



**Drylands Learning
and Capacity
Building Initiative**

**THE 4TH PASTORALIST LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (PLS) HELD AT WAJIR
GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL IN WAJIR TOWN FROM 8TH TO 10TH
DECEMBER 2024**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **4th Pastoral Livelihoods Summit (PLS) 2024**, held in **Wajir from December 8-10, 2024**, brought together leaders from 15 pastoralist counties, government officials, and development partners to address policy and financial challenges hindering pastoralist development.

The summit emphasized the need for **localized peacebuilding**, community-driven security frameworks, and enhanced border security to tackle intercommunal conflicts and arms trafficking. Key resolutions included increasing **county budget allocations for livestock development**, operationalizing the **Livestock Marketing Board**, and **establishing a Camel Center of Excellence** to boost pastoral economies. The summit also called for **fast-tracking community land registration**, expanding **conservation efforts**, and investing in **climate resilience programs** to protect pastoralist livelihoods.

Additionally, delegates urged the government to **abolish vetting barriers for national identification**, enhance **digital connectivity**, and promote **technology-driven economic empowerment** for youth and women.

In the education and health sectors, the summit prioritized **mobile schools for nomadic children**, improved maternal healthcare, and **climate-sensitive disease surveillance systems**. Infrastructure discussions focused on **accelerating LAPSSET road projects**, **expanding solar energy access**, and **constructing mega-dams** for water security.

To strengthen governance, stakeholders recommended **transferring the State Department of ASAL to the Office of the President** for better coordination, resource mobilization, and oversight.

The summit reaffirmed a collective commitment to **sustainable pastoralist development**, urging the government to prioritize **equitable resource allocation**, **institutional reforms**, and **climate adaptation strategies** to unlock the full potential of Kenya's pastoralist regions.

ACRONYMES

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
CRA	Commission on Revenue Allocation
EAC	East African Community
EDE	Ending Drought Emergencies
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGRTC	Inter-Governmental Relations Technical Committee
KES	Kenyan Shillings
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
PEC	Pastoralists Elders Council
PLS	Pastoral Livelihoods Summit
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

The Pastoral Livelihoods Summit (PLS) 2024 brought together key stakeholders, including government representatives, policymakers, development partners, and grassroots organizations, to deliberate on the critical challenges and opportunities in the pastoralist regions of Kenya. The discussions focused on investment in quality livestock management, peace and security, economic development, infrastructure, land tenure, climate change, gender inclusivity, human capital development, and technology. This report synthesizes key resolutions from plenary and breakout sessions.

The summit emphasized the urgent need to develop a framework that supports investments in quality livestock management, trade facilitation, security, infrastructure, and land reforms.

A coordination and reporting framework was proposed at all levels, ensuring transparency and accountability, particularly in resource allocation, with clear mechanisms for development partner engagement. Participants called for legislative measures to guarantee adequate budgetary allocation to the livestock sector, recognizing its significant contribution to Kenya's GDP. This includes leveraging funds such as the Equalization Fund and equitable revenue-sharing models.

The Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) Plans were highlighted as requiring alignment with the Kenya Vision 2030 Fourth Medium-Term Plan (2022-2027), which serves as the primary development blueprint. Stakeholders stressed the importance of technology and evidence-based research in fostering anticipatory interventions for mitigating drought impacts.

The Inter-Governmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC), in collaboration with both levels of government, was urged to fast-track the unbundling of devolved functions under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution to ensure adequate resources are allocated accordingly. Additionally, the National Treasury was called upon to establish sustainable funding mechanisms to finance pastoralist development projects effectively. The Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) was encouraged to develop the Third Marginalization Policy, unlocking the Equalization Fund for projects specifically targeting pastoralist communities.

2. Thematic Areas

Thematic areas discussed were as follows:

2.1. Peace and Security – Addressing Community Conflict in Pastoralist Areas

Discussions in this session focused on inter-ethnic violence, political marginalization, economic struggles, and border security concerns. Key conflict drivers include political exclusion, proliferation of small arms, and youth radicalization, all of which perpetuate insecurity. Border insecurity, particularly with neighboring countries, was identified as a critical issue affecting trade, security, and cooperation.

The persistent insecurity in pastoralist regions necessitates comprehensive, community-driven security coordination that fosters collaboration between government agencies, local leaders, and communities. One of the primary challenges has been the trust deficit between security forces and local populations, which undermines intelligence gathering and early conflict detection. Strengthening security coordination requires active community

engagement in policing efforts, establishing early warning systems, and creating conflict resolution committees at the grassroots level. This approach ensures that security interventions are not just imposed from the top but are tailored to the realities of pastoralist communities. Additionally, regular joint security forums involving local leaders, law enforcement, and community representatives should be institutionalized to build trust, encourage cooperation, and facilitate timely responses to emerging threats.

Another pressing concern is the proliferation of illicit arms, which fuels violence and lawlessness. Many of these weapons enter Kenya through porous borders with neighboring countries, making it critical to collaborate with regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC). By enhancing border surveillance, increasing patrols, and improving intelligence-sharing mechanisms, authorities can disrupt the supply chains that sustain armed groups. Strengthening disarmament programs must also be a priority, ensuring that those who surrender weapons are provided with alternative livelihoods to prevent them from rearming. A regional arms control strategy, backed by legal frameworks and diplomatic cooperation, should be developed to target arms traffickers and cross-border smuggling networks while promoting sustained disarmament efforts.

Youth in pastoralist communities remain particularly vulnerable to radicalization, recruitment into armed groups, and cycles of violence due to limited access to education and economic opportunities. Addressing this requires investment in youth empowerment programs, including education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support. Establishing technical and vocational training centers tailored to the unique needs of pastoralist communities can equip young people with practical skills in agribusiness, renewable energy, construction, and digital technology. Additionally, creating business incubation hubs and facilitating access to micro-financing can help young entrepreneurs establish sustainable enterprises, reducing their susceptibility to recruitment into conflict groups. Cultural and sports-based peace initiatives should also be leveraged to provide positive outlets for youth engagement and foster inter-community cohesion.

