

Gathering for peace

15-17 January 2009, Ethiopia,
Oromia region, Borana Zone, Mudhisellu

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RECEPTION

Forty- two kilometres south of Yaballo, pastoralists from Kenya and from all corners of Ethiopia gathered in a remote, beautiful valley to talk about peace. Some delegates travelled for eight days to reach the meeting place. Latecomers were shown to their tents by the light of kerosene lamps that twinkled in the night. Next morning, out of the reach of mobile phones, the familiar scream of tent zips was matched by the dawn chorus of outraged weaver birds and the murmur of morning prayers. Under clear skies and an east wind, the delegates sat on mats under a large acacia tree as the gathering got under way.

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“This is a peace gathering. We expect it to be a gathering that develops neighbourliness, peace, living together, patience and brotherhood among pastoralists. It starts with a blessing by the elders.”

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Nura Dida

Chairman, Oromia

Pastoralists Association

Honoured guests; our gathering is a peace gathering. This gathering is taking place in Oromia region, Borana Zone, at a place called Mudhisellu in Dambala Wachu Kebele of Dirre District. Welcome!

This is your home, it's a pastoralist area, so all of you are welcome.

Pastoralists have travelled from many places for our peace gathering. From Ethiopia's regions: Oromia, Somali, Afar, Gambella, and Southern Nations and Nationalities. Government officials are also participating. Our pastoralist neighbours from Kenya and government officials are also here.

The three organisers are the Oromia Pastoralists' Association, the Oromia Regional State Administration and Security Bureau, and the Oromia

Pastoralist Development Commission. In spite of this, it's an Ethiopian pastoralists gathering.

The custom in this area is to slaughter cattle and serve it to guests. The people here have prepared an eight-year-old ox and 10 goats as gifts to the gathering. I would like to thank our host community on your behalf.

This is a peace gathering. We expect it to be a gathering that develops neighbourliness, peace, living together, patience and brotherhood among pastoralists. It starts with a blessing by the elders.



Boru Godana

Borana Zone Administrator

Pastoralists are among the communities neglected by previous régimes in our country. The existing government, led by EPRDF, is giving special attention to pastoralists and is currently working to create an institution that represents pastoralists at country level

Great efforts are being made to create different government bodies for pastoralist affairs at regional, zonal and woreda level to change the lives of pastoralists. The efforts being made to improve the lives of pastoralists when they are affected by natural and man-made disasters will also be strengthened.

Practically speaking, education has increased at kebele level in various woredas and hundreds of pastoralist children have joined higher institutions. Major emphasis is also given to health, both human and animal, which is essential for the health of the economy. The regional government is also concerned to solve the key problem of pastoralists, the water supply. Currently 2,000 kms of water development work is taking place in Borana area alone.

Getting back to today's agenda, **peace is crucial and a key matter. In a place where there is no peace, it is not possible to maintain the existing social services, let alone build new ones.**

Whenever there is conflict, both human and animal lives are lost. I think these gatherings and discussions we have started are solutions that have universal value.

The Oromia Pastoralists Association (OPA) has supported the peace process through establishing different pastoralist committees and by working together with neighbouring pastoralist committees for peace. Its results, working together with the government, are outstanding. I would like to thank the association on behalf of pastoralists in general.

I believe much is expected from all of us in the next three days. We pastoralists need to bring peace and development to our nation, comparable to other nations.





“...peace is crucial and a key matter. In a place where there is no peace, it is not possible to maintain the existing social services, let alone build new ones.”

RESTORANT No 3

“The main objective of OPA is to create the right understanding and awareness of pastoralists at government level so that the government will include pastoralists in its development policies and programmes and allow them to benefit from development.”

The Oromia Pastoralists Association

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Under the current government we are known as pastoralists, a term that expresses our true identity. We have been gathering in the shade for eleven years under that name. Thus, since the government has given us recognition, and is supporting us to get together and discuss issues, we need to play our role. This is how we make use of the opportunity that this gathering provides. Pastoralists from Ethiopia and neighbouring nations are gathered here to discuss peace.

Eleven years ago Abdi Abdulahi, who is with us today, initiated discussions with pastoralists in Guji, Borana, Arsi and nearby Somali regions, and we discussed pastoralist affairs. We discussed why we were not known as pastoralists and why we weren't recognised. These questions were raised in our first meeting at Nagelle Borana and we also discussed them at the [first Pastoralists' Day] meeting at Filtu. The need for pastoralists' representatives to speak for the rights of pastoralists and the provision of a credit service for pastoralists were other issues raised at that event.

Pastoralists' Day has been celebrated every year, first at regional level, and for the last four years at federal level, ever since. Now the 11th annual celebration will be held at federal level on January 25th at Semera, the Afar regional capital.

The Oromia Pastoralists Association was established in the presence of 75 representatives from pastoral areas of the region and the Oromia Regional State's Deputy House Speaker. We achieved recognition and were granted a licence before we started working.

When we started functioning, we organised the Oromia region into three parts: South Oromia, which includes Guji and Borana zonal administrations; South East Oromia-Bale, and Central and West Oromia, which includes East and West Hararge. We have formed executive committees for each of these branches and have been making decisions and taking action.

The main objective of OPA is to create the right understanding and awareness of pastoralists at government level so that the government will include pastoralists in its development policies and programmes and allow them to benefit from development.

We have a wide range of objectives; however we found peace to be a priority and

we are working on it. Peace is a priority for the development of the coming generation.

When we started working, we didn't leave everything to the government. Instead, we identified what we can do by ourselves as pastoralists for our own peace and development, and what kind of support we expected from the government. Through interacting with the community and raising their awareness of the role of pastoralists and the role of government, we made pastoralists from our region and neighbouring regions equal participants in the peace process.

There was conflict between Guji, Borana and Gabra when we started and we have been working to resolve this (see page 15). OPA has also worked on peace with the Karayu, who live in East Oromia and were in conflict with the Argoba in Amhara region and with their neighbours in Afar region around Awash Fantalle area, as well as in Mieso, an Oromo district in East Oromia, where the residents were fighting with the neighbouring Isa clan of Somali region.

We organised and gathered neighbouring pastoralist community representatives and governmental bodies at woreda, zonal and regional levels. We set up a peace committee who followed up the peace process between the Karayu and Argoba, the Karayu and Afar, and the Oromos in Mieso

and the Isa. **Governmental bodies at different levels participated in the gatherings so that they could respond to the cases concerning them.**

OPA has also been involved in experience-sharing gatherings with neighbouring regions' pastoralist communities so as to stand together in the peace making process. For example, we helped facilitate the Somali and Oromia pastoralist communities' gathering at Hudet in December 2007.

Similarly, a big gathering was held at Nyangatom in Southern Nations and Nationalities Regional State with participants from eighteen ethnic groups. We have been trying to share our experience with our neighbours so that we can work together.

Among our many activities we have also represented Ethiopian pastoralists in the regional council of East Africa, attended gatherings in Kenya, Uganda, Switzerland and Spain, shared discussions with the Prime Minister on higher education, raised awareness on making the best use of cattle and facilitated peace making forums in Southern Ethiopia.

We have been working on peace between pastoralist communities in south-eastern Oromia and their neighbours in Somali Region.

We organised various forums together with the government. However we needed equal support from the Somali side and also the involvement of the Somali Regional Pastoralist Council, but because this body was still in the early stages of its formation, we could not achieve much on this front. We hope to continue with this effort now that the Somali Council is better established.*

All this work on peace and development was achieved by coordinating with the government, neighbouring regional pastoralist councils and most of all with the community. If we don't work together, we can't make change. The discussion agenda is common to us all. We'll discuss together and we need to be frank in this gathering. Then I believe we'll make our gathering successful.

* After the gathering, in February 2009, OPA came together with the Oromo and Somali Regional governments and the Somali Pastoralist Council to facilitate peace discussions between the Somali and Oromo clans living in the Mada-Walabu area.

“Governmental bodies at different levels participated in the gatherings so that they could respond to the cases concerning them.”



Justice and Peace



Nura Dida

Making peace between Gabra, Guji and Borana

We met representatives of each group at a place called Hallona in Arero woreda to resolve the conflict between them, our first attempts at peace making. Oxfam America financed us and the Ethiopian Red Cross Association was also present. We resolved the conflict with the participation of the three groups. The peace making was achieved through the customary Gada institution. The Gada leaders (*Abbaa Gadaa*) made decisions according to the traditional system of conflict resolution.

These were their decisions: to punish a murderer with a fine of thirty head of cattle; to punish a thief who steals a cow with a fine of five head of cattle.

Then we formed a peace committee of representatives of the three groups to ensure they followed up and monitored the peace keeping. The committee meets from time to time to discuss peace issues and to resolve conflicts in their area.

Utukana Mallo

Chairman of Borana, Guji and Gabra Peace Committee

There were conflicts between Borana, Guji and Gabra (from 1997 to 1999 Ethiopian Calendar [2004-7]). There were thefts, people were dying and were displaced.

Since the OPA interventions we have been able to move from place to place peacefully. We tried to encourage all parts of society to participate in the peace making process. The peace gathering was effective, learning from the previous ones, with the participation of all sections of the community, women, youth and elders.

The thirty-member committee was formed by selecting ten representatives from each of the three groups: Borana, Guji and Gabra. Their main duty is to implement the decisions made by the gathering, like punishing criminals and following up the continuity of the peace process at community level.

The committee has just strengthened the existing, customary way of resolving conflicts within the commu-

nity as they have strengthened their own traditional administration and institutions. Nothing was added from outside. They made their decisions through the traditional system. They have passed punishment decisions.

