



## NOUAKCHOTT DECLARATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVESTOCK AND THE SECURING OF PASTORAL SYSTEMS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

(Nouakchott, November 8, 2024)

1. **WE**, the Representatives of the countries of West Africa and the Sahel, pastoral, agro-pastoral, and agricultural organizations of the region (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad, Togo), have convened, in Nouakchott at the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), and the World Bank, alongside representatives from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the 2013 Nouakchott Declaration, known as "Nouakchott +10".
2. Joined by representatives of International Organizations, Regional Organizations, scientific and technical research, Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, and technical and financial partners, we gathered in a Forum from November 6 to 8, 2024, to evaluate the progress made since the adoption of the 2013 Nouakchott Declaration and identify new challenges to be addressed for the development of livestock and the securing of pastoral systems within the regional space.
3. This Forum has been enriched by extensive consultations and preparatory work by pastoral and agro-pastoral civil society actors of West Africa and the Sahel, as well as research and development projects that have significantly contributed to the assessment of the operationalization of the Declaration adopted in Nouakchott in 2013. These efforts have

identified persistent or emerging issues and challenges in the livestock and pastoralism sector, to inform this new Declaration during this high-level Forum "Nouakchott +10".

**CONSIDERING THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE:**

4. Welcome the advancements in integrating pastoralism into public policies and cooperation strategies, stemming from the first High-Level Forum of Nouakchott on Pastoralism in the Sahel, organized in October 2013, following the N'Djamena colloquium in May 2013, both events emphasized the need to improve the consideration of pastoralism in public policies and cooperation strategies. Over the past ten years, national and regional institutions, along with their partners, have shown a renewed commitment to developing and securing pastoralism. Numerous regional or national projects have thus emerged, aligning with the implementation of these commitments.
5. In this context, the numerous investments made have been aimed at *inter alia*: i) strengthening herders' access to animal health services, ii) securing grazing areas, transhumance routes, and water access for herds, iii) facilitating livestock trade, iv) developing forage crops, v) establishing processing and valorization activities for pastoral products, vi) strengthen response to pastoral crises, vii) strengthen mechanisms for conflict management, and viii) strengthen pastoral organization's capacity for intervention.
6. Ten years after this strong commitment to supporting pastoralism, significant achievements have been made with notable positive impacts on pastoral and agro-pastoral populations. These advances include improved animal health services, sustainable natural resource management, development of livestock value chains, production and marketing infrastructures, social and economic inclusion of vulnerable pastoralists — particularly women and youth — strengthening of livestock institutions, and better governance of shared resources.
7. Significant achievements have also been made in cross-border cooperation between coastal and Sahelian countries placing transhumance and livestock trade at the heart of exchanges between communities and countries. A high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue on peaceful transhumance has been established at the regional level to assess transhumance conditions and facilitate its organization. This has been reinforced notably by the organization of the pastoral weeks, fostering cross-border cooperation. Monitoring instruments have also been developed and are now becoming operational, including the Regional Observatory of Mobile Livestock Systems in West Africa and the Sahel (OSEMAOS), designed to provide reliable and up-to-date information to support informed political, economic, and social decision-making on pastoralism and transhumance.
8. Among the achievements stemming from the N'Djamena commitments is the development and validation of a long-term regional strategy for livestock development and the security of pastoral systems in West Africa and the Sahel. This strategy is built on a shared vision, shaped through extensive dialogue with all stakeholders, including those involved in livestock, to support a controlled transformation of pastoral and agro-pastoral systems that incorporates herd mobility.

**NOTING, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE THESE TANGIBLE PROGRESS, THE CONSTRAINTS ON PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT HAVE INTENSIFIED, PARTICULARLY:**

9. Increasing land pressure, demographic and climate change related disruptions in rural, pastoral, and agro-pastoral areas.
10. The persistence—and in some cases, the spread—of major animal diseases in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.
11. The tense security situation in the entire region compounded by the COVID-19 challenges, and the repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine war.
12. The weakening of the free movement principle for goods and services, defined within the framework of sub-regional integration organizations, which should play a key role in the implementation of the 2013 Nouakchott Declaration.
13. These various regional and global health and security threats have prompted several countries in West Africa, the Sahel, and Central Africa to restrict transhumance, leading to significant environmental and socio-economic impacts on both sides of the affected borders.

**IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE, THE PARTICIPANTS, UNANIMOUSLY DECLARE THAT:**

14. Pastoral and agro-pastoral livestock systems constitute a fundamental link of food systems and a fundamental factor for integration between Sahelian, coastal countries and some countries in Central Africa through the production of meat, milk, and hides. They provide multiple services including climate change adaptation, ecological transition, biodiversity protection, and cooperation in scientific research.
15. This vital link must be strengthened by fostering greater synergy and coordination in policies and strategies. This includes recognizing and integrating the needs of coastal countries and some Central African countries (Central African Republic, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo) into development efforts and building on the complementarity between sedentary and mobile livestock systems for the peaceful management of territories.
16. Livestock mobility (transhumance, trade) will remain a necessity that requires robust cooperation and coordination between states.
17. Cross-border cooperation is a cornerstone in addressing the challenges of insecurity, strengthening the pastoral economy, and managing migration dynamics between Sahelian and coastal countries. Establishing suitable mechanisms—such as cross-border governance bodies and joint action plans—in the affected territories, with attention to the security,

economic, ecological, cultural, and social factors, is essential for promoting peaceful pastoralism.

18. In their efforts to develop cross-border exchanges and manage flows, countries must strengthen their structural investments in departure and reception areas.
19. