Where are the women?

We gathered around to watch the Hamar youth tell us their story through a drama. While many could not understand their words, the youth were still able to share their feelings about the problems they see. After this, people at the gathering began to tell their own stories from their own countries about their problems and their solutions. Sarah Ossiya, from Uganda, asked why no women were speaking. She said that the first problem is that very few women are here at this gathering. The second is that the women who have spoken, spoke very very powerfully, which shows that when women are given the opportunity, they have something to say and can say it powerfully. The third point she made was that often as pastoralists we talk only to ourselves, this is a problem. The gathering here in Turmi is an opportunity to speak to people who can help us. What Sarah said made many people think.

Then some women began to talk to each other, and Hamar women told others about how they would like to make things better for their families. We decided to have a women’s gathering. As the sun was setting, we sat on the sand in the dry river bed, gathered in a circle to listen to each other. The conversation brought women together from Argentina, Australia, Italy, Israel, Mongolia, Spain, Switzerland, UK, USA and Hamar. The Hamar women told us of their hopes and problems. Carina Gerez from Neuquen, Argentina, said to the Hamar women, with tears in her eyes: ‘I have walked through Turmi and seen how hard the women here work and I want to say congratulations to you for what you do. After the sharing of tears, emotions, stories and ideas, the Hamar women ended the meeting saying: ‘This is an occasion for us to talk. When you go back, we want you to think of us and remember us.’

The women’s gathering yesterday was the beginning of an extended conversation that will continue throughout the week.
Gathering objectives
+ To share ideas with each other
+ To communicate in the future, pastoralist to pastoralist, across the world
+ For the pastoralists, government, and agencies to understand each other better
+ To look critically at government policies on pastoralists and see how we can make them better
+ To look carefully at how we communicate with each other

A blessing from Hamar people
After welcome rains the gathering began formally with a blessing of chants and whispers by the Hamar people. After hearing from Choke and Bereda who welcomed all the different people and cultures to Turmi. We heard powerful words from Workneh Woita and Bona Belenta: “You have come and in a way you are bringing out all our cleverness ad stupidity, how we live and how we are. Now I want to see what I can learn from you in the days ahead.”
“I presume you drink milk, eat meat and drink blood, but there must be something else that you are getting. You say you are herding cattle and goats, but your appearance doesn’t look like it.”

Pastoralist representation in Benin
Several conversations yesterday morning raised the issue of government representation and recognising that governments and pastoralists have different perceptions about the key issues. I was interested to hear of an example in Benin where similar issues have been identified. El Hadj Aboubacar Tidjani spoke about UDOPER, which is an organisation facilitating communication among pastoralists, as well as between local, regional and national government groups. He will be presenting on these issues on Monday under tree 1.

Herding turkeys in Spain
In the mountains of Spain, pastoralists continue traditions of herding goats, cows, sheep, pigs, and turkeys, following the seasons. They use 125,000 kilometres of common byways. Many government people grew up in rural areas themselves and are supportive and sympathetic to the needs of pastoralists. Jesus Garzon, a pastoralist from Spain, encourages careful land use and ecological equilibrium to ensure a sustainable future.

Summary of Day 1
A pleasant morning rain caused the delay of the schedule, and created an opportunity for participants to gather together under the one shade. Many pictures were taken and people were able to make first contacts and share stories and experiences. The blessing of the Hamar people and the government of Ethiopia welcomed us all to Turmi. We saw a drama by the young Hamar, which sparked an interesting sharing of experiences from Turkana, Iran and Canada. Many discussions continued after the session ended, and an impromptu gathering of women took place on the river bed. Some groups also slaughtered sheep and goats to celebrate the occasion. The day ended with the showing of a Hamar film. We look forward to how these discussions continue and develop over the next few days.

Remember: Tea will be served today at 15.30.
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 understand 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.
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<th><strong>Tree 1, morning session</strong></th>
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<td>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. <strong>Wale Baro</strong> 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?”</td>
<td>After Kereyu and Guji blessings, we heard strongly from <strong>Haji Qassaru Jillo</strong>, a federal MP and Kereyu clan elder, <strong>Aga Tantano Guya</strong>, 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. <strong>Chief Shane Gottfriedson</strong> from Canada ended with a hopeful comment: “by making the effort to be the person you want to be, everyone will be better off”</td>
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<th><strong>Tree 2, morning session</strong></th>
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| 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 | 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. |

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<td>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 loosing traditional ways of living.</td>
<td>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 <strong>Martins Adegbe Ayegba</strong> 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. <strong>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.</strong></td>
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Over the past three days, we have listened under all the trees, and have noticed some parallels between different groups. Today we will highlight two areas that seem important.

