Introduction

Due to the fact that Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world, today the majority of her peoples live below the poverty line. And as a result of the political, economic and social problems created by the ousted military regime (Derg/ WPE) a great number of Ethiopians have lost their lives ; or have emigrated; vital infrastructure has been destroyed; the country's economy, too, has been totally devastated. The whole country is, therefore, plagued by all kinds of social problems. Furthermore, the situation has been aggravated by the rate of population growth which — unchecked and unbacked by a similar rate of economic growth — has been increasing alarmingly.

The brunt of these problems is, of course, borne by the most vulnerable segments of all societies — that is, children, youth, women and the elderly. As such, many among them are marginalized into illiteracy, abject poverty and diseases that result from malnutrition and poor sanitation.

The ousted military government was, by all standards, so anti-popular and pre-occupied with war-mongering that it paid little or no attention to the formulation of policies and strategies as well as to the promulgation of laws and regulations that could have helped ensure the social welfare of the Ethiopian peoples and alleviate their social problems. On the contrary, it exacerbated their plight by mis-allocating whatever meagre resources the country had and by violating even their basic human rights. Nor did it conduct a comprehensive study on, or a research into, the underlying causes of the then existing social problems as well as the prevalence, magnitude and solutions thereof at the national level.

What little effort was occasionally made by way of ensuring the social welfare of the peoples was unplanned, inefficaceous and lacking in coordination. Worse yet, it was made with a view to alleviating the problems, as a showcase, rather than uprooting them.

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has laid the foundation for ensuring the social welfare of all Ethiopians by fully guaranteeing a democratic governance whereby all nations, nationalities and peoples can govern themselves on an equal footing with one another as proprietors of the land they till and of the fruits of their labour. This government is, in fact, committed, as much as possible, to ensuring the welfare of especially the disabled, the elderly as well as that of orphaned and abandoned children.

That all schemes the government resorts to in order to address the country's social as well as economic problems are the most apposite and that they will bring about economic development is an indisputable fact, for they are rural-development-led. Also, it goes without saying that in an agrarian society like ours, the right approach to preventing and solving social problems is always the rural-development-led and democratic one.

Since the overthrow of the military regime (Derg/ WPE), a number of national policies, proclamations, laws and regulations have been enacted so as to ensure the prevalence of peace, a democratic culture, the rule of law and justice as well as to bring about economic and social development and are now being enforced and implemented. Of the policies made, the most seminal are the Economic Policy and the Social Policy. The others, which are actually based on these two, include the Population Policy, the Education Policy, the Health Policy and the Women's Policy.

In addition to these policies, a need to formulate a Developmental Social Welfare Policy has been felt in order to prevent and control the further spread of the already prevalent and deep-rooted social problems in our country, and to gradually eliminate them.

The phrase " social welfare, " of course, refers to all the activities being undertaken by a community with a view to facilitating the economic and social conditions that are conducive to a healthy life and a sustainable development as well as to activities designed to meet the common needs of a society or to solve its problems. As such, social welfare has the following three main features:

. Developmental
. Preventive
. Rehabilitative.

The main objective of this Developmental Social Welfare Policy which has been formulated to feature development, prevention and rehabilitation is the creation of a social condition conducive to a healthy life and a sustainable development.

The strategies that will be designed and the programmes that will be prepared to help implement the Policy and thus achieve its main objective shall, therefore, stress societal participation in all activities of development and the elimination of harmful traditional practices. They shall also create a condition whereby every citizen can play an active role in the effort to prevent and control social problems and solve them, fully aware that every social problem is, directly or indirectly, everyone's problem.

1. Conditions of the Segments of Society Whose Social Welfare is a Priority Concern

1.1. Children

Due to the inadequate availability of educational services in the country and other related reasons, the number of children enrolled in educational institutions today is very low. According to the 1995 annual statistics of the Ministry of Education, only 29 percent of all Ethiopian children of primary school (grades 1-6) age were enrolled.

Their health condition is no better either. In fact, the infant mortality rate in Ethiopia is one of the highest in the world, the causes of their death being easily preventable diseases and malnutrition. A study done by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1994 shows that 110 of every 1000 babies born alive die before they celebrate their first birthday, and 160 before they turn five. The number of children that become physically disabled as a result of harmful traditional practices is great, too.

The UNICEF study cited above further states that in developing countries, of all children under 15 years of age, one in five live in especially difficult circumstances. According to the 1995 Annual Statistical Abstract of the Central Statistical Authority of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the whole population of the country in 1994 was estimated to be 54,939,000, 48.6 percent

being children under 15. That means, in 1994, 5,535,200 of the 26,675,000 children in this age group were estimated to be in especially difficult circumstances. An evaluative study carried out by the Children and Youth Affairs Organization in 1993 has shown that only 95,049 (1.8%) of these children had access to social services.

Likewise, the above-cited 1995 report by the Ministry of Education shows that only 70,255 children were being given pre-school services.

