Inter Africa Group Strategy

2019-2021

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
February 2019

Girma Kebede Kassa
National Consultant

Table of Contents   **Page**

Acronyms

AAMR	Amani Africa Media and Research Service
ACT	Act Change and Transition
AU	African Union
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
CDRC	Centre for Dialogue, Research and Cooperation
CEWERU	Conflict Early Warning Unit
EASSI	East Africa Sub-region Support Initiative
ELCDP	Ethiopian Local Capacity Development Program
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUTF	European Trust Fund
FSS	Forum for Social Studies
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development
IRC	Inter Religious Council
MOP	Ministry of Peace
NRI	National Research Institute
PACT	People Acting in Community Together
RECs	Regional Economic Communities Organizations
LPI	Life and Peace Institute
ICBT	Informal Cross- border Trade
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. **Introduction**

   Over the last 30 years, since its establishment in 1989 as a non-profit organization, IAG has played an important role in promoting peace, democratization and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa. As a result, it has managed to cultivate an impressive (a high) reputation in research and public dialogue providing vital inputs to the development of policy issues both in the context of Ethiopia and the IGAD sub-region. In its long journey IAG has achieved commendable results towards peace building, strengthening democratic culture and institutions, documentation and knowledge transfer. It has also faced numerous challenges in its operations especially over the last few years because of restrictive CSO legislation and constrained enabling environment.

   Owing to the newly unfolding political reforms in Ethiopia, e.g. opening democratic space, proclamation of a reformed Charities and Civil Societies Law and creation of an enabling environment, improved relations between government and the NGOs in Ethiopia on one hand, and the continuing challenges in the Horn on the other, the IAG Board of Directors and Management felt the need for developing a revised and updated strategy that reflects the current reality on the ground. Accordingly, this document offers a strategic framework to guide and sustain the operation of IAG for the coming three years (2019-2021). The strategy builds on the knowledge acquired and experience gained by IAG over the past several years in its programmatic focus areas.

   Initially, the document highlights the achievements of its current ongoing programs both in Ethiopia and in the IGAD sub-region and the challenges and constraints they have been facing. It elucidates the institutional challenges and the difficulties of operating in a restricting environment. It subsequently discusses the emerging political reforms in Ethiopia as it relates to the operations of civil society and the opportunities that are appearing on the scene there of.

   The document further discusses the process followed in reviewing the previous strategy, i.e. organization of a two day retreat (on December 31st, 2018 and 1st January 2019) where IAG Board of Directors and the staff deliberated on the

different scenarios and options that are available for future program activities. This was enriched by a review of relevant documents and discussions with key staff of partner organizations. The approach has resulted in identification of key strategic pillars that will guide the operation of IAG in the coming years. It has also highlighted important programmatic areas and related activities in line with the strategic pillars that have been identified. The document also touches upon legal and administrative actions that may be required to position IAG for the coming opportunities as well as challenges. It emphasizes the need for strong monitoring and evaluation, as well as, learning and knowledge management.

The major challenge facing IAG remains its continued reliance on donor financial support that presents problems of sustainability; these problems must be overcome with diversification of its potential funding sources. Maintaining a robust resource mobilization strategy and retaining key staff might also pose a challenge in view of potential competition from other civil societies and NGOs.

2. **IAG's Profile**

   Inter-Africa Group (IAG) is an independent non-profit organization established in 1989 with a mission of supporting sustainable development, strengthening democratic institutions, and promoting peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Over the last 30 years IAG has managed to cultivate a reputable niche in research and public dialogue on vital development and governance policy issues, both in the context of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa sub-region. More particularly and since 2004, it has played a significant role in conflict prevention, mitigation, and peace building initiatives in cross-border programs in the Horn (including Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia) in partnership with Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD's) Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), PACT, USAID and Ministry of Peace (MoP) in Ethiopia.

   From its inception IAG has primarily implemented highly visible and effective undertakings (research, public dialogue, networking, as well as, coordination of conflict prevention, mitigation and peace building work) executed at higher political and intellectual levels alongside programs targeting local communities. This has enabled the organization to strategically position itself at national and regional levels, where vital political and socio-economic issues are articulated and alternative policy recommendations are developed.

