

# Declaration on Livestock Keepers' Rights



**LIFE Network**

We, the LIFE Network and other organizations<sup>1</sup> representing indigenous and ecological Livestock Keepers<sup>2</sup> and supporting ecologically and socially sustainable livestock development,

Affirming our commitments to international legal instruments<sup>3</sup> relevant to Livestock Keepers' Rights, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and other pertinent legal agreements,

Taking cognizance of the efforts and contributions of the LIFE Network, its supporting organisations and stakeholders in previous processes advocating Livestock Keepers' Rights, including especially the Sadri Declaration, the Karen Commitment, the Bellagio Brief, and the Addis Résumé,

Conscious of the important role of Livestock Keepers in the conservation and sustainable use of livestock diversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, livelihood and food security, sustainable land use and management of natural resources,

Aware of the threats posed by industrial and corporate models of livestock breeding, which include privatization of genetic resources through intellectual property rights and the free market system,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 4 for a list of organizations and individuals that have signed the declaration

<sup>2</sup> "Livestock Keepers" in the context of this declaration means indigenous and ecological livestock keepers. See Appendix 1 for definitions of indigenous and ecological livestock keepers and for information on the LIFE Network

<sup>3</sup> See *Appendix 2* for legal agreements and instruments in support of the different principles and rights and *Appendix 3* for the web addresses of the different instruments

Affirming that Livestock Keepers possess collective rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development as custodians of local animals genetic resources,

Conscious that the livelihoods of Livestock Keepers are under threat by the progressive loss of grazing land, limitations to mobility and lack of participation in decision making,

**We hereby recognize and endorse the following principles and rights:**

Principle 1:

***Livestock Keepers are creators of breeds and custodians of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture.***

Over the course of history, pastoralists and small-scale farmers have managed and bred their livestock, exposed them to different environments, selected and used them, thus shaping them so they are well-adapted to their environment and its extremes. Keeping these breeds is a vital part of their culture and livelihoods. Yet these breeds and their livelihoods are under risk through globalization, environmental degradation, climate change, changes in land use, and many other threats. This might endanger food security in marginal areas.

As recognised in the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources, livestock keeping communities are thus the creators and custodians of the breeds that they maintain. They have therefore earned certain custodianship rights over these breeds, including the right to decide how others use the genetic resources embodied in their breeds.

Principle 2:

***Livestock Keepers and the sustainable use of traditional breeds are dependent on the conservation of their respective ecosystems.***

Traditional breeds are developed through the interaction between livestock, Livestock Keepers and their natural environments. These natural environments are conserved, inter alia, through traditional practices of Livestock Keepers, and traditional breeds lose their specific characteristics once removed from these ecosystems. Livestock Keepers therefore have a right to access their natural environment, so as to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of their breeds and the environment.

Principle 3:

***Traditional breeds represent collective property, products of indigenous knowledge and cultural expression of Livestock Keepers.***

While Livestock Keepers have collective custodianship rights over their breeds and the genetic traits of these breeds, it is crucial that these rights are supported and promoted by States. States must therefore respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of Livestock Keepers embodying lifestyles relevant for sustainable use and conservation of livestock diversity.

Based on these principles articulated and implicit in existing legal instruments and international agreements, Livestock Keepers from traditional livestock keeping communities and/or adhering to ecological principles of animal production, shall be given the following **Livestock Keepers' Rights**:

- 1. Livestock Keepers have the right to make breeding decisions and breed the breeds they maintain.**
- 2. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to participate in policy formulation and implementation processes on animal genetic resources for food and agriculture.**
- 3. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to appropriate training and capacity building and equal access to relevant services enabling and supporting them to raise livestock and to better process and market their products.**
- 4. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to participate in the identification of research needs and research design with respect to their genetic resources, as is mandated by the principle of Prior Informed Consent<sup>4</sup>.**
- 5. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to effectively access information on issues related to their local breeds and livestock diversity.**

Such principles and rights must be entrenched in legally binding international and national instruments.

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<sup>4</sup> See the Bonn Guidelines at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-bonn-gdls-en.pdf>

## **Appendix 1: Explanation of Terms**

*Indigenous Livestock Keepers* include all those communities who have a long-standing cultural association with their livestock and have developed their breeds in interaction with a specific territory or landscape.

