

DREAM II – Pre-Conference 2 – Proceedings – 12-11-2020

‘Cooperation for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in lowland areas’

Opening remarks – Dr. Kaba Urgessa Dinssa	2
Welcome speech - Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker (GIZ SDR-ASAL)	2
Keynote - HE Ato Fikri Regassa (State Minister of Agriculture)	3
Presentation of key programmes in the lowlands	5
<i>Afar Regional Government - Ato Mohammed Hussain</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Somali Region Regional Government – Ato Bedale.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>USAID - Ato Dubale Admasu.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>EU-Delegation - Dominique Davoux.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>KfW - Andreas Weitzel.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Alliance2015 - Sara Worku.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Break-out groups discussions.....	8
<i>Afar.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Somali Region.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Online A.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Online B.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Online C.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Wrap-up of conference.....	11
Outlook on 3rd pre-conference.....	12

Opening remarks – Dr. Kaba Urgessa Dinssa

Dr. Kaba Urgessa Dinssa welcomes all participants and speakers to the 2nd Pre-Conference. He mentioned in his opening remarks that the Pre-Conference will help in preparing for the DREAM II Conference in 2021.

Welcome speech - Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker (GIZ SDR-ASAL)

“Let me welcome H.E. Dr. Fikru Regassa from Ministry of Agriculture, dear Ato Wondimagegnehu Shibru from Ministry of Peace, dear representatives from national and international organisations, development cooperation, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen. One more time, a very good morning to all of you! I’m very happy that many have joined, even sometimes in difficult situations, I am very happy to welcome you to the 2nd webinar preparing the DREAM II conference. This webinar has the focus on **Cooperation** - “Cooperation for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in lowland areas of Ethiopia”. It is a big honour for me to see you all linked in willing to reflect jointly on what it means **Cooperation** – cooperation in the Ethiopian lowland areas and for pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods.

From the last webinar, do you remember the image of the orchestra or music band and the dancers? That their efforts are not ending in a cacophony, a very good director is needed to coordinate between all different musicians but also a dancing leader to support their choreography. But this is not enough. Even if both groups are perfect in their own performance, for the overall performance, they need to cooperate.

The music band – every musician needs to cooperate with the others, they need to listen to each other to provide the most impressive music. The same is true for the dancers. And between them. For me, this image speaks for our work.

During the last webinar, we heard a lot about extremely interesting initiatives, through governmental projects, through NGOs, through platforms representing pastoral issues, and for sure through German Development Cooperation.

If all these stakeholders are like single musicians trying to perform the development of lowland areas and more resilient livelihoods as a common goal, how is this organized to not end into a cacophony but to reach into a joint future that raises the treasures that the lowlands have to offer – for the benefit of both, the population of the lowland regions and the population of Ethiopia.

If the dancers are the communities, how can we ensure that there is a good cooperation between them and the music band? How could we come to a coordinated cooperation between all stakeholders and beneficiaries? This is the important topic for today’s webinar.

At the end of the first DREAM conference, we jointly signed and endorsed a declaration on joining forces in regard to the development initiatives for the lowlands. The Ethiopian lowland areas have a lot to offer.

To ensure a real outcome of our webinars, we need to go one step further. Not only discussing and reflecting, but also taking serious action. I would like to invite you very warmly to join a task force towards the end of the webinar to develop jointly an action plan how to install a strong and well-coordinated cooperation under the guidance of the Ethiopian government. Now I am curious for all presentations and the discussions we will have. I wish for all of us a very fruitful webinar.”

Keynote - HE Ato Fikri Regassa (State Minister of Agriculture)

“It is a great pleasure for me, to welcome you to the 2nd Pre-Conference, which is titled ‘Cooperation for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in lowland areas’. I am grateful that you are taking time off from your busy schedule to attend this important webinar. It is also an honour for me to welcome the financial and technical German development corporation, the EU delegation, the representatives of International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United States Agency for International Development, the African Development Bank, the Alliance2015 and representatives of main governmental organisations.

The future does not happen, well, we all create it. A strong coordination and effective cooperation are one of the underlying foundations. The first DREAM Conference in 2019 in Afar hosted more than 250 participants and brought several stakeholders together for a joint mission for exchanging their marvellous experience for better implementation and for an effective future cooperation. The main outcome of the first DREAM Conference was the declaration signed by all participants in the conference and endorsed by the government, development partners and NGO’s.

