

CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED MIGRATION IN KENYA

Assessing impacts on pastoralist communities, and legal and policy options to enhance adaptation actions

ROBERT KIBUGI / SYLVIA LANYASUNYA || The fact that the impacts of Climate Change are being felt in Kenya cannot be questioned. The proof is in the increasingly erratic and unpredictable weather patterns that the country has been experiencing in recent times. Certain segments of society such as pastoralists are more vulnerable to the adverse effects of Climate Change than others. In Kenya, the most serious extreme weather event is drought, and although this is not a new phenomenon, recent instances of drought have increased in frequency and magnitude thus threatening the very existence of pastoralists who rely on livestock rearing as their main source of livelihood. In recognition of the seriousness of this situation, the Kenyan government is taking action to build the resilience, and enhance the adaptive capacity of pastoralist communities. This policy brief is an assessment of the situation, and review of legal, policy and strategic action being undertaken in Kenya to address the climate challenges facing pastoralist communities, including mitigating against forced migration.

EVIDENCE AND IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN KENYA

The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),¹ released in 2014 noted that "warming projections under medium scenarios indicate that extensive areas of Africa will exceed 2 °C by the last 2 decades of this century relative to the late 20th century mean annual temperature and all of Africa under high emission scenarios."² In addition, AR5 reported that African ecosystems are already being affected by climate change, which will further amplify existing stress on water availability in Africa, with strong adverse effects on food security.³ The IPCC has, further, reported that climate extremes exert a significant control on the day-to-day economic development of Africa, particularly in traditional rain-fed agriculture, pastoralism, and water resources, at all scales. In this case, vulnerability is exacerbated by floods and droughts that cause

major human and environmental impacts on, and disruptions to the economies of African countries.⁴ The IPCC reports support observations made earlier by the 2010 East African Community (EAC) Climate Change Policy that "EAC Partner States are generally dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources, have high poverty levels, coupled with low adaptive capacities."⁵ The EAC policy also noted that "high reliance on rain-fed agriculture makes rural livelihoods and food security highly vulnerable to consequences of climate variability and change."⁶

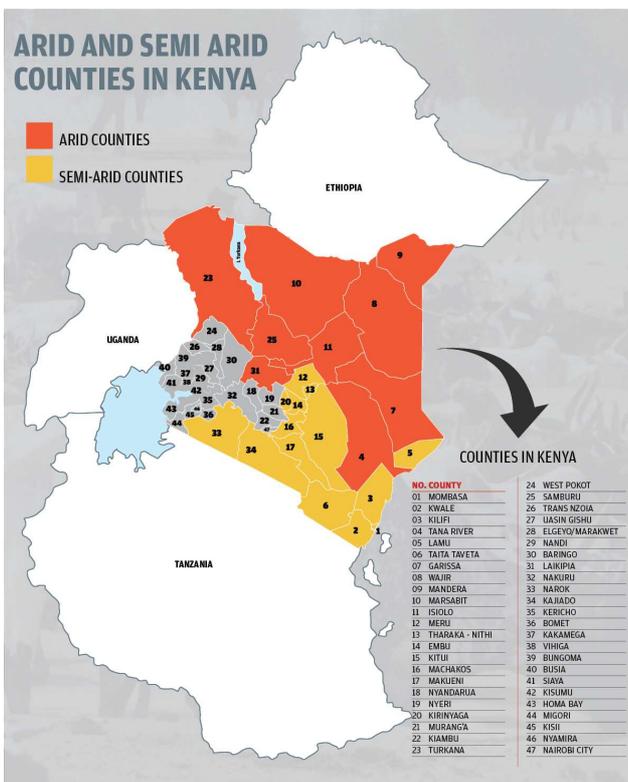
The impacts of climate change, in Kenya, have been interrogated by the 2013-2017 National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP),⁷ and the 2014 Draft Framework Climate Change Policy.⁸ These impacts of climate change, as observed in Kenya, have resulted in changes in the frequency, intensity, spatial extent, duration, and timing of extreme weather and climate

events.⁹ This has resulted in unprecedented extreme weather and climate events, with evidence of higher frequency and intensity being noted in Kenya, particularly droughts and floods. The country's famine cycles have reduced from 20 years (1964-1984), to 12 years (1984-1996), to two years (2004-2006) and to yearly (2007/2008/2009/2010/2011/2012).¹⁰

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON PASTORALIST LIVELIHOODS IN KENYA

Livestock keeping, and particularly through pastoralism by nomadic communities, faces significant challenges from the impacts of climate change. The 2010 National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), noted that nearly half of all livestock in Kenya is found in fragile ecosystems, such as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) that are most vulnerable to climate change, and livestock production is therefore not exempt from the vagaries of climate change.

Fig 1: Map of Kenya with Arid and Semi Arid Counties highlighted (source: John Allosso of McAllosso & John Creatives)



Consequences of climate change for pastoralist communities in Kenya are severe.

