

MANAGING CONFLICT IN NIGERIA



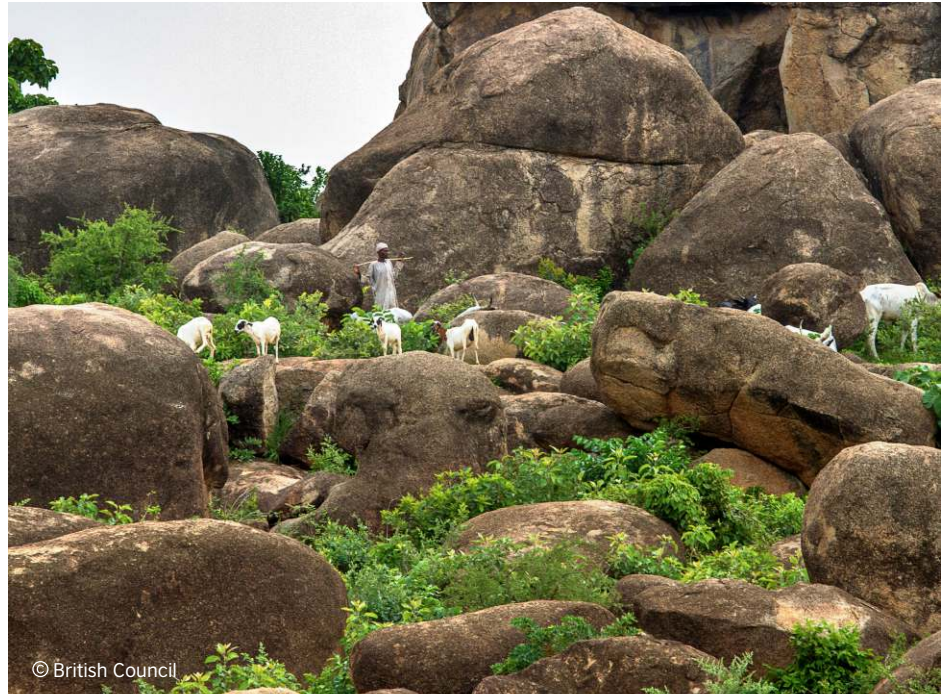
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The Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN) Programme aims to support Nigerians with conflict resolution, at both the state and community level. Our work focuses on reducing violence, promoting stability and strengthening resilience so that Nigerians feel more safe and secure in their communities.

We work in North Eastern Nigeria in three focal states – Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe – some of the country's most conflict-affected regions.

The four-year programme (2017-21) is funded by the European Union and implemented by the British Council.

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MANAGING CONFLICTS RELATED TO LAND AND WATER USE IN ADAMAWA STATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

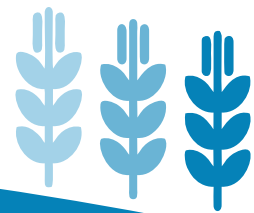
Nigeria is facing major crisis that is defined along the lines of deadly conflict between farmers and pastoralists, whose contribution to the economy of the country is huge. Deadly clashes between farmers and pastoralists in the country continue to pose serious threats to human, national and regional security. In some local government areas of Adamawa State, notably Numan, Demsa, Girei, Madagali, Maiha, and Mubi North, this has resulted in loss of lives and property, displacement and dislocation of people from their communities. The major actors considered to be key to conflict management and resolution include the state, traditional rulers, community based associations, youth leaders as well as community and religious leaders. Unfortunately, the frequency and intensity of these conflicts raise serious concerns about the efficacy of the role of these institutions and actors.



The central issues underlying the various conflicts in the state is the question of access to and control of land, increased polarisation and politicisation of ethnicity and religion in the state and in several northern states plagued by farmer – pastoralist conflicts.

These security challenges are heightened by frequent deadly clashes between farmers and pastoralists over state mediated natural resources that are declining due to the severe impact of climate change that heightens droughts and forced migration of pastoralists. This is further compounded by the failure of governance in

addressing them in a proactive and responsive manner. This policy brief is the outcome of a study, which explored the intersection between farmers and pastoralists conflicts and natural resource governance in Adamawa State. The research made some key findings as well as proposals relating to sustainable policy and practice options for the management of access to land and water resources by farming and pastoralist communities in order to address the perennial violent conflicts arising from competing resource demands in Adamawa State.



