

**Pathways to Resilience in the Karamoja Cluster**  
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**Opening Keynote Presentation**

**Reflections on Resilience in the Karamoja Cluster over 40 Years**

Dr. Darlington Akabwai

**Definition of the Karamoja Cluster**

In 1952, Gulliver described the Karamoja Cluster as comprising the Karimojong, Jie, and Dodoth in Uganda, Toposa and Dongiro or Nyangatom, Jiye in Sudan, Dassanech in Ethiopia and Turkana in Kenya. He derives its name from the fact that Karamojong are just a cluster of ethnic groups. He describes these communities as sharing very similar languages and cultures, and who pursued a similar livelihood, that he identified as pastoralism.<sup>iii</sup> But later, the Karamoja Cluster was expanded to include those communities who were not Karamojong but who had adopted their language and culture because of living with them in a similar arid and semi-arid ecosystem. Such communities included the Pokot of Uganda and Kenya, Teuso(Iik) of Kaabong district, Mening, Nyangia and Napore living in what is now Karenga district, the Tepeth of Moroto, Napak and Kadam Mountains, the Labwor/Nyakwai of Abim district in Uganda, and finally, the Merille (Dassanech) of Ethiopia.

The Iteso share a lot in common with the members of the Karamoja Cluster, except that they moved to live in a more fertile and rainy ecosystem, which made them adapt to a more sedentary life style where crop agriculture dominates livestock keeping.<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, it is important to note here that in spite of the wide difference in economy and consequent development between the Iteso and other members of the cluster, there is similar unity in history, language, custom, and members of social organizations which warrants inclusion of the Iteso with the other tribes listed by Gulliver as members of the Karamojong cluster.

**Strategies for improving resilience among pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the Karamoja Cluster**

Much of the Karamoja Cluster is characterized by harsh and arid and semi-arid conditions receiving 300mm or less rain per annum. Precipitation is seasonal but very highly erratic in timing, volume, and distribution. The cattle keeping communities living in the cluster are careful managers that have evolved a range of strategies to enable them to adapt to, rather than change or damage, the environment in which they live. They have instead made deliberate efforts to develop sophisticated mechanisms to cope with the high level of risks inherent to this marginal environment. These strategies include seasonal mobility, split herd management, keeping several livestock species and supplementing food supplies and income with small scale rainfed sorghum cultivation, fishing, trading, and fruit gathering. Periods of acute seasonal hardships form part of the annual and longer term drought cycles within the Karamoja Cluster.

Consequently, systems of natural resource management and social organization have evolved among the Karamoja Cluster communities and are generally based on common land tenure, to use efficiently the resources available mainly for livestock herding. For instance, in the traditional set up, it was possible to mitigate natural and manmade threats to pastoral livelihoods with a considerable degree of success. The secret behind this successful sharing of pasture, water, salt links, and other resources is found in the way

the neighboring pastoral communities have interacted through their corridors (Ngipidinga) for centuries as defined below.

### **Karamojong migratory routes in search of pasture and water**

Focusing on the Karamojong way of managing their dry seasons, they have designed migratory routes that they follow whenever a severe drought falls on them. These routes are ethnic-specific and this means there is a migratory route for Bokora to Teso, for Matheniko to Teso, for Pian to Teso and Bugisu, for the Jie to Acholi and Lango, and finally, for Dodoth to Acholiland and Didinga. Apart from the Dodoth routes, the Karamojong routes follow mainly rivers emanating from the Karamoja escarpment flowing down to the plains of Teso and Acholilands. Hence the statement from the Karamojong that “they follow their waters”.

During the colonial period and the first Independence Government of Uganda, the Karamojong migrations were generally amicably received by the neighbors because these neighbors received official protection from the government of the day. This forced the Karamojong to share resources with their hosts peacefully and in addition, the Karamojong women used to be granted a chance to provide manual labor to their Teso, Langi and Acholi hosts, and in return they would be given food to carry back to their homes.

