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The Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS): a multifunctional initiative to strengthen the resilience of pastoralists in the Sahel

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CONTEXT AND ORIGINS OF PRAPS

Pastoral systems in the Sahel have adapted and readjusted to the many changes and shocks that have been a feature of their existence for thousands of years. They represent a way of life and a system of production founded on mobility in which environmental, economic, social and ecological factors interact with one another (SIPSA 2012, Hesse et al., 2016). The environmental impacts of herding are highly controversial: pastoralism is often the only productive activity to make use of arid and semi-arid regions, yet it is accused of contributing to ecosystem degradation. At the same time, however, it has been shown that under conditions that maintain mobility and therefore control pressure on resources, herding safeguards reservoirs of biodiversity and is both competitive and profitable across all range areas (Behnke & Scoones 1992, Thébaud & Hesse, 2008). It is therefore appropriate to consider the multifunctional nature of pastoralism and its constraints to understand and anticipate its production potential and the social, economic and ecological dynamics at work. It is just as important, however, to situate pastoralism in the context of the current development and security challenges the Sahel and West Africa have to face.

This context formed the backdrop for a regional symposium on the sustainable contribution of pastoral livestock production to development and security in Sahel-Saharan areas, held in Ndjamen, Chad in May 2013 with the support of a number of technical and financial partners. The conclusions of the symposium included recommendations to: i) improve governance; ii) strengthen the resilience of pastoral societies; iii) enhance the economic sustainability of the pastoral livestock sector; and iv) enhance the social sustainability of communities in Sahel-Saharan areas. In October 2013, the World Bank organised a joint high-level forum with the CILSS and the Government of Mauritania on pastoralism in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The forum called for the adoption of a sub-regional approach to respond to the challenges associated with pastoralism, addressing the need to harmonise and reform agricultural policy, develop capacity and make strategic investments. It called on the international community to join forces to support the Sahel, renewing the political commitment of the Region, the Sahel countries and technical and financial partners, and forming an international coalition for sustainable consideration of the issue of pastoralism. The Nouakchott Declaration that resulted from the forum was adopted on 29 October 2013. The stakeholders in the Declaration made a commitment to “securing the way of life and the means of production of pastoral populations and increasing the gross proceeds of herding activities by at least 30% in six Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad) over the next five years, with a view to substantially increasing pastoralists’ incomes in 5 to 10 years from now.”

To improve and strengthen services to producers, the Declaration provides that “the programme may seek to improve: (i) Animal health services by: (a) strengthening public veterinary services (in particular, the organization and operationalization of cross-border services) and private veterinary services (through investment, training and structuring assistance); (b) promoting sub-regional cooperation with regard to animal health and animal welfare; (c) gradually bringing national veterinary services up to the standards of the OIE (World Organization for Animal Health).” At the close of the Nouakchott forum, the heads of state and government in attendance were unanimous in affirming

that the context was conducive to action that would recognise pastoralism as an effective practice and lifestyle suited to conditions in the Sahel and Sahara. They also affirmed that pastoralism should be placed at the centre of strategies and policies promoting stabilisation, sustainable development and national and regional agricultural development, bringing in issues relating to the sustainable management and equitable sharing of resources, political inclusion, security, access to markets, health, education and gender. They called for ambitious commitment from all stakeholders, their own countries, regional organisations for economic and technical integration (ECOWAS, WAEMU and CILSS), civil society, including associations of agricultural producers, pastoralists and livestock producers, and the private sector; and they called for relevant international organisations (FAO and OIE) and Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) to respond to requests to mobilise their resources at the appropriate level and for the required period of time to support pastoralism in the Sahel and, more generally, livestock production in the sub-region.

This desire to take action in support of pastoralism was built into the World Bank's Sahel Initiative, launched in November 2013. The CILSS was assigned responsibility for technical coordination of this pastoral programme, under the political leadership of ECOWAS/WAEMU, plus Mauritania and Chad. The World Bank stated its willingness to contribute some US\$248 million to an extensive regional project to support pastoralism in the Sahel (PRAPS). In January 2014, each of the six countries involved in the project (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad) appointed a "PRAPS Focal Point (PFN)", with regional technical coordination provided by the CILSS and the formation of a Regional Task Force on Pastoralism (TFRP). Supported by the World Bank, they began the process of formulating the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS).