- **A killer must pay a fine of thirty head of cattle and will be punished by government law.**
- **One who shoots and wounds must pay a fine of fifteen head of cattle and be punished by government law.**
- **A thief who steals one cow must pay a fine of five head of cattle and will be punished by government law.**

A great deal of the committee's work is in preventing the problem before it occurs. The committee has been focusing on preventing conflict before it results in destruction. We have worked on preventing conflict in Adolla, Arero, Bulehora, Dugdada, Moyale, and Arsi areas, in all areas where Borana, Guji and Gabra live. This work has been appreciated by our neighbours, especially by Garri elders in Somali region. We have done all these things in cooperation with government bodies at different levels.





Nura Dida

Here is a question asked by a pastoralist from Somali Region.

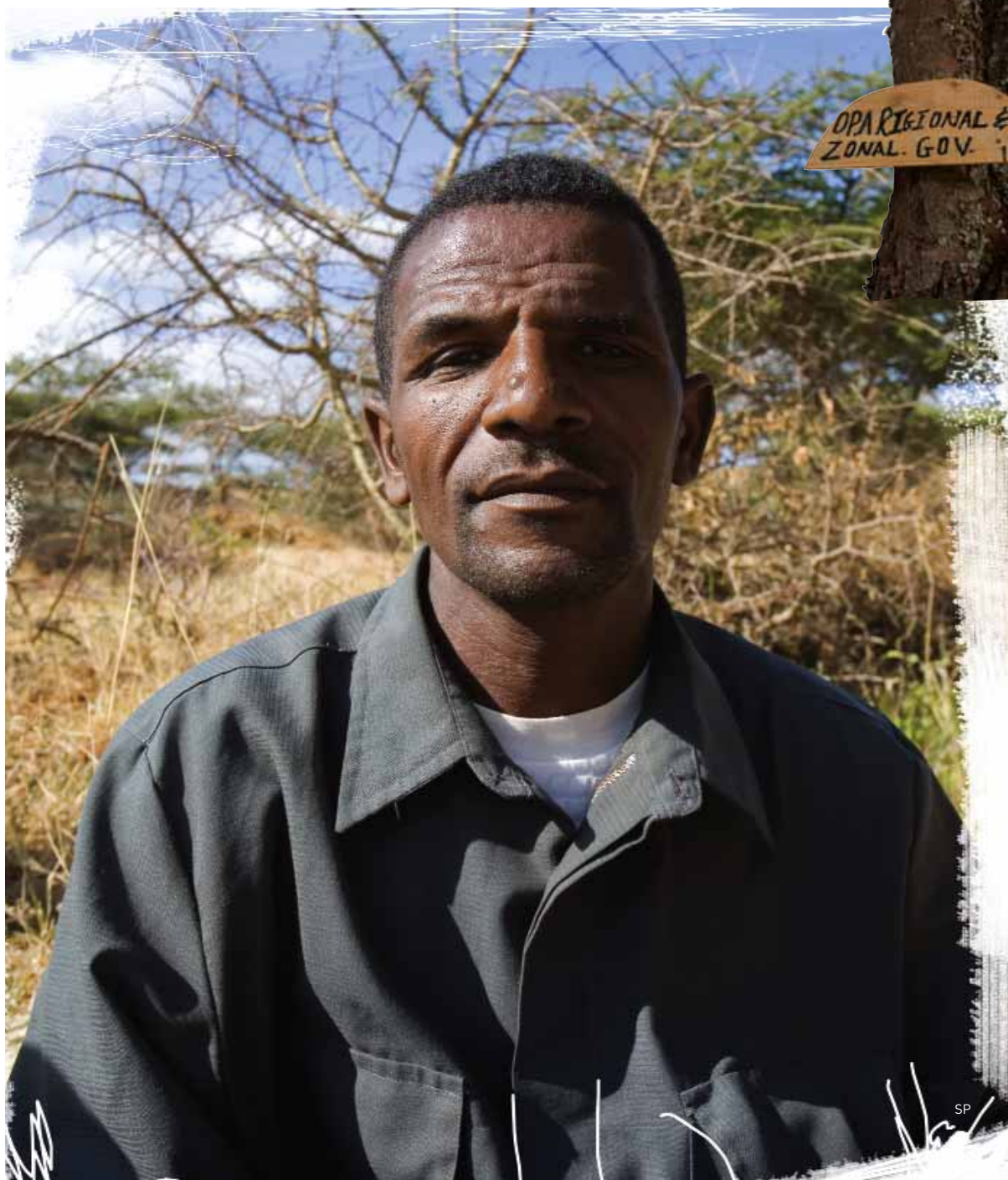
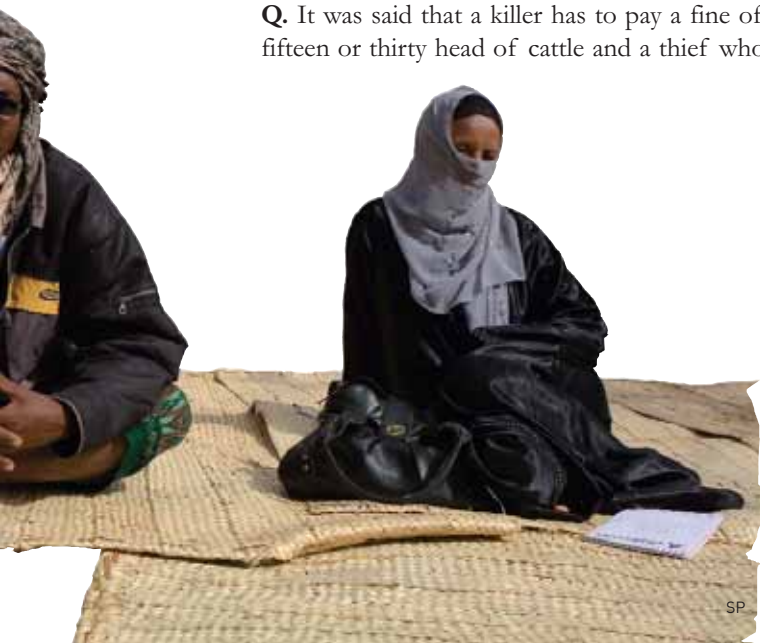
Q. If a murderer has to pay a fine of thirty head of cattle, who is responsible for payment, the killer or his clan?

A. If the killer has cattle, he is the one to be punished and must pay thirty head of cattle. If he doesn't have cattle, his clan has to share the punishment because they should have advised him and prevented him from committing the crime.

Melkamu Fiqru

Deputy Head of Administration
and Security Bureau, Girja
Woreda, Guji Zone

Q. It was said that a killer has to pay a fine of fifteen or thirty head of cattle and a thief who



steals one cow has to pay a fine of five head of cattle. A killer doesn't usually consult his clan, his wife or his father before killing someone. It was said that his clan must share his punishment. Isn't this against the law? Doesn't it put pressure on the people?

Nura Dida

A. What we said was that a killer has to pay a fine of thirty head of cattle, a person who wounds someone has to pay a fine of fifteen head of cattle, a thief who steals one cow has to pay a fine of five head of cattle. It's not against the constitution and the government has

accepted it. The government law will judge criminals after they pay the fine, and these people could be released due to lack of evidence when the government law judges them. The other parties might see them being released and say to themselves "why should I keep myself from killing these people for they, who killed my people, have been released?" Thus we pastoralists punish the guilty one according to our culture so that others will be discouraged from committing crimes.

This rule has been put into practice, which in turn results in a decrease in crime. It doesn't harm the people or the government in any way. The Guji, Borana and Gabra approved the idea because the traditional Gada law governs them. It doesn't apply to other regions.



Haji Hawas Abomsa

Fantalle Woreda,
Oromia Region

Q. Is the rule working practically? And how much does it improve things for the people? Because if this rule brings peace to the people governed by it, all pastoralists should adopt it.

Utukana Mallo

A. The rule is working in practice and has created peace and security. For example, last month a Guji man stole ten head of cattle and was caught at Bule Hora Woreda. The thief had 52 cattle of his own and 50 were taken from him, leaving him with only two cows. When other thieves heard this story, they abandoned cattle they had stolen before reaching their homes with them. These stolen cattle were found and returned to their owners. The rule benefited the people to this extent and it has brought peace.

Hassano Ibroo

Miesso Woreda, West
Hararghe Zone

Q. It was said that a killer has to pay a fine of thirty head of cattle. Is this a rule or a constitutional law? According to folk talk, public law is not the same thing as family law and vice versa. Is it family law or cultural law?

Nura Dida

A. Oromo is a big society, thus it has various cultural administrations within it. Culture varies from area to area. The three groups who declared this rule did so according to their culture. It's not all Oromo society that is doing this. We are not saying that this is part of the culture of the Oromo in Hararghe; we are talking about how to resolve conflicts. We are gathered here to condemn, resolve and prevent conflicts, not just between two groups but among all pastoralists.



CE.ZONE
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Hon. Issack Ibrahim

MP for Hudet, Federal House of Peoples' Representatives

Q. Who will get the cattle that are taken from the criminals in fines? Leaders and members of Pastoralist Councils are here in this gathering. When are you going to pass rules like those of the Borana, Guji and Gabra to other pastoralist councils at regional level?

Nura Dida

A. The cattle that are taken from criminals are given to the victims of the criminals. When conflict breaks out in an area, we use the culture in that particular area to resolve the conflict. For example, if conflict breaks out

between the Oromo and Somali, we form a committee that includes both parties; we appoint peacekeepers and they'll keep the peace. A killer in Oromia has to pay a fine of thirty head of cattle, while a killer in Somali has to pay a fine of a hundred camels. When a person from one of these groups is killed we may make the fine fifty head of cattle, as a basis for negotiation, or we may take a hundred. Many times, we have been negotiating according to their culture and this is how the reconciliation process works and it will continue like this

Ugass Mohamed Ugass Gurra

Guradomole Woreda, Somali Region

Q. The three groups, Gabra, Guji and Borana, made an agreement on their rule based on Gada

law; but have they made any agreement on their rule with other nearby groups or regions?

