

**AFAR NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE
RURAL LAND USE AND ADMINISTRATION
POLICY**

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Introduction

1.1 General Feature of the Afar National Regional State

The Afar national Regional State is situated in the North-eastern tip of Ethiopia and has an area of about 94,760 square kilometers. This area of the regional state accounts for 8.4% of the area of our country Ethiopia.¹ The Afar National Regional State is found in the Great Rift Valley System of northern part of Ethiopia. It shares borders with Eritrea in the north-east, with Tigray National Regional State in the north-west; with Oromia in the south; with Somali Regional State in the south-east; with Amhara National Regional State in the west; and with the Republic of Djibouti in the east.

The region is divided in to five zones and thirty two woredas. The region exhibits a physical feature that is mostly plain and an altitude of less than 1500 meters above sea level, an altitude that further falls from west to east. The lowest point in the Country, Dallol depression that is 126 meters below sea level is found in here.

The land use indicator study suggests that about 7.0% of the total area of the region is suitable for crop production; and 22.4% of the total area of the region could be developed for agricultural activity. However, only about 1.2% of the total area of the suitable area is used. The land use study also indicates that about 25.7% of the total area of the region is suitable for grazing purposes. About 70.9% of the total area of the region is denuded and devoid of vegetation. In the rainy season that is usually scarce, about 54.9% of this denuded part of the region gets little rainfall. The grass shoots that appear as a result of the little rains in this area are used for grazing purposes, though, for a short period of time.

The land use study also shows that there about twelve soil types available in the region; and out of these soil types 49% is sandy and rocky. This has resulted in making 70.9% of the total area of the region denuded; and only about half of this area is used for grazing for a short period of time during the scanty short rainy season. Other than this large tract of land has no use at all.

The climatic condition of the region is mostly hot, desert type and partially dry. As a result the region exhibits high temperature, and low rainfall that is not distributed uniformly.

According to the 1996 population and housing census, the population of the region at the end of 2004 was estimated to be 1,329,999 (one million three hundred twenty nine thousand nine hundred ninety nine). Out of this 92% of the population is rural pastoralist and agro-pastoralist.² The Afar pastoral community is leading a communal life (using natural resources communally); and they are also mobile in search of water and grazing.

¹ The source of this information is the preliminary indicative land use study of the Afar National Regional State conducted in 2001.

² The National Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, January 2004.

It is estimated that there are about 9,213,683 (nine million two hundred thirteen thousand six hundred eighty three) cattle, goats and sheep in the region. Out of this, about 1,990,851 (one million nine hundred ninety thousand eight hundred fifty one) are cattle; 2,303,247 (two million three hundred three thousand two hundred forty seven) sheep; 3,960,512 (three million nine hundred sixty thousand five hundred twelve) goats; 759,754 (seven hundred fifty nine thousand seven hundred fifty four) camels; 172,181 (one hundred seventy two thousand one hundred eighty one) donkeys; 2,964 (two thousand nine hundred sixty four) mules; 898 (eight hundred ninety eight) horses; and 20,276 hens (twenty thousand two hundred seventy six).³ The life of the people of the region, as indicated in the study, depends on its animal wealth and the natural resources like grazing and water. However, the animal production and husbandry practice in the region is not properly managed in line with the availability of grazing and water distribution. This poor natural resource management practice has contributed to the degradation of the natural vegetation, the loss of the fertile top soil through wind and water erosion; and intensification of desertification.

1.2 The objective condition of land use in the region

The Afar National Regional State has a large size land that is endowed with natural resources. However, the land and natural resources are not being used in a rational and sustainable manner in order to accommodate the interest of future generation.

Rural lands in the region are mainly administered under clan leaders. The government also administers rural lands in few areas where there are state farms and national parks that are found in Zone two. There are certain areas where rural lands are administered by individuals in areas where sedentary farming prevails in Argoba Special Zone. Such lands are mainly used for agriculture and grazing purposes. The lands that are under clans and clan leaders are mostly used as communal grazing lands and communal farms. It is important here to note that all members of the clan do not have equal rights to use and decide on the communal lands. Furthermore, women do not have equal rights with men to use and decide on land related matters. Besides, there is no government organ that administers rural lands in a uniform and consistent manner.

