

**Document  
of  
Afar Development Conference**

Aysaita, December 15-30, 2004

**Compiled  
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# 1. A Statement of Afar Development Conference

Aysaiṭa, Afar National Regional State  
December 30, 2004

Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) organized an Afar National Development Conference between 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004 in Aysaiṭa in Afar Regional State of Ethiopia. The participants of the conference consisted of Afars from the Diasporas and Djibouti, representatives from Afar regional government and pastoralist communities coming together to discuss Afar development problems and future development perspectives. At the outset of the conference from December 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, six groups of delegates were dispersed into districts of the region topographically representing the overall development status to gain a hands-on assessment. During this visit, they observed development achievements that have been made in the past twelve years and the difficulties encountered. While they were impressed with development program made in the region, equally, they have come to realize the growing disappointment of development expectations and the appalling situation of the recurrent drought and famine, inadequate facilities that are not catered to service the end users, transportation problem, insufficient medical facilities and medicine, lack of educated people to run the program designed by the regional and federal government, and lack of security were among many subjects discussed.

To begin with there is an urgent need to avert human catastrophe due to looming imminent hunger, which is showing its effect! We appeal to both authorities and the international organizations to rapidly assist the Afar pastoralists in Teeru, Barahle, Chifra and other critically affected Woredas as soon as possible! The most affected are children, elderly people and animals. It is evident that there is a critical water shortage in most of these woredas. Malnutrition and waterborne diseases are rampant. Unless an urgent aid is in its way, there will be a catastrophic result in human and animal life.

The conference participants suggested that the need for a new and holistic approach to tackle the Afar development problem. The Afar region in Ethiopia occupies a large geographical area and has substantial varied natural resources. Nevertheless, these resources are either under developed or totally untapped. Consequently the Afar remains as one of the most impoverished people in the country today. The traditional Afar economy survived for centuries by adapting and perfecting a lifestyle of pastoralism. Loss of grazing land, water sites and increased population has meant increased poverty as the natural resource base on which they depend continues to be degraded.

Poverty in the Afar often has been described as being caused by natural factors and by man-made practices. These are by no means separate from one another; on the contrary, they reinforce each other. Afar region in Ethiopia is one of the most impoverished areas in one of the world's poorest countries. Its history of chronic externally induced conflicts, instability, and inaccessibility has contributed substantially to the neglect and underdevelopment that persist to the present

day. Even though attempts to engage the Afar people in development schemes are evident. However, it is equally evident that there is much to be done in a manner that can bring enduring improvement.

One of the obstacles for regional development has been the geographic and ecological factor of the region of the Afar, which is in any case prone to drought and ecological degradation because of erratic rainfall patterns. This has led to recurrent drought and famine throughout many years. Out of necessity, the Afar has evolved a highly adapted mode of transhumance pastoralism, which is, the most efficient land use in such an environment. Traditional livestock management is based on herd diversification. However, it appears that this process has been altered by recurrent drought and hence exposing the pastoralist to unprecedented harm.

The other major factor has been lack of proper policy to address the grave situations of the people up to 1994. There are no policies, which specifically address pastoral dynamics, and as result a far-reaching effect on pastoralist development is evident. Even today there are no by-laws, which address pastoral land administration. The land ownership and right of use of the Afar were neglected in the past. In 1995 a proclamation on property rights was formulated that protected the right of pastoralists not to be displaced from their land. This however has not been formalized and the by-law is still not in place. The absence of such by-laws has created confusion on land rights. At present the expansion of construction and urbanization has no parallel in Ethiopian history and the Afar is no exception. But the basic poverty question has remained, as in the past, untouched. The situation for pastoral people today has not improved very much compared with the past.

The open market policy has exacerbated the pastoralist condition. Livestock products are becoming an increasingly scarce commodity. The food habit of the Afar pastoralists diet is changing due to the drought situation leading to food insecurity. The Afar pastoralists in some areas of the Afar region are affected by the declining of livestock per capita characterized by instability, decreasing income, increasing poverty and environmental degradation. Pastoralist Afar have poor access to education, limited educational opportunities and the existing school curriculum does not reflect the pastoral way of life in general and their cultural values in particular. Poorly developed infrastructure, makes remote parts of the Afar area inaccessible.

Communal grazing is currently under increasing pressure, due to the expansion of poorly planned investments and the construction of roads and urbanization. Important grazing areas, which are close to the highlands, riverbanks, and swampy areas are increasingly occupied mainly for cultivation purposes. Therefore they are no more accessible for livestock use. Some rangeland areas are reserved as military security zones. As a result livestock are forced to move to already over grazed areas. In addition, bush encroachment has been expanding and has further reduced the grazing potential of the rangelands. The stage of deterioration at present, for instance, around the Awash Valley is serious

and may already be irreversible. It should be understood that it is leading not only to the destruction of the Afar as pastoral society but is affecting the long-term dynamics of the entire Awash Basin ecosystem.

There are hardly any references to specific social structures or administrative units, and little evidences of understanding of the internal rules of different tribal groups. Too little has been done in understanding the know-how and resources the Afar already controls. This neglect lends to the reinforcement of dependence and to the diminution of self-reliance.

A major constraint, however, to the development of the region has been instability related to internal and external border clashes. In particular, the participant of the conference overwhelmingly agreed that the Afar and Issa conflict requires an immediate solution in order to bring stability and lasting peace in the areas affected in particular, and to Ethiopia in general. To find solution they identified and recommend the following:

1. The Afar National Regional Government should make strenuous efforts to bring solution to the problem
2. The Federal Government, which is expected to bring solution to the conflict and protect its citizens, should act soon
3. In the interim, both the Afar Regional and Federal government must put pressure to safe guard and protect the lives of daily civilian victims of the conflict.

Further, it is evident that the absence of effective administration and lack of capacity, which all are the legacy of past rules and policies are still rampant. All these factors are interrelated. First of all considerable emphasis should be placed on Afarisation articulated in a clear policy orientation and should be reflected in various regional government institutions. In this context priority should be given to social services, training, employment and capacity building. The driving force for this should be a close cooperation between the few educated Afars and non-Afar experts to work in their full potential in collaboration with the federal and regional government. The lessons learned indicate that the pastoral development strategy should focus on improving food security, minimizing risks, improve livestock production, enhancing emigration and increasing long-term sustainability of the pastoral system. This should take into account not only social and ecological factors but also a broad and often neglected question of whether projects contribute to economic self-reliance and enhance measures that promote independence. For this to happen projects have to be owned by the community, have to be wereda based and could be executed through government institutions, local communities or in partnership with NGOs.

The lack of clearly defined and directed pastoral holistic approach based on the sustainable development of the arid and semi-arid regions remains an obstacle. At present, the Afar consider their life is at stake because much of the land that used to serve as grazing land is now either engulfed with swamps/marsh or has

become non-productive because of insufficient flooding from Awash river. Indeed, a kind of destruction chain reaction appears to have been put in motion since the beginning of the last few decades. Obvious increase in the density of livestock has resulted in a progressive reduction of the availability of high quality herbs in the region. With a reduction of pasture land and high quality of fodder at the rate that is being observed, the Afar population will be in great economic crisis unless mitigation measure are taken sooner than later.

It is clear that the sustainable development of the Afar pastoral production system within the framework of the development of the regional and the Federal government is not a simple task but one that requires the collaboration and good will of the federal and local government; and NGO's for considerable period of time. Whether or not the Afar people seize this moment to define their future in terms of their own priorities, needs and aspirations is a matter for Afars to choose. When it comes to pastoralist communities like the Afar, there is a need for a different approach that is strategically suited to the pastoralist way of life. But to ensure food security on a permanent basis much more is needed. But it is also the responsibility of the Federal and Regional Government, NGOs and the international community to encourage the Afars to set their own agenda, but not to set the agenda for them. A comprehensive Development Program along the above-described lines could be developed but it should be designed in Afar with Afar leaders and with the support of Federal State. It is only through this process that a reliable and sustainable development program could be formulated and implemented. For this to happen Federal, regional Governments and NGOs that support the efforts of development should create an appropriate space and environment to work in. An effective implementation structure would have to be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all partners.

The participants unanimously identified the following development obstacles, which needs an immediate attention. These obstacles are categorized into external and internal factors. The external factors are those obstacles that Afars could not resolve by themselves and therefore requires proactive role to be played by both the Federal and Regional Government. Equally, the internal factors refer to remain with the domain the Afar society to tackle.

#### External Factors:

1. Drought
2. Conflict/security
3. Investment and Landownership (also internal)
4. Water resource (partially internal)
5. Transport and communications
6. Lack of veterinary drugs

#### Internal Factors:

1. Consumption of chat and its impact on the society
2. Empowerment of women
3. Afars attitude towards work

4. Education and culture
5. Health and health education with particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS
6. Environment

The above-identified obstacles need serious consideration and participation of four stakeholders:

1. Afar society itself
2. Afar National Regional Government and the Federal Government as well.
3. Afar intellectuals in Diaspora as well as in the region
4. Local and International NGOs

It is also recommended that an active and viable involvement of the Federal and Afar Regional governments are of utmost and immense importance. Such involvement calls for formulating policies that can work for the Afars and empowering the people to alleviate their problems. If an achievement in development and conflict resolution is sought in the Afar region, the participation of the Afars themselves is necessary. In addition, it is also mentioned that the role of some Afar intellectuals aboard has not been active and are called upon to engage themselves fully or during their visits in the development of the region.

