Livestock markets a solution to food security in upper Eastern Kenya

Livestock markets are the main gateway to food security in upper Eastern Kenya. This is according to displays, presentations, and discussions made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) during the second Kalacha food and cultural festival on 24-25 August 2013 in Marsabit County, Kenya. Communities in the pastoralist setting predominately rely on livestock such as goats, cows, and camels as their single most important source of livelihood. Besides providing food directly in form of meat and milk, pastoralists are able to trade to meet urgent cash needs such as school fees and staple foods. However, the pastoralists are not always able to sell their livestock when they want due to absence of vibrant livestock markets within their reach. Even where this market exists they are often run down and poorly managed. In an attempt to address these challenges, the Livestock Market Co-management

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Model, a public-private partnership (PPP) where local authorities and market management committees agree to share responsibilities and revenues in the market was initiated. The initiative, championed by FAO is aimed at promoting ownership of livestock markets by the local communities they serve in order to improve effectiveness and sustainability.

“Livestock production remains the best way of utilizing the vast rangelands of Northern Kenya and research shows that pastoral production systems have very good returns on investment. Other than providing food and cash when sold, livestock also serves as an investment just like land or shares,” says Mr. Michael Ngutu, FAO field monitoring officer. Livestock is closely linked to the social and cultural lives of several million pastoralists for whom animal ownership ensures varying degrees of sustainable farming and economic stability.

In Marsabit, the Livestock Market Co-management Model has been implemented in Merille, Moyale, Sololo, Turbi, Korr, Illaut and Kalacha. “This model has benefited both local governments and communities through increased revenue/Cess collection, infrastructure development, reduced transaction costs, increased market participation, employment, stimulation of local economies and centralization of social welfare,” Mr. Ngutu explained at the FAO exhibition booth in the festival. The Kalacha food and cultural festival is an annual event held in Kalacha, in the outcasts of Marsabit town. The event is aimed at sharing and celebrating the cultural and natural heritage of the people of Marsabit and Isiolo counties. It brings together pastoralists, fisher folk, hunter gatherer, metal artisans and agricultural communities of Eastern Kenya in order to promote cultural diversity, social harmony and sustainable development. A diversity of the region’s rich cultural and natural heritage was showcased through artistic expressions, exhibitions of traditional foods, medicinal plants and demonstration of traditional technology. Participating communities included the El-Molo, Gabbra, Rendille, Boran, Somali, Konso, Garri, Burji, Waata, Samburu, Saakuye Turkana and the Daasanach.

FAO took part in the exhibition and displayed seven posters highlighting some of the key interventions that the organization has initiated in partnership with the government and various implementing partners. These include Livestock market management; Holistic natural resource management; Community managed disaster risk reduction; Village community banking; Mobile phone data collection technology-EpiCollect; Pastoralist farmer field schools; and Food security assessment. A summary of what FAO is doing in the field was made and flyers distributed to different participants and organizations.

In his presentation, Dr. Joseph Mathooko, FAO field monitoring officer, demonstrated the use of EpiCollect, a mobile phone data collection technology that enables veterinary officers and other animal health practitioners to collect and transmit data on vaccinations and disease outbreaks using mobile phones. “This technology is very useful especially for the pastoralist region as it supports livestock markets, disease surveillance, and waterhole monitoring and gives real time field situations,” he underlined.

Plenary discussions which were part of the side events were held and relevant papers presented by prominent scholars and development agencies. Key issues discussed included treasures of Northern Kenya; Pastoralism-Challenges and opportunities; Ethnicity and culture; and the future of Northern Kenya.

The Kenya Wetlands Atlas: Tackling degradation of Spectacular and vital wetlands

![UNEP Executive Director Mr. Achim Steiner displaying a copy of the Wetlands Atlas © UNEP, 2013](image-url)

The Kenya Wetlands Atlas, produced with funding from the Government of Kenya and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and technical support from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was launched on 31st July, 2013.