1.2 Youth

Though the word " youth " means different things in different countries, in this policy document it is defined as the segment of society that falls in the 15-24 age group. Again according to the 1995 Annual Statistical Abstract of the Central Statistical Authority, in 1994 this age group constituted 19.7 percent of the total population.

The problems of Ethiopian youth are many, complex and inter-related. Because of their limited access to training and educational opportunities and the acute shortage of recreation and sports centres, they fall victims to lumpenness, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency and criminal activities. Due to the country's dismal economic condition, employment opportunities for this age group are hard to come by.

According to a magazine published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) in 1994, a total of 64,682 job seekers were registered that year, though that does not mean that that was the number of all the unemployed Ethiopians that year. Of these 58.0% were males, and 42.0% females. And 31.2% of them were in the 15-19 age group, whereas 55.0% were in the 20-29 age group.

Basically, the problems, needs and welfare of Ethiopian youth are mirror images of the problems, needs and welfare of the whole Ethiopian society. Nonetheless, in light of the particular behavioural problems youth are vulnerable to and their productive potentiality in both the social and economic sectors, they need to be given special attention.

1.3 The Family

The family is a vital social institution and the smallest unit of society wherein children are reared appreciating their heritage — historical, cultural and social — so that they will want to pass it on to their children, thereby ensuring that posterity is tied to its ancestry. It is the best arrangement for the proper upbringing of children, too, and has, as such, no substitute whatsoever.

A census taken in 1995 has revealed that the number of families in Ethiopia — excluding the Afar and Somali Regions whose census result had not yet been turned in at the time

of reporting — was 10,391,978. It has also shown that the average number of members of an Ethiopian family is about 4.8, which, like that of all developing countries, is considerably high.

Today an estimated 60.0% of all Ethiopian families live in abject poverty. And the brunt of this brutish, poor life is normally borne by the females who are family heads.

It is common knowledge that, directly or indirectly, all the social and economic problems of a society affect the family as well. There are, for instance, many customs and practices that have a negative bearing on the formation, organization and welfare of the family. Natural and man-made disasters, too, contribute to the disruption and decimation of families. We have repeatedly witnessed the displacement of families and the hardship they had to face as a result of these disasters. Yet the absence of a viable policy framework and a coordinated programme of action have long made it difficult to efficaciously respond to the dire needs of this vital social institution.

A large number of families in our country are today disintegrating due to poverty and other related problems, thereby swelling the number of abandoned and street children in the cities.

On the other hand, the laws and customs governing family relationships are such that the basic human rights of women are violated with impunity, and women are at a

disadvantage even at times of divorce. That, in turn, greatly affects the family.

1.4 Women

The roles women play in the social, political and cultural sectors are exceedingly great, for they are not only producers but procreators of producers as well. As mothers, women have a great influence on children. The welfare and harmonious growth of our children, who are the coming generation, therefore, greatly depends on how well women play their maternal role.

Yet the benefits women get are not at all commensurate with their contributions. They are, in fact, barred from enjoying the fruits of their labour due to economic and cultural pressures. Consequently, they are lagging behind in every field of development.

Even though the national census taken in 1995 has shown that women constitute 51.8% of the whole Ethiopian population, their representation in education, employment and the like is very low. Though the magnitude of the problem differs from custom to custom, about 60.0% of the peoples of Ethiopia are believed to be victimized by harmful traditional practices, five-sixths of them being women. In short, women — especially those who head households — are disadvantaged in more ways than one.

According to the above-mentioned census, which does not include the Afar and Somali

Regions, female-headed households range between 20.0% (Dire Dawa) and 50.0% (Tigray) in the urban areas, and between 15.0%(Dire Dawa) and 27.0%(Tigray) in the rural areas. It can, therefore, be surmised that the life these women lead is quite miserable.

The 1996 Annual Statistical Abstract of the Ministry of Education shows that girls' representation in the country's institutions of learning is much lower than that of boys — that is, only 36.9% in the elementary schools, 44.4% in the junior high schools, 43.5% in the high schools, 13.5% in the junior colleges, 12.8% in the four-year colleges and 9.5% in the post-graduate programmes.

This great disparity of representation is evident in the work places, too. According to a study conducted by MOLSA in 1986 — the latest available — of all Ethiopians employed in the public as well as the private sectors, 82.1% were men, whereas the women were only 17.9%. A 1995 report issued by the Federal Civil Service Commission revealed that 40.4% of all the civil servants employed by the Federal Government were women. According to regions which sent reports that same year to the Commission, however, only 28.2% of the workforce employed by the regional governments were women.

A 1993 study jointly done by UNICEF and the Transitional Government of Ethiopia has shown that the fertility rate in our country is seven children per women. Yet nearly 96.0% of our women have no access whatsoever to

family planning services. About 100 of every 100,000 women die of complications due to child birth. And between 10.0% and 23.0% of all mothers suffer from inadequate nutrition.

