

**Return to our Roots: Can Customary Law or Best Practices from Around Africa
Provide Possibilities for More Harmonious Farmer/ Pastoralist Relations?**

Nneka Ikelionwu

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, Nigeria
ikelionwu@ipcr.gov.ng; nikelionwu@gmail.com

Abstract

Cattle rearing has been a part of the “African life” since the stone ages and so has farming. Pastoralists have always related with farmers and have in many cases, over the years even developed symbiotic relationships with them. The relationship has never however, been without strain. The combination of climate-change induced droughts; sedentarisation of pastoralists; increased ownership of cattle by farmers; encroachment of traditional grazing routes and to some extent, departure from customary ownership of land in parts of Africa has served to further strain the relationship between farmers and pastoralists. In some cases, the resulting conflicts are low-intensity conflicts while in many cases, such as in the middle belt of Nigeria, they are serious conflicts that have resulted in many deaths, loss of property, and mass migration. It appears that while these conflicts have always existed, they have become more violent and taken on extraordinary dimensions in recent years in some parts of Africa. If the deterioration of farmer/herder relations in Africa remains unchecked, it poses a serious threat to security on the continent and therefore stands in the way of the continent’s achievement of the objectives of the African Union’s Agenda 63. This paper attempts to examine the customary regulation of farmer herder relations across Africa in a bid to determine whether it was more effective than current practice or whether changing physical conditions are solely responsible for the increase in intensity of farmer/ herder conflicts across Africa. It draws from the evolution of farmer/ herder relations from countries across the continent and attempts an assessment of the dynamics of these relations especially as regards the shift from customary to more private ownership of land. It also assesses practises from across Africa and especially in countries where the relationship between these two sets of people are less turbulent so as to identify good practices. It concludes with an adaptation where necessary, of customary practices and an infusion of best practices in a bid to make recommendations for States to adopt towards encouraging, promoting and ensuring an improvement of relations between farmers and herdsmen in Africa.

Introduction

Cattle rearing has been a part of the “African life” since the stone ages and so has farming. Pastoralists have always related with farmers and have in many cases, over the years even developed symbiotic relationships with them. The nature, extent and levels of this symbiosis varies. For instance, there is a host/ client level where traditionally, the farmers play host to the pastoralists as is the case between the Gbaya farmers and the Mbororo herders in Adamawa Province of Cameroon and the Mossi farmers and FulBe herders in Central Plateau, Burkina Faso¹; an economic level, where they benefit economically from each other; and the household level where the households may exchange milk for crops or the farmer may entrust his livestock with pastoralists.² Pastoralists were allowed to let their cattle graze on farmland after harvest, the cattle left dung on the farmland which was good for fertilization. Farmers dug wells that the pastoralists were allowed to use. The relationship has never however, been without strain. It has been claimed that even in biblical times, farmer and pastoralist relations were not devoid of friction.³

In recent years, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have taken alarming dimensions that if not arrested might lead to even civil war in some countries. The reasons for the change in dynamics of farmer/ pastoralist conflicts are discussed in this paper. The paper also attempts to identify measures that might serve to mitigate the negative effects of these changing dynamics. It concludes with recommendations for improving farmer/ pastoralist relations across Africa and working towards the achievement of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

¹ Mark Moritz, “Understanding Herder-Farmer Conflicts in West Africa: Outline of a Processual Approach,” *Human Organization* 69, no. 2 (2010): 139

² Mark Moritz, “Changing Contexts and Dynamics of Farmer-Herder Conflicts across West Africa,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 8.

³ Abba Gana Shettima and Usman A. Tar, “Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict in West Africa: Exploring Causes and Consequences,” *Information Society and Justice* 1, no. 2 (June 2008): 169, http://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/55/1/InformationSocietyAndJustice_v1n2_p163-184.pdf

Evolution of Farmer/ Herder Relations in Africa

The evolution of farmer/ herder relations could be considered in terms of the pre-colonial era and the colonial and post-colonial era. The symbiotic relationship between farmers and herders that was mainly touted as responsible for the relative mildness of farmer/ herder disputes in pre-colonial Africa was disrupted by the advent of the colonialists. Colonialism came with changes to this symbiotic balance and most of the changes remained and continued even after independence. There were changes in production systems; dispute management systems; and land tenure systems amongst other things.

