



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## CONFLICT AND CLIMATE ASSESSMENT REPORT KARAMOJA CLUSTER



*Cross Border conflict meeting in Karamoja cluster*

### DISCLAIMER

This report was produced at the request of the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity implemented by Chemonics and ACIDI/VOCA through funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The report was prepared independently by the Agency for Cross Border Pastoralist Development (APaD). The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the USAID or the United States Government.



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## FOREWORD

The twin challenges of conflict and climate risks pose significant challenges to agro-pastoral communities in Africa and the rest of the developing world. The Karamoja cluster that straddles the borderlands of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan is among the most affected regions by protracted conflicts and climate change, thus reducing their capacities for resilience and sustainable livelihoods. The ecological context of the cluster, together with a history of marginalization, predisposes it to various conflict types (particularly natural resource conflicts and other low-level conflicts such as banditry and road ambushes), and the various types of conflicts often take an internal or cross-border dimension, involve multiple actors, and their evolution makes them much more complex.

If interventions in the Karamoja cluster, such as the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity (project) are to have meaningful impact among the communities, it is imperative that the conflict and climate context of the cluster is clearly understood. It is against this background that the CBCR Activity commissioned this conflict and climate assessment to lay the technical evidence base for identifying the main conflict and climate trends in the Karamoja cluster, their dynamics and drivers, as well as opportunities for furthering social cohesion and climate risk adaptation initiatives.

On the conflict assessment front, this report supports the CBCR Activity in understanding the context, drivers and dynamics of conflicts, as well as the key actors or parties to the various conflict types in the Karamoja cluster. The evidence emanating from this assessment is thus critical for designing evidence-based and context-sensitive social cohesion projects in addition to ensuring conflict sensitivity in project implementation. Additionally, the climate assessment investigates the common and differentiated climate risks in the Karamoja cluster, including the impact of climate change on livelihoods, the coping and adaptation mechanisms used by individuals and communities, and the barriers in and opportunities for addressing climate risks.

Overall, the CBCR Activity presents this report as a knowledge base that is not only useful for its programming, but also in project implementation by government and non-government organizations interested in intervening in the Karamoja cluster. The CBCR Activity believes that shared knowledge and action is instrumental in contributing to the resilience of cross-border communities with the goal of reducing the need for their reliance on humanitarian assistance.

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## ACRONYMS

ACME	Acme Development Organization
APaD	Agency for Cross Border Pastoralist Development
AUBP	African Union Border Programme
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBCR	Cross-Border Community Resilience
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
DRM&FS	Disaster Risk Management and Food Security
EAC	East African Community
ENDF	Ethiopia National Defence Forces
ERCA	Ethiopia Revenue and Customs Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
ICPDO	Integrated Community Peace and Development Organization
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KII	Key Informant Interview
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
LDO	Local Development Organizations
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NRA	National Revenue Authority (South Sudan)
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
ODR&FS	Office of Disaster Risk Management and Food Security
OPRD	Organization for Peace Relief and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
SC	Sub County
SO <sub>4</sub> CM	South Omo for Christ Ministry
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A-IG	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Government
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition
TW-SC	Turkana West Sub County
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WP-SC	West Pokot Sub County

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a conflict and climate risk assessment for the Karamoja cluster. The cluster comprises Turkana and West Pokot Counties in Kenya, the Omorate and Nyangatom *woredas* (districts) in South Omo, Ethiopia, Kapoeta East and Kapoeta South Counties in South Sudan, and Amudat, Moroto, Kotido, and Kaabong districts in Uganda.

First, the conflict assessment systematically analyzes the dynamics of peace, conflict, stability, and instability in the Karamoja cluster. In so doing, the assessment supports the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity in understanding the context, drivers, and dynamics of conflicts, as well as the key actors or parties to the conflicts. The assessment also identifies the formal and informal conflict governance bodies and procedures currently in place. Second, the climate risk assessment explores the common and differentiated climate risks in the cluster, impact of climate change on livelihoods, coping and adaptation mechanisms used by individuals and communities, and the barriers and opportunities for addressing climate risks.

Collectively, the conflict and climate risk assessments provide the technical evidence base for identifying the main conflict and climate trends, dynamics, and drivers, as well as opportunities for furthering social cohesion and climate risk adaptation initiatives. The assessment incorporates Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations from the outset and proceeds to identify plans for participatory frameworks and interventions that prioritize the needs, experiences, and perspectives of women, young people, and traditionally marginalized groups within the Karamoja cluster.

For this purpose, the study adopted a systematic review of existing literature on conflict and climate dynamics in the Karamoja cluster. Additionally, primary data was collected through field research in Kacheliba and Alale in West Pokot County, Loima and Turkana West in Turkana County, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Amudat districts in Uganda, Kapoeta South and Kapoeta East Counties in South Sudan, and Nyangatom and Omorate *woredas* in Ethiopia. The research team used open-ended key informant interviews (KIIS) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community representatives (men and women, elders and youth, urban and rural residents), government officials, religious and cultural leaders. The research team also reached out to individuals with specialized knowledge in diverse fields such as agriculture, peace, environment and natural resources, security, administration, immigration, and livelihoods working in the Karamoja cluster. A total of 24 FGDs and 160 KIIs were conducted from February 1 - 20, 2023.

According to the study findings, there are various types of conflicts in the Karamoja cluster. These include cattle rustling, natural resource-based conflicts, banditry and road ambushes, violent and armed confrontation between pastoralists and government forces, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), human - wildlife conflicts, and land-based border conflicts. Across the cluster, the most prevalent conflict is cattle rustling, which has increasingly evolved over time from a cultural practice to a more violent and commercialized economic activity. Cattle rustling has been captured by criminal gangs and business networks involving a wide range of perpetrators, among communities and across borders within the Karamoja cluster. Moreover, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has been a game-changer in enhancing cattle rustling by tilting the balance of power in favor of those who have access to, and control of, the most powerful weapons. This results in immeasurable suffering to those who cannot defend themselves.



The study identified actors in the conflict chain, and the critical roles they play that help fuel it. The main players included children of ages 12-17 years, male youth aged 18-35 years, *kraal*<sup>1</sup> leaders aged 35-60 years, and elders aged 60 years and above. At an early age, children are indoctrinated into their culture and used as herds' boys who would later be used as spies to report on possible raid targets. The young men are the lethal attack force and provide the bulk of the warrior armies. Each community across the cluster depends on an agile young force to execute or repel an attack from a rival community. Other actors with a lot of influence that are consulted include sorcerers, traditional leaders, and fortune tellers who advise the warriors of predicted outcomes before an attack. Businesspeople, brokers, and middlemen help in the quick disposal of conflict loot. Livestock, in particular, is quickly loaded onto waiting tracks and ferried across borders.

Development partners who include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) play peace-building roles in incidents of conflict. Other actors such as the central and local governments are accused of not adequately responding to the conflicts, as well as being non-responsive in the provision of critical services such as education and security that could contribute to the mitigation of conflict.

The conflict assessment identified triggers and drivers to conflict within the cluster, with climate change and environmental stressors emerging on top. Set in arid and semi-arid lands, the Karamoja cluster is experiencing the effects of climate change and worsening environmental conditions that are exacerbating an already fragile situation.

Other triggers included persistent socio-economic and political inequalities and marginalization, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, conflict legacies and disarmament inadequacies, commercialization of cattle rustling, and emergence of conflict alliances for distribution of cattle. Poverty, unemployment, the influence of illicit alcohol, changing land use, management and development policies and interventions in the region, mineral exploration, oil discovery and extractives were identified as other drivers of conflict in the region.

The conflicts have several impacts, such as changes in social roles in the community. For example, more and more women have taken up traditionally male roles as household heads. More women and youth (male and female) have migrated to urban centers where they are engaged in formal businesses and provision of informal services.

There are notable existing efforts and opportunities to address conflict and promote peace among the ever-warring communities across the cluster. The emerging role of women and their experiences in times of conflict have powerful implications for peace-building and conflict transformation. Women influence many decisions that go into activating a conflict and possible deterrence of the same.

Positive cultural perceptions of Karamoja cluster identity and oneness in diversity is an aspect that enhances cohesiveness through cultural events such as the famous *Tobong'lore* held annually in Turkana County. Further, there is a customary resource management regime and presence of positive interdependent and complementary actor roles in the Karamoja cluster.

Climate change and variability presents new risks and vulnerabilities. Climate related risks such as prolonged dry seasons are becoming more frequent and intense with negative impacts on community

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<sup>1</sup> A *kraal* is a rural African village consisting of several homesteads and families under the immediate rule of a headman responsible for the conduct of the members.

livelihoods such as nomadic pastoralism and agro-pastoralism. Other risks include heavy rains which cause catastrophic flooding. The floods, in turn, increase the levels of the rivers and lakes within the cluster, enhance the spread of numerous animal and human diseases, and wash away physical infrastructure.

Climate change effects such as rising land temperatures, frequent droughts, reduced rainfall, and flash floods have an impact on community livelihoods. This impact is seen in the loss of pastoralist land, sedentary living, livestock diseases, and food insecurity.

Management of climate risks has been structured at three levels. Traditional short-term coping mechanisms of managing climate risks include harvesting immature food crops and selling off a small number of cattle. Long-term adaptation strategies include diversification of livelihood sources, livestock mobility to track forage and water resources, diversification of herd composition to benefit from the varied drought and disease tolerance, fertility of diverse livestock species, and sending children to school for formal education as a long-term investment expected to pay back through income from employment. Policies and development interventions that reduce risks, diminish livelihood constraints, and expand opportunities for increased household resilience to drought are critical complements to the pastoralists' coping strategies.

At government level, free primary and secondary education, irrigation agriculture, and enhancement of food storage facilities are promoted. Dryland farming techniques and deployment of agriculture and livestock extension staff to the rural areas of the Karamoja cluster are other government initiatives. The civil society sector also supports access to free primary education, and provides school feeding programs and food supplements for the management of malnutrition. Other initiatives by civil society include the promotion of irrigation agriculture, management of humanitarian services, and facilitation of cross-border resource sharing initiatives.

The assessment also investigated critical barriers to decision-making on climate change. These include lack of adequate climate change information, low capacity of actors, institutional red tape, duplication of roles and responsibilities due to poor coordination, and changes in timing and duration of seasons' effects on seasonal management activities. Other barriers include constraints from national and regional budgets, policies or processes on altering or supplementing current management practices to enable adaptation to climate change, and general decline in staff resources and capacity.

On the other hand, several opportunities exist for more effective integration of climate change adaptation within development activities. These include enhancing the availability and relevance of climate information, developing and applying climate risk screening tools, and using appropriate entry points for climate information. Other opportunities include shifting emphasis to implementation rather than developing new plans, encouraging meaningful co-ordination and sharing of good practices, reviews of the timing of management activities, and taking advantage of seasonal changes that provide more opportunities to implement beneficial adaptation actions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Karamoja cluster is a mass of borderland that falls between Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia covering approximately 150,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The countries share approximately 8,382kms of border, stretching from south-west Ethiopia, north-west Kenya, south-east South Sudan, and north-east Uganda<sup>2</sup>.

