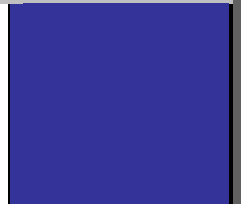




**Back to Office Report
Annual Farmers' Festival
6 - 10 February 2010, Mekelle**



Members of the Mission: TakeleTeshome, Programme Analyst	Mission Date: 6-10 February 2010
Project Title: ♦ Food Security and Recovery Program 3. Main Activities Undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended in the 4th Farmers' festival representing UNDP• Participate in the best practice experience sharing visit• Participate in the panel discussion• Followed up on financial report and advance liquidation with IPs	Project Id: 00056570 Implementing Agencies discussed with: <p>Federal MOARD Staff contacted Ato Techane Adugna : Planing and programming head of MOARD and NPC for UN assisted Food Security and Recovery programme Ato Tarekegn Tsige: Director, Public Relations Directorate of MoARD</p> <u>Sector Bureaus Contacted</u> <u>BoFED:</u> Ato Solomon : 0914 721455 <u>FSDPPC:</u> Ato Kahsay:0914723106

4. Objectives of Mission:

The Purposes of the field visit were:

- To attend the 4th national Farmers' festival
- Participate in the best practice experience sharing visit
- Participate in the panel discussion
- Followed up on financial report and advance liquidation with IPs

5. The 4th Farmers' Festival

5:1. The Exhibition

On 6 February 2010, H:E Ato Tefera Deribew, Minister for Ministry of Agriculture accompanied by Ato Deputy President of Tigray Regional State and head of the Tigray Regional Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bureau heads and invited guests opened the exhibition and visited the various stands.

NGO's operating in the Region, Agriculture Bureaus and research centers from various regions, the private sector, model farmers exhibited their work and explained their success stories.

Questions raised by his Excellency the Minister of MOARD and visiting guests were responded by the exhibitors on the spot.



Picture1: Participants receiving the guest of honor



Pic 2: H:E. Ato Tefera at the exhibition opening ceremony



Pic 3: H:E. the minister and senior government officials visiting the exhibition

5.2. The Award Ceremony

UNDP Ethiopia has been supporting MOARD in organizing the annual national Farmers' Festival as part of broader programmatic support towards Food Security and Recovery since 2006. In the past three years, three annual farmers' festivals have been organized in the Amahara, South Nations and Nationalities, and Oromia regional states respectively and this is the 4th event. The 2009 Farmers' Festival was celebrated from 6-9 February 2010 in the regional capital of Tigray, Mekelle.

This annual event has been funded as part of the FSR outputs, enhancing social mobilization and community participation which helped MOARD to develop social mobilization manual which was translated into Amharic, Oromigna, and Tigrigna to guide effective implementation of social mobilization at grass root level.

In the past 4 years, Farmers' Festivals have been celebrated in different regions on a rotational basis with the aim of promoting exchanges of innovative and successful farming practices among farmers across the country. The major part of this event among others include exhibitions, award ceremony, panel discussions and field visits to cross fertilize best practices through experience-sharing discussion to further promote scaling up of best practices. As was done in the past, the current year's festival was organizer by MoARD in collaboration with Tigray Regional State while the award materials and equipment were procured by UNDP.

At the beginning of the event, a minute of silence was made to remember Ethiopians who lost their lives in the recent plane crash while flying from Beirut to Addis Ababa.

Ato Tarekegn Tsigie, Director of Public Relation Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, mentioned that like the previous year, the certification and award provision included the names of the wife along with the husband to reflect that "**behind every success there are women**" and they were also invited to attend the festival and receive certificate along with the husband.

Ato Tarekegn, in his introductory remark mentioned that during the 2009, 4th Farmers' Festival to 727 production heroes and heroines will be awarded for their outstanding contribution to the enhancement production and productivity. Out of these, 577 are farmers/pastoralists and of these awardees, 176 are those who have been awarded in the previous festivals, created wealth and stepped into investment while the 401 are new awardees. The remaining 150 awardees are drawn from woreda administration, kebele administration, investors, cooperatives, microfinance institutions, and development agents who played significant role in supporting farming community to boost production and productivity and became a role model in their communities.