The participants have also highly recommended such a gathering of Afars from all places to be held every two years. It was evident the collegiality displayed can bring people together and forge friendship to better understand each other. Through such gatherings and discussions it is believed that the benefit is evident. The participants agreed that the Afar National Regional State and Afar Pastoralist Development Association make every effort to conduct and facilitate such gathering every two years.

## **2. The objective**

Objectives of the conference are to evaluate, discuss and find means to alleviate the Afar development problems. Regardless of opinion the objectives is to find a workable solution to the problems that faces the Afars.

## **3. Government Position**

'Afar National Government': A text prepared jointly by Afar National Regional Government and APDA for the Afar Development Conference

The Afar Region is geographically situated in the north east of Ethiopia. It is 100 860 square kilometers. From important studies carried out it is estimated that 2.8% of the whole area is suited to farming. So far, 1.6% is used for farming. From the whole area, 25.7% is suitable land for grazing animals. 70.9% of the land is desert. Trees grow on 54.9% of the land in the rainy season therefore animals graze in a wider area seasonally. The census conducted in 1998 showed the population as 1,329,999, of whom 92% live in rural area. Their livelihood is dependant on animal products. They move from place to place in search of grazing and share resources together. In the past, in the rule of Haile Selassie and the Dergue, the Afar people were divided in 5 regions. There was no way for them to discuss on political, social and economic issues concerning them. They did not have opportunity to take part in development activities.

Regarding development during the previous governments, there is an asphalt road extending from Addis Ababa to Assab, some schools for the advantage of workers in government – owned cotton farms, old fashioned electricity supply in not more than two towns and telephone lines. In short Afars were forgotten and backward in basic development sectors such as education. There was no means of discussing any problems. Even after integration there were problems to work out things successfully.

In the region from 1985 EC to 1987 when the provisional government, lead by the Afar Liberation Front which had won the election and took power, they started the regional infrastructure from zero. As a result, they could not manage to establish more than the administrative boundaries of 5 zones and 29 woredas (districts) in the region.

Since the establishment of regional government in 1988, problems inherited from the past continued to affect the government as follows:

- a) In the education sector, there was not sufficient manpower to do the job successfully
- b) There was no center for region, zone and woreda
- c) There was conflict internally and from outside.
- d) Different political organizations were created and there was not enough concern about development except who will take the power
- e) Poverty was widespread
- f) There was no policy and strategy planned for the pastoral community

- g) Harmful cultures and backward views were prevalent
- h) Drought was striking the region time and again
- i) Adequate agitation in the community was not done
- j) There was no participation by investors and NGOs

The government did its best to solve the problems as follows:

- a) The government did its best to solve the problem of disagreement among political parties by unifying them
- b) In order to elevate the understanding of the mass toward peace, development and democracy, so many conferences have been held
- c) Peaceful solutions were found for the conflicts raised

Different efforts were done in development as follows:

- a) Construction of buildings for 29 woreda centers and 5 zonal centers. There were a total of 360 buildings of offices and homes constructed.
- b) Aside from asphalt road, different levels and types of roads were constructed by the Federal Government. About 18 roads that suit the rural areas were constructed. Roads of the distance of 2,017 kilometers are already constructed and under service to the community.

Different evaluations on development of the region were made as follows:

- a) Studies regarding how to use the land were done
- b) Studies on farm development of the region for Afar were done
- c) Studies on how to utilize grasses and water resources in the lowland were done
- d) Studies for tourist attraction areas were done
- e) Industrial potential studies were done
- f) Studies on agricultural development at the woreda level were done

On the issue of human health, 117 buildings housing hospitals, clinics, health centers and health posts are completed. In education, 174 schools are built. 131 water sources are constructed.

Today, the government has formed a system of decentralization. By so doing, the authorities are spread down to the woreda level. Using World Bank finance, a five - year program of capacity building at the woreda level in the region is underway. As part of this program, the amendment of civil service capacity is underway.

To change the pastoral life to sustainable situation:

- a) 3 woredas were selected to pilot activities of pastoral development, spreading the vision and experiences to other areas
- b) New policy of the vision of development and good governance for pastoral areas is underway
- c) A program for sustainable development and poverty reduction is prepared
- d) In order to implement the vision of pastoralist policy and verify whether food for work program is practical, Pastoral Community Development Project is being implemented by the fund of the World Bank in 6 woredas. Next year, another 3 woredas will be included in the program. In general,

- the program is divided into 3 steps and will be completed in 25 years. It will include other woredas, step by step.
- e) Safety net program as part of food security will be started in the near future
  - f) Preparation is already underway for clean water supply program with a fund supplied by the World Bank. In the beginning woredas will be selected and the beginning phase will be implemented in the immediate future

**On road construction:**

To connect 3 roads of Aba'ala, Yallo and Magaale, studies and designs have been made and construction will be done by the Federal Government. As part of the Ethiopian Rural Roads and Transport Program, Dullassa woreda road construction will be implemented collectively by the Federal and Regional governments with funds from 8 donors.

**On communication:**

20 towns have now got telecommunication services and 12 towns have electricity. Kalawaan and Daale Gaage will soon receive electricity service.

The number of NGOs in the region has increased from 2 Or 3 before to 22.

Despite all this effort, still there are many complicated problems, especially to do with drought and poverty. In studies done in December 2004, 588,630 people were identified as victims of drought and starvation. If the situation of rain does not change in the next months and they did not receive any help, then the victims of drought will be higher.

## 4. Situation Reports

Six groups are set up to visit different sample weredas to see the situation. These weredas are elected on sample base.

### 4.1 From Assayita woreda

#### Information of Henale kebele

##### 1. The situation of education

There is an improvement in the interest for education from before. We developed this further interest in education after we lost large numbers of our herds in drought. Schools in the community are close and they teach in 3 languages to grade 6. Currently, in the community, there are not educated people.

Solution: *Although there are few educated people in the society, now that education is available, interest in it should increase. People who have had some education should return from herding to education. For this reason, we are asking a boarding school for the children.*

##### 2. Health and Nutrition

The health worker does his best and transfers those he cannot treat. There is no mother/child care. There is no treatment for chest infection (tuberculosis) and no place for blood test. There is a great interest health education to prevent sickness but it has not been tried before.

Community aspirations: *That TBAs get training and get equipped. A treatment place for babies be opened and people to treat the babies from the community be taught. A place of blood testing be opened.*

##### 3. Women's issues and harmful practices

The harmful traditions in the district are FGM and marriage by force to the cousin. After child-birth, the mother must stay in the house for 7 days without washing and drinking water only once per day. Males cannot come into the house she delivered in. Also the problem of kaat chewing brings many problems. This brings heavy economic problems to the household. The wife cannot get what she needs and wants. His child has no food because of his kaat chewing. Those who have money loose it on chewing.

Solution: *We need to leave FGM. This needs a woman to teach the women about the problem. The tradition of marriage by force should stop and the girl gets her choice in marriage. Women should get their full rights. Hygiene education and teaching should be available.*

##### 4. Water problem

The available water is dirty. This water is close by and comes from the river.

Solution: *We need clean water from a well and a pump to get the water out of the river when it is low for farming.*

#### 5. Animal health

Fifteen years before the animals were healthy. Now the animals get many sicknesses. Goats get chest infection and 'geera mole' sickness when it is colder. Animals do not get treatment or vaccination.

Solution: *A pump to flood irrigate and create grass for animals. We ask the government to teach paravets and give them medicines to treat animals.*

#### 6. Movement of animals in the pastoral setting

All the land we were using for grazing is now used for farming. Now the river water is diminished it is not sufficient for the animals. *Therefore we are asking the government to dig out the river channels.*

#### 7. Market and household economy

Below are the answers gained from asking the community about the market and household economy:

- we have animals and farm
- We go to the market to sell our goods and buy what we need
- We sell goats, cattle, sheep, camels and donkeys and buy clothes, food, coffee and tobacco
- The closest market is Assayita, one hours walk
- In drought, animals fetch under half of their value. Goats normally sell at 100 to 150 ETB. This drops to 50 to 70 ETB in drought time. Similarly, cattle price drops from 1,000 to 1,500 ETB down to 500 to 600 per cow and grain price goes up to 100 ETB per quintal

Solution: *The government should teach us improved market skills. Also we want pesticides for the farm.*

#### 8. Coping mechanisms

Afar have a traditional mechanism of assisting themselves. Animals are protected from hunger in time of drought. For inter-clan conflict, the clans have a mechanism to resolve the problem.

Solution: *We need to strengthen the former cultures. We should leave bad traditions and strengthen good cultures. We should protect the rights of women.*

#### 9. Roads and communication

We have a radio and road. For communication in the society, we have female traditional association leaders.

#### 10. The future of Afar development

***We should leave clan conflict and establish widespread education leaving illiteracy. In so doing we should develop our own language and culture.***

#### 11. Why are Afar behind in development

Clan conflict and illiteracy.