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A. The traditional reconciliation and rules made between the three groups are for themselves only. Others can make their own rules and apply them.



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Afder Zone, Somali Region

The Afar, Somali and Oromo have different cultures, but pastoralists in these regions should take these different cultures as examples and evolve one culture. It would be better if Ethiopian pastoralists discussed matters with a common culture and a common way of doing things.





Tariku Selina

Bench-Maji Zone, SNNPRS

We have all travelled long distances for peace. A year ago, there was a gathering in Nyangatom. There we made decisions on solutions for conflict. When we went back home at least fifteen to twenty people were killed and cattle were stolen, including cattle donated from the government through its safety net program. This would not happen if the decisions were put into practice. Thus we want our decisions to be practical and applied through community leaders, as others have made their decisions practical, and brought peace to their area.

Paul Puok Kosal

Gambella Region

I am a Nuer, one of the five ethnic groups in Gambella. There are people who kill intentionally and people who kill accidentally. If it's accidental, a killer has to pay a fine of fifty head of cattle. If it's intentional, a killer has to pay a fine of a hundred head of cattle. After a killer has paid the fine, he'll be handed over to the government and will be judged by the law. After paying a fine of a hundred head of cattle, a killer will not make the same mistake again.








Pastoralists talk





“Hatred is one of those problems that we can alleviate by ourselves. It means that what we say when we are sitting together under the shade of a tree and what we say when the Oromo are alone, when the Somalis are alone, and when the Afar are alone, will be the same as when we are all together.”

SOMALI

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Sultan Mohamed Hassan Gababa

Chairman, Somali Region
Pastoralist Council

For the past year the Somali Region Pastoralist Council has been preparing and amending its internal rules and regulations. Now we are starting work. We are prepared to work with others in resolving conflicts. When unity and brotherhood strengthen us - and these pastoral councils help us to stand together - our vision of peace will become a reality and we shall solve our problems.

There are three bodies that can contribute to making this vision of peace a reality: The Government at federal and regional levels, Pastoralists and their associations and NGOs. If these bodies work hand in hand with one goal, we can overcome our problems.

Hatred is one of those problems that we can alleviate by ourselves. It means that what we say when we are sitting together under the shade of a tree and what we say when the Oromo are alone, when the Somalis are alone, and when the Afar are alone, will be the same as when we are all together. If we agree, then whatever happens to the Afar will concern us as Somalis and will make us feel sad. It's the same with the Oromo. Whatever happens to the Gambella or South people will concern us as pastoralists and we should treat any misfortune as if it had happened to us.

Our brotherhood is based on two things, that we are pastoralists and that we are Ethiopians. We need to form unity and brotherhood based on these two.

Lotikori Yarekal

Dassenech Woreda,
South Omo Zone

I have participated in such gatherings before. We had reconciliation at a gathering in Nyangatom and we made decisions on how to punish criminals. For example we agreed that a killer has to pay a fine of thirty head of cattle and will also be punished by government law.

In our area, when we started working, we formed a committee including representatives from Turkana, Dassenech, Hamar, Nyangatom, Bench-Maji and Suri. Criminals are punished according to the punishment set for their crime.

When conflict broke out between the Gabra and Borana with the Dassenech, for example, the peace committee negotiated with them. We are working, but we lack the financial capacity to strengthen what we are doing.

We come from different directions, we are eating from the same plate, we are gathering at the same place; thus let us continue with the peace we have here. We are talking about human lives, it's not something trivial.

When you go home, you need to gather your people and convince them. You need to disseminate the information. Don't just go home and sleep.

Abraham Bongorso

Director, AEPDA
(Atowekisi Ekisil Pastoralist
Development Association),
South Omo Zone

We, South Omo Zone pastoralists, are trying to resolve the source of conflict and security problems of pastoralists. We have learnt from OPA. It's because of the lessons we learned from OPA during the Nyangatom gathering that we formed a committee. After that gathering we pastoralists have been trying to overcome problems existing among the seventeen ethnic groups in our Zone.

More forums need to be organised for pastoralists. Forums where pastoralists stand together and solve their problems will be organised, not only in Oromia, but also in Southern Nations and Nationalities region as well. Not just once, but twice or three times a year.

“When you go home, you need to gather your people and convince them.

You need to disseminate the information.

Don't just go home and sleep.”

Hassan Mohamed Hassan

Chairman, Afar Pastoralist Council

When pastoralists began to contact each other and discuss issues, they raised three main issues with the government:

- The need for a Ministry of Pastoralists
- The need for a Pastoralist Day
- The need for Pastoralist development, and banking services that use livestock as collateral.

The need for a Ministry of Pastoralists and the need for banking services have elicited no response yet while the rest is progressing.

We established the Afar Pastoralist Council less than a year ago. Since then we have been able to organ-



PW

ise three big gatherings in which Somali and Oromo pastoralists participated. We discussed how to achieve our goals of peace within Afar and neighbouring regions' pastoralist development and how to raise the voice of pastoralists in Ethiopia, Africa and globally.

We are prepared to have discussions with our neighbours in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions. We agreed with OPA to work more closely together, particularly between the Afar and Oromo. We also talked with the Somali, especially about the confrontation between the Isa clan of Somali and the Afar, and we have a plan to take a step forward. We believe we'll accomplish our plan.

Sekko Mohamed Said

Deputy Chairman,
Afar Pastoralist Council

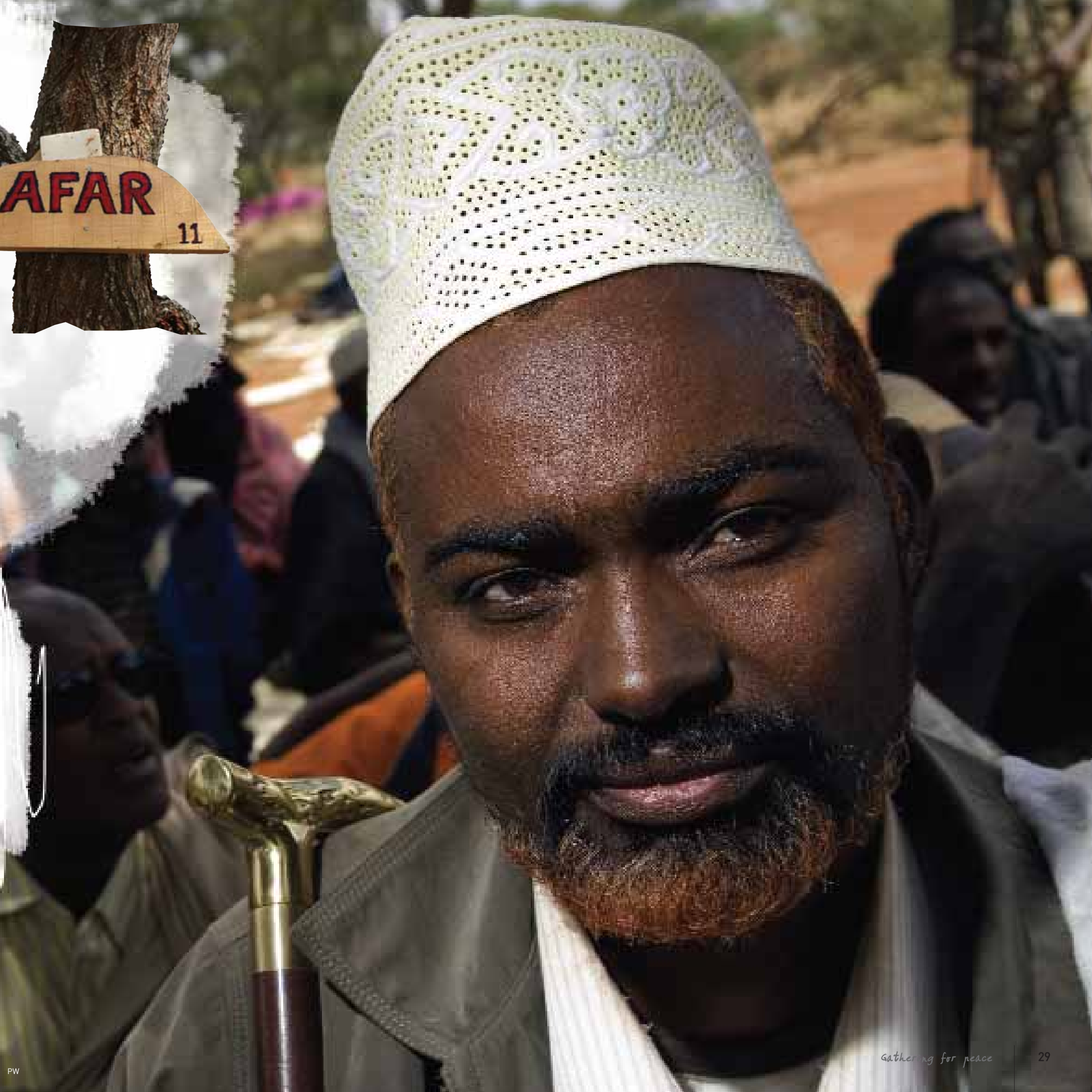
Today the Oromia, Somali and Afar Councils have common views and we are working on the same objectives.

