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**New challenges and opportunities for pastoralism in ACP countries**

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**Policy Framework in Support of Pastoralism in Africa**

*Executive Summary*

African pastoralism is defined by a high reliance on livestock as a source of economic and social wellbeing, and various types of strategic mobility to access water and grazing resources in areas of high rainfall variability. Pastoralism is found in all regions of Africa and in some regions, is the dominant livelihoods system. Pastoralists supply very substantial numbers of livestock to domestic, regional and international markets and therefore, make crucial – but often undervalued – contributions to national and regional economies in Africa. Their production systems are highly adaptive, constantly responding to market and climatic trends. Pastoralist culture is part of the cultural heritage of Africa, and animal and plant resources in pastoral areas comprise one of the most important types of genetic resource on the continent.

Against these positive aspects of pastoralism is the reality that human development and food security indicators for many pastoral areas of Africa are among the lowest on the continent, and in some cases, worsening. Drawing on extensive regional expert consultations conducted since 2007, the African Union **Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa,** which was adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is the first continent-wide policy initiative which aims to secure, protect and improve the lives, livelihoods and rights of African pastoralists. The policy framework is a platform for mobilizing and coordinating political commitment to pastoral development in Africa, and emphasizes the need to fully involve pastoralist women and men in the national and regional development processes from which they are supposed to benefit. The framework also emphasizes the regional nature of many pastoralist ecosystems in Africa and therefore, the need to support and harmonize policies across the Regional Economic Communities and AU Member States.

The AU **Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa** contains guiding and cross-cutting *principles*, key *objectives*, and a set of *strategies* to attain theobjectives which are: (a) 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, focusing on the need to recognize the rights, existing and potential future economic contributions of pastoralists to development, with related political and policy processes needed to develop appropriate pastoral policies and fully integrate pastoralism into national and regional development programmes and plans; and (b) reinforce the contribution of pastoral livestock to national, regional and continent-wide economies, which focuses on the core assets of pastoral areas viz. pastoral rangelands and livestock; emphasizing the need to improve the governance of pastoral rangelands and thereby secure access to rangelands for pastoralists; with the involvement of traditional pastoral institutions as central to this process; and with protection and development of pastoral livestock, risk-based drought management, and support to the marketing of pastoral livestock and livestock products in domestic, regional and international markets constitute important strategies to achieve this objective.

Pursuant to the Decision of the AU Assembly, the commission of the African has been engaging stakeholders with a view to (a) strengthening and/or establishing an appropriate institutional framework to provide coordination of follow up activities and facilitate mutual learning by member states as they develop/review their pastoral policies in accordance with the Policy Framework; (b) putting in place appropriate measures/mechanisms for mobilization of financial resources and partnerships in support of promoting pastoral policy development and implementation at regional and country levels; (c) taking appropriate measures for the establishment of mechanisms for progress tracking and periodic member states reporting on progress achieved; and (d) supporting pastoral groups and networks in their efforts to initiate regional and/or continental pastoralist forums.