## **Information from Kutubla**

### **1. The situation of education**

The community is very motivated education. We have a teacher from APDA teaching in Afar. There is no other education. The kebele leaders have no education.

### **2. Health and nutrition**

The community has poor health. Children have nutritional problem. Many children died. We do not have a road to the clinic. Before, we were carrying sick people 70 kilometers to Assayita. Many people died before reaching. Delivering mothers died in their homes. When it rains, the road to Assayita is closed. Now we have health workers and women extension workers from APDA.

### **3. Women's issues and harmful practices**

There are many problems including marriage by force, marrying an older man and FGM. After birth, the women are closed with thorns. After birth, she cannot get out until the stars are in the right position as determined by the 'cutukbeytoh'. She cannot have a fire in her house and cannot eat cooked food. She may remain like this for up to a year or more. Now that there is much less butter and meat, women get very weak under these conditions.

### **4. Water problem**

Water is dirty. It is not far. We do not have the tradition of digging for clean water. In Kifilu, a well was dug and covered but whether the water is good or bad, it is not known.

### **5. Animal health**

Before 15 years, animal health was better since when rain fell, we took the animals to the hilly areas and they got clean, rain-water. This year, the rain did not fall. The main 4 sicknesses the animals are dying from are schistosomiasis, chest infection, hepatitis, pasteuriosis.

### **6. Movement of animals**

Grazing land is reduced due to farming taking the land. The traditions of coping are still there but the society is not upholding them as they did. People from Kutubla only move during the main rainy season.

### **7. Household economy and market**

We do not have a household economy since we do not know the meaning of economy. When we go to market and sell animals, we immediately buy what we need, whether grain, clothes or coffee etc. For this reason, we are not left with money in the hand. We go 70 kilometers to the Assayita market. We bring cattle, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys to the market. We also farm but this is very small this is due to the fact that those who farm cannot get enough water out of the Awash for this. We also do not get grain seeds or pesticides for the insects attacking the grain. Also, there is not a good price for the grain in Assayita. For example, the merchant will buy the grain for 50 ETB

and sell it again in the dry season for 120 ETB. Also, farming is all done by the traditional means - no modern system.

#### 8. Traditional coping mechanisms

In the case of internal conflict, this is solved by traditional judgment or 'mablo'. This conflict arises from problem of ownership – women, animals and land and conflict is now increased compared to before. This is due to the fact that now people are being punished under the government law rather than the traditional law.

#### 9. Roads and communication

In this respect, we do not have either roads or communication.

*Solution: Since no development can happen without roads, we need a road connecting us to the town. We should leave the good traditions of administration and conflict resolution. If you leave your culture, it will be replaced by bad traditions.*

#### 10. For the future, what development do Afar need?

*For Afar development to succeed, people need to leave illiteracy and learn and also, they need school buildings.*

#### 11. Why is Afar culture left behind?

Because people do not know the value of education, they are clanistic and involve in conflict.

These ideas and information were given by Mumina Maahe, Hasan Mohammad and Aadu Helem Seeko

### **Information from Handug in Gayrane, Gehrtu and Allasoboolo in Afembo**

#### 1. The situation with education

The community has a great enthusiasm for education, they are learning in 3 languages but the number of teachers is low. Those who are learning teach others and those who do not attend class go to others to learn. This system of learning was established by APDA.

#### 2. Health and nutrition

We get health care from APDA. There is a clinic but the health worker in the clinic does not come all the time to open the clinic. We are taught health education including the need for vaccination and also get TBA assistance. We get all this from APDA and we appreciate them. The main difficulties are we do not have a laboratory or a mother, child care center or X-ray facility. The community has poor nutrition but is very interested to improve its health.

*Solution: If an Afar person is working in the clinic and there is a place for checking pregnant and women and a laboratory this will improve the situation.*

#### 3. Women's issues and harmful practices

The situation for women is now better. APDA has intervened to help us and now most of the community agrees that FGM should stop. However, there is still much problem with

traditional marriage: the girl is still forced to get married and the most difficult is that the widow is forced to marry her dead husband's brother/ close relative. The woman who refuses to marry this way then loses all access to her dead husband's property. Young girls forced to marry sometimes kill themselves.

The situation in Geherto is more extreme as the girls are married very young and FGM is still practiced

Solution: *We need someone with good knowledge of the religion to assist us and teach us to overcome these problems. For this we must participate ourselves.*

#### 4. Water problems

At the moment, we do not have a problem of access to water. It is close to the house but it is dirty. We have requested assistance to get clean water from the government but this has not yet eventuated.

#### 5. Animal health

Now, compared to 15 years ago, the animal health is much worse. Overall the animals are hungry. The main sicknesses in cattle are disease of the joints (caray mude), cattle die standing (soole), pasteurelosis, all cows die (dagge cabe), hepatitis, schitsomoniasis, die sitting down (nooke) black leg. Goats have external parasites, pasteurolosis, fever, 'afqood' – sores in the mouth, black stomach, diarrhea from drinking hot water, diarrhea 'inxaci', skin sores when rain falls. Camels have chest infection, pasteurolosis, 'amo lafa', 'qanga kala', 'geera moole', sores on the legs. There is no treatment for animals aside from what APDA assists.

Solution: We need a fodder place for the animals and our people taught as paravets and animal vaccination.

#### 6. Pastoral movement

There is no shortage of land but it is affected by drought. We have good coping mechanisms governed by traditional laws. This is helping us. We move twice: for our own choice and for the reason of drought.

#### 7. Household economy and market

The nearest market is 12 kilometers away in Assayita. In the time of drought, the prices are down. This is because a poor quality goat makes 30.00 ETB and in a good time, the goat can sell for 200.00 ETB. Also a cow in drought time makes 150 to 200 ETB but in good times, 1,000 ETB. Recently, we formed a women's association but we still do not have any money for it. We get problem with farming due to insects that stop the growth of grain. We are looking for assistance from the government or NGOs for farming.

Solution: *The government organizes for us to inter - market our goods.*

#### 8. Coping mechanisms

We overcame our problems by starting to farm. Now the situation is worse due to drought. Since conflict issues are now taken to the government, the situation is worse: people do not respect the traditional ways of solving the problems of conflict – over women, land and animals.

Solution: *Returning to the traditions of before – respect, obeying of clan elders and so on.*

#### 9. Roads and communication

We have a road and radio communication as established by the government and a women's traditional association

Solution: *We are waiting assistance from the government to take the road further and to establish water sources where there are none.*

#### 10. Why is Afar development behind?

Afar are illiterate and enter into conflict one with another.

#### 11. What development does Afar need in the future?

We need to develop our Language, and establish education everywhere, along with roads.

This information is given by 'Alo Huseen, Hasna Kaddafo Ali, Taahir Hummud Omar, Hallo Kaddafo Hammadu, Mahammad Hasan 'Aadumo, Musthafa M/d Aabdalla, Ali Abdalla, Faatuma Abdu

## 4.2 Report from Eli Daar visit

This group went to Eli Daar Woreda. The woreda is divided into 18 kebeles. We went to all other districts but we did not go to Hayyu, Buldugum and Daddah. We will describe the situation in the areas we went to in the following report. The most serious difficulties we saw were thirst, hunger and sickness.

#### 1 Lee 'Aado

We saw a birikut (cistern) made in 2003. Before, the area had a problem of thirst but this cistern helped this. However, now the water is very low. In the district, there is one health worker from APDA, 3 TBAs and one women extension worker. There is no school or clinic.

#### 2 Boyna'dabba

We saw the steam wells the Afar constructed in this district before. The people are getting condensed water to quench their thirst. APDA has made a new model of steam well there. There is no school or clinic there.

3 We went on the road constructed by the community from 'Unxa Hiilu steam well. Then we left that road and came to the road going to Me'e Dola kebele. We saw the people of Hiilu and Tikibu were constructing their own road. In the area of Boyna Dabba, the community made their own steam wells and getting cement from APDA to do so.

#### 4 Halle dola

Saturday morning we came to Halle dola in Kontonera kebele. In the area, we saw the birikut (cistern) and the road they constructed themselves.

#### 5 Gawwah

We saw that the camp Soge (French road constructors) left needs some small repair to be useful. There is a birikut there constructed by APDA and around 35 students.

6 Su'ula and Issiyu

From Su'ula into Issiyu, there is a road constructed by the community. In Issilu, we saw that men and women are working together to construct a birikut. There are many young people there. We also saw that because of the cold, many people had chest infection. Three people died of it and 17 people were very ill. There is a health worker and a teacher there from APDA but the teacher told us that girls are not learning because they need a female teacher. On the way back from Issiyu to Su'ula, we saw 14 girls constructing a birikut without having materials to do it. This made us very happy.

7 'Aallooma

15 kilometers from Manda, we came to 'Aallooma in the afternoon. We saw a big birikut constructed for people in the place called Dat Kusra at the base of Mussa Ali mountain. We also saw a road built by the local community. In Oddobo, we saw a flat plain that, if dug it could be a water collection place for animals and people. On Sunday morning we saw a birikut constructed by the community near Manda village.

