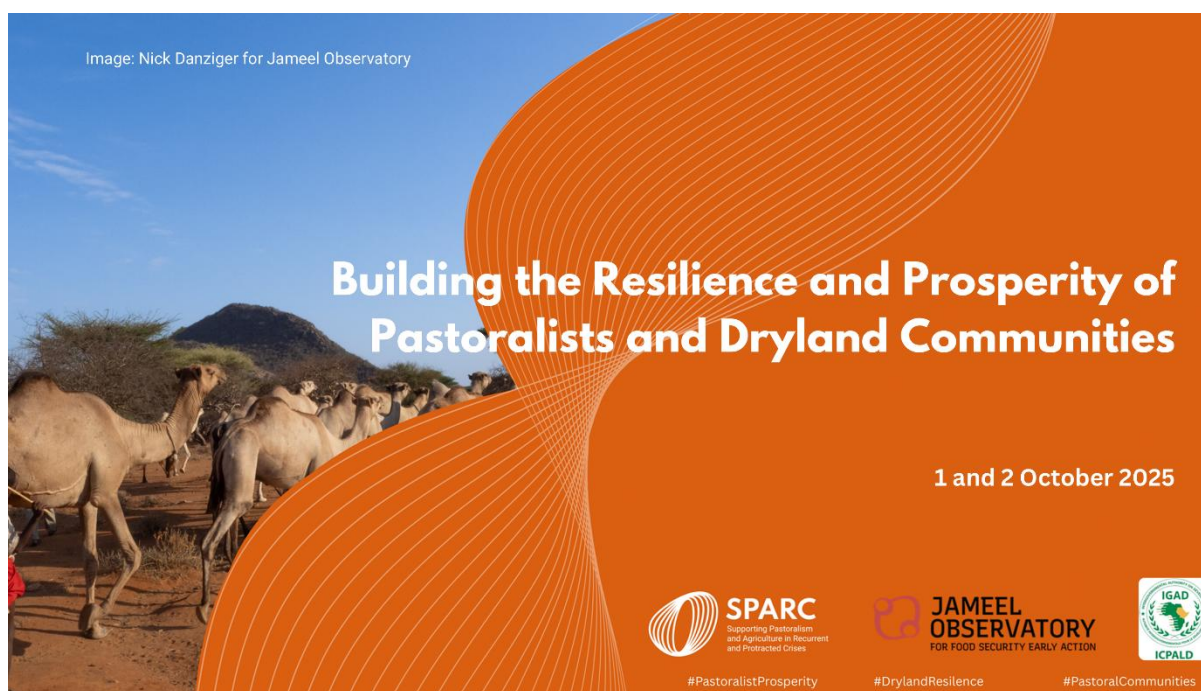




Building the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities

Summary report of the research and policy dialogue

Nairobi, Kenya, 1–2 October 2025



November 2025

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Background

Covering two-thirds of Africa, **drylands are home to 250 million pastoralists and agro-pastoralists** and are vital for the food security, livelihoods, and the ecological diversity they support.

Drylands in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere in Africa face severe challenges, including climatic fluctuations, resource scarcity, and socio-political pressures that threaten the food security and livelihoods of pastoralist communities that live in them.

Often described as harsh and unproductive, **drylands provide a wide range of benefits** including, among others, environmental services, agriculture and extensive livestock production, tourism and natural resource products, and ecosystem services. Pastoralism, revolving around livestock production, is well-adapted to dryland ecosystems and provides livelihoods for almost 80 million people in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Overcoming the **critical challenges facing pastoralist communities** requires innovative science – of communities as well as scholars – integrated research for development, effective partnerships, inclusive dialogue and robust pathways for knowledge and innovation to be communicated, taken up and lead to outcomes.

Above all, facing climate change, insecurity, environmental shocks and economic uncertainty, a **new narrative** is needed to give impetus and direction to policies and interventions so they better account for the specific contexts and complexity of drylands and build upon the adaptive capacities of pastoral systems.

Involving development partners and investors, governments, civil society actors, pastoral associations, policy and research organizations, this two-day dialogue on '**Building the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities**' was convened by three research for policy and practice institutions: the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), the Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action, and the Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC) programme.

The conference offered a **mix of sessions** with presentations, plenary and panel discussions, space for audience interaction and showcased case studies, findings and good practices. Together, the sessions were designed to highlight: 1) pathways to prosperity and resilience for drylands and pastoralists; 2) advancing dryland's futures through innovation and technology; and 3) investing in and delivering for dryland people.

Objectives

- Reframe narratives and policies around pastoralism, seeing them as pathways to prosperity, and calling for actions that better reflect their dynamism and resilience in the face of complex challenges such as drought, insecurity and climate change.
- Critically discuss emerging insights, evidence and lessons to inform policies and other actions to build the resilience of drylands, rangelands and pastoralist communities.
- Facilitate collaboration and partnerships and strengthen the capacities of institutions and communities in dryland regions.
- Connect current work to upcoming milestone events, including the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification COP17 conference in Mongolia.

After an opening session on ‘new narratives, new impetus for drylands and pastoralism’, day one explored new evidence around dryland and pastoralist systems, with strong emphasis on anticipatory action, risk, early warning systems and community-led resilience.

Day two topics explored food price trends in the region, rangeland health, climate finance, improving the accessibility and use of data, land tenure systems and opportunities to enhance capacities in dryland regions.

A poster display was organized on both days and during the reception in the evening of day one.



Opening Plenary: Building the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities

Welcome remarks were provided by:

- Dr Tahira Mohamed, Tahira Mohamed, Regional Engagement Lead, Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action
- Prof Geoff Simm, Head of the Division of Global Agriculture and Food Systems, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Guy Jobbins, Executive Director, SPARC Consortium
- Dr Dereje Wakjira, Director, ICPALD



After opening remarks by HE Mohamed Abdi Ware, Deputy Executive Secretary of IGAD, the event was opened by Mr Ambrose Lore Ekunoit, Acting Secretary, State Department of ASALs and Regional Development of the Republic of Kenya.

Thereafter, a keynote address on 'New Narratives, New Impetus for Drylands and Pastoralism' was given by Dr Emmanuel Seck, Director of ENDA Energie.



Opening remarks - HE Mohamed Abdi Ware

Let me start by acknowledging the efforts of the organizers of this important conference, which draws our attention to the critical topic of “pastoral prosperity and dryland resilience”. Second, I wish to thank the government of the Republic of Kenya for generously hosting this important gathering in this beautiful city of Nairobi.

Your presence here today is not only a demonstration of your commitment to the topic of arid and semi-arid areas that constitutes about 70% of our economies in the region, but also the need to discuss issues facing pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, which predominantly inhabit the drylands.

The arid and semi-arid areas, despite their wealth and potentials, have been largely characterized by crisis, humanitarian efforts and unproductive.

Yet, the fact is that dryland areas have huge economic potential and offer significant ecological and cultural contributions, through production of high-value natural resources, fibers, animals and crops for food security, and areas of significant cultural heritage and endemic biodiversity. What we may just need is to drive the positive narrative and show case evidence that bring strategic investments to this region.

IGAD’s commitment to sustainable development of dryland is demonstrated by the establishment of the IGAD Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) and the regional program called ‘IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI)’. Our contribution as Intergovernmental Authority on Development to the challenges of the drylands and pastoralism includes:

- Establishing innovative frameworks for valuing pastoralism and dryland economies to inform planning, policy making and advocacy
- Create impactful gender mainstreaming throughout policy and project cycles through ensuring gender equality, gender-sensitive planning, analysis and implementation.
- Developing sustainable land and water management practices and increasing productivity, resilience for increased productivity, resilience and community empowerment
- Addressing negative impacts of degradation, water scarcity and drought-related challenges through long term sustainable techniques for greater impact
- strengthening early warning systems for anticipatory action through use of digital technology
- Contribute to bridging the gap between policy and practice and resolve policy disconnects through evidence-based data and information, continuous learning and adoption of tested models and best practices



As you will be discussing during those two days, I would like to share with you some of the key priorities we are thinking about to contribute to the future pathways of our drylands and pastoralism:

- Building resilience and sustainable ways of natural resource management
- Promotion of diversified economic opportunities and access to resources, markets and finance
- Strengthen rangeland and resource governance, and improving access to pastoral markets, infrastructure and services.
- Maintain an integrated approach to sustainably address risks, conflict and climate hazards.

As you are aware, research and evidence are foundational to effective policy development and is key for planning, decision making and for addressing our transboundary development challenges.

This important dialogue will for sure result in new narratives and evidence around dryland and pastoral systems, especially those narratives that consider the current challenge of climate change.

It is also expected that the debate will be informed by rich insights from governments, regional institutions and organizations working on research. Through this, I am sure you will be able to chart prosperous and sustainable future pathways for drylands and pastoralism.