*Figure 1. Map of the Karamoja cluster (Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia border)*



Source: Catley et al<sup>3</sup>

Approximately 14 pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities occupy the region. All, or most of them, have strong linguistic and other cultural affinities. The ethnic groups in the cluster include: the Dassanech and Nyangatom of Ethiopia, the Nyangatom, Buya, Didinga, and the Toposa of South Sudan, the Pian, Ik, Bokora, Dodoth, Jie, Matheniko, Pokot, and Tepeth of Uganda, and the Turkana and the Pokot of Kenya. While most of the communities are pastoralists, the Ik, Pokot, and Nyangatom are agro-pastoralists<sup>4</sup>. The Turkana and the Dassanech also practice fishing in Lake Turkana. All the communities keep large herds of livestock, especially cattle. Generally, the communities also engage in trade activities around food crops, cereals, livestock, pulses, honey and bee products, gums and resins,

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Authority on Development, 'IGAD Cluster 1 (Karamoja Cluster),' 2023, <https://resilience.igad.int/clusters/igad-cluster-1-karamoja-cluster/> (accessed 12 June 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Andy Catley, Elizabeth Stites, Mesfin Ayele and Raphael Arasio, 'Introducing Pathways to Resilience in the Karamoja Cluster', *Pastoralism* 11 (1) (2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-021-00214-4>.

<sup>4</sup> FGD, Turkana West, Turkana, Kenya, 04 February 2023.

fodder, among others. Pastoralism contributes approximately 19 percent, 13 percent, and 8 percent of total gross domestic product (GDP) in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, respectively<sup>5</sup>.

Water availability is a major challenge in the Karamoja cluster. Most water sources in the cluster are seasonal, and rainfall is unreliable and sparsely distributed, causing long extreme dry spells. The mean annual rainfall in the region is 200mm, and ranges from 150mm to 250mm on the Turkana side, and slightly higher on the Karamojong side at 600mm<sup>6</sup>. Climate change has further altered the rainfall patterns and the rains tend to appear earlier or later, and over a limited duration compared to normal years. Heavy downpours cause flash floods that bring about destruction of lives, livelihoods, and property. The destruction caused by the flash floods is exacerbated by lack of tree and other vegetation ground cover on rangelands that would otherwise help reduce the flow of water and allow for more soil absorption. These challenges, therefore, result in serious water shortage for livestock and human use in the cluster, leading to internal and cross-border conflicts over limited resources.

In the entire cluster, especially in Nyangatom, Dassanech, Turkana, Toposa, and Pokot, there has been a remarkable decline in rainfall over the years. However, at the same time, there has been an increase in rainfall in the Karimojong section of Moroto and Kaabong districts. There is more flooding in the Turkana section towards Lotikipi plains and Lake Turkana. The occasional rise in the water levels in Lake Turkana affects fishing and adjacent grazing lands, and is also a consequence of climate change. Climate change risks are more prominent within the Turkana section which experiences the highest temperatures and more aridity compared to the other sections of the cluster.

The cluster has only two permanent rivers – Rivers Turkwel and Omo – which are on the periphery. All other rivers are semi-permanent and, unlike in previous years, hold water for a much shorter period because of climate change.

Climate change, manifested by drought and flooding among other effects, threatens to derail or even roll back the hard-earned development gains of the past decades. It also jeopardizes progress towards development goals across sectors, and contributes to cycles of loss and vulnerability at all levels. Within the cluster, climate change is about more than just the weather in the sense that its distinct impacts connect to some of the most pressing issues humanity currently faces, including conflict and extreme poverty that cumulatively create conditions of social-economic and ecological vulnerability. While it is an undeniable fact that climate change burdens all of humanity, there is evidence that its impacts are not felt equally. Indeed, vulnerabilities related to climate change and its impacts on communities are deeply gendered and have historically affected the poorest echelons of society, especially women and children.

Conflict in the region is, to a great extent, resource based. The conflict revolves around the competition over water and pasture, whose scarcity is exacerbated by climate change. In addition, poor communication, dishonored peace and natural resource sharing agreements, and emerging mining activities along the common borders are pertinent issues causing conflict<sup>7</sup>.

Cattle rustling remains a historical and persistent cause of conflict, further fueled by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons held by civilians in the Karamoja cluster. Rearmament by Uganda's

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<sup>5</sup> Dorothy A. Amwata, Dickson M. Nyariki, and Nashon R. K. Musimba, 'Factors Influencing Pastoral and Agropastoral Household Vulnerability to Food Insecurity in the Drylands of Kenya: A Case Study of Kajiado and Makueni Counties', *Journal of International Development* 28 (5) (2016): 771–87, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3123>.

<sup>6</sup> Intergovernmental Authority on Development, *supra* n 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

Dodoch and Jie, the Turkana of Kenya, and the Toposa of South Sudan has made the situation worse. Another emerging issue leading to conflict is the unresolved cases of unrecovered livestock; a vexatious and teething issue in the Karamoja cluster. All Karamoja cluster communities have a case of stolen but unrecovered livestock against each of their neighbors.

Thus, the combination of the impacts of conflict and climate change negatively impacts livelihoods of the communities within the Karamoja cluster. It not only overburdens their adaptive capacities, but they also must rely on humanitarian assistance for survival. There is, therefore, a need to understand the underlying issues through a conflict and climate sensitive analysis. Thus, this conflict and climate risk assessment sought to lay the knowledge base for the CBCR Activity which is designed to enhance resilience and, thus, reduce the need for humanitarian assistance among communities in the cross-border cluster of Karamoja.

This conflict assessment analyzes the dynamics of peace and conflict in the Karamoja cluster. This will support the CBCR Activity in understanding the context, drivers, and dynamics of conflicts, and the key actors to the conflict in the cross-border region. The findings will help in designing evidence-based, context-sensitive social cohesion projects, and ensure conflict sensitivity under the ‘do no harm’ framework. This framework emphasizes minimizing the negative impacts of conflict and maximizing the positive impact.

The climate assessment investigates the common and differentiated climate risks in the Karamoja border cluster. It also investigates the impact of climate change on livelihoods, the coping and adaptation mechanisms used by individuals, households, and communities, and the barriers and opportunities for addressing climate risks. It further considers the formal and informal procedures currently in place in confronting climate change risks in the cluster.

Accordingly, this report establishes that the Karamoja cluster has a long history of marginalization that dates back to colonial administrations. This has created viable conditions for conflict escalation and various types of conflicts to thrive. These conflicts include cattle rustling, natural resource-based conflicts, banditry and road ambushes, violent and armed confrontation between pastoralists and government forces, human-wildlife conflicts, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and land-based border conflicts. Cattle rustling is the most prevalent conflict across the cluster, and it has increasingly evolved over time from a cultural practice to a more violent and commercialized economic activity. Cattle rustling has been captured by criminal gangs and business networks involving a wide range of perpetrators, among communities and across borders within the Karamoja cluster. The main players in cattle rustling are children of ages 12-17 years, male youth and men aged 18-35 years, *kraal* leaders aged 35-60 years, and elders aged 60 years and above.

Among the major climatic episodes in the Karamoja cluster are prolonged periods of drought that are becoming more pronounced to the level of a humanitarian catastrophe, with some respondents alluding to year-round drought. Insufficient and highly variable rainfall precipitation is a defining feature of climate change in the region. Importantly, there is broad consensus across study respondents that rainfall remains erratic in the cluster, with some areas only experiencing short rains between the months of March and October, dating as far back as 2009.

Climate change also has security implications, evidenced by pastoralists raiding from neighboring communities in a bid to recoup their decimated stock. Because of their economic and social value, theft of cattle represents a severe loss to the targeted families. The social tension caused by raiding,

compounded with the effects of events such as floods and drought, further leads to a surge in displaced populations within nations and across borders.

### **Organization of the report**

After this introduction (which opens with a background to the study and the assessment objectives), the next section presents the study methodology, which is followed by the findings section. The findings are broken down into the following sub-sections: socio-political and ecological context of the Karamoja cluster, the conflict assessment, and the climate risks assessment. The report ends with a conclusion and recommendations.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

This conflict and climate risk assessment is based on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Moreover, the conflict assessment draws upon the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Conflict Assessment Framework<sup>8</sup> and Conciliation Resources Gender Conflict Analysis tool<sup>9</sup>. The USAID Conflict Assessment Framework underscores a process of collecting information relevant to a specific context in relation to its internal conflict dynamics ranging from their policies, interests, personal and cultural dynamics, to language and logistical constraints.

The climate risk assessment analyzes how climate change and extreme weather events interact with socio-economic factors to determine the overall risk for the affected population. Additionally, both the conflict and climate assessments incorporate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Data was abstracted from both secondary and primary sources. This involved a systematic review of secondary literature related to the conflict and climate dynamics in the Karamoja cluster. The secondary sources of literature were journal articles, commissioned research reports on conflict and climate change in the Karamoja cluster, media, and online sources. Besides the review, data was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) bringing together local government officials, political leaders, opinion leaders, traditional leaders, leaders from civil society organizations (CSOs), and ordinary citizens.

### 2.3 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy was purposive. The criteria for their selection was determined based on membership in respective groups, knowledge of specific or general information on conflict and climate change events, residence in the area, participation or experience of events or activities in the cluster, and occupation of certain formal positions. Respondents were contacted as key informants or as a team (FGD) to obtain diverse information from a common sitting for triangulation purposes.

### 2.4 Data Collection

Prior to the start of data collection in all the study locations, introductory meetings were held with the respective country leadership i.e., Offices of County Commissioners, Resident District Commissioners, *woreda* administrators, and County Secretaries or Executives. The meetings were useful in introducing the planned research, agreeing on the scope, outlining the ethical considerations and support requirements.

The country level entry meetings were held on January 30 and February 1, 2023. The data collection exercise was held from February 2 – 9, 2023, running concurrently in all four countries. The research team and the research assistants (RAs) conducted the FGDs and KIIs using open ended interview schedules. The research support team monitored and verified the incoming data to ensure a high degree of quality, and undertook necessary research adaptation and modification to improve the data collection

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<sup>8</sup> United States Agency for International Development, 'Conflict Assessment Framework Application Guide', 2023, [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADY740.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADY740.pdf) (accessed 30 January 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Sanne Tielemans, 'Gender and Conflict Analysis Toolkit for Peacebuilders,' Conciliation Resources', 2015, <https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/CR%20Gender%20Toolkit%20WEB.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2023).

in collaboration with the RAs in the field. Photographs and GPS locations of interview sessions were also taken and submitted alongside the data sets.

Twenty-four (24) FGDs were organized in the districts of Amudat, Moroto, Kotido, and Kaabong in Uganda; Kapoeta East and Kapoeta South Counties in South Sudan; Nyangatom and Omorate *woredas* in Ethiopia; and Turkana West and Loima sub-counties in Turkana County and Pokot North sub-county in West Pokot County. The study also conducted 160 KIIs in the respective districts, counties, *woredas*, and sub-counties stated above.