*Ecological Livestock Keepers* are those that sustain their animals and the environments, where these animals live, relying largely on natural vegetation or home-grown fodder and crop by-products and without artificial feed additives.

The **LIFE Network** is a group of non-government organisations and individuals supporting community-based conservation of animal genetic resources. For further information, see [www.lifeinitiative.net](http://www.lifeinitiative.net).

## **Appendix 2: Existing legal instruments supporting Livestock Keepers' Rights**

Principle 1:

***Livestock Keepers are creators of breeds and custodians of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture.***

Point 9 of the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources recognizes “that the *genetic resources of animal species most critical to food security, sustainable livelihoods and human well-being are the result of both natural selection, and directed selection by smallholders, farmers, pastoralists and breeders, throughout the world, over generations*”.

Point 12 of the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources recognizes “*the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers, pastoralists and animal breeders of all regions of the world have made, and will continue to make for the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*”.

Part I Point 10 of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources: “*all animal genetic resources for food and agriculture are the result of human intervention: they have been consciously selected and improved by pastoralists and farmers since the origins of agriculture, and have co-evolved with economies, cultures, knowledge systems and societies. Unlike most wild biodiversity, domestic animal resources require continuous active human management, sensitive to their unique nature*”.

Principle 2:

***Livestock Keepers and the sustainable use of traditional breeds are dependent on the conservation of their respective ecosystems.***

Article 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity: “*genetic resources should be conserved in the surroundings in which they have developed their distinct properties*”.

Article 10 (d) of the Convention on Biological Diversity demands that local populations are supported “*to develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduce*”.

Chapter 15 (5) (g) of Agenda 21: requires States to “*Take action where necessary for the conservation of biological diversity through the in situ conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats,...and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings.*

Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration: “*Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and*

*development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development”.*

Principle 3:

***Traditional breeds represent collective property, products of indigenous knowledge and cultural expression of Livestock Keepers.***

Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: *“Contracting parties shall...subject to national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity...”*

Article 10 (c) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: *“customary use of biological resources is protected and encouraged in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation and sustainable use requirements”.*

Chapter 15 (4) (g) of Agenda 21 calls on governments at the appropriate level *“to recognize and foster the traditional methods and knowledge of indigenous people and their communities ...relevant to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources”.*

Chapter 15 (5) (e) of Agenda 21: Governments should *“subject to national legislation, take action to respect, record, protect and promote the wider application of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources ...”*

### **Livestock Keepers’ Rights:**

#### **1. Livestock Keepers have the right to make breeding decisions and breed the breeds they maintain.**

Article 10 (c) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: *obliges Parties to “protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation and sustainable use requirements”.*

Article 1(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: *“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.*

Further agreements in support of this right include:

- Article 8(1), 11, 18, and 24(1) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- Article 7(1) and 15(1) of the Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries,
- Article 11(2), 15(1) (a) and 25 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- Article 25 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and
- Principle 10 and 22 of the Rio Declaration.

**2. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to participate in policy formulation and implementation processes on animal genetic resources for food and agriculture.**

Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: obliges Parties to *“promote the wider application of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities with their approval and involvement”*.

Article 14(1) (a) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: obliges Parties to *“introduce appropriate procedures requiring environmental impact assessment of its proposed projects that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biological diversity with a view to avoiding or minimizing such effects and where appropriate allow for public participation in such procedures”*.

Article 3 (a) of the United Nations Convention on Desertification: compels Parties to *“ensure that decisions on the design and implementation of programmes to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought are taken with the participation of populations and local communities and that an enabling environment is created at higher levels to facilitate action at national and local levels”*.

Article 10(2) (f) of the United Nations Convention on Desertification: obliges the *“effective participation at the local, national and regional levels of non-governmental organizations and local populations, both women and men, particularly resource users, including farmers and pastoralists and their representative organizations, in policy planning, decision-making, and implementation and review of national action programmes”*.

Further agreements in support of this right include

- Article 5, 18, 19 and 27 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- Article 7(1) of the Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries,
- Article 25(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- Article 21(10) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and
- Principles 10 and 22 of the Rio Declaration.

**3. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to appropriate training and capacity building and equal access to relevant services enabling and supporting them to raise livestock and to better process and market their products.**

Article 12 (a) of the Convention on Biological Diversity obliges Parties to “*establish and maintain programmes for scientific and technical education and training in measures for the identification, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and its components*”.

