

Hibret Lelimat Ma'ekel

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2008 ANNUAL Report DECEMBER 2008

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Hibret Lelimat Ma'ekel (HLM)
2008 Annual Report
For presentation to the General Assembly
20 December 2008, At Imperial Hotel

Introduction

This is Hibret Lelimat Ma'ekel's second Annual Report covering the period January to December 2008. The General Assembly at its December 2007 meeting approved the 2008 proposed work plan and budget that served as a guide for implementation during the year.

As per its Strategic Planning Document (SPD), HLM envisages the full mobilization and utilization of Diaspora technical, intellectual and financial resources to facilitate optimal *brain gain* and capacity building for poverty alleviation and socio-cultural and economic transformation of the Ethiopian people.

During 2008, HLM has made remarkable achievements in initiating and strengthening networks, advocacy and partnerships with key stakeholders. During the year, HLM was also able to identify some of the critical gaps in qualified human resources in selected institutions in some priority sectors. During the year, HLM has also successfully established contacts with committed professionals in the Diaspora who are willing to contribute to the country's development which could be greatly enhanced by streamlining related policies, strategies and processes in the country.

Through its action and efforts HLM has managed to acquire recognition by institutions and professionals in the country, and by those in the Diaspora as a promising and timely organization that can facilitate and achieve increased participation of professionals and friends of Ethiopia in the Diaspora to contribute to national capacity strengthening through brain gain. The organization has also gained the confidence of its partners and stakeholders as having the potential to serve as a bridge and accelerate the link between professionals in the Diaspora with those in the country. In this regard, through its active engagement and dialogue, it has raised expectations among the Diaspora community and institutions in the country to facilitate brain gain for Ethiopia's social change

However, the year has been a very challenging year financially. This report, presented activity by activity as per the 2008 work plan, highlights the achievements of the year and proposes carrying over of some of the pending activities for implementation in 2009 depending on availability of funds.

Activity One - Strengthening HLM's Operational Capacity

a) Staffing

Recruitment of core staff including volunteers was envisaged during 2008 to attain and sustain effective and efficient level of operation including the maintenance of a user friendly, dynamic and interactive website. However due to lack of funds, HLM did not employ any staff. The Managing Director (MD) remained the only personnel working full time in the organization and with no salary paid.

However during the year the organization continued to use its outsourcing strategy to get specific work done and have, as the previous years, enjoy the good will and work of volunteers. HLM would like to extend its appreciation for the many colleagues whose names are not mentioned here but who contributed directly and indirectly to its work in 2008. Special thanks goes to Dr. Tamerate Retta for the extended time he sacrificed including holding the fort in the absence of the Managing Director. HLM would also like to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to

Ato Gizaw Zewdu, for devoting his time, knowledge and resources to develop the HLM Board Bylaws, Accounting Procedures and Consultancy Guidelines; to Ato Tarekegne Bishaw for dispatching all the donor proposals and proceedings and for regularly collecting mail and ensuring timely payment of telephone bills; to Ms Woubalem Taye for providing oversight to the preliminary study on human resources needs, to Ato Getachew Abebe for providing auditing services, to Ms Yemisirach Bezabih for checking the accounting books; and , to Ms Sefanit Mesfin for the editing support and for facilitating, technical and logistics assistance during the Managing Director's work in the US. HLM also expresses its heartfelt appreciation to members of the Board for the support and most valued guidance they regularly provided despite their heavy work schedule.

b) Equipping and Furnishing the Office

No equipment or furniture was procured during the year due to lack of funds

c) Day to day Operation : With guidance and oversight by the Board, the day to day running of HLM has been maintained at acceptable levels. Most of the burden of the work was carried by the Managing Director.

