I. **Purpose:**

The Development Partners (DP) seek to cooperate with and support the Government of Uganda (GoU) efforts to bring peace, security and development in Karamoja. The GoU and the Development Partners have an interest in supporting a sustainable transition from insecurity to peace and from relief to development, which preserves the unique assets of Karamoja, shares the benefits of development as widely as possible, and will not, in the future, result in increased vulnerability of the population.

Towards that end, this paper highlights the views of Development Partners on pastoralism and agro-pastoralism and how to support livestock and crop production for a successful transition from humanitarian aid to long-term food security and sustainable development in Karamoja.

II. **Background:**

**Development policies for Karamoja**

In recent years, the Government of Uganda has made substantial progress in the definition of development policies for Karamoja, with, in particular, the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP) and the Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security (KAPFS). While the KIDDP promotes the necessary linkages between disarmament, security and development, the KAPFS is a commendable attempt to address food security through a long-term and comprehensive approach aiming at breaking the dependency on recurrent food aid. Though food aid is still –and is likely to remain - needed for the most vulnerable parts of the population there is a consensus on the need to support the transition from humanitarian interventions to development programmes. The GoU has recently announced its intention to define a policy on pastoralism, and has requested DP for financial support to this process.

**Karamoja unique features**

Karamoja is the main semi-arid region of Uganda. It is characterized by high climate variability, erratic –although often substantial- rainfall, and recurrent cyclical dry spells and droughts. Climate variability has increased in the last decades, probably partly as a consequence of climate change. These characteristics make Karamoja's dryland ecosystems fragile and prone to rapid degradation; they have limited carrying capacity, further challenged by the pressure on natural resources caused by the increasing population, extensive recourse to income generating activities such as charcoal making and restrictions on mobility. Due to these unique features, Karamoja differs markedly from the other zones of Uganda's cattle corridor.

Another major distinctive feature of Karamoja is the chronic situation of insecurity, caused by frequent episodes of cattle raiding and theft, exacerbated by a diffuse presence of illegal small arms and light weapons: the commitment by the GoU to restore law and order has led to important results in the disarmament process, but also to accusations of human rights violations and use of excessive force against the civilian population and impounding of their main asset: livestock.
The importance of Pastoralism and mobility

Pastoralism is an extensive and mobile livestock production system based on the use of vast areas of uncultivated land. When livestock and crop production are mixed, one talks about agro-pastoralism. Pastoralism and agropastoralism are the basis of food security, livelihoods and the culture for most of Karamoja's populations. The vast majority of livelihood systems incorporate livestock production to some extent. Over time, the people of Karamoja, like other (agro-)pastoralists have developed specialized livestock raising strategies, combined with small-scale and opportunistic cropping, to allow the productive use of extensive seasonal rangelands in arid and semi-arid lands: these systems allow them to make a sensible and sustainable use of the natural resources of the area, without degrading the fragile environment which characterizes arid and semi-arid lands.

Mobility is an essential feature of pastoralism and agropastoralism: it allows the livestock to track and benefit from the best grazing areas and water sources throughout the year, without depleting these resources. The major reason for mobility is to maximise livestock productivity from a fragile and limited resource base in the context of erratic and unreliable rainfall patterns. It provides livestock with a diversified diet and limits the build-up of pests and diseases. Mobility also allows (agro-)pastoralists to bring the livestock closer to better markets in the neighbouring districts, where they can sell at higher prices and buy food items at lower prices. Mobility in Karamoja mostly takes the form of transhumance, which entails seasonal and organized movement of livestock to grazing grounds from a (semi-) permanent settlement, the manyatta or ere. Transhumance enables increased herd productivity, the preservation of the animals as capital; it involves low production costs and builds social relationships between communities (www.oecd.org/sah).

Often, mobility is neither appreciated nor understood as a viable component of the livelihood system. It has frequently been associated with the negative practices of cattle raiding, theft and violence. A mobile lifestyle also constitutes a challenge for modern states, in particular for social service delivery, security and local administration. The Government of Uganda has expressed its wish to promote sedentarisation (settlement) in Karamoja, and to promote irrigation assisted agriculture. Recent years have seen growing restrictions to livestock mobility, which have undermined the capacity of the pastoral systems to ensure food security and livelihoods. This situation, combined with frequent crop failures due to droughts during recent years, has led to food aid becoming a substantial source of food for a big part of Karamoja's population. The restrictions to mobility have also led to overgrazing and depletion of natural resources in the areas of livestock and people concentration.

