

Conflict resolution and peace building in the drylands in the Greater Horn of Africa

Brief 6

Technical Consortium for Building Resilience to Drought in the Horn of Africa



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Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| AU | African Union |
| CEWARN | Conflict and Early Warning and Response Mechanism |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

Terms

| <u>Term</u> | <u>Countries</u> |
|------------------------|--|
| COMESA | Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe |
| East Africa | historically, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda |
| East African Community | Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda |
| Greater Horn of Africa | Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda |
| Horn of Africa | <u>Djibouti</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Ethiopia</u> and <u>Somalia</u> |
| IGAD | Djibouti, Eritrea (suspended), Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda |

Executive summary

This brief on conflict resolution and peace building in the Greater Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda) takes the pastoralist communities living in these countries as its focus of prime concern. The analysis is based on the premise that sustained violent conflict represents failure of social relations and institutions at multiple levels of society (local, national and regional) acting on one another. It pays attention to the realms of governance institutions, citizen–state relations and the politics of resource allocation.

Most of the pastoralist areas in the region, many of which span international borders, are persistently insecure, defying repeated attempts by different bodies to build peace and provide security, and rendering the populations ever more vulnerable to drought and other emergencies. This is because the nature of violent conflict in the region is multi-layered and dynamic. It is impractical to single out primary causes and drivers; indeed, conflicts that may appear limited and localized to pastoralist dryland areas may be fuelled by drivers in institutional, political-economic and social spheres operating at national, regional and even global levels.

Different spheres of authority and a wide range of policies affect conflict management and peace-building efforts in the drylands. Locally, customary institutions and authorities are widely trusted, but in many cases they have been ignored, overridden and weakened by state institutions. Fragmented governance systems, competitive patronage politics, competing claims over land and resources along with disaffection and weak citizenship arising from poor governance and negative attitudes about pastoralism all represent significant obstacles to lasting peace.

In several countries of the Greater Horn, local peace policy is adapting to the new complexities of violent conflict and is having an impact on making and keeping peace, at least temporarily. However, the development and implementation of much-needed national policies on conflict management and peace building to support local efforts on the ground are lagging behind. The absence of specific national policies is indicative of a lack of direction among states and the international community.

While several regional strategies and policies for peace and security have been developed in recent years as part of an important push towards regional cooperation, they are not linked effectively to national or local implementation. A coherent regional project appears also to be undermined by the proliferation of multiple and often overlapping regional bodies, which in many cases compete rather than collaborate over resources and political influence.

Examples of successful peace building are found at different levels, but few have been holistic in their approach or have led to sustained peace. Initiatives that have led to positive results appear to have drawn in the support of both citizens and policymakers, have been conceived as lengthy processes, and have explicitly dealt with governance, resources, politics and social issues at once.

There are no quick fixes to conflict in the region. To be sustainable, peace building requires concerted efforts—part of long-term investments aimed at supporting dryland livelihoods—to strengthen citizenship, improve social connectivity and economic infrastructure, foster cross-border links and reform governance. Key priorities for interventions:

- Developing and implementing integrated national and regional peace building and security frameworks. International donors together with international and national NGOs and local communities should strengthen commitment and action of national governments to develop and implement national policies on conflict management. IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and the African Union (AU) would be well placed to support this process, particularly to ensure that such policies are developed with a regional perspective in mind and are aligned with each other.
- Reforming local governance in pastoral areas. Dialogue should be supported among state, customary and civil institutions to agree on respective core competencies, roles and responsibilities around governance of the rangelands and managing and preventing conflict.
- Strengthening state–citizen relations. The voice of pastoralists in decision-making circles needs to be strengthened and state, civil and customary institutions (for example, judiciary and police) brought together so that existing divisions are not reinforced by dealing separately with the two governance authorities.
- Strengthening citizenship and state–society relations. Peace-building activities must go beyond reconciliation meetings to strengthen citizenship and state–society relations. Activities should include supporting systematic community policing, information exchange and effective justice. Justice institutions and peace-building bodies must take action on divisive political games that may occur or recur, especially around elections and in relation to administrative boundaries; they must take seriously issues of power arising from differences of wealth, gender, age and status.

- Supporting pastoralist development. A common vision and a long-term strategy needs to be agreed on to support pastoralist development and guide plans and investments in the drylands.

Introduction

This brief on conflict resolution and peace building in the Greater Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) is a contribution to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and country-common program frameworks to 'End Drought-Related Emergencies and Build Resilience in the Horn of Africa'. It aims to guide project design, including appraising ongoing interventions, policy frameworks, and the potential contribution that investment in key intervention areas can make to the problems of recurrent drought-related emergencies and increasing vulnerability in the drylands. IGAD has identified violent conflict and insecurity as one of the pillars of a common architecture for programs at country and regional levels. This technical brief explains the technical rationale for priority interventions for this pillar.

The brief takes the pastoralist communities of the drylands of the Greater Horn as its focus of prime concern and considers violent conflict and insecurity, whose origins may lie at multiple levels, from local to regional.¹ The analysis that follows is based on the premise that sustained violent conflict represents failure of social relations and institutions at multiple levels of society (local, national and regional) acting on one another. It requires attention to the realms of governance institutions, citizen-state relations and the politics of resource allocation at all these levels.

