

issues are not addressed appropriately and consistently, our assistance will have a reduced impact on the poor as well as prospects for Ethiopia's progress on sustainable development overall.

In a democratising country, key actors including Parliament, the opposition, civil society and the poor themselves require free access to information and a commitment to allow them a major voice in the development process. Without this, their essential contributions are not heard, and the pro-poor outcomes we all look for are severely curtailed. We are concerned that recent events, including the apparent closing down of space for civil society and limiting access to the media, have considerably reduced the scope for such interaction and, as such, threaten the effectiveness of some of our development assistance.

To help minimise the adverse effects on development assistance and to enable us to continue to support government plans to scale up its programmes the DAG therefore urges Government to move rapidly on the agreement and implementation of key governance principles as set out in the DAG's contribution to the SDPRP II policy matrix (currently with Government for consideration). These include:

- Fair, efficient and accessible justice for all;
- Enforcement of citizens' rights as enshrined in the Constitution and Penal Code;
- Ability of all citizens to participate in ongoing, pluralistic political processes in a fair and free environment;
- Freedom of expression and free access to information;
- Enhanced civil society empowerment and participation in the development process at all levels.

These are critical issues for management of our contributions to government programmes and we would welcome an early meeting in order to agree the mechanism for such dialogue and how best they can be fully integrated as an important part of the new SDPRP. In the process of reviewing our programmes the DAG also recognises the need to deepen consultation and engagement on development programming and governance to a wider range of partners including civil society, the opposition, and the private sector.

We also recognise that current events increase the vulnerability of Ethiopia. We wish to understand the underlying issues causing fragility and hope to be able to reformulate our programmes to address them over the longer term.

In the interests of all engaged in Ethiopia's sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts, we look forward to working with the Government urgently to address the issues raised above.

Yours sincerely