The series of webinars planned for 2020 and the physical Dream 2 Conference in Jigjiga in September 2021 will bring all of us again on a common forum. In the first webinar held, on the 3rd of November 2020, we learnt that many actors are actually in the lowland areas working in similar areas or in related activities to bring development forward to a positive change for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. However, it was also the practice that coordination of activities is an important bottleneck. There is a strong push for a network system of thematic areas and sharing best practices. However, this needs to be linked between all actors at all levels, including federal and regional actors.

The government of Ethiopia acknowledges the increasing importance of the lowlands of Ethiopia and this is practised in pastoralism development policies and strategies. The LLRP, the Lowland Livelihoods Resilient Program, was launched in the first quarter of 2019. This program provides support for more resilient livelihoods but also to development of 6 regions dominated by pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods. Since the devastating droughts in 2011 and 2012, a multitude of incentives have been provided to improve pastoral land use in the lowland areas under the guidance of Ethiopian government. Examples are the Drought Resilient Increasing Livelihood Project of African Development Bank and the IGAD supported country drought resilience framework. A large group of international development partners have provided their support. This is fantastic and we are grateful for it.

Yet, without coordination and cooperation we may reach the opposite of what was meant to be reached jointly. The Minister of Peace has the mandate to coordinate the development of pastoral livelihoods including humanitarian activities. Myself I am coming from the Ministry of Agriculture and we are responsible for activities fostering pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods through natural resource management among others. How could activities be efficiently coordinated and how can we reach effective cooperation? How to work through the regional and local administrations, how to avoid overlapping arrangements and different planning, financials or monitoring procedures. This needs to be discussed.

I am convinced that we will find a proper setting in which we better coordinate our efforts, resulting into a fruitful cooperation for the benefit of the concerned population. So as to coordinate each of these initiatives we need to plan together, we need to share the work, we need to build capacities together, we need to bring together our knowledge, skills, initiatives, technologies, ideas, to coordinate our own efforts and be more effective and efficient. This will actually give us the synergy. The lowland areas are offering many more opportunities, as

has been indicated by Dr. Elisabeth as well, than are currently used. In the future, they will play an increasing part of the economy as well as contributing to the food security and also the export earnings of the country. The lowlands are treasures which need to be wisely used. To reach this goal, our forces should be joined in a coordinated cooperation in different thematic areas. This is why we are here together today. This is why I invite you to listen and to discuss jointly to define how we could cooperate for the benefit of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists communities. So, let us discover jointly what is necessary for coordinated cooperation. The implementation of programs being active in the lowlands will be presented and their cooperation opportunities. We will discuss how a functional cooperation could be reached without overexploiting our system and the scarce resource of time. Finally, at the end of today's sessions, we would like to set up task forces which will elaborate an action plan, based on ideas brought up today, on how to reach coordinated cooperation. The implementation of such actions will be one of the topics of the 3rd webinar of, which will be held in two weeks' time. Therefore, I wish you, the participants of the webinar, successful participation in the webinar, getting known into what is going on and coming up with ideas on cooperation and coordination in the lowland areas of Ethiopia on behalf of the Ministry and the government of Ethiopia. The necessary capacitation will be the topic of the 3rd webinar. I wish all of us a very fruitful webinar, thank you very much."

Kick-off note Pastoralist Development Policy and Strategy - Ato Wondimagegnehu Shibru (Ministry of Peace)

The Pastoral Development Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia are presented by Ato Wondimagegnehu Shibru (Ministry of Peace). The major objective of the policy and strategy is "Realizing sustainably improved livelihood of pastoralists through integrated development that is centered on the animal resources, material and spiritual, and other reliable endowments of the pastoral people." That is built on the vision which is "Creating a pastoralist that is resilient to man-made and natural disasters; that has an improved and sustainable livelihood basis, environment, and institutions; where democracy and good governance are ensured; and peaceful and accommodating development is realized"

After an introduction and background information, 4 policy issues are mentioned.

