

# **Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia**

**Inclusion of a 'Chapter on Pastoralism' in the  
final PRSP of the  
Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia**  
*(Prepared by Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE))*

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## **1. Background**

The pastoral regions in Ethiopia as elsewhere in Africa are characterized by unpredictable and unstable climatic features as well as ecologically fragile environment. These regions embracing roughly 61 % of the country's landmass are situated in the periphery of the country that fall below 1500 m. They are inhabited by approximately 7.7 million population (13 % of the national) residing in 7 Regions, 21 Zones, and 123 Woredas. The livestock population in the pastoral regions is estimated at 40-42% of the country's total livestock population. Besides, the pastoral areas are rich in cultural and traditional heritage, flora and fauna diversities, valuable minerals, aquatic resources, and energy resources (solar and wind). The regions are also characterized by frequent calamities (drought and conflict), food insecurity, and lack of adequate social services and capacity building institutions. Because of these and other contributing factors, pastoralists remain the poorest of the poor and becoming more vulnerable to a growing process of impoverishment. Macro economic policies and programs overlooked pastoralists' way of life and living conditions, without providing sound and fair pastoral development policy. As a result, pastoralists experienced decades of failed policies and a century of social and political exclusion. Nowadays, the marginalization of pastoral population and alternative remedial measure has become a national issue. Thus, pastoral areas/livelihoods require long-term, multi-sectoral, holistic and integrated development interventions.

### **1.1 National (I) PRSP and Pastoralism**

The Federal Government of Ethiopia earlier prepared the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP). The Ethiopian IPRSP as it is presented by the government lacks representativeness and mentioned very little about poverty status and mitigation measures of the pastoral community and areas. However, the pastoralists need to have their voices heard and integrated to the center in decision making of national issues through representation including participation in the process of the PRSP. They should benefit from the PRSP, a policy of inclusiveness, consultation, and focus on poverty reduction strategies.

### **1.2 Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE)**

Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) was established in 1998. The idea to establish the pastoral forum was initiated by the Somali and the Borena pastoral elders that had attended the pastoralists workshop held in Negelle (Borena Zone, Oromia Region) and Filtu (Liben Zone, Somali Region) in 1996. However, the forum was realized by NGOs working in pastoral areas for the sake of networking. The main objectives of the forum are: advocacy and networking for pastoralists as well as working on pastoral development and researchable issues. The forum has nowadays nineteen member NGOs and is coordinated by Panos Ethiopia, an international NGO working on media and communication for sustainable development.

## **2. Legitimacy of PFE in the Process of PRSP**

The former MEDaC, on behalf of the federal government took the initiative for stakeholders' contribution to fill the knowledge gap and ensure a complete PRSP in its final stage. This line of thinking towards participation rewards the attention of many working groups in taking advantage of the opportunity to engage in debate and discussion from the part of their own concern. In response to this participatory approach towards poverty reduction and development, NGOs, civil societies and individuals as development partners are invited to contribute to the process of the full PRSP. Thus, following the participatory consultation process, concerned stakeholders are requested to go through this document to help its inclusiveness and provide strategic solutions.

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Therefore, the main purpose for the Pastoral Forum Ethiopia (PFE) engagement in the process of pastoralists poverty reduction strategies lies on the combination of these factors.

### **3. Objective**

The objective of preparing a chapter on pastoralism is to ensure the inclusion of pastoralists poverty reduction strategies in the final national PRSP for sustainable pastoral development.

### **4. The PRSP Process**

PFE developed a two years project to come up with a relevant chapter and work in the PRSP process. As a result, PFE launched participatory pastoralists consultation workshops in three pastoral regions namely: Awash for the Afar, Somali and Kereyu pastoral communities; Awassa for pastoral communities from Borena and Southern Ethiopia; and in Gambella for the Nuer pastoralists. The purpose of the consultation process was to prepare a pastoralist poverty reduction strategy document. The overall participants of the three workshops were 102. The pastoralists, government bureaus/institutions, and NGOs represented accounted for 65.7%, and 19.6%, 14.7%, respectively. In addition, female pastoralists accounted for 20% of the total. Based on the findings of the consultation workshops, and reviewing relevant documents on recent pastoral development in the different regions of the country, PFE came up with the chapter on pastoralism.

