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Agricultural and Food Security Challenges
for the IGAD Region

by

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1. AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE IGAD REGION

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To understand the magnitude of the food security challenge in the IGAD region is to recognize that this region is the most food insecure part of the world with over 70 million people, about one half of the population are food insecure. Of these at least 20 million are dependent of food aid. The region, which is only 75% self-sufficient in its food requirements, imports at least 1.5 million metric tons of cereals each year. With concerted efforts, the region can easily close this food gap and even become a net-exporter of food.

The issue of food security is now recognized as a global challenge. At the world food summit in 1996 and re-echoed at the millennium summit in 2000, the world committed itself to reducing the number of food insecure people at least by half by the year 2015. Indeed this is also the goal for the 7 member countries of the IGAD region, namely Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia Sudan and Uganda. To tackle the food security challenge, it is essential to clearly understand the causes of food insecurity particularly as it applies to the IGAD region. The causes are global, regional, national and individual.

At the global level, there are serious macro-economic shortcomings, which have led to the sharp economic decline in many poor countries of the world. The shortcomings include the unfair trade practices of the developed world which have led to a gradual erosion of the poor countries' terms of trade as prices of primary agricultural commodity exports fall to unsustainable levels while prices of industrial goods and services of the developed world have kept on rising. One result of this unfavourable situation has been the reduction in farm and rural employment with the concomitant loss of purchasing power among the rural people. Loss of economic empowerment leads to loss of entitlement to food among the poor people. Faced with poor balance of payments and serious shortages of foreign exchange, the poor countries have had to depend on loans from international lending institutions as well as bilateral sources. The resulting debt burden was too high to bear and any meaningful development efforts were thwarted by the unsustainable debt servicing commitments. To access these loans, the countries were required to undertake major structural adjustments of their economies, which included among other things the retrenchment of many government employees in order to reduce government expenditure. This automatically created poverty not only in the urban areas but also through out all the countries. In many cases, in response to the increasing exposure to food insecurity and in some

cases famines (usually triggered by droughts), donor countries brought in massive food aid. The food aid was useful in addressing the immediate emergencies, but there was no clear exit strategy after the emergencies. As such continued food aid imports have had the negative effect of dampening local markets and acting as a disincentive to local production and thus creating paradoxical a food aid trap.

At the regional level, the countries of Africa and the IGAD region in particular have overplayed the importance of national boundaries thus limiting exchange of goods and services among them. Issues here include high tariffs, poor or non-existent communications between countries (e.g. Isiolo-Moyale road which is a missing link between the north and south of the IGAD region). Instead, the countries have found it much easier to engage in conflicts internally and across borders. These conflicts have had the adverse effect of sapping the meagre financial resources from positive economic activities and disruption of agricultural production in the rural areas, as well as resulting in large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Currently there are over 5 million IDPs in the IGAD region.

At the national level, the main cause of economic decline, which has exacerbated food insecurity, has been bad governance as a result of lack of accountability of the leader to the people. This may not be so surprising because post-independence leaders took after the colonial masters who were only accountable to the colonial offices back home. After independence democracy was never given a chance to take root, as military takeovers became the order of the day. Military regimes bred corruption, which further saw the bleeding of national economies as huge sums of financial resources were stashed away in personal safe accounts abroad. There was a total lack of visionary leadership and national planning and policies were largely flawed and ineffective. For instance, in continuation with the colonial legacy, there was little attention paid to agriculture in national planning and budgeting, which largely accounted for the dismal growth of the sector. In many cases, the food growth rate was outstripped by population growth rates (in excess of 3% per annum). The agricultural research agenda was left as set by the colonial governments, that is, restricted to the few cash crops for export to the European markets. Illiteracy rates remain unacceptably high and all other social development indicators are lowest in the region. Indeed most countries of the region are ranked among the poorest in the world.

At the individual level, there are socio-psychological factors which hinder economic development including lack of innovativeness to find alternative sources of income, lack of personal savings, sheer laziness and resort to unproductive activities like alcoholism, thuggery and a host of other unbecoming behavioural factors.

