

# Achieving Resilience in East and Southern African Drylands



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## Communique from the East and Southern Africa Learning event on CBA and Resilience, Addis Ababa, September 2014

This communique is the collective product of 83 participants from over 50 organisations engaged in policy, practice and research across 11 countries in East and Southern Africa. It conveys strong messages from the conference discussions on the need to develop effective approaches to community based adaptation (CBA) and secure resilient and productive livelihoods for communities living in the region's drylands, in the face of an uncertain and changing climate.

### The Changing Face of Drylands in East and Southern Africa

Drylands account for more than 40% of the world's land area and are home to over 2 billion people, 325 million of them in Africa. Yet they are among the regions in the world where climate change impacts on ecosystems, livelihoods and human health are potentially the greatest (IPCC, 2014). They are fragile, dynamic and challenging environments in which to pursue a livelihood, often marginalized in terms of infrastructure, investment and policies. Pastoralists, farmers, conservationists, tourism, energy and business services and more, depend on and make multiple demands of dryland natural resources.

Climate change adds another layer of uncertainty and risk to the existing challenges faced by vulnerable households living in the drylands. Traditional coping mechanisms and emergency response measures are no longer sufficient to ensure recovery to productive livelihoods. New, scalable approaches for adaptation to climate change and realizing resilient livelihoods are needed which link local knowledge and adaptive capacity with economic opportunities, risk management and welfare systems, equity, and innovation in land use management.

### Key Recommendations for Policy and Practice:

1. **Enhancing community ownership, aspirations and capacities** is critical for enabling continuous adaptation to the uncertainties of climate change.
2. Adaptation must recognise and **analyse differences in vulnerabilities and capacities, promote equity** and ensure inclusive participation.
3. **Risk management** approaches need to take account of climate information and be mainstreamed into development planning.
4. **Local and scientific knowledge** provide valuable information for adaptation decisions and should be more accessible, combined and mainstreamed.
5. **Multi-level and cross sector stakeholder interactions** are essential for making flexible and responsive decisions.
6. The use of relevant **climate information improves decision making** in the face of uncertainty through anticipating and responding to future risks, impacts and changing needs.
7. **Governance and policy frameworks** are needed which integrate coordination across development, adaptation, risk and emergency response, in line with local development priorities.
8. **Measuring resilience** should go beyond numbers to focus on transformation of practices, systems and structures.

## The Changing Face of Drylands in East and Southern Africa

The livestock value chain in East and parts of Southern Africa is a multi-billion dollar business growing at ever faster rates and together with wildlife tourism contributes highly to national GDP, demonstrating that the drylands livelihood system is becoming more productive overall despite climate change. However for many pastoralists and farmers whose lives depend on drylands, vulnerability and challenges are increasing. Degradation of the environment and rangelands, invasive species and conflicting land uses are disrupting ecosystem functionality. Recurrent droughts, changing aspirations, social and gender dynamics and mobility, population growth, transitioning and new livelihoods in peri-urban and urban centres are creating rapid changes in the family and social fabric. In Kenya's drylands, for example, more than 3 million pastoralist households are regularly hit by drought costing the economy an estimated \$12.1 billion in 2008 – 2011 (ILRI, 2014).

Economic trends are creating fewer wealthy families owning a larger proportion of assets resulting in new 'drop outs' from productive livelihoods from poor and vulnerable families. The livestock value chain is yet to benefit 70/80% of the people living in rural areas (UNECA, 2012).

## Key Conference Recommendations for Policy and Practice

### 1. Community ownership and aspirations

Dryland communities have their own aspirations and the right to determine their own futures and engage actively in local and national development. Provided with the appropriate support to harness and enhance existing local knowledge, skills, information and structures they can become agents of change in addressing the impacts of climate change rather than recipients of pre-determined solutions.

#### Recommendations:

- **Promote a people centred, rights based approach** to development of programmes and policies in the drylands, which focuses on empowerment and governance through increasing community rights and voice in decision making towards locally owned development pathways.
- **Build capacity of communities to continuously adapt** to the uncertainties and impacts of climate

change, absorb shocks and transform their lives by learning and sharing of experiences and good practices, innovation, accessing and generating information, making informed decisions and developing and implementing collective action plans.

### 2. Equity and vulnerability

Climate change exacerbates the risks facing people already marginalised by the inequitable distribution of resources and denial of rights, and increases these inequalities further, particularly for women and children.

#### Recommendations:

- **Ensure inclusive and meaningful participation of all groups**, including the most vulnerable and the youth, respecting their agency and supporting men, women and youth to recognise the value and complementarity of each other's different aspirations, skills, knowledge and capacity.
- **Recognise differences in vulnerabilities and capacities and increase investment in analysis and assessment** of social differentiation so as to avoid assumptions and respond effectively to norms and rules which determine differences in capacities, skills, rights and access to and control of information and resources.
- **Support a continuum of social protection measures** from social safety nets to springboard mechanisms like savings and loans which target the most vulnerable and promote pathways out of vulnerability and into resilience.

### 3. Risk Management

Climate change impacts exacerbate already recurring risks in drylands. Drought and floods are becoming more intense, frequent and unpredictable, occurring in places and times not experienced before. Avoiding disaster and chronic vulnerability from new and ongoing climate risks and uncertainties is critical to realizing resilient livelihoods.