Infrastructure development plays a pivotal role in fostering security and economic stability. Many pastoralist areas suffer from poor road networks, lack of market access, and limited water infrastructure, which exacerbates resource competition and conflict. Investing in all-weather roads can improve mobility for security forces, facilitate trade, and enhance the economic viability of remote areas. Strengthening livestock markets and developing value-chain linkages will help pastoralist communities integrate into the national and regional economy, reducing their dependence on informal trade networks that sometimes fuel insecurity. Moreover, investing in water infrastructure, such as boreholes and water harvesting systems, will mitigate conflicts over scarce water resources, which have been a major trigger for inter-communal clashes. These interventions should be designed with climate resilience in mind, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Finally, political inclusivity is fundamental to fostering peace and reducing inter-ethnic tensions. Historically, pastoralist communities have been marginalized in governance structures, leading to political alienation and a sense of disenfranchisement. Ensuring fair representation of all communities in decision-making processes—both at the county and national levels—will be crucial in addressing grievances and promoting a sense of ownership in governance. County governments should establish inclusive policy platforms where traditional leaders, women, youth, and minority groups can participate in governance

discussions. Moreover, election-related violence must be addressed by enforcing electoral integrity, promoting civic education, and encouraging political dialogue between competing groups. Long-term peacebuilding efforts must include constitutional reforms that guarantee equal political representation, ensuring that marginalized communities have a voice in policymaking.

In conclusion, a multi-faceted approach is required to effectively address the security challenges in pastoralist regions. Strengthening community-driven security initiatives, curbing the illicit arms trade, empowering youth through education and employment, investing in infrastructure, and promoting political inclusivity will collectively create a foundation for sustainable peace and development. Without these strategic interventions, cycles of conflict will continue to undermine the stability and prosperity of pastoralist communities.

It was resolved that localizing peacebuilding efforts would be the most sustainable approach, including engaging elders, women, and youth in reconciliation efforts. Additionally, governments at all levels were urged to allocate resources for peacebuilding and incorporate conflict-sensitive planning into development projects.

2.2. Pastoralism and Livestock Sector Development

Despite the presence of policies supporting pastoralism, implementation gaps remain a significant challenge.

The livestock sector in pastoralist regions presents significant economic potential, yet it remains largely underdeveloped due to limited investment in critical areas. Strengthening this sector requires targeted funding and policy interventions to enhance veterinary services, market infrastructure, disease control, trade, and value chain development. These interventions will not only improve livelihoods for pastoralist communities but also boost national economic growth by leveraging regional and international trade opportunities.

A key area for investment is the improvement of veterinary services, market infrastructure, and disease control programs. Pastoralist communities heavily rely on livestock as their primary source of income, food, and cultural identity, making animal health a crucial factor in economic stability. However, frequent outbreaks of livestock diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, Rift Valley fever, and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, significantly impact productivity. Strengthening veterinary extension services, increasing the availability of vaccines and medicines, and establishing mobile veterinary clinics in remote areas will help mitigate disease outbreaks. Additionally, investing in modern livestock markets with adequate holding pens, auction yards, and weighing stations will ensure that pastoralists can sell their animals at fair prices in well-regulated environments.

Enhancing trade and market linkages is another critical intervention that will unlock the sector's potential. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets provide vast opportunities for Kenyan livestock and livestock products. However, for pastoralists to fully benefit, there must be structured mechanisms to facilitate cross-border trade. Investments in export standard compliance, certification programs, and quality assurance systems will ensure that Kenyan livestock meets international requirements. Additionally, establishing direct trade partnerships with high-

demand markets such as the Middle East will reduce reliance on intermediaries, thereby increasing pastoralists' profit margins.

To further streamline trade, the establishment of a Livestock Marketing Board is essential. Currently, pastoralist livestock markets remain highly informal and unpredictable, with significant price fluctuations dictated by intermediaries. A centralized marketing board would help regulate pricing, quality standards, and market access, ensuring that pastoralists receive fair prices for their animals and livestock products. The board would also be instrumental in coordinating export deals, negotiating trade agreements, and setting up standardized meat grading and certification processes.

Another critical step is operationalizing pastoralist livestock cooperatives under the Ministry of Cooperatives. A well-organized cooperative system can help aggregate livestock products, facilitate bulk sales, and create value addition opportunities. The success of tea, coffee, and dairy cooperatives in Kenya provides a replicable model for the livestock sector. Through structured cooperatives, pastoralists can negotiate better prices, access credit facilities, and invest in shared infrastructure such as feedlots and cold storage facilities. This will enhance collective bargaining power and promote the sustainability of the sector.

Investment in processing facilities for hides, skins, and other livestock products will unlock additional revenue streams and create employment opportunities in value addition industries. Kenya currently exports most of its hides and skins in raw form, missing out on the economic benefits of leather processing. Establishing tanneries and leather production units in pastoralist regions will not only increase the value of livestock products but also create jobs and stimulate local manufacturing industries. Similarly, setting up meat processing plants will allow for the production of high-quality meat products for both local and international markets, reducing post-slaughter losses and increasing export potential.

Protecting grazing lands through controlled settlement policies is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability of the pastoralist economy. Uncontrolled land encroachment, urban expansion, and land degradation are shrinking grazing lands, increasing conflicts over resources. Governments must develop clear land-use policies that designate specific areas for grazing, settlement, and conservation. Additionally, investments in rangeland rehabilitation programs, water access points, and pasture reseeding initiatives will support sustainable grazing practices. Encouraging community-led land management systems can also play a crucial role in preserving grazing lands while reducing land-based conflicts.