### **5. Focus of the PRSP Consultation Process**

The PRSP consultation process focused on three major issues namely:

- definition of poverty in the pastoralists context,
- causes and dimension of poverty; and,
- recommendation strategy points to reduce pastoral poverty.

### **6. Concepts of Pastoral Poverty**

The concept of pastoral poverty in general goes along with the definition of absolute poverty, a situation of deprivation of basic needs, independent of the general style of living in a given society. Poverty in the pastoral context is thus, a condition characterized by:

- lack of livestock resource
- deprivation of the basic needs (food, shelter, and cloth)
- lack of skill and knowledge to raise livestock
- unable to keep up with ancestral cultural heritage/norms
- unstable condition due to war/conflict ,and disintegration
- lack of livestock and children
- being either widow, orphan, or disabled
- bitter experience of spiritual loss due to inability to undertake ritual sacrifice so "unable to communicate with God"

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## 7. Causes and dimension of Pastoral Poverty, and Recommended Strategies

The causes of pastoral poverty are complex, deep-rooted and multi-dimensional that emanate from the cumulative effects of natural calamities (drought, flood, pest etc) and artificial (war/conflict, poor policy and institutional development etc). The causes and dimension of pastoral poverty, and the recommended strategies are discussed below.

### 7.1 Drought and flood

Few years ago, drought was a natural phenomenon that happened once in a long period; however, in recent past in the pastoralist areas it occurs more frequently. Although the degree and impact of the drought varies across the pastoral groups, drought remains a major cause of asset losses and resource degradation leading to poverty. Drought also increases vulnerability of livestock to death and equally threatens the pastoralists livelihoods.

Including mortality, sales, and slaughter, cattle herd reduced by an estimated 72% in Afar Region during the 1972/74 famine, by 60% in Borena during the 1984/85 famine, and by 78% in Somali and Borena areas during the 1995/7 drought (Sandford and Yohannes 2000: 6)<sup>1</sup>. When drought started in southern Ethiopia in early 1998, herds had had no time to recover from the 1995/7 drought. In one year, May 1999 to May 2000, the southern Somali and Borena suffered great losses of cattle that exceeded 70%. In recent survey conducted in Borena (Taffese 2001)<sup>2</sup>, the per capita TLU<sup>3</sup> has declined from 4.1 in 1998 to 2.25 in 1999. The major catastrophic loss of livestock number was due to drought and drought induced diseases.

The low herd recovery rate coupled with continuous drought has haphazardly affected the livestock resources. According to estimate of Dahil (1976), the herd left only with 20% of the original number, then the recovery period will take 6, 10, 24, 28 years for goat, sheep, cattle, and camel, respectively. Therefore, the cumulative effect of drought has increased the number of pastoralists to 'depend' on food aid and from 10-20% in 1990s to 40% in 1997/99 (Sandford and Yohannes 2000: 32).

On the other hand, most of the Ethiopian rivers courses cross the pastoral regions. Thus, the problems of flood have been there with pastoralists of Somali (WabiShebele river), Nuer (Baro and Akobo river), S.Omo (Omo river), and Afar and Kereyu (Awash river). The problems with flood are predominantly seen in crops on the riverbank, access denying to school, health center and to others, and causes water born diseases both for animals and livestock. Furthermore, flood from Awash River, for instance, has deteriorated much of the rangelands in Afar Region.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandford, S. and Yohannes Habtu, 2000. *Report of the Pastoral Appraisal Team: on emergency response interventions in pastoral areas of Ethiopia*. London: DFID

<sup>2</sup> Taffese Mesfin, 2001. **What should a Pastoral Development Strategy Constitute towards Poverty Reduction among Pastoral Communities in Ethiopia?** In (Yonas Admasu, ed.): *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on pastoral Development in Ethiopia: Poverty Reduction Strategy and Pastoral Development*, held May 22-23, 2001 in Imperial Hotel, Addiss Ababa, Ethiopia. Pastoralists Forum Ethiopia (PFE).