Agriculture

accounts for

40%
National GDP



employs

38%
working
population



accounts for

75%
non-oil export
for Nigeria



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Agriculture, which accounts for 40 percent of the national GDP in Nigeria, represents the backbone of the Nigerian economy, as the largest employer of labour in the country. In spite of the fact that Nigeria relies on its oil and gas production to finance its budget on a yearly basis, agriculture is a critical sector that plays a significant role in the economic development of the country, accounting for about 75 percent of non-oil export for Nigeria. Altogether, agricultural production in Nigeria, either crop or livestock production contributes significantly to economic development and food security of the state. A major challenge to agricultural production and sustainable food security in Nigeria is incessant

farmer-pastoralist conflict over access to arable land and water. Unfortunately Nigeria is facing major crisis that is defined along the lines of deadly conflict between farmers and pastoralists, whose contribution to the economy of the country is huge. Located in the North Eastern region of the country, Adamawa State is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse states in Nigeria over 70 ethnic groups. The major source of livelihood in the state is agriculture in its broad sense including crop cultivation and animal husbandry. The people had coexisted in relative harmony in spite of their ethnic or religious differences and divisions. However there has been a surge in the level of intolerance between and among people, which manifests along ethnic and religious divide. The divisions were further deepened as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency that affected communities such as Gombi, Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North.



Nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists have a long history of seasonal migration patterns into and within Adamawa state. They have also cultivated relationships with farming communities that duly acknowledge their status as pastoralists.

These relationships, which hitherto assumed the form of coexistence and cooperation, have been fractured as a result of violent competitions and conflicts over shared natural resources – land and water.

The consequence of this has been the escalation of violent clashes between pastoralists and sedentary farmers. With the majority of pastoralists being muslim and most sedentary farmers being christians, the conflicts have taken an ethnic and religious colouration.

This has further compounded mediation and resolution. The impact of climate change on the security and livelihood of both farmers and pastoralists, further explains the nexus between natural resources and conflict. This is also shaped by the intersection of the trends that resonate around a growing population of young people with poor employment prospects, often deployed as cannon-fodders for violence. The recurrent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are largely driven by competition for land and water resources. The dramatic increase in cattle rustling has forced pastoralists into arming themselves to fight the cattle rustlers and armed bandits in order to protect their livestock and livelihoods. Sedentary communities have also resorted to arm themselves against deadly attacks. All these indicate state failure to protect its citizens thus forcing them to resort to self-help.

Evidently, the recurrent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are viewed to be primarily about competition in relation to access and use of resources, damage to crops, blocking of transhumance corridors (Burtali), farming along valleys and stream/river banks. In most cases, these conflicts often take ethnic and religious dimension, which makes it easy to be interpreted in identity terms.



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Central to this conflict also lies what has been regarded as a transformation of 'normal' conflicts between pastoralists and farmers into generalised rural banditry. These production forces are both producers of food for the local economy and compete for similar natural resources, particularly land and water.

² <https://pastoralist2.wordpress.com/2013/06/11/conflicts-between-transhumant-pastoralist-and-farmers-in-nigeria-the-way-out/>

³ See Ibrahim, J. (2014) State crisis, pastoralist transhumance and rural banditry, available in www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/state-crisis-pastoralist-transhumance-and-rural-banditry/41989.html

⁴ Mercy Corps (2015a) The economic costs of conflict and benefits of peace: Effects of farmers-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt on households, Abuja: Mercy Corps.

⁵ Blench, R (2004) Natural resource conflicts in North-Central Nigeria, London: Mandarav Publishing.

⁶ Federal Government of Nigeria (2015) North-East Nigeria Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment: Volume II – Component Report.

⁷ Conciliation Resources. 2017. 'From cooperation to contention: Political unsettlement and farmer pastoralist conflicts in Nigeria'. Report prepared by Adam Higazi and Zahbia Yusuf. Conciliation Resources. London. March 2017. <http://www.c-r.org/resources/cooperationcontention>

Beyond the farmer and pastoralist conflict and its impact on the economy of Adamawa state, a report on recovery and peacebuilding by the Federal Government of Nigeria revealed that Adamawa state accounted for 12 percent of the total losses in the agricultural sector (farmlands, buildings, equipment and livestock), as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency. This has resulted in a decline in agricultural production as many families have been forced to abandon food production due to insecurity.



