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New challenges and opportunities for pastoralism in ACP countries

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1. Background

Pastoral systems support the livelihoods of millions of people living in harsh environments where alternative land use systems are highly risky or simply not possible. Livestock reared in pastoral systems also contribute significantly to national and regional economies and provide important environmental services such as carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation. Extensive pastoral production is practised on 25% of the global land area, from the drylands of Africa (66% of the total continent land area) and the Arabian Peninsula, to the highlands of Asia and Latin America¹. It provides 10% of the world's meat production, and supports some 200 million pastoral households who raise nearly 1 billion head of camel, cattle and smaller livestock, about a third of which are found in sub-Saharan Africa². Apart from African regions, an increased and renewed interest in pastoral production systems is reported in the Mediterranean, western and central Asian regions. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Somalia and Mongolia), pastoralists are usually a minority in their countries occupying marginal land along national borders, and ruled by a political elite often representing an agricultural majority who live in higher rainfall zones.

Other benefits of pastoral livestock include: carbon sequestration, maintenance of biodiversity, dairy and meat production and consumption, skins and fibres, use of animals for transport and ploughing, use of manure as fertiliser and fuel, use of livestock as insurance, inputs to tourism. Pastoral areas also host a large variety of wildlife, often not in conflict with domestic animals, offering important source of livelihoods to pastoral communities in the form of tourism and other non consumptive use of wild animals.

2. Significant contribution of pastoralism to the economic growth

Statistics from African Union's policy framework for pastoralism³ show that there are 268 million pastoralists. They live and move on 43 % of Africa's land mass and contribute between 10 to 44 % of the GDP in the countries that they live in. Pastoralism has immense potential for reducing poverty, generating economic growth, managing the environment, promoting sustainable development, and building climate resilience. A study by IIED⁴ shows that pastoralists, who feed their animals solely on natural dryland pastures, can achieve high rates of productivity than on modern ranches built on the Western model.

In Western Africa, the contribution of the livestock sector to agricultural GDP, ranges from 5 % in Cote d'Ivoire to 44 % in Mali and provides employment for about 50 % of the economically active population. Livestock is an important factor of integration in the region as cattle, sheep and goats are major items exported from land-locked Sahelian countries to humid and sub-humid coastal countries. However, the regional supply of meat and dairy products is far lower than demand, resulting in a large net importation livestock products; this trend is expected to increase in future. In Central Africa, the contribution of livestock to the GDP in these countries is estimated at 27 % in Chad, 13 % in Cameroon and 9 % in Central African Republic. Intra-regional trade in livestock and livestock products is a feature of this region,

¹Michele Nori, Michael Taylor, Alessandra Sensi. *Browsing on fences Pastoral land rights, livelihoods and adaptation to climate change. IIE Issue paper 148*. May 2008

²FAO, 2001; Global statistics need nevertheless careful handling and skeptical reasoning, as pointed out by Dobie (2001).

³African Union. *Policy framework for pastoralism in Africa: Securing, Protecting and Improving the Lives, Livelihoods and Rights of Pastoralist Communities*, October 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

<http://au.int/en/dp/rea/sites/default/files/Policy%20Framework%20for%20Pastoralism.pdf>

⁴International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and SOS Sahel International UK, *Modern and mobile – the future of livestock production in Africa's drylands*, 2010, <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=12565IIED>

with these three countries having the opportunity to export to the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe. The multipurpose socioeconomic and cultural features of pastoralism are better exploited in East Africa. Sudan and Somalia are major livestock exporters to the Gulf States, Ethiopia has a substantial informal export trade through Somalia, and a growing formal export trade to the Gulf States, Egypt, Sudan and other countries. Livestock export facilities along the northern Somali coast and Djibouti continue to grow, often with private sector investment. Eastern Africa is also characterized by exploitation of pastoral areas for wildlife conservation and tourism, especially in Kenya and Tanzania, although the extent to which revenues benefit pastoralists is unclear. In Sudan, the pastoral-dominated livestock sector contributes 80 % of the agricultural GDP. In Ethiopia the livestock-dependant leather industry is the second largest source of foreign currency after coffee. In Uganda, pastoralist and small livestock producers contribute the fourth largest share of foreign currency earnings. In Southern Africa, South Africa pastoralism accounts for about 60 % of the national cattle herd, where the livestock sector, including pastoralism, is an important meat export market. In Namibia pastoral-dominated livestock sector contributes 3 % of GDP and 28 % of the agricultural GDP. Namibian pastoralists hold 80 % of the national cattle herd, which contribute about one-third of income in traditional households.