- Prof. Zinabu Gebremariam was elected as the new chairperson of the Board replacing Dr. Teshome Yizengaw who currently is out of the country. All the formalities have been completed with the MOJ. The Board met three times out of the planned four meetings, and provided the required leadership and oversight.
- HLM through the help of a volunteer, has now developed its own , By Laws to guide the work of the Board, Accounting Procedures, for accountability, efficiency and transparency, and, a Consultancy Guideline to follow. These documents have been reviewed and approved by the HLM Board. It is now presented to the GA for endorsement.
- The two proceedings covering the HLM Launch and the National Symposium have been developed, printed and distributed. **The printing and binding was done by Agri-Services Ethiopia who kindly cost-shared 30% of the expenses. Out of the estimated cost of Birr 10,000.00 Agri-Services Ethiopia covered Birr3000. HLM express its sincere appreciation to Ato Getachew Worku, Executive Director and through him the Agri-Services staff for their contribution for their commitment and support to HLM.**
- Funding Proposals were developed for three projects and were distributed to over 40 potential donors. However no positive response. HLM being a newly established NGO does not have a project performance track record. Also many of the donors are not keen to support staffing and overhead costs which was also a hindrance.
- During the year HLM has continued with its networking, advocacy and interaction with partners, stakeholders and professionals in the Diaspora. Its advocacy in some areas has already paid some positive outcomes that would stimulate more interest and attract increasing professionals in the Diaspora for brain-gain.

Activity Two - Undertaking Situation Analysis

At its meeting in December 2007, the GA endorsed the implementation of this activity based on the information that funds would be made available from the IOM/MOFA MIDEth initiative. HLM was planning to compete task when the fund was available. However no fund was available hence implementation did not take place. HLM suggests the postponement of this activity in 2009 if funds are available as planned.

Activity not implemented due to unavailability of funds.

Activity Three: Generating data on priority qualified human resource needs in selected key sectors.

A preliminary study on priority human resource needs was conducted using questionnaire, interview with key respondents and documents review. The study involved the health sector, the Public Universities under the Ministry of Education and the Addis Abeba University selected post graduate programmes.

The study was conducted by a Short Term Consultant with technical oversight from Ms Woubalem Taye, Dr Tamerate Retta and the MD. The consultant was identified through head hunt. Findings from the study enabled HLM to see the extent of the skill gaps that exist in the various disciplines in these institutions. The findings indicated the extent of shortage of qualified human resources in specific areas of specialty in the various department and faculties of these institutions. Findings from the preliminary study were used for advocacy purposes during consultations with some professionals in the US Diaspora. This has stimulated their interest by providing them with the information that professionals in the Diaspora are seeking for and it also indicated the extent and magnitude of the problem. The report is being polished for posting on the HLM website after securing permission from the MOE AAU and MOH

While the preliminary study gave us a quick birds eye view of the situation it also indicated the importance of having a more detailed assessment of needs including analysis of the existing policies, guidelines and procedures that these institutions have for engaging the Diaspora. Furthermore, through this exercise it was possible to see the difficulty to extract data from these institutions calling for improvement.

Activity Four: Study tour and Documenting Lessons Learned form national and international experiences.

The August 2007 National Symposium strongly recommended for a multi sectoral team with institutions such as MOFA, MOCB, National Bank, MOYS Prime Minister's Office, MOE, MOH and HLM visit countries such as India where positive experiences in Diaspora engagement exist. This coupled with lessons learned from documenting national and international experiences on the subject were to contribute to national policy and strategy development to enhance Diaspora's participation in brain gain.

In 2008 it was planned to focus on documenting lessons learned through assessment and analysis of country specific experiences in Ethiopia, analysis of existing reports and recommendations from the previous study tours, and literature review for relevant international experiences.

Activity did not take place due to lack of funds. It is proposed that this activity be postponed to 2009 depending on availability of funds.

Activity Five: Consultation with Diaspora and related Organizations

5.1 HLM participation at the AAU International workshop on its PhD Programme

HLM was requested to join the AAU at its the international Workshop on their PhD programme covering over 26 disciplines of study. The AAU is expected to train about 2500 PhDs over a period of three to five years. HLM invited some 200 professionals in the Diaspora to participate at this important workshop of national interest. Some 30 senior Ethiopian professionals from over 10 countries responded to the call and participated in the workshop and made valuable contribution in the different disciplines including committing their future participation using different modalities.

