

Walta Info

Villagization cannot be carried out without voluntarism: Premier

Addis Ababa, 28 January 2015 (WIC) - Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said that the Villagization Program that has been implemented in the pastoral areas is carried out only with the free will of the pastoralists.

At the celebration of the 15th Ethiopian Pastoralists Day in the Semera town in Afar State, the Prime Minister said that the objective of the Villagization Program is to provide the necessary infrastructure such as schools and health facilities for the communities and to provide food stalk and water for the cattle. In addition to that, pastoralists are induced to practice sedentary farming thus changing their way of life in a gradual manner.

Hailemariam said the government rural development policy assumes pastoralist areas as a source of cattle wealth, and to tap the resources, watershed management has been implemented. With that, the natural resources could be recovered and strengthened attaining good results. More design work particularly in Afar and Somali States are underway.

Furthermore, through the Watershed Management Programme large scale irrigation farms have been established and many pastoralists have benefited from such development.

According to Hailemariam, currently many pastoralists have achieved a higher economic status by supplying pulses to the market. Side by side, the implementation of the MDG is also well underway.

The Premier said the Villagization Program was never implemented forcefully and this indicates how pastoralists play a crucial role in their own affairs.

However, Hailemariam added that some Western media and so called human rights groups have been making accusations against the Ethiopian Government alleging that the Villagization Program was implemented in disregard of the will of the pastoralist communities. He hence warned them not to meddle in the internal affairs of the nation.

On another development, the renowned expert on pastoralists affairs, Ato Sora Adi who has served as advisor to many non-governmental organizations said no pastoralist wants to move from place to place for the sake of seeking water and animal feed stalk unless the situation forces them to do so, and the government Villagization Program is acceptable by pastoralists.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Herald, Sora said that the availability of basic necessities in the pastoralists areas stabilizes the living condition of the people and the expansion of education thereby promoting human development.

Sora further said that the implementation of Villagization with sufficient preparation could also reduce the vulnerability of the pastoralist community to drought and climate change, and the Program by itself is an adaptation mechanism. (EH)