3. Key challenges for pastoralists

The mix of growing population, shrinking and fragmentation of land and climate change are likely to provoke and aggravate conflict over resource access, control and utilisation. Despite considerable progress towards supportive policies, pastoralists continue to suffer from isolation, political marginalization and lack of public services in many African countries. Policies focused on 'modernising' the livestock sector, sedentarising pastoralists and privatising land tenure have not been successful. An integrated development approach would be more effective in supporting livelihood systems and enabling pastoralists to recover and maintain their inherent resilience and self-reliance.⁵

Food price increases and financial crises: Food price increases impacted on pastoralists because they need to buy a substantial proportion of their food needs in the form of cereals. For some poorer pastoralists, up to 85 % of food needs are acquired through direct purchase so food price increases have a direct impact on food security. In some cases, increase in grain prices may trigger parallel increase of values of animal products.

In response to the food price crisis, cases of large scale land acquisitions in pastoral zones have been reported in relation to this trend, thereby adding another cause of land loss to problems faced by pastoralists.

Financial and insurance services: Although pastoralists can possess substantial financial capital in the form of livestock, often the banking systems in Africa do not classify livestock as insurable, and therefore, pastoralists are excluded from formal credit systems. In some countries there are progressive, alternative credit systems developed by private or government-owned banks that are tailored to the pastoral context. The causes of **conflict** include poor governance, cultural norms among some pastoral groups such as livestock raiding, or the forced abduction of children from other groups. However, there are also numerous examples of peaceful co-existence, including between pastoralists and crop-farming populations and mutually beneficial economic exchanges.

Women traditionally play an important role in livestock rearing, processing milk, selling dairy products and maintaining households. Yet, they do not own valuable property, are the least educated, and are excluded from decision making processes and resource management and allocation.

Protecting pastoral livestock assets: It is further recognized that in some countries, processes of government decentralization provide opportunities for supporting locally-appropriate land tenure arrangements. However, national legislation also needs to protect pastoral rangelands from commercial ventures in pastoral land. There is a need to acknowledge the legitimate rights of pastoralists to pastoral lands by granting them communal land ownership on a priority basis as well as adequate compensation in case of expropriation of their communal pastoral land for bio-energy production, development of oil and mineral deposits, and construction of infrastructures.

⁵ *Demographic trends, settlement patterns and service provision in pastoralism. Transformation and opportunity.* ODI.HPG. April 2009. <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/4311.pdf>

Market access: is a key challenge for pastoralists. The many goods they produce and the way they are marketed depends on a number of factors including distance to markets, types of markets competition from other producers and demand for products. Income can also be generated through a range of conservation-related activities including eco-tourism, and sale of medicinal plants, gums, and fruits. International trade and tariff systems have been accused of depressing the price that pastoralists can expect from the market, thereby threatening the long-term financial sustainability of pastoralism. In some cases, market access for pastoral products has been negatively impacted by the globalization of markets and imports as well as increased concerns over health and safety. In particular, SPS requirements require a formal monitoring system which is not compatible with most pastoral systems and of difficult application in mobile animal rearing systems.

Animal health: Poor animal health services coupled with lack of animal health certification and the sporadic outbreak of economically important diseases (RVF, FMD etc.) remain major constraints for the marketing of livestock and meat from the Horn of Africa in general.⁶ The status of the community-based animal health workers (CAHWs) as main providers of animal health services is not fully recognized by the Departments of veterinary services.

And new opportunities...

Pastoralism is a whole way of life, which utilizes marginal agro-ecological areas while also providing important environmental services – land management, biodiversity, carbon sequestration etc. It is a way of producing nutritious food and animal proteins in harsh, arid environment, thus representing a highly skilled natural resource management system. It will be increasingly important to produce such animal proteins which are increasingly on demand by society (the livestock revolution paradigm), and to produce them in more sustainable ways – which is not the case for other livestock systems with higher impacts on the environment (deforestation, pollution, GHG) as well as, for some, on public health.

