



Strengthening Drought Resilience for Smallholder Farmers and Pastoralists in the IGAD Region (DRESS-EA)

Policy Brief on Knowledge Management and Sustainability

Introduction

According to the IDDRSI (IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience Sustainability Initiative) report shows that Arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) make up about 60% of the land surface area of the IGAD sub-region. In addition, over 30% of the population living in IGAD region are the rainfed dependent farmers and pastoralists. Pastoral and agro-pastoral populations have maintained movements within and across national boundaries to search for forage of their cattle as one way to mitigate the impact of the impact drought.

A strong and comprehensive institution is essential to enhance information-sharing, coordination, cooperation and knowledge-management among various levels of governments, sectors and society which include:

- ◆ Drought risk management must be incorporated into both long-term development

measures and humanitarian responses.

- ◆ A combination of top-down (overall drought policy, institutional set-up, funding, modern knowledge) approaches supported by bottom-up (traditional knowledge, local production, livelihoods and decision systems) measures is needed to guarantee the maximum efficiency of implemented measures.
- ◆ Drought early warning needs to be followed by early action based on reliability, transparency and trust.
- ◆ Flexibility of funding (contingency planning) must become an integral part of development budget planning.
- ◆ Drought policy implementation requires capacity-building at the local level to ensure effective interaction between concerned parties.

The communities are rich in indigenous knowledge, which is highly held in implicit form. Ignorance of this indigenous knowledge has led to the loss of traditional strategies, values, and practices. Integrating the rich indigenous knowledge with formal knowledge should be the new way to adapt to climate variability and change.



A way of communicating, disseminating, storing, and retrieving using Information and communication technologies should be devised for the indigenous knowledge to be useful for future generations.

Long-term adaptations strategies to drought have been constrained by several socio-economic, political changes and deteriorating ecological conditions. For instance, violent conflicts, lack of affordable credit facilities and financial services, limited access to markets, changing land tenure, and poor infrastructure. In addition, lack access to veterinary services, degradation of grazing lands, and extension services also slow down the farming activities in the region.

The main factors associated with increasing rangeland degradation in the areas include over-exploitation of resources due to localized increase in human and livestock populations, changing land use patterns, nomadism life of the pastoralists, privatization of the communal land tenure, insufficient and unreliable rainfall, and poverty caused by changing climatic conditions.

Some studies in the recent past suggest that heads with a higher level of education are likely to

have a better level of planning, access, and understanding of early warning information for effective climate change adaptation. Thus, strengthening the education sector could be one of the key areas for building climate change resilience of the households in the study area.

Sustainability of DRESSEA

Project:

Important roles in strengthening the adaptation and coping strategies lie with the governments of the IGAD block, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and donor agencies. It is critical to value pastoralism as a productive and sustainable adaptation strategy for ASAL areas by guaranteeing free and safe livestock mobility and improving security, access to education, markets, and communication infrastructure. This ought to be coupled with offering affordable credit facilities, strengthening extension services, diversification of livelihoods, and enhancing live-

stock diversity and species for drought resilience.

Several governments in the region have adopted comprehensive ASALs policy, which is a good starting point; implementation will be paramount in offering pastoralists' support required for effective adaptation and coping responses. Resilience to drought will remain a mirage without significant government support to reduce drought risks among the pastoralists and smallholder farmers, including violent conflict and households' resilience to drought.

Pastoralism remains one of the most important sustainable livelihood production systems in ASAL communities with the right policies and targeted investment in identified adaptation and coping responses in the IGAD area.





The drought frameworks have been useful in guiding the regional stakeholders to support actions to reduce drought risks and increase resilience. Researchers like Crossman N.D (2019) have elaborated the importance of drought frameworks and the linkage of the drought actions to the three pillars of integrated drought management; drought monitoring and early warning systems, Assessment of drought vulnerability, and Implementation of measures to limit drought impacts.

Developing new legislation and enforcing the existing ones is an approach utilized to implement mitigation and response actions. There are already existing land use plans in several countries, which require to be amended to incorporate drought management principles. The other ways the stakeholders are using to mitigate drought events are strengthening the monitoring actions to close the gaps and using outreach and awareness-raising on drought.

Integrated approaches should be used to deflect the pressure and manage the droughts risks to increase resilience and minimize risks. These approaches include

Community participation in drought-related actions from policy influencing and prioritization of their needs to support their development agenda; Understanding that the ASALs are the worst hit. Therefore, countries are refocusing their investment priorities, for example, investing in rural/community infrastructure, markets, appropriate enterprise development- income-generating activities like access to timely early warning climate (drought) information by end-users and early response; conflict resolution/grievance mechanism to mitigate farmer-pastoral issues and developing acceptable stock routes agreements; training in appropriate drought technologies to increase stakeholder capacities in food production for consumption and sale; developing pro-community drought adaptation actions; and, creating linkages between practitioners and researchers on drought-related issues.

Other pathways to enhance drought resilience include: establishing women empowerment schemes like providing soft loans/women credit schemes for their investments, provision of drought-

resistant high yielding crop varieties, and most importantly, avenues targeted towards equal access to information for both women and men.

Conclusion

While the knowledge management campaign for this project is a cumulative effort of the agencies of government from the participating countries in the IGAD block, it's clear that its success is in the implementation organizations in conjunction with all the actors, both state and non-state, research institutions and the pastoralists and smallholder farmers on the ground across the region. For sustainability and the inclusion of the marginalized groups of women and the youth, better planning and targeted interventions, awareness creation on the environment, alternative income source, support pastoralists adaptation and coping strategies, enhancement of extension services, documentation, and dissemination of indigenous knowledge, and enhance pastoralists' resilience to drought and heat stresses, will be essential tools.