Whose Rights?
Rights have been mentioned both as something which can help pastoralists, and something which has made situations for pastoralists more complicated. But many people have talked about how pastoralists understand and use rights.

Angelica Tomasa Reales, from Argentina, spoke of how the UN Declaration of Human Rights includes rights for all. But in her experience, she has adapted internationally agreed human rights to her needs. For example, she says that pastoralists’ rights should also include the right to the pastoralist way of life (such as traditional food, and livelihood).

We heard how in Mali, land rights have made some things more complicated. As part of decentralisation, different parts of Mali have developed different types of land rights, and these districts do not respect the types of land rights from other districts. This makes migration even more difficult for pastoralists in Mali, although many pastoralists believe that there should be a right to land.

By comparison, in conversation under tree 1 yesterday, one of the Gabra speakers said that the real issue is about how pastoralists access their rights—because the rights are not new, they are rights the pastoralists already have.

Traditional basis for rights, like ancestral and hereditary land rights do not necessarily match the rights that governments will protect in reality. But pastoralists have been organising to get governments to be more accountable.

Who’s listening?
The key issues of influencing and holding governments accountable have been addressed in the presentations from many different countries. We heard yesterday from the people of Kazakhstan about a system of associations that is not working well for pastoralists because the associations represent both the pastoralists and the farmers. As Yesmyrzayev Sadyk said, “if you take the interests of both pastoralists and farmers, of course it’s the pastoralists who lose.”

We have also heard some positive examples from other regions, at the local, regional and national levels. In India for example, pastoralists organised themselves and were able to collectively negotiate with the local government and gain partial access to forest pastures which the government had taken away. Although the pastoralists at one time had unlimited access to these forest areas, this example shows how when communities, organising themselves and working together, have the potential to change harmful policies introduced at the local level. Likewise for the Bedouins in Israel, although not yet recognised by the national government, they have been able to organise 15 associations to represent 45 local villages. As Fares Abu Abid said, “we realised that nobody will solve our problems unless we solve them ourselves. We are now a strong community, we have our organisations, and we have policies to confront Israeli policies.” Enrique Omar Soto offered a similar message from Argentina, when he said that “our strongest bargaining tool with the government is that we don’t depend on anyone, we organise things for ourselves.”

From Spain, Benin and Canada, we can gain even more hope from seeing how these associations can extend influence all the way to the national government. As Chief Shane Gottfriedson said, it is a difficult process that requires a lot of trust, time and unity.
**News In Brief**

**Tree 1, morning session**

Yesterday people from South America (Argentina, Chile and Peru) and from Africa (Maasai and Barabaig people of Tanzania) spoke about their experiences. There were many issues in common, but some interesting contrasts emerged between the African and South American contexts. In both there was a sense that there is a traditional basis for rights, such as hereditary or ancestral rights to land, that is being ignored by governments and private companies. However, the South Americans spoke of several examples of how they have organised as pastoralists, which has led to greater economic strength and political influence. While there are still problems to be addressed, the South American’s offered some hopeful examples of what can be achieved. The Hamar people expressed their desire to travel to see how the South Americans work in practice, and the Argentineans extended a formal invitation to the Hamar people to visit.

**Tree 2, morning session**

At tree 2 yesterday we saw presentations from Kenyan and Ethiopian Somalis, the Bedouins and the people from Kazakhstan. Some common issues were water, access to pasture and government representation. We also heard of specific issues about marginalisation during the privatisation of pastoralism in Kazakhstan, that shifted from collective land use and government ownership of livestock under the Soviet control to private ownership of animals in the current situation. We also heard about specific problems of seasonal pastoralism in Kazakhstan, which has a cold winter and a hot summer. Another interesting dialogue developed between the Ethiopian Somali and the Iranians, who spoke of mobile schools as a possibility for increasing the access of pastoralist children to education. This is working well in Iran, and is currently included in the policy of the Ethiopian government but yet to be implemented. The Bedouins used a simple proverb to motivate us all, saying that if you are sleeping you just continue to snore—you have to help yourself.

