

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE PASTORAL BUCOLIC SPLENDOUR, ITS IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A PRESENTATION AT THE

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON MIGRATION
AND DESERTIFICATION**

HELD AT

**THE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE -
FAISALABAD**

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January 2011

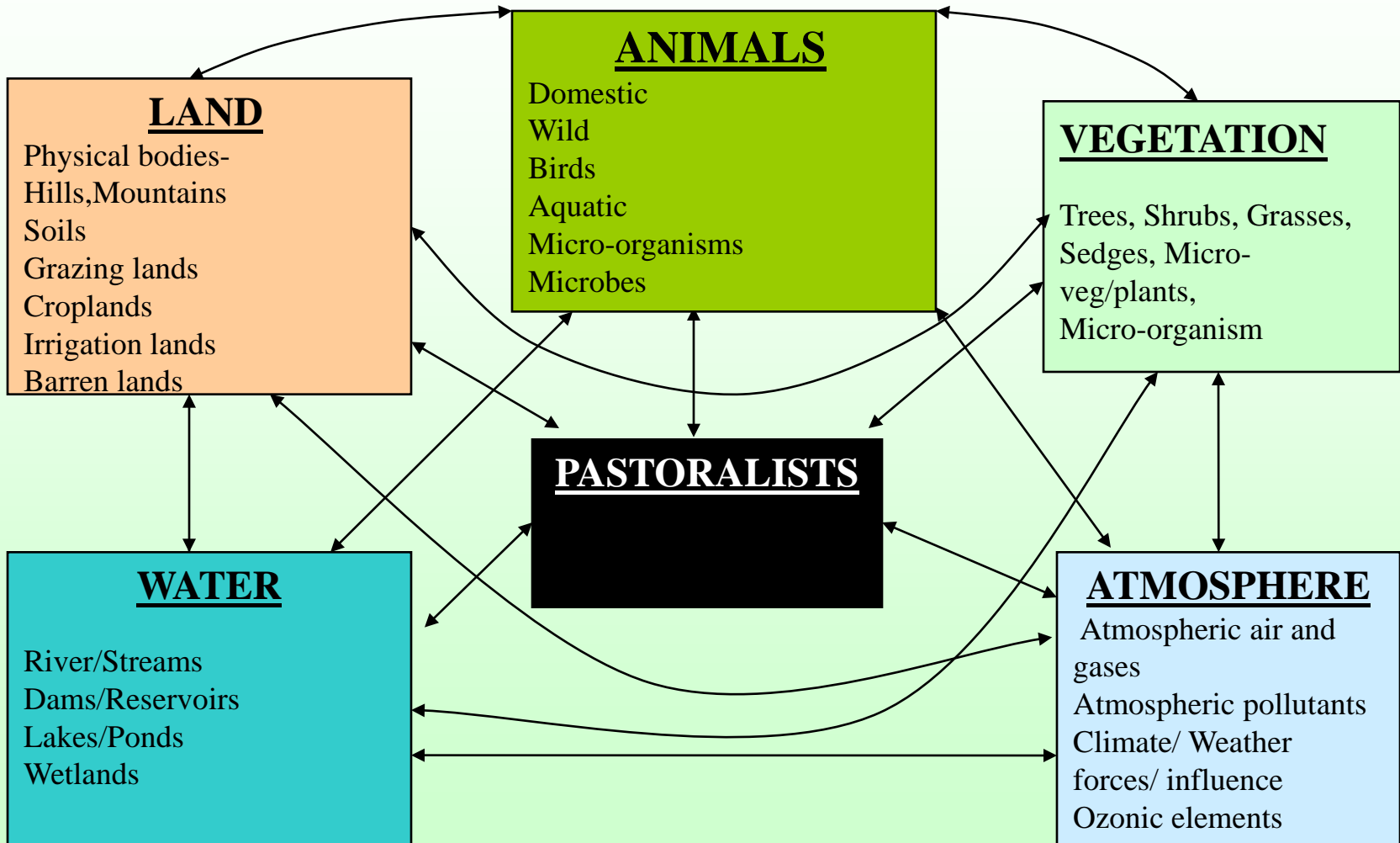
ROAD MAP

- The herders' bucolic splendour
- The pastoral ecosystem
- Pastoral support mechanisms
- The disintegrative external forces
- Governments' and people's reactions and responses
- The consequent risks
- Constraints to ASALs and pastoralists
- Mitigation measures .

The herders' bucolic splendour

The herders' bucolic splendour of the old traditional pastoral eco-systems were characterised by harmonious and adaptable interactions between the various components of the ecosystems.

The pastoral ecosystem is complex, represented by intricate relationships and interactions among the sub-components, but manipulated by the humans (the pastoralists)



PASTORAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

During the pre-colonial era, a number of support mechanisms were applied by the herders to ensure sustainable livelihoods and their wellbeing, and the bucolic splendour.