Thank you for your participation and attention



Opening remarks - Mr Ambrose Lore Ekunoit

It is a great honour to accept your invitation and to join you today in officially opening this vital workshop, which focuses on strengthening the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities. I commend the conveners — ICPALD, the Jameel Observatory, and the SPARC programme for bringing together such a diverse and dedicated group of stakeholders. This gathering is not just another meeting in a city hotel, but a time for deep reflections by researchers, renewal, and resolution by policy influencers.

Drylands: Are Strategic National Assets

Kenya's drylands are often misunderstood. Yet they cover 80% of our landmass, support millions of livelihoods, and are home to rich cultures and resilient ecosystems. These landscapes are not marginal—they are strategic national assets. Pastoralism, deeply rooted in these regions, is a dynamic, adaptive, and forward-looking system that contributes to food security, economic growth, and ecological balance.

Last year, the pastoralist leadership and policymakers gathered in Wajir. That event marked a turning point in Kenya's policy dialogue. It has turned the leadership resolutions into government action, currently coordinated by the State Department of ASAL and Regional Development. This policy dialogue builds effectively on the momentum of the 4th Pastoralist Leadership Summit, held in Wajir last December. That summit made bold resolutions, including the protection and restoration of rangelands, preventing dryland degradation, and safeguarding pastoralist livelihoods.

These commitments reflect a growing recognition that resilience and prosperity in drylands must be built on community agency, secure land rights, and sustainable resource management.

Why this policy dialogue matters

Over the next two days, during this workshop, international drylands experts will gather to explore:

Pathways to prosperity and resilience for drylands and pastoralists,

Advancing dryland futures through innovation and technology,

And investing in and delivering for dryland people.

These themes are not merely theoretical - they are urgent and actionable. They directly address the challenges we encounter in Kenya's drylands: drought, insecurity, climate change, and underinvestment.

I am particularly encouraged by the conference's objectives: To reframe narratives and policies around pastoralism as a pathway to prosperity, To critically discuss emerging



evidence and lessons for policy and practice, To facilitate collaboration and strengthen the capacities of institutions and communities,

This conference provides a valuable platform for linking our national efforts to global milestones, such as the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and the UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia.

These objectives align closely with the Government of Kenya's priorities under the ASAL Policy Framework and our commitment to inclusive, climate-resilient development.

Let this workshop serve as a platform for bridging research and policy, amplifying pastoralist voices, and co-creating solutions that are locally led, evidence-based, and globally relevant. As we move forward, let us remember: no community should be left behind in these conversations, and no rangeland should be left and lost to degradation.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all participants for their dedication to strengthening pastoralism, dryland economies, and building resilient pastoralist communities. Please take the time to engage fully, collaborate boldly, and leave this workshop with renewed energy and a shared purpose on Building the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities.



Keynote address – Dr Emmanuel Seck

During our five-plus-year journey, I remain convinced that each of us can write his own story with SPARC. And better, many have been touched by the stories, testimonies, and narratives of the people we have met throughout the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and other regions.

These regions are drylands where populations are exposed to the negative impact of natural and human-induced disasters such as drought, floods, water scarcity and conflicts which threaten the agriculture and pastoral production systems and livelihoods of vulnerable communities. The livelihoods of an important portion of the African population are tied to these drylands, primarily through pastoralism, cropping, and agroforestry, though poverty and environmental degradation are significant challenges.



To contribute to a paradigm shift for the resilience of populations and ecosystems, prosperity and peace, SPARC and partners have deployed research to fill knowledge gaps and produce evidence to help poor and vulnerable people cope with crises and meet their basic needs.

The SPARC initiative is not only a question of research or resilience but also a question of HUMANITY, JUSTICE and EQUITY towards populations who experience double vulnerability, namely climate change and conflicts.

This is in full compliance with the second principle of the United Nations universal values, which is to "leave no one behind."

Furthermore, we should understand that more than just an environmental issue, climate change is actually a prominent topic in the agenda of the international debate. So it may be seen as a very political issue, if not geopolitical.

Through research, SPARC has:

- Raised awareness of the links between climate change, conflict and sustainability issues;
- Strengthened political dialogue on pastoralism, development, humanitarian aid, conflicts, cross-border issues, etc.
- Influenced policies, processes (GGA, Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace, etc.), humanitarian and climate thinking frameworks
- Carried out actions at the community level to strengthen their resilience.

During our journey, we were able to realize that beyond the aforementioned challenges, drylands can seem like a paradox because they are full of riches and opportunities.

- These lands are provided with transboundary river basins, the most important of which are the Niger (11 countries), the Senegal (4 countries), the Volta (6 countries), Lake Chad (8 countries), the Nile (11 countries).

- Biodiversity is richer than sometimes thought in drylands, and both farmers and pastoralists take an intense interest in natural diversity
- In drylands beyond prosperity there is SOLIDARITY

We also learned during this journey that:

- Traditional and innovative practices, such as drought-resistant crops, water harvesting, and agroforestry, are used to build resilience.
- Nomadic and migratory movements are crucial for livestock owners to access temporary resources during climatically unstable periods.
- A shift towards decentralized governance and community-level initiatives is necessary to address the specific challenges of dryland regions.

Today, with SPARC, we have not reached the end of a journey; we have simply reached an important milestone, where we must take time to reinvent ourselves in light of the global geopolitical context and the challenges of all kinds that our populations are facing.

- Decrease of international aid by 9 to 17% in 2025 compared to 2024, a year that had already seen a decline after five consecutive years of increases (OECD)
- Decrease of humanitarian aid by more than 40%
- Major budget cuts have been announced in several donor countries: a quarter in Belgium, more than a third in France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, and up to 83% in the United States, where USAID was abruptly dismantled.

We must further support populations and countries to improve their access to financing, particularly climate finance, and to better direct investments. And "the best investments align closely with the socio-ecological logic of dryland systems and are suited to the complex, shifting realities of fragile and conflict-affected settings. Without this grounding in lived reality, development is at risk of inadvertently becoming extractive, exclusionary, and unsustainable."

We should strengthen cross-border cooperation with regional intergovernmental institutions as well as programs such as the GW, the Regional Project to Support Pastoralism in the Sahel, etc.

And engage in spaces for dialogue, climate diplomacy, etc. to share our findings.

However, after all the work done, we can say together that we have accomplished something by improving understanding and knowledge about pastoralism and agriculture in countries affected by conflict.

After all, every action deserves consideration because "little drops make the river". And SPARC has contributed to the river flowing.

Advancing locally led early and anticipatory actions in drylands

Session moderator Nelly Maonde (START Network) introduced the session and its focus on approaches and strategies to foster and reinforce locally-led early and anticipatory actions (AA). Following the four short presentations, the audience was asked to reflect in table groups on the policy and practice implications of taking locally led actions seriously, identifying any specific actions that need to be taken.



Key insights presented:

- Pastoralists use different pathways to predict crises, typically combining indigenous/local knowledge as well as information from formal ('scientific') predictions – “knowledge is not binary for pastoralists.”
- Anticipatory actions should avoid thinking of binary knowledge at local level – in reality, the more knowledge sources pastoralists can draw from the better for them.
- For AA to strengthen ownership and local resilience it needs to be embedded within existing community infrastructure. AA practitioners should work with local structures and institutions while tapping into the resources that exist locally.
- There is a willingness among local communities to invest their own resources in early actions, as long as they are involved in planning, designing and implementing interventions. Community action planning is one tool that can enable this as it enables community members to take agency.
- Local governments and communities are already doing AA but they often just don't call it that. If we can avoid AA jargon and overcome our aversion to informality, we can provide more meaningful support for AA-related/adjacent activities that already take place.
- Social protection needs to account for traditional ways in which pastoralists cope with shocks – principles of solidarity and reciprocity are often ignored while individualistic targeting is prioritized.
- Targeting social protection takes reductionist understanding of shocks typically focusing on one event such as drought while traditional forms of social assistance account for other losses such as cattle raiding/rustling.

Main points of discussion or debate:

There was consensus around all these points – the point was also made that many of these are also known, so what prevents them being followed:

- Policy development: move from consultation to co-creation.
- Co-funding by communities is important.
- Promote dialogue and coordination of all the actions/actors.
- Develop multi stakeholder partnerships for grassroots inclusion.
- We (development actors) need to be in listening mode and leave our preconceived ideas behind.
- We need to find ways to fund activities that don't undermine community initiatives. Government also has responsibility to fund local government.
- Coming up with something that's undefined and flexible does not imply it will lack accountability.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Listen: We need to look at what people are already doing to anticipate events ranging from community level/grassroots to local government. Act and communicate in participatory ways that avoid jargon of AA. Just because something is not called AA does not mean it is not being undertaken.
- Let us capitalize on local resources rather than creating parallel systems, recognizing that people are also willing to invest their own resources.
- We must overcome our own biases and simplified notions around formality versus informality, indigenous versus scientific, etc. Communities and their representatives do not conceive the world in these ways and rigid binary perspectives get in the way of meaningful engagement.

