

PRESS RELEASE

“Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers on the continent take more lives than terrorism”

Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia – 18 September 2018. *“Today, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers on the continent take more lives than terrorism. Since 2018, over 1,000 people were reported dead and thousands displaced in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, Central region of Mali, on the border between Mali and Niger, in the Tillabery region of Niger and some parts of the Horn.”* Stated Amb. Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security (PSD), while opening a two-day workshop on transhumance conflicts in Africa in Addis-Abab, with his peer Amb. Josefa Correia Sacko, Commissioner Rural Economy and Agriculture (REA).



Group Picture at the opening ceremony of workshop on transhumance conflicts

Attended by various experts and practitioners from the five regional farmers association’s as well pastoral networks, relevant departments of the AUC and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and civil society organizations respectively, the meeting is a collaborative initiative between PSD and DREA including the AU’s Semi-Arid Africa Agricultural Research and Development (SAFGRAD).

Also chairing the opening ceremony of the workshop, HE Mrs Josefa Correia Sacko, Commissioner of REA, recognized during her remarks that despite the huge contribution of the sector, the pastoral populations have benefited little from national and regional development policies along with their infrastructure needs, production services (support, veterinary services, credit, livestock inputs) and basic services (health, education, drinking water) and in safety and security are very far from being covered. In addition, public policies have always neglected the specificities of such populations because their political inclusion is not yet effective.

“Despite this situation, pastoralism is still of paramount importance for Africa in the implementation of Agenda 2063, by its potentialities through notably its livestock, its natural resources and its ancestral know-how” the Commissioner of REA said. She added that *“Pastoralism thus becomes a lever, if not an essential asset for growth and economic development, that is, a powerful instrument for combating poverty that can promote food and nutrition security and thus serve as a base for stability and peace in the continent”*. She finally recognized that the adoption of the African Pastoral Policy Framework by the African Heads of State and Government in January 2011 is an important step for the implementation of the Malabo Declaration as part of the Agricultural Investment Plans of African Union Member States.

The meeting aims to discuss the causes of transhumance conflict and design appropriate strategies to respond to them with the objective of promoting sustainable peace and security in Africa. According to the Amb. Chergui this important gathering will also “*contribute to the AU’s Agenda 2020 of silencing the Guns in Africa and the overall vision of a Peaceful, Prosperous and Integrated Africa*”.

The expected output of the two-day workshop includes : holistic understanding of the drivers for farmer-herders conflict and resilience factors; development of comprehensive continental implementation plan to address the identified factors and transform the conflict by promoting cross border cooperation; enhanced capacities of pastoral networks on conflict prevention, management and resolution.

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