3. Vision
IAG's vision is a Horn of Africa where human rights are respected, democratic culture flourishes, and economic development and peace are achievable. The vision envisages a region in which citizens live in shared and equitable prosperity and conflicts are resolved peacefully and justly.

4. Mission

IAG has a committed mission to nurture and promote peace, human rights, democratic culture and values, as well as, sustainable economic development. IAG strives to fulfill its mission through a combination of research, dialogue, advocacy, and networking on the realization of critical policy issues.

5. Key organizational Principles and Values
IAG strives for excellence and integrity in accomplishing its mission and vision through its strategy. It is guided by the high values and principles stipulated in the relevant regional and international treaties and charters that the Horn/IGAD Member States have entered into in pursuit of sustainable development and durable peace in the region. The revised strategy affirms the vision, mission, and values as laid out in the previous IAG strategies; it updates it by taking into account the internal organizational dynamics and external current political and social environment. These values and principles include the following:
- Promotion of good governance and protection of fundamental human rights through institutionalization of democracy and inclusive participatory development,
- Promotion of community aspiration to maintaining peace in the cross-border areas and finding peaceful resolutions to disputes and disagreements,
- Advocacy for good governance and social justice and evidence based participatory policy formulation,
- Advocacy for accountability and transparency for creating a robust regional peace and security order,
- Promotion of effective partnership and transparent and joint financial management modalities with its donors and partners,
- Adherence to the principle of gender sensitivity and equity,
- Adoption of flexible approaches to compelling realities.

These principles and values shall guide the individual and collective responsibility of the organization.

6. Geographic Focus and Rationale

Geographically IAG has two major programs:

6.1. Ethiopia Program:

Democracy in Ethiopia is at its formative stage. The country lacks strong institutions and also lacks tradition and practices to advance the democratic process. The recent reforms initiated by the new Prime Minister have created an opportunity, and broader political space, for CSOs to expand their engagement in activities that support the democratic process in the country. Hence, one of the focal areas of engagement of IAG is Ethiopia. Accordingly, IAG shall support and sustain the momentum of building democracy in the country through activities that foster research and inclusive dialogue on current political and socio-economic issues, as well as, advocacy aimed at promoting a democratic culture.

6.2. Regional Program

While there are signs of hope for stability and peace in certain countries (e.g. Peace Agreement of South Sudan, rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea), the sub-region of the Horn countries continues to suffer from armed conflicts which have caused countless deaths and has internally displaced millions. The stability and human security of the region remains under perpetual threat. In view of this conundrum the other priority area of IAG program is the Horn. IAG plans to be engaged extensively in the sub-region with peace building program activities and initiatives-including Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) with partners working for the same endeavor.

7. IAG's Past Performance

Despite various legal and resource challenges faced during the last few years, IAG has designed and implemented as important core set of activities under a national program in Ethiopia and under a sub-regional program in the IGAD sub-region. These activities are aimed at building and nurturing democracy,

advancing economic development and fostering peace. They have contributed significantly, and particularly, to the ongoing deepening of democratic process, gender mainstreaming and empowering women. Furthermore, they have also generated recommendations to inform policy on socio-economic issues, as well as, on mitigation of cross-border conflicts and building peace.

7. 1   Ethiopia Program:- The IAG Ethiopia programs included: Parliamentary Internship, Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer Forums, Out-of-school Adolescent Girls Support Program, research and dialogue on critical socio-economic issues, peace building initiatives, Public Opinion Survey, and Countering Violent Extremism Studies. A brief summary of each program is highlighted below.

7.1.1   **Parliamentary Internship:-** Through parliamentary internship over 500 graduate students from the Universities of Addis Ababa, Haromaya, Hawassa, Mekele and Jijiga, have served the federal and regional parliaments providing technical support while in tandem acquiring knowledge and   exposure on how the parliamentary governance functions.

7.1.2   **Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer:-** The Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer dialogue forums created the opportunity for thousands of young professionals to benefit from the accumulated knowledge and experience of seasoned senior experts on various professions, including diplomacy, governance, economic development, health, media etc.