Some take-away messages by the moderator:

- Let us recognize and appreciate that communities and other local actors are already doing AA. It is not new to them though they may not use our terminology.
- Let us engage with communities, their knowledge, and their local and informal ecosystems of actors so we are embedded in what they do
- Locally, informal mechanisms and relationships are very important and working with and through these forces us to innovate and learn and adapt
- Communities don't think in binary ways, let us also think 'together.'

Speakers and presentations:

- Tahira Mohamed: Why social protection programmes should learn from local solidarities and moral economy practices.
- Magda Nassef: Local government led anticipatory action: Lessons from Mali and Uganda.
- Jannie Nielsen: Locally-led Anticipatory Action and Adaptation Through Community Action Planning (CAP) in Ethiopia: From Research to Action.
- George Tsitati: Intestines to Radio Signals: Informing Locally Led Anticipatory Action in Drylands of the Horn of Africa.

More: [session report](#) | [video recording](#)



Approaches and innovations to reduce risks in fragile and conflict-affected situations

How well do externally introduced innovations support household and community resilience? Do locally developed innovations result in greater adoption and resilience?

Moderated by Rupsha Banerjee (ILRI), this session discussed which reducing-risk innovations in drylands have had the greatest impact and why.

Key insights presented:

- The session showed that innovation in pastoral systems is not just about technology but also about processes, governance, and social change. Case studies—from digital tools like AfriScout to livestock vaccination programs delivered using a gender lens—demonstrated that locally co-created innovations can improve decision-making, equity, and adaptation. This broadens the understanding of innovation beyond technological solutions to include community-led and context-specific processes.



Main points of discussion or debate:

- Speakers debated what truly qualifies as innovation—new technology versus reimagined local practices—and whether the focus on scalability overlooks small but effective grassroots solutions. There was general agreement on the importance of partnership and co-creation, though questions remained about how to achieve scale and profitability from a business perspective without losing local relevance.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Policies should recognize pastoralists as co-creators of innovation, not passive recipients. Practitioners should embed participatory and gender-transformative approaches early in program design. Researchers should develop frameworks that better capture informal and locally-embedded innovations.



Some take-away messages:

- Effective innovation must be relevant, accessible, flexible, and rooted in community priorities. Partnership, co-creation, and participatory methods are essential for adoption and lasting impact.

Speakers and presentations:

- Geoffrey Lelenguyah: Harnessing the power of participatory approaches to facilitate locally led climate adaptation in Northern Kenya
- Miguel Uribe: Targeting individuals or communities? Learnings from AfriScout to improve pastoralist well-being
- Milcah Asamba: Women Economic Empowerment as a Pathway to Innovation
- Peter Awin: Business and Process Innovation – CowTribe.

More: [Video recording](#)



Capacitating dryland resilience and early action

Moderated by Alan Duncan (University of Edinburgh), the session began with two framing presentations – by Rahma Hassan (Center for Research and Development in Drylands) and Bilach Jimale (on behalf of Jarso Mokku, Drylands Learning and Capacity Building Initiative) – exploring the types of capacities demanded across dryland and pastoralist contexts, from community to political levels. Intended to help understand the nature of the ‘demand’, these were followed by a short introduction to the [Dryland Futures Academy](#) (DFA) by Geoff Simm (University of Edinburgh) and then by several short presentations illustrating different approaches to capacity development.

Rahma Hassan introduced a ‘building resilience from below’ project of the CRDD that aims to enhancing local knowledge and institutions for flexible, adaptive management, deploy diverse skills and practices, and fostering relations, connections, and networks.

Bilach Jimale called for a conceptual shift from technical skills to leadership ecosystems, so that pastoralist leaders are empowered through leadership development, governance, and strategic vision, and leadership as change architects.

Reacting to these ‘demands’, Simm introduced the **Dryland Futures Academy** as a collaborative opportunity to enhance capacities in this area. He introduced its four learning pathways – dryland leadership, continuing education, academic and formal education, and community skills sharing – and how the subsequent presenters touched on these.

Amanda Grossi’s presentation showed how an extension curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of dryland livestock keepers [\[more information\]](#); Rashid Warsame introduced work to develop a ‘pastoralism and planetary health’ online course [\[more information\]](#); Jackson Wachira reported on a drylands summer school for early career researchers held earlier in 2025 [\[more information\]](#); and Tahira Mohamed shared her ideas for an early career/dryland scholars network.

Complementing these Academy-related initiatives, Rosie Herrington illustrated how veterinary paraprofessionals can be reached and their capacities enhanced through a co-created online course.

Following this session, and building on these discussions, the session organizers were pleased to announce a drylands capacity development agreement with the [Kenya School of Government](#) as well as the formation of an [early career network](#).

Speakers and presentations

- Rahma Hassan: Building resilience from below: Exploring local constructs of ‘Resilience’ in the face of chronic uncertainty in the Drylands.
- Jarso Mokku: Rethinking Pastoralist and Dryland Capacity Building: Resilience from



Above.

- Geoff Simm: Introducing the Dryland Futures Academy: Strengthening capacities for food security early action in East Africa.
- Amanda Grossi: Building enduring capacity for resilience in the drylands: Extension curricula for livestock systems.
- Rosie Herrington: Collaborating to improve last-mile animal health service delivery through para-professionals.
- Tahira Mohamed: Drylands and pastoralism scholar network.
- Jackson Wachira: Learnings from the Drylands Summer School February 2025.
- Rashid Warsame: Co-developing a short course on pastoralism and planetary health.

More: [Session report](#) | [video recording](#)



Climate finance in conflict and fragile settings: Insights from country case studies

Despite their acute vulnerability to climate change, conflict-affected and fragile countries remain largely excluded from significant climate finance flows. Moderated by Manisha Gulati (ODI Global), this session drew from SPARC research and advisory work on the barriers and opportunities for accessing and using climate finance effectively.

Following a framing presentation by Yue Cao (ODI Global) on key lessons and enabling factors, a panel of experts, below, commented on key questions and issues.

- Abdullahi Khalif, NDC Partnership, Somalia
- Emmanuel Seck, ENDA Energie
- Guyo Malicha Roba, ICPALD
- Muthoni Nduhiu, African Development Bank
- Nasra Hussein Abdi, Ground Truth Solutions
- Isaiah Sciford, Norwegian Refugee Council

Key insights presented:

- There is a conflict blind-spot in climate finance which neglects fragility and conflict. This is demonstrated through those most vulnerable countries and those most vulnerable within countries receiving the least climate finance. This is compounded through climate finance architecture design being unsuitable for fragile and conflict affected settings and as such they are not well-represented in international treaties and agreements. There is a cost of implementing climate finance in fragile and conflict affected settings but at the same time the cost of inaction is ever-growing.
- In Somalia, between 2018-2022, US\$ 356 million was received annually as climate finance. almost 50% of this went to “others” and emergency response as opposed to adaptation activities. Therefore the NDC has been reviewed to re-prioritise towards adaptation activities.
- Groups such as BRCIS could not wait for development funding and climate finance – instead they have advocated for action now with the communities which they have a long-term relationship with. They recommend the sector starts working now with what resources are available, closely with communities, because if are waiting for climate finance will be waiting a long time.
- Global financing is based on a commitment which is not always needs based. The needs are far ahead of the commitment. The global system and the local realities are very different. Climate change is a problem without a passport and so we need to update planning and coordination to create regional and global agreements. In addition, climate financing is based on data which cannot always be ascertained to a specific context due to poor data.
- We need a functioning private sector to fill the gap between public funding and the situation on the ground. For fragile countries, the private sector is averse to investing in the climate sector due to real and perceived risks. Only 3% of climate financing is going to climate adaptation and this is a challenge.



Main points of discussion or debate:

- “Without the foundation to stand on, recovery is not possible” – climate finance is needed more than ever before.
- Need to consider resilience, not just the short-term risk but also the long-term risk.
- Need to consider fragility also at a community level not just at a national level e.g. robust traditional coping mechanisms in Somalia.
- Communities are tired of short-term cycles and humanitarian intervention. They want to see a significant shift in funding to long-term interventions to break the cycle of crisis.
- Scarcity of climate finance is clear. Mobilising global climate finance is very difficult and the climate action window of the African Development Bank aims to help member states access these funds.

