

Dassanetch Integrated Development Program (DIDP)
SNV-Ethiopia

**Report on the Peace Making Ceremony held in
Arbore, Ethiopia, 6-9 March 1993.**

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N.B. This version of the report includes minor edits from the original.

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“Report on the Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore, March 1993”

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Background

As explained in 'A proposal for the Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore' the initiative of promoting the ceremony was taken by some traditional leaders of the Arbore people. The Arbore are a small ethnic group (about 3.000 people), living in a strategical position in the lower Weito valley. Their territory is geographically a natural centre for all the other people directly involved in the ceremony, the Borana, the Hamar, the Konso, the Tsemai, and the Dassanetch. Due to their special position and to the mix origin of the Arbore, they have historically maintained strong relationships with all the surrounding ethnic groups and have made of inter-ethnic relations one of their survival strategy. In fact all Arbore speak at least two local languages.

In the present occasion their main preoccupation was related to a war which occurred last year against the Borana. In that occasion 300-400 Borana lost their life during an attempt to attack the Arbore. Since that time the people and the town itself have been living under constant threat of the revenge, with great economical loss due to the fear of using very good pastures close to Borana territory. The Borana have as well been engaged in warfare with all the other mentioned ethnic groups. Also the other ethnic groups involved in the ceremony have recently been involved in fighting with each other. As a result all over Southern Ethiopia great extensions of excellent pasturages were simply unused because of inter-ethnic fear, while at the same time the drought has hit the region, with a generalized heavy loss of stock. Over the last year two of the biggest group, Borana and Hamar, were and are surviving only thanks to intensive food distribution by NGOs.

It is in this context that the Arbore have requested assistance to a SNV research team for organizing a peace making ceremony with the aim of re-establishing peace on the lower Weito valley and in the southern part of South Omo from the Weito to the Omo rivers. As the largest group involved in the hostilities were the Borana, the first request by the Arbore was to enter Borana country and ask the elders there if they are willing to make a peace (the relation between the two groups was so deteriorated that they could not communicate to each other at all).

A new dimension in peace making in South Omo

In the request of the Arbore there are at least three new elements:

- a) the strong community-based character of the initiative;
- b) the dimension of the ceremony.
- c) the direct call of the international community into peace making activities;

South Omo region is populated by about 16 different small ethnic groups speaking 13 different languages belonging to three different language families (this estimation doesn't include the town people, coming from all over Ethiopia). The relation among those groups and between them and the Borana, living to the East of South Omo, has always been characterized by a dynamic alternation of war and peace. When warfare used to step up to a level which was endangering the economical viability of both groups, peace used to

be re-established by means of peace-making ceremonies.

With the incorporation of the southern part of Ethiopia into the Ethiopian empire, about a century ago, the responsibility of controlling inter-ethnic warfare in Southern Ethiopia was mainly taken over by the armed new-comers. Later on, with the bureaucratization of the empire, the same responsibility was attributed to the established regional administration. We must, however, observe that the administration was entirely composed by the political dominant Northern newcomers (Amhara, etc.) or, at best, by Amharized and urbanized members of the local communities. Their life and productive activities were made in or around the towns which have grown after the invasion as administrative, military and marketing centres. In South Omo there is a clear ethnic dichotomy between urban and rural context, the first associated with a mixture of people belonging to any Ethiopian ethnic groups (administrators, priests, traders, etc.), the second one associated with the local populations and cultures. Only very recently, with the process of regionalisation, some of the local administrators show a much closer relation to the people of the countryside.

Due to the described situation, the peace making activities promoted by the administration were up to now performed in a top-down fashion. The initiative wasn't left to rural communities, those who were really involved in the fight and who were really suffering because of the fighting. The most common *modus operandi* of the administration is the selection of committees whose majority are town people. The language used during meetings is Amharic, which is not understood by rural elders. During government-organized meetings debate is not freely left to the flexible bargain of the people on the base of actual needs, but it follows a rigid agenda. Administrators sit on chairs near to a table, thus stressing by their position their higher authority (but what authority do they have with regards to young countryside warriors?). Again, the places of the meeting are towns, sometimes the very far administrative centres, a choice that again symbolically stresses top-down authority, in a region where such an authority cannot practically be enforced due to the particular physical and human environment. In other words, the peace making activities by the administration are held outside their proper context.

