Pastoralists in the Horn of Africa: The Continued Threat of Famine

Johan Helland

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Summary

This paper discusses the current food security crisis in the pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa. It tries to explain the recurrent famines with reference to some important features of pastoralism as a production system, and it outlines some of the effects that development projects have had on such systems. The current situation of the pastoral communities in the Horn of Africa is discussed within a framework of three distinct, but closely interrelated crises:

- an ecological crisis
- a food security crisis
- an institutional crisis

The paper argues that the problems of the pastoral communities of the Horn must be put back on the development agenda and that there is an urgent need for new initiatives and reform within pastoral policy, resource tenure, economic policies and service delivery. The pastoral societies of the Horn of Africa are probably facing the most complex set of issues in their entire history. Failing food security is a vitally important issue but it is necessary to pay renewed attention to a much wider set of problems if pastoral societies are to survive into the next century.

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PASTORALISTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: THE CONTINUED THREAT OF FAMINE[1]

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Famine in the Horn of Africa

The current famine in the Horn of Africa cannot simply be explained in terms of climatic variation and drought. It is necessary to take into consideration a range of other factors as well, to understand how this situation of food insecurity has been generated, and to propose new solutions to the underlying problems. The fundamental outlook that informs this paper is that famines are not caused by drought, but by poverty!

It must be remembered that famines in the Horn of Africa are not in themselves anything new. In the past three decades only, there have been at least three major disasters and a number of less wide-spread famines. This time span is not a totally arbitrary cut-off date: famines of variable severity have been common in this part of the world for centuries, but up to the 1972/73 famine it was basically up to the local communities, sometimes with assistance from national governments, to handle famine situations. The 1972/73 famine was the first famine in this part of the world to become a major international issue, and an international responsibility, first and foremost through intensive media exposure.

There have been numerous national and internationally assisted famine relief interventions to counter the problems that became so prominent when the 1972/73 famine spread across the African drought belt. In addition to efforts to improve national capacity to handle famine and to increase the level of preparedness, there has been a lot of analytical work to gain a better understanding of the underlying factors a famine situations. A lot is actually known about how and why a drought results in widespread starvation, and a lot is known about the many other non-drought factors which from time to time contribute to a loss of food security in this part of the world. Far less is known about how these problems can be solved and although there are isolated technical successes within a number of fields, neither the research effort nor practical development work have resulted in a greatly increased ability to prevent famine, to improve food security or to alleviate poverty.

One important aspect of the famines that have become a common feature of the region, is that they are basically treated as extraordinary emergencies. This conceptualisation of the problem is important to the responses. As famines evolve, resources are mobilised, mostly through the attention of the international media and eventually successful famine relief efforts (by and large) are organised. In the course of events, also the underlying causes of the famine receive attention. There has been apparent resolve in the international community to bring to bear on the problems

[1] This paper was originally prepared for the Inter-Agency Task for on Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa, FAO, Rome, May 2000

all available research and technology, to prevent another major famine from developing. The experience after the two large famines in 1972/73 and in 1984/85 is, however, that the rehabilitation and development efforts quickly run out of steam, from lack of demonstrable success, loss of interest and redeployment of funds. The determination in the international development community and national authorities to change the underlying conditions of poverty and prevent the recurrence of famine have in fact not been able to prevent the current famine. As long as the real reasons for famines remain, famines cannot really be seen as extraordinary emergencies. The food security problems of the Horn cannot be solved through high-intensity famine relief campaigns.

This time around the disaster is primarily located in the lowlands of the Horn of Africa, in the agriculturally marginal lands with poor potentials, dominated by animal husbandry as the mainstay of the local economy. The focus of this paper will therefore be on these marginal lowlands.

The main lessons to be drawn from the two other major famines that have taken place in this region in the last three decades seem to be that

- there are no quick and easy answers to the underlying problems that generate famines, neither in terms of available and affordable technology nor in terms of other development efforts
- the marginal areas of the Horn of Africa, where famines have occurred, are unable to command sufficient attention for sufficient lengths of time for any significant progress to be made in terms of solving the underlying problems of food security and poverty
- the marginal areas of the Horn of Africa are marginal in terms of resources and productivity, but more importantly, they are marginal because the populations who live here are seen as politically unimportant.
- the lack of success in sustaining the effort to improve food security in the Horn of Africa should be seen as a major impetus and justification for a renewed effort, in particular on the basis of the renewed prominence of a rights-based approach to development

Development in pastoral societies

The current disaster has long been reflected in the sense of crisis running through contemporary reports from the pastoral societies of Eastern Africa. Pastoral societies seem no longer able to contend with the challenges posed by the environments in which they live, or by the effects created in their interrelationships to the larger social, economic, political contexts. The structures and institutions of the pastoral societies are apparently no longer up to the tasks of maintaining these societies as going concerns. The pastoralists have long specialised in survival on marginal lands and on a resource base that nobody else can use; these days they are being pushed to the margins of larger society in a social and political sense as well.

The most pessimistic outlook asserts that pastoralism as a way of life in the Horn of Africa has outlived itself and that pastoral societies now are locked in a downward spiral of ecological crises, famine, dependency and permanent destitution. The outcome of these processes can only be the disappearance of pastoralism as a way of life.

There are many obvious differences between pastoral societies in Eastern Africa, but many show striking similarities and have histories which have run along largely similar trajectories. These similarities grow out of largely similar ecological adaptations to largely similar environments. Equally important are relationships to a dominant state which in a process of nation-building and state integration in fact has marginalised the pastoralists in social, economic and political terms. In a contemporary perspective, perhaps some of the most widely shared experiences of the pastoral

societies of the Horn arise from large-scale pastoral development projects that were designed without taking local interests into account or the experience of the pastoralists much into consideration.

There is no doubt that pastoral societies have had, and still have, greater difficulties than others in articulating their particular interests in national policy contexts and in national administrative structures that are clearly biased in favour of agriculture or politically volatile urban populations. Pastoralism is still frequently regarded as inherently primitive, as a way of life which must be changed and modernised, even if the alternatives are not at all obvious. Pastoralists have little influence when government decisions on these matters are made, but must bear the full brunt of the consequences when things go wrong. The pastoralists of the Horn of Africa have for most practical purposes become second-class citizens, living precariously in a degraded environment, on the margins of society.

The failure of development interventions to improve on the ability of the pastoralists to make a living from these marginal lands (which seems to be the general conclusion) is a clear indication that there are not too many other options other than traditional pastoralism available with regard to sensible use of these resources. Innovations like modern veterinary services and water technology, have certainly had a major impact on pastoralism, but there seems to be general consensus that development interventions have overall reduced, or even undermined, the viability and sustainability of pastoralism as a way of life in the drylands. The most common public intervention today is large-scale famine relief. But even famine relief seems to follow in the pattern of earlier development interventions, solving a problem in the short term at the expense of reinforcing the long-term problems underlying the pastoral societies.