- Increasing the income generating capacity of pastoralists and improve their living standard
- Expanding social and economic infrastructure and urban areas together with industry to modernize the life of pastoralists.
- Building the implementation capacity of pastoralists and grounding good governance and constitutional democracy on a strong foundation in order to ensure maximized participation and benefit for pastoralists.
- Ensuring sustainability and reliability of the development and progress of pastoralists by treating critical cross-sectoral issues; economic, social, capacity building, and good governance.

It is explained that Ministry of Peace, regional state governments and NGO's all have a role in implementing the policies and strategies.

In the 2nd part of the presentation, the LLRP (Lowlands Livelihood Resilience Project) is highlighted. This six-year project, started in 2019 and primary implemented by the Ministry of Peace, has the objective to improve livelihood resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Ethiopia. The project, mainly funded by IDA and IFAD, will build resilience

through absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity. The four major bottlenecks addressed are the following:

- Low productivity and limited market linkages
- High vulnerability of prevailing livelihoods
- Limited livelihood diversification opportunities
- Limited social and economic service delivery

Presentation of key programmes in the lowlands

Afar Regional Government - Ato Mohammed Hussain

After a short background introduction, some the main challenges of Afar Region are mentioned:

- High natural resource degradation
- Low level of capacity and capability on water resource management
- Low involvement in modern agricultural development
- Climate change impact
- Weak coordination and integration between developmental partners
- Recurrent flood and desert locust impact
- Weak pastoral oriented development organizational structure at all levels
- Not using alternative energy sources

Following these challenges, potentials at regional sector level are mentioned; livestock population, vast rangelands, forest and wildlife, fertile agricultural land, water resources,

Core components of GIZ-SDR regional strategic interventions are:

- Participatory planning
- Physical and biological land rehabilitation
- Rangeland management (including area enclosure, forage development and invasive species management)
- Livelihood development (including income generating activities, flood-based farming, CBO and cooperative development and homestead gardening)
- Water utilization and disaster risk management (including cistern development, borehole rehabilitation, water filters, emergency water supply and latrine construction)
- Competence development

Finally, the way forward for future successes are highlighted by the following points.

- Scaling up of GIZ-SDR good experiences to other woredas
- Knowledge transfer to other (non-project) woredas in the region
- Improvement of partners engagement, in order to promote and replicate technologies
- Continuing participatory approach of planning and implementation
- Adaptive training provided to woreda professionals
- Community-based management for emerging invasive species
- Alignment of PSNP with other similar soil and water conservation intervention endeavors

Somali Region Regional Government – Ato Bedale

After an introduction of the area, the LLRP (Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Project) is highlighted, which scope is to enhance rangeland management, livelihood improvement and diversification, and improved market development to promote livelihood resilience. This 6-year project is implemented in 36 Woredas in Somali Regions. The project is directly linked to the strategic development road map of the region, GTPs, SDCs, and pastoral development policy in terms of development and integration of rangeland management and pastoral livelihood diversification.

The 5 strategic priorities for Somali region are:

- Ending poverty, eradication of hunger and economic growth
- Governance, justice and rule law
- Human capital development
- Economic infrastructure
- Women, children and youth empowerment and development

The cooperation between the LLRP program and the main governmental institutions is good, since the program and projects are directed by a regional steering committee that guides the program/projects implementation. Road maps are based on key priority issues for the region. As a results of regular cluster meetings, cooperation between the LLRP programme and other organizations is good yet needs to be strengthened.

USAID - Ato Dubale Admasu

In his presentation, Ato Dubale Admasu discussed RiPA (Resilience in Pastoral Areas Project). The goal of IPA is to improve the resilience capacities of households, markets and governance institutions, collectively contributing to enhanced food security and inclusive economic growth. Major components of the project, which recently started are:

- Improve disaster risk management (DRM) and response
- Improve employment opportunities for people transitioning out of pastoralism, particularly youth
- Improve livestock and crop productivity and market systems
- Improve household nutrition, sanitation and hygiene and cross cutting social cohesion

Links between the policy issues mentioned earlier and the program are made. The collective impact model is used for strengthening cooperation and networking. It consists of a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support.

