



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The *Mobility and Migration in the Karamoja cluster* analysis and research Brief was commissioned and produced by UNDP African Borderlands Centre. The author is Dr Dereje Feyissa Dori (Associate Professor at Addis Ababa University). The work has been overseen and supported by the Africa Borderlands Centre team comprised of Lily Murei, Hugh Lamarque, Antony Mutungi, Kristoffer Tangri, Kehinde Bolaji and Kareen Shawa under the leadership of Zeynu Ummer. We would like to offer our sincere gratitude to other UNDP colleagues; Hyewon Jung, Asfaw Kumssa and Edwin Mangeni and Dr Agol from IGAD for their valuable insight and direction. The author acknowledges the insights provided by the following resource persons from various institutions: Tigist Hailu (IGAD-CEWARN; Ayten Birhane (PDC); Padmini Iyer (DDG); Anthony Egeru (Makerere University), and Fana Gebresenbet (Addis Ababa University). We thank Karen Kelleher Carneiro for design and layout.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a dynamic pattern of population movement in the Karamoja cluster that straddles the borders of Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia. This mobility can be classified into two broad categories: **voluntary movement** (intentional, and without compulsion) and **involuntary movement** (unintentional, forced). Examples of voluntary movement include seasonal pastoralist movement, cross-border trade, and labor migration induced by rapid urbanization and opportunities connected to the emerging extractive sector. Examples of involuntary movement include as a result of climate change, development-induced displacement, violent conflict, trafficking and refugee flows.

Seasonal pastoral movement (also known as transhumance pastoralism) is the most common type of population movement in Karamoja well suited to the arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) found in the region. It is a livelihood strategy that holds potential to reduce poverty, generate economic growth, manage environmental challenges, and promote sustainable development.

Despite being a key livelihood component, pastoral mobility is constrained by external factors. One of these external factors is **the artificiality of state borders**. Pastoral mobility is restricted by the state borders that divide the cluster, though pastoralists never recognize national nor international boundaries. This constraint is exacerbated by **an agrarian bias in development policymaking**. Governments across the region rarely integrate pastoral land into national economic development models. Rather, they promote farming and sedentary lifestyles.

Pastoral mobility is also constrained by contested state borders. The Ilemi Triangle, where Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia meet, used to be a natural resource reserve area accessible to the cross-border Turkana, Topossa, Nyangatom, and Dassenech communities. Access is now primarily confined to Turkana. Kenya exercises de facto control of the region, enabling the Turkana to be the dominant occupier of these contested resources. This exclusion of the other cross border communities has the potential to fuel inter-state tension.

Cross border trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is rife in the Karamoja cluster, constituting a major driver of insecurity and undermining pastoral mobility. The region is awash with SALW following protracted civil wars in Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. This has negative consequences on pastoral mobility and promotes conflict. This proliferation has incentivized the predatory pursuit of cross-border natural resources, as seen in the deteriorating Turkana–Karamojong relationship. It has also transformed small-scale cattle raiding into large-scale commercial cattle raiding involving a greater degree of violence. Inconsistent disarmament interventions have upset local power relations. Pastoralist communities in Uganda’s Karamoja cluster territory have undergone more sustained and successful disarmament programs than other sections of the region. Although Uganda’s decade-long disarmament programs brought a relative stability in its part of the Karamoja cluster the uneven disarmaments have also made communities there more vulnerable.

Climate change has increased vulnerability to the ASAL regions more broadly. In Karamoja, it has weakened resilience, exacerbated competition over scarce resources, and led to new patterns of mobility and conflict. Karamoja's average drought cycle has increased from one every eight years to one in every three years. However, there is limited empirical evidence on violence directly related to climate change and resource scarcities. Pastoralists recognizing common property rights often regulate resources for collective benefits, as communities learn to cooperate when confronted with scarce resources. Unfortunately, in many parts of the Karamoja cluster, such as the Turkana–Topossa–Dassench–Nyangatom border area, there is a rapid deterioration of local institutions and unitary norms.

Mega national development projects have adversely impacted on the human security of cross-border communities. Large-scale agricultural and infrastructure projects have undermined the viability of pastoral mobility and given way to a new type of involuntary population movement: development-induced displacement. Examples include the construction of a hydroelectric dam and the associated large-scale irrigated commercial agriculture in the Lower Omo Basin, the emerging extractive sector in Turkana, and conservation projects in Karamojong.

Labor migration is a voluntary form of population movement in the Karamoja cluster caused by rapid urbanization, new opportunities associated with the extractive sector, and mega infrastructure projects. Turkana County, and its capital Lodwar in particular, is emerging as a major migrant destination. Karamojong is also going through a rapid process of change as a result of its mineral wealth. Its capital, Moroto, is called “the marble city of East Africa” attracting both internal and cross-border migrants. However, the new labor market is not sufficiently inclusive of the local communities who have consequently been uprooted. The requirements of the labor market marginalize locals who lack skills as a result of traditional underdevelopment. As a result, most of the workers in the new economic sectors hail from other regions. This has politicized migration and created the divisive categories of “natives” and “outsiders”.

Influx of refugees constitute a form of forced migration. The Karamoja cluster has hosted refugees at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County since 1992. By the end of 2020 it was estimated that there are close to Two hundred thousand (200,000) refugees in Kakuma. The relations between the refugees and their hosts have largely been peaceful, albeit tense. Turkana has also pioneered an integration scheme for refugees

and the host population since the birth of the Kalobeyei settlement in 2016. The Kalobeyei settlement was initiated with the intention of promoting the self-reliance of refugees and the host population and delivering integrated services to both.

Human trafficking is observed mainly in the Karamoja cluster predominantly in Karamojong mainly expressed in the form of child trafficking. There has been a high incidence of child trafficking specifically among the Bokora community who have been more affected by Uganda's disarmament programs making them vulnerable to attacks by their neighbors. Brokers have exploited this vulnerability and trafficked children of destitute families to cities and towns in Uganda

Impact of COVID-19; Like elsewhere, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted mobility and migration in the Karamoja cluster. Two of the four constituent countries – Ethiopia and Kenya – are among the hardest hit by the pandemic in Africa. With the congested nature of camp life and inadequate resources, refugees are very vulnerable to COVID-19. Responses to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, such as restricted movement, have a negative impact on pastoralists who depend on mobility to access resources and markets. Responses such as livestock market closures also negatively impact food security and livelihoods in pastoralist areas which is already happening in the wider Horn of Africa region due to COVID-19. This provides critical income for marginalized borderland communities. Due to border closures cross border trade was also affected. With shifting government priority to contain the public health crisis, the pandemic has also reversed gains in **cross-border cooperation** and may induce a security vacuum.

Regional and continental frameworks for cross border migration and mobility are more progressive than national development policies. AU's pastoralist strategy and the SALW strategy and IGAD's Protocol on Transhumance and policy framework for Informal Cross Border Trade are cases in point. There is a need for greater alignment between national, regional and continental frameworks particularly with regard to mobile pastoralism which is a key component of livelihood for cross border communities and a source of resilience.

Key recommendations to protect livelihoods and improve the security situation of borderland communities include: Recognition of mobile pastoralism as a legitimate form of life and rational livelihood strategy well suited to the ASAL regions; a coordinated and comprehensive regional disarmament program; strengthening environmental resilience in pastoral areas such as through the use of technologies; promotion of a

negotiated access to key natural resources at the contested borderlands; translation of government political will in cross-border cooperation into policy reform and financial commitment; mitigating the cost of national development projects for cross-border communities through locally inclusive investment; avoiding discriminatory practices against migrants in the labor market; facilitating cross-border trade through creating a conducive policy environment such as IGAD's cross-border trade and security governance policy framework; easing travel restrictions and greater investment in provision of public goods for the self-reliance of refugees and host populations, and mitigating the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the wellbeing of pastoralists through a more regulated access to regional livestock markets; protection of transhumance mobility through COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement for herders as well as direct support, such as voucher systems to purchase livestock fodder when necessary to ensure livestock nutritional needs that may arise because of mobility restrictions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Karamoja cluster straddles the borders of four countries in East Africa: Northeast Uganda; Northwest Kenya; Southeast South Sudan; and Southwest part of Ethiopia consisting of agropastorist communities such as Turkana, Pokot, Dodoth, Jie, Karamojong, Toposa, Dassenech and Nyangatom. Despite recurrent conflicts they all share a cultural identity as part of the wider Atekere family.



