

## Water Points Management Experience Sharing Visit of Community Representatives from South Sudan to FAO's Natural Resources Management Projects in Ethiopia

**Addis Ababa, May 2013** - Water harvesting community representatives from Jonglei State of South Sudan visited FAO's natural resources management projects in Borena Zone of Oromiya region to create better synergy and experience sharing between the two countries.

The exchange visit was organised by FAO Representation to Ethiopia and South Sudan with the objective of exposing the community representatives to experiences in community-based water point management and how similar agro-pastoralist communities manage, protect, use and maintain their water points.



The eight days visit was also aimed at sharing the experience of in proper management of water points and how this has helped to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts over resources.

Accordingly, the community representatives held discussions with the Zonal administration and visited three water points (ponds and Elases) projects implemented in *Haro Muyate*, *Higo* and *Tilomeda* located in Dharito, Higo and Legessure villages of Borena Zone. These included *elas* (Borana traditional hand dug wells) constructed by FAO and the Zonal administration. These *elas* are the main water sources especially during dry period.

The water point's rehabilitation projects are also aimed at increasing the resilience of the communities to drought and disasters and have benefited more than 500,000 pastoralists with a total budget of about one million USD.

FAO Ethiopia has been rehabilitating the *elas* since 2006 which include improvement of cattle troughs (water tight), temporary collection box/reservoirs, widening and reducing slope of cattle paths, widening cattle drinking areas, etc. All *elas* rehabilitated by FAOET are well managed and serving the community. There are traditional rules and regulations for water point management that ensure equitable water distribution among the clan members and other communities.

The Boran are agro-pastoralists like the Southern Sudanese, therefore, their experience would be directly relevant to the community representatives from Uror and Nyirol Counties.

It is therefore, after discussion with the FAO Ethiopia that the Boran community managed water points (*elas* and ponds) in Southern Ethiopia were identified as the most appropriate water harvesting schemes where Southern Sudanese communities can learn from.



After visiting these projects on site, the visitors have also held discussion with the Boran pastoralists and learnt that despite the challenges facing pastoralists, they are working hard to adapt to the changing situation and working hard to improve their environment and livelihoods.

"I very much appreciate how the Boran community constructed and preserved the *elaas* and I would like to do the same for my community," one of the representatives said during a reflection session at FAO Ethiopia

premises in Addis Ababa. "The Boran community are hard working people and I have realised that FAO's support to them have helped them realise their dream of adapting to the changing climatic situation," he added.

Towards the end of their visit the team also held discussion with Mr. Hassen Ali, the Assistant FAO representative to Ethiopia, and Mr. Abubeker Ali, Natural Resources Management team leader in Addis Ababa.

During the discussion, the community representatives said that the experience sharing visit has been an intensive learning experience and that they will share the experience they got from Ethiopia to their fellow colleagues in Jonglei state of South Sudan.

"It is my first time to see elas and I realised that they help the community a lot," said Mr Moses Nyanglew, County Committee chairperson.

"It was an impressive learning visit and I thank FAO and all those who organised this visit," representatives of the community to the Assistant FAO representative and the team leader.

Ato Hassen Ali for his part said that similar exchange visits are important to alleviate poverty and ensure development in both countries.

"We have similar resources, so if we can support and work together we can eradicate poverty and food insecurity," he said. "It is my sincere hope that you will share the experience you got from Ethiopia to your communities, so that they will work and hard and be self-sufficient,"

"We would also like to learn from South Sudan on how it is trying to eradicate poverty and food insecurity," he added.

Ato Abubeker Ali also commended that FAO representation to Ethiopia, Zonal administration and Borana pastoralists have also learnt a lot from Jonglei water harvesting community representatives.

"Thank you once again for coming to Ethiopia and it is my sincere hope that you will share the experience to your colleagues. Especially the role of community participation to bring development is vital," Abubeker said. "Water is a scarce resource and we have to manage it carefully," he added.

**For more information, please contact Mr. Abubeker Ali, NRM Team Leader at FAO Ethiopia.**

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