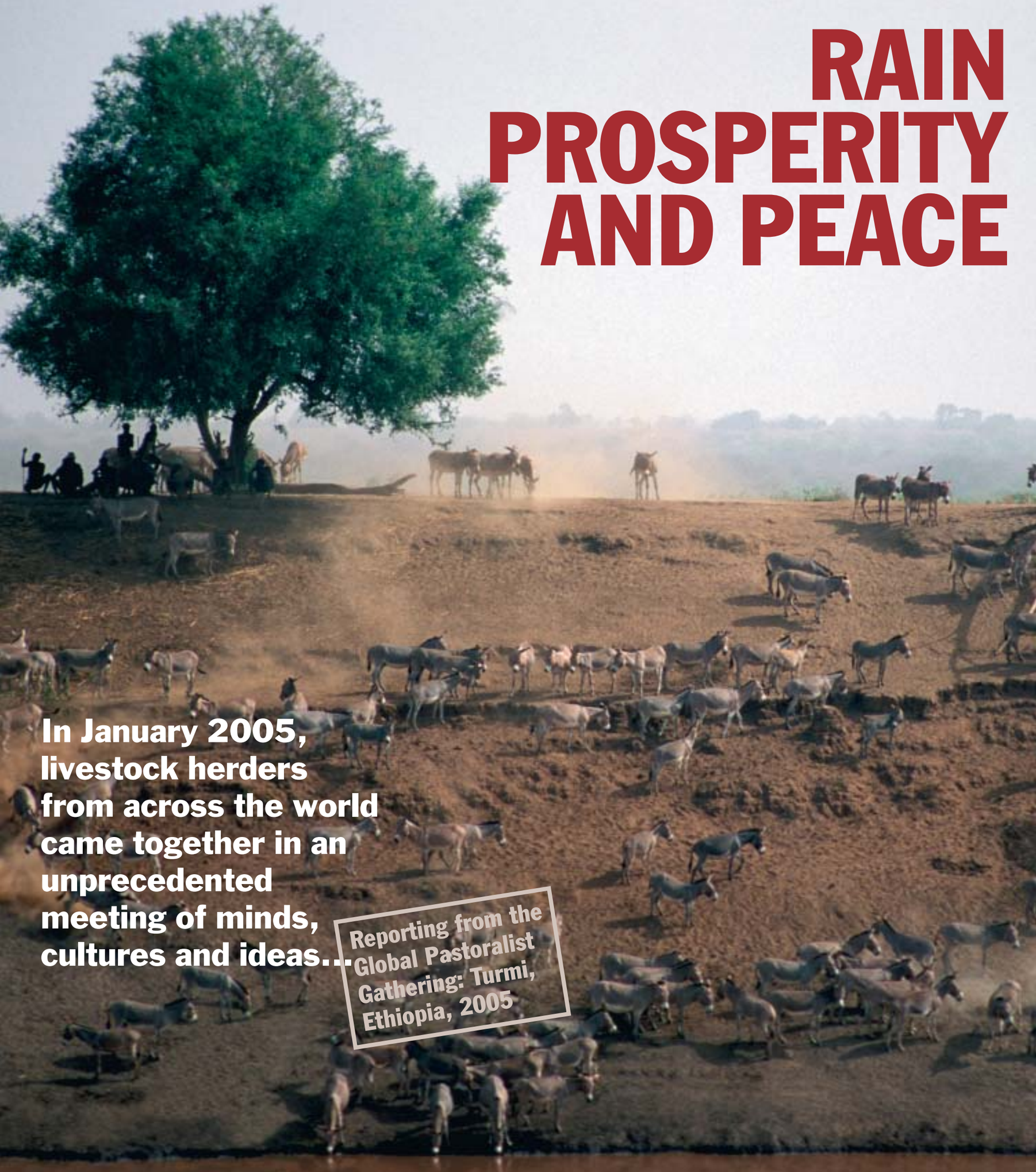
RAIN PROSPERITY AND PEACE

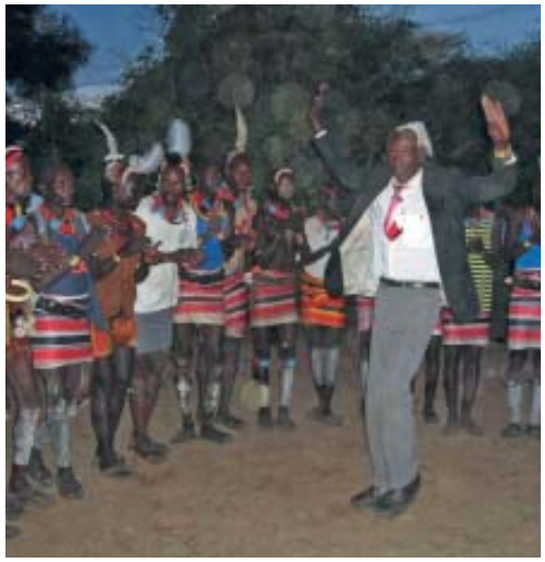


In January 2005, livestock herders from across the world came together in an unprecedented meeting of minds, cultures and ideas…

Reporting from the Global Pastoralist Gathering: Turmi, Ethiopia, 2005











Reporting from the Global Pastoralist Gathering: Turmi, Ethiopia, 2005

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Also to all the pastoralist representatives, the translators and the individuals in each of the 23 countries who helped us to make the gathering a success.

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photos © Munro-Dowsett 2005

RAIN, PROSPERITY AND PEACE

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Spiritual leaders of the Hamar people open the Global Pastoralist Gathering with a blessing calling for 'Rain, Prosperity, Peace, and a successful outcome to the Gathering'.
photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

cover photo:
Livestock on the banks of the Omo River, Southern Ethiopia.
© Pietro Cenini - Panos Pictures

Lionel Roux from France and Dave Hughes from Wales relaxing in Global Pastoralist Gathering accommodation.
Photo Sarah Wilson

Hamar Goats, near Turmi
Photo Patta Scott-Villiers

EDITORIAL

Patta Scott-Villiers opens a session.
Photo Jane Stevens

A fleck of colour on a vast horizon, a cloud of dust rising into the azure sky, a line of two humped camels is led by a young Mongolian boy. A great herd of lyre-horned cattle stand peacefully by the Omo River in Ethiopia, the air is thick with the smell of dung fires and the songs of their owners. A mountain-side in Europe is speckled with white sheep, an old man rolls a great cheese over. What is particular about pastoralists? They are people whose livelihood comes from herding animals across thinly populated lands. Many are witnessing decline, although it is now widely accepted that their way of living is productive and at the same time harmonious with the ecology of these difficult territories. Excluding the rainforests and the oceans, it would be fair to say that pastoralists have helped create and preserve much of what remains of the near-pristine environments on our earth. One element of this life is mobility of animals and to a lesser extent of people; another is a collective approach to the use of land, allowing flexibility in an unpredictable natural environment.

This report is a compilation of some of the most compelling stories to come out of the Global Pastoralist Gathering, an unprecedented event held in January 2005 with more than 200 people from 23 countries, most of whom were pastoralists. Funded by the UK Department for International Development, the Gathering was organised in Southern Ethiopia, together with UNDP, by the Pastoralist Communication Initiative, a group based in Addis Ababa working on communication between pastoralists and those with whom they need to negotiate.

The discussions at the Gathering were marked by an unusual clarity and directness, emerging from the intense interest of the pastoralists present to hear from one another. The stories that follow were the ones that elicited the most excitement. Captured by a team from the Institute of Development Studies, the articles try to be faithful to what was said. We hope this makes it possible for a wider audience of pastoralists and those who want to understand them to catch a glimpse of a powerful, articulate and productive group talking not to government or aid agencies, but to each other, about issues with which they are deeply familiar and passionately concerned.

In the pages ahead the reader is invited to look first at how pastoralist and allied peoples have found means of political participation and recognition, despite their physical and cultural distance from national governments. They have managed to revive old laws protecting their shared rights to land, water and mobility, they have gained government services and successfully advocated for new laws that recognise their position in the modern world and their role as custodians of many of the earth's most precious environments.

Then the story darkens as we consider how whole tribes of pastoralists are losing their lands and livelihoods on a frightening scale. Exploitative investors and competing land users have annexed valuable territories for mining, irrigated plantations, game parks and oil wells and have given little but poverty in return. Despite this, pastoralists are finding new ways of dealing with changing times and in the last section we refocus on their resilience and look at marketing of pastoral products. We examine, albeit briefly, the impressive possibilities that exist when pastoralist products find the right market; when money is made and recognition found.

As one of the organisers I was delighted and privileged to witness this extraordinary event and I hope that this report does it justice. I hope too that it helps to keep the conversation, which started in the small town of Turmi not far from the centre of Africa, going and growing until the planet's 200 million pastoralists regain a secure and valued place in the world.

Patta Scott-Villiers

THE STORY OF THE GLOBAL PASTORALIST GATHERING

The world cannot attain its development covenants while its pastoralist population is excluded.

Daoud Tari Abkula.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

I was part of the team that worked on the Global Pastoralist Gathering from the very beginning. We wanted an event that would bring together pastoralist leadership from every corner of the world. The Hamar people of South Omo in Ethiopia gladly agreed to provide the place of the meeting, which meant that the event had its owners who would stand for it and protect it from any evil. The Ethiopian Government also pledged support.

The next challenge was to have a gathering conforming to a setting at least recognisable by any pastoralist, so we made a tented camp with room for 200 people. Set under great acacia trees by a dry river bed at Turmi, 1,000 kilometres south of the capital Addis Ababa, we used rushes to make shades against the hot sun and put up more than 80 tents. The main meeting venue was under tree shades spread about with rush mats. For the first time it is as if the world has turned upside down—it is for the people from the cities to adjust to the world of pastoralists.

> “Pastoralists prefer the hotel of a thousand stars to the hotel of five stars.”
>
> Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena, Mali

Our target participants were not the usual easily-identified workshop-goers. We had to bypass the ones who said they could speak *for* pastoralists and get to the real leadership. As much as possible they had to be mandated by their people to attend the gathering and report back whatever had transpired. We contacted major pastoralist groups in more than 30 countries asking for 2–4 pastoralist delegates and a government counterpart. From the savannahs of Northern Kenya to Argentina's Andean slopes to the snows of Mongolia, the deserts of Syria and the forests of India, we got reports of consultations. The process was not without bottlenecks. Some of our non-pastoralist contacts could not comprehend how pastoralists who might not read or write could possibly participate in a global event. Language, literacy, culture and behaviour, all were the things used to push pastoralist leadership out of the scene. It was that prejudice against pastoralists which we were trying to demystify, so we had to be diplomatic, but we did not compromise. Some of the non-pastoralists helped enormously with meetings, travel arrangements and translation. Some did not believe it would work at all and insisted that they be invited themselves. We had to be strong and resist the pressures of those powerful actors. To circumvent the jinx of language every pastoral group was asked to bring one of their own as an interpreter.

Meeting under the shade.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

The next major issue was bureaucracy. How to get travel documents on time, book flights, obtain visas and arrive on time for the gathering? How to give everyone the right kind of food? Everything worked but not without a drama and last minute gasp. Well, we kept vigil at offices and got visa approvals but we found out that it was even more problematic getting the visas to participants in their home countries. People are not on emails, faxes simply don't work and time was running out. Sometimes I would say we were lucky that things worked and at other times we got wonderful cooperation from government officials. I do recall the episode of one of the Ugandans who could not get his travel document

on time. In less than half an hour the Ethiopian authorities in Addis Ababa got in touch with their colleagues in Kampala and the Karamojong elder was on his way to the gathering.

It was now like the final sprint of a long race. From the one-room office on the 4th floor of the UN building in Addis, the Pastoralist Communication Initiative team operated like an army at war. Every person was simply on the run to get this or that done. The fact that it took place far away from the capital city was by itself a big difficulty. Every phone, computer, and car was deployed to maximum use. At last, they arrived by plane from five continents and descended on Addis Ababa while others drove all the way to Turmi from East Africa. The travel to Turmi was long and hot, but still a pleasure, and thus they all came safely on the 28th February to their waiting camp. Their arrival was very magnificent. They came adorned in their beautiful traditional regalia: the flowing jallabiyas of the Touareg, the majestic Iranians from the Old World, the immaculate Central Asians, the broad smiles of the South Americans, the custodians of the law of the Oromo pastoralists of Ethiopia with the authority-exuding Gujji Aba Gada all met with the shiny people of Turmi. It was a huge emotional festival that was blessed, though it was the full dry season, with a light rain shower – all perfectly fitting in the tradition of the pastoral peoples on the eve of important issues. The introductions, greetings, and informal discussions all went on till it was time for the formal opening with blessings from the Hamar people and a statement from the local administration.

Then participants dispersed to take their positions under the tree shades which were going to be their meeting venues for the next five days of the event. Each pastoral group made a presentation about their state. They talked on many issues, from the workings of their institutions to how they are facing challenges of the modern State and its development apparatus; they shared products, they lamented on issues of external forces negatively impacting in their system, they shared examples of social political organisation and much more. All this important discussion went on through the assistance of a wonderful translation network provided to every language group. It was a complex web of translation that was implemented without assistance from the world of modern technology, and it worked well.

In the evenings it was all goats roasting on bonfires around which groups shared stories and had serious discussions on things of common interest. Many streams of issues emerged which were later reduced to three major rivers that were flowing through the debates: the routes to power and good services, the struggles for justice, and the creation of market value. The entire event then turned into a huge market where clients sold and bought ideas from the major rivers. The whole meeting arena was a buzz of activity, an extravaganza where people engaged each other seriously on matters very pertinent to them.

The gathering was also graced by a high-powered delegation of senior officials representing the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations, the UK Department for International Development, and USAID. They jetted in to the rough airstrip to stay overnight and get a first-hand glimpse. I think they were really excited and humbled with the people and the scene. They also had opportunity to engage with some of the pastoralist leadership. I vividly recall the intense discussions the Gujji Aba Gada had with all of them. They gave statements of commitment to issues of pastoral development and fielded difficult questions from the critical audience.

The last leg is coming and the three rivers have all to drain into one big ocean of a powerful statement endorsed by the gathering after some amendments. 'The world cannot attain its development covenants,' it says, 'while its pastoralist population is excluded. While pastoralists will work tirelessly, governments and international bodies need to work too on redressing the imbalances and deprivation experienced by pastoralists the world over.' With that it is disbursed to the external world.

It was now time for closing rituals to be performed. The Hamar hosts were to give presents to every one of the 23 countries and there was a round of emotional and festive farewells. You could see serenity and tranquillity of satisfaction descending on everyone. There was the joy of bonding with fellow pastoralists who not only share with you a production system but lots of cultural, social and other sentimental issues. Before dawn the next morning under the thousand stars of Turmi, the people started their long journey home.

