuring in the region established environmental department within the agricultural and natural resource bureau. And at *zonal* and *Wereda* levels, environmental issues are part of natural resource department within the agricultural bureau. I believe the frequent restructuring and confusions of responsibility have a negative effect on the office implementation and regulatory capacity. From all the interviews that I had at all levels of the government bureaus; I learnt that the environmental protection authority, the regional, *zonal* and *Wereda* levels, the agricultural and natural resource bureaus have no network of information exchange whatsoever. Information networks function only at the *Wereda* and *zonal* levels. The regional bureau has more of a symbolic presence when it comes to this particular project, and had been represented in meetings and training sessions at the project start up time.

The Environmental Protection Authority at the federal level, which houses the Designated National Authority (DNA), was involved from the very inception of the project. The office is in charge of assessing the contribution of the project to the sustainable development strategy of the country. It is also expected to issue letters of

[11] When it comes to the region, the status of environmental bureau is confusing even for those who are part of the structure. There has been frequent restructuring that comes with new names and status. The status of environmental office changed from office to department or desk within agricultural and rural development. When it comes to the zonal and Wereda level there is no such distinction, as it is part of agricultural and natural resource. ***SO when I use 'environmental desk' it refers to the regional, and when I use the 'agricultural and natural resource bureau' it refers to Zonal and Wereda level structures.***

approval based on its assessment. The authority is also expected to have regulatory role. This applies particularly to the development aspect of the project, since the host country was made sovereign to decide whether or not a CDM project activity contributed to the sustainable development of the country.

The authority has environmental impact assessment and CDM document approval criteria that focus on the economic, social and ecological aspects of a project. In both documents socio-economic and ecological aspects are given due emphasis. The environmental assessment document gives focus on health, natural and cultural heritages, gender, participation, and issues of access to both forest product and other infrastructures in more elaborate manners. But the approval criteria are vague and simplistic, unlike the impact assessment criteria which are more thorough.

When it comes to access to the forest, the approval criteria specify two indicators; impact on access to natural resources and impact of the project on energy costs. But the document did not provide any methodology for looking at such impacts or how to measure such an impact in general. In the Project design document (PDD) access to the forest are discussed, but there is no mention what the cost of energy might be, or if there will be any cost at all. So how the DNA decided on such matter remains vague. During my interview with Derge Agonafe (Yeakababe Ahidoche directorate director), He stated that the DNA revised the document according to the stated sustainable development criteria, which focuses on economic, social and ecological aspects. From the listed sustainable development criteria I found only one that related to people's interests (the rest are focused more on pollution and ecosystems safeguards):

> That negative impacts on the environment and on people's environmental rights be anticipated and prevented, and where they cannot be altogether prevented are minimized and remedied (EEA 2004:2).

The office has not done any evaluation since 2006 to check whether the project has been done based on the PDD or not, nor did they speak with the local community, or even to the regional and *Wereda* level bureau before issuing letters of approval. What the director believes is that - whatever is in the PDD and its implementation - the local community is better off with the project regardless. The source of such optimism regarding the project outcomes comes from the premise that the reforested area is severely degraded to the point that no one gets anything out of it. The authority basically left the issue to be addressed by the NGO and there is *a priori* understanding that socio-economic problems which come with the project intervention can be addressed by WVE other aid programs. It is important here to bring in Crummey and Nelson's (2003) description of Ethiopian elite's attitudes towards farmers: "Ethiopian elites perceive Ethiopia farmers to be, to a considerable extent, agent of their own misfortune." They believe that if the community is left alone there will be more disaster and degradation.

The regional environmental desk does not even have a copy of the project document. They do not have any knowledge as to what is going on at the ground level and had limited involvement during the project's inception. One of the staff at the regional bureau has the responsibility and he is the only link to this project, though even now, he does not have any established network with line sectoral offices. He claims to have been involved from the very inception of the project, but he has never seen any project documents and he does not have any knowledge of his office's responsibilities as one of the signatories of project implementation.

According to the 1995 general guidelines of transitional government of Ethiopia,[12] sectoral offices have to be involved in the planning and implementation of any development program spearheaded by any NGO. The guideline gives sector offices the power to reject a proposal if it does not conform with the local development plan. So for any NGO working at the regional level to be able to register and sign implementation agreements with the regional Finance and Economic Development Bureau, they needed a cosigner from a responsible government organization[13]. In this particular project the regional Agricultural and Rural Development and Land Administration and Use and Environmental Protection Authority was a cosigner. As a cosigner of the project, the office has responsibilities which in any case do not involve financial commitments. The regional bureau is on the top of the ladder, and it can delegate the responsibility to *Zonal* and *Wereda* level line office and follow the progress from there. But in the case of this project, the regional office did not establish any links with the line offices. I was told by the Bureau head, Ato Abera Mulate, that when the regional office has limited information on such an issue, no one will expect the line offices to have full engagement because the regional office did not provide them the resources and the technical capacity to do so.

At the *Zonal* and *Wereda* levels, two government organizations, the Bureau of Agricultural and Natural Resource Development and the Bureau of the Cooperative Society Promotion each played a significant role during the project development and startup. However, they have internal weakness that relates to structural, financial and

[12] In 1995 the transitional government of Ethiopia formulated a general guideline for the implementation of the national policy on disaster prevention and management; which has guideline on NGOs operational system and how they establish and maintain relations with the national and local level government offices in the country.

http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:2932

[13] Recently the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development both at the national and regional level has the responsibility of registering and monitoring all NGOs that operates within the country. It used to be the mandate of the disaster prevention and preparedness commission and later the Ministry of justice.

technical capacity which limits their involvement to the point that the NGO sets the rules of engagement.

The *Zone* and *Wereda* Agricultural and Natural Resources offices are over-loaded with the daily routines that relate to agricultural extensions, land rehabilitation, food security and other land rights related issues. So the follow-up of project commitments that the bureau has with non-governmental organization is not a priority for the day-to-day routine. They did, however, have a clear understanding of the project and were involved from the project start-up phase, still; the bureau involvement is supervised by the NGO. Whenever demands arise from the main project owners, in this case World Vision Ethiopia, the bureau responds in a positive manner. The government's Agricultural and Natural Resource experts are involved as a data collectors and trainers throughout the project periods. The bureau also issues letter to the community and other sectoral offices whenever the NGO finds it necessary to do so through government offices.

The other line office that has a stake in this project is the Cooperative Society Promotion Office, which has the responsibility for organizing and regulating cooperative societies. This bureau is established by the Federal Cooperative Communion Proclamation, Number 274(2002). The Commission as the other ministerial institutions has its line bureau in the region and at the local level. The establishment of cooperatives has a long history and passed through different political and economic conditions of the country. I will talk about the history of cooperative development a bit later in the chapter.

The National Cooperative Society Proclamation 147(1998) of the country conforms to the Universal International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Cooperative Principles and the

International Labour Organization (ILO) promotion of cooperative recommendation (No.193/ 2002). It outlines the legal framework for registration, the role and responsibilities of the legally recognized cooperatives members, management, privileges, audit and inspection, and also cooperative dissolutions.

The Cooperative Commission Bureau played an important role in the formations of seven K*ebeles* farmers' cooperatives, which were established to manage the forest. It has the responsibility of auditing the cooperative society account and also supports them in matters of legal issues, which needed legal representation in the court of law. The bureau is constrained by lack of financial and human resources, and infrastructural problems. Nevertheless they made an effort both in terms of organizing and regulating the various cooperative in the area.

In the light of all the political and administrative structures just described, one might ask about the degree of autonomy of the offices at various levels of the structure.

#### *5.3.1.1 Who has power in the government structure?*

Many have argued that despite regionalization, the current regime has centrist tendency and there exists little form of local governance. Despite having constitutionally defined power and responsibilities, regional states have limited power on issues of local concerns (Meheret 2002, Aspen 2002, Keeley& Scoones 2003, and Berhanu 2007). Constitutionally the regional states are made responsible for executing economic and social development policies, strategies and plans for the region, establishing and administering a regional police force, and maintaining public order. The constitution added further responsibilities stating that all powers that are not given to the federal government are reserved for the states (FDRE, 1995). Research done on the issue indicates that the extent of central government interference in the regions varies based on

administrative and institutional capacity, sufficient local resource base, and the adequacy of trained man power in the regions.

> … the regional context increasingly matters in some cases, offering more room for maneuver, and the opportunity to reinterpret and transform policies coming from the centre for the local context. In other cases, by contrast, political and bureaucratic constraints appear to limit such opportunities, resulting in less flexibility and fewer attempts at local adaptation of centrally derived policies (Keeley& Scoones 2003:92).

