

2nd int'l PHE conference kicks off tomorrow



Negash Teklu and Jayson Bremner briefing journalists

BY AREGU BALLEH

ADDIS ABABA--The 2nd International Conference on Population, Health and Environment (PHE) which Addis Ababa is chosen to host is due to kick off tomorrow.

In a joint press conference they gave to local journalists Friday,

Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium also known as PHE. Ethiopia Consortium and its partnering organization, the US-based non-profit organization Population Reference Bureau (PRB) announced that the conference which would take place November 11-12, 2013 at Radisson Blu, is expected to bring together 150 PHE implementers and advocates from sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world.

Population, health and environment initiatives are integrated approaches aiming to bring sustainable development by way of improving access to health services especially family planning and reproductive health while helping communities to manage natural resource and conserve the critical ecosystems on which they depend.

PHE Ethiopia Consortium Executive Director Negash Teklu said that the conference would give a platform for the PHE community from across the world to

share experiences, coordinate efforts, and develop strategies to extend integrated approach to remote rural communities where poor health and reproductive health contribute to poverty, population growth, environmental degradation and unsustainable livelihoods.

Integration of population, health and environment was relatively a new concept to Ethiopia until 2007 when the country hosted the first conference which led to the creation of PHE Ethiopia Consortium, as well as the PHE East Africa network.

PHE Ethiopia, which now has 50 member organizations, is presently piloting 44 integrated PHE projects which are being implemented by member organizations across the country, Negash said.

Negash explained that integration of population, health and environment is an approach which is in line with sustainable development approach. "If we are going to have a sustainable development we need to

address, social, economic environmental concerns of communities in an integrated manner with the focus on social equity, health and environment."

The PHE approach has much to contribute to Ethiopia's major development programmes including the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), Climate Resilient Green Economy and Millennium Development Goals, according to the Executive Director.

During the conference, Ethiopia will share one of the successful experiences gained from the Gurage Peoples Self-help Development Organization known as GPSDO where PHE integration brought remarkable results especially in promoting and expanding family planning and reproductive health services.

Negash, who commended the government's effort to follow integrated approaches in some of its major development strategies and programmes such as the GTP