However, in 1980s to the 1990s, the situation turned sour when the Karamojong were left by the government to pillage the livestock of communities to the west.<sup>iv</sup> As a result, the Karamojong raided most of the animals from the neighboring regions of Teso, Lango, and Acholiland at this time. These raids intensified in the mid-1980s with the combined cattle population in the raided areas falling from 685,000 in 1980 to only 72,000 in 1989. At the same time, cattle numbers in Karamoja increased by an estimated 692,000 animals.<sup>v</sup> The Iteso in particular lost a large number of cattle to Karamojong raids while the Government watched, and this issue became a factor in fuelling the Teso rebellion against the central government. The rebellion ended in 1993. In fact, the Sixth Parliament later forced the regime to disarm the rampaging warriors. The disarmament policy was declared by the government and was implemented in two phases. Phase One used voluntary disarmament which succeeded in recovering only 10,000 guns.<sup>vi</sup> The second phase involved forceful disarmament, which unfortunately was accompanied by human rights abuses<sup>vii</sup> and severe depletion of Karamojong cattle due to internal cattle rustling (that erupted due to unbalanced removal of guns from the different ethnic Karamojong groups), and alleged stealing by UPDF from the protected kraals.<sup>viii</sup> This accounts for the very low population of cattle in Karamoja today, nearly ten years after the government declared the successful removal of guns in 2010. This drastic loss of cattle has posed a serious livelihood challenge, further pushing the Karamojong into poverty.<sup>ix</sup> A proper livestock census is needed to give a clear picture on the real number of these important livestock assets.

### **My experience working in the Karamoja Cluster**

As shown in the above sections, I have deliberately described in detail the background of the place, its ecology and climate, and some characteristics of the people who for centuries have been scraping a livelihood here. In this place called the Karamoja Cluster, I have worked in for over 40 years. And honestly speaking, since there is a lot to say, I will just highlight a few activities that I felt worked positively for the resilience of the inhabitants of the Karamoja Cluster as a whole. I will then list what has changed over time and offer some recommendations in improving resilience in the Karamoja Cluster that most likely other presenters in the conference could have already worked on.

- **Use of corridors as landmarks in the Karamoja Cluster to deliver development services**

A corridor can be defined as a geographical point of entry between any two tribal or ethnic groups in the Karamoja Cluster. For example, the area of land between Dodoth of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya (in this case Kalapata- Camion on the Uganda side and Oropoi- Nawonitos on the Kenya side). Or the space of land between the Dasennech of Ethiopia and Turkana of Kenya (in this case, Omorate- Namorupus on the Ethiopian side and Todoynang on the Kenya side). These two examples would be called corridors or *Ngipidinga* (single: *Epiding*). This is a very critical zone which the neighboring communities deliberately reserve as a place where they fall back to when drought becomes severe. The elders of the two tribal communities would usually maintain by mutual agreement, a buffer zone along their corridor. And this is a place where the neighboring communities come from time to time to share pasture and water, gather fruits, perform their rituals, and carry on with a barter trade that often involves the marketing of their livestock in exchange for grain or other commodities. And above all it is a vital *pass* where the livestock of one community go through after having been granted grazing rights at the neighbor's side of the border. Once they have crossed the border the two communities cooperate very well and share their natural resources very peacefully. The host community even shows their neighbors which direction they should take while grazing their livestock and which watering point they are to use. The elders and the seers from both sides supervise that critical process. It cannot be left to young men alone as they are bent to break it by stealing animals of the new comers or vice versa. The newcomers usually reciprocate by offering their hosts bulls to roast in appreciation for their welcome.

It must be pointed out that this is a real zone and it is not an imaginary line that was drawn by the West European countries as they scrambled in 1885 to divide Africa. It is also important to note here that corridors in West Africa are deliberately supervised by the Governments of the region and international stakeholders, and these corridors can be as long as 300 to 700km. For example, there is an existing corridor between Chad and Sudan, where the Zaghawa of Chad used to migrate to Sudan, grazing their livestock and even marketing them.<sup>x</sup> This is not just a short *pass* left to be supervised by traditional elders and seers as is happening in the Karamoja Cluster. I have personally located myself along these various corridors of the Karamoja Cluster, vaccinating cattle of these communities and we have conducted cross border peace meetings and women peace crusades since 1972.