8 Kori and Biddaali fan

We saw a road constructed by people that can extend from Kori to Biddaali. They did this in order to overcome the thirst they had suffered from for a long time. They were going every second day for water. There are 150 households there. Neither APDA nor the government has reached this community. When we went from Manda to Buure, we saw a shiek who constructs both ponds and birikuts. This man wants some digging materials.

9 Dola and Lammaasan

From Buure, we went to Lammaasan and Dola kebele. There are 150 houses constructed on land that has land-mines left from the Eritrean/ Ethiopian war in it. We heard that many people have died and the local people reported that about 30 have been injured. The local people there are many people coming from Eritrea as refugees.

10 'Aadgeno

In Aadgeno/ Fuluulu, we saw a school up to Grade 4. We also saw a birikut constructed by the local people and one constructed by the community.

11 Dagaasa

In Dagaasa near Buure, we saw a road and 2 birikuts constructed by the local people.

12 Gaamiddo

In Gaamiddo, we saw a birikut constructed by the community.

13 Bali'taamo

Then we came to Bali'taamo and saw the birikut constructed by APDA and the other by the local people. There is 95 houses there - no clinic, school or TBA training.

14 Siyyaaru

On Monday morning we came to Siyyaaru and saw a road built by the community connecting Eli Daar and Siyyaaru.

15 Immiino

We came to Immiino. The road coming down from Immiino Mountain was broken but it is being maintained by Afar. First we came to Isseyu. There we found a pond constructed by the community used by humans and animals. Issiyu and Garbo are watering places where many people and animals living. We came to Namma Ganta and saw APDA health worker and TBAs and a government teacher. The teacher said he has 46 students of whom 12 are girls. The Immiino are complaining about dirty water.

16 Hakara

On Tuesday morning we arrived in Hakara. There we met men and women who were constructing a road and birikut. The government mobile teacher was there. He said he had 30 students of whom 10 were female. We also saw a teacher from APDA who was teaching under the tree. In Lofofle, we saw a government teacher with more than 30 students – both men women and children.

17 Galablu

From Hayyu town, we went to Sardo and turned on to the Sardo to Afdeera road. At Somma, we turned into the Galablu Road. We went through this road that was constructed by the community, supported by APDA and came to Gadayta. In addition to the road, we found people constructing a very big birikut. There is also a birikut constructed by APDA there.

18 Maska

Then we came to the Maska Road, also constructed by the community supported by APDA. The road stops at Boorota. There, because of severe thirst, the community was crying. There we found a small child with many types of diseases that needs urgent help.

Now we divide our recommendations into immediate and long – term actions:

Immediate needs:

- Immediately, the government, APDA and other donor organizations should solve the problem of thirst. This because if they do not get help within the coming week, death from thirst is eminent.
- The above-mentioned organizations should help the people from starvation. Additional help should be given to those constructing roads and their families.
- The necessary tools for road construction should be given to the community immediately
- Those constructing birikuts should get immediate assistance of cement
- The refugees who crossed the border at Lamassan from Daabu, more than 500 people, who are in the serious condition of thirst and hunger, should receive immediate assistance from the government and APDA.

Long- term needs:

- Since the work of APDA is good, they should do more: more teachers, health workers, TBAs, women extension workers and constructing birikuts.
- We saw that, had the government done like APDA, things would have been much, much better now.
- To improve the life Afar pastoralists, the government and APDA should work together side by side and struggle for change.
- They should build schools, clinics and wells.

- Children should go to school at an early age. The curriculum should be according to the Afar language, culture and history.
- For the 500 people who fled because of insecurity in Daabu and Lamassan, they should receive immediate food and water assistance, as well as their rights as refugees according to international law.

### **4.3 Report from Sifra Woreda**

#### 1. the situation of drought

Before we reached Sifra town, we met a heavily loaded camel being pulled by women. The women told us they needed help as the camel is very weak and the men of their families had gone to take the remaining animals far away to grazing. They said we cannot carry this material ourselves to help the camel. The women said they were trying to track down the men who had gone with the few animals. They looked incredibly tired and hungry. The women spoke about how extreme the drought was and how so many animals had died and most of the few remaining animals had been taken far away a lot to the Amhara highland districts to get pasture. We remarked how normally Afar women were active and hard –working but this time, they were clearly weakened by the difficult drought conditions.

We reached Sifra town before sunset and immediately contacted the woreda leaders who were expecting us. They were very hospital and, as a group, we want to thank them. Next morning, as we were traveling to visit the districts, in a plain area we saw to cows sitting. We were told their owners had left them as they were too weak to go with the remaining herd in search of grazing. Too, on both sides of the road where normally high grass grows, the land was completely bald and littered with animal carcasses with a few very weak animals just sitting around. There were several deserted houses in the district, evidence that people had left to save themselves and their herd from hunger. Some people we met said ‘it is better to die from a bullet than to die of hunger’. In Damaato Bahara, we met 3 women who had a number of goats and 3 heifers. We asked them where they were going and they replied they did not know. They said they had not eaten for 3 days and did not know what to do to rescue themselves. We gave them some money we had as we realized how severely they were affected by the drought. We asked them how was the situation with other people in the district and their reply was inexpressible.

From there, we went down to the Lee Adda River where we found many people who seemed to have gathered for a particular reason. They said that a new spring of salty water had gushed out of the land there. The water, they said is good for children, the same as fruit in drought. Again, we found elderly women who told us the young en had all gone with the remaining animals far away to find grazing.

All the above stories were gathered from people in Lee Adda and ‘Aad Aamaaya kebeles. Then we went to Degeera kebele where we found a huge number of animal carcasses. Again, the people had gone with their remaining animals to the Amhara grazing areas. Thos we met told us they had no news of the ones who went and they did not know if they were dead or alive. From there we went to Maskiid kebele where we found a mosque 117 years old that has a fire that has not gone out for that many years. The light of the fire is used to teach the Koran. On the river near the mosque, people were farming. When we asked them how long they had been farming, they replied that

they had started in recent years, pressured by the hunger of drought. They had many problems with the farming since they had no implements.

From there, we went to Andalokolo where we were told most of the transport camels had been taken to better grazing. Then we were confronted by the stench of animal carcasses. Then we saw many people working on a food – for – work program run by the Lutheran World Federation. There we saw more female workers than males. They women said the men had gone with the animals and, rather than starve, the women had begun to work.

Finally, the above is the situations we saw ourselves but we heard much similar news from other kebeles and we conclude by saying that these people need immediate and urgent drought relief.

## 2. The situation of education

Education in the woreda is divided in 3 ways: formal, non-formal and Koranic teaching. Formal education goes to Grade 8 and non-formal education is implemented in 4 kebeles by APDA. In non-formal education, they are learning both Afar language and mathematics and in the 4 kebeles, there are a total of 843 students who have accomplished literacy. Now there are 223 people learning with 6 teachers of whom are 30 women, 31 adults and the remainder children. The teachers told us they did get the necessary books and that students drop out of studying due to drought conditions. Too, they told us that those who learn to read and write could not get jobs so it was discouraging to learn. As far as those learning in the Koranic schools are concerned, we could not get a number of the students but we saw they were very active. In one village of 117 year old, we were told children had been learning Koranic verses there for that length of time. We then understood that if the community gets water, they do not need to move and can do education activities. The main problems facing education are as follows:

1. There are not enough Afar teachers so the people mostly learn in a foreign language
2. People are not settled in one place and the lessons give do not relate to their lifestyle.
3. Most people do not appreciate the advantage of education
4. In many kebeles there are no schools
5. Also there are no boarding schools
6. Those who are educated demand higher salaries and are not satisfied with meager salaries. Too, few people appreciate the need for education

We found there were 28 people in the woreda who have completed grade 10 and two who have completed grade 12. they also informed us there were some people who have been trained in paravet work and others who learned in technical schools but left for other regions to look for work.

Six of the woreda's clan elders are literate and of the 57 kebele leaders, only 5 can read and write.

## 3. The situation with health service

There is one health center, two clinics and one health post. These places are staffed by 10 nurses, 2 health workers and one laboratory technician. In term of treatment, very little is done compared to the health problems the people face. There are also 6 youth who were trained as health workers by APDA in Harsis. These people were trained by

APDA on behalf of a German NGO called Malteser. Malteser withdrew their project after the training. We were told that polio vaccination is done but does not reach all kebeles due to lack of transport. Aside from the 2 clinics and health center in Sifra town, there are no other places that pregnant women get regular care and checking. The problems in the health sector are as follows:

1. Lack of mobile health workers to serve inside the pastoral society
2. In the rural kebeles, there is no health care
3. The community do not bring people to the town health services quickly before their sickness is advanced
4. There is no form of health education
5. There is no follow up for pregnant women and newborn babies
6. There is no community awareness on disease transmission – they drink from the same cup, share tooth – cleaning sticks etc
7. The household hygiene and sanitation situation is very low
8. There is no clean drinking water or clean water for cooking
9. They drink milk and eat the meat of sick animals without knowing the consequences
10. They do not separate sick people from well people
11. Pregnant and delivered mothers do not receive the necessary care
12. People complained they do not get the right treatment for the right sickness

#### 4. Harmful practices

Girls are forced to marry without their consent. We were told that kaat chewing causes health problems waste of money, waste of time and makes people careless and negligent toward their household responsibilities. Also, kaat chewing keeps you away from your family and causes physical and mental weakness. It also forces you to beg for money, something strange in the Afar culture.