This brief summarizes key considerations concerning mobility and migration in the Karamoja cluster. It provides immediate, up to date analysis of mobile borderland populations and contemporary conflict linked to

mobility. Migration and mobility are a key feature of the Karamoja Cluster. Ensuring a safe, regular migration and mobility and contribution to the development and human security of the region would be a key added value of the brief, its content, and its recommendations. The focus of the brief, considerations, and recommendations, as such would encompass the broad range of issues including promoting mobile pastoralism, labor mobility, cross-border trade, improving on the legal/regulatory frameworks at country and regional level for cross border movements, and addressing the additional drivers of migration/displacement.

2. PATTERNS OF MOBILITY AND MIGRATION IN THE KARAMOJA CLUSTER

2.1 Seasonal Pastoral Movement

The most widespread form of migration in the Karamoja cluster is **seasonal pastoral movement** across international borders. Most communities are mobile and they depend on seasonal pastures and temporary water sources for their survival.

Patterns of movement vary within the cluster. Internal migration is common in the seven districts inhabited by the Karamojong in Uganda. Within the cluster, the most common pastoral movement across an international border is by the Turkana of Kenya to the relatively more resource rich territory of the Karamojong in Uganda. On a smaller scale, the Dassenech of Ethiopia cross the border into Kenya for the northern shores of Lake Turkana. Meanwhile, the Nyangatom of Ethiopia and the Topossa of South Sudan cross the disputed Ilemi border during the dry season.

Most of the Karamoja cluster falls within the ASAL region where there is a significant climate variation. Critical resources such as pasture and water are widely distributed. Transhumance pastoralism facilitates access to these resources, particularly during the dry season when they become scarce. Despite climate challenges, pastoralists have not only survived but thrived in the cluster. They produce the lion's share of the livestock sector in their respective countries.¹

However, the debilitating effect of climate change threatens this vitality as ASAL regions are disproportionately affected by environmental changes. Drought

has become more frequent, exacerbating the scarcity of the critical pastoral resources. This has necessitated pastoral movement beyond traditional migration corridors.² Drought, more than any other factor, increases regional mobility to areas that are endowed with water, pasture, and food. Climate change has thus inflamed local disputes over natural resources and restricted traditional migration patterns.

2.2 Development-induced displacement

A major feature of population movement in the Karamoja cluster is **development-induced displacement**. While this often stems from new interventions in the agricultural and extractive sectors, pastoralism has faced sustained pressure since the colonial era.

Recurring government interventions have reduced mobility, created land dispossession, and led to forced settlement and ecological changes. The discovery of oil deposits in southern Turkana has caused disruption and raised fears of pollution. Meanwhile, recent mining activities in Karamoja have a mixed record. They provide some locals with much-needed income, but also adversely impact livelihoods through increased pollution and are prone to resource grabbing. There is also a shift from a more sustainable mobile pastoralism to short term, opportunistic mining instead of an integrated livelihood diversification.³

Notable development-induced displacement arises from large-scale transformation schemes targeting the Lower Omo Valley. This includes the Gibe III Dam and associated commercial agricultural projects in Ethiopia. These developments threaten productive ecosystems that rely on access to the river and the surrounding forests and flood plains, as well as Lake Turkana and the millions of people who depend on it. Irrigation projects in the Lower Omo Valley alone could reduce the Omo River's volume by half, which derives more than 90% of its fresh water from the transboundary Omo River.⁴ This could lead to the displacement of many Turkana across the border in Kenya.

The magnitude of the anticipated Lower Omo Valley development project is concerning. The planned development covers up to 245,500 hectares. This entails the relocation of 150,000 people into permanent sedentary villages. While the population is to be provided with schools, clinics, and other infrastructure, previous experiences elsewhere in Ethiopia have shown that these movements are not always voluntary.⁵

Two population groups who live on the Ethiopian side of the Karamoja cluster – the Dassenech and the Nyangatom – are negatively impacted by the dam and the associated sugar plantations. They have lost prime dry season grazing land and the Omo's annual flood has resulted in the loss of flood-retreat farming lands on the banks of the river. As a coping strategy these groups have increasingly resorted to alternative livelihood strategies. This includes the Dassenech's increased cross-border movement to Lake Turkana for fishing. Competition for Lake Turkana fish stock is at the heart of the current deadly confrontation between the Turkana and the Dassenech. These development projects have attracted huge investment and are key pillars of regional integration efforts. Kenya is poised to buy electricity from Ethiopia – made affordable by the hydroelectric dam – and a power transmission line connecting the two countries is well underway.

2.3. Cross-border Trade

Another form of population movement in the Karamoja cluster is **cross-border trade**. A dynamic and complex market exists in the Karamoja cluster, with major hubs in district headquarters linked to smaller market towns and other regional centers. The market network has penetrated more deeply into northeastern Uganda, northwestern Kenya, and southeastern South Sudan.⁶ Security-related improvements in Karamoja, particularly along roads, have brought more and new traders into the region, generating greater diversity and availability of food and nonfood items at markets. The cessation of the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government has resulted in an increase in trade across the Uganda–South Sudan border.⁷

Cross-border commerce is most developed along the Kenya–Uganda border. The recent reduction of conflict along this border has enabled traders to cross it more safely. As a result, cross-border trade in livestock, grains, and other commodities, especially between Moroto and Nakiloro in Uganda, and Lokirima in Turkana County, Kenya, has increased.⁸ Industrial products accounted for the largest share of Uganda's informal exports to South Sudan, representing more than 30%. Ugandan agricultural products are also significant, accounting for around 25% of informal exports to South Sudan.⁹ Informal trade far outweighs the significance of formal trade in most of the cluster's trade corridors. According to IGAD sources, more than half of the region's informal cross-border traders are women.¹⁰

A study indicated that 77 percent of traders in South Sudan were from female headed households, depending solely on cross border trade as a source of income.¹¹

The LAPSSET transport project is expected to improve the accessibility of the region and create greater opportunities for cross-border trade. In particular, it is expected to boost the trade in livestock.

The Karamoja region has significant potential for livestock, with potentials for further development. Lomidat is currently the only abattoir in Turkana County, Kenya, able to slaughter meat for export. Lomidat is known for its high-quality products and is unique as women constitute three-fifths of the members of the Lomidat Pastoral Multipurpose Co-operative, which supplies animals to the abattoir. A major international export destination is the Juba market in South Sudan.¹²

2.4 Cross Border Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons

Cross border trafficking in SALW is rife in the Karamoja cluster. Not all the goods traded across the border are licit. Firearms are exchanged through various trade routes throughout the region, including the South Sudan–Kenya border route, as well as directly from South Sudan to Karamoja, passing into Kotido, then to Pokot and Samburu in Kenya, and later back to Nakapiripirit and Moroto in Southern Karamoja. Firearms have been prevalent in the Karamoja cluster since being introduced by traders in the second half of the 19th century in exchange for ivory. The postcolonial internal conflicts in the area increased their spread and use. Uganda's, South Sudan's Ethiopia's civil wars in the 1970s and 1970s/80s have further created a regional vacuum and a security dilemma that allowed the arms trade to proliferate. The Pokot, for instance, joined the arms race only after the frequent attacks by the Karamojong and the Turkana.¹³

2.5 Human Trafficking

Another form of trafficking in Karamoja is child trafficking. Children in the Karamoja region are increasingly being trafficked to work in other parts of the region to make hoping to support their families. The area which is the most affected by child trafficking is Karamojong, specifically the Bokora community. This is linked to Uganda's uneven disarmament interventions which has inadvertently made the Bokora vulnerable to the cross-border raiding. The Turkana raids on the Bokora have been so intense that many families have

abandoned pastoralism and migrated to urban centers in Uganda to flee the violence. A consequence of this has been the emergence of trafficking of Bokora children in the slums of Kampala. Brokers deceive parents with false promises of employment opportunities and prospective remittances from their children.¹⁴

2.6 Labor Migration

Labor migration as a result of urbanization is another form of population movement in the Karamoja region. This is particularly the case for the new towns such as Lodwar, which has seen rapid growth as a result of Kenya's decentralization agenda. The Turkana area was primed for increased wage labor because of new economic opportunities following the establishment of the Kakuma Refugee Camp.