A stakeholder validation meeting to share the draft findings was convened on March 21, 2023 in Lodwar, Turkana County, Kenya. The meeting sought stakeholders' insights on the assessment and the same were incorporated into a revised report.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

The raw research data from the field was cleaned then uploaded to Excel data sets for analysis. The audio recordings were transcribed to form texts and typed into field notes. Processing of data entailed review of transcripts and notes relevant to the study objectives and for quality assurance. To improve the data quality, triangulation was applied as necessary. Analysis also involved review of data for each specific issue of investigation to develop insights and inferences, and to draw conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.6 Informed Consent

The research teams held introductory meetings with respective country authorities and received consent to undertake the research. In the field, the research team adhered to the research protocols and the requirements of ethical consent. In conducting individual interviews and FGDs, informed consent was obtained from all respondents. The KIIs and FGDs each lasted approximately one and a half hours. To preserve the identities of the various individuals who participated in the research, all data is anonymous.

## 2.7 Limitations

The research team noted a reluctance from some informants to speak openly about sensitive topics especially around cattle raids, issues around guns, and gender-based violence. However, this was mitigated by assuring the respondents of privacy and confidentiality, as well as anonymity in data processing and information presentation.

Some of the sampled government officials required the research team to reach out to their seniors before they could give their opinions, despite agreements during entry meetings. Although this led to delays in undertaking scheduled interviews, the study team complied with the requests and was able to complete the KIIs.

Moreover, some of the key informants at the time of field research were unavailable. The papal visit to Juba and a referendum in Ethiopia meant that some initially identified key informants were unavailable. To mitigate this challenge, alternative key informants were sourced and replaced.

There were also logistical challenges brought about by poor transport and communication infrastructure. These challenges called for advanced planning and coordination with the field contacts.

Additionally, insecurity in Ethiopia and South Sudan presented security considerations that required more on-the-ground support and significant advance planning with the local security agents.



## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1 Introduction

The political, economic, ecological, and socio-cultural dimensions of the Karamoja cross-border cluster are inter-linked in many ways and provide the context in which the various types of conflicts and climate risks across the cluster emerge and are understood.

First, the conflict assessment discusses the various types in the cluster, key trends and actors, and capacities for peace. Second, the climate assessment discusses climate change manifestation through sudden and slow-onset events affecting the border cluster, the main causes and drivers of sudden and slow-onset events, the impact of these hazards, in terms of health, economic, and social impacts. It also assesses mobility and displacements, gendered dimensions of climate change impacts, the management of climate risks (formal and informal mechanisms), and the opportunities for climate change mitigation.

### 3.2 Socio-Political and Economic Context of the Karamoja Cluster

#### 3.2.1 Political Context of the Karamoja Cluster

The Karamoja cluster has a long history of marginalization that dates to the colonial administrations<sup>10</sup>. In Ethiopia, the South Omo region was neglected because the people were perceived to be sympathetic to the Oromo Liberation Movement. Districts within the Karamoja cluster were referred to as frontier districts by their respective immediate post-colonial governments. That they were placed under military and/or police administration for a long period of time presents a challenge to post-colonial governments because of their indifference to government control<sup>11</sup>. It is only since the 1990s that these regions were integrated into the mainstream development process of their national governments.

In Kenya and Uganda, in particular, the Karamoja communities have been victims of forceful disarmament by police and armed forces since the 1980s<sup>12</sup>. The operations were/are often accompanied by violence, torture, confiscation, and other human rights abuses by the state<sup>13</sup>. In Kenya, for example, this exercise has been underway for the last two months in Pokot and Turkana<sup>14</sup>. In these communities, the police have been objects of attack by disgruntled people. In West Pokot, for instance, respondents reported that the deadliest and most horrendous government violence was in the mid-1980s, and is referred to as *Loturiri*. Thousands of cattle were rounded up and driven away by the army while the villages were bombed by helicopters.

Following the civil wars in South Sudan and Ethiopia in the 1980s, and the overthrow of the government of Idi Amin of Uganda in the late 1970s and the following insurgency, there has been a free flow of guns and other ammunition into the Karamoja cluster. Each community armed itself to defend and/or acquire livestock from the neighboring communities. The acquisition and relatively free flow of guns and other light weapons has made the Karamoja cluster more volatile and confrontations more lethal.

Access to government services remains limited and the presence of government is minimal in the Ugandan districts of Kaabong, Amudat, and Kotido, Loima in Turkana, and Kapoeta East and Kapoeta South in South Sudan. In Uganda, the government created a special Ministry for Karamoja affairs

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<sup>10</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kakuma, Turkana West, Kenya, 04 February 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Katanga, Moroto, Uganda, 06 February 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Katanga, Amudat, Uganda, 07 February 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Alale, Pokot North, Kenya, 06 February 2023.

which has ensured more focus on this part of the country. In Kenya, a constitutional review in 2010 created the Equalization Fund to invest in the development of the area to enable it catch up with the rest of the country. In Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia such an initiative does not exist. Therefore, the Karamoja cluster is an area that lags in development and is, therefore, in need. To meet these needs, NGOs and churches play a leading role in provision of services ranging from health, food, education, livestock, and peace-building. For this reason, they enjoy more respect from the people than their governments.

### 3.2.2 Ecological Context of the Karamoja Cluster

The Karamoja cluster is a region that receives low and unreliable rainfall, and experiences high temperatures most of the year. The aridity and drought in the entire cluster makes food security precarious, making it difficult for communities to survive. The communities remain net beneficiaries of humanitarian food aid. As such, the highest number of refugees from Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Somalia are hosted at Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camps in Turkana County.

Within the cluster there is little effort towards promoting agricultural production as pastoralism remains dominant. Because of the large herds of cattle held, any change in climate has substantial implications for the cluster communities.

The nexus between climate change and conflict is evident in the Karamoja cluster. There is a strong view that climate change, prominently marked by prolonged and more frequent droughts and reduced pastures and water, elicits migrations to far-flung areas for pasture and water. In the process, this increases the cluster's susceptibility to conflict due to competition over dwindling resources. For example, in the process of migration, the Pokot, Turkana, and Toposa come dangerously close to the Karamojong, Jie, and Matheniko of Uganda. The Dassanech and the Nyangatom migrate to the Kibish area of Turkana, increasing the likelihood of conflict with locals.

### 3.2.3 Cultural Context of the Karamoja Cluster

Culturally, rites of passage encompass the full life of an individual. Transitioning from one stage to the next is collectively marked with pomp, jubilation, and celebration<sup>15</sup>. Young men are required to demonstrate bravery and acquisition of cattle wealth. Attacks on other communities are often sanctioned and expected, and the collective moral economy of cattle theft is strong.

The traditional notion of ownership of cattle as a measure of wealth and respect or social recognition remains a key motivation for conflict over livestock. This places a very high value on cattle, and has resulted in a strong attachment to cattle, referred to as the cattle complex<sup>16</sup>. The trans-generational mentality that ownership of cattle defines one in the community still persists, especially among the youth.

The Karamoja cluster communities have a strong adherence to payment of bride wealth<sup>17</sup>. Bride wealth remains expensive, often in the form of hundreds of cattle. All young men are socialized to obtain livestock to marry. The occurrence of early marriages is often despite the reduction in traditional *kraal*-based marriages<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, girls are socialized to marry only men who demonstrate the ability to pay

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<sup>15</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kakuma Turkana West, Kenya 04 February 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Melville Herskovits, 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa', *American Anthropologist* 28 (1) (1923): 230–72.

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kaabong, Uganda, 20 February 2023

<sup>18</sup> FGD, Kaabong Town Council, Uganda, 20 February 2023.

bride wealth. Therefore, the demand for cattle remains high and it fuels a considerable proportion of cattle raids in order to satisfy this obligation.

Additionally, cattle as a source of social recognition creates a motivation to demonstrate bravery and ability to appropriate the livestock of others. The pride associated with ownership of cattle is strong motivation for staging raids. There is strong competition among youth to demonstrate superiority over other communities. This notion is associated with the mentality that theirs was the first community to own cattle and other communities are, therefore, not entitled to cattle.

Overall, livestock and access to land-based natural resources are key livelihood factors. They define and shape individual and community political and socio-cultural relations, economic organization, and local security sub-structures. Because the region's entire security configuration is primarily for the protection of livestock and resources around which the livelihood of the community revolves, any alteration in any of these factors is certain to trigger conflict.

### 3.3 UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT DYNAMICS

Despite sharing fundamental socio-political and economic aspects, there is evidence that the communities suffer from intolerable stress because of conflicts. In this regard, key informants revealed that the communities' livelihood (pastoralism and agro-pastoralism) is intrinsically linked to conflicts. Evidence shows that the conflicts are predominantly about livestock assets and related competition over water and pasture.

#### 3.3.1 Types of Conflicts

There are various types of conflicts in the Karamoja cluster. These include cattle rustling, natural resource-based conflicts, banditry and road ambushes, violent and armed confrontation between pastoralists and government forces, human-wildlife conflicts, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and land-based border conflicts.

The most prevalent conflict type is cattle rustling. Cattle rustling has increasingly evolved over time from a cultural practice to a more violent and commercialized economic activity across the cluster. It is deemed as a traditional and cultural activity, and is part of what these communities have known since time immemorial. However, changes in conflict dynamics have turned it into a multifaceted conflict that consumes whole communities. Today, livestock raiding is used to restock herds after raids or droughts have depleted the original stock.

According to study participants, cattle rustling is common among communities in the cluster, with the Turkana at the center of such kinds of conflicts since they border all the other communities<sup>19</sup>. Years before, the Nyangatom and the Turkana were not enemies but now conflict has reared its ugly head because of cattle rustling, pasture, and water<sup>20</sup>. Other dimensions of the conflict include those between the Pokot of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda, between the Pokot and Turkana in Kenya, and the Jie conflicts with the Acholi.

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<sup>19</sup> Joshia O Osamba, 'The Sociology of Insecurity: Cattle Rustling and Banditry in North-Western Kenya', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 1 (2) (2000): 11–37.

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview, Administrator Advisor, Turmi Ethiopia, 2 February 2023

Natural resource-based conflict refers to the struggle over access to pasture and water which is met by resistance from the host community<sup>21</sup>. The Nyangatom, Turkana, and Dassenech have been locked in regular conflict majorly over water, pasture and livestock, and recently over fishing grounds in Lake Turkana<sup>22</sup>. This conflict is further aggravated by cultural variations among the communities, and state neglect evident in the lack of institutions to enable the people to meet their basic human needs and actualize their potentials<sup>23</sup>. These underlying causes and subsidiary factors have not been significantly transformed and continue to persist in the Turkana-Nyangatom-Dassenech conflict environment<sup>24</sup>.

Conflicts over fishing rights in Lake Turkana between the Dassenech and Turkana are mainly concentrated in the Omo River delta in the north of the lake. The conflict is caused by the Dassanech's claims that they have a right of access to the lake which, in their view, belongs to them as much as to the Turkana. Additionally, pastures are fertile in this region due to the subtle blend between the saltwater of the lake and the fresh water of the Omo<sup>25</sup>.