A complex web of conflict

Conflict and insecurity have devastating consequences on the livelihoods and vulnerability of pastoralist societies in the Greater Horn of Africa. They represent major obstacles to the long-term development of the drylands. Loss of human life and livestock, food insecurity, displacement, restricted or blocked access to key resources and to livelihood opportunities are among the most immediate outcomes of violence. Limited private sector investments, reversal of development gains, stunted economic growth, breakdown of social fabric, and further marginalization are more of the long-term negative effects of conflict (ICG 2009:24 in Markakis 2004; Nori et al. 2005; IADC 2009; AU 2010b).

It is often difficult to disentangle causes and effects of violence. For example, the long-standing economic marginalization of pastoral dryland areas (see below) and lack of new or alternative livelihood opportunities in a context of ongoing erosion of pastoralist livelihoods are among the underlying drivers of mobilization into militias and engagement in violent criminal activities, of youth in particular. Limited investments and slow economic growth in pastoral areas may be seen as both cause and result of conflict.

The drivers of violent conflict operate at several levels: local (intra-community), national (intra-state and civil wars), regional (inter-state) and even beyond, to global dimensions² in a 'complex web of interlocking armed conflicts' (Mengisteab 2011; Williams 2011:19). The challenge is local, national, regional and global at the same time, with drivers and effects of conflict at one level having profound repercussions at other levels and all manifesting in violence on the ground.

The destructive conflicts endured by countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda for decades are indicative. Many of these countries share a history of mutual destabilization, fuelling conflict by providing support to insurgents in neighbouring states because of ethnic ties with rebel groups, or as part of their foreign policies aiming to destabilize regimes with which they have antagonistic relations (Mengisteab 2011; Williams 2011; Kaplan 2012). In addition, private companies seeking to gain control of resources such as oil and land have also played a role in fuelling and sustaining internal wars by providing arms and funds to different factions in inter-communal and intra-state disputes. The history of Sudan's civil wars, for example, is characterized by the role of private oil companies funding different factions (Johnson 2003).

Inter- and intra-state conflicts and insurgencies intensify the occurrence and effects of local inter-personal violence (such as murder, domestic abuse and rape, particularly acute in refugee camps), criminal violence (such as commercialized livestock raiding)

¹ This technical brief recognizes that the dryland areas across the Greater Horn of Africa are home not only to mobile pastoralists but also to agro-pastoralists, sedentary farmer communities, and urban and peri-urban populations who depend on other livelihoods. This brief also recognizes that different livelihood systems are affected in different ways by conflict and that conflict management and peace-building strategies must take into account this diversity. However, given the limited scope of this analysis, this brief will mainly focus on pastoralist communities.

² Since the global war on terror, the long-standing intra-state conflict in Somalia, for example, has developed a global dimension, since Somalia is seen as harbouring terrorist groups that threaten international security (Williams 2011).

and inter-communal violence (such as inter-ethnic, inter-clan clashes) in the region (Mkutu 2008; Bueger et al. 2011; IRIN 2011; Lopoukhine 2011). Institutions that would otherwise dispense justice, resolve conflict and control crime are weak, opportunities for redress are low, and local communities are often both victims and perpetrators of violence.

An array of factors in the institutional, political economy and social spheres interact to fuel and sustain violence in the drylands. Institutional factors include contested borders, weak land-tenure rights, and failures of policing and justice; political-economic factors include extractive commercial enterprises, land alienation, divisive politics and corrupt local administrations; and social factors relate to broad processes of exclusion and issues of identity, gender and ethnicity (Humphreys 2005; Young 2007; Boege et al. 2008; IADC 2009; Beswick 2010; Bueger et al. 2011; Hickman 2011; Mengisteab 2011; Williams 2011).

The multi-layered and dynamic nature of violent conflict in the region makes it impractical to single out individual or primary causes and drivers. Indeed, conflicts that may appear limited and localized to pastoralist dryland areas may be driven and exacerbated by factors found elsewhere. This also helps explain the difficulty of building sustained peace in the region, when efforts at one level are undermined by processes at another.

Challenges to peace building and conflict management

Peace building is challenged by a number of accumulative factors such as growing vulnerability to drought and restrictions or lack of access to economically important resources. These challenges are also a result of misguided policies and approaches to pastoral development, proliferation of arms, divisive politics, ineffective governance of pastoral areas and uneasy state–citizen relations.

Drought

Drought is a normal and often predictable occurrence in the region, and mobile livestock production strategies have evolved over centuries precisely to deal with cyclical drought. However, in recent decades vulnerability to drought shocks and stresses has intensified. In 2011 Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda were hit by what has been defined as the worst drought in 60 years, prompting a severe food crisis that affected over 12 million people (African Ministerial Conference on the Environment 2011).