Some take-away messages:

- There is a conflict blind-spot in climate finance which neglects fragility and conflict
- There is a cost of implementing climate finance in fragile and conflict affected settings but at the same time the cost of inaction is ever-growing.
- Evidence and research is central to producing change.
- Climate change is a problem without a passport and so we need to update planning and coordination to create regional and global agreements.
- Engaging the private sector in climate finance is important.
- We need to start working now with what resources are available, closely with communities, because if wait for accessible climate finance, the wait will be long.

Speakers and presentations:

- Yue Cao: Climate Finance in Conflict and Fragile Settings

More: [Video recording](#)



Collective tenure rights: A roadmap for the greater Horn of Africa

Moderated by Ken Otieno (RECONCILE), this session drew from policy research and practice to better comprehend pastoral collective (communal) tenure challenges and opportunities in the region.

Following two presentations, the speakers and panelists (Natasha Maru, ILC; Oliver Wasonga, University of Nairobi; Husna Mbarak, FAO; Hussein Wario, CRDD; and Allan Akivaga, RECONCILE) discussed issues and opportunities offered by a land tenure roadmap for the region.

A photograph of a camel standing in a dry, open landscape with scattered trees and a clear sky. The camel is facing left, and its shadow is cast on the ground.

SPARC
Supporting Pastoralism
and Agriculture in Recurrent
and Protracted Crises

IGAD
ICPALD

JAMEEL OBSERVATORY
FOR FOOD SECURITY EARLY ACTION

Collective Tenure Rights: A roadmap for the Greater Horn of Africa

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Key insights presented:

- Collective land tenure is a resilience enabler as it offers flexibility for water and pasture access.
- Competing interests put pressure on and challenge collective land tenure and there is a need for striking the balance.
- Economic arguments used for other interests to get rights over pastoralists.
- Secure tenure can be indicated by formalized rights of grazing and livestock corridor, social cohesion (e.g., status of shared identity), local norms and rules, perception of assurance, and perception towards relationship with others.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- Registering community lands is contentious as it implies fixation where pastoralism requires flexibility to access other lands when needed.
- Recognition, registration and protection.
- Some antagonistic policies exist for example where SDG recognizes land rights as a private property, while other policies identify land rights as collective.
- The need for livelihood diversification requires private land rights for cropping.
- Power dynamics/relations such as who is got more/less rights (e.g. rights of marginalized groups) in the community is not reflected in the discussions. While securing rights, policies come with operations and processes that disproportionately benefit those with higher capacities or have access to information.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Understanding the complexity and balancing the competing interests is critical to secure tenure rights.
- Progress in the implementation of the enacted legislations and strategies is still limited.

Some take-away messages:

- Operationalization is still limited despite progress in enacting many strategies and legislations by the countries in the region.
- Differentiating between the right to the land itself (ownership) and rights to the resources (access) in that land is critical.
- Increased recognition for pastoral systems and their equitable rights.

Speakers and presentations:

- Natasha Maru: Indicators for pastoralist land tenure security
- Oliver Wasonga: Collective Tenure Rights: A roadmap for the Greater Horn of Africa.

More: [Video recording](#)



Enhancing forecasting and earth observation data and applications for drylands

Recent combinations of advanced earth observation sensors and investments in remote surveillance and forecast models have led to fast changes in data availability and forecasting products. This session highlighted some of those advances and their implications for early warning and early action in the drylands.

Moderator Maurine Ambani (World Food Programme) introduced the session, framing the roles of earth observation data and forecasting in the humanitarian space, especially with regards to anticipatory action.

She asked the audience to consider three questions: How does this research on EO support anticipatory actions in the drylands; what essential information do these types of EO-based solutions miss; and are there some key synergies emerging that link research on EO with other early action agendas?



The session comprised four short research presentations followed by audience interaction and closing summaries with a panel comprising Eugene Kayijamahe (IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre), Vivianne Meta (LocateIT Ltd) and Maurine Ambani.

Key insights presented:

- EO drought index design shows promise but lacks clear trigger mechanisms to link triggers to actions and react fast to shocks.
- We need continuous co-learning to understand compound risks and cascading impacts associated with drought, moving from crisis response to opportunity creation.
- Ground truthing is critical to address mismatches between satellite data and local conditions, particularly for identifying vegetation types valuable for livestock.
- EO alone is insufficient – it must integrate with deep place-based knowledge of natural resources and environmental changes.
- Timely surface water information and water mapping capabilities are advancing for drought preparedness and early action.
- Longitudinal data covering entire nations enables monitoring of conflict impacts on agricultural activity and rural markets.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- Consensus emerged that EO has limitations – it cannot capture mobile markets nor full market functionalities, and it may miss important local variations.
- Debate on extent of EO capabilities and where to stop, with agreement on need to bring local voices into EO applications.
- Discussion on economic analysis of different anticipatory actions – there is limited cost-benefit analysis available for decision-making.
- Tension between availability/access (no longer major problems) and acceptance of products, requiring better communication of uncertainty.
- Questions about animal movement as optimal strategy - may not always be best option depending on context.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Policy needs include developing trigger mechanisms that effectively link EO data to rapid response actions and ensuring quality verification through institutions like IGAD.
- Practice requires capacity building to bring EO science closer to ground practitioners, with simplified applications using AI and machine learning.
- Research priorities include addressing cost barriers for in-situ sensors, developing economic analysis frameworks for anticipatory actions, and improving uncertainty communication.
- Private sector involvement is essential for sustainability and commercialization, building solutions for different end users.

Some take-away messages:

- EO presents significant opportunities, but challenges remain – we need greater awareness of limitations while maximizing potential.
- Integration of satellite data with local knowledge and ground truthing is essential for effective applications.
- Private sector roles are often forgotten but are crucial for sustainability - need commercialization strategies that serve diverse end users.
- Capacity building and simplification through AI and machine learning are necessary to bridge science-practice gaps and ensure solutions match real needs.

Speakers and presentations:

- Francesco Fava: Toward Next-Generation Earth Observation (EO) for Anticipatory Drought Risk Management Pastoral Drylands.
- Daniel Hudner: Using satellite imagery to assess markets and conflict in Sudan.
- James Muthoka: Pixels to Decisions, Water Maps for Early Action.
- Anton Vrieling: The Resilient Approaches in Natural ranGeland Ecosystem (RANGE) project: use and role of Earth Observation.

More: [Session report](#) | [video recording](#)



Higher food prices in low-income Africa since 2020: Causes, impacts, responses

How can governments, NGOs, and international agencies respond effectively to food price shocks and crises?

This session explored new research from AERC, SPARC, and partners on the impacts of food price volatility driven by global and local factors since 2020.

After introductory remarks by Victor Murinde and Alicia Sosa, Steve Wiggins and Dirk Willem te Velde presented findings from two studies using contrasting approaches to examine food price volatility in African markets.



Drawing on evidence from across the continent, the session highlighted how rising prices have deepened vulnerability, especially for low-income households and women while public support for those most affected by higher prices has been limited.

Steven Were Omamo (IFPRI) then facilitated discussion and reflections from Eleni Yitbarek, Roselyne Akinyi Wallender, and Margie Buchanan-Smith.

Speakers:

- Victor Murinde, AERC
- Alicia Sosa, Global Affairs Canada
- Steven Were Omamo, IFPRI
- Steve Wiggins, ODI Global, SPARC
- Dirk Willem te Velde, ODI Global
- Eleni Yitbarek, University of Pretoria
- Roselyne Akinyi Wallender, Practical Action
- Margie Buchanan-Smith, SPARC

Key insights presented:

Studies of households in Mali, northeast Nigeria, Sudan, and northern Uganda carried out by SPARC, in part funded by IDRC, showed that prices of staple foods (and other basic goods) had risen sharply since 2020, doubling and often rising by much more. Those domestic price rises did not reverse after May 2022, when world prices declined from their peak, but instead remained high or even rose through to 2025. Price rises in the four countries were driven first and foremost by domestic events: harvest failures, general inflation, and conflict. Local price rises owed little to the spike in world prices seen from early 2020 to mid-2022.

Such large price rises took a toll on people on low incomes: they cut back on food consumption, took children out of schools, economised on health care, fell into debt, and

suffered mental anguish (sometimes breaking out into domestic violence) as they struggled to pay bills. Few of those affected received any support from public agencies, be they government and donors, or NGOs and civil society. Instead, they had to cope from the resources of their households and families, friends and neighbours.

Studies by AERC researchers of economy-wide impacts of higher world prices for Africa as a whole, and for Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe (with additional insights from Peru and Sri Lanka), showed just how vulnerable economies were to the price spike that peaked in mid-2022. Costs of imports of food, fuel and fertiliser mounted leading to wider imbalances in trade, domestic inflation and higher interest rates. Countries were impacted differentially depending on their exposure to world trade and the extent to which their governments had the revenue to respond to such unwelcome developments.