Mentioned challenges for collective impact are

- Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities for technical area leadership and coordination (government side)
- Commitment, capacity and accountability issues for leadership which erodes trust among stakeholders (government side)
- The long-standing culture of attribution vs. contribution to common goal (among donors and implementing partners alike)
- Equity for resource sharing vs comprehensive programming (government side)

EU-Delegation - Dominique Davoux

Dominique Davoux presented the HEARD (Health of Ethiopian Animals for Rural Development) programme, which has both governmental and private partners. This

programme aims to enhance the performance of animal health service delivery system through implementing three outcomes:

- The quality of public and private veterinary services is strengthened, and delivery optimised
- Technical competences and incentives for veterinary service providers is improved
- Capacity is built for food safety of primary products of animal origin and for control of zoonotic diseases

KfW - Andreas Weitzel

Andreas Weitzel presents the project on “Strengthening drought resilience of the (agro)-pastoralist population of Afar Region”. Apart from the resilience objective, it has the objective of conservation and more productive use of water, soil and pastureland. The programme is inter-linked to the overall development framework and road map for the Region and the Country (such as GTP, Pastoralist Development Policy and IGAD Strategies).

Investments are made in the rehabilitation of agricultural irrigation systems, water storage systems (e.g. sand dams), prosopis management and rehabilitation, soil cultivation and conservation measures for pasture areas. Intense community participation is an important feature of the program. The cooperation between programme and governmental institutions is organised via Steering Committees.

Alliance2015 - Sara Worku

Alliance2015 is a strategic partnership of eight European NGOs engaged in humanitarian and development action, which has four joint programmes in the lowland areas:

- Sustainable natural resource management for enhanced pastoralist food security
- Creating access and ensuring quality education for out of schoolgirls
- Livestock insurance for pastoralist resilience building
- Integrated multi-sectoral and emergency response for improved living conditions of IDPs.

All programs are implemented in close collaboration with (local) governments.

Opportunities for strengthening cooperation and networking are seen in cooperation platforms. These can be used for experience sharing, information flow and synergy. It also creates joint voices for problem solving and advocacy issues and leverages of the resources. It also addresses that most problems requires a multi-faceted, coordinated and innovative approach that need the cooperation of multiple actors. DREAM Conferences are really helping in coordination and cooperation.

However, there are also restraints for cooperation. Short term programs, actors fearing loss of freedom and high turnover and frequent restructuring from government side are restraints. These restraints can be overcome by long term programs, flexibility and resource and commitment by government.

Break-out group's discussions

The program continued with discussion in separate breakout groups, both in Semara (Afar) and Jijiga (Somali Region) as well as on-line.

Afar

What networks and platforms already exist for fostering coordination and cooperation?

The networks and platforms already existing are:

- Steering committee
- Afar Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Task Force (APATF)
- Multi-sectoral platform on shared Natural Resource Management and Participation in Government and Rights Issues

The regional bureau has organized a unit in the Study, Plan and Budget Directorate that performs the coordination of NGOs and stakeholders working in the pastoral and agro-pastoral community.

What are the mandates of these networks and platforms regarding coordination and cooperation?

The task force has monthly meetings that enable reviews of activities from stakeholders in the previous months and planning for the coming months. This way, the correction measures and redundant activities will be facilitated as per the consensus of the meeting.

Which functioning cooperation models exist at the different implementation levels?

Joint developmental activity will be evaluated semi-annually. Best practices are identified and validated in order to be scaled up.

Roles and responsibilities for efficient horizontal and vertical coordination?

The roles and responsibilities and efficient horizontal and vertical workflow are discussed in the monthly meeting. It is not conducted yet in a well-defined manner with clearly set roles and responsibilities: that is why it is establishing the NGOs and Stakeholders coordination Unit is being set up under the Study, Plan and Budget Directorate.

What is needed for an efficient cooperation between stakeholders involved in the same region or on same topics?

For an efficient cooperation between all stakeholders, revising the steering committee and the incorporation of new partners is needed. A clear and well-defined memorandum of understanding (MoU) and accompanying guiding principles should be issued for the platform to be revised. The revised platform should be supported by the technical committee that will be led by NRM sector that will follow every technical activity. The resource that will support the platform should be allocated in a committed manner. The platform has to be extended to grass root level.