#### 5. Water problems

We only saw 3 wells in the whole area of which only 2 are functional. There is extreme scarcity of water in the district.

#### 6. Women's issues

The issues harming women we noticed are as follows:

- a) Without their willing, girls are married at an early age
- b) The problems they face during labor and delivery
- c) They go far to fetch water and carry it back on their backs
- d) They do not get the necessary treatment and care in pregnancy and delivery

The main problems seem to be that they have no proper care for pregnant and delivering mothers and that the water they fetch is far away and in areas of conflict between Afars and their neighbors. Therefore they fear to go there.

#### 7. Animal health situation

Years ago, the animal health situation was good. Now since 1990, due to repeated drought, many of the animals have died and they are repeatedly affected by diseases due to malnutrition, especially in the Spring. People drinking the milk of sick animals also get ill. We saw emaciated women since they could not get dairy products they were used

to. Therefore, it looks like starvation in the area is inevitable and emergency assistance is urgently needed. There are many diseases and the animals are not vaccinated. We asked about the grazing land. They said there is no shortage grazing areas but all areas were currently totally grazed out. We enquired whether they had a law for problem of animal theft, murder and so on and they replied they did. Also, we asked how they moved. They said in a normal year, they moved 3 times going to where the rain fell. They also said when it is dry, they move a lot more searching for pasture.

#### 8. Situation of market and household economy

They said before they were going up into the highlands to market but due to lack of security and many were killed in fighting with the neighbors, they now only market in Sifra town each Sunday. We could not get any figure on the number of animals sold each year but we estimate it must be thousands. During the dry season, the price of animals is low and the grain price high so they then sell many animals to purchase grain. Aside from mats, they have no other commodities to sell. In comparison to the population size, government assistance is poor.

#### 9. Road construction and communication

There is a 105 kilometer road from Sifra town to Mille and a second road from Sifra to Kassa Gita in Mille Woreda on the Bati Road. There are no other roads connecting the kebeles. Aside from the semi-automatic telephone from Sifra, there is 4 telegram communications from each of the government schools and telegram communication from the police station.

#### Recommendations

1. *Running water for irrigation*
2. *Encourage farming*
3. *Clean water should be made available*
4. *Since the people have a burning desire to learn, more schools and boarding schools should be built*
5. *More development activities should happen in the area to change people's attitude to work. Also technical work should be created*
6. *Animal treatment centers should be built in places to the people*
7. *Local leaders should visit their areas regularly and follow-up what is to be done*
8. *Education in Afar should be started in every area as soon as possible*
9. *The problems women face should be solved without delay*
10. *Youth who have reached grade 12 should be working in the woreda offices*

### **4.4 Report of Barahle Visit**

Visit team composed of : Maa'ar Ali Sirro, Hasan Abdallah, Abdo Samad, Joel Luvien, Mohammad Hasan

In Samara on December 16<sup>th</sup> Afar Pastoralist Development Association opened the Afar Development Conference and divided the participants into 6 groups. We were in the group to go to Barahale. We will give the 6 most important points of our visit report below:

## 1. Education

In the major town of Barahle Woreda, education goes from 1 to grade 8. In other the other 9 kebeles, education goes from grade 1 to 4 in seven of these kebeles and in the remaining two kebeles, teaching is under a tree. Also in For'o kebele, mobile education is undertaken.

In the woreda, a total of 2,501 children are learning of whom 445 are girls. One teacher said, since most of the students are from herding families and they go according to the clouds, the number varies up and down. Also, within the students, the number of female students is small'. When we asked the students, they said they did not have any textbooks. From one book, four children are learning. They also said there was no teaching in Afar. They said children of herding families could not buy education material.

Most of the students, when they finish grade 4, cannot go to further education somewhere else. Most of the children stop learning after grade 4. The reason for this:

- Firstly, most mothers do not have money to send their children on to further education
- Also, parents cannot send female students to study in another town.

Within Barahle Woreda, the number of workers who have reached Grade 12 is from 1 to 2%. Of all the workers in the woreda, 15% are literate. Too, of the woreda and kebele leaders, 3% are literate. From this we saw that the number of educated and skilled people in the woreda is very low. Despite all the difficulties, there is a good awareness and acceptance of the importance of education. In Adda'al, the community built a school from their own money and effort.

## 2. Health

In Barahle town there is a clinic and a health post. The health post is not working. In 9 of the kebeles, seven have health posts but they are not functioning. This is due to the fact there is no medicine and there is no qualified person to run the health post. There is no mother and child care place. Newborn children do not get vaccination. Pregnant and delivered mothers do not get follow-up. There is no clinic/ hospital for the women to deliver in and there are no taught TBAs. If there is a problem with the delivery, aside from taking the mother to Mekele, there is no other help. For this reason, many delivering mothers die. We saw that the maternal and infant death was high. In Barahle, the main sicknesses are tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, diarrhea and so on. In Ad'daal, the community constructed a clinic.

## 3. Women's issues

The first difficulty for Barahle women is FGM. They said that when they have menstruation and delivery this FGM brings many problems. Although they realize this FGM is very bad for their health, there are 3 reasons why they have not left it:

- the think that the FGM is ordered by religion
- Also, that a girl with no FGM will not get a chance to marry is a reason for not leaving it
- Also they think that women without FGM will make the person more sexually active and out of control

Also, another problem for women is that they have no choice themselves in marriage. Also, as soon as she menstruates, she is married off to a man. Then she gets pregnant when her body is not yet developed and this gives many health complications.

#### 4. Water

There is much problem with water in Barahle Woreda. There is only one site of a well in Barahle town where the households are getting tap water. This was constructed by an Italian NGO. From half of the kebeles, people go far to collect water. From a couple of places, they only go for water 3 times in the week as it is so far. Now that the camels and donkeys have fallen victim to the drought, they cannot use them for carrying water. In Gubeena, there is a very heavy thirst. Also in Lee le 'Aala, 2 ponds and 40 shallow wells were constructed by the community.

#### 5. Pastoralist lifestyle

At the present, there is a big difference from what people used to have. People now do not get milk, butter. This is due to the fact that drought is continually repeating. Before people had a mixed herd of goats, cattle, sheep and camels. Before, they were going to the highlands in the hot season and spending the winter in Barahle. Those animals died. On the top of drought, the animals got sicknesses. There is no veterinary service in the woreda. The animals mostly die of a disease that the tail moves out of control, mange, sores, and pneumonia. After the animals died, people did not know what to do and went to live in Barahle town. Also, in the town they do not get a better life. They do not have the money to live in the town. From these people there is a very serious situation. Aside from relief food, they have nothing to live on. This relief food is also very little and the people have malnutrition. These pastoralist people have no one aside from their kebele leaders to tell their problem to.

#### 6. Economy

In Barahle there are 2 markets: one in Barahle town and the other in Konnaba town. Before, when people had animals, they were selling milk, butter and animals. From this money, they would buy what they needed and get treatment. Now that they have lost their animals, there is nothing to sell in the market and they do not buy from the market. It is clear that the means of household commerce is gone. Too, the women of Barahle rent their water containers (saar) to the camel caravans going to the Assaale salt. These people are highlanders and they give to the women a block of salt in exchange for the rent of the saar. These women sell this salt but recently, the animals they make the saar from reduced due to drought and therefore there is a problem to get the water containers.

Farming is in 2 districts: Damaale and Lee le Alaa. Due to using traditional farming methods there is little return from the farming.

#### 7. Communication

Aside from the town of Barahle, there is no telephone. The roads from Barahle to the kebeles are poor. For this reason, the relation and communication with the kebeles is poor. Since Barahle has a telephone, they can get help if necessary. The community is constructing a road from Adda 'Ar to Saane and from Barahle to Dallol.

## 8. The questions and the needs of Barahle community

### a) *They want education*

- *for children to like education, they each need to have their own text book*
- *Children should get school materials for free*
- *Since the best prevention comes from the mother's breast – milk, the children should learn in their Afar language*
- *Boarding school is necessary for pastoral children*

### b) *Heath*

- *They want a mother and child care center built*
- *Trained TBAs*
- *In the clinics, people who are qualified*
- *Medicines in the clinic*

### c) *For women*

- *Awareness in the community of harm of various traditional practices*
- *Community leaders should be examples for leaving harmful traditions, firstly FGM*
- *They should not marry girls till they reach 18 years.*
- *The female should marry from her choice*

### d) *Water*

*Since the wells due to drought are dry therefore clean water should be found near there homes*

### e) *Pastoralist lifestyle*

- *Since the drought has made it not possible to live a pastoral life, they need the facilities of towns – school for children, adult literacy, work – training, women should be assisted with starting money to make business.*
- *Men should not marry a second or a third wife due to poor income*
- *The roads should be restored between the kebeles and then they should have a telephone in each kebele.*

**An acute food shortage is killing people in the area. The only means they have to live is on aid food distributions. The people of Barahle are appealing for help and assistance. If for any reason food aid stopped the people of Barahle are destined to perish.**

## **4.5 Report from field visit of Gawane and Burimodayto**

The Report presented by the delegation, which was sent to Gawane and Burimodayto

In the auditorium of the government council, found in Semara, the regional capital a meeting of those Afar gathered from various areas took place. That meeting divided people into 6 groups. As the sixth group we were chosen and sent to Gawane and Burimodayto. We left on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2004. Then this group began its work.

