



PROCEEDINGS OF  
CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS ON RECONCILING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
LOWER OMO VALLEY



Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

May 2013  
Mizan-Teferi

# **Proceedings of Consultative Meeting on Reconciling Conservation and Development in the Lower Omo Valley**

## **Organized by**

Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority in Collaboration with Population, Health and Environment  
Ethiopia Consortium and Southern Regional States

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BMZCTD	Bench-Maji Zone Culture and Tourism Office
CCA	Community Conservation Area
CM	Collaborative Management
CT	Community Tourism
EWCA	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
IBC	Institute of Biodiversity
IT	Information Technology
MCHA	Murulle Controlled Hunting Area
MCTCHA	Ministry of Culture and Tourism Cultural Heritage Authority
MNP	Mago National Park
ONP	Omo National Park
PA	Peasant Association
PAs	Protected Areas
PHEEC	Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium
SFE	Sugar Factory Enterprise
SNNPRSCTB	Sothorn National Nationalities and Peoples Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureau
TWR	Tama Wildlife Reserve
WWDSE	Water Works Design and Supervision Enterprise

## List of tables

Table 1. Zone, district and population size of communities in the ONP .....	5
Table 2. Population of project area Woredas .....	8
Table 3. Livestock population of the project Woredas .....	8
Table 4. Management of Wildlife Protected areas and area in sq.km .....	11

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Location Map of Omo National Park .....	7
Figure 2. Network of protected areas in the lower Omo Valley .....	12
Figure 3. Distribution Map of Elephant .....	13
Figure 4. Distribution Map of Buffalo.....	13
Figure 5. Distribution Map of Eland .....	14
Figure 6. Distribution Map of Tiang.....	14
Figure 7. Distribution Map of Zebra and Hartebeest.....	15
Figure 8. Key Wildlife areas and settlement sites.....	15
Figure 9. Proposed Sugarcane plantation sites in the lower Omo valley .....	16
Figure 10. Comparison of key wildlife areas and proposed investment sites .....	16
Figure 11. Proposed map to reconcile conservation and development in the lower Omo valley .....	17
Figure 12. Photo of Workshop Participants at a Glance .....	19

## Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	III
List of tables.....	IV
List of Figures.....	IV
Table of Contents .....	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	VI
1. Executive Summary .....	1
2. Programme introduction and welcoming speech .....	2
3. Opening speech.....	3
4. Presentations .....	4
5. Discussion .....	19
6. Closing Remarks .....	26
Appendixes .....	25

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

All members of the lower Omo valley sugar development project and conservation workers have contributed for the resource base data collection and for the success of the workshop. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHEEC) for their financial assistance to realize this valuable consultative meeting. We also thank the management and staff of the Bench-Maji zone for all their assistance for the success of the meeting.

# 1. Executive Summary

A National consultative meeting entitled “Reconciling Conservation and other Developments in the Lower Omo Valley” was held at Mizan-Teferi Town on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2013. The workshop was organized by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) with financial support from Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHEEC) and GIZ/SDPASE. The Omo National Park (ONP), which is the only protected area in the country in supporting Common eland, was established in 1966 in the lower Omo valley around 887 km south of Addis Ababa, covering an area of 3566 km<sup>2</sup>. The Park is endowed with exceptionally diverse Mega fauna and spectacular ecosystems. The park provides pertinent refuge for hundreds of Elephants, which is believed to migrate between South Sudan and Ethiopia. The park supports 69 mammal species, 300 bird species. However, the park is being severely encroached and rapidly exposed to a state of desertification due to rampant anthropogenic pressures. As a result, the wildlife populations of the park have substantially declined, the vegetation cover has reduced, and a plan for rapid land transformation was designed, which was one of the key growth and Transportation Plan (GTP) of the country, within and around the park. However, during the design of the project key institutions like EWCA were not consulted; as a result key wildlife areas, corridors and impact mitigation strategies were not considered at the initial stage of the project. To fill this gap a team drawn from EWCA, Water Works, Design and Supervision Enterprise (WWDSE), Ministry of Culture and Tourism Cultural Heritage Authority (MCTCHA) and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureau (SNNPRSCCTB) was sent to the Omo valley in December 2012. The main objective of the field work was to identify areas with most potential wildlife resources, migratory routes and World Heritage Sites within the proposed Kuraz Sugar Development Project command area and propose measures that can minimize possible impacts of the development plan on the natural resources and local livelihood in the valley. The team identified key wildlife areas, migration corridors and recommended the tentative plan of the revised boundary of proposed park areas and the sugar development project site, which to be discussed and agreed by key stakeholders for sound re-demarcation and gazettelement of the park as well paves the way for holistic and integrated development approach in the lower Omo valley.

To this end, a national consultative meeting was held at Mizan Teferi, which brought together a total of 35 participants drawn from the House of Representatives, federal concerned institutions, regional administration bodies of Southern Regional State, Journalists, conservation oriented NGOs and resource persons.

## 2. Programme introduction and welcoming speech

The workshop was started with brief introduction of the workshop program by Ato Alemayehu Gebeyehu who also invited Ato. Ewunetu Bilata, Director General of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority to put keynote address.

Ato. Ewunetu Bilatal, Director General of Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and himself welcomed all participants to this pertinent consensus building consultative meeting to reconcile the different resource use conflicts for sound re-demarcation and management of the Omo National Park and surrounding areas. He highlighted the diversified fauna and flora of the county, the challenging facing them and the need to work with all key partners to reverse the interlinked conservation and development challenges facing the country. Ato Ewunetu focused on the existing conservation challenges facing the lower Omo valley and urged the participants to thoroughly discuss on the issues and came up with timely and workable action plan that enable to reconcile the wildlife Conservation and other land use options in the lower Omo valley. He finally invited her. E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf, Chair women, House of Representatives, Culture and Tourism and Public Relation Committee, to officially open the consultative meeting.



Mr. Ewunetu Bilata, Director  
General, EWCA



### 3. Opening speech

Ato. Ewunetu Bilata, Director General, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority;

Dear participants, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be with you today at this timely consultative meeting to reconcile wildlife conservation and other development endeavors in the lower Omo valley focusing on the Omo National Park and surrounding areas. As we all know, the previous wildlife development and conservation strategy was neither participatory nor targeted to poverty reduction. As a result it was not possible to ensure sound ecosystem management and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources. Since the recent past, there have been promising situations towards ensuring sound wildlife conservation and participatory planning and management due to the fact that our Government has rendered considerable attention to conservation sector and created well-designed and strategic organizational setup. The fact that our ministry's strategic plans of the sub-sector are explicitly indicated in the five years GTP, it depicts our government's commitment and using this encouraging opportunity, we are currently doing to our best level to make all conservation endeavors possible and successful. Since the establishment of new institutional setup, we have been working on improving management of our protected areas and this would in turn create ecological resilience and creates harmonized land use systems. In this regard, one of our main targets has been assessment of ecological and socioeconomic conditions of our protected areas and their surroundings besides investigation of the resource potential of the Omo National Park and its adjacent areas were part of this.

Accordingly, this consultative meeting, which entails collective will of all partners, is believed to critically discuss and agree on potential wildlife areas considering the various land use options to come up with constructive ideas and the best management options that enable us to ensure sound re-demarcation and sustainable development of the park and surrounding areas as well as to develop sound wildlife tourism for the region.



