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CapEx in supporting pastoral development

## Land and development of pastoral areas in sub-Saharan Africa

Adamou Boureima and Manuel Flury, February 2016

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### Key messages

- Livestock production is an essential economic activity of the people and the member states of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States).
- Mobility is the basis of the pastoral economy but has been weakened in the Sahel with recurrent droughts. There are also increased barriers to pastoral mobility, hence the need to develop the pastoral areas. Such development generally raises issues of land tenure.
- There is need for inclusive reforms in land policy in Africa in order to improve land governance and to promote investment for the benefit of pastoralism.
- A subregional approach is essential in supporting pastoralism, because many of the issues faced have cross-border dimensions (mobility, natural resource management, trade, transboundary animal diseases, harmonisation of policies, early warning and rapid response systems, conflict and peacebuilding).



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## **CapEx series on pastoralism**

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*Pastoralism is practised on a quarter of the globe's surface and provides a source of food and livelihood for millions of people, especially in areas that are too dry or high for reliable production of food crops. For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) work in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, pastoralism is a key domain. Having recognised the value of learning from experiences in development cooperation across countries and regions, the Subgroup Pastoralism in the SDC network for Agriculture and Food Security undertook an internal learning process called "Capitalisation of experiences in supporting pastoral development" (CapEx Pastoralism for short). The Subgroup members identified issues about which they wanted to learn more, so as to be more effective in supporting the development of pastoral economies and livelihoods. During the CapEx process, they compiled information and formulated texts on selected topics. This brief is one of a series of briefs that came out of this process. The briefs are intended primarily for SDC and its partners at country and regional level, particularly in West and Eastern Africa, and SDC staff in Switzerland, but also for other development practitioners and donors engaged in pastoral development.*

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### **1. Introduction**

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In the Sahel region, livestock ranks first in agricultural production, ahead of arable farming of crops that are highly exposed to risks. Through their adaptability to uncertainty, pastoral societies may appear vulnerable but they are also resilient. Usually receiving little support from government policy, pastoralists have developed mechanisms to constantly upgrade their mobility systems, adapting to new constraints and incorporating many innovations. This mode of operation dictated by uncertain conditions and context obliges the pastoralists to negotiate with other stakeholders for access to pastoral resources. This tension persists in the pastoral rangelands as well as in the transhumance corridors and in the areas used only temporarily for grazing. Indeed, access to natural resources is increasingly constrained by the gradual disappearance of fallow land, encroachment on migration corridors, expansion of cropland by clearing of grazing and forest areas, and the decrease in the amount and quality of forage.

The land issue is currently one of the top issues for debate, particularly in the context of rural development in Africa. The different forms of land use raise the question of how to develop the land. This brings changes in legal status of social and economic relations related to land, including the structure of land ownership and use.

Given the current population growth and urban expansion, the issue of land development constitutes a fundamental dimension for the trade-off between meeting the growing need for space to grow crops and managing conflicts.

#### **Key terms**

**Land:** This term is central to the issue of pastoral land development. In a broad sense, "land" refers to everything related to any piece of ground not covered by water, the relationship of people to the land, and the social and economic relations between people with regard to land, which are governed by land rights.

**Land development** refers to any transformation of land from an existing state to a new state. Land development implies a dimension of dialogue and consensus more than just technical development.

### 3. Specific cases

It is increasingly important for African States to have an appropriate framework and instruments to ensure sustainable use and management of land and natural resources. The case from Niger illustrates this well.

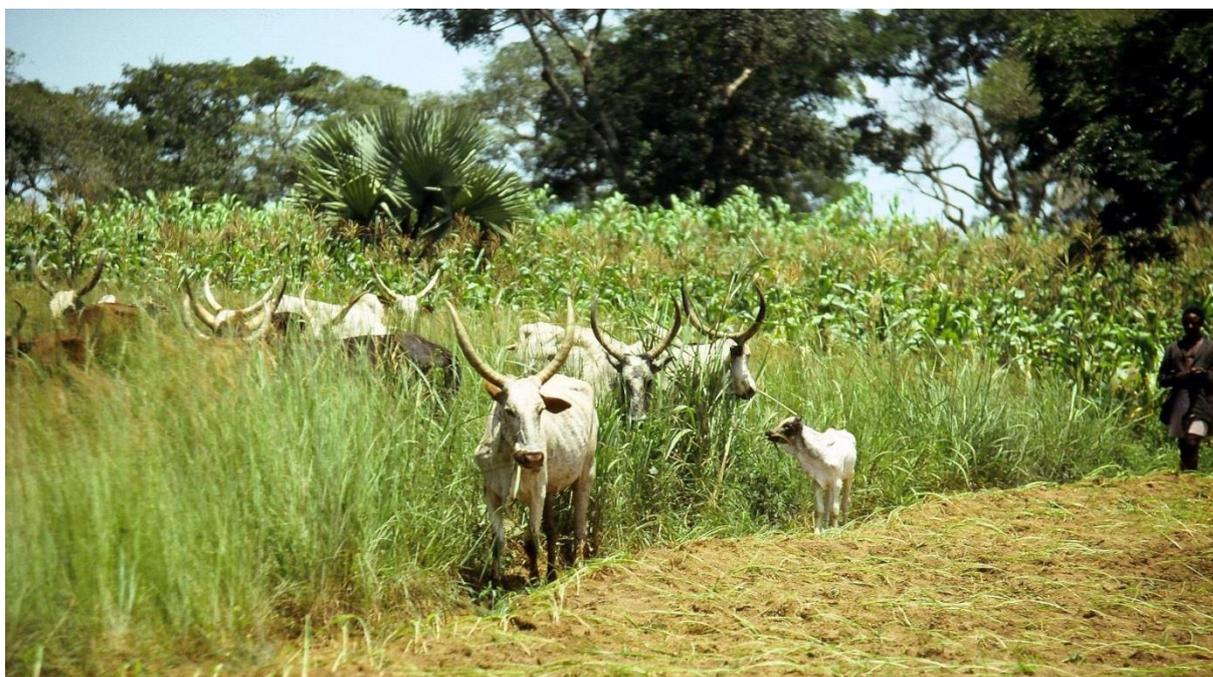
#### **Case 1: Process of drawing up a land-use plan in Dosso Region<sup>1</sup>**