Conflict is one of several complex processes³ that have contributed to weakening the ability of local communities to prepare for, cope with and recover from climatic stresses. Drought-affected communities, for example, often flee to other areas in search of food, fresh pasture and water sources. These population movements, also across administrative boundaries and international borders, can put enormous pressure on resources (often already scarce) and can result in violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists or between pastoralist groups and clans. In addition, conflict can disrupt the traditional or customary rules and principles that pastoralists use to manage their rangelands⁴ and access key natural resources, such as water and pasture land.⁵ For example, the customary system of flexible and negotiated access rights is an important drought management mechanism that enables livestock movement and access to much-needed resources during times of stress. However, when clans or ethnic groups are in conflict these institutional arrangements around access to resources—but also to trade, migratory routes and markets—break down, principles of mutual cooperation and sharing are replaced by animosity and isolation, and pastoralists' ability to deal with the effects of drought is seriously undermined as a result.

While conflicts and violence are widely recognized as linked to vulnerability to droughts and as undermining long-term development in the drylands, lacking are systematic knowledge and hard data on the extent to which conflict affects pastoralist livelihoods, pastoralists' ability to deal with drought and other crises, and their long-term development opportunities.

3 Global climatic changes, high population growth in a context of limited resources, which also drives environmental damage and desertification, and failures of policy and practice to support communities sustain their livelihoods in their increasingly fragile ecosystems are among the key factors underpinning the increasing vulnerability to drought shocks and stresses in the Greater Horn of Africa (African Ministerial Conference on the Environment 2011; Devereux 2011).

4 The rangelands in the Greater Horn of Africa are typically vast tracts of land with natural vegetation comprising native grasses and shrubs, and characterized by high temperatures and low, unpredictable and highly variable rainfall, which create low cover density of vegetation.

5 A wide range of natural resources including grasses, plants and shrubs that are used for livestock grazing and browsing (grazing or pasture land), water sources, forests, salt and mineral licks, and honey are all found on the rangelands of the Greater Horn of Africa.

Misguided pastoral development policies and the management of resources

Conflict in pastoral areas has long been linked to the need to gain control of scarce and strategic resources, particularly water and pasture. However, the key issues here are not merely scarcity, which, as highlighted above, has always been a determining feature of life in the rangelands, but also the increased inability to *manage* scarcity (Levine and Pavanello 2012).

Centuries of inappropriate policies and misguided approaches to pastoral development have had serious repercussions on pastoralists' ownership of their land and their ability to effectively manage their resource base (Nori et al. 2005; Mengisteab 2011; Kaplan 2012). Pastoral development policy in British colonies, especially in Kenya and Uganda, was shaped by the view that the communal rangeland management governing pastoralist systems was inefficient and was causing environmental degradation. Many pastoralist communities were stripped of their land rights on large portions of the rangelands, which were then taken by the colonial administration for ranching developments (AU 2010b).

Post-independence national policies and approaches to pastoral development were guided by the need to 'modernize' mobile livestock production systems through technical interventions that sought to improve land production. During the 1970s and 1980s, policies and debates on rangeland management became heavily influenced by Hardin's argument outlined in the 'Tragedy of the Commons' article in 1968, according to which by managing their lands communally individual herders have no incentive to limit the number of animals they graze on the land, and without such limits conditions are set for land degradation and desertification (Cotula et al. 2004). While this argument has long been criticized—also because it ignored the existence of customary rules and principles that actually govern rangeland use—current national policies and attitudes continue to be influenced by the negative perceptions of pastoralism and the 'non-rational' use of the land emanating from Hardin's argument.

Today, the land rights of pastoralist communities continue to be poorly recognized by states in the region and pastoralists have lost significant portions of land⁶ as a result. Most countries in the Greater Horn do not have specific laws that explicitly address pastoral land-tenure issues, and the communal land-tenure regime, which is of key importance in managing vast areas of land in a sustainable way, is largely unrecognized in national legal frameworks.

The new constitution of Kenya, for instance, recognizes the need to support communal land-tenure systems and community land rights but does not specifically mention the role of community institutions in managing those rights. It is unclear how pastoralist communities will distinguish themselves as land-owning units and how they will establish sufficient ownership claims over land to be able to officially register those interests (Pavanello and Levine 2011). In Ethiopia the land rights of pastoralists are weak; the rangelands are considered 'free lands'. The moment the state chooses to claim any grazing land and declare it no longer 'free', pastoralists lose any right to it (Pavanello and Levine 2011). In Sudan, long-standing restrictive land policies have paved the way for the expropriation of vast tracts of pastoral land. The 1984 Civil Transaction Act reinforced the role of the state as land owner and manager, and stipulated the right of the government to impose temporal and spatial restrictions on grazing and to allocate grazing land for the benefit of an entire community or for protecting wildlife (Pantuliano et al. 2009).

In all these contexts the rangelands have been fragmented, livestock mobility has been restricted, and land tenure has been rendered insecure. In turn, the ability of pastoralists to effectively manage their scarce-resource base has been weakened, and conflict, tensions and competition over resources have often ensued.

Small arms

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a serious threat to peace and security in the region and in pastoral areas in particular (Markakis 2004; Williams 2011; Wepundi et al. 2012). Finding small arms and light weapons is not difficult. States and their foes import weapons for their military, paramilitary and security forces, and some then find their way to local communities in

⁶ For example, the ongoing expansion of large-scale commercial farming in the region supported by several national development plans that prioritize sedentary agriculture over a mobile livestock production system has led to the loss of significant portions of the most critical and rich parts of pastoral land (typically dry season reserves). Pastoralists have also lost land to wildlife conservation projects, game reserves, and other private and government developments in the rangelands.

pastoralist areas through various routes (Markakis 2004). The permeability of international borders also means that arms can quite easily be smuggled across country boundaries (Wepundi et al. 2012).

