



## Brussels Development Briefing no. 26

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

Brussels, 22 February 2012

On 22 February 2012, CTA organized the 26<sup>th</sup> Brussels Development Briefing – part of a series of bimonthly Development Briefings on ACP-EU rural development issues. More than 170 participants discussed the challenges and opportunities that pastoralists face in ACP countries.

#### Partners in the Briefing:

- European Commission
- ACP Group and ACP Secretariat
- Concord
- Media

Haile Gabriel Abebe, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture at the African Union Commission, stated the importance of addressing the challenges that pastoralists face and of implementing frameworks to support



them. Francesca Mosca, Director for Sub-Saharan Africa, DG DEVCO at the European Commission, emphasized the large presence of pastoralists in the world – 25% of land area is used by pastoralists, supporting approximately 200 million pastoralist households and 10% of the world's meat is produced by pastoralists. Pastoralism is a sophisticated practice that needs to thrive in unpredictable climates and relies on mobility to use available resources and manage livelihoods in these environments. There are many threats to pastoralists in terms of livelihood and health. However, advantages include reducing poverty, generating economic growth, maintaining biodiversity, managing the environment and building resilience to climate change. Pastoralists need to be supported, in order for them to be able to access resources fairly and contribute to the wider society. Although implementing policy and economic practices remains a challenge, a policy environment that is more favourable to the needs of pastoralists is emerging. The EU has supported pastoralism in many ways, such as by investing in veterinary surveillance and control, and will continue to do so. Michael Hailu, Director of CTA, stressed the multiple

direct and indirect values and the immense potential of pastoralism for reducing poverty, generating economic growth, managing the environment, building climate resilience and promoting sustainable development. There is need to invest in value addition at local level and branding of pastoral products. Many pastoralists have also been quick to take advantage of new technologies, particularly mobile phones as well as the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and the global positioning system (GPS) and thematic maps of seasonal movements of livestock allows to accurately predict animal deaths and supports efforts to provide livestock insurance for pastoralists.



#### Is there a future for pastoralism?

The first panel moderated by H.E. M. Kembigitura, Ambassador of Kenya, provided an overview of the main challenges affecting the pastoralists especially in ACP countries and the opportunities provided by policy frameworks and processes. Jeremy Swift, Pastoral Development Specialist, formerly Professor at the Institute for Development Studies, United Kingdom, provided a definition for pastoralists. They depend principally on livestock for their livelihood; are mobile to some degree; use community-managed grasslands for part of the year and recognize customary rules and norms as a source of authority to regulate many aspects of daily life. The exact amount of pastoralists is as yet unclear and is estimated at 20 million pastoralists in Africa and 50 million in the world (mainly Europe, Middle East, Central Asia and South America). As Francesca Mosca

mentioned, he stated that nomadic pastoralism is a highly specialized livelihoods system with a detailed knowledge base and an appropriate technology, based on the productive use of resources with very low opportunity costs.



Indeed, pastoralists should be seen as extraordinary livestock specialists. In spite of this, their contribution to national and international economic activity is considerably underreported and they remain invisible in statistics, leading to insufficient investments to pastoralists from national budgets. For pastoralists, it is important that they start engaging with the outside world, participate in elections and pursue education. For governments, it is necessary to make pastoralists more visible in statistics and discourse and represented in parliament, protect pastoral land and recognize pastoralism as a productive and efficient use of resources and their contribution to the national economy. To conclude, Professor Swift confirmed his belief in the future of nomadic pastoralism, which will require much effort.

### **AU Policy Framework on pastoralism**

Haile Gabriel Abebe discussed political and economic marginalization, extreme and worsening levels of poverty and food insecurity, and conflict and insecurity, which are very common among pastoral communities. Until now, government responses to address these challenges have been inadequate: they are biased, do not consider pastoralist realities or circumstances and have been ineffective. The African Union Commission, together with UN OCHA, launched the Pastoral Policy Initiative in July 2007 to address the challenges with the objective of developing a policy framework to address the challenges and needs of pastoralist communities, and serve as an advocacy tool and mechanism to attain the official recognition of pastoralists, protect their livelihoods and promote continent-wide commitment to the political, social and economic development of pastoralists. 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. Turning these strategies and aims into concrete results remains a challenge.

### **Legislating for pastoralism: lessons learnt**

Boureima Dodo, Permanent Secretary of Bilital Maroobe, West African network, gave an overview of some initiatives to support pastoralists – new documents that take pastoralists' interests into account, laws that have been passed, the development of legislation relating to pastoralism in many countries. At both the national and sub-regional level, there have been many efforts to develop documents that facilitate the management of transhumance and prevention of conflict among pastoralists. ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate represents a series of commitments between the Sahel countries and other countries to vaccinate animals, and determine dates and points of passage that are to be followed by transhumants. Another ECOWAS plan is to deal with issues related to the cross-border transport of livestock as well as the prevention of conflict. However, there are many gaps in the documents, and conditions for transhumants have not necessarily improved despite the interest. Furthermore, there is a lack of flexibility, specifically in the International Transhumance Certificate, such as the need to provide information on the zones that will be traversed 2-3 months in advance, even if they are hindered by drought, otherwise they receive a fine. Indeed, in many cases the exact needs



of pastoralists are disregarded and laws are developed by politicians and fail to be realistic and practical. In the future, it is important that research demonstrates the advantages of pastoralism, in order for pastoralists to make their case more strongly, and for the political recognition of pastoralists to occur.

### **Pastoralism in Europe**

Jean-Michel Courades, Leader Programme, DG Agriculture at the European Commission, demonstrated that pastoralism exists in Europe, especially in mountainous areas.