The ceremony planned by the Arbore over-turns such a tendency. It was requested and organized by traditional leaders and held in the site where of the main fighting occurred. According to the request and to the initiative of the Arbore, the participants of each group were selected by each rural community involved in the fighting, with special attention to traditional leadership. Particular attention was paid for having a considerable number of elders from each group, including people who have lost sons and relatives in the conflict. The debate took place under the shade of the trees in the countryside, following traditional political procedures. Once peace was agreed upon by the participants, a complex ceremony, including old and new peace making rituals, took place.

Grassmatch Sora, the main host of the ceremony, explained how the peace making ceremony in Arbore went on according to a long established tradition of peace making. Nevertheless the number of ethnic groups involved in the ceremony was a new element. The reason given by Grassmatch Sora for such an attempt is the need of peace at a regional level. A century of incorporation into the Ethiopian state and 15 years of development initiatives have, in fact, not passed in vain. Perceptions are changing. The rural communities and the traditional leaders, or at least by some of them, start to think in an inter-ethnic dimension, they start to recognize that their neighbours share the same

problems and that there is another reality in their country, having both positive and negative potentialities, with which they have to confront themselves: the state and the international community. In this new perspective, peace is recognized as the most important pre-requisite to economical development. Here is where the call for the international community comes in. On the one hand international aid made possible the performance of a large scale community-based initiative, on the other by involving them the Arbore passed a clear message to both national and international authorities:

"We are able to manage our own development".

It is now up to the national and international agencies to respond to such a call.

The preparatory work

The preparation simultaneously took place locally and in Addis Ababa. Locally the initiative was taken by the Arbore with the help of a SNV consultant of Addis Ababa University, Ato Ayalew Gebre. They have organized a number of preparatory meetings with elders of Borana, Hamar and Tsemai and have sent messages and letters to the other people and to the regional and local administrations concerned (reports on this activity are available). The Arbore people have built a special ceremonial hut and more elevated beds for the guests.

The preparation in Addis Ababa included the following activities:

- a) Involving NGOs and other agencies/enterprises in the ceremony
- b) Assuring political support at the national level
- c) Assuring adequate documentation by external observers, at a international standard

The first step was to contact all major NGOs active in South Omo and Borana in order to get some logistic help from each of them, under the coordination of SNV. The idea was to start networking by creating a widespread consciousness among NGOs of the need to work actively in the field of peace making. Inter-ethnic warfare by definition involves different ethnic-group. As NGOs strongly tend to work with a single group, networking is the only possible answer to such a problem. Also, NGOs had to be convinced of the need of involving themselves in peace making (for more details see 'A Proposal for a Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore'). The largest NGO in South Omo, operational in the area of the ceremony, was the first to be invited, but it clearly declined the invitation to provide assistance or/and contribution to the ceremony, on the ground that it would be a 'political' activity. Other NGOs and even private enterprises have either agreed to provide logistic help or approved in principle the initiative.

This refusal showed that the support of political authorities was necessary for the performance of the ceremony. Thus prof. Ivo Strecker, a SNV adviser based in Addis Ababa University, has approached the Vice Chairman of the Council of Representatives who has delivered a formal letter of support inviting all government and non government organizations concerned to support the peace making ceremony (see enclosed documentation). Secondly, a member of the Council of Representatives from Borana area

belonging to the OPDO party, has expressed his approval for the initiative and has sent oral messages and letters of support to local authorities in Boranaland.