The guest of honour, Prime Meles Zenawi accompanied by Ministers, Regional Presidents and other senior government officials attended the festival. Following artistic shows by the federal police Band, Ato Tarekegn Tsigie, national coordinator of the festival introduced the programme and invited H: E Ato Tefera Deribew, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to give opening address.

His Excellency the Minister expressed his heart felt gratitude to UNDP for supporting this event for the past 4 years. The PM then awarded the 727 development heroes (see attached photos)

Water pumps, computers and printers, mobile phones, Motor Bikes and trophies were among the major

equipment and materials provided to the winners

The encouragement and incentives provided to men and women farmers/pastoralists including community based organizations will contribute to increasing production, diversifying livelihoods, improve adoption rate of modern production technologies and cross fertilize best practices in the various parts of the country. This in turn will improve the well being of small holding-farmers and also contributes to the economic advancement of the country.



PIC 5:

H: E Ato Meles Zenawi awarding the production heroes



PIC 6: H: E the Prime Minister with the Awardees

The award ceremony was concluded by the closing remark of the Prime Minister. In his closing remark, H:E Ato Meles remarked that the celebration of this farmers' festival signifies the sustained development gains of the country in combating poverty. He further noted that MOARD, development practitioners, researchers, the private sector, cooperatives and Micro finance institutions have played significant role in making this gains a reality for which he thanked all very much. Finally, he assured the commitment of his government to strongly support this effort.



PIC 7: Investors received trophy from H;E Prime Minister

5:3. The field Visit

The field visits to Abreha We Atsbeha woreda have also enabled the participants to observe best practices in natural resource management, water harvesting, beekeeping and vegetable and fruit production. Participants outside Tigray Region appreciated the hard work of Tigray Farmers and the leadership at all levels and the achievements so far made. The awardees committed to themselves to share the lessons to colleagues back home and increase their effort to cross fertilize innovative practices.



PIC 8: Community members (men & women) at soil and water conservation work



PIC 9: Aleka Alem explaining his Bee keeping project for the visitors



PIC 10: The visit to plant tissue culture and Abattoir

A small group of MOARD and Institute of Agricultural Research led by H:E Dr Abera Deressa visited the newly established abattoir (slather house) for oxen and small ruminant and plant tissue culture. The senior officials heading the organizations explained the works of their respective agencies and progress so far made. The tissue culture has been fully operational since the past two years while the abattoir will be inaugurated



PIC 11: The plant tissue culture under production and climatization



5:4. Panel Discussion

With a view of cross fertilization of best practices from different regions, a panel discussion was held following the field visit. H:E Dr. Abera Deressa, State Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development facilitated the panel discussion.

In the panel discussion session, Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR presented papers in participatory natural resource management, small scale irrigation, homestead vegetable and fruits production and vertisol and acidic soil management respectively. Senior experts from Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Agriculture bureau head of SNNPR presented the papers respectively.

Awardee farmers from different regions who made a commendable achievement have shared their experience during this panel discussion

The discussion included paper presentations from the 4 regions and Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization. The paper presentation focused on:

1. Management of natural resources: The experience of Tigray
 - Integrated watershed management
 - Water harvesting
 - Gully control and soil conservation
 - Bee keeping were among the key areas of Tigray presentation
 - Community participation for natural resource management
2. Irrigation: the experience of Oromia
 - The use of irrigation for see multiplication, the experience of Fentale and Tibila
 - Traditional irrigation
 - Spate irrigation: diverting flood coming from the high land and using the water for irrigation
3. Community based integrated homestead horticulture production
 - Homestead development using water as entry point
 - Integrating farming, livestock production and natural resource management
 - Introducing productive safety net for conserving the resource for food production (food for work)
 - Organizing farmers group for water harvesting
 - Establishing village elderly committee to monitor and evaluate group and individual performance in collaboration with experts
4. Vertisol and acidic soil management : the experience of Amhara
 - Developing technological package and assigning experts in the field
 - Study on the coverage and agro climatic zones of vertisol

- Constructing ponds to drain surplus water
- Introduction of Broad bed maker (BBM)
- The use of carbonate (Nora) for treating acidic soils

Were the major contents of the technical presentations

Dr. Dawit and Dr Solomon also presented some of the available technologies, improved seeds etc that will help boost production and encouraged farmers to use the improved technologies in order to follow the paths of awardee farmers/pastoralists.