The Atlas detailing the many challenges facing dozens of important ecosystems in Kenya reveals that despite the important role that wetlands play in sustaining livelihoods in Kenya, they have been subjected to severe pressure and rapid degradation. The government is mindful of the opportunities lost through wetland and has embarked on a long-term strategy to conserve and enhance its rich and varied wetland-key natural resources important for
agriculture, drinking water, flood defense and tourism—among concern that many are facing serious degradation and decline.

In order to reverse the worrying trend of degradation, the atlas highlights the need for Kenya to embrace a raft of measures under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands’ main pillars of wise use, designating and managing more Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), and international cooperation. During the launch, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, said, “The first step is knowledge, understanding, because only then can governments both put legislation in place and then enforce it. Because it is also the impunity in not maintaining an adherence to the legislation and the law of the country, the planning regulations, the land use regulations, that create what is often called the tragedy of the commons.”

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has been in force in Kenya since 1990, and an environment-friendly Constitution was promulgated in 2010. The Environment Management and Coordination Act and its by-laws contain a number of innovative wetland provisions, the absence of national wetlands policy and a sector-specific wetlands law continues to impede the sustainable management of this vital but fragile ecosystem.

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Noise and clatter that impaired guided tours in Nairobi have been silenced

Guided tours at the UN Headquarters at Gigiri in Nairobi are gaining momentum each succeeding month since its introduction 19 months ago. But with noise of lawn mower engines and heavy containers being dragged around by workers in the 140-acre compound, the challenge of conducting guided tours was becoming mission impossible especially with a big group of visitors. And now, the challenge has been nipped in the bud.

No one could hide their excitement when a long-awaited package finally arrived at the Nairobi Visitors’ Service offices on 5 August. The staff was itching to open a parcel containing 100 VOX headsets purchased from Vienna.

“This was the first time such gadgets would be used at the UN Office at Nairobi,” said Rebecca Gakonyo, tour guide at the Visitors’ Service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON).

She knows all too well the challenges of conducting a guided tour between the sounds of lawn mower engines and heavy containers being dragged around by workers. The noise levels along the tour route can sometimes sound like massive tractors going through cornfields. The noise often made it next to impossible for visitors to hear presentations from

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Tour guides. Larger groups of 20 people or more only made the challenge even greater. “Thanks to modern technology though, we now have a solution – a permanent one,” said Marian Aggrey, Chief of the Visitors’ Service-Nairobi.

How does it work? The tour guide system is a lightweight set of listening devices used to enhance the guided tour experience. Visitors are each equipped with a receiver as well as an ear-piece. The tour guide uses a transmitter with a discreet microphone to address the group. Large groups of visitors do not have to stand close to the guide. This enhances the tour experience as more information is received by participants. The tour-guide system also resolves the problems experienced by the hearing-impaired. The system is one-way, from guide to visitors. Two-way communication is possible with questions addressed directly to the guide who then shares with the rest with the group.

The first group to use the high-tech equipment comprised 56 primary school students from Thika Road Christian School in Nairobi. They were thrilled as they had never seen nor used such gadgets before. “This is what we call technology!” remarked one of the students. Another student wanted to take the device home. “How much does it cost?” she asked. At the end of the tour, the students were very pleased with their experience and did not miss a word.

“How with the newly purchased gadgets, the Visitors’ Service can now efficiently handle larger groups and provide high quality informative tours,” noted Ms. Aggrey.

Nairobi is a tourist haven, with an average of 1.8 million visits per year.

Migrant smuggling, ivory trafficking, heroin trafficking, and maritime piracy identified as major organized crime threats in Eastern Africa

UNODC’s latest report which was released on 4 September 2013 provides insight into some of Eastern Africa’s principal transnational organized crime threats.