Pre-Colonial Era

Production Systems

In pre-colonial Africa, production systems encouraged more peaceful coexistence of farmers and herders because their livelihoods were conveniently symbiotic.⁴ Production was mainly for subsistence with a little surplus which was used for barter trading with herders who in turn, proffered animal products for food crops. The pastoralist practices supported the production systems of the farmers in such ways as supplying dung for fertilizer in return for access and other benefits.

Dispute Prevention and Management Systems

There were even dispute management measures in place. In some parts of Niger and Nigeria, there were systems in place to prevent or mitigate conflict amongst Fulani herdsman and farmers. One such system was the election of a *Ruga* within the herder community. The *Ruga* managed the grazing activities of his group, was responsible for managing disputes between his group and the farmers and generally acted as an intermediary where necessary.⁵

⁴ Moritz, "Changing," 9-10

⁵ Aniuska Luna and Mark Davidheiser, "From Complementarity to Conflict: A Historical Analysis of Farmer-FulBe Relations in West Africa," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 8, no. 1 (Jan. 2008): 82-83

In Nikki in Benin, most early disputes were settled through conciliation and recourse to elders and leaders and this method was effective according to 91.70% of farmers and 70% of pastoralists interviewed for a study and who agreed that the method encouraged good relationships between the parties.⁶

In Northern Cameroon, pastoralists had arrangements for access to land with Fulani *laamiibe* (chiefs), who were installed after the Jihads in the 1800s and who protected their access and ensured their safety.⁷ The *lammiibe* accorded the herders the same rights as farmers and agro-pastoralists. They also played a role in dispute settlement.⁸ Similar circumstances existed throughout the Jihad conquered regions in other countries like Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali.

Land Tenure Systems.

Under customary land tenure systems, anyone that put a piece of land to production, laid claim to it. The land then became the property of the lineage of that first occupant and was managed by a representative of that lineage. The land could not be transferred without first obtaining the permission of the clan.⁹ This was more or less the method of “acquisition” of land across Africa. In Kenya, anybody could lay claim to a piece of land as long as no one else was using it and no one had *Runo* (first cultivation) rights over it. *Runo* rights arose after a person demarcated the border of a piece of land and held a blessing ceremony over it in the presence of clan elders. The person was then required to put the land to use immediately to validate the right and had control over the use and transfer of the land. These rights were,

⁶ Latifou Idrissou, Janvier Egah, Ismail Mama Zakari and Nasser Mohamed Baco “Dynamics of Conflicts Between Crop Farmers and Pastoralists Over Agro-Pastoral Resources in Northern Benin,” *European Journal of Business of Social Sciences* 6, no. 9 (December 2017): 23

⁷ Mark Moritz, Paul Scholte and Saidou Kari, “The Demise of the Nomadic Contract: Arrangements and Rangelands Under Pressure in the far North of Cameroon,” *Nomadic Peoples* 6, no. 1 (2002): 124

⁸ Moritz, Scholte and Kari, “The Demise,” 128.

⁹ Luna and Davidheiser, “From Complementarity,” 83

however, not automatically passed on his descendant who for instance, required permission from the original owner's lineage to transfer.¹⁰

Traditionally, as regards pastoralists it appears from available literature that their land tenure system was fluid, undefined and precarious. For instance, rights of a farmer who put a piece of land to use would appear to have precedence over the rights of a pastoralist that has been using the same piece of land as part of his grazing route for years. Their rights, usually to use land and resources, where they had them, derived from flexible arrangements between them and individual farmers or communities over landed properties and between individuals and communities. Only then, was there any semblance of definition to their rights.¹¹

In Northern Nigeria and in many other parts of Africa, the pastoralists paid grazing fees, tributes, taxes and other levies to earn rights of way, use of resources etc. In Northern Cameroon, they paid the *laamiibe* tribute (including cattle) and taxes as consideration for "Nomadic Contracts" in return for access to community land. Because these contracts were negotiated with *laamiibe*, they were anchored on the validity of his authority.¹²

Colonial and Post-Colonial Era

Production Systems

As already pointed out above, colonialization brought about changes that affected farmer/ pastor relations. Changes in production systems were mostly aimed at increasing productivity and commercialization with often significant effects on the environment and population growth. Developments towards "de-specialization" in production systems meant that farmers learnt to use animals to maximise their productivity and herders learnt to grow their own produce and therefore, become

¹⁰ Angelique Hargerud, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Change in Kenya," *Journal of International African Institute* 59, no. 1 (1989): 74

¹¹ Moritz, "Changing," 18

¹² It is important to note that in some cases, relations with the *laammibe* became strained because the herders felt as exploited by them as they had felt with the non-Fulani chiefs.