Yet the region has such enormous natural resources including natural gas, petroleum, gold, geo-thermal, great rift valley, long rivers, great lakes, long coastline, high mountains, flora and fauna, sunshine, irrigable lands and wetlands. What is required is a concerted effort to sustainably exploit these resources for the benefit of the people of the region.

The signs are that things are changing for the better. Democracy is steadily taking root. The reformation of the AU and the efforts of NEPAD e.g. the peer review mechanism will go a long way in fostering good governance in Africa. At the IGAD level, a lot of effort has been put in finding solutions to the long running civil conflicts in Sudan and Somalia. IGAD has also put in place a regional conflict early warning mechanism. There are also strategies to increase regional integration in the areas of food security and economic cooperation. The regional food security strategy (under reformulation) aims to assist member states enhance their capacity to achieve food security through increased regional cooperation in areas of food production and marketing. There are enormous opportunities to increase agricultural production if reliable markets could be secured both in the region and internationally. More opportunities are being offered by the international community including the opening up of markets to African goods – including the American AGOA (African Growth Opportunities Act) and the European EPAs (Economic Partnerships Agreements).

But for economic growth to occur and to reduce food insecurity, the bulk of the work has to be done by the regional countries themselves. Admittedly, there are many constraints to agriculture and food security, but with good leadership and determination, a lot can be achieved. It is gratifying that the countries have made a fresh start and we hope that the PRSP processes they have embarked on will be the way to definitively combat poverty and increase food security. We call upon the international community to make good on its promise to significantly increase the flow of financial resources in support of these poverty reduction efforts.

In summary therefore, the food security challenges facing the IGAD region and Africa at large include (1) determination of governments to make real change in implementing policies and strategies, (2) ensuring proper planning in the use of resources in viable investments, institutions, infrastructure, storage facilities, and enhancing productivity, (3) mainstreaming food security concerns in the ongoing PRSP process.

II. THE IGAD MEMBER STATES' FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PRSP

Chronic food insecurity is inextricably linked to poverty. There is a global commitment to drastically reduce the number of hungry people in the medium to the longer term. This commitment requires that developed (OECD) countries significantly increase financial support to the poor countries to enable them reduce the poverty levels and increase their food security. But the onus of guaranteeing food security rests squarely on the national governments of the affected countries. The African leadership through NEPAD has resolved to significantly increase investments in agriculture in order to boost food production and reduce poverty given that the biggest part of the population live in rural areas and derive their livelihood from agriculture.

The World Bank has spearheaded a new funding framework for the very poor countries requiring them to focus on poverty reduction by preparing comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the corresponding mid-term investment plans. Most donor funding including the proceeds from debt-relief of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative will be provided within the PRSP framework. IGAD countries have embarked on the PRSP process and are at different stages of its implementation. As part of this process, the countries have come up with detailed programmes for strengthening their food security. In most of the countries, these programmes are still on paper and in some cases are still being refined.

In general, the national food security programmes of the IGAD countries cover the following broad areas with total annual budgetary allocation of well over US\$ 1 billion (see Table 1):

- Soil and water management, especially for the drylands
- Land policy
- Livestock development
- Fisheries development
- Agricultural inputs and services
- Agricultural marketing
- Agricultural research and extension
- Disaster preparedness and management

The individual country food security strategies are briefly described below.

Djibouti

The economy of Djibouti is dependent on the service sector, which contributes over 80% to GDP; agriculture contributes a mere 3% due to the country's arid climate. The production system is extensive transhumant pastoralism and there is a small peri-urban system that mainly produces milk. Goats and sheep are numerically the most important livestock species (1 million heads) followed by camels (50,000 heads) and donkeys. There is a potentially cultivatable land area of 10,500 ha of which 10% is for oasis agriculture. With a long coastline of 372 km, artisanal marine fisheries employ over 1,000 persons.

The human population of Djibouti is estimated at about 600,000 most of which (85%) is urbanized. The per capita income of about US\$ 780 ranks highest in the region, however, poverty and unemployment levels are high (42% and 59% respectively).