I was sceptical at first whether we had the ability to organise and facilitate an event of this magnitude. For three months we almost lived Global Pastoralist Gathering and at the end of it all everybody left happy and persuaded about pastoralism and its place on this planet. The people living pastoralism will continue to actively contribute to their own welfare and that of humanity. They left having met and interacted with their likes from all corners of the world. They left with resolve, energy, understanding and confidence in themselves. Yes, they renewed their commitment to safeguard and manage the environment as its custodians for future generations. They appreciated that pastoralism is not an enterprise fading into the oblivion of history but rather a profitable social, cultural, economic endeavour that is common to humanity of every colour, region and religion.

Daoud Tari Abkula

Scenes from the Global Pastoralist Gathering:

West African Pastoralists arrive at Addis Ababa Airport. *Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005*
Travel to Turmi by bus. *Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005*
John Dowsett films the Iranian group. *Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005*
Camp Manager, Will Knocker gets some lunch. *Photo Sarah Wilson*
Mauritanians roast goat in the evening. *Photo Lucy Stackpool-Moore*

1: ROUTES TO POWER

There are only a few countries in the world where the State is actively supportive of its pastoralists.

Chief Ron Evans of the Norway House Cree Nation, wrote to Paul Martin, the Prime Minister of Canada after the Global Pastoralist Gathering. As an active member of the Assembly of First Nations of Canada he has cordial relations with the Prime Minister. Chief Evans felt confident that he would be successful in raising issues he had seen and heard at the Gathering with Prime Minister Martin and his Ministers, so in his letter he called for greater attention to pastoralist needs and recognition of their contribution to the global environment. 'I want to thank you,' wrote Chief Evans 'for making Aboriginal issues a top priority in your government. The fact that we are able as Chiefs to communicate with your Ministers directly…was something that no other delegate [at the Gathering] could say about their governments'.

Borana woman milking, Ethiopia.
Photo UNOCHA-PCI

Pastoralists may have prospered for centuries in deserts, marshes, wild steppes and high mountain ranges without relying on much outside contact; but today their relationship with governments, neighbours and market institutions are fundamental to their struggles for a better life. Historically living on the margins of richer regions, pastoralists trying to enter these legal, political and economic arenas have found themselves at a disadvantage. Herders need laws, services and access to international trade. 'Pastoralists know they are pastoralists, but they also need to believe that they are citizens' said Jesús Garzon, a Spanish shepherd and outspoken advocate of pastoralism in Europe.
There are plenty of other institutions and groups with whom pastoralists have relations and negotiations. Global companies drilling for oil or mining minerals, national companies investing in irrigation and local farmers extending their cropping land are among the most important groups that pastoralists have to deal with.

Internal relations among pastoralists play a central part in all of this. Pastoralists are very successful at co-operating on the highly integrated livestock management systems that have developed over the centuries. They have not always been so successful in co-operating in negotiations with the outside world; individuals and subgroups often disagree and compete rather than acting in concert.

> **'Pastoralists know they are pastoralists, but they also need to believe that they are citizens.'**
>
> Jesús Garzon, Spain.

Dinka boys with their cows, South Sudan.
Photo © Teun Voeten – Panos Pictures

There is no single pattern of relations with all the different players in the broad range of countries in which pastoralists live. Nevertheless there are clearly strategies that improve negotiating positions and help to stabilise relations with often capricious and exploitative institutions, while improving internal relations.

There are only a few countries in the world where the State is actively supportive of its pastoralists. In Europe, herders as citizens have rights to land and livelihood and are recognised and subsidised for their contribution to food production and to the maintenance of an environment that attracts a vibrant tourist trade. Ancient laws protecting animal migration routes and common land are, by and large, respected and new beneficial legislation has reached the statute books. Herders are given access to national parks in recognition of their role in maintaining the ecology of these natural havens. This is not to say that European pastoralists have an easy life: their migration routes are encumbered with highways and urban developments, their way of life is often disrespected, their access to government services is fraught with difficulties of mobility, and their products

do not often get the kind of promotion that they need to compete in the global market. Relatively though, they represent a success story.

For most of the world's 200 million pastoralists, the idea of being a citizen with rights to land, services and political participation is a distant dream and for women pastoralists this distance is even greater. Men and women have very distinct roles and the relations between pastoralist women and governments are usually based on misunderstandings. Officials often think of women as less intelligent and less important, while the women themselves may conform to prejudices by being alternately shy of making public statements and angry when their issues and opinions are sidelined. In reality women play a central role in education, product processing, trade, internal leadership and in affecting conflict between neighbouring groups.

Gabra tending camels, Ethiopia.
Photo Jesus Garzon

The degree to which pastoralists have organised and educated themselves is a direct determinant of their success. In Israel men and women Bedouin have developed prodigious lobbying capacity. In Iran, free education has boosted pastoralist capabilities and status. In West Africa many countries have developed pastoralist laws after pastoralists have pressed for recognition. In Kenya government works with pastoralist customary institutions on peace and development. In South America and many parts of central Asia, there are well-organised economic and social organisations that demand policies and investments favourable to pastoralists.

Bedouin herding goats along a section of the separation wall at the Mount of Olives, Israel.
Photo J.C. Tordai - Panos Pictures

In the following section on the Routes to Power the reader will get a glimpse into some of the many different contexts in which pastoralists and indigenous people relate to governments and others. We start with how people in Canada and Spain managed to get legislation agreed and implemented. Then we move to Mali where a new pastoralist code is ready if the final signature of the President can be wrung out of an unwilling council. We consider the triangular relationship between pastoralists, farmers and a changing State in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Mauritania. Going further into relations within pastoralist communities, we look at gender and the challenges it poses. In India, Gujjar from Rajasthan have been successful with local government, while in Israel, Palestinian Bedouin have managed to change a policy in a long advocacy struggle, but they have not secured rights to an identity. No doubt the laws and policies that pastoralists are describing here all have problems of politics and bureaucracy, but they nonetheless show the wide range of possibilities open to pastoralists who want and demand change.

Patta Scott-Villiers

CONSTITUTIONS CAN CHANGE

Aidos Smailov from Kazakhstan, Ganchimeg Dorj from Mongolia, Chief Shane Gottfriedson. *Photo Jane Stevens*

> ‘In Canada, 15% feed the other 85%. Once organised the 15% are in a strong negotiating position. The government cannot destroy the 15% because it needs them.’
>
> Chief Shane Gottfriedson

It was late afternoon and the sun was beginning to slant through the leaves of our shade tree. Chief Ron Evans and Chief Shane Gottfriedson got up to speak to the Global Pastoralist Gathering; two impressive Canadians, leaders of First Nations peoples. They described their people’s ownership of wide fertile lands and how they make a good living: one tribe owns a hydro-electric dam, another has large ranches, fishing operations, casinos and more. Achieving all this, they explain, has been a struggle of generations. When they have finished speaking there is a hush and a sigh. One after another people speak their appreciation: ‘It is like I have been thirsty and you have given me very clean water. No – not water – it is like drinking milk! I am feeling very healthy because I am satisfied!’ exclaimed a Hamar elder. The Chiefs look surprised and pleased.

In 1969, the Canadian government was considering legislation that would take away the autonomy of its indigenous people by abolishing 18th century treaties that protected indigenous rights. According to Chief Evans, indigenous people in Canada knew very little about how government policy worked and were not adequately prepared to influence policy at the national level. In danger of losing the rights and autonomy that they had won through centuries of struggle, indigenous people from across Canada decided to organise themselves. They formed local organisations based on their tribes, which chose regional representatives, who in turn chose national representatives that could speak to the Canadian government. At each level of this structure, there were also womens’ organisations focusing on issues of inequality and how to influence policy. As a result there are now women chiefs and women representatives in national parliament. Under the name First Nations, 63 different peoples, languages, and cultures from across Canada consolidated their political power.

First Nation representatives were able to incorporate legal recognition of indigenous rights into the Canadian national constitution. They then began to submit land claims through the court system to help strengthen these rights in practice. The changes to the constitution also led to other types of agreements about land use and economic development. The elders and the chiefs gave education paramount importance. Chief Evans says that ‘everyone is protective of what is theirs and resistant to change, and it can take a long time to build consensus. The key is education and building awareness.’ Insisting on the legally binding nature of treaties signed often centuries ago, the Assembly of First Nations has gained for Canada’s indigenous peoples rights to own and profit from vast tracts of their traditional rangeland, as well as to contribute to national issues as a political force.

A few thousand miles to the east in Spain, 30,000 people migrate every year with 1.5 million animals. They even pass through park systems in urban centres as they travel between winter and summer pastures to rear livestock and produce milk, cheese, wool and meat. Isabel Bermejo López-Muñiz is a herder, a lobbyist and a scholar of pastoralism in Europe. She explains the history. ‘The first legislation protecting pastoralist rights in Spain is very old, dating back to 1273 when King Alfonso the Wise passed a law protecting *cañadas* (drovers' roads) used by transhumant shepherds when moving their herds. *Cañadas* are at least 75 metres wide and provide green pastures for the sheep as they move southwards and northwards from the plains to the mountains and back, along a network that is 125,000 kilometres long. They represent a total of 400,000 hectares of common grazing land reserved for transhumant herds throughout Spain.’

In 1974 the law was changed, allowing for privatisation of *cañadas* if they were deemed ‘unnecessary’, and in the early 1990s a new proposal was being discussed that weakened the law even more. By then only a few pastoralists maintained the traditional transhumance on foot, although many still moved their herds seasonally by train or lorry in search of green pastures and water. The encroachment and lack of maintenance of *cañadas* made traditional transhumance on foot increasingly difficult, and the prevailing view, even among pastoralists themselves, in the early 90s was that traditional transhumance was a thing of the past and its maintenance unworkable. On the other hand, the ecological, cultural and environmental value of transhumance was recognised by scholars and by an increasing number of experts in ecology.

So it was not pastoralists themselves, but environmental organisations like Ecologistas en Acción and Fundación Española para el Medio Ambiente who campaigned for the protection of *cañadas* and lobbied the Spanish government not to weaken, but rather to strengthen legislation protecting this common heritage. In 1995 a new law was passed protecting the *cañadas* and giving recognition to pastoralists’ preferential rights to use them.

Since then, many local pastoralist groups have persuaded local government to make concessions. One story comes from Spain’s northern mountains, the Picos de Europa, where pastoral groups pushed for a Regional Government decree supporting the revival and

modernisation of traditional grazing. For more than 3,000 years the people of these mountains have herded sheep and goats and made a unique and delicious cheese. The government support will allow pastoralists to recover lost pastures, improve their dilapidated sheepfolds and install solar power, upgrade access paths, improve the hygiene of their cheese-making to fit with EU standards and encourage new shepherds by means of special grazing contracts. It is not all successes though – after the Gathering, Jesús Garzon was in the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture pressing for support for transhumance from a new Director of Rural Development, who is not known for his belief in pastoralism. Garzon is now on his way to meet higher level officials in his passionate and long fight for the rights of the people, the animals and the environments they sustain.

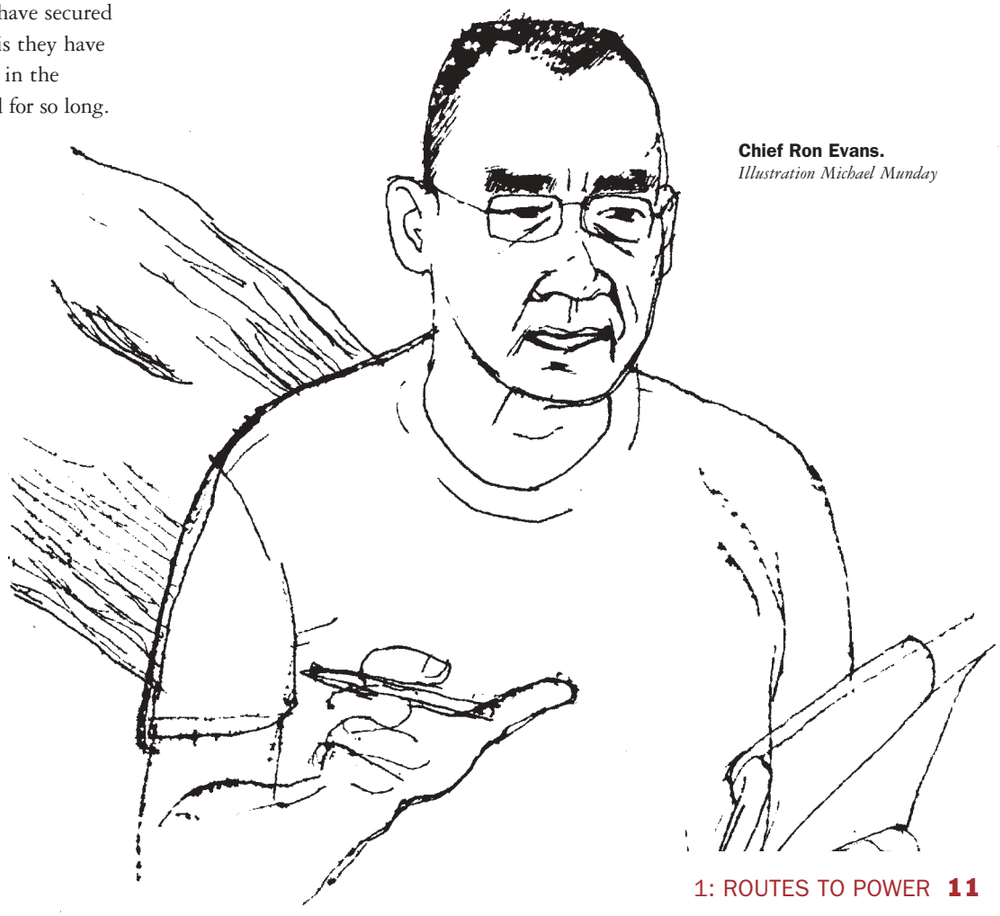
At the Global Pastoralist Gathering European pastoralists from Spain and Wales and Canadian First Nations leaders attributed their relative success to their organisation, lobbying and alliances. They may fail to mention other special circumstances such as the influential movements for equality and human rights in both Europe and North America over the last two centuries. The general wealth of these societies also makes it possible for them to indulge their minorities and aboriginals, especially when it doesn't put too great a stress on the national exchequer. Free, good quality primary and secondary education has also boosted the profile and capabilities of pastoralists and other rural movements in these northern countries. Whatever the different histories and conditions, people's own efforts have led to constitutional amendments that have secured their ability to make a good living. From this they have also gained the right to play a respected role in the political life of the nations they have inhabited for so long.