**Sharing Knowledge and Experience between Generations**

7.1.3 **The Support to Out-of-school Adolescent Girls:**- The program provided access to education for over 1100 girls (aged 12-18), from remote rural parts of the country in various regions. It also offered general life skills training to help the girls with income generation that supports their families.

Adolescent Girls Learning with Enthusiasm

7.1.4 **Research and publication:**- The research on political and socio-economic issues has resulted in the publication of several studies on critical regional and national topics, such as, democratic governance, peace and security, federalism, poverty, unemployment, agrarian reforms, health etc. The following are some of the publications: i) Gulf States Engagement in the Horn ii) The Arab Spring and Its Implication for the Horn Countries iii) Constitutionalism and Human Security in the Horn iv) Poverty: Dimensions, Dynamics and Response Options iv) Agrarian Technology Options and Food Security in Ethiopian Pastoralist Areas v) HIV/ AIDS in the Uniformed Services in the Horn of Africa: its implications on Governance, Peace and Security. Subsequent public deliberation on the studies led to informed debates that generated important recommendations to inform policy at national and local levels.

The study on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), conducted and validated in eight regional states in Ethiopia, has produced crucial and valuable input to the envisaged national strategy on preventing and countering extreme violence in the country.

Public deliberation and validation of the CVE study
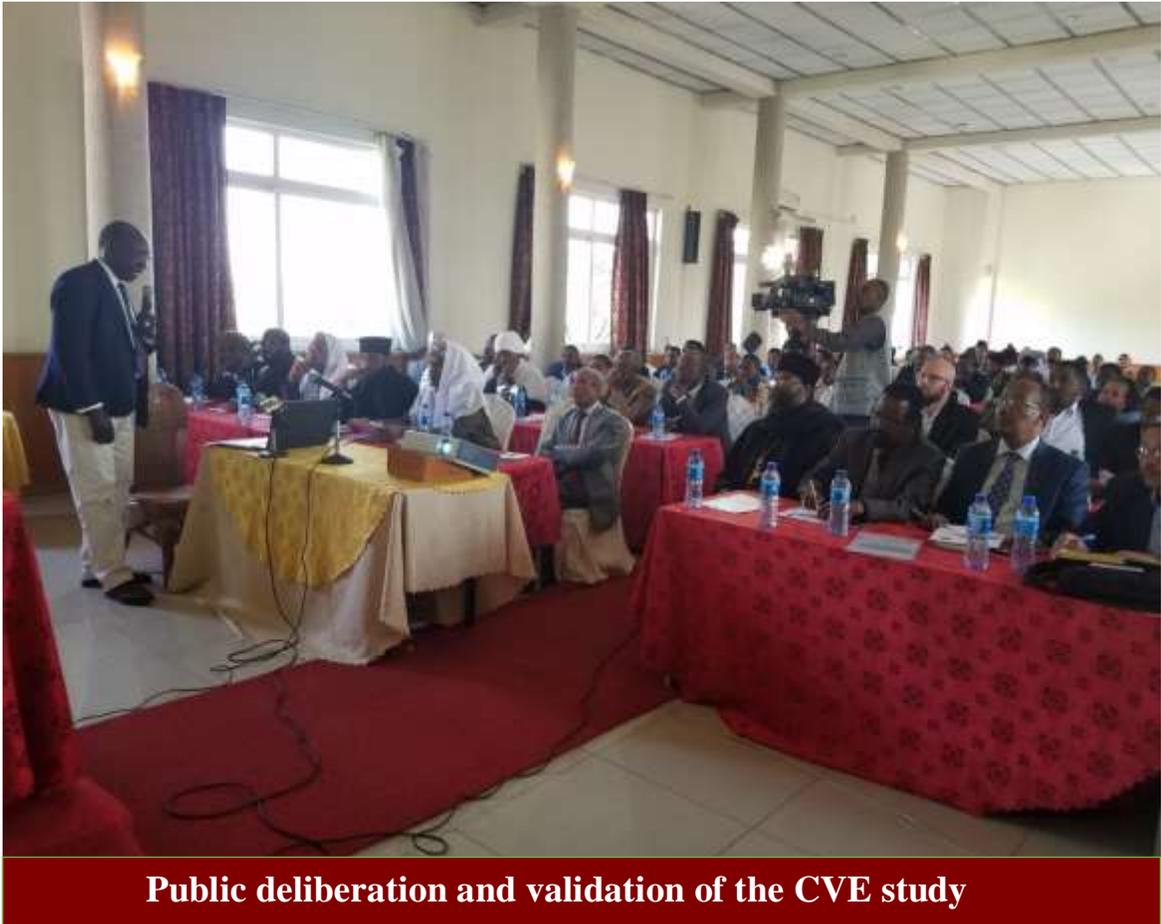
7. 1.5 **Public opinion surveys**- the IAG national public opinion surveys on political and socio economic concerns have produced valuable data that informed the government on the public view on its governance. As an output of the survey the publications included: i) Public attitudes towards the Ethiopian government and ii) The Socio-economic and Political Issues affecting the Society most. These publications have been shared with the relevant institutions and authorities with the intention of contributing to improvement of governance and service to the public.