- **Livestock disease control**

I will focus mainly on vaccination against rinderpest, leading to its eradication in 2010. I decided deliberately to describe the corridors in detail because these are the unique areas where I met my target clients - the pastoralists in Turkana, Toposa and Nyangtom, and the agro-pastoralists from the Karamoja side. My main goal here was to save their animals from dying of diseases, but especially rinderpest. Again, it is along the corridors that rampant cattle raids occurred. Therefore, we had to conduct cross-border peace meetings and women's peace crusades with the aim of reconciling the warring livestock owners, to give us a conducive environment to treat their livestock. These are in fact the two activities that I am proud of since they contributed to the improvement of resilience of my clients, as their livestock were saved from being wiped out by rinderpest.

The conventional approach to rinderpest vaccination involving qualified veterinary and livestock production staff proved to be a difficult in Karamoja due to the harsh environment, difficult terrain with few or no access roads, and highly mobile herds in search of pasture and water. Transportation of mobile crushes, fringes and staff was a heavy task that reduced the coverage of cattle to be vaccinated every year. This was made even worse with rampant raids among the livestock owners of the Karamoja Cluster. And worse still there were civil wars in Uganda and Sudan, and Mengistu Hailemariam was fighting for his

survival in a civil war in Ethiopia. These wars accounted for much of the delay in controlling and eventually eradicating rinderpest in Africa and globally. Meanwhile our medical colleagues were celebrating the eradication of smallpox globally in 1980. This ignited our determination as veterinarians to work harder to make sure we vaccinate as many cattle as possible, and boost immunity against rinderpest among the cattle herds of the Karamoja Cluster.

However, due to the difficult situation in the Karamoja Cluster we were forced to think outside the box and introduce the livestock owners themselves into the vaccination program to join the few veterinary doctors who could reach the region. In 1992/3 we placed our team comprising Tim Leyland, Andy Catley, Chip Stem and Jeff Mariner, all veterinarians under Organization of African Union/Interafrican Bureau of Animal Resources (OAU/IBAR), who were implementing the Pan African Rinderpest campaign, and later, the Programme for the Control of Epizootics, working with the government veterinary services of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. We ourselves operated under a small unit called the Community-based Animal Health and Participatory Epidemiology Unit (CAPE). This unit had targeted the herders in the treatment of their animals. And we also implemented the vaccination programs in Southern Sudan under the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan program, since there was civil war in Sudan and no government institutions operating in the south. We were further blessed by the discovery of a thermostable rinderpest vaccine by a veterinary school in America where Jeff Mariner was working. This positively solved the challenge of using a cold chain in a poor terrain without access roads. Thermostable rinderpest vaccine was manufactured in commercial quantities in Botswana, and this helped us to vaccinate thousands and thousands of cattle in the whole of the Karamoja Cluster.

- **Training Community Animal Health Workers**

While my colleagues were operating from Nairobi, I and other African veterinarians were stationed in Lokichoggio where we would regularly fly to the interior of Southern Sudan, with Landcruisers for use on the ground in transporting vaccines and staff. We were working at the battle fronts of the ongoing war, and had been trained by our colleague Tim Leyland, who had worked in Afghanistan during the war there. My specific role in Southern Sudan was to train the herders to help in the vaccination of their herds. I must point out that I had already got some skills of training the herders to treat their own animals while I was working with the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar at Kakuma Parish in 1978 to 1982, and I continued the training of herders when I was working with Turkana Rehabilitation Project and Norad from 1983 to 1989. These trained herders are the paraprofessional staff who later became called the Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs). These people turned out to be the key staff in knocking out rinderpest in these remote and inaccessible areas of the Karamoja Cluster, because they know their ecosystem so well.

