

## **Cross border conflict as a factor to food safety/security**

Cross border conflict has in many instances acted as one of the main impediments to food security especially among the warrying communities. In Turkana County and in particular along the border with West Pokot County, two communities that are both pastoralists with historic conflict and clashes over animals, pasture and which have experienced a protracted violent conflict are yet to find a common ground to co-exist peacefully. This problem continues to manifest in different forms amid multi-stakeholder's approach that has tried to provide multi-faceted solutions.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October, KAS Kenya held a 3 days seminar in Turkana County. The seminar targeted relevant Departments of Government, members of the CSOs- especially those that are working at the border areas including women and the youth groups, community structures for ADR, politicians and opinion leaders from the border region. The main objective of the seminar was to support discussions that will provide the basis to understanding the conflicts around the border region of West Pokot and Turkana counties and how this affects communities' access to food.

Discussions spun around challenges of Turkana County in accessing water as a critical element on fostering resilience and a key factor on the recurrent inter boundary tension and conflicts. The participants were taken through the drought Early Warning (EW) phase which provides specific drought mitigation activities to support livelihoods. Further to this, understanding the national and regional scenarios of border conflicts and their effects to vulnerability was conversed.

Projections on the border trends and dynamics responsible for promoting perennial food insecurities were also shared and the following emerged: livestock losses reduced the communities' income levels especially in the month of March; secondly, milk yields and livestock productivity reduced resulting in high prices of milk and other livestock products that contributed to hunger and reduced household incomes, and last but no least was that land degradation and overgrazing was poised an increasing challenge especially in specific areas that are close to seasonal rivers or irrigated agriculture (border of Turkana and Samburu).

Inter community conflict was discussed and it was around the hotspots that the triggers were identified including historically unresolved disputes, political rivalry, inter-clan suspicion especially in respect to decision making and access to government 'goods', et cetera. It was conferred that the council of elders are strong institution in dispute resolution even though the current government machineries have not incorporated them much. The outcome of the seminar promoted the establishment of an ASAL Stakeholder's Forum Chapter for Turkana County. The forum will be important in consolidating advocacy campaigns and common approaches to problem solving.

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