Her E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf  
Chairwomen, House of  
Representatives, Culture and  
Tourism and Public Relation  
committee

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the organizers of this important workshop. I am also grateful to Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium for financial support, and Bench Maji Zone Administration Counsel and the ONP for making this important workshop possible. Having said this, it is my pleasure to announce that the workshop is officially opened.

## 4. Presentations

Following the official opening speech by H.E. W/ro Fetia Yesuf, Ato. Alemayehu Gebeyehu invited Ato Ewunetu Bilata and H.E/ W/ro Fetia Yesuf to chair the presentations and discussion part of the workshop. The chairpersons invited the respective presenters. The highlights of each presentation are indicated below:

The first presentation entitled “*An Overview of the Natural Resource use System of local communities in and around the Omo National Park*” was presented by Ato. Asegid Gebre, warden of the Omo National Park. Before starting his presentation Ato. Asegid reminded key words that were part of a speech delivered by the then Prime Minister of Tanganyika: Mualimu Julius Nyerere, during the International Wildlife Symposium held at Arusha in September 1961 ***“The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa. These wild creatures amid the wild places they inhabit are not only important as a source of wonder and inspiration but are an integral part of our natural resources and our future livelihood and well-being. In accepting the trusteeship of our wildlife, we solemnly declare that we will do everything in our power to make sure that our children’s grand-children will be able to enjoy this rich and precious inheritance. The conservation of wildlife and wild places calls for specialist knowledge, trained manpower, and money. And we look to other nations to co-operate with us in this important task, the success or failure of which not only affects the continent of Africa but the rest of the world as well.”***



Mr. Asegid Gebre, Warden,  
Omo National park

The symposium came out with the world famous “Arusha Manifesto” which expresses in clear terms the attitude of the host government - Tanganyika toward the conservation and development of its wildlife resources. It epitomizes also the tone of the discussions on the conservation of nature and natural resources in modern African States. After describing the impact of the “Arusha Manifesto” on

wildlife conservation and development in Tanzania; currently Tanzania is the second country in the world following Brazil in protecting natural resources, endemic species and able to attract 750,000 tourists per year of which 90% are wildlife oriented visitors. Currently tourism covers 17% of the annual income of the country and created significance job opportunities. Ato. Asegid then focused about the wildlife resource use of local communities, ecological diversity and protected areas coverage, why and where to conserve wildlife resources, opportunities challenges and root causes of human-wildlife conflict in the Omo valley. According to Ato. Asegid ONP supports a variety of fauna and flora including 69 species of Mammals, 300 species of Birds, 24 species of Reptiles, 13 species of Fish. The local communities living in the Omo Valley around Omo National Park are listed as follows:

**Table 1. Zone, district and population size of communities in the ONP**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Estimated Population</b>
Bench-Maji	Menit	Me'en/Menit	20,000
	Disi	Dizi	20,000
		Kwegu	200
	Suri	Surma,	Total 28,000
		2 clans: Chai	16,000
		Tirma	12,000
South Omo	Nyangatom	Nyangatom	32000
		Muguji	600
	Salamago	Mursi	8,000
		Body	8,000
Total			116 800

Almost all have their own lifestyle. Nyangatom, Musri, Surma Bodi are agro-pastoralist, Disi and Menit depend on agriculture and keep few cattle, whereas Muguji and Kwegu depend on flood retreat agriculture and fishing and also have few cattle as well. Recent studies revealed that the Northern. Southwestern part of the park, Dirga escarpment, Illibai plain and hot spring are inhabited by surrounding communities. All communities hunt wildlife for food and cloth. Finally, Ato Asegid summarized as poaching, habitat conversion and urbanizations, influx of firearms, over-exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation, lack of awareness at all levels, lack of

participatory and integrated approach on land use and associated systems to be key conservation challenges and root cause for the resource use conflict in the areas.

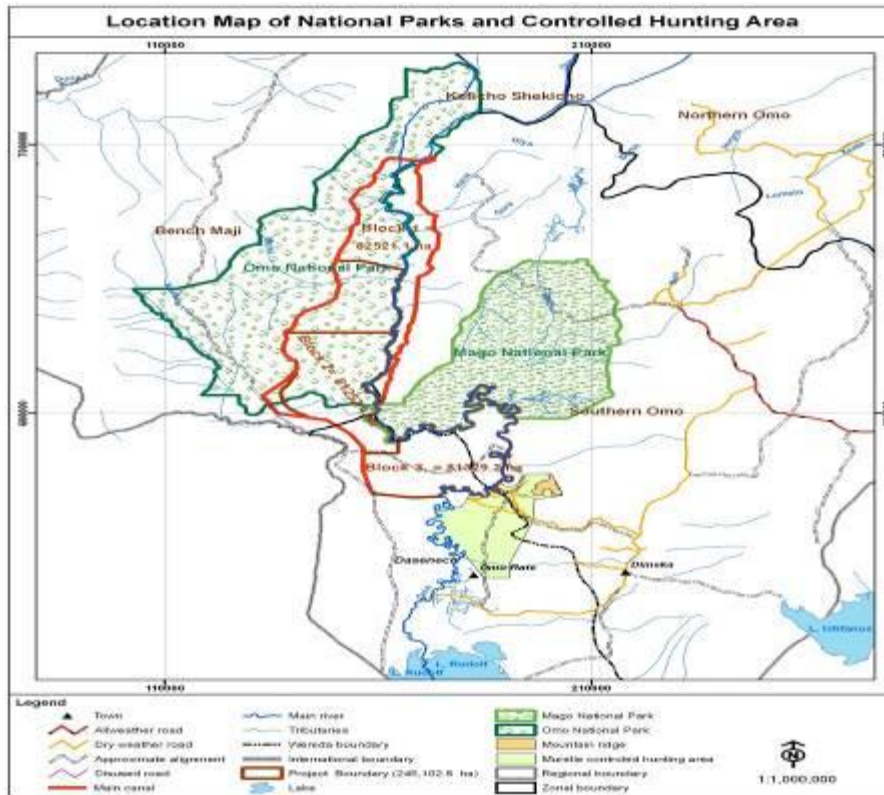
Ato. Asegid concluded his presentation by emphasizing the need to use these opportunities, integrating our attractions and concerted effort of all stakeholders and partners and the need to convert all values to tangible economic benefit, devise sustainable conflict management mechanisms, create stakeholders consultative forums and integrated land use and associated systems, launch awareness creation programs at all levels and establish effective PAs management.

The second presentation, on “**Overview of Kuraz Sugar Development Project Environmental Impacts on Ecologically Sensitive areas of the lower Omo and Proposed Mitigation Measures**”, was presented by Ato. Benti Shimina from Water Works Design and Supervision Enterprise and summarized as follows:-

Ato Benti elaborated the background and general objective of Kuraz Sugar Development Project aiming at: Developing 150,000 hectares of land sugarcane plantations, establishing six sugar factories in order to address the existing sugar demands–supply gaps of the country. He then elaborated the general objective of the Environmental impact Assessment (EIA), which is to assess positive and negative environmental impacts and find feasible remedial measures for the identified possible negative impacts. Ato Benti summarized the methods used to investigate the impact of the project on the resources in the lower omo valley, which includes Review of previous studies, polices, guideline, baseline environmental conditions data collection, secondary data collection from relevant sectors, conducting stakeholders consultations, baseline Omo River water quality assessment and data analysis and report writing.



