

National Workshop on The Vetiver System Applications

16 March 2009, Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa

Welcome Address by Dr. Habtemariam Abate
Executive Director of Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF)

Your Excellency

Distinguished Workshop Participants

The Vetiver Network International and National Resource Persons

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF) members and staff, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and The Vetiver Network International (TVNI); I am privileged to welcome you all to the 3 days very important “**National Workshop on The Vetiver System for Soil & Water Conservation, Environmental Protection and Land Rehabilitation in Ethiopia**”.

The workshop is organized by SLUF in collaboration with TVNI with the aim of scaling out/up the Vetiver System for SWC, environmental rehabilitation, stabilization and protection of infrastructures, and mitigation of climate change in Ethiopia.

SLUF is a membership organization established in 1995 and registered with the Ministry of Justice as a national NGO (Registration No. 808). Its programme signatory is the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development (MoARD). Currently 20 NGOs (3 international & 17 local) engaged in natural resources and sustainable land management, food security and operating in 7 Regional States of Ethiopia are members of SLUF.

SLUF's vision is to see Ethiopia where natural resources are sustainably managed and poverty alleviated. Its mandates are to build members and their partners capacity, document and disseminate best sustainable land management (SLM) practices, piloting, research and studies, networking, conducting experience exchange visits, provide advisory services, advocacy & lobbying, monitoring & evaluation, and managing resources in relation to sustainable land use (SLU) and natural resources management (NRM).

SLUF also works on identification, publication, documentation, dissemination and sharing of best practices in SLM through organizing workshops, and publishing in hard and soft copies. Its donors are Oxfam Novib (The Netherlands), Sida, EC-Civil Society Fund, and East and South Africa Partnership Programme (ESAPP, Switzerland).

As stated above, one of the mandates of SLUF is to identify, document, share and scale out/up best SLM practices. In line with this, it identified the vetiver technology as an important element for SWC, environmental rehabilitation & protection, and decided to share the practice in a national workshop and further participate in dissemination and scaling out/up of the Vetiver System (VS) applications in Ethiopia.

The VS uses vetiver grass (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*), found in more than 100 tropical and subtropical countries including Ethiopia, is effective in SWC, environmental & infrastructure protection, natural disaster reduction, prevention & treatment of contaminated water & land. It is environmentally friendly, low cost and labour intensive technology. These multiple uses of vetiver impact SLU & NRM positively, and contribute to improved livelihoods as demonstrated in some of Sida/SLUF, Menschen für Menschen Foundation (MfM), GTZ, etc. supported environmental conservation programs/projects, and private farms of Anno Agro-Industry PLC in East Wellega and Nigat Bio-Farm in North Wello.

The overall objective of the 3 days national workshop on “**The Vetiver System for SWC, Environmental Protection and Land Rehabilitation in Ethiopia**” is to contribute to the scaling up of the vetiver grass for agriculture, environmental & infrastructure protection, and other application of vetiver in Ethiopia through sharing international and national experiences among more than 200 participants and 17 highly experienced resource persons.

The invited participants of the workshop are policy makers & representatives of government & non-government organizations, research and higher education institutions, individuals and the private sector working on environmental protection and food security in Ethiopia. Nine of the resource persons are from abroad representing TVNI while eight of them are from different parts of Ethiopia. Therefore, we believe that the workshop will be a good platform for sharing world wide experiences and lay a fertile ground for advocating, networking and scaling up of the VS for environmental protection and income generation in Ethiopia.

The workshop will also create better awareness among participants & encourage them to integrate the VS into their environmental protection/rehabilitation programs/projects, and the emerging nationwide environmental protection program of the Government of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Strategic Investment Framework (ESIF) for sustainable land management (SLM), being implemented by the MoARD. On the part of SLUF the VS applications would be included in its capacity building programs such as participatory land use planning (PLUP) and integrated watershed management (IWSM) as one of the best biological conservation technologies.

The VS Application Technical Reference Manual and other handouts published by TVNI, and distributed to the workshop participants along with the soft copy of the proceedings of the workshop are expected to be widely used by your staff and staff of your partners for promoting the VS. If we get financial support, we hope to publish the proceeding of the workshop in hard copies, document and share with like-minded organizations, research & higher education institutions, Development Agents, the private sector and the public at large.

There are clear indications that the potential of using vetiver for SWC, environmental protection/rehabilitation and income generation is so huge in different parts of the world where the technology has been introduced. However, the public is not aware about its applications. Therefore, a concerted effort of the concerned government and non-government organizations, research & education institutions, individuals and the private sector is required to create awareness among the public and promote the application of the VS. On the other hand, to realize this noble cause in an organized manner we need to form **Vetiver Network Ethiopia (VNE)** at the end of this workshop on voluntary basis.

This workshop is jointly organized by SLUF and TVNI. It is jointly funded by TVNI and Sida. TVNI covered costs for the international resources persons and other expenses required abroad. All local costs are funded by Sida NGO/CSO environmental protection programme.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank TVNI and Sida for providing financial and technical supports to the realization of this workshop.

The Workshop Organizing Committee (TVNI & SLUF) would like to thank all of you who have come from different parts of Ethiopia and abroad to participate in the workshop and share your experiences.

Finally, allow me to thank the Workshop Organizing Committee members embracing Mr. Richard Grimshaw and Dr. Paul Truong, and SLUF Secretariat staff who have actively participated in organizing this workshop and made it a reality.

With this brief remark I would now like to kindly invite *Mr. Abdulhady Mohammed*, National Programme Officer, Embassy of Sweden-Sida, to make a keynote address.

Thank you