The discovery of oil and Turkana's placement within LAPSSET is expected to further boost the economic position of Turkana County. Lodwar boasts a bustling market linked to Kitale, which provides the bulk of food products to the area. People living in and around Lodwar engage in a range of livelihood activities, from firewood and charcoal vending to private businesses.

The lack of skilled local labor has given rise to labor migration from areas within Kenya (mainly western Kenya) and across the border with Uganda, particularly the Moroto area. The Karamojong prefer wage labor in Lodwar as they face social discrimination because of the stigma associated with their pastoral identity in Uganda's urban centers. Karamojong migrants feel at home in Lodwar due to a shared sense of cultural identity with the Turkana.¹⁵ Both are members of the Atekere family.

A push factor for labor migration from Karamojong are state policies that promote other sectors of the economy – in particular ecological and conservationist policies – at the expense of mobile pastoralism. The entire territory of Karamoja is designated as either a forest reserve, game reserve, controlled hunting area, national park, buffer zone, or military area.¹⁶ Karamojong is also prized for minerals such as marble and gold. Resulting social crises increasingly drive the Karamojong out of the region, to urban centers within Uganda and across borders to neighboring countries, particularly Kenya.

Following Lodwar, Moroto town, the headquarters of the Karamojong region, is the fastest-growing urban center and the biggest labor market in Karamojong. It has seen a noticeable population spike in recent years – a sign of migration and not merely natural increase. Although precise data is not readily available, many

residents of Moroto have arrived from other regions and districts of Uganda to work in a variety of wholesale and retail businesses, as well as in the public, natural resource, and development sectors.¹⁷

In Lower Omo, there is growing tension between local communities and migrants from other parts of Ethiopia that work in the commercial farms. In Turkana there is increasing concern of migrants settling and possibly accruing the benefits of royalties from the oil industry.¹⁸ Local and national governments and corporations should devote greater attention to the economic inclusion of local communities to ensure their investments are sustainable and acceptable.

2.7 Refugee Influx – Trajectories and Current Conditions

An **influx of refugees** is another type of involuntary population movement in the Karamoja cluster. The area hosts close to 200,000 refugees and asylum seekers in two sites in Turkana County: the conventional refugee camp in Kakuma and the integrated settlement in the nearby Kalobeyei. The refugees originate primarily from conflict-stricken South Sudan but represent more than 20 nationalities. Women and girls account for 46% of the refugees, and 30% are youth.¹⁹ Kakuma Refugee Camp is the largest residential area in Turkana County. Consequently, the Turkana in Kakuma host a refugee population significantly larger than their own. This has created tension and brought both challenges and opportunities.

On a positive note, the camp has led to the emergence of new livelihood opportunities alongside improvements in social services such as health and education. Negative consequences for the local hosts include rising insecurity and conflicts in Turkana County. There is also a strong sense of relative deprivation. Local sentiment holds that it is better to be a refugee than a Turkana in Kakuma.²⁰

The combination of limited livelihood opportunities in the host community and the imbalance of humanitarian assistance undermine peaceful coexistence between refugees and their hosts. Members of the host community have reported refugees entering their villages to steal, provoke fights, rape women, and even murder Turkana people. Conversely, refugees claim the Turkana conducted criminal activities such as cattle rustling and perpetrate other forms of violence.

Refugee influx has also contributed to food insecurity. For instance, in areas like Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Letea, land is degraded by soil erosion resulting from

presence of refugees and pressure on the already fragile ecosystem. The competition over the supply of firewood and building materials is also a source of conflict.

The Kenyan authorities restrict the movements of refugees through the Refugees Act (2006) – which states that a refugee shall “not leave the designated refugee camp without the permission of the Refugee Camp Officer”.²¹ Still, Kenya has pioneered the Comprehensive Refugees Response Framework (CRRF) and the Global Compact for Refugees with the establishment of the integrated Kalobeyei settlement for refugees and host populations. The rationale for the Kalobeyei settlement is to design and implement projects that will supplement humanitarian assistance with long-term development projects to help them support themselves by carrying out economic activities that boost their self-reliance and improve their sustainable livelihood. The programme will also reduce the potential conflict between refugees and host communities.²²

It is in Kalobeyei, for the first time anywhere in the world, a refugee settlement has been designed to enable refugees and the host community to live communally, sharing markets, schools, and hospitals. A multi-agency collaborative plan is implemented to develop the local economy and service delivery over a 14-year period. This differs from the “care and maintenance” model of Kakuma and highlights the integration of Kalobeyei into the Turkana County Integrated Development Plan.

All food assistance in Kalobeyei is converted entirely into cash transfers. In comparison to in-kind assistance, cash transfers are praised for enhancing autonomy, reducing costs, and boosting local markets. This aid model has also benefited women. Most food vendors in Kalobeyei and Kakuma markets are refugee women; they sell cabbage and tomatoes sourced from as far as Kitale market, 400 km away, and red onions from across the border in Uganda’s Moroto, a town about 260 km away. Their goods reflect the region’s mobility.²³

Although it is still in its formative phase, Kalobeyei promises a potential model to learn from as the CRRF is being rolled out in several countries in the region and beyond. Kalobeyei’s agricultural and cash-assistance programs have improved nutrition and enhanced autonomy.²⁴ Development planning has seen increased coordination. The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan is embedded within the Turkana County Integrated Development Plan, benefiting a population of approximately 500,000. Economic integration has reportedly increased per capita host incomes by 6%.²⁵ However, it is still a long

way before self-reliance is achieved for the refugees and the host population given government travel restrictions and inadequate provision of public goods by the aid agencies.

2.8 Demographics of Migrants and Mobile Populations

Transhumance pastoralists often have a permanent homestead and base at which women, children, and the older members of the community remain throughout the year.

As a strategy to manage uneven access to water and pasture during the dry season, agro-pastoralists, in Karamoja rotate between semi-permanent villages and mobile cattle camps. Near permanent homesteads are usually located in proximity to areas used for cultivation. Alongside this, Karamoja's pastoralists use mobile camps to access grass and water. This movement allows herders to use a variety of pastures, water points, and resources such as salt licks. It is a sophisticated adaptation to the challenge of inhabiting a harsh environment.

However, more women than men migrate to pursue wage labor. Men are often needed to herd cattle at home, while women attain a wider range of employment opportunities in the city. These include housekeeping, cooking, and childcare. Migration to Lodwar by unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers from Karamojong has gradually increased. Marriage, primarily of women to Turkana men, has also facilitated migration.²⁶ Internal mobility is gendered, particularly in Karamojong where the majority of the labor migrants to the towns are women who compare their livelihood strategies to that of 'warriors'. They believe that just like the men were referred to as warriors when they went out to hunt and raid cattle they have also become warriors by becoming the bread winners of their households.²⁷

Gender intersects with wage labor and employment in critical ways. More productive wage labor opportunities are reserved for men. Women, especially rural women, rely on brewing, cleaning, and the petty trade of firewood, charcoal, and other goods for income generation. Men are typically recruited for physically strenuous activities, such as construction labor and as porters (e.g. for hardware stores or even at construction sites). Most people engaged in wage labor are young, under the age of 40. Employers prefer this demographic because many unskilled jobs demand physical strength.²⁸

In Karamojong, people in rural areas of Moroto District, such as those in Rupa and Tapac sub-counties, are heavily involved in mining. In cases of artisanal mining in Uganda, Karamojong stands out in terms of gender dimensions. Women are heavily engaged in mining – up to 90% in some locations, a significantly greater portion than elsewhere in the country.²⁹

3. NEXUS BETWEEN MOBILITY AND CONFLICT

Pastoral areas like the Karamoja cluster are some of the most conflict-ridden parts of Africa. Traditional pastoral mobility is characterized by intermittent conflict because of variations in natural resource endowments. The Turkana's push toward the uplands and wetter parts of Karamojong is a case in point. Turkana is drier than the neighboring regions, with the exception of limited riverine areas. However, it is not mobility per se that is causing conflict, but rather changes in the traditional pattern of pastoral mobility in the region.