The challenge now facing the pastoral societies in Eastern Africa (and the nation-states that have assumed responsibility for pastoralists as their citizens) is the restoration of the capacity of pastoralism to make use of the resources in the marginal lands to meet the needs of as many of the pastoralists as possible. It must be remembered at all times that the marginal areas of the Horn of Africa are in fact poor in resources and that there are limits to the number of people who can actually gain a livelihood from this resource base. But there are few alternative ways of using these lands and not many other places for the pastoralists to go.

The development experience

The development era in the Horn of Africa has left a deep imprint on pastoral societies. There have been large-scale public investments in the pastoral areas in most countries, particularly in the 1970's and 1980's. There are no doubt individual interventions which have been successful in their own right and which have contributed positively to the pastoral economy, but overall and in general terms, the results from the pastoral development efforts have been disappointing.

There has been some variation between the various projects and in the different countries of the sub-region, but for the purposes of this paper it suffices to point out that the development experience in the pastoral areas has brought two distinctly different outlooks to bear on the situation of the pastoralists:

> The first development projects in pastoral settings in Eastern Africa saw the integration of pastoralism into the national economy as a major goal, on the assumption that the pastoral economy contained a surplus which could be used for various national purposes. Even so, it was believed that there was room for improvements in the productivity and output of pastoralism. This first phase in the development history of pastoral societies thus saw the introduction of innovations and presumed improvements like veterinary services, water

development, rangelands management, genetic up-grading and improvement of livestock through cross-breeding schemes, supplementary feeding and fattening schemes and so on.

The expected effects and benefits have usually failed to materialise. Neither the national economy nor the local communities have benefited from these massive investments. On the contrary, failed schemes and the unintended consequences that they have produced are by now quite well known. Water development has become particularly notorious for causing harm in pastoral contexts. The introduction of water in formerly dry places has altered land-use patterns and set in train processes that have turned out to be environmentally destructive, thus often contributing to increase the vulnerability of the pastoralists to the very drought problems they were intended to solve. Water projects have also in many cases unintentionally rearranged social relationships as well, by disregarding the local arrangements for the appropriate distribution of rights to water and management of resources, to the extent of threatening mutual assistance networks and other socially constructed means of averting risk.

The outlook on pastoral development underwent a major change after the major crises of 1972/73 and, in particular, in 1984/85. The famine dramatically revealed how vulnerable pastoral societies across the drylands of Africa had become. Pastoral societies, which in former times were able to handle one or two drought seasons (with hardship but without too many problems) were now faced with utter destitution and disintegration after the failure of a single rainy season. Even temporary delays in the onset of normal rains seemed to create problems. The main issue in pastoral development now became a concern that pastoral societies apparently had lost their ability to handle droughts, or at least that the threshold to famine and destitution was much lower than before.

The outlook on pastoral development has therefore changed. The issue is no longer the contributions which pastoralism can make to the national economy; the concern has shifted to the restoration of the capacity of pastoral societies to feed themselves. Local food security and local self-reliance have become paramount concerns. Great importance is attached to fostering popular participation and strengthening local institutions, often involving the resurrection of organisational capacities undermined or even denied by administrative subjugation in earlier times. Local communities are now to an increasing extent expected to be responsible for their own welfare, including food security and the delivery of public services which the government no longer can afford or is incapable of delivering to the pastoralists, such as human and animal health services, education, water, access roads and so on.

The earlier approach to pastoral development usually entailed considerable public investments, with projects being implemented by government agencies with statutory responsibilities for the livestock sector, the pastoral communities or the dryland areas in which pastoralists live. The new approaches are much less clearly focused and far less technical in nature, reflecting the much reduced range of responsibilities that government now wants to assume in the pastoral areas. Clear-cut government policies stating what these responsibilities should be are usually lacking. The new approaches, however, are usually not linked to government investments. Government agencies previously charged with a responsibility for pastoral development are being scaled back and public funds for investment in pastoral projects are dwindling.

A notable change, which has taken place concurrently with the increasing influence of the new 'participatory' outlook on pastoral development, is the growing presence of various

voluntary agencies in the pastoral areas. As government agencies redefine their ambitions and divest themselves of responsibilities in the pastoral areas, the non-government organisations seem to increasingly take over the role of government with respect to both social welfare and economic development The NGOs cannot, however, directly assume the full range of responsibilities of government agencies. They cannot formulate or promulgate policy and they do not have any legitimate basis for the large-scale co-ordination of effort that often is required. Furthermore, NGO's are largely answerable only to themselves. Already at this stage there are numerous example of how they come and go on the basis of considerations which do not necessarily have to do with conditions in the pastoral societies where they work. While pastoralists may be described as second-class citizens in their relations with government, in their relations with the NGOs they are described as 'beneficiaries' or even 'clients'. Still, the NGOs are now the main development agencies in the marginal areas, where they operate on the basis of co-operation with 'grass roots communities' and provide services which technically often are as good or better than what government delivered. There is no doubt that this may bring benefits to individual pastoral households. In the pastoral areas, however, problems often appear, and must often be solved, at the aggregate level! The NGOs are not well equipped to operate at this level and there is thus a real danger that successes at the micro-level generate aggregate problems which nobody is interested in or able to handle.

The inhabitants of the marginal lands

The people who live in the marginal areas of the Horn are, in the most general terms, pastoralists. They inhabit the dry (arid and semi-arid) lowlands, where they specialise in animal husbandry. In large parts of the Horn, rainfall varies with altitude and the resource base in the lowland areas is poor and patchy. With productivity directly related to rainfall the resources improve towards the wetter end of the scale, in the semi-arid areas, usually at somewhat higher altitudes. The spatial and seasonal distribution of rain is highly unreliable, however, and mobility is an important aspect of pastoral adaptation to the environment. Due to the unreliable distribution of the pasture resources, pastoralists in the Horn are highly opportunistic in their movements, basically moving to where the rains have produced good pasture and forage. Another common feature is the splitting up of the family herds, distributing the animals on several different camps which move on independent circuits in search for pasture and water. In addition to the advantages this arrangement provides in terms of animal husbandry, it also provides a measure of security against disease outbreaks and raiding. Flexibility and opportunistic exploitation of ephemeral resources are important characteristics of the landuse patterns of these areas..

