

EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

REPORT 2/2018 COUNTRY EVALUATION BRIEF



Ethiopia



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The purpose of this **Country Evaluation Brief** is to present relevant knowledge about donors' development efforts in Ethiopia. The brief systematises relevant findings from existing evaluations of development interventions in the country. The idea is to present the findings to the reader in a succinct and easily accessible format.

Readers who want to explore key issues in depth can access the underlying reports through the reference list. At our website, you can also find a set of short “Evaluation Portraits” summarising the key contents of those documents.

The Country Evaluation Brief was researched and produced by Particip GmbH in consortium with Menon Economics.

Oslo, January 2018
Per Øyvind Bastøe, Evaluation Director

PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/2014/OSE

Main findings

🗨️ **ETHIOPIA STILL NEEDS** significant development assistance, but is committed to poverty reduction and social sector development, ambitious climate policies, and improved public sector management.

🗨️ **ETHIOPIA HAS TAKEN** ownership of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating their agendas into its national development plans. By the end of 2015, Ethiopia had successfully achieved, or was on the way to achieving, six of the eight MDGs.

🗨️ **THE COUNTRY HAS** achieved impressive economic growth in the last decade and has – with donor support – addressed the problem of chronic food insecurity. Severe problems persist, such as the prolonged food security crisis in 2015-2017, caused by two droughts affecting different parts of the country.

🗨️ **ETHIOPIA IS RECOGNISED** for its efforts against climate change. Its ambition is to become a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient

economy, as outlined in the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy launched in 2011.

🗨️ **THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT** is by and large addressing the social and economic rights of its citizens – such as the right to food. However, human rights organisations still raise concerns about civil and political rights.

🗨️ **FOLLOWING THE VIOLENT** 2005 post-electoral crisis, Ethiopia's major donors quickly withdrew from Direct Budget Support and devised a politically feasible alternative, the Promoting Basic Services programme. Many donors continued to support large-scale anti-poverty programmes. More recently, such as during the 2015-2017 anti-government regional protests, the donor community has largely kept quiet.

🗨️ **THE POLITICAL SPACE** for civil society remains seriously constrained since the introduction of the 2009 Charities and Societies Law, which restricts governance-related activities of civil society organisations (CSOs) that are more than 10 per cent funded externally.

🗨️ **DUE TO THE** strong state ownership, a large part of aid to Ethiopia is channelled through Programme-Based Approaches, in the form of large-scale multi-donor programmes mostly implemented by the government.

🗨️ **THE EVALUATIONS** focusing on these large-scale multi-donor programmes point to relatively well-implemented programmes, although the evidence of impact is not always available. One exception is the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), which documented enhanced food security in the Highlands. No such evidence was found in the Lowlands (pastoral areas).

🗨️ **WITH THE CURRENT** constraints to fund policy dialogue and democratic government, in particular through civil society, the donor community continues to provide large-scale funding, primarily through government-implemented programme-based approaches. In this sense, the donor community appears to be promoting government rather than country ownership.