<sup>3</sup> Tropical Livestock Unit = 250 kg of live weight (i.e., equivalent to 0.7 cattle, 0.5 donkey, 0.1 goat/ sheep (ILCA 1992)

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## Recommended Strategies

- developing participatory drought management mechanisms: preparedness including community development, capacity building of grassroots institutions, drought contingency planning, community based drought early warning systems; and mitigation measures
- linking relief with development and sharpening the food aid targeting mechanisms
- encouraging livelihoods/asset diversification (fishery, agro-pastoralism, herd diversification, mining etc)
- developing the use of wild food sources (wild fruit, roots, stems, tubers, and leaves)
- provision of 'feed aid' for productive livestock groups (calves and lactating animals)
- encouraging preservation of hay, and dry season range reserves
- focusing on timely restocking and de-stocking activities
- possible arrangements of the use of by-products from local investment for livestock feed (State Farms-cottonseed cake, Sugar Factory-molasses and cane stalk etc)
- controlling the diversion of natural river courses (especially Awash River)
- appropriate measure to alleviate flood hazards (specially River of Wabi Shebele, Omo, Baro, Akobo, and Awash)
- controlling drought-induced livestock diseases

### 7.2 Lack of Basic Social Services

The inadequacy/lack of basic social services such as education and health are one of the major problems in the pastoral areas.

#### 7.1.1 Education

The education coverage in percent for the Afar, the Somali, and the SNNP were 10, <9, and 12, respectively (Beruk Yemane, 2002<sup>4</sup>). The key problems of education are expansion problem (access to school), and quality and efficiency problem (within-school). The root causes of the education problems are related to shortage of trained staff, inappropriate curriculums, school calendar, school infrastructure, and cultural taboo towards sending girls to school, inadequate/lack of school furniture, teaching aid, and learning equipment, low motivation of teachers due to lack of incentives, unable to keep schools from disturbances of non-students, shortage of human resources etc.

#### Recommended strategies

- developing pastoral friendly curriculum and schooling calendar
- recognition and encouraging the religious way of teaching (*Dubsi/Qoranic school System*-the teacher lives with the students)
- expansion of both formal and informal school systems by giving attention to boarding schools, school feeding, training of teachers from the community (pastoral background), girls groups home education (this attract girls with age groups of 7-14 years)
- provision of incentives for teachers (reasonable salary/allowances, better careers structure)
- encourage and support community based organization (CBOs) to engage in the supply of teaching/learning materials

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<sup>4</sup> Beruk Yemane, 2001, Quoting Regional Bureaus sources. *The Reality of Pastoralism in Ethiopia*. A paper presented on NGOs Perspective on PRSP Workshop. Organized by CRDA, September, 2001, Addis Ababa

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- vocational skill training for pastoral-system-drop-outs
  - strengthening the capacity of local authorities to participate in the planning and management of school systems

### **7.2.2 Human Health**

According to Beruk Yemane (2001), the health coverage in percent for the Afar, the Somali, and the SNNP were 29, 24, and 35, respectively. The available health facilities are found haphazardly distributed. The major problems of health development are lack of access to health services, infant mortality, lack of medicines and medical equipment, shortage of human resources, less attention to primary and reproductive health education, harmful traditional practices (FMG), incidence of epidemic resulted from flood, prevalence of HIV/AIDS etc.