The pervasive 'gun culture' that has developed in the drylands drives and is driven by the commercialization of livestock raids, inter-clan and inter-ethnic tensions, and a lack of alternative means of protecting households, livestock and natural resources (IADC 2009; Wepundi et al. 2012). For example, livestock raiding—which in the past was a customary practice used to mark rites of passage into adulthood for young men, carried out with spears and bows and guided by established rules and principles—has become a lucrative and increasingly violent activity in the form of unregulated group raiding carried out with modern automatic weapons (Markakis 2004; Wepundi et al. 2012). In Karamoja, for instance, cattle raids have become increasingly commercialized, with raiders operating under commission (Mkutu 2010). The proliferation of small arms is exacerbated by the remoteness and isolation of pastoral areas together with relatively little police presence and visibility, which contribute to a widespread culture of impunity fed by poor or non-existent law-enforcement mechanisms to sanction firearm detention.

Government responses to the problem have often consisted of collecting weapons or disarming armed pastoralist communities, which in some cases has taken the form of aggressive crackdown operations by military and police forces. In general, disarmament initiatives have a poor record in addressing the growing availability of small arms and light weapons in the region. They have been criticized for intensifying insecurity for specific groups, for being ad hoc rather than tied to broader peace and development initiatives, and for favouring coercive measures over genuine reconciliation and mediation (see for example, Small Arms Survey 2007; Stites and Akabwai 2010).

Divisive politics

It is not uncommon for politicians in the region to play a role in fuelling tensions and conflict. The possibility of gaining control over administrative units, resources and power can encourage politicians to further their own interests over those of their constituency (Mengisteab 2011). Local politicians often rely on ethnic affiliations to secure and maintain a socio-economic and political power base. Conflicts along ethnic lines are ignited and sustained as a way of retaining power, with ethnicity being often invoked in pursuit of political and private goals (Mwamba 2011:8; Cook and Moro 2012). In turn, ethnicity often offers a useful cue as to how politicians will distribute patronage once in office, and tribalism in government work is pervasive across all countries of the Horn.

Pastoralist institutional arrangements have also in many cases been undermined or co-opted by government authorities and political players. In Ethiopia, for example, federalism and the constitutional right of ethnic groups to self-determination have prompted a race towards control over land, as territorial gains at the pastoralist association, district and regional levels 'translate into more administrative power, land, tax revenue, and potentially food aid' (ICG 2009:24 in Pavanello and Levine 2011). As part of this quest for political control over land and resources, government administrators have at times pressed pastoralist communities to adopt a more exclusionary approach to access to resources. This approach is incompatible with the livelihood needs of mobile pastoralism as it runs counter to flexible and negotiable customary rights of access, creates suspicion among communities and fuels inter-clan tensions (Pavanello and Levine 2011; Scott-Villiers et al. 2011).

Governance issues

While the quality and nature of governance of pastoral areas inevitably differ among the states of the Greater Horn of Africa region, management and regulation of most of the rangelands today is a space shared, albeit unequally, between state and customary authorities. Far from being harmonized and working towards a shared vision of developing pastoral areas, these two spheres of authority usually operate in a largely separate manner and are guided by different sets of rules and principles. In particular, customary land rights, mechanisms governing natural resources, and systems of adjudicating and resolving conflicts in the two spheres continue to be disharmonious and represent different and unequal economic, political and cultural powers (AU 2010b; Watson 2010; Mengisteab 2011).

The division between state and customary systems carries a number of implications for the security of mobile pastoralists in the region. First, it contributes to the exposure of the populations that adhere to traditional governance systems to economic and

political marginalization, as their institutions and authorities are largely ignored, their voices poorly heard and their interests ill represented in formal governance and policy spheres (Mengisteab 2011). Long-standing processes of exclusion and inequality have had profound consequences on inclusive nation building as well as on state–pastoralist relations in the region, which—not surprisingly—have mostly been in conflict (Mengisteab 2011).

Second, the weakening of traditional governance systems and elders' authority has meant that elders' ability to enforce rules and manage conflict has been eroded. Formal governance structures do not enjoy adequate representation and legitimacy in most pastoral areas and are thus largely ineffective in containing conflict and enforcing the rule of law (AU 2010a; Mengisteab 2011). Third, government officials have at times overruled customary institutions and authority of the elders and have made unilateral decisions in pastoralist affairs rather than jointly with elders or in line with elders' decisions. Such arbitrary handling of affairs has contributed to disaffection and poor state–citizen relations, and in some cases it has ignited clashes and conflict.

Policies, attitudes and initiatives that contribute to conflict

Government officials have often portrayed pastoralist groups as backward, in need of modernization and, as highlighted above, as exploiting the rangelands in a non-efficient way. Negative attitudes towards pastoralism and insufficient attention to existing customary institutional arrangements have had significant implications for security. Tensions—for example, between Borana and Garri pastoral communities over water sources in Ethiopia—have arisen when administrative boundaries (i.e. those of the regional states) established as part of the policy of ethnic federalism in 1991 differed from the territorial boundaries of ethnic groups (Pavanello and Levine 2011). Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda all suffer from similar problems of boundaries and ethnicity.

