



## **Report on the meeting between the delegation of the European Parliament and Civil Society Organisations engaged in pastoralism, organised by the European External Action Service and CELEP**

On 25–27 March 2014, a delegation of the European Parliament visited Khartoum. Three Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are in the Development Committee – Ricardo Cortés-Lastra (Spain), Filip Kaczmarek (Poland) and Fiona Hall (UK) – exchanged views with their Sudanese counterparts and government officials. During the MEPs' visit to Khartoum, the European External Action Service (EEAS) delegation and CELEP organised a meeting on pastoralism in Sudan. This gave an opportunity for representatives from local Sudanese pastoralist organisations and international non-governmental organisations that are members of CELEP to discuss issues about pastoralism with the European Parliament delegation and the local European Commission representatives.

Overall, the meeting went well with a strong representation of local and international organisations, including several Sudanese pastoralists. At the meeting, the initiative of the European Commission to work on a reference document on pastoralism was welcomed. The meeting also brought together a number of pastoralist organisations in one place and gave them the opportunity to exchange on key issues with European decision-makers.

One of the issues raised included the challenges faced by pastoralists in Sudan since South Sudan became independent, leading to restricted cross-border mobility. Sudan is 65% desert and, with growing human and animal populations, access to land and pasture is becoming increasingly difficult. Pressure on land also results in conflicts between pastoral/nomad and settled groups (including internally displaced persons) over natural resources. Land conflicts are exacerbated by the effects of climate change on the lives of pastoralists and crop farmers. Challenges regarding an appropriate legislation for land use remain. It was also mentioned that all signed peace agreements (such as the Naivasha Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Doha Agreement) failed to include pastoralists and their needs.

Another issue that was addressed at the meeting is the importance of having services such as healthcare and education that are adapted to mobility of people. As roughly 85% of pastoralists are illiterate, this requires urgent action. Also in this connection, the importance was highlighted to cater for the special needs of women and girls, who need to be directly targeted by interventions to sustainably improve livelihoods in pastoralist communities. Gender dimensions need to be understood in depth in terms of roles and responsibilities of women and men, young and old. The focus of interventions should be more on people rather than primarily on livestock. To emphasise this, the suggestion was made during the meeting that pastoralists be given more attention in the humanitarian programmes in the region.

Concern was raised about the limited research being done on and with pastoralists in Sudan. It appears that Sudanese research institutions are losing their links with international research institutions. Databases on livestock and pastoralists need to be set up to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of development and humanitarian interventions, to facilitate future analysis and to guide future action. The data should be organised and made accessible to allow data sharing at local, state and country level.

The meeting agreed on the potential to improve the lives and economies of the pastoralists by strengthening the focus on adding value in existing and potential new value chains for products like live meat, hides and skins and dairy products (the last-mentioned specifically as a source of income for women and girls). However, funding is needed to develop these value chains. MEP Fiona Hall mentioned regional funding mechanisms in East Africa and the Horn; however, much more time and facilitation would be needed to bring pastoralist organisations together to build cross-border collaboration in order to design multi-country programmes and assist them in accessing these funds.