Joanna Wheeler and Patta Scott-Villiers

Jesus Garzon talks about Spain at the Gathering.
Photo Jane Stevens

You cannot kill a louse with one thumb, you have to bring a finger down too. Communities must organise themselves.

Jarso Tari, Ethiopia



Chief Ron Evans.
Illustration Michael Munday

PASTORALISTS IN THE MAJORITY

Keeping up Relations in Kazakhstan

from top:
Yesmyrzayev Sadyk from Kazakhstan.
Photo Jane Stevens

Kazakh Camels.
Photo Carol Kerven

Kazakh pastoralist with his goats.
Photo Carol Kerven

If you take the interests of both pastoralists and farmers, of course it is the pastoralists who will lose' said Yesmyrzayev Sadyk, who herds horses, sheep, goats and camels in Southern Kazakhstan. This may seem odd considering that in Kazakhstan 70% of the land is pasture and the majority of the population are pastoralists. But it is their mobile lifestyle that makes it difficult for them to take part in political processes. According to Ilya Alimaev, a Kazakh government official, the size of the pasture makes it the fourth biggest pastoralist country in the world. There is a strong history of pastoralism in Kazakhstan, and Ilya commented that the country has been dealing with herding issues for 3,000 years. 'Some problems, like maintaining the condition of the pasture land, have plagued pastoralists for many years,' he explained, 'but others are recent, like our efforts to negotiate privatisation with pastoralists.'

Under the Soviet Union, pastoralists were collectivised into state farms. During this period the government took the profits and in return provided many services, such as fodder in the winter, veterinary services, roads and transportation, which supported pastoralists and their way of life – they even provided regular newspaper deliveries. This was followed in the 1980s by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which unleashed massive institutional, political and social changes. Formerly pastoralists had worked for the State, but now they were on their own. Services previously offered by the State were privatised and the elites connected with the government acquired control. For a while the infrastructure collapsed, and the fodder and trucks for transporting animals became prohibitively expensive. Within the short space of two years, the changes were so widespread and devastating for pastoralists that the number of sheep in the country decreased from 35 million to 8 million.

From Tajikistan, Alisherov Beknazar Shirinbekovich tells a similar story. Where land was privatised it became difficult for Tajik pastoralists to care for their animals because taxes on pasture land soared (a rise from 30 cents to 4 dollars) and veterinary services became increasingly expensive. This in turn led to over-grazing and poverty. Thankfully things are now improving in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan (sheep numbers have now risen to 14 million), and other former soviet states, but there is a widening gap between the rich and poor pastoralists – a widening division between those who capitalised and profited in the privatisation process, and those who did not.

> **If you take the interests of both pastoralists and farmers, of course it is the pastoralists who will lose.**
>
> Yesmyrzayev Sadyk, Kazakhstan

Sheep in Kazakhstan.
Photo © Paul Lowe - Panos Pictures

Yesmyrzayev says that all pastoralists, and particularly those pastoralists that find themselves marginalised even within their own communities, need to project their voices and make their views count in government decisions. He points out that this is complicated because pastoralist groups are not homogenous and encompass the often competing agendas of the elite and the poor and different sub-groups such as young people, women and men. The organisation that deals with these issues is an association that includes both crop farmers and pastoralists. Not only are the pastoralists themselves being simplistically lumped into one homogenous group to present their interests, they are also doing so in competition with farmers. The association itself is very active, but pastoralist priorities are being subsumed and overpowered by the agriculturalist agenda. It is a kaleidoscope of competing agendas: at one level there is a triangular link between pastoralists, farmers and the government. But there are also triangles within triangles as each of these groups is made up of heterogeneous voices and often conflicting priorities.

> Although it is thousands of miles away in the African Sahel, Mauritania's situation is similar to that of Kazakhstan.
>
> Lucy Stackpool-Moore

Although it is thousands of miles away in the African Sahel, Mauritania's situation is similar to that of Kazakhstan. Taleb Ahmed Juddu Ould Sidi describes how pastoralists make up some 85% of the population and are generally favoured. Grazing is considered an important land use and after independence in 1960 the government continued with the pastoralist infrastructure set up by the French. They tackled the problem of expanding farmland by fencing it in. As in Kazakhstan, the pastoralists in Mauritania are by no means a homogenous group, and some tribes have achieved more voice and power than others. One pastoralist at the Gathering pointed out that in many ways you can connect the sedentary farmers in Mauritania with the pastoralists in Mali, Argentina or Ethiopia – not in terms of lifestyle and livelihood, but in terms of their isolation and lack of representation.

This surprising comparison raises questions about how pastoralists and agriculturalists should negotiate and cooperate within their communities as well as with each other, and in turn how they should work with changing governments and how those governments should work with them. The kaleidoscopic relationships between pastoralists, farmers and governments are complex. Just as in the ever-changing pictures projected in a kaleidoscope, patterns of relationships continually adjust to accommodate different interests and perspectives.

Lucy Stackpool-Moore

from top:
Mohamed Mokhtar Ould Mohamed, Ballahi Ould Limam talking about Mauritania.
Photo Jane Stevens

Sarah Robinson, Alipbek Akjolbekov from Tajikistan.
Photo Jane Stevens

Alisherov Beknazar Shirinbekovich from Tajikistan and Ilya Alimaev from Kazakhstan.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

WAYS OF LISTENING TO GENDER

What about gender?' is one of those questions that have the potential to wreak havoc in a conversation. It is a wild card that for some sparks immediate interest; for others immediate disdain. At the Global Pastoralist Gathering, participants heard about differences and similarities of the intertwined lives of men and women. There were moments when we heard about life stories that were differentiated in terms of gender – stories that provided a mirror for us to think about gender roles in our own lives and communities.

Oga Steve Abah, Martins Adegbe Ayegba and Mallam Abdullahi Yunusa, facilitators with the Theatre for Development Centre in Zaria Nigeria, came to Turmi one week before the Gathering to work with a group of 12 young Hamar on a drama about their lives. The group of 6 men and 6 women between the ages of 16 and 27 was drawn from Turmi's surrounding villages.

Over several days, they told Steve, Martins and Mallam about the important issues in their lives—shortage of pasture, the lack of government action about their problems, conflict between the Hamar, other pastoralists groups and the government; and women's frustration about their lack of choice in whom to marry. For the women in the group, it is not marriage itself, but the process of how the marriage is arranged that they find frustrating. They said that they feel like a product being sold – their fathers would identify who could pay a certain number of cows and the negotiation would be finished; the girls sold and married without any say. In preparing for the drama, the girls talked about their frustrations with this process, and their aspirations and dreams about more romantic marriages. The men in the drama group were more concerned with the issues of conflict and scarcity that they confront every day. They acknowledged that marriage happened as women described it, but they didn't see the same need for change. In both the drama and in the discussions leading up to it, the men were dismissive of women's concerns about marriage. In the end the drama that the group presented showed both men's and women's stories together. It focused on shortages of land and water, clashes with other tribes, and marriage – and on the way these issues would surface in everyday life.

How did the Hamar elders react to gender issues presented publicly through the drama by young Hamar women to an audience of 200 from 23 different countries? The elders acknowledged that the drama was an accurate representation of the problems they are facing – but they remained silent on the women's issues. Oga Steve Abah explained: 'The ordinary question of marriage is very sensitive, but in the drama the issue was presented in the form of entertainment. The elders enjoyed the drama, but they are not necessarily ready to address all the things that the drama raised. It will take time for the men to want to do something about these problems.'

The drama helped open a debate where people spoke about the ways that conflict arises in their own contexts, and what the options are for solving conflict. As one of the listeners from Kenya commented, expressing empathy with the issues raised about conflict and gender, 'what you have seen in this drama is not peculiar to Hamar alone.' But this discussion did not provide any answers for the Hamar women about their concerns with how they are married.

By contrast, the Hamar elders reacted with scorn and laughter when a different group raised gender issues later in the gathering. Asking all the women present to stand up, Bona Balenta, the president of the Turmi women's association, gave feedback to the whole group about the conversations that had taken place at the "women's meetings" during the gathering. The women's meetings had initially started from an impromptu conversation between Hamar women and other women (from Ethiopia, Spain, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, USA, Argentina, UK, Israel and Australia) in the dry riverbed near the camp. Many participants, women and men alike, had noticed that there were fewer women than men representing their communities at the pastoralist gathering.

It was not the first time Bona had spoken before the crowd, and she had in fact evoked great applause when she welcomed everyone to Turmi on behalf of the Hamar women on the first day. She had asked: 'I presume you drink milk, eat meat and drink blood, but there must be

> How is it that you can suppress these women that have given birth to you and raised you?

Bona Balenta, Ethiopia

something else that you are getting. Look here, I am wearing goat skin. Where are yours?' Everyone laughed, men and women alike, and they listened to her introduction about herself, about the life of Hamar women, and about the hopes of her peers to receive a good education. But as she stood before the same group on the final day, she was standing for Hamar women as well as offering feedback from the women's meeting. She followed presentations from two men, Turkana Paramount Chief Musa Ngitieng from Kenya and Touareg Mohamed Ag Mohamed Ali from Mali, about gender roles in their societies. Bona began by asking all the men present to look around and then asked one direct question, 'How is it that you can suppress these women that have given birth to you and raised you?' This was a powerful moment for many in the crowd, particularly for those involved with the women's meeting. But the Hamar men were not applauding – some looked angry; some walked away. Bona finished by shaking hands with the speaker from Mali, saying that he had given her hope.

For some the women's meetings came to represent a space of solidarity for women to share their stories and hear about the lives of other women; for others they represented an exclusive arena that alienated men; for more still they represented an opposition to mainstreaming gender issues at the Gathering. The women met three times, but conversations, concerns and ideas about gender issues permeated discussions throughout the whole Gathering. The way gender is portrayed can influence how people respond. For example, fictionalising problems can make real problems easier to deal with. The young people's drama had been able to introduce prickly and sensitive concerns about gender roles in a way that the Hamar elders, and indeed everyone in the audience, could listen to.

Among pastoralists, the roles of men and women tend to be highly differentiated as they cope together with vicissitudes of their environments. But today, pastoralist women's powers in society seem to have declined, and many younger women are questioning the lack of choice they have in their lives. Although men and older women may appear reactionary, they are also considering the effect of social fragmentation on their ability to survive as pastoralists. New gender relations are developing from within; the question is can they develop in ways that will satisfy the new demands of women, men, families and societies in a rapidly changing world?

Lucy Stackpool-Moore and Joanna Wheeler

opposite:

Bona Balenta addresses the Gathering.
Photo Jesus Garzon

Women from Argentina, Ethiopia and Europe at the Gathering.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

Hamar elder watches the drama.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

Hamar men discuss conflict in the drama.
Photo Jean-Pierre Biber

Hamar girls discuss marriage in the drama.
Photo Jesus Garzon

MORE THAN HOT AIR?

The challenges of implementing Mali's Pastoral Code

Ahmadou Ag Horradi, Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena, Mohamed Ag Mohamed Ali.
Photo Jane Stevens

> Although pastoralists make up more than 30% of the population in Mali, and pastoralist production accounts for more than 28% of the GNP, pastoralists are being marginalised – pushed off their land, losing their herds, and their livelihoods.
>
> Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena, Mali

Across Africa and beyond, the Pastoral Codes of West Africa are celebrated for their recognition of pastoral rights to land, migration routes and trade. At the Global Gathering, pastoralist and ACORD representative Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena explained the Malian Pastoral Code, how it was passed and the problems facing its implementation. Designed to help resolve problems for pastoralists, Mali's Pastoral Code is a high potential document that is still some way from being fully implemented. Mohamed Ag estimates that 80% of pastoralists in the country are unaware of it. What will it take for Mali's pastoralists to become aware and supportive of a Code that has such potential? And equally important, what will it take to ensure that the Pastoral Code is more than just hot air – not just words, but an enforceable law?

'Although pastoralists make up more than 30 per cent of the population in Mali, and pastoralist production accounts for more than 28 per cent of the GNP, pastoralists are being marginalised. They have been pushed off their land and have lost their herds and their livelihoods' explains Mohamed Aly. In 2001, facing declining living conditions and shrinking pasture land, pastoralist and civil society organisations succeeded in getting a new pastoral law passed by the National Legislature. The Pastoral Code addresses the problem of conflict over land use by protecting pastoralist land rights and providing mechanisms for resolving conflicts between herders and farmers. But for Mali's pastoralists there is now a period of confusion: on one hand they have a legal code protecting their access to land, officially recognising their rights and way of life; on the other the code is still awaiting "implementation decree" from the Council of Ministers.

Long before independence, pastoralists had customary systems that governed their co-existence with farmers and fishermen. After independence in 1960 things began to change. 'We were pushed aside in favour of farmers, and we felt betrayed,' said Mohamed Ag Mohamed Ali, another Malian pastoralist. In the national code of the time, it was stipulated that "the land belongs to the state" which recognised property rights only in terms of "the one who exploits it". Because herders moved across land rather than settling on it, the law only officially recognised agricultural usage as land ownership. The situation was also aggravated by new intensive systems like rice cropping along the Niger River in Timbuktu and Gao, which began to exacerbate conflicts between pastoralists and farmers as well as between pastoralists themselves.

Today, different systems of land administration have also come into conflict. There are customary land rights, private land rights, decentralised administrative areas and international agreements on trans-boundary migration that all govern how pastoralists use land. The rapidity of the process of decentralisation means that it is now not clear which laws should govern different areas

Touareg with camels in Mali. *Photo Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena*

and how conflicts and contradictions between different laws and layers of government authority should be resolved.

Mohamed Ag Mohamed Ali believes that even the unsigned law is a very important step, because it signals the government's commitment to securing the rehabilitation of migration routes which had been blocked through agriculture; the clear definition and protection of pastoralist zones; the right of animals to graze on agricultural land after the harvest; and a system backed by law to help resolve disputes between pastoralists and agriculturalists. Although knowledge of the code is still not widespread, non-governmental organisations have been translating it into the local languages and sharing the information through audio tapes and on the radio.

There is still much to be done. Laws that have been passed by parliament might not actually be implemented until 5 or 10 years later, because of delays in passing the 'implementation decree'. Mohamed Aly also points out that too few of those really affected by the Code – including both pastoralists and agriculturalists – were involved in its preparation.

The success or failure of the Code depends on their participation. Some organisations are pressuring the government to explain the Pastoral Code to farmers in an attempt to reduce their opposition, in particular to explain how they can use it to resolve disputes with pastoralists.

