Notes from the August 2014 DAG resettlement assessment mission to SNNPR - Team Two, covering Surma Woreda, Bench Maji Zone -

Mission participants: Canada, EU (lead, overall SNNPR mission), France, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, UK DFID (Surma team lead); World Bank.

1/ Summary of the mission findings and recommendations

The mission in Surma Woreda did not find any evidence of direct, forced resettlements. Some of the projects active in the area are explicitly aimed, however, at incentivizing the sedentarization of seminomad pastoralists through the provision of basic services and improved housing around settlements that in many cases are already established. The mission received positive feedback from the local population in terms of improved access to education, road and health services in the last years. Sedentarization also seemed to have some positive impacts on women's livelihoods in particular.

However, more problems were found in access to water, high cost of health care and absence of AIDS centres, unclear and inefficient process for house and land allocation, low access to secondary schools, lack of alternative sources of income for women and job opportunities for educated people, distribution of food possibly conditional on sedentarization, and the growing diffusion of guns and alcohol. With regard to the investor was grazing land for Suri cattle. The episodes of violence against the plantation workers seem to have been triggered in part by the inability of the Suri to access this land.

During the visit, we learnt that our interpreters held positions in the local government. We can speculate that their interpreting will have been slanted in favour of the government as a result — also that community members will have been aware of their employment and so more likely to give favourable reports of government programmes. Given this fact, we were glad of the additional interviews we arranged with informed and critical residents, which were conducted without interpreters present. Overall, we are confident we received as accurate an impression of the situation in Surma woreda as could be expected in the circumstances.

Our recommendations (cf. part 5) affect several issues:

- -Settlement programs must remain voluntary, and alternative ways of providing services (such as health and education) should also be explored for those currently more reluctant to settle;
- -The basic services provided should be globally improved. All services (health, water, education, housing, agricultural plots) should be available and affordable, and the process for allocating housing and agricultural plots should be more transparent;
- -Regarding investment projects linked with land acquisition, the government should involve more the local authorities, make sure all affected communities have a stake in projects, provide compensation for the loss of grazing lands, and consider a phased approach to changing patterns of land use (to minimise instances of pastoralists being denied access to land that is not yet being used for other purposes);

- -Government should explore options for enabling the Suri, and especially Suri women, to diversify their income generating activities beyond gold panning and sale of alcohol;
- -Government should carefully consider, again, the issues of alcohol abuse and possession of deadly weapons among the Suri and find ways of mitigating the conflict and social risks of these problems, while respecting 'do no harm' principles;
- -Government should examine the relationship between tourism and harmful traditional practices, and seek ways to develop forms of tourism that do not inadvertently encourage harmful traditional practices (eg. the reported increase in lip plates).

2/ Latest information on the movement of people, provision of services, etc.

- We heard that the Government may have tried to force sedenterisation in parts of Surma in the recent past. After some time, realising this approach was not working, a more consensual approach seems to have been taken. Now the government seems to try to settle the Suri through the provision of basic services and the construction of roads. So far, the sedentarisation carried out in Suri country has actually been semi-settlement. The government is keen to shift the traditional Suri agro-pastoral living pattern with women and children inhabiting temporary villages located around the tribe's shifting cultivation areas and men and boys living in cattle camps set up in faraway grazing lands to a pattern whereby, while men and boys may continue living a nomadic existence, women, elder men and young children will live in more permanent habitations and practise more fixed site agriculture on plots of land adjacent to their dwellings.
- The mission did not hear of any specific cases of forced relocations or resettlements.
- We received information from zonal and woreda officials of their pastoralist development programs: the MDG infrastructure program is designed to encourage and facilitate the settlement of pastoralist people in permanent houses. The program offers incentives for settlement including corn, roofing and framing material. The homeowner must then provide the wood for the walls. The regionally-managed URAP (Universal Road Access Program) aims at linking isolated villages to the main towns and between each other by building roads. These two programs are complementary for the sedentarization/settlement process. The Pastoralist Community Development Project ((PCDP) may provide services to the new villages including schools, health clinics, veterinarian services and water, if communities so choose, but support for resettlement is clearly not part of its design.
- A key incentive to sedentarization/settlement process appears to be the provision of food (either one-off provision, or provided on a regular basis for an uncertain number of months), to those who decide to settle. We heard that sometimes, promises made by the Government to the newly settled Suri were not respected.
- The mission spoke with a number of villagers about the new settlements. Most had benefited from the program or hoped to benefit from it shortly. Most of the interviewees spoke of an improving situation in the region over the last 5/10 years. Several people we interviewed, however, believed the services could be improved. We were told that some clinics were empty and people (mostly women) complained about the high prices of health services. We were also told that school teachers were sometimes not paid, and that food shortages continued. Water

facilities were not available in any of the communities visited, though they were under construction in some. Most of our informants said they had no access to borehole water or latrines yet,