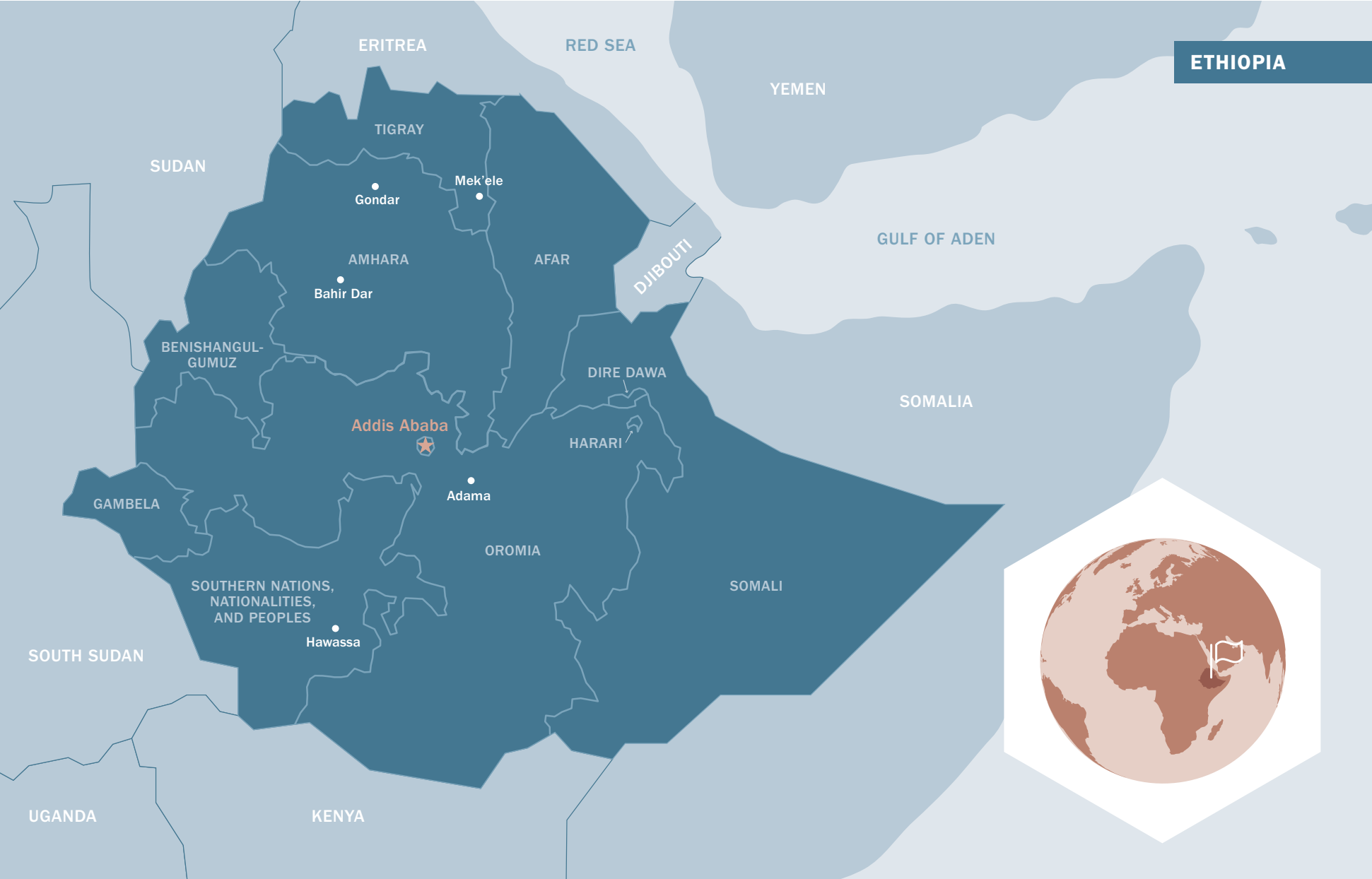


ETHIOPIA

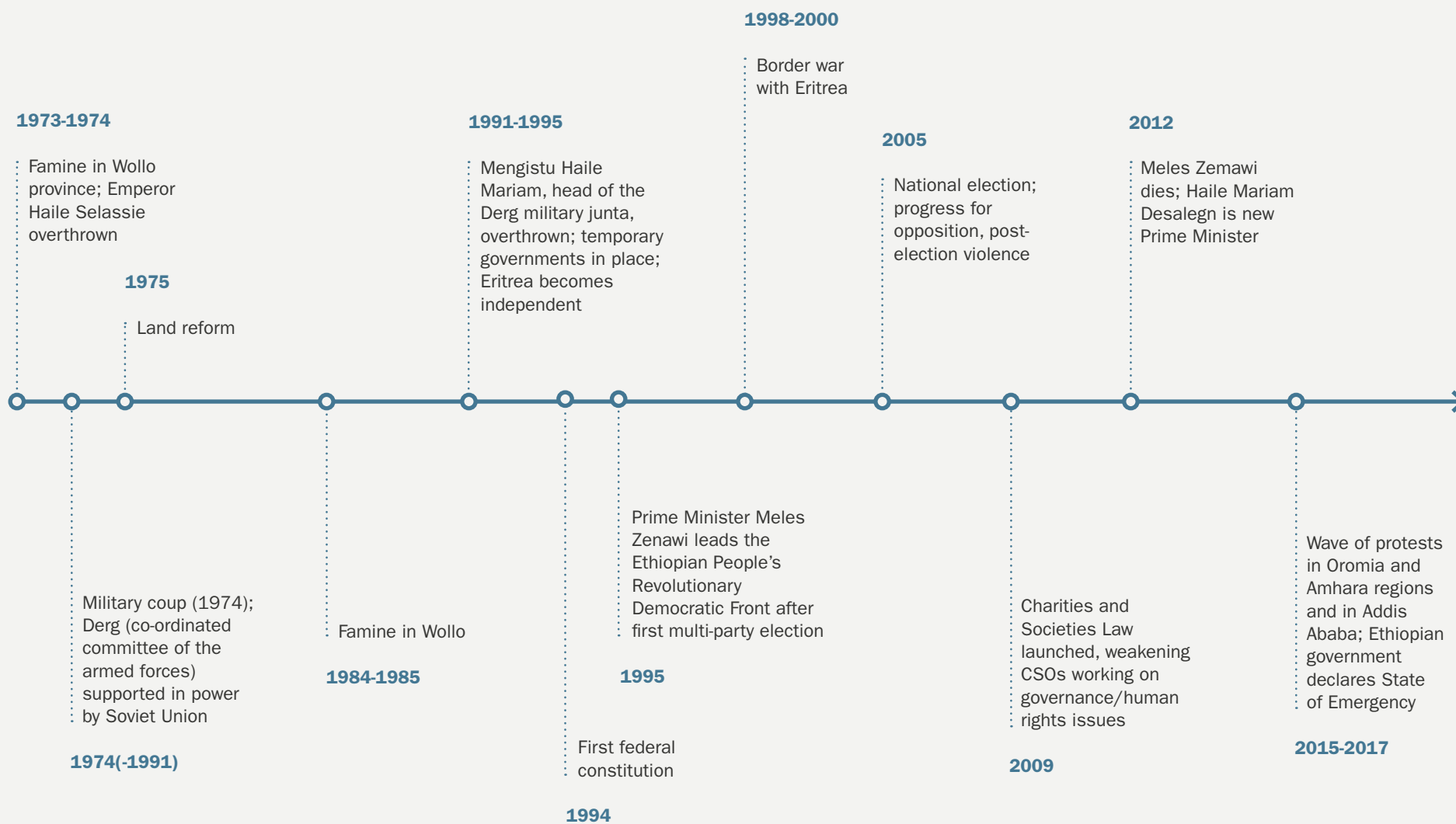
- Estimated population:** 102,374,044 (CIA 2017; 2016 est.)
- Population under the age of 15:** 43.71% (CIA 2017; 2016 est.)
- Urban population:** 19.5% (CIA 2017; 2015 data)
- Annual urbanisation rate (average rate of change of the size of the urban population):** 4.89% (CIA 2017; 2010-15 est.)
- Human Development Index (HDI):** 174 (of 188) (UNDP 2017; 2015 data)
- Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 116 (of 159) (UNDP 2017; 2015 data)
- Poverty Rate (below \$ 1.90 per day):** 33.5% (World Bank 2017; 2010 data)
- Adult literacy rate:** 49% (UNDP 2017; 2015 data)
- Life expectancy at birth (male/female):** 65 (63/67) (World Bank 2017; 2015 data)
- Child mortality rate (under 5, per 1000 live births):** 59.2 (World Bank 2017; 2015 data)
- Net ODA received (% of GNI):** 5% (World Bank 2017; 2015 data)
- Corruption Perception Index rank:** 108 (of 176) (Transparency International 2017; 2016 data)
- Internally Displaced Persons (new displacements in 2016 due to disasters)** 374,000 (IDMC 2017; 2016 data)
- Mean years of schooling:** 2.6 (UNDP 2017; 2015 data)
- Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, PPP (current international \$):** 1,630 (World Bank 2017; 2015 data)



The city of Harar was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006. PHOTO: MARIUSZ KLIZNIAK



TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS



1. Introduction

Few African countries have developed as fast as Ethiopia over the past few decades. At the same time, the country continues to be one of the top ODA receiving countries on the continent. The strong commitment to pro-poor development has assisted the government in making significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.



Three failed rainy seasons resulted in Ethiopia's worst drought in 50 years in 2016. Farmers sowing crops. PHOTO: EU/ECHO/ANOUK DELAFORTRIE

Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa, with a population of more than 100 million (CIA 2017). Despite impressive economic growth in the last decade, the country remains one of the poorest in the world. With a fast-growing population, the country faces the challenge of achieving agricultural growth as the basis for economic development, at the same time as ensuring food security in food insecure areas.

Development co-operation today is largely delivered as government-implemented programme aid, with a high level of commitment to food security and poverty alleviation and to the social sector. Ethiopia has also shown a high level of ownership and initiative in relation to the MDGs and SDGs, and to the global climate agenda. This, combined with strong state structures and relatively sound Public Finance Management, has made Ethiopia a “donor darling”, even if this is challenged by the human rights situation in the country.



Salemwoit Negase, Health Extension Worker, updates a chart at Galeto Health Post in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) for a follow-up visit after being treated for malnutrition, 2 April 2013. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/JIRO OSE

2. Methodology

The assessment is based on 26 evaluations published since 2010, selected primarily based on relevant thematic areas. Larger donors and country and thematic evaluations were given priority over smaller donors and project evaluations. Limitations of the sampled evaluation reports were mitigated by including other studies and government publications in the analysis.



Residents of Boricha Woreda talking about their problems with access to clean water, 2013. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/JIRO DSE

This Evaluation Brief is based on the review of 26 evaluation/reports and analyses of development aid to Ethiopia from the mid-2000s to 2017. The main selection criteria were: 1) Good methodological quality and robustness; 2) Priority of evaluations commissioned by, for example, large OECD donors, multinational organisations; 3) Priority of country portfolio, thematic areas and large individual programme evaluations; 4) Inclusion of project evaluations only if these added value beyond a single intervention; 5) Evaluations addressing significant areas of development assistance, such as institution building, good governance, and other country-specific criteria.

The thematic areas of specific relevance for Ethiopia were: 1) Governance, Civil Society and Human Rights; 2) Promoting Basic Services; 3) Food and Nutrition Security; 4) Agricultural Growth and Sustainable Land Management; 5) Private Sector Development; 6) Climate-resilient Green Economy; 7) Cross-cutting Issues. The identified thematic areas reflect the substantial development needs in the country, such as the immense need for social services, particularly in the rural areas. The thematic areas reflect the hugely ambitious national development goals and the high level of focus on state ownership and programme-based aid.



