

NEW APPROACHES TO FRAGILITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND SAHEL

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR DANISH STABILISATION
POLICY TO ENGAGE WITH CLIMATE- AND
LIVELIHOOD-RELATED CONFLICT**

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Peer Schouten

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SUMMARY

The Horn of Africa and the Sahel are among the most fragile regions in the world: poor, lacking basic infrastructure and state presence across much of their respective territories, and both form hotbeds of conflict and political instability compounded by climate change. These factors are leading to large-scale forced displacements related to droughts, floods and conflicts over water and natural resources, as well as violence stemming from insurgencies and extremism.

This Working Paper focuses on identifying evolving notions of fragility that could strengthen Danish stabilisation efforts in the Horn and Sahel. It foregrounds notions of fragility that move away from a focus on strong state institutions towards the adaptive capacities of populations in the hinterlands of the Horn and the Sahel to deal with conflict and climate variability. The paper gives an overview of this rapidly evolving field and distils key insights, challenges and future options by exploring the question, how can we support people in the Sahel and Horn to re-establish their responsibility for their respective territories and the management of their natural resources?

The paper addresses this question by exploring the implications of recent climate change and livelihoods research on how we approach fragility and, by extension, stabilisation. On the basis of such research, the Working Paper advocates a move away from a sector-based understanding of fragility towards a way of working that is more in line with contextual realities, alongside the 'comprehensive approach' to stabilisation that Denmark promotes.

The **key message** is that, programmatically, Danish stabilisation efforts across both regions could benefit from a more explicit focus on supporting the variability that dominant livelihood strategies require and that need to be considered if sustainable security and development outcomes are to be achieved. Failing to do this will only serve to marginalise key communities and may drive them further into the arms of radical groups.

We posit that farmers and herders are experts in dealing with variability, and we discuss best practices and emerging policy options for harnessing these skills so as to mitigate and address challenges at the nexus of climate change and conflict effectively. The main recommendations are:

- Make explicit a focus on variability in supporting adaptive and resilient livelihoods, predicated on seasonal mobility.
- Adopt a 'system of systems' approach to stabilisation to support the complementarity of herding and farming in shared resource ecologies.
- Involve local communities in the governance of remote hinterlands.
- Bring the state back in through maintenance and inclusive service delivery.
- Include discussions of the return of the state's authority in peace negotiations.
- Mainstream the maintenance of local infrastructure.

- Promote coherence and a geographical focus between overlapping regional and national stabilisation efforts.
- Adopt a mobility perspective on development efforts, aligning them to livestock supply chains, transhumance corridors and seasonal migration routes.

INTRODUCTION

Background and rationale

The Horn of Africa and the Sahel are among the most fragile regions in the world: poor, lacking basic infrastructure and state presence across much of their respective territories, and both forming hotbeds of conflict and political instability compounded by climate change. This is leading to large-scale forced displacements related to droughts, floods and conflicts over water and natural resources, as well as violence stemming from insurgencies and extremism. The instability in the Horn and Sahel and its international repercussions have led to significant resources being allocated to stabilisation efforts and research. It should therefore not be surprising that the Horn and Sahel are focal points in the development of innovative approaches to questions of fragility and stabilisation. This Working Paper provides an overview of this rapidly evolving field and distils key insights, challenges and future options by exploring the question, *how can we support people in the Sahel and Horn to re-establish their responsibility for their respective territories and the management of their natural resources?*

Point of departure

In recent decades, the concept of ‘fragility’ has undergone radical change. Whereas it initially served as a proxy for the instability resulting narrowly from state weakness—inviting state-building as a response—over the years it has morphed into a comprehensive, blanket concept indicating the absence of coping capacities within a society. The most comprehensive response is that of the OECD, which breaks down fragility analytically by sector—political, security, economic, environmental and social. This approach has become mainstreamed across stabilisation frameworks, with a focus on ‘resilience’ (*modstandskraft*) emerging as a key priority across programmes.¹

The emerging focus on resilience across the different dimensions of fragility within Denmark's new approaches to stabilisation provides a unique opportunity for the country to address conflict and climate change simultaneously by engaging

¹ For instance, earlier this year, the World Bank reiterated that stabilisation of the Horn and Sahel requires a real commitment to strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable and marginalised. World Bank. (2020). *From Isolation to Integration: The Borderlands of the Horn of Africa*. Washington: World Bank.

constructively with a segment of the population and issues in the Sahel and Horn that has received relatively less attention over the past few years: pastoralists or herders, that is, those who engage in livestock production through various strategies, including seasonal mobility. This focus finds support in the increasing acknowledgment by key stabilisation stakeholders that this social segment is key to the economy, the fabric of governance and fragility in the Horn and Sahel.² Thus, as the World Bank puts it for the Sahel, 'any long-term development effort aimed at stabilising the region would be doomed without the pastoral population's involvement'.³ At the same time, there are also good security reasons for focusing on pastoralism. Many violent incidents in the Horn and Sahel over the past few years, whether involving violent extremists or not, have involved pastoralists (see Figure 1 below). Linked to this, around 60-70% of IDPs within and refugees from the Sahel and the Horn are pastoralists.⁴ Addressing migration from these regions can be helped by engaging with the push factors that are meaningful to pastoralists. Additionally, recent policy studies point out that the erosion and marginalisation of traditional pastoralism is in itself a risk factor, as it corrodes salient mechanisms of governing and stabilising remote hinterlands in the Horn and Sahel, thus allowing extremist networks to take refuge in difficult geographies where the state's reach is limited but pastoralists abound.⁵ Pastoralists live in hard-to-reach areas and, as relevant governance actors, may be empowered to keep violent extremists out. This means that their grievances need to be addressed to reduce the breeding grounds for radical groups.⁶

² See for instance UNECA. (2017). *New Fringe Pastoralism: Conflict and Insecurity and Development in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel*; UNOWAS. (2018). *Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel*; World Bank. (2020). *From Isolation to Integration: The Borderlands of the Horn of Africa*. Washington: World Bank. While exact data are lacking, pastoralists roam an estimated 40 percent of Africa's total land mass, while herding directly supports an agro-pastoral population of around 60 million in the Sahel alone, and indirectly an even larger population of absentee owners. 60% of Somalis are pastoralists. World Bank. (2016). *Pastoralism Development in the Sahel: A Road to Stability?* Washington: World Bank; Kratli, S. (2018). *Farmer-Herder Conflict in sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview of the Issue*. Sussex: IIED. Additionally, pastoralist systems deliver about 90 per cent of the meat consumed in East Africa, and about 60 percent of the meat and milk products consumed in West Africa (UNECA, *op cit.*: 13-14).