The Regional Task Force on Pastoralism (TFRP) met four times in 2014-2015 and held more than a dozen video conferences, enabling the countries to take a participatory and inclusive approach to the process of formulating PRAPS. The project was evaluated and approved by a series of meetings and technical discussions which culminated in ratification by the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank on 26 May 2015. Most of the countries met the conditions for implementation between June and December 2015, bringing the project into operation. The CILSS was effective from 25 September 2015.

ISSUES FOR PRAPS

PRAPS is the World Bank's operational response to the objectives of the Nouakchott Declaration. Since the end of 2015, the project has been implemented in the six countries of the Western Sahel belt (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad), with the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) providing coordination at regional level. The project development objective is to "improve access to essential productive assets, services, and markets for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in selected trans-border areas and along transhumance axes across six Sahel countries, and strengthen country capacities to respond promptly and effectively to pastoral crises or emergencies" (WB, 2015). The project supports the regional priorities of productivity improvements and the sustainability and resilience of assets for pastoral existence, as reflected in the Nouakchott Declaration on Pastoralism, via a combination of strategic investment, capacity development and political dialogue. The central focus is improving living conditions for more than 2,000,000 pastoralists and agro-pastoralists who will benefit directly, at least 30% of whom are women.

The area covered by the project maps to the transhumance routes in the Sahel. Each country has identified specific concentration zones within this area, linked to the major cross-border commercial routes for transhumance. PRAPS comprises three technical components:

- 1) Improve animal health: this primarily involves strengthening national veterinary services and the epidemiological surveillance of animal diseases in the sub-region, as well as the control of two priority diseases (ovine rinderpest/PPR [*peste des petits ruminants*] and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia/CBPP) by means of vaccination campaigns.
- 2) Develop and secure access to the natural resources that are especially crucial for pastoral activity: essentially, this involves access to grazing lands and drinking water.
- 3) Move pastoral products up the market value chain by building new infrastructure, facilitating the movement of animals and pooling commercial information.



Since the project is located in the Sahel region where there are repeated crises (particularly climate-related), PRAPS is also developing a crisis preparedness and rapid response component supported by early warning systems, the diversification of sources of income for pastoral/agro-pastoral communities and an emergency fund.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRAPS

Four criteria are used to determine the national activities for implementation of the project. Firstly, the proposed activities must be national priorities (with potential for sub-regional benefits); secondly, they must be clearly aligned with the regional activities defined by the countries themselves and/or form part of the ECOWAP agricultural programme; thirdly, they must have the proven potential to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the livestock production sub-sector; and fourthly, the host country must demonstrate that there is value in implementing and sustaining these activities (CILSS-WB 2016). Activities fall under the components below.

Component 1: Animal health improvement. PRAPS will support critical national and regional efforts to build more sustainable and efficient national veterinary services (NVS), and will conduct surveillance and control campaigns for major diseases affecting large and small ruminants. The project will focus specifically on providing local animal health services in remote pastoral areas. The intermediate outcome to be achieved under this component is a reduction in the regional prevalence of two priority livestock diseases (CBPP and PPR). The short-term outcomes are an increased proportion of animals vaccinated against CBPP and PPR and the construction and rehabilitation of veterinary units. The outcomes to be achieved for this component in the medium-term are (i) an increase in post-vaccination immunity against ovine rinderpest (PPR) and (ii) a reduction in herd prevalence of infection with contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP). This component will benefit livestock owners, including women, who often own domestic animals, particularly small ruminants.

Component 2: Natural resource management (NRM) enhancement. This component aims to enhance pastoral and agro-pastoral communities' sustainable management of and secure access to natural resources, focusing specifically on water and rangeland resources, which often extend across national boundaries. The medium-term outcomes to be achieved in the target localities are an increase in the land area where sustainable land management practices have been adopted, a reduction in serious conflicts over access to grazing, and a reduction in the average distance between functional water points accessible to pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the target localities. To achieve these outcomes, the areas under joint management will be increased, a greater proportion of conflicts will be referred to mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms and the number of functional water points in target localities will be increased. Women will be involved in rangeland management activities and will also benefit from improved access to water, since they will spend less time collecting it.