We started our work by meeting with the government officials of the two woredas. Then we went to meet the local people.

## 1. Education

In the areas we went, the education system was very weak. In Gal'eela Dora, Gabaya Boora, Bil'ida and Gawane APDA has its education schools. In these schools, the participation of girls was very low.

- From the government side, there was little evidence of their participation in raising up this education.
- There was no mobile education system
- From Galaayla Dora to Gabaya Boora they are teaching up to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade.
- For the students who reach 4<sup>th</sup> Grade there is no school beyond that
- In Burimudayto Woreda we saw one school teaching from Grade 1 to 8. We also saw a kindergarten. Then for the students who reach Grade 8, they cannot go further. Moreover we saw lack of mobile schools for herding children.
- Also the government officials have no education

## 2. Health

The health service for the society was seen as very poor. For example, the people said the health worker in the Galaayla Doora clinic had closed the clinic for the past 7 months. There is no vaccination service. A person with delivery problem is taken to Gawane but there is no means of transport to take her. Therefore she must be carried on a traditional stretcher. In Gowaneh clinic, no more than 20 people can be treated daily.

The local community expressed hope and enthusiasm to get improved health service. However, because they cannot get needed medication, we heard that they are returning to depend on traditional treatment system. The main sicknesses they told us about were malaria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, schitzomaniasis, kidney infection and eye diseases.

## 3. The problems the women are in

Women go 25 kilometers to fetch water and firewood, carrying them on their back. Women do all the tiresome household tasks. The problem of marriage, FGM and that of delivery were explained. They are obliged to accept marriage to their dead husband's brother or close relative. The women are married at an early age and without their willingness. They marry them by force to an older man.

They do not see women and men equally. They are not permitted to participate in decision making. Women are not permitted to have property. Females do not have access to education and they take girls by force and take them to their house. Because of the problem of FGM, we saw women with birthing injury causing them to continually pass urine. We were also told that women deliver in quick succession causing health problems. For example we saw a woman 8 months pregnant and she has a child of 8 months age. The women said that when their husband marries another wife (polygamy), it is more painful than death. In Lee Assa in Gawane Woreda we saw a girl of 15 years who committed suicide by shooting herself because she forced to marry someone she does not want. This took place on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2004.

## 4. The problem of kaat chewing

Below are the names women told us for kaat:

- the destroyer of your household
- the one who leaves the child and the wife without food

The side effects of kaat as reported by the community are addiction, makes a person inept, causes sleeplessness, makes you careless for appointment, makes you thief, makes you stupid and go mad, makes you a slave to debt, causes quarrel between married partners, Makes you lose your dignity and become a beggar, causes fighting between parents and children and gives chest infection (tuberculosis).

#### 5. Water

There is water but it is completely dirty – there was no clean water found. The Awash River floods, damaging households each rainy season.

#### 6. Animal health

Before they were selling their animals and their milk. Now all the places where there was grass are taken by the weed shrub 'prosopis'. And in other areas, flooding takes over grazing land. In the hills around, there is no security. They told us they were not getting animal treatment. The animals have the following diseases:

Mange, pasteuriosis, external parasites, schitzomonosis, anthrax, blowing up of the stomach in cattle and goats, sores on camels, intestinal sores, infection of the hooves, body sores, the poison of the prosopis thorn, chest infection. (In Afar the sicknesses are qagara, sangiita, (gublo), geera mole, kibri, laadore, laa kee wadar qarba, gaali dale, ulqi dale, lifiiqa, qabeebi, korboxxa, data caxa keena, aqamba biyaaka, qaxmaku, galli gason, qambaraaru).

#### 7. Household economy and marketing

They do not have a household economy. There is no close by market. The markets they go to are as follows: 8 days to Diili, to Malka Wara – 16 days, to Dawwe 20 days, to Sami Roba 30 days, to Sifra 36 days. On the road they face thirst and hunger and insecurity. Often, they do not all arrive at the market safely with their herds.

8. They told us when they face problems, mostly they do not solve it as they stay with traditional thinking.

#### 9. Communication

Within the community, there is no means of communication – no radio or telephone.

#### 10. The future of Afar Development

When we asked them what they want for Afar development, they replied education, health, farming, learning about economy, clean water. They said that all this should be done with the participation of women.

#### 11. Reasons for delay in development

When asked why Afar development is delayed, they answered because of no education and because what they need is done by other people. Then they always wait for others to do things.

*Immediate solution is needed for the weed shrub 'prosopis' tree.*

## 4.6 Teeru visit report

The difficulties we saw in Teeru woreda we describe below:

### 1. Drought

- The land is dry. The forest cover is lost. The land has become dust, even the roots of grass are not left. Cattle and sheep are dying. Of these cattle are the most affected. The carcasses of cattle are everywhere. The remaining cattle are unable to stand. According to our reckoning, the remaining cattle will not last longer than a month.
- Camels and goats are better off.
- Urgently, the life of both animals and humans must be rescued
- Animals are dying from both hunger and disease together
- These hungry people, must lift up the weak cattle bringing fodder and water to them. At the same time, people are getting sicknesses from the animal carcasses.

The reason for the drought

- The rain did not fall since September 2004
- The two rivers, Awra and Magaale have left their normal course, leaving the grazing land dry
- People did not learn from past experience of drought
- Weather forecast and early warning of drought was not available
- The people had many cattle

Urgently needed assistance

1. *Human dry ration and supplementary food should be ordered*
2. *For the remaining cattle, they urgently need feed and water*
3. *Animals in the district should receive treatment along with fodder*
4. *The carcasses should be burnt and the cattle that are dying killed and burnt to prevent to the spread of disease*
5. *The people should have urgent awareness – raising and assistance to cope*
6. *Urgent treatment for human disease outbreaks*

In the medium term:

7. *Put the two rivers back on their normal course*
8. *The huge cracks in the land that any rain water goes into need to be closed so that the water spreads across the land leading to grass growing*

### 2. Difficulties of education

In Teeru Woreda there are only 4 schools. They are taught as far as Grade 4 and there are a total of 304 students of whom 22 are female students. There are a total of 10 teachers of whom 3 are teaching in Afar language. The teacher from Digdiga kebele has gone, we were told. Of the 4 schools, 3 were constructed Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund (ESRDF) and one by the community.

The most serious problems:

- The schools are built away from the town in a place without water. In Garad Bara school, the mothers bring water to the school filling a container for the children to drink

- There is no food for the children. Children coming from 7 kilometers to study must go without their food.
- Due to the drought and much household chores, students drop out of school
- There is no books and learning materials
- In half of the places, there is a shortage of teachers.
- Due to being pastoralist children, they cannot complete up to grade 4, they must return to herding animals
- Aside from these points, the education itself is not suited to these children's culture and lifestyle
- For children who want to transfer to another school or higher education, there is no certificate to prove how far they have learnt
- In Barantu, the school is a make-shift building. Dust falls in everything, the building does not protect from rain and wind. For this reason, the children lose their morale for learning
- The head of education in the woreda does not raise awareness for education

#### Solutions for education

- *Construct water reservoirs or wells for the 4 schools and in the future, all constructed schools should have a water source.*
- *School feeding program should be opened*
- *Mobile education would be very useful for the society*
- *All needed school books and equipment should be provided*
- *For children who have completed 4 grades, arrangement for them to continue education should be made*
- *Each school should have a seal of recognition so that students can be transferred to another school*
- *Teachers increased and Afar education should be further consolidate*
- *Students should have a suitable place to study*
- *The teachers should be carefully followed up*
- *The person in charge of education in the woreda should be enthusiastic and able to motivate people*
- *People should be made aware of the need of education and adults should learn literacy*

#### The number of educated people in the woreda

- There are 2 educated people in the woreda
- Of all the kebele leaders, there are none who have had education
- In the woreda council, there is one person who has completed grade 12. The other man who is also in the woreda officials is learning in grade 5. Of the rest of the people, we saw they cannot read and write.

### 3. Health and nutrition

In the whole woreda, there are 3 clinics. Of these 3, one is closed with no staff. We were told due to the drought, the health workers had left. The other 2 clinics were not functioning. Aside from pain medicine, they had no medicine. They did not even have alcohol and soap. In one place, there was not a chair to sit on. There are no first – line health workers. The health workers told us they had asked medicine from Kalawan but it had not been delivered. The Head of health in the woreda died. The person replacing him is weak and that, they say is the reason they do not get medicines.

People use the traditional 'treatment' of bleeding the sick person and other local medicines. There is no ambulance. The health workers do not venture into the community.

The head of the health in the woreda has no health education and cannot read and write.

There is no health care for pregnant, delivering mothers or newborn babies. Aside from polio vaccination, they have not been given any other vaccination. There is no form of health education. There is no nearby place where they can get useful health care.