Points of discussion:

Africa has seen multiple shocks since 2020: COVID-19 pandemic; the spike in world prices; the effects of climate change; and conflict.

Responses need to differentiate among those affected, recognising that often women are harder hit than men.

International responses have often been underwhelming and delayed: local responses have been more effective: governments and donors need to work with the grain of local responses.

When governments have had the means to offer cash transfers — such as in Ethiopia, these have helped people.

Even amid conflict, village and district economies have continued to function to a remarkable degree; owing in part to traders who find ways to keep goods moving in very difficult circumstances. Without such trading, the impacts on local people would have been far worse.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

Inflation caused by the change in prices of imported goods has large impacts across the entire economy. Countries need to have fiscal space and tools to respond to rising prices to keep inflation down.

Some 31 of the 54 countries in Africa are now classified as middle income. Yet there is massive poverty across the continent, even in middle income countries. African countries should trade more between themselves to even out the variable harvests from country to country, rather than import foods from outside Africa.

Cash transfers may be effective and efficient for the most part, but we need to be aware of who may be missed out by such transfers.

Given the importance of keeping village and district economies running during crises, and especially during conflict, there is a need to work with trusted traders to help them resolve problems of trade. At the same time, we need to understand war economies to avoid inadvertently supporting warring parties who seek to profit from conflict.

More: [Session report](#) | [video report](#)

Maintaining pastoralist mobility amid land use change, tenure insecurity and conflict

The Horn of Africa faces complex interlinkages between environment, climate change, conflict and human mobility. Moderated by Natasha Maru (ILC), this session explored ways to maintain mobility by employing multifaceted approaches such as improved governance, community capacity building, cross-sectoral coordination and recognition of collective tenure rights.

The issues were introduced by Japheth Kasimbu in a framing presentation. Following three research presentations, Charles Kagama (Kenya National Land Commission) and Guyo Malicha Roba (ICPALD) reflected on the points covered and implications for policy and practice.



Key insights presented:

- Pastoralist mobility is facing challenges, including commercial interests for mining, and carbon/biodiversity offsetting, among other challenges.
- Supporting pastoralist adaptive capacity requires facilitating mobility by providing options rather than restricting and locking in descriptive pathways.
- Ongoing efforts to develop and digitize detailed maps about livestock routes, markets and cross-border corridors.
- There is a need to follow statements on papers and frameworks with action on the ground.
- Need for establishing multisectoral (e.g. pastoralists and crop farmers) committees and supporting traditional and customary institutions for dispute resolutions between these groups.
- Developed a protocol that secures host countries to guarantee rights that people used to access through customary institutions across borders.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- Consensus on disconnect from EW/AA frameworks and pastoral realities, and the need for action and implementation on the ground.
- Recognition of the importance of cross-border pastoral mobility.
- Tensions in the gender inclusiveness of the traditional and customary institutions which are more male-dominated.
- Upscaling cross-border mobility corridors, surveillance and harmonisation of national policies.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Recognition for the importance of bringing order to the mobility across borders for disease control and conflict mitigation, among other things, while also facilitating the mobility.
- Locking pastoralists in descriptive pathways can be restrictive and short-sighted.

Some take-away messages:

- Facilitating rather than restricting mobility is key.
- Social cohesion across borders, such as Kenya-Somalia, makes cross-border conflicts less of an issue.
- ICPALD recognizes the importance of guaranteeing the rights of pastoralists crossing their borders by host countries.

Speakers and presentations:

- Japheth Kasimbu: Maintaining Pastoralist Mobility Amid Land Use Change, Tenure Insecurity and Conflict
- Ahmed Mohamoud: From Early Warning to Anticipatory Action: Lessons and Evidence from PASSAGE
- Hussein Sulieman: Spatial analysis on the role of land in farmer-herder conflict in Sudan
- Mohammed Yahya Said: Participatory Mapping of Livestock Routes in Ethiopia and Kenya

More: [Video recording](#)



Predictive tools for rangeland health, restoration and feed security in the Horn of Africa

Drylands have both opportunities and challenges which require combinations of innovative science, integrated approaches to research for development, as well as effective partnerships and collaboration between scientists, researchers, development partners/governments and communities as the end users of the research outcomes.

Moderated by Bridget Mungatia, this session highlighted some dryland innovations to enhance rangeland health, feed security and rangeland restoration.



Key insights presented:

- The session emphasized that sustainable rangeland management depends on data-driven planning, cross-border coordination, and community participation.
- Presentations highlighted predictive tools for feed security, the mapping of invasive species (Lado), and participatory restoration efforts.
- Together, they advanced understanding by showing how remote sensing, local knowledge, and gender-sensitive participatory research can combine to improve rangeland resilience and resource use.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- There was broad agreement that participatory approaches and harmonized regional policies are essential.
- Concerns remained about data gaps, uneven capacity in decision-making, and the practicality of scaling cross-border initiatives.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Policymakers should invest in cross-border coordination and harmonized rangeland management policies.
- Practitioners can use predictive and feed-balance tools to move from reactive to strategic planning, while researchers should focus on integrating remote sensing with participatory field data to fill key information gaps.

Some take-away messages:

- Resilient rangeland systems require data-informed, locally grounded, and regionally coordinated management.
- Technology must complement, not replace, traditional knowledge, and sustained collaboration across borders and communities is key to lasting feed and ecosystem security.

Speakers and presentations:

- Julius Muyizzi: Predictive tools for rangeland health and range restoration and livestock feed security in the Horn of Africa
- Befikadu Zewdie: Understanding the Current Status of Cross-border Rangelands, Available Feed Resources and its Management Practices for Sustainable Management of Transboundary Natural Resources: Case of Kurmuk District, Western Ethiopia
- Dominic Gore: Identification and Mapping of Invasive Plant Species in Kapoeta East County of Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan
- Francis Ejobi: Participatory Action Research with Pastoral Communities for Enhanced Livelihood Diversification and Sustainably Managed Rangeland Resources: A Case Study of Kaabong District, Uganda
- Hellen Mutogah: AfriScout Regen: Community Led Rangeland Restoration in Ethiopia
- John Mutua: Feed Balances: Using earth observation data to assess feed security.

More: [Video recording](#)



Rethinking early and anticipatory actions to better manage shocks and risks in drylands

The underlying issues for this session were introduced by Jarso Mokku (Drylands Learning and Capacity Building Initiative). His broad argument to think and act differently was illustrated by five short presentations focused on different attributes of dryland/pastoralist development ecosystems and what they mean for policy and practice in this area.

After the presentations, audience members were invited to reflect in table groups on the significance of the presentations for policy and practice and to identify some principles they would strongly recommend for governments, investors, and humanitarians to adopt. Finally, brief commentaries on the session were provided by Khadar Sh. Mohamed Nur (Somali Disaster Management Agency), Guyo Malicha Roba (IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development) and Jarso Mokku.



In his framing remarks, Mokku argued that the region suffers from massive misconceptions of the drylands, which overshadow the innovations that exist in the drylands and limit the uptake of opportunities for inclusive growth and investment. He argued that current early warning system, based around standardized assumptions about the drylands as stable environments, don't match the realities and complexities of hazards and thus require different and innovative approaches, more focused on longer term resilience building and anchored in traditional mechanisms, especially on mobility.

Tahira Mohamed (International Livestock Research Institute) reported on her research on inter-institutional disconnects in disaster risk management in Kenya and incentives to close these. These include: Competing or non-complementary institutional mandates and mindsets; tensions between operational practices and organizational cultures; lack of trust in data and between actors; and limited incentives to overcome silos. Ways forward include developing stronger relationships based on trust, accountability and centering the community and committing to “doing more with less” – through solidarity, cohesion and a shared vision.

Natasha Maru (International Land Coalition) introduced work on land tenure and its relations with anticipatory action (AA), arguing that it is still a contentious issue. Anticipatory actions for people whose livelihoods rely on mobility need very different approaches. Moreover, land tenure systems for pastoralists need to be flexible to allow relationality, reciprocity, and relationality. Neither fixed tenure systems nor fixed anticipatory actions suit the needs of pastoralist communities.

Nelly Bosibori Nyamweya (Mercy Corps) reported on [recent discussions](#) examining how weather and climate information services (WCIS) can better be targeted to match the needs of pastoralists. She shared some insights from a September discussion in Kenya's Wajir county where participants identified some challenges, including: Limited multi-sectoral stakeholder coordination structures; inadequate infrastructure such as automated weather stations and community radio; missing links between WCIS products to AA, few feedback loops with WCIS providers; and low trust in formal climate information. Opportunities she highlighted included greater co-production of WCIS products with the community as well as merging indigenous knowledge into WCIS.

