

Drylands development, pastoralism and biodiversity conservation in Eastern Africa

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Introduction

Generally, drylands cover about 41% of the Earth's land surface and are inhabited by more than 2 billion people. In Eastern Africa, drylands occupy 75% of the land – ranging from 90% in Kenya, 75% of Ethiopia and 67% of Tanzania ; in total, covering an area of about 2 million square kilometres. More than 60 million or 40% of the population live here.

These drylands are productive and contribute to national economies and to society. They support agriculture, livestock rearing, tourism and wild resource harvesting, and play a critical role in ensuring national food sufficiency. Kenya has the highest growth rate (2.7%), followed by Ethiopia (2.5%) and Tanzania (2%).

Measuring multiple values of dryland systems provides a means for valuing, comparing and making policy decision based on various benefits of ecosystem services, and can be a powerful tool to support wise use and management of dryland environment.

Demonstrating values of current and emerging land uses in drylands

An ASARECA project on “drylands development, pastoralism and biodiversity conservation in Eastern Africa” was conducted to obtain data and to provide guidance for policy reforms for sustainable investments .



Ecosystem goods and services	Value (US\$ million/year)
Pastoralism – livestock and livestock products	estimated value of \$150.24 in Ewaso Nyiro
Small scale irrigated agriculture	estimated \$0.905 in Ewaso Nyiro
Minor forests products	estimated at \$0.004 in Ewaso Nyiro
Gums and resins	estimated at \$168 in Ewaso Nyiro
Tourism and wildlife-related activities	23.12
Spiritual and cultural	152.38
Regulatory- climate and water	2677.1
Pastoralism – livestock and livestock product	83.7 for Mara river basin
Forest and non-forest products	10 for Mara River basin
Agriculture	78.9 for Mara river basin
Tourism/eco-tourism	28.1
Gums and resins	95.8 in Ethiopia

Policy Recommendations

- For Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional frameworks, they must re-think their approach to the development of drylands. This will call for the following:
- Review and consolidate diverse sectoral policies with a bearing to pastoralism, biodiversity conservation and drylands or ASALs development. In addition to the consolidation, a comprehensive institutional framework should be established to coordinate government and other stakeholders' interventions in the drylands.
- Governments should invest in drylands development research to generate more knowledge on different models applicable to drylands development. As part of this effort, governments of the three countries should establish research and development centres to take lead on the generation and package of knowledge.
- There is need to secure pastoral mobility within and without the borders. Livestock routes should thus be demarcated and opened up to facilitate conflict-free movement of livestock and people. In addition to this, wet season and dry season grazing lands needs to identified/mapped and secured.
- To facilitate effective and appropriate investment in drylands/pastoral areas, land use planning should be done. This will help secure pastoral livelihood and also help reduce conflict between competing land uses.
- The countries should recognise pastoralism and implement the provisions stipulated in AU Policy Framework for Pastoralism.