The actual training of the CAHWs can be sketched as follows:

- ✓ Conducting a baseline survey among the target community to know the general livestock disease situation at the grazing areas.
- ✓ Taking back the report to the target community for validation, so as to correct any errors in the ethnoveterinary knowledge that has been tapped from the traditional elders. At the same time these elders are requested to select disciplined sons and daughters to be trained to vaccinate their herds.
- ✓ The selected CAHWs, consisting of both boys and girls, are given intensive training for three to four weeks on how to handle the rinderpest vaccine, and practice actual vaccinations first with water on rubber articles, and then with vaccine on live animals.
- ✓ Dispersing the trained CAHWs to their livestock grazing areas, and then following them up critically as they vaccinate their animals, at least for one to two months.

- ✓ Bring the CAHWs back for refresher training for one week.
- ✓ Disperse the CAHWs back to their grazing areas to continue with vaccinations while treating other livestock diseases that are prevalent in the grazing areas.

Using this approach, we vaccinated hundreds of thousands of cattle in Southern Sudan, such that reported cases of rinderpest outbreaks reduced drastically in the war-affected areas. It is also instructive to point out that when we used the same approach in Afar, Ethiopia, it produced very unique and positive results. Afar cattle remained a source of infection for the cattle in highland parts of the country, because they migrated to the hills for dry season grazing and in the process, they carried with them the rinderpest virus. At that time, it was too difficult to vaccinate all animals in Afar. But in 1992 I went to Ethiopia and trained 42 Afar herders, and they performed very uniquely by vaccinating thousands of cattle using the thermostable vaccine, and handling the cattle and vaccination at speed. The whole exercise was accomplished without using a cattle vaccination crush. In addition, no cold chain was used since the thermostable vaccines needed no fridges in the field. By 1993 Ethiopia was declared provisionally free from rinderpest disease, the same year when Egypt was also celebrating the same status.

Our team in Nairobi realized that although we had scored very well working in the battle fronts of Southern Sudan, other parts of Eastern Africa were still reporting outbreaks of rinderpest. For instance, Turkana reported rinderpest outbreaks in the grazing areas of Lokichoggio in 1985, and at the same time, Karamoja region was also complaining of rinderpest outbreaks. In 1997 we decided to move into Moroto, Lodwar and Kapenguria, and train CAHWs so that they could also contribute to the vaccination effort the governments of the regions were making. The vaccinations against rinderpest improved fantastically in these difficult regions through the use of CAHWs. In 1999, the Commissioner of OAU/IBAR was so happy with my contribution to rinderpest control that he gave me a certificate of recognition.

- **Cross Border Peace meetings in the Karamoja Cluster**

All that enduring effort on rinderpest control was happening against a background of cattle raids. It prompted a Turkana Seer called Ekeno Loirabok to request me to enable him to meet his counterpart, the Seer from Toposa neighboring grazing areas. To quote what Ekeno told me, *“Longechel (man with a gap in the upper teeth) you can only control rinderpest disease if you bring to me the Elders of Toposa so that we can meet and talk about peace.”*

Turkana-Toposa Cross Border Elder Peace Meeting in Nawoitorong Guest House in Lodwar, 1999

I explained in detail to my colleagues at CAPE the raiding problem, and they understood it and we went ahead to facilitate the first Cross Border Meeting between Toposa Elders and their warriors, and the Turkana elders with their warriors. The meeting took place from 30<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999 in Lodwar<sup>xi</sup>, and was opened and closed by the District Commissioner of Turkana. The two ethnic groups were so happy that they had at last agreed to live in harmony along their Lokichoggio-Nadapal Corridor. The Directors of the Operation Lifeline Sudan based in Lokichoggio were also happy, seeing for the first time the Toposa dancing together with Turkana, and sharing the two vehicles bringing them from Lodwar to Lokichoggio. After one month, the same participants were brought to Lokichoggio, at the Diocese of Torrit Seminar Hall, to make a follow up of the points of agreements that they had pledged to observe during the Lodwar Peace Meeting. Apart from minor mistakes of theft by the youth of either side, the elders reported that the peace remained intact.