7. 2 **Regional (Horn of Africa) Program**

7.2.1 Peace III: It is a three year program funded by USAID and implemented in partnership with PACT-Kenya. The main objective of the program is strengthening the peace building capacities of communities, so as to enable them to mitigate and resolve local conflicts. Under the Peace III program, IAG is engaged in cross-border activities on the Ethiopian and

Kenya sides. The program supports local peace structure and institutions (such as Local Peace Committees, Youth Groups, Women's Networks, Elders councils, and Traditional religious groups). Peace III activities are built on IAG's previous experience on peace building through community based Grass Roots Organizations in Ethiopia and Kenya.

In the course of implementing this project, IAG has contributed significantly to mainstreaming women in peace building processes. Likewise, it has revitalized the influence and power of traditional leaders. Through facilitating review and revitalization of dormant community agreements (e.g. Maikona Declaration), IAG has successfully enabled cross-border communities to resolve conflicts triggered by resource competitions. With the help of community consultations organized by IAG under Peace III, traditional customary laws are harmonized with the modern legal system, such that communities found breaching peace accords do not face double penalties for a single crime.

7.2.2 Regional Approaches for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration (RASMI)

The RASMI project is also implemented by IAG in partnership with PACT-Kenya. It is a three year program on cross-border peace building funded by the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF). The program is designed to strengthen joint activities with boundary partners in conflict management and integration. Despite prevailing security challenges in the project areas, IAG has successfully conducted joint training to youth groups and Local Peace Committees with Kenyan counterparts on the culture of peace building which subsequently resulted in preparing a Joint Action Plan. Likewise, a cross-border dialogue was organized by IAG in which traditional elders and local authority representatives reviewed traditional resource management agreements and deliberated on trade and migration issues. The dialogue also led to a Joint Action Plan. A Joint Border Management Team is in the process of being established to follow-up the implementation of the latter Action Plans.

Training on Conflict Prevention and Resolution

7.2.3. **Collaborative project to build NGOs capacity in partnership with Life and Peace Institute (LPI)** -The NGO capacity and partnership building program is a three year cross-border regional project being implemented in collaboration with LPI, EASSI and ACT. The project is aimed at enhancing peace-building capacity of local partner NGOs selected from the two regions of Oromia and Ethio-Somali in order to build confidence and skill to mitigate local conflicts. It involves a number of activities including: rapid assessment, selection of local NGOs (three from Oromia and three from Ethio-Somali regions), conducting at baseline study and mid-line capacity assessment based on criteria set to measure progress and results. To enhance the capacity of local partner NGOs, trainings were given to members drawn from them on issues related to gender advocacy, conflict, role of AU and RECs at AU headquarters. On the basis of the trainings offered, the trainees cascaded to their respective local communities the themes they were trained on. By enhancing the capacity of the local NGOs that reach out to the vast local

communities, the project is better-positioned to assist in realizing its objectives. A major activity envisaged, but not yet implemented, relates to the introduction of information exchange technology for cross-border collaboration among the partners.

