



Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission

“The Impact of Cross-border Transhumance on Sustainable Peace and Development in West Africa and the Sahel”

Tuesday, 3 December 2019

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Conference Room 2

Concept Note

Context

The contribution of pastoralism and transhumance to some West African and Central African economies, including in the Sahel, is considerable. Pastoralism¹ is an ancient practice common in the Sahel and West Africa region that sustainably exploits a very restricted agro-climatic territory and allows pastoralists to cross the region following seasonal patterns for their herds to graze, often on the farming land of sedentary communities, and allows revenue generation through the sale of livestock. Longstanding agreements between pastoralists/herders and farmers have allowed for relatively peaceful transhumance, with strong local and traditional mediation capacities to manage traditional conflicts.

In recent years, these arrangements have come under increasing pressure due to a multitude of factors, including climate change-induced reduction of grazable land, water scarcity, food insecurity, socio-economic challenges, demographics, limitations of peripheral rule of law, and the influence of armed and violent extremist groups, further provoking cross-border population movements. Where traditional transhumance routes are disregarded by herders or blocked by farmers, encroachment onto farmlands often results, which can trigger conflict. Conflict among herders themselves over water scarcity is also common. This has led to rapidly escalating tensions and conflicts that have claimed thousands of lives amongst herders and farming communities, including women and children. Because herders are pre-dominantly Muslims while farmers are often Christians or traditionalists, the conflict is often used to fan inter-religious animosity by sectional interest, particularly during electoral periods, but also exploited and further fueled by violent extremist groups. Historic social exclusion and disenfranchisement of pastoral populations also make pastoralists/herders (mainly youth) vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and human rights violations. The presence of nomadic herders and their animals in protected areas (especially national parks) is also posing a threat to ecosystems and biodiversity.

Research by UN Women indicates that the destruction of property, loss of livestock and crops, loss of markets from the breakdown of social capital and security affect women farmers who contribute to 40 percent of agricultural production in the region. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that the disruption of traditional pastoralism has added to population displacement in the

¹ Pastoralists also rear livestock as an intrinsic part of their culture.

region, including refugees and internally displaced persons. These factors destroy the economic and social fabric of rural communities and compromise traditional governance and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Transhumance is regulated in West Africa by the Protocol on Transhumance (1998)² of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Conflicts between herders and farmers are of increasing concern to ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Some Member States of the region have highlighted transhumance-related challenges in their Voluntary National Reviews of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. During the ECOWAS and ECCAS Joint Summit on 30 July 2018 in Lomé, Heads of State and Government expressed serious concern with the “upsurge in and spread of violent conflict between herders and farmers” and “instructed the ministers responsible for agriculture, livestock and security of the two regions to hold regular consultations, with the participation of herder and farmer organisations, in order to identify measures for the prevention and peaceful management of these conflicts.”

ECOWAS has renewed efforts to address associated challenges around transhumance. Working with partners it has sought to ensure implementation of the 1998 ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance by Member States, as shown by the convening of the Regional High-Level Meeting for a Peaceful Cross Border Transhumance (October 2019) to enhance the collective governance of transhumance campaigns to reduce potentially destabilizing economic and social impact of persistent tensions. The African Union (AU) and regional bodies remain committed to addressing pastoral conflict, building on the AU’s Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa (2011) and the AU Strategy for the Sahel (2014) which encourages conflict management and the integration of nomadic communities and promotes regional dialogue to facilitate cross-border nomadic population movements.