In Niger, a decree on pastoralism was adopted on 20 May 2010. It complements the guiding principles of the Rural Code. These instruments encourage the establishment of strategic reserves and grazing areas. For this purpose, pastoral areas are defined as "the space intended for livestock keeping, involving one or more pastoral resources that can be freely used by pastoralists and their herds during their movements" (Article 2). This process involved strong participation of pastoralist organisations. The national law was initially applied at the local level, particularly in Dosso Region.

Having more than 13% of Niger's population living in an area that covers less than 2% of the country, Dosso Region is a densely populated area with, in some places, over 100 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and an average of three head of livestock per person. This creates a strong pressure on the natural resources and sometimes leads to deadly conflicts. Faced with this situation, the authorities in the region, with the support of technical and financial partners, opted to offer the region a land-use plan (LUP). This was the first such proactive initiative to draw up an LUP in Niger and bears witness to the willingness at local level to embrace planning and ownership of development. The approach is sensitive, as LUP concerns a complex and delicate issue and still poses challenges in strategic, methodological and operational terms.

The starting point was a capitalisation study. This was carried out by the structures of the Rural Code on all levels, with the support of the University of Niamey. To this end, the region acquired important tools for land-use planning, including: i) a numerical register and syntheses of all documents on land and natural resources in the region; ii) a comprehensive inventory of all land transactions at municipal level by the different structures of the Rural Code; iii) land-use maps, location of agrosylvopastoral resources and water infrastructure for which details were available; iv) a proposal for two databases to facilitate archiving, consultation and document management as well as land transaction instruments.

A participatory and inclusive approach enabled the validation of these tools by all stakeholders.



Precision herding in agropastoral area of northern Nigeria (Credit: Wolfgang Bayer)

<sup>1</sup>Source: Niger Rural Code website ([www.coderural-niger.net](http://www.coderural-niger.net))

To illustrate the practical application of the participatory approach, we look at the example of Cameroon.

### **Case 2: Inclusive development of the pastoral code in Cameroon<sup>2</sup>**

Cameroon's pastoral code is an exemplary case for inclusive policy development. Even though the example is at the national level, the lessons learnt can be applied at regional / international level.

The Cameroonian Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) supported by FAO took the initiative to organise and improve pastoral livestock activities by developing a law for pastoralism. Eager to ensure the full participation of pastoralists in the process, SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) decided in 2009 to support the initiative. Thanks to its expertise in public policies and people's participation, SNV mobilised pastoralists and raised awareness in the National Confederation of Livestock Breeders in Cameroon (Confédération nationale des Éleveurs du Bétail du Cameroun, CNEBCAM). It supported this organisation representing pastoralists with training and mentoring in lobbying and advocacy activities. To disseminate the proposed pastoral code and receive feedback on it from pastoralists and other stakeholders, SNV facilitated the organisation of debates at national, regional and local levels. Later, SNV supported development of implementation texts to supplement the pastoral code. The proposed pastoral code is thus the result of an inclusive and highly participatory process.



Afar pastoralists in the move in Ethiopia (Credit: Wolfgang Bayer)



Training of local stakeholders in pastoral spatial planning (Credit: Adamou Boureima)

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## **4. Lessons for development cooperation**

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### **3.1 Analysing the situation**

The challenges faced by pastoralists can be found at two levels – national and international (regional and continental). The main challenges at national level are:

- Implementation of laws: in Niger, some decrees for implementation have still not been issued by the Government, even though the law on pastoralism was adopted in 2010;
- Effectiveness of the systems and rules for securing land tenure, preventing and managing or resolving conflicts related to land and natural resources (e.g. in Mali and Niger, there are inclusive local structures for preventing and managing conflict prior to going to judicial bodies);
- Securing pastoral land in the face of generalised “land-grabbing” for the benefit of large agropastoral businesses. This has led civil society organisations and pastoralist associations in Niger, for example, to start a movement called “*Sauvons les terres pastorales au Niger* – Let's save pastoral land in Niger”.
- Issues that need to be noted at regional (West African) and African level are:
- Sustainably managing natural resources: the management of natural resources in the Sahel is achieved through matching the stocking rate to grazing resources that vary over the year. The