Unlocking the full potential of the livestock sector requires a comprehensive approach that integrates animal health management, market development, trade facilitation, value addition, and land protection strategies. By implementing these interventions, Kenya can transform its pastoralist regions into thriving economic hubs, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for pastoralist communities while enhancing the country's livestock export.

The presidency was called upon to relocate the State Department of ASAL to the Office of the President to enhance coordination, improve resource mobilization, and strengthen oversight.

2.3. Securing Community Land Rights, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change Mitigation

The slow progress in community land registration was a major concern, with only 59 communities (50 group ranches and 9 trust lands) successfully registered under the Community Land Act in the past seven years. Challenges include boundary disputes, insecurity, court cases, and limited resources. It was recommended that the government allocate dedicated funding for expediting land registration.

Additionally, clarity was needed on carbon credit ownership, ensuring that benefits are directed to local landowners rather than brokers. Conservation initiatives should extend beyond tourism, incorporating wildlife trade and community-based conservation models. The Wildlife Act (2013) should be amended to allow counties in Northern Kenya to establish their own conservancies.

Environmental degradation remains a significant challenge in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya, threatening the livelihoods of pastoralist communities and exacerbating climate change impacts. To address these challenges, a set of sustainable environmental protection strategies has been emphasized, focusing on afforestation, sustainable fuelwood extraction, and mitigating deforestation in refugee-affected areas. These measures aim to restore degraded ecosystems, reduce reliance on unsustainable energy sources, and enhance climate resilience in ASAL regions.

One of the key strategies is the fast-tracking of the 15-billion-tree afforestation project, which prioritizes the planting of drought-resistant tree species in ASAL regions. Given the harsh climatic conditions in these areas, traditional afforestation methods often fail due to low rainfall, poor soil fertility, and overgrazing. Therefore, a targeted approach that incorporates native, drought-tolerant species such as *Acacia tortilis*, Baobab, and Neem trees is essential. These trees not only increase vegetation cover and reduce soil erosion but also provide additional benefits such as fodder for livestock, firewood, and medicinal resources. To ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the government, local communities, and conservation organizations must coordinate reforestation efforts, establish community tree nurseries, and implement water harvesting techniques to support seedling survival. Additionally, integrating afforestation programs with livelihood-enhancing activities—such as bee-keeping and gum Arabic production—will incentivize local participation and foster a sense of ownership over the restoration efforts.

Another critical component of environmental protection is developing sustainable fuelwood extraction models and promoting bio-pesticides to reduce environmental degradation caused by deforestation and chemical pollution. Many ASAL communities heavily depend on charcoal production and firewood as their primary energy sources, leading to uncontrolled logging and land degradation. To counteract this, alternative energy solutions such as solar cookstoves, energy-efficient charcoal kilns, and biogas technology should be promoted to reduce the demand for wood fuel. Additionally, sustainable fuelwood harvesting techniques, including regulated cutting cycles, tree planting to replace harvested trees, and rotational woodlot farming, should be encouraged. These measures will ensure that wood fuel remains available for local use without depleting forest resources.

The use of bio-pesticides is another important step in reducing environmental pollution and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Many ASAL farmers and pastoralist communities rely on chemical pesticides to control pests, which often results in soil contamination, water pollution, and harm to beneficial insect populations. By promoting bio-pesticides—derived from natural plant extracts, beneficial microorganisms, and organic

compounds—communities can effectively manage pests while maintaining soil health and biodiversity. Government and research institutions should invest in training programs and awareness campaigns to educate communities on the benefits and application of bio-pesticides, ensuring a gradual shift toward eco-friendly pest control methods.

Mitigating deforestation in refugee-affected areas is a pressing concern, particularly in Northern Kenya, where large refugee settlements such as Dadaab and Kakuma have led to extensive environmental degradation. The high concentration of refugees in these areas has intensified deforestation due to the demand for firewood, timber for shelter construction, and agricultural expansion. To address this, there is a need to promote alternative energy sources, such as solar power, improved cookstoves, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), to reduce reliance on firewood. Programs that integrate refugees into sustainable land restoration activities, such as reforestation projects, agroforestry, and tree-planting initiatives, should be expanded to ensure active community participation in environmental conservation.

Additionally, developing green zones within and around refugee settlements, supported by both local governments and humanitarian organizations, will help restore degraded areas and improve climate resilience. Encouraging the adoption of permaculture and sustainable agriculture techniques can also help refugees grow food while preserving natural resources, reducing the pressure on fragile ecosystems.

The successful implementation of these environmental protection strategies—large-scale afforestation, sustainable fuelwood extraction, bio-pesticide adoption, and mitigating deforestation in refugee-affected areas—will ensure long-term ecological sustainability and resilience in ASAL regions. These measures will not only curb environmental degradation but also enhance community livelihoods, strengthen climate adaptation, and contribute to Kenya's overall green economy transformation. By prioritizing community-driven conservation initiatives, policy support, and investment in alternative energy sources, ASAL regions can achieve sustainable development while preserving their natural resources for future generations.

2.4. Gender, Youth, and Emerging Social Issues – Role of Technology

Pastoralist communities, particularly women and youth, face systemic challenges that hinder their access to education, economic opportunities, and legal documentation. To address these issues, a set of strategic actions has been proposed, focusing on nomadic education for girls, technology-driven economic empowerment, digital inclusion, and reforms in national registration processes. These initiatives aim to bridge inequality gaps, improve livelihoods, and ensure social inclusion for marginalized groups in ASAL regions.

One of the most pressing concerns is the high dropout rate among girls in nomadic communities, largely driven by early marriages, cultural barriers, household responsibilities, and inadequate educational infrastructure. To combat this, targeted investment in nomadic education for girls is essential. Traditional schooling models are often ineffective in these regions due to the seasonal migration of pastoralist families, requiring innovative solutions such as mobile schools, community learning centers, and digital learning platforms.