increasingly sedentary. This resulted in a shift away from their hitherto exchange-based relationship where people associated with a particular production system or economic activity (and often socio-cultural group) benefitted from each other's activities and were therefore less wont to cause any disruption to these activities.¹³

Land Tenure

Land tenure regulation began to evolve resulting in a departure from customary regulations and a move towards western style regulation.¹⁴ Colonial policies were aimed at privatisation and nationalisation of land. These policies reduced indigenous communities' control over land and landed resources. Also under colonial rule in West Africa and some other parts, all land that was not owned was public property subject to the administration of the colonial (and later, indigenous) government. Therefore, save for where these lands became formally allocated, nothing stopped farmers from using them.¹⁵ Some prior arrangements for grazing land for pastoralists suffered as a result. This resulted in more competition for the resources as they became scarcer.

The 1974 Land Tenure Law in Cameroon introduced private ownership of land and allocated all land that was not in use. Since grazing did not qualify as "use" under Cameroonian law, a lot of land that was used for grazing was affected. The *laamiibe* no longer had control over the land and could no longer honour Nomadic Contracts. Even where traditional rulers still had power to allocate lands, it could only be exercised by lower chiefs far away from the *laamiibe's* seat. Some of the land that was previously used for grazing was allocated for developments such as the establishment of parks and the *laamiibe* could not do anything about it.¹⁶

There were exceptions to the tendency of colonialists to limit communal regulation of land tenure. In Sudan, a predominantly agrarian country, they recognised the

¹³ Moritz, "Changing," 9-10

¹⁴ Luna and Davidheiser, "From Complementarity" 78

¹⁵ Moritz, "Changing," 18

¹⁶ Moritz, Scholte and Kari, "The Demise," 130.

need for secure land tenure and recognised that they could only achieve this through communal regulation. However, about fifteen years after independence, the country sought to depart from this system and the resultant ambiguous land tenure regime remains a constant source of conflict in the area especially as government has taken over, former grazing lands and allocated them for mechanized farming even to foreign parties in the name of national interest in east, central and western Sudan.¹⁷

Dispute Settlement

As regards dispute settlement, some of the structures that made it possible for the parties to settle with the help of elders, chiefs etc., began to evolve during colonisation. For instance, in Northern Cameroon, the German and later, French colonialists established a system of indirect rule through the *laamiibe* and lower chiefs respectively. Before independence, the *laamiibe* were formally absorbed into the colonial administration and thus, became rather powerful but the democratisation processes that began in 1991 stripped them of most of their power.¹⁸

Amongst the Nikki in Benin, there are currently four methods of resolving conflicts between farmers and pastoralists: the conciliation method and the recourse to community (which existed pre-colonialism); as well as recourse to conflict management committees and formal institutions such as police and courts. These additional methods contribute to the deterioration of relations between the two groups, this, according to 85% and 80.3% of farmers and pastoralists respectively interviewed for a study.¹⁹

Dynamics of Farmer/ Pastoralist Relations Across Africa.

¹⁷ Mustafa Babiker, "Pastoral Land Rights and Peacebuilding in North Kordofan: Policy and Legislative Challenges," *Nomadic Peoples* 13, no. 1 (2009): 135-136. They even allocated land nomadic pastoralists who would ordinarily have required permission from the land-owning communities to acquire land rights.

¹⁸ Moritz, Scholte and Kari, "The Demise," 130.

¹⁹ Idrissou, Egah, Zakari and Baco "Dynamics" 23

Farmer/ Pastoralist relations across Africa have become increasingly strained often leading to violent conflicts which vary in intensity. Reasons for conflict between farmers and pastoralists include destruction of crops and encroachment on grazing land. One of the more universally accepted reasons for the conflict is the competition for limited resources. This is further affected by the increased commercialization of production systems. Farmers and pastoralists alike adopt measures to ensure that they have access often to the detriment of the other party.