From a UN Project aiming to connect women to the export market with training in handicrafts such as leather, weaving, basketry, embroidery, gemstones, and spinning. July 2015. PHOTO: UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

The limitations of this approach are that smaller, yet relevant, projects/programmes are not included in the sample, and that civil society projects, also as a result of the governmental restrictions, receive limited attention. An additional limitation of the selection of evaluations (not related to the selection strategy) is that in the case of some large important donors, such as DFID and CIDA, only relatively old (2009/2010) country evaluations were available. Moreover, in some areas, such as the private sector and energy, no full thematic reports were available; the topics were only dealt with in, for example, country evaluation reports.

The quality of the evaluation reports was found to be reasonable. However, for most reports,



A town official discussing water issues in Boricha Woreda in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region in April 2013. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/JIRO OSE

the limited time available for the evaluations is evident in, for example, the lack of sound contextual analysis. The main focus is on project/programme implementation and achievements. Exceptions include DFID, CIDA and European Union country evaluations, which provide broader contextual analyses. To mitigate the above-mentioned limitations, the CEB also draws on a number of relevant academic articles, policy studies, government publications, news articles, statistics, and other types of assessment.

3. Country Context

Ethiopia has a unique history, being one of two non-colonised countries in Africa, although briefly occupied by Italy during the Second World War. It is also the home of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the oldest Christian churches. In 1994, Ethiopia adopted ethnic federalism, and restructured the regions along ethnic lines.



St. Gabriel Celebration at St. Petros Church, Kolfe, Addis Ababa, December 2013. PHOTO: PETER HADEN

Following the famous Battle of Adwa in 1896, the first major victory of an African nation against a European power (Italy), Ethiopia became one of the two non-colonised countries in Africa, along with Liberia. Ethiopia was ruled by emperors until 1974, when Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by the communist military junta, the Derg regime, supported by the Soviet Union. During the period 1977-1991, Mengistu Haile Mariam established himself as Ethiopia's dictator, with the aim of modernising the Ethiopian feudal economy through Marxist-inspired policies, such as nationalisation, resettlement and villagisation, and land redistribution. In 1991, Mengistu was overthrown by Ethiopian and Eritrean guerrilla movements. After some transitory governments, the current ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, came into power after the first multi-party election in 1995, when Meles Zenawi became Prime Minister.


Ethiopia is a highly diverse nation, with about 80 different ethnic groups and languages and a high level of topographic and climatic variation. Since 1994, Ethiopia has been founded on ethnic federalism, dividing the country into nine regional states and two multi-ethnic chartered administrations, based on ethnic lines. Ethnic groups were granted rights to self-government, and the states



The Ethiopian Government is focusing on developing agriculture, livestock exports and hydro power to drive the economy. April 11, 2010. PHOTO: NENA TERRELL/USAID

were given autonomy in legislative, executive and juridical functions. In practice, however, the autonomy of the regional states has been limited by the centralised nature of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Ethiopia is predominantly an agricultural country, based on smallholder farming. Exports almost exclusively rely on agricultural commodities, with coffee the largest earner of foreign exchange. Other agricultural products include oil seeds, dried pulses, hides and skins, as well as live animals and, more recently, flowers. The importance of agriculture for the

Since 1994, Ethiopia 
has been founded on
ethnic federalism.

national economic development has been recognised since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front launched the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialisation Strategy in 1991. According to this strategy, the development of Ethiopia should be based on boosting the agricultural sector (through

smallholder agriculture), thereby providing the impetus for industrial growth. The focus on agriculture as the fundamental source of economic growth and input for the manufacturing and industrial sector has remained the same throughout the years. This strategy is currently incorporated in the Growth and Transformation Plan.

Until the late 1950s, Ethiopia was self-sufficient in staple foods and was an exporter of grains. However, from the early 1960s onwards, the national food production has failed to meet the food requirements of the people. The structural and chronic causes of the recurrent food insecurity are the high (although decreasing) annual population growth rate, which is leading to land fragmentation and increased food demand, as well as the overriding dependence on rain-fed agriculture, characterised by shortages of land, soil erosion and low productivity. Food insecurity is frequently further aggravated by climatic factors. Ethiopia has a long history of disastrous famines, particularly those in 1973 and 1984-85. However, due to famine-prevention and early-warning measures, and more recently the large Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) launched in 2005, food crises do not have the same disastrous effects as previously. Nevertheless, the country experienced a severe and prolonged drought

in 2015-2017, requiring emergency food assistance to an estimated 8.5 million people – on top of the approximately 8 million people targeted by the PSNP (USAID 2017b).

Concurrently with the severe food insecurity problems, Ethiopia has experienced extraordinarily high economic growth (GDP), peaking in 2014 with 10.4 per cent, and then slowing down to 8 per cent in 2015/2016 (African Economic Outlook 2017:3). The government has a vision that Ethiopia should reach middle income status before 2025, based on a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient economy. To this end, the government adopted the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy in 2011. Building a climate-resilient green economy has been included as one of the pillars of the national development strategy, the Growth Transformation Plan.

In line with the climate resilience strategy, Ethiopia has become the region's leading producer of renewable energy, focusing primarily on hydropower. The government has set the target of increasing the power generation in the country from 4,180 megawatts (MW) in 2014/2015 to 17,000 MW in 2020 (Danida 2016:3). The main element in this ambitious endeavour is the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile River, one of



Boru Duba dug rain water reservation ponds for the dry season, so communities can use it for livestock and their household use, June 14 2017. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/2017/SEWUNET

the largest reservoirs in the continent. However, Ethiopia's neighbours, Egypt and Sudan, as well as experts, have raised concerns that the water reservoir will negatively affect the population that depends on the Nile River for farming and water supply (Yale Environment 2017). Ethiopia has also started diversification of generation from other renewable sources and is constructing some of the largest wind turbine parks in Africa (Danida 2017). In 2014, only 27.20 per cent of the total population had access to electricity (World Bank 2017).

Although still lagging behind the public sector, the private sector has lately experienced substantial growth within three major economic sectors: agriculture, industry, and services. At policy level, (for example, within the Growth and Transformation Plan), more emphasis is now

Ethiopia has been strongly committed to fulfilling the MDG and SDG goals, and has also included these into successive national development strategies.

given to private sector development. The private sector is, however, still constrained by unskilled labour, high transport costs, limited availability of financial and telecommunication services, and land tenure insecurity (USAID 2017a).

Ethiopia has been strongly committed to fulfilling the MDG and SDG goals, and has also included these into successive national development strategies. By the end of 2015, Ethiopia successfully achieved, or was on track to achieving, six of the eight MDGs: 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2 – Achieve universal primary education; 4 – Reduce child mortality; 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability; and 8 – Develop a global partnership for development.

For example, under-five mortality almost halved from 123 per 1000 live births in 2005 to 67 in 2016 (MGD 4), and the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was reduced from 4.5 per cent in 2000 to 1.1 per cent in 2014 (MGD 6). The primary school net enrolment rate increased from 68 per cent in 2004/2005 to 94.3 per cent in 2014/2015 (MDG 2) (African Economic Outlook 2017:11). Despite the high economic growth and human development achievements, Ethiopia still remains a “least developed country”, ranking 174th out of the 188 countries on the Human Development Index in 2016 (UNDP 2017).

