

Increased pastoralist participation in climate change at meetings and platforms

Background

Strengthened voice and participation in climate change policy making processes in Kenya is key to achieving climate resilient pastoralists' communities. The policy environment in Kenya is robust with Climate Change laws and institutional frameworks newly established to build economic, social and environmental resilience of communities and individuals to climate change shocks. The policy frameworks are however devoid of a strong pastoralist agenda which leaves pastoralists and their mainstay livestock economic system vulnerable.

Appropriate policies are a key component of stabilising the livelihoods of pastoral systems especially those that are geared towards climate change mitigation. Policies that are well formulated and are adaptive to the needs of pastoral communities, incorporating indigenous knowledge and recognising the role of customary institutions will foster a robust business environment that supports businesses and investments in pastoral systems resulting in communities with enhanced ability to cope with climate change. Civil society participation in platforms and policy frameworks will open (legal) avenues to comprehensively address economic, political, social and environmental issues affecting vulnerability of pastoralist communities to climate change.

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 has opened up participation by making it a constitutional requirement. This means that with all the processes, programmes and policy, participation of pastoralists is a must. Informed participation of pastoralists, however, has been low, as evidence available indicates that most designers and implementers of programmes and policies in pastoralist areas have tended to only consult the technocrats. Climate change processes have not been better.

The problem

Although pastoral civil-society groups are beginning to establish themselves across East Africa, they remain relatively weak. In many cases they are ill equipped to articulate and defend the interests of their members. Amongst other issues, many of these organisations lack the technical skill set to analyse and make use of available entry points for climate resilient pastoralist policy. On the other hand, while there is evident change in Government commitment and attitude towards ASALs, policy makers are yet to effectively engage in climate resilient pastoralism. Pastoralists can and should play a role in shaping their own future. They must be able to influence policy and implementation at the national level. National and county government must proactively involve them in development initiatives including managing climate change and its impacts. Climate change makes hearing and understanding pastoralists all the more urgent. Furthermore, thousands of years of experience in dealing with climate variability inevitably means that pastoralists have a huge amount of useful knowledge to share with policy makers.

It is understood, through various studies that have been done, that climate change will undoubtedly have significant impacts on pastoralists, but there is arguably limited space provided for them to participate in relevant climate change and adaptation policies and programmes to ensure that their voices are captured. It is therefore important that as climate change effects exacerbate, pastoralists and their representatives are given a voice to ensure that their issues and concerns are captured by the various actors and processes around climate change in the country.

As part of this empowerment of pastoralists and their representatives, the Centre for Minority Rights Development, implementing the new Voice for Change (V4C) Partnership Project, *Resilience Thematic Focus*, (funded by SNV and Pan African Climate Justice Alliance through its project on Strengthening the Capacity of Pastoralists Organizations to Engage in Climate Change Processes at National and Regional level and sponsored by Open Society International Eastern Africa), are organising a two day national workshop on ***Increased pastoralist participation in climate change at meetings and platforms***

Main Goal

The workshop will bring together thirty participants from pastoralist communities, CSOs, government and the private sector to discuss and share experiences on participating in climate resilient pastoralist policy processes in Kenya.

This workshop is aimed at agreeing on policy advocacy entry points, as well as strategies for government to effectively engage pastoralist actors in ensuring the pastoralist voice is heard in climate resilience pastoralism policies that will support the communities to manage the risks posed by climate variation and change. Participants will share tools, methods and approaches to enhance learning and innovative ways to engage in policies around Climate Smart Agriculture Framework and Funding, National Climate Change Action Plan (2013 -2017); Climate Change Act No. 11 of 2016; National Climate Change Response Strategy (2010).

This workshop will focus on sharing and learning on the following thematic areas:

1. Policy Engagement for Climate Resilient Pastoralism – An overview
2. CSOs, Evidence Use and Policy Influence
3. Private Sector and CSOs collaboration – Opportunities and Constraints
4. Practical Approaches to Resolve Key Obstacles
5. Way Forward

Anticipated impact

The level of inclusion of the pastoralist voice in the currently ongoing climate change processes and programmes has been arguably minimal at the very least. There has been minimum recorded participation of the communities in processes like development of the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Framework, National Policy for Disaster Management, National Irrigation Policy, National Land Reclamation Policy, and the Climate Change Act amongst many others at the county level. One of the reasons for this low level involvement of pastoralists, even though it is a constitutional requirement, is arguably the lack of information of the pastoralists and their representatives on these processes and their potential impact on their livelihoods.