Mr Benti Shimena WDCF



### Critical issues

- 1. Omo River & L.Turkana level**
- 2. Wildlife**
  - 1. Omo National Park,**
  - 2. Mago National Park,**
  - 3. Tama Wildlife Reserve,**
  - 4. Murulle Control Hunting,**
- 3. Livestock Vs Grazing land loss**

**Figure 1. Location Map of Omo National Park**

According to Ato. Benti the critical problems of the lower valley includes: low and unreliable rainfall and undeveloped agriculture, food insecurity, poor health facilities distribution, Restricted & poor access to all weathered roads and other infrastructure, low soil nutrient, poor soil with low moisture holding capacity, etc. remoteness and harsh agro-ecology and conflicts on natural resource uses among indigenous people. The population of the lower valley was presented as follows:

**Table 2. Population of project area Woredas**

No	Woreda	Population			Woreda Area (km2)	Density Person per km2
		Male	Female	Total		
1.	Selamago	15,770	15,422	31,192	4450.07	7.0
2.	Gnangatom	9,891	9,728	19,619	2643.49	7.4
3.	Meinitshasha	24,391	24,225	48,616	2931.01	16.6
4.	Maji	17,154	18,210	35,364	4,670.40	7.6
5.	Decha	72,100	72,135	144,235	2958.52	48.8
	Total	139,306	139,720	279,026	17653.5	15.81

**Table 3. Livestock population of the project Woredas**

Livestock	Selamago	Gnangatom	Maji	Meinitshasha	Total
Cattle	138,000	519463	118,660	183,711	959,834
Sheep	10,000	120873	11,210	66,700	208,783
Goat	25,000	148302	16,550	91,000	280,852
Camel	0	2	0	0	2
Horse	0	0	65	317	382
Mule	0	0	176	301	477
Donkey	60	7737	182	393	8372
Poultry	39,000	5,883	46,000	68,000	158,883

The most critical sites emphasized by the presenter include: Historical, Cultural, Archeological and Religious Sites, buffer areas, the Omo National Park; Lake Turkana and Possible mitigation measures were recommended for each critical sites. Ato Benti noted the potential positive impact of the project including: Creates employment opportunities, promotes economic growth of the country, creates skilled and semi-skilled man power, reduce/eliminate conflicts among indigenous people, creates markets for livestock & livestock products, creates Alternative Energy supply sources, moderates downstream flood, promotes urbanization, brings services close to the communities. Decreases soil erosion and sediment loads, promotes sugar products for interior and exterior markets and inline with this hard currency, molasses for livestock feeding, decreases pressure on

natural resources, promotes infrastructure development of the area, increases hydrological & nutrient cycle of the area, Moderate micro-climate conditions of the area and sugarcane plantations promote carbon sink.

He also mentioned the adverse impacts of the project: including: affects water balance and downstream environmental release, affects wildlife negatively both from direct and indirect Project activities, creates pressure on grazing lands, affects water quality from irrigation & factories, creates water-logging and groundwater rise, affects Soil Quality and Structure; soil salinity, community displacement, creates environmental Health problems, aggravates Diseases such as Malaria and Schistosomiasis (Bilharzia) prevalence, aggravates prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDs, etc. Aggravates eutrophication problems by nutrient releases from irrigation farms and factory wastes; disrupts natural movement Accesses, Creates resource use conflicts, etc, Ato. Benti elaborated the resource potential of Omo National park and proposed investment sites within the park and surrounding areas and challenges facing PAs. To minimize and/or eliminate the possible negative impacts as a result of the project, he suggested, to use lining canals network based on site specific conditions and soil conditions, efficient irrigation water use & management, undertaking permanent water quality monitoring, promote catchment conservation activities, optimize & undertake efficient agrochemicals uses Strengthening irrigation on-farm management activities, leave corridors or seasonal migration routes between wildlife areas (parks and reserves), construct appropriate canal crossings and water, points for wildlife in the park boundary, leave cattle movement corridors in the project command areas in line with community settlements, grazing lands and water points.

Ato. Benti concluded his presentation by recommending the following key issues: environmental clauses should be clearly incorporated in contract agreements with contractor, strengthen stakeholders' coordination & collaboration on environmental management of the basin, Tune to efficient water use technology, ensure efficient and optimum agrochemical uses; and promote off-farm activities to lower possible pressures on environment resources.



The third presenter was Ato. Wondimu Chirfa, PHEEC Monitoring and Evaluation Officer on **“Socioeconomic and environmental concerns of the Omo National Park”**. Considering most of the background information were dealt with in the previous presentations, Ato Wondimu briefly described the history and resources, challenges facing the park and then directly moved to and the recommendation part as follows:

- Multispectral taskforce has to be established from kebele to national level that addresses and manage the social, economic, and environmental and security issues in a way sustainable development can be realized in the locality through active and sound participation of the stakeholders. Because, Wondimu said that the current border of ONP does not legally protect wildlife and their distribution, it could be valuable to consider a re-demarcation of the border. Core area and buffer zone has to be re-demarcated
- Addressing community’s social, economic, health and environmental problems through PHEEC integration approach to reduce the burden on the park as well as to contribute to sustainable development
- Awareness has to be created on conservation, environment and natural resource management, conflict prevention and management, etc.
- Strengthening and developing community by-laws that involves the local community in conservation, biodiversity entrepreneurships and manage it.
- Capacitating and designing IGAs where by the local community diversify their livelihood
- Ensuring the involvement of the local community from inception to M&E on the development programs and projects in and around the park
- Designing equitable benefit sharing mechanisms
- Creating market opportunities for dairy products, cattle, skin and hides for the local community to improve their livelihood
- Awareness creation on the essentiality of quality than quantity livestock production and promoting tezering than open grazing.



Mr. Wondimu Chirfa,  
PHEEC



The fourth presenter was Ato. Cherie Enawgaw and the title was “**Towards, Reconciling Conservation and Development in the Lower Omo Landscape, Ethiopia**”. The under mentioned points are the salient features of the presentation.

Ethiopia is a relatively vast country with land coverage of 1.12 million squares and greatly varying physiographic features and landscapes raging from highland and rugged mountains to deep gorges and rivers and rolling plains. This enormous terrain diversity and diverse physiographic features have contributed for wide variations in climate, soil and natural vegetation. It comprises of over seven ecosystems that range from afro-alpine to evergreen montane forest and desert scrubland areas. As a result, Ethiopia is blessed with a wide variety of fauna and flora and the extreme ranges have resulted in unique and diverse suite of its biological resources that puts it as one of the top biodiversity rich



Mr. Cherie Enawgaw,EWCA

countries in the world. Considering this, significant numbers of protected areas have been set aside in representative ecosystems of the country, of which ONP is the one (see table 4.)