Assuming that conflicts between the parties were all purely competition based, this is still no explanation for why some areas in the Sahel, which have abundant resources suffer more intense conflicts than areas with fewer resources.²⁰ It has been suggested that resource based disputes are often escalated when they occur and are pronounced by religious and political conflicts existing in the same area.²¹ For instance, in Nigeria and a lot of West Africa, the fact that pastoralism is a production system that is associated predominantly with a particular ethnic group (the Fulanis) means that any dispute between pastoralists and farmers will automatically take on ethnic or cultural dimensions which would usually manifest, even before it escalates into conflict, as mutual distrust and disdain. Also, Islamists tend to appeal to the sentiments of Muslim pastoralists and often use their treatment at the hands of (usually) non-Muslim farmers as propaganda material.²² The introduction of ethnic or religious dimensions would usually lead to an intensification of the conflict.²³

These relations that are coloured by mutual distrust and disdain do not always result in conflict as the sentiments often remain latent. For instance, even some of the pre-colonial symbiotic relationships were not devoid of negative sentiments. The

²⁰ Moritz, "Changing," 6

²¹ Moritz, "Changing," 3

²² An example is the Macina Liberation Front's campaign to recruit disgruntled Fulani pastoralists in Mali. Kaley Fulton and Benjamin P. Nickels, "Africa's Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism," *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies* (Jan 2017): <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-pastoralists-battleground-terrorism/>

²³ Steve Tonah, "Migration and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 160

Mbororo herders in Cameroon likened their relationship with the Gbaya to the master/ slave relationship of the slave trade era²⁴ yet there was limited conflict.

The host/ client relationships, where they still exist, make reconciliation and general engagement much easier and therefore serve to limit conflict like in the case of Mossi farmers and FulBe herders in the Central Plateau in Burkina Faso. Where conflicts occur in that area, they are quickly resolved.²⁵ This usually obtained in areas where, based on the land right arrangements with local chiefs, the chiefs would mediate in conflicts.²⁶

However, this is not always the case. The massacre in Toda, Niger in October 1991 is one exception. In that case, although there was a symbiotic relationship between the farmers and the herders, a seemingly minor dispute (over stray cattle) quickly evolved into a violent conflict in which 103 people were killed. Other exceptions include the conflict in Sideradougou, Southwest Burkina Faso in 1986 and the Wum, Cameroon conflict between Aghem women and Aku herders. Instances like these have led some writers to question the explanation that where host/ client relations exist, there is less likelihood of serious conflict. While some are satisfied with counting such incidences as exceptions and putting them down to ill luck, others see it as yet further evidence that the weakening of pre-colonial arrangements alone are not responsible for the increase in violent conflicts between farmers and herders.²⁷

In many parts of Africa, the host/ client system has collapsed due to the fact that the two systems are no longer dependent on each other. This could also be responsible for the increase in frequency and intensity of conflict. In areas such as Northern Cameroon where it has become almost impossible for Nomadic contracts to be upheld by the *laamiibe* and where former pastoral land is no longer in the control of

²⁴ Moritz, "Changing," 12

²⁵ Moritz, "Understanding," 139

²⁶ Tonah, "Migration," 170

²⁷ Moritz, "Understanding," 140-142

the original “hosts” the pastoralists often resort to other often violent means of ensuring access to land.²⁸

Other attempts to rationalise the frequency and higher intensity of farmer pastoralist disputes across Africa include the fact that younger generations are not as vested in peaceful relations as the older ones. In Northwest Cameroon, FulBe youth have adopted an attitude of “do not make pulaaku”. Pulaaku refers to the strategies adopted by the older generations to evade conflict. Similarly, youth from farming communities in central Ghana are adopting more confrontational strategies to gain access to land.²⁹

Change in political contexts may also encourage one party to adopt more violent and daring strategies to ensure that they have access to land. For instance, many allege that the reason farmer/ pastoralist conflicts in Nigeria are particularly brutal in current times is because the Fulanis who are often accused of brazenly entering and sacking entire villages and damaging farm lands and crops rely on the fact that the current President is Fulani. Moritz reports that nomadic FulBe pastoralists that had travelled through Chad and Cameroon had reported that crop damage was more severe in Chad than Cameroon because the political climate in Chad favoured them more.³⁰ Also, as pointed out above, when the Fulani *laamiibe* had the power to allocate land rights to Fulani pastoralists in Cameroon, they did all that was within their power to protect those rights. The enabling political context does not only derive from ethnic or similar affiliations. Sometimes pastoralists enjoy privileges by paying or bribing government officials for them. These allegations have been made by farmers in Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana and Cameroon.³¹

²⁸ Tonah, “Migration” 171

²⁹ Moritz, “Changing,” 24; Tonah, “Migration,” 164

³⁰ Moritz, “Changing,” 21

³¹ Rita Yembilah and Miriam Grant, “The Political Ecology of Territoriality in Farmer-Herder Relationships in Northern Ghana,” *GeoJournal* 79, no. 3 (2014): 398; Tonah, “Migration,” 169

Not totally unrelated to the change in political contexts is the proliferation of firearms in Africa. The changing dynamics of farmer/ pastoralist conflicts in especially west Africa has been aided to a large extent by the availability of sophisticated weapons. Not too long ago, pastoralists were armed only with sticks, bows and arrows and perhaps a Dane gun or similar weapon for protection. As recently as 12 years ago, one writer remarked that the sophistication of weaponry that was prevalent in east Africa and the horn of Africa was not yet evident in west Africa. Today, pastoralists in west Africa are armed with AK47s and similar firearms.