The approval of the Pastoral Code shows that pastoralists have been recognised, but the road towards implementation is likely to be rocky. The law challenges embedded practices of land management and begins to address unequal political and practical relations between herders and farmers. The two Mohameds both hope that it will prove to be more than hot air, and will be one of many steps towards recognising and realising the rights of pastoralists in Mali.

Joanna Wheeler,
Mohamed Aly Ag Hamena
and Lucy Stackpool-Moore

Talking about Mali at the Gathering.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

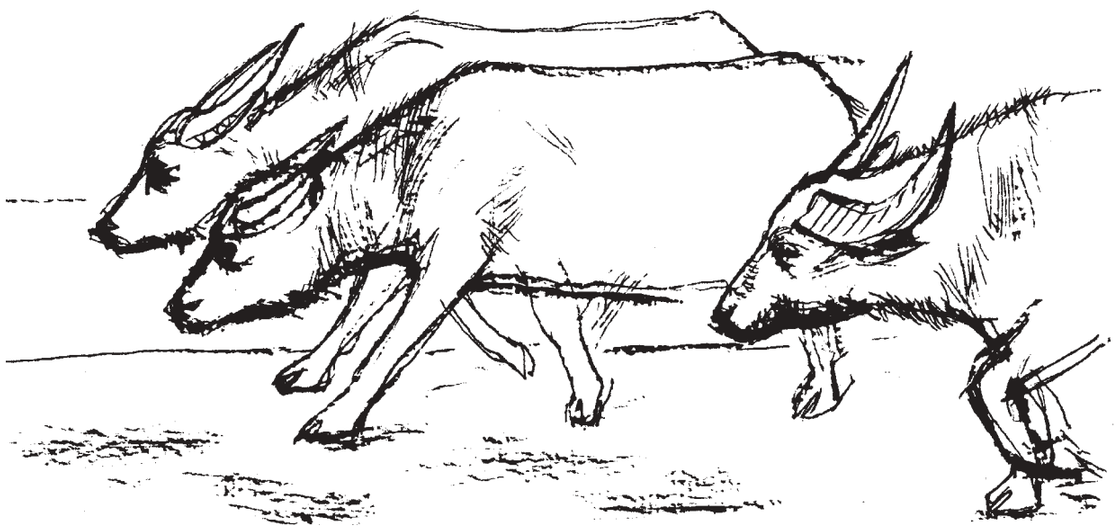
GETTING GOVERNMENT TO LISTEN IN INDIA

Dolat Ram Gujjar.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

Gujjars', says Aman Singh, who works for a local organisation in the Indian State of Rajasthan, 'are nature lovers. Their villages are scattered around the world-famous Tiger Reserve. There are so many villages located inside the reserve forest area, which harbours unique biodiversity and is at the same time the home and source of livelihood for these people.'

In 1973, the Indian government passed forest conservation laws that deprived many pastoralists of access to land they traditionally used for grazing, in order to protect forest areas. But in the Alwar district in Rajasthan, pastoralists have regained access to some of this land through pressuring the government to renew their rights to go into the forest in a way that supports and sustains the ecology. Dolat Ram Gujjar, a cheerful pastoralist clad in a white dhoti and turban, said 'I am proud of our system and what we have achieved.'

> **'This meeting has shown me that community organisations can be so strong that they can influence policy on a national scale...'**
>
> Dolat Ram Gujjar



The Gujjar, of whom there are some 250,000 in Rajasthan and Gujjarat, raise cows, buffalos, and goats, and live on milk products such as buttermilk and milk cake. In Dolat's Alwar district, there are twelve villages of pastoralists, with a total population of around 20,000. The Gujjar migrate into the hills as water sources run out, and then return to the lowlands with the monsoon. Through local committees, each village manages a protected area of 12 hectares (*chind*) that is used to provide extra grazing land in times of drought. Anyone who uses this land without permission pays a fine, which goes into a community fund that is also controlled by the local committee. There are also specific rules determining each family's share of the *chind*. In between drought periods, pastoralists collect medicinal plants from the *chind*.

Most *chinds* are part of forest reserves controlled by the forest management agency. But because they are used for grazing only in times of drought, the government agreed to restore pastoralists' access. The Gujjar hold monthly meetings to decide on which issues to pressure the government. Dolat explained: 'the government said that grazing in the past were forbidden. So we said could we instead have some rules about periods when we can use the forest for grazing, and the government listened.' But on other issues, the government has not been as responsive. According to Dolat, there is increasing degradation of pastoralist land, but the government will not allow them to develop it.

The *Panchayat* system of village committees in India has helped the pastoralists influence Rajasthani government policy to support their way of life. The government helps to organise a pastoralist fair every six months where herders meet and sell animals. It has also established formal migration routes, on which health services for people and their animals are offered. The government is now introducing an innovative scheme of insurance for sheep and their owners. Sheep owners pay 5 per cent of the value of each animal each year as an insurance premium. The government then subsidises 20 per cent of the total premium paid by each herder. Animals must get an annual check-up and health certificate, given free of charge by government vets. The sheep are then tagged to show that they are insured. The government has contracted four private companies to collect premiums and pay out claims in cash.

Despite the successes of the Gujjar at influencing their state government and gaining good services, Dolat said he will take back an important lesson from the Global Pastoralist Gathering: 'this meeting has shown me that community organisations can be so strong that they can influence policy on a national scale, like the Mali people have. We are already influencing the government, but we have learned it is possible to be more powerful.'

Joanna Wheeler

2: KEEPING IT MOBILE

While education, health and welfare are on the list of what pastoralists should expect from government, in most countries they receive very little. Despite examples of functioning mobile education in Iran and veterinary stations in India, few pastoralists have regular access to schools, markets, clinics or banks whose services are suited to their needs. Governments the world over have tried, with varying degrees of success, to settle pastoralists, in part to make service delivery easier, and for other less palatable reasons. Pastoralists see a failure to take responsibility and many are not pleased with their governments. Their own investment, trading and welfare networks and their customary legal systems remain very important to them, but these are sometimes limited in their powers. The internal welfare systems that once protected entire peoples through reciprocal sharing have become attenuated as pastoralists diversify their ways of life and engage increasingly with systems of governance and service provision outside their own.

In this section we see how good relations with government can be used to create good services for isolated and mobile peoples. In Iran mobile education and veterinary services have been the result of pastoralist organisation and the creation of a specific government body for pastoralists. In Argentina, community radio is supported by government and forms a social and economic lifeline. In Kenya, the government runs a drought mitigation system involving contingency funds used by local committees to make emergency interventions to stave off livestock deaths and famine.

Patta Scott-Villiers

> **‘Schools are not in line with the movement routes. Therefore we face a hard choice: putting children in school or moving with the animals.’**
>
> Galma Godana, Ethiopia

left: **Turkana settlement on the move, Kenya.**
Photo © Crispin Hughes – Panos Pictures

Migration of goats in Argentina.
Photo Gabriel Palmili

Migration with camels in Somali Region, Ethiopia. *Photo UNOCHA*

Newly-built roads displace traditional migration routes in Iran.
Photo Ali Aghili

Moving by camel in Mongolia.
Photo Lkhamdulam Natsagdorj

TOP OF THE CLASS

Mobile services in Iran

> Pastoralists and their affairs were once dealt with by the Ministry of Housing.

Sayyaad Soltani, Iran.

Mobile school for Karamoja pastoralists.
Photo © Crispin Hughes – Panos Pictures

Pastoralism in Iran originated in the mighty and beautiful Zagros Mountains, some 12,000 years ago and nomads are still an important economic force today. Every year they produce 500,000 tonnes of animal products and by-products, including handicrafts and carpets. Herding goats, sheep, cattle, donkeys and camels is part of daily life, as is living off meat and milk products. Sayyaad Soltani, Shokrollah Pirmoradian and Nasser Ahmadi are leaders of customary institutions who speak of how they and their co-leaders have influenced government decisions on how to deliver services to pastoralists in Iran.

Historically the national government was formed of nomadic tribes, but in the last century the balance of power shifted, and those now in government neither understand nor value pastoralists, nor the nomadic way of sustaining a livelihood. The first non-pastoralist leader of Iran took power in the early twentieth century and since then the government has been trying to settle nomads; one administration even put pastoralist affairs under the Ministry of Housing. Initial efforts were aggressive and even involved force, but one after the other they failed. Then 12 years ago, the cleric government launched its own sedentarisation programme with greater success. It gave plots of farmland to pastoralists and political space for pastoralist issues. Many, like Sayyaad, Shokrollah and Nasser lobbied against these changes, exerting pressure in two directions – on government to value the migratory way of life, and on pastoralist communities to reorganise their customary traditions.

Ali Akbari is the director of the government-funded Organisation for the Nomadic Peoples of Iran which has done much to facilitate effective delivery of education, health care and veterinary services. It has been successful for several reasons, not least of which because it has real support from both government and pastoralists. Ali himself comes from a pastoralist background and is a tireless supporter of the nomadic cause within a sometimes uninterested bureaucracy.

Rightly famous, the Iranian mobile schools make education possible for pastoralist girls and boys. Primary classes are held in tents and the schools move seasonally with the pastoralists. They are completely closed during the migration, which usually lasts for three months each year and can mean travelling up to 1,000 kilometers, and they open again in fixed winter and summer locations. Primary school is free and the government pays teachers' salaries. The curriculum is the same in the mobile schools as in sedentary schools, so pastoralist children have the opportunity to continue on to a secondary boarding school. Students attend school for seven hours a day. Does mobile schooling mean lower quality education? 'In some cases the mobile schools may actually be of higher quality than the fixed schools,' says Shokrollah, 'because the teachers are from the society and know the local issues.' Teachers train for two years in the cities and then return back to their families. But they do face difficulties. Different families move at different times in the migration, so even when school starts again after the migration, not all of the students will have arrived.

Similar to the teacher training process, there is a system in place of creating "para-vets" who can provide mobile veterinary services. Ali Akbari explains how the government picks a number of herders from each community to learn how to diagnose disease and administer animal drugs. They spend six months training in the cities and then return to their communities, where they will be visited occasionally by veterinary doctors for supervision and support. The government subsidises their veterinary drugs, which para-vets buy to sell on.

The key has been co-operation, vision and willingness to change. 'We want to be able to provide an education to our children, especially our girls,' say the Iranian pastoralists. 'We want a form of education that does not alienate us from our lives and our values.'

Lucy Stackpool-Moore

> We want a form of education that does not alienate us from our lives and our values.

Shokrollah Pirmoradian, Iran

Nasser Ahmadi, Ali Akbari.
Photo Sarah Wison

KEEPING AHEAD OF DROUGHT

A story from Kenya

Water catchment for use in dry season.
Photo Jesus Garzon

Drought in Africa can pose the frightening spectre of famine. In Kenya, a country of contrasting geography and unpredictable weather, over 80 per cent of the land is classified as arid or semi-arid. This means not only low rainfall, but also extremely erratic rainfall: one year the rains will come in abundance and the brown country will be blanketed with green for several months; another year no rain will fall at all. Although the pastoralists in Kenya have a system of herding that is designed to cope with fluctuations in the climate, their way of life has changed and in many ways become more vulnerable. Restricted by borders and boundaries, they are no longer able to move away from drought as they used to. Because of the expansion of farming and other forms of land enclosure, many of their dry season reserves have been lost.

The World Bank and the Government of Kenya, have been running a project for many years aiming to reduce the effects of drought on Kenya's pastoralists. Dr Adan Bika, a District Drought Officer in Isiolo District, has been involved in the development of a system of early warning that has now been taken up by more than 20 districts. As Adan says, 'people don't wake up one morning and find a drought – it is the result of a weather phenomenon that develops over time. It is therefore something that can be monitored and managed.'

So how does such a system work? The key issue says Adan, is accurate information and rapid reaction. Advance planning is also critical. All district authorities have developed drought contingency plans, and in conjunction with pastoralist communities, a set of indicators which together they monitor on a monthly basis. District committees use reports on animal and human health and on weather trends, sourcing their data from local pastoralist monitors and from satellite images. The committee assesses the situation each month on a scale of 1–5. If the indicators show that they are in an Alert phase, then a series of responses kick in, such as overhauling all borehole pumps and checking that there are plenty of spare parts in stock. If the more serious Alarm phase has been reached, they will take more drastic measures. They might, for example, buy up livestock in order to maintain their value at market. This is important in times of drought as livestock prices tend to plummet and fodder prices increase. Otherwise when pastoralists most need to sell off livestock to buy fodder to supplement the diets of the rest of their herds, they find the prices are against them.

Adan claims that the system has helped avert livestock deaths and helped government officials and other development actors to react in an informed and co-ordinated way. But the system is not without its bureaucratic bottlenecks: sometimes it cannot respond to urgent demands and gets caught up in bureaucratic red tape: resources do not flow as fast as needed, requests for supplies cannot be met when they are most wanted and sometimes critical decisions are delayed due to lengthy consultations and approvals. The system is also vulnerable to endless political intrigues and power plays by politicians and other powerful people wanting to direct resources to their areas and people of preference.

But what about pastoralists' own drought response systems? Adan hopes that the traditional institutions that were once used to manage drought can become strong once again. Then they will complement the government offices that currently dominate the system. While this sounds like a good approach, it will be interesting to see how issues of power and finance play out, and how much influence pastoralists have in what is essentially a government service with uncertain future funding. Whether this system can and will continue once funding has run out remains to be seen.

Jane Stevens

> **People don't wake up one morning and find a drought – it is the result of a weather phenomenon that develops over time. It is therefore something that can be monitored and managed.**
>
> Dr Adan Bika, Kenya

Illustration Michael Munday

RADIO – A COMMUNITY LIFELINE IN ARGENTINA

On the fourth day of the Global Pastoralist Gathering, Enrique Omar Soto stood with his shoulder hunched around the satellite phone. 'Hello Nacho?' he said. 'Can you patch me through to the air? I have an announcement. I'm in Ethiopia and it's hot!' Enrique, an Argentinean pastoralist leader called Radio Nacional Chos Malal in Argentina from Turmi, Ethiopia – to send a message that reached almost every pastoralist in Northern Neuquen. Radio Nacional Chos Malal is one of several examples of how pastoralists communicate with other pastoralists – overcoming the challenges of long distances and diffuse and mobile populations.

The radio station is part of a national network that uses a government bandwidth. It is broadcast over AM so it can reach even remote areas in the Andes. It has more than 40,000 listeners across 200,000 square kilometres in Neuquen, Mendoza, other surrounding provinces, and even in neighbouring Chile. During the fall of dictatorship in Argentina in the mid-1980s, as the opportunity for more voice on issues of public policy opened, the radio station was used by people, including pastoralists, to discuss issues of local governance from health, to police, to agriculture and herding. Since democratisation, the overall importance of the radio station has declined in terms of wider political impact.