According to the NCCAP, approximately 60 per cent of the country's livestock is found in the ASALs, which constitute about 80 per cent of the country's land mass and which are home to 30 per cent of the country's population. It is important to note that land in most of these areas is communal and not owned by individuals.¹¹ Pastoralism is the dominant form of livestock-keeping in the ASALs and given the recourse to mobility to manage climate variability, pastoralism is inherently adaptive, but the increased frequencies of extreme weather events multiply the impact of factors that constrain pastoralists' livelihoods.¹² The 2014 Draft Climate Change Policy concurs, noting that as livestock is experiencing negative impacts from climate change due to increased frequency of droughts in the ASALs, there is higher livestock morbidity and mortality.¹³ The impact of these events on pastoralism communities is profound:

- Frequency in droughts has major impacts on pastoralist communities, destroying livelihoods and increasing vulnerability. Men, who are traditionally responsible for livestock have been compelled, by reduced herd sizes, to migrate to urban centres for wage-employment. This has had implications for women and children due to the additional burden of sustaining household food, water and human security, such that school attendance rates decreased, child labour increased and conflicts over resources were observed to intensify.¹⁴
- The ASALs have witnessed several transformations that impacted on the livelihoods of the pastoralists. Migration of rural communities from the congested high-potential areas and the dry arid areas to cities has contributed to over-populated slums and settlements that lack basic services. The

dwellers of the slums in turn continue to migrate to the semi-arid areas and pursue non-pastoral activities such as cropping in grazing lands not well suited for agriculture.¹⁵

- There has been increased displacement of communities and migration of pastoralists into and out of the country resulting in conflicts over natural resources, such as pasture and water.¹⁶
- Pastoralism requires mobility, often over wide spatial areas. Diminishing land sizes due to higher population, sale of land to non-pastoralist communities resulting in fencing of pastoralist corridors and access to water, exacerbates the challenges arising from climate change. This has resulted in livestock being pushed into unsuitable areas, including the City of Nairobi, where incidences of diseases, and conflicts with other communities, increase.
- Increased scale and duration of migration by the men (heads of families), with the livestock in search of water and pasture, will likely increase pressure on families, including higher vulnerability to famine.
- Climate-change induced migration, in situation of extreme drought and famine, in search of water and pasture, creates conflict and challenges over property rights as herdsmen encroach on the land belong to other people. In the north of Kenya, for instance, pastoralists from West Pokot and Turkana counties often move their herds towards and even into neighbouring Uganda when drought intensifies and this has been witnessed already this year.¹⁷ This movement has led to conflicts in some parts of the country, such as in Laikipia with pastoralists from the neighbouring counties forcibly relocating their herds to privately owned ranches to graze. Incidences of conflict increase as pastoralists from different ethnic communities migrate from their traditional homelands to other parts of the country where they are not always welcome. The competition for grazing land between pastoralists from different communities raises tensions and sometimes turns violent as the situation becomes more desperate.

- Communities that used to be considered nomadic are now less mobile and more likely to have settled homesteads, which brings both benefits in terms of access to services as well as challenges such as natural resource degradation and reduced economic potential. For instance, the Turkana people of northern Kenya are still referred to by some as nomads yet many Turkana now grow crops and only some members of the family, or hired herdsmen, migrate with livestock in search of water and pasture.¹⁸

The interface between pastoralist livelihoods, ASAL ecosystems and climate change, is enhancing the vulnerability of pastoralist communities by lowering their resilience and adaptive capacity. The mobility of pastoralist communities through migration, is historically, a strong strategy for adapting to the natural variances. This mobility has become migration, within Kenya, and often, out of Kenya into neighbouring countries such as Uganda. However, long periods of drought have affected the practice of mobility that is based on transhumance, which implies seasonal migration between distinct resource area, such as wet and dry season pasture areas, including across international borders.¹⁹

LEGAL AND POLICY OPTIONS ADDRESSING ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE BY PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES

Kenya has undertaken a number of legal and policy steps that provide a firm basis for action, and support the implementation of adaptation actions by pastoralist communities:

Enactment of Climate Change Act

Kenya, in 2016, enacted the Climate Change Act (CCA) to provide a legal framework that will trigger and support coordinated actions taken in response to climate change. This law provides the overall governance structure for climate change in Kenya, and to support development and implementation of measures and mechanisms that will enhance climate change resilience (through adaptation) for the sustainable development of Kenya. This would

include actions to support adaptation of pastoralist communities to the impacts of climate change, which is evident from some of the objectives of the CCA, below:

- Taking into account climate change considerations (otherwise referred to as mainstreaming climate change), during all development planning, decision making and implementation in Kenya
- Formulating adaptation programmes and plans to support and enhance reduction of vulnerability, and strengthen capacity of human and ecological systems
- Taking into account the needs for climate change disaster risk reduction in public policy decisions
- Support and facilitate development of capacity for public participation in climate change actions through awareness creation, public consultations, public representation, and access to information.