- While some Suri people have accepted the offer of settlement program, we were told that
 others have resisted it and in many cases moved far away from the new roads and houses to
 pursue their traditional lifestyles unimpeded. This resistance stems from:
 - an attachment to 'freedom' and the agro-pastoral way of life;
 - safety reasons ("towns" bring many people together into one place easily reachable for the Suri's external "enemies" and also facilitating intra-Suri revenge killings)
 - a belief that the new houses are ill-designed (some informants complained that their enemies might shoot them through the holes in the houses' walls [and therefore they would prefer cement houses] and/or that the wind might tear roofs away)
 - the size and nature of the agricultural plots too small to produce a sufficient amount of food for subsistence needs (average size being 50m x 100m) and/or requiring more work than shifting cultivation areas.
- There had been expropriations and land acquisitions due to expansion of commercial agriculture and agroindustry, which led to restriction of traditional grazing land. An example is the (see below). Conflict relating to this expropriation has resulted in the killing of some plantation workers, which in turn was a factor underpinning the closure of the plantation by the investors.
- The likely increase in the number of Suri people and reduction of available land for cattle grazing strains their livelihood.
- We heard allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement at the level of the woreda which affects the running of basic services such as the clinics. Vaccination campaigns have apparently been cut short because of the sudden lack of funds or medicines, and women have not been able to access medicine due to stock shortages. While the woreda has said these issues relate to inadequate budgets, some feel that it relates more to mis-spending of budgets on per diems for workshops etc. that take officials to bigger cities.
- Another complaint heard in the interviews and allocated plots as promised, to the problem is that the government has not yet demarcated and allocated plots, as promised, to the growing number of households, although they
- Security is a major concern, which is linked to an increase in the proportion of armed men
 among the Suri community and the use of alcohol. The mission noted that traditional systems of
 conflict resolution and mechanisms for addressing social tensions over resource use are
 gradually declining and many pastoralists are now using self-help to resolve conflicts. As part to
 this trend, it seems that elders influence over young warriors is declining. Violence has always
 played a central role in traditional Suri life, but these cultural trends, linked to the multiplication

of guns and alcohol, tend to increase the number of killings.

- We heard of a number of recent, violent incidents, including an incident during our stay resulting in a death. Violence relates to inter-tribal raiding, intra-tribal blood feuds, stick fighting, the prevalence of light weapons and heavy liquor (araki – whiskey, distilled in Maji - also locally made beer).
- o Before, we heard that beer drinking was usually consumed on special occasions such as weddings, and clearing of farm land. Now, it seems to be more a routine feature of life, drunk more frequently, and alongside stronger alcohols (Araki) brewed by highland people. In addition, we heard that a greater proportion of the corn harvest is now used to make beer for sale in markets and that this can impact negatively on the food security of some families. In an attempt to address the above mentioned problems, we understand that the government has been registering guns and has banned araki in the Surma Woreda. These policies do not seem to have had the desired impact, so far.
- We also heard about two instances of serious violence in 2012, which reflected earlier information received by some embassies in Addis Ababa. These instances involved the deaths of dozens of Suri, one incident in Maji market and one around the gold mines. We heard that the security forces were implicated in both instances, but the violence also had a strong ethnic dimension with an element of vigilantism also possible at the gold mines. We wondered if the conduct of the security forces in these serious incidents had been examined and investigated, and will follow up with the Human Rights Commission.
- We understand that inter-tribal conflict may intensify if e.g. sugar plantations push the further north, or insecurity in South Sudan pushes the east.
- Gender Inequality: the mission noted big differences between men and women in decision making, and access to resources. The society is strongly patriarchal, and men have exclusive power over women. Several points can be observed:
 - o Marriage among the Suri appears to be getting more difficult as cattle become more scarce and less affordable for many. Men have to wait longer to gather the sufficient amount of cows. This favours promiscuous behaviour which happens before marriage. Violent behaviour is inflicted on women who get pregnant before marriage as a way to obtain economic compensation from the boyfriend. If the man is married, we heard it is the wife that will be beaten so that her husband is forced to compensate the family of the girl he impregnated.
 - In some cases, women also become alcoholic, probably from desperation regarding their own personal situation. We learnt that the problem is serious: women are also dying from liver illnesses. Part of this drinking could be linked to a general depression amongst women, related to livelihood insecurity and intra-Suri conflicts.
 - Suri people may be less hungry if the women didn't use as much of their corn harvest to produce beer. On the other hand, they need a monetary income to be able to pay for services (health), clothes and other goods.
 - The worst hunger period is from February to May. The crops are still growing and the men are away with their cattle. The women are left to fend for themselves to find food for their children as well as for the elderly that are left in their care. Some people interviewed believe that Suri men care more about their cattle then their families.