Somali Region

There are 8 clusters in Somali region led by the respective bureaus and UN agencies co-chair including

- ATF cluster (Livestock bureau and FAO): agriculture, livestock and natural resource management focusing on emergency/response, resilience, relief and development
- WASH cluster (Water Bureau and Unicef): WASH
- Protection cluster (Women affairs and UNHCR): protection including children, gender-based violence
- ESNFI cluster (DRMB and IOM): shelter
- Health and Nutrition cluster (Health Bureau and WHO): mandated health and nutrition needs

- Durable solution (DRMB and IOM): Resettlement IDPs
- Food cluster (DRMB and WFP): food
- Education Cluster (Education Bureau and Unicef): education

Humanitarian organizations (not development agencies) coordinate all the above clusters.

An EPRP (emergency preparedness response plan) is produced each 6 months for resource mapping and gap identification of the whole region. This is where all upcoming resources are discussed.

The existing functioning cooperation model is through stake holder and partnership and at the same time it is a sector-based model

Roles and Responsibility work follows vertically flows: Federal Level /country bureaus /offices, Regional Level, Zonal Level, Woreda Level, Kebele Level.

Online A

In this group, there has been a discussion on the role of existing platforms. There is not always a clear understanding on the role and working of these platforms. An example of that is the Durable Solutions Working Group. It is not clear how they are working and how people could engage with them.

It is thus important to map what everybody is doing and where, and also to have exchange of information, every three months. This is not necessarily a working group, but rather an exchange group.

As cooperation does not happen automatically, coordination is needed. The DREAM conferences created opportunity to focus specifically on how to collaborate with government institutions and to identify what is lacking.

Online B

The following networks and platforms already exist for fostering coordination and cooperation:

- Ministry of Agriculture Rural Economic Development and Food Security (MoA-RED-FS) platform
- DRM coordination platform: National and Regional:
- SDR steering committee at National, and Regional (in Afar and Somali) Levels
- National, Regional, Cluster, Zonal thematic areas coordination platforms, taskforces, etc: Agriculture, Nutrition, WASH
- Durable Solutions Working Group (National, Somali Region) - IDPs integration with local people, Humanitarian Assistance - Development Programs Nexus (Switzerland leading these initiatives)
- Project level steering committee at the national, regional (National, Regional) SDR
- Working Group of DREAM-I

What are the mandates of these networks and platforms regarding coordination and cooperation?

- Deal with livelihoods and natural resources management
- Coordinating emergency taskforces- flood, drought, etc
- Support smooth program/project implementation

- Engaging stakeholders and involving beneficiary community
- Trying to avoid duplication of efforts as much as possible

Which functioning cooperation models exist at the different implementation levels?

- RED-FS : Livestock Technical Committee, Pastoral Agro Pastoral task force- used to be active before MoA restructuring and dissolving the Pastoral wing
- NRM technical working group-committed and dedicated leadership, clear and simple action plan,
- Durable solutions working group (National, Somali)- IDPs integration with local people, Humanitarian Assistance -Development programs nexus -Switzerland leading the initiatives
- National DRM coordination platforms National and Regional: emergency taskforces- flood, drought

Roles and responsibilities for efficient horizontal and vertical coordination:

- MoA: RED FS TCs and Taskforces: Agriculture, Pastoral Agro Pastoral
- MoH: Work on nutrition, WASH issues
- MoE: Deal with different education, curriculum for different training, WASH etc
- NDRM: Playing significant role in the resilience capacity building works in the lowlands
- MoP: Leading any interventions and concerns of pastoral and agro-pastoral developments
- Steering Committees: works in line with the thematic areas they established for.

What is needed for an efficient cooperation between stakeholders involved in the same region or on same topics?

- Responsibility: Define individuals leading and co-leading at different level
- Setting clear role and responsibilities: define the scope and leading institution and individual
- Clear joint plan, measurement system,
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation
- Commitment and accountability
- Budget and dedicated facilitation/TA support
- Allocation of required resources (manpower and budget)
- Coordination should start from the grassroots level

Online C

What networks and platforms already exist for fostering coordination and cooperation?