Article 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity obliges Parties to “*adopt economically and socially sound measures that act as incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of components of biological diversity*”.

Article 19 (1) (e) of the United Nations Convention on Desertification obliges parties to promote capacity building “*by adapting, where necessary, relevant environmentally sound technology and traditional methods of agriculture and pastoralism to modern socio-economic conditions*”.

Strategic Priority 6 of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources requests governments to “*Support indigenous and local livestock systems of importance to animal genetic resources, including through the removal of factors contributing to genetic erosion. Support may include the provision of veterinary and extension services, delivery of microcredit for women in rural areas, appropriate access to natural resources and to the market, resolving land tenure issues, the recognition of cultural practices and values, and adding value to their specialist products.*”

Further agreements in support of this right include:

- Article 21(1) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and
- Article 22 and 27(2) of the Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

**4. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to participate in the identification of research needs and research design with respect to their genetic resources, as is mandated by the principle of Prior Informed Consent.**

Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (see above) and Article 10 (d) which says Parties shall “*support local populations to develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced*”.

Chapter 15(4) (g) of Agenda 21 require states to “*Recognize and foster the traditional methods and the knowledge of indigenous people and their communities ...and ensure the opportunity for the participation of those groups in the economic and commercial benefits derived from the use of such traditional methods and knowledge*”.

Further agreements in support of this right include

- Article 11(2), 19, 26, 28, 31 and 32(2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- Article 15(2) of the Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries,
- Article 11(2) (a), 15(1) (b) and (c), 15(3) and 25 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- Article 17 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and
- Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.

**5. Livestock Keepers shall have the right to effectively access information on issues related to their local breeds and livestock diversity.**

Article 13 (a) of the Convention on Biological Diversity: obliges Parties to *“Promote and encourage understanding of the importance of and the measures required for the conservation of biological diversity, as well as its propagation through media, and the inclusion of these topics in educational programmes”*.

Further agreements in support of this right include:

- Article 15 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- Article 11(2) (a) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- Article 19(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and
- Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.

## **Appendix 3: Web addresses of the legal instruments and civil society statements mentioned in this Declaration**

### **Legal instruments**

- Agenda 21:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21toc.htm>
- Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/62.htm>
- Convention on Biological Diversity: <http://www.cbd.int/convention/convention.shtml>
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions:  
[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=31038&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities: [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_minori.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm)
- Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources:  
[http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/documents/Interlaken/ITC-AnGR073\\_en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/documents/Interlaken/ITC-AnGR073_en.pdf)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:  
[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ceschr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ceschr.htm)
- Rio Declaration:  
<http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>
- United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification:  
<http://www.unccd.int/convention/text/convention.php>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:  
<http://www.iwgia.org/sw248.asp>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

### **Civil society statements:**

- Sadri Declaration: <http://lifeinitiative.net/index.php/archives/2000/12/02/sadri-declaration/>
- Karen Commitment: <http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/KarenCommitment5.pdf>
- Bellagio Brief: [http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/bellagio/bellagio\\_brief.htm](http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/bellagio/bellagio_brief.htm)
- Addis Résumé: see “The way forward” on page 4 at <http://www.esap-eth.org/Publications/Newsletters/ESAP%20newsletter%20April-%20June.pdf>

## Appendix 4: Signatories of the Declaration on Livestock Keepers' Rights

### Organizations

Association for Practical Ecology, Denmark  
Breeders Association of Black Spotted Danish Landrace Swine and Danish Landrace Swine anno 1970, Denmark  
Breeding Association of Maritza sheep, Bulgaria  
Bulgarian Biodiversity Preservation Society SEMPERVIVA, Bulgaria  
Damara Sheep Breeders' Society, South Africa  
Dana and Qadisiyah Local Community Cooperative, Jordan  
Foundation for Environment and Development (FEDEV), Cameroon  
Heifer Project International, USA  
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), Germany  
Iringa Herders and Health Development Organization (IH&HDO), Iringa, Tanzania  
Kisup Ateker, Uganda  
League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development (LPP), Germany  
Lokhit Pashuk Palak Sansthan (LPPS), India

MASIPAG, Philippines  
Natural Justice, South Africa  
Nourishing the Planet/Worldwatch Institute, USA  
Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA), Uganda  
Pastoralism and Poverty Frontiers, Uganda  
Prelude Data Bank, Belgium  
Rain-fed Livestock Network, India  
SAVE Foundation, Switzerland  
SAVES, Pakistan  
Senaapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation, India  
Spanish Federation of Shepherds Associations, Spain  
The Association Old Danish Domestic Animals, Nyborg, Denmark  
World Association of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), Iran