The AAU workshop was held at its Akaki campus from 19-21 June 2008. Over 600 participants, from the various AAU departments, other national Universities and representatives of key partners and stakeholders, government, non government and UN organization attended the workshop. Over 40 international Universities from various parts of the world including countries in Africa, from US, Canada, countries in Europe, Asia, and Australia participated. These Universities will form consortium with the AAU and collaborate in this major national capacity building.

At the workshop HLM organized a side session for brain storming with Diaspora participants and the AAU Alumni. After a stimulating and insightful discussion **the group** came up with a three point statement which was presented by HLM at the closing plenary. The statement was very well received by all present. The three point statement that mandates HLM to take active part in facilitating linkages, read as follows:

“The Group

- a. Acknowledges the University’s call for partnership and support to achieve its strategic goal of developing an effective program of high quality and relevance fast-tracked to produce a large number of PhDs in various disciplines.
- b. Wishes to draw the attention of the university to the benefit and wisdom of formally and systematically interfacing with the Diaspora community including its Alumni.
- c. Endorsed the effort made so far by HLM and affirmed the Group’s intentions to work with HLM to respond to AAU’s call of this flagship activity and to recognize the project as a Grand-challenge for all Ethiopians.

The meeting was an excellent opportunity for HLM to introduce itself and its mission to participants in the academic circle inside and outside the country. It also demonstrated how HLM can contribute to linking institutions and professionals in the country and within the diaspora for a win-win and synergistic partnership between the two.

In 2009 HLM will continue its collaboration with the AAU to support and strengthen its effort for facilitated and enhanced Diaspora engagement. In this regard, during the period HLM will also expand its contact with other public and private institutions of higher learning and research universities.

Detailed report will be posted on HLM website

5.2. Introducing HLM and networking with professionals in the Diaspora.

An important achievement during the year is the visit by the Managing Director to the US to introduce HLM and to network with professionals in the US Diaspora. The was based on invitation received from, Zebra Consulting International, an Ethiopian Diaspora related NGO in the US that was organizing a workshop on Diaspora engagement for development. This was done concurrent with the Ethiopian Soccer Tournament which this year was held in Washington DC area. This annual social event brought together over tens of thousand Ethiopians and friends of Ethiopia residing in Northern America. This year the tournament was held from 28 June to 7 July 2008.

On 1 July, HLM made a presentation where over 50 participants attended. At this workshop three other Diaspora related organizations namely Zebra Consulting International, Ethiopian Tree Fund Foundation, Vision for Development Incorporated also made presentations on their activities related to Diaspora and brain- gain. At the meeting HLM also shared findings from the preliminary study on priority human resource needs of some key institutions in the health and education sectors in the country.

Subsequent to this workshop, during her stay in the US in July and August, the Managing Director met a large number (300-500) of Ethiopian Professionals and friends of Ethiopia in formal and informal settings, one on one and in groups for advocacy and net working. A scheduled presentation was also made at the Ethiopian Physicist Society in North America where presentation on HLM and useful discussion was held with members and invited guests. A formal presentation was also held at Sankofa in Washington DC to a group of about 30 Ethiopian young professionals who expressed deep commitment to participating in Ethiopia's development while also seeking for opportunities to learn. Made a brief remark on HLM was made at the "Third Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum" held at GWU where over 200 potential Ethiopian investors attended- meeting was sponsored by USAID, VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+USAID, Precise Consult International, PLC among others. HLM's message was well received and several one on one discussion were held with some of the participants after the meeting. Advocacy and networking meetings were also held included with- ENHAPA - Howard University, University of Georgia- Athens, Director, Washington DC Medical Services, with some Ethiopian Student Association international (ESAi) members, with Library of Congress, Ethiopian Embassy, USAID, WB, , and at meetings organized by Ethiopian Community in Washington DC, Yejimma Lejoch Mahiber, and a Ethiopians for Obama group, etc as well as individual professionals who currently provide technical support to institutions in Ethiopia and with those interested to do the same. The Ethiopian Soccer Tournament has increased the opportunities for networking.

