

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



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Livestock industry benefits from improved food security, provides affordable energy

Sheikh, Somaliland, 21 May 2012 – The livestock industry is the economic backbone of Somaliland, providing livelihoods for approximately 75 percent of the population. A new project, initiated by UNDP and Terra Nuova, aims to both strengthen this industry through improving food safety, and to harness its potential by piloting the production of biogas, using animal waste to provide energy to the residents of Sheikh. The funding for the project is being provided by the Government of Japan.

The joint venture, which was officially launched in Sheikh today by UNDP Somalia Deputy Country Director Marie Dimond and Mr. Yoichiro Yamada, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Kenya, will be conducted in partnership with the Sheikh Technical Veterinary School (STVS) and Terra Nuova. The school was opened in 2005 to ensure quality control of the Somali livestock industry, and trains its students on international trade rules and regulations and how to apply these when exporting livestock.

Food security is not only about ensuring food availability and accessibility, but also quality and safety. This means that food, whatever its origin, should provide the required nutrients without harming its consumers or the recipient environment. To ensure food safety, food analysis, requiring a testing laboratory, is essential. This new project will support STVS to maintain its food hygiene laboratory in order to monitor local food production, exports and relevant imported foods. As a result, this project will contribute to enhanced food safety among Somali consumers as well as consumers of Somali livestock products in importing countries.

In addition, the project will support STVS to convert biodegradable livestock waste into an alternative source of energy that can be used for cooking and electricity. As a first step, UNDP will assist STVS to undertake a feasibility study for the production of bio-gas in rural and urban settings.

Lack of access to sustainable energy services is considered as the single main cause of deforestation for firewood and charcoal. These factors call for the exploration of alternative sources of energy – such as biogas – that are eco-friendly and cost-effective to meet the needs of local populations. Increased use of biogas has the potential to stall further land degradation, contribute to long-term environmental protection, mitigate climate change at the local level and increase livelihood opportunities.

Women community members will be direct beneficiaries of the biogas, as their exposure to the harmful emissions from fuel wood and charcoal will be minimised. The provision of biogas will also reduce the burden on household income for purchasing the fuel wood and charcoal at high prices from the market.

The project will initially be one year in duration and is funded by the Government of Japan, along with the other donors to STVS, such as the European Commission, the Royal Danish Embassy, and shortly USAID. STVS has two prongs – the school with its 2 3-year accredited residential Diploma courses in Livestock Health Sciences and in Livestock Product Development and Entrepreneurship, and the Reference Centre, which conducts out participatory research and information sharing with livestock stakeholders from the region. STVS is academically

mentored by Makerere University of Uganda to which is affiliated and is in the process of becoming an IGAD regional institution. Please visit: www.stvs-edu.org.

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ABOUT TERRA NUOVA: Terra Nuova is an international non-governmental organization, focusing on promoting sustainable socio-economic development initiatives, in various African and Latin American countries. Please visit: www.terranuova.org.