The first external factor in the nexus between pastoral mobility and conflict is **the artificiality of the colonial border**, which has dissected the culturally homogeneous Ateker group into four sovereign states. With the exception of the Dassenech in the Lower Omo Valley, all populations in the Karamoja cluster belong to the wider Ateker community, within which critical pastoral resources such as water and dry season grazing lands historically constituted a common good.

Pastoralist groups traditionally rely on interdependent relationships and the symbiotic sharing of knowledge and resources. The fragmentation of the rangeland created by colonization – a situation maintained by postcolonial governments – has restricted access to pastoral resources.

Contested state borders constitute a core link between pastoral mobility and conflict. Most of the border in the Karamoja cluster is not demarcated, in part because ownership is contested by the various states. This is particularly the case in the Ilemi Triangle.

The contested territory covers an area of roughly 14,000 sq. km. It hosts important water points and dry season grazing resources in flood plains and mountain ranges. While the Turkana, Dasanach, Nyangatom, and Toposa use the area for herding, hunting and – in the case of

Nyangatom – cultivation and permanent settlement, only the Turkana are permanent residents of Ilemi today. Over 90% of these communities are pastoralists whose livelihoods depend on their ability to access water and pasture resources across borders. However, their mobility is impaired by restrictive border policies. Ownership of the area has changed hands several times: from Sudan, to Uganda, and presently Kenyan jurisdiction. Ethiopia holds a latent claim over the contested area.³⁰

The dispute over the Ilemi Triangle has been compounded by the potential existence of hydrocarbons and other strategic minerals. This prospect is now probable following the discovery of oil in the Turkana basin. This competition has hardened the attitudes of both local and state actors.³¹

As Kenya asserted its authority in the area, the Turkana began to exclude other local groups, particularly the Toposa of South Sudan and the Dassenech and Nyangatom of Ethiopia. This exclusion has facilitated the rise of new mobility routes that lack an established rule of engagement. The excluded groups have also continued to cross the international border, creating conflict between the Turkana and their neighbors.³² This is particularly applicable to the Nyangatom, who are affected by development-induced displacement arising from commercial agriculture in the Lower Omo Valley.

Pastoral movement and conflict is also influenced by **the spread of SALW and the resulting intensification of large-scale cattle raiding**. Traditionally, livestock raiding serves the purpose of redistribution in times of drought and disease. The more precarious communities would raid their relatively better off neighbors for the purpose of restocking their depleted resources. This is true of the Turkana, who often raid their Karamojong neighbors across the border in Uganda in times of hardship.

Traditional cattle raiding is an embedded cultural practice that serves as a rite of passage for young males. However, in recent years, and in the context of civil wars and the proliferation of SALW, more powerful groups now raid weaker, more vulnerable neighbors for illicit commercial purposes. Unlike the traditional small-scale raiding in which violence was minimal, this predatory form of cattle raiding is brutal. Beyond pastoralists, it has also seen the engagement of local elites and business interests, eager to take their own cut from this lucrative activity.

Commercial cattle raiding is more common among the pastoralist communities on the South Sudanese side of the cluster, where it has been intimately connected to the broader political economy of long-running civil wars.³³ To a limited extent, the Nyangatom and Dassenech raiding of Turkana cattle has a commercial dimension. Conversely, the least affected by disarmament interventions Turkana have preyed upon Karamojong cattle following the effective, albeit coercive, disarmament program in Uganda.

Climate change disproportionately impacts ASAL regions. In the Karamoja cluster it has weakened resilience, exacerbated competition over scarce resources, and led to new patterns of mobility and conflict. Karamoja's average drought cycle has increased from one every eight years to one in every three years.³⁴

There is limited empirical evidence on violence directly related to climate change and resource scarcities. Pastoralists recognizing common property rights often regulate resources for collective benefits, as communities learn to cooperate when confronted with scarce resources. In fact, pastoralists fight more often during periods of plenty than during times of scarcity, such as a drought.³⁵

While climate change threatens peace in the Karamoja borderlands, it could also provide an incentive for peaceful coexistence. Managing climate threats will require the transformation of contested natural resources into shared public goods. Such an arrangement is already in place across the Karamojong–Turkana border. Unfortunately, in many other parts of the Karamoja cluster, such as the Turkana–Toposa–Dassenech–Nyangatom border area, there is a rapid deterioration of local institutions and unitary norms. The antagonistic treatment of members of the Dassenech and Nyangatom communities by the Turkana when they sought shelter following a devastating flood in August 2020 is illustrative of the deterioration of traditional norms.³⁶

National and regional development projects are contributing to the conflict situation in Karamoja. Development projects across the border in Ethiopia have diverted the flow of water to Lake Turkana from the Omo River. Lake Turkana is nutrient limited, and flow from the Omo River carries vital nutrients into the lake. The livelihood of the indigenous communities of the Lower Omo also depends on the annual flood of the river and access to the land along the river where they practice flood retreat cultivation.³⁷ The Dassenech in Ethiopia have been pushing southward across the

to Kenya to access Turkana farmlands. Key conflict hotspots are Todenyang and Loareng where Turkana farm and fish. Many Dassenech have limited economic options and are obliged to push south across the border and compete with Turkana for arable land and fish stocks.³⁸ Like the Dassenech, Turkana herders have increasingly been forced to abandon their traditional pastoralist lifestyles and adopt fishing to secure their livelihoods. Dassenech–Turkana conflict has the potential to spur wider inter-state tension between Ethiopia and Kenya. Kenya’s interest in Ethiopia’s hydroelectric power has ensured restraint to date. However, the volatility of the geopolitics of the Horn and Turkana’s growing political leverage thanks to its oil reserves could potentially transform what is currently a “local” conflict into a broader confrontation between Ethiopia and Kenya. The tension in 2011 following a major attack on the Turkana by heavily armed Dassenech reflects the potential for local conflicts to evolve into inter-state tension.

The emerging extractive sector in Turkana has contributed to communal tension and between local communities, companies, and governments. More positively, the extraction of oil in Turkana has the potential to strengthen the overall economy of the region, providing both direct and indirect employment opportunities. According to the County Government Act, 70% of jobs arising from oil extraction are to be reserved for local Turkana. However, this allocation is not being observed.³⁹ Kenya’s 2015 Petroleum Bill further reinforced local grievances. The act reduced royalties to local communities from 10% to 5%. Meanwhile, Kenya’s national government receives 75% of royalties while County governments are allocated 20%. The sector has also failed to provide significant employment opportunities for the Turkana.