Initiatives by NGOs and international donors have at times also failed to respect pastoralist institutional arrangements and livelihood strategies. While driven by the well-meaning desire to increase much-needed access to grazing areas, some external initiatives have promoted the establishment of water points in wet season grazing reserves across the region. The logic underpinning these efforts goes against basic customary norms around water management, which do not envisage permanent water points (IIED 2010), precisely because these areas are to be used only during the wet season when surface water is aplenty. Such misguided initiatives have in many cases fuelled conflict, encouraged pastoralist communities and their livestock to settle around water points, and led to overgrazing and environmental degradation (IIED 2010).

Role of policy and challenges to broad-scale success

Many policies have the potential to affect conflict in the drylands. This section discusses some of the local, national and regional policies that specifically focus on peace and security, and it outlines the salient technical features of these policies. This section does not attempt to cover all existing policies in the various countries of the Greater Horn that have a bearing on conflict and insecurity in the drylands, as these are too many.

Local policy

The lives and livelihoods of the overwhelming majority of citizens in the Greater Horn countries, including pastoralists, are governed by traditional policies and authorities, which also assist in resolving conflict and maintaining peace. The community governance mechanism of the Karamojong, for example, is led by a council of elders, which is also used at times of crisis, such as disease or war. Young warriors act for both war and peace, as do networks of women, who have an important role in traditional conflict-incident and -resolution mechanisms. Inter-ethnic conflict is regulated by a system of negotiation and compensation. The traditional system of justice also provides a forum in which community members can offer ideas for a permanent solution to the conflict (Chapman and Kagaha 2009).

The lives of the Borana of southern Ethiopia have also long been governed by sophisticated customary institutions. In particular, rights, access and resource use are governed by the combination of traditional institutions: *gadaa* (customary administrative) system, *aadaa* (custom or tradition), *seera* (the set of Borana laws), *safuu* (the Oromo concept of ethics) and *heera* (justice). The same institutions are also used to regulate conflicts, thus providing a holistic approach to interrelated issues of community welfare, environment and conflict management (Desalegn et al. 2007).

On one hand, many customary institutional systems today remain widely respected and trusted by the societies in which they operate (Scott-Villiers et al. 2011). These institutions involve specific gendered and age-defined roles and responsibilities, but do also change. They are increasingly interacting with local and national governments, with other institutions such as mosques and churches, and with modern semi-formal institutions such as women's peace groups and local peace committees (Scott-Villiers et al. 2011). On the other hand, the future viability of customary arrangements is under threat. As discussed above, rather than working together state institutions have systematically ignored, overridden, co-opted and weakened traditional pastoralist institutions. In turn, the ability of traditional authorities such as elders to perform crucial regulation and policy-enforcement activities, also around conflict management, has been eroded and in many cases rendered ineffective.

National policy

National policies and laws that indirectly affect peace and security in the pastoral drylands are many; they cover foreign affairs, policing, justice, electoral law, land, water, agriculture, livestock, trade, and many other topics. But if conflict and violence are to be tackled effectively, it is essential to develop (and implement) national policies that specifically deal with conflict management and peace building and provide the institutional and legal framework to guide national and local strategies and efforts. In most countries in the Greater Horn, formulation of such policies is lagging behind.

In 2009 Kenya developed the National Policy on Peace Building and Conflict Management, which also deals with conflict in pastoralist areas (GOK 2009). This is a positive step forward as it offers a useful holistic framework to guide interventions and to harmonize multiple policy areas. The policy recognizes the customary systems of peace management and justice, and commits to facilitating their harmonization with formal systems. However, despite this recognition, clear links to national legal frameworks have not been developed. Furthermore, in the absence of complementary policies in neighbouring countries, it is difficult to see how cross-border harmonization or regional approaches can be effectively implemented and sustained.

Regional policy

As in other parts of the African continent, East Africa has witnessed in recent years a proliferation of regional security bodies that seek to promote peace in the region as part of broader regional integration and interstate cooperation processes. COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) has had a peace and security committee since 2000, and the East African Community also has a peace and security structure (Fisher et al. 2010:23). IGAD and the AU play a particularly relevant role in conflict management and peace building in the region, particularly in regard to pastoral dryland areas.

In 1996 IGAD adopted a mandate for preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in the region. IGAD has formulated an extensive strategy for facilitating regional peace and security and has implemented various programs, including the Conflict and Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), discussed below. As is often the case with multilateral diplomacy, IGAD as a regional organization seeking to foster peace and security is in tension with IGAD as a political forum in which members are mutually suspicious, create power blocs and conduct power plays. In other words, the full scope for the IGAD Secretariat to develop an autonomous conflict resolution capability is constrained by its member states' interests (Healy 2011).

Using both military and mediation approaches, the AU is also increasingly active in conflict resolution and peace building. Similarly to IGAD, the work of the AU faces numerous challenges relating to the tension between political membership and AU's mandate for unity. In some cases, member states have been accused of paying mere lip service to 'African solutions to African problems' in order to net more donor resources, impress local populations and build hegemony (Beswick 2010).