According to Keeley &Scoones the history of interactions between people and the ruling party matters when it comes to political participation and political independence within Ethiopian regional frameworks. According to them, because of such reasons, the SNNPR top-down stance is often that the rules are applied in contradiction to Tigray regional states, which was a key player during the struggle for liberation. In his 1999 review of the regionalization, Young stressed how the ruling party runs things in the southern region in order to have strong control over the political process:

> …unlike their counterpart in Tigray, cadres selected to administer the south typically have low levels of education, frequently appear to be motivated by opportunism and, not surprisingly, have questionable legitimacy among their constituents. Weak leadership gives rise to accusation of theft, bribery and incompetence, and these charges are given at least some credence by the frequent changes and short tenures in the office of many leading officials in the region (Young 1999:198).

Frequent restructuring and lack of stability have played a significant role in undermining the power of the state. Such instability created in some way a safe environment for the NGO and companies in general to adjust things to their own ends. For example, during

the project start up, the NGO wanted to finalize the certification of the cooperative formation in order to get the paper ready for international approval. The normal procedure was to get temporary registration paper for the first year and based on the evaluation of the year performance permanent registration certificate will be issued. This is done, not only because it is standard procedure, but also because so many cooperative created by the NGO happened to phase out with the project. So the expert demanded that WVE follow the normal procedure, but WVE did not want to wait a full year. What they did instead was to call up on the political elites to a three day meeting[14] and get the blessing there directly, by-passing the system. Even though there are problems to be solved from the point of view of the experts, the NGO got the creation of the cooperatives approved by the political assignees. The Humbo forest project being approved centrally, along with the fact that the Prime-Minister Melse Zenawi is taking a significant role in international and regional climate change agenda, made the project unique and politically more sensitive than the government's own land rehabilitation programs which had similar purposes.

Another means of central government influence over regional states comes with the lack of separation between party membership and state administration. Aspen (2002) and Meheret (2002) in their studies of regionalization of the country clearly indicates that the local councilors and administrator see their roles as the representatives of the central government and the party, rather than of their electorates. Another manifestation of the top-down character of Ethiopian political structure is also the financial dependency of the regional state on the federal government. According to Meheret (2002) the regional state receives 83% of their revenue from the central government.

[14] According to my informant the political elites were provided with a satisfactory amount of money under *a per diem* from the NGO. According to him, the NGO provided them 6 days worth of *per diem* while they were only in the venue for three days. After the meeting, the experts were told that they stand against the national development agenda and told to issue the certificate.

Despite having all the legal and political power to influence the project outcome, all the local governmental offices are paralyzed by structural instability, political, financial and bureaucratic constraints, and a lack of confidence on the part of experts and authorities because of the regular public political evaluation system of *'gim gima'*[15] as well as insecure and uncertain political positioning.

### *5.3.2 Multilateral Institution and Non-Government organizations*

#### *5.3.2.1 The World Bank*

The role of multilateral institutions in developing countries' political and economic affairs has been the subject of academic study for long now. They have been subjected to increasing scrutiny, especially after the Asian financial crisis. Predominantly, the financial institution of the World Bank as the single largest creditor to Third World states has "garnered the lion share of the public critics" (Bryant and Bailey 1997:87). The financial institutions exert a considerable power over Third world states because of their ability to influence the flow of both private and public money from the developed world. According to Bryant and Bailey, the Bank's power is coming not only from its role as bank but also from its ability to influence the development path of third world countries over the decades (Bryant and Bailey 1997:88).

One of the critiques of the bank is its indirect influence over third world environmental degradation. As financer and planers of the third world economic development, the Bank

[15] Every employee is subjected to a review when any person outlines their criticisms of performance in a public hearing. The proponent of such system argues that it encourages openness and increases motivation and performance. On the other hand critics of this system point out the way in which the system encourages conformity and often involves intimidation. See Keeley and Scoones (2003) for more.

is thus somewhat responsible for the environmental crises that these countries are suffering. The Bank is criticized for the conditionalities imposes on the borrowing state without due consideration of internal circumstance and perspectives which result in increasing economic and social problems. Continued replenishments of loans effectively reduce many developing nations to powerless states, dependant on the so-called 'charity' of the Bank and its twin, the International Monetary Fund (IMF). World Bank funded projects are also criticized because of their ignorance of social, human and environmental cost (Nath 2000, Bryant& Bailey 1997).

In its new role as global climate change financial planner, the Bank has also caused much controversy. The Bank is facing an increasing resistance from civil society organizations to limit its role related to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). In 2011, more than 50 NGOs and global civil society networks wrote a letter for UNFCCC Secretary and members warning against Bank's role in the GCF. The Bank's role in extractive industries, its continuing investments in polluting industries, its undemocratic governance structure dominated by developed nations, and the privileges given to the private sector pointed out by the organizations letter point to the Bank's many weakness and ultimate inability to be considered an environmental bank (Craynest and Streatfeid 2008, Brettonwoods project.org 2011).

The World Bank has played a role in the Ethiopian economy and environmental rehabilitation programs since the 1950s. The Bank has played an important role in supporting agricultural expansions and resettlement programs in the country. The area studied in this thesis is one of the recipients of the World Bank supported 'comprehensive integrated development program' since 1970. The program promotes both agricultural expansion through increasing access to modern inputs, and land conservation through

bund building, gully control and large scale afforestation programs. Infrastructural development and resettlement schemes were also part of the project (Dessalegn 2007).

The Bank's involvement in the particular project with which this thesis is concerned is a bit different from the other Bank engagements in the country. According to the project team leader of the Bank, Edward Felix Dwumfour, the Bank's involvement is purely business, to buy the carbon sequestered because of the project. The Bank signed the agreement with World Vision Australia and World Vision Ethiopia to buy some of the carbon for the next 10 years at a price of $4USD per ton of carbon. The Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement for this project was signed in November 2007.

The Bank also helped finance the upfront cost of the project and help build the monitoring capacity of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and also the capacity of World Vision Ethiopia, primary project proponent. Dwumfour expressed the Bank's interest in this particular project is more to secure experience in carbon financing:

> It is a learning period. Gathering experience and lessons to scale up and replicate. I guess also to pilot test carbon financing. Start off, start small, start in an African country, I mean the continent did not benefit from CDM because of the cumbersome nature of CDM framework. Do it and see how that works and if there are challenges and gaps in the framework we will be able to submit revisions (Dwumfor, WB environmental expert).

Even if the Bank claims it is a business deal, at the same time it is clear that the Bank is very much involved in shaping the project portfolio to pass through international criteria to be able to secure accreditation. It provides and pays for the technical support and expertise that is locally inaccessible.

#### *5.3.2.2 World Vision Australia*

World Vision Australia is a Christian organization that engages people to eliminate poverty and its causes. The organization works in five continents and about 60 countries focusing on relief and development projects. The Humbo forest project is part of a portfolio project that World Vision Australia does with World Vision Ethiopia. It provides financial and technical support throughout the project period. Dean Thomson, Commercial and Compliance Advisor of World Vision Australia, stated that the interest and involvement of the organization is part of the organization's development project in helping the local community to get additional income flow from the carbon market.

World Vision Australia is involved in a carbon project in Peru before Humbo, so it has the experience and the expertise in the area of marketing and also on the verification processes that the project has to pass through in order to get the accreditation requisite to be involved in the carbon market. World Vision Australia was one of the Project entities up to 2009, but in 2009 the validation mission found that the fact that Australia has not instituted a structure for administration of CDM projects, technically disqualified World Vision Australia from participating as one of the proponents for such project (WBE, 2009). So now the organization remains to provide the financial and technical support needed in order for the project to achieve its goal.

### *5.3.3 World Vision Ethiopia*

World Vision Ethiopia opened its national office in Ethiopia in 1974. From it establishment up to the 1990s it focused on relief and rehabilitation programs. Like any other NGOs in the country since 1990s, World Vision has changed its program direction towards development assistance. Currently the organization has 68 Area Development Program Offices (ADP) in six regional states and a head office at the capital city Addis

Ababa. It also provides emergency assistance when needed throughout the country, and is engaged in collaborative projects outside the six regional states in which it has offices and projects. The organization of their national programming involves sponsorship, education, child protection and participation, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, agriculture, economic development, income generation, access to market, etc(National office strategy 2010).

World Vision Ethiopia started its relief work in the project area, Humbo, in 1970s. Since then the organization has been doing both development and relief assistance in the area. The community in the research area is quite attached to the organization activities in one way or another**.** The research area is regarded as a drought prone area, so World Vision is involved both in the distribution of relief assistance, the distribution of food-based safety nets, and food security related aid. According to Dessalegn (2007:50), World Vision Ethiopia had spent 12 million USD in Sodo and Humbo ADP from 1999 to 2006.

Like other NGOs in the country, World Vision Ethiopia seems more successful in relief distribution than the development assistance that it has claimed to work on since 1990s. The organization is still providing relief assistance for the same people that it claims to provide development assistance, so people in the area have been involved both in the relief and development programs of the organization, and thus they have developed strong attachments and respect for it. Compared to government organizations, World Vision is more accessible to the poor, stable in their structure, more flexible and efficient, and they work to promote a participatory approach.