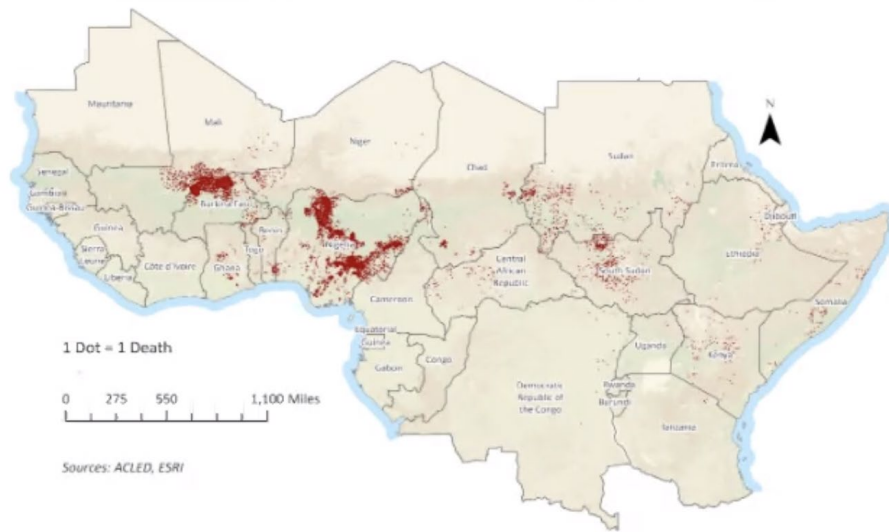
³ World Bank. (2016). *Pastoralism Development in the Sahel: A Road to Stability?* Washington: World Bank, p. viii.

⁴ UNECA. (2017). *New Fringe Pastoralism: Conflict and Insecurity and Development in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel*, pp. vii-viii.

⁵ Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018). Why do pastoralists in Mali join jihadist groups? A political ecological explanation. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 46(1), 1-20, Raleigh, C., & Dowd, C. (2013). Governance and Conflict in the Sahel's 'Ungoverned Space'. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(2). Indeed, Search for Common Ground suggests that rebels may have an 'edge' in providing agile governance *responsive* to local needs, however partial. Claiming state absence as the biggest problem denies political significance to these underlying grievances and further aggravates the problem. Put simply, as these spaces are not ungoverned, simply bringing in the state risks fueling discontent. See Brottem, L., & McDonnell, A. (2020). *Pastoralism and Conflict in the Sudano-Sahel: A Review of the Literature*. Washington: SFCG.

⁶ Baldaro, E., & Nori, M. (2017). *Cooling Up the Drylands: Disentangling the pastoralism-security nexus*, Florence: European University Institute, World Bank 2016 *op cit.*, Kratli 2018 *op cit.*; Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018) *op cit.*, Raleigh, C., & Dowd, C. (2013). Governance and Conflict in the Sahel's 'Ungoverned Space'. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(2).

Deaths Relating to Pastoral Conflict 2016-2020



The realisation that pastoralists are central to, but often neglected in, stabilisation efforts has meant that livelihoods have become a flashpoint in discussions about stabilisation in the Horn and Sahel, as it is becoming recognised that many violent incidents are underpinned by tensions between herders and farmers. Insights from research into livelihoods in the Horn and Sahel can serve to operationalise this approach. On the basis of such research, this Working Paper advocates a move away from a sector-based understanding of fragility towards an approach to fragility that is more in line with both the contextual realities and the ‘comprehensive approach’ to stabilisation that Denmark promotes. This Discussion Note argues that the point of departure in pursuing this question should be an approach to fragility and resilience that takes **variability** as the status quo.

Methodology and structure

This note is based on a review of the relevant policy and academic literature (cited in footnotes), as well as 21 consultations with key stabilisation stakeholders and experts (see Appendix). Interviewees were probed about currently prevailing approaches to fragility and stabilisation within their organisations and asked to identify key gaps and opportunities that they see as important in current approaches. Based on this material, this paper is structured as follows.

The next section provides an overview of the evolution of the concept of fragility, noting its broadening from referring to *state* fragility alone towards denoting resilience across all societies. Section two discusses recent insights from applied climate and livelihood research in the Horn and Sahel, highlighting their emphasis of *variability* as a key characteristic of both: in this view, climate patterns are not slowly changing but becoming more variable, forcing dominant livelihood strategies in the Horn and Sahel to rely on mobility and optionality to profit from resource and rainfall variability. Section three asks what this implies for stabilisation policy. It foregrounds social cohesion and local institutions as key

entry points to help the inhabitants of the Sahel and Horn to re-establish their responsibility for their respective territories and their resources. The fourth section translates these insights into recommendations, moving from broad, analytical points to more concrete and specific suggestions. A concluding section summarises the main points and recommendations.

FRAGILITY: FROM BUILDING STATES TO SUPPORTING RESILIENCE

All conventional definitions of fragility locate the root causes of conflict in aspects of state weakness, implying that stabilisation should focus on re-establishing and reinforcing state capacity. Indeed, a dominant trend at present is to consider large parts of the Horn and Sahel as ‘ungoverned’ because state actors are absent, leaving a void that is filled by criminal and terrorist actors.⁷ However, this interpretation may inadvertently lead to a mismatch between the aspiration to engage with the drivers of fragility and the tools with which to do so.⁸ In addition, the priority given to strengthening with the state's capacity to deal with migration, jihadism, etc. may have given rise to agendas that are not related to the actual concerns of residents in the Horn and Sahel.⁹

In light of recurring disappointments with state-centric stabilisation efforts, evolving notions of fragility are moving away from a unique focus on the state. The OECD is spearheading this move towards seeing fragility as variable and multi-dimensional. However logical this may sound, the implications are drastic: once we stop treating the state as the sole benchmark of stability, we can confront the situated interests of other actors, which might have other needs for stability. This radically new approach to fragility and resilience foregrounds the intersection of risks and coping capacities, not only of formal governance institutions, but across the segments (youth, women, herders, farmers) and sectors (economy, society, environment, politics and security) of a given society.¹⁰ From

⁷ See, for instance, OECD. (2018). *Illicit Financial Flows: The economy of Illicit Trade In West Africa*. Paris: OECD, Shaw, M., & Reitano, T. (2014). *The Political Economy of Trafficking and Trade in the Sahara: Instability and Opportunities*. Washington: World Bank. This approach is also current in Danish policy circles: see Boserup & Martinez (2018) *Europe must play its part in filling the power vacuum in the Sahel*. Copenhagen: DIIS.

⁸ For instance, Denmark's Regional Sahel program *aims* to focus on ‘underlying regional political and security challenges’, but, in the absence of explicit analysis of the drivers of fragility, its *objectives* are to strengthen G5 states' capacity to deliver security.

⁹ Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018). *Op cit*.