There is a potential for expanding **trade in livestock** at regional and global levels as a result of increasing demand for animal proteins all over the world. Standards on food safety and disease control tend to be outweighed by issues of demand and price, with trade proceeding on the basis of bilateral arrangements between countries. There are considerable opportunities for African pastoral producers to export livestock or meat, to the Middle East and other regions. Similarly, urbanization within Africa affords opportunities for greater domestic and regional trade as there is a growing domestic market for meat and milk which is an important opportunity for pastoral producers.

A second strategy relates to added value, and where economically viable, the need to retain value locally through more processing of livestock products. There are also new emerging markets for pastoral products such as ethical products, biological products, animal welfare standards, etc

New technologies such as mobile phones as well as improvements in roads are opening up pastoral areas. Many pastoralists have also been quick to take advantage of new technology, particularly mobile phones. The growing systems around remittances and migrations are also assisted by mobile phone communication. Increasingly, the private sector is exploring options for delivery financial services, including banking, via mobile phones, with systems already in place in some countries.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation: Some experts⁷ argue that pastoralists will be among the first groups to lose their livelihoods, as rangelands and water points dry up. Others insist that pastoralists are the best equipped to adapt to climate change, since their livelihood strategies are honed to respond to scarce and variable natural resources, and to cope with uncertain agro-ecological conditions. Pastoralists selectively breed their livestock to emphasize traits such as drought resistance and milk production. They also altered the species composition of their herds in the face of rainfall and markets.

The environmental services of pastoralism: Pastoralists have an intimate and rich knowledge of complex ecosystem dynamics making them one of the best detectors of environmental change. Although the predominant discourse is usually the degradation caused by pastoralists, they provide many environmental services. The challenge in understanding these closely interrelated services– for example,

⁶ Akililu, Y. (2008). *Livestock Marketing in Kenya and Ethiopia: A Review of Policies and Practice*. Feinstein International Center, Addis Ababa.

⁷ *Demographic trends, settlement patterns and service provision in pastoralism. Transformation and opportunity*. ODI.HPG. April 2009. <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/4311.pdf>

livestock grazing can contribute to maintaining healthy vegetation, which captures carbon, reduces erosion, maintains soils and facilitates water holding capacity.⁸

Innovations: Alongside formal scientific and technological advancements, pastoralists are developing and testing new knowledge and practices to take advantage of emerging opportunities to participate in national and regional markets such as the example of Northern Kenya pastoralists and Ethiopian camel markets, market milk in Kenya or innovations to increase access to high value fodder in Kenya.⁹

4. Continental and regional policy processes supportive of pastoralists

The commitment to the **Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa** has two objectives: (1) secure and protect the lives, livelihoods and rights of pastoral peoples and ensure continent-wide commitment to political, social and economic development of pastoral communities and pastoral areas; (2) reinforce the contribution of pastoral livestock to national, regional and continent-wide economies.

In the **CEMAC region**, specific cooperation instruments are also emerging such as the cooperation agreement creating CEDEVIRAH (Economic Commission for Livestock, Meat and Fish) across CEMAC countries. In **COMESA**, a draft *Policy Framework for Food Security in Pastoralist Areas* was released in late 2009, under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3. This framework proposes regional harmonization of national policies to support regional movements of pastoralists to enable efficient use of transnational rangeland ecosystems, and for livestock trade. In **IGAD**, a *Regional Policy Framework on Animal Health* was finalized in late 2009 which although not directly focused on pastoralism, was very relevant to the large pastoralist areas of IGAD Member States.

In **West Africa**, governments have passed a series of pastoral laws to protect pastoral land and enhance livestock mobility as well as priority use rights over resources. Progress has been made in West Africa, in formulating legislation to enable pastoral mobility through the *ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate*. In COMESA certification systems for regional livestock movements are evolving. Related to the livestock trade and surveillance aspects of regional livestock movements is the issue of *Transboundary animal disease (TAD) control*. However, in many countries, policies on TAD eradication or control need to be reviewed. In **Central Africa** supportive policies range from government mobile schools to provide education services to the children of pastoralists during transhumance in Chad to the allocation of land and appropriate veterinary services to pastoralist communities. More positive policy experiences are also beginning to emerge in **Eastern Africa**, with related efforts to improve coordination and understanding of pastoralism across central government.