According to the report, more than 100,000 people were smuggled out of the region last year alone, generating over $15 million for organized criminal networks operating on the maritime crossing from the Horn of Africa. Ivory poaching, which results in up to 154 metric tons being taken annually, led to an additional $30 million in illicit revenue just from Asian markets. Drugs are an increasingly lucrative illicit trade. Up to 22 tons of heroin are now trafficked to and through the region annually, with local consumption alone amounting to some $160 million a year. Finally Somali piracy was worth an estimated $150 million in 2011, equivalent to almost 15 per cent of the country’s GDP. Throughout 2013, however, no successful hijackings for ransom have been made in the Somali area of operation, and this remarkable progress shows that even the largest crime problems can be countered through international cooperation.

The report – Transnational Organized Crime in Eastern Africa: A Threat Assessment – is aimed at highlighting the most pressing transnational organized crime threats facing the region. Looking at some of the key areas, this latest report focuses on four such concerns: migrant smuggling from Ethiopia and Somalia to Yemen and Saudi Arabia; heroin trafficking from South-West Asia to Eastern Africa; ivory trafficking through Eastern Africa to Asia; and Somali maritime piracy.

The role of transnational organized crime is evident in migrant smuggling. This is driven in part by high levels of conflict and poverty which have resulted in a large and
vulnerable stream of migrants. Many of those trying to escape the situations they face are subjected to a range of abuses, including confinement, beatings, extortion and rape at multiple stages of their journey. In 2012 alone, more than 100,000 people paid smugglers to transport them across the Gulf of Aden or Red Sea to Yemen where their journey takes them onwards to Saudi Arabia, with the sea passage alone generating over $15 million for organized criminal networks.

Regional wildlife trafficking is also increasing, and Eastern Africa appears to be the main conduit through which illicit ivory is flowing. Recent research indicates that the rate of poaching in Eastern Africa has risen to levels that could significantly threaten the local elephant population. Between 5,600 and 15,400 elephants are poached in Eastern Africa annually, producing between 56 and 154 metric tons of illicit ivory. In 2011, two-thirds of this, or 37 tons, was destined for Asia, worth around $30 million.

The regional drug trade represents another core threat. While heroin has been trafficked to and through Eastern Africa since at least the 1980s, a series of recent large seizures suggests that this flow has increased. Between 2010 and 2012, more heroin was seized than in the previous 20 years and in the first five months of 2013, the seizures exceeded those of the total previous 24 months. Annually, as much as 22 tons is trafficked to the region. While it is estimated that at least 2.5 tons of this is consumed locally every year (worth some $160 million), the excess suggests substantial amounts are transited through the region, particularly to Southern and West Africa, and possibly beyond.

In 2011 Somali pirates reaped an estimated $150 million. In recent years, however, progress has been made in tackling this issue. International countermeasures have contributed to a dramatic decline in piracy. While in April 2009 pirates hijacked 16 ships, two years later this averaged less than one per month; in the first half of 2013 there were no successful hijackings for ransom in the Somali area. Effective intervention has also forced pirates to move further away from the coast: in 2005, the average successful pirate attack was 109 km from the Somali coast; in 2012, it was 746 km.

International Youth Day

International Youth Day (IYD) is an awareness day designated by the United Nations which is held on the 12 August annually. The first International Youth Day was held in the year 2000. The theme of this year's International Youth Day, was “Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward”.

In his message during the occasion, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos said the majority of the world’s young people living in cities and towns in the developing world where nearly 90 per cent of the world’s urban growth is taking place.

“It is estimated that as many as 60 per cent of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030, with a significant percentage of this growth being the result of youth migrating to urban areas. According to the Executive Director, the United Nations had found that there were nearly twenty-seven million international migrants who are youth.

“They migrate for reasons such as crisis within their own country, accessing education or seeking job opportunities. Many of these youth are leaving rural areas and moving to cities. For example, a recent UN-Habitat report found that young Ethiopians migrate from rural areas to cities due to insecure land tenure. In examples all around the world, young people are taking on the responsibility and risks of moving, and it is imperative that governments at all levels develop policies that support them,” he said.