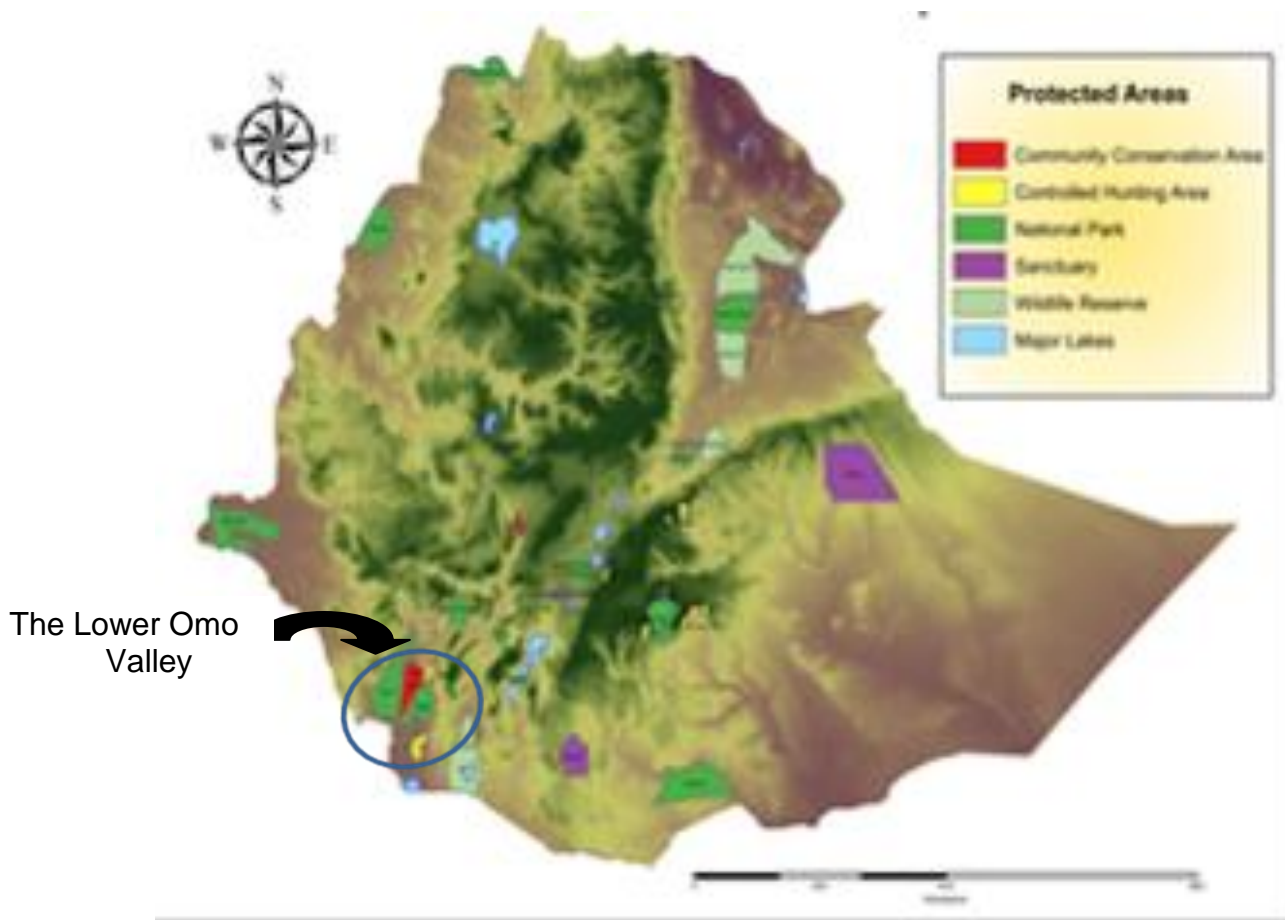
**Table 4. Management of Wildlife Protected areas and area in sq.km**

Type of PAs	Management of PAs and area coverage in sq.km				Total Area, Km2
	Federal	Regions	Community	Private	
National Parks	11(26031)	10 (8444)			34475
Wildlife Sanctuaries	2 (7036)	1			7036
Wildlife Reserves	1	6 (20796)			20796
Controlled Hunting Areas		8 (79463)*		13 (8558)	88021
Community Conservation areas			4 (11565)		11565
Open hunting areas			5 (858)		858
Biosphere reserves		3(4005)			4005
Total					166756

Note: 7 NPs, 4 CCA established since 2000, which witnesses the commitment of the government for conservation in recent years.

Ato. Cherie presented the unique features and potentials of the Omo National Parks including:

- Unique and little known wilderness area
- one of the most bio-diverse areas in the world
- Hundreds of elephants believed to migrate between S. Sudan and Ethiopia
- Supports 69 species of mammals, 327 species of birds; and 7 Reptile Species
- Supports thousands of Common eland, which is found only in ONP in the country
- One of the IBA sites and known to support the big five, but Black Rhino is probably extinct
- Tiang, buffalo, waterbuck, lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, lesser kudu are common
- The area is drained by the Omo river and its tributaries like the Mui, Kuma and kibish rivers.



**Figure 2. Network of protected areas in the lower Omo Valley**

The lower Omo valley includes the Omo National Park, Mago National Park, Tama Wildlife Reserves and Murulle Controlled Hunting Area (MCHA). Generally, the areas are important in terms of biodiversity conservation i.e. ecological, tourism/recreations, scientific research and education,

social and economic values. It is located on the western bank of the Omo River in the lower Omo valley, where as Tama Wildlife Reserve, Mago National park and MCHA are found in the eastern side of the Omo River.

Key wildlife areas (Source: ONP Archive)