5. Way forward

The diversity of pastoralist groups needs to be recognized: not all pastoralists are at the same level of vulnerability. Some are well-off with stable livelihoods. Others, once stable in pastoral production, today find themselves in danger of losing their livelihoods. Still others have fallen out of the pastoral system altogether, own no livestock or land and live in shanties with no access to social amenities, depending almost entirely on relief agencies.¹⁰ Current policy and practice must accommodate these different categories of pastoralists and their particular needs. There is a need for increased political representation of pastoralists in the decision-making processes and the recognition of the role of traditional institutions. Favorable land tenure policy and legislation as well as land use planning are key tools to improve pastoralists livelihoods especially in the context of large land acquisition trends. Further support is needed in primary veterinary care in pastoral areas, especially systems which link community-based animal health workers to veterinary professionals and the involvement of the private sector, under the regulation and supervision of national veterinary services.

More needs to be done as to capture the benefits at national and regional level of the environmental services that pastoralism provides. Further research includes a better understanding of the complex relationship between livestock and climate change and the importance of the livestock sector to the

⁸ (WISP) The World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism. 2008. *Forgotten Services, Diminished Goods: understanding the agroecosystem of pastoralism*. WISP Policy Note No. 8. http://data.iucn.org/wisp/documents_english/WISP_PN8_en.pdf

⁹ Nunow, A., Hussein, A.A., Lind, J., Dida, B., and Mahmoud, A.H. 2011. *Innovation Works: Pastoralists Building Secure Livelihoods in the Horn of Africa*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies (IDS); Future Agricultures Consortium. Source: http://www.future-agricultures.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=1162&Itemid=1073

¹⁰ *Pastoralism, policies and practice in the Horn and East Africa*. A review of current Trends. ODI.HPG. April 2009

adaptation strategies of rural poor people in Africa¹¹; the role of pastoral rangelands in carbon sequestration and the possibilities for carbon trading. The development of livestock value chains represent an economic potential but requires improved market access, reducing livestock trade barriers and non-tariff barriers, enhancing market information systems, SPS compliance and financing mechanisms. Support extension services that responds to the needs and interests of pastoralists, and which build upon their extensive indigenous knowledge are needed. There is need to invest in value addition at local level, branding of pastoral products, utilization of livestock products in urban and peri-urban areas.

Another major challenge is the limited availability of alternative sources of livelihoods. In order to provide food security and decent living to an increasing number of people, pastoral livelihoods must be on one hand 1) strengthened (access to land, mobility, access to markets – increasingly important to exchange livestock commodities with other staple at favorable caloric terms of trade), while also 2) opportunities should be set to diversify such livelihoods, through adequate investments in human resources (i.e. currently basic services are lowest in pastoral areas) – access to information, education, vocational training, alternative skills, etc.... - so that parts of pastoral populations get the properly-informed opportunity to choose different patterns, as it is the case for rural livelihoods in general.

Objectives of the Briefing

To improve information sharing and promote networking, CTA, the DG DEVCO from the European Commission, the ACP Secretariat, Concord and various media organise bimonthly briefings on key issues and challenges for rural development in the context of EU/ACP cooperation. The Briefing on 22nd February 2012, is organised with the African Union Commission and in collaboration with the Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern Africa Pastoralism¹², will address issues related to pastoralism in ACP countries. It will: (i) discuss the challenges and opportunities for pastoralism; (ii) review the main policy frameworks supporting pastoralism and the good practices and experiences from the field ; (iii) provide a dialogue platform to feed into the policy debate.

Target group

More than 150 ACP-EU policy-makers and representatives of EU Member States, civil society groups, research networks and development practitioners, and international organisations based in Brussels.

Available material

Input and comments before, during and after the meetings will be included in the Briefings blog: <http://brusselsbriefings.net>. A short report and a Reader in printed and electronic format will be produced shortly after the meeting.

¹¹ *Building climate change resilience for African livestock in sub-Saharan Africa* - World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP): a program of IUCN - The International Union for Conservation of Nature, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi, March 2010. <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2010-103.pdf>

¹² See more on CELEP: <http://www.celep.info/>