Government and non-governmental organizations should establish mobile classrooms equipped with solar-powered technology to provide consistent education access, even in remote locations. Additionally, offering incentives such as scholarships, conditional cash

transfers, and school feeding programs can encourage families to keep girls in school. Strengthening sensitization programs that engage community elders and religious leaders will also help shift attitudes toward girls' education, ensuring greater community support for these initiatives.

In addition to education, economic empowerment for women and youth is a critical intervention for fostering self-reliance and reducing poverty levels in pastoralist communities. By leveraging technology-based skills training, women and young people can access new economic opportunities beyond traditional livestock-based livelihoods. Programs that introduce skills in digital marketing, e-commerce, financial technology, and mobile banking will enable them to participate in the digital economy. Establishing women-led cooperatives and business incubators can also facilitate market access and financial inclusion. Special attention should be given to training in climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy technologies, and artisanal crafts, which align with the unique environmental and socio-economic context of ASAL communities. Expanding access to microfinance, savings groups, and mobile credit services will further empower women and youth to start and scale their enterprises.

Another major area of intervention is leveraging digital technology for education, security, and market access. Pastoralist communities have historically been excluded from the benefits of digital connectivity, yet technology has the potential to revolutionize service delivery in these areas. Expanding internet infrastructure and mobile network coverage will enhance access to online learning resources, telemedicine services, and digital banking platforms. In the education sector, interactive digital content, virtual classrooms, and mobile learning applications should be integrated into nomadic education programs. Security agencies can also use digital surveillance tools, satellite mapping, and community reporting applications to enhance peacebuilding efforts in conflict-prone pastoralist areas. For economic development, digital marketplaces and blockchain-powered livestock trading platforms can improve transparency, reduce exploitation by middlemen, and connect pastoralists directly to regional and international buyers.

Addressing the exclusion of pastoralist communities in national registration is a crucial step toward ensuring legal recognition and access to government services. Many pastoralist communities face bureaucratic barriers and discriminatory vetting procedures when trying to obtain birth certificates, national identification cards, and passports. This exclusion significantly limits their ability to vote, own property, access financial services, and receive social benefits. To resolve this, the national registration process should be streamlined by removing unnecessary layers of vetting, decentralizing registration services, and using biometric technology for identity verification. Mobile registration units should be deployed to remote areas, ensuring equitable access to documentation services. Additionally, public awareness campaigns should educate communities on their rights and the importance of legal documentation.

The proposed actions—investing in nomadic education for girls, expanding technology-driven economic opportunities, leveraging digital technology for essential services, and reforming national registration processes—will collectively empower marginalized groups in pastoralist areas. By implementing these strategies, policymakers and development partners can foster inclusive development, bridge inequalities, and create sustainable opportunities for women, youth, and underserved communities in ASAL regions

2.5. Human Capital and Basic Services – Education, Health, and Water

Pastoralist communities face significant **barriers to accessing education** due to their nomadic lifestyle, inadequate infrastructure, cultural practices, and economic challenges. The traditional education system, which is built around stationary, classroom-based learning, does not cater to the unique needs of mobile populations. To bridge this gap, several adaptive and inclusive strategies must be implemented, including developing mobile schools, integrating madrassas and traditional learning into formal education, and expanding vocational training programs for youth. These solutions will ensure equitable access to education, improve literacy levels, and enhance economic opportunities for the next generation in ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) regions.

One of the most effective strategies to address the educational needs of nomadic communities is the development of mobile schools that align with their seasonal migration patterns. Nomadic families frequently move in search of pasture and water, making it difficult for children to attend conventional schools. To accommodate this lifestyle, mobile schools equipped with portable classrooms, solar-powered learning devices, and digital content can be introduced. Countries such as Iran and Mongolia have successfully implemented mobile schooling models, and Kenya can learn from these experiences. These schools can function using flexible curricula, allowing students to attend lessons at different locations throughout the year. Additionally, the use of technology-enhanced learning tools, such as tablets with pre-loaded lessons and satellite internet connectivity, will enable children to continue their education remotely. Governments should partner with NGOs and international agencies to fund and scale up these initiatives, ensuring that education reaches all children, regardless of their mobility.

Another key intervention is the integration of madrassas and traditional learning systems into the formal education framework. In pastoralist communities, religious institutions such as madrassas play a significant role in education, often serving as the primary centers of learning for many children. However, these institutions mostly focus on religious studies, leaving students with limited exposure to core subjects such as mathematics, science, and literacy skills. To ensure a holistic education, governments should harmonize the curriculum by incorporating secular subjects into madrassa education, allowing students to gain both religious and academic knowledge. Additionally, teacher training programs should be introduced to equip madrassa instructors with modern teaching methodologies and subject diversification skills. Recognizing traditional education systems and integrating them into formal learning structures will help reduce resistance to Western-style schooling and increase enrollment rates among pastoralist children.

Furthermore, expanding vocational training programs is essential to equip youth with practical skills that align with the economic realities of pastoralist communities. Many young people in ASAL regions face high unemployment rates due to limited access to technical and vocational education. Investing in skills development programs tailored to local industries—such as livestock management, leather processing, beekeeping, agribusiness, and digital technology—can help create employment opportunities and improve livelihoods. Establishing vocational training centers in pastoralist regions and integrating apprenticeship programs with local businesses will ensure that youth acquire relevant, marketable skills. Moreover, introducing mobile training units that move with nomadic groups can provide hands-on learning experiences without disrupting their lifestyle. Additionally, access to

microfinance, business incubation programs, and mentorship initiatives will empower youth to start their own enterprises and contribute to community development.