Component 3: Market access facilitation. Herders have a comparative advantage in the production of ruminant livestock, and ensuring producer access to competitive, inclusive markets is likely to foster broad-based poverty reduction and improve the resilience of herder households. Unfortunately, a series of constraints related to infrastructure, institutions and logistics impede access to markets in pastoral areas, especially for small-scale producers. This component aims to increase producers' access to competitive, inclusive markets and to increase trade

in pastoral products (especially live animals) in select areas of each country where the project will operate. The medium-term outcome is expected to be an increase in the number of animals sold at reference markets (a proxy for improved market access). The short-term outcome is expected to be an increase in the number of reference markets operating according to specified criteria. Investments related to small-scale dairy collection centres and processing units will benefit women in particular.

Component 4: Pastoral crisis management. This component is intended to improve crisis preparedness, prevention and response at national and regional levels. The medium-term outcome to be achieved is a reduction in the time required during a pastoral crisis to reach 50% of the target beneficiaries (as identified in a crisis intervention plan developed previously that specifically includes pastoralists). The short-term outcomes are an increase in the number of specific pastoral parameters built into national early warning systems and a reduction in the time required to provide governments with funding to respond to a pastoral crisis that meets the eligibility criteria. The activities financed under this component will build greater resilience by: (i) strengthening early warning systems; (ii) enhancing the crisis response at national and regional levels; and (iii) supporting income diversification in vulnerable pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. The emergency response mechanism enables participating countries to reallocate funds to deal with any serious pastoral crisis. Support for vocational training and micro-project financing under this sub-component – much of this support will specifically target women and young people – will help to diversify livelihoods and incomes and give households the means to better withstand intermittent crises.

Component 5: Project management and institutional support. This component focuses on all aspects of project management, including fiduciary management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), knowledge generation and management, communication and monitoring mitigation measures related to safeguards. It also supports critical needs for institutional support, capacity building and training identified in the six participating countries and by the CILSS. The institutional arrangements for implementing this project reflect the fact that it will operate at three levels, regional, national and sub-national (local). Training and other institutional support provided under this project will benefit women as far as possible. The areas of financial management, procurement, M&E and communication will receive specific attention. In line with the subsidiarity principle, this component will also organize regional forums (for launching PRAPS and the project's mid-term review) and undertake regional studies identified with Sahelian countries during project implementation. It will also develop and maintain the project's regional website.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND FORTHCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

PRAPS proposes to build a solid alliance to support pastoralism by pooling the expertise and resources of various actors (bilateral and multilateral technical and financial partners, governments, the private sector and pastoral civil society organizations). This support is aligned with national priorities, considers the dynamics at work in the region and complies with the subsidiarity principle. The project will enhance the current frameworks for joint action to develop a consolidated, regionally harmonized framework that provides a platform for multiple actors to promote sustainable action that will support pastoralism. This approach provides the flexibility to link country-specific outputs with broader, region-wide priorities through additional, expanded initiatives that include coastal regions, such as the Regional Dialogue and Investment Project for Pastoralism and Transhumance in the Sahel and Coastal Countries of West Africa (*Programme Régional de Dialogue et d'Investissement pour le Pastoralisme et la Transhumance au Sahel et dans les Pays Côtiers d'Afrique de l'Ouest*, PREDIP) and the Regional Investment Programme for Livestock Development in Coastal Countries (*Programme régional d'Investissement pour le développement de l'élevage et du pastoralisme dans les pays côtiers*, PRIDEC), which is currently being formulated.

On the ground, extensive support for vaccination campaigns in the six countries reached around 30 million animals for PPR in the 2016-2017 campaign, and this figure is expected to increase sharply over the next few years in line with the national strategies for eradicating PPR and controlling CBPP that all the countries have developed (Ba Dio & Berger 2018).

One of the first outcomes of PRAPS is that it has put pastoralism back on the international agenda: as a result, scores of other donors have followed its lead by providing additional support for this sector, which is a source of regional integration in West Africa.

With the mid-term review of PRAPS activities now approaching (this may provide an opportunity to refocus some support measures), the immediate operational challenges for the project are to ramp up animal health activities to capitalise on achievements to date, and to build and/or upgrade a whole host of pastoral infrastructure in 2018,

including water points, transhumance corridors, livestock markets and other storage facilities.

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