At the political level, regardless of having a multi-party democracy on paper, the reality is that the room for manoeuvre of other parties than the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front is limited. In the aftermath of the 2005 contested election results, the riots and demonstrations that broke out in Addis Ababa resulted in many deaths, according to human rights organisations (Human Rights Watch 2006). As a response, the donor community took a strong and unified stand by withdrawing their General Budget Support and re-channelling their support direct to the regions, through the Promoting Basic Services programme.

In 2009, the government passed the Charities and Societies Proclamation, weakening human rights

and governance-related activities of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Organisations working on human rights, good governance, conflict resolution, and advocacy on the rights of women, children and people with disabilities, are not allowed to receive funding from foreign sources for more than 10 per cent of their total budget (Human Rights Watch 2016b). More recently, human rights organisations raised concern in relation to regional protests in the Oromia region in 2015. The protests later expanded to other regions/areas, with protesters demanding an end to arbitrary arrests and release of political prisoners. The protests had a violent outcome, with human rights organisations reporting a high death toll and mass arrests. However, public criticism by the international community, including donors, was minimal (Human Rights Watch 2016a, Amnesty International 2017). In October 2016, the Ethiopian parliament adopted a State of Emergency, restricting the right to freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

Corruption in Ethiopia is relatively high, although lower than in comparable regional countries. For example, corruption is found in relation to land, tax and customs administration, public services, and public procurement, according to the GAN Business Anti-corruption Portal 2017. Ethiopia ranks 108 out of 176 on the Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International 2017).

4. Donor engagement in Ethiopia

The three top donors to Ethiopia are the World Bank Group, the US and the UK. A major part of the aid is channelled through large-scale multi-donor government-implemented programmes; the largest sector is social infrastructure and services. The aid channelled through NGOs and civil society constitutes less than half of the amount of aid being channelled through the public sector.

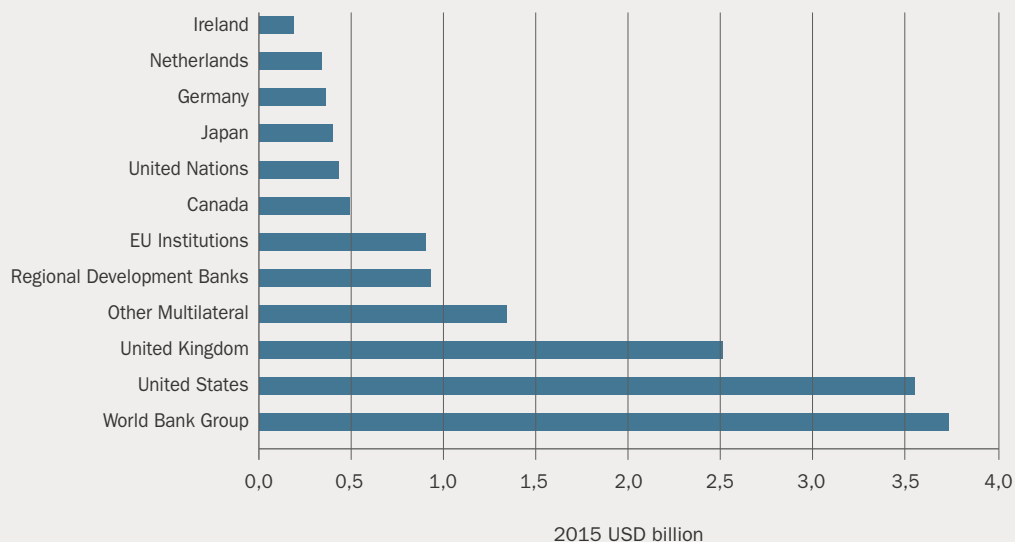


Mohammed Umad, 7, pays full attention at school in Awash city in the Afar region, 9 April, 2014. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/2014/OSE

Historically, Ethiopia began to receive foreign aid immediately after the Second World War, initially primarily from the UK. In the 1950s, the US, the Soviet Union, India and Sweden also provided donor funding. When the communist military regime, the Derg, came into power in 1974, this aid diminished, except for food aid during the 1980s, which was substantially in response to the 1984-1985 famine. During the communist regime, the Soviet Union provided military aid and ideological education, but this ceased with the end of the Cold War. In the 1990s, Ethiopia received large amounts of development aid for reconstruction and political stabilisation, but this aid was reduced during the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea. Following that war, the country received large disbursements of grants and loans from the European Union, the United States, and other donors.

Ethiopia is today one of the top ODA recipients in Africa. During the period 2011-2015, the three principal donors included the World Bank group (USD 3.7 billion), the US (USD 3.5 billion) and the UK (USD 2.5 billion). Other major donors included (in declining order) other multilateral and regional banks, European Union institutions, Canada, the UN, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, and Ireland (see Figure 1).

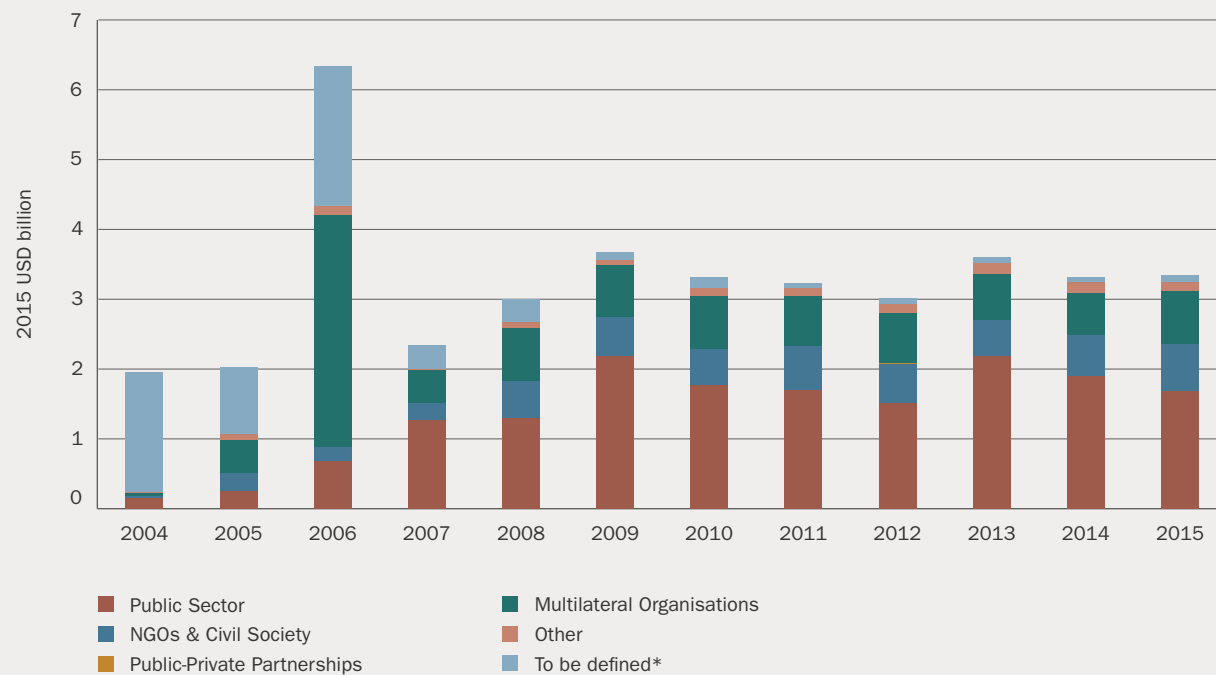
FIGURE 1 // TOP 12 DONORS OF GROSS ODA, 2011-2015