It is here highlighted clearly that under the CAPE Unit we managed to conduct cross border peace meetings in most of the corridors of the Karamoja Cluster, and the meetings themselves were termed Border Harmonization Meetings. The elders seriously concluded that they had agreed to make and live in peace for the benefit of sharing their border resources. However, they complained that it is their sons who kept on breaking the peace agreements they made in Lokichoggio, and so requested that even their stubborn sons should be brought to Lokichoggio to learn from these meetings. That request from the elders was taken to our managers at CAPE Unit in Nairobi and they readily accepted and we went ahead to mobilize the youth in each corridor to come to Lokichoggio Diocese of Torrit Seminar Hall.

The First Youth Cross Border Peace Meeting involved the Toposa and Turkana youth from the Lokichoggio-Nadapal corridor. This was a unique peace meeting to facilitate because we discovered that the two groups of participants already knew each other very well. They started by quarrelling to the point of fighting. The episode shocked us as the facilitators, but the security officers were around and that gave us confidence to watch the groups in silence. After expressing their anger with abuses and fist shaking, the youth then turned to be very friendly and started narrating their past stories with joy! They were then given their goats to roast and share together. That evening they had their traditional dance which makes Toposa and Turkana a people of one culture and one language, but with only a cow inciting them to fight. Unlike their elders, they made very honest and practical recommendations. We the facilitators gave them one month back home doing their routine herding chores, and then return for a follow up meeting again in Lokichoggio Diocese of Torrit Seminar Hall. Their feedback showed they had been serious, only mentioning looking for lost animals which happened to have been safely kept by their neighbors.

It is important to point out that the CAPE Unit facilitated the Youth Peace Meetings throughout all the corridors of the Karamoja Cluster. However, after going through all those meetings the conclusions of the youth shocked us as the facilitators. The youth in general concluded that they had accepted to make peace but it was their mothers who were inciting them to go and raid. This time around, they did not mention their fathers. The main root of incitement was to refuse the boys to engage with their daughters, and also abusing them by claiming that, *“they are too poor to afford dowry for their daughters!”* The youth said, *“that is what sends us to go and raid, and get dowry or get killed. All is the same to them!”* They therefore requested me to bring all their mothers also to Lokichoggio to attend these educative peace meetings. This message was passed to our colleagues of CAPE Unit in Nairobi and as usual they responded positively and facilitated the first meeting between Toposa and Turkana women from the Lokichoggio-Nadapal Corridor.

#### Turkana Toposa Cross Border Peace Meeting at Lokichoggio 2001

This was the most dramatic meeting we have ever facilitated in our conflict resolution work. The 40 women who attended pelted us with questions. They asked us, since when did we hear that Turkana or Toposa women had gone to raid? *“Longechel (meaning me), why did you bring us here in Lokichoggio?”* When I replied that it was their sons who recommended that they should attend this meeting, the mothers went wild, blaming the Ngoroyang (Toposa raiding youth) and Ngigumakeri (Turkana raiding youth) for being a source of insecurity in the grazing areas. *“They rape them when they get them collecting wild fruits, they molest them when they get them collecting fire wood or water. And yet they are the ones who have made such recommendations about their mothers!”*. *“Since when did these youth see us with guns?”*, wondered one participant.

*“Why bring us women here under this roof?”*, the women continued complaining to us, the facilitators. *“Longechel (meaning me), if you are the one who has brought us here, please change this venue. We would like to take our Alokita (pressure group for the pastoralist women) to the grazing areas and watering points of Toposa, and Turkana, We want to take our Alokita to the tree of men where their fathers are regularly meeting. We would like to talk and sing our songs of sorrow to the elders and the chiefs of Toposa and Turkana and we have our messages for the Ngorokonyang and the Ngigumakeri and their mothers”*.