**Tree 3, morning session**

Peoples from Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Spain and Wales told us about their lives. A recurring issue related to the tracks, byways and common land used by pastoralists: with other competing land use pressures, many of these traditional routes are now inaccessible, having been taken for building, tourism, roads or by sedentary people. Even where traditional usage is protected by law, implementation of law can take a long time or not happen at all. Mauritania and Spain however shared encouraging stories of genuine support by government and others, even though the relative numbers of pastoralists in each country are very different. There were also calls for provision of water, veterinary services, well-marked paths, effective government policies, and agreements to make crossing border to reach both grazing and markets more easy.

**Afternoon session**

In the afternoon, people from each region came together to discuss what they had learned over the past three days, and what they would like to know more about. The groups identified a wide range of issues including: production, technology and how it can be shared, the way policies and laws affect pastoralists, how service provision from education to animal health can be improved, the role of marketing and political associations, the impact of international programmes, and conflict. In total, more than 14 groups from Argentina to Tanzania were called upon to share more information about these different areas. As a representative from Mali said, “we have learned that there are many different kinds of communication between pastoralists, there are different levels and that pastoralists are not all on the same level. But despite this, there is still a common basis to unite us together.” Today, these groups will be invited to share more detail about these issues. There was also a parallel meeting of women to discuss their issues.

Representatives from the Ethiopian and regional government, UNDP, DFID and USAID arrived to join the gathering today. We welcome them.

*This newsletter was prepared by Jane, Joanna and Lucy from IDS, UK.*
Learning through examples

Turmi hosted the first international pastoralist information bazaar today. Many interesting conversations took place. Although we could not listen everywhere, here are some samples of the details and ideas exchanged.

Mali’s Pastoral Code

Building on conversations throughout the gathering, we learned about the complex and overlapping history of land systems in Mali. Following independence from the French, pastoralists were pushed aside in favour of agriculturalists. This continued for many years, and some pastoralists lost animals and access to land as agricultural practices increased (especially rice cropping). This situation for pastoralists was made worse by the conflicts between different systems of land use. Currently there are customary land rights, private land rights, and international agreements on trans-boundary migration that all govern how pastoralists use land.

Responding to pressure from local communities, ethnic groups, and international organisations, the legislative assembly passed a pastoral code in 2001. The representatives of Mali explained that although the code does not solve all the problems of the pastoralists, it is a very important step towards helping the marginalisation of the pastoralists in Mali. The positive parts of the code include: rehabilitation of migration routes which had been blocked through agriculture, the clear definition and protection of pastoralist zones, the right of animals to graze on agricultural land after the harvest, and a justice system to help resolve disputes between pastoralists and agriculturalists. The code was written in part by intermediaries for the pastoralists, and pastoralists also gave their opinions of it before it was passed. Now there are many further challenges to be faced before the code can be fully implemented, but the importance of the pastoralists in Mali has been recognised.

A coincidence?

In a tight cluster this afternoon, Hamar elders and Daniel Singadeda of the Barabaig in Tanzania spoke of their histories. Although the Barabaig and the Hamar are now many miles apart, they shared stories of their ancestors and lifestyles in search of common ground.

They shared names of their forefathers, spoken first by the Hamar and then by Daniel. On hearing the 8th generation of the Barabaig forefathers, the group became excited to find a common name. Perhaps he was one of the Hamar who were expelled many years ago? They then shared stories of cattle marking and cutting the dulag on the cows.

The group excitedly searched for common ground and similarities between their cultures. Perhaps they have found it.
Rapid response to drought in Kenya

Dr Adan Bika, District Drought Officer from Kenya, opened shop beneath Tree 1. He spoke of the Kenyan system that has been developing since the mid 1980s. Combining traditional coping strategies with new mechanisms, they have developed an early warning system that continually monitors the situation that enables a rapid early response. Information is critical and comes from a number of sources such as weather, health and satellite images. Each month this information is compiled by the District Steering Group. If the incoming information indicates that a drought is on its way they have the authority to respond rapidly with pre-emptive measures such as overhauling borehole pumps. He also described how they are trying to strengthen traditional institutions that have been weakened over time and saw government departments as being complementary to these traditional structures. The Hamar people who were present commented that they didn’t have a problem with water but with conflict. In response Dr Bika explained that conflict, drought and veterinary departments are merged in Kenya, enabling integrated thinking and actions.

