

**The Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network- Addis Ababa University (HoA-REC&N-AAU)**

**Brief History**

Initially, HoA-REC&N-AAU was initiated by the Faculty of Science in 2006. With the funding support of several international development partners mainly the Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Centre and Network have been working to promote cooperation and knowledge exchange between organisations with environmental expertise, including NGO's, CBO's, research institutions and universities from Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In 2010, the University Senate established HoA-REC&N-AAU as an autonomous centre governed by a board of trustees chaired by the Vice President for Research and Graduate Program accountable to the President of the University. In the current structure of the University, it is placed under the office of the President. Currently, the Network consists of more than 40 members, of which Ethiopia has the largest share of about 40 percent. The Network is constantly growing with environmental organisations from the Horn of Africa showing an interest to join.

**About us**

The HoA-REC&N-AAU) has been working towards uniting academia and practitioners to promote environmental conservation, natural resource management, while facilitating strengthening and advocating for sustainable development and environmental governance across the Horn of Africa .Since 2014, the center has been engaged in the development of the ILDP for GPNRS in collaboration with National and Regional relevant partner institutions and donors. The 1st phase of the study was financed by the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Ethiopia. While the 2nd phase and subsequent engagement has been financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).

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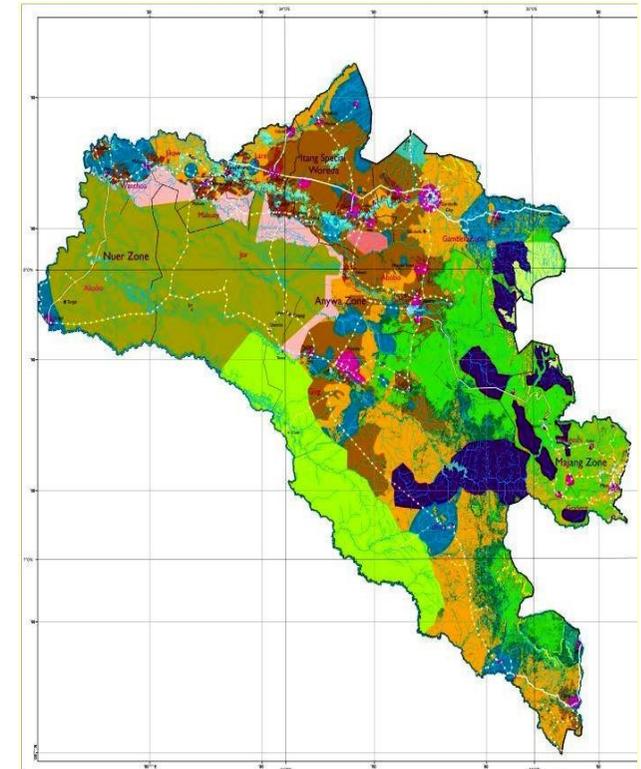
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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE



**Planning the Hidden Treasures of Gambella for Socioeconomic & Environmental Transformation**



**Integrated Land use and Development Plan of Gambella People National Regional State**



## Gambella People National Regional State- (GPNRS)

The GPNRS is among the landscapes with a prominent biological and cultural diversity in the Horn of Africa Region. It is characterized by a diversity of resources including its cultural and ethnic composition. The pristine environment, the navigable rivers, and other ecosystem goods and services, harbours variety of wildlife resources including the white-eared kob (*Kobus kob leucotis*) known for its unique transboundary migration rout recorded as the second largest wildlife migration in Africa.



Fig.2 Nile-lechwe (*Kobus megacero*)

Some sites qualify for UNESCO World Heritage site, the Gambella National Park, the Ramsar Site - Duma Wetland harbouring important populations of Nile-lechwe (*Kobus megacero*) & the Shoe-billed stork (*Balaeniceps rex*) and Biosphere reserve in the Majang Montane Forest (which has similar biophysical characteristics with Sheka Biosphere Reserve) making the region a prime destination for eco-tourism development.

However, over the last few decades, possibilities for social and economic transformation have been confined to the manipulation of rural lands for unregulated investment.

Agricultural lands have been expanding into its pristine ecologies by deforesting valuable forests. The challenge in the economic loss that has resulted from misuse of the best agricultural lands, commercial forest expansion areas, as well as lands for tourism development, is significant. This has influenced the historical and current settlement and land use patterns in the region. Misuse of land for what it is not best suited has been playing havoc on many fronts. All these factors strongly suggest that GPNRS needs to use its rural and urban lands in harmonious way.

Realizing the necessity and urgency to resolve the challenges, and initiated upon the official request of the government of the GPNRS the Government of Ethiopia made a historic decisions to develop an Integrated Land use and Development Plan (ILDP) for the region. The planning process has been facilitated collaboratively by all Federal and Regional relevant institutions coordinated and directed by Addis Ababa University – Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre & Network (AAU-HoAREC&N).

### The ILDP

The overall main goal of ILDP is to contribute to the sustainable transformation of the lives and land-resources of GPNRS by way of guiding the optimal use of the land and water-based resources through provision of coordinated, aligned and harmonized landuse and development master plan as a guide. It targets at:

- 1.Supporting economic transformation of the beneficiaries by allocating land according to its use potential and avoiding landuse conflicts in Gambella,
- 2.Enabling speeded-up and improved social transformation of the beneficiaries,
- 3.Guarantying sustainable environment for GPNRS.

The planning process involved about 40 all Ethiopian professionals, demonstrating our local capacity and competency to shoulder national responsibility.

### Planning outputs

The planning produced ILDP for each of the three Zones (Anywa, Nuer, Majang), Itang special woreda, the Gambella city and other 6 cities of strategic importance. More importantly, the 20 year LDP identified more than 72 different ILDP-based livelihood development projects creating a welcoming matt for indigenous and foreign investments in the region that would benefit the people of GPNRS and the Nation and beyond.

### Realized opportunities

The GPNRS has been closely working with different development partners to efficiently and effectively realize the ILDP in the ground towards bringing significant socioeconomic transformation in the region. This has been demonstrated through the strong commitments, transparency, accountability and free of corruptions ect.

Added to these, the easily available labor source, relatively peaceful and secured environment, accessible roads, the availability of various resources that can be commercialized etc fueled the growing interest and curiosity of potential investors to indulge in a promising business.



Fig.3 A snap shoot of land for development