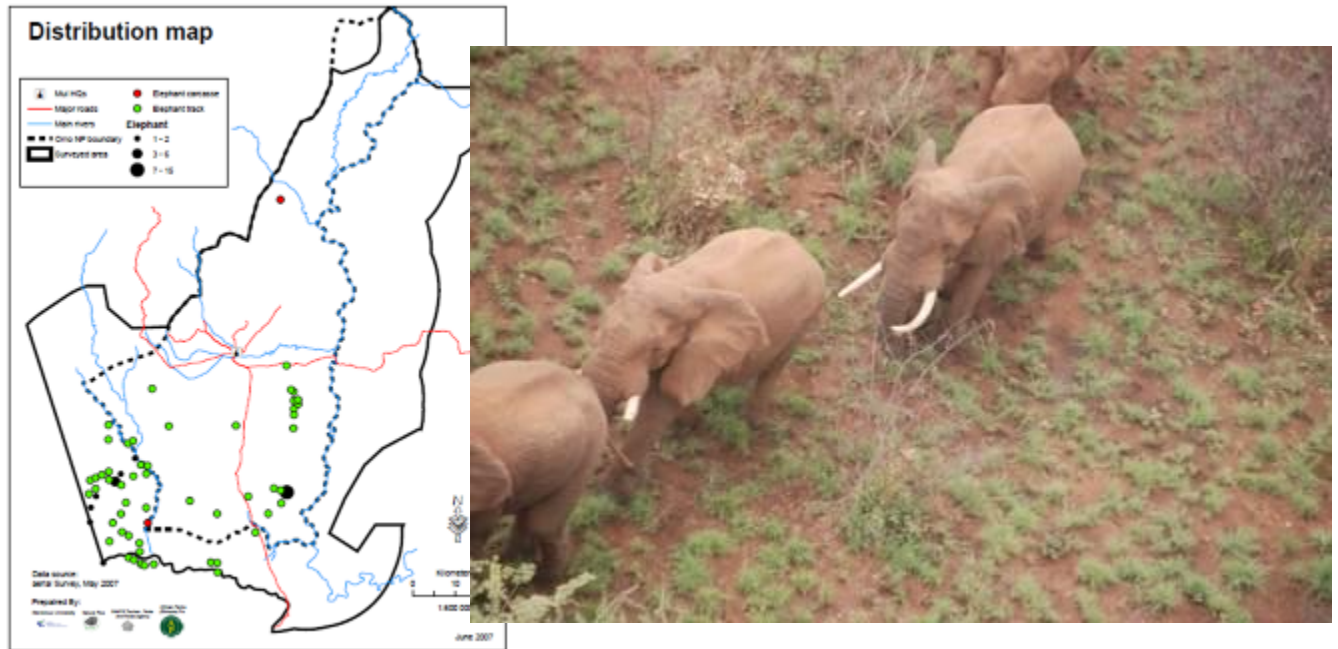


Figure 3. Distribution Map of Elephant

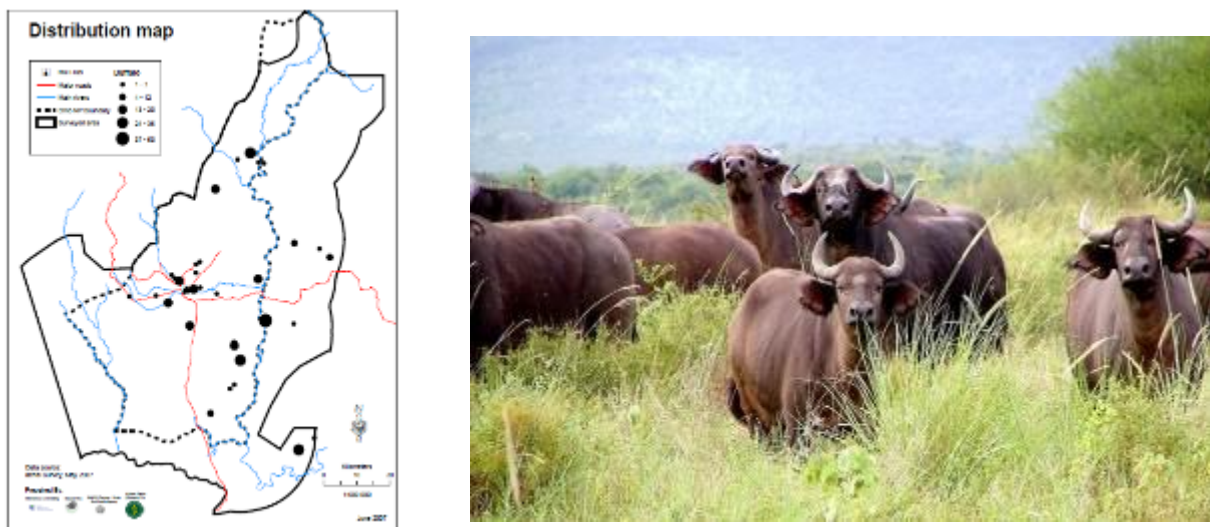


Figure 4. Distribution Map of Buffalo

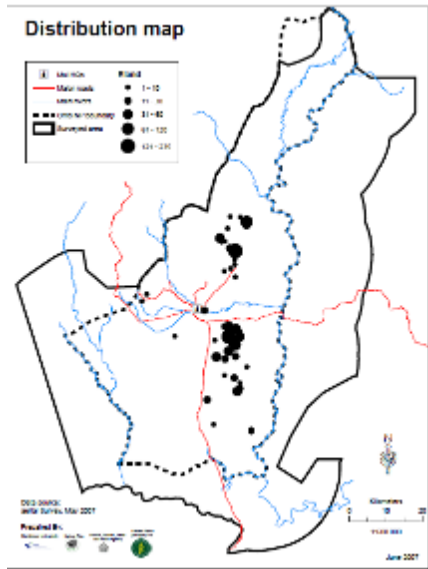


Figure 5. Distribution Map of Eland

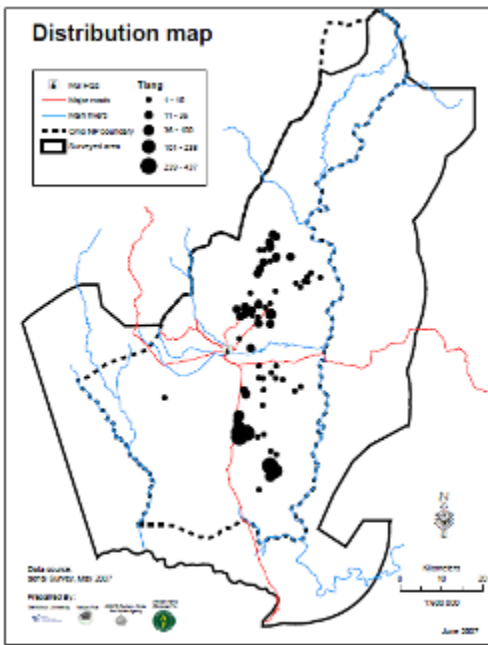


Figure 6. Distribution Map of Tiang



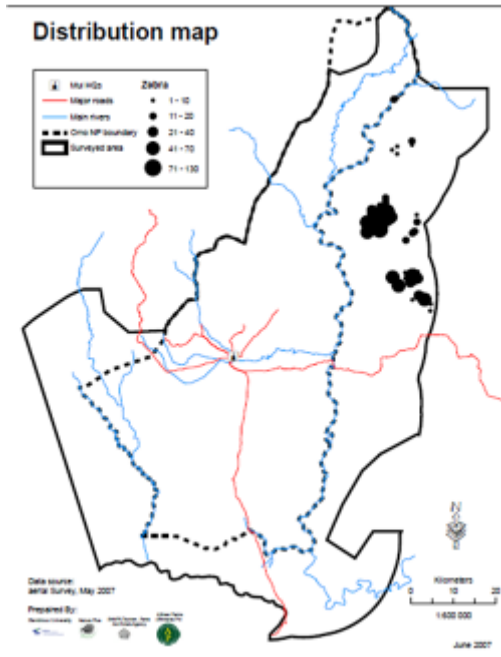


Figure 7. Distribution Map of Zebra and Hartebeest

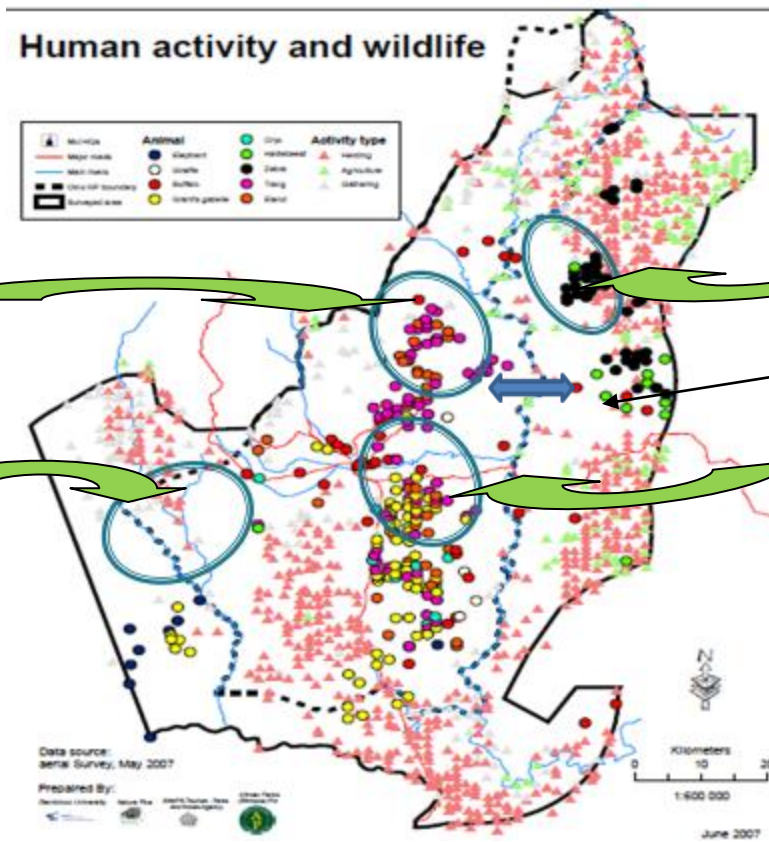


Figure 8. Key Wildlife areas and settlement sites

## Conservation Challenges

- Poaching, settlement and cultivation
- Investment - large area of land was allocated for investment and no initial consultation
- There was less priority for conservation-focus on food security
- No integrated approach
- Construction of 125 km canals and patrol road across the park
- About 63000 ha. from south of illilbai plain and 43 ha from Sai plain proposed for investment
- Key wildlife corridors not considered