Cross-border community discussion on training received

7.3. Major Challenges
7.3.1. Ethiopia Program:- Restrictive law and Enabling Environment

On account of the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation, which prohibited CSO's engagement on advocacy, the IAG-Ethiopia program was drastically curtailed. It was forced to abandon its niche areas in national programs such as opinion surveys, research, public dialog, parliamentary internships. It was compelled to be engaged exclusively in Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer forums and Support to Out-of School Adolescent Girls. This immensely reduced the Ethiopia program activities in the last three years and challenged IAG's ability to mobilize funds for a number of the previous programs discussed above.

In view of the favorable space created under the revised CSOs legislation, which allows engagement in previously prohibited activities, the IAG Ethiopia program, capitalizing on the new enabling situation, could and should consolidate and reactivate its previous programs in which it has

developed a recognized niche, such as, advocacy, research and public dialogue.

7.3.2. Regional Program:- Insecurity and Instability

Overall, instability in the nation and lack of peace and security in the border regions where IAG operates have severely curtailed implementation of planned activities. At the federal level, political and structural reforms affecting the former Ministry of Federal Pastoralist Development Affairs (the present Ministry of Peace), that coordinates the work on the CVE strategy, have compelled progress on developing the strategy to slow down and follow the pace of the Ministry. While preliminary work on developing the envisaged national strategy is already completed, the actual work is yet to commence.

At the regional level, regular and effective communication between the implementation partners could not be sustained because of the frequent conflicts in the project areas; particularly in the border areas of Ethio-Somali and Oromia regions (around Moyale). It was also difficult to readily plan joint activities. Unrest in Jimma led to the suspension of CVE project activities in early 2017 and was one of the causes for no-cost extension of the project.

Though it is difficult to predict change in the insecurity in the project areas in a short period of time, IAG needs to keep gauging the situation and work closely with the Ministry of Peace to facilitate execution of project activities.

8 Rational and Context for the new strategy

8.1. Ethiopia Program

Over the last several months (since the assumption of power by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed), Ethiopia has gone through a wave of tumultuous events and a series of reforms that will have a radical impact on democratization and governance of the country. The successive and rapid pace of change in the country has created much enthusiasm among the civil society to contribute and participate in the reforms. However, their actions are curtailed by capacity limitations. The sudden opening of political space means that few mechanisms and resources exist for fully

engaging in informed and constructive manner on the envisaged reform process.

The Ethiopian Government had initiated a series of reforms aimed at fostering national reconciliation and widening the democratic space. Most important among these are the revision or repeal of laws such as: the Charities and Societies legislation Antiterrorism law, and Mass Media Proclamations-which previously severely curtailed civil society work on human rights and democracy issues and restricted the ability of independent media to operate. In addition, acceleration of the criminal justice system reform and the security sector to make them independent of political control and influence is another important undertaking. Moreover, steps to ascertain institutionalization and implementation of electoral reforms that guarantee the independence of major institutions, including the Judiciary and the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia are important measures for deepening democratization and opening up of the political space. Further, the media landscape has been broadened with the opening of new television and radio stations, unblocking of websites and mushrooming of online news, proliferation of platforms and print newspapers.

Despite the opening of the political space, there is currently very little informed-knowledge based debate on the national media about the challenges facing the country. In order to fill this gap IAG will take timely advantage of the positive changes. IAG will join the current efforts by the civil society and media outlets in providing avenues for evidence based debate between national stakeholders on the current political and economic challenges; it will provide possible recommendations for the short and long term. By providing platforms for engaging meaningfully in a national dialogue, IAG will contribute to building a national consensus ensuring that the relevant actors had the opportunity to voice their opinions on the critical issues facing the country.

8.2. Regional/Horn of Africa program

While there are signs of some hope for stability and peace in certain countries (e.g. Peace Agreement of South Sudan, rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea), the sub-region of the Horn countries continues to

suffer from armed conflicts which have caused hundreds of deaths and internally displaced millions. The stability and human security of the regions remain fragile and under perpetual threat.