- Hence they are more willing to buy medicine for their cattle than to spend money on medicine for their children.
- The changes with modernity have also enabled women to speak out more. The Government has made it a point to always include women in their discussions and meetings. Women are becoming slowly but surely more self-assertive.
- Farming: in several interviews, women explained they shared the task of farming 50-50 with men. However, it was explained to us that what that means in reality is that men clear the land and women plant. If oxen are used, then it is the men who use them.
- Widows seem to have a particularly hard life. They seem to be marginalised and don't benefit from much help.
- Harmful traditional practices: globally, the mission heard of many traditional practices that are
 inconsistent with international human rights norms and standards e.g. stick fighting combined
 with alcohol abuse resulting in deaths; children denied education by parents opting to maintain
 an isolated pastoralist lifestyle; physical abuse of women to punish husband's infidelity; cattle
 raiding and violent attacks against neighbouring communities.
- We also heard that illegal trafficking of ivory is on the rise. We heard that the Suri are involved
 in this trafficking as a source of income, and the increased presence of the Chinese in Ethiopia is
 creating a demand for it.

<u>The</u> investment

- The mission heard direct testimony of conflict around the development of the

 (a 31,000ha project that had only just begun operations with 100 ha
 of palm production and small cassava and sweet potato farms and with 1500 ha cleared for
 further palm tree farming). Developed over the past 4-5 years in the

 area in Suri grazing
 lands, it never employed more than 210 workers at a time, most of them daily workers
 (watering, planting etc.).
- There was no evidence of resettlement related to the plantation as the land had not been inhabited before the investment. However, sources confirmed that the land had been used for grazing by some pastoralist groups and that this had been a factor in the conflict between the plantation and local communities.
- Moreover, we heard that some local people had supported the investment and had benefited through jobs. However, the type of work was not attractive for some Suri pastoralists and therefore workers from neighbouring ethnic groups were also brought in and employed at the plantation. Suri workers have never numbered more than about 40. Salaries ranged between 19 and 30 ETB daily.
- The owners have pulled out their investment, citing lack of security and lack of water as the main concerns:
 - There have long been thefts on the plantation (sweet potatoes dug out, Suri cattle taken to graze into the plantation - which prompted the digging of a protective ditch),
 - Security was stepped up after a plantation worker was shot (but not killed) in December 2013,

	 Several other workers were shot in a fresh attack in February 2014; at least two of them were killed.
	o Finally, the area apparently suffered from insufficient rainfalls – an explanation that
	doesn't completely satisfy though.
issu pos	approach to Corporate Social Responsibility around this investment might have been an e. Although the investors do seem to have tried to employ as many Suri people as sible and to provide support to the community, the project seems to have been poorly naged by the Ethiopian authorities:
	It's not clear whether the plantation lies in the Surma or the Mr it lies in Surma but is administered by the Maji woreda. In any case, revenues from the plantation seem to have gone to the Maji woreda. This has no doubt exacerbated existing tensions between the and the plantation seem to have gone to the Maji woreda. This has no doubt exacerbated existing tensions between the plantation of Suri people were killed in 2012 in plantation incidents in and in the plantation area plantation of the woreda border. O As the plantation's surface area was more than 5000 ha, the investment has been decided and managed at federal rather than local level. As a consequence, the plantation on the investment's social and environmental impact, or the reasons why the plantation on the investment's social and environmental impact, or the reasons why the plantation on the investment's social and environmental impact, or the reasons why the plantation on the investment's have decided to pull out. There are clear risks to major projects moving ahead without substantial input from those closest to the affected areas, who understand and care more about the impact of investments on local communities.
3/ Methodo	plogy and limitations
con of t war	were present in Surma for three nights, 26-28 August 2014. On 27th and 28th August, we ducted nine official interviews through interpreters (using the DAG ToR questionnaire). Five hese interviews were with women, and four with men (3 groups of elders, 1 group of riors) in five villages () - among the 45 villages in the Surma reda that are part of the settlement programme.
resi	also conducted 5 additional and informal interviews without interpreters with informed dents of Surma. Before arriving in Surma, on 25 August, we interviewed to the conducted 15 interviews (formal and armal).
to a	independently chose our itinerary, where to stay, and where to conduct interviews. But due access issue and lack of time, we did not manage to reach Surma groups living in areas far in the road and in areas close to the Omo river more likely to be affected by the Omo river