SOURCE: OECD CRS AID ACTIVITY DATABASE DATA 2017

Figure 2 presents total ODA by channel. The largest channel is the “Public Sector”, reaching USD 1.6 billion in 2015. This sector almost doubled in 2007 as a result of the shift from General Budget Support to the Promoting Basic Services programme. Moreover, a major part of the development aid to Ethiopia is being channelled through large-scale multi-donor government-implemented programmes. The multilateral channel was the second largest channel in 2015 (USD 760 million), starting relatively low in 2004 and peaking in 2006 (USD 3.3 billion). The peak is presumably related to the below-mentioned debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), although it has not been possible to verify this. The NGOs and Civil Society channel is less than half the size of the public sector, although it has increased steadily since 2004. In 2015, the ODA to the NGOs and Civil Society channel was USD 669 million.

FIGURE 2 // TOTAL ODA BY CHANNEL, 2004-2015

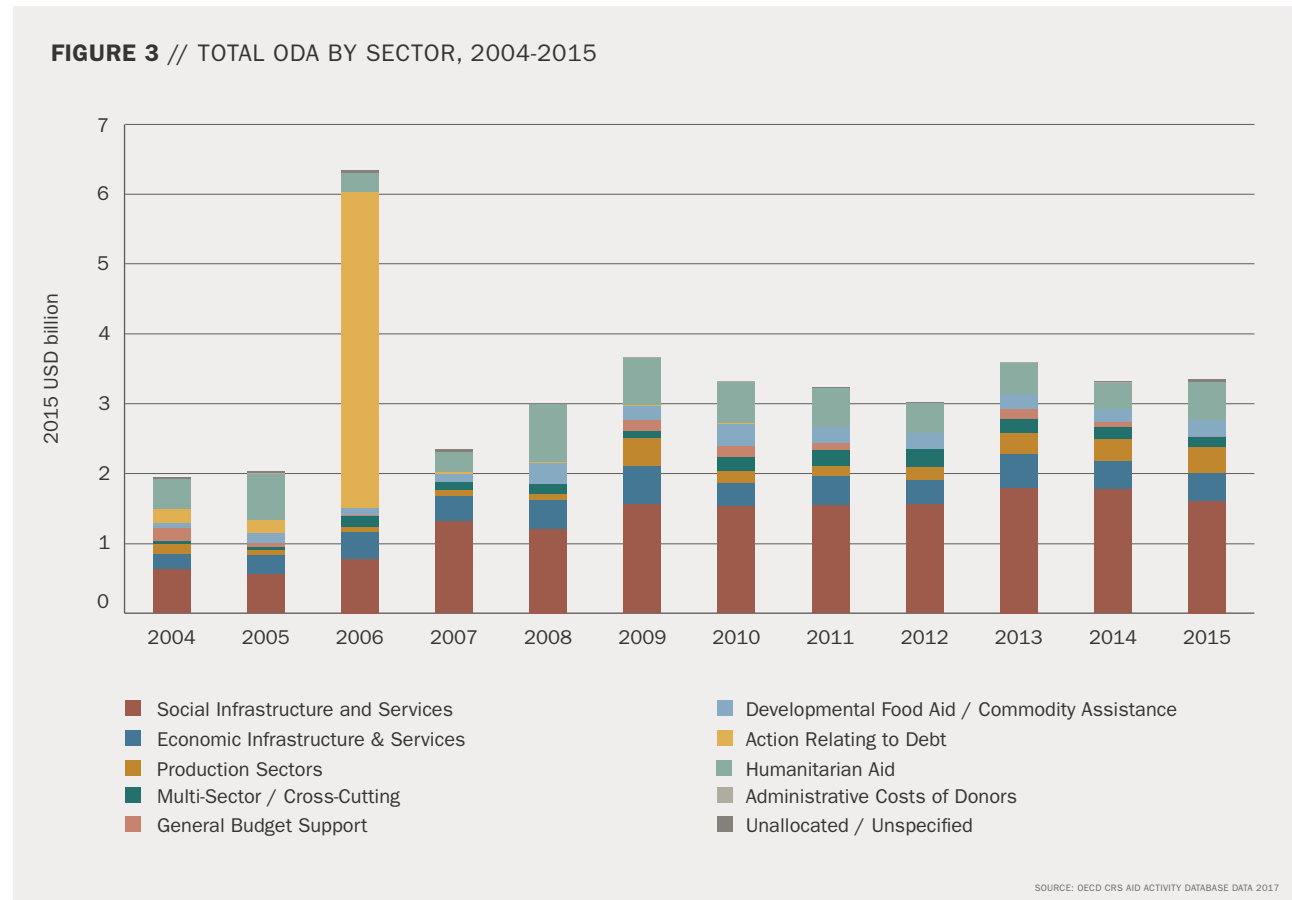


SOURCE: OECD CRS AID ACTIVITY DATABASE DATA 2017
 **THE CATEGORY "TO BE DEFINED" IS RELATED TO THE FACT THAT THE OECD'S MAPPING EXERCISE TO APPLY CRS CATEGORIES RETROSPECTIVELY IS STILL ONGOING. AID FLOWS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN MAPPED YET ARE MARKED AS "TO BE DEFINED". IN CONTRAST, THE CATEGORY "OTHER" APPLIES TO AID FLOWS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN MAPPED, BUT WHICH COULD NOT BE PLACED IN ANOTHER CHANNEL CATEGORY.

In 2006, Ethiopia benefited from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

Figure 3 shows total ODA by sector during the period 2004-2015. Total ODA (for all sectors) increased significantly during the reviewed period, from USD 1.9 billion in 2004 to USD 3.3 billion in 2015. In 2006, Ethiopia benefited from debt relief under the MDRI after having reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative in 2004 (IMF 2016). The debt relief is reflected in the huge spike in 2006 in the “Action Relating to Debt”.

The largest sector is the “Social Infrastructure and Services Sector”, followed by the “Economic Infrastructure and Services Sector” and the “Production Sectors”. Whereas the “Social Infrastructure and Services Sector” and the “Production Sectors” increased steadily during the period 2004-2015, the “Economic Infrastructure Sector” has stayed at the same level. As seen from the graph, General Budget Support fell significantly from 2005 and in the following years. Some donors, such as CIDA, also limited or suspended direct transactions



with the government. The disputed 2005 election acted as a trigger for the shift from General Budget Support to the Promoting Basic Services programme; this is reflected in the large increase in the “Social Infrastructures and Services” sector in 2007. Many donors, including the European Union, the World Bank

and CIDA, continued to support large-scale anti-poverty and food security programmes (primarily under “Production Sectors”).

5. Evaluations of Aid

The sample of evaluation reports reflects the substantial development needs in Ethiopia, e.g. the immense need for social services, particularly in rural areas, the shrinking democratic space, and the urgency of concurrently ensuring food security and climate-smart agricultural growth as the basis for economic development for a fast growing population.