World Vision Ethiopia, like any other NGO in the country, is constrained by an unfriendly policy environment. It introduced itself to the community through its emergency work and was seen by the community as an "aid giver" and so it has been a challenge for World Vision and others who had the same engagement to change their role.

> The relationship between NGO and their beneficiaries is still informed by the notion, if not reality, of "aid giving" which makes the tasks of the organizations quite difficult. Many initiatives to enable peasants and their communities to take over responsibility for managing health, water, savings and credit schemes have failed as a result of this ( Dessalegn 2007: 56).

Like government institutions, all NGOs including World Vision Ethiopia, particularly in their ADP, found it hard to attract and keep high-caliber staff. Its engagement in economic development, particularly of agriculture, naturally led the organization to integrate environmental issues at the heart of all programs. Land degradation is the major problem in the country which World Vision engages in, with land rehabilitation programs in most ADPs. Involvement in the Clean Development Mechanism is an opportunity that no one in the country was aware of until WVA came with the idea and expertise. For both the WV organizations involved in this project, poverty reduction and natural resource conservation remain their main priorities.

### *5.3.4 The Seven Community Cooperatives*

The seven community cooperative societies were formed for the purpose of this particular project. The project is aimed to rehabilitate a communal land area that, it is claimed, has neither formal nor informal institutions that can represent the community or manage the resources in question. The claim is that the idea of cooperative formation comes during community mobilization. In some NGO reports, there exists an indication that

government officials at *Wereda* level suggested the idea of cooperatives society formation. Wherever the idea came from, cooperative society formation in the country is not new and has been trained within the NGO environment for some time now. In 2006 there were 6004 Primary Agriculture and Allied Cooperatives in only rural parts of the country (Veerakumaran 2007:5).

There are three well known traditional cooperatives or self-help groups in the country, *Edir, Eqube, Debo,* which each has a different form and strength in different cultural and ethnic groups. Since 1960 the modern form of cooperatives started in the country and their formation and development has changed with the political and economic transformation of the country. Excessive government intervention during the socialist regime contributed negatively to the development of cooperatives in the country. After the collapse of the regime in 1991 some cooperatives were looted by local people for their assets (Yuka 2007:2). Cooperatives were used for political purposes and there are still state-controlled 'pseudo-cooperatives' in the country. There were many failures that made both farmers and some elite groups skeptical about cooperative formation after the regime change and liberalization of the country economy. It is appropriate here to cite what cooperatives mean to Wollaita farmers':

> To the surrounding peasantry, socialized enterprises, particularly cooperatives, were a threat, a burden, or unwelcome competitors for resources…peasants were compelled to work on them during ploughing, weeding, and harvesting but were not paid for their work, and on occasions they were expected to meet their own expenses if the work lasted more than a day (Dessalegn 2007:36).

In 1998, the activities of farmers' cooperatives were formally revived by the Cooperative Societies Proclamation No. 147/1998. The proclamation defines that cooperative formation is a voluntary action and that they participate in the free market economic system. The proclamation also outlined the organizational structures of the cooperative which have four layers; primary cooperatives, Union, Federation, and cooperative leagues.

The regional proclamation for the establishment of cooperative was issued in 2007, with Proclamation no. 111/2007 further elaborating the regional context upholding the federal law. In its Guiding Principles, it states that a cooperative society has to be:

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation organization
4. Cooperative societies are an autonomous and independent democratic organization
5. Giving Education, Training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperative societies
7. Concern for community's sustainable development

The seven cooperative societies established in the project area have taken the form of the primary cooperative society. They have their registration certificate from the sector office and now have a legal identity and also a user right over the communal land.

All these cooperatives were established by fulfilling all the needed criteria to be registered cooperatives. They have offices, bylaws, internal law, name and address,

including shares of their members, and bank accounts. The organizational structure of each cooperative have:

- General Assembly; composed of all members of the society and it is the highest decision-making body of the society. The assembly elects the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Cashier of the Executive Committee.
- Executive Committee; composed of seven members which are accountable to the General Assembly
- Internal Control Committee: composed of 3 members to be elected by the General Assembly and accountable to it.
- The societies establish sub-committees accountable to the executive committee to undertake specific functions for the purpose of managing and protecting the demarcated reforestation area: in all the cooperatives there are audit, forest development and forest guarding committees.

All these were cooperatives established with the objectives:

- To undertake reforestation and conservation activities of the area designated as forest land within the locality
- To mitigate the degradation of natural resources and climate change in the designated area and restore the natural balance by planting indigenous tree species.
- To ensure that the development, protection and conservation of the reforested area is carried out under the full control and active involvement of the community living around the area.
- To improve the livelihood of the members of the society by promoting investment and saving culture within the community.

- To encourage sustainable forest management and natural resources conservation.
- To ensure that members share the responsibilities and the benefits from the reforestation of the designated area.
- To increase forest cover in the community managed areas and ensure improved forest condition.
- To use the income derived from the reforestation project to meet the various development needs of the community.

Establishing formal institution to take the management role of the communal land was one of the major tasks during the project startup phase. It was not an easy task, having to consider issues of property, massive numbers of claimants to the particular resources, and the bad reputation of previous cooperatives in the country. A concerted effort by the NGO and sectoral offices staff made it possible, but was there true community participation? This is the question that I am trying to answer based on the interviews I conducted with members of the cooperative, non-members individuals, and executive committee members.

### *5.4 Partnership and Participation*

The community in the project area was involved, and it is still consulted in some matters. But the question that I am trying to address here is what does partnership and participation mean in a country like Ethiopia? What does it mean when it involves state apparatus and multilateral institutions like the World Bank? And whose opinion matters? As Harrison (2002:587) notes "Development 'partnerships' obscure a wide range of inequalities, but the ability to define the terms of the debate is one of the more subtle."

When we talk of participation and partnership of the various groups we tend to ignore the differences of power dynamic and asymmetry between the partners. As Harrison indicated above, the power to define the terms of the debate is often ignored while discussing participation and partnership. The history and culture of the given society also matters here. Ethiopia's long standing hierarchical and non-participatory state apparatus needs to be taken into account when we talk of partnership in general and participations in particular. In Ethiopia, participation becomes a form of public relations to create greater institutional legitimacy. Both state and non-state actors' claim to promote a participatory agenda, but one has to analyze the political processes in order to understand its true meaning.

All adult Ethiopians have passed through one or two oppressive regimes in their lifetime. The country has never experienced democracy in its true sense. The regime in power currently claims to be a democratic one, but both its practices and research indicates otherwise. For instance, Vestal (1997) states that "several commentators argue that the present government has not relinquished the dictatorial tendencies of the Derg[16], and continues to stifle free expression" (Vestal 1997 cited in Harrison 2002:599). It is important here to consider communities memories of the past regime and the current state practice when we talk of participation and partnership.

When I started my fieldwork, I was naïve not to have had remotely appreciated the political sensitivity of the project, or for that matter, any project that relates to environmental conservation. After a couple of weeks in the research area, it became clear how closely things were associated to politics. The opposition group is considered relatively strong in this region, compared with others; not because it is more powerful but

[16] The socialist regime that rule the country from 1974-1991

because of its relative stability over time. Due to such leverage of the opposition, people can easily be labeled as members of the opposition for simply expressing concerns on issues that matters to their livelihood.

> Whether it is the state or the NGO, expressing our opinion is difficult now since everything is political. When the disadvantage outweighs the advantage of expressing opinion, the majority prefer to hold their thoughts to themselves. We prefer to live in peace pretending that we did not hear or see anything (M1: Bossa Wanche).

Another informant from *Longena* cooperative says*:*

> We knew cooperatives during the *Derg* period too. We were divided into *Kebeles* and told to form a cooperative and so we form a cooperative. When one refuses not to be part of the cooperative, he becomes an outcast. Because of this I am now a member of the cooperative. I do not want to be an outcast. We do not want to live alone. How can we live without people, can we live in the forest? We want to live with people (M2: Longena).

Apart from the influence of past experience on present decisions of people, these excerpts show that the political environment in the country is not conducive for people to express their concerns freely, and show that people still live in fear of the political repercussion of their opinions. Some members of the cooperative join in order not to be seen as being in the opposition. Still others might join because they believe there are benefits, while some join because of the promise that has been made to them.

In the beginning of the project period in 2006, a massive community mobilization was conducted. From the lower *Kebele* to *Zonal* administrators were involved in the mobilization process. In most of the *Kebeles,* the administrators were the ones who

chaired the community conversation and later even became the heads of the cooperatives. From the community perspective, the state focused on educating them through Development Agent (DA) for about a decade to become more strict in matters of environment, and no one can do anything about it except to submit to their power. Community members talk of being powerless in the face of the state, but they did not give up without a fight. They strive to keep what they believe was theirs for generations. There were different forms of resistance such as planting own trees within the project border, removing the newly planted seedlings, poaching wood and fodder on a large scale, especially during the night. Such resistance activities still persist today. Recently there was an attack on one of the guards at *Longena Kebele* and massive distraction of forest at *Bola Wanche* in 2010.