As indicated earlier, the economic basis of the Afar people is animal wealth; and the land is generally used as communal grazing land. The recurrent drought, deforestation, salinity of the soil, the disproportion number of animal size to the grazing area, growing population, overgrazing, have all contributed to the decline of the quality of the soil. Furthermore, the Awash flood, the spread of weed like plant species, such as the *prosopis juliflora*, *acacia pertinum*, etc. have contributed to

³ Central Agricultural Census Commission, November 2003

degradation of the land in Afar. Farm lands are also becoming scarcer due to conflict with neighboring people/ethnic groups, and allocation of lands for parks.

In order to trying to solve the above land use and administration problems and to lay the groundwork for sustainable use of lands and land related resources; and to ensure the tenure security of the pastoralist, it is therefore, found out imperative to adopt this Land Administration and Use Policy of the Afar National Regional State.

2. The Importance of the policy and its relation with other development policies

The agriculture sector, especially animal husbandry is the economic basis of the region's pastoralists. This is explained by the number of people of the region engaged in the agricultural activity, the fact that animals and animal products are the main sources of food, and sources of income of the majority of population. Side by side with the pastoralist mode of production, there are some agro pastoralists who are engaged in irrigated farming activity.

In order to sustainably develop the animal husbandry and farming activity; and ensure the availability of these resources to the benefits of the future generation; it is necessary to use land and land related natural resources on the basis of information based research and study. Under the current situation, due to overgrazing, and the disproportionate size of animal population and deforestation; the very existence of the pastoralist community is severely threatened leave alone ensuring the security of the future generation.

Adopting a land administration and use policy is found out to be the best alternative to deal with the problems mentioned above and other related problems. The main reasons for adopting the policy could be classified in to four categories:

1. The traditional land administration and use system is not in line with the formal government land administration and use system. Furthermore, the traditional system has been emphasized over the formal system and this situation has created hindrance to investment and tourism activities in the region.
2. The existence of conflict between land use for farming activities; and grazing activities and protection of wildlife.
3. The weakening of the traditional land use and administration system has brought about uncontrolled grazing that in turn brought about land degradation; and spread of animal diseases.
4. The Afar region had previously a land use plan prepared under a small scale map (1:250,000). However, this land use plan has not been supported by policy and legislation to fully implement it.

The policy that is prepared to solve the Afar land administration and use problems mentioned above creates conducive environment for the implementation development policies and strategies that are already enacted and that will be enacted in the future at federal and regional level. Such policies include: the Federal Rural Development Policies and Strategies; the Federal Rural Lands Administration and Use Proclamation; Federal and regional environmental policy; investment

policy; water resource administration policy; forestry policy; the food security strategy; agricultural production development policy; wildlife policy; animal resource development policy; and other natural resource development policies and strategies. The implementation of these policies together with the land administration and use policy will avoid discrepancies and enable authorities to implement the policies consistently so that the goals and objectives of the policies could be achieved.

3. Principles, goals and objectives of the policy

3.1 Principles of the policy

- Land use study; plan; and implementation will be conducted with the participation of the public.
- Every land user shall have the legal right to protection of his/her user right; and shall have a duty to properly use, and protect his/her land.
- Rural land is under the ownership of the people and the state; and is common property that is not susceptible to sale or transfer.
- Women shall have equal land use right with men.
- The right of pastoralists and/or agro pastoralists to free access and use land is guaranteed.
- Where decision to take land for public purposes is reached with the participation of communities, the holder have the right to be compensated by the party who take the land for the property that was on the land and could not be transferred or damaged, the investment made by the holder on the land.

3.2 Goals of the policy

The main goal of this policy is ensure the reliable and sustainable use and protection of the land and land related natural resources in the region through implementing a system of land administration in order to contribute to the improvement of the life of the people of the region.

3.3 Objectives of the policy

The policy has the following objectives:

- Ensure the land use rights and obligations of pastoralists, agro pastoralists, investors, and other users;
- Avoid land use related conflicts;
- Ensure that land is used for sustainable development through public participation and scientific land administration and use study;
- Develop and organize information on land and land based resources, and strengthen the sources of information; and create a system of updating the information;

- Conduct in depth study on the traditional land use and administration system and develop its strong sides;
- Establish government land administration and use institutions (with powers and duties); and
- Create the awareness of the people with respect to the land administration and use policy.

4. Policies

4.1 Ownership of rural lands

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 40 (3) provides that the right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange. The Constitution of the Afar National Regional State, Article 38 (3) also provides that the right to ownership of rural and urban land as well as all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and the people. Land is the common property of the peoples of the region and shall not be subject to sale or other means of exchange. However, since in most parts of the region, land is divided by clans and administered by clan leaders; the state and public ownership of land is hardly recognizable.

