

# Environment, Forest and Climate Change Background

## **Background & History of MEFCC**

### **Background of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

Ethiopia has issued various strategic and institutional frameworks to be applied in the effort to manage the environment. The regulatory framework ranges from the supreme law of the country, the constitution, to various specific environmental standards. Whereas the institutional arrangements extended from the federal to the local levels.

### **Ethiopia's Constitution**

Ethiopia's Constitution incorporates a number of provisions relevant to the protection, sustainable use, and improvement of the country's environment. Article 44 guarantees "the right to a clean and healthy environment," while Article 43 pledges "the right . . . to sustainable development." Additionally, Articles 89 and 92 require national policy and government activities to be compatible with environmental health. Article 89 further obliges the government to ensure sustainable development, work for the common benefit of the community, and promote the participation of the people, including women, in the creation of national development policies and programs. Moreover, according to Article 91, the government is duty-bound to protect and support cultures, traditions, natural endowments, and historical sites and objects. The

incorporation of these important provisions into the supreme law of the land has raised environmental issues to the level of fundamental human rights.

## **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC) is the Federal institution for managing the Environment of Ethiopia. MEFCC is responsible to ensure the realization of the environmental rights, goals, objectives and basic principles enshrined in the Constitution. As well as the Environment Policy of Ethiopia through coordinating appropriate measures, establishing systems, developing programs and mechanisms for the welfare of humans and the safety of the environment.

It is mandated to formulate or initiate and coordinate the formulation of strategies, policies, laws and standards as well as procedures and up on approval monitor and enforce their implementation. It is also responsible for the synergistic implementation and follow-up of international and regional environmental agreements. Including those pertaining to hazardous chemicals, industrial wastes and anthropogenic environmental hazards in which Ethiopia is a party. All MEA's are currently being coordinated and monitored by the Ministry of environment, Forest and climate Change.

## **History of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

### **Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)**

To reach its current existence, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has passed through different institutional restructuring and changes in its legal

formation. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Ministry of Environment and Forest were key stepping institutions for the establishment of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) was established as an autonomous government agency at the Federal level by Proclamation 9/1995 in 1995. The institution was accountable to the prime Minister. Along with EPA, the Environmental Protection Council was also established to oversee the tasks and activities of EPA as well as the activities of sectorial environmental agencies and units responsible for environmental management. The proclamation establishing EPA also stipulated the need for the establishment of environmental organs by regions.

## **Ministry of Environment and Forest**

Following the need for better representation of environmental matters in the Council of Ministers, EPA upgraded to the Ministry of Environment and Forest showing the political will and increased momentum in managing the Environment. EPA was subsequently re-established as an autonomous body responsible to the Prime Minister by the Environmental Organs Establishment Proclamation No. 295/2002. The Ministry of Environment and Forest was established by the amended proclamation 803/2013. The proclamation mandated the Ministry, to Coordinate and ensure the environmental objectives stipulated in the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia and the basic environmental principles indicated in the 1997 environmental policy of Ethiopia. The Ministry took the the following powers and duties vested to it by proclamation No 803/2013:

- Coordinate and ensure the environmental objectives stipulated in the 1995 constitution of Ethiopia and the basic environmental principles indicated in the 1997 environmental policy of Ethiopia
- Ensure that private, public and government projects do

not inflict adverse social and environmental impacts. It also ensures that government social and economic development policies, strategies, laws and programs are in line with the constitution and other law of the lands and never induce adverse social and environmental impacts;

- Prepare a mechanism that promotes social, economic and environmental justice and channel the major part of any benefit derived thereof to the affected communities to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that would otherwise have resulted from deforestation and forest degradation;
- Ensure the implementation of internationally agreed and ratified environmental and natural resource issues are rightly implemented through the preparation of different policies and strategies as well as establishment of implementing institution(s);
- Propose incentives to encourage best practices or disincentives to discourage practices that may hamper the sustainable use of natural resource or the prevention of environmental degradation or pollution;
- Promotes the sustainability of the environment and the conservation and use of forest as well as the equitable sharing of benefits accruing from them while creating opportunities for green jobs.

## **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

In 2015, the Ministry of Environment and Forest was renamed and restructured to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change by Promotion No 916/2015. The Ministry has, the following powers and duties:

- Coordinate measures to ensure that the environment objectives provided under the constitution and the basic principles set out in the environmental policy of

Ethiopia are realized.

- Establish a system for environmental impact assessment of public and private projects, as well as social and economic development policies, strategies, laws and programs.
- Prepare a mechanism that promotes social, economic and environmental justice and channel the major part of any benefit derived thereof to the affected communities to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that would otherwise have resulted from deforestation and forest degradation.
- Coordinate actions on soliciting the resources required for building a climate resilient green economy in all sectors and at all governance levels as well as provide capacity building support and advisory services.
- Establish a system for the evaluation of the environmental impact assessment of investment projects submitted by their respective proponents, the concerned sectorial licensing organ or the concerned regional organ prior to granting permission in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation.
- Take part in the negotiations of international environmental agreements and, as appropriate, initiate a process of their ratification.
- Establish an environmental information system that promotes efficiency in environmental data collection, management and use.
- Promote and provide non-formal environmental education program and cooperate with competent organs with a view to integrating environmental concerns in the regular educational curricula.