Djibouti has a national PRSP with the objective to achieve sustainable reduction in poverty by half by 2015 and improve living conditions of all citizens. Within the framework of the PRSP, a Mid-term Investment Programme for Rural Development (2004-2010) has been formulated with the following specific objectives:

For the crop sector, increase production by:

- Expanding cultivated area
- Using adapted planting materials
- Promoting small-scale irrigation
- Promoting micro-credit institutions and cooperatives
- Agricultural training and introduction of skills like apiculture

For the livestock sector:

- Improving water supply for pastoral areas
- Strengthening the capacity for re-exporting livestock from the region
- Enforcing Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary control measures
- Promoting peri-urban livestock development

For the fisheries sector:

- Promoting sustainable management of marine resources
- Promoting employment creation
- Increasing export revenue from fisheries

Food security safety-nets:

- Promoting fish consumption
- Promoting low-cost fish preservation techniques
- Improving the fish distribution chains
- Supporting women engaged in the fish trade

Djibouti enjoys major comparative advantages due to its strategic location on the Red Sea, its port and the proximity of Middle East markets. Linked to these factors and of equal importance are the trading traditions and abilities of its people, their experience in exporting livestock and the strong historical ties they enjoy throughout much of the Arabian Peninsula. Djibouti's development effort should capitalize on these strategic advantages.

Eritrea

Agriculture is an important sector of Eritrea's economy as it is the primary source of livelihood, employment and food security for the majority of the people and the poor in particular. Two thirds of the population of 3.6 million are poor and food insecure.

Eritrea's food security strategy is part of the national PRSP whose objective is to reduce the number poor people by half by 2015. The food security strategy has three pillars:

- Raising agricultural productivity and improving marketing of agricultural output
- Improving national capacity to import food, including keeping adequate strategic reserves
- Using international food assistance more efficiently and effectively as a measure of last resort during emergencies to fill the food gap.

The strategy includes measures that the government will take to enhance food security at the household level. Key measures among them are: 1) increasing production and household income; 2) ensuring access to food; 3) promoting targeted public assistance programmes including food for the vulnerable and very weak.

With regard to increasing production, policy measures and incentives to boost private investment will be put in place to enhance crop and livestock production in the following areas:

- Expanding rain-fed cultivation in high potential areas
- Expanding areas under irrigation in the high potential areas
- Promoting improvements in land use in dry highland areas
- Expanding forest land and improving management of rangelands
- Enhancing livestock development
- Developing the fisheries sector
- Improving agricultural marketing and distribution.

To ensure the success of the food security strategy specific measures will be taken to strengthen the capacity of the public entities and private bodies that are involved in the food security issues to make them more efficient and effective. These measures include:

- Putting in place a reliable regulatory policy
- Strengthening agricultural support services
- Strengthening agricultural research capability and re-orienting its focus
- Strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture's capabilities
- Developing a well functioning domestic and regional market
- Establishing an effective early warning system
- Increased access by rural households to credit.

In addition to exporting livestock, Eritrea would like to regain its position as a net exporter of food commodities and other high-value agricultural products including marine fish.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia, with a population of over 67 million, is the third most populous country in Africa. Correspondingly, the largest number of food insecure people in the IGAD region is found in Ethiopia, where over 20 million people (a third of the population) are chronically food insecure. A combination of factors resulted in serious and growing problems of food insecurity in Ethiopia. Adverse climatic variability (drought) combined with high population pressure, environmental degradation, technological and institutional factors have led to a perennial food gap for more than two decades, which has had to be bridged by importing food aid.

The Government of Ethiopia launched its Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (2002-2005) with a strong emphasis on agriculture, as it is the source of livelihood for 85 percent of the population. Agriculture is also envisaged to be a potential source of surplus that would fuel the growth of other sectors of the economy. It is worthy noting that the proposed national food programme of Ethiopia envisages drastically increased funding of over 10% of GDP. The programme has the following objectives:

- Increasing the availability of food through domestic production;
- Ensuring access to food for food deficit households;
- Strengthening emergency response capabilities.