We need to strengthen pastoralist unity for pastoralist peace. Forming these councils is helping us to solve our problems. Here, not only Ethiopians but also Kenyans are gathered with us. Tomorrow I hope we'll gather at pan-African level and then globally.

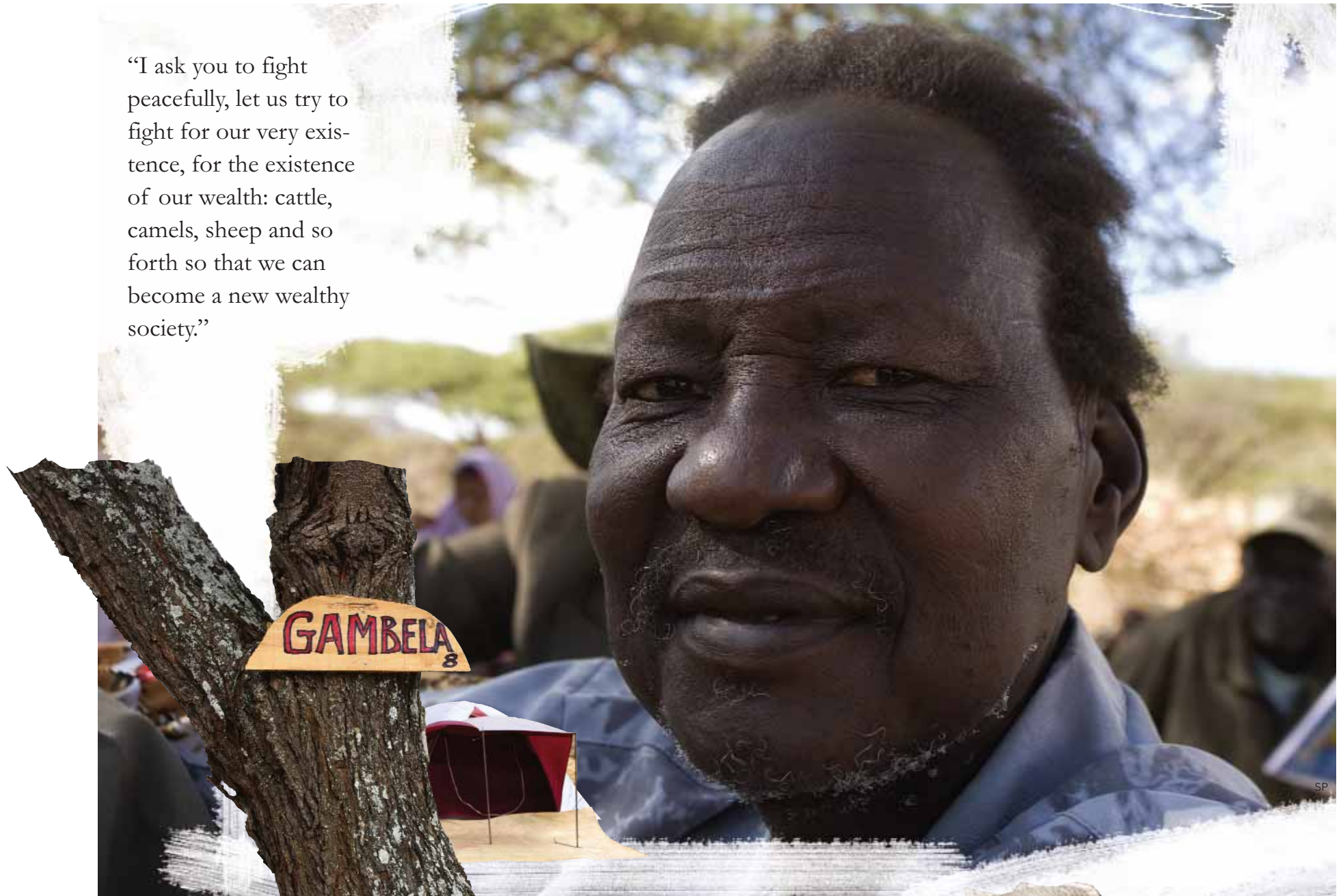


AFAR

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“I ask you to fight peacefully, let us try to fight for our very existence, for the existence of our wealth: cattle, camels, sheep and so forth so that we can become a new wealthy society.”



Rhamry Chuol

Gambella Region

Peace will not just happen. We have to struggle, we have to use all our strength, all our ideas, all our thinking to achieve peace.

Gambella was not known as a pastoralist area

just three years ago, but we are a big pastoralist region. We are in conflict with the Murille and the Nuer from Southern Sudan and we are unable to resolve it. From Sudan they cross the border, they come and raid our cattle, kill our people and go. Previously we used to fight them because we were armed and we would chase them away and protect our cattle. But now we have handed in our arms to the government. We need protection from the government for our people and our wealth. We recognise that it is difficult because these people are coming from another country.

When we go back, we'll try our best to put these ideas [of forming associations and working on peace] into practice. **I ask you to fight peacefully, let us try to fight for our very existence, for the existence of our wealth: cattle, camel, sheep and so forth so that we can become a new wealthy society.**





KENYA

“Peace is expensive but it’s cheaper than war.”

Chief Tuye Katello

Kenya Government representative
from Dukana, Upper Eastern
Province

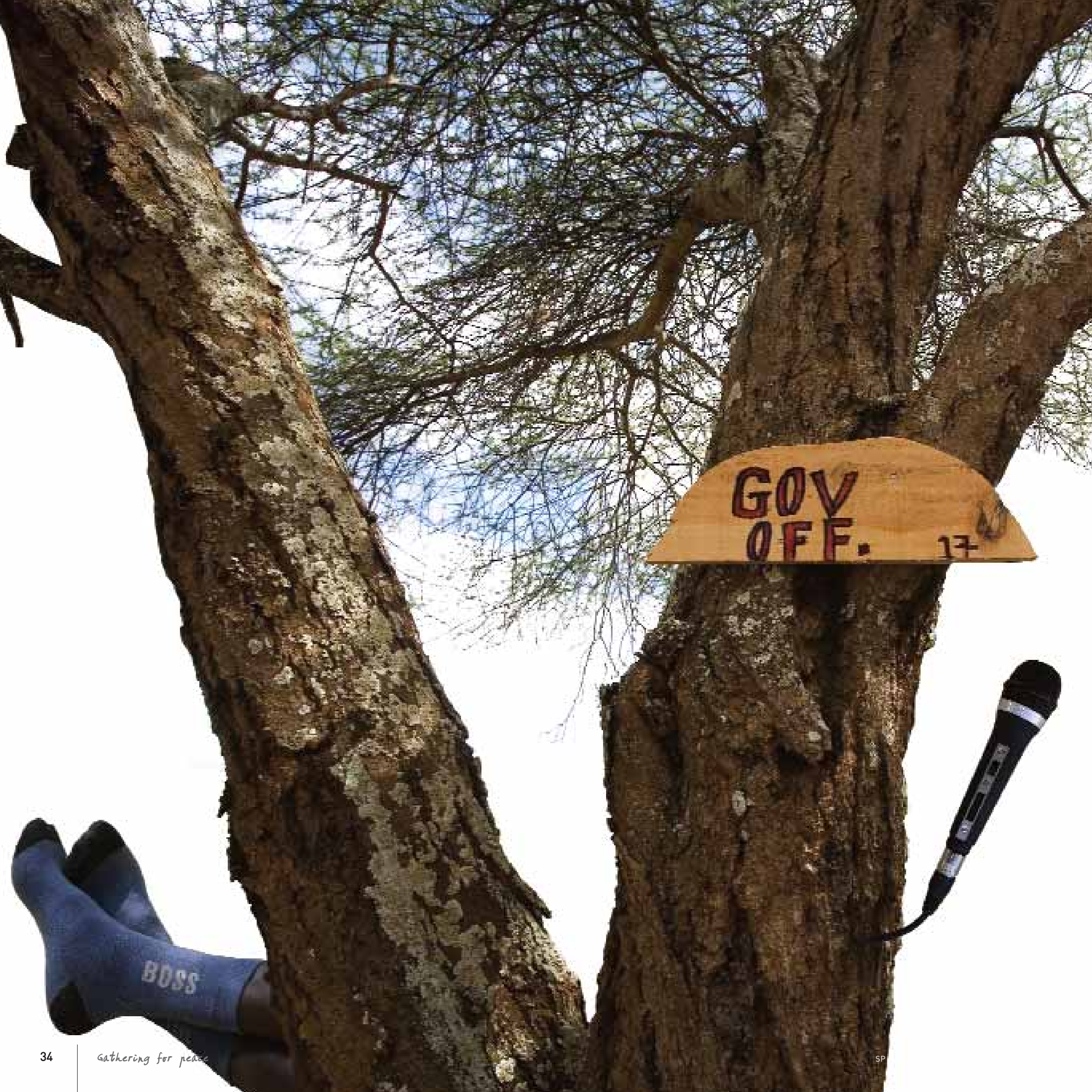
When we gather together most of us are happy about peace. But there might be some among us who are unhappy. If there is such a person he had better wash his heart.