At the same time Musa Ngitieng of the Turkana offered the Mursi advice about interboundary relationships. The Mursi are frequently short of grass and cross into neighbours territory to make use of grazing in a wildlife park. They then are unjustly blamed for the killing of game and starting fires. The Turkana responded by suggesting that they negotiate with their neighbours prior to moving to the grazing land, recognizing that the park is an important economic base. The Mursi saw this as a useful suggestion and resolved to try and negotiate in future. The group also discussed an example of a transborder organisation, the local peace network, which may also be a model to help facilitate conflict resolution and friendly interboundary relations in the future.

Uniting pastoralists in Canada

Chief Ron Evans told us about how the indigenous people in Canada were able to unite and confront threats to their rights. In 1969, the Canadian government was preparing to take away the autonomy of indigenous people by abolishing the laws that protect indigenous rights. At the time, the indigenous people knew very little about how government policy works. However, because of the danger to their rights and autonomy, the indigenous people from across Canada decided to organise themselves. They formed local organisations based on their tribes, which chose regional representatives, who in turn chose national representatives that could speak to the Canadian national government. In this way, they were able to unite as one voice and they called themselves the First Nation.

One of the most crucial strategies that helped them come together in this way was the importance that the elders and the chiefs gave to education. Education helped increase people’s awareness about the situation. As a result of their organisation, they were able to add the agreement on indigenous rights into the Canadian national constitution. They then began to submit land claims through the court system to help strengthen their rights in practice. Chief Ron says that ‘everyone is protective of what’s theirs and resistant to change, and it can take a long time to build consensus. The key to this is education and building awareness.’
Mobile education services in Iran

The main services discussed at this information shop were mobile education and veterinary services. Following on from discussions on Monday, the Iranians shared details about the success of their programs.

For primary school, mobile schools are held in tents and move with the pastoralists. The schools are completely closed for the migration, which usually lasts for 3 months each year and can mean travelling up to 1000kms. Primary school is free, and the teachers' salaries are paid by the government with no contribution from the community. The curriculum is the same in the mobile schools as in fixed schools, so that pastoralist children may have the opportunity to continue on to a secondary boarding school. In response to a question about the quality of schooling raised by a Kenyan, the Iranians responded that in some cases, the mobile schools may actually be of higher quality than the fixed schools, particularly in the villages, because the teachers are pastoralists themselves. The teachers train for 2 years in the cities and then return back to their families. Some of the problems facing the mobile schools are that some students have to travel up to 3 kms to attend school, and that different families move at different times in the migration. This means that even when the school starts again after the migration, not all of the students will be attending.

The mobile veterinary services described were also interesting, as there is a system in place of creating 'para-vets' in Iran. This means that some pastoralists from each community are selected by the government to learn how to administer the drugs for the animals. They spend 6 months training in the cities and then return back to their communities. The drugs are subsidized by the government, and the para-vets buy them to then sell in their communities, but do not sell them for a profit. Veterinary doctors then go to these areas to get the reports about the drug administration. The key issue to the success of both of these programmes is the involvement of pastoralists in the delivery of services.

Resolving conflict in India

A great deal of interest emerged from other groups on how India manages its forests and handles related conflicts. In their shop yesterday the Indians were offering more information:

In the state of Rajastan different natural forest areas are managed through Khadu village and family systems that allocates to the different Gujjar villages access to pastoral land for grazing. On an informal basis, the pastoralists establish different agreements on reciprocal pastoral land usage. But as in other places, things go wrong and conflict emerges when there are no agreements set and when there is illegal land trespassing. As a response, the pastoralists have developed two mechanisms for resolving disputes in forest areas. The first is a formal intervention where the government, which owns the land, intervenes in case of a major escalation of a conflict. Local officials are sent and sit with the elders of the villages in dispute until the conflict is resolved. The second mechanism is an informal one which is applied to local and smaller cases of disputes such as the illegal trespassing of animals from one village to another without a prior agreement. In such cases the animals can be taken by the village whose lands were entered to a kahnjihod (jail) which is a common designated area. When Gabriel Palmili from Argentina asked how the owner of the ‘criminal’ sheep can be sure that his/her animals are being well fed, Dolat Ram Gujjar explained that fees collected are used for the welfare of the animals. The confiscating village charges 3 rupees for every sheep taken and provides good feeding for the animals. Dolat explained: “after all it is not the animals’ fault but their owners and they should not be the ones that suffer.” He also clarified that there are a lot of other examples where the pastoralists themselves decide to use local conflict resolution management before asking the government to intervene. They have shown that internal decisions are faster and more efficient and if applied on time can prevent a conflict from escalating.
**News In Brief**