But for pastoralists, it remains in many cases their only contact to the outside world. The radio station is used to make announcements for the community through a show called *Mensaje al Poblador* or 'messages for the people' which is broadcast four times daily. While the resources for public radio have been in decline, *Mensaje al Poblador* has continued without interruption. 'The life of the community passes through the radio - from family issues, to business, to notices about people's health, births, deaths, and even lost goats,' says Gabriel Palmili, a local government extension agent who works in the region.

Enrique Omar Soto talks to Radio Nacional Chos Malal, Argentina, by satellite phone with Joanna Wheeler and Gabriel Palmili.
Photos Jane Stevens

People who want to make announcements leave notes at the station, or they send notes to the radio operator with others who are passing through the town. The radio operator reads out all the notices each day. 'Pastoralists may be without salt and without candles, but they always manage to have some batteries and a receiver so they can listen to the radio,' says Gabriel. Herders have also used the radio station as a tool to help organise local associations – announcements about when and where meetings will be held are made over the radio.

In Canada, First Nations groups have used new forms of communication to document and record oral histories. They produce films that visually promote who they are, what they are doing, and what they want. By translating parts of a rich tradition of oral histories onto videos and DVDs, the First Nation is able to educate children in schools about their own history and strengthen their sense of identity. They use the same films to advocate to the national government and international organisations. As Canada's Chief Ron Evans explained: 'Our ability to tell the world about what is happening gives us more ability to pressure the government – our skills of communication help us to tell others about ourselves.'

Joanna Wheeler

> **'Our ability to tell the world about what is happening gives us more ability to pressure the government.'**
>
> Chief Ron Evans, Canada

Listening to the radio.
Photo © Rhodri Jones – Panos Pictures

Chos Malal; Home of Radio Nacional Chos Malal.
Photo Gabriel Palmili

> **The life of the community passes through the radio – from family issues, to business, to notices about people's health, births, deaths, and even lost goats.**

Gabriel Palmili, Argentina

3: FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

Difficult to tax and harder to control, the pastoralist production system has never been valued by outsiders.

In 1995, British researcher Ian Scoones published *Living With Uncertainty*, in which he showed that African livestock systems can produce more energy, protein and cash per hectare than Australian and US ranches. Nonetheless it is common for pastoralists to be denigrated as backward and unproductive and extraordinary efforts to be put into changing them into something else. Few pastoralist production systems are getting the investment of technology and services that they need, nor promotion of their value in political and economic spheres. In many parts of the world, investments are made in competing production systems that undermine the extensive livestock-land management that fits so well with local ecology, while limited government education, health and credit services are aimed at a sedentary lifestyle.

In Tanzania, one story tells of how 150,000 hectares of rangeland were leased by government to foreign companies for wheat growing. It was in the late 1960s that Barabaig pastoralists woke up to find the land around their homesteads ploughed and their migration routes cut off by fences. Eventually problems with rodents and infertility forced the companies to withdraw and the land is now idle. The government wants another investor, but it is also considering giving it to other landless people. The Barabaig took the case to the Tanzanian High Court, but, said Daniel Singadeda, a Barabaig leader, 'we were not able to win the case because we were not educated enough and we ran out of money.'

Hajji Kasseru Jilo from Ethiopia, echoes Daniel's story and the stories of countless other pastoralist groups whose access to a living has been annexed with the enclosure of once vast grazing lands. He speaks of the Kereyu, who have seen their land on the Awash River whittled to almost nothing by sugar and orange plantations. 'The government has asked seven villages to move, but there is nowhere left to go. If these villages go then no group will be able to define themselves as Kereyu, because they will be without land. We will have to find a new identity.' Hajji Kasseru speaks out in local and international meetings. 'But,' he says, 'although Ethiopia's government differs from previous regimes in

> **'The government likes to enjoy animal products, but they don't enjoy pastoralists.'**
>
> Achuka Paul Lokochil, Uganda

Daniel Singadeda from Tanzania addresses the Gathering.
Photo Sarah Wilson

Gada Boku and Fanto Boro in Kereyu, Ethiopia.
Photo Jesus Garzon

Sago Bargal.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

allowing free speech, nothing has actually changed for the Kereyu pastoralists.' He pins his hopes on the future, 'Women are starting associations and we are getting more schools. We are hoping that when some of the children finish school we will have a different life.'

In many areas it is national parks and wildlife reserves that have been creating the land conflict between pastoralists and government, in others it is mining and oil. Pastoralists from Neuquen in Argentina report that most of the grazing areas in the high Andes remain intact, but the migration routes between winter and summer pastures have become longer, as industrial, residential and farming plots expand across the traditional transhumant routes and oil production damages the land. In Kenya's Tana River District it is cotton and sugar that displace pastoralists, in Ethiopia it is oranges, sugar and wildlife parks: sweet products that leave a bitter taste.

While pastoralists are expert at herding, these irrigation schemes, crop processing factories and land enclosures have profoundly shifted the political and economic context in which they operate. They have found themselves disempowered. 'The system makes our products valueless,' said Achuka Paul Lokochil, a leader of the Jie of Uganda. 'The government, by not valuing our animals, is by extension saying that we have no value ourselves.' Investments, when they come, go into other production systems that fail to produce as much as the pastoralists are able to do. These interventions undermine the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of people in order to benefit only a few investors and politicians. In a bid for survival, pastoralists themselves join in with the destruction of their own systems, themselves enclosing land and selling access rights. From different parts of the world, but most particularly from East Africa the story is repeated: of loss of land that people had invested in and thought they collectively owned, of loss of productive capacity, of loss of dignity and loss of livelihoods.

Often violent competition for meagre resources is turned upon neighbouring pastoralists: Sago Bargal, a fiercely articulate leader from South Omo cries out, 'we are excluded! We don't want to die, nobody wants to die. The only option we have is to compete with one another for resources and there is a mentality of separation. The scarcity of resources and our declining herds are driving us apart.'

People differ as to whether the solution lies in the marketplace, where value can be added to pastoralist products through processing and promotion, or in the political arena, where pastoralists can use global conventions and national constitutions to claim rights to their livelihoods. They do know one thing though, that talking and being talked about is not enough.

Patta Scott-Villiers

‘The people were looking for medicine. They found a special kind of honey made by bees that nest under the ground. They were so happy they danced. They danced and danced with joy; they stamped their feet and jumped into the air. Then they looked down and saw that they had destroyed the honey in their frenzy. We pastoralists have been so busy celebrating that we have been recognised by our governments as pastoralists and human beings, we have not noticed that for many of us our situation continues to get worse. We must stop dancing, organise ourselves and solve our problems. This is not a game, where children are learning skills to grow. This is serious business. We must make change. This talking and talking is part of the problem. We are tired of talking.’

Ibrahim Adano, Ethiopia
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

“We are excluded! We don’t want to die, nobody wants to die. The only option we have is to compete with one another for resources.”

Sago Bargal, Ethiopia

WE ARE WORTH MORE THAN OIL!

A story from Argentina

Gabriel Palmili drinking mate.
Photo Sarah Wilson

At the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece, an Argentinean swimmer had the province slogan of Neuquen emblazoned on his uniform: 'Neuquen is trust'. Recent wealth generated by exploiting petroleum and natural gas reserves means that the province of Neuquen can afford to pay US$500,000 to promote itself at the Olympics. At the same time, pastoralists in the province do not have access to basic services and a series of political corruption scandals at the national and provincial levels means that trust in government is at an all time low.

For pastoralists, their trust in the government has been plummeting in the face of a strong alliance between the province and major petroleum companies. The oil industry and pastoralists share the same land, but pastoralists lose out from the deal. Enrique Omar Soto, President of a Pastoralist Association in northern Neuquen, says: 'My heart tells me we should be living in a paradise, but instead we are living in a hell. The government doesn't take responsibility, only money.'

> **'My heart tells me we should be living in a paradise, but instead we are living in a hell. The government doesn't take responsibility, only money.'**
>
> Enrique Omar Soto, Argentina

Major oil reserves in Neuquen were discovered almost thirty years ago, but only in the past ten years has extraction begun on a major scale. The state of Neuquen, in the Patagonian region of Argentina, stretches from the snow-capped Andes mountains in the west down to semi-dry low lands in the east. It also has some of the richest oil and gas reserves in Argentina. In Northern Neuquen 40,000 pastoralists move their herds of goats and cattle from winter pastures in the lowlands up to highland meadows and forests each summer. The journey, which normally takes 30 days, is getting longer as the government has begun to restrict access to land. New roads and petroleum industrial complexes mean that pastoralists are forced to make long and dangerous detours on busy roads, or pay to move their animals in trucks.

In Argentina the government owns the sub-soil regardless of who has land rights. Pastoralists may have the formal rights to their land, but the state can override these to get access to resources in the sub-soil. Extracting and processing petroleum has been having major environmental impacts that particularly affect pastoralists because it is they who inhabit the remote regions where oil and gas reserves are located. They talk of erosion, dwindling water and polluted watersheds. Oil extraction means that the free passage of animals to roam is curtailed. The increase in the traffic of heavy machinery, oil spills and disposal of waste water has polluted pasture land. Fragile geological formations that have created natural springs, the only source of water in the region, have also been destroyed – and are irreparable. Neither oil companies nor the state government have assumed the responsibility for repairing the environmental damage. 'They've ruined our land to get to the oil, and they don't give us anything in return,' complains Enrique.

While oil companies are not violating the legal rights of pastoralists by extracting petro-chemical reserves, national and provincial laws require that the government compensate pastoralists for damage to their land. Currently they are not receiving compensation as laws are convoluted and confusing. Gabriel Palmili, an agricultural extension agent with more than twenty

years experience in local government explains, 'if it is difficult for major land owners and university-educated professionals to realise their rights, imagine what the situation is like for a person who, like the majority of pastoralists, is illiterate, isolated, and lacks information about the situation and who can help.'

Pastoralists' hold on their land has been slipping, because the government has not taken their views into account in decisions about how their land will be used. In the 1990s the state began a process of rapid privatisation, as part of a wider national process to promote and protect foreign investment, including the petro-chemical industry. While some pastoralists have received formal titles to land, communal migration routes are being lost. Many young people have moved to urban areas, and older pastoralists have been forced to sell up as they become unable to manage their livestock. Once oil companies get access to this land, other pastoralists who live nearby also begin to lose access as the companies cut off routes and deplete or pollute water sources.

The heart of the problem is that the province of Neuquen values the oil industry more than pastoralism, and oil revenues make up a large portion of the province's income, almost doubling during the 1990s to reach 61 per cent in 2003. 'From the perspective of the government,' points out Gabriel, 'the money in the province is in resource extraction, and not in any productive sector. But money from resource extraction doesn't help anyone but a few elites. Pastoralism, on the other hand, provides a living for over 4,500 families in the region.'

The presence of the oil industry in the Neuquen has had some benefits for herders. They are able to sell their animals for a relatively high price, in cash, to supply the oil camps. The fact that the camps have telephones and doctors means that they now have more help in emergencies. Some pastoralists also see the camps as a good source of work for their children, especially as their livelihoods as livestock owners are under threat.

In spite of the clout of the oil companies, there are efforts to change the situation. Associations of lawyers, agricultural engineers, and geologists have been informing pastoralists about their rights, and filing compensation claims on their behalf. These associations take 30 per cent of total if an award is made, but they have been able to win some cases against the government. Associations for Rural Mobilisation, formed by herders themselves, are also joining with representatives of local government who recognise the problems. Enrique is one of several pastoralists in the province working to build associations that can challenge government policy. The government has some programmes to help pastoralists, such as providing basic goods and services, including fuel, food, and education. The rural associations and representatives of the local government are trying to make the wealth of Neuquen work for pastoralists, 'but' Enrique points out, 'given the wealth of the province, the situation should be ten times better.'

Joanna Wheeler

Oil spillage, like this one in Ecuador, has major environmental impacts.
Photo © Rhodri Jones – Panos Pictures

'From the perspective of the government, the money in the province is in resource extraction – and not in any productive sector. But money from resource extraction doesn't help anyone but a few elites. Pastoralism, on the other hand, provides a living for over 4,500 families in the region.'

Gabriel Palmili, Argentina

THE ONES WHO WILL NOT BE BEATEN

The Palestinian Bedouin in Israel

'We have a proverb that when someone is sleeping, someone else will have to cover him. We realised that nobody will solve our problems unless we solve them ourselves. We are now a strong community, we have our organisations, and we have policies to confront Israeli policies.'

Fares Abu Abed, Israel

As the Bedouins stood up for their turn to speak at the Gathering, they were introduced as "the Bedouins from Israel" and there was some commotion from the audience. One voice shouted something about the State of Israel, and that the Bedouins would have to say they were from Palestine in order for them to be recognised by the Iranian listeners. This is because the State of Israel is not recognised by the Iranian government. Beginning again, Abdelkarem Alakaita, a pastoralist community representative from the Negev Regional Council for Unrecognised Villages, introduced themselves as "Palestinian Bedouins living in the State of Israel". To great applause, the Bedouins had introduced themselves and the issues facing pastoralists in Israel, and indeed the question of identity as citizens of a State that does not recognise ethnic minority groups.

The Bedouin's land crosses borders, and only about 10% is within Israel. Although Israel, defining itself as a Jewish state, refuses to recognise Arab or other ethnic groups, the Bedouin have often shared water and pasture with Jewish villages in the past and relations at a local level tend to be good. Under military rule until 1966, the Bedouin were not permitted to migrate with their animals, and the community became increasingly poor. While the Israeli constitution gives Bedouins the right to vote, Fares Abu Abed explained that 'the government doesn't recognise us. They treat us as the enemy.'

Fares works as the coordinator for 15 organisations of Bedouin pastoralists in Israel. And in part through these organisations, the Bedouin in Israel have succeeded in changing national policy on pastoralism. According to Fares, it was the threat of "modernisation" by the Israeli government that helped pastoralists unite. But the success of the Bedouin at changing government policy has not resolved all the problems between pastoralists and the Israeli government.

In 1970, the Israeli government began a programme to "modernise" and control Bedouin pastoralists, through forced sedentarisation and expropriation of Bedouin land. Their response was to organise. They began with gathering the leaders from 45 different Bedouin villages and then formed 15 associations to represent and coordinate the activities of the Bedouin pastoralist community in Israel. As Fares explained, 'of course there were problems with organising the community, but when the threat was to everyone, we came together and agreed on a leader. Now we have the capacity to organise the group and this helps solve other problems.'

Their situation has been greatly helped by the high literacy level the community has attained despite harsh conditions. The associations can rely on support from a pool of lawyers and other educated people from within the community who are able to understand the complicated legal and policy prescriptions issued by the government, as well as the workings of international systems like the United Nations.