Pastoralists are sometimes referred to as nomads. Although mobility is the main distinguishing feature of nomads, this seems to be a less useful term in the Horn of Africa than it is e.g. in the Middle East, where it is specifically used to describe pastoralists who regularly move over long distances in a set annual pattern, for instance between winter pastures in the lowlands and summer pastures in the mountains. These nomads are of course also pastoralists, and while livestock herding is an important part of their economy, they also gain income from a number of different activities, such as trade, or even direct investments in business ventures and land. In the Horn of Africa, the fact that people keep livestock is more important than the fact that they move. The emphasis is on the economic aspects of pastoralism.But also here it is important to keep in mind that pastoralists may derive significant parts of their income from activities other than animal husbandry.

People who gain more than 50% of their annual income from animal husbandry are usually referred to as pastoralists. Depending on which other activities they are engaged in, it may be proper to designate them as agro-pastoralists (deriving an important part of their income from

crops), sylvo-pastoralists (partially deriving income from trees and forest products). Even so, in all these cases, an important, and probably the most valuable part of people's assets is their livestock capital. In this context the emphasis in the designation 'pastoralist' is on the economic activities relating to animal husbandry and the ownership of livestock.

In former times, pastoralists were also sometimes distinguished by their diet, and it was common to describe them as subsisting entirely on milk and other livestock products. Milk, butter and meat are still highly prized foods in any pastoral camp, and in a good season they probably still play an important role in the diet of pastoralists. Today, however, very few pastoralists in the Horn of Africa can afford an entirely pastoral diet. Animal products are expensive and considerable gains can be made by converting expensive livestock products like meat or milk into cheaper agricultural products like grain. Trade and barter for agricultural products have been important to pastoralists for a long time, but today the exchange rate between pastoral and agricultural products is of central importance to the livelihood of the pastoralists. Pastoral households have come to depend increasingly on the additional food provided by the trade margin to accommodate the growing population. Today, market fluctuations and prices changes may therefore have equally serious repercussions as climatic perturbations on the food security of pastoralists.

Income from animals is a central feature of the pastoral economies of the Horn of Africa, but in parallel with the opportunistic patterns of movement demanded by the livestock herds, pastoralists do engage opportunistically in a number of other income-generating activities as well. These could include e.g. collection of gums and resins from trees, trading in livestock or other commodities, production of handicrafts like rope and wooden containers, excavation of salt and other minerals, transport or smuggling. A number of international borders run through the pastoral areas of the Horn and many pastoralists are able to exploit the differences in availability and prices of various goods on either side of the border. In some countries young pastoralists are in particular demand as soldiers or security guards and spend part of their time away on labour migration, leaving their animals in the care of close relatives. Long-range labour migrations (e.g. to the Gulf countries) is important in some countries, and cash remittances may play an important role in the household economy. In other contexts labour migration may be shorter and more limited in time, e.g. as seasonal agricultural labour on irrigation farms or in the highlands.

It is convenient, however, to refer to the people of the lowlands of the Horn as pastoralists, and pastoralism is indeed an economic mainstay of these areas. This shorthand should not detract attention from the fact that the pastoral households, in addition to livestock rearing, are engaged in bundles of activities without which many households would not be able to survive. The combination and co-ordination of all these activities are major concerns to all pastoral households, and must also inform all development efforts in the marginal areas. It is, in other words, not very useful to think of pastoralists as a discreet category of people who behave in certain ways. Popular stereotypes about the pastoralists' irrational obsession with cattle and cattle numbers are particularly not useful! Pastoralism is but one, albeit important, or even dominant, economic activity that contribute to the livelihood of the households in the marginal areas.

The particular comparative advantage of pastoralism compared to other economic activities found in the rural areas of the Horn is the ability of pastoralists to make a living from the poor and scattered resources found in the lowlands. They have done this quite well, for a considerable period of time. But their success depends on a number of quite specific factors, the most important of which can be summed up as low population densities. An explanation of the low population densities commonly associated with pastoralism must draw on number of factors, some of which are quite unacceptable today (e.g. increased mortality from starvation). As these factors change, populations tend to grow. Although the pastoral areas are still sparsely populated compared to the agricultural areas in the Horn, the populations also here are growing. This is in itself not a

major cause for concern, but seen against the lack of alternative opportunities which now characterise the marginal areas and the diminishing capacity of these areas to sustain the populations they already hold, population growth actually becomes a serious problem.

The three crises of pastoralism

The situation of pastoralists in the Horn of Africa today is precarious. There is considerable variation across the marginal areas of the Horn with respect to how vulnerable pastoral societies are. Pastoralists are not all the same, neither in terms of accessible opportunities and resources, nor in terms of how they are organised within groups, between groups and in their relationships to national authorities. None the less, there are some important common themes which seem to emerge from a largely common environment, a largely common adaptation and a largely common experience over the last few decades with national governments as well as the international development community.

The current situation of the pastoral communities may be understood in the framework of three distinct, but closely interrelated crises. The first of these have in the broadest sense laid down some of the most important preconditions for the current famine, which culminates in the second crisis. The third crisis will remain crucially important in the effort to move towards a solution to the problems. The situation of the pastoralists (and the marginal areas) can thus be understood in terms of:

- an ecological crisis
- a food security crisis
- an institutional crisis

The current situation of the pastoral communities will be examined under these three headings.

Ecological crisis

Pastoralists live in resource-poor environments and the main distinction of their particular adaptation is their ability to derive a livelihood from the scattered and meagre resources available to them. Pastoralists have through time been very successful in these terms and have often enjoyed a standard of living which surpassed that of their agricultural neighbours. Over the past few decades, however, the pastoralists seem to have lost this ability to derive a stable and sustainable livelihood from the resource base found in these marginal areas. There were without any doubt droughts and famines also in the past, but the success of pastoralism as a way of living has been closely connected to an ability to maintain sufficient numbers of people and animals to regenerate and rebuild when times improved, and survive as a society.

Land

The pastoral adaptation has, however, depended on access to large tracts of land and free movements across this land in search pasture and water. The supply of these two main resources are driven by rainfall, which in the lowlands of the Horn of Africa is highly variable and highly unreliable, in terms of geographical distribution and quantity. There is not yet sufficient evidence that the rainfall patterns have changed significantly over the past century or so: what seems to have changed is the ability of pastoralists to cope with the variation.

Since the turn of the last century, the pastoral communities in the Horn of Africa have increasingly been drawn into the newly formed states of the sub-region. New borders have

been created and enforced, usually for reasons which had little to do with the pastoralists themselves, and new restrictions on movement have been introduced. As the new state administrations assumed a hegemony with regard to security issues, control became a paramount concern. As much by default as by design, competition with neighbouring groups over land and water has also been curtailed. A formerly fluid and flexible situation has throughout the 20th century become increasingly solidified, with pastoral groups finding themselves increasingly tied to particular tracts of land, confined within borders defined and upheld by the state.