¹⁰ OECD. (2018). *States of Fragility 2018*. Paris: OECD. A proactive partner in the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) is, amongst others, exploring ways of turning the OECD's variable and multi-dimensional approach to fragility into a risk analysis tool.

this perspective, stabilisation efforts need to focus on the adaptive capacity of these often interdependent stakeholders, or risk exacerbating fragile situations.¹¹

In Denmark, this current approach to fragility has given rise to the ambition to foreground resilience to fragility as a key element in Danish peace and stabilisation activities. Denmark has hitherto refrained from defining stabilisation or fragility, instead taking a ‘comprehensive’ (or ‘integrated’) approach to stabilisation as intervening in a multi-dimensional field of play.¹² This open-ended approach has allowed Denmark to work together with stakeholders who adopt different and evolving definitions of fragility to address the root causes of, for example, terrorism and irregular migration.¹³ Whereas most stabilisation stakeholders involved in the Horn and Sahel today likewise pay lip service to a nuanced understanding of fragility, implementation often tends to follow conventional approaches, clusters and sectors. For instance, while the G5 Sahel—a regional development and security cooperation framework—acknowledges that ‘climate change’ and ‘food security’ are urgent priorities for achieving stability, most of the available funding is actually allocated to security.¹⁴ Emerging evidence from applied climate and livelihoods research in the Horn and Sahel can help formulate benchmarks for arriving at comprehensive stabilisation efforts that take their point of departure in the needs and challenges of local populations.

FRAGILITY AND RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF VARIABILITY: CLIMATE, LIVELIHOODS, GEOGRAPHY

In recent years, increasing evidence has become available that approaches to resilience and fragility could benefit from a focus on variability. It is the argument of this paper that this insight can serve to inform more context-sensitive approaches to stabilisation in the Horn and Sahel. There are three interlocking reasons why this is the case.

From climate change to climate variability

First, climate change is increasingly recognised as a factor in stabilisation. Research on the nexus between climate change and conflict in the Horn and Sahel

¹¹ See USAID. (2020). *Pathways to Peace. Addressing Conflict and Strengthening Stability in a changing Climate: Lessons Learned from Resilience and Peacebuilding programs in the Horn of Africa*. Washington: USAID.

¹² As a 2014 evaluation of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund found, ‘The Danish government does not have a definition of stabilisation’. Coffey. (2014). *Evaluation of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund*. Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, p. 8.

¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Peace and Stabilisation: Denmark’s Policy towards Fragile States*, p. 9. However, it has been noted that the absence of a clear definition of fragility in Denmark means that the pathways between perceived priorities, funded activities and intended stabilisation outcomes may be unclear, as the OECD warned in its 2016 DAC peer review of Danish ODA.

¹⁴ G5. (2016). *Stratégie pour le développement et la sécurité des pays du G5 Sahel*.

agrees that resource scarcity and climate change are *not* direct drivers of conflict.¹⁵ Instead, climate change affects intra-seasonal rainfall patterns and unexpected weather events in these regions, modifying the seasonal availability and type of plant cover.¹⁶ The state of the art in applied climate research is therefore moving away from ‘climate change’ towards ‘climate variability’ because in practice weather patterns are not changing gradually but are becoming more capricious, creating geographically discontinuous patterns.

Denmark has already acknowledged this in its Country Policy Paper for Somalia 2018-2023, which frames climate resilience as ‘the need to adapt extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, both of which are projected to increase in frequency and intensity as a consequence of climate change’. Similarly, UNSCR 2423, which extended the MINUSMA mandate in 2019, recognised ‘the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Mali, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasising the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the government of Mali and the United Nations relating to these factors’.¹⁷ However, peacebuilding actors are already stretched and badly positioned to engage with climate as a factor because of their security-focused mandates.¹⁸

Dryland and climate experts warn that the notion of climate variability stresses *constant* turbulence rather than ‘resilience’ because of the need to cope with exceptional, time-bound shocks. Whereas earlier approaches to stabilisation framed climate change primarily as a factor aggravating resource conflicts, the focus is increasingly being shifted to understand how perpetually variable weather patterns impinge on the *adaptive capacity* of not just the states but also the individuals, communities and organisations that make up the social fabric of the Horn and Sahel.¹⁹ In the face of increasingly erratic climate patterns, stabilisation efforts can no longer start from equilibrium models and instead should aim to strengthen the capacity of local communities to cope with climate uncertainty by enhancing their mobility and optionality (see next section).²⁰

¹⁵ S.M. Cold-Ravnkilde & P. Schouten (2020) *climate-cattle-conflict: a moving frontline in Africa* (Copenhagen: DIIS); Brottem & McDonnell (2020) *op cit*.

¹⁶ Brandt, M., Hiernaux, P., Rasmussen, K., Tucker, C. J., Wigneron, J. P., Diouf, A. A., . . . Fensholt, R. (2019). Changes in rainfall distribution promote woody foliage production in the Sahel. *Commun Biol*, 2, 133.

¹⁷ <https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/news/unsc-extends-minusma-mandate-include-climate-security-aspects-first-time>

¹⁸ Delsol, G. (2020). *UN Peacekeeping Operations and Pastoralism-Related Insecurity: Adopting a Coordinated Approach for the Sahel*. New York: International Peace Institute; cf. Eklöv, K., & Krampe, F. (2019). *Climate-related security risks and peacebuilding in Somalia*. Stockholm: SIPRI Policy Paper No. 53.

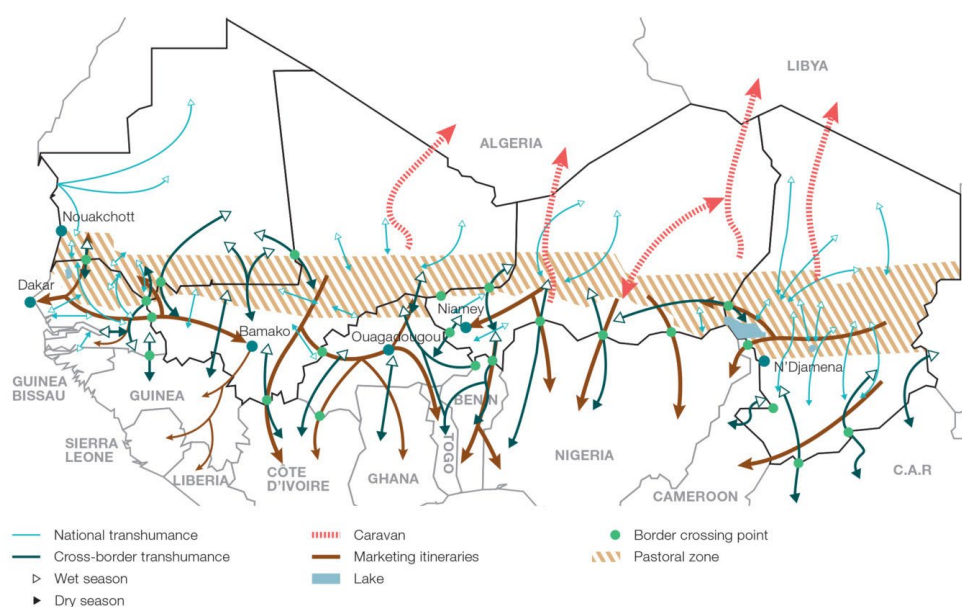
¹⁹ See USAID. (2020). *Pathways to Peace: Addressing Conflict and Strengthening Stability in a changing Climate - Lessons Learned from Resilience and Peacebuilding programs in the Horn of Africa*. Washington: USAID.