Bedouin pastoralist organisations used three techniques to confront the threat of sedentarisation by the Israeli government. First, they leveraged the power of their population by bringing together all the Bedouin to talk about the issues and raise their profile with the government. Second, they collected contacts in the media and used them – appearing on television,

speaking on the radio, and distributing information about their situation on the internet. Connections to the outside world were vital in increasing the pressure on the government to respond. Finally, they created political pressure by lobbying specific representatives in Parliament to force the government to listen to herders' issues.

As a result, the Bedouins have won permission to migrate to land outside their region from February to September every year. They have also gained some support from within the Israeli leftist political community. But in early February 2005, the Israeli government passed a new law "expelling enemies of the state", which is intended to address the threat of terrorism. The Bedouins worry that this law will be used as a pretext to further dispossess them of their lands and curtail their rights of movement and existence. The Bedouin Association is currently advocating with other Palestinian groups by presenting their case against this law to the United Nations, the Israeli national courts, and other international organisations. Fares says: 'We have a proverb that when someone is sleeping, someone else will have to cover him. We realised that nobody will solve our problems unless we solve them ourselves. We are now a strong community, we have our organisations, and we have policies to confront Israeli policies.'

They have yet to solve the enduring issue of the lack of recognition or even acknowledgement of the Palestinian's identity and right to representation within the State of Israel. But they have struggled and won important concessions, and the applause was loud as Fares and Abdelkarem finished their presentation. In a gesture of solidarity the Iranians reached across as the Bedouins sat down, shook hands, and presented them with their felt hats. At least at the gathering of pastoralists in Turmi, the Bedouins were wholeheartedly recognised and valued as Palestinian nomads in the State of Israel.

Joanna Wheeler and Lucy Stackpool-Moore

Fares Abu Abed wears the felt hat presented to him by the Iranians.
Photo Lucy Stackpool-Moore

opposite:
Pastoralists from Chad, Israel, Mauritania and Syria listen to Arabic translation of discussions at the Gathering.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

Bedouin herding sheep in Israel.
Photo © Ahikam Seri – Panos Pictures

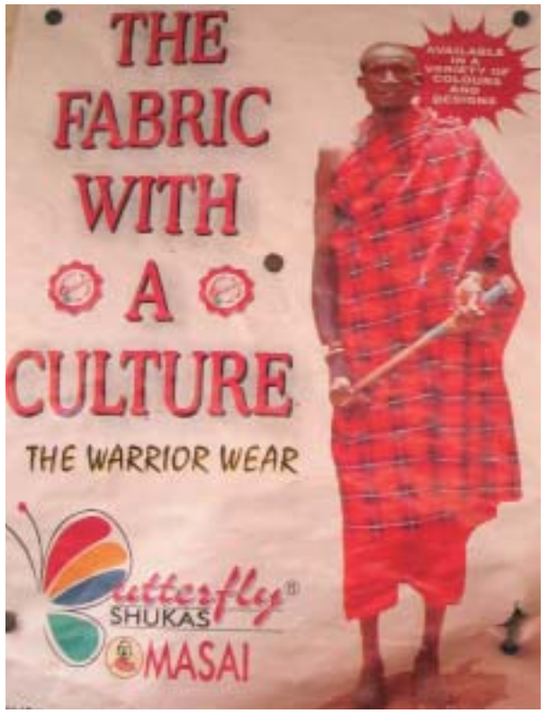
TURNING ON EACH OTHER

Conflict in East Africa

> “The last speaker spoke of peace, yet he has markings on him that showed he has killed a man. How can he talk of peace?”
>
> Dawit Etyo, Nyangatom

Across the pastoralist world, conflicts with others over power, land, boundaries, traditional routes and government policies play out in a myriad different ways. But when conflict turns inwards, its violence seems to the outsider like a self-inflicted wound. This is particularly true in East Africa where levels of raiding and retaliation between pastoralists have spiralled out of control and levels of fear and mistrust are so high that it seems impossible to find solutions that last. Early on at the Global Pastoralist Gathering a group of peoples from this region sat together and the issue of conflict between their groups quickly emerged as their major concern. As a documenter at the event, I followed their discussions over the days, as they explored together what conflict means to them. I watched and listened as they delved into the heart of their problems with the hope of finding new solutions.

Karo, Nyangatom, Mursi, Arbore, Turkana and Hamar elders all took part, most of whom are either in conflict with each other, or with other tribes not present. They described the importance of their animals as well as the problems that arise from lack of water, little or no access to health or veterinary services, few available markets and environmental issues such as degraded pasture and dangerous rivers. For every speaker, conflict was part of their world: most knew how it feels to lose livestock and many also had suffered killings of men, women and children. To me as an outsider the causes seemed complex: scarce resources, the kudos gained by men who “prove” themselves by raiding and killing, the need for bridewealth, and the proliferation of guns and small arms that make such activities both easy and incendiary. These scenarios are compounded by strained relationships with governments which seem blind to the needs of pastoralists, interested only in exploiting and having vested interests in maintaining a situation of mutual distrust and disunity amongst the groups. All groups expressed a desire to change the situation, to return or at least move towards a way of living that would be fairer, more respectful and less violent.



At these initial discussions I was aware that most people seemed to be looking to outside agencies as a way of making this change. This took me by surprise, knowing how I was struggling to understand the complexities of their situation. I certainly didn’t feel equipped to provide solutions. Neither, it transpired, did others at the meeting who pitched in and challenged this idea that outsiders have the solutions. The pastoralists concurred that they themselves, with their unique knowledge and understanding of their lives and histories, as well as the political context affecting them, were the key to making lasting peace with each other. As a Hamar elder said ‘people from all places make mistakes – we need to think amongst ourselves. The people who understand the problem live within. People from outside are like guests, they find it hard to understand.’

Arbore men at the Gathering.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

Hamar and Mursi men at the Gathering.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

top:
Kereyu boy with gun, Ethiopia.
Photo Jesús Garzon

Poster in a Turmi Shop, Ethiopia.
Photo Sarah Wilson

Turkana taking animals out for grazing, Kenya.
Photo © Crispin Hughes – Panos Pictures

A very immediate example of how things can indeed change was then offered by another Hamar elder who commented, 'these are the Mursi. They used to be our enemies but now they are our friends. Our herds move together and nothing bad happens between us.' This is by and large because intermarriage between the two groups is both encouraged and common.

Such was the gravity and relevance of the conversation that the elders organised another meeting to continue discussions. The next day, beneath another tree, I sat and listened to Wale Baro, spiritual leader of the Arbore, who spoke of how they had taken on the role of peacemakers. As a tiny group of a few thousand people, surrounded by conflicting ethnic groups many times their size, they offer a peace mediation service. Their children grow up learning five languages each, so that they can operate within an environment of conflict between the ethnic groups of their part of southern Ethiopia. Their commitment is strong but their role is not without problems – they feel their mediation services are ignored and actively undermined by government. Different agendas often collide, and power, ignorance or misunderstandings can upset careful and fragile negotiations

I also listened to Paramount Chief Musa Ngitieng from Turkana, Kenya. He described how many years of conflict, mistrust and killing have led groups there to look to their customary institutions for answers. They have built on the idea that it is the people themselves who have the wisdom, customs and traditions to resolve conflicts and that while governments can play a supportive role, pastoralists have to make the first moves.

With this in mind they set up the Turkana Peace Network, an umbrella group that includes representatives of pastoral groups in Kenya. This group monitors conflict situations and tries to resolve them peacefully. Alex Losikiria, a young articulate man from Turkana, described how this initiative is also supported by complementary government structures, in areas such as peace negotiation, tracking stolen cattle and disciplining youth. The Turkana then directly challenged the South Omo groups to set up a similar initiative in Southern Ethiopia. How would they respond?

By the end of the meeting they had agreed on a pastoral committee for peace in South Omo. Once this is done they plan to approach government and then they will ask the Turkana formally "to join hands in an effort to bring peace to the border regions".

The Turkana's success is by no means complete: they are still in conflict with the Pokot (living south of the Turkana) over resources and land. National politics and power issues can override the best intentioned networks. In this case the Pokot had been closely aligned to a previous national government and favoured by them. In Uganda these same issues feature, with groups apparently being encouraged to raid by those in opposition to the national government.

As a guest at these meetings, I was struck by the fact that the constantly evolving roots and tendrils of conflict are very tangled, drawing nourishment from patronage, power, regional and national politics and allegiances, the arms trade, the environment, culture and history. I was impressed by the willingness among the groups at the Gathering to sit down and talk together and I hope they will finally find ways to move towards the lasting peace they all so desperately want and need.

Jane Stevens

"People from all places make mistakes – we need to think amongst ourselves. The people who understand the problem live within. People from outside are like guests, they find it hard to understand."

Hamar elder, Ethiopia

RECLAIMING MOBILITY: BORDERS AND BARRIERS

Moving animals from one place to another with the changing seasons is the essence of pastoralism.

top:
Younis Daoud, Issakho Abo Idriss from Chad.
Photo © Munro-Dowsett 2005

above:
Jorge Villalobos, Hernan Contreras from Chile.
Photo Joanna Wheeler

Traditional routes have been used for hundreds of years by herders moving between pastures. Mobility is what makes it possible to live well from the poor soils, the harsh and variable climates and the distant markets. Yet experiences from around the world show that this movement is becoming increasingly difficult. Competing land uses – buildings, industry, tourism, roads and agriculture – are taking priority and blocking access to traditional pathways.

Agricultural activities are a major force in this change. In Chad, where up to 80 per cent of the rural population makes a living by herding livestock, land has been claimed by settled agriculturalists and traditional routes have been lost. Similar tensions exist in Mali and in both situations considerable community energy goes into dealing with the chronic conflict that results. While this may occur at an individual level it is often reinforced by societies that undervalue pastoralists in favour of farmers. For example, in Burkina Faso, traditional paths have been taken for cotton production, a priority for the government. There is a feeling of desperation as pastoralists see their traditions of movement being undermined. Ali Kalas, a pastoralist from Chad said, 'they have made studies and more studies about this problem and nothing changes: meanwhile people are dying and pastoralists are waiting and waiting'.

Wildlife parks or conservation interests can cause similar problems. In Tanzania land that was traditionally grazed by Maasai pastoralists has been designated as a national park and movement across it has been prohibited. The Mursi people in Southern Ethiopia still use an area within a park boundary, but feel that they are now unfairly blamed whenever there is a problem and have become the scapegoats for any issues that arise. In another part of Ethiopia the Kereyu people are even being shot at and wounded when they move across a national park that has cut off their access to their main water supply, the Awash River.

Hajji Kasseru Jilo described the prohibitive control of an area that had once been traditional pasture land: 'the herders are fined 10 birr (US$1.20) for every animal that strays into the wildlife area. If they see a herder, they will shoot him. Many herders are crippled now as a result.' In Burkina Faso, forests have been planted across traditional byways without any alternative routes being provided. If the herders go through the forests their animals are taken away. Similar stories can be told in other parts of the world, such as where villages have been built on paths in Mali, and major highways laid across tracks in Iran.

Sometimes influences detrimental to mobility come from powerful international companies exerting their investment leverage to fence land and block animal movements. The Barabaig of Tanzania, having lost access to the land they once grazed because it was deemed "in the public interest", argued that they should at least be able to cross the now-enclosed land. This was also refused by the courts. In Tajikistan much of the land was privatised after the fall of the Soviet Union and some routes are no longer accessible. Unsurprisingly, with a shift in regime came a shift in political attitudes towards pastoralists, and those in power now have less respect for or capability to support mobility.

All these examples reflect the lack of value or real thought given to the question of animal mobility by bureaucrats, as opposed to the consideration that is given to the strong and apparently legitimate claims of administrators, conservationists, investors and farmers. Pastoralist rights may exist, but their calls for free movement across borders and boundaries are often placed at the bottom of government agendas. Frequently neither herders' rights as people following a legitimate livelihood, nor their contributions in terms of economics or guardianship of the environment, are taken into account. More often than not they are perceived as a nuisance to be made to settle, corralled, or simply ignored.

When it comes to international frontiers, government's concerns over revenues, contraband and security are often well founded. But pastoralists are looking for new ways to negotiate around the problem, as has been the case in parts of West Africa were free movement of livestock across borders has benefited urban markets. For many pastoralists borders are an artificial construct – a line needlessly

separating similar peoples, much needed pasture and desirable markets. In Chile, pastoralists traditionally cross into Argentina during the dry season. They are welcomed by the people who live there, yet can find themselves in deep trouble as such movement is prohibited by the Chilean and Argentinean governments. For Tajik herders living in the mountainous Eastern Pamir region, markets inside Tajikistan are too far to reach yet they are not allowed to cross the nearby borders with China, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan in order to reach closer markets. As a result, says Alipbeck Akjolbekov, a Tajik herder, 'we cannot trade our milk products and we end up throwing away the wool and skins from our animals.'

Despite the difficulties that loss of land and impinged mobility causes for pastoralists all over the world, there are some inspiring examples. In the most successful cases, both pastoralists and governments have turned around prevailing attitudes and policies, enabling herders to continue their movements from one place to another. In Rajasthan, the government has recognised herders' traditional routes and byways and ensures that help is available on the ground during the migratory season. If disputes arise between agriculturalists and pastoralists the police will intervene – usually in favour of the pastoralists. Dr Sita Ram Verma from the government of India said 'it is essential to have clear-cut government policies that favour pastoralists – if these aren't in place problems will continue'.

Likewise, as detailed in the article on constitutional change in this report, Spanish laws have been strengthened to secure the rights of herders to thousands of kilometres of byways, even where they pass through agricultural or urban landscapes. As in India, this is supported and implemented on the ground in concrete actions to assist the migration, such as the closure of roads in metropolitan cities like Madrid when herders are passing through. 'The challenge for pastoralists', says Jesús Garzon, a Spanish shepherd, 'is to share our culture with others. Taking large flocks of animals through a capital city helps to achieve this!' Ensuring sound government policy and genuine implementation is of course easier where there are people in government sympathetic to pastoralist traditions, which is the case in Spain. And there is strength in numbers. In Mauritania, where 85% of people are pastoralists, pastoral rights are a priority in both law and practice. Here, traditional routes and byways are prioritised and good relations with Mali ensure that Mauritanians can cross the border between the two countries without major problems.

For many isolated pastoralists the ever-increasing obstacles to movement are depressing. Numerous factors conspire to make it increasingly difficult for them to follow their traditional routes. Nevertheless, it become clear at the Global Pastoralist Gathering that, by organising, finding allies in local and national government, and negotiating the economic and environmental benefits with policy-makers, it has been possible for some pastoralists to retain, or reclaim, their rights to follow the paths that they have used for centuries.

