

The Turmi Morning Herald, Monday 31 January 2005

The first day someone asked: how can we hear everything? The purpose of this newspaper is to help share some stories, events, and other information from the Global Pastoralist Gathering with all the participants, and to encourage more discussion.

Losing Honey and Finding Meaning

As people talked more today about the experiences and issues particular to them and their people, many speakers shared powerful stories using proverbs and local sayings to capture the meaning.

One example of this was in the morning session under tree 1, when **Ibrahim Adano**, a Gabra spiritual leader, shared a story from Arab Africa. He spoke about a man who went to see a doctor, who said that the cure to his disease was in a medicine that came from special honey in the ground. The man and his people went searching for the honey. They were so excited when they found the honey that they danced and danced in celebration. Then they realised that all their dancing had destroyed the honey, and they would have to look for more. But there was no more to be found. Ibrahim then suggested that now is the time to stop dancing in celebration of our common identity as pastoralists, and to organise ourselves and solve our problems.

Another powerful example was given by **Aga Tantano Guye**, **Abagada of the Guji people**, who said that he was pleased to learn the knowledge of others at this gathering. He spoke of the problem affecting his animals and his community caused by the Tsetse fly. He said that the real value of this meeting has been that he has found someone with the knowledge to help him. He said that there is value in sharing stories and ideas, and talking around a problem to find a solution. He said “I now understanding that pastoralist problems are different for each locality, but actually all look the same. We have a saying that if you only cry for yourself, you can’t stop the tears.”

By sharing stories from other people’s realities, we were offered glimpses of wisdom and understanding. Now the challenge is to use these stories and understandings to find some solutions.



An Arbore speaker of Ethiopia, under tree 1, said “I don’t want to explain what the government has done, but they have made a land that is very big seem very small.”

Achuka Paul Lokochil of the Jie of Uganda, under tree 2, said: “It was the right thinking for white people to realise they should bring pastoralists together—it’s a wonder!”

Borbor Bulle, a Borana pastoralist from Ethiopia, in tree 1, said “there are a lot of issues to sort out but the real issue is why these things happen. The solution is to get together, we talk, we agree, and to get back to these basics.”

This newsletter was prepared by Jane, Joanna and Lucy from IDS, UK.

News In Brief

Tree 1, morning session

The morning session began with blessings from the Hamar people. We heard from representatives from the Borana people from Kenya and Ethiopia, from the Gabra and from the Arbore people. Some of the key issues that were raised were questions of value and markets, questions of what is holding us back and questions of how this meeting can help with solutions. **Wale Baro** of the Arbore people asked: “What is the problem? Is it that we can’t decide, or can’t agree? Is there something holding us from what we decide?”

Tree 2, morning session

The **Duali and Tuarig people from Mali** and the **Guja people from Rhajastan, India**, shared their experiences and problems. Although every sentence had to be translated into four languages before we could all understand, we realised that one common challenge for many pastoralists is how they can come together to join different peoples and tribes to negotiate with government. **Aman Singh** from India and **Fares Abu Abid**, a Bedouin from Israel told us that from their experiences the following can help:

- Bring people together to talk about the issues and how to raise them to the government
- Tell the media about what has been happening
- Find allies in the government so they can force people to listen
- Base claims on what has worked in the past, such as traditional rights to land

Tree 3, morning session

Pastoralists from Iran, Mongolia and Tajikistan shared stories and delicious milk products beneath the tree. We heard about pastoralist practices, education systems and types of pastoralist representation in government. An inspiring example from Iran demonstrates how registering pastoral groups within modern state structures can achieve recognition without losing traditional ways of living.

Tree 1, afternoon session

After **Kereyu and Guji** blessings, we heard strongly from **Haji Qassaru Jillo**, a federal MP and Kereyu clan elder, **Aga Tantano Guya**, and also from two Canadian chiefs. Real concerns were shared about losing land, identity and livelihood. A powerful sharing across cultures and continents took place as everyone listened to the stories of successful community organisation, cooperation and representation in Canada. **Chief Shane Gottfriedson** from Canada ended with a hopeful comment: “by making the effort to be the person you want to be, everyone will be better off”.



Tree 2, afternoon session

Chiefs from the **Koramoga and Jie people of Uganda** and the **Maasai and Turkana people of Kenya** blessed the meeting place, and then spoke of the problems they each face. They spoke of conflict over water, cattle, and land. Some conflicts were old and others were new, but many agreed that politicians often made them worse. A chief from the Turkana people said: ‘We have come to this meeting seeking for peace, and we are ready to sit down and look for peace with other peoples. Strength relies on different partners in development.’ The Turkana chiefs are planning to join the informal meeting today to discuss peace in Eastern Africa.

Tree 3, afternoon session

Peoples from **South Omo** met yesterday and discussed common problems of water, access to veterinary care and conflict. This last issue was explored with the assistance of an exercise that **Martins Adegbe Ayegba** showed us. Six people from the different groups held hands and by stepping under and over each others arms, tied themselves into a human knot. Four outsiders were challenged to try and untie them through dialogue. Although they tried their best, they failed. This was an inspiring lesson of how outsiders cannot solve problems; solutions need to come from within communities who know themselves best. The discussion of this pressing issue will continue today.

Remember: Women’s meeting at 1pm today, tree 3. An opportunity for women to speak and share stories with other women. International Trade and WTO meeting at 3pm.