#### **Recommended strategies**

- focus on community based health development system (TBAs training and equipping them with TBA Kits, attention to Information, Education and Communication (IEC), facilitate primary and reproductive health education)
- expansion of Extended Program of Immunization (EPI)
- controlling HIV/AIDS expansion by targeting on urban and peri-urban dwellers, ex-soldiers, returnees/refugees, immigrants, and tourists
- special attention to control fatal diseases such as malaria, STD, reparatory diseases (TB), and water born diseases etc
- construction of new/rehabilitation of strategic health posts/health centers, and improving their efficiency through staffing with incentives, supplies of drug and equipment
- attention to both preventive and curative health care

### **7.3 Water Development and Environment Pollution**

In pastoral areas, water shortage for both humans and livestock especially during dry season is a major problem. The water service regional coverage (potable) for Afar, Somali and SNNP were reported in % 16, 14 and 27, respectively (Beruk Yemane 2001<sup>5</sup>). The pastoralists shared the available water with the livestock. The chemicals dump from Mojo and Woldiya Tanneries as an example are cited in polluting the Awash River severely. In addition, plastic bags (Festal) and other plastic origin materials are polluting the range environment.

#### **Recommended Strategies**

- use of environmentally friendly water harvesting technologies (pond, micro-dams, roof catchments (especially in school compounds), and cement cisterns/ 'Birkas')
- expansion of deep boreholes that are environmentally sound in strategic sites
- strengthening traditional water management system
- development of community based water schemes
- discouraging extensive production of plastic bags by exerting high tax, but at the same time seeking alternatives for plastic bags
- strong controlling mechanism on factories/state farms polluting rivers

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<sup>5</sup> Beruk Yemane, 2001, Quoting Regional Bureaus sources. *The Reality of Pastoralism in Ethiopia*. A paper presented on NGOs Perspective on PRSP Workshop. Organized by CRDA, September, 2001, Addis Ababa

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## 7.4 Livestock Marketing, Veterinary, and Livestock Feed

The inefficiency and ineffectiveness of livestock marketing in the pastoral regions have been contributing to pastoral food insecurity. In the dry season and drought period, the terms of trade between livestock and cereals becomes unbearable for the pastoral household. For instance, in Borena in year 1998/9 there was the decline in the price of sheep, cattle, and camel by 38%, 35%, and 29%, respectively. During the same period, the price of sorghum and maize rose by 113% and 61%.

The inadequacy and inefficacy of the veterinary services are a bottleneck for pastoral development. The endemic diseases like CCPP, CBPP, FMD, anthrax, external (tick and mange mites), and internal parasites are causes of low livestock productivity and huge livestock losses. In addition, feed shortage resulting from drought, range degradation, and land shrinkage due to inappropriate land policy are major constraining factors to livestock development and pastoral livelihood.

### Recommended Strategies

- facilitating and strengthening of cross-boarder livestock trading through credit provision, certification for quarantine in the eastern African level, and capacity building
- establishment of livestock marketing information systems so that the producer could decide when to sale
- restoring the stocker/feeder program through private or livestock cooperatives
- privatization of veterinary to enhance the possibility of controlling livestock diseases that have negative impact on the export quality of livestock and livestock products
- appropriate market infrastructure (development of stock-routes, water points, veterinary service, sale of mineral lick etc)
- special attention to control external parasites (ticks) and other economically important diseases such as FMD
- training of community based animal health workers
- facilitating immunization campaign program in sustainable way
- encouraging dry season feed reserve ('Kello') and use of crop residue in the agro-pastoral areas
- promotion of 'commercialization' of livestock production objectives
- improving the traditional husbandry techniques to efficiently use of the available feed resources (separate feeding of productive and non-productive livestock groups) and improving access and use of supplements from the factory by-products (molasses, various oil seedcakes)

## 7.5 Conflict

Pastoral areas are the most conflict prone areas in the country. Pastoralism as a mode of production requires movement across boundaries and with in boundaries for search of water and pasture. this movement when restricted often leads to disputes between them and other neighboring groups. Most traditional peace forums that were strong enough in gaining acceptance in earlier times have weakened today. Hence, conflict in pastoral areas for majority of the pastoralists has been remained the cause for poverty aggravation. The causes of conflict are largely multi-dimensional the major ones however are associated with restricted movement, and range and water resource limitation resulted from the growing expansion of crop encroachment and 'privatization' of prior communally owned water and rangeland resources.