Of particular relevance to peace and security in the dryland areas of the Greater Horn are the two policy frameworks—on pastoralism and on land—ratified by AU member states in recent years. The AU Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa—developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and adopted in 2011—provides new impetus for national support to pastoralism and its institutions. It acknowledges that peace and security are fundamental to protecting and developing pastoralism in Africa. Dialogue with pastoral communities is proposed as central to the process of improved security and integrating pastoral areas into mainstream development policies and plans. The framework calls for properly identifying sources of conflict, immediate response, supporting traditional conflict-management mechanisms, and sensitizing national laws and regulations (AU 2010b).

The AU Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa was adopted in 2010 to strengthen land rights and secure local livelihoods. It notes how unequal access to land has led to conflicts and advocates for regional cooperation in dealing with transboundary land use. While reflecting consensus on African land issues, rather than on specific land concerns for pastoralists, the framework serves as a basis for African governments' commitment to formulating and implementing land policy. It represents a foundation for engaging a wide range of development partners in mobilizing resources and building capacity in support of developing and implementing land policy in Africa (AU-ADB-ECA 2010).

Despite political and economic challenges to the regional (and continental) project, a common interest in peace and security as part of a growing push toward regional cooperation is emerging in the Greater Horn. Since a regional approach to conflict management is of crucial importance for peace to be sustained, this is a positive development for the lives and security of citizens living in the drylands. However, a coherent regional project is currently being undermined by the proliferation of multiple and often overlapping regional structures, which in many cases compete rather than collaborate over resources and political influence (Engel and Porto 2010). The extent to which regional policies are currently promoting substantial collaboration and cooperation between states is also questionable. Mechanisms to implement existing policies and frameworks are largely lacking (Aboud et al. 2012:66). In addition, while member states may agree to sign regional instruments, they often continue with a 'business-as-usual attitude' also because in most countries these regional policies have little or no relationship with national policies and interests (Franke 2007).

Peace-building initiatives—an overview of examples

This section provides examples of conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives led by actors at different levels, from local to regional. Each actor is acting from a different starting point on the complex web of conflict that drives violence in the region. The purpose here is not to be exhaustive but to provide insights on what has been known to work and where there are obvious limitations. The most positive examples appear to address the widest range of obstacles to sustained peace outlined in the previous sections. Peace-building efforts seem to be most effective when they are understood as lengthy processes that require significant ownership at multiple levels to achieve a series of agreements and actions over time; drawing in the support of citizens and policymakers together and creating effective, inclusive institutions for justice and resource management.

Borana–Gabra—a customary institutional response

A six-year peace process initiated by customary leaders and elders and backed and supported by women peacemakers, young pastoralists and, latterly, the governments of Kenya and Ethiopia, managed to reconcile a large number of rural Borana and Gabra pastoral communities in the border areas of Ethiopia and Kenya in 2009 (Scott-Villiers et al. 2011). The peace agreement included elements of forgiveness and of restorative justice for the traumatized and of homecoming for displaced people and refugees; it resulted in re-opening large tracts of grazing land at a time of drought.

In a series of high-profile meetings, Kenyan and Ethiopian government officials actively supported cooperative approaches to policing and justice, making use of a combination of state and customary authorities. In summarizing the main elements of the peace process, elders noted four important factors for success: moral persuasion, law, citizen communication, and citizen and police monitoring. Nonetheless, they also noted that the peace was not universal and, citing political instigation and alienation of young people in the towns, acknowledged that potential for conflict still existed, particularly in and around the two urban centres of Marsabit and Moyale.⁷

While similar to many externally engineered conflict-resolution efforts led by NGOs in the region, this process was initiated and led from within and drew on strengths of local legitimacy and comprehensive political and social analysis by Borana and Gabra elders. Unlike similar peace-building activities, which tend to focus on a limited number of factors, the Borana–Gabra peace-building process sought to tackle three factors that affect peace: governance, divisive politics and social disharmony (Scott-Villiers et al. 2011).

Wajir—a community organization response

Though an old example and one that has spread and developed considerably since its inception, the Wajir peace story remains a useful guide to peace-building initiatives. In the early 1990s a small group of local women leaders intervened in an inter-communal conflict in Wajir District of northern Kenya. Their intervention led to sustained peace among the three main clans in the district and helped produce a new type of civic–government partnership to manage conflict (Menkhaus 2008). The women's group expanded to include professional women members representing all the clans in the district. The group called elders together and mediated successful negotiations. The district commissioner then formed a rapid response team composed of both government and civic leaders, whose task was to monitor incidents and set in motion early response that would prevent many manageable conflicts from spiralling out of control. Peace and justice were managed according to customary law, including compensation payments and clan guarantees.

The result was a steady decline in crime. Some of the members of the women's civic group went on to be leaders of national peace processes in Kenya.

⁷ And indeed conflict in these locations was subsequently reignited in 2012, partly in relation to elections (Orto and Ungiti 2012 pers. comm.).

The success was based on the ability of local actors to command legitimate authority with the people. This broad constituency then found cooperation with state structures. The role of a capable, responsible and dedicated civic leadership within the region's small group of urban professionals and the leadership of women provided the ideal conditions for peace (Menkhaus 2008). Like the Boranaa–Gabra peace process described above, the Wajir process was also strong with regard to issues of governance, citizen–state relations and social harmony.