These included:

(1) controlled access to communal grazing and resource use, that appreciated and respected territorial grazing and resource rights for each ethnic group; (2) strategic livestock and people mobility, to accomplish numerous ecological and socioeconomic purposes;

support mechanisms for sustainable livelihoods and their wellbeing.....*cont*

(3) effective indigenous knowledge systems (including traditional land and resources management, ethno-sciences, and others); (4) effective social institutions and organizations (norms; regulations; mode of sharing - "stock friends"; etc; and an effective form of leadership to enforce rules); (5) psychological framework and preparedness (to deal with and accept seasonal livestock variations in form of crashes and booms, through maximization of the stock.

- The bucolic splendour of the old traditional pastoral ecosystems is now an elusive case.
- But during the pre-colonial era, the Kenyan pastoralists' lifestyles and livelihoods were ecologically adapted to the harsh pastoral environment, and were culturally and socio-politically tailored to maintain a harmonious and sustainable mode of life, making them happy and contented, with all their needs provided for.

THE DISINTEGRATIVE EXTERNAL FORCES

The disruptive & disintegrative successive governments' interventions were characterized by:

- Curtailed and/or restricted mobility (which increased pastoral carrying capacities, and so overgrazing, environmental degradation, loss of livestock condition and mortalities, poverty, disease epidemics, human mortalities, etc)
- A shift to open access to communal grazing (creating competition; the "tragedy of the commons" syndrome; environmental degradation; poor stock; poverty; etc)

THE DISINTEGRATIVE EXTERNAL FORCES...*cont*

- Loss of ethnic territorial land and resources rights (resulting to trespass, animosity, conflicts & violence)
- Disintegration of indigenous technical and social systems (denying the use of effective traditional innovations; bringing in unpopular laws and “corrupt chiefs”; etc)
- Introduction of erroneous and non-adaptive interventions and technologies (such as “top-bottom” approaches to development); calendar grazing systems; wrongly located water sources; veterinary drug abuse; etc)

REACTIONS AND RESPONSES

of the Government:

- Blame the pastoralists for the problems (brand them ignorant and obstinate) and advanced some myths, debates and theories about the people and their systems
- Consider pastoral lands as unproductive, and allocate them to other land uses (such as wildlife reserves, dryland farming; etc)
- Marginalize and/or neglect pastoral lands and people
- Provide minimal social services

REACTIONS AND RESPONSES

of the Pastoralists:

- Settle down to urban and agro-pastoral life
- Succumb to poverty, and depend on famine relief
- Migrate to urban centres for casual employment (watchmen, body guards, herders, shamba boys, etc)
- Accept the minimal social services provided, and sustain the poverty vicious circle

THE CONSEQUENT RISKS IN PASTORAL SETTING

With the weakening of the pastoralists as a result of the aftermath, they became vulnerable to risks, including:

- effects of droughts and climatic variations
- land use competition
- violent conflicts
- poverty and food insecurity
- livestock and human disease epidemics
- Loss of land through degradation and desertification

RESULTANT CONSTRAINTS TO PASTORALISM

- **Environmental constraints:** These results from low, erratic and unevenly distributed rainfall, frequent droughts, environmental degradation, poor soils, pests and diseases.
- **Technology constraints:** Previous research work has mainly concentrated on wetter areas in Kenya and migrants from these areas often bring with them unsuitable technology to exploit arid lands.

RESULTANT CONSTRAINTS TO PASTORALISM.....*cont.*

- Infrastructural constraints: ASALs have some of the poorly developed public infrastructures thereby hindering delivery of inputs and outputs, as well as social services to the areas.**
- Resource constraints: This is evidenced by low land potential using the present technology as well as acute water shortages.**

RESULTANT CONSTRAINTS TO PASTORALISM.....*cont.*

- Human resource constraints: Human resource is least developed in ASALs making most people to be less prepared to cope with changes and innovations. Besides, the rapid growing population exerts a lot of pressure on dryland biodiversity.
- Economic constraints: A significant portion of dryland inhabitants is impoverished and simply cannot think of tomorrow. Poverty is a major cause and consequence of environmental degradation.

RESULTANT CONSTRAINTS TO PASTORALISM.....*cont.*

- Management constraints: There prevails a wide spectrum of division of responsibilities for natural resources management among several different agencies. This “sectoral approach” breeds conflicts of interest and has far reaching consequences to natural resources development.**
- Policy and legislation constraints: Until recently, there has been lack of a consolidated environmental policy and legislation to provide for the creation of an independent authority to coordinate activities aimed at conserving and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.**

MITIGATION MEASURES

First, there is need to restore some aspects of the disrupted well adapted traditional pastoral ecosystems that protected biodiversity and resources (through mobility, effective social and leadership institutions, controlled access to land and resource tenure, etc)

Second, there is need to rectify the misguided and erroneous approach to dryland development, resulting from the emphasis placed on raising economic indices, such as the GDP and GNP, and overlooking critical ecological, demographic and socio-cultural factors, leading to serious environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

MITIGATION MEASURES.....cont.

Third, there exists a knowledge gap among key policy players with respect to the reality of Drylands and the rationale of the livelihood and land use systems of the populations in these lands.

Fourth, the policy and legal environment since independence has not been conducive to sustainable development of the drylands, nor the conservation of biodiversity therein. A related issue is that there has been a power imbalance against the inhabitants of arid lands within the policy-making framework.

**Thanks.....and please
put pastoralists' interests and
wellbeing at heart**

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