The farmers' resistance in one of the K*ebeles*' named *Hobicha Bongota* is worthy of mention. Large numbers of people were marching towards the cooperative offices shouting and menacing leaders of the cooperative. The cooperative leaders had to run towards the *Kebele* office for help but the mob was too aggressive and significant in number for the *Kebele* officials and guards to contain. So, both the cooperative leaders and the *Kebele* officials, as they said, had to run for their life. WVE and *Wereda* administration and police force were later at the scene. According to my informant, around 15 community members were taken to prison – those who were identified by cooperative leaders and officials of the *Kebele* as the architects of the protest. The community suspected leaders of the cooperative of collaborating with the *Kebele* administration to sell their lands to foreigners (MK3, M4, and W5).

According to Scott (1985:28-35) when an open protest results in grave measures, like confinement on the part of the state, the resistance may restore to slowdown and take a

less dangerous forms of resistance. In a country like Ethiopia, where there is no democratic culture and institutions, people resort to the safest way of showing their discontent. In addition to poaching in the forest, they express their dissent through oral poetry, jokes and 'back talks' (i.e. talking behind people's back rather than confronting them). According to my informant, sometimes the back talks get them some attention from WVE. For example, WVE responded to complaints about lack of benefits by organizing paid training sessions, which had a calming effect for a while.

Around 2007, during the actual project area demarcation and closure, claim over ownership of land inside the forest become a controversial issue. There exist different opinions on such claims. Some people, most notably WVE staff and some officials in the agricultural bureau, believe that the claimants do not have legal ownership of the land and their claim is simply based on traditional ownership. They further stress the issue as a politically motivated scam on the part of the individuals. The other groups, court officials, and community members argue that these individuals have a legitimate claim over the land but they failed to invest on it. Having this difference of opinion, those individuals have taken the matter to the courts. The court at the lower level decided in favor of some of the plaintiffs (those who had certificates of ownership and receipts of tax payments). The *Kebele* appealed to the higher court and at this stage the cooperatives rather than the *Kebele* became the defendants because ownership of the resource had been transferred to them. The higher court decided against the plaintiffs for the reason that they never had any investment on the land since it was allocated to them by the state in 1988 EC [17](1995).

[17]EC: Ethiopian Calendar

What made the higher court decide against the plaintiffs is a controversial matter. There exist two opinions about the decision among the experts and the community in general. One group said that the court decision is unbiased and it was a right interpretation of the law. The second group believes that the court decision is biased and not supported by conclusive evidence. As discussed above in the land tenure section of the chapter, the law states the possibility of ownership transfer from communal land to private land. Most of these farmers have ownership certificates and tax receipts and are, by law, entitled for ownership of the land. The lower court sent experts to the villages so as to substantiate the claims, and based on this, the court decided against the K*ebele*. The higher court reversed the decision, and this also relates to the rural land Proclamation. The regional Rural Land Proclamation in its section three "rural land restrictions" states that:

> When any land user leaves the land uncultivated beyond the time limit given by the competent authority without sufficient reason, he shall lose his right of using the land. Details shall be determined by the regulation (Regulation no 66/ 2007:10)

If the higher court claims to use this law then one could argue that it should also refer to the regulation which states the conditions for losing ownership. Since the *Kebele* never warned the farmers about not investing in the farm either orally or in written form, it may be said that the court does not have conclusive evidence to rule against the plaintiffs:

> Any rural land user shall not negligently let fallow his land more than two consecutive years. After the *Kebele* administration approves the land is not ploughed it shall give oral warning with *Kebele* land administration and use committee together with local elders. Then, if it is not ploughed after six months, the *Kebele* administration shall give written warning for the next six months. Still, if it is not done based on this warning, he shall loose his use right. However:
>
> a) He is sick or put in prison,

b) There is no land tiller due to death of his family member

c) Drought, flooding and other natural calamities occur, and

d) When rural land user face problems and accepted by the *Kebele* administration, he shall not lose his rural land use right (Regulation no 66/ 2007:11).

The court appears to follow the law but without having conclusive evidence to support whether owners invested on the land or not. But then, why rule against the farmers? Could there be any underlying sources of pressure?

After the lower court ruling, WVE wrote a letter addressed to various government offices from *Wereda* to *Zonal* levels including the court, stating the project's global and national importance. The letter stressed the significance of the project to the nation development in general and the future generation in particular. It emphasized how such a project could turn to dust because of the ignorance of insignificant number of individuals:

> …in the mean time, a handful few people who lack understanding of the ongoing development undertakings have undermined the benefits that the project provides for the society and future generations, and claimed land ownership in the project area. They took their case to court and, unfortunately, the court decided in their favor. When they engaged in some illegal activities, they were made to refrain from their actions by the *Wereda* Administration and the *Wereda* Agriculture and Development Offices…At the same time, the Bola Wanche cooperative society appealed to Zonal court (WVE letter no/62/2002 EC).

In the letter the organization calls up on all the government offices to follow the court procedure and discuss the matter with pertinent authorities. The question here is, can this

letter have had an impact on the court ruling? The letter has persuasive power if one looked at it in the context of the country's economic and political directions. The letter pointed out two important issues; first the development of the country and second, the majority interest being put on hold because of an 'insignificant number of individuals'. These two points have precedence over any individual interest if we look at it in the constitution and other proclamation and policies of the country. Whatever the influence of this letter may be is a matter to be left for debate, but the action of WVE here is my discussion point. Whose interest is it that WVE is protecting? Is it not part of the CDM to protect people's right to resources? I will come back to this when I discuss NGO and donor relations.

How did WVE and the sectoral offices manage to establish seven cooperatives through all this resistance and controversy?

> As a responsible *Kebele* administrator, I used both my administrative power and my skill to convince people. I had to get more than 300 individuals to sign as cooperative members. At the beginning the resistance was tough and we tried to convince people by telling them of the benefits of the project. We told them that they will get money by selling carbon, as well as plant seedlings and through trainings. And we told them that the organization will support them…As an administrator I told them that we and our individual interests are not above interests of the state and I said to them, you do not need to interfere in matters of politics. The state will not bring something that will harm us. If we protect the forest we benefit from it (M8).

This excerpt shows how the administrator uses his power in order to subdue the resistance of the peasants and to get them on board. Such deeds lead us to question whether there has been any participatory planning that secured community consent and ownership. In this particular project, the use of intimidation was applied in almost all the *Kebeles*. When I have raised the question in three of my focus group discussions (FGD)[18] they unanimously and explicitly say there was intimidation. They stressed that the resistance in the beginning was very hard to contain, so that the *Kebele* administrator used intimidation and at some point, with the collaboration of the police force, individuals were detained for more than 15 days (as noted above). They believe that detaining some members, especially those who were considered to have their own independent ideas and take initiatives to act as such, would be a lesson to the rest of the community.

The answer to one of my question for WVE/ADP staff clearly shows how the institution through government networking uses intimidation of local people to enlist collaboration:

> There were an insignificant number of people who created chaos within the community. They were mobilizing the community and troubled all those involved in the project and stood in the way of project implementation. By identifying those people with the collaboration of the community, a corrective lesson was given to them. Prisons play a corrective role, isn't that true? (Kebede Regasa, forest officer)

This issue has a different interpretation when asked to officials and experts at the sectoral offices. The answers focus on the level of community knowledge and awareness on

[18] The FGD group was a combination of 2 members from each of cooperative executive committees. Other FGDs were with women from the 6 cooperatives and one FDG with 6 Household at Longena.

issues of environment and land degradation. Since the community is regarded as ignorant of what is happening to the environment and to its livelihood, it is the government and the NGOs that have to play a corrective role. According to government officials, all the things the local administrator did were for the good of the community and the future generations, because all the community thinks about is the daily basis. This line of argument is also shared by World Vision experts both at the level of ADP and the head office.

> At the beginning, the local community thought that World Vision and the government took their land; they did not understand the development that the project brings to them. What they know was somebody will take the land and invest on it, they do not understand that the project activity is an activity that changes their environment. First of all, the carbon market is scientific, it is difficult for them to understand and this is the reason for their resistance. The other thing is that the community thinks they will lose their right to land, another reason for their resistance (Addisu Zekiwose; ADP coordinator).

On the part of the experts, there is a tendency to attribute every concern of the community to lack of knowledge. During my fieldwork the communities, including some of the executive members, were talking about how their farms are affected by wild animals and they claim that in some of the villages there was even an attack on little children. The community argued that because of the project, the number of wild animals is increasing and they are coming closer to the villages. They claim that more than ever, they have to guard their farms day and night. A family owning a farm closer to the forest claimed that half of their farm products destroyed and eaten by baboons, warthogs and bush duikers. Women are especially afraid of the ever increasing number of hyenas in the

village, more for the life's of their children. Hyenas have always been in the villages, but now they are coming out from the forest before the sunsets.

