



TRANSFORMING LIVESTOCK SECTOR IN THE PASTORAL AND AGRO-PASTORAL AREAS OF THE IGAD REGION

INTRODUCTION

Livestock contributes significantly to the economies of the countries in the IGAD region and is a major source of livelihood for a pastoral and agro-pastoral population in arid and semi-arid areas (ASALs) which covers 70% of the region's landmass. For example, in Kenya, the value of pastoralism has an economic worth of US\$1.13 billion and in Uganda, the total economic value of pastoralism stands at US\$ 4.4 Billion (ICPALD, 2020). Pastoralists own up to 90% of the

national herd, providing meat, hides, skin and milk for domestic and international markets. In Ethiopia, 90% of the live animal exports is supplied by pastoralists, who also contribute significantly to the domestic supply of meat and milk. It is estimated that 80% of the annual Ethiopian milk supply comes from pastoral production (CELEP, 2017). Pastoralism is the most efficient way to use the drylands compared to production of crops. There is high demand for livestock and livestock products in Africa, Middle East and Asia. However, pastoralists find it difficult to access prime market for their animals and products due to structural bottlenecks both at production and marketing.

THE KEY CHALLENGES IN THE PASTORAL AREAS

The large livestock population is not sufficiently contributing to national economy and household livelihoods due to multiple factors such as poor support of the production systems, inadequate transport infrastructure, limited access to grazing lands due to rangeland degradation and insecurity. Pastoral and agro-pastoral livestock production is affected by limited pasture feed, water and poor animal health services. Contrary to good market demand from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the market is hampered by inadequate and inconsistent supply of marketable animals. For instance, in Ethiopia export abattoirs perform below 50% of their capacity mainly due to the limited supply that meet requirements of the market.

Therefore, in order to harness economic potential of the huge livestock resources of the IGAD region, both for herders and national economy, there is a need for transformation of livestock production in

pastoral and agro-pastoral systems with adequate attention and support in an enabling policy environment. By transformation we mean not to change pastoralism but to provide support to breeding and multiplication of good performing local animal breeds, timely offtake through support to private sector, conditioning animals to meet market requirements, timely response to early warning through functioning destocking and restocking system and cutting out the lengthy unproductive market chain through direct links to live animal and meat exporters.

This policy brief was developed from a panel session held at the first Pastoralism Day and Expo (January 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). The panelists were drawn from herders, traders, exporters, development partners and government officials based on their extensive experience. The following policy recommendations were drawn from the panel discussion.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to tap the economic opportunity of livestock value chain in the pastoral areas, it is important to undertake youth sensitization programs to ensure their involvement in the long-term livestock sector development in pastoral areas. These efforts will empower pastoral communities to adapt and thrive in the rapidly changing market, policies and climate.
- Provide pastoralists with market information and requirements including demand, link exporters to pastoralists, and expand contract farming initiatives to ensure consistent supply of quality animals and reduction of reliance on middlemen
- Build capacity of development extension agents from the pastoral areas to consistently support livestock producers on best practices such as on improved husbandry, timely response to early warning alerts, matching livestock with available forage and feed, and supplementing feed at times of drought among others. Such support system further empowers producers, enhances resilience and orients production to the market.
- Facilitate conducive policies that allow pastoralists protection against climate change risks such as drought and disease outbreaks through insurance scheme.
- Unorganized pastoralists lack bargaining power and it is therefore important to organize them as aggregators and traders, in share companies, trade cooperatives or marketing groups.
- Collaborative efforts to combine traditional knowledge with innovative technologies and practices, such as promoting drought adapting breeds and effective disease management practices.
- Facilitate trade and investment in the livestock sector using the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to expand market access for livestock and livestock products in West and Central Africa and across the continent.

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