In some parts of the cluster, banditry and road ambushes which invite security forces into the fray are becoming prevalent<sup>26</sup>. It is a frightening form of conflict perpetuated by the Pokot mainly against the Turkana and travelers who have nothing to do with cattle or their differences with their neighbors. Similar incidences have been witnessed in the Nadapal-Lokichoggio border, with skirmishes and confrontations with security forces turning violent and causing border closures<sup>27</sup>. Persistent killings and livestock theft by the Pokot against the Turkana, and highway banditry which rocked the Lodwar – Kitale highway caused the Kenyan Government to deploy the army to try and contain the acts of terror visited upon innocent civilians by the so-called warriors. The new anti-banditry force, known as the Land and Air Team (LAT), targets to drive out the bandits from their hideouts in gorges and valleys in the affected region<sup>28</sup>. However, the Pokot are fighting back against the government's forced disarmament exercise. As a study participant noted, *"In the past six months, several civilians and police officers have been murdered with schools, churches and police vehicles burnt by bandits who have stepped up their attacks on civilians and security personnel."*

There are also land related conflicts around uncontested boundaries and borders. Most importantly, the Ilemi Triangle is a thorn in the flesh among the Nyangatom of Ethiopia, the Toposa of South Sudan, and the Turkana around the greater north<sup>29</sup>. A PAX research report refers to Ilemi as a territory larger than Israel or about the size of Rwanda (c.25, 000sq km), which runs from the northern end of Mogilla

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<sup>21</sup> Anne Gakuria, 'Natural Resource Based Conflict Among Pastoralist Communities in Kenya' (MA Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Marine Le Ster, 'Conflicts over Water around Lake Turkana Armed Violence between Turkana and Dassanech's,' HAL, 2011, <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01206597/document> (accessed 15 May 2023).

<sup>23</sup> Austin Ngacha, 'Diminishing role of Traditional Mechanisms in the Management of Pastoralist conflict,' 5 November 2020, <https://shalomconflictcenter.org/briefing-paper-no-2-an-analysis-of-turkana-dassanech-conflict/> (accessed 12 June 2023).

<sup>24</sup> Personal interview, Administration advisor, Turmi, Ethiopia, 8 February 2023

<sup>25</sup> FGD, Turmi, Ethiopia, 8 February 2023

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview, District Education Officer, Amudat, Uganda, 21 February 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Personal interview, Border Patrol Officer, Nadapal, South Sudan, 18 February 2023.

<sup>28</sup> ACLED, 'Situation Update', *Kenya: Government Operation against Pastoralist Militias in North Rift Region* (blog), 31 March 2023, <https://acleddata.com/2023/03/31/kenya-situation-update-march-2023-government-operation-against-pastoralist-militias-in-north-rift-region/>.

<sup>29</sup> Al Chukwuma Okoli, 'Ilemi Triangle Spat: How Resources Fuel East Africa's Border Conflicts,' *The Conversation*, 16 February 2023, <https://theconversation.com/ilemi-triangle-spat-how-resources-fuel-east-africas-border-conflicts-199656> (accessed 15 June 2023).

Mountains near the Nadapal South Sudan-Kenya border crossing to the old Anyuak village of Ilemi at the confluence of River Achuma with the Akóbo much further north on the Ethiopian border<sup>30</sup>. It includes much of the Boma Plateau (roughly 85 percent), the vast Kàuto highlands with the basin of the upper Kuròn River and the Nanyangachor Valley, Moruangipi and parts of the plains west and south of them<sup>31</sup>. The Nyangatom believe that the Ilemi region belongs to them while the Turkana also claim it as theirs. The war experience and self-determination of the Dassenech in the conflict-ridden area of northeastern Africa gives a clear explanation of the Ilemi Triangle issue. It remains unresolved to this day with a huge swathe of land annexed by Kenya<sup>32</sup>.

This area continues to witness conflicts pitting any of the three communities against each other. There have been numerous inter-community peace settlements and agreements. However, these are quickly disregarded during times of severe drought when livestock need to access water and pasture which may be in the other community's area of occupation at the time.

There is also conflict over the Nadapal border between the Turkana and the Toposa. The point of contention is ownership and accessibility to the rich pastures around Nadapal that the Kwatela clan who live around Lokichoggio and Nanam in Turkana West in Kenya and the Toposa of Eastern Equatoria state in South Sudan both lay claim to<sup>33</sup>. The region under contest ranges from Nadapal to Losolia and Logolei at Mogilla range that is known as a veritable war zone for the Turkana (Kwatela) and the Toposa. Apart from conflicts over access to grass and water, the communities have recently extended violence to road construction projects funded by the World Bank<sup>34</sup>. As a result, road construction projects expected to link East African countries have been halted following attacks on the workers by the Toposa militia<sup>35</sup>. As a study participant opined, *“Several of the workers have been shot dead by suspected Sudanese Toposa militia at the road site, forcing the suspension of the road works. We have observed that there have been constant disruptions of the road construction at Nadapal border. We appeal to our neighbors to allow the work to continue and stop killing road construction workers. This road is of economic benefit to both countries.”*<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, SGBV is more pronounced and perpetuated in times of conflict and inter-community cattle raids. During this time, women are raped, abducted, tortured, and remain in fear of the unknown as they go about their daily work<sup>37</sup>. Sexual harassment exposes women to HIV/AIDs and psychological torture<sup>38</sup>. For example, at Narus in South Sudan, women are commonly sexually harassed during the frequent conflicts<sup>39</sup>.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority was cited as an affected entity due to livestock overgrazing in Loroo sub-county and Nabilatuk that are reserved for wildlife, and this has heightened the human-wildlife

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<sup>30</sup> Eliza Snel and Lotje de Vries, 'The Ilemi Triangle: Understanding a Pastoralist Border Area', [https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/import/2022-03/PAX\\_REPORT\\_ILEMI\\_FINAL\\_digi\\_single\\_page.pdf](https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/import/2022-03/PAX_REPORT_ILEMI_FINAL_digi_single_page.pdf) (accessed 13 June 2023).

<sup>31</sup> FGD in Kajamakin, Nyangatom, Ethiopia, 5 February 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kangaten Ethiopia, 9 February 2023

<sup>33</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nadapal Village, Turkana West, Kenya, 8 February 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Lokichoggio, Turkana West, Kenya, 8 February 2023

<sup>36</sup> Personal interview, Nadapal Payam, Kapoeta East County, South Sudan, 10 February 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Personal interview, Catholic Priest, Turkana West, Kenya, 11 February 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Moroto, Uganda, 5 February 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview, Narus, South Sudan, 4 February 2023.

conflicts<sup>40</sup>. In a region where communities' livestock depends heavily on water and pasture, the abundant availability of grass ostensibly reserved for wild animals irks the livestock keepers, and the next most obvious action would be use of violence to access it.

### 3.3.2 Conflict actors and trends

The various types of conflicts in the Karamoja cluster tend to consume and affect all community members, regardless of age, while each gender contributes to it differently. Children between the ages of 12-17 years and men aged between 18-35 years are the most active combatants across the cluster.

Children are conscripted at an early age, and grow up to defend what they believe is rightfully theirs: livestock and pasture<sup>41</sup>. Their exploits in raids and counter-raids are celebrated and extolled as heroic deeds of valor. In the Karamoja cluster, the fighting youth are viewed as warriors and not mere criminal perpetrators of violence. They are the most mobile and travel long distances to spy and raid neighboring communities for livestock. The acquisition of livestock is for purposes of enhancing social esteem, acquisition of wealth, payment of the ever-high bride price, and revenge camouflaged as restocking<sup>42</sup>.

The women are not left behind. Among the Pokot of Kenya, the women perform rituals when men go out to raid. The rituals involve the tying of a string of cloth or herbs around their waists tightly during raiding periods<sup>43</sup>. They believe this ensures the success of the raids and safe return of their husbands<sup>44</sup>. This means they fully understand the accrued benefits from such escapades and the need to observe certain rituals that ensure safety and prosperity of their homesteads and as a people<sup>45</sup>.

Women also celebrate their men with song and dance when they return from cattle raids, showing their support for these excursions. When their communities are on the receiving end, however, women bear the brunt of these attacks<sup>46</sup>. They are brutally raped, sometimes maimed and carried off as trophies and benefits of war. When their husbands are victims and die during raids, they become widows and are helplessly consigned to a life of destitution. Traditionally, there were support systems within cultural settings, but as the communities within the cluster face harder options with the onset of harsher climatic conditions resulting in scarcity of water, pasture, and food, the situation becomes critical<sup>47</sup>.

Male *kraal* leaders (aged 35-60 years) and traditional elders (60 years and above) are the pillars that hold most of the Karamoja cluster communities together. They lead by offering guidance and strategic advice before, during, and after most conflicts. As one study participant said, "*Elders from the different communities here influence the youth to raid.*"<sup>48</sup> Across the cluster, men are the most accused as the perpetrators whose role in conflicts surpasses all the other groups. At an age where wisdom and peace should override material gain through conflicts, we see a completely different view.

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<sup>40</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Amudat, Uganda, 7 February 2023.

<sup>41</sup> FGD respondents, Pokot, Kenya, 7 Feb 2023

<sup>42</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kacheliba, West Pokot, Kenya, 9 Feb 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Alale, West Pokot, Kenya, 9 February 2023

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Pokot, Kenya, 9 Feb 2023.

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview, Katanga, Moroto, Uganda, 11 February 2023

<sup>47</sup> Ali Raza, Ali Razzaq, Sundas Mehmood, Xiling Zhou, Xuekun Zhang, Yan Lv and Jinsong Xu, 'Impact of Climate Change on Crops Adaptation and Strategies to Tackle Its Outcome: A Review', *Plants* 8 (2) (2019): 34.

<sup>48</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Turmi Omorate, Ethiopia, 3 February 2023.

The *kraal* leaders and the traditional elders fan the attacks against neighbors most times to increase their wealth but at times to encourage revenge attacks on neighbors. Revenge attacks by the Toposa against the Turkana are very popular and may be carried out against perpetrators several years after<sup>49</sup>. Seers famously known as *Ngimuruok* sanction and predict the outcomes of attacks, thus fueling conflict among the communities within this vast cluster. They are trusted and, over eons of time, have become cultural institutions within the communities. They not only ensure success but may advise against a particular raid if they feel there are possible signs of failure during execution.

New modern actors have entered the fray. They are the astute businessmen, brokers, and middlemen who are turning out to be funders of rustling in the name of communal conflict over the twin natural resources of pasture and water<sup>50</sup>. The FGD participants at Nakapelimoru, Kotido district in Uganda, Dassenech area near Turmi in Ethiopia, Narus in Kapoeta East, and Alale in Kenya reported that lorries collect livestock immediately after raids are conducted. The conflicts seem engineered for the benefit of the business class and a number of them actually accompany raiders up to safe places nearer the identified target communities<sup>51</sup>.