United Nations Support

There have been several ECOSOC and Security Council discussions and resolutions on instability in the Sahel in recent years, including the adverse impact of climate change in the region (S/RES/2349)³. The proposed joint meeting builds on previous ECOSOC-PBC joint meetings, especially the 2018 gathering which recommended the continued engagement of the two entities in the Sahel region to help address climate change, promote sustainable development and support peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, in line with their respective mandates. The Security Council (S/PRST/2018/16)³ expressed its concern over increased tensions between pastoralists and farmers in the region and encouraged ECOWAS and its Member States, with the support of UNOWAS, to address these challenges in a coordinated and holistic manner. Also, the UN Executive Committee decision (November 2018) requested the UN system to strengthen its cross-pillar and integrated support to stem the ongoing violence between herders and farmers and to address the long-term drivers of conflicts, through a number of practical actions. Given that the Sahel region is a key UN priority for conflict prevention and sustaining peace, addressing the challenges arising from transhumance is a growing priority for the UN system. In addition, the World Bank is supporting a range priority related to transhumance including infrastructures for peace, dialogue forums, etc. in the region. UNOWAS chairs the UN Working Group on the Prevention and Resolution of Herder-Farmer Conflicts to strengthen UN system cooperation, contribute to unified messaging, and build bridges between local, national and regional responses.

Tackling this multi-dimensional issue impacting several Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 1 (poverty eradication), SDG 2 (hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 15 (life on land), SDG 16

² The Protocol recognizes the importance of cross-border pastoral mobility and aims to reduce problems, including farmer-herder conflict while also seeking more productive livestock industry

³ http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_prst_2018_16.pdf

(peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships), among others requires national and local, cross-border, regional, and holistic and integrated approaches to prevention and mitigation, across the nexus of economic and social development, security, governance, and human rights, coupled with coordinated implementation, multi-sectoral competencies and increased and scalable funding.

Objectives of the ECOSOC-PBC Joint Meeting

The joint meeting will allow for discussion of the interlinked transhumance-related challenges from a peace, security, development, and environmental perspectives with the objective to:

- *Increase international awareness of the complex challenges related to transhumance in countries and cross-border areas of West Africa and the Sahel, from a security, development peacebuilding and climate change perspective;*
- *Showcase successful practical approaches and actions to address transhumance-related challenges to provide lessons learned for ongoing work in the affected sub-regions of Africa⁴; with a focus on identifying gaps and challenges to implementation and impact;*
- *Identify further action-orientated, integrated and sustainable solutions to address these challenges; and make recommendations, coherent and coordinated response by the UN system, in coordination with partners, with the aim of addressing the root causes of conflict between farmers and pastoralists,*
- *Identify policy advice that could be useful for the Economic and Social Council with respect to related issues on its own agenda;*
- *Consider providing relevant recommendations for consideration by the UN Security Council ahead of the renewal of UNOWAS's mandate in December 2019.*

Format of the meeting

The meeting will be co-convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for a three-hour duration. An opening segment with welcoming remarks will be followed by keynote addresses and an interactive panel on the challenge of transhumance in West Africa and Sahel, with discussion among representatives of Member States, the United Nations system and civil society.

Expected Outcomes

The outcome of the meeting will be a joint summary by the ECOSOC President and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, with recommendations for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. This could include advice to the UN Security Council on the renewal of UNOWAS mandate.

⁴ In West and Central Africa, Sahel zone and Horn of Africa.

Questions to guide the discussion

- What are the key obstacles and opportunities for responding to transhumance-related challenges through an integrated development-security approach? What are the gaps in existing approaches? How can the UN link the different initiatives by a multitude of UN entities and across various affected regions in Africa into a coherent and effective framework?
- How can the UN ensure that transhumance related initiatives inter-link with existing strategic planning frameworks in the affected region (e.g. UNISS)?
- Where and how should the UN system and international partners show greater coherence, integration and coordination in addressing the challenges related to transhumance?
- How can international partners support implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance (1998) and national and sub-regional regulatory frameworks across the region? Is there greater potential for sharing lessons and best practices from among ECOWAS and Sahelian countries?
- What types of interventions can be implemented to enhance the livelihoods and resilience of farmers and pastoralists/herders affected by conflict, especially in areas of insurgency?
- What are the mechanisms in place to enhance the capacity of local communities, including women and youth, to prevent and resolve farmer-herder conflicts at local levels and to foster dialogue between community leaders to decrease the likelihood of armed actions between communities, including by bringing local authorities closer to the communities?
- What are the opportunities for greater collaboration with the private sector, international financial institutions or other partners in preventing, and mitigating the impacts of, changing transhumance patterns?
- How can the UN system support Member States in strengthening reliability of data on transhumance, and promote evidence-based peacebuilding efforts?
- How can we sustain international attention and mobilize support for the local, national, regional partners that are addressing/facing the development-security challenges of transhumance?
- What long-term efforts should we pursue in order to prevent violence between herders and farmers?