Landscape in the region of Amhara, 2012. PHOTO: MARIUSZ KLUZNIAK

The seven main thematic areas identified for Ethiopia were: 1) Governance, Civil Society and Human Rights; 2) Promoting Basic Services; 3) Food and Nutrition Security; 4) Agricultural Growth and Sustainable Land Management; 5) Private Sector Development; 6) Climate-Resilient Green Economy; 7) Cross-cutting Issues.

GOVERNANCE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The evaluations reviewed include only limited reference to governance and human rights work – thereby confirming the challenges of working in this area. The European Union Civil Society Fund is the only European Union vehicle for CSO activities beyond mere service delivery, as the government agreed to treat this project as nationally-funded. Most development and civil rights CSOs have moved back to service delivery in the framework of government programmes supported by development partners (European Commission 2012). The 2009 DFID country programme evaluation found that individual programmes within DFID Ethiopia's governance strategy have performed reasonably well in a difficult environment. It was, however, hard to engage civil society, especially with the continued delay in launching the multi-donor-funded Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP). Generally, over the



As of February 2017, Ethiopia's refugee population stood at 742 700, the highest number hosted by any country on the African continent. PHOTO: EU/ECHO/ANOUK DELAFORTRIE

evaluation period (2003-2008), the political “space” shrunk, and the level playing field for non-ruling party actors and civil society organisations vanished (DFID 2009).

The Civil Society Support Programme is particularly important in terms of building the capacity of civil society organisations and enhancing their engagement in, and contribution to, the national development strategies and plans. The programme finally took off in September 2011. The Mid-Term Review (Irish Aid 2015) found that the programme had performed well – for example,

with regard to creating space for dialogue between the government and civil society organisations – and had been successful in focusing on the “hard to reach” civil society and citizens. The CSSP had in total disbursed 159 direct grants to CSOs, with 81 more in the pipeline (Irish Aid 2015:3). “Hard to reach” is defined as meeting one of the following criteria: 1) geographical remoteness or exclusion; 2) social marginalisation on the basis of ethnicity, sex, ability, illness or age; 3) affected by an overlooked development issue, such as mental ill health or addiction to the stimulant leaf, khat. The programme

was operating within the framework of the 2009 Charities and Societies Law, and also assisted civil society organisations in managing the different requirements of the law (Irish Aid 2015).

PROMOTING BASIC SERVICES


In the aftermath of the 2005 post-election crisis, donors withdrew from General Budget Support, but continued to support anti-poverty programmes, using other aid delivery mechanisms, including the Promoting Basic Services programme. The reviewed evaluations generally assessed this decision favourably. The CIDA Country Programme Evaluation, for instance, stated that “the PBS [Promoting Basic Services] was seen to be a measured and effective response, which continued support for poverty reduction while balancing this with risk mitigation and a co-ordinated message on democratic governance” (CIDA 2010:2). The Promoting Basic Services programme (I and II) supported the national development strategies by augmenting budgetary resources for the delivery of basic services in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and rural roads. The donors included: the World Bank, the European Union, DFID, the German Development Bank (KfW), Spain, Ireland, CIDA, Australia, Italy, Netherlands, and AfDB.

Several evaluations found that the Promoting Basic Services programme made a positive change by increasing the resources available for decentralised service delivery, at a time when the suspension of General Budget Support threatened to worsen the situation of Ethiopia’s poorest. The basic services programme also made a substantial contribution to Ethiopia’s efforts towards achieving the MDGs (European Commission 2012, Irish Aid 2012, CIDA 2010).

The 2012 European Union country strategy evaluation was slightly more critical of the programme. Although stressing that the programme and its pooled funding approach improved aid effectiveness compared to project-based aid, the evaluation found that there was limited evidence to suggest that the basic services programme is fully capable of matching budget support. For example, it said that the programme is restricted in terms of enabling a dialogue on systemic governance issues, partly because the pooled funding is directed towards local government (European Commission 2012).

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Despite the chronic nature of food insecurity in Ethiopia, these issues were treated for decades as acute short-term problems being

Despite 
considerable progress,
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malnutrition in Africa.

tackled by different forms of relief measures. Since the beginning of this millennium, donors have increasingly aired their dissatisfaction with these short-sighted solutions to chronic and structural problems. This led to the establishment of the government-implemented multi-donor-financed Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in 2004-2005, targeting *woredas* (an administrative unit corresponding to a district) that are chronically food-insecure. PSNP, now in its fourth phase, is still the major food security programme in Ethiopia, and the classification of PSNP-*woredas* (chronically food insecure *woredas*) is the basis for the geographical distribution of all food security interventions. The programme has a target group of 7-8 million people, divided into Direct Support beneficiaries (labour deficit households/non-able bodied) and Public Work beneficiaries (building community assets using community labour, paid in cash or food for

three consecutive years or until “graduation”). “Graduation” in this case means a household that is no longer receiving food or cash transfers and can meet its food needs for all 12 months of the year (Ecorys 2017).

The Outcomes and Performance reports (focusing on PSNP 3), conducted once every second year, point to a well-implemented programme that contributes significantly to enhanced food security in the Highlands – primarily through a reduced food gap, enhanced purchasing power, and protection of assets. The same positive results were not found in the Lowlands, mainly due to the lack of proper targeting and well-designed interventions. The surveys also showed that it is very difficult for beneficiaries to “graduate” from the programme in both the Highlands and the Lowlands (PSNP 2015). As a consequence of the limited impact in the Lowlands, it has been recognised that achieving increased impact will require better understanding of the pastoral culture and livelihood systems.

Ethiopia has one of the highest levels of malnutrition in Africa, although considerable progress has been made in this regard. In 2000, the prevalence of stunting (height for age indicating long-term nutritional status) of children under the age of five was 58 per cent,



Mother and child visiting health extension worker Binti Mohammed for a monthly growth-monitoring session and nutrition counseling, Gemechis, Oromia, 2014.
PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/NESBITT

but in 2016, this had fallen to 38 per cent (Central Statistical Agency 2016:189). In 2008, the government launched a National Nutrition Strategy, operationalised within the National Nutrition Programme (NNP) 2013-2015 and the current NNP II 2016-2020. The current phase of the programme has the ambitious goal of reducing the prevalence of stunting to 26 per cent by 2020.

The Community-Based Nutrition programme is a multi-donor funded programme, implemented by the government in collaboration with UNICEF. The evaluation of the programme during the period 2008-2012 (UNICEF 2012) found that the programme activities conceivably had a significant benefit on child nutrition, and in many cases exceeded its targets – for example, for stunting. The evaluation, however, also

found a relatively low participation of children in the targeted *woredas* (around 30 per cent). As of 2016, the Community-Based Nutrition programme was still ongoing and had been expanded to 386 *woredas*, receiving funding from, for example, DFID, the European Union, the Government of Canada, and UNICEF.

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Since the early days of the ruling party Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, agriculture has been considered the backbone of the economy and the impetus for the manufacturing and industrial sector, as outlined in national development strategies. Multi-donor government-implemented programmes were launched – such as the Sustainable Land Management Programme in 2008 and the Agricultural Growth Programme (AGP) in 2010.