**Summary of Day Four**

Tuesday began with statements from representatives from government and international organisations. *Ato Abdul Khadir Risqe* from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke of how we all need to work together to move beyond the identification of problems, and affirmed the Government’s commitment to mobilising resources to resolve problems. *Modibo Toure*, Head of the United Nations Country Team greeted participants in the many languages represented here. He said “you are most knowledgeable about your problems; solutions you put forward yesterday make a great deal of sense and we are going to work on these with, and for, you.” Saying he was humbled by what he heard, he assured us that pastoralist concerns would included in the 5 year Working Plan which is currently being drawn up. *Dr Belay Durza*, from Regional Government, commented on the complexities of development and called for investment and partnership. *John Graham* from USAID said that “those of us who have worked with pastoralists are committed to moving them from the margins to the centre of our thinking and our work.” *Paul Ackroyd*, head of DfID Ethiopia, spoke of how they are working to incorporate traditional society into a modern state, where everyone can achieve their economic, social and human rights. Finally *Maryam Niamir-Fuller* from the World Initiative on Sustainable Pastoralism commented on the widely held misunderstandings of pastoralism by governments and agencies, and how they need to understand the value of pastoralism. Following these statements pastoralists raised important questions. Iran asked how we could be sure that these promises would be kept, given that they have not been kept in the past. The Kenyans asked why their livestock market disappeared when the British colonial administration ended, and asked that it be returned.

**Women’s meeting continues**

The women met again yesterday to continue sharing stories about their lives and ideas for the future. Some of the *Mursi* women spoke about their culture and their experiences as women, and expressed gratitude to the organisers and participants of the global gathering for respecting their culture. In a moving exchange, *Angelica Tomas Reales* shared stories of her women’s cooperative in Argentina and showed examples of her artisan work. The group saw examples of clay pots, llama ornaments and wool products. The meeting concluded with photos and friendship, and *Bona Belenta* will speak on behalf of the group in today’s plenary.

**Processing camel milk**

In a fascinating cross-cultural dialogue between *Canada, Iran, India, Mongolia and Somali from Kenya and Ethiopia*, ideas about milk processing were exchanged. Building on the Canadians use of cows’ milk to make yoghurt, cheese, cream and butter, the Iranians described how they process their milk. They described how they make yoghurt, and then how they use that yoghurt to then make butter, butter milk, and other cooking ingredients. One of the by-products is dry, and can be kept for many years. Responding to a question about using this process with other milk as well as goats’ and sheep’s milk, the Indians responded by saying that they use a similar process with both cow and buffalo milk. The Ethiopian Somalis then asked about the possibility of using a similar process with camel’s milk.

This sparked an engaging conversation about the possibility of keeping the milk. Everyone listened to the description of the process used in India, where camel milk is boiled in a mud pot, cooled in a mud glass, and then drunk fresh. *Abdi Haji Yussuf* from Kenya then shared details of how he has seen camel milk preserved for up to 3 months. He described a process of adding sugar to the milk (at a ration of a cup of sugar for every 2 cups of milk), stirring the mixture while boiling it until it becomes thick, and then storing it in tins (with a lid). We also heard that the Mongolians also process camel milk as well as the hair from young camels to make wool. Everyone came away from the dialogue with some practical ideas to try for milk processing as well as an inspiring recognition of similarities between people and practices across the world.
Can dreams become realities?

Yesterday morning we all met to discuss and answer two questions:
1) What do we predict will be the reality in 10 years?
2) What is our vision or dream for the future?

Regional groups discussed these critical questions as part of the process of bringing this global gathering to a close. The first group to present were the South Omo, who spoke of hopes of a livestock market in Turmi centre and the hope that they will have the resources to organise themselves to make change in the next 10 years. From the Afar and Somali groups of Kenya and Ethiopia we heard how if there is no change pastoralism will decline, poverty will increase and people will be forced to settle in villages. They hope that government efforts will include pastoralists in policy and decision making, and that the pastoralists themselves can continue to talk with each other. They also found hope in the fact that the world community and some representatives of governments and policy makers have come together here in Turmi. It is hoped that the policy makers will have listened and will make more effort to help pastoralists, so that pastoralists can in turn make more effort to help themselves.