In conclusion, women, in addition to shouldering a big responsibility as heads of households, play a vital role in the national development effort. Due to cultural, social, economic and political pressures, however, they face many problems. Furthermore, their participation in learning, research work, vocational training, employment, medical care, development and decision-making is much lower than that of men. Nor do they enjoy the fruits of their labour as much as men do.

1.5 The Elderly

The elderly make a great contribution to the welfare and harmony of a society. This they do by sharing with the rest their accumulated knowledge and experience, by giving counsel, settling disputes, etc.

According to The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, 56.5% of the world's elderly live in developing countries. And according to the 1994 Annual Statistical Abstract of the Central Statistical Authority, 2,569,000 (4.7%) of the total Ethiopian population that year were 60 years old or above.

By reason of age the elderly are exposed to various problems. Many studies have shown that the difficulties they have in adjusting to the ever-changing societal values in the modern world cause them much anxiety. On top of that, they suffer from all kinds of ailments. And many among them cannot meet even their basic needs for lack of family support. The absence of a comprehensive social security system has also exacerbated their plight.

Even though almost all elderly persons need special care and assistance, some among them—such as women, the physically disabled, those who have no source of support whatsoever and the displaced - need these direly and must, therefore, be given priority whenever assistance is dispensed.

1.6 Persons with Physical and Mental Impairment

Disability is one of the social problems' prevalent in our country. The World Health Organization estimates that about 10.0% of the populations of developing countries are persons with disability. And according to the national census taken in 1995, 943,620 of all Ethiopians in the Regions where the census was taken were disabled.

Poverty, ignorance, war and drought are the major causes of disability in our country. The problem is aggravated by inadequate nutrition, limited access to health care and

educational services as well as by the high prevalence of harmful traditional practices.

A total of 23 types of disabilities have been identified in Ethiopia by those who took the census mentioned above. Major among them are blindness, deafness and muteness, lameness, leprosy, amputation of limbs and mental illness. Studies done indicate that 85.0% of all disabled Ethiopians live in the rural areas and that, with regard to this problem, children and the elderly are the most vulnerable segments of society.

Persons with disability in our country do not always have access to rehabilitative services, simply because the availability of these services is very much limited. Furthermore, backward societal attitudes and prejudice against the victims perpetuate fatalism — that is, the victims and their loved ones would rather learn how to live with the problem accepting it as God's will than seek a remedy for it. The end result is that even those who could have been made productive become either life-time dependents of their kith and kin or resort to begging.

The rehabilatitive services that are available today to persons with disability in our country emphasize institutional care; are costly and, therefore, greatly limit the number of beneficiaries. Worse yet, the institutions are very few and urban-concentrated — and thus exclude the majority of those who need the services.

Mental retardation is another problem that needs to be mentioned here. Though not much is known yet about its causes and magnitude, mental retardation is a serious problem in Ethiopia. And the most troubling thing about it is that there is a wide-spread belief that it is a manifestation of the wrath of God. That is true with regard to mental illness, too.

1.7 Social Problems

Social Problems have been increasing in both scope and magnitude at an alarming rate. The major problems subsumed under the rubric "social problems" are prostitution, lumpenness, begging, drug and alcohol abuse, street life, juvenile delinquency, etc. These problems affect not only those who are directly involved but also their families and society at large.

The underlying causes are many and complex and have a political, economic and social nature. Major among them include the following:

- Prolonged civil war, recurrent drought, famine, poverty caused by the precipitous decline in the economy and the breakdown of families and hence of social control;

- Rapid population growth and the increasing gap between conditions of life in rural and urban areas — a gap

that feeds migratory trends from rural to urban areas;

- Limited employment opportunities, the exceedingly limited scope of social services as well as family life education programmes and services;

- The high prevalence of harmful traditional practices and behavioural patterns foreign to our society, and

- The economic dependence of women on men.

It has been many years since an empirical study was done in our country on social problems in general and prostitution in particular. But according to the 1986 study conducted by MOLSA, there were 44,707 prostitutes that year. And according to estimates jointly given by UNICEF, the Ethiopian government and NGOs, the number of Ethiopian street children is over 100,000 and is increasing at the rate of 5.0% a year.

Federal Police records show that from June 1995 to June 1996, 2,962 children between the ages of 9 and 15 were charged with juvenile offences, representing 1.3 percent of all persons placed in police custody (Federal Police Files, 1997) during the period. In the reporting year (June 1995/ June 1996) criminal charges were entered for 40,205 loafers. These represented 18.1% of the total number of persons against whom criminal

charges were filed. Of these 4,551 were females, representing 11.3% of the total.

For a significant number of our country's men and women, begging has now become a way of life. The problem is more visible in urban areas. It is known that begging requires considerable mobility, depending on the beggars' perception as to where the opportunity lies. A 1992 sample survey of beggars in Addis Ababa undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs indicated that about 77.0% of the sample of beggars covered migrated from various regions. Over fifty-eight percent of the beggars included in the sample were able-bodied, whereas the rest suffered from varying degrees of disability. The study also indicated that 51.0% of the respondents were non-literate. Among the reasons given for resorting to begging were poverty, displacement and bad health conditions.