Figure 9. Proposed Sugarcane plantation sites in the lower Omo valley

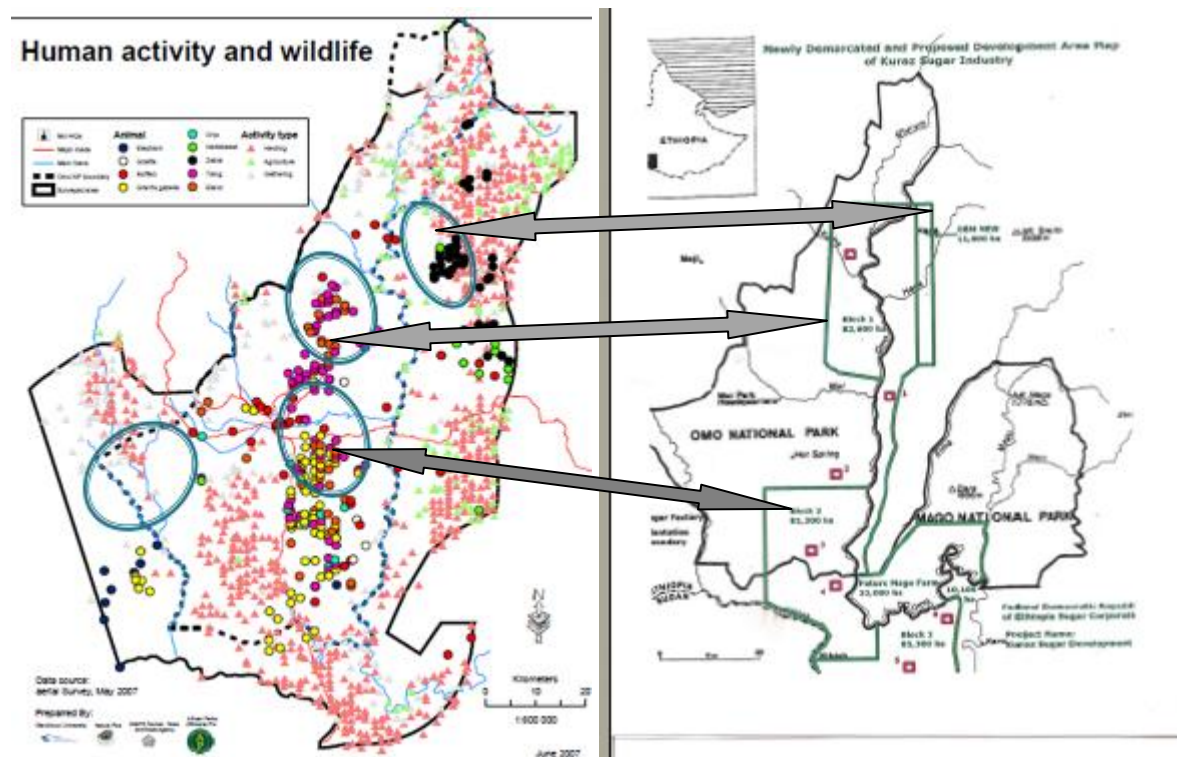


Figure 10. Comparison of key wildlife areas and proposed investment sites

## Recommendation to reconcile conservation and other development in the valley

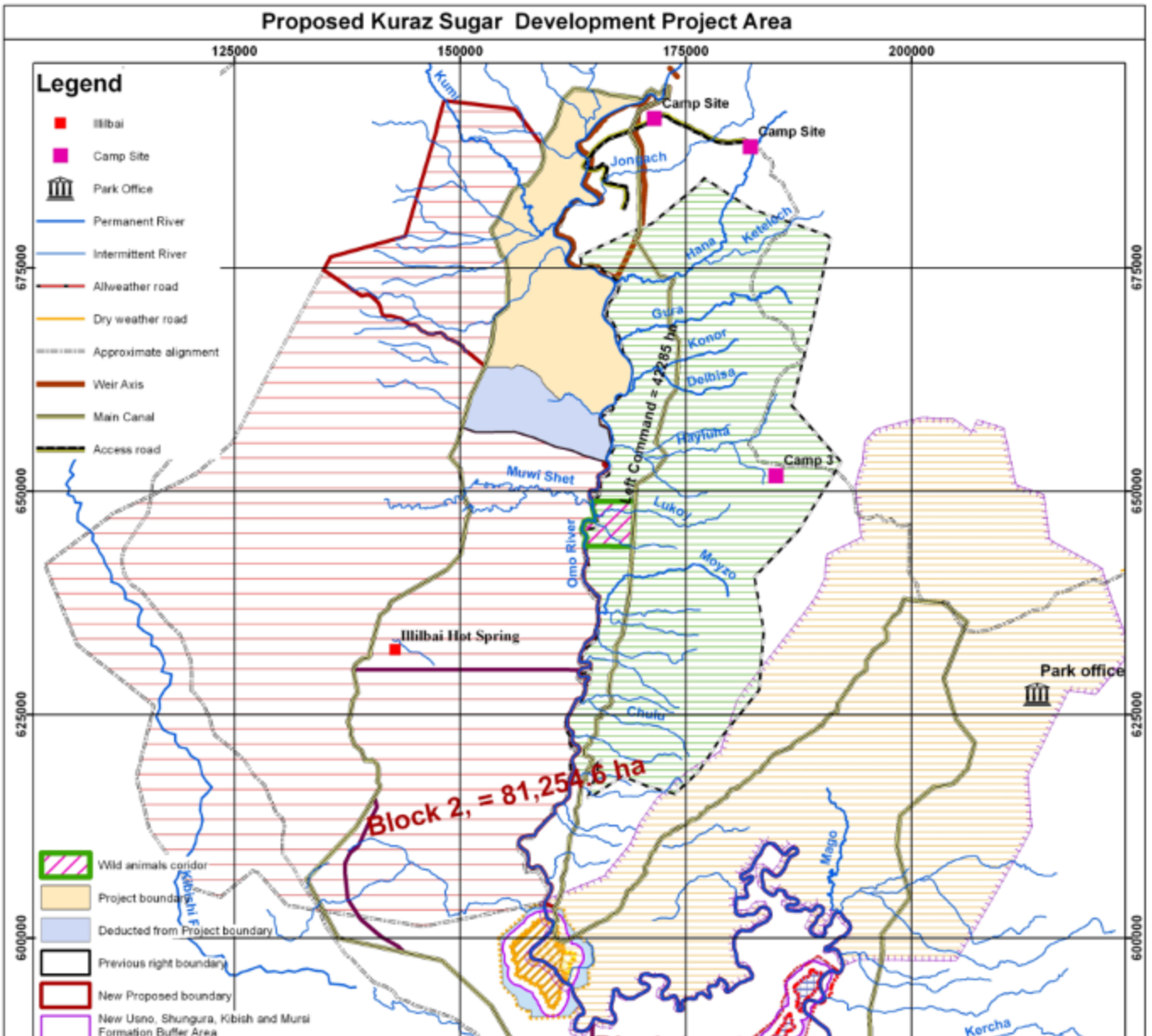


Figure 11. Proposed map to reconcile conservation and development in the lower Omo valley

