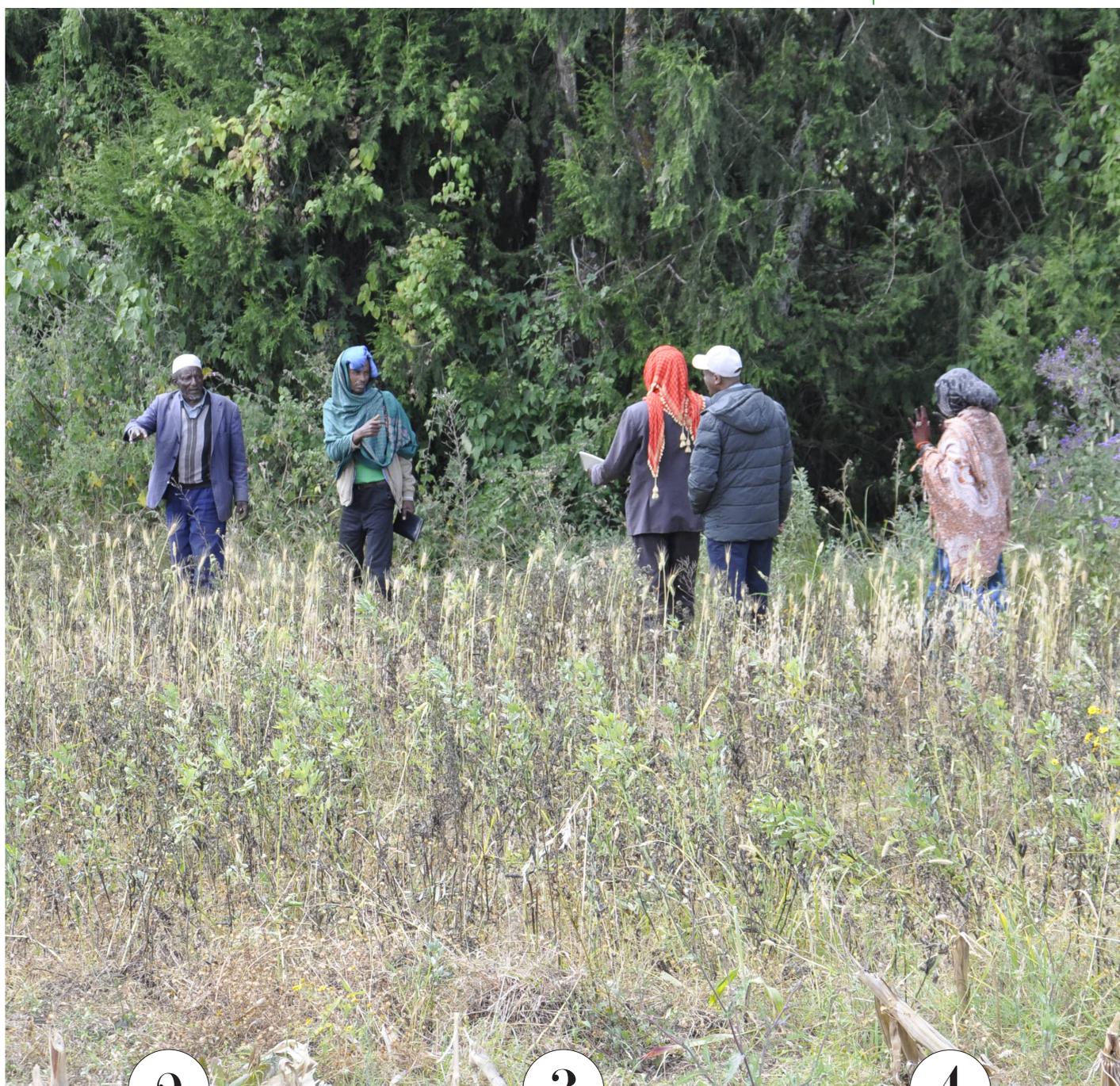


Organic

ISD Newsletter
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No. 20

*Creating a Better
Environment for Life*



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Keep yourself and others by washing your hands frequently, social distancing and wearing a mask

EOA, National Platform Meeting



A National Platform meeting of EOA, SDC-BvAT was held with various stakeholders in March 2021. The aim of the meeting was to strengthen the National Platform and to elect members of the national steering committee in place of previous members. The gathering, held at Kaleb Hotel in Addis Ababa, brought together some 30 representatives from government offices, including the Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, CSOs, other community groups and ISD.

Welcoming the participants, Ato Gizaw G/Mariam, ISD Deputy Director and Programme Manager indicated the importance of strengthening the National Platform and electing new stakeholders to assist in furthering its objectives. In his own address to the participants Ato Bitew Shibabaw, the steering committee deputy chairman from Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, stressed that the meeting was crucial in order to make the National Platform functional. He said that electing new members was a step in this direction.