The response of the NGO experts was surprising. They said the community's claim was unfounded and impractical because the change they claim that the project brings in the forest provides the wild animals the necessary fodder to stay in the forest. They did not check whether there is some truth in what the community says. For both government and NGO experts, the community is seen as a group of ignorant individuals who needs to be coached in order to improve their own life situations. For both, participation of the local community is a criterion that they need to fulfill for donors sake or a way that they channel their top-down planning. It is also the way they enlisting labour participation from the community which takes part in planting and pruning activities in the forest.

### *5.5 Are the cooperatives autonomous entities?*

The cooperatives are registered under Ethiopian law as independent entities. They have institutional hierarchy that shows the power structure of their organization having the major power reside in the general assembly, which includes all members of the cooperatives. They have bylaws and internal laws[19]and have a usufruct right over the communal land. Membership registration and selling of shares are their basic means of finance.

As the initiator of such an establishment, the support and guidance of WVE started from the very beginning. They supported in building their offices and in providing office equipment. They have been, and are still, providing capacity building training both to the

[19] Bylaw: the bylaw is a general law that focuses on the structure and membership criteria.

Internal –law; is in this case unwritten law that more focuses on rules and regulation of access to the forest.

leaders and members of the cooperatives on issues directly relevant to the project; forest management, conflict resolution, financial management and planning, income generating activities, and to the far more distantly related HIV and AIDS issues. The issue here is questioning whether these trainings do help build their capacity to be able to manage the forest, or will they still remain dependent on WVE support and guidance? WVE readily give the answer to this question by saying that the cooperatives are now independently running the project and going to form a union of seven cooperatives. But the day to day practices of the cooperatives show a different picture: they are obviously dependent on WVE.

When I was in the field, the Zonal cooperative promotion office conducted performance evaluations of the seven cooperatives following WVE's request to form a union of the seven cooperative societies. I attended the last evaluation meeting at *Hobicha Bongota* society. During the evaluation[20] the two members of the evaluation team established that the independence of the cooperatives is questionable for reasons that they found in the cooperative documents and also from the interviews they had with all executive bodies of the societies:

- Community mobilizers (employees of WVE) have been chairing meetings of the cooperative societies.
- The existence of limited knowledge among the executive bodies of the cooperatives about their bylaw and objectives.
- Their failure to genuinely represent the interests of members. The team found out that the leaders are hiding the problems that local community faced because of the

[20] After attending the evaluation meeting I had interviewed one of the members of the group. So the information here is both from the interview and the meeting.

project. A case in point is the threat that wild animals have posed to the communities.

- Their complete dependence on the guidance and supervision of the NGO etc…

To start from the cooperative formation, their bylaws were produced and provided to them by other institutions; which the cooperatives say is WVE. WVE on the other hand, reported it to be the WB. To quote one of their reports:

> Accordingly, draft bylaw and internal law of the cooperatives society was produced by WB and the Amharic version was discussed, commented by the special group selected from the community so that their comments are incorporated and presented to the whole user group members for final comment (WVE 2006:9).

Here in the 2006 WVE report, WB is the one who produced the bylaw. According to Dwumfour, WB environmental expert and team leader, this is not true. On the other hand, he has the Amharic version of the law, which he had difficulty in understanding what it is. From his project visit he had learned that the cooperatives are the one who developed the bylaw. Cooperative promotion office also believes that they developed and own the bylaw because it is important that they did and the Cooperative Establishment Law requires that it should be the case. Another problem with the bylaw is that most of the executive bodies of the cooperatives have a limited knowledge of it. For instance in the article 17 sub article 2, it states that more than 10% of the member of the society can call an extraordinary general assembly. But WVE through agricultural office can call extraordinary meetings whenever they find it necessary for them without the support of 10% of the members. For example, in 2010, to replace the cooperative leaders of *Bossa Wanche,* WVE use the agricultural office to call the meeting because they suspected that cooperative leaders were involved in forest distraction activities that happened the same

year (WVE letter No 51/2002). Similar meetings were also called for different purposes in different societies.

On the other hand, cooperative leaders and members have a good grasp of the internal laws that are not even in written form. According to the information I received, all the cooperatives have no written version of the internal law. During the interviews with community members concerning the subject of access, they always raised grievances about the amount of fines they have to pay for trespassing. When I asked the community who decided on the amount, they replied that they themselves created it and yet they are suffering from it. Most of the community members agreed to the fine believing that it would restrict all members equally, and they also relied on the information that the restriction for grazing would only last until the trees grew to a certain level. At first, the amount was set to 5 birr ($0.28USD). When some members of the community decided to graze their animals in the forest and pay the fine, the executive committee decided to increase the amount, but with consultation of the members. In most *Kebeles* the fines are now 20 to 50 birr which is equivalent to $1.10- 2.80 USD. In one *Kebele*, *Abela Shoya* cutting trees and sending animals to the forest is a sufficient reason to send somebody to prison for a day and also 50 birr ($2.80 USD) fine. Such measures were never agreed up on by members and WVE in general, but it used to be practiced by all cooperatives in the beginning (MK3, M5, M6, M7 and MK8).

Since I do not have the opportunity to look into the internal law, I do not have details of the law on how, what, and who determines access to the resources. I depend solely on my interviews with the executive bodies of the cooperatives. According to cooperative leaders, permission to access resources depends on the availability of grass, the season and demands of members. Since demand on the part of the cooperative members is

always there, demands that are created because of the dry summer season are the one that receive positive responses from the cooperatives, but WVE is the one who ultimately determines access to the resources. According to my informants when WVE communicates with the cooperative leaders to allow members to cut and carry the grasses, the leaders will allow members to buy a one or two birr pass and cut whatever amount they can. In the event of fire risk, farmers are allowed to cut grasses without restriction. WVE also has to call upon the cooperatives or the agricultural offices to organize community labour for coppicing and pruning, and then members are allowed to collect the cut back branches of trees for firewood. The availability of firewood for the community depends when coppicing and pruning are needed inside the forest. When it comes to firewood and animal feed, the community has to rely on other alternatives such as far away forests, crop residue, their own farms, and animal waste etc. The very interesting contradiction to note here is that the communities do not want to do the pruning and coppicing work without being paid. WVE has pointed this out as one the challenges for the project implementation (WVE plan, 2011). These are not the only places that the organization interferes and imposes its interests. What I am about to discuss below will also makes us question where the interest of the organization lies when it comes to this particular project.

In 2009, WVE called upon the executive committee of the cooperatives for training and asked them to come up with annual development plan. All the seven executive committees came out of the training having the same development plan: to build a store house, which they are going to use as a store and a shop for the grain market, and a mill house. Why all seven cooperatives planned to build the exact same thing leads one to question what happened during and after the training.

The executive members of each cooperative were told to discuss the plan with the community and they did. In all of the cooperatives, the community did not like the idea of investing the money in business activity which they say, would mainly benefits most of the cooperative leaders. They instead wanted to share the money. They were told by the NGO that this was not possible for two reasons. For one thing the divided amount an individual would receive is too small to be invested in meaningful way, and the other reason was that the purpose of the project and the money that comes out of the project effort is to improve the livelihoods of the community by investing on infrastructure, health education, etc.

Once the members understood the impossibility of dividing up the money, they proposed that what they needed collectively is the development of their particular *Kebeles*: and four *Kebeles* out of the seven asked the money to be used for the development of water points. According to cooperative leaders such development needs were presented during the training but the NGO redirected their focus to business. They were told that water point development is a project that is not for them to be engaged in, it is rather what government or NGO will do for the community as a responsible institution. Such development priorities of the community were also recorded in the PDD:

> …the benefits from the project should be spent on community priority development areas amongst which, water, both for drinking and irrigation, was the most suggested priority area by most *Kebeles* (PDD 2008: 76 ).

After the transfer of money to all the cooperative accounts in 2010, no one wanted to invest the money so they kept it in the bank up to the end of 2011. In 2011, the NGO insisted and even warned the cooperatives to do the planned development program if they want to have another round of money in their bank account. When I was in the field, three of the cooperatives started building the store house.

> We are now building a store and mill house because we do not know what to do ("*Mehogna atene new*")[21] .We want to save the money we have and when the second payment comes we want to invest it in building water infrastructure, the unsolved problem we have had for long now. This is what the community wants. The community did not want any profit making or business activities (M5)

WVE claims that the development plan is purely the community's plan. When confronted with the question of water they said that when each cooperative shared the total of the money that is paid out it will only be an amount of less than 100,000birr ($5,630 USD), except for *Longena* that has the largest share. So, they maintained that it is unrealistic for the community to plan water point construction with such very small finance. To this response, one could ask follow up questions: what about the next 9 years payments? What about finding other ways of financing in addition to the money they have? But these are beyond the scope of this paper.