Regarding point c), SNV has approached the Department of Sociology and Social Administration of Addis Ababa University. Two international professors, Ivo Strecker and Alula Pankhurst, and several Ethiopian Ma. students participated in the ceremony. Alula Pankhurst took a video of the ceremony.

The selection of elders

The elders of the different tribes were selected with different methods, due to time constraint:

Arbore: being the host people, they have entirely organized themselves.

Borana: The Borana of Teltelle, who were mostly involved in the fighting, attended the preparatory meetings in Arbore and were supposed to self-select the participants and sent them to Arbore on foot. Regarding the Borana of Yavello and Mega, SNV staff has approached the local administrators who have taken the responsibility of selecting elders and accompany them to Arbore using a lorry provided by CARE-Borana.

Konso: The people of Arbore sent messages through the Traders Corporation based in Konso. Later on SNV staff approached them. They have explained that traditional leaders have to be invited directly. Traditional leaders have therefore been approached directly by SNV staff and by some Arbore representatives. The follow up was entrusted to both traditional leaders and to the Traders Corporation. A representative of Konso Administration was also invited. The Konso people were supposed to take the same lorry provided by CARE.

Tsemai: close neighbours of the Arbore, the Tsemai were approached by the Arbore themselves and went to the ceremonial ground on foot. Father Brian O'Tools of Catholic Mission advertised the ceremony among them.

Hamer: The Hamer living close to Arbore attended the preparatory meeting in Arbore. They self-selected representatives and to the ceremony on foot. Prof. Ivo Strecker was entrusted to advertise the ceremony in far community and to transport the representatives, using the car provided by Addis Ababa University.

Dassanetch: SNV staff and the *wereda* (district) administrators went jointly to contact the elders of the two sections of the Dassanetch involved in the fighting with the Borana, Inkoria and Naritch. The elders did select representatives themselves, who were transported to Omoratte by SNV car and to Arbore by a lorry provided by Ethiopian Rift Valley Safaris.

Bottlenecks

The lorry coming from the Dassanetchland with elders, administrators and SNV staff was stopped in Turmi until the arrival of the President of South Omo Region, Ato Getaun. He arrived on the next day. The local administrator of Turmi delayed the beginning of the ceremony claiming that Getaun had changed the place of the ceremony, which now should be held in Turmi. The explanation was that Arbore, not being a town in a proper sense, was inappropriate for lodging. After a difficult debate with Getaun, SNV staff succeeded in not changing the site of the ceremony, a move that was logistically impossible at that stage). Key support was provided by the administrators of Dassanetch area. Getaun also decided to invite to the ceremony the representatives of Karo and Nyangatom living in the Omo valley, who had been very recently involved in reciprocal fighting. The lorry continued its way to Arbore, while the President went to collect the Karo and Nyangatom.

On the first day of ceremony, 6th of March, the people sat under the shade of the trees outside Omoratte and started to check who had come. From Borana mainly young people belonging to the administrative structure came. From Konso, together with a few traditional leaders and elders, many town people came. The Research Coordinator of DIDP (SNV) started to look into the matter. The administrator of Mega (Borana) explained that the elders actually came to Mega town and by lorry went to Yavello. There they had to sleep but no shelter nor food were provided. Therefore they all went back (except youths). No many elders were invited from Yavello. The administrators also explained that the people of Teltelle (the community mostly involved in the conflict) was confused by a number of contradictory messages about the date and place of the ceremony. Getaun, in fact, had sent a communication concerning the change of place. It was therefore impossible for them to go to Turmi without transportation and they decided to give up. In Konso, the administrators had loaded on the lorry the members of a committee which was formed for a peace making meeting which was organized without success by the administration.

The situation, therefore, was the following: the Borana were not properly represented and a lot of town people, which find difficult to adapt to countryside conditions, came to Arbore (among other things, town people eat different food from countryside people). The Research Coordinator decided to afford the long travel to Teltelle to collect elders, accompanied by the local administrator of Teltelle area.