A key element in the programme is the voluntary and planned resettlement of nearly half a million vulnerable households in the more productive areas of the country. Other measure to be taken in the food security programme include:

- Re-orient the extension programme to address the specific problems of different farming systems
- Strengthen agricultural research
- Identify and promote household-based water harvesting technologies
- Address the problems of moisture deficit areas through supplying short cycle livestock and relatively high yielding varieties
- Improve livestock production and marketing system
- Initiate, promote and strengthen micro- and small-scale enterprise development through industrial extension services
- Improve the food marketing systems
- Initiate public supplementary employment and income generating schemes
- Targeted programmes to support vulnerable groups
- Improve credit services for food insecure rural and urban households
- Nutrition and health interventions in the rural areas
- Strengthen emergency capabilities of the Government including monitoring, surveillance and early warning management, food relief distribution and strategic reserve for food grains.

Given the huge amount of internal and external resources needed to implement this strategy, the Government of Ethiopia and its development partners established a “coalition” to ensure better co-ordination, harmonisation and synergy. With the country’s GDP expected to grow at an annual average rate of

7% or higher, Ethiopia would be able to attain the Millennium Development Goal of at least reducing by half the number of food insecure people by the year 2015.

Kenya

Kenya is the most economically advanced country in the IGAD region and it is the only one not listed among the Least Developed Countries of the world. Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy, contributing about 33% of GDP. However, only 16% of the land is suitable for rain-fed agriculture (9.2 million hectares). Agricultural production is mostly smallholder-based with limited use of improved technology to increase yields. There is also thriving large-scale farming contributing some 30% to overall agricultural produce. Over the last 20 years Kenya experienced a sharp and abrupt decline in agricultural growth, leading to stagnation of the national economy.

Kenya has in recent years adopted a number of strategies related to food security including the Kenya Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2000-2003), the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (2003-2007), and the Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (2004-2014). These strategies include specific measures to promote food security at different stages of the food chain, i.e. production, marketing and consumption.

Production related measures:

- Increase budgetary allocation on research to reach 5% of Agricultural Domestic Product or 2% of GDP by 2009/2010.
- Reform the extension service system to create a more effective linkage between research, extension and the farmers as the ultimate beneficiaries.
- Support agricultural education and human resources training institutions to cater for the needs of production, processing and trade activities in the agricultural sector.
- Introduce measures, which encourage the private sector to undertake reliable supply of inputs at reasonable prices and high quality.
- Build capacity to regulate and monitor plant and livestock health services, license the use of agro-chemicals, acaricides, drugs and poisons.
- Intensify fish farming, regulate fishing in the EEZ, rivers and other public water bodies and improve cold storage and transportation.
- Development of ASALs through rehabilitation of existing community water pans, intensify the construction of dams and boreholes. Disease control measures will be implemented through the community based animal health programme.
- Encourage diversification in ASALs such as production of tree crops, facilitation of farmer-led irrigation programmes, encouraging private sector development of slaughter houses and meat, hides and skins processing, game ranching and beekeeping.

Marketing and trade related measures

- Promoting internal and external trade through the implementation of a privatisation programme.
- Development of improved livestock marketing infrastructure
- Promoting agro- processing and rural industries by providing special incentives to investors, support research on food technology, promote partnership between smallholder farmers and agribusiness and support infrastructural services.

Consumption related measures

- Smooth consumption and protect the most needy by maintenance of a national reserve of three million bags of maize in physical stocks and a drought contingency funding of US\$60 million in cash equivalent.
- Ensuring that an early warning system is functional in all drought prone districts.
- Continue to have relief distribution and monitoring carried out by NGOs and communities.

With a large population of over 31 million that is growing rapidly at a rate of 2.3% per year, while agricultural land is limited, Kenya's strategy should be to promote sustainable crop and livestock production in the ASALs, where the majority of the chronically food insecure live.

Sudan

Sudan is the biggest country in Africa with a total area of 2.5 million square kilometres and has a gradation of agro-climatic conditions ranging from tropical rainforest to the south to hyper arid desert to the north. The cultivable area is estimated at more than 80 million hectares, of which only 20% is cultivated. With a population of 33 million people, there still remains a huge potential for increasing production through expanding the cultivated area. Crop production is practiced under three main farming systems in Sudan: traditional smallholder rain-fed, semi-mechanised large-scale rain-fed, and irrigated. About 90 percent of the cultivated area is rain-fed dominated by traditional smallholder agriculture, although 60% of food production comes from the large-scale sector in the central eastern part of the country. Sudan's Gezira scheme is the world's largest irrigation system under one management and has been in operation since 1926. The agricultural sector also has livestock, fisheries and forestry as key sub-sectors. Sudan has the second largest livestock population in Africa after Ethiopia.