²⁰ Kratli, S. (2014). *Saharan Livelihoods: Development and Conflict*. Washington: World Bank.

Variability as key to dryland livelihoods

Secondly, variability is also emerging as key to resilience from research into the main livelihoods in the Horn and Sahel. Eighty percent of people in the Sahel rely on rain-fed agriculture, while livestock accounts for 30 percent of GDP. In African drylands, importantly, rain-fed crop farmers and herders both make use of the same land, but to different degrees and at different times. Herding and farming are specialised seasonal production systems that both rely on mobility and extensive land-use in order to profit from climate-induced resource variability. In adapting to climatic variability, pastoralists move their herds around in search of pastures, while farmers shift between fallow and productive seasons (see Figure 2 below).

TRANSHUMANCE AND NOMADISM



Extract: OECD (2014), An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security, OECD Publishing, Paris.

© 2014. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

Both production systems rely crucially on optionality and mobility in order to profit from resources that are discontinuous in space and time, and they typically share the same landscape as seasonally variable pasture and farmland, exchanging nutrients and services.²¹ Across livelihood and climate research, it is becoming apparent that traditional pastoralism is highly resilient to increasing weather variability and is essential to mitigate climate change and re-green grasslands and drylands, as soils become too poor for crop farming, thus also offering avenues to achieving food security.²² From this perspective, supporting resilience means

²¹ Krätli, S., & Toulmin, C. (2020). *Farmer-herder conflict in sub-Saharan Africa?* Sussex/Paris: IIED/AFD.

²² Bradley, D., & Grainger, A. (2004). Social resilience as a controlling influence on desertification in Senegal. *Land Degradation & Development*, 15(5), 451-470, FAO. (2009). *Review of evidence on drylands pastoral systems and climate change: Implications and opportunities for mitigation and adaptation*, Krätli, S., Huelsebusch, C., Brooks, S., & Kaufmann, B. (2012). Pastoralism: A critical asset for food security under global climate change. *Animal Frontiers*, 3(1), 42-50.

increasing the flexibility of herders and farmers to respond to variability, including where these responses involve migration and the diversification of livelihood strategies. Conversely, conflict undermines optionality and mobility, leading to maladaptive land-use and conflicts around exclusive access, as well as compromising nutrient complementarity.

Approach variability as geographical ‘systems of systems’

Thirdly, understandings of resilience should go beyond individual resilience and adopt a geographical approach, following a trend increasingly applied by stabilisation, humanitarian and development actors.²³ The distribution of conflict, climate impacts and emergencies across the Sahel and the Horn is geographically variable, requiring context-specific approaches. The majority of areas across the Horn and Sahel are characterised by peaceful relations and cooperation among different populations, a complementarity that has only been disrupted in some hotspots,²⁴ especially remote cross-border regions characterised by mixed farming-herding populations under stress from climate variability and conflict. Intervening in such geographies requires appreciating that herding and farming are collaborative livelihood strategies and production systems that rely on time-bound access to variable resources. Combining livelihood and geographical perspectives, local geographies should be understood as interdependent ‘systems of systems’ comprising integrated and complementary crop and livestock production by specialised farmers and specialised herders.²⁵ These become interdependent through collective, more or less implicit agreements around agricultural work, animal breeding and exchanging the resulting outputs (nutrients), inputs (manure, crop residues) and services—agreements that regulate access to land and water resources to mutual benefit. These complex ‘systems of systems’ are premised on the informality and flexibility to cope with resource variability, as well as with mobility, that is, the circular migration of herders and farmers.

VARIABILITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR STABILISATION

Taking a point of departure in variability as an aspect of climate change and livelihood strategies and as a geographical factor has two key implications for the overall focus of stabilisation programming.

²³ Humanitarian actors use ‘area-based’ terminology, while the World Bank speaks of ‘territorial development’ approaches to priority zones; peacebuilding actors often speak of ‘conflict-affected areas’.

²⁴ Krätli, S., & Toulmin, C. (2020). *Op cit.*

²⁵ Krätli, S., Sougnabé, P., Staro, F., & Young, H. (2018). *Pastoral Systems in Dar Sila, Chad: A Background Paper for Concern Worldwide*. Sommerville: Feinstein International Center, p. 6.

Implication 1: social cohesion is key

A key implication of taking variability as a key premise in approaching fragility is that countering fragility through stabilisation should focus on enhancing adaptive capacities across interdependent social systems in resource geographies in order to cope with variability. Herding and farming provide complementary nutrients, making use of different resources offered by the same communal landscape.²⁶ Typically, herders move south from ‘pastoral zones’ where they have their settlements (*zones d’attache*) at the end of the rainy season to spend the dry season in wetter regions. This brings them into landscapes they share with settled farmers and agro-pastoralists. Managing this requires exchange relations and resource-sharing institutions, which in turn create interest-based social cohesion. Resilience in such contexts should be considered on the level of a ‘system of systems’ comprising configurations of exchange relations with farmers, open access to resources and flexible institutions.²⁷ There are important political reasons for adopting a ‘system of systems’ approach, instead of approaches that favour one livelihood strategy over another. As USAID found for stabilisation programming in the Horn, ‘interventions aimed at building sustainable livelihoods and reinforcing social cohesion between and within communities were more likely to increase their capacity to cope with both conflict- and climate-related shocks and stresses’.²⁸ This implies reconsidering sector-based approaches, given how they intervene in what is a holistic field.

Implication 2: local institutions are key

It is important to note that small-scale local conflicts between farmers and herders is intrinsic to the joint use of communal lands. However, robust local mechanisms for mediating conflicts are key to ensuring that local conflicts don’t spiral out of control. Local, often informal institutions mediate the resilience of ‘systems of systems’, determining whether farmers and herders can make optimal and mutually beneficial use of shared resources. This does not prevent pastoralist-farmer relations being strained in many places, with usually effective local dispute-resolution mechanisms being overwhelmed. Militant groups exploit local conflicts and find traction in them, particularly if they offer an advantageous solution to groups that feel they have been marginalised.²⁹ If many of the grievances of herders result from structural marginalisation in informal and state institutions, there is increasing evidence that armed actors—including extremist groups—have sought to bank on these grievances by displacing traditional forms of authority and taking over the local governance of transhumance, access to resources, conflict resolution and the taxation of movement. By imposing

²⁶ Farmers can cultivate vegetables and out-of-season crops in the pastures of herders and benefit from animal manure to fertilise their crops and farmlands elsewhere, while herders are grazing their livestock on crop leftovers on farms belonging to local farmers, improving the quality of their livestock and soil fertility on the farmlands.