In addition to the loss of flexibility, many pastoral groups have suffered outright loss of access to important land areas. The new states have effectively abrogated all pastoral land rights, usually declaring the pastoral areas as some form of state land, with access being governed by state consent. This change of legal status has been most important in the cases where the state has particular interests in the land, e.g. in developing important river frontages into irrigation schemes. River frontages often contain key resources. Access to river frontages are often vitally important to the pastoralists in the critical dry season and loss of comparatively small areas along the river can easily be multiplied into effective denial of access to much larger areas.. While there may be good reasons to invest in irrigation schemes and the expansion of agriculture, it is an important issue that these decisions are usually taken without involving the pastoralists or considering their best interests. They have no legal rights to the land and no legal right to be heard, but must bear the consequences of a reduced resource base.

There are also cases where the lands previously used by pastoralists contain areas suitable for agriculture and where there has been a pressure from the agricultural neighbours to move in. The best land was of course occupied first; later, the continued population growth in many of the countries in the Horn have continued to pushed land-hungry peasants out into land with an increasingly marginal agricultural potential. The pastoralists inevitable lose out in this competition with crop-based agriculture when land rights and access is mediated by the state. There is a consistent pro-farmer/anti-pastoralist bias in the mindset of the administration in the countries of the Horn, even in those countries where the largest part of the population are pastoralists. Agriculture is associated with development, while pastoralism is perceived as a backward and primitive way of life.

In most cases it is too late and/or politically impossible to reverse these processes of land alienation from the pastoralists. But the population movements into former pastoral lands is an ongoing process and the common situation in the countries in the Horn is still that pastoralists have no legal rights to the land resources on which they depend. It is true that pastoralists do not need to control land to the same extent and with the same intensity as farmers, but this lack of secure land rights have had at least two important consequences:

- The land area accessible to pastoral groups has shrunk considerably in extent over the past century. In addition, the land that has been lost has often been the most productive land, denying pastoralists access to e.g. strategically important dry-season reserves.

- By abrogating pastoral land rights and itself assuming powers of mediation with respect to pastoral lands, the state has turned areas which were under some kind of restricted management (most pastoral groups for instance at least maintain a distinction between dry-season and wet-season pastures) into classic open-access resources without management. There have been examples of the state attempting to introduce access restrictions and land management regulations in the pastoral areas,

often in the context of pastoral development schemes, but the high transaction costs involved have inevitably forced the state to retreat from this. Still, the alternative of granting the pastoralists secure rights and management authority to look after the land in their own best interest has not been contemplated. Land management, therefore, is for all practical purposes missing in the marginal areas of the Horn is. The ecological repercussions have been severe, in particular in the areas of the best potential.

There are situations where pastoralists or pastoral groups actively try to gain more secure rights to land. In Kenya, for example, it has been possible for pastoral groups to gain legal title to group land (which, in the event, then again has been subdivided into sub-economic individual holdings). In Ethiopia pastoralists can demarcate limited areas of lush bottom-lands as farm land and gain legal protection by paying land tax. There are also numerous cases in Ethiopia and Somalia where individual pastoralists build thorn-bush fences to reserve parts of the rangelands for themselves, building partly on accepted local customs. Exclosures are often associated with individually owned water tanks in the rangelands, and the overall effects of these developments seem to be the withdrawal of increasingly large parts of the communal range for individual purposes. These individual strategies are of course only viable if they are combined with access to much larger communal holdings, in which case the individual holdings function as private drought reserves, at the expense of the larger community.

Pastoralism in the Horn still depends on access to large land areas and all events which restrict access, restrict mobility or reduce the area accessible, at the same time reduce the chances for pastoral households to survive. There is an urgent need for a land tenure reform which give the pastoralists stable and secure rights of access and for new land management structure which will allow pastoral groups to make and uphold management decisions over common lands and stop the tendency towards privatisation of essential resources in the rangelands.

Water

The pastoral areas are located in the driest parts of the Horn and access to water is in an immediate way seen as the most obvious bottleneck restricting human use. This is often a deceptive impression. On closer examination, the dry Afar lowlands of Northern Ethiopia, for instance are surprisingly well watered through shallow aquifers fed by run-off from the mountain escarpment. The same is the case in Turkana District in Northern Kenya, where only a small part of the district is more than 20km away from a water source, even if rainfall is well below 200mm/year. Hence, there are areas where vegetation growth is driven by local rainfall, while the water supply is determined by conditions elsewhere. But there are also areas where water shortages have prevented efficient utilisation of the available range resources or where large parts of the rangelands could only be used during the wet season.

In the first phase of the development era, water development was the hallmark of pastoral development projects all over the Horn. Development planners and pastoralists alike welcomed the idea of additional water and it is mostly in retrospect that the undesirable aspects of water development have become apparent. As far as animal husbandry is concerned, there has to be a balance between available water and available forage through and across the years. Additionally, the uneven distribution of water served to drive the seasonal migrations of pastoralists, most importantly away from permanent water in the wet season, on to lightly used and temporarily accessible wet-season pastures. This helped conserve forage for the critical dry season.

In many contexts where the supply of water represented a bottleneck, additional water has effectively removed the distinction between dry-season and wet-season pastures. Conscious attempts have been made to restrict the capacity of the water sources put into the wet-season pastures, e.g. by regulating the size of stock ponds or by seasonally closing or even removing pump sets from boreholes. But once it was seen that the technical capacity was there to provide water in these areas with ample forage, the political and administrative pressure to gain access to more water has often prevailed over technical considerations.

Water development has usually taken place within the framework of various government programmes and water has been provided in the framework of government management. The management structures put in place have often failed to meet the technical considerations of range management and overlooked the local structures for distributing rights to a critical resource like water. Many pastoral areas have now seen the effects of water expansion and then experienced the difficulties of maintaining the facilities installed. Derelict facilities are now found all over the rangelands and the pastoralists have learned to treat proposals for additional water with circumspection. But there are still situations, in particular where stock ponds with low maintenance requirements were installed, where water development continues to have a direct influence on utilisation rates on the surrounding rangelands and causes environmental damage. These damages range from changes in vegetation composition and bush encroachment in the wetter parts of the rangelands, to removal of woody vegetation and general resource depletion in the drier parts.

Development planners have been scared off water development in the drylands, and there is no doubt that uncritical water development has caused problems and damages. But water is still scarce resource in most of the marginal areas of the Horn and in many contexts an effort to provide clean water may still be necessary. But greater attention must be given to the management of water facilities. Many pastoral communities are well aware of the problems and dangers associated with water development, and they are well aware of the likely effects on the range resources. But too often, the pastoral communities are still not involved in neither the decisions to develop an additional water source, nor the maintenance, management or control over how it is used.