Even with the emerging oil sector, the agricultural sector remains the mainstay of the national economy. Agriculture contributes 46 percent of the country's GDP and more than 90 percent of the non-oil export earnings. In addition, it accounts for two thirds of the labour force. Sudan is a net livestock exporter and agriculture will continue to be the driving force of the national economy.

The Government of Sudan has developed a 'Strategic Quarter-Centennial Plan' for achieving faster and equitable national development. Within the framework of this 25-

Year Strategic Plan, a medium-term poverty reduction strategy (aka PRSP) for the period 2005-2007 was being prepared. The key elements of the medium-term strategy are:

- Transformation of traditional crop and livestock sectors based on a comprehensive integrated package of rural development programmes;
- Introducing extensive institutional and management reforms of public irrigated schemes to revitalise their productivity and enhance farmers' incomes;
- Land tenure reform and appropriate policies for sustained natural resource management in the semi-mechanised large-scale rainfed schemes.

While the medium term economic programme addresses agriculture as the dominant sector in the economy, the focus will be to reduce poverty and achieve food security in the traditional sector through:

- Provision of improved seeds
- Research and technology transfer
- Improved soil and water conservation practices
- Control of crop and livestock pests and diseases
- Facilitate access to credit through the establishment of rural credit institutions under the supervision of the formal banking system
- Construction of feeder roads linking producing areas to markets
- Building a strategic grain reserve coupled with a viable drought and early warning system
- Provision of primary health care and education services and improved and sustainable clean and hygienic water supplies for both domestic use and livestock.

With the vast productive land resources, rising revenues from oil exports and the imminent end of civil conflicts, Sudan has the potential of becoming the region's food basket. However, the necessary marketing arrangements and suitable infrastructure will have to be put in place for a meaningful intra-regional trade in food commodities to take place.

Uganda

The economy of Uganda, like most IGAD countries, is agriculture-based with the sector accounting for 43% of GDP and providing employment to 80% of population. Uganda has the most favourable agro-climatic conditions and is relatively most food secure. However, with dominant subsistence agriculture, poverty levels are high in the country. Uganda's poverty reduction efforts are therefore rooted in improving the agricultural sector. In December 2000, the Government of Uganda launched the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), which is a key component of the PRSP. The PMA was developed taking into account the perceptions of the poor about the nature, causes and dimensions of their poverty. The PMA is the country's de facto strategy and action plan for food security. The PMA has as its objectives to:

- Increase income and improve the quality of life of poor subsistence farmers through improved productivity and increased share of the marketed production
- Improve household food security through the market rather than emphasising self-sufficiency
- Provide gainful employment through the secondary benefits of PMA implementation such as agro-processing factories and services
- Promote sustainable use and management of natural resources by developing a land use and management policy and promotion of environmentally friendly technologies.

The main thrusts for the medium term public action in PMA include:

- Provision of regulatory services
- Provision of agricultural advisory services for farmers
- Agricultural research and technology development for farmers
- Agricultural statistical data collection, analysis and provision of market information
- Provision of market information on agricultural inputs and products
- Control of epidemic diseases and pests
- Soil fertility management, water conservation and environmental protection
- Formulation of a land use policy and implementation of the Land Act
- Construction of infrastructure including feeder roads, rural electrification and fish landing sites
- Capacity building for irrigation and water harvesting including construction of community valley dams
- Capacity building for micro-finance services and risk management
- Capacity building for breeder's seed, planting and stocking materials including fish fry
- Capacity building for marketing and agro-processing infrastructure
- Capacity building for agricultural education.

Implementing the PMA will require major institutional reforms including moving decision making to the local administrative levels. The success of the PMA will greatly depend on the speed of these reforms.

