

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGY FOR SNNPRS

More Than 1400 Participants in Awareness Creation Forums



Raising awareness for conflict resolution was the major aim of the forums.

How should conflicts in a region with a highly diversified society of 56 nationalities be dealt with? Which mechanisms and actors can contribute to a peaceful co-existence and sustainable management of conflicts? The Regional Conflict Resolution Strategy published in July 2011 is an effort to find answers and solutions to these and other questions for the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS). SNNPRS is the first region in Ethiopia to have a strategy of this kind.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Civil Peace Service Programme of GIZ has been supporting the Council of Nationalities (CoN) and its department of Common Values of Nationalities and Dispute Resolution in elaborating, publishing and disseminating the strategy. The CoN is a governmental body where

each nationality of SNNPRS has at least one representative – similar to the House of Federation on federal level.

To present its strategy to all relevant stakeholders in the region, the Council of Nationalities organised a series of events called Awareness Creation Forums supported by GIZ. From the end of August 2011 to mid February 2012, there have been six of these forums which have been held in the cities of Hawassa, Hosana, Jinka, Arba Minch, Mizan and Sodo with more than 1400 participants in total.

By organizing the six forums it was possible for the Council to invite stakeholders from all 14 Zones with 134 Woredas and four Special Woredas of SNNPRS. The participants that took part at the forums were heads of city administrations, representatives of the women, youth and children's affairs bureau, chief police officers, representatives

from civil society organizations, prominent personalities, leaders of traditional institutions and representatives of religious institutions.

The forums, though, not only served to present the strategy to the stakeholders. They were also an important opportunity for the representatives of the Council to get feedback and ideas from the participants about how the strategy can be improved and developed further. "Valuable information about current disputes in different parts of the region was gathered via the participation of the stakeholders, which will help us to promote peace development in the region," says Ato Zeleke Belaineh, Manager at the CoN for the Core Process of Common Values of Nationalities and Dispute Resolution.

David Fuechtjohann
Photo: GIZ/David Fuechtjohann

● Goethe-Institut and GIZ sign cooperation agreement

The Goethe-Institut and GIZ are extending their current partnership. Johannes Ebert, Secretary General of the Goethe-Institut, and Christoph Beier, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of GIZ, recently signed a cooperation agreement in Berlin to this effect.

As Christoph Beier explained: "Culture promotes social cohesion and the development of societies. It drives social change. It is for this

very reason that a society's cultural identity and traditions must be preserved and harnessed for development. GIZ incorporates this knowledge into its work." Johannes Ebert, echoed these sentiments: "Art, culture and education play a crucial role in the constitution of societies and are key factors in dealing with the current global and regional challenges. This realisation defines many aspects of the Goethe-Institut's work."

The cooperation agreement is designed to

provide a framework for existing and future joint projects. It is based on the consensus between the two organisations that cultural aspects are just as important for transformation processes as political, economic and social factors. Their common aim is therefore to cooperate more closely in future and to harness synergies and competences of international cooperation and foreign cultural and education policy more effectively.