In their presentations, Alex Humphrey (Mercy Corps) and Samuel Derbyshire (International

Livestock Research Institute) reflected on recent research on pastoralist decision making under uncertainty. Humphrey emphasized that pastoralists are already anticipatory, but not in the ways that AA usually defines. He emphasized that engaging pastoralist communities needs to “embrace informality and complexity and prioritize flexibility.” Derbyshire emphasized the collective nature of pastoralist livelihoods, land tenure, social institutions and decisions and asked whether AA can adapt to these and learn from them. He also emphasized the importance of informal services and the need for AA to reinforce and not undermine these. He concluded by suggesting that a set of principles for effective AA in pastoralist contexts could be useful, also to help ground interventions in locally driven success.

Reflecting on the presentations and discussions, Guyo Malicha Roba argued that it is important to put pastoralists at the centre of development efforts in the Horn of Africa. We must further anchor these efforts in different conceptual thinking that recognizes the complexity of pastoralist livelihood strategies and relationships. Above all, he said, we need to redesign the entire architecture of anticipatory action so it can be properly applied to variable landscapes.

Speakers and presentations:

- Jarso Mokku: Rethinking Early Action in the Drylands: Why Drylands and Pastoralist Communities Are Different, and Why This Matters.
- Samuel Derbyshire: Rethinking Anticipatory Action and Pastoralism.
- Nelly Bosibori Nyamweya: Targeted Weather and climate information services – Insights from Wajir County, Kenya.
- Alex Humphrey: Adapting Anticipatory Action to Drylands Realities.
- Natasha Maru: Land tenure for anticipatory action.
- Tahira Mohamed: Institutional, policy and actor interactions in disaster risk management: insights from Kenya.

More: [Session report](#) | [video recording](#)



Risks and their impacts on pastoralist livelihoods

While much research and aid related to pastoral populations focuses on drought, support for pastoral livelihoods requires broader understanding of the interconnected nature of risks and shocks that characterize these livelihoods. This session examined some drivers of risk in pastoralist contexts, aiming to provide a richer and truer reflection of the complex risk environments in which pastoral households operate.

After an introduction by Hassan Bashir (CEO of Nourishing Nomads Ltd), the session focused on three categories of shocks and their impacts. Each topic area comprised a couple of short presentations followed by audience interaction.

Topic 1 on risks associated with markets featured short presentations by Kelvin Shikuku (ILRI) and Mercy Kinoti (Strathmore University). Topic 2 on the interconnectedness of shocks featured short presentations by Nathan Jensen (University of Edinburgh) and Jackson Wachira (Centre for Humanitarian Change). Topic 3 on perceptions of risks and behaviours featured short presentations by Wendy Chamberlin (SPARC), Marcos Sugastti (University of Edinburgh) and Susan Njambi-Szlapka (University of Edinburgh).



Key insights presented:

- Market access is crucial for pastoralist resilience and recovery, with markets contributing to de-risking of pastoralist systems, though market data remains unavailable for many markets.
- Pastoralists face multiple interconnected risks including extreme events (droughts, floods), violent conflict, pest and diseases, price volatility, and pandemics.
- The livestock sector accounts for 80% of arid and semiarid lands (ASAL) economies, presenting opportunities for socio-economic models through cooperatives and trusted service providers.
- Innovative approaches include livestock self-insurance (one goat insuring four others), community finishing feedlots, and promoting local materials for animal feed.
- The first shock increases the likelihood of a second shock, requiring early warning systems that account for pastoralist-environment interactions.
- Machine learning models can forecast and predict diseases using climate and other datasets.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- The central debate was on how to position ASALs competitively in marketplaces while preserving positive cultural elements and sense of pastoralism.
- The tensions around flexible funding approaches. Donors resist flexibility due to concerns of corruption, but communities need adaptive management.
- Discussion on linear versus non-linear problem identification approaches, with criticism that communities are often not consulted in solution design.
- Debate on accountability frameworks – shifts are needed from rigid compliance to evidence-based outcomes that meet real community needs.
- Questions raised about comparative analysis between counties/drylands and agricultural productive areas.

Implications for policy, practice and research:

- Policy implications include developing frameworks for accountability that allow flexibility while maintaining transparency, and reframing funding mechanisms to "crowd in" rather than exclude.
- Practice requires high-frequency monitoring systems for livestock commercialization and integration of health systems in Horn of Africa.
- Research priorities include comparative studies across different ecological zones, metadata systems to integrate diverse datasets, and understanding interaction effects between multiple shocks.
- Need for economic analysis of different risk mitigation strategies and their cost-effectiveness.

Some take-away messages:

- Derisking approaches are not 'one size fits all' - innovation uptake requires community-centered design and genuine consultation.
- Flexibility in funding and adaptive management is essential but requires new accountability frameworks focused on meeting real needs rather than rigid compliance.

Speakers and presentations:

- Wendy Chamberlin: From Risk to Resilience: Grounding Innovation in Pastoralist Realities.
- Nathan Jensen: Shock interactions and compounding impacts on food security: Evidence from Malawi.
- Maria Kinoti: Overcoming dryland market risks through institutional development of cooperatives.
- Kelvin Shikuku: Livestock marketing risks in the drylands of Africa.
- Marcos M. Sugastti: The impact of climate shocks on perceptions of risk, beliefs about future shocks, and preparedness behaviour.
- Susan Njambi-Szlapka: anticipatory action and preparedness behaviour.
- Jackson Wachira: Health systems in the Horn of Africa drylands: Risks, impacts and pathways for resilience.

More: [Session report](#)



Supporting successful adaptation: Addressing the evolving roles of women and youth in fragile and conflict-affected situations

Household dynamics are changing as pastoralist livestock keepers maintain smaller herds and people migrate to urban areas. Increasingly, women and youth income earners are meeting a household's day to day needs and future aspirations.

Moderated by Liz Daley (SPARC), this session shared insights on what is influencing successful adaptation by women and youth in the drylands.



Key insights presented

- Current impacts of climate change disproportionately effect women. For example, young women may be targeted and killed by conflict due to their tokenized worth in cattle; and young women in particular are increasingly taking on gendered tasks in the cattle camps as they are the only ones who can travel due to conflict and climate change. The current adaptation strategies can also disproportionately effect women, for example through meal skipping to prioritize child nutrition or forming armed forces to protect the cattle at home.
- Women's role are also diversifying into more income-generating activities such as crop farming (partly due to conflict preventing livestock ownership), wage labour and business ownership. This has increased their decision-making capacity in their households. To further support this they require support of their existing adaptive livelihoods such as context-specific training; strengthening of supportive social networks and investment in gender transformative approaches which engage dialogue in both men and women.
- Adolescent girls are facing specific compounding shocks and stressors from conflict and climate change. To support their well-being the literature indicates we should address social norms and barriers, invest in integrated approaches and respond to mental health needs and challenges.
- When considering gender transformative approaches, it is important to highlight the complexity of unique and pastoral specific power dynamics. Pastoralist voice and agency should be amplified in program design and capacity development should support their empowerment. To achieve this it is also important to improve evidence of impact.

Main points of discussion or debate:

- Adolescent girls need to be included when considering gender transformative approaches.
- Local voices are needed to understand and tackle challenging social/gender norms.

- The root causes need to be understood to unpack gender roles, and a gender framework analysis can help with this.
- Resilience without considering gender is not possible. Boundaries are blurring as gender roles change which touches the changing norms.
- Male change agents are important to involve in discussions also.
- The term 'women' is very diverse – who within these women require support? Cannot take them as just one category.

Some take-away messages:

- The impacts of climate change and conflict, and the resultant coping mechanisms disproportionately affect women.
- Adolescent girls also face specific compounding shocks in particular in relation to their psychosocial well-being.
- As women's gender roles are changing, they require support of their adaptive livelihoods. There are existing adaptive strategies that need to be supported by governments/donors.
- When considering gender transformative approaches, it is important to highlight the complexity of unique and pastoral specific power dynamics.
- Improving evidence is important. Donors need to fund long-term research.

Speakers and presentations:

- Chol Peter Bak: Pastoralist Adaptations
- Claire Bedelian: Enablers of women's adaptation in Western Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan
- Renee Bullock: Gender transformative approaches in pastoral areas: Current trends and key issues
- Tom Kipruto: Supporting adolescent girls' well-being in climate- and conflict-affected areas of East and West Africa.

More: [Video recording](#)



Closing plenary – take-away insights

At the closing session, Jameel Observatory PhD Student Susan Njambi-Szlapka shared key points and threads on behalf of the session reporting team provided by the Observatory:



Listen, act and listen some more

- Make sure to listen to what people need and want when designing interventions.
- Be mindful that not all people are the same – women bear a disproportionate share of the burden of shocks.
- Prioritize the needs of communities and co-create with them.
- Focus on ease of use for products and services.
- Be flexible so you can adapt to how people respond.
- Design flexibility into programs.