On the other hand, the traditional forms of national sovereignty are increasingly being challenged by the dynamics and realities of political and economic interdependence that call for joint effort at regional and global levels. Sharing resources, ecological and economic systems, and joint endeavors mostly fall outside national jurisdiction. This entails that sustainable development can be better achieved through regional approaches agreed upon mutually by the concerned countries.

In view of this challenging reality the other priority area of IAG program is the Horn. IAG plans to be engaged extensively in the sub-region with peace building program activities and initiatives (including integration & Countering Violent Extremism) with partners working for the same endeavor.

9. **Process for the development of the New Strategy**
As stated earlier, cognizant of the promising reform trends in Ethiopia and the challenges in the Horn, the IAG Management and Board of Directors decided on developing a revised and updated strategy that reflects the current unfolding political environment to guide and sustain the operation of the organization for the coming three years. Accordingly, a two day retreat was organized on December 31st 2018 and 1st January 2019, in Bishoftu to review the existing IAG strategy and deliberate on the emerging opportunities and challenges. Members of the IAG Board of Directors, staff and stakeholders actively participated in the discussion assessing the IAG performance, noting its achievement, identifying the drawbacks and institutional challenges and external environment. The highlights of the report from the retreat are the main input towards the formulation of the new strategy.

In addition, inputs from the IAG project program officers have also contributed an important part in identifying the strategic pillars, institutional imperatives, as well as, constraints and impediments. Interviews with key staff from partner institutions have provided an important insight in the development of the strategy. The updated strategy builds on the strength of the

previous strategies that were developed in 2009, 2012 and 2015. IAG has taken into account the new evolving legislative environment as it unfolds and has been able to re-define its relationships with the government and its partners. The process has helped in identification of the approaches it must adopt to guide the implementation of its future programs and activities and its collaboration framework with partners.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the review process has enabled IAG to identify its strategic pillars among the choices that are available, lay out a clear road map in attaining its goals by taking into consideration its institutional capabilities and gauging the new enabling environment for the operation of civil society in the country.

10. **Aim and Objective of the Revised Strategy**

The overall aim of the revised Strategy is to enable IAG to actively contribute to the deepening democratization, good governance, social and economic development, as well as, to the maintenance of peace and security in Ethiopia and the IGAD sub-region.

In other words, the essential purpose of the strategy is to develop and implement programs and activities that will have bearings on democratization and governance, sustainable development as well as management of conflicts and peace building in Ethiopia and the IGAD sub-region.

The intended outcome of the strategy is to enhance democracy, peace and stability in Ethiopia and the IGAD sub-region by engaging the different segments of society in informed, participatory evidence based discussion on the emerging challenges and providing recommendations on how they should be resolved.

11. **Strategic Pillars**

The strategic pillars that emanated from the deliberation at the end of the retreat, and the feedbacks solicited from government and civil society stakeholders, as well as, from a review of relevant documents are the following:

11.1. **Research-**By conducting research, analysis and publication on topics of critical relevance, including governance, peace building, democratization and economic issues, IAG will generate both knowledge and evidence-based analysis to assist stakeholders in making informed policy choices. Moreover, the evidence-based analysis will be a vital input for organizing forums for dialogue and debate on selected political and socio-economic issues. IAG research outputs will thus bring added value and will reinforce other on-going efforts to support governance and democratization. The research will be undertaken in cooperation with universities in the regions and Addis Ababa, Think-tanks and sectoral experts.

11.2. **Dialogue-**IAG will be organizing forums for inclusive dialogue and debates on selected critical policy issues to support and foster the nascent democratic process. Building consensus or making informed choices on policy issues requires transparent, informed discussion and dialogue based on evidence from issues papers or research outputs. It is critical that all the stakeholders are able to participate constructively in an informed discussion and dialogue over core structural issues pertaining to democratization and development and peace building. The dialogues and debates, facilitated in a fair and impartial manner, will contribute to enhancing social cohesion and consolidating sustainable peace in the country and the broader sub-region. This pillar also includes organization of meetings that facilitate Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer.

11.3. **Opinion Surveys** -IAG will undertake an inquiry into public opinion on selected socio-economic issues to assess the perceptions and aspirations of the public on development, democratization and governance issues. Topics may include electoral behavior and attitudes, policy preferences, quality of governance and public services, etc. The resulting reports indicating the attitudes and views of citizens on the latter national issues could be used as inputs to reformulate public policies.