²⁷ Krätli, S., Sougnabé, P., Staro, F., & Young, H. (2018). *Op cit.*

²⁸ USAID (2020) *op cit.*, p. 1.

²⁹ ICG. (2020). *Burkina Faso: Stopping the Spiral of Violence*. Brussels: International Crisis Group Africa Report N°287; Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018). *Op cit*; Krätli & Toulmin 2020 *op cit.*, p. 41.

alternatives, Al Shabaab in Somalia, 3R in the Central African borderlands and FLM in Mali have upended complementarity and worsened the tensions between farmers and herders. In light of the ambition of comprehensive approaches to address violence, it should be realised that there is an important counterinsurgency element to local institutions. If communities interact to their mutual benefit and institutions are inclusive, jihadists are less likely to find fertile ground for support and will be less inclined to go on the offensive. Indeed, extremist groups have found less traction where local institutions were perceived to be inclusive. For instance, in Burkina Faso, jihadists have refrained from attacking schools that teach in Arabic.³⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of its flexible and open-ended approach to stabilisation, Denmark is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in spearheading new, innovative approaches to address fragility in the Horn and Sahel. Based on the premises outlined in the first section, this fourth section offers general recommendations, programmatic insights and substantive suggestions to support the inhabitants of the Horn and Sahel in assuming the responsibility for their shared land and resources and thus coping with climate variability.

Involve remote communities in governance

A key implication of taking variability as a key premise in approaching fragility is that countering A key challenge for stabilisation efforts is to extend them into the remote ‘bush’, where insurgent and extremist groups are based. Instead, they tend to cluster geographically around ‘islands of stability’ and are perceived to benefit sedentary populations to the detriment of residents in remote areas, whose grievances over exclusion form a breeding ground for support to insurgents. Denmark already emphasises working with communities and bottom-up approaches to stability. Its ‘intermediated approach’³¹ to development programming could be deepened as part of its stabilisation policies by prioritising programmes that involve local communities in hinterlands where African states are either absent or face opposition. Agro-pastoral communities in remote hinterlands have vernacular local skills and knowledge that can be harnessed for both climate adaptation and peacebuilding purposes. Because outside authorities are at a disadvantage in attempting to control remote hinterlands and border areas where people remain highly mobile and where there is so much ignorance about local security, governance and lifestyles, it is necessary to experiment with ‘diffuse governance’³² and make communities partners in governance. This would form a

³⁰ Consultation, CARE; cf. ICG 2020.

³¹ Lundsgaarde, E. (2019). *Danish Development Cooperation in Fragile States*. Copenhagen: DIIS Working Paper 2019:10, p. 12.

³² Kratli 2014 *op cit*.

natural extension to Denmark's distinctive 'integrated approach' to stabilisation, which entails working in partnership with and through all relevant stakeholders to achieve commonly defined stabilisation outcomes.³³ Where community-based militias with local grievances have replaced the state, negotiations to promote participation in post-conflict local governance settlements should be considered. Denmark could ask host governments to allow the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) to follow up peace settlements with experiments in this direction. Since 2017, specialised negotiating NGOs such as HD have been authorised by the governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to establish contact with more radical groups, but governments have been hesitant to pursue political dialogue any further than that. Denmark could promote political dialogue in particular with insurgent groups that are driven by national demands, as well as with groups that may sway towards jihadism.

Bring the state back in

Denmark's priority objectives in strengthening the capacity of public authorities to deliver basic services and strengthen confidence between the state and local populations could benefit from a geographical approach that is sensitive to livelihoods. This means avoiding blanket, country-wide programming. Instead, it would differentiate between the needs of pastoral zones and zones in which both herders and farmers live.

In zones where herding populations reside during the rainy season (*zones d'attache*), the return of the state could take the shape of service delivery catering specifically to pastoralists' needs. To 'win pastoralist herds and minds', Denmark can support states in extending symbolic and meaningful services (animal vaccination, mobile health and education services) to often marginalised herding communities. A good example is the farmer and pastoralist field schools, which the FAO has developed and ADRA Denmark is already attempting in Ethiopia in the context of its 'Resilience in the Horn of Africa' programme.³⁴ More ambitious stabilisation efforts for pastoral zones would include the involvement of pastoralist populations in local government through the distribution of identity documents to nomadic people, as well through positive discrimination policies in respect of recruitment into the administration and security forces, education in languages used by pastoralists (such as Arabic or Fulfulde) that is aligned with the annual migration cycle and a greater focus on animal health.

For areas where herders and farmers cohabit—typically during the dry season—service delivery needs to promote impartiality and social cohesion, revolving around health, markets, conflict resolution, water points and the governance of shared land use. Development organisations are uniquely positioned to offer non-exclusive basic services from which herders and farmers can both profit, such as education, water and sanitation. However, service provision has often deliberately

³³ *Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World* (2013), p. 11.

³⁴ <https://www.adra.dk/land/etiopien/>

excluded one category to the detriment of the other. For instance, basic education is often offered in the dominant national language, which tends to exclude Arabic- or Fulfulde-speaking herders. Government education and service provision in areas of mixed livelihoods should be assisted in promoting 'balanced discrimination' to undo such imbalances and promote social inclusion. The planning of service delivery should also be synchronised with seasonal calendars that make sense in terms of the livelihood strategies of different populations.

Support local institutions

Support to render herding and farming livelihoods viable should be provided mostly on the level of institutions, with local peacebuilding and mediation efforts able to foster locally workable resource-sharing agreements being encouraged. However, this 'social' dimension of climate change remains poorly understood, even though multilateral donors are now putting it on the agenda. Local institutions, here conceived broadly as predictable patterns of social exchange and local agreements regulating them, play a key role in mediating the capacity of herder-farmer systems to adapt to climate variability. Flexible but predictable land-sharing agreements already exist in most places. As farming mostly takes place during the rainy season, and as herding makes use of the same land during the dry season, 'time-sharing' land-use rights can be agreed and enforced. These can be formulated in meaningful ways, for example, with reference to the onset of the rains, to capture climate variability rather than fixed calendar months. Efforts to establish local conflict-resolution mechanisms should involve both traditional authorities in sedentary populations and herders in herding communities. To ensure that peacebuilding and stabilisation efforts are able to take these local dynamics into account, it is crucial to invite only organisations with demonstrable long-term, local track records and expert knowledge to tender. Either acting directly or through a capable partner, Denmark could also open a separate funding stream to finance small-scale pilot projects consisting of area-based local initiatives in climate-stressed zones with a focus on (re)establishing conflict resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms should be participatory, concern joint land-use, involve 'traditional' authorities as much as state actors and be accompanied by strong monitoring and evaluation.

