

ETHIOPIAN CONSORTIUM FOR INTEGRATION OF POPULATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT FOUNDED

A new developmental approach that will help to bring sustainable and equitable growth for the country has been launched on May 30-31, 2008, in Ambo, Ethiopia, in the presence of His Excellency President Girma Woldegiorgis, as the Consortium for Integration Population, Health and Environment (CIPHE) was established.

His Excellency the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Girma Wolde Giorgis, pledged his devotion to CIPHE as the patron of the organization in his culmination speech at last week's launching of CIPHE. The President has granted unwavering support since CIPHE's beginnings last year and expressed his pleasant surprise that CIPHE came to the establishment stage with such great speed and impressive composition.

CIPHE is an approach to development that takes a holistic view of the needs of Ethiopian population, health, environment, gender and others issues as well as institutions, organizations and community associations working to further these causes. In order to improve the livelihood of the Ethiopian people and contribute to the attainment of the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), CIPHE's integrated approach to projects and studies concerning PHE will act as a catalyst for learned professionals, organizations and communities to make the best use of resources and apply the latest techniques and development directions.

Last weekend's event is the culmination of months of hard work to bring together the right human resources and areas of expertises to make a meaningful impact on the manner in which Ethiopia develops. The coalition-building workshop that was held at Hilton Hotel from November 12-13, 2007, and the conference organized under the theme "Population, Health, and Environment: Integrated Development for East Africa," sponsored by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and LEM Ethiopia, which was held at ECA from November 14-16, 2007, were a success in helping to bring together East African Partners and moving the process along for the formation and launch of a PHE Network at an East African level and in the respective countries.

It was seven months ago that the seven ad hoc committee organizations, LEM Ethiopia, Engender Health, Addis Ababa University, Arba Minch University, Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations, Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority and Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Authority, began work on CIPHE's establishment, supported by an individual member coordinator,

Ato Negash Teklu. But these respected and varied organizations connected through these events and countless efforts exerted since are now cemented with the formal establishment of CIPHE in Ethiopia.

With the finalization of the Memorandum of Association and election of experienced and qualified members of its board, CIPHE garnered the momentum it needs to implement its vision “to see a prosperous and healthy society in a sustainably managed environment”.

Gelila Kidane (MD) from Engender Health Ethiopia, who is the Chair of the new seven member board, confirmed the great benefits that will accrue to Ethiopia’s sustainable development at CIPHE’s onset:

“By applying the experiences from other countries such as The Philippines and Madagascar that have demonstrated the potential for integrated approaches to projects and studies in PHE areas, measurable and noticeable change in environmental sustainability and holistic development will follow.”

The conference also included the successful election of the Board’s Vice Chair, Professor Zerihun Woldu from AAU, as well as its other five members: Ato Moges Worku from LEM, Ato Ababu Anage from the Environment Protection Authority, W/ro Saba Gebremedhin from the Network of Ethiopian Women’s Associations, Dr. Desta Woldeyohannis from the Ministry of Health and Dr. Getachew Tikubet from Integrated Biofarm Enterprise.

The hard work put forward at the conference by the above 60 participants in analyzing and finalizing CIPHE’s vision, mission, objectives, membership rules, responsibilities and procedures as well as the organization’s structure was an example of the progressive work that will be accomplished. The general assembly of CIPHE also elected the President of the Assembly Ato Eshetu Bekele, executive director of PANE, Vice President, Ato Tezera Getahun, from Pastoralist Forum for Ethiopia and Secretary W/ro Beletu Mengistu ISAPSO Executive Director.

With the resources and expertise now gathered with CIPHE it will successfully enhance an enabling environment for integration of PHE at various levels; build the capacity of stakeholders and network members; improve coordination and communication among members and stakeholders, support community empowerment initiative on PHE; and disseminate relevant information and experience to the wider community.

Both Dr. Strike Mkandla, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Representative to the African Union (AU), ECA and Ethiopia and Dr. Abera Deressa, State Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, showed enthusiasm and support at the event for a promising beginning to CIPHE that recognizes its

immediate need and harmony with international and domestic efforts.

But it was Dr. Kostentinos Berhe, Master of Ceremony, who explained it best when he affirmed that it is a rare moment when such talented individuals, organizations and institutions can begin such a promising endeavour. “CIPHE is bound for success in its quest to make a positive, lasting and strong impact on Ethiopia’s bright path forward.”