

Keynote MoA Dr. Fikru Regassa

Welcome Speech

Dear distinguished guests, dear representatives from national and international organizations, development cooperation, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It is a real pleasure for me to welcome you to the 2nd Webinar of the DREAM II conference “Cooperation for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in lowland areas of Ethiopia”. I am grateful that you are all taking time off from your busy schedule to attend this important webinar. It is also an honor for me to welcome the Financial and Technical German Development Cooperation, the EU-Delegation, the representative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United States Agency for International Development, the African Development Bank, the Alliance 2015 and the representatives of non-government organizations.

“The future does not just happen, we all create it. A strong coordination and an effective cooperation is one of the underlying foundations.”

The DREAM-I conference held in Samara, Afar in 2019 hosted more than 250 participants and brought several different stakeholders together for a joint mission, for exchanging their marvelous experience for better implementation and for an effective future cooperation. The main outcome of the DREAM-I conference was the

“Declaration” signed by all participants in the conference and endorsed by government, development partners and NGOs.

The series of webinars planned for 2020 and the physical DREAM II conference in Jijiga in September 2021 will bring all of us again on a common forum.

In the 1st webinar held on the 3rd November 2020, we learned that many actors are active in the lowland areas, working in similar areas or in related activities to bring development forward to a positive change for the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. However, it was also reflected that coordination of activities is an important bottleneck. There is a strong need to establish a network system for thematic areas to increase best practices. Moreover, this needs to be linked between all actors at all levels, including federal and regional.

Government acknowledges the increasing importance of the lowlands of Ethiopia. This is reflected in the Pastoralist Development Policy and Strategy and in the LLRP, the Lowland Livelihood Resilience Program, launched in the 4th quarter of 2019. This program will provide support to more resilient livelihoods but also to development of six regions being dominated by pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods.

Since the devastating droughts in 2011 and 2012, a multitude of initiatives have been launched for the pastorally used lowland areas under the guidance of the Ethiopian government. For example, the Drought Resilience Strengthening and Livelihood Project of AfDB under the guiding framework of the Country programming Paper to End Drought Emergencies within Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

A multitude of international development partners also assured their support. This is fantastic, and we are grateful about it.

BUT:

Too many well-meant initiatives without profound coordination and cooperation might reach jointly the opposite of what was meant to be reached!

The Ministry of Peace has the mandate to coordinate the development of pastoral livelihoods, including humanitarian activities. So, coming from Ministry of Agriculture, activities fostering pastoral livelihoods through natural resource management for example, how could such activities be efficiently coordinated and reaching into an effective cooperation? How to work through the regional and local administration without overloading them with a multitude of different planning, financial or monitoring procedures?

This needs to be discussed. I am convinced that we will find a proper setting in which we can better coordinate our efforts resulting into a fruitful cooperation for the benefit of the concerned population:

- we need to coordinate right from the beginning of each initiative,
- we need to plan together,
- we need to share the work,
- we need to build capacity together,
- we need to bring together our knowledge, skills, innovative technologies and ideas, to coordinate our own efforts and be more effective and efficient.

The lowland areas are offering many more opportunities than currently used. In the future, they will play an increasing part in the economy as they will contribute to the food security of Ethiopia. The lowlands are treasures which need to be wisely used.

To reach this goal, our forces should be joint in a coordinated cooperation within the different thematical areas.

This is why we are together today. This is why I invite you to listen and to discuss jointly to define how we could cooperate for the benefit of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities.

Agenda

Let us discover jointly what is necessary for a coordinated cooperation.

The implementation of different programs being active in the lowlands will be presented and their cooperation opportunities.

We will discuss how a functional cooperation could be reached without overstretching our system and the scarce resources of time.

Finally, at the end of today's session, we would like to set up a task force which will elaborate an action plan based on the ideas brought up today on how to reach a coordinated cooperation.

The implementation of such an action plan would be one topic of the 3rd webinar of DREAM II conference, which will be held in two weeks' time.

Finishing Part

I therefore wish the participants of the webinar success in their participation in today's webinar, getting insights into what is going on and coming up with ideas bringing forward the issues on coordination and cooperation in the lowlands of Ethiopia on behalf of our ministry and the government of Ethiopia.

All around the necessary capacitation will be a topic for the third webinar.

I wish all of us a very fruitful webinar!