Animals and animal numbers

Improved veterinary services and veterinary vaccination campaigns were other common development interventions in the pastoral areas in the early phases of development. These immediately useful innovations were eagerly accepted by pastoralists. The usefulness of veterinary medicine is now so well established that pastoralists are usually willing to pay for proper services. In the pastoral areas of the lowlands these services are hard to find and are often organised such that costs become prohibitive. This has opened up for all kinds of sub-standard solutions, such as the smuggling of scheduled drugs, the distribution of diluted drugs and the under-dosage of drugs. But there is no doubt that veterinary campaigns directed against the main diseases have been effective and have had a major impact. The main problem, in the wider context of pastoralism, has been that such veterinary services tend to increase animal numbers, and while this is good for the individual herdsman, the aggregate effects in terms of rangelands usage or water supply are difficult to contain.

Together with water development, veterinary services are thought to be the main impetus behind a growth in animal numbers. Information from the rangelands of the Horn is very poor, however, and proper census material is not available. It is therefore very difficult to assess how many animals there are, how quickly or slowly the herds grow or how many die in any given drought or disease event. Numbers are most likely highly inflated or deflated according to who is asking and why questions are put and there are few possibilities for actual verification of claims that anything up to 90% of the herd have perished in a drought.

But the received wisdom that the rangelands of the Horn are over-stocked and over-exploited (with growth rates driven by water development and veterinary interventions) is being increasingly debated. There now seem to be sound arguments and demonstrations that this view must be modified, at least in the drier parts of the rangelands. Here it is often hard to detect the damages reputedly caused by overexploitation. The vegetation seems well adapted to periodic intensive use and recovers quickly the next time there are good rains. It seems that resource availability in the driest end of the spectrum depends much more on available rainfall than on some notional proper utilisation rate and the need for conservation.

On the other hand, there are also extensive rangelands in the wetter parts of the area where this argument does not seem to apply, where excessive use in fact is translated into changes in species composition and reduced range condition and where heavy use is eroding the capacity of rangelands to support animals. It is estimated, for instance, that 40% of the rangelands in Borana in Southern Ethiopia now are affected by moderate to heavy bush encroachment. It is believed, however, that this may not be entirely due to high numbers, but something which must be explained by a combination of factors, including weakened traditional range management practises. Range burning was at one stage banned by the administration and the traditional movement between dry-season and wet-season pastures became difficult due to permanent use of the wet-season pasture following water development there. The local story may be a bit different from place to place, but it would seem that there are significant ecological changes in the wetter parts of the rangelands (e.g. Kenya's Maasailand, Borana in Ethiopia) involving a depletion of the range resources and a reduced capacity to support the herds that depend on them.

Events in the last few decades have rearranged the ecological relationships of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa. Some of these events are the result of consciously designed interventions, designed to solve specific problems, others are the inadvertent result of processes which were not directly related to the pastoralists. Irrespective of the specific causes, however, the various changes in the lowlands of the Horn of Africa over the past 3-4 decades have basically worked to push up population density rates, both of the animal and human population, in a system which depends on low density rates to operate.

Food security crisis

The inability of the pasture resources in the marginal lands of the Horn of Africa to feed the animal herds and the inability of the herds to feed the human population is of course a symptom of the ecological imbalances which now characterise the situation. Land areas have been reduced, movement has been restricted, animal numbers have grown, as have the human populations. Although the problem becomes much more acute when the rains fail, there have long been signs that the pastoral system is under pressure in terms of its ability to feed the populations they contain. There are signs of increasing diversification, away from livestock husbandry. Pastoralist have a reputation for being conservative in their ways and excessively preoccupied with their

livestock but are now increasingly willing to try alternative sources of gaining a livelihood, even if there are few obvious alternatives available in these areas.

Changed consumption patterns may be seen as a successful strategy which is now widespread throughout the marginal lands, to meet increasing demands for food in a situation where the herds produce less. Increased market penetration and improved market access are important precondition for this change in consumption patterns from the milk/meat-based diet closely associated with East African pastoralist to the current grain-based diet which is now becoming common. In some cases it is claimed that the distribution of famine relief grain first introduced the idea, but it is well known that grain obtained through barter and trade with agricultural neighbours has been consumed by pastoralists for a long time. But the main point now is not how this started but that it is possible to feed a larger number of people on the output from the herd, if herd products are exchanged for grain rather than consumed. The gains to be made are significant: it has been calculated that 1 calorie of milk may be exchanged for up to 6 calories worth of maize. Exchange rates of course vary by the products involved, by season, by distance to markets, by the standard of transport and other infrastructure and so on, but are normally so favourable to the pastoralists that it has been possible to accommodate a growing population.

Although this strategy of increased involvement with the market has been quite successful, it has added yet another element of risk to the economic management of pastoral households. Market prices, both for the purchased grain and the sold animals, are influenced by a number of factors **outside** the marginal areas, in addition to events in the local community. The grain offered for sale is not grown locally and prices offered for livestock are not driven by the local demand for animals. It is well known that livestock prices will fall dramatically in a crisis, e.g. in a drought where animals start to die, to the extent that the exchange rate will be inverted and grain becomes very expensive. But increased market integration exposes pastoral households to market fluctuations generated far afield even in normal years, quite aside from such extraordinary local effects.

A second effect of the market strategy is that it leads to greater social differentiation. The poor depend more on favourable exchange rates to secure enough food and are the first to be hit if prices change. They have to sell all or a large proportion of the herd output (milk, calves, young animals) even in normal years, leaving little surplus to invest back into the herd. The poor will therefore remain poor. The rich, on the other hand, can reduce consumption from the herd by exchanging part of it for grain, leaving a proportionally larger part of it for reinvestment. The market strategy will allow the rich to become richer.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that the market strategy which most of the pastoralists of the Horn, to a smaller or larger degree, have been obliged to pursue, can only be successful on a temporary basis. The market strategy has provided a buffer between the growing population and food production, but this buffer is in the process of being worn away. Given the underlying ecological problems of the marginal lands, which have led to decreased output, irrespective of whether the main problem is a reduced land area or reduced productivity, the households will need an increasingly favourable rate of exchange to meet the needs of a growing population. It is difficult to speculate on exactly how the relative prices between grain and livestock products will develop, but it seems quite certain that the current market strategy of the pastoralists of the Horn will at one stage, perhaps quite soon, be overcome by population growth.

Food security will remain an important issue and with the high-risk strategies which the pastoralists of the Horn have to live by, threats to food security can come from a number of sources. Drought is a convenient short-hand for these threats, even if drought in the strict (meteorological) sense is not the main problem. The many elements in the food production system

of the marginal areas are so delicately balanced against each other that even minor perturbations may have far-reaching consequences.