Next day, the 7th of March, Getaun arrived to Arbore with at least 20 body-guards, worsening the problem of lodging situation of town people even worst. All of them were expecting free accommodation and food.

Heavy intimidation against the organizer of the ceremony took place and strong pressure was made to conclude everything immediately. The people, however, obtained to postpone the ceremony until next morning, hoping that the Borana would meanwhile arrive. The SNV Project Coordinator formed a committee to afford the problem of food and accommodation for the town people.

During the night the Borana did arrive, thanks to the efficient collaboration of Teltelle (Borana) administration. However next morning, the 8th of March, during the opening plenary meeting at the site of the ceremony the Borana refused to go through the peace making ritual without having a proper public discussion. Despite the pressure and continuous disturbance by the President, they went on with their proposal and a long meeting took place. The main objection by the Borana was that they wanted to clarify the

responsibilities of the war (the aim was to obtain public apology by the Arbore). A second objection was that the Borana were not sufficiently represented to undertake such a binding ritual without the approval by the main traditional leaders. The President has also tried to impose the formation of a committee in order to solve the problem in a fast way, but the people simply continued the debate following their own way. Indeed the 'committee' procedure does not fit with the egalitarian character of the societies of Borana and South Omo: each individual should be given the potential capacity to take or oppose decisions

Only at the end of the public debate, late in the afternoon, the Borana accepted to undergo the ritual, which took place with further disturbance by the President.

Later on, in Arbore town, Getaun called SNV and Addis Ababa University people and he formally apologized for his behaviour. Arrangement was made for a meeting on next morning for the follow up of the ceremony. However, at night, the President suddenly left and he did not attend the meeting on the next morning.

The President might have disturbed the ceremony because there were rumours of the ceremony been manipulated by OPDU, a political party of South Omo opposing the leading one. Somebody may have spread such rumours in order to spoil the ceremony. The behaviour of the President, however, may also be interpreted as a worry for the process of empowerment of the local population and for the traditional way to manage peace making, as opposite to the administrative fashion.

Participants to the ceremony

The following is the list of participants. The administrators have been included in the figure of each respective ethnic group.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Arbore | over 150 |
| Hamer | over 180 |
| Tsemai | 35 |
| Borana | 40 |
| Konso | 26 |
| Dassanetch | 27 |
| Nyangatom | 3 |
| Bodi | 2 |
| Mursi | 3 |
| others (various town people) | 86 |
| Tot | <hr/> over 552 |

Contributions to the ceremony

Several institutions have contributed to and/or participated in the ceremony. Here the list:

People of Arbore:

The people of Arbore have organized the ceremony and have accommodated the elders. They have also built special elevated beds for guests and a special ceremonial house. They have provided 6 oxen, 5 sheep and 6 goats for slaughtering. The Police and hotel keepers of Arbore have collaborated as much as possible in hosting the town people.

Snv/Novib:

SNV has provided most of the work of coordination of the external assistance to the ceremony and most the cash used for the ceremony.

The expense by SNV, covered by NOVIB budget, is described in the table here below (this is still an approximate estimation).

The food in excess has been distributed to the inhabitants of Arbore who have mostly contributed to the ceremony, including host families and those who have provided oxen and goats.

The DIDP (SNV) also provided the availability of two Dassanetch facilitators, one car and the required fuel for two weeks. Costs for video-tape editing, translation and photocopies of reports are not yet defined.