The issues of re demarcation through the involvement of multisectoral taskforces has to be included

- Use good opportunities like access and other infrastructure to develop wildlife tourism
- Leave at least 5 km wildlife corridors to ensure Seasonal Migration Routes between the Omo and Mago National Parks through Tama wildlife reserve (figure 11)

- Construct appropriate canal crossings and water points in the park to minimize effects on wildlife movements and water availability. The project should work closely with the park office and EWCA, and the Region to minimize human wildlife conflict and to improve local livelihood
- Work closely with Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, Omo National Park, local communities and concerned national, regional, zonal and woreda institutions, etc to promote and strengthen wildlife conservation and development of the area.
- The Sai plain, which is proposed as investment site, is key wildlife area and thus 9,579.1 ha should be set aside for conservation. The southern side of the mountain chain; kabsu and katekaro hills, and its bottom areas serve as breeding sites for the most of the park wildlife and also has high wildlife population. Recent elephants' footprints, waterbucks, Giraffe, Ostrich, Elands, Tiang, and Buffalo were observed. The Elands and Tiang were in large herds (Figure 3-7).
- In areas outside the park and sugarcane plantation sites, Eco loges, community wildlife hunting areas, wildlife ranch, fishery, wildlife farm are some of the potential alternative to be practiced in the landscape to improve local livelihood and ensure well integrated and holistic development approach in the landscape.
- Extend the park boundary to south Sudan side to ensure ecological connectivity and wildlife movement between the two countries.



## 5. Discussion

Following the detailed presentations of the resource persons, the chairpersons Ato Ewunetu Bilata and H.E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf as a startup, thanked all presenters and participants for the comprehensive and informative presentation and for patiently attending the sessions and they summarized the core issues addressed under each presentation and they opened the floor for discussion. Then, intense discussion was held focusing on the key park's issues.



Figure 12. Photo of Workshop Participants at a Glance

### **Bench Maji zone representative**

- Appreciated the participation of the House of Representatives which indicates the commitment of the government to protect wildlife resources and expect positive change in the near future. He said, we are destroying the last remaining resource and be ready to face the challenges ahead of us. He also mentioned the need to protect the buffers zone and upper stream to maintain the entire ecosystem and water level of the dam.
- The livelihood of local communities should be changed to minimize livestock grazing pressure on the park
- Why wildlife resources are declining and no measures taken to halt the problem?
- Why the meeting was so late?

**Sugar corporation representative** commented that the park to be the only representative heritage site and the possibility of losing it if immediate action not taken. He mentioned the poaching problem of the park. Surma and Gngangatom to be the major poachers of the resources in the valley and the situation were aggravated by uncontrolled firearms and ammunitions. He gave more emphasis on the positive measures taken by the government, including registering and controlling firearms and ammunitions, reducing resource use conflicts and towards changing the livelihood of local communities. He said that culturally all pastoralists must have cattle to get married and all cattle belongs to the society. They hunt wild animals to get respect by the locals. There is a need to work on those cultures that have adverse impact on wildlife but less important for the society. Gngangatom has excellent indigenous knowledge related to wildlife, including naming of relatives after the name of wild animals. For instance, Elephant family → Ostrich family→ Gazelle family→ Buffalo family. Promoting such culture is crucial to ensure sustainable wildlife conservation in the valley.

Then, he recommended the following points:

- Establishment of taskforce to address the challenges
- Awareness raising on the cone and prone of the various cultural practices
- Experience sharing including arranging cross visit for key stakeholders,
- Benefit sharing with local communities,
- Employment opportunity for locals
- Resettlement programme will contribute to change local livelihood

### **Major points raised by participants include:**

- Which part of the park is encroached by people and cattle?
- Why the park is not clearly delineated?

- What is the solution for livestock and human population growth?
- Absence of mechanisms of the park to work with communities and absence of clear and sustainable relationships with communities Establishment of the park without due consideration of local communities are noted as a real challenge.
- No community participation and awareness raising endeavors
- No employment opportunities for local residents,
- Why some animals like zebra locally extinct from the park and why they prefer outside the park? What will be the option to protect them?
- Why lessons learnt from other countries not implemented?
- Participatory management and local livelihood/socio-economic issues not addressed in the EIA document
- Poor attention for buffer zone management and wildlife management outside protected areas
- No school , and other social services

Ato. Ewunetu Bilata summarized EWCA's endeavors and challenges as follows:

- Foreigners know more than us about our wildlife
- The challenges facing scouts and problem arm them,
- One park is more than two factories interims of economical contribution
- The meeting was late because the wildlife was less priority for the government till recent times
- No one can clamp with one hand so need to involve all partners
- There is more poaching from bench Maji side and more collaboration and law enforcement id needed from the Bench Maji side
- Wild animals prefer outside the park because the Park is not protected
- The park has no infrastructure, no visitors, no management plan and thus Omo is more of a paper park,
- It is expected to be re-demarcated soon

Her Ex. W/ro Sofia Yesuf reflected the government stands to protect natural resources and all have to work not for the park but to ensure our future survival. The potential the region has interims of natural resources and the deterioration of the resources. Firearms alone cannot save animals, no awareness, the park office should be seen as partnership not as an opponent. It is

time to take appropriate action against any illegal activities like poaching and encroachment and all stakeholders should be part of the solution,

Representative from Ethiopian news Agency requested:

- Most workshop outputs not implemented on the ground, can the outcome of this meeting be implemented?
- The need to work to community level

Representative from Southern CTB

- How to reconcile conservation and the envisaged sugarcane development plan
- The need to protect water catchment areas
- Human wildlife conflict is the major challenges and all Mago. Tamo and Omo are threatened
- There is a need to establish taskforce
- The project will hire 300000 workers, how to reduce the impacts of incoming people? the impact of the project, like machineries, canal, buffer zone,

Other points raised by participants include:

- Not only for wildlife, protected areas are our lung and needs protection
- No collaboration with district officials,
- The number of scouts in relation to the size of the park is too low
- How Sugarcane plantation and wildlife conservation be harmonized?
- Security problem
- How the impact of the main canal, which crosses the park, including construction machineries, vehicle speed, by product of the factories. Chemicals, wildlife movement be mitigated?
- Core wildlife areas and the long-term impact of the project?
- No collaborative management in ONP
- There is TVT collage in Mizan but no road access to Omo to give practical training
- What is the plan of the project to assist the park?
- Wildlife corridors are conducive for poachers how can it be minimize?  
What will be the proportion of local communities in the envisaged employment of 300000 workers?

Maji woreda administrator commented that we are destroying the last remaining resource and be ready to face the challenges ahead of us. He also mentioned the need to protect the buffers zone and upper stream to maintain the entire ecosystem and water level of park and promised his readiness to do everything possible to reverse the existing challenges.