Policy: The right to ownership of rural lands is vested in the state and the people.

4.2 The right to use land

Under the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 40(4), (5), and (6):

- “Ethiopian farmers have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession”;
- “Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands”;
- “Without prejudice to the right of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples to the ownership of land, government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by law.”

In the same vein, the Constitution of the Afar National Regional State, Article 38 (4), (5), (6) provides for:

- “The farmers of the region have the right to obtain land free of charge and the protection against eviction from their possession”;

- “Afar pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands”;
- “Without prejudice to the right of the people to the ownership of land, the regional government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by law.”

In spite of these federal and regional constitutional provisions, the pastoralists and agro pastoralists of the region have no equal use right to lands because of the fact that land is administered by clan leaders under the traditional land administration and use system. Furthermore, investors in order to access to land and determine the amount of payment need to negotiate with clan leaders. As a result land use payments are determined by the clan leaders and not by government agency. This system does not create conducive environment for investment and also does not provide legal guarantee and security to investors.

Since the right to use land is not defined by law, pastoralists, agro pastoralists, investors and others could not invest their money and labor in a sustainable manner in order to develop land and land based resources.

Policy: Every pastoralist or agro pastoralist in the Region who intends to be engaged in animal husbandry and/or farming and who is 18 years of age and above, has the right to free access to land. The right of use of pastoralists and agro pastoralists has no time limit. Convenient ways shall be looked in to in order to make land available to investors and other bodies so that they shall have the right to access and use of lands. The right of use of investors and other bodies shall be limited and will be determined by law.

4.3 The right to transfer use right

Under the Constitution of the Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia article 40(7) “Every Ethiopian has the full right to the immovable property he builds and to the permanent improvements he brings about on the land by his labor or capital. This right shall include the right to alienate, to bequeath, and where the right of use expires, to remove his property, transfer his title, or claim compensation for it.”

The Constitution of the Afar National Regional state Article 38(7) also provides:

“Every person has the full right to the immovable property he builds and to the permanent improvements he brings about on the land by his labor or capital. This right shall include the right to alienate, to bequeath, and where the right of use expires, to remove his property, transfer his title, or claim compensation for it.”

However pastoralists and agro pastoralists of the region could not exercise their right of use and the right to transfer and renting of their holdings because of the absence of laws and regulations that clearly determine these rights. This has resulted in a situation where

the pastoralists, agro pastoralists and other bodies could not invest their resources and labor in order to develop perennial crops, engage in soil and water conservation activities; use grazing lands in accordance with the carrying capacity of the land; and in general be involved in protecting the land and its natural resources. It is therefore necessary to ensure the rights of pastoralists, agro pastoralists, investors and other bodies to transfer their use rights through renting and bequeathal so that every one of these right holders will be encouraged to invest to protecting and conserving land and land based resources.

Policy: A rural land holder who has user rights shall have the right to transfer and bequeath his holding rights to others.

4.4 Rural land leasing

In order to improve investment in rural development and use lands for better economic activities in the region, it is necessary to create suitable environments for investors who desire to invest in the area. To create this suitable environment, one of the important measures is to ensure the right of land holders and the regional government to transfer land holdings by lease.

Policy: The regional government or any other person who has rural land use rights shall have the right to transfer his land holdings by lease.

4.5 The right of women to use rural lands

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic republic of Ethiopia Article 35(7) provides that “women have the right to acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property. In particular, they have equal rights with men with respect to use, transfer, administration and control of land. They shall also enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property.”

Similarly, the Constitution of the Afar National Regional State Article 34(7) provides that “women have the right to acquire, administer, control, use, and transfer property. In particular, they have equal rights with men with respect to use, transfer, administration and control of land. They shall also enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property.”

Regardless of these constitutional guarantees, however, women in Afar have no land property rights. This is described in two ways:

- a. An unmarried woman has no equal right with men to inherit lands, especially, irrigation lands for fear that when she marries she would transfer the property rights of such land from her parents to that of her husband.
- b. A married woman has no right to inherit land if she has not given birth to a child at the time of divorce; or if her husband dies before she gives birth.

Policy: Women shall have equal right with men to access, use, and transfer, administer and control lands.