| <i>Category-item</i> | <i>bought in/from</i> | <i>qty</i> | <i>cost (ETB)</i> |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| a-sorghum | Omoratte market from Dassanetch | 12 qtl | 644 |
| a-maize | Weito project | 7 qtl | 420 |
| a-coffee beans | Konso market | 9 qtl | 1,700 |
| a-local beer | Konso market | 40 lt | 300 |
| a-hoes | Konso Market | 16 | 80 |
| a-margarine | Mega shop | 15 tins | 90 |
| a-ox | Arbore | 2 | 850 |
| a-health care | health centres | | 33 |
| a-loading work | Arbore | | 40 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | SUBTOT CATEGORY A | 4,157 |
| b-various food | Addis Ababa | | 204 |
| b-hotel (admini- stration and bodyguards) | Arbore | | 1,298 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | SUBTOT CATEGORY B | 1,502 |
| c-sugar | Addis Ababa | 1 qtl | 280 |
| c-salt | Addis Ababa | 1 qtl | 88 |
| c-tea | Mega shop | 10 pkt | 45 |
| c-travel expenses for elders and administrators | Turmi, Omoratte, Arbore and Konso hotels and shops | | 623 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | SUBTOT CATEGORY C | 1,036 |
| d-jurricane | Addis Ababa | 6 | 360 |
| d-plastic sheet | Mega | 10 mt | 300 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | SUBTOT CATEGORY D | 660 |
| e-Addis Ababa University consultancy | Addis Ababa | | 1,500 |
| e-salary for local follow up | Arbore, Borana, Turmi | | 3,900 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | SUBTOT CATEGORY E | 5,400 |
| GRAND TOTAL ETB | | | 12,755 |

Administration

All the concerned local administrators have actively collaborated. Particularly, they have greatly helped with the selection of elders in Borana and in Kuraz *wereda*. The elders of Teltelle have also received pocket money from their *kebele* in Teltelle.

Care-Borana

CARE-Borana has provided a lorry for the transport of elders and local administrators from Mega, Yavello and Konso to Arbore and back. This lorry has also loaded various food from Konso and Weito project. Later on CARE has provided one car to take the people of Teltelle back to Teltelle from Yavello.

Ethiopian Rift Valley Safaris

The Ethiopian Rift Valley Safari has provided a lorry to transport people, food and other items from Omoratte and Turmi to Arbore and back.

Addis Ababa University

A team came from Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology and Social Administration. They have taken a video of the ceremony.

Catholic Church, Dimeka

Father Brian O'Tools has helped to advertise the ceremony among the Hamer and Tsemai elders, and took part to the meeting on the last day. During the preparatory period the Church gave an essential mechanical assistance to SNV car.

Mekane Yesus, Konso

Mekane Yesus Evangelic Church in Konso has provided some assistance in Konso, preparing food for the Borana in transit.

Weito Project

The Weitu farm has sold grain at a reasonable price, has lent some cooking material and representative have taken part to the meeting.

Selam:

SELAM has provided some goods.

Ethio-Korean Cotton Project

A representative of the Ethio-Korean Cotton Project has attended the meeting.

Others

Other anthropologists and travellers have attended the ceremony. Yukio Miyawaki, a Japanese anthropologist has given assistance with transportation.

Evaluation of costs

The ceremony has been performed using facilities already available in the area (lorries provided by NGOs and enterprises) with an extra cash expense of ETB 12,755. Such an expense may be subdivided into the following 5 categories (see paragraph 'Contribution to the ceremony', SNV/NOVIB):

- a - Food and health assistance for elders and ritual objects
- b - Expenses to guest town people only
- c - Commodities for both town people and elders
- d - Goods which will remain property of the project
- e - Consultancy and follow up.

Out of these expenses, only category a) and c) may be considered effective costs if this type of ceremonies will become a common practise in the area. Expenses b) were inflated by the exaggerated attendance of town people and by the tremendous pressure of the administrators for a proper hosting. Category d) in practise constitutes an increment of the property of the project. Lastly, category e) is related to the innovative character of the initiative, a feature which requires skills during the preparation, study, documentation and monitoring.

Therefore, if NGOs will accept to give logistic help and the local and regional administrators will take over the responsibility of organizing such type of ceremonies, the actual extra cost will not exceed ETB 5,193 for a gathering of over 466 elders. Such an amount is simply ridiculous compared to the normal costs of standard development activities.

Most of expense for the Peace Making Ceremony was made locally, thus contributing to the local economy.