The education crisis in pastoralist regions requires innovative, flexible, and culturally sensitive solutions. By developing mobile schools, integrating traditional and religious learning systems, and expanding vocational training programs, governments and development partners can significantly improve education access and quality in ASAL areas. These strategies will ensure that no child is left behind, empowering future generations with the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable economic growth and community resilience.

In the health sector, maternal and infant mortality rates remain alarmingly high, with Mandera recording 3,795 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The healthcare challenges faced by pastoralist and ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) communities are exacerbated by limited infrastructure, geographic isolation, and the growing impact of climate change on disease patterns. To address these issues, participants called for targeted investments in maternal-child health facilities and the development of climate-sensitive disease surveillance systems. These interventions are crucial in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, improving healthcare access, and ensuring timely responses to emerging health threats.

A primary concern raised was the inadequate healthcare infrastructure, particularly the lack of maternal and child health facilities in remote pastoralist regions. Women and children in ASAL areas face high maternal and neonatal mortality rates due to long distances to health centers, poor road networks, and understaffed medical facilities. Many women are forced to deliver at home without skilled birth attendants, increasing the risk of complications such as postpartum hemorrhage, sepsis, and obstructed labor. Additionally, the limited availability of prenatal and postnatal care contributes to high rates of infant mortality and preventable maternal deaths.

To improve maternal and child health services, the government and development partners must expand healthcare infrastructure by constructing and upgrading maternity wards, neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), and rural health clinics. These facilities should be equipped with essential medical supplies, trained personnel, and emergency response mechanisms to handle high-risk deliveries and newborn care. Furthermore, mobile maternity units can be deployed to provide on-site prenatal checkups, vaccinations, and basic healthcare to nomadic communities. Investments should also be made in telemedicine and digital health solutions, enabling healthcare providers to remotely monitor high-risk pregnancies and offer consultations where in-person visits are not feasible.

Beyond infrastructure development, climate-sensitive disease surveillance is critical in addressing emerging health threats linked to environmental changes. Pastoralist regions are increasingly vulnerable to climate-related diseases such as malaria, Rift Valley Fever, cholera, and respiratory infections. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and prolonged droughts create ideal conditions for disease vectors such as mosquitoes and waterborne pathogens. Additionally, climate-induced livestock disease outbreaks often have direct consequences for human health, given the close interaction between humans and animals in these communities.

To mitigate these risks, it is necessary to establish early warning systems that integrate climate and health data, allowing for predictive modeling and rapid response to outbreaks. Investments should focus on strengthening health surveillance networks, including the deployment of climate-resilient diagnostic laboratories, real-time disease tracking tools, and community-based reporting mechanisms. Collaborations between meteorological departments, health ministries, and research institutions can enhance data sharing and forecasting, ensuring proactive rather than reactive disease control measures.

Additionally, public health education and community engagement are essential in building resilience against climate-related diseases. Local health workers should be trained in climate-adaptive health practices, such as vector control strategies, climate-sensitive sanitation techniques, and nutrition programs to combat malnutrition linked to drought-induced food shortages. Ensuring access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities will further reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases, particularly among children.

Enhancing healthcare infrastructure for maternal-child health and establishing climate-sensitive disease surveillance systems are crucial steps in safeguarding the well-being of pastoralist communities. These interventions will not only reduce mortality rates and improve access to essential health services but also strengthen the region's capacity to anticipate and respond to climate-related health threats. By prioritizing health equity in ASAL regions, policymakers can ensure that even the most vulnerable populations have access to quality healthcare, regardless of their geographic or climatic challenges

Water scarcity continues to affect education and health outcomes. Access to clean and reliable water remains one of the most pressing challenges in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions, where communities experience chronic water shortages, prolonged droughts, and infrastructure deficits. Limited access to water has significant consequences for human health, livestock productivity, and agricultural sustainability, making it imperative to implement long-term solutions that enhance water security and climate resilience. Participants in various discussions proposed strategic investments in boreholes, water pipeline networks, and climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate the impact of droughts and floods, ensuring sustainable water supply systems for communities in pastoralist and ASAL regions.

One of the most immediate and impactful interventions is the investment in boreholes and water pipeline networks to increase water access for domestic, agricultural, and livestock use. Boreholes provide a stable groundwater source, reducing dependence on seasonal rainfall and surface water sources that often dry up during droughts. However, due to high costs of drilling and maintenance, many existing boreholes in ASAL regions remain non-functional. To address this, the government and development partners should prioritize rehabilitation of broken boreholes, ensuring they are equipped with solar-powered pumps to enhance efficiency and reduce reliance on expensive fuel-operated systems. Additionally, drilling deep boreholes in strategic locations, particularly in areas with high groundwater potential, will help extend water access to remote and underserved communities.

Beyond boreholes, developing comprehensive water pipeline networks is essential for ensuring equitable water distribution across ASAL regions. Many pastoralist communities must travel long distances in search of water, leading to disruptions in education, health challenges, and conflicts over scarce resources. By constructing interconnected water supply systems that link boreholes, reservoirs, and community distribution points, authorities can

significantly reduce water scarcity and ease pressure on local sources. Additionally, incorporating water storage facilities, such as underground tanks and large-capacity reservoirs, will allow communities to store and regulate water usage, ensuring availability even during dry seasons. These systems should be integrated with smart water management technologies, including remote monitoring sensors to detect leakages and optimize water distribution efficiency.

In parallel, developing climate-resilient infrastructure is crucial in mitigating the impact of droughts and floods, which frequently devastate ASAL communities. As climate change intensifies, extreme weather events such as prolonged dry spells and flash floods are becoming more frequent, posing risks to water security, infrastructure stability, and overall livelihoods. To build resilience, infrastructure development must align with climate adaptation strategies, ensuring that water systems can withstand harsh environmental conditions. One key intervention is the construction of sand dams and subsurface water harvesting structures, which help capture and store water during rainy seasons for use in dry periods. These structures are cost-effective and reduce evaporation losses, making them particularly suitable for arid environments.