11.4. **Peace Building and Conflict Resolution-**IAG will build on its previous experience in conflict resolution and peace building activities in the context of cross-borders in the IGAD sub-region, as well as, in selected hot spots in the border areas of the national regional states in Ethiopia.

The newly formed Ministry of Peace is developing its strategic plan and one of its innovative approaches is to work with religious groups, artists' associations, women's and youth groups, and elders. With these partners it aims to promote a culture of peace and to address the root causes of conflict. IAG would link up with the Ministry to implement some of these innovative program components. It will also strengthen its collaboration with CEWARN and the CEWERU in collecting and processing relevant socio-economic data based on its experience and capacity. Further, IAG will engage in conflict sensitivity planning designing and implementing various socio-economic projects so that the interventions will be able to bring harmony among the beneficiaries and avoid conflicts as much as possible.

11.5. **Capacity Building**- IAG will continue with its Parliamentary Internship Program through the strategic period so that young university graduates gain experience in parliamentary procedures and legislative work. At the same time IAG will provide technical support to the House of Federation and the House of Peoples' Representatives. IAG will also continue its collaboration with LPI to build capacities of local NGOs for conflict resolution, peace building and strengthening cross-border governance.

11.6. **Network Engagement and Communications-** Network engagement and communications will be central to IAG activities to amplify its voice, as well as, disseminate the products of its research and analysis on important topics for democratization and governance and peace initiatives. This activity pillar will be critical in linking up with strategies and activities of key partners like Ministry of Peace and IGAD/CEWARN which are in the process of crystalizing their own strategies. By identifying areas of common interest IAG can leverage their structures and technical capacity in the implementation of its planned activities. A component of its communication strategy will be working with local FM radios for nurturing a culture of peace and dissemination of targeted information and knowledge.

11.7. **Gender mainstreaming**-IAG will strive to mainstream gender perspectives into its programs, projects and activities to ensure they are gender responsive.

The implementation of the strategic pillars cited above, related programs and activities, and the successful attainment of the strategic goals entails the review of IAG organizational structure, staff and capacity.

12. **Approaches for the implementation of the strategies**

In its future engagement IAG has to capitalize on the opportunities discussed above and adopt a two pronged approach for the implementation of its strategies and related activities. The first one is to resume or revitalize interrupted or suspended activities in Ethiopia in light of the removal of restrictive articles in CSO law and subsequent expansion of the democratic space. The second one is to build and expand on the reputation, niche and strength IAG already built prior to the curtailment of its programs in the sub-region of the Horn, and prudently explore new areas of program activities that complement its niche. Simultaneously, IAG will be reviewing its legal and administrative setup with relevant GOE authorities in conformity with the emerging democratic space and potential area of activities. In addition it will also engage in resource mobilization activities to diversify its source of funding to implement its planned activities.

13. **Program components**

Way forward- Priority activities for 2019 and beyond
Ethiopia
- Research & Dialogue: In the context of the Ethiopian program IAG should primarily aim to seize the opportunity to undertake research and conduct evidence based public dialogue on the reform measures initiated by the new Prime Minister. (Topics to be picked later in consultation with the relevant institutions). IAG's partnership with Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) will be one of its major activities focusing on the upcoming election in 2020.
- CVE: Key focus will be development of detailed CVE national strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Peace (coordinating funding with PACT-Ethiopia and USAID). In this regard further rapid assessment to complement the eight regional studies completed could be conducted to look into the dynamics of extremism related to the recent political reforms. In tandem,

with the CVE strategy activities, IAG shall focus on research and interventions to mitigate and resolve regional conflicts.