4.6 Ensuring tenure security of land holders

Government has been taking lands of the pastoralists and agro pastoralists for various purposes like state farm development, parks, etc. without their knowledge. This experience has created suspicion in the minds of pastoralist and agro pastoralist communities that government may one day take their lands. This sense of insecurity in the community has caused instability in their lives. The investor too, is insecure because not only he access to land with the agreement and permission of the clan leader, but also the terms of the lease agreement could be annulled at the whim of the clan leader. As a result, the pastoralist, agro pastoralist and the investor are becoming on lookers where land that could be used for farming purposes is covered by unnecessary bushes, like the prosopis juliflora.

In short, because of tenure insecurity pastoralists, agro pastoralists, and even investors could not be engaged in conservation activities of the land and natural resources. This has resulted in the destruction of land and the natural resources to an unprecedented scale.

Under the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Article 40(7) that says “every Ethiopian has the full right to the immovable property he builds and to the permanent improvements he brings about on the land by his labor or capital. This right shall include the right to alienate, to bequeath, and where the right of use expires, to remove his property, transfer his title, or claim compensation for it”; and the Afar Constitution that adopts Article 40(7) of the Federal Constitution as a whole under Article 34(7), it is necessary to issue a policy that ensures tenure security of land holders over the lands they hold.

Policy: Every land holder shall have security of tenure over the land under his possession.

4.7 Minimum size of grazing lands

Under traditional Afar culture, it is the number of animals that one family has that is much more important than the quality of the animals. So, pastoralists always strive to increase the number of their animals rather than ensuring their quality. This has resulted in a situation where too many animals are grazing over a piece of land over and above the carrying capacity of the land which in turn destroys the land and the natural resources. Furthermore, this situation intensifies the decimation of the animals during drought. The increase in the size of the animal population has also contributed to the spread of animal diseases that resulted in the destruction of the animal wealth of pastoralists. The size or number of cattle/animals that would be sufficient to satisfy the overall economic needs of

the pastoralist should be proportional to the carrying capacity of the land size of each clan. This will further help to ensure sustainable use of land and land based natural resources. It is therefore necessary to determine the minimum size of grazing land of a family.

Policy: Without prejudice to the traditional system of communal and shifting grazing system applied by pastoralists, the minimum land size of a family or a clan holding will be determined in proportion to the number of animals and the carrying capacity of the land on the basis of studies.

4.8 Agricultural land size

In certain areas of the Afar Regional State large tracts of land that could be developed through irrigation are in the hands of clan leaders. These lands are not used and are left fallow and in some cases are being covered by weeds like the prosopis juliflora. On the other hand there is a shortage of lands in some areas where irrigation and rain fed agriculture is practiced. It is therefore necessary to determine the minimum and maximum size of agricultural land holdings according to the objective reality in each area and in a manner that the available land could be utilized efficiently.

Policy: The government organ that is in charge land administration and use in the region shall determine, on the basis of study, the minimum and maximum size of agricultural land holdings.

4.9 Redistribution of rural landholdings

Large tract of land that is already developed and that could be developed is not utilized. To deal with this problem, it may be necessary to conduct redistribution of such lands. The following could be cited as justifications to conduct the redistribution:

- There has never been judicious redistribution of lands in the region;
- The land ownership right of women is so minimal and that redistribution could be used as a correcting factor ;
- Large tracts of agricultural lands are in the hands of few individuals;
- There are large tracts of lands that were previously under state farms which are now left unutilized and fallow;
- Conflict in the community has become rampant as a consequence of the weakening of the traditional land administration and grazing system.

Policy: On the basis of study, and as deemed necessary; grazing and farm land holdings could be redistributed.

4.10 Land surveying and registration

Information gathered from different sources such as maps concerning the area and boundary of the Afar region are not consistent and are not reliable. The information is not

reliable and consistent because the boundaries of the Afar regional state is not clearly defined and this has made it difficult to exactly tell its total area. A better map of the region available is the land use plan indicator map that was prepared with the technical assistance of the previous Ministry of Agriculture. This map will not be reliable unless it is supported by a larger map of 1:50,000 and above and detailed cadastral survey. Surveying and registration activity has not been conducted in the region. This has contributed to the problem of designing a land use plan for the region. Furthermore, the absence of surveying and registration of lands has contributed to the aggravation of land use conflicts between Afar clans, between Afaris and neighboring people, between Afar pastoralists and parks/government.

Policy: Land holdings shall be surveyed and registered according to their use and in the name/s of the land holder/s.

4.11 Preparing and implementing land use plan

A 1:250,000 land use plan indicator map of the region is already prepared but this plan cannot be implemented unless a detailed study is conducted and a larger scale map (1:50,000) or above is prepared.