However, more studies need to be conducted at the local and regional level. EU initiatives to support pastoralists have been made possible through funds for rural areas, supporting agricultural practices that go beyond basic agricultural standards and national projects, such as the network for rural development that has set up a working group on transhumance by the Spanish government and the attempt to include transhumance and pastoralism as part of their national heritage. Problems remain relating to insufficient training of shepherds, the value of pastoralist products, EU legislation with animal health and the significant administrative burden caused by the mobility of pastoralists. Cooperation with the local population and taking a variety of issues that pastoralists deal with into account are important for the future of pastoralism.

In the **debate**, emphasis was put on including pastoralists more explicitly in the European Commission's *Agenda for Change*, and on the remaining challenge to put policy into practice. Priority should be given to research and investment in the agricultural sector, the reintegration of pastoralists into society among others. In the European experience, there has not been tension between pastoralism and modernity, as it is a very adaptive model, seen in the improvement of livelihoods through technology, the existence of niche markets for local breeding with genetic improvement and better working conditions.

### **Enhancing resilience in pastoral systems**

For Shirley Tarawali, Director of Institutional Planning at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), pastoral communities



who live on rangelands are environmental stewards whose lives can be improved through diversification and index livestock insurance. Indeed, pastoralists are usually the first victims of climate change, conflict, animal disease, poor infrastructure, to name a few of the challenges they face. She suggested certain options to support them, for instance securing access to and availability of assets (animals, natural resources) and diversifying markets. As the loss of animals is the main cause of poverty for pastoralists, it is important to mitigate animal asset loss. ILRI has come up with a scheme to protect pastoralists against the risk of drought-related livestock loss, an index-based livestock insurance, which monitors the greenness of surfaces and triggers insurance payments when a certain number of livestock deaths can be predicted. This scheme was launched in Kenya in January 2010 and is still in the pilot phase with hopes of launching it in Ethiopia this year. There has been much demand for the scheme – 3000 pastoralists have bought the product, of which 600 received payments after last year's drought. One of the main challenges, however, is helping pastoralists to understand the idea of paying and not immediately receiving a return.



### **Improving market access for dairy products**

Maryam Abeiderrahmane, CEO of Tiviski Dairy, Mauritania, shared the experience of the company, which was set up in 1987 with the aim of establishing a connection between the dairy potential of pastoral stock and city-based consumers of fresh produce who are unable to access fresh milk. Tiviski has faced many challenges: huge distances between herds and markets, low yield from stock, poor infrastructure, a supply subject to extreme seasonal variations, an unpredictable quality of milk, a shortage of labour, the short shelf life of fresh milk, pastoral environments that are similar to desert conditions, the protection of EU markets. Despite the hurdles, the dairy's collection system, quality policy and general Business approach proved powerful, leading up gradually to total investment of €4 million and turnover exceeding €3 million, a



thousand faithful suppliers, 200 employees, a considerable impact on the rural economy ... and several imitators. Tiviski has been valuable to pastoralists who are unable to market their products and highly benefit from Tiviski's assistance and support. Thus, governments should implement policies that are favorable to pastoralists and manage imports in a way that supports the access of local produce to the domestic market and more financing should be made available to private entrepreneurs.

### **Adaptation and mitigation to climate change**

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of M'Bororo Nomadic Peoples Association in Chad, stated that indigenous groups and pastoralists are still largely excluded from decision-making processes.



These groups face greater risks to climate change and benefit from climate science and related information to avoid and manage these risks. The M'Bororo community consists of nomadic and semi-nomadic herders in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and Nigeria (250,000 in Chad from the 1993 census). They rely on traditional knowledge systems to cope with seasonal weather patterns and manage limited resources in a sustainable way. Challenges they face are vulnerability to climate change, increasing restrictions on mobility, increasing distances, loss of livestock, and changes in lifestyle. Although modern knowledge systems are being used, such as modern monitoring and forecasting systems to generate and provide a wide range of information, traditional knowledge systems and decision-making methods are still used, for example local loyalties, cultural values, traditional beliefs and trust in traditional predictive systems, such as observing the size and shape of fruits produced by a certain palm tree to indicate whether or not the coming year will be a good one or the abundant offspring of a certain type of lizard to predict a good season. Ways forward will be the participatory use of ICTs to document traditional knowledge and multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchange.

### **Learning through Pastoral Field Schools**

Joep Van Mierlo, Director of Vétérinaires sans Frontières, Belgium, gave an overview of the successes and challenges of the Pastoral Field

Schools (PFS) – farmer field schools started in 1989 in South East Asia and later expanded to other parts of the world. It is a 'school without walls' that has been adapted to the mobility of pastoralists with the aim to 'develop pastoralists through observation, experimentation and capacity building, and help them to become more resilient and less vulnerable, empower them to remain experts in their own context, and encourage them to appreciate their traditional customs. Following the strategy to facilitate rather than teach, the pillars are based on group organization and cooperation, technical exposure and demonstrations and discovery-based learning. The PFS have contributed to the general improvement of livelihoods, socio-economic empowerment, adoption and adaptation of practices against environmental degradation and climate change. The main challenges are the abandonment rate and participation of pastoralists to the entire cycle, legalization and registration of community-based groups, strengthening the role of PFS in emergency responses, involving government departments and funding.



Following the second panel, the **debate** revolved around the lack of national activity to support pastoralists and the importance of identifying the key issues to focus on, such as resilience to climate change and conflicts that have resulted due to climate change. The issue of integrating modernity with the traditional methods of pastoralists was brought up as well as the necessity to offer alternatives for generating income among pastoralists. The importance of supporting women in decision-making processes and facilitating the education of children was highlighted. Again, the necessity to bridge research development and policy was highlighted as well as the necessity to assist in solving conflicts between pastoralists, farmers and industries – conflicts that pastoralists do not have the power to solve.

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