Although no profound study has yet been undertaken to depict the situation of drug and substance abuse, there are signs that show that the problem is becoming increasingly serious.

All these problems result in taking off people from productive labour and in aggravating the problem of parasitism, or living off others. This is a serious problem that merits immediate attention.

2. The Need For a Policy

The social problems are essentially the by-products of the political, economic and social crises generated by the misguided public policies of previous regimes. Although these problems, in one way or another, affect all segments of society, children, youth, women, the elderly and persons with disability are the most vulnerable.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has formulated policies that will help it effectively tackle pervasive social problems that have long plagued our society, with a view to creating an environment conducive to expediting economic development. To that end, it has charted out a rural-led development strategy, too, and is working hard along that line.

Furthermore, the Government has facilitated the conditions that will enable the peoples of Ethiopia to actively participate in the national development effort and to solve their common problems, thereby becoming its important partners in the implementation of the policies made in order to ensure for them a better life — politically, economically, socially and culturally.

It has, therefore, been found necessary to formulate this Developmental Social Welfare Policy so that it will serve as a guideline and help coordinate the peoples' participation.

3. Policy Objectives

The Policy has the following major objectives:

3.1 Expand participatory developmental social welfare programmes and services;

3.2. Study the causes of social problems and develop preventive measures based on knowledge generated by such studies;

3.3. Rehabilitate members of society who are already suffering from various social problems and require special treatment and attention.

4. General Contents of the Policy

4.1 Social welfare services shall be made accessible to all Ethiopians in accordance with the principles of equity and justice;

4.2. Every effort shall be made to close the rural-urban gap in the distribution of social welfare services through economic growth and development;

4.3. Special attention shall be directed towards the development of infrastructure and the fullfilment of basic social welfare services;

4.4. A variety of programmes aimed at preventing and minimizing the causes of social problems shall be designed and implemented;

4.5. Conditions that permit members of society to be both active agents and beneficiaries of social welfare services shall be facilitated;

4.6. Social Security programmes shall be expanded to keep abreast with the rate at which the economy is growing so as to progressively cover hitherto unreached segments of the society;

4.7. Efforts shall be made to plan and implement appropriate rehabilitative programmes and services to meet the needs of those members of society who are in especially difficult circumstances;

4.8. All necessary support shall be extended to regional governments in their effort to ensure higher degrees of welfare for their peoples; and

4.9. Appropriate support shall be given to non-governmental organizations and institutions involved in the provision of social welfare services.

5. Areas of Focus of the Policy

5.1. Child Welfare

5.1.1. Appropriate and comprehensive care and services shall be extended to children so as to ensure their all-round and harmonious development;

5.1.2. Conditions shall be facilitated whereby children in Ethiopia will be enabled to develop a sense of identity and belonging and thus grow up to be self - confident citizens.

5.1.3. All effort shall be made to implement all international and regional conventions and legal instruments concerning the rights of children which Ethiopia has already acceded to;

5.1.4. All necessary effort shall be made to eliminate harmful traditional practices with regard to child-rearing;

5.1.5. The necessary support and incentives shall be provided to the effort in the expansion of child-development-oriented day care centres, kindergartens and other services;

5.1.6 Any effort that is being made towards the establishment and operation of child welfare and development organizations and services by

appropriate organs of government, communities, non-governmental agencies, voluntary associations and individuals shall be given support;

5.1.7. Every effort shall be made to create an environment conducive to addressing problems of children in especially difficult circumstances;

5.1.8. Conditions that will enable orphaned and abandoned children to get the assistance they need and to eventually be self-sufficient shall be facilitated;

5.1.9. Effort shall be made to find appropriate and effective ways and means of dealing with the problems of children with physical and mental impairments; and

5.1.10. All effort shall be made to provide protection against child abuse and neglect.

5.2 Youth Welfare

5.2.1. All effort shall be made to create opportunities for youth to develop their abilities and become productive citizens making significant contrib utions to the development of the country;

5.2.2. A network of civic education services shall be launched for the purpose of using such services to

engender patriotic sentiments and industriousness in youth;

5.2.3. The necessary arrangements shall be made for providing youth with appropriate vocational/technical training, job placement services and related support in order to enable them to make effective contributions to the development of their country;

5.2.4. A variety of leisure-time services and programmes shall be made available and recreation centres shall be established, and existing ones strengthened to protect young people from being exposed to social problems by engaging themselves in socially harmful activities;

5.2.5. All effort shall be made to organize vocational/technical training and counselling services for young people who have either dropped out of school or completed high school and could not find jobs, with a view to enabling them to be engaged in self-supporting activities;

5.2.6. Strategies that will help prevent and control the migration of young people from rural to urban areas and the attendant social problems thereof shall be formulated and implemented;

5.2.7. All voluntary effort by youth to organize themselves into youth associations for the purpose of

safeguarding the enjoyment of all their rights and for engaging in all developmental activities shall be encouraged and supported; and

5.2.8. All non-governmental, community and individual effort to promote the economic and social well-being of young people shall be encouraged and supported.