#### Recommendations:

- **Mainstream risk management into development planning** in all sectors to ensure resilient livelihoods in the face of an uncertain climate, with contingency planning or risk spreading through for example insurance products, village savings and loans, diversification of livelihood options or social protection systems.

- **Risk management approaches should be holistic**, integrating risk analysis, early warning and early action, reduction, preparedness and emergency response and recognizing the links between different risks – e.g. climate, competition over natural resources, conflict - and their impacts.
- **Risk management strategies are most likely to succeed when they are community based** and build on locally identified risks, existing coping strategies and an understanding of risk profiles and projections for different vulnerable groups.
- **Climate information is an important resource** for informing early warning systems, risk reduction and preparedness actions as well as reducing risk in livelihood choices.

#### 4. Integrating information and knowledge sources

Local knowledge and information systems are a valuable resource that builds on years of experience of pastoralists and vulnerable communities but which is gradually being eroded and lost, due to rapid biophysical and socio-economic changes.

##### Recommendations:

- **Recognise and strengthen the value of local knowledge sources**, mainstreaming them into existing systems (like agricultural extension services), whilst also facilitating access and linking to new information, skills, knowledge and technologies such as climate information, mobile phones and radios.
- **Undertake joint inventories and validation of local knowledge and practices with local people**, which support climate change adaptation and resilience, for example local climate forecast knowledge can facilitate downscaling to produce locally relevant and useful information for decision making.
- **Promote participatory technology development** which combines local knowledge and practices with new technological innovations to improve the productivity of dryland livelihood systems, such as in animal health, and pasture, land and water management.

#### 5. Multi-stakeholder interactions

The impacts of climate change are complex and multiple and as such cannot be addressed by one group or individual alone but require multi-level, cross-sectoral approaches which bring together a range of different stakeholders.

##### Recommendations:

- **Promote systems for two-way communication** between different stakeholders with regular interactions and feedback which enable ongoing and coordinated decisions for adjustments in response to changing circumstances and therefore effective adaptation.
- **Use multi-stakeholder forums to share evidence of impact, good practices and learning**, facilitate co-production of information that is locally relevant and promote holistic decision making and planning, as well as dissemination and scaling up.
- **Use existing local, national and regional structures and opportunities** like the seasonal forecast announcements to facilitate the institutionalisation of multi-stakeholder forums. For example, mainstream multi-stakeholder platforms which include community representatives into local government level planning and review systems.

#### 6. Decision making under uncertainty

Climate change means that managing uncertainty is an increasingly important skill for communities in the drylands and can become a powerful adaptation tool when considered, understood and interpreted effectively so that shocks do not come as surprises and risks can be anticipated, reduced, managed or turned into opportunities.

##### Recommendations:

- **Improve access, interpretation, value and use of climate information** and forecasts from meteorological services, weather stations and climate science, which communicate anticipated impacts, and levels of uncertainty and probability in the information. Support climate science to understand user information needs and develop new products in response.
- **Combine and interpret local knowledge and climate science**, including uncertainty in the information, so that plans for seasonal and adaptation action relate to the local context and respond to changing needs and demands.
- **Enhance community recording and sharing of local climate and environment information** to build a body of locally based knowledge useful for anticipating future risks and impacts, innovation and actions to take.

- **Create systems which embrace uncertainty through in-built flexibility** for continuous and responsive decision making and planning including in funding and budget allocations.

## 7. Governance and policy

Practical recommendations for adaptation and resilience will only be viable when policy and governance frameworks appropriately support their implementation at all levels.

### Recommendations:

- **National climate change policy frameworks should empower local governments** to define needs and take actions which are tailored to their context and constituent communities' priorities, in line with local development priorities and governance systems and based on evidence and knowledge of successful approaches which can be scaled up.
- **Ensure policy and institutional support for strengthened and coordinated responses to risks** linked to community based systems and ongoing processes including drought monitoring, peace/conflict resolution, adaptation and development planning.
- **Enhance integrated approaches to policy development and investment** (public or private) that are multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and multilevel, promoting coordination across development, adaptation, risk and emergency response towards resilient and productive livelihoods in the drylands. For example integrated land and water management approaches which take into account the needs of different user groups and stakeholders, leveraging synergies whilst managing trade-offs and resulting in more effective use of resources and contribution to the wider economy.

- **Strengthen and integrate traditional community structures with formal governance systems and institutions** so that responses are embedded within existing structures, and promote inclusivity and ownership.

## 8. Measuring resilience

Although there is still much debate on the value of measuring resilience, a good understanding of the many changing socio-ecological factors in drylands: climate, crises, technology, development interventions and their impact on the lives of vulnerable people, is essential in order to assess and scale up and scale out good practices, and to identify areas for further research.

### Recommendations:

- **Integrate adaptation and resilience into existing measurement, participatory monitoring and evaluation systems** and develop new and innovative tools and approaches to help better understand and measure resilience. For example, through the Resilience Analysis Unit set up by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to strengthen coordination, learning and information sharing on measuring resilience across the Horn of Africa region.
- **Measuring resilience must go beyond the numbers** and focus on changes in adaptive capacity, transformation to new livelihoods and fundamental shifts in practices, structures and systems of governance which support resilience.
- **Establish a baseline of social, economic and environmental indicators** which can be used as proxies against which changes in resilience can be measured.



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