The chairpersons requested presenters to clarify some of the key issues forwarded by participants. Ato. Asegid Gebre clarified the root causes for the depletion of the resources including, poaching, flood retreat cultivation along the water banks, siltation, large-scale farming. He also mentioned the challenges of the park to work with key district officials due to access and some park management problems and expressed his commitment to closely work with all key stakeholders and partners and reverse the challenges.

**Ato. Benti replied as follows:**

- Socioeconomic survey has been conducted
- All community development issues considered
- Mitigation measures to reduce impacts on wildlife investigated and recommended
- Each sugar factory has treatment to reduce pollution
- There are long term and short term mitigation strategy
- The project will contribute ensure the local security
- Towns will be established
- Locals will be trained to incorporate in the project

Ato. Cherie clarified as follows:

- The project could be seen as opportunity as well as ONP will be one of the most accessible parks in the near future. The interest of private Investors in Eco lodge are growing
- Regarding wildlife population trend, Ato, Cherie explained that the Aerial survey is not good to estimate bush animals, For instance in 1999 more than 2100 lesser kudu found dead in Mago National park following the outbreak of Anthrax but the aerial survey result of previous year estimated the presence of less than 200 lesser kudu. This could be one of the reasons why the result of aerial survey showed downward trend for bush animals but stable or increasing for plane animals like eland.
- The core wildlife areas like Sai Plain, wildlife corridors are included within the proposed plantation site. There is historical record of elephant movement between Mago and Omo National Park crossing the Omo River. Recently in 2012 one herd of elephants has crossed the Omo river around south of the confluence of the Omo and Mui rivers. It is crucial to reconsider the core wildlife areas and movement routes in the lower Omo valley. EWCA was not consulted during the initial stage of the project.
- Wild animals outside the park can be protected in collaboration with local communities, which could be through the establishment of community conservation areas.
- The park will be re-demarcated and gazetted based on the consensus reached in this consultative meeting and additional meetings to be held with communities in the process of re-demarcation. Well integrated and holistic approach is crucial to ensure sound conservation of wildlife resources and social wellbeing of local communities,

Then, Ato. Ewunetu elaborated that lessons from other countries could be used to improve community livelihoods. He also appreciated the consensus reached on the challenges facing ONP and the focus to be how to reconcile the interwoven issues and requested the participants to think on the best option for sound conservation of ONP and improving livelihood strategy of surrounding communities from agriculture, community based tourism or Sugar factory. Although the scouts are mandated to check and confiscate any wildlife products without any precondition priority is given to work in close collaboration with local communities. He suggested that establishment of collaborative wildlife management taskforce will contribute to reduce illegal activities. Livestock issue can be addressed by like improved breed, Job opportunities. It is crucial to improve conservation approach and develop trust between the park and community and resolve through discussion and Continuous meeting.

**Recommendations forwarded by participants include:**

- Park, local government and communities should work hand in hand
- Awareness raising and community should have sense of ownership
- Develop trust with communities and work collaboratively
- Fence and fence doesn't work, establish nature club and raise awareness
- Wildlife outside PAS should also be protected
- No attention given for the park so far- the taskforce should critically evaluate and develop action plan
- Re-demarcate the park as soon as possible

Ato Ewunetu

- The region has to support in firearms, collaborate in law enforcement.
- Our staff particularly scouts have sacrificed their life for the conservation.
- All partners and stakeholders have to share our problem and collaborate to solve this complicated conservation challenges.
- The park management is weak because the salary is not attractive. Only committed conservationists are working.
- The park has to be re-demarcated and gazetted.

Her E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf summarized as follows:

- The roles and responsibilities of the federal, region and communities should clearly indicated
- The need to incorporate all crucial community issues raised by participants,
- The government has increased budget for tourism sector and good to use the opportunity
- Experience sharing and cross visit is important to raise awareness
- The issue of firearms should be resolved
- The management problem has to be resolved
- The park has to be re-demarcated as soon as possible
- Road construction, joint management is crucial to address the conservation challenges.

Ato. Ewunetu appreciated the consensus reached on the challenges facing ONP and promised to establish taskforce, representing the federal, regional, zonan, community as well as representatives from Sugar Corporation, WWDCE and other partners, for the management and conservation of the park. Re- demarcation is the priority and additional discussion will be conducted at the woreda and

community level before desiding on the specific sites of park boundary. Once the re-dimarcation is finalized the park will have legal boundary and management plan.

The road construction outside the park should be done by the respective district and road Authority. The park has the responsibility to construct the roads within the park. The park scouts are really committed to protect the park but no considerable support from stakeholders. Particularly the zone and woreda has to share the responsibility in the development, conservation and management of resource use conflict of the park and surrounding areas, manage the park in collaboration with local communities. Finally Ato. Ewunetu Bilata invited representative of Bench-Maji zone to officially close the workshop.

## **6. Closing Remarks**

The Representative of the Bench Maji Zone Administration, in his closing remarks, appreciated Her, E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf, Ato Ewunetu Bilata and the organizers of timely consultative meting and other partners who supported financially and/or technically to realize this pertinent meeting and pay tribute to Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and PHEEC for their tireless effort to bring us today under one roof to discuss and give solutions on land use conflict resolutions and clarify the potential of wildlife resources of Omo National Park. Today, we understand the potential resources of the park and important animals that migrate seasonally between the three protected areas as well as further to south Sudan.

He said, as we see today the experiences of other countries like Kenya and Tanzania, the values of wildlife resource have paramount importance for the economic development of the country to achieve the growth and transformation plan. The challenges facing the Omo National Park Office and Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority on managing Omo National Park are fully understood and the bench Maji zone will give full support. Moreover, consensus which is reached by all stakeholders to have new re-demarcated Omo National Park and integrate land use planning in the lower Omo valley will be implemented. The Bench Maji Zone is, therefore, behind the workable option towards safeguarding the valuable biodiversity of the region and integrates the development activities in an



environmentally friendly manner. It is now my pleasure to officially close the workshop and thank you all.

# Appendixes

## Annex 1. Workshop Agenda Mizan Teferi Workshop Agenda – May 16/2013

Time	Topic	Presenter/facilitator	Chair
8:30-9:00 am	Registration	EWCA/ ONP	Organizer
9:00-9:10 am	Welcoming Speech and Introduction	Ato Ewunetu Bilata, Director General, EWCA	
9:10-9:25 am	Opening Speech	H.E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf	
9:25-9:50 am	Resource Potential and challenges of Omo National Park (ONP)	Ato Asegid Gebre, ONP	Ato Ewunetu Bilata H.E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf
9:50-10:30 am	Social Economic and Environmental Concerns of Protected areas	Ato. Negash Teklu PHE	
10:30-10:45 am	Coffee /Tea B r e a k		
10:30--11:00 am	Overview of Kuraz Sugar Development Project environmental Impacts on Ecologically Sensitive areas of lower Omo and Proposed Mitigation Measures	Benti Shimina:- Water Works Design and Supervision Enterprise	
11:00-11:30am	Towards Reconciling Conservation and Development in the Lower Omo Valley	Ato. Cherie Enawgaw, EWCA	
11:30-12:30 pm	Discussion and group formation	Participants	
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch B r e a k		Self
1:30-3:30 pm	Group Discussion	Participants	Ato Ewunetu Bilata H.E. W/ro Fetiya Yesuf
3:30-4:00 pm	Co f fee /Tea B r e a k		
04:00-04:50 pm	Group presentation	Group representatives	
4:50-5:00pm	The way forward		
5:00-5:15	Closing Remarks		