Suggested Development Projects

Many of the people who have attended the ceremony think that the ceremony alone will not be enough for maintaining peace in the area in the long run. Development work should sustain the peace with initiatives oriented towards projects which may help to maintain or promote peaceful inter-ethnic relations.

The following ideas were forwarded by the participants themselves:

- 1) *Boarding school for students of different ethnic groups in Arbore*: Requested by the Arbore and supported by several other groups. In Arbore a school already exists. The idea is to build a hostel to guest the boys of the surrounding pastoral peoples. As the ceremony has demonstrated, Arbore is an ideal geographical and cultural centre for several surrounding groups.
- 2) *Agricultural development of the Weito valley*: Requested by the Arbore, the Tsemai and the Wata Wandu (a subsection of the Borana): Before engaging in practical activities, an over-whole study of the potentialities of the entire valley should be undertaken,

with special emphasis on technology manageable by the local communities and consuetudinary rights of the people of the area. People of Addis Ababa University (Dept. of Sociology), with external funds, may take the initiative; the input of a 4 wheel drive car for research activities (during a limited span of time) would be necessary;

- 3) *Agricultural development of the Segan valley*: Requested by the Konso. Unfortunately the water of the Segan river seems to be too salty for irrigation. Studies may be undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture.
- 4) *Maintenance of the road Teltelle-Arbore*: the idea came from the administrators of Teltelle and has been supported by the Arbore. The road, which went out of use since the beginning of the hostilities, may promote inter-ethnic trade with positive results. If funds will be available, the administration of Teltelle may take the responsibility to organize the work.
- 5) *Radio facilities (with solar panels) in isolated police posts both in Borana and South Omo*: The idea came from several administrators. The police located in some isolated places, where war parties are likely to pass by, do not dispose of radio facilities. Even if the police with the limited force available in the place will be unable to stop the raiders, they may both ask for support and alert the possible target communities, thus reducing the possibilities of success of the attack. It would be a relatively very small expense.

Follow up

The ceremony needs a follow up in different fields.

- At the last plenary meeting 40 people from Arbore, Hamer, Tsemai Konso and Borana, living in key locations, were selected to overview the situation and to check violators of the agreement.
- Horra Sora has been entrusted by SNV to follow up the general situation of warfare (monitoring), including ideas from local people on development project which may help to maintain inter-ethnic peaceful relations.
- Halake Helema has been entrusted by SNV to go to Borana ritual villages (*yaa'a*) in order to explain to the most relevant traditional leaders (*qaallu* and *abbaa gadaa*) about the ceremony. The debate which took place in Arbore was recorded and the tape (with a tape recorder) was given to Halake. This is because the SNV Research Coordinator had committed to properly inform the *qaallu* and *gada* leadership of the Borana about the ceremony.
- Finalisation of Several reports on the ceremony and elaboration of the documentation: internal reports, reports by the Arbore themselves, publication on scientific journals, media, reports to be delivered to the regional and local administration (see paragraph 'Evaluation of the ceremony in the process approach perspective'), copies and transcription of audio-tapes, copies and editing of video tapes.

- Finding sponsors for the projects that have been identified during the ceremony.

An incomplete peace

One of the problems addressed during the Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore was the conflict between the Dassanetch and the Borana. However the Borana of Teltelle have clearly explained that they themselves do not raid the Dassanetch, this being rather done by the Borana of Kenya together with the Gabbra. It is therefore necessary to proceed with another peace making ceremony. Due to its international dimension, proper preparation should be done by the Regional Administration. But in that context there are still problems regarding the principles, procedures and modalities of a community based peace making. Before engaging in international activities it is perhaps better to clarify the internal situation.

Evaluation of the ceremony in the process approach

As mentioned in 'A Proposal for a Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore' it was hoped that the role taken by SNV will, after this first experience, be taken by the administration and other NGOs, in line with the principle of the process approach.

In this perspective there are both good and bad signs.

