

Pastoralists plan int'l gathering in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA, July 07 -- Around 300 livestock farmers from the Horn of Africa countries will meet 11-18 July in a bush camp in southeastern Ethiopia to discuss, among other issues, trade, governance and innovation in livestock products, organisers of the gathering disclosed here Thursday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the traditional livestock keepers would pitch camp in the remote Yabello district of Oromiya Region for the meeting that would also be attended by senior government and UN officials.

Their discussion would also touch on critical issues, including HIV/AIDS, education, the environment, and conflict in their communities.

"Pastoralists from the Horn of Africa will explore the relationship between traditional and state governance," OCHA said in a statement.

Kenyans and Somalis will shed light on livestock marketing.

Israeli Bedouin will join the event to tell people what they are doing to improve their lives amid difficult circumstances.

Pastoralists, traders and entrepreneurs from 19 countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Iran, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Peru and Chad are expected to take part in the meeting.

A small number of entrepreneurs who have managed to produce and market food products from camel milk in Mauritania, Niger and India will attend the meeting to demonstrate the complex process by which camel milk is turned into camel cheese.

For the first six days the livestock herders will meet alone. Government and UN officials as well as the Horn and international media will join the gathering for the last two days.

The Gada councils of the Borana, Gabra and Guji peoples are hosting the event in the heart of the Borana rangelands. - angop