We [the Gabra] were fighting the Borana from 2004 to 2007. Many people died on both sides. Many animals were stolen. At first the government stopped the war but it did not end. On one particular day, we fought and the next day both sides added reinforcements and the fight ended the day after. It was

as if both sides received God’s message – if we don’t shoot they won’t shoot – both sides said the same thing separately but at the same time, and when we met to fight, we shouted “If you are for peace, don’t shoot, let’s get together to discuss things.” We met and agreed not to fight and there was peace. Now, we meet every weekend. We meet at the Kenya/Ethiopia border to talk peace and this has lasted eighteen months. We looked for the causes of the fighting: political interest, tribal enmity, land, pasture and water. These are all causes. Then we agreed, if we want peace, let’s leave out these NGOs, politicians and tribal enmities and, just as pastoralists, plan to do things on our own. We included chiefs and councillors only. We excluded District Commissioners, MPs and District Officers. We embraced peace and that is how we succeeded with the peace in Dukana. This is the way forward for peace in my experience. The politicians, elders and warrior age-sets are educated and therefore they changed their attitude and embraced peace. There is true awareness. If civil and spiritual leaders are educated, thus we shall get peace. During that time, we have incurred much expense when meeting – goats, cows, food for eighteen months of weekly meetings. **Peace is expensive but it’s cheaper than war.**



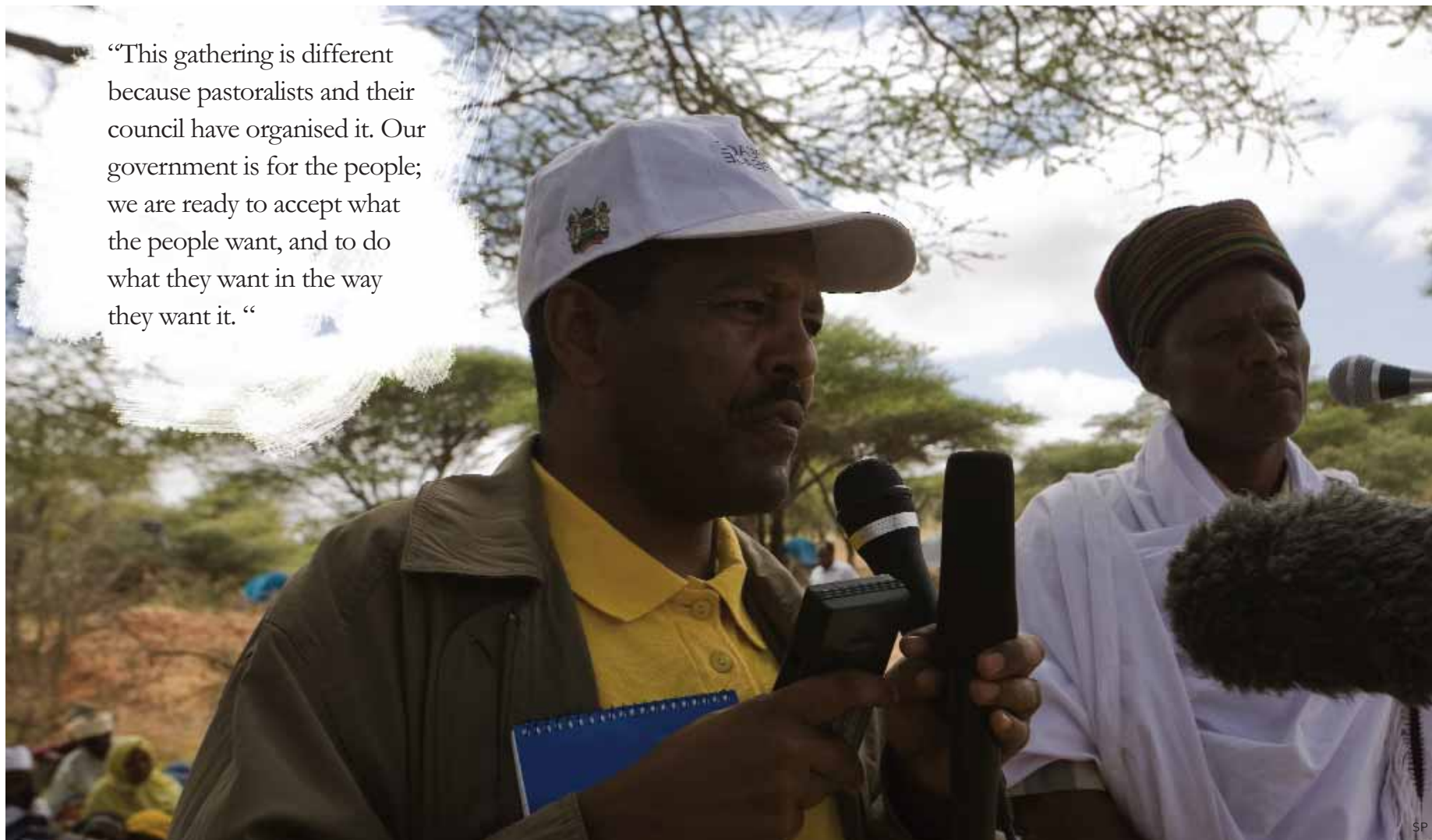




Governments talk

On the second day, the Chairman invited government representatives to speak on the topics that had been raised the previous day.

“This gathering is different because pastoralists and their council have organised it. Our government is for the people; we are ready to accept what the people want, and to do what they want in the way they want it.”



Mesfin Abebe

Deputy Head Oromia Administration and Security Bureau

This gathering is different because pastoralists and their council have organised it. Our government is for the people; we are ready to accept what the people want, and to do what they want in the way they want it. Pastoralists' issues need to be discussed at government level just as equally as issues of politics, peace and development. The policies of the current government are closer to pastoralists than previous governments. When the topics of education, health and development are raised, they need to be discussed in the context of pastoralists. Our main focus is on peace; pastoralists share the land, water and other natural resources. The population is growing and the number of cattle is also increasing, while the land is the same size as it has always been. Thus natural resource management should not be traditional as in the past. We are working with the people and their representatives in neighbouring regions.

We have done a study of the sources of conflict with neighbouring Somali Region and now we have started taking action. We have initiated many development activities; building schools and infrastructure in woredas where conflicts break out regularly, and we have made changes.

We believe that when traditional rules are integrated with government law it is more effective. **These rules are acceptable and relate well to our constitution, as long as they benefit the people. The interests of the people are the prime concern of the government.**

We'll contribute what we can; the government will provide its support to enable you to continue what you have started.

Community elders and committee members of the area have worked hard on negotiating peace and it's encouraging to see the decrease in conflicts and thefts in places where they have been prevalent.

Regarding Peace, the Administration and Security Bureau has been established and is working at local levels together with the community, community elders, religious leaders, committee members and NGOs. All these working for peace have a vital role to play.

Our role is to coordinate all these organisations. To strengthen this, we'll have more forums like this, lessons about peace will be shared in different places, peace gatherings will be held in more places.

Jemal Mohamed

Chairman Afar Regional State

Pastoralist Standing Committee

In our Region development activities concerning pastoralists are underway in education, health and water development. The regional government has established a Pastoralist Research Institute that provides training for improving cattle breeds, animal feed and agricultural productivity. We have been resolving conflicts with all our neighbours except with the Somalis. I hope that we'll manage to resolve the existing conflict between the Afar and Somalis in this pastoralist gathering.





PW

Salad Usman

MP, Somali Region Parliament and
Member of the Somali Pastoralist-
Standing Committee

The Somali Regional Government is alleviating the key problem of pastoralists, which is water, and deep wells have been dug. There is conflict in Somali Region, especially with our neighbours in Oromia and Afar Regions. I would like to underline that the Somali Regional Government is ready to solve problems in peaceful ways.

We are putting all our efforts into resolving the conflict with the Afar as quickly as possible. Following

its establishment, the Somali Pastoral Council is working hard with the government, NGOs and neighbouring pastoral councils and, in future, will solve many problems. Such initiatives are leading pastoralists in the right direction. We need to continue.

Mamaye Tsedal

Gambella Regional Government

For those of you who are here seeking peace, may it be the will of God to have peace upon you. The will of God requires our effort. It requires willingness from all parts of the community.

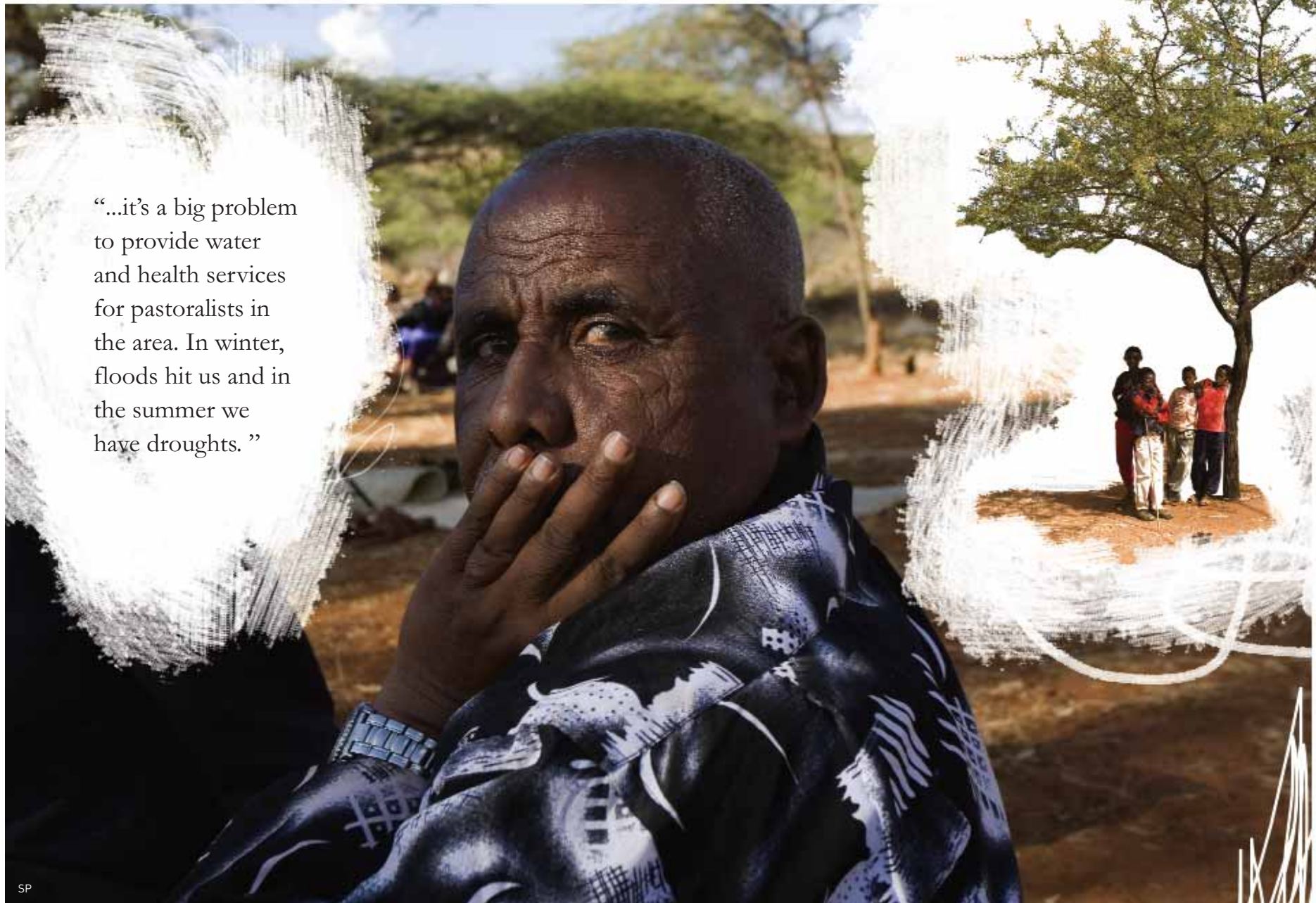
It has been a year since the Regional Government