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There is a sense in which the mechanism for conflict management and resolution in the context of farmer and pastoralist relations has broken down. The inability of the state to fashion out sustainable ways and means of managing the conflicts between farmers and

pastoralists in Adamawa state, has contributed to the soured relationships between these two production forces. The response of the state government has been ad-hoc and reactive rather than proactive. The main response is to deploy the police and military and then set up commissions of inquiry, whose outcomes are never publicised.

Amidst informal efforts by traditional, community and religious leaders in managing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists across communities in Adamawa State, the mechanism for early detection and management of conflicts before they become violent have proven not to be effective due to episodic community level conflicts. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study explored sustainable policy and practice options for the harmonious utilization of land and water resources by farming and pastoralist communities in order to address the perennial violent conflicts arising from competing resource demands in the state.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in the following LGAs, Demsa, Girei, Madagali, Mubi North, Mubi South and Numan. The choice of these locations was informed by occurrences of conflicts related to farmers and pastoralists over access to, as well as control of natural resources, land and water.

The methodology for this research relied on two sources of data generation, which had to do with primary and secondary data. The primary data were generated through the use of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, as well as focus group discussions with residents across selected communities of Adamawa State— including women, youth and elders.

With the use of semi-structured questions that utilised Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), it was possible for the researchers to obtain information and data from respondents on perceptions, awareness and knowledge of conflicts, conflict contexts, conflict dynamics, causes, impacts and responses across communities in Adamawa State.

The stakeholder consultations covered officials of the state and local governments, security agencies, community and religious leaders, youth and women groups, people with disability, academics, civil societies, community based associations, international organisations among others. For secondary data, the research also relied on documented evidences and other published reports in order to capture the conflict dynamics in the state and how they manifested. The study utilised the participatory community vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) approach, which is a new model of vulnerability assessment that was hinged on three key and interrelated pillars.

Firstly, an analysis of the vulnerability of communities to conflict and their capacity to deal with it; Secondly, the use of community knowledge, data and information in understanding conflicts and vulnerabilities; Thirdly, capturing community level mechanisms and action plans in addressing conflicts and vulnerabilities in the context of resilience.



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SOME OF THE UNDERLYING ISSUES EXAMINED INCLUDE

A The environment, natural resources (land/water) and conflict in Adamawa State

B Trends and patterns of conflicts over land and water in Adamawa State

C Historical and current management system of access to land and water between farming and herding communities in Adamawa State

D The gender dimension to natural resource conflict in Adamawa State

E State responses to natural resource conflicts (land and water) in Adamawa State

F Lessons in community level resilience around natural resource driving conflict

G The responses of non-state actors (civil societies/international partners) to natural resources conflict in Adamawa

FINDINGS

Competing demands for land and water between farmers and pastoralists: Natural resource (particularly land and water), underpins the economic, social and political lives of the majority of people in Adamawa State, particularly those who depend largely on agriculture and pastoralism for their social reproduction and survival. In this sense, the competing demand for land as it relates to cultivation and grazing are being affected directly by degradation, infrastructural developments, acquisition of large tracks of land by rich and privileged individuals and institutions and indirectly by population pressure.

Inter-dependence between farmers and pastoralists as the basis for cordiality: The relationship between the two groups (farmers and pastoralists) had been generally peaceful as a result of interdependence, extensive network of exchange and mutual understanding that existed between them. Added to the social capital created by such relationship as defined by the extensive network of relationship between these groups was the presence of effective community level mechanisms for addressing conflicts when they arise.

Establishment of commissions of inquiry as first resort by the state: The most common state response to natural resource related conflicts in Adamawa State has been the establishment of administrative panels of inquiry. Examples of such panels include the Administrative Panel on Dumne crisis of 2003; the Administrative Panel on Koh crises of 2017; the Administrative Panel on Kodomun crisis of 2016; the Administrative Panel on Numan crisis in 2018; and the Ad-Hoc Committee on managing farmer-herder conflicts of 2018.