In addition to the technical papers by senior experts from the different regions, farmers who stood 1st from the region they come from also shared the secrets of their success.



PIC 12: One of the awardees who created wealth of about 16 million Birr sharing his experience

Some of the awardees who shared their experience indicated that some questioned whether they have really generated such a remarkable wealth or they are told to say so. They confirmed to the audience that they have generated the said wealth and escaped from poverty. They also reflected their willingness to show what they have and the improvement of their well-being compared to the past.

At the end of the discussion, H.E. Ato Tsegaye Berhe, President of Tigray Regional State made a closing remark and thanked all participants for sharing their experience.

6. Key challenges

- 6.1. Although the procurement request for the purchase of award materials and equipment was submitted relatively earlier compared to the past years' failure of some of the tenders, unavailability of some materials in the local market and failure of the selected pump to meet the specified requirement delayed the process.
- 6.2. The postponement of the event from end of 2009 to 2010 has created a major budget problem since no resource was allocated for such an event in 2010. Since the national event is one of the top priorities of the government of Ethiopia and sensitivity of the issue, UNDP was forced to transfer the budget at the end of 2009 to facilitate prior preparation and hotel and flight booking.
- 6.3. Absence of a multi-agency committee other than MOARD and host region affected resource mobilization from multiple sources. Although the government is still very much interested to continue the celebration of such festivals, the initial plan of UNDP was to support the 4 UNDP-assisted regions (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray) all of which are covered. Similar support in the future demands additional resource allocation which is unlikely. The government needs to mobilize funds from other sources.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. The fund for the celebration of the annual farmers' festival has ended in 2009 and no budget was allocated in 2010. The initial plan was to cover the 4 big regions on a rotational basis while the government will engage other donors to support the initiative. However, from the various discussions with MOARD, the government appears to continue the event. This will demand the engagement of multiple donors to at least fund the event jointly in their major operational regions. Engaging multiple stakeholders (donors, private sector, NGOs etc) will solve funding constraints and sponsor the event.
- 7.2. During the panel discussion, it was indicated that there are a number of farmers who demonstrated innovative approaches that could play an exemplary role, but could not be awarded since they did not meet the expected capital which was one of the requirements. Therefore, the presenter strongly recommended that the selection criteria be revised to also give adequate attention to innovation and potential for replication at the small holders level. I share this recommendation and criteria among others should include innovativeness, replicability of the innovation at resource-poor farmers' level, contribution to climate change adaptation and gender dimension apart from wealth creation.
- 7.3. UNDP supported this initiative for the past 4 years and documenting this practice as a knowledge/communication product by conducting an assessment to the 4 regions and discussing with sample farmers who have been awarded in the past years and the lessons learnt in the vicinity appears to be of paramount importance for scaling up the practice across regions and

promoting south /south cooperation and cross fertilization of ideas.

7:4. The steps taken by the federal government and the political will by the officials to help to create a supportive and enabling environment to address food security challenges in Ethiopia is appreciable. Tigray region and federal coordination committees have done a remarkable job to manage the various components of the festival for which they deserve congratulation.

Increased participation of the wider UN agencies and International and local NGOs, relevant private sectors, donors and religious leaders, etc would give a due weight to the festival and enhances the creation of national ownership of the event which in turn believed to contributes to increased resource mobilization for the country.

7:5. Part of this event has been captured by Video and photograph using own camera since Dereje Melaku could not come due to booking cancellation. I suggest this video be edited and copied as compressed file on CD. Availability of digital camera for the programme staff during monitoring trips would help documentation of best practices

Reported by:

Signature:

Takele Tesjhome: Programme Analyst

Date :12/02/2010: _____