established the Pastoralist office in Gambella. Strategic plans have been developed and manpower has now been assigned to the pastoralist administration. As beginners, we need your support.

Efforts have been made in water development and road construction, but **it's a big problem to provide water and health services for pastoralists in the area. In winter, floods hit us and in the summer we have droughts.** This problem has to be solved with the support of the community and the government.

The other problem is security. Pastoralists move from place to place and, when they move in search of water and grazing, others come and kill their families and steal their cattle.

If this problem is not solved, development won't be easy. It will take time for us to come up with a long-term solution unless we have a chance to discuss it and make peace through such gatherings as this one. I promise you that we'll convey the message from this gathering.



“...it’s a big problem to provide water and health services for pastoralists in the area. In winter, floods hit us and in the summer we have droughts.”

SP

Mulugeta Desalegn

Bench-Maji Zone, Southern
Nations and Nationalities
Regional State

SNNPRS includes about forty-five nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. I mention this figure because in Oromia Regional State, the conflict is within the Oromo and also between regions. But in the South, we are trying to resolve the conflict between nationalities. Two zones of SNNPRS have come here for this gathering: South

Omo Zone comprises sixteen nations and nationalities, six of them pastoralist and Bench-Maji Zone has six nations and nationalities, two of which are here.

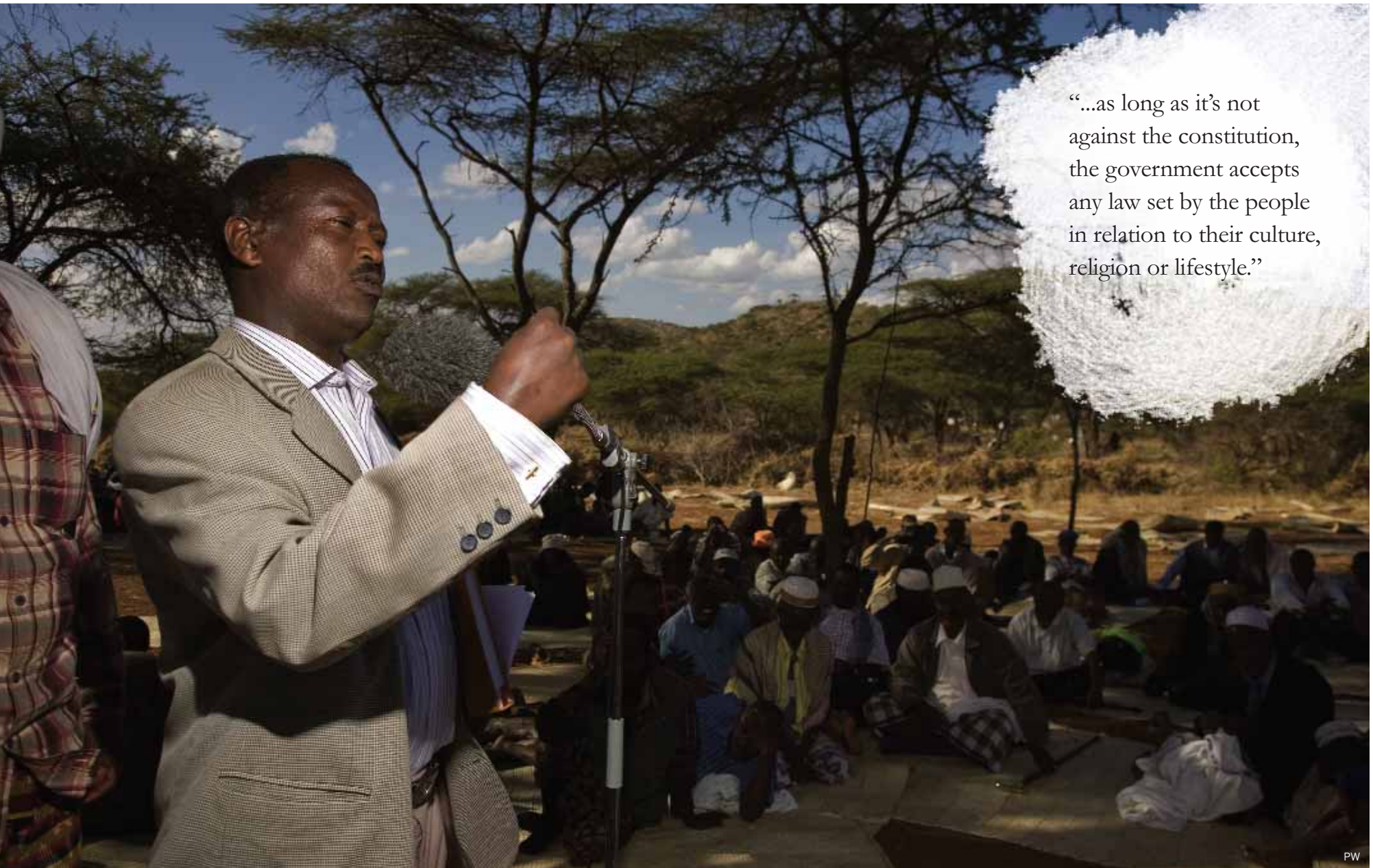
We have taken the initiative in several areas of conflict resolution at zonal level. A pastoral commission has been formed at regional level and there are pastoralist executives in the agriculture and rural development offices at zonal level.

Boarding schools in Jinka, Arba Minch, Bench Maji and Surma have been especially constructed and many other development and health projects are being implemented.

In Bench-Maji Zone, three nations and nationalities are in conflict: Suri with Nyangatom, Suri with Dizi and Suri with Menit, all due to grazing and theft. The regional government program, with the support of Pact Ethiopia, organised a forum for these nations and nationalities and brought them to-

gether. During the peace conference there was a great reconciliation between them. After they resolved their problems they made peace and now trade with each other. During the peace conference in Nyangatom they strengthened their peace and made traditional agreements by setting punishment rules and forming a peace committee. The regional Administration and Security Bureau is coordinating zonal government bodies with the community and trying to organise meetings to alleviate security problems; however, there is no support from NGOs. In SNNPRS, security committees have been formed at zonal level, at woreda level and even in villages. These security committees hand over killers and thieves to the government to be judged by the law.

When we return home we’ll pass on another lesson we gained from here; what pastoralists can do by themselves for themselves.



“...as long as it’s not against the constitution, the government accepts any law set by the people in relation to their culture, religion or lifestyle.”

PW

Hon. Tuqe Liban

Federal House of Peoples’
Representatives

The Pastoralist Affairs Standing Committee was formed in parliament seven years ago. Its function is to raise and address pastoral issues just like any other major issue. This Committee is following up all matters concerning pastoralists and efforts are being made to strengthen pastoral administration while setting rules and laws and developing policies. You have noticed how Borana, Gabra and Guji set traditional rules for themselves and how they brought peace to their communities. Their law is not contrary to government law or the constitution and, **as long as it’s not against the constitution, the government accepts any law set by the**

people in relation to their culture, religion or lifestyle. Some conflict between pastoralists is inevitable and people will sometimes die due to conflict. But if pastoralists resolve such cases with traditional negotiations through elders, there won’t be a sense of revenge.

Mwachiro Ngalla

District Officer 1,
Moyale District, Kenya

Our pastoralists in Kenya have the same problems as you. Changing the lives of pastoralists in Kenya depends not only on developing their animal productivity

but also in discovering other development options or alternatives. **What we have learnt from this gathering is that the traditional way of resolving conflicts is well structured and organised in Ethiopia.**

We’ll improve what we have started in Kenya through the experience we gained here. The traditional system has to be integrated with the government system; the Kenyan Government is currently working to resolve conflict and we need to work more on it.

Our government has worked on increasing the productivity and marketability of livestock. We have also created disease-free areas for healthy animals, built health centres in many districts and provided free education for pastoralist children.