- The dream conference enabled establish a forum but is not well functioning.
- There are forums and associations for Livestock, veterinary, pastoralists' but they are not as effective as required.
- There are also regional task forces- PENA coordinated by pastoralist areas,
- One WASH is a good example for coordinated donor's effort in the WASH sub-sector
- regional command posts/steering committee for watershed management

What are the mandates of these networks and platforms regarding coordination and cooperation?

- Some platforms work on advocacy; some work on coordination of NGOs,

- There are platforms working on land registration in collaboration with GOs
- Coordinate various efforts of multi-actors, implementers, and facilitate partnership.
- Some NGOs work on Knowledge, Implementation, advocacy (facilitation, joint action).
- Working groups from last group (DREAM I), no model platform that is known.
- Gap exist in making regional/national coordination lacking,
- function only when asked.
- fragmented and loose coordination –
- Strengthening existing network –

Which functioning cooperation models exist at the different implementation levels?

- Land and water management – academics
- Make platform relevant to them -
- Organize platforms in thematic areas.
- First- characterise all actors- their needs, what they did,
- Clustering
- Strong government partner- organizing role
- Government shall play lead role and become thematic lead
- Shared vision, facilitate
- NGOs and donors shall play lead role on funding and capacity creation.
- Establish and involve partners at level

Wrap-up of conference

The final session discussed – on the basis of the discussions in the working groups – the following main points:

- What are the learning points of today's pre-conference?
- What does it take to cooperate/in other words the benefits of cooperation for your organisation?
- Can you suggest the best ways of reaching to coordinated cooperation?
- What are the ideas for a task force?

The main conclusion was that we need to strengthen coordination and cooperation on the basis of the existing structures. These structures need to function better and be more inclusive. At the same time there is need to connect all the different mechanisms.

We are facing a common challenge, we all want to have coordination, integration and complementarity, but it is not happening enough. It will be good to establish a small team, representing donor's community, the implementing partners, the government key institutions, like Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Peace and NGOs. This small team should do the mapping of all the existing coordination platforms at a national as well as regional level, as well as Woreda level because that is actually where things are happening. At the higher-level different steering committees of different programs may be combined into a single steering unit. Specific task forces are helpful in figuring out specific issues and presenting them to the wider community. It is also important to provide resources for coordination: it does not happen automatically. Coordination requires commitment, leadership and dedicated effort. The benefits will be large, however.

We are not the first ones having this type of discussion. So, what happened and why are things not working? The small team – mentioned earlier - developing ideas based on proven best practices would be instrumental.

We learnt many things today from this pre-conference. We need to know what different parties have been conducting in the region: in this respect the pre-conference was very valuable. It is very important to look again at activities in the regions. Another learning is, as has been the case today, it is important to connect with other parties and sectors. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding is important for both task forces and coordination platforms, in order to work effectively.

People with a key role were present today, which is the start of cooperation. It is time to put all efforts and commitment together and work according to an efficient workplan for the development of the lowlands. If we do not create a road map for the future, we will miss opportunities repeat earlier mistakes. Cooperation now is not just an idea, but it really is a big need to move forward. What is also important, is that we should not forget the communities in this cooperation. Because we talk a lot about the communities, but their involvement should also be active.

A large segment of the lowland population lives under the current poverty line: this should provoke us to do our best to cooperate. The government has to take the lead and see what is being done at grassroot and also try to cooperate with the different (funding) stakeholders. Development efforts are undertaken to reduce the poverty, but unless properly bundled these will be insignificant, when looking to the size of land and the population We need to cooperate and governments have to take the lead, in making the best of the resources they have.

Outlook on 3rd pre-conference

Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker closed the Pre-Conference: “You will be invited to join small short-term taskforces allowing to look into how to revitalize the existing platforms and how to start again really working together for the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, but also for the people of Ethiopia. As mentioned, there are so many opportunities in the lowlands, and we have to use them wisely.

The next pre-conference will be on the 26th of November and will be following up on these discussions, on how to take the coordination and cooperation forward, and how to capacitate lowland development. We will elaborate the questions for task forces and then I would like to invite you all; help us in cooperating together to get it done and to continue the process we have started for better coordination for the lowlands. I think COVID was a huge challenge, but we will overcome the COVID and this challenge for the benefit of the people.”