The discovery of oil reserves has also inflamed existing intercommunal rivalries, as the border dispute between Turkana and Pokot indicates.⁴⁰ The flurry of investment, speculation, and positioning in advance of oil extraction could accelerate dispossession and further marginalize pastoralist communities in Turkana County. There are also rifts between oil companies and local communities. In October 2013, for instance, an oil company briefly suspended operations due to riots by locals aggrieved by the lack of opportunities for Turkana people. The protests led to the emergency evacuation of all non-Turkana personnel. This tension.⁴¹

Among the Karamojong in Uganda, a major factor hindering pastoral mobility causing tension between pastoralists and the government is the loss of grazing lands to conservation and wildlife projects. Most of the Karamojong rangeland has been earmarked

for conservation purposes and numerous wildlife and game reserves have been developed. In the 1960s, a staggering 94.6 per cent of the region of Karamoja was allocated to wildlife conservation. In 2002, the Ugandan Parliament approved the change in status of land use and tenure of about half of that land. However, communities are still vulnerable to internal and external loss of land and its resources lacking the information that would otherwise empower them to protect, negotiate and participate in ownership, use and management of their rangeland.⁴²

4. THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRATION PATTERNS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY AND TRADE

Like the rest of the world, COVID-19 has adversely affected almost all sectors of the East African economy. COVID-19 and the measures taken by governments to prevent its spread are negatively impacting pastoralist livelihoods. While cross-border pastoral movement occurs through porous borders, it remains to be seen if thousands of Turkana who crossed the border to Karamojong before the onset of COVID-19 will face travel restrictions when they attempt to return to Kenya during the wet season. Restrictions on pastoral mobility will have dire consequences for their livestock.

Movement inherent to pastoralism increases mixing and contact, thereby increasing transmissibility of the COVID-19 virus. Markets and water points pose the highest risk to pastoralists and can provide a source of infections that can introduce COVID-19 to pastoral areas. The pandemic also has the potential to rekindle conflict, especially in the Karamojong area where a relative peace following the disarmament program is now showing signs of strain. This tranquility was disrupted in December 2019 when conflict surged because of rearmament from weapons stocks in Kenya and South Sudan. While the conflict stabilized by March 2020, COVID-19 disrupted a disarmament campaign and may thus have far-reaching effects on conflict dynamics in Karamojong. It has also weakened the momentum for cross-border cooperation. As one study noted, “the closure of livestock markets, diversion of security forces to fight COVID-19 and locusts, and limited trade and movement of goods may result in hard times for the communities and warriors may strike again”.⁴³

Another at risk group of people are the refugees. In October 2020, authorities in Turkana issued a red alert following a surge in the number of COVID-19 cases in the county and the Kakuma Refugee Camp was identified as a specific hotspot. Of Turkana's 267 confirmed cases, 207 are in West Turkana, where Kakuma Refugee Camp is located.

The absence of social safety nets coupled with rising xenophobia increases the economic insecurity of refugees amidst COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, efforts to facilitate the economic inclusion of refugees in the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement were progressing, albeit slowly. The effects of COVID-19 threaten this tentative progress.

Stereotypes and stigma associated with the pandemic has also affected labor migration, both internal and cross-border. Communities in Karamojong are known to be suspicious of outsiders, and in Moroto, Rupa Subcounty, there was a standoff between locals and foreign miners. The miners were evicted from a gold and marble mine following accusations that they introduced COVID-19 to the community. A similar issue was reported in Kaabong district.⁴⁴

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDELINES ON BORDER CROSSING

There are various legal frameworks and guidelines pertinent to border crossing in the Karamoja cluster at the national, regional, and continental levels.

5.1 National development policies

National development policies on mobile pastoralism vary among the four countries. While Ethiopia and Uganda advocate for permanent settlement, Kenya and South Sudan follow a moderate position.

The Ethiopian constitution provides for freedom of movement, guarantees special support for pastoralists, and respects the right to self-determination. Ethiopia has instituted a Ministry of Peace with a mandate for pastoral development. In 2020, a mobility-friendly pastoral development policy framework, a Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Pastoral Development Policy and Strategy, was endorsed by the Council of

Ministers. The new policy direction promises to ensure participation, respect property rights, and ensure that government and private firms working in pastoral areas extend social benefits to local communities. Overall, the policy contains some very progressive provisions regarding mobile pastoralism. However, it sustains the country's recurrent approach towards pastoralism – advocacy for sedentarism and the embrace of villagization. In practice, therefore, Ethiopia's development agenda in pastoral areas maintains a strong agrarian bias. Addis Ababa urges sedentarism for mobile pastoralists and advocates for the adoption of irrigated and rain-fed farming.

The Government of Uganda appears to have engaged with mobile pastoralist policies more rigorously. This is evinced by the establishment of a ministry whose sole responsibility is the Karamoja region, home to most of the country's pastoralists. Additionally, Uganda adopted a Rangelands Management and Pastoralism Strategy in 2017. The strategy offers a framework for the sustainable management of range resources. It offers guidance on livestock management, climate change mitigation, improved agro-pastoralism practices, biodiversity protection, respects indigenous knowledge, and pledges to engage communities in decision-making and development processes.

The policy is to be supported by a National Pastoral Code, which shall be enacted through a public and private sector partnership. It will provide general principles and rules to govern pastoral activities in the country. However, as in Ethiopia, Uganda policies have shown a preference for sedentary farming.

In Kenya, several policies have been or are being formulated in support of pastoralist development. The Draft Rangelands Management and Pastoralism Strategy (2018) is the most prominent. Key issues addressed by the strategy include the need to identify and map seasonal grazing and livestock movement, the allocation of adequate finances for rangeland resource management, and the promotion of indigenous coping mechanisms to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Kenya's ASAL draft policy (2012) urges the development of an inter-governmental policy framework to oversee cross-border security. Although Kenya recognizes more pastoralist rights than Ethiopia and Uganda, a lot remains to be desired to address the daunting challenges confronting mobile pastoralists. South Sudan does not have a single framework that manages

cross-border pastoralism mobility. However, traditional leaders and communities in border areas continue to recognize longstanding informal agreements.

The rights of pastoralists are enshrined in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (2011). However, there is a need to develop a specific pastoralism policy and initiate the development of pastoral legislation. This effort should consider the requirements of the Protocol on Transhumance for the establishment of transboundary infrastructure. This includes transhumant corridors, service delivery, and cross-border frameworks.

A rising factor in national development frameworks and border management mechanisms is the increased role of local governments as a result of changing government structures. Ethiopia's federal political system, devolution in Kenya, and decentralization in Uganda and South Sudan have capacitated local government structures and grassroots decision-making within the Karamoja cluster, although central governments continue to be important players in border areas.

Despite this grassroots empowerment, mobile pastoralism and the livestock sector have not received sufficient attention in the Karamoja cluster. Located at the periphery of each country's capital, this drought-prone, cross-border region has the lowest social development indicators and the worst access to services in the region. Though livestock is a crucial livelihood asset, the region is poorly integrated into national livestock marketing systems. It is also conspicuously detached from the booming livestock exports from the nearby Horn of Africa to the Gulf.

5.2 Bilateral arrangements

There are various **bilateral arrangements** that govern border crossing in the Karamoja cluster.

A 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Kenya aims to enhance bilateral cross-border cooperation on animal health issues and sanitary measures. In 2019, Kenya and South Sudan established a joint border commission to resolve communal conflicts in the Ilemi Triangle. Nairobi aspires to address the boundary dispute within its larger scheme of regional integration through the LAPSSET project. One of the LAPSSET corridor highways passes through the Karamoja cluster, traversing Lamu–Garissa–Isiolo–Lokichar–Lodwar–Nadapal–Kapoeeta–Torit–Juba.⁴⁵

However, local governments on the South Sudanese side of the border resent Kenya's perceived territorial encroachments beyond the Ilemi Triangle, including so-called "peace roads" that Kenya is constructing beyond the border. Deeper collaboration is needed to pacify this contentious border.

The latest bilateral cross-border agreement in the Karamoja cluster is the much-celebrated Kenya–Uganda Memorandum of Understanding in September 2019. The agreement permits reciprocal grazing by pastoralists and supports efforts to encourage joint grazing in a bid to reduce conflict.