Annex A – Additional Background

Current Programmes relating to transhumance challenges

World Bank. The World Bank is implementing a US\$ 250 million regional pastoralism project focusing on improving access to essential productive assets, services, and markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in selected trans-border areas and along transhumance axes across six Sahel countries, and to strengthen country capacities to respond promptly and effectively to pastoral crises or emergencies. ⁵

UNDP-World Bank joint regional risk and resilience assessment. World Bank-Sahel Alliance Joint Regional Risk and Resilience Assessment (World Bank, AFD, GIZ, EU, Sweden, UNDP). This is a new study led by the World Bank, aimed better understanding the underlying risk factors in the G5 Sahel, including conflict risks (e.g. climate extremes, access to natural resources, local governance, economic conditions, etc) to inform the G5 Sahel, UN and partners in programming and investments related to conflict prevention, peace building, risk reduction and resilience building.

World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD): WFP and IFAD are working on projects that impact on transhumance routes and are at the interface of where tensions occur between farmers/agro-pastoralists and pastoralists – where food insecurity and malnutrition are also the highest. For example, IFAD and WFP jointly work in parts of Niger in rehabilitating degraded lands for pastures regeneration and fodder production that provides mutual benefits for these groups.

UNDP-DPPA-UNEP Climate Security Mechanism (CSM). The CSM was established in October 2018 (with support of Sweden, Germany and Norway) to strengthen UN capacity to address the linkages between climate change, peace and security. CSM is expected to support analysis, advocacy and awareness raising in the Sahel, among other field contexts. A detailed mapping and stocktaking, including a workshop in December 2019, will help identify and narrow down specific climate security risks, strategies, and actions for priority countries, which may include transhumance.

UNDP-ECOWAS-AU-UN Women: This project (with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) aims to strengthen capacities for disaster risk reduction and adaptation for resilience in the Sahel Region – fostering risk-informed solutions for sustainable development.

Plan de Sécurisation Intégrée des Régions du Centre (PSIRC) and Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF). MINUSMA and UNCT are working at providing integrated support to the Mali Government's efforts in central regions through the PSIRC, including preventing transhumance-related violence.

IOM is working closely with the national and regional herders' association (Réseau Billital Maroubé – RBM) to identify gaps in governance of transhumance mobility, and participated to the recent ECOWAS/RBM High-Level Roundtable on Peaceful Transhumance in Accra, where Sahelian and Coastal States collectively recognized the paucity of reliable data based on which to make policy decisions and the need to revise the 1999 ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol and its Supporting Regulation (2003). IOM is expected to initiate a counting exercise at the border between Coastal and Sahelian Countries in relation to the next Transhumance Campaign.

⁵ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P147674?lang=en>

Annex B: Peacebuilding Fund Support for Transhumance in West Africa and the Sahel Region

In the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, PBF has invested over US\$ 18 million over the past two years in 7 projects addressing farmers and herders' conflicts and transhumance (Liptako Gourma, Nigeria, Niger, Chad-Niger, Chad-CAR, Mauritania, Mali). These projects have been developed in close partnership with UNOWAS and UNOCA and are currently implemented by FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP. PBF's investments are in line with the "*Plan d'Investissement prioritaire*" (Investment Priority Plan) of the G5 Sahel – and its priority of resilient pastoralism and the implementation of the UN Strategy for the Sahel. The PBF's projects are operationalizing the analysis and recommendations of the ECOWAS/ECA study on pastoralism and security in West Africa. PBF's investments filled a critical gap by funding cross-border and integrated programmatic response to address the root causes of conflicts related to transhumance, impact of climate change and management of natural resources.

