

Keynote MoA Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker

Welcome Speech

Dear H.E. Dr. Fikru Regassa from MoA, dear Ato Wondamagn Shibru from Ministry of Peace, dear representatives from national and international organizations, development cooperation, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed.

A very warm good morning!

I'm very happy to welcome you to the 2nd Webinar preparing the DREAM II conference. This webinar has the focus on **Cooperation** - "Cooperation for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in lowland areas of Ethiopia". It is a big honor for me to see you all linked in willing to reflect jointly on what it means **Cooperation** – cooperation in the Ethiopian lowland areas and for pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods.

From the last webinar, do you remember the image of the orchestra or music band and the dancers?

That their efforts are not ending in a cacophony, a very good director is needed to coordinate between all different musicians but also a dancing leader to support their choreography.

But this is not enough. Even if both groups are perfect in their own performance, for the overall performance, they need to cooperate.

The music band – every musician needs to cooperate with the others, they need to listen to each other to provide the most impressive music.

The same is true for the dancers.

And between them.

For me, this image speaks for our work.

During the last webinar, we heard a lot about extremely interesting initiatives, through governmental projects, through NGOs, through platforms representing pastoral issues, and for sure through German Development Cooperation.

If all these stakeholders are like single musicians trying to perform the development of lowland areas and more resilient livelihoods as a common goal, how is this organized to not end into a cacophony but to reach into a joint future that raises the treasures that the lowlands have to offer – for the benefit of both, the population of the lowland regions and the population of Ethiopia?

If the dancers are the communities, how can we ensure that there is a good cooperation between them and the music band?

How could we come to a coordinated cooperation between all stakeholders and beneficiaries? This is the important topic for today's webinar.

At the end of the first DREAM conference, we jointly signed and endorsed a declaration on joining forces in regard to the development initiatives for the lowlands.

The Ethiopian lowland areas have a lot to offer. Livestock, irrigated agriculture, mineral resources like gold and potash, geothermic resources. To use these treasures wisely, a coordinated cooperation is needed.

To ensure a real outcome of our webinars, we need to go one step further. Not only discussing and reflecting, but also taking serious action.

I would like to invite you very warmly to join a task force towards the end of the webinar to develop jointly an action plan how to install a strong and well-coordinated cooperation under the guidance of the Ethiopian government.

Now I'm curious for all presentations and the discussions we will have. I wish for all of us a very fruitful webinar and would like to hand over to Dr. Kaba.