This includes the provision of grazing rights for Turkana pastoralists in Uganda and for the shared use of the Kobebe Dam by the Turkana and Karamojong. Kenya has committed to developing amenities including schools, dams, and health centers on its side of the common border, which will be accessible to all communities in the cluster.⁴⁶

This agreement originated as a grassroots initiative that the political leadership of the two countries subsequently elevated to a bilateral agreement. It was jointly signed at Moroto, Uganda, in the presence of both presidents in an affirmation of their deep commitment to its aims. While the MoU has received widespread acclaim, some Karamojong activists have lamented that it does not commit the Kenyan government to carrying out disarmament of the Turkana and the Pokot commensurate with the more rigorous disarmament of the Karamojong implemented by the Ugandan government.⁴⁷

5.3 Regional frameworks

IGAD has several **regional frameworks** on border crossing. The body has adopted a cluster approach to implement its regional integration vision. IGAD defines a "cluster" as "a geographic space that cuts across multiple political-administrative units within the country and international borders, where a range of resources, services, and cultural values are shared by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, and in which stakeholders aim to develop and implement coordinated investments to enhance resilience and sustainable development" (IGAD 2015).

Karamoja is a fully developed IGAD cluster, treated as one ecological, economic, sociocultural, and conflict zone. In 2017, the first IGAD coordination office for the Karamoja Cluster was established in Moroto, Uganda. This office, the Development Facilitation Unit, coordinates cross-border interventions aimed at building resilience in the cluster.

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) is among the most visible institutional expressions of IGAD in the Karamoja borderlands. Created in 2002, it is a leading platform for regional cooperation on conflict prevention and mitigation in the Horn of Africa region. While the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), and Southern African Development Community, have adopted similar initiatives, CEWARN is the longest functioning early warning mechanism on the continent.

Collected data tracks pastoral conflicts across borders. One component of CEWARN is a Rapid Response Fund, a multi-donor basket fund that provides a flexible and rapid response capacity to address pastoralist conflicts. CEWARN has been most active in the Karamoja cluster. It has prevented conflict through its early warning system and spurred dialogue on a comprehensive regional disarmament program.

IGAD's Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) is a major regional development framework for disaster management. It seeks to strengthen pastoral livelihoods through interventions that target livestock production, health, and petty trading.

IDDRSI has produced Country Programming Papers and a Regional Programming Paper, which guide its operations. While recognizing differences among member states, Country Programming Papers suggest regional and cross-border priorities. They align with a common Regional Programming Paper that guides interventions at the regional level.

IDDRSI's flagship project is a Regional Integrated Development Plan for the Karamoja cluster, adapted to the needs of pastoralists. The plan adopts the findings and recommendations of the African Union's Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa. Both documents recognize mobile pastoralism as a legitimate way of life and seek to improve pastoralist livelihoods. Specific projects envisioned by the plan include regional and comprehensive disarmament programs, the formation of cross-border pastoralist organizations, and the promotion of cross-border activities that strengthen peace and promote indigenous scientific research.

IGAD ratified the Informal Cross-border Trade – Cross-border Security Governance Policy Framework (ICBT–CBSG) in 2018. It facilitates the deployment of strategies that leverage policy shifts on ICBT to improve CBSG. The framework follows a narrow definition of ICBT: “the small-scale cross-border trade of legitimate subsistence goods and services, which intentionally or unintentionally evade taxation and other procedures set by governments, and often goes unrecorded into official national statistics”.

CBSG is defined as “cross-border multilateral or bilateral cooperation, coordination and collaboration among states, civil society and/or borderland communities to address threats and harness opportunities along their borders towards commonly shared peace, integration and prosperity”.⁴⁸

Many studies have attested to the immense contribution of ICBT to the livelihoods of borderland communities in East Africa. ICBT encourages entrepreneurial activity, is an important source of food security for communities in ASAL areas, provides employment, and constitutes an important source of capital and savings for communities and individuals with vulnerable livelihoods. ICBT also has critical gender implications. A substantial proportion of ICBT traders in the IGAD region are women and ICBT is a critical source of income and savings for women and women-headed households.

The draft IGAD Protocol on Transhumance is premised on the fact that seasonal mobility, which includes cross-border movement, is a core component of pastoralist livelihoods. In an effort to address mobility and migration challenges and to protect the pastoralist ecosystem within its member states, IGAD is leading consultations toward a protocol on transhumance that will facilitate the cross-border mobility of livestock in the region. There is a critical need for this Protocol. The semiarid and arid areas of East Africa, where pastoralism is a key lifestyle strategy, constitute up to 70% of the region's total land area and provide 20–30% of its GDP.

Unlike other categories of mobile groups, such as refugees or internally displaced people, pastoralist communities are the only group of migrants in the region whose movement has not been formally recognized or protected. Numerous policies and development programs within IGAD states have advanced strategies to support agro-pastoralist communities, but they remain silent on transhumant pastoralist communities. Consequently, pastoralists are increasingly marginalized as other livelihood systems are privileged.

5.4 Continental frameworks

Beyond IGAD, there are various **continental frameworks** on border crossing. The AU Policy Framework on Pastoralism (2010) explicitly supports the strategic mobility of pastoralists. It recognizes that pastoralist mobility conserves the land and is a key strategy to mitigate against the impact of climate change. This support is reflected in the practical strategies of the framework.

The AU's pastoralist framework urges the adoption of land tenure policies and legislation that support pastoralist mobility. Similarly, it calls for the development and coordination of regional policies that support cross-border mobility and livestock trade. The document stresses that regional reforms and harmonization are critical components of efforts to promote pastoralist lifestyles. IGAD has embraced this call and adopted a pastoralist-friendly development approach.

The AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (2012, also known as the Niamey Convention) aims to ensure efficient integrated border management. It defines cross-border cooperation as any act or policy aimed at promoting and strengthening neighborly relations between border communities and administrations, or other stakeholders under the jurisdiction of two or more states.

The Niamey Convention provides a holistic legal framework for cross-border cooperation at all levels of governments throughout the continent. A consortium of civil society organizations under the leadership of LPI is working towards getting IGAD countries to ratify the convention. The group is targeting Uganda and Kenya, which have the most developed cross-border cooperation policies in the Karamoja cluster. To date, only five countries have signed the convention, largely from the ECOWAS region.

assist border demarcation and delimitation and, more broadly, to facilitate cross-border cooperation between AU member states. The AUBP requires that all the member states complete the delimitation, demarcation, and reaffirmation of their national boundaries by 2022.

South Sudan and Uganda have completed this exercise and signed a border treaty. Kenya and Uganda signed a MoU on border delimitation in March 2019, while Kenya and South Sudan concluded a similar agreement in July 2019. The AUBP may facilitate the resolution of the protracted and potentially explosive Ilemi Triangle border dispute. South Sudan has pressed its case to the AU. Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda have also commenced a joint boundary demarcation process to demarcate this border area as part of peace-building efforts in place since 2019.

In 2013, the AU adopted the Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (the SALW Strategy), along with a corresponding Action Plan. The plan aims to coordinate and strengthen sub-regional cooperation. It calls for the establishment of a steering committee on SALW with the African Union Commission but composed of the continent's various Regional Economic Communities.

