

# LPP statement to the Eighth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Curitiba, Brazil, 22 March 2006

*The following statement was made by Vivekanandan of SEVA, India, on behalf of the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development within Agenda item "Agricultural Biodiversity" of the Eighth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil, on 22 March 2006 (see also [www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)).*

Mr. Chairman,

I'm Vivekanandan of SEVA NGO, and speaking on behalf of the League for Pastoral Peoples.

Since it is the first time we have the floor, we would like to congratulate you for being elected Chair, and thank the Brazilian Government for hosting this important event.

My statement is with reference to document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/1/Add.2, Decision 26.4 Agricultural biodiversity

Being a representative of livestock keeping and breeding communities in India, I understand that both the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity and Nutrition and the International Soil Biodiversity Initiative also refer to pastoralism when they address "farmers and other land managers" or production systems like agro-forests. We welcome Switzerland's suggestion to specify the wording. We also strongly welcome Ethiopia's suggestion to negotiate an international treaty.

Domestic animal diversity has been largely neglected as compared to crop diversity, not only by the CBD, and our wish is that in the implementation of initiatives like the ones addressed in the decision document as well as other activities of the CBD, that this neglect is redressed.

We welcome FAO's Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources that comes ten years after the Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources held during 1996.

Pastoralists make use of arid and semi-arid areas that mostly are unsuitable for cropping. They supply plough bullocks, supply manure, and disease-resistant local breeds to the farmers. Unfortunately their traditional grazing rights have been severely restricted, they undergo sufferings and harassments. In recent years this pressure often originates from protected area management. All this lead to a great loss of animals, domestic animal biodiversity, and of traditional knowledge: the younger generation has to migrate to find alternative livelihoods. For the first time in Indian history, pastoralists are resorting to legal assistance in order to secure their grazing rights and their livelihoods. At the global level, pastoralists and other livestock keeping communities are getting organised to secure Livestock Keepers' Rights. Inspired by Farmers' Rights, the Livestock Keepers' Rights also address Intellectual Property Rights (as we don't want patents on animals), Access and Benefit-Sharing, and Participation in Decision-making. Just as an example, I want to quote, Mr. Chairman, 85% of the Brazilian cattle has Indian Ongole blood, which is called Narole in South America. This may not have been possible if animals had been monopolized by patents.

Finally, I would like to inform that a side event was held on Tuesday to inform about this. FAO, IPGRI and party delegates attended it. The Swiss delegation invited us to hold parallel and side events during the Interlaken conference. We are also planning to hold preparatory workshops for NGOs and journalists ahead of the conference.

Some development organisations like the UNDP have come forward to take up this issue in cooperation with environmental organisations like IUCN. It could have a great impact on poverty alleviation, as 70% of the world's poor people keep livestock, 650 million livestock keepers are subsistence farmers and the majority of the 190 million pastoralists are poor. The impact on biodiversity is obvious, as they keep and develop indigenous animal breeds. Instead of focusing on assessment of the biodiversity losses, they contribute to halt the loss of breeds, which is actually an aim of the CBD.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.