5.3. Family Welfare

5.3.1. Programmes and services designed to promote family welfare shall be formulalted and implemented;

5.3.2. Laws that will ensure the social welfare of the family as an institution and strengthen matrimonial bonds shall be enacted; the existing relevant laws, too, shall be revised accordingly; furthermore, other relevant services shall be made available;

5.3.3. Strategies shall be developed and mechanisms established to facilitate the extension of economic and social assistance to families in especially difficult circumstances;

5.3.4. Programmes shall be designed in order to educate the public about the harmfulness of some traditional practices, such as the early marriage of girls;

5.3.5. All community, non-governmental and voluntary effort to promote family welfare shall be encouraged and supported.

5.4. Women's Welfare

5.4.1. All effort shall be made to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in respect to access to technical training, formal sector employment, working conditions, access to health care services and to protect them from all social and cultural pressures to which they are subjected on account of their sex;

5.4.2. Appropriate measures shall be taken to protect women from being unduly exposed to social problems and any effort to extricate those who are already exposed to these problems shall be supported and facilitated;

5.4.3. The conditions that will enable low-income women who need particular assistance to lighten their work load and play a meaningful role in the social, economic and political life of the country shall be facilitated;

5.4.4. Arrangements that will make it possible for women to receive appropriate and timely pre-natal, perinatal and post-natal care shall be made;

5.4.5. Educational programmes shall be designed and disseminated with a view to eliminating harmful traditional practices negatively impacting on the welfare and dignity of women through awareness creation; and

5.4.6. Programmes of rehabilitation for women in especially difficult circumstances shall be launched; laws and regulations aimed at protecting women from all kinds of potential and actual abuses shall be enacted and vigorously enforced; and sustained public education programmes shall be mounted to increase public awareness about and insight into the seriousness of the problem.

5.5. Welfare of Elderly People

5.5.1. Appropriate social and cultural climates shall be created to ensure that society benefits from the accumulated wealth of the social and cultural experiences of the elderly as well as to assist them to adjust to changing situations in the country;

5.5.2. All effort shall be made to strengthen and reenforce all positive elements in our culture and society, especially the integrity of the family, that are aimed at guaranteeing the security and welfare of the elderly;

5.5.3. Arrangements shall be made for the elderly without any material and psychological support to receive appropriate social security services and assistance in the communities where they live;

5.5.4. In order to guarantee the material and social well-being of the elderly, social security programmes shall be extended to groups hitherto uncovered, and appropriate laws and regulations shall be promulgated and enforced;

5.5.5. A follow-up mechanism shall be created to ensure that services that are aimed at ensuring the security and well-being of the elderly are comprehensive; and

5.5.6. All effort by non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations and community action-groups desiring to establish services to assist and support the elderly shall be encouraged and supported.

5.6. Welfare of Persons with Physical and Mental Impairment

5.6.1. Conditions that will enable persons with disability to use their abilities as individuals or in association with others to contribute to the development of society as well as to be self-supporting by participating in the

political, economic and social activities of the country shall be facilitated;

5.6.2. Efforts aimed at instilling in persons with disability a sense of confidence and self-reliance through education, skill training, gainful employment opportunities and other services shall be increased and appropriate legislative measures shall be taken to ensure their welfare;

5.6.3. Mechanisms shall be created by which persons with physical and mental impairment will receive appropriate medical/health services and supportive appliances;

5.6.4. Mechanisms by which persons with physical and mental impairment will receive appropriate support services in the context of their family and community environment shall be created;

5.6.5. All effort shall be made to establish special centres where persons with physical and mental impairment and without any family support will be cared for;

5.6.6. Appropriate and sustainable educational programmes shall be launched to significantly raise the level of public awareness concerning the determinants and consequences of the problems of physical and mental disability as well as to change the prevailing harmful traditional attitudes, norms and practices in respect to persons with physical and mental impairment;

5.6.7. Strategies and programmes designed to increase our understanding of the causes and prevalence of physical and mental disability and thereby prevent and mitigate their spread shall be formulated;

5.6.8. All effort shall be made to gradually remove all physical impediments and make residential areas, work and other public places more physically accessible to persons with disability; and

5.6.9. Support and assistance shall be provided to community action-groups, non-governmental organizations and voluntary associations involved in providing services to persons with physical and mental impairment.