Additionally, flood mitigation infrastructure, such as drainage systems, reinforced embankments, and flood diversion channels, must be incorporated into regional development plans. In many ASAL areas, seasonal floods wash away roads, displace communities, and contaminate water sources, leading to waterborne diseases and increased vulnerability. Establishing flood control mechanisms, including proper land-use planning and reforestation initiatives, can significantly reduce the impact of extreme rainfall events. Furthermore, investing in climate-smart water harvesting techniques, such as rooftop rainwater collection systems for schools, health centers, and community hubs, will enhance water availability while reducing reliance on distant sources.

Ensuring community participation in water resource management is also vital for the long-term sustainability of these interventions. Local governance structures should be empowered to oversee water access, implement conservation strategies, and manage infrastructure maintenance. Strengthening water user associations will enable communities to collectively manage boreholes, regulate usage, and prevent over-extraction, ensuring that water resources remain available for future generations.

Addressing water security in ASAL regions requires a multi-faceted approach that includes investing in boreholes, expanding water pipeline networks, and developing climate-resilient infrastructure. By implementing these solutions, pastoralist and marginalized communities will gain reliable access to clean water, reducing the burden of water scarcity, preventing climate-induced displacement, and improving health and economic outcomes. Policymakers must ensure that water security remains a top priority, integrating sustainable water management strategies into regional and national development agendas to enhance resilience and improve livelihoods in ASAL regions.

2.6. Bridging the Infrastructure Gap in Northern Kenya: Key Priorities and Strategic Interventions

The Pastoral Livelihoods Summit (PLS) underscored the critical role of infrastructure development in transforming the socio-economic landscape of Northern Kenya. The region has historically suffered from inadequate road networks, limited energy access, chronic water

scarcity, and slow project implementation, all of which have hindered economic growth, security, and service delivery. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from the government, development partners, and private sector stakeholders. Key interventions include expediting major road projects under the LAPSSET Corridor, developing solar energy infrastructure for essential services, constructing mega-dams for sustainable water supply, and ensuring contractor accountability to prevent delays in infrastructure projects.

A major priority identified at the summit was the expedited implementation of key road projects under the LAPSSET (Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport) Corridor Program. The LAPSSET project, envisioned as a game-changer for Northern Kenya, aims to connect the region with national and international trade routes, fostering economic integration, market access, and regional development. However, progress has been slow and inconsistent, with many road segments either unfinished or in poor condition due to funding constraints, security threats, and governance challenges. Stakeholders at the summit called for urgent action to fast-track the construction of critical roads such as the Isiolo-Moyale highway, the Garissa-Lodwar road, and feeder roads connecting pastoralist communities to urban centers. Upgrading these roads will enhance security, facilitate livestock trade, improve access to health and education services, and attract private investment. Additionally, special attention must be given to securing LAPSSET infrastructure from threats such as banditry, terrorism, and land disputes, ensuring uninterrupted progress in road construction efforts.

Another key intervention highlighted was the development of solar energy infrastructure to power hospitals, businesses, and households in Northern Kenya. The region has abundant solar resources, making it an ideal location for large-scale solar power investments. However, energy poverty remains a major barrier to development, with many health facilities, schools, and enterprises lacking reliable electricity. To address this, the summit emphasized scaling up investments in off-grid and mini-grid solar systems, particularly for healthcare centers, maternity wards, and emergency response units. Electrifying hospitals and clinics with solar energy will improve medical service delivery, especially for maternal and child healthcare, vaccine storage, and life-saving equipment operations. Additionally, solar power for businesses can boost entrepreneurship, enhance productivity, and create job opportunities. Policymakers were urged to streamline regulatory frameworks, provide incentives for private sector participation, and promote local capacity building in solar energy installation and maintenance.

To tackle water scarcity, which remains a persistent challenge in ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) regions, the summit called for the construction of mega-dams as a long-term water security solution. Northern Kenya frequently experiences prolonged droughts, leading to severe water shortages for human consumption, livestock, and agriculture. Existing water sources, including boreholes and seasonal rivers, are often unreliable and overstretched, requiring a comprehensive water storage and distribution strategy. The construction of large-scale dams and reservoirs will allow for rainwater harvesting, water conservation, and controlled distribution to communities. Additionally, these dams can support irrigation schemes, enhancing food security and resilience against climate change. The summit recommended that water projects incorporate climate-smart technologies, ensure equitable water access, and integrate community participation in water resource management.

Lastly, ensuring contractor accountability in infrastructure projects was a major point of discussion. Many government-funded projects in Northern Kenya have suffered from delays, cost overruns, and substandard execution, largely due to poor oversight, corruption, and lack

of enforcement of contractual obligations. Participants called for strict accountability measures, including performance-based contracts, independent monitoring mechanisms, and legal action against non-compliant contractors. It was emphasized that project timelines must be adhered to, and any contractor failing to meet delivery standards should face penalties. Additionally, local communities should be engaged in project implementation, ensuring that infrastructure projects reflect local priorities and benefit the intended populations.

Bridging the infrastructure gap in Northern Kenya requires a multi-faceted approach, combining accelerated road construction under LAPSET, expansion of solar energy for essential services, large-scale water storage solutions, and stricter enforcement of contractor accountability. These initiatives will unlock economic opportunities, improve service delivery, enhance climate resilience, and foster long-term stability in the region. To achieve sustainable progress, government agencies, private investors, and development partners must work collaboratively, ensuring that infrastructure projects are well-funded, efficiently managed, and aligned with the development needs of local communities. A proposed Infrastructure Bond for roads in Northern Kenya and a ring-fenced KES 10 billion annual allocation for LAPSET were among the key financial strategies suggested.