There is growing worldwide recognition of the relevance and economic importance of pastoral and agro-pastoral production systems: according to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Uganda's pastoralist and smallholder livestock contributes 8.5% of total GDP, more than tourism. COMESA recent studies highlight that pastoralism in arid and semi-arid areas of East Africa contributes to household income in proportions ranging from 51% to 100%. Alternative methods of calculations to GDP, such as the Total Economic Value (TEV), confirm the superior potential and actual economic contribution and ecological sustainability of pastoralism and agropastoralism in arid and semi-arid areas compared to commercial ranching or intensive irrigated agriculture: several studies show a productivity of pastoralism 50% to 85% higher in terms of protein production per ha compared to ranching. Many African countries, including Mali, Kenya, Tanzania

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1 Agropastoralism can be defined as a semi-sedentary or sedentary production system that combines livestock and crop productions where animals are fed both on agricultural by-products and through grazing on natural pastures.
2 Source: FAO Household Economy Analysis - Livelihood profile Karamoja Region, May 2010
3 Transhumance can be defined as "a system of animal production characterised by seasonal and cyclical migration of varying degrees between complementary ecological areas and supervised by a few people, with most of the group remaining sedentary" (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/14/38402714.pdf).
4 Source: IIED The future of livestock production in Africa’s drylands., 2010, p8
and Ethiopia, have developed policies that fully recognise the benefits of (agro-) pastoralism in arid and semi-arid lands. The African Union is developing a policy framework for pastoralism in Africa (AU Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has led the way and put in place an institutional framework that facilitates cross-border livestock movement based on International Transhumance Certificates.

The potential for crop production and agricultural diversification

Karamoja also has **substantial potential for crop production**, mainly in the central agro-pastoral zone and the western green belt. Water and soil conservation techniques (including rainwater harvesting and appropriate agronomic practices) and, to a lesser extent, irrigation, can make a substantial contribution towards securing crop production in a context of growing climate variability and more frequent droughts. The recent "degazetting" of large parts of the green belt (previous game reserves), although potentially endangering precious sources of biodiversity, open great opportunities for rainfall agriculture. If poorly planned, however, the promotion of intensive agriculture in large parts of Karamoja, including the green belt, poses the risk of causing major disruptions to the pastoral and agro-pastoral systems, conflicts for the use of scarce resources and widespread and irreversible environmental degradation: hence, the need of careful planning, taking into account the specific needs of the various stakeholders. Karamoja's green belt has hitherto been home to many of the dry season grazing areas, which are so vital for maintaining livestock during this period. If well planned, there is potential for a harmonious and peaceful coexistence of animal and crop production, with some degree of integration between both, where the pastoralist benefits from the crop products, residues and by-products and the farmer from animal products, manure and draught power. Many traditional systems are based on these interactions and entail “social contracts” between (semi) nomadic livestock keepers, like the Peuls of West Africa, and settled agriculturists, like the Dogons in Mali: traditionally this existed in Karamoja/Acholi/Teso/Lango too, where the Karamojong would trade animal products for grain, the agriculturalists would benefit from the animal manure on their land when the animals were brought across for pasture and water, and in lean times the Karamojong would send their children to work on farms in Teso where the children would be fed in return for labour – this is the origin of the out-migration which has now become a social problem of street children, since these traditional social contract relations between families in Karamoja and Teso have been weakened by social and economic shocks.

Settlement

The people of Karamoja have a dual **settlement system** that combines (semi-) permanent manyattas (ngireria) and mobile kraals (ngawion). Many of the manyattas tend to become permanent, and new permanent settlements are created by people moving from different places to areas perceived as safe. This offers an **opportunity** for Development Partners to support Government of Uganda efforts to **enhance service delivery, improve security and bring economic development to Karamoja**. Development efforts can focus on improving conditions in the manyattas, promoting crops and alternative income generating activities, improving and diversifying animal production and strengthening market infrastructure, without curtailing the movement of livestock.
III. Elements for the policy dialogue

- Support to GoU’s policies for the development of Karamoja – policy on pastoralism
  Development Partners reiterate their commitment to support the transition from humanitarian aid to long-term development in Karamoja and the implementation of existing GoU policies for the region. They recognize the need to develop a policy on pastoralism and agro-pastoralism and stand ready to support the GoU in this effort. Considering the specific ecological and social conditions of Karamoja, which are distinct from the rest of the country, Development Partners encourage the GoU to benefit from the experience and expertise developed in other arid and semi-arid regions/countries in Africa, and to agree on common policies with neighbouring Kenya and Sudan.

- Respecting people's choice
  Any policy on Karamoja should allow the Karamojong to decide for themselves and pay due respect to their culture. The Karamojong know their land better than anybody else. Supporting them to make well-informed and voluntary choices and promoting consultation among all stakeholders will be crucial to maximise the benefits and minimize the negative impacts.