Traditional conflict management mechanisms as effective tools for maintaining relations between farmers and pastoralists: Traditionally conflicts involving farming and pastoralist communities were quite simple in terms of their manifestations and management. They were

localised, relied on their simple traditional mechanism for their resolutions. The consequences and impact of such conflicts were also handled locally.

Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists impact on gender: Both women and men are actively involved in the use of land and water resources for farming and herding, and as such, both genders are directly affected by the conflicts. However, examination of mechanisms developed to address the concerns did not show a corresponding involvement of women as much as men in addressing the conflicts.

The media as both a source of conflict and vehicle for peacebuilding: Media narratives and analysis of the conflict between farmers and pastoralists are often reported in ways that heighten sensitivities around ethnicity and religion, which serve as key tools for mobilization by the conflicting parties.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1 The Adamawa State Government and civil society should strengthen the capacity of traditional and religious leaders on conflict management: There is strong evidence to suggest that the traditional and religious leaders have been effective in the management of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, despite the fact that they have suffered from neglect by the State. A key factor in their effectiveness lies in the community confidence, trust and legitimacy they enjoy. This is an important social capital that government and other non-state actors that seek to intervene in Adamawa state should leverage on. Traditional and religious leaders also require legal and financial support to make them more efficient in discharging their responsibilities in the prevention and management of conflicts, including farmer pastoralist conflicts at the local level. The Adamawa State Government should work with other stakeholders towards the realization of this goal as a critical vehicle for strengthening relations between the farming and pastoralist communities

2 The Adamawa State government should implement reports of committees or commissions of inquiry: The Adamawa State Government should demonstrate strong commitment to peace building processes through the implementation of recommendations made by committees and commissions of inquiry. Such an action would strengthen citizen's confidence on the state as the primary arbiter in the conflict, as well as guarantor of security. Above all, since the inability of government to implement such recommendations has contributed to the cyclical nature of the violent conflict, efforts towards implementation would represent one of the most important measures towards containing impunity in the State.

3 The Adamawa State government and civil society should strengthen community level early warning capacities: In line with the long-term goal of supporting communities in relation to their ability to cooperatively manage natural resources in ways that strengthen their cohesion, they should be empowered to also anticipate and effectively respond to conflicts. As the repository of information, members of the communities are in a better position to provide quick, precise and actionable intelligence for prompt action.

This is one value that resonates within the community, which has also strengthened the current argument and call for the decentralization of policing in Nigeria, in a way that places the people and communities in particular at the centre of policing related decision making processes. This would be the most potent way for government, development partners and civil society to support efforts towards building an inclusive community peace structure that is proactive and responsive

4 The federal and Adamawa State governments should strengthen nomadic education and provide infrastructure: Since the nomadic education programme has collapsed due to poor funding, the federal government should strengthen the current programme through proper funding that targets personnel and infrastructure. Both the curriculum and timing for the school should be designed in ways that takes care of the interests of the nomadic communities, with specific reference to when they feel or think is conducive for them to attend classes.



5 The federal, state and local governments should strengthen inter-governmental partnership in conflict prevention and management: There is the need to overhaul the existing peace and security architecture of Adamawa State. This is to allow for integrated responses by the federal, state and local governments, towards ensuring the sustainable prevention and management of the recurrent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Adamawa State. Through such intergovernmental partnership and collaboration, mechanisms for conflict prevention and management would be enhanced.

6 The Adamawa State and local governments should domesticate the UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security: The development of the Adamawa State Action Plan, as well as the Local Government Action Plan on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, represent step in main streaming women participation in peace and security issues. Governments at all levels should ensure the promotion of women empowerment and gender parity, as well the recognition and redefinition of the roles of women by their inclusion into the community decision making structures in relation to the conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, which impact them as well.

CONCLUSION

There is a sense in which farmers and pastoralists in Adamawa State are fiercely competing for shrinking natural resources, and mobilizing for conflict along ethnic and religious fault lines. This conflict, which is presently manifesting in few local government areas and communities within the state, has the potentials to degenerate into a wider, statewide conflict unless urgent steps are taken to address the underlying causes.

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