Policy: A land use plan for the Afar region shall be prepared and implemented on the basis of detailed study.

4.12 Creating public awareness on land administration and use and land and natural resources development and conservation

There has not been a public information and education exercise conducted to create the awareness of the people of the region with respect to managing, administering using, developing and conserving land and land based natural resources. It can be generally said that there has not been any kind of activity undertaken to conserve land and land based natural resources in the region. Consequently, the community has become onlooker when farm and grazing lands are invaded by unnecessary bushes and weeds like *prosopis juliflora* and *partinium* spp., and also when parklands are invade by members of the community in search of grazing. A public information campaign to educate the people on the importance of protecting land and land based natural resources so that the people themselves would be engaged in conservation activities is therefore of paramount importance.

Policy: A public information and awareness activity shall be conducted at various levels to educate the people in order to conserve and develop in a balanced manner the natural resources.

4.13 Protecting land holdings

The traditional land grazing system that was practiced in Afar in previous times is known to have protected the well being of the eco-system. The traditional land grazing system, however, has been weakening from time to time due to various factors. As a consequence of the weakening of the traditional land use and land grazing system, the land has been exposed to too many animals over and above its carrying capacity and overgrazing that resulted in the destruction of the natural resource. Furthermore, irrigation farm development activities conducted by agro pastoralists, investors, and state farms is not based on a land use plan, and also does not follow the drainage system. This has brought about the salinity of the soil and as a result large tracts of land are becoming unproductive. The spread of the unnecessary bushes and weeds (prosopis juliflora, partinium spp., and acacia spp.) on farm and grazing lands has brought about serious negative consequence on productivity. It has become necessary, therefore, to control undesired bushes like Prosopis Juliflora, Accacia spp., and to totally destroy the weed Partinium spp. that is spreading widely, in order to conserve the land and make it productive.

Policy: Every land holder who is using lands has the duty to protect, conserve, and control his holding in order to prevent the causes of land degradation and that make the land unproductive. Under a law that will be enacted to implement this policy, anyone who fails to comply with this duty will lose his land holding and to those who comply with this duty some kind of incentive system will be laid.

4.14 Protected lands

The Constitution of the Afar National Regional State, Article 104(2) provides “The Afar people and government have a duty to protect the Awash and Yangoderassa national Parks in addition to the protection provided to these parks by the Federal Government.”

There are some places around riversides and spots where hunting activities is prohibited in Yangoderassa and Awash parks that consist of few wildlife and plant species. But even these spots are not given sufficient attention and protection. Some members of the pastoralist and agro pastoralist community enter the parks in search of grazing and farm lands. As a result trees are being cut down and destroyed for fuel and construction purposes; and the wild animals are being forced to leave their habitat due to the unplanned human intervention.

Policy: Areas that are designated protected areas like Yangoderassa and Awash National Parks, riverside forest areas, and places where hunting is restricted with their natural resources shall be protected in order to preserve the eco-system.

4.15 Conducting studies and research on land administration and land use

Because of the absence of a consistent and uniform land administration and use system; and lack of research and study in the area of land administration and use in Afar national regional state, it is not possible to find adequate and concrete information on land administration and land use issues and to understand the changes in land use. Furthermore, the traditional land grazing and use system is not well researched and it is not possible to tell its weakness and strengths. As a result it has become difficult to identify the better type of land administration and use system suitable to the objective condition of the region. It is, therefore, essential to conduct research and study in the area of land administration and use to fill this gap.

Policy: A system that will facilitate study and research which focuses on identifying problems and proposing solutions on land administration and use issues will be established.

4.16 Land use tax

The Constitution of the Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 97 (2) provides that “Regional states shall determine and collect land use taxes.” In the same vein, the Constitution of the Afar National Regional State, Article 45(2) provides that the regional government shall determine and collect taxes on land use. However, tax for grazing and farm land use has not been practiced in the region. This has constrained the regional government from generating revenue that is needed for regional development.

Policy: A land tax system that requires land holders and users to pay taxes for land use on the basis of the type of land use (grazing, farming, etc.) and that take other factors into account shall be established.