Somaliland—a subregional response

In 1991, while Somalia was in turmoil, political leaders, elders and ordinary citizens in Somaliland successfully managed a process of reconciling, demobilizing and restoring law and order (Bradbury 2008). The political order that was created is still functioning and combines customary pastoralist institutions—in particular councils of elders (*guurti*)—and modern institutions based on elections, including a parliament and a president (Boege et al. 2008). Although the borderlands with Puntland are still affected by high levels of violent conflict and interpersonal violence is rife, the interior of Somaliland remains relatively peaceful compared with other parts of Somalia.

The relative success of peace building in Somaliland had much to do with traditional actors and customary institutions rooted in the pastoralist society. Clan elders and their councils were decisive actors, drawing on customary forms and mechanisms of conflict resolution, melding these with institution building that drew on systems of modern statehood as well as voluntary citizen engagement, particularly of youth. The councils of elders were part of a process of political order, and today they remain embedded in the political system. Security, as far as it has been achieved, is decentralized and to a great extent guaranteed by local politicians and elders (Hagmann and Hoehne 2007:24). The blend of Islamic, customary, civil and statutory institutions enjoys fair levels of legitimacy in the eyes of the people (Hagmann and Hoehne 2007:25). Elders have responsibilities for resolving conflict but also in the broader sphere of government and administration (Boege et al. 2008). This example highlights particularly the governance elements of efforts for peace.

IGAD and the African Union—regional responses

The CEWARN mechanism established under the auspices of IGAD in 2002 has functioned as an important conflict early-warning system in the region. CEWARN focuses on collecting information and reporting incidents of violence, and monitoring loss of human life and livestock along some of the international borders of the Greater Horn. A rapid response framework allows local monitors deployed in border areas to also act as organizers of immediate conciliation activities, along with helping to form local peace committees. A reported positive outcome of CEWARN has been improved information flow. In several cases of alert, information supplied by CEWARN has helped to prompt state security and elders to intervene in violent or potentially violent incidents (Kassa 2011). However, CEWARN has been criticized for being excessively bureaucratic and for using indicators that are so technical that their usefulness for early response is limited (Kut 2009).

In 2012 the role of CEWARN was substantially broadened to shift from mainly technical to also political and administrative engagement, including interstate cooperation on preventing conflict around land and border disputes. The scope of work of CEWARN has therefore been broadened to address wider issues including conflicts driven by competition for natural resources, food insecurity, climate change, religious and ethnic identity, political processes, elections and devolution.⁸ While the effects of this

8 IGAD (2012), Hon. Janet Museveni presides over launch of CEWARN's post-2012 regional conflict early warning and response strategy, <http://www.cewarn.org/>

new approach remain to be seen, this shift can be seen as a positive step forward in the more substantial diplomatic engagement of CEWARN and IGAD around conflict at different levels and with multiple drivers.

NGO interventions

In recent years there has been growth in externally driven conflict management and peace-building initiatives in the pastoral areas of the region, spearheaded by international donors USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and the EU (European Union), and international and local NGOs—including those running humanitarian programs—and local non-government actors. Training and capacity building of pastoralist civil society and local government actors, activities to control small arms, and externally mediated negotiations such as peace meetings have been widely promoted at the local level. While such efforts have had immediate positive benefits and outcomes—such as bringing warring communities together at peace gatherings—and may succeed in restoring harmonious relations, their potential for fostering lasting peace at a larger scale appears to be limited. There are a number of reasons for this. Activities such as peace meetings or pastoral gatherings, for example, have been criticized for being largely ad hoc, uncoordinated and lacking strategic complementarities (IADC 2009; Nori et al. 2009). Concerns have also been raised over the lack of a robust conflict analysis preceding these efforts, including considerations of the overarching context and of the broader vulnerabilities that pastoral communities face (Nori et al. 2005; Kurtz and Scarborough 2012).

A key problem is that many of these initiatives lie at the 'technical' end of the spectrum of peace building, failing to engage with issues of power, identity, economy and politics (Scott-Villiers et al. 2011; Levine and Pavanello 2012). Ultimately, peace-building initiatives that do not explicitly seek to change the status quo by taking into account these issues may have positive short-term outcomes but are unlikely to contribute to lasting peace. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how initiatives that are planned and developed alongside humanitarian programs and by humanitarian actors can be effective in reducing conflict in the pastoral areas of the region. Engaging and dealing with such issues is beyond the mandate, capacity and role of humanitarian actors.

Key priorities and interventions

There are no quick fixes to bringing lasting peace in the drylands of the Greater Horn. Local conflicts are exacerbated by their connections to larger processes of political struggle and civil strife, which in turn are supported by interstate disputes. The pattern of conflicts in the region and the drivers that fuel and sustain them are multiple, dynamic and interconnected. A comprehensive and cooperative approach to conflict management and peace building in the region is needed. Developing and implementing such an approach is clearly far from straightforward. To be effective, the approach should be a concerted effort; it should operate across a wide range of sectors and address core political-economic, institutional and social issues at all levels.