5.7. Social Problems

5.7.1. To promote the prevention, control and reduction of the prevalence of social problems, a network of rural-development-led programmes shall be established over time; new laws and regulations aimed at curtailing the spread of these problems shall be enacted and enforced;

5.7.2. All effort shall be made to rehabilitate persons whose lives have been affected by social problems through psycho-social interventions, vocational/technical training, job placement and other services and programmes;

5.7.3. In addition to nurturing the elements in our culture that make for gracious living, educational programmes shall be mounted to free the population from attitudes and practices rooted in harmful customs and beliefs wherein social problems have their roots;

5.7.4. Developmental programmes and services aimed at preventing and controlling such social problems as are inimical to human dignity and productivity which include lumpenness, prostitution, begging, etc. shall be designed and implemented;

5.7.5. Programmes and services aimed at rehabilitating street children and juvenile delinquents as well as reducing the prevalence of these problems over time shall be designed and launched;

5.7.6. Measures shall be taken to curtail the consumption of psychotropic drugs and related habit-forming substances resulting in behavioural patterns and practices offensive to public morality; and

5.7.7. Governmental,non-governmental, community and individual voluntary efforts aimed at preventing, controlling and treating the consequences of social problems shall be encouraged and supported.

6. General Strategies for the Implementation of the Policy

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia committed itself to the task of meeting the economic and social needs of the most vulnerable segments of society by adopting this National Developmental Social Welfare Policy. The Policy identifies the family, children, particularly those in especially difficult circumstances, youth, women, particularly those suffering from severe economic and social deprivation, the elderly, particularly those without families, persons with physical, mental and emotional disabilities and those who are victims of various social problems, as target groups . Such persons and groups are indeed the responsibility of communities, civil societies, non-governmental organizations and the State.

The effective implementation of social welfare programmes addressing primarily the above-mentioned segments of the population requires the participation of religious organizations, associations and the private sector.

This is the essence of the strategy of using community organizations and institutions in problem-solving efforts and differs from charity in its traditional sense in that it calls for empowering communities to use all available personal and institutional capacity in problem-solving efforts at the local community level.

Community organization strategies are used as a method of reversing the marginalization of community-based organizations and as antidotes to dependency and a sense of defeatism and despair. Participation of the poor and the marginalized in the effort to solve the problem of poverty enables them to acquire new insights into the causes and consequences of given problems and how they can be solved. This is what participatory, bottom-up development essentially means.

The process involves the optimal utilization of local capacity by encouraging and enabling local communities to identify the nature and complexity of their own problems and to explore alternative solutions thereof. It also involves identifying the type of leadership available at the local community level, determining the degree of trust people place on such leaders and training them to assume responsibility for guiding the community in the course of self-reliant development and in the management of sustainable services.

In most cases, however, it is not possible for local communities to be entirely self-reliant in terms of human, technical and material resources. This is particularly the case in this country where readily usable community resources are scarce. Hence the need for federal and regional support to local development efforts.

One other common method applied in meeting the needs of the vulnerable segments of society is the institutional approach. Institutions which are established to address the needs of specific groups of

people can be employed when and if circumstances dictate that other approaches are not viable.

However, community-based services with a system of outreach will be the focus of this strategy, be it in developmental, preventive or rehabilitative social welfare prgrammes and/or services.

There are two other important areas of strategic importance in the provision of social welfare services that must be stressed. These are research and multidiciplinarity. The strategy of multidiciplinarity can be broadly viewed to include the effort to involve civil society institutions in problem-solving processes .

Based on the above principles and in recognition of the ability of Regional Governments to develop their respective strategies in line with this, the following general strategies are designed for the implementation of the Policy.

6.1 Community Participation

Community mobilization and participation is a key strategy that will be given priority in the implementation of all developmental social welfare programmes and services at the grassroots' level. The primary responsibility for the implementation of this Policy as well as for mobilizing communities and ensuring their fullest participation rests with the Wereda, with Wereda Councils at the helm.

The following strategies, among others, are designed to ensure such community mobilization and participation:

6.1.1 Existing traditional and other grassroots' associations of the people shall be assisted and utilized for the initiation and implementaion of developmental social welfare activities as outlined in this Policy.

6.1.2 The participation of already existing peoples' development associations as well as new ones shall be facilitated and encouraged in all social welfare programmes in the Weredas.

6.1.3 The Federal Ministry and Regional Bureaux of Labour and Social Affairs/Disaster Prevention and Preparedness and Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux (LSAB/DPPLSAB), in collaboration with line Ministries and Bureaux, shall assist Wereda Councils to be capable of mobilizing communities for activities related to developmental social welfare.

6.1.4 Depending on each Region's need, Wereda Councils shall be strengthened with the appropriate financial,material and human resources required for the effective implementation of the Policy.

6.1.5 Based on the Policy, Regional Governments shall see to it that community participation is facilitated and the appropriate, region-specific and workable mechanisms are designed and implemented by way of ensuring such participation.

6.2 Partnership and Coordination

The stakeholders in developmental social welfare are many and diverse. The complexity and magnitude of the problems to be addressed dictate multidiciplinarity as a priority strategy that must be followed so that the active involvement of all relevant sectors is ensured. Appropriate mechanisms should, therefore, be put in place in order to ensure such a multidiciplinary approach, coordination and partnership. To this end, the following mechanisms are designed:

6.2.1 At the Federal level, a 'Partnership Forum' comprising representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved, or have potential interest, in social welfare as well as the private sector will be formed.