Integrate development considerations into conflict-resolution

A geographical approach to humanitarian responses to climate-conflict interactions is already taking place, with short-term programmes focusing on areas where conflict and climate change are manifest, including HD negotiations. Denmark could push to **include longer-term development components in such short-term interventions from the start**, tying short-term negotiations into longer-term institutions to mediate resource access, including political negotiations over reforms moulding the shape that a return of local government, increased inclusion and service delivery could take, instead of aspiring simply to bring back the

state.³⁵ For instance, short-term negotiations with pastoralist groups could involve the establishment of focal points for medium-term development schemes to negotiate over service delivery. Prioritising poverty and underdevelopment, together with a preference for ‘tangible’ programme outcomes, has led to basic infrastructure, such as health, water and education, being favoured. However, in contexts of conflicts over resources, such infrastructure is insufficient to address conflicts, which it may even exacerbate in the absence of a prior political settlement.³⁶ Additionally, confusion between ‘customary’ and state procedures has created a fertile ground for growing conflict. These different power structures (customary institutions such as traditional leaders and village councils, and state institutions such as administrative officials, the police and the judiciary) often have contradictory and inconsistent rules for accessing resources and managing conflict. Building bridges between these two structures would foster joint understanding and improve accountability. For instance, governments can be helped to recognise the need to invest in ‘intangible infrastructure’ alongside physical works. **Customary institutions may lack buildings and titled officials, but their legitimacy can make a big difference to how societies cope with disruption.** People need credible and legitimate organisations through which to structure the management of space, access to resources and relations with other groups.

A mobility perspective on development interventions

Whereas adaptation to slow-onset climate change requires large-scale investments in infrastructure, resilience to climate variability implies ensuring the optionality and mobility of local populations. The seasonal migration of people and livestock is an entrenched and useful coping strategy for people in arid environments in reducing vulnerability, one that should be stimulated – within and beyond ECOWAS and IGAD – rather than curbed. Yet, extremist movements predate the absence of services and inclusion mechanisms along the seasonal and internal migration corridors of both people and livestock. USAID noted the positive impact of peacebuilding efforts in the Horn that fostered greater freedom of movement and access to natural resources, which in turn improved local coping capacity in the face of climate shocks.³⁷ For longer-term resilience strategies to be able to mitigate extremism as well as slow-onset climate impacts, it is worthwhile considering **adopting a ‘supply-chain’ perspective to the seasonal migration of workers and herders along transhumance corridors, as well as to urban-rural market connections.** This would support not local activities but also projects dealing with connected systems in order to prevent and buffer local crises impacting on interconnected systems. Herders and farmers could be alerted to each other’s movements and use of lands along transhumance routes so as to

³⁵ Lebovich, A. (2020). *Disorder to chaos: why Europeans fail to promote stability in the Sahel*. Brussels: European Council on Foreign Relations, p. 16.

³⁶ Negotiation is crucial to avoid conflicts escalating. In Burkina Faso, jihadists have destroyed infrastructure (schools and wells) because they represent the return of the state, which they deem unacceptable; cf. ICG 2020, *op cit.*

³⁷ USAID. (2020). *Op cit.*, p. 4.

avoid conflict.³⁸ This could include a focus on in-country and cross-border ‘mobile governance’, semi-permanent and aligned with migratory seasons. Such a strategy should be based on robust regional and cross-country diagnostics of compound risks and be funded through the IOM-EU Joint Initiative for migration corridors and the World Bank Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project for Africa, which aims to provide services and support at key bottlenecks along transhumance routes. For its part, Denmark could explicitly reiterate its commitment to support national and regional pastoralist codes (see above) across regional and country strategies, provide guidelines for funded programmes and support member states and regional organisations in meeting their commitments in this field.

Mainstream maintenance

A key way of improving social cohesion and kick-starting livelihoods is by financing the rehabilitation or construction of local infrastructure that can benefit and bring together conflicted populations. This is a recurrent feature across programmes in the Horn and Sahel, being used by UN missions, development organisations and humanitarian actors. A big gap in current funding concerns the ‘after-project’ phase of Quick Impact Projects and other local infrastructure projects. Often, project cycles end after delivery of the physical asset. A recent DIIS/UNOPS review of infrastructure efforts in stabilisation programmes found that **a key source of dissatisfaction with stabilisation efforts among local populations concerns this abandoned infrastructure, which tends to fall into disrepair because of a lack of maintenance.**³⁹ Nothing is as bad for winning hearts and minds as building something that stops working after the project cycle ends. Denmark can consider allocating support to government budgets for the functioning and especially *maintenance* of local infrastructure built as part of stabilisation efforts and to capacity building to this end. This could also be an opportunity to promote the return of government through its maintenance of infrastructure in conflict-affected areas.

Promote coherence

There is a real momentum within the international community to address the nexus between climate change, conflict and displacement in the Horn and Sahel. However, a lack of coordination means that many such efforts overlap, and little cross-donor learning is taking place either within or between programmes. Appreciating the nexus between climate variability and flexibility in dryland livelihoods, Denmark can move further away from separate climate change adaptation or mitigation programmes and stabilisation efforts towards approaches that are sensitive to the impact of increasing climate variability on resilient livelihood strategies. EU approaches to stabilisation in the Horn and Sahel are exemplary in wedding programmatic community-resilience perspectives to an overall framework informed by EU security priorities. Many of these things are

³⁸ Already practiced in CAR by IOM for farmers; also see Kratli & Toulmin 2020 *op cit.*, p. 72.

³⁹ Schouten, P., & Bachmann, J. (2017). *Roads to Peace? The Role of Infrastructure in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States*. Copenhagen: UNOPS/DIIS.

done, but through different funding streams and initiatives. Recently there has been a spate of regional initiatives for the Sahel, such as the European Sahel Alliance (2017), the G5 and ECOWAS and Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel (P3S, 2019), and the Coalition for the Sahel (2020). Denmark could **aspire to press for the greater coherence and streamlining of regional initiatives**, as well as strengthened coherence across sectors and coordination among disparate efforts and initiatives.

Promote a geographical focus

Given that many of the causes of conflict are local, Denmark needs to develop climate-change informed, conflict-sensitive implementation strategies and to select partners appropriate to the conflict situation in the different countries, combined with an area-based approach in sub-national regions and cross-border areas. Whereas most stabilisation programmes recognise the importance of focusing on hotspots, the bulk of implementation often concentrates on easy-to-reach areas, to the detriment of the geographies that could most benefit from support. In Mali and in Somalia, for instance, security restrictions mean that funding for climate change adaptation is largely allocated in the areas where sedentary populations predominate, not in the pastoral-dominated hinterlands, which are arguably more affected by climate-related stresses. In light of the cross-border nature of the challenges of climate and conflict, Denmark should **privilege regional institutions that have immediate impacts in key geographies**, such as the Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA) and the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) in the Sahel, the former of which is rapidly turning into an anchor point for dedicated development initiatives in this conflict hotspot.