The AU strategy draws on regional initiatives like the 2002 Nairobi Convention. It needs to deliver on its promises and the strategy by producing a functional program document. Of relevance here is the need for African governments' to share sensitive information on the manufacture, import, and export of weapons and ammunition, thereby facilitating disarmament efforts.⁴⁹

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recognize mobile pastoralism as a legitimate form of life and rational livelihood strategy well suited to the ASAL regions such as Karamoja.** Food insecurity and conflict in pastoralist areas should not be attributed to inherent deficiencies in the lifestyle. In fact, key drivers of human insecurity in the Karamoja region are largely external. There is an urgent need for regional governments to recognize mobile pastoralism as a viable livelihood strategy and invest in the livestock sector than pushing the sedentarisation agenda. National development policies should be aligned with the more progressive continental and regional frameworks that recognize and promote pastoral mobility in ASAL areas.
- Proliferation of SALW is one of the major drivers of insecurity in the Karamoja cluster. As there is no political incentive for local governments to engage in effective disarmament programs and programs implemented by national governments proved to be uneven, thus ineffective, **there is a felt need for a coordinated and comprehensive regional disarmament program** is implemented. A thorough implementation of the AU SALW strategy by IGAD Member States will provide the missing link for the national level dispersed and uncoordinated disarmament efforts.
- **Managing climate threats requires the transformation of contested natural resources into shared public goods.** Such an arrangement is already in place across the Karamojong–Turkana border. Because pastoralists have a long history of exposure to climatic variability, they have—out of necessity—developed mechanisms to cope with it and **mobility is a key part of the adaptive strategy**, along with keeping different animal species and categories as a strategy to reduce risk and exploit a wider range of ecological niches. The magnitude of external shocks and the intensity of climate change in the ASAL regions however necessitate **strengthening**

environmental resilience in pastoral areas such as the use of technologies. Climate change interventions in the Karamoja cluster could learn from and draw on best experiences elsewhere. The Concern International's initiative (Satellite Assisted Pastoral Resource Management/SAPARM), a satellite-assisted program that provides pastoralists with maps showing them which areas are better than others, helping them make better migration decisions in the face of increasing drought risks.

- **Promote a negotiated access to common resource pools at the contested borderlands.** Cross-border coordination and equitable access to natural resources should be a dominant norm and ethos at the local, national, and regional levels. The community level is particularly critical for the success of these efforts. However, conceiving the demarcation of borders as a final solution ignores local needs and will not bring a durable solution. Communities who are locked out of a disputed territory after “final” demarcation should obtain negotiated access to key cross-border natural resources. A key issue is the **reconciliation of local human development needs with national-level priorities for cross-border security and development.** Mobility is key to such considerations. Governments should identify a strategy that supports local human security interests without devaluing their sovereignty concerns. Most cross-border initiatives by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – including the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), and the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) – argue that borderlands should be zones where development and security interventions respond to “local” concerns that transcend national borders. CEWARN's peace committee model, IDDRSI's resilience promotion via collaboration with local civil society organizations, and ICPALD's transhumance protocol are all steps in the right direction which Member States need to emulate.
- **Governments needs to translate political will in cross-border cooperation into policy reform and financial commitment.** In recent years there has been increased interest in cross-border cooperation, of which the 2019 MoU between Uganda and Kenya is notable. However, these have largely remained mere declarations of intent. A number of conflicts have taken place after the signing of the agreement partly due to gaps in the MoU such as lack of financial support and commitment on the part of the two governments. For the MoU to deliver on its

promises the joint work plan (2019–2023) needs to be made actionable. Effective implementation of the MoU also entails Uganda to adopt the long overdue Rangelands Management and Pastoralism Policy which could facilitate efficient and sustainable use and management of rangeland resources as well as allow for better wildlife conservation and protection of the biodiversity found in the greater cattle corridor of Uganda within which Karamoja falls.

- **Mitigate the cost of mega national development projects for cross-border communities.** Cross-border communities bear the highest cost of large-scale national and regional development projects. There is an urgent need to mitigate the cost of development for local communities. For instance, appropriate measures in the Omo valley might include local livelihood reconstruction programs, simulated flooding to maintain flood receding cultivation, and efforts to ensure that efficient irrigation technology and strategies are deployed. Development policy choice between commercial agriculture and mobile pastoralism should not be construed as dichotomous. Choices based on a careful assessment of comparative advantages and sound social and environmental assessments promise a more sustainable and inclusive development. While mitigating the adverse impact of large scale commercial agricultural schemes there is an economic rationality for governments to invest in the livestock sector which could have a wider transformative impact on local livelihoods. Similarly, the extractive sector should not be promoted at the expense of local livelihood strategies such as mobile pastoralism. The emerging oil sector in Turkana has resulted in constrained pastoral mobility and intensified border conflicts. Moving forward, Kenya needs to improve the local content Bill of 2018 to make the extractive sector locally inclusive with greater alignment with the international standards expected for local content policies. Oil companies should also adopt robust corporate social responsibility initiatives. By the same token, Karamojong has recently become the new mining hub in Uganda. The rush for minerals and the anticipated short-term benefits have come at the expense of pastoralism which is otherwise proved to be a more sustainable livelihood strategy. What is needed is rather a balance between mining and pastoralism in a mutually supportive manner and as part of diversification of livelihoods. CSOs should support capacity building to communities to understand the benefits of the two sectors including laws and regulations on benefit sharing accrued from mining, forests etc. Likewise, community efforts to obtain entitlements allocated

by the Ugandan Wildlife Authority Act (1996) should be supported. Communities near Central Forest Reserves need assistance to undertake forestry management that respects their rights as provided for in the National Tree Planting Act (2003).

- **Promote an inclusive regional labor market.** Internal and cross-border labor migration is a key source of resilience in the Karamoja cluster. One of the major obstacles is discriminatory practices, especially against the Karamojong internal labor migrants which could be addressed through a due diligence of Uganda's Equal Opportunities Act (2007), which seeks, among several areas, to eliminate discrimination based on ethnicity. There is also the issue of lack of skills for many members of local communities which created for them a structural barrier to meaningfully participate in new sectors of the economy such as the extractives. As a result, most of the workers in the new economic sectors hail from other regions. This has politicized migration and created the divisive categories of "natives" and "outsiders". Governments and the private sector need to redress this gap through appropriate affirmative action such as skill training and enhanced access to capital.
- **Facilitate cross-border trade.** The Karamoja cluster, and the IGAD region more broadly, lags far behind other regions of Africa in terms of regional economic integration. Informal cross-border trade is much more robust. Subsistence-oriented cross-border trade is critical to the attainment of food security. National governments should design policies to promote this commerce. The informal cross-border trade is also important because it is highly gendered with greater female participation, especially women who often pursue petty trade as a survival strategy to feed their families. As East African livestock markets become internationalized, commercialization and expansion could profoundly impact pastoralists and agropastoralists. However, to meet market demand, supply from the Karamoja cluster must increase. The commercial potential of the livestock sector remains untapped in the region yet is contingent on security and herd growth that could be achieved through investments in animal health and the availability of livestock credit. IGAD's Informal Cross-border Trade - Cross-border Security Governance (ICBT-CBSG) policy framework, ratified in 2018, represents a carefully crafted policy framework that balances the legitimate concerns of borderland communities and national governments concern on security matters and the flow of illicit goods such as trade in firearms

and expired pharmaceuticals. Governments are well advised to duly implement this policy framework that recognizes and promotes cross-border commerce.

- **There is a need for greater investment in provision of public goods for the self-reliance of refugees and host populations.** While self-reliance in Kalobeyei integrated settlement offers a potentially important opportunity to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus, a lot remains to be desired before self-sufficiency is achieved. Kalobeyei lacks access to basic goods including healthcare, water, education, and electricity which inhibits refugees' ability to engage in economic activities. There is also a need to improve educational facilities which are so far unable to accommodate all school-aged children in the settlement. While the shift from in-kind to cash support is designed to purchase food, refugees often receive insufficient funding and access to food remains a challenge. Efforts should be made to help women overcome barriers such as employment, education, and trade. Not least, there is a need for a greater freedom of movement of refugees to expand their network horizon and make use of economic opportunities.
- **Mitigate the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the wellbeing of pastoralists.** The covid-19 response should focus on preventing transmission in population centres such as markets and water points, while also protecting pastoral livelihoods from the secondary effects of disease control efforts. Transhumance mobility should be protected, as this is essential aspect of pastoral livelihoods.⁵⁰ This can be done through COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement for herders travelling with their livestock by Community One Health team (COHTs). Direct support, such as voucher systems to purchase livestock fodder, can also be implemented when necessary to ensure livestock nutritional needs that may arise because of mobility restrictions. Market access can be preserved through a nuanced approach to COVID-19 that keeps markets open while implementing public health measures. Livestock insurance activation and selective destocking programmes by national governments can also alleviate cash shortages for pastoralists.