The various discussions were most insightful, stimulating and brought out important issues that could help on HLM's way forward. Following were some of the highlights of the suggestions made:

- There are many professionals who are willing and ready to contribute to Ethiopia's capacity building but need to have an up-to-date database of these professionals- HLM website working on this
- Clear and up-to-date information is needed by the Diaspora community to give them the exact picture of the situation, the need and existing policy- HLM website can play as information resource
- Teaming up or partnering of professionals in the Diaspora with those in the country to help in capacity building could use different modalities, such as

- virtual, short visit, materials, teaching, teleconference and also serving as a bridge and mediator for partnership to mobilize greater resources from institutions and supporters- these and other modalities should be facilitated
- Clear and enabling policies and strategies specifically on brain-gain must be established, streamlined and widely communicated to all concerned.
 - Basic needs such as remuneration/honorarium, housing, transport and enabling working environment are important that must be considered for increasing Diaspora participation in brain-gain
 - Host and partner institutions locally need to be more proactive, improve their openness and responsiveness to be ready and willing to optimally use Diaspora's technical and intellectual input for a win-win and synergistic partnership
 - More advocacy is needed for full mobilization of the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia all over the world for brain-gain
 - Youth in the Diaspora could participate in collaboration with youth in the country and also could work with senior professionals in the country for mentorship
 - HLM's website must be actively functioning and interactive to attract viewers and to be used as effective medium for communication and to serve as a bridge and for source of information
 - Having organized Diaspora professional groups could facilitate communication and cohesiveness of sustainable participation easier –more effort is needed in this regard.
 - Friends of Ethiopia are important resources that could be partners in development- important to know who and where they are.

On return from the trip, the Managing Director briefed relevant officials in the MOCB, MOFA, and the AAU on findings, observations and suggestions made during discussions at the various meeting. There are already some indications that some of the issues raised and the concerns were being looked into by responsible institutions. HLM will continue its follow-up with relevant bodies to address some of the concerns and suggestions made to keep the momentum and interest created during the discussions.

Detailed report will be posted on the Website for further information

Activity Six: Development and Maintenance of Database

To-date, Ethiopia does not have a comprehensive data base on its migrating and returning Diaspora. Most of the information available is often anecdotal. Development and maintaining accurate, complete and up-to-date database on the Ethiopian Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia is a primary and priority task of HLM for a successful information base for rendering effective and efficient services for the local and Diaspora institutions.

For 2008, the plan that was to develop a reliable and efficient database and working system supported by ICT did not take place due to lack of funds. However pending on availability of funds the activity is proposed to be taken as a priority of 2009.

Activity Seven: Advocacy, Information, Education and Mobilization including Resources

1. Advocacy Information and Mobilization

As a young organization HLM has put emphasis on advocacy and mobilization to introduce its vision, mission and objectives to a wider network of stakeholders and partners as well as mobilize consensus, support and resources. HLM's dual pitched focus which include: motivating local institutions for improved preparedness towards efficient utilization of the technical and intellectual resources of the Diaspora on the one hand and mobilizing the Diaspora community to participate in national capacity building on the other, required the development and use of a sound and comprehensive communication strategy to create national awareness for the full and optimal engagement of professionals in the Diaspora to contribute to building national capacity for the development and prosperity of the Ethiopian people.

In 2008 significant achievements were made in this area. HLM has created and used different opportunities to inform, advocate and mobilize support towards creating enabling environment for the full and optimal engagement of the Diaspora through a win-win partnership with professionals and institutions in the country.

While work is in progress to create an "African Diaspora Forum for Brain Gain" as one of the more comprehensive and systematic approach, following are some of the activities carried-out during the year.