Policy and legal frameworks

Efforts to prevent and reduce conflict in pastoral areas must be part of broader long-term investments and development efforts aimed at building the resilience of dryland livelihoods, strengthening the state–citizen contract, improving economic infrastructure, and enhancing regional cooperation and cross-border links. There is broad consensus among the wide range of actors working in dryland areas that ‘development’ is exactly what is needed to address chronic vulnerability in the Greater Horn. However, there is no consensus on what ‘development’ means in this context. This lack has often led to conflicting institutional arrangements, policies and initiatives that have contributed to further undermining customary institutions, fuelling conflict and weakening pastoral systems. A common vision and strategy for supporting pastoralism on terms agreed by pastoralists should be developed. The African Union Pastoral Policy Framework for Africa provides a useful basis for this discussion.

Developing national and regional peace-building and security frameworks is also essential. Efforts to develop national policies are currently lagging behind. International donors together with international and national NGOs and local communities should work to strengthen governments’ commitment and action on managing conflicts more comprehensively, and they should support the formulation of focused national-level policies. IGAD and the AU are well placed to support this process, particularly to ensure that national policies are developed with a regional perspective in mind and are aligned with each other.

Experience also indicates that developing well-articulated policies does not necessarily lead to meaningful changes on the ground. Hence, it is crucial that systematic and well-coordinated advocacy strategies, monitoring mechanisms, and resources of international and local actors and regional bodies are developed and invested to pressure governments to not only formulate but also implement conflict management policies.

Institutions

Without meaningful structural and institutional transformation, conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa is likely to persist. At the local level a key issue relates to the governance of pastoral areas, and particularly how to change the status quo where state, non-governmental and customary institutions operate in discordant ways. There is no blueprint solution on how to foster reforms for local governance, and inevitably, strategies must be developed on a case-by-case basis informed by robust understanding of the existing institutional, social, political and governance settings.

Work to transform institutions should seek to support dialogue among state, customary and civil institutions to agree on respective core competencies, roles and responsibilities around governance of the rangelands and on managing and preventing conflict. This process should focus on several areas, including how to legally recognize customary institutions, how to systematize cooperation between the different systems of justice and policing, how to enhance cooperation between customary institutions and other stakeholders such as private sector actors, and how to include women and youth in the reforms.

Transforming institutions and making reforms in governance are difficult, long-term processes that cannot be supported through short-term and ad hoc initiatives, which in some cases are part of humanitarian programs. Rather, they need to be seen as the result of sustained and collaborative efforts backed by long-term approaches and funding over years, even decades.

Institutional and governance dimensions and the links between conflict and natural resource management should be at the core of local peace-building initiatives. An institutional and governance lens can help in moving away from technical aspects, such as water issues, for example, to meaningfully deal with underlying power relations and interests, such as who are the users, who allows whom to use water, what are the rules and who sets them?

State–citizenship relations

Governance failures, ineffective policies and disregard of pastoral institutional arrangements are all closely linked to poor representation of pastoralists in policymaking circles, and to processes of socio-economic exclusion. There should be investments and support to strengthen the voice of pastoralists in decision-making circles such as alerting communities and customary authorities to existing state policies (e.g. on peace building, land and natural resource management policies), supporting pastoralist communities to articulate and convey their priorities and interests to upper levels of decision-making, and so on. Many of these efforts have been ongoing in the region for some time. However, it is critical that such capacity-building efforts strive to include state institutions (for example, the administration, judiciary and police) so that existing divisions are not reinforced by dealing separately with different governance authorities (and multiple sections of government) but are brought together as part of broader local governance reforms.

Peace-building activities on the ground must go beyond reconciliation meetings to embrace the long path of healing from conflict and seeking to build citizenship and state–society relations. This embrace needs to be accompanied by systematic community policing, information exchange and effective justice. Justice institutions and peace-building activities must take action on divisive political games that may occur or recur, especially around election times, and take seriously issues of power arising from differences of wealth, gender, age and status.

Research and knowledge management

A comprehensive conflict analysis with rigorous evidence is needed that accounts for governance institutions and policy, divisive political processes relating to valuable economic resources such as land, and the citizen–state contract. In these arenas it will be important to gain a sound understanding of the power relations at play to better inform workable peace-building and conflict management initiatives and conflict-sensitive programs at different levels. More in-depth research and analysis on how states and traditional institutions can better cooperate and work toward a common vision in the pastoral areas of the region is also needed. This conflict analysis must be complemented by a vulnerability analysis by gender, ethnicity, age and other key variables to understand the conflict in detail. To identify and address the complex array of vulnerabilities and needs of affected local populations, such analysis should be based on evidence.

The reasons behind the persistence of conflict and its drivers in the drylands remain poorly understood. Research to inform and guide future conflict-management strategies could focus on two areas:

- Address the lack of systematic knowledge and hard data on how and to what extent conflict affects pastoralist livelihoods, their vulnerability to drought and to long-term development opportunities.
- Generate better understanding of practices around conflict management and peace-building approaches, policies and initiatives.

Finally, comparative research between the Greater Horn of Africa and other regions (i.e. West and southern Africa) to understand, analyse and explain differences and similarities of policies and legal frameworks around conflict management, natural resource management, land tenure, and similar topics could highlight positive lessons and experiences that could be usefully applied to the Greater Horn of Africa.

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