There are also other aspects in the project where WVE takes the upper hand in deciding upon issues of community concern. This may be in order to make the project implementation easy, or also to give the project a bigger size. The latter has to do with qualifying for carbon project. For A/R CDM project to be qualified it needs to be 10,000 ha, or if it is small-scale it must result in GHG removals of less than 16,000t CO2 per year (D. Kloss, Terra Global capital 2009 cited in Seeberg-Elverfeldt 2010:13). During community mobilizations, the communities in the seven *Kebeles* expressed their concern

[21] The Amharic word Mehogna atene new: it is a very strong word, which describes the difficult situation that people are in. It shows that things are beyond their capacity to handle.

on how and where they get fodder for their animals. The community asked the project to allocate part of the communal land for grazing. Such a demand on the part of the community was also recorded both in the WVE economic assessment and community consultation result reports. In the assessment report more than half of the sampled communities (66%) responded that they believed part of the land should be allocated for grazing, while only 30.5% suggested a total closure of the land (WVE 2006:13). In the PDD it simply noted that significant number from the sub-sample expressed strong support; when the fact is that more than half of the sample did not want a complete closure. Before the closure there was an understanding between the cooperatives and WVE to allocate a percentage of the land to each community. For example *Abela Longena, Hobicha Bongota*, *Bolla* and *Bosa Wanche* asked for 25% of their forest land to be allocated for grazing. However, WVE decided to close all the land without consulting the community and also without providing an alternative grazing land, which is one of the leakage prevention measures stated in the PDD.

Poaching inside the protected forest

In the project area the sampled households were asked how they cope with shortage of fodder if the area is to be protected (see the table below for the results). A significant number of the community responded that they will look for an alternative forest land. From the total sample population, 11.5 % and 14.5% respectively responded to use market and crop residues. What does this mean when we look at it in terms of CDM criterion and its objectives? One of the CDM criterions of forest projects is the issue of leakage: if the forest protection in *Humbo* leads to deforestation in *Badanu*, *Chofre* and *Wachie* or around Lake Abaya that makes the emission reductions of the project questionable. When the project creates an increase in the price of animal feed and firewood through its protection measures, it create difficulties on HH economy and also puts pressures on the household's time, particularly on children who will be responsible for taking the animals to the distant forest areas. As I indicated elsewhere in this chapter, this would clearly have negative impacts on children's schooling. From the WVE assessment report, in most of the *Kebeles,* the distance to another forest area is on average a 2 to 3 hours walk.

Table 3: How do you cope with shortage of fodder if the area will be protected for regeneration?

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Collect from other areas | 67 | 33.5 |
| | Buy from market | 23 | 11.5 |
| | Use crop residue | 29 | 14.5 |
| | Other | 39 | 19.5 |
| | Collect from other areas and buy from market | 9 | 4.5 |
| | Collect from other areas and use crop residue | 25 | 12.5 |
| | Other | 4 | 2.0 |
| | Total | 196 | 98.0 |

*Source: WVE 2006*

According to WVE's assessment, more than 60% of the communities are dependent on the communal land for their energy demands. Recognizing this fact, the PDD outlined ways to address such needs (which remain only a plan on paper):

> To minimize the potential leakage in the form of fuel wood collection, this project will establish some fuel wood plantations to offset potential project leakage, however these are a small proportion of the project area, and will be used for the communities' fuel wood supply rather than commercial purposes (PDD 2008:15).

As I indicated elsewhere in the chapter the forest has been the communities' survival mechanism not only in times of drought but also for everyday life's struggles. This is also reflected in the socio-economic assessment report of WVE. In the conclusion, the report describes how this impacts them:

> In the past whenever there was drought they can survive out of the sales of their livestock; poor people can also survive by selling fuel wood and fodder. If the sites are protected, they can no more get fodder and fuel wood, the only alternative they have is to abandon the area and to be resettled in another place (WVE 2006:16).

Farmers in the area always struggle to sustain their annual harvest throughout the year, and every year they face shortages of food for four or more months. In 2009 the *Wereda* agricultural bureau reported that 82,838 (66.1%) of the population were in need of food aid. From the report, I extracted the situation in the seven *Kebeles.* The table below indicates that more than 75% of the *Kebeles* population needs relief assistance and a significant number of children also malnourished. From the total *Kebeles* population, 37.8% of them receive food aid every year for 5 to 6 months through the productive safety net program (Report 2009).

Table 4: Emergency food aid, nutrition and safety net support beneficiaries[22]

| kebeles | Total population | Safety net | Emergency food aid | Nutrition | Total aid re. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abela Gefeta | 4927 | 1834 | 2020 | 707 | 4561 |
| Abela Longena | 9512 | 2908 | 3700 | 1285 | 7893 |
| Abela Shoya | 2243 | 1265 | 820 | 287 | 2372 |
| Hobicha Bongota | 8434 | 2754 | 3500 | 1225 | 7479 |
| Hobicha Bada | 10,938 | 4725 | 2000 | 700 | 7425 |
| Bosa Wanche | 4938 | 1729 | 1500 | 525 | 3754 |
| Bola Wanche | 2557 | 1225 | 245 | 200 | 1670 |

*Source: Adapted from Humbo Wereda agricultural bureau report (2009)*

The grave situation that the communities are in is well recognized by WVE, since most of the relief and safety net food distribution is done by them. But why does WVE not sufficiently address the needs of the community in this project? This is my next point of discussion.

### *5.5 World Vision and Donors Relation*

As they are depicted in the literature and the common understanding of such institutions, World Vision are defenders of local interests and work towards poverty reduction and also environmental protection. WVE and WVA vision, mission and development

[22] A family cannot get both safety net and emergency food aid, but may be get nutrition support for their children.

objectives are consistent with the common understanding and the literature. What causes one to question their interests and objectives is the issue of where their accountability lies.

Development activities of NGOs in Africa depend on the flow of money from industrialized countries. Since 1970 their roles have become important in the development activities in many of African countries. The financial flows to them also increase because of the significant role NGOs play in development work, and also because of the decline of state institutions in development activities after structural adjustment programs. The growing critiques of African state legitimacy vis-a-vis donor democratization and the human rights agenda, as well as the growing dualistic view of state and NGO - the 'good guys -bad guys' approach - made NGOs a more viable partner for donors. Donors are increasingly using NGOs through sub-contracting arrangements (Campbell 1996:2).

Increasing donor support for NGOs brings the dilemma of their accountability and also conflicts of interest with states, since the state also competes for the similar resources. According to Jacobs and Wilford (2007), NGOs accountability lies "upwards" to their donor and "downwards" to the aid chain, from implementing NGO to beneficiaries. Some studies also indicate horizontal accountability, meaning accountability towards similar institutions. But there are no agreed upon standards or a particular approach for NGOs accountability, and true international accountability remains an "elusive goal" (McGann and Johnston 2006:72).

According to Edwards and Hulme (1995, cited in Jacobs and Wilford 2007:4), accountability is "the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority, or authorities, and are held responsible for their actions." From this definition what matters is the action and the impact on society, rather than the NGO's financial performance. If we are stressing more attention on the actions, then the question is how to address the gap between rhetoric and the practice of accountability? NGOs seem to have corporate style accountability to the donor, rather than to their actions (Edwards and Hulme, 1996c; Najam, 1996 cited in Ann Tilt 2006:8).

If the NGO gives priorities to their stakeholders' instead of the donors, their very existence will be in question because they may lose funding. So the whole question of accountability is a complex one. Like all the other NGOs, WVE always has to struggle for funding and fulfilling all the evaluation metrics that donors demanded. To address the growing demands of accountability to other stakeholders, WVE also has adopted mechanisms by including people's voice in the reports and through review meetings with all local and national stakeholders once a year. But there are issues that are related to the project nature that force WVE to focus more on the interests of donors over the demands of the community. It is necessary here to look at WVE's role itself in all the process of project development and execution. What exactly is WVE's role? Are they equal partners in this project?

Like the other local stakeholders, WVE did not have the necessary skills or financial capacity to have had a powerful position in the process of developing this CDM project. On the other hand, WVA came with the finances and the necessary skills to develop the project, but also to influence the outcome of the project. Since WVA have the skills and the financial capacity regarding CDM projects, it gave them the power to seal the deal

with the WB. The PDD was in practice developed and provided to WVE by WVA and the WB. WVE's role is like the government agricultural expert's focus on data collection, community mobilization, organizing local community and on the implementation of the activities that are designed by WVA and WB.

