

National Workshop on The Vetiver System Applications
16 March 2009, Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa

Keynote Speech by Mr. Abdulhady Mohammed
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Your Excellency
Distinguished Workshop Participants
The Vetiver Network International and National Resource Persons
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) supported “**Swedish NGO/CSO Cooperation Programme**” was implemented through nine Specialized Umbrella Organizations (SUOs) which embraced 155 Sub-Grantees (SGs) geographically spread all over Ethiopia. A total of SEK 159.4 million was allocated for the CSO programme over a period of 4.25 years (October 2004 – December 2008) for five priority/thematic areas identified in the Swedish Country Strategy for cooperation with Ethiopia 2003-07. One of the priority/thematic areas of the ‘Umbrella Model’ was environmental protection.

The main objective of the “**Swedish NGO/CSO Cooperation Programme in Environmental Protection**” was to provide resources and enable Sub-Grantee CSOs that are working in environment to actively participate in addressing the critical problems of environmental degradation in Ethiopia, and contribute to the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP) of the Federal Government of Ethiopia.

The environmental programme envisaged that SUOs/SGs document, share and disseminate best practices in environmental protection and sustainable land management (SLM). On the other hand, the terminal evaluation of the Swedish NGO/CSO Cooperation Programme 2004/05 – 2006/07 strongly recommended that Sida SUOs and SGs identify, share and scale up best practices. Inline with this noble recommendation, SLUF, one of the nine SUOs and implementing the environmental protection thematic area, identified the vetiver grass (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*) technology as an important biological system for soil and water conservation (SWC), environmental rehabilitation/protection, and income generation. Hence, SLUF decided to share the vetiver system (VS) applications in this important national workshop in collaboration with The Vetiver Network International (TVNI). SLUF has also committed itself to further participate in the dissemination and scaling up of the VS applications in Ethiopia through its members and their government partners, SGs, like-minded organizations, the private sector, and Vetiver Network Ethiopia to be established at the end of this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The problem of environmental degradation caused by massive soil erosion due to deforestation, changes in farming practices, population pressure and overgrazing has become a priority development agenda in many developing countries including Ethiopia.

Although governments and donors have allocated substantial amount of fund to solve the problem of environmental degradation, conventional SWC techniques attempted are found to be ineffective and inappropriate for small farmers. Through the 4 years environmental protection programme implemented by SLUF and its SGs with the support of Sida and other NGOs' interventions, it is proved that vegetative systems such as hedge of vetiver grass are cheaper, more effective and acceptable to small farmers due to their multifaceted uses. Vegetative systems can also be integrated with the conventional soil and moisture conservation techniques where appropriate.

We hope that the deliberations of this workshop will create a better awareness about the VS applications that is used in more than 100 countries for SWC, environmental protection, SLM and income generation would lay a solid foundation for scaling up the technology in Ethiopia.

Finally, I would like to thank SLUF and TVNI for organizing this noble workshop and state that Sida, as usual, will have a stake to play in scaling up the VS applications for SLM through its environmental protection cooperation programme with the Federal Government of Ethiopia.

Thank You