

Ethiopian Pastoralist Day (EPD) As an effective pastoral Advocacy Tool

1 Back ground and History

The Ethiopian Pastoralist Day (EPD) is an advocacy forum and a common platform for pastoralist and partners to converge their collective voice, to build on pastoral solidarity, to share experience, culture, living customs and environment. The following are specific objectives of EPD:

- Raise awareness of the public, NGOs and government institutions that pastoralism is a viable way of life and mode of production system.
- Make collective voice to influence decision makers to favor pastoralist interests
- Encourage advocacy work on issues of development of pastoralist areas/ livelihoods
- Facilitate experience sharing among pastoral groups and partners from different regions

EPD has been celebrated annually since the year 1999. The idea of celebrating the Ethiopian Pastoralists' Day was first initiated in 1996, during the conference that had been organized by the Pastoralist Concern Association Ethiopia (PCAE) in Filtu, a town in Libon zone of Somali region. During that conference the Somali and the Borena pastoralist elders insisted on the establishment of a common forum for sharing their experience, attitudes, views and voice out their plights and to be heard by decision makers. This inspiration of the pastoralist elders had been recognized and taken up by PCAE and few others.

The date of celebrating EPD was fixed to be January 25, this is mainly because the month January is an ideal time of drought, and the celebrants could have a good opportunity to understand the core problems of the pastoral community. EPD was first celebrated on January 25, 1999, and for the past 9 years it has been celebrated every year. The first three EPD celebrations (1999 and 2000 in Filtu, 2001- Jijiga) were organized by PCAE.

The 4th, 5th, and the 6th EPD were celebrated in Afar, SNNP and Oromya regions respectively and organized jointly by PFE, the regional and federal governments. The 7th EPD celebrated in Diredawa while the 8th and the 9th EPD were celebrated in Addis Ababa.

The recent three Ethiopian Pastoralist Days (7th ,8th & 9th) were organized jointly by Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE), Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA), and FDRE House of Peoples representatives Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee (PASC).

2 Participants of the event

The participants of EPD are Pastoralists drawn from different parts of the country, Federal and regional government officials, CSOs, Donors, Embassies, Academicians, researchers, universities and others invited from out side Ethiopia

3 Advocacy issues

- Establishment of higher institution at federal level (Ministry or commission) to deal with pastoralism
- Pastoralists Elders group should be established at federal level to deal with different issues including conflicts
- Implementation of pastoralist land use policy with the participation of pastoralists
- Develop and strengthen communication, physical and social infrastructures
- Recognize January 25 as Ethiopian pastoralist Day and include in the national calendar.
- Facilitate the possibility of using pastoral livestock resources as collateral for bank loan
- PFE, Pastoralist Affairs Standing Committee (PASC), and Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA) should organized the 7 EPD
- Development a mobile education and health (human and animal) in the extension services.
- Recognition of pastoralism as a rational way of life and economic activity
- Strengthen of livestock marketing (local and foreign)
- Develop diversified income generating activities
- Assigned more NGOs to be functional in the pastoral areas
- Identify vaccinations for camels
- Develop health institutions and create awareness on HIV-AIDS
- Utilization of Indigenous knowledge as a point of departure in development intervention

4 Major activities

- Establishing organizer committee and developing Terms of Reference for the committee member
- **Planning and execution of the event.** This includes preparation of project proposal, raising fund, strategizing and leading the activities of the event, monitoring, etc. The organizer committee assisted by

Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia will conduct a series of meetings to ensure the activities of the event went on smoothly.]

- Lobbying higher decision makers to officiate the event and participate in the celebration.
- Preparing banners, Brochure, T-shirts/Capes conveying key messages of the EPD
- Mobilization of representatives' of Pastoral communities and participant invitation
- Organizing panel discussion and press conference some days before the actual date of EPD
- Celebrating the event, formulating and approving of the resolution of the day, documentation & publications of the whole process, and dissemination of the information

5 Tools and methods

- Using Banners, Brochure, T-shirts/Capes conveying key messages of the EPD
- Presentation of report on the progress/achievements made so far vis-à-vis the resolutions passed in the previous EPD, by high -level federal & regional government officials
- Speech from pastoralist representatives and CSOs representatives
- Open discussion and debate on key pastoral issues among pastoralists, decision-makers and stakeholders
- Cultural shows, music and exhibitions
- Field visit

6 Impact & achievement of EPD and other pastoral advocacy works for the past 9 years

- EPD decided by the government of Ethiopia to be a National Holiday from the year 2006 onwards
- Pastoralists are represented in the federal parliament and regional councils
- Power is decentralized at woreda level
- Pastoral specific projects such as PCDP and others initiated and under implementation
- Increasing interest from non state actors to work with the pastoralist
- MoFA, regional governments are engaging more and more on the process to own EPD
- Establishment of Pastoral Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) in the federal parliament
- Establishment of Pastoral Development department in MoFA
- Establishment/or reformulation of pastoral institutions at regional level

- Pastoralist Elders Council establishment (Oromia Region)
- Celebration of the recent two EPD in the capital, in the presence of the PM and other higher officials. The pastoralists for the first time visited the State Palace, discussed and argued pastoral burning issues with the Head of the Government, the PM
- The cumulated advocacy result has put pressure on the decision-makers and the public to recognize pastoralism as a viable source of livelihood and a way of life.
- PFE has been considered as a key partner in advancing the interests of pastoralists.