### Individuals

Abdul Raziq, SAVES, Pakistan  
Amsale Shibeshi, PENHA Uganda  
Antje Feldmann, GEH, Germany  
Atila Sedefchev, BBPS SEMPERVIVA, Bulgaria  
Balaram Sahu, Editor Ama Akhapakha (Oriya version of Honey Bee), India  
Barney Links, Livestock Keeper in Namaqualand, South Africa  
Bharat Ghodgavakar, Chennai, India  
Birgit Bak, Breeders Association of Black Spotted Danish Landrace Swine and Danish Landrace Swine anno 1970, Denmark  
Camila F. Nkwenti, Lawyer, Cameroon

D. K. Sadana, Scientist, India  
Dawie du Toit, Sheep Breeder, South Africa  
Danielle Nierenberg, Senior Research, Nourishing the Planet/Worldwatch Institute, USA  
Donald Rugira Kugonza, Livestock Breeder/Genetist & Senior Lecturer, Makerere University, Uganda  
Elder M.M.Moonga, NEPAD/SANBio Livestock Node Coordinator, Zambia  
Eliamani Laltaika, Lawyer, Tanzania  
Elizabeth Katushabe, PENHA, Uganda  
Evelyn Mathias, LPP, Germany  
Fernando García-Dory, Spanish Federation of Shepherds, Spain

Getachew Gebru Tegegn, ELD Network,  
Ethiopia

Hanwant Singh Rathore, LPPS, India

Igshaan Samuels, Agricultural Research Council,  
South Africa

Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, LPP, Germany

Jacob Wanyama, LIFE Network Africa, Kenya

Jean Lehmann, Prelude Data Bank, Belgium

Julieta von Thüngen, INTA, Argentina

Kabir Bavikatte, Lawyer, South Africa

Kanyangareng Oscar Okech, Coalition of  
Pastoral Civil Society Organisations  
(COPACSO), Uganda

Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, Senaapathy  
Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation, India

Kassahun Awgichew, Genotype Program Officer,  
Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity  
Improvement Program (ESGPIP), Ethiopia

Khalid Khawaldeh, Dana and Qadisiyah Local  
Community Cooperative, Jordan

Knud Theil Nielsen, The Association Old Danish  
Domestic Animals, Denmark

K.P. Ramesha, Scientist, India

Kwenkam Paul Yemgai, Cameroon

Lilli Jensen, Kgs.Lyngby, Denmark

Maria da Gloria Taela, Animal Breeder, Agrarian  
Research Institute, Mozambique

Marc Moens, Senior Livestock Investment  
Officer, Investment Center of FAO, Food and  
Agriculture Organization of the UN

Markus Arbenz, IFOAM, Germany

Mosses Ndiyaine, IHO, Tanzania

Nchunu Justice Sama, Lawyer, Cameroon

Nitya Ghotge, ANTHRA, India

Olivia Mah Tamon, Barrister-at-law, Cameroon

P. Vivekanandan, SEVA, India

Philippe Leperre, Expert livestock production  
and health, Laos

Ranjit S. Kataria, Sr. Scientist, NBAGR, India

Raúl Perezgrovas, Mexico

Reza Senopati, Researcher in Ethnoveterinary  
Study, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia

Salah Galal, Professor, Animal Production  
Department, Ain Shams University, Egypt

Sider Sedefchev, BBPS SEMPERVIVA,  
Bulgaria

Thomas Loquang, Kisup Ateker, Uganda

Ultra Kothari, Associate Professor, Sai Baba  
College, Jaipur, India

W. Akin. Hassan, Usmanu Danfodiyo University,  
Nigeria

In addition, 74 people have signed the declaration at <http://www.genecampaign.org/appeal/index.php> (status of 1 November 2010)

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**If you would like to sign, please contact:** LPP, c/o Ilse Koehler-Rollefson at [ilse.koehlerroll@gmail.com](mailto:ilse.koehlerroll@gmail.com) or Sabine Poth at [sabine@pastoralpeoples.org](mailto:sabine@pastoralpeoples.org) and indicate whether you'd like to sign as an organization, an individual or both!