We saw that tuberculosis, malaria and diarrhea are very high in the population.

Solutions for health

- *Due to the situation of dead and dying animals, every caution against the outbreak of epidemics should be taken*
- *Health education should be undertaken*
- *The necessary medicines and equipment should be available to the clinic workers*
- *The head of health should be someone capable of the position*
- *Vaccination should be available for women and children*
- *TBAs should be trained*
- *An ambulance should be available*
- *Nutrition education should be given*
- *Increase the number of health professionals in the clinics and these people should circulate inside the community*
- *Mobile health workers should be established*
- *For clinics without water, wells should be dug. In the future clinics should be constructed alongside water sources*
- *In order to make the best access of health care to the people, the lifestyle of the people should be studied*

#### 4. Water problems

The difficulty for water in Teeru Woreda is extreme for humans and animals. These people do not even have dirty water to drink. There is not even stagnant water. For the sake of water, most of the population has displaced. They go up to 50 kilometers to fetch water. There are so many dried, deep wells that have crumbled in. On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 3 men were buried alive trying to get water out of a well some 25 meters deep.

The reason for this water problem:

- Firstly, the fact that the two rivers changed their course and that water disappears in deep cracks in the ground.
- Normal water places (wells) dried
- Absence of rain
- Attempts to get water by drilling have failed

Solutions for water

- *Return the rivers to their former courses*
- *Close over the cracks in the ground*
- *Construction of ponds, water cisterns (birikuts) and wells*
- *Clearing of the silt that the rivers bring*
- *Closing off of small rivers to make dams*

- *The situation should be quickly monitored and evaluated*

#### 5. Animal treatment

You could say there is no veterinary service. The medicine that the people Action Contre le Faim trained as paravets is very expensive. That there is no animal vaccination and that from before there were the following sicknesses anthrax, gano (animals suddenly die), external parasites, 'caray-tiya' – suddenly get joint problem. From these, very many animals died.

Solution for animal treatment:

- *Animal treatment and vaccination should be available.*
- *Many people from the community should be taught animal treatment*
- *The community must be told how to prevent animal diseases and how to prevent disease transmission from animals to humans*
- *A better and suitable way of herding should be researched and taught to the people*

#### 6. Economy problems

People do not know any other economy than animal herding. After speaking to 100 people, we got one person with a jerican of butter. They are unaware of the benefit of selling animals. We saw that a person with good bulls that could have fetched 2,500 ETB. Four of his bulls died and 11 are now so weak they could die. This is illiteracy (lack of awareness/ knowledge).

Solution for economy

- *People should be taught to sell animals when they could get money for them, save this money or use this for other trading activities*

#### 7. Problems of women

- Girls are not able to marry the man of their choice expect divorced women. They organize the marriage without telling the girl. For 3 days before the marriage, she is not allowed out of the house and they try to persuade her.
- There is very little opportunity for people to marry out of love. If they know people are meeting out of love they are not permitted to marry. She will be married to another man. Then, if she is divorced, he may be able to marry her by force. They say that meeting between a man and a girl in the religion is shame.
- If two clans fight, the men from the other clan steal women, taking them without their children. In the process of clan fighting, people married out of love can be separated and the woman taken by the other clan
- There are women who have not been supported by their husbands for years, neither are they divorced.
- For women beaten by their husbands, there is a problem of protection for her in the society
- FGM is practiced

Solutions for women's problems

*To rid the community of these problems, people should get access to religious teaching.*

#### 8. Marketing

- There is one animal market in Yallo which, for half of Teeru is 100 kilometers away.
- The road to Yallo is also bad in places and there is no water on the way

Solution to marketing

- *An animal market should be established inside the community*

#### 9. Road and communication

There are two roads but they need repair. It needs repair at 'Aadarrayta where there is a hilly stretch for 6 kilometers and from Awra Woreda town to Karabbaayuk – a 15 kilometer distance. Recently, the community repaired the road at Adarrayta hill but it is still difficult for a heavy vehicle.

There is no radio or telephone in the woreda. Since there is no public transport or telephone connection, the people of Teeru are very isolated. If these problems are not solved, the people cannot develop.

Solution to road and communication

*The road should be repaired quickly and communication installed. Unless the road is not repaired immediately, the crisis of hunger, water and animal death will not be solved.*

#### 10. Harmful practices

- They cut their skin in patterns for beauty
- Inter clan hatred
- Revenge for someone killed by killing the murder's close relative. They take revenge on a person of education or a person highly valued by the society

Solution for harmful practices

*Continual education and awareness raising*

#### 11. Previous traditional laws

These cultures exist and are respected. But due to drought, these traditional laws are not respected.

Solution: *The traditional law should be strengthened and awareness of them re-enforced.*

#### 12. Conclusion

We asked 100 people why Afar do not have development. We got the following response:

50% said because of Afar illiteracy

20% said because of thirst

15% said because of poverty

10% said because of sicknesses

5% said because of lack of communication and roads

As a result of this, it is clear that education is the first thing that needs to be done. However, the other points should not be forgotten.

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Discussion on solutions to drought

What was there?

- There was an Afar traditional law addressing how to cope with drought
- There were traditional clan leaders that the community respected and obeyed
- The trees of the forest were protected so that the fruits used as drought food would be available
- Before drought happened, the people sold butter
- The community were helping each other – if one losses animals, the others replace This system is called ‘idibu’
- If a person with many children gets into difficulty, he was supported by a milking cow. If that cow got pregnant, the cow is given back to the community and a cow with milk was replaced to him
- The Afar agro-pastoralists were helping those who came to them and needed help grain. They were assisted by
  - a) the religion (Zakat) – giving a percentage of wealth to the poor
  - b) Anyone who came for help from any place, they gave grain

Also, the grain was not very expensive.

- They were helping each other by camel and donkey transport
- If the river went off its course, the traditional association leader (fiamat’abba) called for all the people to assist and put it back on its course
- The grazing land was designated as dry season and wet season grazing, controlling the grazing so that people could not graze haphazardly.

Recommendation

- Afar should regenerate the traditional laws to protect the environment and the use of it
- Settlement should be according to the willing of the community
- The community must construct water reservoirs and re-direct rivers that have gone off course
- Grass seeds should be distributed to places where it is degraded
- The community and the government must control the charcoal trade and re-plant the trees
- The weed-shrub, ‘prosopis’ should be destroyed by the community and the government effort together
- There must be a limitation of the herd size
- The market for grain grown in the region should be strengthened, including dates
- The community must prepare a place for grazing reserved for drought and animal treatment

- The rich and the poor should help as they have done in the past
- This group has agreed on the need for urgent help for Teeru. Also the people of Teeru who went to other areas due to the drought in their land should be helped.

## **5.2 Recommendations of education, Afar language and cultural development**

### **- Education**

1. Teachers must be well motivated
2. Improve the follow-up of teachers
3. To assist the students, there should be a good relation between the teachers and the parents of the students
4. All schools, including government school should have Afar teachers to facilitate Afar medium of education from grades 1 to 4.
5. There should be boarding schools everywhere in the rural community for the children
6. The government and the community should facilitate the teachers so that education goes well
7. There should be adequate equipment for the schools either from the government or from NGOs
8. Since the Afars are mostly pastoralists, from grade 1 to 4 is better suited as mobile education.
9. The students who cannot take their education further should be taught vocational training

### **- Afar language development**

1. In order to develop Afar language to the standard of other languages the society must reach the level of showing their identity
  - a) In order to put Afar to the standard of modern languages, the role of intellectuals is essential
  - b) The Afar Regional Government must make every effort to use the language as the medium to teach and as the medium of local administration
2. Every Afar language teacher should have a good command of the language in order to teach
3. Until they become rich in the language, the regional government should encourage Afar language teachers
4. The Afar curriculum should be written on the basis of suitability
5. In order to increase the use of the language in writing:
  - a) Every meeting in the Afar Region should be recorded in Afar language
  - b) Government papers and NGO materials should all be published in Afar.
  - c) There should be competition between those who write Afar

6. As the government policy indicates, in a short time, the government leaders and advisors should be trained in Afar literacy. The Afar Development and Enrichment Center should encourage capable Afar overseas to do this.
7. There should be Afar Language Conferences every 2 years

- **Development of the culture**

1. Since Afar culture is an oral tradition, it should be preserved by taking information from the oldest and wisest people before they die
2. Wherever the Afars are living, there should be research centers to preserve the culture.
3. Every year the Afar Region should have a forum of cultural competition: songs, dancing, handcrafts. The winners should be awarded.

### **5.3 The Recommendations for Women's Issues**

- All these recommendations should be implemented in the near future.
1. FGM should be totally stopped in a short time. This is the responsibility of the Regional Government, the Afar community especially the Islamic Sharia, NGOs and Afar intellectuals
  2. Women should have health education through the government, NGOs and intellectuals in a short time.
  3. girls and women should have full access to education through the hands of the community, the government, NGOs and intellectuals
  4. The female must marry the person of her choice
  5. Her husband should help her with the daily housework.
  6. She must have money or property of her own. She should be taught about economy and given materials to work. This should be facilitated by government, NGOs, community members and Afar intellectuals

### **5.4 Recommendations on use of kaat**

It ruins your home by wasting money, health and causes marriage and social disturbance. Therefore, it should be stopped in a short time through the intervention of the government, the Afar society, singers, intellectuals and NGOs. The government should create laws to stop harmful cultures.