PROGRAMMATIC INSIGHTS

These more general recommendations can be embedded into Danish stabilisation policy through the following concrete actions:

- **Allocate the research and policy-making capacity to develop theories of change that incorporate commitments to strengthen resilience in the Horn of Africa by stimulating mobility and optionality in the face of conflict and climate variability.** However, instead of departing from Denmark's flexible approach to stabilisation by aspiring to greater rigour in defining fragility or subscribing to one definition, expert panels and participatory methods should be used to develop flexible, up-to-date and relevant targets for analysis and intervention, informed by political economy analyses of the dynamics of local contexts. In particular, Denmark could strengthen the PSF's capacity to conduct qualitative context analysis and develop theories of change as a basis for PSF programming, monitoring and evaluation.
- For this approach to be effective in contexts where many different stabilisation stakeholders are involved in complementary efforts, it is

important to consolidate knowledge management in order to capitalise on knowledge produced in the field and by partners, including CSOs, and to **strengthen information-sharing**. There is a real opportunity here for Denmark to play a proactive role in generating knowledge and evidence-based programming, thus developing learning that is already part of its multilateral and NGO architecture. A dedicated learning team could coordinate this with think tanks and other research institutions. Analyses by, evaluation of and local data collected by DRC, CARE and other partners with a significant local presence, such as Humanitarian Dialogue, should be required to be made public and be fed back into programming and evaluation.

- Danish stabilisation efforts must identify areas where their efforts may neglect, or potentially exacerbate, the drivers of pastoralism-related violence and work to mitigate any unintended consequences. **All funded projects should come equipped with conflict-sensitive risk assessments** that combine locally specific climate, conflict and fragility data based on participatory and inclusive methodologies and frameworks, such as the World Bank's risk and resilience analysis. Only through such a coordinated and interdisciplinary strategic approach can policymakers and practitioners effectively reduce the threats posed by the erosion of pastoralism and the rise in pastoralism-related violence in the Horn and Sahel.
- These should be accompanied by an **integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework** that captures results for all the **intended and unintended** outcomes and impacts by using multiple qualitative and quantitative methods.

SUBSTANTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

This section outlines a number of concrete, substantive programme priorities that emerged from the literature review and stakeholder interviews as particularly important in achieving stabilisation across the Horn and Sahel. It concerns recommendations for initiatives that Denmark could spearhead or support more through multilateral partnerships.

- Across the Sahel, but particularly in the Horn, we need a better understanding of the changing character of pastoralism. Much programming and donor funding for issues involving herders and farmers are still premised on traditional seasonal subsistence farming and herding. There are strong indications that these are declining in favour of 'new fringe pastoralism' or 'neo-pastoralism' and large-scale farming.⁴⁰ These

⁴⁰ Cf. UNECA 2017, *op cit*.

include risk-taking, militarisation, banditry and the poor working conditions that might induce radicalisation. It is also possible that programming is out of tune with reality, but few detailed studies of this are available. Multiple interlocutors stressed the need for research on how exactly to work with these new trends in pastoralist systems. Denmark could commission studies requiring combined expertise from experts on livelihoods (especially pastoralism), climate adaptation, conflict and political economy experts.

Best practice. DFID and USAID are funding elaborate studies of this sort for the borderlands of the Central African Republic, which could be reproduced for the Horn and Sahel.

- Herders (or pastoralists) are increasingly recognised as key stakeholders in stabilisation because extremist networks take refuge in difficult geographies where the state's reach is limited but pastoralists abound.⁴¹ However, their cross-border mobility and often decentralised forms of organisation makes them hard to reach, meaning that sedentary populations typically figure disproportionately in development efforts. Multiple experts have advocated exploring the option of using pastoralists to secure hard to reach areas.⁴² Currently, stabilisation efforts already reach out to sedentary communities in borderlands. Pastoralists can be involved in acquiring information on hard to reach areas and, as a community frontline in peacebuilding and mitigation in the vast borderlands of the Horn and Sahel, to prevent the unwanted presence of insurgent groups. Involving mobile and modern pastoralists with access to communication technologies, enabling them to liaise with border-force commands with rapid deployment capacities, should be encouraged. Pastoralists can also be recruited as remunerated game-rangers to aid conservation and act as scouts for purposes of locust control.

Best practices. In the 2006 Algiers Accord, Mali committed itself to devolving governance to special Tuareg security units in order to monitor the north. The N'Djamena Declaration of Sahelian countries proposes extending optionality for pastoralists by developing communications and network coverage. Experiments are being conducted in equipping pastoralists with phone apps containing weather information and radio stations providing early warnings in Fulfulde.

The trade-off: The same 'infrastructure' permitting pastoralist mobility, optionality and communication could also be used in transnational illegal smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering and terrorist financing.

⁴¹ Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018). *Op cit.*, Raleigh, C., & Dowd, C. (2013). *Op cit.*; Brottem & McDowell (2020) *op cit.*

⁴² Baldaro, E., & Nori, M. (2017). *Cooling Up the Drylands: Disentangling the pastoralism-security nexus*. Florence: European University Institute; Kratli, S. (2014). *Op cit.*; Yilmaz, E. (2019). Mobile pastoralism and protected areas: conflict, collaboration and connectivity.

This introduces the phenomenon of the trade-off, namely that what is necessary for pastoralist systems to thrive also enables criminal and extremist networks. This raises the question of how to decouple jihadism from optionality and connectivity, and to provide alternatives. Making transactions and unregulated mobility more difficult *in general* through border management risks marginalising local populations who depend on them as a by-product of stabilisation efforts.⁴³

- *Develop pastoralist-driven development indicators.* Pastoralists have a very simple key performance indicator that captures their equivalent of ‘stability’: the health and well-being of their herds. Pastoralist strategies to achieve herd health are devised not by individual herders but by the collectives—clans, families, owners and hired drivers—that manage them. Thus, diversification and coping strategies are only visible on the level of the family or clan (some family members settle, others remain mobile; some join the resistance, other tend to their herds). If herd health is the key performance indicator, stabilisation efforts can support investments in local herds, with equal access to water, pastures and markets for purposes of exchange. Concrete stabilisation projects then assume the form of service delivery: vaccination, and support for herds, livelihood diversification and mobility.

Best practice. There are numerous but scattered examples of ‘development by caravan’, i.e., mobile vaccination, education, information and health-care units that provide services in ways adapted to pastoralist lifestyles.⁴⁴

Bottleneck. The provision of basic services is made more complicated by pastoralists’ frequent movements. Governments may tend to be reluctant to allocate resources to groups that do not reside solely in their country. In addition, seemingly innocuous aid programs such as cash programmes may entail a *loss* of optionality for pastoralists.