Famine relief has become the standard response to the food security crisis. In the short term, this seems unavoidable. Furthermore, if famine relief were a treatment directed at an extraordinary event, it would be quite unproblematic. This is not the case, however. Famine relief on a large scale was first introduced in connection with the drought of 1972/73 and has since become a more or less permanent feature of the marginal areas. But to the extent famine relief operations actually address real food security issues, they are now directed more at the symptoms of systemic failure than at isolated and extraordinary emergencies. Famine relief therefore becomes necessary more often. There are now also all kinds of additional reasons for distributing famine relief: it seems to be more easily available than financial assistance, it may be politically expedient for the government to be seen to be involved, jobs in famine relief organisations depend on it, local administrations starved of all kinds of resources welcome it, as do the local pastoralists.

If the real food security issue in the marginal areas of the Horn involves a growing population against an inadequate resource base (irrespective of whether it is fixed, variable or declining), the famine relief will generate its own demand. Successful famine relief will contribute to population growth. This is in itself neither an argument for, nor against famine relief. But famine relief has produced effects which in turn need attention.

The effects of famine relief on population growth are obvious, as are the demands which a growing population will put on resources such as water and fuel-wood. Famine relief also contributes to herd growth, however, by reducing the consumption demands that the pastoral households put on their herds. In times of great stress this argument does not seem to have any practical implications. Since famine relief in fact is distributed also in more normal times, there is no doubt that milk that could have been consumed and calves that could have been sold go back into the herd when consumption needs are (partly) met by famine relief.

It will no doubt be necessary to distribute famine relief in the marginal areas of the Horn for many years in the future. There has been a growing awareness of the potential damages continued famine relief can cause in terms of production incentives and price formation in grain-producing agricultural areas. These effects are sometimes monitored and there is pressure to stop famine relief or intervene in other ways to handle these problems. In the pastoral areas there seems to be a far more complacent attitude to famine relief and to the extent undesirable consequences of famine relief are discussed the argument is usually about dependency relations. And it is true that the marginal areas have become increasingly dependent on famine relief. The ramifications of famine relief in these areas have not been fully explored and are not well understood, however, and the capacity to handle the unwanted consequences of famine relief in the marginal areas is absent.

Institutional crisis

The most serious aspect of the marginal areas of the Horn of Africa may not be that these areas are marginal in economic and ecological terms, but that they are marginal in a social and political sense. Commentators have referred to 'the deep gulf' separating the pastoralists and the state and have characterised the relationship of the state to the pastoralists as one of benign neglect. Since the integration of the marginal areas into the new nation-states of the region (or the structures which preceded them), the relationship between the state and the pastoralists has been shaped by mistrust, conflict, subjugation and control. The policy ambitions of the states in the sub-region have been very modest as far as the marginal areas are concerned. In many cases, the lack of fresh policy initiatives have served to simply carry forward the colonial administrative legacy, which

was restricted to issues of border security and maintaining the peace among the troublesome pastoralists. Since the failures of the development efforts within livestock development, the states have more or less abdicated their responsibilities for the populations in the marginal areas. Important fields like natural resources management, economic development, social service delivery or emergency relief have either been totally neglected or left to the more or less arbitrary attention of the NGOs.

The main concern in the relationship between the state and the pastoralists since the early stages has been focused on issues of security and control. In some parts of the Horn these issues were forcibly settled through violent campaigns. But once these concerns were met, there are variations across the marginal areas of the Horn with respect to how closely the national authorities intervened in the affairs of the pastoral communities. There was, in general terms, little interference and little concern. Pastoral communities which bordered agricultural areas were monitored more closely than in the more remote areas, and were subjected to more intervention and more regulation, often with reference to the problems they could cause to their agricultural neighbours. Interventions would typically be negative, such as restrictions on movement, veterinary quarantines, restrictions on trade and so on.

Initially the state basically allowed the pastoral communities to run their own affairs, as long as nothing threatened the hegemony of the state. Throughout the last century, however, systems of local administration have been gradually introduced. The local administration is part of the state and as such consolidated state control over the marginal areas. In the process the state had to do away with whatever local structures existed in the pastoral communities, but this was not always very successful. The marginal areas are extensive but quite sparsely populated and the state could not afford, or did not want to, and sometimes did not manage to extend control to all aspects of pastoral societies. The marginal areas therefore often reflected a situation of internal colonisation, with an indigenous or traditional system existing side by side with the local administration. This situation has persisted in large parts of the marginal areas, even if the traditional structures have been denied recognition and legitimacy by the state. In all cases were there is a question of overlapping or competing jurisdictions, the local administration will obviously prevail. But the very fact that these parallel systems continue to exist may be seen as an indication of the limited scope of government involvement with the pastoral areas.

On the one hand, because it lacks both appropriate policies and effective institutions for the marginal areas, governments have neither the inclination nor the ability to come to grips with the situation in these areas. Government involvement becomes, at best, reactive, in the sense that it may react to issues like drought, famine and lack of security, if and when these issues become large enough. The choice of interventions are usually limited, partly because interventions are implemented only after long delays. Furthermore, since governments lack familiarity with the situation and experience in intervening, the instruments are usually quite crude, with little scope for fine-tuning or pinpointing attention to where it is needed.

Government capacity for proactive involvement, to solve problems at an early stage or prevent them from happening, is restricted. They usually maintain only a very limited administrative capacity in the marginal lands, some of which have only recently emerged from military or para-military forms of administration. There is little sensitivity to local issues and few resources to do anything about various local concerns. As long as there are few good and well-tested ideas on how government can promote development in these areas, the pastoralists are basically left to manage on their own, sometimes with the assistance of NGOs.

On the other hand, the famines and the environmental problems reported from the marginal areas makes it obvious that the pastoralists are not able to manage on their own. All examinations of

their situation today indicate that there it is not possible to explain the problems regularly experienced in these areas with reference to drought alone. There are combinations of factors and long chains of causality generating the famines which repeatedly occur. Large-scale famine relief, which has become a semi-permanent feature of the pastoral areas, is not an adequate response.

The need for a new initiative

The policies of benign neglect which still characterise the relationship between governments and the marginal areas in the Horn must change. The populations in the marginal areas must be brought back into society and government must give them more attention. Any solution to the problems identified in the marginal lands, some of which are outlined above, must start with a commitment by government to come to grips with the situation. The problems are of such a scale that they cannot be left to the NGOs. Governments have a responsibility for these areas but without a policy framework and institutional reform governments will continue to command only a strictly limited capacity to do anything at all in the drylands.

The main justification for a new initiative for the marginal lands grows out of a rights-based approach to development, viz. that also the people in the marginal areas have a right to development, a right to food, employment and dignity. In more pragmatic terms, a new initiative is justified by the high costs of not doing anything. Lack of appropriate policies and neglect of the populations in the marginal areas have to a large extent allowed the recurring economic and food security crises to evolve. The disruptions and emergency actions caused by famines have huge macro-economic costs to the nations in the sub-region, quite apart from the costs and sufferings borne by individuals. In the longer term, continued inaction will exacerbate the situation by gradually allowing larger and larger parts of the populations in the marginal areas to become permanent famine relief clients.