6.2.2 The focal point for the 'Partnership Forum' at the Federal level shall be the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and the 'Forum' will be chaired by the Minister .

6.2.3 Similar 'Partnership Forums' will be established at Regional, Zonal and Wereda levels.

6.2.4 The 'Forums' at various levels will, among others, serve as platforms to discuss and address problems, constraints and achievements related to social welfare as well as to facilitate the roles of NGOs and other sectors involved in developmental social welfare. They will also be used to mobilize and distribute resources as well as to coordinate efforts.

6.2.5 In due time and with recommendations from the 'Forums' to be established, mini-forums addressing each of the target groups/areas of the Policy will be established.

6.2.6 Detailed duties and responsibilities as well as working guidelines, for the forums at various levels, will be formulated and implemented by the respective bodies.

6.3 Research /Studies

Preventive and developmental as well as rehabilitative programmes of social welfare should be based on scientific and applied research. Understanding the underlying causes and consequences as well as the magnitude and intensity of social problems associated with the target groups of the Policy is an essential strategy component.

It is, therefore, designed, among others, to implement the following strategies:-

6.3.1 Federal, Regional and Zonal Offices of Labour and Social Affairs will design and conduct studies/researches that are in line with their mandates and responsibilities.

6.3.2 A close collaboration will be forged with research and higher learning institutions at the Federal and Regional levels both in conducting studies and dissemination of results.

6.3.3 Focus of research/study areas in all cases will be the target groups/areas as outlined in this Policy with the ultimate objective of creating preventive, developmental and/or rehabilitative programmes and services as well as base-line data.

6.4 Capacity Building

The realization of the Policy objectives dictates that Federal and Regional Offices of Labour and Social Affairs have the required capacity. In this regard, the following major strategies, among others, will be pursued:

6.4.1 Federal and Regional Offices of Labour and Social Affairs will prepare training packages for their respective staff, based on correct identification of needs/gaps and implement them accordingly, revising them periodically.

6.4.2 Federal and Regional Labour and Social Affairs Offices will conduct, short-term in-service training programmes, depending on resource and capacity, for the Regions, based on the packages or otherwise.

6.4.3 The Federal Labour and Social Affairs Office shall extend technical assistance to training programmes that are region-specific.

6.4.4 The Federal Office will initiate and implement various capacity building programmes/projects for the Regions, to equip them both technically and materially.

6.4.5 As Wereda Councils are the primary local public body responsible for the implementation of this Policy, Regional Governments and Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux (LSAB/DPPLSAB) shall provide them with capacity-building assistance.

6.5 Programmes and Services

Social welfare programmes /projects and services should be based on the principles of the Policy and involve a participatory way of performing activities. They should apply bottom-up approaches by making favourable conditions for the community to fully participate in identifying and prioritizing problems and designing alternative solutions and implementing them. Therefore, for successful realization of such programmes / projects and services the following major strategies are designed:-

6.5.1 All programmes /projects/ services related to developmental social welfare must be based on the principles of this Policy, the Regional Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux (LSAB /DPPLSAB) Wereda Councils and other pertinent governmental and non-governmental organizations being responsible for their efficacious implementation.

6.5.2 The Federal-level office will initiate and implement pilot programmes and replicate them, if appropriate, in close collaboration with Regional Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux. Other programmes initiated by the federal MOLSA will be implemented by Regional Bureaux (LSAB/DPPLSAB) with a close follow-up and evaluation of the federal MOLSA.

6.5.3 All programmes/projects/services must, as much as possible, be community-based with the maximum possible participation and ownership of communities, with Wereda Councils playing the leading role.

6.5.4 Services/programmes/projects will be designed in such a manner that they promote self-help groups and initiatives at the grassroots' level, with the ultimate aim of eliminating dependency syndrome and ensuring self-reliance.

6.6 Advocacy and Awareness Raising

The underlying causes of many social problems prevalent in Ethiopia could be traced to the low-level of literacy and awareness. This calls for awareness raising through information, education and communication (IEC), targeting communities with the ultimate objective of bringing about attitudinal changes. In other cases, a lot of advocacy should also be done to planners, policymakers and functionaries at various levels as well as opinion setters and religious leaders. As the success of social welfare programmes highly depends on a change of attitude and practice, the following strategies, among others, are designed in this regard:

6.6.1 Advocacy and awareness-raising programmes primarily targeting communities at the grassroots' level will be designed and implemented by Regional Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux (LSAB/DPPLSAB) and other pertinent governmental and non-governmental organizations.

6.6.2 A mix of media and other appropriate forums, including national and local mass media as well as religious and other cultural gatherings, will be appropriately used for advocacy and awareness raising.

6.6.3 National, Regional and Local workshops, seminars, symposia, etc. addressing issues related to the target groups/areas of the Policy will be designed and implemented.

6.7 Gender Issues

It is evident that in Ethiopia women are affected by social problems more than men are. So in order to enhance gender equity and equality all social welfare programmes should be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures a fair division of labour between both sexes. The following major strategies will be implemented in this regard:

6.7.1 Gender issues will be streamlined in all programmes/projects/services addressing the target groups/areas outlined in this Policy.