- *Rethink natural resource governance from a non-zero-sum perspective.* To be flexible and adaptative, the livelihood strategies of farmers and herders require systems of natural resources to be approached as a ‘platform economy’. This is a complex kind of commons subject to differential and

⁴³ UNECA. (2017). *Op cit.* Current approaches to strengthening the state's authority in borderlands implicitly associates pastoralists with illegal activities. The PSP-HoA's Thematic Programme 3: “Regional and governmental authority enforcement across land and maritime borders” sees the region's porous land borders mostly as an enabler of human trafficking and the smuggling of weapons and drugs, i.e. “flashpoints for localised conflict, poor border management, and unregulated flows of goods and peoples” (PSP-HoA: 29). The strategic focus is concerned with countering and preventing extreme violence (P/CVE), anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) – again, without taking pastoral needs into consideration, e.g. for transhumance corridors and/or semi-permeable border-management. Instead, transnational pastoralist movements are implicitly marginalised as a by-product of targeting irregular migration and illicit trade.

⁴⁴ See Kratli, S. (2018). *Farmer-Herder Conflict in sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview of the Issue*. Sussex: IIED.

complementary land-use, in which different kinds of access and use rights (for instance, rights to pass over land, to pastures, or to farm or settle are all different) may be constantly renegotiated in light of supply and demand.⁴⁵ Such a system-of-systems approach requires moving away from 'individual property rights' and other adaptation or development efforts that risk disturbing the equilibrium between different populations relying on different livelihood strategies. This means supporting conflict resolution around access to land, as well as the development of flexible local institutions.

Best practices. The Nigerien government works with a land-use system that defines the kinds of land-use that are negotiated and under what conditions, and predicts multiple and overlapping uses ('Unité Agro-Sylvo-Pastorale'). Kenya's county by-laws allow for local variation in institutions governing access to resources and some adaptation over time. A formal rotation of land between pastoralists and farmers has been successfully set up in the Pankshin Local Government Area, in Nigeria's central Plateau State. Over a cycle of years, pastoralists and farmers alternate in using the same plots for cultivation, followed by grazing while the land lies fallow. The World Bank-funded Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project supports transboundary migration as an adaptation strategy for pastoralists who are threatened by drought and conflict. It uses a range of interventions, including migration corridors, shared water points, surveillance for major diseases and other veterinary services, and more robust early-warning systems, as well as improving responses to crises. Participatory mapping of land use, transhumance routes and cross-border mobility is emerging as a technique for gaining inclusive insights into needs and challenges.⁴⁶

Trade-off. A key challenge is that even well-intentioned interventions focused on pastoral development can have negative side-effects, particularly if they insert static logics into domains that need to remain flexible. Many efforts to facilitate mobility—for instance, designating transhumance corridors or demarking land-use for a particular area—may themselves attract conflict for intervening in patterns of mobility and optionality that require local bargaining, while sedentary farmers may view designating grazing reserves as a 'giveaway' to pastoral communities. In particular, support for 'land rights' or 'property rights' over water resources has led to conflict.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Behnke, R. (2018). Open access and the sovereign commons: a political ecology of pastoral land tenure. *Land Use Policy*, 76, 708-718.

⁴⁶ <https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/transhumance-routes-for-survival.html>

⁴⁷ Ducrotoy, M. J., Majekodunmi, A. O., Shaw, A. P. M., Bagulo, H., Bertu, W. J., Gusi, A. M., . . . Welburn, S. C. (2018). Patterns of passage into protected areas: drivers and outcomes of Fulani immigration, settlement and integration into the Kachia Grazing Reserve, northwest Nigeria. *Pastoralism*, 8(1), 1, Kratli 2018, *op cit*.

- Pastoralist communities often lack mechanisms to liaise with outside stabilisation stakeholders. To ensure participation in project design and implementation, capacity development for inclusive and representative agro-pastoralist CSOs should be supported.

Best practices. Though pastoralists are seldom mentioned in most Danish policy papers, DANIDA has developed a ‘Tool Kit’ for good practices when seeking to involve indigenous peoples in development programmes, which provides sophisticated best practices that could be streamlined across Danish engagements.⁴⁸

CONCLUSIONS

This Discussion Note has focused on identifying evolving notions of fragility that could strengthen Danish stabilisation efforts in the Horn and Sahel. Dozens of different indexes and definitions of fragility are in use today, but in developing context-relevant approaches to fragility, it is necessary to strike a balance between recognising the complex interrelationship between the different drivers of ‘fragility’ and keeping the focus narrow enough to be useful. This brief foregrounds notions of fragility that move away from a focus on strong state institutions towards the adaptive capacities of populations in the hinterlands of the Horn and the Sahel to deal with conflict and climate variability. The **key message** is that, programmatically, Danish stabilisation efforts across both regions could benefit from a more explicit focus on supporting the variability that dominant livelihood strategies require, which needs to be brought into consideration to achieve sustainable security and development outcomes. Failing to do this will only serve to marginalise local populations and may drive them further into the arms of radical groups. We have taken the view that *farmers and herders are experts in dealing with variability* and discussed best practices and emerging policy options to harness these skills so as to effectively mitigate and address challenges that are at the nexus of climate change and conflict. The main recommendations are:

- Adopt a ‘system of systems’ approach to stabilisation to support the complementarity of herding and farming within shared resource ecologies.
- Involve local communities in the governance of remote hinterlands.
- Bring the state back in through maintenance and inclusive service delivery.
- Include discussions of the return of state authority in peace negotiations.
- Mainstream the maintenance of local infrastructure.

⁴⁸ DANIDA. (2004). *Tool Kit: best practices for including indigenous peoples in sector programme support*. Copenhagen: DANIDA. A very basic insight is that development efforts are often not aligned with meaningful community timeframes, which are based on weather variation and the activities implied by them. Programming should at least be aligned with rainy and dry seasons (USAID 2020 *op cit.*: 27).

- Promote the coherence and geographical focus between overlapping regional and national stabilisation efforts.
- Adopt a mobility perspective on development efforts, aligning them with livestock supply chains, transhumance corridors and seasonal migration routes.
- Work towards implementing these recommendations, which would require Danida insisting on better information-sharing with Danish-funded organisations on the ground and active collaboration with research institutes to translate data back and forth between research, analysis and assessment.

APPENDIX: CONSULTATIONS AND INTERVIEWS (ANONYMISED)

1. Professor, University of Florida
2. Project Manager, Veterinaries without Borders/CELEP
3. Program Officer Stabilization, World Bank
4. Project Manager, Search for Common Ground
5. Consultant and Editor, Nomadic Peoples
6. Researcher, European University Institute
7. Professor, IDS
8. Policy Officer, Danish Embassy in Mali
9. Program Officer, Danish Refugee Council/DDG
10. Program Officer, African Union
11. Director, IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development
12. Program Director, Wetlands International Africa
13. Program Lead, Afalula
14. Research Officer, FAO
15. Coordinator, Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWSSI) at the African Union Commission
16. Associate Professor, Grinnell College and Consultant SFCG
17. Program Officer, SFCG
18. Staff, Danish Embassy in Ouagadougou
19. Program Officer, CARE Denmark
20. Program Officer, CARE Denmark
21. Deputy Head of Mission, Danish Embassy in Mali