4.17 Settlement of pastoralists

The Afar pastoralists usually roam from place to place in search of grazing and water for their cattle and other animals. This system of livelihood has helped to balance and protect the eco-system from destruction. However, the repetitive and cyclical drought has made the traditional system of roaming in search of water and grazing totally unreliable and is threatening the very existence of the pastoralists. Creating suitable environment to settle pastoralists has therefore become an urgent and important task. This issue and direction has already been given sufficient attention in the Rural Development Policies, Strategies, and Tactics document of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and other documents that outline the visions for pastoral areas development and good governance.

Policy: Suitable settlement areas around riversides shall be identified and essential infrastructures will be established in order to enable pastoralists to voluntarily settle and practice irrigation agriculture.

4.18 Assigning rural lands for social services

Lands that would commonly be used by the community for burial, ceremonial, religious or otherwise, etc., purposes should be designated, in order to maintain the long standing tradition of tolerance and communal life of the people.

Policy: Lands that will be communally used for social gatherings and religious ceremonies, etc. shall be designated and assigned based on study and in consultation with the people concerned.

4.19 Government development projects

Government has the responsibility to develop areas that are not within the capacity and reach of pastoralists and agro pastoralists; that require heavy investment but that are of importance for environmental protection and natural resource development.

Policy: Land development activities that cannot be undertaken by the people for they require big investment and higher level of technology shall be identified and government shall cause development activities to be undertaken in such areas.

4.20 Land administration

In Afar, decisions on land matters are made in most places by clan leaders; and in some places by woreda and kebele administration authorities. These persons, however, do not have the requisite scientific knowledge to effectively administer lands. Large tracts of lands are as a result becoming unused and being invaded by unnecessary bushes and weeds. Furthermore, investors could not be engaged in investment activities whole heartedly and with full confidence because they do not have sufficient legal guarantee and security of tenure. Because of absence and lack of regulatory and monitoring body in areas where irrigation farming activities are conducted, water and land use are being abused that resulted in furthering the salinity of the soil. It is therefore necessary to establish an organ of government that administers lands consistently in order to solve these problems and to increase production and productivity.

Policy: A higher land administration organization that shall have the powers and duties of registering land holdings, by type and use shall be established at regional, woreda, and kebele level.

4.21 Land use dispute settlement

There is no organization that is authorized to uniformly settle land related disputes that arise as a consequence of holding rights and use rights in the region. This situation is creating problems on land holders; and is causing large tract of grazing and farm lands to stay fallow and unused.

Policy: Land related disputes and conflicts shall be resolved by traditional institutions; and government administrative organs established at various level under different types of dispute settlement systems.

4.22 Land use restrictions

Lands in some areas of the region have become so degraded that they cannot be used for agriculture, grazing or development purposes due to improper use and natural causes like flooding. The main problems relating to these problems are:

- The invasion of large tracts of lands by unwanted bushes and weeds; the traditional grazing system that is applied by the people that does not prevent lands from being grazed beyond and above their carrying capacity; and the weakening of the traditional system that rehabilitates grazing lands have caused land degradation;
- Some lands that could be developed through irrigation are becoming saline due to misuse of water;
- Incompatibility of the population growth with the natural resource base of the region;
- Conflict of interest between preserving protected lands versus grazing lands;
- The global climate change has turned some places in the region into desert and making them unsuitable for grazing, however such places are still grazed and not left to be rehabilitated or revived to their previous condition;
- Water from higher places is causing serious flooding that washes away the earth and creates gully;
- Highlands and sloppy areas in some woredas have been used for intensive farming and grazing in the absence of any kind of soil and/or water conservation methods. It is therefore essential to adopt a policy that would alleviate the effects of these problems

Policy: Land use restrictions will be applied in areas that are degraded and susceptible to natural resource degradation based on study and research conducted by the appropriate authority.

5. Follow up, monitoring, and evaluation

The characteristics feature of land use is that it changes from time to time; and consequently the information gathered should be updated and be supported by policy. The policy should also be implemented since policy is not an end in itself; and the implementation should be followed up, monitored; and evaluated. Therefore, a system of monitoring and evaluation should be laid down to follow up the implementation and updating of the policy.

6. Legal framework

- 6.1** Laws that establish and define the powers and duties of the region's land administration and use authority; the land administration and use of the region; and regulations and guidelines that are consistent with the Federal and Afar constitutions, and this policy; and in consultation with the people will be enacted.
- 6.2** The land administration and use laws that will be enacted shall assert as a framework that land belongs to the state and shall be administered under the laws and regulations of the government.
- 6.3** The customary laws and practices of the region will be studied and accorded recognition and will be enforced as long as they do not contradict with the region's constitution and this policy.