Government administrators and members of the security forces are also involved in both fanning and containing conflict in their areas of jurisdiction<sup>52</sup>. In certain places, there are situations where the administrators fail to act to stem rising conflicts among communities<sup>53</sup>. Most border points are conflict flashpoints, as pointed out earlier, and the communities that are at these borders rarely get help to fend off attacks from cross border communities<sup>54</sup>. This is primarily because of the expansive porous borders which raiders take advantage of. The administrators and law enforcement agencies are hopelessly inadequate. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) is, however, the exception<sup>55</sup>. They have managed to have a felt presence every ten kilometers along the common border stretch, ensuring rapid responses to cries for help from the ethnic communities which get attacked anywhere along the border regions with the Turkana<sup>56</sup>.

Local politicians in each of the cluster member countries are the designated cultural beneficiaries of a system bestowed upon them by their ethnic communities<sup>57</sup>. They, therefore, reflect warrior-like tendencies that seek to encourage conflict instead of peaceful resolutions of disputes as they arise. Across the cluster, politicians influence conflict for their own benefit<sup>58</sup>. South Sudan is a veritable example of politicians dabbling in conflict and fanning the flames to cart away minerals found within the Toposa area in Kapoeta East<sup>59</sup>. Because politicians are knowledgeable and represent their communities in the government, they are bestowed with a lot of trust which they, in turn, exploit to their

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<sup>49</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nadapal, Turkana West, Kenya, 04 February 2023

<sup>50</sup> FGD participants, Nakapelimoru, Kotido, Uganda 04 February 2023.

<sup>51</sup> KII, in Pokot, Kenya; Turmi, South Omo; Narus, Kapoeta East, South Sudan, Feb 2023

<sup>52</sup> FGD, Lokichoggio, Turkana West, Kenya, 8 February 2023

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nadapal Village, Turkana West, Kenya, 4 February 2023

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Moroto, Uganda, 5 February 2023

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> FGD, Alale, West Pokot, Kenya 8 February 2023

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Amudat District, Uganda, 4 February 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Narus, Kapoeta East, South Sudan, 11 February 2023.

own benefit. Several politicians caught in scandals rarely do so for the benefit of the people but rather for their personal benefit and that of their families<sup>60</sup>.

### 3.3.3 Effects and Impacts of Conflict

Loss of lives and a heightened orphan burden is one of the effects of conflict<sup>61</sup>. Families battle with rustlers from the various areas in the Karamoja cluster, and the worst hit are the young families who are orphaned. Most of the families become female-headed and they must fend for themselves<sup>62</sup>. Several community documented events that end up in the killing of suspected rustlers always ignite revenge killings and counter raids<sup>63</sup>. Some of the differential effects of conflicts on men, women and youth include rise in female-headed households, loss of livestock and other property, displacement of populations, changing livelihoods and environmental degradation.

#### **Rise in female-headed households**

Prevalent cross-border conflicts have led to deaths and injuries of civilians and armed men (youth warriors and security officers). There is an emerging reality in which gendered power relations have been redefined by conflict. The study revealed that rural women of Karamoja cluster have been rendered even more powerless and helpless in fulfilling their basic roles. During an FGD in Loima and Alale, several women narrated their experience of the “triple widow tragedy after losing three husbands to raids”<sup>64</sup>. One woman in Alale, West Pokot, narrated that she has suffered psychological trauma from conflict, narrating<sup>65</sup>,

*“My first husband married me when I was 13 years old. It took me two years for me to conceive my first child. A year later my husband acquired a gun which made him crazy and a renowned warrior. Every woman and man alike admired him. A year later he was killed in a raid in Turkana, but his gun was recovered which was passed on to his young brother who also later inherited me. Because of the anger to revenge the death of his brother, he too was killed in Loima, but the gun was again recovered and handed to the last son in that family. Because I was still young and beautiful with only two children, the clan decided that he inherits me. Although he promised not to raid, the Turkana raiders killed him from home while defending the family wealth”.*

#### **Loss of livestock and other property**

Cattle rustling and undercover livestock business using violence to fend off any economic stresses and eventual conflicts disrupt local economies, affect livelihoods, and fuel insecurity across the region. For example, in Katanga, Moroto, the cutting off of the livestock trade markets due to conflicts leads to reduced access to income and an increase in counter cattle raids, counter thefts, and loss of property and lives. In Alale, it is alleged that the Pokot community traders (mainly men) buy stolen animals from the Turkana community rustlers and sell them through the border to Loroo and Moroto districts in

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<sup>60</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nadapal Village, Turkana West, Kenya, 4 February 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Zachary Wagner, Sam Heft-Neal, Paul Wise, Robert Black, Marshall Burke, Tiese BormaZulfqar Bhutta and Eran Bendavid, ‘Women and Children Living in Areas of Armed Conflict in Africa: A Geospatial Analysis of Mortality and Orphanhood’, *The Lancet Global Health* 7 (12) (2019): 622–31.

<sup>62</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Lokirama, Loima, Kenya, 9 February 2023

<sup>63</sup> Rachael Onyango, ‘Participation of Children in Armed Conflict: A Case Study of Marsabit District, 1991-2005’ (M.A Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> FGD with women, Loima and Alale, Kenya, 8 February 2023

<sup>65</sup> FGD, Alale, West Pokot, Kenya, 9 February 2023



Uganda<sup>66</sup>. Unfortunately, due to the vast borders, the slow response of the armed personnel, and complicity of the various cross-border ethnic groups in Kenya and Uganda, tracking and recovery of the stolen livestock is particularly problematic. The mutual sharing agreements on scarce resources along the border lines have also been disrupted and are a recipe for conflict and tensions<sup>67</sup>.

### **Changing livelihoods systems and environmental degradation**

Conflict has forced some of the Toposa youth in South Sudan to migrate to towns. Where they had previously engaged in pastoralism<sup>68</sup>, some operate small-scale businesses as traders, while others burn and sell charcoal. Other instances of diversified forms of livelihood include wage labor in mining and quarries<sup>69</sup>.

### **Socio-economic isolation**

The Karamoja cluster is isolated from the political, social, and cultural processes taking place in major towns and cities in other parts of the respective nations as a direct consequence of the conflict and insecurity associated with the region. For many people from the wider regions outside the Karamoja cluster, Karamoja remains a 'no go' area because of fear of conflict and insecurity<sup>70</sup>.

As such, there is little opportunity for communities outside the cluster to understand the Karamoja communities and their way of life. Apart from the fact that this only serves to feed the stereotyping that characterizes any discussion of Karamoja at the national levels, it also limits interaction between the Karamoja cluster populations and the rest of the country. Yet, such interaction is needed for the free flow of goods and services that would help spur the Karamoja cluster economy and create opportunities for positive change in lifestyles and livelihoods.

#### **3.3.4 Formal and informal initiatives**

There are standing peace accords and agreements between several ethnic groups. For example, the Lokiriana Peace Accord was signed in 1973<sup>71</sup> between the Turkana and Matheniko and, to date, neither community has raided the other. A peace declaration, dubbed the Kibish Declaration, between the Nyangatom and Toposa was the result of a peace caravan in the Nyangatom *woreda* in the South Omo region in December 2023<sup>72</sup>.

Festivals and commemorations such as *Tobongu'lore* festival and *Moru Anayeche* are held annually with support from the Turkana County Government and NGOs in the cluster<sup>73</sup>. *Moru Anayeche*<sup>74</sup> is a celebration of the initial dispersal point of the Toposa, Karimojong, and the Turkana in Letea ward, Turkana West. The celebrants are people from across the cluster region. The Lokiriana Peace Accord festival in Loima sub-county, the peace caravan in Nyangatom, and the Karamoja Cultural festival in Moroto are additional government-led initiatives to foster peace and reconciliation. They also celebrate

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<sup>66</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Katanga, Moroto, Uganda, 9 February 2023.

<sup>67</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Amudat, Uganda, 9 February 2023.

<sup>68</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Narus, South Sudan, 15 February 2023.

<sup>69</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kaabong District, Uganda 11 February 2023

<sup>70</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Lokichoggio, Turkana West, Kenya, 8 February 2023.

<sup>71</sup> FGD, Lokiriana, Loima, Kenya 09 February 2023

<sup>72</sup> FGD, Aypa Kebele, Nyangatom, Ethiopia, 04 February 2023

<sup>73</sup> KII, Lokiriana, Loima Kenya 04 February 2023

<sup>74</sup> Nayeche is the mother to all the respective ethnic communities in the cluster.

the culture of peace and management of peace dialogues and resource sharing agreements among the cross-border ethnic groups<sup>75</sup>.

Informal institutions at the *kraal* level, including *kraal* leaders, seers, and diviners (*ngimuruok*), are engaged in various cross-border initiatives on resource sharing of water and pasture. Their discussions with neighboring, cross-border *kraals* enable the peace accords, festivals, and celebrations to take place. Even the main NGO and CBO activities only take place once an entry is made, and they provide the platform for the participation of women, youth, and children. These celebrations could attract support from various government and non-governmental agencies where support in the form of provisions to the respective host venues could be extended. This can include social amenities with attendant services including water, health, education, and related services, which would extend benefits to the community.

NGOs and foundations host various sports events and competitions. One such organization is the Tegla Loroupe Foundation, which is supported by the Athletics for a Better World social responsibility program, organizes the annual Loroupe Peace Race<sup>76</sup>. The events/competitions target mainly the youth and aim to foster friendship networks among the warring communities on the Kenyan-Ugandan border. The focal point of the event is the warriors 10km road race where rivalling factions put aside their differences and unite in the spirit of sport. High-profile dignitaries from Uganda and Kenya have supported and attended the race since the inaugural edition in 2003<sup>77</sup>, with some participating in the dignitaries' 2 km road race in a show of improved diplomatic relations. The race has provided a much-needed platform to reflect and talk about peace and development. With the establishment of a series of other peace races across Kenya, there is palpable evidence of a soothing of relations. One group of warriors from Kainuk in South Turkana district, who took part in the Moroto Peace Race, has remained a staunch advocate of peace, helping to improve community relations between the Pokot and the Turkana along Turkwel, Amolem, and Kasei areas<sup>78</sup>.

*Kraals* are known to have individuals who can participate in various sports, especially athletics. The youth engaged in raiding are strong, energetic, and healthy individuals, and practice will for sure see them change their ways. All it requires is for their talent to be recognized and nurtured.

In the cluster, the prominent women peace actors are Lodwar-based Friends of Lake Turkana, which is undertaking work in governance and peace-building across the border between the Turkana and the Karimojong; I\_REP (I am Responsible Organization), which is working on peace and against FGM among the Pokot, Tepeth, and Karimojong; Karamoja Initiative for Sustainable Peace (KISP) in Moroto, which is working between the Karimojong and Turkana. Peace choirs such as Kosuroi in Oropoi, the Kalobeyei Peace Choir<sup>79</sup>, and St. Monica Women's Group in Kaabong<sup>80</sup> have continued to be useful towards convincing the *karachuna* (reformed Karimojong warriors) to abandon cattle raiding and take up other non-violent ways of livelihoods.