Hon. Hussein Tari Sasura

Deputy Minister of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands

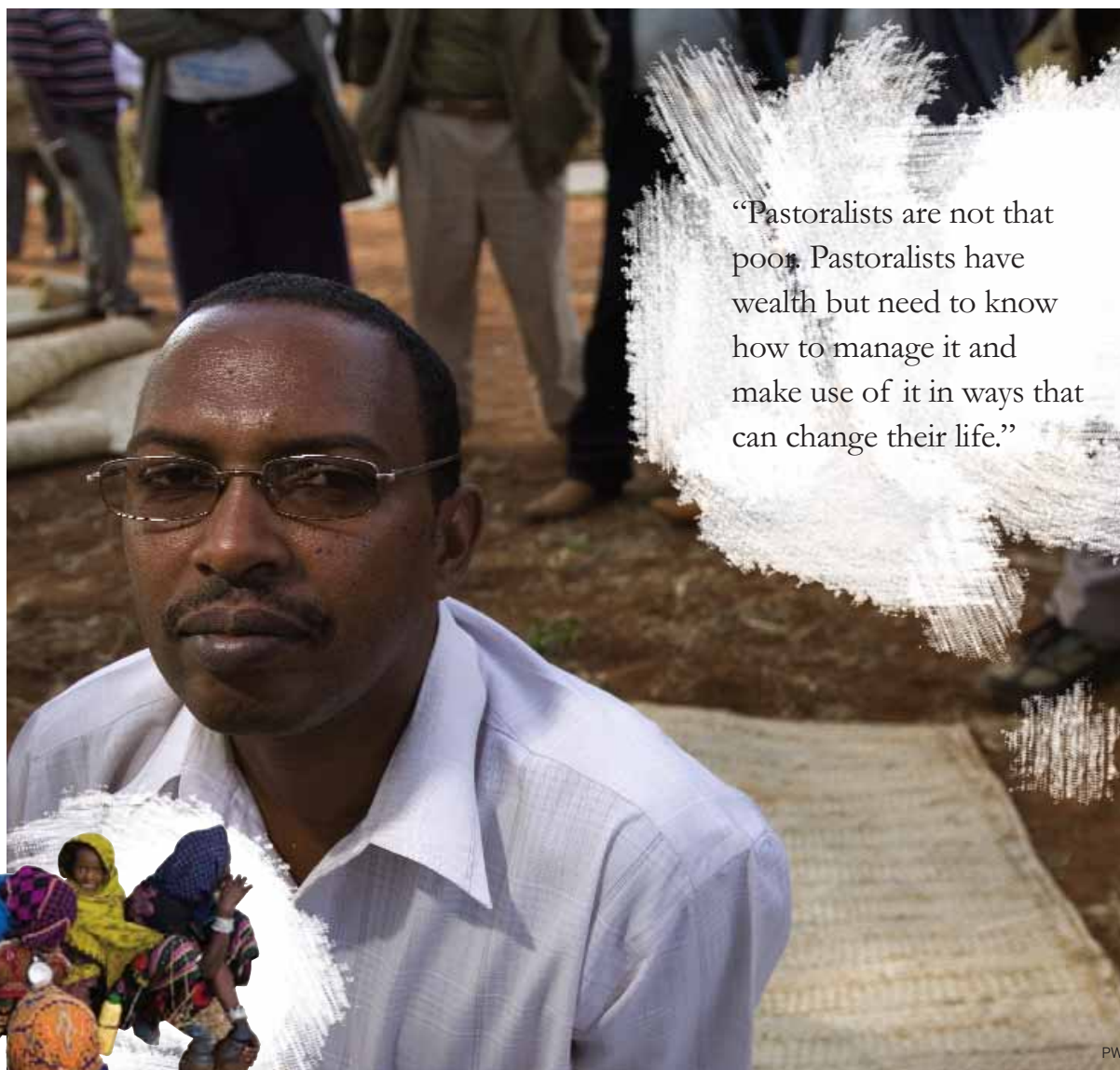
The pastoralist problems in Ethiopia and Kenya are similar. The pastoralist areas in Kenya are lagging behind other areas in Kenya in terms of development because they were not given proper attention. Now there are two Ministries of Pastoralists: one, the Ministry of Livestock Development whose minister is Mohammed Quti, son of a pastoralist, and my ministry whose Min-

ister is Mohamed Elmi, and I'm his deputy. There are peace committees in every district whose members are elders from different groups.

The participation of women in Kenya has been given due emphasis and they are given a chance to constitute at least 30% of the total number in any activity and are eligible for any job opportunity. Education is not just a means of escaping poverty but also alleviating conflict.

The financial budget made yearly by parliament is equivalent for both pastoralists and farmers. Pastoralists have their own pastoralist committee in parliament so their rights are respected equally. When people gather like this, when they get to know each other, eat together and sleep together, they narrow their differences and change their attitudes and understand that it's possible to live together peacefully. **Pastoralists are not that poor. Pastoralists have wealth but need to know how to manage it and make use of it in ways that can change their life.**

“What we have learnt from this gathering is that the traditional way of resolving conflicts is well structured and organised in Ethiopia.”



“Pastoralists are not that poor. Pastoralists have wealth but need to know how to manage it and make use of it in ways that can change their life.”



PW



SP

“If we make reconciliation, it should come from the heart. What we are saying here should be real and true.”

Nura Dida

Yesterday, we agreed to debate the issues that were raised last night and this morning to share ideas on how to strengthen peace and brotherhood among pastoralists.

THE AFAR AND ISA PEACE

Mohamed Seker

Burimodaito Woreda

We Afar seek peace as much as anybody else or even more so. Peace is mandatory between similar ethnic groups and families. We seek peace in any way. If there is no peace, it's not possible to do anything or develop. In order to bring peace, neighbouring pastoralists and the government should have a strong relationship. **Despite the fact that we speak different languages and live in different areas, we have the same needs and the same lifestyle as all pastoralists.** Elders, religious and tribal leaders should forge close relationships.

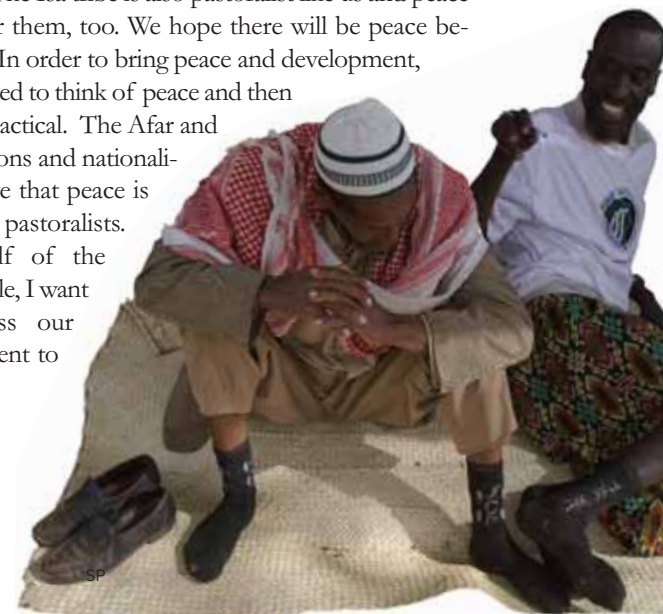
A peace without a firm foundation based in the community cannot endure. Conflicts break out not only between one community and another, or one tribe and another, but also within the tribe. **If we make reconciliation, it should come from the heart.** What we are saying here should be real and true.

