

Growing the Network: ANSA-Africa Stakeholder Conference Edition

“It was interesting to realise that relatively stable countries like South Africa have the same social accountability problems as post-conflict states in Africa.”

*Delegate on day one of the
Growing the Network stakeholder conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*



Ethiopian dancers give us a taste of local culture



Getting into the rhythm

Day one of the stakeholder conference set the tone for the next year of the ANSA-Africa network, by giving delegates multiple opportunities to see how much they have in common – not only by sharing their views and questions during conference sessions, but by getting to know one another more informally at meals, tea breaks ... and on the dance floor.

The conference has brought together **132 delegates – 43 women and 89 men – from 30 different countries**, representing all the regions and islands of Africa. In addition, representatives from ANSA in Asia and delegates from other parts of the world have joined us to share their experiences of social accountability in other parts of the world. Don Don Parafina of ANSA-East Asia and Pacific, for instance, led a breakaway session on emerging social accountability tools, along with Absalom Masendeke of Practical Action Southern Africa.

Conference delegates also provided a balanced representation of NGOs, academic and government institutions, donors, associations, religious institutions and research institutes.

Day one began with a welcome to Ethiopia by Eshetu Bekele, the director of Poverty Action Network of Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia and by Michael Kahn of the Human Sciences Research Council, one of the founding partners of ANSA-Africa. Mary McNeil of the World Bank

Institute, ANSA-Africa's other founding partner, set the tone of the conference's general discussion with an overview of the state of social accountability today.



A conference delegate at the panel discussion

That discussion got into its rhythm with the panel discussion that followed on the status of social accountability in Africa. Moderated by Ethiopian Workneh Deneke of Wokod consultancy, the panel offered a range of views from the community development sector, the UN, the academic world and the legal and political sectors. But they were not the only voices heard: delegates participated from the floor as well, contributing to a lively discussion on the challenges facing social accountability partners in helping to improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable across Africa.

In the afternoon, Sylvain Boko of Wake Forest University and Mohamed Halfani, who leads the urban governance section of UN-Habitat, spoke on accountability in fragile and post-conflict states and in the context of decentralisation and revenue generation, respectively. Breakaway sessions focused on these two topics as well as on social accountability tools.

The discussions continued as day one ended. About 20 organisations displayed at the Knowledge Faire, giving a colourful overview of the different activities and focus points of social accountability across the continent.

Please log on to www.ansa-africa.net for reports and transcripts of all conference sessions. Friends of ANSA-Africa who could not make it to Addis Ababa can join in by reading these special conference inserts on the web portal.



Knowledge Faire heroes

ANSA-Africa would like to give a special thank-you to these exhibitors, who took the trouble to carry to the conference a broad (and heavy) range of literature, photos, jewellery and other items to share with fellow delegates.

The strength of ANSA-Africa is in each member's generosity in sharing information, views and support. This generous spirit is making the conference a great success.

Yours for the growth of social accountability,

The ANSA-Africa Team

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ANSA-Africa website: www.ansa-africa.net
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