Most former colonies, after colonisation adopted legal systems that were a variation of the system their colonisers introduced. Even where customary laws were retained, they are usually retained under a plural system where rights can be derived from several parallel sources and different courts at the same instance, have the jurisdiction to hear disputes regarding land tenures. This is bound to lead to conflict.

Even in spite of all the above, there are still areas with relatively more peaceful relations between farmers and pastoralists. The next section attempts to identify the reasons for this and possibly extract measures that are adopted in those areas to protect the harmony.

Farmer/ Pastoralist Relations: Good Practices from Across Africa

Countries and communities across Africa have adopted different strategies to deal with not only the environmental and other changes that may lead to strains in the relationship between farmers and pastoralists but also to manage disputes and prevent them from escalating. A Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) study highlighted some

of them which are summarised below along with measures adopted by some other countries.³²

In Mali measures adopted include:

- i) Providing solar and wind powered pumps for boreholes;
- ii) The 2001 Pastoral Charter which recognized the right of pastoralists to access land and resources necessary to maintain their livestock; coupled with decentralization reforms, makes local authorities responsible for resolving land use disputes;
- iii) Encouraging the farming of crops that can be used as animal fodder and establishing banks for livestock feed;³³
- iv) They have ensured that plans for agricultural developments are accommodating of pastoral activities;

Senegalese regional administrative authorities, joined by the local and traditional authorities ensure that parties are aware of the calendar for farming and grazing by holding stakeholder meetings before harvest period where everything is set out. They also set up dispute settlement and regulatory mechanisms.³⁴

Togo inaugurated a National Management Committee of Transhumance with members drawn from administrative authorities, traditional leaders and chiefs as well as the transhumant community to:

- i) Regulate the movement of pastoralists and lead them along the best routes (not through farmlands) to grazing areas;

³² Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), "The Cross-Border Transhumance in West Africa Proposal for Action Plan," *Food and Agriculture Organization*, (June 2012): <http://ecpf.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CrossBorder-Transhumance-WA-Final-Report-1.pdf>

³³ Kelsey Jones-Casey and Anna Knox, "Farmer Herder Conflicts in Mali." *Focus on Land in Africa*, (Feb 2011):

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiyjbuW0dvvAhVUecAKHe2qABEQFggyMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.focusonland.com%2Fdownload%2F51dda6a62a68d%2F&usg=AOvVaw37KcjRFJVs0VKQTZ82Nbj5: 3>

³⁴ FAO and ECOWAS, "The Cross-Border," 38

- ii) Ensure that pastoralists adhere to the laws and regulations of Togo and enforce such laws;
- iii) Manage disputes.³⁵

In Niger, the Livestock Sector Support Program (PASEL) redefined former grazing routes and allocated them with the help of donor agencies and with the participation of all stakeholders. There is a Committee that will oversee these routes. Similar measures were adopted in Benin's Toucountouna region where stakeholders colluded to map out pastoral corridors to enable pastoralists and their herds access land and other resources.³⁶

Cote d'Ivoire has managed to minimise the negative consequences of grazing activities in the rural areas by:

- i) Provision of barb wire for farmers to protect their farms in risky areas and creating mandatory night paddocks;
- ii) Mapping out agro-pastoral areas and allowing only pastoralists access to rangelands, giving them identification cards;
- iii) Establishing a well-developed mechanism for determining the extent of damage to crops;
- iv) Encouraging mixed farming whereby farmers and pastoralists each benefit from each other; and
- v) Encouraging breeding of sedentary livestock.³⁷

Under Ethiopian Land laws, pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation. They are also protected from displacement from their own lands.³⁸ Article 18 also provides that pastoralists shall enter into agreements for the allocation of land for pastoral use in accordance with the customs of the people.