basin development.

- We were not obstructed in any of our choices, or our movements. We had a regional police
 escort on the roads between towns, but they stood well away from interview sites (except in
 one instance, unfortunately,
- During the visit, we learnt that our interpreters held positions in the local government. We can speculate their interpreting will have been slanted in favour of the government as a result also that community members will have been aware of their employment and so more likely to give favourable reports of government programmes. We also wondered whether the identity of our interpreters might have explained the lack of clarity we got from communities on more 'sensitive' questions such as government-community consultations and the criteria for new housing allocations. It was a challenge to verify quality and possible bias in translations, but body language of interviewees did not reveal any obvious inconsistency/contradiction between the way statements of interviewees were given and the translation.
- Our interpreters received a long briefing from woreda security on arrival in interpreters were reluctant to tell us what they had been told during the security briefing, and appeared more anxious/ distracted from that point on. Woreda officials also seemed to be tracking us during our time in Surma. We wondered why the briefing and why the tracking, given the fact that we had a large contingent of regional police escorting us between communities. This behaviour from woreda officials was unfortunate it made us less confident that we were getting a clear picture from communities.
- We were glad of the additional interviews we arranged with informed residents, which were
 conducted without interpreters present. Overall, we are confident we received as an accurate
 an impression of the situation in Surma woreda as could be expected in the circumstances.

4/ Tabular comparison of findings between this and the previous mission illustrating trends (+ve and –ve) (or setting of a baseline as relevant), in relation to areas outlined in the checklist, followed by a narrative explanation of the findings based on interviews/focus group discussions;

Since this mission was the first one in the Surma area, no comparison is possible.

5/ Recommendations

- Settlement programs must remain voluntary and the process should advance at a pace in line
 with demand: more consultation and dialogue would benefit the process; alternative solutions
 for service delivery to pastoralist communities should be implemented (e.g. schools, health and
 veterinary services along grazing routes).
- There should be no connection between the voluntary acceptance of a settlement program and the provision of food aid to a food insecure family.
- Government should make sure that there are water points and latrines in each new village at
 the same time as the new houses are available. Similarly, each new household should
 immediately receive a plot of sufficient size to ensure their subsistence. It is not good practice to

provide the new house without these additional promised services at the same time.

- Government should clarify the process for applying for new houses and take into account the suggestions of the communities regarding the construction of these houses.
- Government should clarify the price of health services and provide free healthcare whenever people cannot afford to pay, in line with government policy.
- In case of new investment projects linked with land acquisition, the Government should at all stages consult the local authorities, involve the communities, make sure they have an opportunity to accept the project and provide financial compensation for the loss of any essential grazing land.
- Addressing alcohol abuse and the illegal possession of deadly weapons and firearms by Suri people should be a priority.
- Government should strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms and provide a platform for local authorities, key stakeholders and non-state actors to consult on a regular basis on issues of common interest.
- Government should promote political and social inclusion of under-served communities through affirmative action, particularly by targeted hiring of members of such communities in positions that give them a greater role in the woreda, zone, health facilities, schools, etc.
- Government might wish to assess whether demarcating traditional grazing or livestock routes would help to avoid or minimize resource use conflicts.
- Government should enhance the involvement of community stakeholders in managing donorfunded small infrastructure programs targeted in such communities.
- Government should explore options for supporting the Suri, and especially women, to diversify their income generating activities beyond gold panning and the sale of alcohol.
- The Government should consider setting up an AIDS center in and establishing awareness and prevention programs in the woreda.
- Awareness programs need to be designed to address negative impacts of tourism (i.e. increase in lip plates).
- Greater oversight and accountability in the financial accounts of basic service institutions is recommended to reduce local corruption affecting basic services (i.e. vaccination).