#### Turkana-Toposa-Nyangatom-Didinga Alokita –The July Women’s Peace Crusade, 2001

This time round this message of request turned out to be unique and it would be very expensive. It would require five to six Landcruisers for transporting the crusading women of Toposa and Turkana plus a vehicle for a mobile kitchen, for about two weeks so as to cover all the grazing areas of the crusading women. It was a relief that the CAPE Unit accepted to fund the first crusade in July 2001.<sup>xii</sup> As described in the report on the meeting, the crusaders fulfilled very successfully the mission they set out to accomplish. The youth got their messages, the Elders got it clear from the mothers of their sons, the seers on both sides of the border heard their message loud and clear, the chiefs and other administrators also got their version of the message and even the women themselves were told to be content with whatever cattle they have, as they will eventually multiply. *“Stop sending your sons to die because of cattle. The few that you have now will multiply”*, said the crusaders.

Despite the fact that the peace crusade approach was very expensive, the CAPE Unit managed to fund the crusades from July 2001 to 2004. The crusades covered all corridors of the Karamoja Cluster, including up to East Pokot. The impact of the peace crusades was to lower tension in the Karamoja Cluster, and which allowed concentrating on rinderpest vaccination, and eventually, rinderpest eradication in 2010.

#### The Turkana-Kenya and The Karamoja- Uganda Elder’s Peace Meeting, 2002

Meanwhile, other stakeholders became interested in the CAPE Unit peace program, which had evolved into the Pastoralist Community Harmonization Initiative. For instance, the Government Administrators of Uganda and Kenya were facilitated to hold a Cross Border Peace Conference in Lodwar (which was initially meant to be the Elders Peace Meeting) that lasted from 6-10 May 2002. The participants included MPs, DCs, RDC, and many other stakeholders.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Concluding remarks**

In general, the cross-border peace building activities which were conducted along the corridors of the Karamoja Cluster improved sharing of resources, and made rinderpest vaccinations easier, leading to its eradication in 2010. All these events, when added to the removal of the gun that ended in 2010, opened Karamoja much more to international development agencies, and opened trade along the peaceful corridors like the Lokiriana which is now booming with the Moroto-Lodwar beer trade, and the establishment of livestock markets like Kotido market which has boosted trade in livestock. All these have positively impacted the resilience of Karamojong agro-pastoralists.

- Apart from the above activities that were of direct implementation that ran up to 2004, I entered the research sector in Tufts University in 2005, working still in the Karamoja Region. Our research was focused on the livelihoods of the Karamojong pastoralist. And we worked along the implementing organizations like UNICEF, Save Children in Uganda, World Bank project, and Mercy Corps. Our role was to use research data to guide their programming. Therefore, generally

stated, the research proved to be very effective and vital in guiding programming of the many development actors that had entered the region. There are many stakeholders now conducting research in the Karamoja Cluster, and most of them are present today in this conference.

That was all on the positive side. But in addition, I did witness things that I feel affected the resilience of these agro-pastoralists negatively. I will just list them as follows:

- As I have highlighted above, we succeeded in contributing to bringing peace, especially up to 2003 and the beginning of 2004, by crisscrossing the Karamoja Cluster and conducting dialogues and peace crusades through corridors. But that achievement was de-railed by some awkward Karamojong politicians at the beginning of 2004, especially along the Nawontos-Kalapata corridor where the Dodoth raided Turkana livestock that had immigrated there due to severe drought in Turkana. The situation was salvaged by the continued, heavy-handed forceful disarmament by the Uganda Government, which was started in 2001.
- Human rights observers reported that during the forceful disarmament, Karamojong youth were tortured by the UPDF.
- The population of livestock owned by the agro-pastoralists reduced drastically during disarmament and thereafter. This sudden and acute asset reduction caused a myriad of problems including hunger, Lonetia, destruction of environment through tree cutting and commercialized charcoal burning and rural to urban immigration.
- The Uganda Government introduced the policy of sedentarism in an ecological environment where mobility is key to livestock survival. This was partly forced upon the government by the western neighbors who were tired of Karamoja raiders.
- The continued destruction of the Karamoja Cluster environment through commercialized charcoal burning.
- In general, these negative impacts put the resilience of the Karamojong to test.

