



Development Assistance Group ETHIOPIA

DAG Statement - Human Rights Watch (HRW) report: Development without Freedom – How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia

21 October 2010

The objective of development partners in Ethiopia is to provide assistance that supports effective development and poverty reduction and that reaches its intended beneficiaries. Respect for human rights is central to our work and to sustainable development. And some members of the DAG include human rights issues regularly in their dialogue with Government.

The aid provided by members of the DAG in Ethiopia is transforming the lives of millions of poor people through basic services such as healthcare, education and water, and long-term food security. Our programmes are directly helping Ethiopia to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

We take allegations of misuse of development assistance very seriously. That is why, even before the earlier HRW report, *One Hundred Ways of Putting Pressure*, the DAG commissioned an independent Aid Management and Utilisation Study in Ethiopia to examine the vulnerability of the programmes we support to possible misappropriation.

We do not concur with the conclusions of the recent HRW report regarding widespread, systematic abuse of development aid in Ethiopia. Our study did not generate any evidence of systematic or widespread distortion. We, nonetheless, recognize that the programmes we support are not immune to the potential for aid misuse and have therefore included safeguard measures to address these risks. These measures include a range of rigorous checks such as regular financial audits, independent evaluations, independently-commissioned surveys and field monitoring visits to make sure our aid achieves the intended development results and its benefits reach those who need them.

The DAG Aid Management and Utilization Study concluded that there are generally good accountability mechanisms and safeguards in place that provide checks on possible distortions. The study recommended, however, that safeguards could be further strengthened to include a greater focus on, for example, transparency and independent monitoring. Donors in Ethiopia are working jointly to strengthen programme-specific systems, in line with the study recommendations. And we will

take forward a second stage of the DAG study to review further the effectiveness of accountability measures and safeguards on the ground and to cover other important donor-financed programmes. We believe that implementation of such measures will further reduce the potential for the type of misuses with which the HRW report was concerned.

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