There is need for policy initiatives within at least the following four fields:

- Institutional reform
- Resource tenure
- Economic policies
- Service delivery

There is variation between the countries of the Horn with respect to how extensive these reforms must be, but the common objective of a policy initiative must be to re-integrate the communities of the marginal areas and put the particular problems of these areas on the national development agenda. This will not, in and by itself, solve the immediate problems faced by the inhabitants of the marginal areas with respect to food security, economic diversification and ecological rehabilitation. But a policy initiative is none the less needed to lay down the first stepping stones towards a better future.

Institutional Reform

Institutional reform must in particular address the polarised situation usually found in the marginal areas, and attempt to bridge the existing gulf between the 'modern' local administration and the 'traditional' structures of local leadership. Local institutions where these two systems can be merged and encouraged to work in the same direction are needed. The 'traditional' structures enjoy legitimacy and promote participation in the broadest possible sense. They are sensitive to the local situation and provide platforms for the expression and discussion of local concerns. Decisions reached by 'traditional' structures are much more likely to be implemented and

respected by the population. On the other hand, care must be exercised to avoid recreating the colonial practice of indirect rule. Traditional structures must be co-opted into the national political system and the aims of empowerment and popular participation must be vigorously pursued. To achieve this, there is often a need to confront such 'traditional structures' with new issues: Traditional society may not be very democratic, there may be problems of rigid social stratification, relations of exploitation and privilege, social exclusion and so on. Gender issues in particular will be a likely arena for conflict between national policies and local practices.

New local level institutions, here understood as social frameworks for the mobilisation of people and resources in the pursuit of common goals will only be possible if governments are prepared to devolve parts of their existing powers to the local level. Several countries of the Horn have embarked on exercises of local government reform and devolution, even if it probably will take some time before the intentions behind these exercises have been fulfilled. In the context of a new initiative for the marginal areas particular attention and flexibility may be needed to achieve the aim of improved local representation and increased participation.

Local level institutions are usually multi-purpose and must relate to the whole gamut of issues and challenges involved in living in the marginal areas. Although many issues can be resolved at the local level, it is often necessary to seek both technical and economic support elsewhere for a number of tasks. Such resources and support is usually managed by specific line ministries of particular technical agencies. It is necessary to have some back-stopping structure for the local-level institutions which cuts across sectors to reflect the holistic outlook which local-level institutions must adopt. There are also issues which transcend the capacity and scope of local-level institutions, involving co-ordination and mediation, as well as the articulation of broad policy concerns, which must be handled by such a back-stopping structure.

There is, in short, a need for some broadly mandated national agency with a particular responsibility for the marginal areas. At the national level such an agency would be responsible for e.g.

- Broad policy formulation, with emphasis on the particular needs of the marginal areas
- Macro-economic issues, like trade policy (in particular livestock exports), price policy (in particular stability of grain prices), taxation of pastoral assets, credit
- Strategic investments, particularly investments in basic infrastructure like roads and communications
- Cross-border migrations and co-ordination, in particular to facilitate orderly use of borderland resources
- Back-stopping and co-ordination of local-level institutions
- Residual issues, or issues which are not handled anywhere else

Resource tenure

The inhabitants of the marginal areas are directly dependent on secure access to the natural resources. Under the present circumstances in all the countries of the Horn, land rights in the pastoral areas have been abrogated by the state and pastoralist may be denied access to the resource base if and when governments decide on alternative uses. Contested areas often contain what to the pastoralists are key resources and decisions to exclude them (as happens when e.g irrigation schemes are put in) can have far-reaching consequences.

Furthermore, by assuming rights to the common property resources of the pastoral communities , the state has often removed all forms of management of these resources. The marginal areas have been turned into open-access resources and are exposed to degradation and depletion.

There is a need for tenure reform to return control over the resource base in the marginal lands to the communities that live there. After many years with a tenure regime which for all practical purpose has been an open-access regime, it may take some time and effort to put in place legislation and procedures which will return to the pastoralists control over the resources that they depend on. This is not necessarily an easy task but one which is necessary for the sake of equity as well as for the sake of putting in place a management regime in these resource-poor areas which is effective as well as affordable.

Economic policies

Although livestock rearing is sill the predominantly important economic activity in the marginal areas, it is not exclusively so. Food security often depends on multiple strategies and a range of combinations of various sources of income. Furthermore, pastoralism does not seem to offer much scope for absorbing a growing population. There are definite relationships between land, rain and pasture resources on the one hand, and livestock productivity on the other. The pastoral systems of the Horn of Africa are, by all accounts, full. Overloading them will mean collective misery.

The experience from the pastoral development schemes seems to be that there are few technologies available which can improve on the livestock production practices of the pastoralists under the conditions prevailing in the marginal areas. Most of the inputs provided in this phase seem to have been either unsustainable or directly damaging. There is, however, a real demand in the pastoral areas for veterinary services. Policies and institutions in the countries of the Horn are directed towards the settled agricultural populations, and to a large extent this also applies to the veterinary services. There seems to be considerable scope for an overhaul of both policies and institutions to make them more suitable for the conditions in the drylands.

The marginal areas of the Horn are mostly suitable for livestock rearing, with limited opportunities for other agricultural activities. None the less, and paradoxically, the best development strategy for the marginal areas is probably one which offers people opportunities outside pastoralism, either by diversification into the limited other opportunities (irrigation, agro-forestry, processing of local products) or by developing livelihoods which do not depend on land resources. These are strategies which must be pursued over the long term and there are no quick and easy options immediately available. On the other hand, there may be options which have not been fully tried out and the challenge is to identify these and provide an enabling environment for new opportunities. The role of education, communication networks and arenas for the exchange of ideas must be underlined.

A strategy of economic diversification may backfire, however, if, as has happened in some contexts, surpluses are channelled back into the livestock economy. Some times people do this because of an attachment to pastoral society and pastoral values, e.g. proper marriages can only be entered into if the correct number and types of animals are available for bride-price. But livestock production is in principle a capital-intensive mode of production and income gained in other sectors can easily be invested in animals. Depending on what other opportunities are available, investment in livestock placed in the care of relatives and friends may be one of the most attractive options available. Such investment linkages could contribute to maintain high rates of resource use even if the number of people dependent on livestock is reduced. It could also lead to a proletarisation of pastoralism, in which animals are controlled by absentee herd-owners ansd herded by hired labour.