- The importance of pastoralism and animal productions
  Pastoral and agro-pastoral production systems are the basis for food security and livelihoods in Karamoja: development policies should recognize this importance. The economic potential of animal production is largely under-exploited. The commercialization of animal production can bring substantial economic benefits and become an important source of income for the people of Karamoja. Support measures are needed, particularly in the following areas: introduction of improved herd management tools and skills, standardized livestock branding and tracking, fodder production, strengthened District Veterinary Offices and Community Animal Health Workers, expanded advisory services, increased vaccination coverage, management of livestock mobility linking water supply and grazing routes, diversification of animal productions (poultry, pigs,..), improved marketing strategies (selling younger, higher quality stock, pre-drought destocking), and investment in market infrastructure and livestock insurance, among others. There are potential complementarities between the drier sub-regions (suitable for livestock reproduction/calving) and the more humid areas of the green belt and neighbouring districts, suitable for fattening/finishing. There is also significant eco-tourism potential in Karamoja, based on the agro-pastoral lifestyle.

- The key role of mobility
  Mobility is broadly recognized as a key element for the productivity and sustainability of animal production in arid and semi-arid areas. It is a rational response to the scattered and uncertain distribution of natural resources, in environments where it is impossible to graze animals year after year on the same pasture. Movement allows herders to use a variety of pastures and browse, water points and other resources such as natural salt licks, and is a sophisticated adaptation to the challenges of risky environments. Attempts to improve the pastoral system by settling herders in West Africa have met with limited success. Restrictions to mobility can lead to lower productivity, higher livestock mortality and land degradation due to overgrazing. Mobility can pose particular challenges for social service delivery, local administration and, in Karamoja, the provision of security, although alternative delivery systems (such as Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), Community Animal Health Workers, etc.) have been promoted with success. In the medium to long-term, most nomadic and semi-nomadic populations tend to sedentarise spontaneously. This process is also observed in Karamoja; it should, however be gradual and part of normal social evolution, as mobility is a central feature of the culture and livelihood of the people. Mobility in Karamoja mostly takes the form of transhumance, which entails seasonal and organized movement of livestock to grazing grounds from a (semi-) permanent settlement, the manyatta. It should be emphasized that a mobile production system based on transhumance is not incompatible with the progressive
settlement of the population. Herds are still moved in the cattle corridor in Western Uganda. Herd mobility is practiced in some 150 countries worldwide, including 7 of the G8 richest nations. Numerous rich countries are now investing in re-opening transhumance where it has collapsed, because of the biodiversity dividends that mobility brings.

- **The need to diversify and promote crop production**
  Besides animal production, **supporting the diversification of crop enterprises is vital for promoting long-term food security and development.** Most people in Karamoja combine some form of crop and animal production. Short maturing, high yielding and drought tolerant crops should be promoted where possible around the manyattas and in the areas with potential, most notably the green belt. The integration of crop and animal productions, in agro-pastoral systems, can bring substantial benefits in terms of productivity and sustainability.

- **Water as a key production factor**
  Water is key to the development of both animal and crop production. Strategically located, and **carefully designed and managed** water sources (reservoirs, valley ponds, traditional valley dams, sub-surface dams, check dams in the riverbeds…) will allow a better management and use of Karamoja’s large grazing areas. Various techniques of **water and soil conservation, including water harvesting**, and, where feasible, irrigation are key to sustainable crop production. Large scale irrigation schemes for commercial production implemented over the last 50 years in similar agro-ecological-social settings in Africa have proved to be unsustainable and to have negative impacts on pastoralists and their environment.

- **Careful land-use planning**
  Promoting the sustainable use of Karamoja’s natural resources in a context of climate change and rapidly growing population requires **careful land-use planning.** The exploitation of the green belt, vital for maintaining livestock during dry periods, needs to be carefully planned and well thought out, taking into account the specific needs of the various stakeholders. If well planned, there is potential for a harmonious and peaceful integration of animal and crop production especially around the manyattas and in the areas with potential where the pastoralist benefits from the crop products, residues and by-products and the farmer from animal products, manure and draught power.

- **No development without peace and security**
  The diffuse conflict and insecurity situation is probably the **main constraint to development** in the region. **Development Partners support GoU efforts to improve security, but are extremely concerned about the protection of human rights in Karamoja.** Widespread losses of livestock by the Karamojong as a result of insecurity, large-scale raids and confiscation by the security forces threaten the asset base of the affected population and expose them to higher vulnerability, possibly generating further humanitarian crises and tensions. **It is the responsibility of the Government to provide security in Karamoja and protect the assets of its population.** Development Partners are ready to provide support in order to improve relations between the Karamojong and security forces in the region. The diffuse conflicts are often difficult to understand for outsiders; they should however be factored into all policies and interventions in the area and great care must be taken in order to avoid exacerbating them. This is most effectively done by applying the principles of “do-no-harm” and stressing **conflict-sensitive approaches** for all activities in the region.

- **Cross-border cooperation**
  Some of the issues mentioned above are of regional nature. Developing durable solutions for food security, pastoralism, mobility and security in Karamoja requires **cooperation and coordinated action with the neighbouring countries.**