3. Conclusion

The Pastoral Livelihoods Summit (PLS) 2024 concluded with a strong set of commitments aimed at addressing the unique challenges facing pastoralist communities in Kenya. Recognizing the economic, social, and environmental struggles that pastoralist populations continue to face, stakeholders emphasized equitable resource allocation, localized security solutions, sustainable infrastructure investments, inclusive economic policies, and strengthened land rights and environmental protection. These commitments reflect a holistic and integrated approach to ensuring that pastoralist communities are not left behind in national development efforts.

One of the key resolutions was to ensure equitable resource allocation for pastoralist development. Historically, pastoralist communities have suffered from underfunding in national budgets, limited access to essential services, and inadequate investment in economic opportunities. To correct this imbalance, stakeholders called for a structured and transparent resource allocation mechanism that guarantees pastoralist regions receive fair financial support from the national government, county budgets, and donor-funded programs. Particular focus was placed on funding for livestock markets, education for nomadic children, healthcare access, and climate adaptation projects. Additionally, the summit called for the effective implementation of the Equalization Fund to bridge the development gap between ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) regions and the rest of the country.

Another major outcome of the summit was the commitment to enhance peace and security through localized interventions. Intercommunal conflicts, resource-based violence, and insecurity have long hindered development in pastoralist regions. To address this, grassroots-driven peacebuilding initiatives were prioritized, emphasizing community engagement, local mediation structures, and conflict resolution mechanisms led by elders, youth, and women's groups. Moreover, strengthening border security and cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries was highlighted as essential in curbing cattle rustling, illegal arms trade, and transboundary conflicts. The summit also advocated for improving trust between security agencies and local communities, ensuring responsive and community-centered policing strategies to tackle emerging security threats in the region.

A critical resolution was the need for increased investment in sustainable infrastructure, particularly roads, water, and renewable energy. The lack of adequate infrastructure in pastoralist regions has hindered economic growth, service delivery, and climate resilience. To address this, the summit prioritized expediting road projects under the LAPSET Corridor, constructing all-weather roads to improve market access and security. Additionally, investments in water infrastructure, such as boreholes, mega-dams, and pipeline networks, were emphasized to address chronic water scarcity and support both human and livestock populations. Renewable energy projects, particularly solar mini-grids and off-grid electrification, were identified as key drivers of economic transformation, enabling health facilities, schools, and businesses to access affordable and sustainable energy solutions.

To ensure economic inclusivity, the summit reaffirmed its commitment to promote inclusive economic policies that empower women and youth. Pastoralist communities, especially women and young people, face limited access to financial services, business opportunities, and vocational training. To reverse this trend, stakeholders agreed to enhance financial inclusion through microfinance programs, cooperative models, and entrepreneurship incubation centers. Special emphasis was placed on leveraging technology-based skills training for youth to equip them with modern skills in agribusiness, digital marketing, and e-commerce. Women's economic participation was also prioritized, with recommendations for tailored capacity-building programs, access to credit, and formalized trade networks that allow them to actively participate in the livestock value chain and small-scale enterprises.

Lastly, the summit highlighted the urgent need to strengthen land rights and environmental protection for pastoralist communities. Land tenure insecurity, environmental degradation, and climate change impacts continue to threaten pastoralist livelihoods. Participants called for expedited community land registration under the Community Land Act, ensuring pastoralist communities have legal ownership and control over grazing lands. Additionally, investments in rangeland rehabilitation, afforestation initiatives, and climate-resilient conservation models were emphasized as crucial to sustaining natural resources and mitigating the impact of climate change. Policy recommendations included establishing sustainable grazing management systems, ensuring livestock corridors are protected from encroachment, and integrating climate-smart agricultural practices into development planning.

The resolutions from PLS 2024 mark a significant step forward in ensuring that pastoralist communities receive the attention, resources, and policy interventions needed to thrive. Through equitable resource allocation, localized peace and security interventions, sustainable infrastructure investments, economic empowerment initiatives, and strengthened land and environmental protections, stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to transforming the pastoralist economy into a resilient and sustainable model. Moving forward, close collaboration between national and county governments, development partners, and local communities will be essential to translating these commitments into tangible and lasting change.

Annex 1: The resolutions of the 4th PLS

Preamble:

We, the elected leaders representing the pastoralist people from fifteen (15) counties in Kenya, which make up 80% of the country, convened the 4th Pastoralist Leadership Summit in Wajir from December 8 to 10, 2024, at Wajir Girls High School in Wajir County. We recognise the progress made in the arid lands' region, understand the challenges and, having explored the untapped opportunities, desire to maximise our political influence and seek to leverage on goodwill and partnership of both national & county pastoralist leadership under the umbrella of the Pastoralist Leadership Summit, reaffirm our collective commitment to achieving the pastoralist people's aspirations to realise pastoralism full potential.

Together, we are inspired by the commonality of our people's challenges. The fourth summit was convened as a high-level policy dialogue to enhance collaboration between pastoralist leadership from both levels of the Kenyan government. We acknowledge and appreciate the strong support from diverse partners and development agencies. We are energised to reaffirm our commitment to the theme of the 4th PLS conference, **“unlocking policy and financing bottlenecks to maximise pastoralism full potential in Kenya”**, for the common good of our nation and to benefit the pastoralist people in the drylands of Kenya.