Next we heard from the Bedouins, who spoke of an optimistic vision for the future within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. They commented that unless there is a coordinated effort from governments, pastoralists and international organisations, this vision will surely fail. But there is hope for a better future if the three groups work together. The West Africans then spoke of the risks ahead if there is no change in the next 10 years, which include further marginalisation of pastoralists, migration from rural to urban areas and the decreased availability of pasture land. They spoke of a vision of a better world for pastoralists supported by a representative international organisation that can recognise that pastoralists can live in harmony with their social and economic environments if adequately supported with basic services such as education and health care.

The Spanish speakers presented next, bringing together the voices of Chile, Peru, Argentina and Spain. They all agreed that if the situation does not change, things will only get worse. Their vision includes a hope that all of society will become aware of the ecological, social and economic importance of pastoralism, which can in turn lead to a great support and recognition of pastoralists at the government level. They also suggested that “a key thing is that pastoralists recover their pride in what they do and what they achieve”.

Finally Iran spoke powerfully about their positive vision for the future. Touching on issues of representation, coordination, universal education, communication and self-mobilisation, they then proposed specific next steps to come from this global gathering. These included a replication of this kind of gathering at the regional level, developing a more concrete plan to achieve these visions, a platform for follow-up communication (such as website hosted by WISP) and finally a commitment from all of us participating here in Turmi to share the results and ideas from this meeting. They echoed the calls from the South Omo peoples and Spanish speakers for a statement that summarises the key issues arising from this gathering.

We are all left thinking not about concrete solutions, but about ideas and possibilities for the future, and some possible strategies to turn these dreams into realities.

Chief Shane Gottfriedson passed on this saying from a respected aboriginal elder in Canada: “Like the thunderbird of old, I shall rise out of the sea, I shall grab the instruments of the white man’s successes, his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my Race into the proudest segment of your society, so shall I shatter these barriers of isolation, so shall the next one hundred years be the greatest in the proud history of our tribes and nations.” The late Chief Dan George (Dukes)

Mali

“We have learned about other’s experiences, solutions that work, and the good will of others. We have also learned how to make better links with international organisations of pastoralists, and we are here to come together.”
Perceptions of women’s roles and issues
The day began with the group of women who have been meeting during the gathering speaking about their experiences. They invited both men to speak about women as well as women about themselves.

Chief Musa Ngitieng from Turkana began, telling us about the role of women in Turkana society, where their husbands generally expect them to do as they ask and they have little power. They are responsible for a range of activities including water collection, cooking, digging holes for tree-planting, herding small animals, milking and gathering wild fruits when times are hard. A contrasting description was offered by Mohamed Ag Mohamed Ali, about the role of women in Mali society. Here, we were told, women are involved in around 70% of decision making processes and also have an important, if hidden, advisory role. They are a major force socially and culturally but a little behind politically. Despite traditional polygamy, the Tuaregs favour having only one wife, who oversees the household management. Hard physical work is done by men.

Then it was the turn of the women to speak. After greeting us all, Bona Belenta of the Hamar asked all the women present to stand up. She then requested the men to look at all these women from all around the world who had given birth and nurtured them. Than she challenged the men on how after all this they still oppress and dominate women. She spoke passionately about meeting other women and the solidarity that resulted from the shared understandings of their issues. She also said that access to education is important because it enables access to change, and drew hope from the account of women’s status in the Mali society.

What did you value about the gathering?
We asked the people of the gathering what, for them, had been most valuable. What follows are some of their responses.

Juan Luis Merega, Argentina
“This gathering has shown us that most of the problems are common to pastoralists from all over the world. But fortunately it has also shown that it is possible to share and exchange on experiences which have had a positive impact in the field.”

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, UNDP WISP
“The most valuable thing has been the ability to cross cultural divides and thereby have much more effective communication on commonly held issues.”

Mali
“That people have discovered they are not alone, not the only ones who live in these conditions and they are not alone in wanting to change their circumstances, are part of a larter pastoral world.”

West Africans
“Pastoralists are like a sick patient in need of medicine. If nothing is done to bring medicine or help to this person, the pastoralist is going to die.”

Patta Scott-Villiers, facilitator, says: “PCI is very happy to hear ideas from people about things they would like to do. PCI’s goals is to help communication between pastoralists themselves, and between pastoralists and international NGOs, governments and other organisations.