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<sup>75</sup> KII, Moroto, Uganda, 09 February 2023

<sup>76</sup> <https://teglapeace.org/>

<sup>77</sup> FGD, Lokiriama, Loima, Kenya 09 February 2023

<sup>78</sup> <https://worldathletics.org/news/feature/tegla-loroupe-champion-peace-in-sport>

<sup>79</sup> FGD, Oropoi, Turkana West, Kenya, 4 February 2023.

<sup>80</sup> FGD, Kaabong Town Council, Kaabong, Uganda, 11 February 2023

### 3.3.5 Disarmament Programmes

After an almost 15-year hiatus in active engagement in the region, activities by the Ugandan government in the early 2000s brought a profound shift in the region. In 2001, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) implemented a short-lived, forced disarmament program, followed by a more comprehensive campaign beginning in 2006<sup>81</sup>. Violence and insecurity initially increased following the start of the 2006 disarmament campaign due to the loss of firearms for protective purposes. Human rights violations by the Ugandan military were also widespread, including gender-based forms of abuse such as requiring young men to lie naked in the sun with bricks on their chests and intentional injuries to male genitalia<sup>82</sup>.

In Kenya, the government's management of the conflict between the Turkana and the Pokot in the land-based border conflict is a replica of colonial strategies. These include heavy-handed political violence, socially systemic fear, rifle disarmament, and undermining of their economic base<sup>83</sup>.

### 3.3.6 Migration to towns

One of the impacts of conflict is the migration of women and youths to the towns within the cluster. Most of the migrants have no special skills and, therefore, engage in informal business activities and provision of services to the urban residents. The increase in urban populations is observed in the rise of informal settlements in Lodwar, Kakuma, Moroto, Amudat, Kotido, Kaabong, Narus, Kapoeta, Kangaten, and Omorate towns.

In summary, the conflicts in the Karamoja cluster are cyclic in nature and are mainly caused by the cultural affinity for livestock as the mainstay of the economy. The climatic conditions prevailing in the region have made conflicts worse. The next section of this study goes further to assess the climate risks that exacerbate the conflict conditions in the cluster.

## 3.4 Understanding Climate Risks in the Karamoja Cluster.

Among the major climatic episodes in the Karamoja cluster are prolonged periods of drought. These are becoming more pronounced to the level of a humanitarian catastrophe, with some respondents alluding to year-round drought.

Rising global temperatures, overgrazing, and increased land use changes through industrial and agricultural development across the cluster are the causes of desertification in the cluster. The major impacts include increased migration of women and youth to urban areas, reduced reliance on pastoralism, and changes in traditional gender roles.

### 3.4.1 Climate change manifestations

An Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report<sup>84</sup> presents strong evidence that climatic disasters and disruptions are becoming more common and catastrophic across the globe, and the

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<sup>81</sup> KII, Katanga, Moroto, Uganda. 09 February 2023

<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Stites, 'Conflict in Karamoja: A Synthesis of Historical and Current Perspectives, 1920- 2022,' USAID, 2022, [https://karamojaresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TUFTS\\_2254\\_KRSU\\_Conflict\\_knowledge\\_synthesis\\_V2\\_online.pdf](https://karamojaresilience.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/TUFTS_2254_KRSU_Conflict_knowledge_synthesis_V2_online.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2023).

<sup>83</sup> Patrick Devine, 'Persistent conflict between the Pokot and the Turkana: causes and policy implications,' (PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2016).

<sup>84</sup> Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Hans-Otto Pörtner, Panmao Zhai , Priyadarshi R Shukla, and Debra Roberts, 'Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management,

Karamoja cluster is not an exception. From Ethiopia's Kangaten, South Sudan's Kapoeta, Kenya's Loima and Kacheliba, all the way to Uganda's Moroto, climate change is an indisputable challenge that characterizes life across the arid and semi-arid land (ASAL).

Insufficient and highly variable rainfall precipitation is a defining feature of climate change in the region. Importantly, there is broad consensus across the study respondents that rainfall is erratic. From as far back as 2009, some areas have experienced only short rains between the months of March and October. As of the time of the assessment, the greater region had been experiencing drought conditions since late 2021.

Historically, it was noted that the dry period or what the Nyangatom call "*lokuang*" and Turkana call "*akamu*" occurs concurrently with increased temperatures in the day and night, with serious implications on the availability of water in the region. Moreover, there was considerable evidence from FGDs that the brief rainfall precipitations come with violent storms resulting in flash floods. In Dassanech, there are months when floods would occur, especially from July to September, on the banks of River Omo as it drains into Lake Turkana, thus damaging the livelihoods of thousands of people and destroying homes. While severe flooding is rare, with the latest being in 2019 and 2020, it is feared that increased climate change may make flooding become more regular, negatively impacting the local communities as shown below.

According to the April 2023 bulletin from the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), above average rainfall in Turkana resulted in flooding in a number of wards including Township, Kanamkemer, Songot, Kangatotha, Kakuma, Lokirama/Lorengipi, and Lokichoggio, among other areas<sup>85</sup>. Flash floods were also reported along major rivers including River Omanimani in Moroto, Uganda, Rivers Turkwel and Suam in Kenya, Kamion, Nadapal, Kuron and Lokoyot Rivers in South Sudan, and Kibish and Omo rivers in Ethiopia<sup>86</sup>.

Climate change is also manifested by increased temperatures. Being an ASAL area, temperatures are characterized by a warm and hot climate, with temperatures ranging between 20°C and 41°C, and a mean of 30.5°C<sup>87</sup>. In Turkana County alone, minimum and maximum air temperatures have increased by between 2 and 3°C (3.5 and 5.5°F) between 1967 and 2012<sup>88</sup>. This temperature increase has been observed across all seasons, but mainly from March to May<sup>89</sup>.

Other manifestations include desert locust invasions. Since early 2020, the region has been battling with swarms of desert locusts. Available literature links the recent intense outbreaks to anthropogenic climate change and the increased frequency of extreme weather events<sup>90</sup>. Scientists believe that locust outbreaks

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Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems', 2019, [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/SRCCL\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/SRCCL_Full_Report.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2023).

<sup>85</sup> National Drought Management Authority, 'Turkana County: Drought Early Warning Bulletin,' April 2023, <https://ndma.go.ke/index.php/resource-center/early-warning-reports/category/2-early-warning-bulletins> (accessed 17 June 2023).

<sup>86</sup> FGD, Nadapal, Turkana West, Kenya, 9 February 2023.

<sup>87</sup> John Nyangena, 'Assessment of Meteorological Drought in Main Climatic Zones of Kenya,' KIPPRA, 2020, <https://repository.kippira.or.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/3007/Assessment%20of%20Meteorological%20Drought%20in%20Main%20Climatic%20Zones%20of%20Kenya%20-%20DP244.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 17 June 2023).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Kristie L. Ebi, Jennifer Vanos, Jane W. Baldwin, Jesse E. Bell, David M. Hondula, Nicole A. Errett, Katie Hayes, Colleen E. Reid, Shubhayu Saha, June Spector and Peter Berry, 'Extreme Weather and Climate Change: Population Health and Health System Implications, Annual Review of Public Health, 421 (1) (2021): 293-315.

are subject to prevailing favorable conditions. These include a combination of weather, and soil and vegetation conditions that favor the reproduction and aggregation of otherwise solitary individuals<sup>91</sup>.

From descriptions by respondents and what could be seen as an after effect of the prolonged rains, tons of soil or debris on the mountain slopes which had been loosened gave way and fell into rivers, causing mudslides. While uncommon, incidents of mudslides were reported in areas such as Kapoeta, Kaabong, and West Pokot.

Being a predominantly pastoral community, the movement of livestock for grazing and trade is reported as responsible for the spread of livestock diseases.

### 3.4.2 Causes of climate change

There is compelling evidence, as presented across the field findings, that human activities are causing climate change in the Karamoja cluster. Activities such as cutting down trees for timber, firewood, and charcoal release heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, warming the planet and destabilizing the climate.

Available data from Global Forest Watch show that in 2010, Kapoeta had 5.81kha of tree cover, extending over 0.17 percent of its land area<sup>92</sup>. In 2021, it lost 1.76ha of tree cover, equivalent to 557kt of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>93</sup>. Similarly, Moroto had 9.48kha of tree cover by 2010, extending over 1.1 percent of its land area<sup>94</sup>, but had lost 7.15ha of tree cover, equivalent to 2.26kt of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>95</sup>, in 2021.

Because fuel wood and charcoal are important sources of energy for households needs, charcoal burning is an increasingly popular source of income across the cluster for people who can no longer survive purely from pastoralism due to factors such as recurrent drought<sup>96</sup>. During the data collection exercise in the field, piles of charcoal and split firewood amounting to many tons could be observed along the roads and villages in mainly woodland areas of Alale and Kacheliba in West Pokot. Furthermore, inadequate fuel alternatives perpetuate charcoal burning activities which have low returns and high costs on the environment.

Land use changes for industrial and agricultural development have increased substantially across the cluster. For instance, over the past several years, Ethiopia has embarked on a massive plan for dams, water-intensive irrigated cotton and sugar plantations, and irrigation canals and other infrastructure along the Omo River basin, which drains into Lake Turkana<sup>97</sup>. These developments are predicted to dramatically reduce the water supply of Lake Turkana, especially through irrigation. Reduced water levels will increase levels of salinity in the lake and raise water temperatures, decimating fish breeding areas and mature fish populations. The higher air temperatures will increase rates of evaporation, further increasing salinity while reducing biological productivity.

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<sup>91</sup> Jane Qiu, 'Global Warming May Worsen Locust Swarms', Nature, 7 October 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1038/news.2009.978>.

<sup>92</sup> Global Forest Watch, "Kapoeta," 13 June 2023, <https://shorturl.at/ampE8> (accessed 15 May 2023).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> FGD, Narus, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 11 February 2023

<sup>97</sup> FGD, Turmi, Omorate, Ethiopia 10 February 2023

Overgrazing and prolonged poorly managed grazing have become prevalent and are widely considered to be major causes of desertification in the cluster<sup>98</sup>. With lack of an alternative, respondents frequently mentioned how they feed their animals on the most palatable plants until those plants are stressed so much they fail to reproduce and/or die. The reduction of plant matter and cover modifies the soil microclimate, which alters soil-water-plant relationships and exposes bare soil to erosion.

Given that soils in ASALs are inherently weak, overgrazing corresponds with soil compaction or disruption of soil crusts, resulting in decreased water infiltration and increased soil erosion by wind and water. Changes in climate variability will make addressing these problems more complicated in areas where soil erosion occurs and where wells exist, as sand dunes may fill up the wells. This assertion is closely shared by Claudia Carr<sup>99</sup> who avers that the high concentration of livestock in the Ilemi was caused by the governments' policies which forced the Nyangatom and Dassanech to crowd their herds into lands between the Kibish and Omo Rivers. Therefore, these pastures became severely overgrazed and ecologically degraded, causing major new livestock mortality and herd decline<sup>100</sup>.

### 3.4.3 Impacts of climate change

The cluster has suffered several long and devastating impacts of climate change in the past decades. The impacts of climate change cut across diverse aspects of society, the economy, and the environment. As earlier mentioned, the available field findings point to the fact that communities in the cluster mainly rely on pastoralist and agro-pastoralism as sources of livelihood.

