



Preparatory webinars

Report of the webinar on Pastoral System Mobility for Drought Resilience

Date: 24 November 2025

Participants: 147 people attended the webinar, among them a majority of representatives of civil society organisations, but also of international networks, research institutions and international organisations.

Speakers:

Facilitation: Ms. Manon Albagnac – CARI Association (France)

Panellists:

- Mr. Jonathan Davies – Independent consultant / expert on rangelands and pastoralism (United Kingdom)
- Ms. Natasha Maru – International Land Coalition / IYRP Global Alliance (India)
- Mr. Bio Goura Soulé – ECOWAS (Nigeria)
- Ms. Hanieh Moghani – CENESTA / Consortium TICCA (Iran)
- Mr. Bernard Bonnet – IRAM (France)



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Summary of interventions and key messages shared:

Webinar Scoping Information:

The webinar contributes to addressing the central question of Désertif'actions 2026, namely: how can we improve the resilience of territories (ecosystems and communities) in the face of drought? A review of the literature shows that mobility is the key element underpinning the resilience of pastoral systems.

By resilience of pastoral systems, we mean the ability of pastoralist communities, their animals and ecosystems to adapt, resist and recover from a drought.

Therefore, the specific question addressed in the webinar is: **How can pastoral mobility be facilitated in times of crisis, such as drought, to improve the resilience of communities and ecosystems?**

In view of the UNCCD COP17, there is a challenge to prepare advocacy elements to defend the resilience of pastoral communities and territories in the face of drought.

This question has been addressed during several national preparatory workshops of Désertif'actions (Guinea, France, Kenya). Although they are located in very different ecological and institutional contexts, the actors of these three countries share common observations: accelerated land degradation, increasing irregularity of rainfall and water scarcity are compromising pastoral systems.

Pastoralism is therefore a victim of climate change and environmental disruption.

Actors from the 3 countries also showed that pastoralism is a tool for adaptation and a lever for ecological and social resilience:

- It regulates ecosystems,
- Preserves soils and landscapes,
- And strengthens food security.

From the preparatory workshops, the following advocacy messages emerged from the three countries:

- Recognizing pastoralism as a pillar of adaptation strategies in drylands
- Promote territorial governance involving pastoralist communities, and in particular women and youth
- Securing pastoral mobility

Mobility at the heart of rangelands management:

Mobility is at the heart of rangeland management but also of the governance of pastoral societies. It obeys sometimes very practical reasons that allow communities to develop, to spread risks, to develop solidarity, and more broadly to prosper as a community.

In the context of crisis adaptation, mobility allows moving from:

- Areas affected by droughts, floods and snow, excessive heat or cold.
- Areas marked by disease or predation.
- Conflict-affected areas.

By being mobile, pastoralist communities move towards:

- Resources (pasture, water, mineral salts, etc.)
- Services and markets
- Connection with communities: The social relations of pastoralist communities can span great distances.

Consideration of pastoralism by the UNCCD:

Rangelands and pastures make up 54% of the world's land surface, the vast majority of which is dryland. But they are still the subject of little political consideration. According to the UNCCD, 50% of rangelands and pastures are degraded.

At the last Conference of the Parties (COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2024) an important decision was taken on rangelands and pastoralists ([decision 29 of COP16](#)), finally prioritizing the sustainable management of rangelands.

Concrete cases from the field shared by the panellists

IFAD's project in Tajikistan on land degradation due to overgrazing: The initial idea to solve this problem was to reduce the size of the herds, which proved economically impossible. It is the reintroduction of herd mobility practices that has improved the situation: improved pasture health but also increased meat and milk yields.

Rabaris community in western India: sheep and goat herders, who move in families or communities. They do not perceive droughts as obstacles and move to less affected places.

The different communities of herders who share a territory of 6 million km² in West Africa and who are more impacted by insecurity (terrorism, cattle theft, kidnapping) than by climate change. The change in their movements, with more migration to coastal countries, is not without problems with farmers.

Agriculture-livestock integration is one of the ways in which pastoral and agricultural systems in the Sahel are strengthened.

The indigenous communities of Iran who raise sheep and camels, and whose migration routes cross mountains of 3000 meters. Their cultural and social functioning is based on mobility, self-governance and shared management of resources. Representatives of its communities can understand the rainfall that has taken place and the weather ahead by looking at a bush or dunes. The mobility of these communities contributes to the regeneration of pastures and pastures, sometimes in an active way: the pastoralists put a small bag containing seeds around the goats' necks. As they move, goats drop the seeds and push them into the soil with their hooves.

Lessons Shared:

- Pastures deteriorate when they are overused (overgrazing leading to degradation of plant cover, soil compaction, etc.) or not used enough (closure of environments, reduction in biodiversity linked to the sowing of herbaceous plants). There is a balance to be found. From an ecological point of view, good rangeland health depends on the disturbances caused by pastoralism. Disruptions must take place at the right time, and with the right intensity, which is part of the know-how of pastoralist communities.
- The restoration of rangelands and pastures leads to benefits on landscapes, biodiversity, soil health, carbon sequestration, food security, peace... But these benefits are often underestimated.
- Data collection on pastoralism by research and wide communication of this data are important issues. First, to measure and demonstrate the positive impacts of pastoralism: for example, research has shown that biomass withdrawals from well-managed

rangelands do not exceed 30%, which allows regeneration. And also, to measure the sustainability of pastoral systems and adapt public policies. Indicators have been developed by the International Earth Coalition to measure pastoralists' land tenure security ([read more on the ILC website](#)).

- For pastoral communities, the world is not divided into plots of land and mobility makes it possible to think about a common management of territories. Social ties and the common management of the use of and access to resources are crucial elements. Pastoralist communities have established self-governance mechanisms that support the sustainability of their lifestyles and the natural resources on which they depend. These traditional patterns of self-governance – [symbolized by the concept of Territories of Life defended by the ICCA Consortium](#) – must be respected and supported by public policies.
- Traditional knowledge (on vegetation, weather, etc.) is a lever for anticipating crises and adapting that also needs to be recognized.
- In the Sahel, livestock farming must be integrated as a central element of local agricultural systems. Mobility has always been built on alliances between pastoralists and farmers. Work on scenarios for the evolution of mobility in the long term has shown that the end of pastoralism will lead to land problems linked to the sedentarization of livestock farmers and competition between food crops and fodder.

Watch [the webinar recording on Zoom](#)

Find out more about Désertif'actions 2026 on [the initiative website](#)