The Agricultural Growth Programme targets *woredas* with a high agricultural potential (as opposed to the chronically food-insecure *woredas*). The programme focuses on strengthening agricultural public services, farmers' organisations, and rural infrastructure. It is assumed that this will lead to substantial increases in agricultural production and marketed agricultural produce, which will

contribute to the economic growth of the agricultural sector. This is expected to lead to improved incomes for beneficiary households, and to a reduction of food prices (Ecorys 2017). A Midline survey (an endline survey is not yet available) showed that compared with the control households in non-AGP *woredas*, households in AGP *woredas* had not achieved statistically significant increases in yield index and total revenue during the period 2011-2013 (AGP 2013/2014).

The Sustainable Land Management Programme focuses on assisting smallholders, watershed user associations and user groups in applying sustainable land management measures, in combination with income-generating activities. The results of the impact study of the Sustainable Land Management Programme did not show any positive results (Sustainable Land Management Programme 2017). According to the analysis, the participation of beneficiary farmers, regardless of the number of years of participation in the programme, was not associated with significant increases in the value of production, as compared with farmers in non-treatment (control) areas. The impact evaluation linked the lack of results of the Sustainable Land Management Programme to the following factors: 1) longer-term maintenance might be

necessary in order to experience significant benefits; 2) the value of production, as well as Sustainable Land Management investments, increased significantly in both treatment and non-treatment areas over the study period; 3) Non-targeted *kebeles* (the smallest administrative entity) that were downstream of targeted *kebeles* may have received indirect benefits through factors such as reduced flooding and increased water tables, and thus the impact of the Sustainable Land Management Programme may be underestimated (Sustainable Land Management Programme 2017). The first two factors might also apply to the Agricultural Growth Programme results.

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Despite having experienced substantial growth lately, the private sector in Ethiopia is still in its infancy, largely due to strong and centralised government control. Several donors/development partners are providing support to private sector development – for example, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (primarily within agri-business), the MDG-F (vegetable oil value chain), the DFID Private Enterprise Programme (primarily within leather, textiles and horticulture, with particular focus on women), the Multi-donor Trust Fund managed by the World Bank (supporting business investment Climate and the Access to Finance),

and Danida (wind power through Independent Power Projects – IPPs). Evaluations focusing specifically on private sector development within the given period (2010-2017) were not available.

Agriculture is one of the three key economic sectors in which the private sector has developed considerably recently. The critical bottlenecks in the agricultural sector include: low efficiency of seed marketing and distribution; limited financing prospects; low productivity; poor post-harvest handling techniques, resulting in high losses; limited access to export markets; and land registration issues.

The case of the seed marketing and distribution system represents an interesting example of how the agricultural sector can be strengthened through private sector development. Currently, farmers' access to improved seed is constrained by the limited (single) government distribution channel (co-operatives), the lengthy processes of the top-down and centrally planned system distorting the demand and supply of seeds, and long delays in the delivery of seeds. The Integrated Seed Sector Development Programme (ISSD), funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supports the development of a private seed sector. The evaluation of the ISSD found the



New graduate working at the cement factory. PHOTO: GAVIN HOUTHEUSEN/DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

programme to be highly relevant and addressing the actual seed sector problems. According to the evaluation, ISSD Ethiopia strengthened and scaled up private Local Seed Business and increased the availability of good and affordable seeds (Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University 2015).

CLIMATE-RESILIENT GREEN ECONOMY

The Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, launched in 2011, is the basis for the government's goal of becoming a middle-income country, based on a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient economy. Based on four pillars (agriculture, forestry, power, and industry/transport/buildings), the ambition of the strategy is that Ethiopia will achieve a carbon-neutral middle-income status before



The cement factory in Dire Dawa produces 3,000 tons of cement a day to help meet the demand of the country's building boom. PHOTO: SIMON DAVIS/DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2025 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2011). No CRGE evaluation is available, but UNDP provided technical assistance to the development of the strategy and a Financial Facility mobilising resources to support the strategy. The evaluation of the UNDP country programme found that implementing institutions had been strengthened with equipment and trained personnel. However, more co-ordination was required to fill gaps in mainstreaming climate change and environment issues in national planning, investment and development programmes (UNDP 2016). The Ethiopian climate resilience strategy has been recognised internationally – for example, during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP) in 2011 and 2014.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The two main cross-cutting issues identified in the reviewed evaluations are gender equality and environment.

Against a backdrop of legal and policy reforms to tackle **gender** inequalities and promote women's and girls' empowerment, the last 20 years have seen significant advances for girls, with greater access to education and primary healthcare – including maternal and reproductive health services. However, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) indicates that Ethiopian women and girls still face substantial disadvantages, ranking the country 116th out of 159 countries (UNDP 2017). Discriminatory social norms, such as Harmful Traditional Practices, constrain women's and girls' choices and capabilities – for instance, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, child marriage, marriage by abduction, and wife beating.

In terms of **mainstreaming gender equality**, most evaluations treated the subject rather superficially and without well-defined assessment criteria, thus restricting comparison across the sample. However, most evaluations found gender equality to be insufficiently mainstreamed into the development interventions. The International Fund for Agricultural Development country programme evaluation was one of the few that

found the gender mainstreaming satisfactory – not just in rhetoric, but also in practical implementation, rating it at 5 out of 6 (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2016). The 2015 Norad evaluation of Norwegian support to women found the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in projects and programmes on good governance, energy, climate change and agriculture to be a modest catalyst to getting women's rights on the national agenda. The government's commitment to virtually eliminate Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting by 2025 can partly be credited to Norway's support, according to the evaluation (Norad 2015a).

A number of evaluations focused on **gender equality** or specific issues related to gender equality – for example, the UNICEF 2012 evaluation of the progress in abandoning Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage. The evaluation found, to some extent, encouraging results in terms of awareness creation and behavioural change with regard to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and a decline in the practice of child marriage in the last five years. The latter was partly attributed to a higher level of school attendance, which delayed marriage for girls. The practice of abduction likewise appeared to have shown a significant decline, primarily due to the criminalisation of the practice (UNICEF 2012).

In terms of **environment**, two programmes focused specifically on climate-smart technology and environmental measures: the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (associated projects) and the Sustainable Land Management Programme. The evaluations of most other programmes largely found environment to be insufficiently mainstreamed. The Agricultural Growth Programme was found to lack climate change adaptation measures – a quite critical aspect, given the huge scale of the programme (the Agricultural Growth Programme II includes climate-smart agricultural measures). The Irish Aid country programme was assessed as lacking mainstreaming strategies – not only for environment, but also for governance and HIV/AIDS, which resulted in these issues being treated piecemeal as arising in different sectoral contexts (Irish Aid 2012). On the positive side, the water sector approaches in the Finnish country programme were found to pay increased attention to resilience against climate change. In the case of the European Union country programme, the evaluation found that several food security and rural development aspects were directly geared towards protection and improvement of the natural resource base (MFA Finland 2016, European Commission 2012).

6. Lessons learnt

Aid to Ethiopia is largely aligned with the Paris Declaration; yet the focus on government-implemented programme-based aid at the expense of support to civil society indicates government rather than country ownership. Thinking ahead, empowering civil society, securing livelihoods and jobs in food insecure areas, and revisiting pastoralist programming will be critical.



A man tends his livestock in Sankabar Kebele in the Somali Region, February 2014. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA

Based on the review of the 26 evaluation reports, a number of critical lessons have been learnt that should guide future development co-operation in Ethiopia. These include specific lessons learnt at programme/project intervention level, as well as broader lessons regarding development co-operation and the role of the donor community and long-term development prospects of Ethiopia.