Jane Stevens

Guarding the livestock in Mali.
Photo © Crispin Hughes – Panos Pictures

'The challenge for pastoralists is to share our culture with others. Taking large flocks of animals through a capital city helps to achieve this!'

Jesús Garzon, Spain

Sheep crossing Madrid.
Photo © Lionel Roux 1995

A BITTER-SWEET CROP IN KENYA

‘I don’t want to explain again what the government has done, but they have made a land that is very big seem very small.’

Wale Baro, Ethiopia

The Tana River District is a great stretch of dry grassland country in the east of Kenya where crops cannot survive on rain alone. Through the district from north-west to south-east runs the Tana River, rising from the northern slopes of Mount Kenya, it runs for more than 1,000 kilometres until it meets the Indian Ocean. Either side of the river and around its delta is a band of forest. This forest provides a place of grazing and refuge for livestock and wildlife in the dry season, a place of food, water and medicines for people and animals alike. In the late 1970s the government established the Bura cotton irrigation scheme using international aid funds. Extensive areas of riverside land were enclosed, hundreds of kilometres of irrigation channels were excavated and mechanical pumps, tractors and processing equipment were supplied. Some 20,000 people joined the workforce of the new enterprise, most of them coming from outside the district. Hassan Ijema Godana is an Orma pastoralist who grew up herding cattle in Tana River District. ‘The government strategy of crop farming destroys pastoralist lives’, he says; ‘40,000 pastoralists have been displaced from their land and left without jobs or schooling.’

In the first few years, when donor money was flowing, the project blossomed and cotton was produced in large quantities. For many pastoralists who had lost their grazing, the only option was to get jobs as guards on the plantation. These jobs came at a price – the irrigation canals harboured mosquitos and mosquitos brought deadly malaria. After the external support dried up, things started to fall apart. Machines fell into disrepair, canals and irrigation channels clogged up, farmers’ payments were delayed, salaries were not paid and finally the gigantic multimillion dollar irrigation scheme collapsed. The net result is that over 15,000 families have been displaced out of which 7,000 now survive on food aid.

The insatiable appetite for the rich soils and abundant waters of Tana River has not abated. Despite the bad experience with the cotton, a government agency, armed with the mandate of developing the river basin, initiated a new irrigation project within the river delta. External funding was provided by Japan, bringing in water pumping machines and state-of-the-art rice processors. During the time that elapsed between the machine installation and preparation of the rice fields, rains came and brought massive floods, destroying the machines. Their hulks still stand on the banks of the river, a testament to another failed project.

Now the same agency has a new plan. The intent is to transform a large proportion of the delta into a huge sugar plantation. Supported this time by 24 billion Kenya Shillings (US$ 260 million) of private investment from Spain, there is determination to ‘bring real development to Tana River’. But over 60,000 pastoralists depend on the delta for an economy worth an estimated 2 billion US dollars. Local leaders like Hassan Ijema Godana have started an energetic *Stop the Sugar!* advocacy campaign with support from Kenyan environmental groups. The campaign is intense. An initial environmental impact assessment ruled in the pastoralists’ favour and the issue has now gone to the National Assembly. The project sponsors have responded by offering a pastoralist component including building a slaughterhouse, animal feedlot facility and other incentives. Negotiations have started with community leaders. But many would claim that this is a ploy to weaken opposition to the project.

Hassan Ijema Godana is a smart articulate man armed with compelling statistics. He is committed to a lobbying route and is collaborating with a Nairobi advocacy organisation to lobby the Kenyan government for change. They have conducted research, printed leaflets and visited parliament, international agencies and the media in Nairobi with their message. Pastoralists in East Africa are now realising that they must safeguard their investment in the land by working together and lobbying for legal recognition.

Patta Scott-Villiers

Wale Baro. *Photo Sarah Wilson*

4: MAKING A PROFIT

Meat, milk, cheese, leather and wool: all products in high demand, particularly among the rich.

Health concerns in northern countries mean it is now a viable possibility to export from 'organic' pastoralist production systems to the super-markets and delicatessens of Europe and North America, if veterinary concerns can be overcome. Regional meat markets have expanded on every continent as urban areas grow ever larger. Specialist cheeses remain in high demand, despite their cheaper mass-produced rivals. High quality wool and fibre continues to find a value in the clothing and cloth markets even though it competes with cheaper synthetic textiles.

But pastoralists are often prevented from legally marketing their products. Jorge Villalobos Castillo is a Chilean pastoralist who negotiates with the national government as the president of a pastoral association. He's been lobbying about cheese. He complains, 'it's very expensive to produce cheese that complies with government regulations, so we can't sell our cheese legally, even though it's our best product.' From several countries pastoralists report that they cannot export their stock and products across borders legally, because of prohibitive taxes or closed borders, and many either sell for low prices in local markets or join in with illegal cross-border trade.

The current undervaluing of the pastoralist economy seems irrational. Urban areas need meat, governments need taxes, rich elites want tasty foods and soft textiles. Willing buyer and willing seller seem to be separated by a wall of indifference. In Africa run-down marketing boards with crumbling buildings and corrupt managers are spread across the continent like gravestones mourning the optimism of the governments who set them up. But pastoralists on all continents have begun to find ways around political and bureaucratic barriers – although it is still a struggle – and some have tapped into very valuable markets.

In this final section we turn to two examples of how pastoralists have engaged with international high value markets for the sale of fibre (alpaca and cashmere), helping to win wealth and recognition at home. We then join herders in a conversation about milk and cheese processing and give you some recipes to try. On a serious note, all three exchanges demonstrate that pastoralists coming together as a producer group, as they did at the Global Gathering in January 2005, can be a profitable exercise: international pastoralist trade fairs could well be a way towards adding new value to pastoralist products and pastoralist lives.

The economic contribution of extensive nomadic pastoral livelihood systems to GDP and exports is high, and is at least partially captured by national economic statistics. For example, in Mongolia pastoral livestock are responsible for one third of GDP and are the second largest source of export earnings (32 per cent) after minerals (41 per cent). In Ethiopia, the livestock sector (of which nomadic pastoral production is a key component) is 16 per cent of GDP, one third of agricultural GDP and 8 per cent of export earnings. The conclusion is that in the drylands, pastoral livelihoods make a major contribution to national economic activity, although often these contributions are not documented properly.

At the Gathering, people learned new techniques and developed new marketing and investment ideas. Producers from Latin America shared techniques of drying and packaging meat and handed round samples of their textiles. We sampled Mongolian and Iranian cheese and admired painted Touareg leather. Discussions between the Canadians and the Somalis focused on how producers could handle international bans imposed after major livestock disease outbreaks; to get products back on to the market as quickly as possible. The Canadians also impressed everyone with details of their diversification: for a local community to own and profit from a hydro-electric dam seemed like wealth beyond imagining.

With economic advancement comes political power and an ability to negotiate good terms of trade, yet there are plenty of pastoralists in the world who cannot always make income enough to feed their families. For those who have achieved it, economic power has been built on organisation and political lobbying as well as on skills of herding, processing and management.

Patta Scott-Villiers

'Comté: full-fat hard cheese made from unpasteurised milk.. collected during late spring and summer when the cows graze the higher slopes of the Jura mountain pastures...'

How French Comté cheese is marketed by a British supermarket chain.

Patta Scott-Villiers models a Peruvian alpaca wool hat, with Angelica Reales from Argentina.
Photo Joanna Wheeler

Speciality cheeses in a British supermarket.
Photo Sarah Wilson

A GOOD YARN

Selling Peruvian Alpaca Wool to Europe

In Southern Peru the Aymara and Quechua herd cattle, sheep and llamas on the slopes of the great Andes range. There are four types of llama: the domesticated alpaca whose wool is soft, the burden-carrying llama, the silken haired wild vicuña and the tall wild guanaco. Isolated and distant though the herders may appear to be, they sell their products for high prices in the markets of Europe and North America. Higinio Porto Huasco is the President of the Aymara and Quechua Association whose headquarters is at Puno, a city on the shores of the world's highest lake, Lake Titicaca. The Association represents and coordinates the marketing operations of eight cooperatives that together own over 200,000 alpacas and produce 250,000 tonnes of wool per year. Alpaca is a unique fibre with the smoothness of silk and the softness of fine wools.

Until recently individual herders would simply sell wool into the local market where they would get variable prices depending on quality and supply. Now, by selling to the cooperative, they can get a generally higher and more consistent price, although the wool is not classified so the herder may get a less than optimal price for the best wool. Nevertheless, Higinio points out that membership of the cooperative is still very well worth it, as the organisation not only negotiates a higher overall price when it sells unprocessed wool, but it also processes the wool which adds even more value. Thus the cooperatives can pay out welcome dividends to their members; half the profits go to the members and half are reinvested. The organisation has never yet suffered a loss, because its leaders put effort into knowing market prices and waiting for the right moment to sell.

Export of wool to Europe is controlled by a single Peruvian company, which pays low prices to herders who are not organised. A large private enterprise, this company is able to monopolise the export trade and gain prices of up to $500 per kilo for the highest quality vicuña. It can afford to undercut competitors with its economies of scale, it has extensive overseas market connections and it has the support of the Peruvian government. Higinio's Association is at least able to demand good prices for its sales to the monopoly because the group of cooperatives not only control a significant quantity of supply, but also undertake initial processing of the wool from basic tangled fibre to beautiful coloured skeins of yarn. They have secured an agreement with one company to use machinery to wash, spin and dye the wool. Whereas 1 kilo of unprocessed wool sells for $2 a kilo, semi-processed wool sells for $8.50.

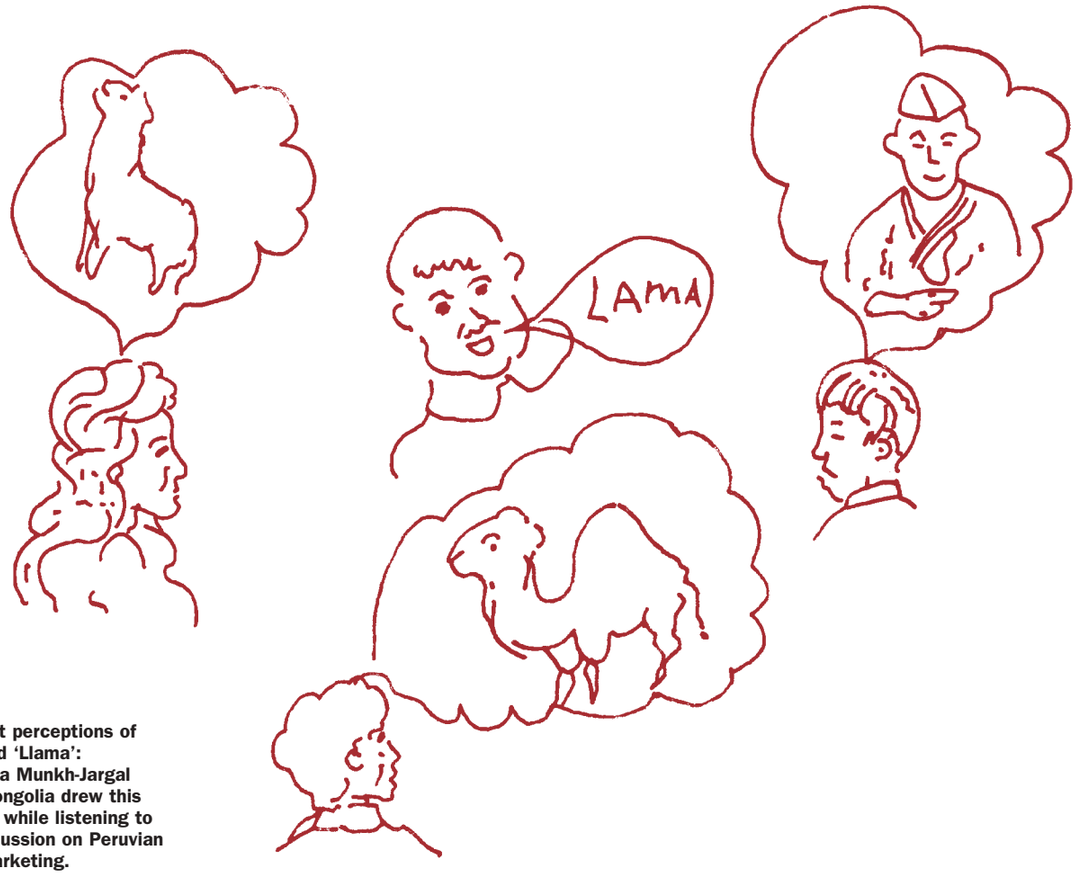
The monopoly also controls the export of the beautifully crafted Peruvian textiles. These rugs and cloths can make high profits in the markets of the North, yet women weavers still get very low prices for their skilled work. This is something the cooperatives have yet to tackle, but they plan to.

'In Peru,' Higinio says, 'the government respects the rights of pastoralists to organise, both as communities and as marketing organisations.' The Association helps its members by providing credit, training and technical assistance in the form of veterinary services or management advice. People join because they get a fair and predictable price from the cooperative, which has secured its place in the market. Their aim is to dislodge and bypass the monopoly and sell the soft colourful yarn and textiles directly to the international market.

Patta Scott-Villiers

top:
Sharaw Munkh-Orgi from Mongolia and Higinio Porto Huasco from Peru.
Photo Jane Stevens

Alpaca in Peru.
Photo Matias Costa – Panos Pictures



Different perceptions of the word 'Llama': Byambaa Munkh-Jargal from Mongolia drew this cartoon while listening to the discussion on Peruvian wool marketing.

> **In Peru, the government respects the rights of pastoralists to organise, both as communities and as marketing organisations.**
>
> Higinio Porto Huasco, Peru

Peruvian weaver.
Photo © Jeremy Horner – Panos Pictures

REALISING HIDDEN VALUE: CASHMERE

Beautiful, soft and incredibly warm, cashmere is highly prized in many parts of the world.

above:
Byambaa Munkh-Jargal, Ganchimeg Dorj, Sharaw Munkh-Orgi talk about Mongolia.
Photo Jane Stevens

> **We hadn't really taken cashmere seriously until we heard it from herders from other countries.**
>
> Tajik pastoralists at the Gathering.

It is so expensive that only the richest can afford clothes made of pure cashmere; others content themselves with coats, suits, shawls and blankets made of a mix of cashmere and other fibres. It comes from the fine soft hairs that lie beneath the outer coats of goats herded in central Asia. For the goats this means a vital layer of insulation against the freezing winter temperatures, for their herders it means real and potential wealth.

