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My name is Nangiro Simon Apolo Lowot. I work for Karamoja Agro-pastoral Development programme (KADP), a local NGO, working with Karimojong pastoralists in the North East of Uganda.

I would like to commend the UN for eventually taking up the issues of minority education, which is a central pillar for understanding and achieving other fundamental human rights. Education is central to development as it empowers individuals. However, its curriculum content and delivery if not well administered may turn out to be a systematic way of alienating and denying some people of society, their rights. This has been the case for Pastoralists in the Horn of East Africa especially Uganda where they are a minority.

Despite many years of concerted educational efforts by both colonial and post independence authorities to transform Karimojong pastoralists, the Karimojong remain the least educated and developed with a literacy rate of 12% compared to the national average of 54% (UNDP 2005). While many reasons account for this, the most salient is the inappropriateness of the content and delivery of the education curriculum.

The curriculum stereotypes pastoralists and their livelihood system as outdated, disorganized, environmentally destructive, and economically unproductive. It portrays pastoralists negatively. The result is that products of this educational system are trained to loath pastoralism. For students from pastoralist origins they become alienated from the reality facing them and become dependent on an imaginary way of life remote from their context.

The result is that today we are witnessing the collapse of the pastoral production system that has not only led to break down of social system but displacement, conflict and chronic dependence on aid.

In conclusion education content should be relevant to minority livelihoods and be able to make them adopt and cope with contemporary phenomena and challenges. It should for example be able to develop their capacity to cope and adapt to the impact of climatic change. On curriculum delivery, appropriate methods should be used to reach out minorities. Modern information and communication technologies, for example has been useful for nomadic pastoralist.

Thank you.