Look around

- What's already there: Better communicate and build on each other's work – pay more attention to what's already been done so have interconnected work rather than isolated silo'd efforts.
- What can we combine: Harness different types of data like earth observations, community voices, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Where the gaps are: Contextual development and implementation of research – don't do pocket research and generalize.

Try new things – talk to strange people

- Engage with the private sector.
- Engage more with local and traditional leaders and invite them to dialogues. But communicate with these leaders in their language not scientific jargon.
- Change accountability frameworks so we are not just collecting data for donor reporting but for true accountability to the communities we serve.
- Explore ways to tap into local financing mechanisms and resources instead of solely relying on external (foreign) assistance.



Event feedback

Immediately after the event, the organizers sent a short survey to participants requesting feedback on the sessions and their usefulness. Here we present a summary of feedback provided by 46 respondents.

Sessions or topics that stood out as particularly relevant

- Early and Anticipatory Action (AA): Sessions on rethinking Early and Anticipatory Actions (AAs) to manage shocks and risks in drylands and advancing locally-led AA were highly relevant, emphasizing the importance of local players and putting communities at the center of interventions.
- Land Tenure and Mobility: Sessions on maintaining pastoralists' mobility amid land use changes, tenure insecurity, and conflicts, and on collective tenure rights, were considered vital for solving a majority of problems in pastoral areas.
- Technology and Data: Presentations on forecasting and earth observation data, predictive tools for rangeland health and livestock feed security, remote sensing, and mapping mobility routes stood out, often highlighting the potential of technology when complemented with local knowledge.
- Livestock and Rangeland Health: Topics such as research on foliage and livestock tracking, feed balance, and rangeland and resilience for pastoralists were highlighted as foundational to livestock production.
- Food Security and Economics: The session on higher food prices in low-income Africa and its implications for poverty and welfare deterioration was noted as important, along with reducing the cost of risks and climate finance in fragile settings.

Something you disliked about the event

- Time management issues: Many respondents mentioned that the event duration (two days) was too short, and the schedule was too heavy or crammed, resulting in limited time for discussions, Q&A, and individual presentations, causing presenters to be rushed. Time-keeping was an issue, with some sessions getting derailed by lengthy speaking by facilitators or presenters.
- Session Format and Content: Dislikes included large sessions with too many speakers, insufficient discussion compared to too many power point slides/presentations, and the fact that absorbing information was difficult due to rushed sessions.
- Participation and Representation: Concerns were raised that youth groups and the community were missing from participation, and some felt that relevant institutions for pastoralists were not empowered.
- Logistics and Marketing: The acoustics of the Hall of Africa were described as poor. There was a request for future support for students' transport costs. Also, there was no opportunity to market the event or presenters on social sites like LinkedIn.
- Poster Presentations: Participants were not engaging with poster presenters, suggesting that in the future, poster presenters should be given a short time to present their work at the plenary.

Examples of research presented at this meeting or generated by the co-organizers that are influencing policy or playing a significant role in informing debates or discussion around dryland issues.

- Anticipatory and Early Action: Research from Jameel Observatory (JO) and SPARC has influenced programmatic guidance on early action and is contributing to a needed rethink of the anticipatory action approach for dryland settings, moving beyond technical fixes to social change and governance dimensions. Local government-led anticipatory action research by SPARC has been used in an ILRI initiative in Kenya.
- Rangeland and Feed Balance: ICPALD co-led the Drylands Transform research program, which generated evidence on the connections between land health, livestock livelihoods, and governance. Research on feed balance, including a low-cost, fast spatial model, has been used in Nigeria and is ongoing in Cameroon. Assessment of rangeland management condition in Akendeyu and Kurmuk 01 kebeles of Kurmuk District of Benishangul Gumuz Region informed regional action to improve rangelands.
- Pastoralist Mobility and Tenure Security: Mapping of transhumance routes in Kenya and Ethiopia is expected to be useful for land use planning. Research on mobility routes is considered very useful in pastoral planning. SPARC research on collective pastoral tenure security has informed global Prindex and Landex indicators to better capture data on collective tenure security.
- Climate Finance and Conflict: The presentation on Climate Finance in Conflict and Fragile Settings was considered outstanding for bringing out issues for development partners and suggesting a need for restructuring and a multisectoral participatory approach for climate funds. This issue was noted for future policy and financing strategies.
- Other Research Mentioned: Other research mentioned includes a SPARC report on climate change impact on countries affected by conflict and fragility, price control measures mitigating food price hikes, and dynamic modeling procedures for pastoral systems.

How the meeting could have been improved

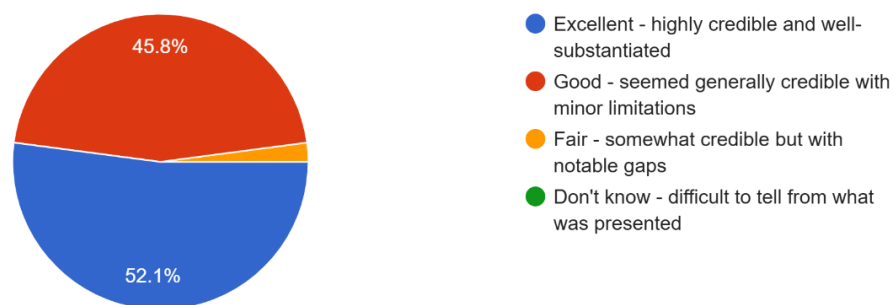
- Time Management and Duration: Several respondents suggested extending the duration of the meeting to 3 or 5 days, or reducing the number of sessions covered to avoid rushing and allow for more in-depth dialogue, presentations, discussions, and reflection. There were also suggestions for stricter time-keeping and allocating more time (15-20 minutes) for presentations and feedback.
- Accessibility and Material Sharing: Sharing presentation slides, research manuscripts/reports, and public materials in advance was recommended to facilitate deeper understanding and more interactive sessions. Creating a mailing list or portal for sharing specific documents and links immediately was also suggested.
- Inclusivity and Engagement: Suggestions included inviting more key players, especially pastoralists and leaders/staff of pastoral and dryland community civil society organisations, to attend and participate actively. Ensuring stronger

participant engagement through interactive group discussions and more breakaway sessions for audience input was also recommended.

- **Content and Structure:** Recommendations included stronger guidance to presenters on content length and focusing on policy and practice implications, having fewer speakers/panellists in some sessions, using fewer long PowerPoint presentations, making session titles less jargon-heavy, and including more case studies on research outcome implementation. There was a comment on the lack of discussion on non-equilibrium thinking and the sustainability/economics of dryland production systems.
- **Logistics and Communication:** Suggestions included holding future workshops in drylands to allow for field visits, improving online viewing quality, strengthening communication, and building trust for multi-partner engagement.

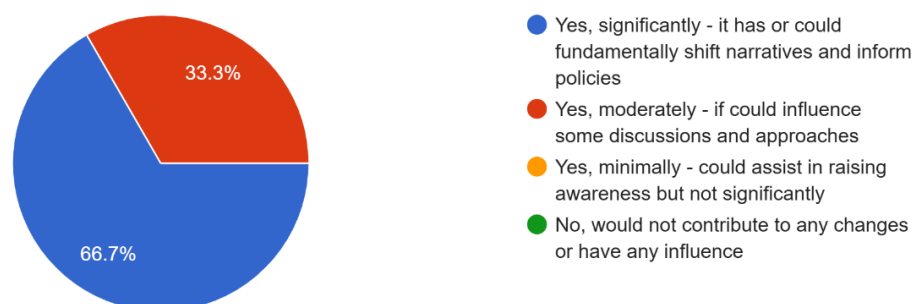
How would you rate the credibility and integrity of the evidence presented at the event?

48 responses



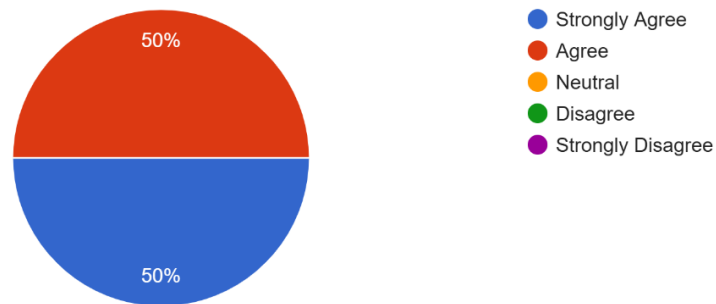
Do you feel that the type of evidence and research presented at this event has influenced or has the potential to influence policies, conversations or debates concerning the drylands?