But the capital-intensive nature of pastoralism may also work the other way, i.e. that livestock capital may be realised and invested in other ventures. Livestock investments in land, for instance,

have long been common in the Middle East. In the Horn of Africa there are examples of pastoralists investing in land, houses, businesses in town or transport facilities, but their experiences in terms of improved livelihoods are mixed. This is a matter of individual new skills and abilities, which pastoralists often lack, but also a matter of social capital, in terms of support networks and trust. None the less, there is scope for more active support and interventions to make these investment links more attractive, such that the pastoral surplus, which undeniably is produced in good years, is taken out of pastoralism and invested in alternative livelihoods or in safety net arrangements. There has been some experimentation with such approaches and some pilot projects have been attempted by NGOs.

Service delivery

The availability of social services, in particular health and education, in the marginal areas of the Horn lags far behind the settled areas of the countries in the sub-region. Availability in the settled areas is by no means adequate, but the marginal areas are even more disadvantaged. This is becoming an increasingly acute problem. The health status of pastoralists throughout the world used to be regarded as comparatively quite good, due to low population densities, a nomadic lifestyle and generally dry environments. To what extent this still is true is uncertain, although reduced mobility, increasing sedentarisation, higher densities and less adequate diets seem to combine in the marginal areas to change health status in a negative direction. Education services for pastoralists have basically consisted of static facilities and the occasional boarding school, with the exception of ambulatory Koranic schools in some areas and the famous literacy campaign organised in Somalia in the 1970s.

The main development problem in the marginal areas is poverty, and access to adequate social services is well established as a crucial element in all attempts to alleviate and overcome poverty. In addition to poor coverage, the marginal areas represent particular challenges with regard to service delivery because of factors like poor communications infrastructure, a seasonally mobile and dispersed population. Delivery models developed for the more densely settled areas are not directly applicable in the marginal lands. One commonly attempted solution to this problem has been to settle pastoralists so that they could enjoy 'proper' social services. Less attention has been given to the alternative of adapting social service delivery to the particular set of problems at hand.

There is a sub-set of health problems which particularly affect the pastoral population, arising from close proximity to animals and disease transmissions between animals and humans, from a diet rich in milk as well as from their nomadic lifestyle (involving e.g. difficulties in immunisation coverage) and the pastoral environment (e.g dust, poor shelter). The main problem however, is designing a format for service delivery which will reach the pastoral population. It seems difficult to design solutions which manage to combine adequate quality, extent and equity of coverage with cost effectiveness and administrative viability. It may not be impossible, but there are no good models available 'off the shelf'. These problems are particularly acute with regard to human health, but there are close parallels also when it comes to veterinary services.

There are similar organisational problems affecting education services in the marginal lands. The provision of schools for pastoralist children and the adaptation of schooling to the special needs of pastoral societies has been given even less attention than health care and veterinary services. There is a vicious spiral affecting the provision of modern education in the marginal areas. The low educational achievements of children from a pastoral background, particularly compared with educationally more ambitious groups, has locked the pastoralists out of positions of influence and power at regional as well as national levels. Pastoralists have become increasingly marginal

as they have been cut off from benefiting from economic growth and development, on the one side, and because their views and interests have been poorly represented, on the other.

Some work has been done in the marginal areas of the Horn with regard to adapting social service delivery to the particular circumstances of the area. The community-based participatory approaches pursued by a number of NGOs have produced some interesting results. Although good service delivery, seen in isolation, has been achieved in several instances (through e.g. community health workers, traditional midwives, para-veterinarian assistants, nomadic teachers etc.) there has inevitably been problems with supervision by the appropriate authorities, conformity to national standards and regulations as well as financial and administrative sustainability. It is clear, however, that a common issue for many of these trials is the need for appropriate forms of pastoral organisation. The lack of effective local administrative structures through which approaches can be thought out and implemented makes the task of providing adequate services to a dispersed and mobile population even more difficult. New local-level institutions which combine aspects of traditional social organisation with more modern organisational forms (bureaucracies, associations, co-operatives) seem to be absolutely essential to improving service delivery.

The main challenge with regard to service delivery, as with the other fields in which a policy initiative is needed, is to experiment with innovative forms or seek new organisational solutions which spring out of the concrete realities of the marginal areas rather than forcibly adapt solutions which are bleak and inadequate copies of solutions for the settled areas. There are no ready-made solutions available.

Conclusions

The pastoral societies in the Horn of Africa have in the course of the last century moved from a situation where they themselves were entirely responsible for all aspects of their society, through a period of loose administration and little interference from central government, on to situations with large, classical pastoral development projects, concurrently with an intensification of government control. In today's situation the pastoralists find themselves more or less on their own again. They still have to face the problems which have always affected the lives of pastoralists in this part of the world, but must now also meet the consequences of a failed development approach. Government development services have been retrenched and have to a large extent been replaced by NGOs neither willing, nor able to fill the gaps left by the large-scale government projects. At best, famine relief is provided as a palliative to this shirking of responsibility, but famine relief in pastoral societies causes as many problems as it solves

But in spite of the pervasive theme of crisis which flavours all accounts from pastoral societies these days, it is obviously too early to declare the end of pastoralism as a way of life. Resilience is an intrinsic quality in pastoralism and the drylands of Eastern Africa still contain significant populations who continue to live there, with or without famine relief. The basic premises remain, viz. that only pastoralists can make a living in these marginal areas, and that the pastoralists have nowhere else to make a living.

There are probably more, and more complex problems facing the pastoralists now than ever before. This is not in and by itself a critical issue. The most ominous feature of the current situation is that the state, after having deprived the pastoralists of the capacity to look after their own affairs now leave them to their own devices. Apart from the administrative subjugation of the pastoralists, government and non-government development agencies alike have introduced, more or less forcibly, misguided development policies for the pastoral areas. The legacy of this era of development is now becoming apparent across the drylands of Eastern Africa.

Interventions at one stage believed to be for the greater common good are now clearly seen as the causes and origins of some of the most intractable problems facing the pastoralists. But rather than taking on these new challenges and bringing to bear on them the same amount of energy and resources as was originally expended to develop pastoralism, the development agencies withdraw.

The new outlook in pastoral development has put popular participation and self-reliance at the centre. This is well and good, even if there still are few examples of how this works in practical terms and what is actually meant by these terms. At best this may be a move to grant the currently disfranchised pastoralists a stronger voice and greater influence over events taking place in their societies. The new approach is definitely not a magic bullet. The pastoralists still live in over-crowded resource-poor environments from which there are no easy ways to a better future. But central governments cannot simply leave the pastoralists alone. There are acute needs for both policy reforms and public investments in the pastoral areas. The search for solutions, whether they are technical or organisational, must continue. The pastoralists still need friends and partners as they start looking for solutions to the problems that they find themselves in.

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