The government should establish regulations so that

- a) Raise the taxation on kaat
- b) Reduce the places of selling kaat to one place per town
- c) The sellers should be restricted to sell the kaat at a low price to stop the merchants
- d) Cigarettes and shiisha should be seen in the same light
- e) Kaat should not be eaten in any public institutions: schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, offices, drivers, police

## **5.5 Afar and their negligence of work**

Government workers should be given the job suited to them and he/ she must organize himself/ herself and then organize the household accordingly. Wherever he is sent in the region, he should work. He should have access to government work. Standards should be adapted according to the pastoral people. Technical schools should be constructed for them by the government, community, Afar intellectuals and NGOs.

They should respect the time of work. They should stop chewing kaat and smoking shisha.

## **5.6 Improving communication**

### 1. The communication between government and NGOs

1.1 The government and NGOs should share the same outlook for development,

1.2 The community should share this outlook

1.3 Sharing the same outlook should create agreement and participation in activities

### 2. Communication between the region and the youth abroad

2.1 To create participation in planning and problem solving, there should be relation with overseas Afar

2.2 To share assistance and knowledge there should be a relation

2.3 The third reason for the relation is to create the same attitude and outlook on whatever happens

### 3. the communication between language and education

3.1 UDC (Djibouti association for Afar culture) and Afar language development and Enrichment Center should have a strong relationship

### 4. The education of communication

We should learn about

- relation between NGOs and the government
- the relation between roads and transport
- The internal relation of government work

There should be a community radio, whether implemented by the government or NGOs

### 5. Organizing associations of youth, women, marketing, cultural – based and the re-organization of traditional associations should be done by government, NGOs and the community.

## **5.7 Recommendations for security problems**

Peace, democracy and development are the basis of life. Conflict is opposed to life democracy and development. Conflict is divided into two: internal and external.

The solutions:

- To struggle for a change of attitude
- Stop tribalism and regionalism and change this to Afarism

Conflict between us and the neighboring ethnic groups (Oromos, Tigrays, Amharas) This arises out of backwardness and poverty and can be solved through discussion and agreement.

The conflict between Issa/ Somalis and Afar (Conflict of over land and politics). This is based on the political participation of outsiders.

Solutions

1. The Afar should defend themselves
2. The Regional government should make effort to solve it
3. The Federal government must take decisive measures to stop the conflict

## **5.8 Improving animal husbandry and marketing**

### **1. Awareness raising**

To remove the worst difficulties, there must be awareness in the society about animal health, good marketing, breeding practices and herd management. This awareness should be raised by the administration leaders, clan elders, NGOs, religious leaders and voluntary people.

### **2. Animal health**

There should be veterinary drug centers in all woredas, regular markets and local people trained as mobile paravets in each kebele.

### **3. Marketing**

- opening animal markets with the facility of fattening centers
- forming community marketing associations and, with the facilitation of associations in both countries, establish viable cross- border trading

This should be done by clan elders, government administration, associations

## **5.9 Water and Environmental Protection**

Water is divided into 3: permanent water supply, rain water, underground water

### **1. Awash River**

Since the Awash River water is contaminated most of the year, there should be shallow wells dug beside the river. This should be done by the government, NGOs and the community

### **2. Where underground water comes down to the plain from the hills**

In these districts shallow wells and boreholes are needed. They should be constructed by the government, NGOs and community

### **3. Rain water**

Micro dams and birikuts can be constructed in landscapes where rain-water can be collected.

Environmental protection

1. Where rivers are diverted, they should be put back on their course
2. The Awash River should be de-silted.
3. Pesticides on cotton farming should be used with care
4. The 'prosopis' should be cut from the roots
5. Cutting of green trees should be punished.

## **5.10 Land ownership and investment difficulties**

The problem:

1. The laws of land ownership are not yet established
2. Land is given to investors by clan elders and the elite of the Afar
3. The community and the government do not get any benefit out of this
4. The investors have taken huge land leaving little for the community. They occupy the land and do not work on it all.
5. Investors use the land as a means of getting tax – free benefits from the government but do not actually use the land.
6. Because of the investors, the Afar community fights clan by clan
7. There is no regulation for dividing the land
8. Aside from farming and salt production there is no other investment in Afar Region
9. Some of the services required investors is above the ability of Afar.

Recommendations:

1. An appropriate law of land ownership should be established
2. Meaning of land ownership should be explained to the community and set in an appropriate way for the community

3. Land should be divided according to population size
4. The resources of the land should be used for development
5. If people do not work, their license should be taken from them
6. There should be an evaluation of investors
7. Afar who need it should be able to get a loan
8. For Afar who have land and not capital, they should be given support by the government to work
9. The intellectuals disturbing clan relations over investment issues in Baadu must stop this action

All these are the responsibility of the Regional government

### **5.11 Recommendation on health**

1. Health education should be the basis of health service before treatment and taught to the community by health workers, teachers, women extension workers and TBAs. This should be in both rural and town communities. This should include hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, prevention of disease transmission, clean water, transmission from animals to humans, problem of the misuse of medications, home treatment for fever and so on. This teaching should be through community radio. There should be a desk in the Afar Language Development and Enrichment Center to prepare written, oral and visual material to carry health messages.
2. The Afar Regional government should immediately overcome the situation of shortage of medicines, particularly anti-malarials
3. In order to establish an appropriate health system for pastoral communities:
  - a) Through a relation with the Association pour la Sante, Djibouti, APDA should solicit the professional assistance of health workers in Djibouti in strategizing
  - b) APDA should develop a close relation with the Regional health authorities so that the government can share the vision of APDA and adopt its work
  - c) Afar health professionals training should be given high priority: training from the community health workers and those who are able, training them as nurses, aiming to replace other nationality professionals to improve the confidence of the community to the health service

Reducing maternal death

- d) In order to reduce maternal death, a conference of selected regional professionals on APDA's methodology in facilitating TBAs and women extension workers to act in the community should be held
- e) TBAs in the community and in the town should be taught. Those in the community should be taught in their sites. All TBAs should be equipped for each delivery

- f) Ambulance and telephone contact should be available in each woreda for immediate transfer
- g) In each clinic, there should be an Afar TBA for deliveries
- h) There should be Mother and child care centers established
- i) Traditions that harm women in birth and in being females should be stopped

To establish vaccination coverage

- a) All health professionals should be trained in vaccination and it should be art of their regular work
- b) EPI should be ongoing and campaigns used strategically. Particularly DPT should quickly activated
- c) Females should get sufficient vaccination to prevent tetanus
- d) In order to reach vaccination into the rural areas, refrigerators and generators should be used to maintain the cold chain – ice that stays for 36 hours should be available

HIV & AIDS prevention recommendations

- a) Information and teaching about it should be greatly increased, particularly in schools
- b) From the position of the religious leaders, there should clear direction on stopping the transmission
- c) Condoms should be made available in places of commercial sex
- d) Harmful traditions that cut the body should be stopped: FGM, taking out un grown child's teeth, bleeding as a treatment (blood – letting)

In the long –term:

- a) Higher level educated youth should be sent for nursing and medical training
- b) There should be a high level hospital built in the region
- c) A maternity hospital should be built
- d) There should be a pharmacy available to the community in every woreda
- e) In each woreda there should be a referral hospital

## Afar Development Conference - Field Groups

### Group 1. Baracle

Name	Position/ representation
1. Qabdu Samaad	Guide
2. Maha Qali Siro	Guide
3. Macammad Casan	Djibouti
4. Pierre	France
5. Hasan Qabdalla	Djibouti
Cuseen Muusa	Driver

### Group 2. Dooda

Name	Position/ representation
1. Qalii Cabib	Guide
2. Macammad Qali Akito	Guide
3 Cammadu Derfa	Sweden
4 Cammadu Dabale	Djibouti
6.	

### Group 3. Teeru

Name	Position/ representation
1. Qabdulkadir Macammad	Guide
2. Saalic Macammad Igacale	Guide
3. Cuseen Xaymoli	APDA
4. Idris Macammad	Teeru
5.Acmad	Gowaneh
Macammad Qali	Driver

### Group 4. Gowane

Name	Position/ representation
1. Arbaahim Saqid	Guide
2. Caalima Qisse	Guide
3. Qibido	Australia
4. Faatuma Qali Qumar	Djibouti
5.	
6.	

### Group 5. Awsa

Name	Position/ representation
1. Qali Macammad Waasiq	Guide
2. Dawud Ayfarah	Guide

3. Saalic Taha	Djibouti
4.Miriam Smith	Djibouti
5.Kevin Smith	Djibouti
6. Dato Macammad	Djibouti
	Driver

**Group 6. Qeeli Daqar**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/ representation</b>
1. Qumar Kotina	Guide
2. Qali Gohar	Guide
3. Macammad Kamil	
4.Karin Sohlgren	Sweden
5.Po Henrikssen	Sweden
6.Acmad Yaasin	Sweden
Qumar Kotina num	Driver