### **Changes over time**

I have included this section because I heard some Karamojong participants saying that the international community had simply made no change in Karamoja. This is definitely contrary to the evidence, for example:

- I. That terrible disease called rinderpest was eradicated by 2010, improving the livelihoods of the people of the Karamoja Cluster region.
- II. Cattle raids have stopped following the successful forceful removal of the guns in Karamoja region; it is hoped that this will not relapse!
- III. Improved security has encouraged international development actors to enter the region to assist the agro-Pastoralist to solve their challenges.
- IV. The livestock population was drastically reduced during forceful disarmament causing widespread hunger in the Karamoja region, urban migration, and insecurity from Lonetia,
- V. By 1972, Karamojong never knew charcoal burning, but over time they now burn and sell charcoal commercially and even firewood was collected for lighting night bomas and cooking, and repairing the wooden fence, But over time the environment has been destroyed by commercial charcoal burning and firewood sales in large quantities
- VI. The breaking of Moroto Barracks in 1979 caused the Bokora displacement and benefits from education.
- VII. The 1980 drought has forced the Karamojong to diversify their livelihoods to include casual labor in urban places, enlarged gardens for crops to supplement the dwindling livestock numbers,



- increased sell of livestock to buy food and entering general trade in livestock and other commodities.
- VIII. The Karojong have taken education seriously and the number of elites has suddenly increased. The current Napak district took the lead in producing educated elites as a result of being displaced in 1979 by the Matheniko, who broke the army barracks, looting all the arms and ammunition.
- IX. Agro-pastoralists have accepted to attend modern health services, relative to 1972.
- X. There is now a tarmac road from Soroti to Moroto, and from Moroto to Nakapiripirit; this has opened the region to trade.
- XI. Gold, marble and oil are the mineral wealth the region is proud about; it remains to be seen if the common man will benefit from it, or it will bring a curse.
- XII. Land is a source of conflict among neighboring households, but is worsened when it involves communities whose places are the source of marble, gold and oil; this will require amicable solution between the authorities and the communities.

### **Recommendations**

Now looking at the successes and weaknesses that I witnessed during my stay in the Karamoja Cluster, I wish to recommend the following:

- ❖ The restocking program that is implemented by the government using the military should go on to help the pastoralist to build the lost assets and improve resilience to hunger. But emphasis should be directed at professional civilians to implement the restocking program.
- ❖ The Government of Uganda should be persuaded to introduce a pro-pastoral policy. The government should be advised to embrace nomadism rather than shun it, as the regions are now enjoying relative peace. Western neighbors must be told that the Karamojong, being agro-pastoralists, have a right of mobility as their key to survival.
- ❖ Research should be encouraged to guide the many development actors that have entered the cluster, with the financial resources to develop the place. The research should particularly target the critical stage of asset growth and guide policy formulations.
- ❖ It is possible to improve livestock marketing in the Karamoja Cluster using the cross-border interactions of the cluster communities. The Turkana, for example, are now marketing their animals at Kotido market, and Karamojong traders and livestock owners take their livestock for sale at Lochorimonging, in Katakwi District in Teso.
- ❖ It is recommended that other corridors should copy these good examples of the Moroto-Lodwar trade, the Turkana-Jie trade at Kotido market, and the Bokora-Teso trade at Lochorimongin market.
- ❖ The Governments of the Karamoja Cluster are requested to borrow the West Africa policy of protecting the corridors.
- ❖ The Governments of the Karamoja cluster should make a deliberate effort to stop charcoal trade.

There are many other challenges among these agropastoralist of the Karamoja Cluster that can be solved. I leave it to the conference to look into that!

Thanks for listening,  
Darlington Akabwai.

## Endnotes

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