On this year’s international youth day, the One Stop Youth Centre in Nairobi celebrated its ten year anniversary. The one stop youth center programme is funded by UN-Habitat and provides innovative and ground-breaking spaces that provide a meeting place for young people to come together to access information and resources critical to youth-led development programmes and projects. The objectives of the centers are:

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UN Women supports engendering of Disaster Risk Reduction laws in Kenya

UN Women is pushing to engender humanitarian laws that deal with disaster risk reduction in Kenya. Whilst disasters affect everyone in the community, women and men experience and cope with disasters in different ways due to the gendered political, cultural and socio-economic differences and inequalities that exist within communities.

A draft Bill on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has already been tabled in Parliament awaiting discussions and assent. At the same time, the National Drought Management Authority is working on a draft policy on the best way to manage droughts in Kenya.

At a meeting between UN Women, the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and other MPs, held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Nairobi last month, it was noted that the DRR Bill and draft Disaster Risk Management policy should be aligned to international standards such as the Hyogo Framework for Action 2000-2015 which states that gender perspectives should be integrated in all DRR policies, plans and decision-making processes.

The legislation on DRR presents a key opportunity to consolidate the development gains made over the past few years, especially with reference to participation of women in legislative processes in keeping with the Constitution.

- Employment and Capacity Building: replicable systems for vocational training and apprenticeships in place with increased employment opportunities gender and age mainstreaming, new employment ideas, and slum upgrading.
- Crime Prevention: progress on crime and delinquency prevention, and support to the empowerment of youth in difficult circumstances.
- Urban Governance: young people as active participants on issues of governance.

UN-Habitat also launched a photo and video competition dubbed #Home is where we live Instagram contest asking young people to show what “home” really means to them.

The competition ends on 30 September 2013, asks the contestants, those aged between 18 and 32, to take a picture of either their homes or their hang out joints and post them on Instagram or Facebook.

The top two submissions will be profiled on the official UN-Habitat Facebook page and website.

For more information, visit our website at: https://www.unhabitat.org.
Donor Mission Ends With Calls for Efforts to Enhance Human Security in Turkana County

There is need for greater commitment in the efforts by the Government of Kenya, County Governments and United Nation agencies, to enhance human security in Turkana Central and Loima Sub-counties. This was the resounding message from a joint delegation from the United Nations inter-agency coordination group and government representatives, following a three day field visit by the Chief of Unit, United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) Unit Ms. Mehrnaz Mostafavi.

Ms. Mostafavi, was in Turkana to assess the progress undertaken to improve human security among pastoralist communities in Turkana County through sustainable interventions in livelihoods, food security, education, child labour and health.

The field visit provided Ms Mostafavi an opportunity to better understand the progress made and determine the effectiveness of translating the human security concept into practical actions and sustainable results as recommended by the United Nations General Assembly. She also had an advantage of interacting with the project beneficiaries.

Turkana region suffers from a ‘climate change-migration-conflict-nexus’ where recurring, severe drought cycles lead to increasingly frequent outward migrations of pastoralists within Kenya or across the border, in search of water and pasture for livestock.

Considering the mobile nature of pastoral border communities, the project targets the most vulnerable of the Turkana Central population as well as selected neighbouring cross-border communities by providing opportunities to interact in a peaceful manner through joint training and the establishment of
joint markets and trade opportunities.
This project builds on recommendations by communities themselves to strengthen local capacities to prevent disaster and mitigate shocks of a climatic, economic and conflict nature.

The pastoralist populations of Turkana Central are faced with acute economic-, food- and health-insecurity, as well as environmental, personal and community insecurity. These threats are interlinked and feed on each other, with most characterized by their chronic and pervasive nature. Increasing weather extremes and unpredictability is evident in Turkana, with escalating severity and frequency of droughts.

The project “Strengthening Human Security in the Border Communities of Turkana, Kenya” officially launched in 2012 is a 6.1 Million USD 3-year project funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

The proposed activities aim to improve human security in a context of UN inter-agency coordination including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNTFHS and building on the capacities of local CBOs, local peace committees, local governments and the governmental Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP).

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