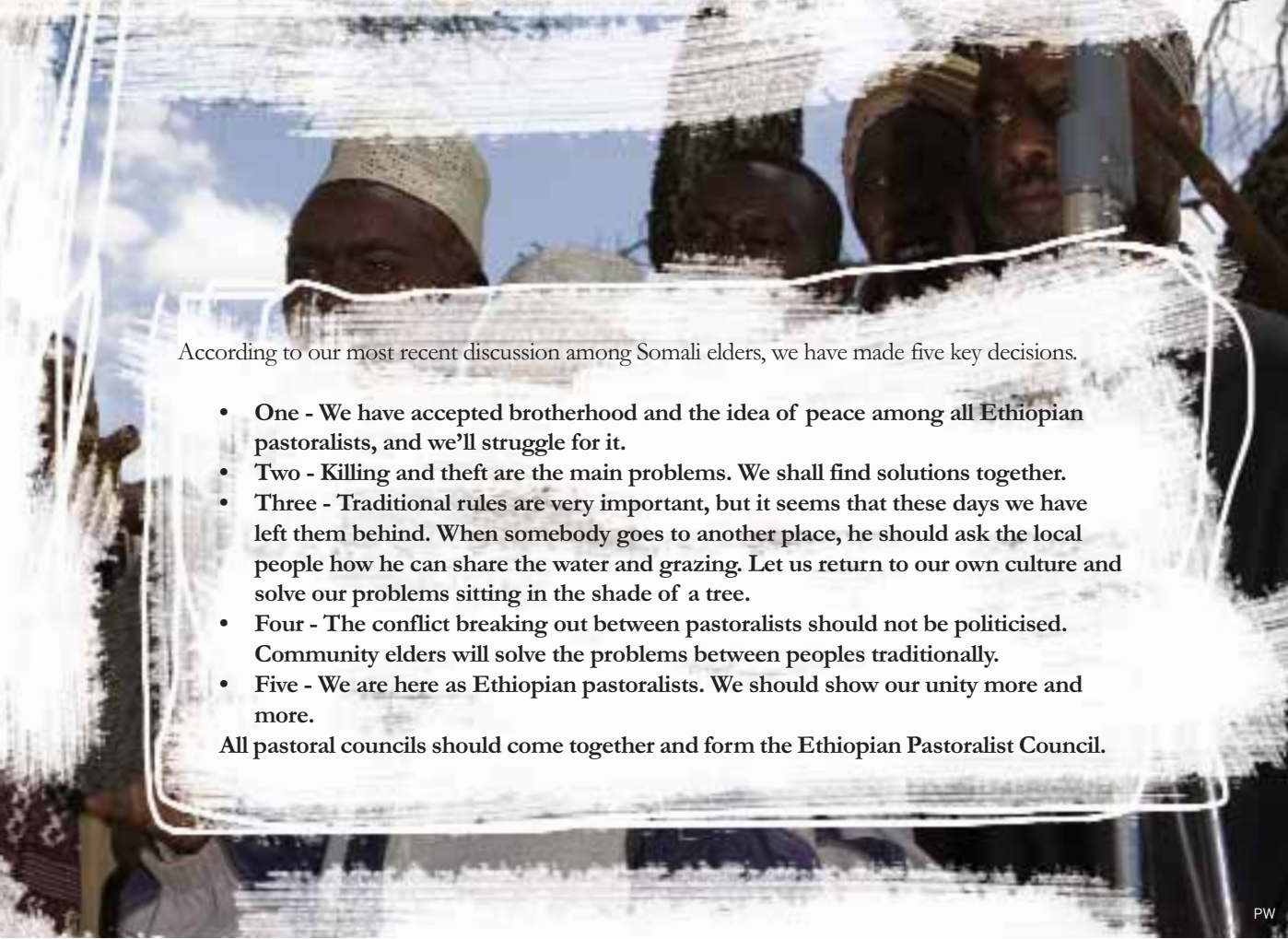
Looking to the future



“If you wash your body you start from the head and if you reconcile, you start from the heart.”

If all the delegates gathered here are interested in peace, it won't be difficult to bring peace to the rest of pastoral society. **There is conflict between Afar and its neighbours, but mostly we are able to solve them and live peacefully.** We want to be open and make our point, we don't want to cover it up. Somali is one of our neighbouring regions. We follow the same religion but speak different languages. Previously, there was a gathering in Somali Region and Afar representatives raised the case of conflict between the Afar and Isa tribes of Somali and we were waiting for their response. Peace is vital for all of us. The Isa tribe is also pastoralist like us and peace is vital for them, too. We hope there will be peace between us. In order to bring peace and development, first we need to think of peace and then make it practical. The Afar and other nations and nationalities believe that peace is vital for pastoralists. On behalf of the Afar people, I want to express our commitment to peace.





According to our most recent discussion among Somali elders, we have made five key decisions.

- **One - We have accepted brotherhood and the idea of peace among all Ethiopian pastoralists, and we'll struggle for it.**
 - **Two - Killing and theft are the main problems. We shall find solutions together.**
 - **Three - Traditional rules are very important, but it seems that these days we have left them behind. When somebody goes to another place, he should ask the local people how he can share the water and grazing. Let us return to our own culture and solve our problems sitting in the shade of a tree.**
 - **Four - The conflict breaking out between pastoralists should not be politicised. Community elders will solve the problems between peoples traditionally.**
 - **Five - We are here as Ethiopian pastoralists. We should show our unity more and more.**
- All pastoral councils should come together and form the Ethiopian Pastoralist Council.

PW

Sultan Mohamed Hassan Gababa

I want to answer the question forwarded from our Afar brothers. The Afar and the Somali are one people, they are brothers, they follow the same religion and both are Ethiopian. We discussed last night how to alleviate the problem as quickly as possible. Now there are favourable conditions, thus we can start working on it. The Afar and Somali representatives should have a discussion here, right after the end of this big gathering. This is a good opportunity for us. The other opportunity will be during Pastoralist Day celebrations in Semera. Somali Council elders will be there, everybody will be there, the government will also be there. We shall make use of this good opportunity. It is not a straight answer for our Afar brothers but it shows that we are trying.*

*Further discussions did take place at the Pastoralist Day in Semera

Damphare Godana

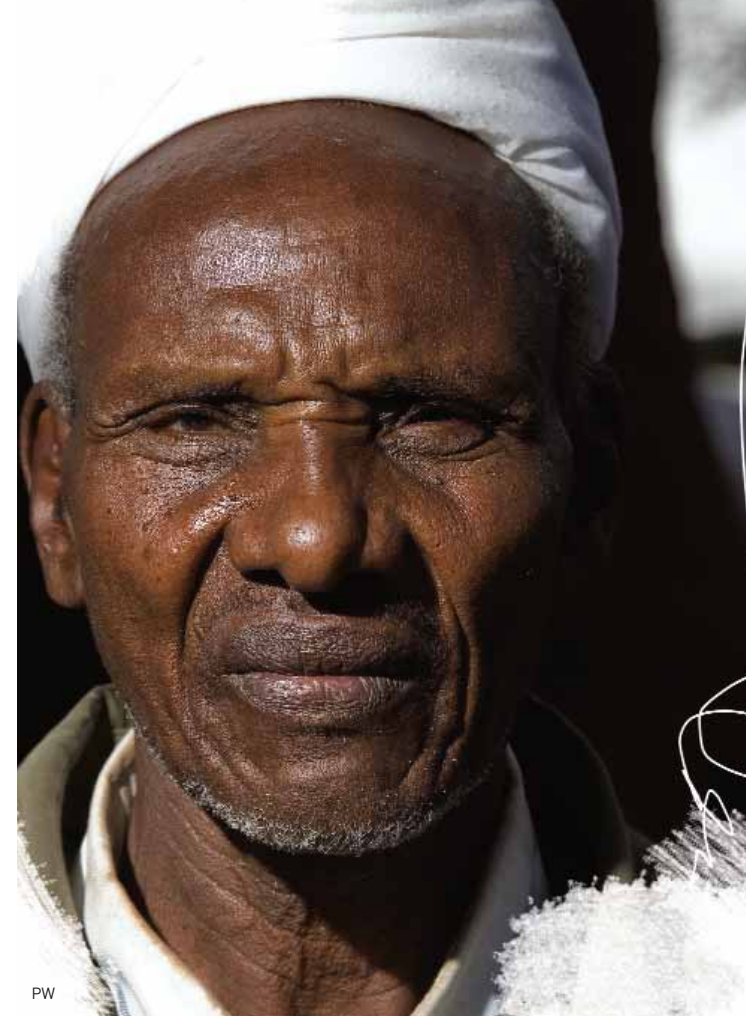
Liban Woreda, Guji Zone

Let's avoid our problems and get back to our culture. If we avoid our problems and get back to being one brotherhood, there will be nothing difficult for us to achieve. There are traditional water management rules, land management guidelines and punishments for criminals. These strengthen our brotherhood.

Lotikori Yarekal

If we form a committee of elders and integrate them with the youth committee and work on peace together, it will be good.

Around the South Omo border, the Turkana, Dassanech, Hamar and Nyangatom have formed a committee and during the past three years we have had a general peace, although conflicts might break out from time to time. We need financial support from organisations for frequent gatherings in one area. We want the Government and NGOs to help us raise funds. I'm a member of a peace



PW

committee. I'm a man of peace and I've been attending gatherings like this. We are one, we are Ethiopians, let us discuss, let us solve our problems together. let us discuss, let us solve our problems together.

Rhamry Chuol

We have come here with a very special issue that we have to solve, the issue of peace. I am sure we are born anew by this gathering of pastoralist associations. Unfortunately, I shall not thank all of us here because we have not yet achieved anything. Peace has no formula. We can create a formula to achieve co-existence and survival. I'm sad to say this, but **it's not a matter of choosing sweet words under the shade of this tree if we don't put them into practice.**

In Gambella we plan to form a new pastoralist council. We look to you to provide us with experience and support to do this.

It would be a good idea to remember that we should not underestimate ourselves. We are powerful, we are part of the government, we are part of the community and we have been given a special mandate to solve this problem that is making peace.

“...it's not a matter of choosing sweet words under the shade of this tree if we don't put them into practice.”

Gathering for peace



Molu Kulu

Gabra Yaa Oddola, Kenya

There were three people, one who had no legs, a second who was deaf and a third who was blind. They wanted to make an agreement among themselves. The blind man said 'I saw cattle there' and the rest agreed. The deaf man said 'I heard the sound of cattle' and the rest agreed. And the one who had no legs said 'let us run to the cattle'.

This is how people make agreements. Everybody is agreeable and says yes to each other. Let us accept ideas from each other. Conflict destroys lives. If there is no war our kids will grow. It's in the hands of us pastoralists. We have wealth, we have livestock, and we can send our children to school.

Final word

Boru Godana

Please give serious attention to making peace and continue these discussions when you reach home. This event should not be a one-off. We are gathered here for peace and thus the peace will lead us to development.

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First of all I would like to thank the Oromia regional government and other bodies that facilitated the organisation of this gathering. I would also like to thank NGOs, especially DGPP, a DFID project that has covered all the expenses of this gathering.

I thank all of you who have come from different regions to participate in this gathering and all the government bodies at kebele, woreda, zonal, regional and federal level who are here.

I thank all participants from Kenya. I thank community elders and the elders of this particular area, the people who have been serving the participants, the police force, all the GOs and NGOs.

May the Almighty help us organize another gathering where we can achieve more than we have achieved in this gathering for peace.

May you have prosperity and a long life.

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May you have prosperity and a long life.







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The opinions expressed in this document are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the UK Department for

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*Gathering
for peace*

15-17 January 2009,

Ethiopia,
Oromia region,
Borana Zone,
Mudhisellu.