Table 1: National ongoing and planned areas of intervention for food security

SECTOR	DJIBOUTI	ERITREA	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SUDAN	UGANDA
Annual Budgetary allocation (US\$ million)	0.75	N.A	604	180	N.A	203
Soil and water management, especially for the drylands	Study of under-ground water potential Improving rural water supply Oasis integrated development	Smallholder irrigation development Soil and water conservation Water points for livestock	Water harvesting and small-scale irrigation Soil conservation including agro-forestry	Construction and rehabilitation of dams, pans and boreholes Rehabilitation and augmentation of existing irrigation canals Implement the Water Act 2000	Irrigated sector institutional reforms	Water for crops, livestock and fish farming Supplementary low cost irrigation, water harvesting, valley dams and fish ponds Promote agro-forestry
Land policy		Implement land reforms	Land use certification Voluntary resettlement of vulnerable populations	Land use planning and titling Put in place a system to resolve land tenure issues in ASALs Develop a land use master plan	Implement land reforms	Implement the 1998 Land Act Land use planning at the community, parish, district and national levels
Livestock development	Pastoral livestock development Peri-urban livestock development	Animal feed and health Improve supplies, services and marketing for livestock	Increase livestock production (feeds, water, extension services) Improve both breed and livestock management systems using credit	Livestock development focusing on livestock marketing, water provision, breed research, and strengthening animal health delivery system	Improve/liberalise export of livestock	Strategically located dams for livestock and crops
Fisheries development	Fisheries integrated development project Improving incomes of artisanal fisheries Rehabilitation of the fisheries port	Development of artisanal and industrial marine fisheries		Develop fisheries industry Secure fish export market (EU) Facilitate private sector development of fisheries infrastructure Sensitisation on nutritional importance of fish		Promote fish farming Establish fish landing sites in strategic locations Develop strategic fish fry centres

SECTOR	DJIBOUTI	ERITREA	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SUDAN	UGANDA
Agricultural inputs and services		<p>Liberalise input supplies</p> <p>Implement the national seed policy/strategy</p>	<p>Provision of inputs (seeds, fertilisers, oxen) for agricultural intensification</p>	<p>Improve animal and crop protection services</p> <p>Improve access to quality farm inputs (manufacture and marketing)</p> <p>Promote mechanisation and labour-saving technologies</p> <p>Develop micro-finance institutions</p>	<p>Agricultural credit</p>	<p>Advisory services to promote fertiliser use and soil management</p> <p>Promote private sector micro-finance initiatives</p>
Agricultural research and extension		<p>Raise productivity through research, extension and credit</p>	<p>Strengthen extension services (farmer training centres and use of rural radio)</p> <p>Adaptive research and TV extension</p>	<p>Develop responsive research services</p> <p>Establish a demand-driven extension service</p> <p>Strengthen agricultural training</p>	<p>Promote agricultural research and technology transfer / extension</p>	<p>Decentralised client-oriented agricultural research</p> <p>Demand-driven agricultural advisory services provided by the private sector</p> <p>Incorporate agricultural education at all curricular levels</p>
Disaster preparedness and management	<p>Implement the FAO Special Programme for Food Security</p>	<p>Strengthen the national food information system</p> <p>Strengthen the relief and rehabilitation commission</p> <p>Promote income-generating activities</p>	<p>Implement public works safety nets</p> <p>Increase agricultural and non-agricultural incomes (safety nets, micro-finance)</p>	<p>Establish a comprehensive agricultural information system</p> <p>Establish a community based drought early warning system in the ASALs</p>		<p>Strengthen early warning system for food security</p> <p>Promote on-farm food storage (including warehouse receipt system and commodity exchange system)</p>

SECTOR	DJIBOUTI	ERITREA	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SUDAN	UGANDA
Agricultural marketing	Construct a livestock export holding and certification facility Rehabilitation of roads	Improve rural infrastructure	Strengthen marketing cooperatives Stimulate livestock exports	Revitalise the cooperatives movement Liberalise/facilitate cross-border trade Improve quality control services – packaging, SPS Promote/liberalise agro-processing and trade Promote internal trade (cold storage, stock routes and rural roads) Establish livestock industries in ASALs Take advantage of the AGOA and EU initiatives	Improve export of Gum Arabic	Market infrastructure Storage and agro-processing Rural road networks Communication infrastructure (FM radios, mobile phones) Market information International market access