The ceremony has involved the people living between the lower Omo and Weito river valleys. The Omo Valley (to the North of Dassanetch) is another area of intensive conflict. Recently the Nyangatom and Dassanetch, and the Nyangatom and the Karo have been involved in bad clashes. As mentioned before, the President of South Omo has tried to bring, in a top down fashion, this problem to the ground of the Arbore ceremony. The elders of those communities attended, but the Arbore themselves were not ready to cope with this problem, because of the very loose inter-relation between Nyangatom/Karo and themselves. Nevertheless the news of the Arbore ceremony and of its modalities spread through the region. The ceremony was also greatly appreciated by administrators at *wereda* (district) level and by members of the Regional Administration belonging to the pastoral ethnic groups of the region. Immediately after the Arbore ceremony the Secretary of South Omo Region, a Nyangatom himself, has asked SNV advice and assistance for a new ceremony to be held among the Nyangatom, Dassanetch, Karo, Hamar, Mogujy, Toposa (from Sudan) and Mursi. The Secretary has committed himself to take over the responsibility of organizing the ceremony and coordinating the help of NGOs and enterprises. Indeed he has approached elders of several of the groups and representatives of NGOs and enterprises. Meetings have been held to agree the place of the ceremony. The elders of Dassanetch, Nyangatom and Karo are simply enthusiastic about the initiative and demanding to have it soon. They are ready to select representatives. Philadelphia Mission is ready to act as main host (from the point of view of food and shelter) and Ethiopian Rift Valley Safaris, a private enterprise, will certainly assist as much as possible, having been so helpful even during the ceremony held in Arbore. The police of Omoratte is ready to

provide transport for the Dassanetch elders. In short, everything seems to go perfectly according to the principle of process approach. Nevertheless, the Secretary cannot proceed further because the President of the region has not yet signed the letters of formal invitation for assistance. According to a talk the Research Coordinator of SNV had with the President, the main problem seems, once again, the selection of the ceremonial ground. The President prefers a town. Taking the meeting into town means to take it out of the control of the local people. This issue is absolutely central to the process of empowerment.

It seems therefore now necessary to send formal reports of the Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore to regional and district administrators. In this way we hope to reach two goals. The first is to show that our action does not oppose the government policy, the second is to explain more explicitly the necessity of leaving the initiative to the people who are directly involved in warfare and who are directly suffering from it, if practical results have to be achieved.

Evaluation of peace making as a starter activity

The Peace Making Ceremony in Arbore was a starter activity for the DIDP (SNV). It was a low-cost initiative and, as such, we have been able to engage immediately in it without looking for extra-budget. Also, it is already concluded, that is it gave an immediate result, if we don't consider monitoring and documentation which anyhow are not relevant from the point of view of the beneficiary group. Beyond the actual success in bringing peace - an issue on which only time can give an answer - the Peace Making Ceremony gave the following positive results:

- a) *Improved dialog between DIDP and Dassanetch*: Thanks to the passage from talk to action, the Dassanetch have now an idea of our aims and on the ways we want to achieve them, through community based action and by empowering them. The preparation of the ceremony and the improvement of the reciprocal understanding also allowed a fast progress into the research, especially into the knowledge of the political organization of the Dassanetch.
- b) *Better understanding of the regional situation*: this includes both horizontal inter-ethnic relations and the knowledge of South Omo political environment.
- c) *Increased consciousness by NGOs and private enterprise to engage in peace making activities*: Philadelphia mission is now ready to promote a new peace making ceremony and we were told that even Redd Barna is now providing some assistance in peace making to the regional administrators.
- d) *Starting of networking*: as mentioned, the problem of inter-ethnic warfare, which is the main constraint to development in the region, can only be afforded through networking. Since the start the coordination of external assistance to the local community has been organized and provided on a networking basis. It was a good start for future activity.
- e) *Empowerment of local population*: increased consciousness by local community on the

possibility to manage their own development.