48 responses



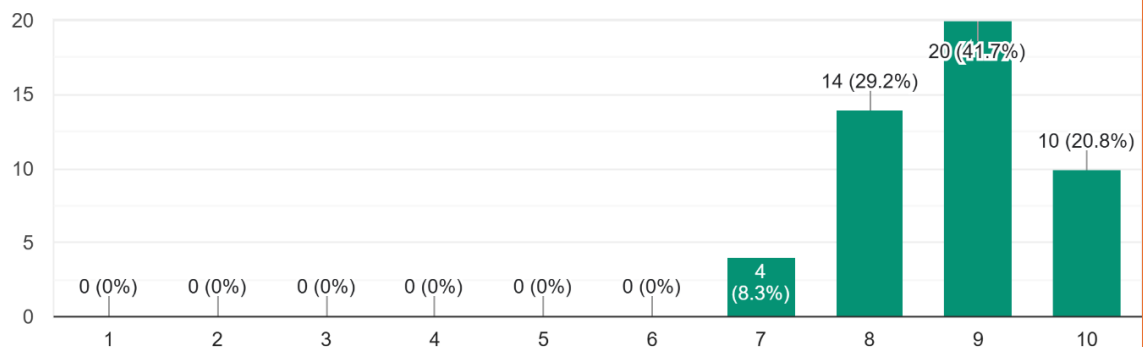
To what extent do you agree that the topics and sessions in this meeting addressed the research questions and issues most relevant for pastoralists and people living in the drylands?

48 responses



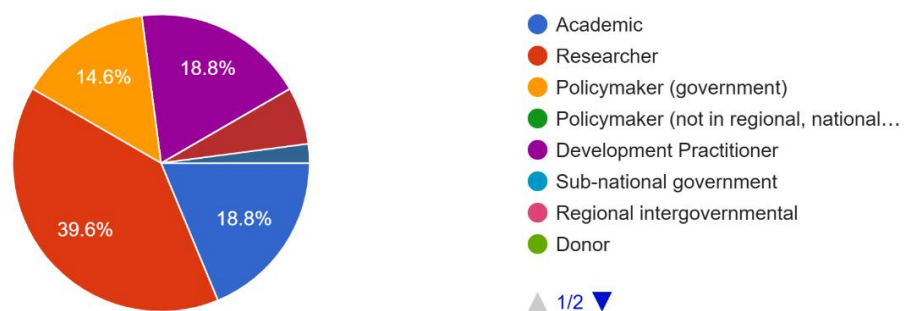
Please rate the overall success of the event 1 – 10 (1 = Poor; 10 = Excellent)

48 responses



Please choose an answer that best describes your affiliation.

48 responses



Day 1 agenda

Time	Session	
09:00–10:30	Opening Plenary: Building the Resilience and Prosperity of Pastoralists and Dryland Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Tahira Mohamed, Regional Engagement Lead, Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action - Prof Geoff Simm, Head of the Division of Global Agriculture and Food Systems, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh - Dr Guy Jobbins, Executive Director, SPARC Consortium - Dr Dereje Wakjira, Director, ICPALD - Opening remark: HE Mohamed Abdi Ware, Deputy Executive Secretary, IGAD - Official Opening: Mr Ambrose Lore Ekunoit, Acting Secretary, State Department of ASALs and Regional Development, Republic of Kenya - New Narratives, New Impetus for Drylands and Pastoralism: Keynote by Emmanuel Seck, Director, ENDA Energie 	
10:30–11:00	Break, Networking, and Posters	
11:00–12:30	Rethinking Early and Anticipatory Actions to Better Manage Shocks and Risks in Drylands Moderator: Jarso Mokku, DLCI Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tahira Mohamed, ILRI - Nelly Bosibori Nyamweya, Mercy Corps - Natasha Maru, ILC - Alex Humphrey, Mercy Corps - Samuel Derbyshire, ILRI - Khadar Sh. Mohamed Nur, SODMA - Guyo Roba, ICPALD 	Supporting Successful Adaptation: Addressing the Evolving Roles of Women and Youth in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations Moderator: Liz Daley, SPARC Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renee Bullock, ILRI - Chol Peter Bak, South Sudan - Tom Kipruto, Mercy Corps - Claire Bedelian, Mercy Corps
12:30–14:00	Lunch	

14:00–15:30	Maintaining Pastoralist Mobility Amid Land Use Change, Tenure Insecurity and Conflict Moderator: Natasha Maru, ILC Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Japheth Kasimbu, ICPALD - Hussein Sulieman, SPARC - Mohammed Said, SPARC - Ahmed Mohamoud, ICPALD - Charles Kagea, Kenya National Land Commission - Guyo Malicha Roba, ICPALD 	Risks and Their Impacts on Pastoralist Livelihoods Moderator: Hassan Bashir, Nourishing Nomads Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kelvin Shikuku, ILRI - Mercy Kinoti, Strathmore University - Nathan Jensen, University of Edinburgh - Jackson Wachira, CHC - Anne Khisa, CHC - Wendy Chamberlin, SPARC - Marcos Sugastti, University of Edinburgh - Susan Njambi-Szlapka, University of Edinburgh
15:30–16:00	Break, Networking, and Posters	
16:00–17:30	Advancing Locally Led Early and Anticipatory Actions in Drylands Moderator: Nelly Maonde, START Network Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - George Tsitati, University of Edinburgh - Jannie Nielsen, ADRA - Tahira Mohamed, ILRI - Magda Nassef, SPARC 	Approaches and Innovations to Reduce Risks in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations Moderator: Rupsha Banerjee, ILRI Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carmen Jaquez, Mercy Corps - Miguel Uribe, Causal Design - Peter Awin, CowTribe - Geoffrey Lelenguyah, Mercy Corps - Milcah Asamba, Mercy Corps
17:30–20:00	Reception and Poster Session	



Day 2 Agenda

Time	Session	
09:00–10:30	<p>Higher Food Prices in Low-Income Africa Since 2020: Causes, Impacts, Responses</p> <p>Moderator: Steven Were Omamo, IFPRI</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victor Murinde, AERC - Alicia Sosa, Global Affairs Canada - Steve Wiggins, ODI - Dirk Willem te Velde, ODI - Eleni Yitbarek, University of Pretoria - Roselyne Akinyi Wallender, Practical Action - Margie Buchanan-Smith, SPARC 	<p>Predictive Tools for Rangeland Health, Restoration and Feed Security in the Horn of Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Bridget Mungatia</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Julius Muyizzi, ICPALD - Dominic Gore, Juba University - Befikadu Zewdie, Assoa University - Francis Ejobi, Soroti University - John Mutua, University of Edinburgh - Hellen Mutogah, AfriScout
10:30–11:00	Break, Networking, and Posters	
1100-1230	<p>Climate Finance in Conflict and Fragile Settings: Insights From Country Case Studies</p> <p>Moderator: Manisha Gulati, ODI</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yue Cao, ODI - Abdullahi Khalif, NDC Partnership, Somalia - Emmanuel Seck, ENDA Energie - Guyo Malicha Roba, ICPALD - Muthoni Nduhiu, African Development Bank - Nasra Hussein Abdi, Ground Truth Solutions - Isaiah Sciford, Norwegian Refugee Council 	<p>Enhancing Forecasting and Earth Observation Data and Applications for Drylands</p> <p>Moderator: Maurine Ambani, WFP</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daniel Hudner, Mercy Corps - Francesco Fava, University of Milan - Anton Vrieling, University of Twente - James Muthoka, University of Sussex - Eugene Kayijamahe, ICPAC - Viviann Meta, LocatelT Ltd
12:30–14:00	Lunch	

14:00–15:30	Collective Tenure Rights: A Roadmap for the Greater Horn of Africa Moderator: Ken Otieno, RECONCILE Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Husna Mbarak FAO - Natasha Maru, ILC - Hussein Wario, CRDD - Oliver Wasonga, University of Nairobi - Allan Akivaga RECONCILE 	Capacitating Dryland Resilience and Early Action Moderator: Alan Duncan, University of Edinburgh Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bilach Jimale, DLCI - Rahma Hassan, CRDD - Geoff Simm, University of Edinburgh - Amanda Grossi, ABC/AICCRA - Rashid Warsame, Garissa University - Rosie Herrington, University of Edinburgh - Jackson Wachira, CHC - Tahira Mohamed, ILRI
15:30–16:00	Break, Networking, and Posters	
16:00–17:30	Closing Plenary: Dryland and Pastoralist Futures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Guyo Malicha Roba, Head of Drylands, ICPALD - Dr Guy Jobbins, Executive Director, SPARC Consortium - Dr Tahira Mohamed, Tahira Mohamed, Regional Engagement Lead, Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action 	



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