From its beginning the project is aimed to be a registered A/R CDM project; this in itself is a pressure on the project implementers for choosing the global over the local. To be a registered A/R CDM project, the project has to achieve the criterion outlined by UN which I discussed in the previous chapter. For the project implementers and local partners, including the state, the idea of CDM was new and no one had the technical and financial capacity to be involved. The costs of the A/R CDM certification process up to its registration was shown to range from $200,000-250,000 USD, according to Seeberg-Elverfeldt (2010). The likely revenue for this particular project is $1.5 million USD from CER in a 10-year period and $160,000 USD from harvested firewood in a 30-year project period. Since most of the criteria demanded using one of the methodologies of the UNFCC, both WVE and the state have to depend on the expertise of WB and WVA. Yes, the criterion officially demands local participation, but it is obvious that the CDM program by itself defines the content of participation. CDM claims to address both greenhouse gas emission reductions and contributions to sustainable development in the host country; therefore, local people's development needs have to be part of the PDD.

The objective of cost-efficient emission reductions was the main driver behind the concept of CDM, and most of the criterion, monitoring and evaluation tools are developed to address those concerns. The institutions both within the UN and outside the UN system such as the financiers, international consultants, and the verifying companies' Designated Operational Entity (DOEs) are involved. Their knowledge and expertise are

used to verify the carbon captured and to commodify this to generate value in the market-system, and so all these actors and entities are formed toward addressing this particular interest. It shows the centrality of western scientific knowledge providing solutions to all global and local problems, even if the locals claim that the solutions create another set of difficulties for their survival, like the growing number of wild animals in the project area.

When it comes to development objectives, the Marrakech Accord (2002) affirms that it is the responsibility of the host party to verify the sustainable development (SD) aspect of a CDM project. The Ethiopian government's focus on land degradation, which is regarded as one of the causes of rural poverty, and the fact that, like any other Non-Annex One Parties, having no power to influence the international market, made them set a low standard for SD. According to Bumpus and Liverman(2011:211) "Countries vary in rigor and definitions of what constitutes sustainable development, and have an incentive to sign off on a project that brings carbon finance to their business or conservation sector." As I indicated at the beginning of the chapter, the Ethiopian government's SD criterion are vague and focus more on environmental aspects. The DNA signed an agreement and wrote the validation letter having a PDD that gives very little emphasis to the development aspect of the project. The PDD do not have an explicit development plan, it simply mentions that the income earned from CER will be used for local infrastructural development.

### *5.6 State relation with World Bank, NGOs and Cooperatives*

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in Africa, which depends on aid through direct budget support and in the form of relief and development assistance. Various researches indicate the relatively independent thinking of the Ethiopian government in its relation with donors as compared to other low income countries. They indicate that none of the

donors have much impact influencing Ethiopian policies even if the popular understanding is more of donors imposition of policy on recipient countries (Fortado and Smith 2007, Borcgrevik 2008). Fortado and Smith (2007) indicated the increasing role of aid in Ethiopia since 1974, as a percentage of totals the average public spending it ranged from 25 to 45% in 2000 from 19% range of 1974-75. Their data shows that donors role became more influential now than it has been before. Borchgrevink (2008:1) on the other hand, explains this as both government internal strategies of resisting any imposition, and donors' lack of coherent and coordinated strategies. Ethiopian government resistance to IMF financial market liberalization has been an example used in much of the literature:

> The IMF was pushing reforms in Ethiopia's financial market that many economists argued were inappropriate for a country at that stage of development…The failure of the policies to achieve the Fund from pushing them, but these failures played an important role in the Ethiopian government resistance - it did not want its already desperately poor farmers to be further impoverished as a result of higher borrowing costs (Stieglitz 2002: 247).

The Ethiopian government did not want conditions attached to aid, particularly to the financial sector reforms where there is no consensus with donors like IMF and World Bank. Therefore IMF withdrew its lending (Borchgrevink 2008). Fartado and Smith (2007:6) argue that the Ethiopian government did not want any outsider involvement in internal issues, in their words "in the kitchen." The World Bank, being a huge supplier of finance, has a special relation with the government (Fartado &Smith 2007). The bank provides billions of dollars for about 148 projects in Ethiopia since 2008:

Table 5: World Bank Loans to Ethiopian government

| Year | Amount in millions $USD |
|---|---|
| 2008 | 720.05 |
| 2009 | 1,145 |
| 2010 | 890 |
| 2011 | 630 |
| 2012 | 520 |

*Source: Adapted from WB web-site* http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/projects

The Bank's partnership with Ethiopia passed through political turmoil. The Bank manages to sustain its relationships through shifts in its lending strategies. For instance, following the controversial 2005 election, the Bank shifts its support from direct budget to Protection of Basic Services (PBS). The Bank and government's relationship has never been a cordial one. There are disagreements on some issues and at the same time consensus on some of them; the Bank interest in liberalization is one of the controversial issues. Most of the time, the Bank focuses its funding on issues where consensus is built in. In 2008, the Bank's country assistance strategy paper noted some recommendations given by an independent evaluation group on its support to Ethiopia, and three of the recommendations are relevant to mention here (World Bank 2008:21):

- Seek consensus within the country team and with Government on priority areas for support;
- Restrict its interventions to policy dialogue and analytic work (rather than lending) in areas where there were clear policy disagreements with Government;
- Continue to work closely with non-governmental stakeholders in Ethiopia

The Bank's decision to work with WVE in this particular project comes from its particular interest to work with non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia. Such a decision of the Bank at the beginning of the project created conflict with government offices, particularly of the Ethiopian Environmental Authority (EPA). The Authority wanted to own the project, and WB on the other hand, wanted WVE and WVA to own the project, so after a long negotiation (and convincing on the part of WB), the project was started by WVE as primary implementer. The EPA got $54,000 USD for capacity building support which, it was stated, would helps the institution to effectively regulate a similar project in future. The Bank argued that the knowledge base of WVA and the upfront finance being small for the government to be involved are part of the reasoning for the decision, in addition to the Bank's interest in working with NGOs.

> For us, we do have the urge to work with civil society organizations. Teaming up with WVE was very important, given that in Ethiopia it is extremely difficult to find civil society engaged in things like that. In 2009 the government came up with legislation that made it extremely difficult for civil society to engage. So, for us it is an attempt to work outside of the government. It was an opportunity for us because we are urging government to work with the private and civil society organizations. (Dwumfour, World Bank environmental expert)

Government support at the beginning was not encouraging for WB, WVE or WVA. The fact that there was a knowledge gap on the part of the government officials, the Bank's interest in direct involvement with the NGO, and issues of capacity made it difficult to start with sure footing, but through time the relationships changed to one of closer collaboration. EPA signed project agreement in collaboration with the NGO and the Bank**.**

### *5.7 State and NGO relationship*

According to Campbell (1996), there are three regimes in which NGOs can operate, with the Ethiopian case falling under the second category:

> The second regime type is the single-party state. Here, a government may tolerate NGOs, particularly if their projects complement the government's development philosophy. There is, however, a greater risk of NGOs falling out of favour by following programmes independently of government and, especially, by opposing and criticizing government policies (Campbell 1996:4).

Government and NGO relations are complex, as Campell indicated, for they depend on "a diversity of philosophies and objectives between - and within – each" (Campbell 1996:4). That mean not all NGOs are in conflict or in a rough spot with the state. NGO works that are related to the advancement of democracy and human rights, promotion of equality among nation and nationality, gender and religion, any type of rights-based projects, conflict resolution, justice and law enforcement, and any advocacy type are basically in conflict with the government. NGOs working with Service Provision might not lead to direct contention but this does not necessarily mean that there is no conflict of interest. NGO and government competition for the same financial sources is itself a major problem. Campbell (1996) recorded how the government associates direct financing NGOs on donors part as politically motivated agenda, and how it creates misgiving on the part of the Ethiopian state.

In 2009, the Charities and Societies Proclamation came out with a clear restriction on the registration of such institutions. What happened was that those who were working in such

areas had to be registered as Ethiopian Charities or Societies[23] in order to continue working on the same issues, and in addition it placed a restriction on their source of finance, for their main financing has to come from local source and only 10% can be secured from outside sources. Those who registered outside of this category were allowed to work on service delivery, poverty reduction, environmental protection, and in advancement of education, health and relief assistance when needed(Tsehai 2010:166). (There are other articles that focus on registration and regulations of NGOs, but which are outside of the scope of this paper). In general, this proclamation is considered one of the most severe laws from all directives and guidelines that the country issued and was considered restrictive at the time.

WVE is registered at the national level to provide services for the community but must have implementation agreement with the regional states to engage with the community. Regional and local level administration offices are the ones directly involved in the implementation of the development policies and strategies. Most of WVEs' every day contact and interaction are with local government apparatuses, unlike WB dealing at the national level. At the local level government offices, WVE agreed that their relationships have improved, but they both claim that it could have been better if the other put in more effort and increased transparency. WVE is involved in providing direct institutional support to regional government line offices in the form of training and in resources provision. Government offices provide expertise in the area of agricultural and natural resource management when their expertise is needed, as well as providing and facilitating duty free access for the NGO. There is also a taskforce where the government line department and NGOs discuss issues of concern.