- Opinions Survey: Conduct Opinion Surveys to gauge the opinions and perspectives of the public on issues that are relevant to the emerging democratic space and governance. The issues and themes for the surveys will be selected in consultation with the relevant institutions and authorities.
- Internship: IAG will resume parliamentary internship in collaboration with universities of Addis Abeba, Makale, Haramaya, Hawassa and Jijiga. This will be contingent on the needs and requests from House of Federation and the House of Peoples' Representatives.
- Capacity Building: To promote peace and development, IAG will continue its current collaboration with LPI in building the capacities of local NGOs in the cross-border areas of Ethiopia and Kenya. IAG will also partner with Ministry of Peace in providing technical support to local NGOs in selected hotspots of the regional states in resolving conflicts and building peace.

Sub-region (IGAD)

- IAG's work with IGAD/CEWARN, and its special engagement in Ethiopia as the National Research Institution (NRI) to the Conflict Early Warning Early and Response Unit (CEWERU), will continue to be important. The ability to gather credible and sufficient socio-economic data and produce high quality analysis, the skills to map and analyze violent conflict risks and responses from a complex systems perspective will be crucial.
- Revitalization of grass-root peace process in the cross border areas based on revised and enhanced declarations and agreements will be important activities.
- Work with LPI on the realization of the framework Informal Cross- border Trade (ICBT). This is a crucial activity in addressing some root causes of conflict and also in improving governance and building trust among cross-border communities.

14. Partnership and alliances

IAG recognizes the need for close and stronger partnerships with all stakeholders in translating the Strategy and planned activities for concrete results. To this end, IAG will enter into strategic partnerships and alliances with relevant stakeholders at local, national, regional levels that have similar

mandates for engagement in socio-economic development and peace building. Accordingly, partnerships will be forged with NGOs, civil societies, UN agencies, RECs and the African Union Commission (AUC). These include current partnerships with IGAD-CEWARN, LPI, PACT, ELCDP, Inter Religious Council and Ministry of Peace. Additional partnership will be forged with Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Centre for Dialogue, Research and Cooperation, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA and Amani. Successful implementation of the Strategy will only be possible with the support of the government partners that could avail the necessary institutional, legal, and human resources. Through the partnerships IAG will explore all avenues for diversifying and mobilizing resources.

15. **Opportunities**

The IAG strategy is flexible, dynamic and responsive to the changing national and regional context so that it can capitalize on emerging opportunities or respond to new challenges as they arise. The recent political reforms in Ethiopia will offer favorable conditions for IAG's area of expertise. Generally, the new conducive political environment encouraging political activism provides opportunity to work on IAG's core business area, i.e dialogue, research, opinion survey and peace building. Specifically, the new legislation governing civil societies provides an opportunity to work widely on dialogue and advocacy in any area of choice in general by IAG, and particularly, in the specific established areas of expertise of the organization. Simultaneously, the renewed donor interest that stems from the new political climate in the nation also offers opportunity for possible availability of resources for research and public dialogue on issues of the democratic process in the country.

16. **Challenges and Risks**

IAG has faced many challenges and tried to adapt itself to changing realities, it has survived the previous 2009 civil society legislation that hit-hard many NGOs, forcing them to scale-down their activities or close shop. Although the enabling environment for NGO and Civil society operations has generally improved, IAG recognizes a number of internal and external risks and threats that could adversely impact its effectiveness and successful implementation of its planned activities. The biggest peril at the moment is the rampant conflict

in regions that could possibly limit movement of staff as well as stall implementation. Secondly, IAG might come across stiff competition for resources which comes with the opening of space for public dialogue and advocacy. Thirdly, frequent staff-turnover because of job market widening and higher staff salaries and benefits made available might affect IAG's performance and effectiveness.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

IAG will develop a monitoring and Evaluation Plan for its projects and will systematically track the implementation of its planned activities on a regular basis. Through appropriate selected indicators it will assess its performance and achievement of results. The goal is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impact. IAG will undertake mid- term review of progress of activities and take appropriate action to ameliorate project performance. It will also undertake beneficiary survey to gauge the importance of its outputs in achieving its stated goals and objectives. Participatory impact assessment will be conducted not only to assess benefits realized through implementation, but also to document lessons learned and best practices.

18. Learning, documentation and knowledge management

Lessons learned, and new knowledge identified, will be constantly fed back into the Strategy Framework and operations. The most important tool in this will be developing and deploying a robust monitoring and evaluation system rooted in participatory approaches.