REFERENCES

- ¹ A. Catley, J. Lind (2) & I. Scoones. The futures of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa: pathways of growth and change. *Rev. Sci. Tech. Off. Int. Epiz.*, 2016, 35 (2), 389–403.
- ² Martin Shanguhya. 2014. Past and Current Initiatives in Managing Trans-Border Insecurity in Kenya's Turkana Borderlands: Implications for Future Policy. IDRC. Retrieved from <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/58720/IDL%20-%2058720.pdf?sequence=2>
- ³ The Negative Impacts of Oil Exploration and Discovery on the Turkana Community. Horn Policy Brief. <https://horninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No.-10;-fMarianne-BachMosebo-The-value-of-pastoralism-and-mining-Balancing-futures-in-Karamoja-Uganda-The-Extractive-Industries-and-Society-Volume-4-Issue-3-July-2017>.
- ⁴ HRW. 2014. Ethiopia: land, water grabs devastate communities. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/18/ethiopia-land-water-grabs-devastate-communities>
- ⁴ FAO. 2017. Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7178en/ca7178en.pdf>
- ⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/18/ethiopia-land-water-grabs-devastate-communities>
- ⁶ Burns, John, Gezu Bekele, and Darlington Akabwai. 2013. Livelihood Dynamics in Northern Karamoja: A Participatory Baseline Study for the Growth, Health and Governance Program (Mercy Corps). Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.
- ⁷ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/South_Sudan_-_A_Study_on_Competitiveness_and_Cross_Border_Trade_With_Neighbouring_Countries.pdf
- ⁸ FAO. 2017. Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7178en/ca7178en.pdf>
- ⁹ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/South_Sudan_-_A_Study_on_Competitiveness_and_Cross_Border_Trade_With_Neighbouring_Countries.pdf
- ¹⁰ See “The IGAD Region” at <https://igad.int/index.php/aboutus/the-igad-region>
- ¹¹ Ngungi, Grace. 2010. “Assessment of the Gender Implications of Cross-Border Trade between South Sudan and Uganda.” World Bank, Mimeo.
- ¹² Market-driven value chain for the livestock sector Turkana County Report. https://cng-cdn.oxfam.org/kenya.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/Market-driven%2
- ¹³ Kennedy Mkutu. Pastoral conflict and small arms: The Kenya-Uganda border region. Saferworld, 2003.
- ¹⁴ IOM. 2014. Child migration from Karamoja. Retrieved from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/karamoja_childmigration.pdf
- ¹⁵ file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/tufts_1740_krsu_wage_labor_karamoja_v3_online.pdf
- ¹⁶ <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/violence-and-state-karamoja-causes-conflict-initiative>
- ¹⁷ <https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Migration-Karamoja.pdf>
- ¹⁸ In Turkana there is increasing concern of migrants settling and possibly accruing the benefits of royalties from the oil industry.
- ¹⁹ <file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/SGBV%20Strategy%20-%20UNHCR%20Kakuma%20camp.pdf>
- ²⁰ Ekuru Auko. 2003. “It Is Better to Be a Refugee Than a Turkana in Kakuma”: Revisiting the Relationship between Hosts and Refugees in Kenya. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 21(3), 73-83
- ²¹ <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/kenya.php>
- ²² <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kalobeyei-settlement>
- ²³ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/all-news-and-stories/kenya-accessing-safe-and-fresh-produce-even-during-coronavirus-lock-down_

- ²⁴ Alexander Betts et al. 2020. The Kalobeyei Settlement: A Self-reliance Model for Refugees? *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 33, No. 1
- ²⁵ https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/KISED_P_Kalobeyei-Integrated-Socio-Econ-Dev-Programme.pdf
- ²⁶ Looking for Work: Wage Labor, Employment, and Migration in Karamoja, Uganda. Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU). Retrieved from [www.tufts.edu/1740_krsu_wage_labor_karamoja_v3_online%20\(6\).pdf](http://www.tufts.edu/1740_krsu_wage_labor_karamoja_v3_online%20(6).pdf)
- ²⁷ Mariam Namiro. 2016. The socio-economic impact of migration on the livelihoods of Karamojong women and children: Katwe slums. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of Masters in Anthropology of development.
- ²⁸ *ibid*
- ²⁹ Hinton. Developing a Roadmap for Gender and Mining. International Workshop Proceedings commissioned by the World Bank, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, June 15th-16th, 2010.
- ³⁰ Robert O. Collins. The Ilemi Triangle. *Annales d’Ethiopie*, 2005, vol. XX: 5-12
- ³¹ Edward Waithaka and Patrick Maluki Emerging dimensions of the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa. *International Journal of Science Arts and Commerce* Vol. 1 No. 4, June-2016.
- ³² Claudia Carr. 2017. River Basin Development and Human Rights in Eastern Africa — A Policy Crossroads. Springer Open.
- ³³ Hannah Wild, Jok Madut and Ronak Patel. The militarization of cattle raiding in South Sudan. How a traditional practice became a tool for political violence? *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*. Volume 2, Article 2 (2018).
- ³³ Karamoja’s average drought cycle has increased from one every eight years to one in every three years.
- ³³ Young, Oran R (2011) Land use, environmental change and sustainable development: The role of institutional d
- ³⁴ Interview with PDC focal person for the Strengthening Local Cross-border Conflict Management in Lake Turkana-South Omo Corridor Project, Addis Ababa, September 15, 2020.
- ³⁷ Situation Analysis Summary: Impacts on the ecology of the Omo-Turkana Basin. Omo-Turkana Research Network, 2019. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/situation-analysis-summary-impacts-on-the-ecology-of-the-omo-turkana-basin>
- ³⁸ IOM. 2014. Child migration from Karamoja. Retrieved from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/karamoja_childmigration.pdf
- ³⁹ J. Schilling et al. The nexus of oil, conflict, and climate change vulnerability of pastoral communities in Northwest Kenya. *Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss.*, 6, 1163–1200, 2015
- ⁴⁰ <http://crimeresearch.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Conflict-and-Extractive-Industries-in-Turkana.pdf>
- ⁴¹ *ibid*
- ⁴² Margaret A. Rugadya and Herbert Kamusiime. Tenure in mystery: The status of land under wildlife, forestry and mining concessions in Karamoja region. *Nomadic Peoples* (2013) Volume 17, ISSUE 1, 2013: 33–65.
- ⁴³ Covid-19 and conflict analysis in Karamoja. Retrieved from <http://www.celep.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID->
- ⁴⁴ Resolving conflicts ignited by COVID-19 in Karamoja. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/uganda/news/resolving-conflicts-ignited-covid-19-karamoja>
- ⁴⁵ <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenya-south-sudan-form-team-on-ilemi-triangle-conflict>
- ⁴⁶ <https://www.president.go.ke/2019/09/12/kenya-uganda-sign-pact-to-end-cross-border-conflicts-promote-devt-in-turkana-pokot-and-karamoja/>
- ⁴⁷ http://www.celep.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019-Who-gains-from-the-Uganda-Kenya-cross-border-MoU_Loupa-Pius_FINAL-270919.pdf
- ⁴⁸ <https://igad.int/attachments/article/1872/Communique>
- ⁴⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/pathway-sustainable-development-goals>
- ⁵⁰ Source: Evans Griffith et al. COVID-19 in pastoral contexts in the greater Horn of Africa: Implications and recommendations!. *Pastoralism* Vol.10, Article number: 22 (2020).

Disclaimer:

The analysis and policy recommendations in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)


© UNDP 2020

Document citation: Dereje Feyissa (2020). Mobility and Migration in the Karamoja Cluster. United Nations Development Programme, Policy Brief Series No.3.

Contact Information

 hello.africaborderlands@undp.org

 www.africa.undp.org/borderlands

 [@undpafrica](https://twitter.com/undpafrica) #africaborderlands

UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre
Nairobi Thematic Hub
United Nations Development Programme
UNON Complex Gigiri
Nairobi, Kenya