[23] The Proclamation creates three categories of charities and societies. These are: Ethiopian Charities or Societies, Ethiopian Residents Charities or Societies and, Foreign Charities or Societies

On the local government side, there is appreciation in general of what WVE has been doing for past 20 years, or more specially, on water development, both drinking and irrigation, and improvements in health and education. The critics are more focused on WVE's lack of transparency in its project agenda and its disregard for the expertise and experience of government offices in some aspects of their project implementation. This applies, for example, in regard to irrigation and trench development, and development planning and implementation in general.

WVE/ADP coordinators and staff claim that their relations with local government have improved and can be regarded as 'good', but there are issues that they pointed out as challenges in their relationship. Instability both in terms of government structure and staffing, lack of capacity (both financial and labour), inflexibility and lack of motivation on the part of government staff are the main points which emerged as barriers. Those in the government office agreed that they have limitations that relate to finance and skills both at the *Zonal* and W*ereda* levels, which limits their involvement in the project both as a regulator and as project partners:

> Since the project concept is new to the country, we cannot claim to be able to run it having the required knowledge. WVE is also depending on the knowledge of its partner WVA. Those in the regional bureau who are suppose to provide us with technical knowledge only have the general concepts. For example, our role on the market aspect of the project is insignificant actually; it is the thing that is far away from us. We do not know how things are running in this aspect. We only have the project document; we do not have documents that shows the carbon trade or agreements of such an exchange (Aberham Bosha, Zonal Agricultural and Resource Bureau Head)

Another official also said:

> Our understanding of carbon sequestration and its market is limited. We do not know where the market is and how the market runs. WVE is the one who knows about this all and they made the knowledge of all this difficult to get to (Yohannes Abota, Cooperative promotion expert).

WVE, however, blames the government's structural instability and the frequent change of officials and staff. Those who received training and have taken part in the project activities leave the position without being able to transfer the knowledge, and when they leave, some of them even take the documents with them. Government officials claim that WVE is secretive about its project activities, and in some cases it is even difficult for them to get project documents. They said their relationship is based on the demands of WVE. The relations are basically strong whenever WVE have difficulties with communities, and when donors demand them to work together.

Both entities want to keep their autonomy intact. NGOs suspect local government intentions whenever unusual kinds of demands, outside of relief or financial support, are pursued. The main good thing about this particular project is that both groups have a shared interest in the value of conservation of the forest for the 'common good of the community'.

### *5.8 State and cooperative relationship*

State and Cooperative Society relationships are a controversial issue in Ethiopia. As indicated in the beginning of the chapters, cooperatives has been misused by the state and there are still such practices on the part of the state, but what made the issue controversial

is cooperatives now formed through different channels for different purposes. During the socialist regime and at the beginning of their revival in 1990s, the government was the initiator of such institutional formation, but now NGOs are also involved in initiating such establishments. There are examples of cooperatives in every *Zonal* and *Wereda* level, and cooperative promotion offices that formed by NGOs that crumble when the project phases-out.

Government as a powerful player in the country can play a dominant role in every institution through its law making, executive and judiciary bodies, and at all level of the structure. Like every other institution, cooperatives in general have a direct relationship to the state in that sense. But when it comes to practical relations, their role and services within the community are more of a motive for the government to establish strong ties than from the mere presence of them in general. For example, the state has a strong (one can say a dominant) role in the day to day activities of multipurpose service cooperatives as compared to the seven cooperatives that have been established to manage the Humbo forest. The multipurpose cooperatives were formed to provide the rural *Kebeles* with agricultural input, other food related items, and more importantly, to regulate the market, for they buy grain in times of harvest and sell it back to the community when it is desperately needed. In every group of three *Kebeles,* there exists one multipurpose service cooperative.

By law, the cooperative societies are entitled to have land free of lease, to receive technical assistance from government line offices, to access credit, and to get necessary legal assistance (Proclamation no.111/2007). When asked, all cooperative leaders said their relations with the government are limited and those that they had were mostly

facilitated by WVE. For all the supports that are stated in the proclamation, most are in practice non-existent because of the capacity problems stated earlier in this chapter.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this research lead us to question two significant discourses that are the glue of sustainable development and natural resources management: the discourse of community participation and 'win-win' rhetoric.

The *principle* of participation is the one that allows local stakeholders to define their basic needs and how they can best be addressed. The *practice* of participation is a different interpretation of such principle; it allows local people's participation in order to discuss the already decided agenda of the powerful players. In the chapter previously, I discussed how local community participation was addressed by the powerful actors in this case. The local community was directly or indirectly forced to take part in the management of the communal land. Their interest and concerns are not given due consideration, even if they were recorded in various ways, such as through WVE's socio-economic assessment and consultation meetings. The reason for such disregard for the interest of local participant is because the conservation agenda and practices are already defined globally, so there appear to be no ways of accommodating community demands within the project framework without compromising the main carbon offset targets.

The talk of participation in the areas of environment and development tend to overlook the importance of power asymmetries. The underling inequalities of local, national and international actors are what form conservation outcomes. All the agendas and interests of the powerful actors become the core elements of resource management. When natural resources management depends on technology and market mechanisms as the only way forward, it simply justifies the monopoly of the powerful groups. The complex criteria, standards and certification process of the CDM indicate its managerial, expert-oriented nature and the limited role that it delegates to the local stakeholders. Since the local

stakeholders do not have the required knowledge and finance to achieve such complex managerial process, they remain as peripheral participants. The content of participation of local stakeholders and the benefits they will get out of such conservation are pre-determined at the global level.

The debate surrounding the benefit of forest management to the local community, and to poverty reduction in general indicates the ambiguous nature of the notion of benefits. The ambiguity starts from the fact that the various stakeholders have their own definition of benefits. Establishing consensuses on such benefits among the local, national and international stakeholders needs a definition of benefit both from the environmental services and socio-economic concerns. The rationale behind CDM is its objective in addressing the environmental and economic needs of developed and developing nations respectively. But both in theory and practice, the two objectives are handled differently**.** Complex standards and institutions are formed to establish and regulate the carbon offsets, when the development aspect of it is left to national governments of the developing nation. The government of the developing nation has little to bargain with to establish strong SD standards, due to the CDM's global scope. Strong SD criteria also compromised by the number and type of investors the countries can attract, in which case the reduction of GHG is prioritized at the expense of the SD agenda.

As I indicated in the previous chapter, the DNA verify the project claiming that it goes with the country's SD strategies, without having the details of the SD plan. In the PDD, the SD aspect is neglected in 86 pages, excluding annexes, with SD issues discussed in only 2 pages. Still, from the PDD we can see the defined benefits; community ownership over the communal land, sustainable fuel wood supply, job creation, and $1.5 million USD from CER over the crediting period. But here is no clear plan or activities towards

achieving SD. The SD aspect is simply left for the newly organized farmer's cooperatives.

As indicated in the chapter before, land ownership issues are controversial. Local communities believe that they have lost their communal land. Community ownership means benefitting from the use value of the resources, not the simple fact of having a legal paper. Issues of access to fuel wood and animal feed in the project area are sensitive issues which need reexamination on the part of project developers, particularly WVE and WVA. The promised alternative grazing land and firewood supply are practically non-existent, so local communities are left alone to deal with the ramifications which has forced some of them to sell their livestock. Such measures will impact the coping mechanisms of families which increases their dependency on meager harvests throughout the year.

The overall focus of the project has also become a concern for the local authorities, particularly the agricultural and natural resource department and the cooperative promotion office. They believe the conservation measures of the project will negatively affect the sustainable management of the resource itself. Since the sustainable protection of the forest depends on people's relation to the resource, so it is important and necessary for the project to establish community ownership in a different sense from only the legal sense of owning the resource. In one of the cooperative promotion evaluations, the executive committees of *Hobicha Bongota* responded that in the absence of forest guards, more than half of their members would immediately march towards the forest with the machetes in their hands. In all the interviews that I did with the cooperative leaders, members and non-members, not one ever referred to the forest as theirs; all referred it as a state forest.

Whenever they were asked to compare the benefit of the forest before and after the project, after a long bout of laughter, they would state "*berawe yegan benebere gezema*" translated as "when the forest was ours." As I indicated in the chapter previously, the use value of the forest is very important. When people were asked about the benefits of the project, their immediate response was that they attended training courses, but when one probed into the benefits of attending training, this was mainly associated with the per diem that they received during the training time. How long does the organization plan to provide such a benefit? Next to that, the benefit of the temporary job of planting seedling and pruning was mentioned, but this is no longer available since the planting phase of the project is over now. The project ultimately provides only 22 permanent jobs for the local community. Sharing mechanisms of the income from carbon selling seems problematic because of numerous institutional weaknesses, both in cooperatives' capacity and autonomy which leads us to question the future of SD aspects in general. The overall project outcomes in terms of SD will not help to live up to the 'win-win' rhetoric that it vows to uphold.

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