Development and implementation of a National Climate Change Action Plan

It is important to note that the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) is the main mechanism through which mainstreaming of climate change actions is undertaken, and it includes actions to be undertaken by the national government, and county governments. Section 19 of the CCA requires county governments to implement climate actions through County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) which are intended to be developed in a participatory manner, including engagement with local communities.

There are a number of policy choices and strategies to enhance adaptation by pastoralist communities to the impacts of climate change, namely:

- Implementation of climate smart agriculture policy strategies, including restoration of degraded pasture areas, and adoption of agro-forestry practices by pastoralist communities.
- Promotion of diversification of livelihood activities such as indigenous poultry, rabbits, beekeeping, and emerging livestock, such as quail and guinea fowl.

- Enhancing citizen participation in decision making. There is need for county governments to devise methods for pastoralist communities to make contributions to the development of CIDPs, in order to identify climate change interventions that are suitable and relevant. In addition, pastoralist communities, in ASAL counties, should be involved in prioritization of climate actions in order for public funds to be dedicated to the most appropriate interventions.
- There is need for county governments in the ASAL areas most affected by climate change, to make efforts to access climate finance sources available within Kenya, and under the international climate change framework, to fund policy interventions that promote building the resilience and adaptive capacity of pastoralist communities.
- In order to ensure that pastoralist migration and the transhumance lifestyle continues peacefully without conflict, it is important for county governments to create forums through which communities can engage on migratory routes and access to water. In addition, it is important for neighbouring counties to formally engage on the question of migratory routes and access to water in order to avoid the break out of conflict.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that climate change impacts facing Kenya continue to increase, in terms of frequency and magnitude, particularly with respect to extreme weather events such as drought. Pastoralism, as the dominant form of livestock-keeping in the ASALs applies mobility and transhumance to manage climate variability. Therefore, pastoralism is inherently adaptive but the increased frequencies of extreme weather events multiply the impact of factors that constrain pastoralists' livelihoods. This is evident through the increased displacement of communities and migration of pastoralists into and out of the country resulting in conflicts over natural resources, such as pasture and water. In addition, the diminishing land sizes due to higher population and the sale of land to non-pastoralist communities has resulted in fencing

of pastoralist corridors and access to water, therefore exacerbating the challenges arising from climate change. This has resulted in livestock being pushed into unsuitable areas, including the City of Nairobi, where incidences of diseases, and conflicts with other communities, increase. In addition, the increased scale and duration of migration by the men (heads of families), with the livestock in search of water and pasture, will likely increase pressure on families and increase vulnerability to famine.

Cooperation of Kenyan county governments with the national government and pastoralists communities is critical for adapting to climate change.

The enactment of the Climate Change Act in Kenya is a key step, as well as the prioritization of adaptation actions focusing on building resilience and enhancing the adaptive capacity for pastoralism as a form of livelihood. The role of county governments, working together with pastoralist communities, and the national government will remain critical, in order to sustain pastoralism as a viable livelihood option, while adapting to climate change and reducing the vulnerability of the pastoralist communities, the livestock and the ASAL landscapes.

Climate Change poses a great risk to the livelihoods of the pastoralists living in the Arid and Semi Arid parts of Kenya, however as has been discussed, there is hope of mitigating against the more severe impacts if all stakeholders involved come together to implement solutions. The Kenya government has taken the steps to show its commitment towards assisting pastoralists to cope with an uncertain future. When implemented, these policies will help to ensure that livestock rearing remains a viable economic pursuit for the ASAL areas of the country as well as enhancing the quality of life of people living in these areas.

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- ³ Cf. *ibid.*
- ⁴ IPCC, 2012: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Field, C. B., Barros, V. et al.: (eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA), 252.
- ⁵ East African Community, East African Community Climate Change Policy (EAC Secretariat, 2010), 1.
- ⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 15.
- ⁷ Kenya, National Climate Change Action Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, 2013), 15.
- ⁸ Kenya, Draft Sessional Paper on National Climate Change Framework Policy (Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, 2014). Online: <http://www.environment.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Draft-Climate-Change-Policy.pdf>, last accessed 31.1.2016.
- ⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 14.
- ¹⁰ Kenya, National Climate Change Action Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, 2013), 14.
- ¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 48.
- ¹² Cf. *ibid.*

- ¹³ Kenya, Draft Sessional Paper on National Climate Change Framework Policy (Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, 2014), 11.
- ¹⁴ Kenya, National Climate Change Action Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, 2013), 52.
- ¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 53.
- ¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 4.
- ¹⁷ National Drought Early Warning Bulletin January 2017 (The Presidency, Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2017), 3.
- ¹⁸ Building climate change resilience for African livestock in sub-Saharan Africa - World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP): a program of IUCN – The International Union for Conservation of Nature, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi, March 2010, 4.
- ¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*