The focus of the projects combines:

- Support to local natural resources management committees bringing together all the stakeholders: breeders, landowners, tenant farmers as well as local businesses or teachers.
- Support to inter-community dialogue and dialogue efforts between countries on transhumance
- Rehabilitation of infrastructures (couloirs / water wells)
- Tracking and documenting movements of herders/transhumance to prevent conflicts
- Promote gender and youth inclusion in the conflict prevention and resolution of farmers/herders' conflicts (Niger, Mali)
- Revision / Dissemination of legal texts around "*code foncier*" (land code), inheritance laws, land ownership, border management.

PBF Examples

UNDP-Burkina-Mali-Niger: Promoting community safety and social cohesion in the

This project aims to promote community safety and social cohesion in the Liptako-Gourma region (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso), financed by PBF: US \$3 million.

The Project's objectives are to strengthen the capacity of local authorities and institutions to put in place mechanisms for wider and more inclusive participation of the community in local development, in particular vulnerable groups, including women and youth; strengthen the capacity of the state to ensure more equitable access to socio-economic resources and services; and support community safety and social cohesion through participatory and inclusive dialogue for the Sahel countries. The project supported trainings and awareness-raising activities for communities on the legal framework on transhumance, the construction of infrastructures such as water points, animal corridors and grazing areas both inside the country and on the borders have allowed better use of natural resources by communities. On the Niger side, the project supported the tracing of 9 transhumance corridors.

WFP/FAO-High Authority for Peacebuilding (HACP in Niger) Preventing inter-communal conflicts through the development of resilient pastoralism in the cross-border area of Diffa and Kanem (Niger/Chad). Actions comprises participatory and in-depth analysis of the determinants of conflict and factors of peace with a view to facilitate peaceful access to natural resources; Improving the participation of women and young people in conflicts prevention dialogue processes with the combined use of communication technologies; Strengthening access to relevant and conflict-sensitive economic and social opportunities. Financed by PBF, this project aims to reduce conflicts between communities, at the regional level (Diffa and Kanem), and cross-border conflicts related to transhumance and empower young people and women,

especially those who feel marginalized, undertake income-generating activities and are increasingly involved in local decision-making processes.

FAO-UNWOMEN: Promoting social cohesion between farmers and herders in the Dosso and Maradi regions through a gender and diversity approach (financed by PBF): the project objective twofold: (i) Reduce conflicts related to the management of natural resources and promote social cohesion in the two regions through the creation of “Dimitra Clubs” (community dialogue platforms) the creation and training of women mediators and the creation of land commissions to address conflicts between herders and farmers. (ii) Provide technical assistance to the Nigerien Permanent Secretariat of the Rural Code to review and ensure that the land management legal framework and regulations are gender sensitive.

IOM and FAO cross-border project on transhumance (Oct 2018 – Mar 2020, \$3m) The project aims to work across the Sahel and Central African region to reinforce capacity of national herders’ associations to better anticipate and quantify transhumance movements, and to work closely with local authorities, community leaders and farming communities, to anticipate areas where tensions could arise and jointly identify solutions and prevent conflict from occurring, with PBF support in partnership with FAO in Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic but also potentially at the borders with Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

UNOCA is supporting ECCAS in the development of a regulatory framework on pastoralism and transhumance for the sub-region, in line with a recommendation by the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa (COPAX).

IOM has started a new regional initiative aimed at supporting the regional network RBM (*Réseau Billital Maroobé*) to enhance its capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate data pertaining to pastoralist movements in West and Central Africa.

FAO plans a project to enable Sahel countries to have reliable information and early warning systems to mitigate security and environmental risks for agro-pastoralists in the Sahel.