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Tah *et al.* (2015)

mobility of herds should thus be seen as a factor for adjustment and sustainable pasture management by pastoralists in the face of opportunities and seasonal variations;

- Developing the pastoral economy: unlike the all too common concepts of "traditional contemplative" or "prestige" that have long been associated with pastoralism, the economic importance of pastoral systems is real. Mobility also plays a key role in the face of risks: during recurrent droughts, the more mobile herds were generally less vulnerable (Colin de Verdière 1995, Hesse & MacGregor 2006);
- Maintaining social peace and preventing conflicts: human population growth leads to the increasing occupation of areas that are vital for transhumant herds, growing crops along the edges of natural water sources and putting vast areas of land under cultivation;
- Adapting the decentralisation process in pastoral areas: especially in Niger, but also in Mali and Mauritania, the national decentralisation policy, along with the establishment of regional and local authorities, must be adapted to Sahelian pastoral areas. The challenge is to successfully establish active local authorities at the inter-municipal level to be able to implement appropriate policy for managing pastoral areas and resources.

Several organisations or programmes are working on these issues. Pastoralist organisations in the country – e.g. AREN (*Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger* / Association for the Revitalisation of Animal Husbandry in Niger), the Communication Network on Pastoralism (*Réseau de Communication sur le Pastoralisme*, RECOPA) in Burkina Faso and the Bilital Maroobe (RBM) network at regional level – are indispensable partners in the process of harmonising pastoral policies in West Africa. The example from Niger of an inclusive process to develop the law on pastoralism has generated interest at the regional level. In 2013, ANOPER (*Association Nationale des Éleveurs du Bénin* / National Association of Livestock Farmers of Benin), a member of RBM, organised a study trip to take inspiration from the process in Niger. This trip to Niger – together with parliamentarians and specialists in this field – was financially supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation Office in Benin.

With regard to land-use planning and securing pastoral tenure, several cooperation partners have committed themselves to support the African countries. These include the African Union through the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), the World Bank through the Regional Programme on Pastoralism (PRAPS) covering six countries in the Sahel (Senegal, Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), the European Union through the Program for Securing Pastoral Tenure Systems through the Strengthening of Land Governance in ten countries (Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, South Sudan, Somalia and Swaziland), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Luxemburg Cooperation Agency and the Belgian Cooperation Agency through various country programmes that they are financing.

### 3.2 Identifying entry points for development cooperation

Some entry points at national level are:

- Funding of pastoral land tenure security programmes in Africa (framework law on agriculture, adoption and dissemination of land tenure security laws, demarcating national and international transhumance corridors, water infrastructure projects, development of micro-dams etc);
- Support and capacity building of land governance structures;
- Strengthening pastoralist information systems for preventing and managing pastoral crises.

Some entry points at regional (West Africa) and African level are:

- Collaboration with other agencies to support the harmonisation of laws on pastoralism in the Sahel;
- Strengthening capacities of organisations in advocacy and negotiation: SDC has a comparative advantage in West Africa, as it is funding two regional programmes on livestock production – ECOWAP (ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Policy) and PEPAN (Programme d'Education et Formation des Pasteurs Nomades / Nomadic pastoralist education and training programme) – and is working in synergy with the World Bank through PRAPS to support several initiatives at regional level;

- Contribute to improving land governance in Africa by supporting the implementation of the Declaration of the African Union on Land Issues within the framework and guidelines adopted in 2008 by the Heads of State and Government;
- Support pastoralist organisations in their advocacy for the implementation of the Nouakchott Commitments made in Mauritania in October 2013.

### **3.3 Interacting with policy processes**

Development agencies should interact with regional and African organisations for economic and technical integration – ECOWAS, EMUWA (Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa), CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) and African Union – in order to:

- Accelerate the implementation of policies and instruments for promoting trade in goods and services;
- Promote regional investment to generate public goods essential to develop pastoralism and to facilitate cross-border transhumance (infrastructure, telecommunications, animal health, trade, hydraulic structures and equipment);
- Participate in policy debates to ensure that non-governmental and civil-society organisations have the right and opportunity to take part in policy processes that concern them.

### **3.4 Key principles to guide the development-cooperation process**

The different projects / programmes for development cooperation should follow these basic principles:

- Respond to requests for resource mobilisation from Sahel countries, at the appropriate level and for as long as needed in order to promote pastoralism in the Sahel and more broadly in the entire subregion;
- Strengthen local capacities in negotiation and management of pastoral land and infrastructure;
- Involve transhumant pastoralist leaders, women and local authorities in setting priorities and monitoring achievements;
- Capitalise on local knowledge and traditional forms of pastoralist organisation;
- Combine policy work, advocacy, capacity building etc with pilots/practical tests on the ground with the communities, e.g. land-use planning at local level in a cross-border region.

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