

I am happy to give the opening words of this DREAM Learning Event on Educational Institutionalization for Lowland Development, in particular on the Dry Valley Rehabilitation and Productive Use Approach.

The DREAM process aims to connect those working on lowland development, to enhance cooperation, coordination and systematically empower and build capacity. The DREAM Process started with a DREAM 1 Conference in Semara in September and October 2019, which resulted in the end in the signing of Declaration by all participants, including main government organizations and international development organization. The Dream of DREAM is to best serve the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities by better coordinated

Today we will discuss the place of universities and vocational training centers. As President of Samara University, I am very happy that we have this opportunity to exchange ideas and better formulate the role and position of universities and TVETs. Since its inception in 2008, Samara University is making great leaps towards producing competent and dynamic graduates who fulfill the needs and aspirations of the people of the lowlands. We see our role in service of the development of lowlands, helping to generate the specific knowledge and skills to serve the special conditions of the lowlands and preparing talented and motivated people that we hope we be the human factor that makes a difference in the development of our areas. Samara University is relatively young and every year brings enormous change. The same I believe with many other emerging universities in the lowlands. For Universities to be intimately connected to development activities is essential – it is what we were set up for and what keeps activity,

We look forward to the discussion on the Dry Valley Rehabilitation and Productive Use Approach, that is being implemented in an increasing number of valleys in Afar, Somali Region and other regional states. The approach was first implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional Government and the GIZ-SDR program and is now spreading. This places a demand on our universities: how can we follow, undertake research to finetune the approach, how can we provide engineers, agriculturalists and sociologists and other professionals to serve the approach, how can our students be engaged with the work on the ground, how can we serve lowland development in providing services such as monitoring and evaluation.

Dear distinguished guests, dear representatives from universities, TVETS, government, the international originations, development cooperation organizations, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It is a true pleasure for me to welcome you to the 2nd Learning Event of DREAM I am grateful to all of you for taking time off from your busy schedule to attend this important event. It is also an honor for me to welcome distinguished speakers, the German Development Cooperation-KfW and GIZ-, the representatives of LLRP and SNNPR, USAID, the educators from other universities and TVETs, from IHE and Flood Based Livelihoods Network, the representatives of the non-government organizations, and very importantly people from national and regional governments, all of carrying an important duty to serve the lowland development.