The first of five presentations was made by Ato Ghebremedhin Belay, ISD Executive Director who described the mission and overall activities, programmes and specific projects of ISD being undertaken in different areas of Ethiopia. He emphasized that ISD's focus was primarily on assisting smallholder farmers by combining traditional/indigenous knowledge with modern

science. The second presentation was made by Ato Seid Hassen from Wollo University, who explained that the latter had been collaborating with ISD since 2015, ostensibly to prevent sorghum infestation and weed growth in South Wollo. Mrs. Azeb Worku, ISD community facilitator made a presentation on the Value Chain and Market Development Project and its objectives, activities, achievements and challenges. She stressed that the project had assisted greatly in promoting quality organic products in local, national, regional and international markets.

The fourth presentation, made by Gizaw G/Mariam dealt with activities being carried out under ISD's Information and Communication Project in ISD project areas. The project is collaborating with woreda agriculture offices by opening information hubs in FTCs and providing them with electronic equipment. In the fifth presentation, Ato Ghebremedhin elaborated on the goals and objectives of a new project to be implemented by ISD from 2021-2023. He said that the project, which ISD had competed for at country and Africa level, had ultimately been awarded to his organization due to its long and very productive experience and success in working on and promoting organic agriculture.

In its final stages the National Platform meeting also elected a representative each from two volunteer organizations to fill the gaps on the steering committee left by previous members.

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High Level Consultative Workshop on Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture

With a view to addressing and promoting the crucial link between agriculture, nutrition and nutrition sensitive agriculture (NSA), and in an attempt to underscore the importance of political commitment and support for the issue, the Ministry of Agriculture organized a high level consultative workshop at Adama Haile Resort from March 6 - 7, 2021. The objective of the workshop, spearheaded by the Ministry's Food and Nutrition Coordination Office, was to prioritize the area of nutrition and incorporate policy and decision makers at all administrative levels in efforts at promoting both nutrition and nutrition sensitive agriculture.

The workshop was attended by state minister of agriculture, the director general in the Ministry of Agriculture, regional agriculture research institutes, and senior advisors from respective sectors within the ministry, college deans from relevant institutions of higher learning providing training on NSA, the public relations directorate within the Ministry of Agriculture, personnel from the Food and Nutrition Coordination Office, as well as partners working on NSA programmes and projects.

The proceedings commenced with remarks by H.E. Ato Wendale Habtamu, State Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture. This was followed by presentations from various guest speakers on basic concepts of nutrition and NSA and reasons the agriculture sector

needed to give due attention to NSA interventions. Two presentations on the roles of post-harvest management and food safety for ensuring food and nutrition security were made by Dr. Mulugeta Teamir and Ato Tewodros Girma, Senior Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Advisors in the Ministry of Agriculture. Ato Tewodros also dwelt on such aspects as the existence of an enabling and conducive environment to promote practical policies concerning nutrition and NSA, as well as commitments to eliminate stunting that would require the attention of decision makers at all levels of government. He highlighted other major points to be addressed in the ensuing general discussion which included: how to implement high impact and low cost NSA interventions; causes of inability to establish NSA structures/mechanism at all levels; engagement of the private sector in food and security issues; effective implementation of resource mobilization efforts on NSA and government budget allocations.

The 3 hour long general discussion was chaired by H.E. Ato Tesema G/Medhin, head of Minister office at Ministry of Agriculture and W/o Alemtsehay Sergawi, Head, Food and Nutrition Coordination Office in the Ministry of Agriculture.

During the workshop, staff members of Save the Children, GIZ and ISD who work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, shared their experiences of NSA implementation at grass root level.



“Walking” Workshop

As a founding member of the African Biodiversity Network (ABN), ISD has, for two decades contributed to the achievements of the network’s thematic objectives. This has involved building the capacities of rural communities and emphasizing the value of different knowledge systems of partner/host communities in Ethiopia. ISD’s valuable experience in this has fostered an information-sharing process in which ABN partners from all regions of Africa have been able to visit local communities working with ISD on youth issues in Ethiopia. Under the auspices of ABN, ISD staff has also been fortunate to visit other African countries for the same purpose.

Over the past three years ISD has been working with Boru Silassie community in the South Wollo zone, Amhara region on revival of local seed systems. In collaboration with ABN, ISD has also been collaborating with ABN in supporting sustainable livelihood improvement of rural communities. The organization has particularly been emphasizing the socio-ecological knowledge of particular communities in designing sustainable interventions by utilizing their own unique tools and tried-and-tested approaches.

To this end, ISD undertook a unique and innovative “Walking” Workshop from November 27-30, 2020. Participants, including various stakeholders, community elders and youth, led by community representatives, took substantive walks in the Boruselassie community to appreciate the landscape, environment and biodiversity, as well as to understand socio-cultural elements of the host community. Subsequent sensitization discussions, group presentations and plenary sessions contributed greatly to an understanding by the participants of the challenges in addressing and ultimately alleviating environmental, social and economic concerns of the Boru community and other similar communities. The tools applied in the workshop enabled participants to explore the existing socio-cultural potential of the Boru community and to encourage the community to look within them and their community to come up with indigenous but effective methods of addressing various challenges. The workshop also provided an opportunity for different stakeholders to commit to closely working with host communities in their socio-cultural revitalization efforts.