As dictated by the dry conditions that, in turn, advances desertification and ecological degradation of the region. Communities are, therefore, forced to migrate in search of pasture and water. In the process of migration, livestock morbidity and mortality increase because of reduced availability of forage and increased disease incidences<sup>101</sup>. While traveling across the field, the research team noticed vultures hovering over livestock carcasses.

This is closely related to concerns raised by respondents on the security implications of climate change. People recoup their decimated stock by raiding cattle from neighboring communities. Due to the animals' economic and social value, the theft represents a severe loss for the targeted families. The social tension caused by raiding further leads to a surge in populations that have already been displaced by extreme events such as floods and drought not just within nations, but often across borders.

Drought events have changed the environment across the cluster, as the prolonged dry spells kill otherwise long-lived acacia trees, resulting in a general reduction of the vegetation cover, leaving land more susceptible to overgrazing and soil erosion. On the same note, the reduction or disappearance of rangeland species have given room to bush encroachment and invasive species such as the *mathenge* tree, scientifically known as *Prosopis Juliflora*.

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<sup>98</sup> FGD, Aypa, Nyangatom, Ethiopia, 11 February 2023

<sup>99</sup> Claudia J. Carr, 'Nyangatom Livelihood and the Omo Riverine Forest', in *River Basin Development and Human Rights in Eastern Africa — A Policy Crossroads*, ed. Claudia J. Carr (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 145–56, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50469-8\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50469-8_8).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Anthrax, tick infestation, sheep and goat pox are common diseases observed during the drought and at the beginning of the rainfall after drought, leading to decimation of herds.

Study findings point to climate associated disasters, especially flash floods that have led to destruction of road and communication networks. Further, the heavy floods hamper access to markets, hospitals, and schools. Unfortunately, such disasters are becoming more frequent in the cluster.

The cluster has a high degree of risk from climate-sensitive infectious diseases such as food or waterborne diseases like diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever<sup>102</sup>. Vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and Rift Valley Fever are also common<sup>103</sup>. High temperatures and intense rainfall, which are some of the effects of climate change, are known to be critical factors in initiating malaria epidemics.

There was almost unanimous recognition by the study respondents across the cluster of the current negative effects of drought and unpredictable rains on community livelihoods. Respondents noted that climate change is already causing suffering and death because of food insecurity. The weight of field findings indicates that the small harvests are not enough to cover the food needs of the population, rendering the communities chronically food insecure. The situation is worse for children who suffer from hunger and malnutrition. When stocks run out, they find themselves feeding on leaves and wild fruit. As such, climate change has exposed the communities in the cluster to loss of livelihoods and, subsequently, a life of desperation of waiting for humanitarian aid.

For the governments, climate risks create an increasing burden in their efforts to protect vulnerable populations, given their limited resources. This is because most of their funding is re-directed towards humanitarian responses at the expense of sustainable development.

Furthermore, climate change is often referred to as a threat multiplier. This is because in areas with prevailing high poverty rates, and changing socioeconomic and political circumstances and demographic growth, the ever-increasing frequency of climatic events does not allow communities to recuperate after such shocks. They, therefore, live in a perpetual state of vulnerability.

#### 3.4.4 Gender aspects of climate change

While risks associated with climate change are not gender neutral<sup>104</sup>, one of the most apparent field observations was that the adverse impacts of climate continue to overburden the poorest and the most vulnerable, especially poor women.

Severe and frequent droughts and floods in the region not only impact men and women differently, but also threaten to amplify gender inequalities and even erode progress that has been made towards gender equality. This is due to the gender-differentiated relative powers, and roles and responsibilities at the household and community levels. For instance, women walk long distances to fetch water and are left behind with children and small livestock when men move away in search of pasture and water. For instance, among the Pokot, women bear a disproportionate responsibility for herding the few cattle that remain after big herds are taken away to greener regions within the cluster to access water and pasture, and fence cowsheds and homesteads in men's absence<sup>105</sup>.

Women have also borne the brunt of natural resource-based conflicts and mobility that have increased in recent times because of longer, more severe, and less predictable droughts. For example, women in South Sudan's Kapoeta the Turkana's Kakuma turn to charcoal burning, collecting firewood to sell in

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<sup>102</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Moroto, Uganda, 10 February 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nadapal, Turkana West, Kenya, 3 February 2023.

<sup>105</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Alale, West Pokot, Kenya 04 February 2023

the refugee camp, and undertake casual jobs at the refugee camp. They have, thus, become bread winners of their homes<sup>106</sup>.

Field findings show that, with their knowledge, women can shape adaptive mechanisms by engaging in alternative livelihood activities such as community savings groups. In these groups they save and disburse loans to facilitate their small businesses, and even engage in cross-border trade.

### 3.4.5 Management of climate risks

Reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate change is challenging. Complex processes have contributed to current exposures and vulnerabilities. Management of these risks is critical to reduce impact on the already vulnerable communities, and efforts to mitigate effects of climate change need to be harnessed towards lasting solutions and for greater impact. Choices which exacerbate rather than reduce exposure to risk need to be avoided or they can further drive irreversible changes in these components. Such choices include expansion of urban and suburban developments, persistent inequality, and increasing pressures on resources such as water<sup>107</sup>. Within the Karamoja cluster, these choices are narrowed down in an environment that is already climate risk prone.

Management of climate risks has been structured to include preventive measures at community levels. These include the introduction of adapted, risk-sensitive building and land use regulations, and traditional adaptation strategies, such as better seeds and different farming techniques<sup>108</sup>. Others are short-term coping mechanisms of harvesting immature food crops and selling off a small number of cattle, as adaptation or coping mechanisms. Households are using other long-term adaptation strategies which include diversification of livelihood sources, livestock mobility to track forage and water resources, diversification of herd composition to benefit from the varied drought and disease tolerance, fertility of diverse livestock species, and sending children to school for formal education as a long-term investment expected to pay back through income from employment<sup>109</sup>. Policies and development interventions that reduce risks, diminish livelihood constraints, and expand opportunities for increased household resilience to drought are critical complements to the existing pastoralists coping strategies<sup>110</sup>.

In Ethiopia, communities within the South Omo regions felt that the Government should release the dammed waters of the Omo River to facilitate their participation in small-scale agricultural activities that will be a source of alternative livelihood<sup>111</sup>. This is because the waters had been diverted upstream for sugarcane production by the Omo Kuraz 5 sugar factories<sup>112</sup>. This was initially thought of as a game changer, however, only a few hectares of land were utilized while the water volumes drastically reduced to the chagrin of the communities downstream. The local and international non-governmental organizations operating within this South Omo region were exhorted to intervene through provision of programs that facilitate small trading businesses<sup>113</sup>. Both the NGOs and governmental institutions

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<sup>106</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Narus, Kapoeta East, South Sudan, 11 February 2023

<sup>107</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Managing Climate Risks, Facing up to Losses and Damages,' November 2021, <https://www.oecd.org/publications/managing-climate-risks-facing-up-to-losses-and-damages-55ea1cc9-en.htm> (accessed 18 May 2023).

<sup>108</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Moroto, Uganda, 13 February 2023.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Lokiriama, Loima, Kenya, 11 February 2023.

<sup>111</sup> FGD participants, Turmi, Omorate, Ethiopia, 12 February 2023.

<sup>112</sup> Personal interview, Turmi, Omorate, Ethiopia 11 February 2023.

<sup>113</sup> FGD participants, Turmi, Omorate, Ethiopia 12 February 2023.



should support those wanting to engage in farming for food and for fodder for their livestock<sup>114</sup>.

Communities across the cluster ranked increasing forest cover among the top initiatives that can help in the management of climate risks. This should get a shot in the arm through various inter-community support initiatives and participation. A lot of buy-in is needed from communities that traditionally do not see the need for tree planting in a land that is bare, and vegetation is composed of scarce shrubs and drought resistant acacia.

Community awareness of climate risk is a starting point. Kenya exhibited a climate risk management approach at community level that displayed remarkable understanding of the risks. The importance of conservation and planting of trees through reforestation of depleted forest cover, and practising agroforestry especially in the Kachagalau and Karasuk hills in Pokot<sup>115</sup> was cited as a veritable example of mitigating climate risk<sup>116</sup>. The contribution of donor agencies and non-state actors, especially on forestry and agroforestry, can be the provision of tree seedlings and seeds when providing emergency cash transfer support to climate affected communities.

Though South Sudan did not report a robust community participation on climate, the few opinions expressed indicated a lack of awareness of climate risks. Communities nonchalantly went on about their lives without a care for the effects of climate change, but their Ugandan neighbors displayed an understanding of the need to manage these risks.

Piloting programs and creating awareness on climate risk management through resilience, building adaptive capacities through integrated resource management especially water and pasture, and scaled action planning on drought resilience and sustainable livelihood programs are suggestions of how to manage climate risk at community level.

Further, there is a need for communities to acquire more knowledge that will make better decisions on their part. Other suggestions preferred within the cluster included alternative livelihoods to improve rural incomes, climate adaptation mechanisms that improve agricultural practices for agro pastoralists, and quick maturing and disease resistant crops<sup>117</sup>. Supporting and promoting innovative technology projects that inhibit greenhouse emissions while enhancing investment in clean energy like solar is also a suitable intervention. Wind energy, rural water supply, minimizing greenhouse emissions, and forest cover all leverage climate risk management within the Karamoja cluster.

The promotion of irrigation agriculture and enhancement of food storage facilities constitute efforts to manage climate risk. Ethiopia's South Omo region promoted irrigation activities for the growing of sugarcane for the sugarcane factories. There are initiatives by the government on dryland farming techniques and deployment of agriculture and livestock extension staff to rural areas of the Karamoja cluster. Where residual risks remain despite adaptation efforts, innovative instruments that spread the (financial) risks between different actors or over a period, such as climate risk insurance, or that use a transformative approach (for instance as regards human mobility) complement the portfolio.

The assessment investigated critical barriers to decision-making on climate change. These include lack

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<sup>114</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Kangaten Ethiopia, 5 February 2023.

<sup>115</sup> These are the water towers for the Alale area communities extending all the way to Pokot in Uganda.

<sup>116</sup> Personal interview, West Pokot, Kenya, 4 Feb 2023.

<sup>117</sup> Personal interview, key informant, Nakapelimoru, Kotido, Uganda 5 February 2023.

of adequate climate change information, low capacity of actors, institutional red tape, duplication of roles and responsibilities due to poor coordination, changes in timing and duration of seasons' effects on seasonal management activities, constraints from national and regional budgets, policies, processes on altering or supplementing current management practices to enable adaptation to climate change, and general decline in staff resources and capacity.

On the other hand, several opportunities exist for more effective integration of climate change adaptation within development activities. These include making climate risk information more available, relevant, and usable, developing and applying climate risk screening tools, using appropriate entry points for climate information, and shifting emphasis to participatory implementation rather than developing new plans. Others include encouraging meaningful co-ordination and the sharing of good practices, and reviewing the timing of management activities while taking advantage of seasonal changes that provide more opportunities to implement beneficial adaptation actions.