- Strengthened partnership with the Ministry of Capacity Building and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Established working relationship with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, the Addis Abeba University and with the Addis Abeba Youth Organization
- Met with and introduced HLM to over 300 professionals and young aspiring professionals and friends of Ethiopia in the Diaspora made presentations on HLM and formally and informally interacted with these professionals, networked and mobilized support for closer dialogue and collaboration.
- Following the consultations with some professionals in the US Diaspora debriefing was given to relevant officials in the MOCB, MOFA and the AAU which triggered some positive action.
- Communication and dialogue has been initiated with the AU Diaspora section for stronger collaboration
- Initiated communication with the African Diaspora Policy Center in the Netherlands
- Work in progress in the development of MOU with AA Youth Organization, the AAU and AHEAD,
- Initiated contact with University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia and with University of South Africa UNISA one of the largest distant education centers in Africa with over 230,000 registered students all over the world
- HLM was invited and made a presentation on the -Role of NGO in Diaspora Engagement- at a meeting organized by an NGO called "Envisioning Ethiopia". This NGO organizes discussions to increase awareness on key social and development issues. The meeting held at the AU conference Center had "The Diaspora" as its theme and was attended by over 100 participants consisting of parliamentarians, key national and international organizations, NGOs, the private sector and University students..

- Gave interviews to local and international papers radios including the VOA that disseminated information on HLM its activities and vision highlighting the Diaspora as important national resource and partner that the country cannot afford to ignore
- Participated and contributed at the national consultations on the new NGO proclamation that was chaired by the Minister of Justice and by the Prime Minister. HLM was one of the 300 selected NGOs out of the 3000 NGOs that exist in the country. HLM's intervention were noted and appreciated.
- Provided information on Diaspora and brain-gain to researchers from GTZ, Australia, AAU and USA

2. Resource Mobilization

Generating required resources is the lifeline to the existence of any organization to implement planned activities and achieve desired objectives. HLM being a young organization required the financial resources not only for implementation of its planned activities but most importantly also to have a functional organizational and operational capacity.

In 2008 HLM developed funding proposals on identified priority activities for the year and submitted these proposals to about 40 potential donors including Embassies, Bilateral Organizations UN and other donor agencies including in the private sector. However response received from these organizations did not yield and financial resource. The World Bank and USAID were also contacted in Washington DC for possible funding.

As a new NGO HLM is unable to show track record of previous implementation of projects which is a disadvantage and most donors are also not keen to support administrative and overhead costs that made fund raising very difficult.

HLM believes that the extensive advocacy will soon yield positive results for the coming years. Following are in the pipeline.

- Expressed interest to participate in the EC-UN Joint Initiative on Migration and Development- an EU fund for small scale actors
- Funding Proposal has been submitted to CIDA and awaiting response.

Major constraint and concerns

HLM is getting more and more recognition and there are a lot of expectations from the institutions and professionals in the country and from the Diaspora. While this is good news the negative trend in resource mobilization is a major and serious concern.

As can be noted from the report, some of the planned activities did not take place due to lack of funds. Till date the time, knowledge and resources of the MD has been used to cover the cost of activities. Although the auditor recommended that the expenses incurred by the MDs personal fund be re-reimbursed once resource is made available, this could not be affected as there was no adequate fund generated during the year.

Hence to ensure sustainability and effective and efficient functioning of HLM it is a prerequisite that we generate the required funds for implementation of activities in 2009 and also to cover the expenses incurred during 2007 and 2008 out of the personal resources of the MD.

The organization was registered in January 2006 and the certificate /license must be renewed in January 2009 as stipulated in the certificate. For this to happen it is important that we have to

commit and ensure out ability to mobilize funds using different fund raising strategies. This commitment is needed now for the renewal of the license.

The lack of funds has severely affected the general operational capacity of the organization as deploying technical and support staff, activating the website and implementing the planned activities for the year.

Some Points for Discussion:

What actions could HLM take to overcome its financial constraint?

How can each member of the GA support HLM?

What actions would facilitate mobilizing membership for HLM?