6.7.2 Where appropriate and relevant, programmes/ projects/services that have women components or are women-specific will be designed and implemented at various levels.

6.7.3 Collaboration and networking with other organizations working on gender issues and the realization of the objectives of the National Policy on Women will be pursued by the Federal, Regional and Zonal Offices of Labour and Social Affairs (LSAB/DPPLSAB).

6.8 Data Bank System

Policymakers, planners, researchers as well as functionaries of social welfare programmes, both governmental and non-governmental, require base-line data and information regarding the target groups/ areas outlined in this Policy. Not much has been done in this regard, primarily because of the nature of the target groups, which are not easy to trace for a representative, scientific survey. Even what has been done so far is not organized and available in a 'user-friendly' manner, and, thus, calls for a data/information bank system. It is, therefore, designed to implement the following:

6.8.1 A central Data/Information Bank will be organized at the Federal level to organize, store and disseminate base-line information and data regarding social welfare in general and the target groups/areas outlined in this Policy in particular.

6.8.2 Regional Bureaux will also establish a similar Data Bank System that will serve their respective Regions and at the same time will be an input to the Central Data Bank.

6.8.3 Appropriate support will be given to Regions in organizing their Data Bank System.

6.9 Social-Welfare-Related Laws

There are laws and regulations as well as international conventions ratified by the Country which are directly or indirectly related with the Developmental Social Welfare Policy. In this regard, therefore, it is designed to implement the following major strategies:

6.9.1 Existing social welfare laws and regulations shall be updated.

6.9.2 New rules and regulations related to the target groups/areas of the Policy shall be developed as deemed necessary.

6.9.3 Mechanisms for the effective implementation of relevant international as well as national laws/conventions/recommendations shall be strengthened.

6.10 Follow-up and Evaluation

Every programme/project and service initiated at any level should incorporate follow-up and evaluation mechanisms as its major components. Follow-up and evaluation mechanisms are very important instruments in all strategies of programme implementation processes. They help ensure that resources are properly utilized, identify problems and seek possible solutions, as well as to monitor and control the success of the programmes/projects and services. Therefore, in order to follow up and evaluate programmes/projects and services related to social welfare activities, the following major strategies are designed:

6.10.1 A 'Joint Forum' of Federal and Regional Offices of Labour and Social Affairs, the working guidelines of which will be prepared by MOLSA in collaboration with the Regions, and meets periodically to discuss and evaluate past performances and chart out future plans will be formed and implemented.

6.10.2 Regional Labour and Social Affairs Bureaux (LSAB/DPPLSAB) will devise and implement a similar 'Joint Forum' mechanism in their respective Regions.

6.10.3 Federal and Regional Offices of Labour and Social Affairs will, on a regular basis, exchange copies of their short, medium and long-term plans as well as their regular performance reports.

6.10.4 All monitoring, follow-up and evaluation activities carried out by Federal, Regional and Zonal Offices of Labour and Social Affairs will ensure that such exercises are participatory by encouraging communities to participate, directly or through their representatives, in monitoring and evaluation, whenever it is appropriate and relevant.

6.10.5 Relevant governmental organizations, other than the Federal and Regional Offices of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as non-governmental organizations will participate in the follow-up and evaluation exercises related to social welfare and are in line with their mandates and responsibilities.

6.11 Institutional Arrangement

Since the issues included in the Developmental Social Welfare Policy are multi-sectoral in nature, they need to be implemented in collaboration with various relevant bodies. On the other hand, it is well known that there is no organizational structure for social welfare activities at community grassroots' level.

Therefore, until the capacity of the country permits to have an organizational structure which enables to reach the community, the following major strategies are designed so as to implement the Policy objectives using the existing institutional arrangement:

6.11.1 The overall responsibility of Developmental Social Welfare rests with the Government at the federal and regional levels so far as legislation, policy formulation and programme development and supervision are concerned.

6.11.2 Identification and prioritization of needs, mobilization of resources for implementation therefore and taking other actions should take place at the Wereda level. The people of the community where development programmes are being implemented have the right to decide on the type and number of programmes/projects to be designed and implemented at a time, depending on the urgency and the practicability of the programmes/projects. Through their own functional organizations, community residents shall decide on the work programme to be followed and allocate responsibilities to different people in the community.

6.11.3 The mobilization of financial resources at the grassroots' level and the allocation of responsibilities to different persons should be done by the supreme coordinating body of organizations at the community level, with technical and professional support from relevant departments of the local government.

6.11.4 In the long-run, there must be a government department at the woreda level deploying a multi-sectoral team, whose main responsibilities will be involving local communities in identifying problems, prioritizing them, identifying local resources (human, institutional and material, including finance) for problem solving. Such community groups could be assisted by international multi-sectoral technical teams established for the purpose of extending technical assistance to community groups organized to address the needs of vulnerable groups at the woreda and lower levels.