There could also be efforts through various capacity building measures for the pastoralists, and an exchange between experts from different public and private sectors to discuss the benefit of integrated climate risk management in dealing with climate-related loss and damage. The interaction between different administrative levels is of key importance in fostering acceptance, and to ensure that implemented measures are sustainable. This would also prove that effective climate risk management can have a positive side effect on good governance. Monitoring and evaluating the implemented measures allows a continuous learning process to take place, which can then be drawn on for current participatory mechanisms and in future decision-making.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The Karamoja cluster is vulnerable to conflict and climate risks, and remains a net recipient of humanitarian aid because of its incapacity to provide food and security. It is a region of need in terms of access to social services and government services, and has been historically marginalized. To uplift this region, the governments of Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia will need to craft a regional development approach to remedy the past. So far, the tarmacking of the Lodwar-Nakodok road and the Moroto-Kenya border road are useful examples. South Sudan and Ethiopia will need to invest in the infrastructure to open these areas to trade. Therefore, development partners that champion infrastructure investments in the region will help to wean the communities from humanitarian aid.

From the recent past, there is an association between the intensity of conflicts across the cluster and climate change, often marked by dry riverbeds, rivers flowing for a shorter time, permanent rivers drying up, and grass failing to germinate etc. The net result has been more frequent migrations, often to far-off areas. Pastoralists move too close to each other, increasing the possibility of conflict. Therefore, development partners will need to support communities to deal with the effects of climate change. Diversification of sources of livelihood would be an important entry point.

Because Karamoja cluster communities have low access to services and low engagement with national centers of power, NGOs and churches provide the bulk of social services as they are closer to the people. They are more trusted by the people. The NGOs and churches remain the most important sources and avenues of development. Therefore, development partners need to take note of this evidence in terms of entry into the community.

There are many actors at both agency and collective levels who wield power and have influence in the Karamoja cluster. The traditional leaders/elders, the *kraal* leaders, the youth, elected political leaders, as well as national government officials hold the key to successful development. While *kraal* leaders enjoy overall support at community level, the youth are the active implementers of conflict. Politicians enjoy great influence and are more associated with incitement and galvanizing support for, or opposition to, development initiatives. Development partners will have to navigate the intricate relationship between the actors carefully to make a positive impact, as it is imperative that development partners obtain their support.

There are hundreds of thousands of refugee populations in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement. Their presence provides a huge market potential for agricultural crops. This provides an unexploited opportunity for local communities to diversify their sources of livelihood. Development partners can support this line of livelihood to reduce overdependence on livestock in the era of climate change occasioned by increasing and more frequent droughts and livestock deaths.

Although the Karamoja cluster communities are associated with never-ending conflict, there are useful formal and informal structures that now show hope for meaningful conflict resolution. These two structures, although useful in peace-building, frequently suffer from inadequate support and follow-up on peace-building activities.

The effect of conflict and climate change on gender relations has been noticeable in the entire Karamoja cluster. Climate change effects and increasing conflict over dwindling range resources force pastoralists to migrate more and further than usual, and spend more time away from their families. The net result is

that many people, especially women, have fallen out of pastoralism and migrated to urban areas like Lodwar, Moroto, and Kakuma to eke a living. Many women are now in the service industry as casual laborers, petty traders, sellers of charcoal, domestic workers etc. Therefore, climate change and conflict have pushed more women into uncharted territory and forms of livelihood that are not traditional. The adaptive capacities of women in urban environments present another opportunity for diversification of livelihoods, and reduce dependence on humanitarian support. Women in business is a desirable way to go in the changing circumstances.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this report, there are key areas where the CBCR Activity can take actions that will reduce the potential for conflict linked to climate change in the Karamoja cluster:

- Given the development history, the weak relationships with the respective national governments, and subsequent marginalization that the region has suffered, civil society organizations (NGOs and churches) continue to provide most services. They are closer to the communities and enjoy higher trust and respect, and pastors/priests are much respected. Therefore, for any meaningful development or entry into the Karamoja cluster, it is imperative that partnership with civil society be obtained.
- The informal power and peace-building structures, especially the *kraals*, retain importance in the overall peace-building and conflict resolution in the Karamoja cluster according to the conflict trends. *Kraals* exist on all sides of the border. In addition, their activities are complemented by low level national/regional government support. To bolster and attain sustainable peace there is need to support and build the capacity of *kraal* leaders, and support some of their engagement activities across borders. This should be done in addition to supporting the facilitation of regular engagement activities by government officials in peace-building.
- Conflict and climate change have affected more women than men, decimated more households, and forced more women out of pastoralism. Many women have, therefore, migrated to urban centers to seek new ways of livelihood. Most of them are cash-strapped, with little or no capacity for meaningful engagement in business. Therefore, development partners need to channel support to build the capacity of women in business and provision of business grants.
- One of the consequences of climate change and conflict is that many households have lost livestock. Over-dependence on declining livestock numbers has rendered many households more food insecure than ever before. It is, therefore, imperative that development partners support the diversification of livelihoods and build the capacity of the communities in agricultural production. Some areas of Karamoja cluster are ideal for rain-fed and/or irrigation agriculture. Support for water harvesting, training in farming techniques, dryland farming, and food storage will greatly build communities' food security and reduce or eliminate the need for humanitarian food aid. Partnership with the civil society organizations and respective ministries of agriculture will produce a better synergy.
- The CBCR Activity could support behavior change programming targeting the children and youth of the cluster. In the Karamoja cluster, youth are the main perpetrators of conflict, and they undertake all the raiding and other decadent cultural practices. These are done in the context of very low access to formal education and disproportionately high value placed on livestock as the only source of social recognition. Therefore, development partners need to support activities and programs that wean children and youth from decadent traditional beliefs and practices. Such programs and activities include construction of schools, awareness creation, support alternative rites of passage programs, support school feeding programs, and engagement of government officials, education officials, and pastors/priests.
- Climate change and conflict have a regional dimension and, therefore, require a regional intervention. Therefore, development partners need to support collaborations within the international donor community and the cross-border governments to adopt and implement policy frameworks that are both conflict- and climate-sensitive. Such frameworks also need to recognize and support pastoralism as a livelihood in transition that remains valuable and viable in the Karamoja cluster. Development partners need to work with governments to implement

priority projects and natural resource management activities, noting the potential of governments for dialogue, conflict mitigation, and peace-building in the Karamoja cluster.

- Support adoption of gender transformative approaches in conflict and climate management for cross-border development. This will include aspects such as inclusion of women in relevant community committees.
- Develop well-designed, contextualized, and focused youth and women empowerment programs for cross-border communities. These include capacity building for income generating activities for alternative and/or diversified livelihoods in agriculture where there are natural flowing permanent rivers such as the Turkwel on the border between the Turkana and Pokot (Kenya and Uganda), and among the Nyangatom, Dassanech, and Turkana in the Kibish area within the Ilemi Triangle and around River Omo. Provision of fishing gear to the Turkana and Dassanech can also help to manage the attendant conflicts. There can also be support towards marketing, packaging, and management of the apiary business between the Turkana and Pokot, and the Turkana and Ik in Turkana West and Kaabong district.

## 6. ANNEXES

Annex I: List of interview participants

	<b>KENYA</b>	<b>UGANDA</b>	<b>ETHIOPIA</b>	<b>SOUTH SUDAN</b>
1	LOPEO-LOKI	KAPDA-KAABONG	TODONYATU	OPRD-NARUS
2	LOKADO-KAKUMA	KDF-MOROTO	IPC-ETHIOPIA	ICPDO-KAPOETA
3	SAPCONE-LODWAR	MADEFO	SAPCONE-JINKA	DOT-NARUS
4	SIKOM-KAPENGURIA	DADO-KAABONG	CARITAS	LRDA
5	DCC-TW	RDC-KAABONG	Admin-Kangaten	Commissioner-Kapoeta East
6	DCC-CENTRAL	RDC-MOROTO	Admin-Omorate	Commissioner-Kapoeta South
7	DCC-LOIMA	RDC-AMUDAT	Admin-Hamer	Executive Director-Kapoeta South
8	DCC-KACHELIBA	RDC-KOTIDO	Admin-Selemango	NSS Director
9	SCA-TW	LC5-KAABONG	Town Mayor-Kangaten	Mayor-Kapoeta Town
10	SCA-CENTRAL	LC5-MOROTO	Town Mayor-Omorate	Admin-Narus Payam
11	SCA-LOIMA	LC5-AMUDAT	Town Mayor-Hamer	Admin-Kapoeta Town Payam
12	SCA-KACHELIBA	LC5-RUPA	Town Mayor-Selemango	Admin-Kapoeta Town Payam
13	KRA-LOKI	URA-MOROTO	ERCA-Omorate	NRA-Nadapal
14	Immigration-Loki	Immigration-Moroto	Immigration-Omorate	Immigration-Nadapal
15	MP-TW	MP-KAABONG	National MP	National MP-IK
16	MP-N	MP-MOROTO	National MP	National MP-Kaabong
17	MP LOIMA	MP-AMUDAT	National MP	National MP-Kotido
18	MP-KACHELIBA	MP-KOTIDO	National MP	National MP-Moroto
19	MCA-LETEA	LC III -KAABONG	Regional MP	State MP
20	MCA-LOIMA	LC 3- MOROTO	Regional MP	State MP
21	MCA-Kacheliba	LC 3-AMUDAT	Regional MP	State MP
22	Chamber of Commerce- Chair	Chamber of Commerce	Office of Cooperatives-Dassanech	Chamber of Commerce
23	Chair Biashara Fund	CAO	Office of Cooperative-Nyangatom	Executive Director
24	Youth Council	Chamber of Commerce	Dep't of Investment Nyangatom	Youth Leader
25	IGAD	IGAD-Moroto	Dep't of Pastoralism-Dassanech	Office of Emergency
26	UNHCR-Kakuma	Director for Emergency	Office of Peace and Security-Dassanech	Customs Officer -Nadapal
27	RAS-Kakuma	DISO-Moroto	Peace and Security-Nyangatom	Executive Chief
28	Catholic Church	Catholic Church	Catholic Church	Catholic Church
29	Anglican Church	Anglican Church	SO4CM Church	Anglican Church
30	AIC	AIC	Jinka Medhaniyalem Church	AIC

31	Muslim-	Muslim-	Muslim-	Muslim-
32	National Police Service	Uganda Police	Ethiopia Police	Police Inspector
33	Kenya Army	Uganda Army	Ethiopia Army	Army Commander
34	ASTU-Nadapal	ASTU-Moroto	ASTU-Jinka	Border Police-Nadapal
35	KDF-Loki	UPDF-MOROTO	EDF-Jinka	SSDF-Nadapal
36	Media1	Media1	Media1	Media1
37	NDMA	NUSAF	DRM&FS	NDMA
38	Advisor-Economy	Advisor-Economy	Advisor-Peace	Advisor-Peace
39	Advisor-Political Affairs	Advisor-Political Affairs	Advisor-Political	Advisor-Political
40	Advisor-Administration	Advisor-Administration	Advisor-Administration	Advisor-Administration



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