Basically we heard this message from you; the most important thing is that pastoralists organise their own connections and their own support for the issues that affect you.”

Eyob Tekalign, Ethiopian Ministry of Affairs: “The most valuable thing about the gathering was meeting people and knowing about people not from papers but from the people themselves. This meeting has made a lasting impression on me and will affect the way I work.”

Eyob Tekalign, Ethiopian Ministry of Affairs
Sharaw Munkh-Orgi, Mongolia
“Because of this meeting over the next ten years the pastoralists’ lives will improve. The world will now hear pastoralists’ voices, and when they go home they will be able to affect the local government which will affect the regional government which will affect international organisations. Herders will push their governments for this, and international organisations can help pastoralists’ voices reach the decision-makers. We appreciate that herders from so many places are here and that they understand that their problems are similar.”

Alippek Akjolbekov, Tajikistan
“With our own eyes we have seen how people in Africa work and live, and this has made a very strong impression. We have also learned that there are international organisations that regulate trade. This is important because the countries around Tajikistan have closed borders, and we have learned that we need to know more about how to open them.”

Dolat Ram Gujja, India
“The first thing is that I have never seen such diversity of people. I learned how people have been doing things differently—especially about how there are different types of policy. What I will take back to India is that community organisations can be so strong that they can influence policy, like the Mali people. In India we are doing this already, but now I realise we can be more powerful. And we will also try the camel milk processing we learned about here.”

Taleb Ahmed Juddu Ould Sidi, Mauritania
“We would be very open to holding an international gathering like this in Mauritania. I think it would be a good idea to repeat this dialogue every year.”

Jesus Garzon, Spain
“We will survive. We will give new hope to the world that we are able to look after our natural resources and preserve biodiversity. The most important thing is to see many pastoralists with a positive mind for the future.”

Jeremy Swift, Wales
“The value for me has been for people around the world to discover they are not alone as pastoralists and for people to discover that there are pastoralists in northern countries. This is exactly the right moment for such a gathering— it’s the first time it could have happened and if we miss this opportunity we’ve lost it.”

Nassar Ahmadi, Iran
“All of us feel that nomadic pastoralists are like fish that have fallen out of the water. It’s like we are struggling to get back to the water, and we are going to die if we don’t get back soon. Things I’ve always dreamed of, I found here. One was to see Ethiopia and its tribes and pastoralists. One was to see a lot of people and tribes from Asia and foreign nations. Not only to meet them, but hear their voices from their hearts, and about their similar lives.”

Farez Abu Abhed, Beodouins of Israel
“Every person came with their perspectives and thoughts, but we think that the gathering was built in a way that allowed new information to flow according to each person’s perspectives. It’s no wonder that there are people who have changed their perspectives and thinking and the way they will deal with issues, such as education for children and the way that women are treated. However, work is not done and there is a need for the international organisations to be in touch with pastoralists continuously.

Two thoughts for all pastoralists: you are strong people and you can change the situation because you are the ones that have survived all throughout the difficult years. No one can ignore you anymore. You must know that there are a lot of organisations and people that are working for you, but everything begins with you standing up for yourselves.”

Melissa Italy
“Not being a pastoralist myself, I found the most powerful aspect was the sharing of the same place, food, and facilities by many different people across borders and across nations.”
From the team of the Turmi Herald

This may be the final edition of the Turmi Morning Herald, but not the final word. We have been honoured to be included in this gathering. While we are not pastoralists ourselves, we have heard your stories, and tried to understand your troubles and hopes. We have done our best to represent the gathering in this newspaper, although we have only been able to reflect a very small amount of this rich exchange. We’ve appreciated people’s comments, feedback, and thoughts on how to make it better.

One of the most important things about this meeting for us has been learning about how pastoralists’ own knowledge is the most essential element for developing solutions, even though it is often overlooked and undervalued. We believe in the ability of pastoralists to use their own knowledge about their world to share with each other and others in order to change the things that affect their lives. Also we have appreciated the opportunity to know more about the creative ways that pastoralists are using communication to learn from each other and change their circumstances.

Further documentation

The representatives of each group attending this meeting will soon be sent a document either by email or as a CD-ROM, which will contain a small report and some photos. A video of the Gathering will also follow, just as soon as our film-maker friends can process the amazing amount of footage that they have shot. Thank you from all of us for all of your inputs.

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