STRENGTHS

Development aid to Ethiopia is, to a large extent, aligned with the principles of the Paris Declaration. The government has developed national strategies for poverty reduction and specific sector policies and strategies, and there is a high level of national ownership. Donors align their support with these objectives and use local systems – for example, many multi-donor programmes are implemented by the government. There is a high level of (relatively effective) donor harmonisation and functioning co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms between donors and the government. The Ethiopian government and the donors have a high level of focus on results. For example, the Productive Safety Net Programme and the Agricultural Growth Programme have large-scale longitudinal surveys to verify the outcomes of the programmes, and for the Sustainable Land



The first line of Addis Ababa's new metro opened in 2015, the first of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. Largely funded, constructed and run by Chinese institutions, the train can transport 60,000 passengers per hour, helping to cut the city's greenhouse gas emissions. PHOTO: MULLUGETA AYENE/AP

Management Programme an ambitious large-scale Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System was developed in 2015. In terms of accountability, donors and the government are both held accountable for development results.

WEAKNESSES

Most evaluations concluded that, overall, the development support appeared to be effective.

However, this was based to a large extent on anecdotal evidence, as the lack of monitoring data hampered assessment of the full evidence of the results achieved. Whereas large-scale multi-donor programmes (see above) have relatively good M&E systems in place, in particular given the extensive scope of the programmes, most other programmes/projects suffer from relatively weak M&E systems.

Examples include the MDG-Fund and the International Fund for Agricultural Development country programme.

The sustainability of the delivered results was mixed. Strong government ownership of large-scale programmes pointed to high probability of sustainability, but many programmes (for example, the MDG-F and the FAO country programme and projects) suffered from weak sustainability prospects and a lack of exit strategies.

GAPS

The review of the evaluation reports in terms of cross-cutting issues revealed that, in most cases, the two identified issues (gender equality and environment) had been insufficiently mainstreamed into the programmes/projects. This appeared, largely, to be the result of a lack of well-defined mainstreaming strategies at programme/project level. At the same time, it appeared quite random how mainstreaming was assessed in the reviewed evaluations, with no well-defined assessment criteria in place.

Moreover, most evaluations failed to contextualise satisfactorily the programmes/projects – that is, providing a thorough analysis of the programme as part of the national political, economic and social context.

Exceptions were the CIDA and DFID country programme evaluations, which provided more detailed analysis of the country context. Due to the high level of diversity in Ethiopia – in terms of, for example, culture, ethnicity, livelihood systems, topography and climate – knowledge and familiarity relating to one region cannot be readily transferred to other parts of the country.

The same lack of familiarity with the local context also prevails in relation to development interventions. For example, in terms of gender, the great variation of gender relations in different agricultural societies is often not well understood; in Ethiopia, these vary significantly between different ethnic groups and different geographic areas. It follows, therefore, that analysis of the specific gender roles and relations in the targeted areas ought to be mandatory in relation to any development intervention. In most cases, the programmes/projects evaluated did not give the impression of being based on a thorough understanding of gender relations in the targeted areas.

LOOKING AHEAD

Diminished political space and the need for donor response

With the exception of a strong and united stand in 2005, the response from the donor

community to the human rights situation and restrictions on democratic governance has been limited. Instead, bilateral and multilateral donors have given priority to the government's record on development and economic progress, the hosting of the African Union, the perceived relatively low corruption, the contribution to peacekeeping missions, and Ethiopia's security and counter-terrorism partnerships (Human Rights Watch 2016a). The emergence of new donors – such as China and India – that are less concerned with governance and democratic reforms, has weakened the leverage of the DAC donors. Particularly in view of the violent events in 2015-2017, there is a need for a unified and powerful donor response to the shrinking of political space in Ethiopia.

Empowering civil society

The Ethiopian government has shown significant commitment to poverty reduction at policy and programme level. The main part of development aid is channelled through pro-poor governmental programmes, thereby supporting national ownership. On the other hand, empowering civil society has received relatively limited attention from the donor community – partly as a result of the 2009 Charities and Societies Law restricting governance and human rights activities of civil society. In this respect, the donors appear to “promote government

ownership, rather than country ownership”. This expression was used in the DFID country evaluation (DFID 2009: xiv), yet is still valid today. There is, therefore, a need for the donor community to tailor development co-operation towards supporting and empowering civil society. The Civil Society Support Programme could serve as a case in point for further scaling up and/or replication.

Trade-off between agricultural growth and food security?

At the national strategic level there is currently a clear distinction between areas (*woredas*) classified as high agricultural potential areas (the so-called AGP-*woredas*) and areas with chronic food security problems (the PSNP-*woredas*). This distinction is, to a large extent, commendable as different measures are needed for the two types of areas. However, it also has negative consequences. In the chronically food-insecure *woredas*, there will be few livelihood and employment opportunities for these households after graduation – for example, employment in agricultural and agri-business sub-sectors – as these will mostly be found in the high agricultural potential *woredas*.

The challenge – and the limited success so far – of linking food-insecure households (e.g.

graduating from the PSNP) with new livelihood opportunities has been recognised by the government, and the new phase of this programme (phase 4) therefore includes a livelihood component. Furthermore, the need to promote rural job opportunities has been recognised, and a Rural Job Opportunity Creation and Food Security Sector department has been established at ministry level. Both of these initiatives are important for creating long-term prospects for households graduating from the PSNP and for creating job opportunities. Donor support to developing rural employment opportunities – for example, through private sector development – will be pivotal. As an example, the Dutch experience with agri-business (horticulture, oilseeds, seeds, and dairy) could be relevant.

Targeting pastoralists

In terms of food security, the PSNP represents a commendable, but also long overdue, policy shift from the previously-applied emergency food aid approach to a more development-oriented programme addressing the prevalent problem of chronic food insecurity. Due to the limited success of the programme in the Lowlands, primarily as a result of poor project design and poor targeting, it has been recognised that increased impact will require better understanding of the pastoral culture



Kedo Abdula washes her hands with ashes outside her family's latrine, in the village of Maderia, in Gemechis, a *woreda* of Oromia Region, 2014. PHOTO: UNICEF ETHIOPIA/NESBITT

and livelihood systems. The current phase of the programme (phase 4) will be used to develop a strategy for the Lowlands.

However, no national “pastoral development” strategy exists, despite the high risk of transitory food security problems in these regions – as reflected in the recent (2015-2017) prolonged food security crisis. As in the case of the PSNP, there has previously been a tendency to transfer agricultural project interventions to pastoral areas without recognising the huge differences in livelihood systems. There is, therefore, a critical need for developing a policy/strategy for pastoral areas, based on the pastoral culture and livelihood system.

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Acronyms

AGP	Agricultural Growth Programme	PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CRGE	Climate-Resilient Green Economy	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
CRS	OECD Creditor Reporting System	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
CSSP	Civil Society Support Programme	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
DFID	UK Department for International Development	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	WFP	World Food Programme
GII	Gender Inequality Index		
GNI	Gross National Income		
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre		
ISSD	Integrated Seed Sector Development Programme		
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals		
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative		
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		
MW	Megawatt		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		
NNP	National Nutrition Programme		
ODA	Official Development Assistance		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		

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Cover photo: Andrea Moroni
*Salt caravan, Danakil depression.
Lying 100 meters below sea level,
the Danakil depression is both one of
the lowest-lying locations, and the
hottest place on the planet on average.*

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