

Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists

21 - 26 November, 2010 MERA, INDIA

WHY PASTORALISM AND WOMEN?

Pastoralism plays a significant role in natural resource management. However, pastoralists are often misunderstood and marginalized socially, economically and politically. Consequently, negative stereotypes pervade pastoral policy and management in many countries. Women pastoralists are marginalized further due to limited opportunities to make decisions within their societies, and to date, their participation in global pastoralist initiatives and fora has been minimal. Despite the many challenges they face, women pastoralists can be influential forces for change.

The Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists will be a first of its kind aimed at bringing together pastoral women, from across the world. The gathering is the brainchild of MARAG, a voluntary organization established in 1994 which works to educate, organize and empower the Maldharis – a marginalized pastoral community from Gujarat in India. MARAG is supported by: International Union for Conservation of Nature – World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (IUCN-WISP), International Land Coalition (ILC), The World Alliance for Mobile Pastoralists (WAMIP) and the League for Pastoral Peoples (LPP).

The gathering aims to provide:

- An opportunity to share experiences, challenges and networking among participants from Asia and other pastoralist areas around the world
- An avenue to learn about each other's livelihoods, traditional technologies and products.
- Follow up work to enhance pastoral women's empowerment through promoting their equal participation in decision making within their communities, local government, in regional and global pastoralist initiatives.
- Global awareness of pastoralism as a livelihood and land use system

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The Gathering's goal is:

To contribute to empowerment of women pastoralists to participate equitably in decision-making within their community, government and other national, regional and international forums and to raise awareness of the specific challenges faced by women pastoralists in the shifting social, economic and ecological environments.

The specific objectives are:

- to encourage women pastoralists participants to seek leadership roles
- to inspire follow up activities that enhances empowerment of pastoral women
- to highlight specific challenges faced by women pastoralists
- to foster exchange of experiences and learning aimed at strengthening the role of women pastoralists in decision (including policy) making