



Regional Learning & Advocacy Programme for Vulnerable Dryland Communities

ENDING DROUGHT EMERGENCIES: Will the promises be met? October 2011

Background

The current drought in The East and Horn of Africa is estimated to have affected 13 million people, of which 4.5 million are Kenyans. Lives and livelihoods have been lost. It has also caused extensive debates on how to end drought emergencies. The discussions have hit media headlines and formed agendas of national and international conferences. A few of the issues that have cut across all these discussions are the acknowledgement that:

- While drought is an unavoidable natural phenomenon, it need not and should not lead to famine and other disasters.
- Long term under-investment in the foundations of development in drought prone areas has increased vulnerability.
- Despite early warning about looming drought, response has been reactive rather than proactive.
- There is a need for urgent investment in resilience building programmes and actions.
- While drought impacts on lives and livelihood may be localized, they affect countries' overall socio-economic growth.
- With climate change, drought will become more severe and frequent and climate resilient livelihood options need to be supported.
- Mobility, the key to the resilience of mobile livestock keeping should be supported through ensuring rights to communal grazing areas and migration routes, both within countries and across borders.
- There is need for social safety nets for vulnerable population though strategies like cash transfer, with clear programs to ensure that sustainable livelihood options are developed for these people.

Strategies proposed to end drought emergencies

On September 8th-9th, 2011 the Governments of East Africa and Horn Africa came together in Nairobi to develop a strategy to end drought emergencies. In this summit, most of the countries including Kenya presented country programme papers. The final product of the summit was a "Nairobi Strategy: enhanced partnership to eradicate drought emergencies". The strategy generally details how to deal with Somalia governance and refugee issues and general strategies for overcoming drought emergencies. This paper will concentrate on the drought component where the key strategies for overcoming drought emergencies were:

1. **Accelerate investment in the foundations of development:** These include pro-poor infrastructure and human capital, secondary roads, water, energy, education and health. North-Eastern Kenya is desperately under-served with 18 of 20 poorest counties, with 74-97% of population living below the poverty line in the



ASALs, primary school net enrolment is 36% and the national average is 93%, 48% of children immunized against 77%.

2. **Strengthen adaptive capacity and livelihood choices:** appropriate education, promoting an enabling environment for SME, environmental protection and afforestation, rangeland management ...
3. **Promote integrated land and water management:** ground and surface water development for irrigation, livestock and human use.
4. **Facilitate formal trade and promote efficient flow of commodities in the region.**
5. **Support pastoralism** as provided for by the African Union pastoralist policy framework by protecting property rights and livestock assets, provide market, health and financial services and support mobility.
6. **Enhance** peace and security.
7. **Fast track climate change adaptation initiatives.**
8. **Establish effective institutional frameworks to ensure the momentum to end drought emergencies.** In Kenya, National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) and National Drought Contingency Fund (NDCF) and ASAL Secretariat need to be established and the ASAL sessional paper passed.

These strategies are not new, what is new is the determination to end drought emergencies. We have the strategies, *what we need now is action by Governments, donors, CSOs as well as the private sector.* We need the *Government to take a lead by providing a programme framework and timelines for implementation as well as accountability and monitoring system to operationalise the dream of ending drought emergencies in the ASAL of Kenya.*



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Copies of this brief and the full report can be accessed at:
<http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/east-central-africa/reglap>