We seek cooperation and support from both levels of government, development partners and stakeholders to take immediate action on the following:

- 1. Peace and Security:** Policymakers shall prioritise localising peacebuilding by tailoring funding, strategies, and interventions to local contexts, addressing root causes of conflict and disputes at the grassroots level and building community-led sustainable peace. Both levels of government adopt a new logic & security framework, recognising and centring on the citizens' roles in managing their security. The national government directs strategic public resources and non-discriminatory political will to address inter-community conflict in pastoralist areas. The national government should direct resources and political goodwill towards addressing the international dynamics shaping conflict at multiple regional levels. Put measures in place to end the use of the cattle rustling narrative in the official language and manage cattle theft and loss of lives in pastoralist areas as criminal activity. Establish the Pastoralists Elders Council (PEC) to guide this process. In forming the council, mobilise persons of high integrity, such as senior elders from pastoralist areas who understand the dynamics and have served in senior roles. Facilitate the elders and collaborate with key partners - IGAD and the EAC in developing working agreements focussing on:
 - a) Resource sharing
 - b) Disarmament
 - c) Ending the small arms trade
 - d) Border demarcation to end the geopolitical uncertainties fuelling inter-community conflicts in the pastoralist areas.
- 2. Pastoralism and Livestock Sector Development:** The county governments will implement the commitment made at the 3rd Pastoralist Leadership Summit (PLS) in Garissa. At the summit, the Governors, Speakers, and Members of County Assemblies agreed to allocate at least 10% of the county development budgets to livestock sector development.

- 3. Operationalise the Pastoralist Livestock and Livestock Products Marketing Board:** The president shall, without further delay, ensure the appointment of the chairperson and members of the Board of the Livestock and Livestock Products Marketing Authority in Kenya to effectively operationalise the agency as per legal notice No. 87 of June 2nd, 2016.
- 4. Hides and Skins Value additions:** Establish facilities for processing hides and skins in the ASAL region and ban the export of leather raw materials from Kenya.
- 5. Camel Centre of Excellence:** Kenya is the third-largest camel producer in the Greater Horn of Africa and fourth globally. However, the camel has been neglected, and many diseases remain unknown. The national government will establish a centre devoted to camel research and development in northern Kenya to address this. This is in recognition of the International Year of the Camelids and the increasing importance of camels in pastoralist livelihoods in Kenya and the international food chain, particularly as the pastoralists face several climate change impacts. The camel, a desert animal, rarely dies of drought but from preventable diseases.
- 6. Pastoralist livestock cooperative development project:** Establish a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Co-operatives and SME to facilitate and support the county governments in forming pastoralist livestock cooperatives. To safeguard the grazing and rangelands, prohibit the further development of new settlements in pastoralist areas.
- 7. Community land registration:** The national Government urgently allocates an adequate budget for implementing the Community Land Act 2016, enacted to identify, recognise, protect, and secure community land rights. This progressive legal framework will empower the citizens of Kenya's vast drylands to facilitate the use of the rangelands, improve drylands productively and manage natural resources equitably, economically, and environmentally. Communities with legal tenure rights will improve the effective coordination with development partners, increase support for dryland communities, attract private sector investment, and align the community system with the national vision, government strategies, and priori/es. The National Government will provide incentives for Expanding Wildlife Conservation Beyond Tourism, supporting breeding, live trade, and other sustainable wildlife utilisation models in ASAL regions. Provide incentives to registered communities to actively participate in conservation efforts. Amend the Wildlife Act (2013) to give counties in northern Kenya the legal capacity to establish and manage conservancies.
- 8. Gender, Youth, emerging issues, and inclusion:** We appreciate the government's efforts to abolish vetting committees, but a bottleneck exists. The national government should ensure the complete abolition of the vetting process as a general practice affecting any part of this country. All citizens in Kenya should be subject to equal treatment and have unrestricted access to birth certificates and identification cards. Both levels of government must proactively mainstream the development of gender inclusivity in pastoralist areas. Leverage technology – work with different sector actors to support improved connectivity and bridge the digital divide in enhancing pastoralist production.
- 9. Improving Human Capital & Basic Service—Mobile education for nomadic pastoralists:** 1.5M school-going children are out of school in pastoralist areas. The National Government urgently needs to implement the Presidential Working Party on Education

recommendations. Fast track National Council for Nomadic Education (NACONEK) to transition to a semi-autonomous state corpora/on under the Ministry of Education and develop accelerated education programme guidelines implementation.

- 10. Equalisation fund:** The Commission on Revenue Allocation shall fast-track the review of the marginalisation policy as the framework for operationalising the Fund, paying particular attention to the Constitution's original conception of the purpose and definition of marginalisation. For the fund to have a meaningful impact, it should rethink its current design, focus on a more prominent idea outlined in the constitution, and be used for impactful mega projects across counties.
- 11. Bridging the infrastructure gap: Accelerating development for Resilience and Inclusive Growth in Pastoralist Areas.** Financing Infrastructure as a foundation for development: The region needs to be opened up for investment by strategically financing the development of facilitative infrastructure in the arid and semi-arid lands. Focus on commencing the development of strategic missing links that connect counties and communities across the pastoralist areas. Develop appropriate policy measures to brand Northern Kenya as a green or renewal energy powerhouse and market as climate change mitigation with Policy Support- One gigawatt to Northern Kenya & Solar mini-grid with an alternative evacuation Plan. Introduce infrastructure Bonds for the Roads in Northern Kenya. Develop a serious strategic water Master Plan for Northern Kenya and other ASAL counties. Ring—fence an annual budget of ten (10) billion to develop LAPSET projects. Renegotiate the Samatar and Rhamu phases and remove the annuity arrangement.
- 12. Financing the Common Programme Framework for Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE):** Both levels of Government shall urgently align the plans set out in the EDE framework to their respective development plans and strategically domicile the state Department of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) under the presidency for effective resource mobilisation and coordination.
- 13. Coordinated multi-sectoral approach:** Both levels of Government, Development Partners, and the Private Sector will implement programs and adopt a community-centred (bottom-up) approach, harnessing synergies, avoiding duplication of efforts, and prioritising evidence-based interventions in pastoralist areas. Inter-Governmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC), in collaboration with the two levels of government, fast-track the unbundling of functions as assigned in the 4th schedule of the Constitution to ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to respective functions. The State Department of ASAL should be transferred to the President's office for improved coordination, resource mobilisation, and oversight.