In Mongolia, pastoralists have been herding their animals and living nomadic lives for millennia. In the Gobi region they have long been involved in the production of cashmere. They will typically keep horses, cows, camels and sheep as well as the goats that yield this precious hair. The growth of the goat's undercoat is triggered in the autumn by the shortening daylight hours and falling temperatures. In the harsh expanses of the Gobi desert these changes can be quite extreme, and the hair of the goats grows thick and long. Come the spring, herders harvest the hair by combing their animals with a special rough comb, yielding between 300 and 500 grams of hair per goat. This can be traded at a rate of 20–25 dollars per kilo and with a good herd it is possible to clear a profit of $2,000 per year. Herders have organised a breeding programme, selecting high quality male goats in order to breed the best livestock for cashmere yield.

Selling their produce is an uncertain business for the Mongolians. Since the fall of the Soviet Union the market has fluctuated wildly and much of the wool exported is now smuggled across the border to China. This means a higher price along with hard cash, but also a higher risk. In Mongolia itself, two major companies dominate the official export market. Neither has managed to offer a fair price to producers nor developed ways of adding value to the raw cashmere prior to export. In an attempt to improve this situation some have gone out to learn about processing. They now sort and grade the cashmere themselves so that the very finest fibres can be separated out and sold for high prices. But these herders – who have the animals, skills and knowledge to produce high quality cashmere – are now struggling in a post-Soviet mire of swinging markets and undercover cross-border activities.

In Tajikistan the rich potential of goat hair has yet to be seriously tapped. Despite having the same type of goats, many Tajik herders are unaware of the value of their goat's secret undercoat, selling it for very little or even throwing it away. Where it is sold to traders it tends to be as a whole fleece with the rough outer hair mixed in with the fine cashmere down. Unlike a couple of generations ago, the art of separating the fibres is now virtually unknown.

Beneath one of the trees at Turmi, three Tajiks, Alipbek Akjolbekov, Alisherov Beknazar Shirinbekovich and Khukmatullo Ahmadov, found themselves in conversation with Sharaw Munkh-Orgi and Byambaa Munkh-Jargal from Mongolia. They talked about cashmere. The Tajiks became increasingly animated as they listened. 'We hadn't really taken cashmere seriously until we heard it from herders from other countries' they said. Ideas of shifting to the production of Angora wool as a lucrative way forward faded as enthusiasm for cashmere took over. The Tajiks realised the hidden value of the goats they already had.

above:
Kazakh women spinning cashmere.
Photo Carol Kerven

They were not the only ones enamoured with the possibilities of cashmere. Shokrollah Pirmoradian, Sayyad Soltani and Nasser Ahmadi from Iran listened intently and decided that they would investigate whether they could raise cashmere goats in the Iranian highlands. Marketing would also be a problem for the Iranians, as it is for all pastoralists producing wool in the rugged and mountainous regions that provide the perfect environment for soft-haired goats. Drawing comparisons with llama and alpaca wool marketing in Peru, Higinio Porto Huasco emphasised the need for producers to work together. He explained his role in a large association of cooperatives that together organise the processing and sale of their wool and described how producers could triple their income – an idea that appealed to the Mongolians. In Peru this well-organised marketing of pastoral products has led to national recognition and as Higinio exclaimed, 'the government is going to put an alpaca on the national flag!'

The importance and potential of cashmere to herders was evident. About cashmere, as about many issues at the Global Pastoralist Gathering, much was shared and learnt in a climate of mutual inspiration. Maybe one day the cashmere goat too, following in the hoof-steps of the Peruvian alpaca, will make it onto a national flag.

Jane Stevens

top:
Camels and cashmere goats in Mongolia.
Photo Sabine Schmidt

Cashmere processing factory in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
Photo © Mark Henley - Panos Pictures

THE QUEST FOR CAMEL CHEESE

> We have learnt many things here. We will just have to go home and try.

Michele Nori, Italy

top:
Nasser Ahmadi and Maryam Rahmanian from Iran, and Abdi Adar from Somali region, Ethiopia, discuss milk processing.
Photo Jane Stevens

above:
Somali boys drink camel's milk, Ethiopia.
Photo UNOCHA

A Somali pastoralist from Ethiopia suggested that he had heard of someone keeping camel's milk for 12 months. Had anyone come across such as practice? Is it possible? An area of intrinsic interest, pastoralists from Canada, Iran, Wales, India, Mongolia, Peru, Chile and Somali from Kenya and Ethiopia wanted to hear from each other about different techniques of processing meat and milk, and also ways of accessing markets. They were also interested in how to preserve milk and meat so that they can be stored for months or years at a time, with the potential to provide nourishment during periods of food shortage.

Responding to requests for more information, the Iranian representatives agreed to host an information session about techniques of milk processing used in Iran. Following a description by Chief Shane Gottfriedson about the by-products of milk processing on the Kamloops Ranch in Canada which include yoghurt, cheese, cream, cream cheese, butter and butter milk, Sayyaad Soltani from Iran explained how they process sheep and goat milk to make yoghurt. It is then possible to continue the processing to a second stage to make products that can be stored for several years. This led to an Iranian recipe for making cheese. A simple process, it involves boiling the milk and adding rennet. They make two types of cheese, which can be stored for years if kept sealed in an animal skin. Everyone listened intently to the recipes, taking notes about the process.

What began as a presentation quickly became an exchange. Responding to a question from an Ethiopian Somali about whether this is possible for cow's milk, the Indians jumped in to describe how they process cow and buffalo milk in Rajasthan. Commenting on the increasingly international nature of the conversation, Jorge Villalobos Castillo from Chile suggested that despite the big differences between contexts, practices and even animals, 'it seems that the practices are very much the same. It's time for our friends here to try' he said, smiling at the people from South Omo who say that they do not make cheese.

The dialogue intensified when someone returned to the question about the possibility of using the cheese processing technique to make cheese from camel milk. Indian, Somali and Mongolian pastoralists shared examples of the techniques they use for processing camel milk, but they were not talking about cheese. Dolat Ram Gujjar, a pastoralist from India, described how camel milk is boiled in a mud pot, cooled in a mud glass, and then drunk fresh. But the milk is not to be kept, and is always drunk within hours of boiling. Camel cheese recipes remained elusive and the question of how it could be done lingered. Leading us further towards finding an answer, Abdi Haji Yussuf from Kenya offered details of how he has seen camel milk preserved for up to three months. He described a process of adding sugar to the milk (at a ratio of a cup of sugar for every two cups of milk) to make a kind of condensed milk, helping us part of the way towards finding an answer, but still no camel's cheese.

The enthusiasm of the pastoralists was contagious. Everyone, even people from non-pastoralist ways of life such as myself, came away from the dialogue with some practical ideas and a glint of eagerness to go home and try these techniques. The search for camel cheese will continue; and hopefully so too will the international exchanges and conversations that it sparked.

Lucy Stackpool-Moore

Recipes

Iran

Stage 1: To make yoghurt from sheep and goat milk, boil the milk and let it cool gradually. As it cools, add a few spoons of yoghurt and stir it all together. This whole pot then becomes yoghurt.

Stage 2: Take the yoghurt, place it in a tight animal skin with some water and shake it for hours and hours. This shaking will divide the contents of the skin into butter and butter milk. Separate out the butter and continue processing the butter milk, which you then boil again; take out the solid parts, roll into a ball and allow to dry. These can be stored for several years. The remaining liquid, which is black and very sour, can be used for cooking, such as adding to a soup.

To make cheese: This is also a simple process of boiling the milk and adding rennet. There are two types of cheese, which can be kept for years if kept sealed in an animal skin.

Rajasthan, India

To process camel milk:
Dolat Ram Gujjar described how camel milk is boiled in a mud pot, cooled in a mud glass, and then drunk fresh. In Rajasthan, a camel can produce milk for 12 months, and is then dry for 12 months. They use the milk for drinking fresh, making yoghurt, and also making milk tea. But the milk is not to be kept, and is always drunk within hours of boiling.

Somali Kenya

Abdi Haji Yussuf from Kenya offered details of how he has seen camel milk preserved for up to three months. He described a process of adding sugar to the milk (at a ratio of a cup of sugar for every two cups of milk), stirring the mixture while boiling it until it becomes thick – when it is sticky, you let it cool. Keep stirring the mixture as it cools, then put it in a package with a lid, such as a tin.

from top:

An assortment of Mongolian sweets made from yak's milk. *Photo Jane Stevens*

Shokrollah Pirmoradian hands round Iranian cheese. *Photo Jane Stevens*

Mauritanian milking bowl. *Photo Sarah Wilson*

LAST WORDS

Some comments on the Global Pastoralist Gathering, taken from The Turmi Morning Herald, Thursday 3 February 2005

The Turmi Morning Herald, Thursday 3 February 2005

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

Can dreams become realities?

Yesterday morning we all met to discuss and answer two questions:

1) What do we predict will be the reality in 10 years?
2) What is our vision or dreams for the future?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mali:
"We have learned about other's experiences, solutions that work, and the good will of others. We have also learned how to make better links with international organisations of pastoralists, and we are here to listen together."

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

'I never imagined that there are some white people from Europe and other parts of the world that are pastoralists. After watching on TV those skyscrapers and other things from the West, I never imagined there are people who could be herding animals and sharing our problems. This is a good exchange, thank you for coming here.' Abdi Adar, Ethiopia

'You are strong individuals and you can change the situation. You have survived all these difficult years and no one can ignore you any longer. You must know that there are many organisations and NGOs which work for you but everything begins when you work and struggle for yourselves.' Fares Abu Abed, Bedouin, Israel

'The late Chief Dan George said: Like the thunderbird of old, I shall rise out of the sea, I shall grab the instruments of the white man's successes, his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my Race into the proudest segment of your society, so shall I shatter these barriers of isolation, so shall the next one hundred years be the greatest in the proud history of our tribes and nations.' Chief Shane Gottfriedson, Canada

'People have discovered they are not alone, not the only ones who live in these conditions and they are not alone in wanting to change their circumstances, but are part of a larger pastoral world.' Amadou Diallo, Mali

'We have learned about other's experiences, solutions that work, and the goodwill of others. We have also learned how to make better links with international organisations of pastoralists, and we are here to come together.'
Sékou Diallo, Mali

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

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

'Pastoralists are like a sick patient in need of medicine. If nothing is done to bring medicine or help to this person, the pastoralist is going to die.' Ballahi Ould Limam, Mauritania

'The most valuable thing about the gathering was meeting people and knowing about people not from papers but from the people themselves. This meeting has made a lasting impression on me and will affect the way I work.' Eyob Tekalign, Ethiopia

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

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

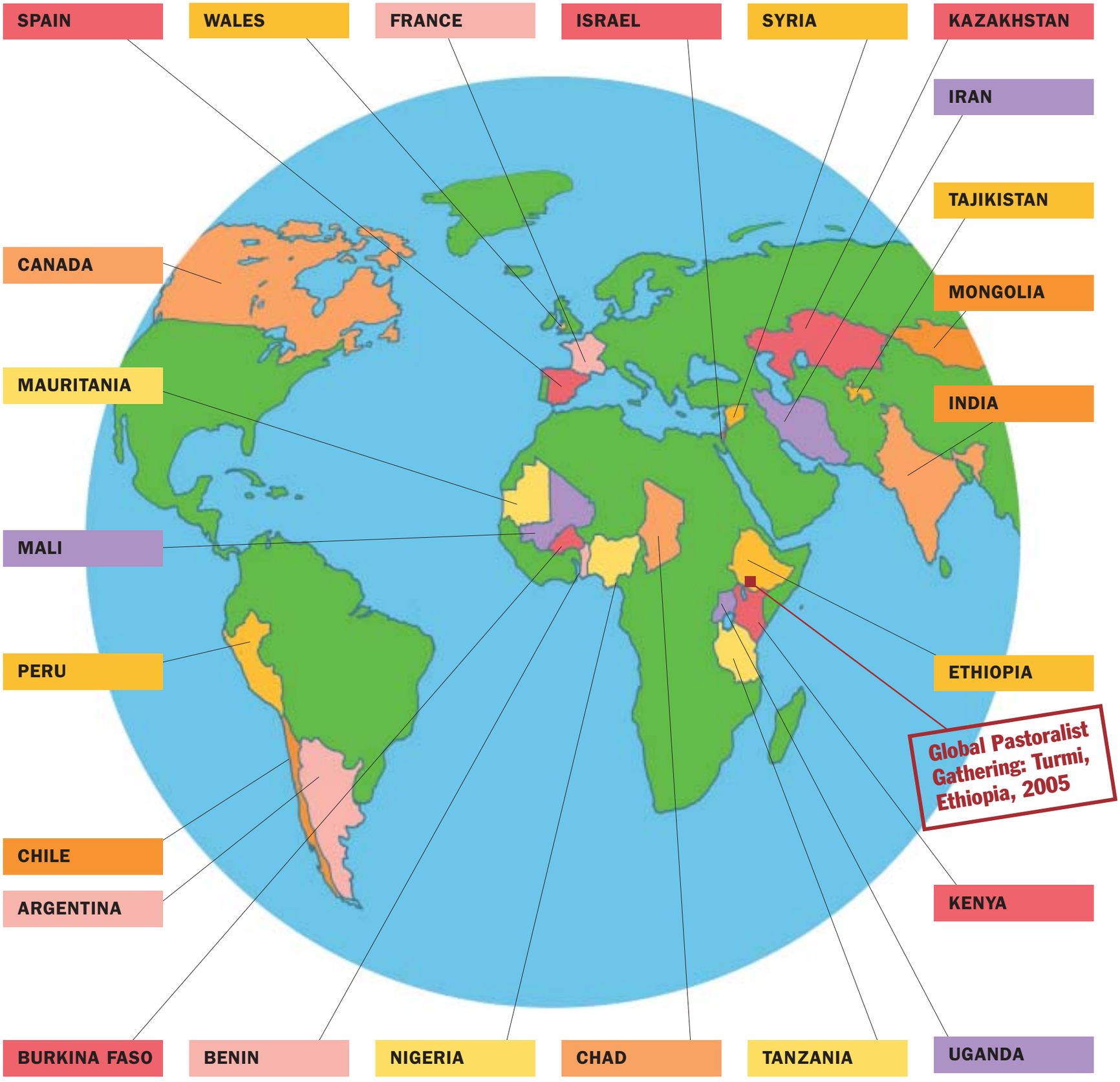
'We will survive. We will give new hope to the world that we are able to look after our natural resources and preserve biodiversity. The most important thing is to see many pastoralists with a positive mind for the future.'
Jesús Garzon, Spain

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

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

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

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



IDS
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Sussex

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