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## Recommended Strategies

- due attention to study a root causes of conflict and frequency of happening thus, designing participatory conflict management system by the government
- creation of Elders Peace Forums specially in often conflicting ethnic groups ( e.g. between Borena and Somali)
- capacity building of the pastoralists on local governance and leadership
- establishment of conflict early warning and mitigation system

### 7.6 Gender

Gender issues are part of any development course and processes that are crucial in understanding pastoral poverty and poverty reduction. The imbalance between gender in pastoral areas in terms of food production, resource sharing and consumption as well as ownership requires basic gender analysis in the context of pastoral poverty. Pastoral women are the most marginalized groups in any development interventions and at times when they have a chance to access situations do not favor their underlying conditions and systems. The often-stated micro financing schemes which cater for the need of poor women did not address most pastoral women.

## Recommended Strategies

- involvement of women in political and social spheres of the public
- creation of diversified income generating activities for women
- studying and acting upon customs and cultural elements that prevent women from participation in development
- availing social services like medical services and simple delivery kits for women in an emergency states
- encourage the application of laws against harmful Traditional practices that are gender specific

### 7.7 Land Tenure and Institutional Policy

The decision makers have had low understanding of the pastoral communal range management system. As a result, the pastoralists land were taken unlawfully and turned in to large parks, state farms, and military camps, which the pastoralists could not benefited out of it. Nevertheless, the federal government has set a policy that protects pastoral lands although it is not yet implemented fully.

On the other hand, the characteristics of pastoral areas are their lowest participation and closeness to governments. Government pastoral policy for long holds an assumption that pastoralists resist change, are irresponsive to market and so on. The promotion of alternatives, more efficient use of land, agriculture and tourism has been done at the expense of certain social costs. A proper understanding of pastoralism requires an understanding of the multi-dimensional reality of the pastoralist situation today which is a product of their changing relation within their system and their neighboring groups. The development of poverty reduction schemes in all directions can best be effective by understanding most of the pastoral dynamics. The initiative made as the consultative process on PRSP is a big step forward and further development of forums for designing, planning and implementation can make this initiative more realistic. Besides, the pastoralists also seek for a friendly pastoral development policy.

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## **Recommended strategies**

- implementation of the law on land property right and formulation of by-laws as to their right
- developing participatory land use and ownership policy based on traditional communal land use system
- the formation of a strong pastoral concerned institution
- a strong network between pastoral concerned forums, NGOs and policy makers
- acknowledgement of pastoralism as a way of life and partnership with pastoralists
- development of micro- financing schemes that improve the lives of pastoralists
- improving cross -border relations including market exchanges
- involvement of minority groups( Hammer, Themai, Arbore, etc.) in development schemes
- consultation of the pastoral community in designing and implementation of development projects that concern them
- helping them benefit from investment, tourism and industries in their areas
- understanding and balancing the economical advantages with the social costs

## **7.8 Infrastructure and Communication**

The development of infrastructure in pastoral areas worse than any other areas affected their life conditions. The problem of infrastructure is not only a matter of lack but also when available are poorly developed and cannot cater for the pastoralists need. The lack of roads and accompanying flood also prevent the use of clinics and schools available to them.

### **Recommended Strategies**

- rehabilitation/construction of main and feeder roads (eg. Gambella-Elaya- Adura)
- encourage media and communication role in dissemination information on pastoralism and pastoral development
- marketing infrastructure (stock-route, watering points, and medium range abattoirs)
- promoting development of VHF radio communication that assist dissemination of marketing information, community based early warning systems (drought and conflict) etc
- development of school, water and health infrastructure in strategic pastoral areas