³⁵ FAO and ECOWAS, "The Cross-Border," 37

³⁶ FAO and ECOWAS, "The Cross-Border," 36

³⁷ FAO and ECOWAS, "The Cross-Border," 37

³⁸ Article 40(4) Federal Land Law

Tanzania's Village Land Act provides for the issue of customary rights to land for pastoral purposes.³⁹

Recommendations for Improving Farmer/ Pastoralist Relations: Towards the Realisation of Agenda 2063

Some of the measures highlighted above are commendable and would go some way towards mitigating conflict between the two parties. Physical measures such as the provision of alternative sources of water and feed for cattle would ease the competition for land and water that might be used by farmers. This might be problematic where pastoralists insist that their cattle must move around. Other measures such as helping farmers secure their land are really short-term measures. Especially as there is no indication that the situation of scarcity of land will change, any physical measure must be accompanied by formal policy and laws to ensure long-term effectiveness.

While many writers tend to romanticise the virtues for customary regulation of relations between farmers and herders, it was still limited by the age-old disadvantage of customary law: its informality, the fact that it was seldom documented. The unpredictability of customary law would create a double-edged sword of sorts that would be vulnerable to manipulations. Aspects of customary law such as the land tenure system can probably no longer be applied in today's Africa. However, and especially in countries where the two parties are either the same tribe or are socially integrated, it would be easier for the parties to respect customary law because there is a sense of ownership. Also, where the dispute management mechanism includes respected members of each group as opposed to strangers, it would be more effective.

With the current situation in affected countries such as Nigeria where there are alleged attacks by pastoralists almost every day, there is need to adopt short as well

³⁹ Section 29(2)(a)(iii)

as long term measures. The short-term measures would consist mainly of what I refer to as “physical measures”. They would include measure such as:

- i) Increased security presence especially in vulnerable areas;
- ii) Improved border management;
- iii) Investigation of complaints;
- iv) Establishment of and maintenance of a register of pastoralists operating within every community, local government area and state;
- v) Issuance of identification documents for registered pastoralists; and
- vi) Establishing accountability mechanism at group level.

It is also necessary to adopt longer term measures such as:

- i) Conduct of an audit of laws governing land tenure in each community and attempt to harmonise them into a unitary system with clearly set out provisions as to governing law and jurisdiction for dispute settlement;
- ii) Establishment of effective early warning and early response systems in affected areas;
- iii) Conduction of conflict impact assessments of potential development projects;
- iv) Establishment of regional cooperation measures especially amongst countries that enjoy free cross border movement;
- v) Mapping out of ancient grazing routes where they exist and assessment of how they can be restored, failing which alternative routes should be mapped out; and
- vi) Concerted efforts should be made to counter the Islamist and other propaganda of groups that attempt to inject other dimensions to the farmer/ herder situation.

The African Union Agenda 2063 envisages a peaceful and secure Africa by 2063 (Aspiration 4). The instrument recognises that there is still a lot that needs to be done on the continent, hence the long time-line. It is especially important as many other

aspirations can only be achieved if the environment is conducive and this is only possible when there is peace.

Conclusion

The present state of the relations between farmers and pastoralists cannot be allowed to continue. Both production systems are vital to the African economy and the practitioners are Africans so both systems are here to stay. The only other option is to ensure that they are able to live and function in such a way as to promote peace and security in Africa.

Climate change and other factors have caused an intensification of competition for land and other resources. Competition has always existed between the groups and so has conflict. In pre-colonial times, perhaps because each was dependent on the other and was therefore, vested in the success of the other's activities, farmers and pastoralists actually helped each other out. The fact that each production system now engages in the practices of the other has meant that the interdependence has reduced and competitiveness has increased. This competitiveness on its own is not necessarily bad. However, with the proliferation of weapons and the tendency of the conflicts to take on ethnic or religious dimensions, the situation needs to be addressed as it is already out of hand.

Governments need to be honest about the situation and adopt credible measures to address the problem. To begin with, everything should be done to prevent the kind of vicious conflicts that are occurring at present in countries such as Nigeria. Government should also adopt long-term strategies to ensure that the laws and policies governing land tenure for farmers and pastoralists are clear, fair and equitable. They should ensure that the laws are enforceable too.

With people being able to move freely between States with free movement and other reciprocal arrangements, it is imperative, that measures adopted to address the situation are designed to apply across borders and designed in consultation with

government from the relevant States. It is also important that all stakeholders especially leaders from the farmer and pastoralist communities are involved in consultations to come up with strategies as it is important for the parties to own the policies.

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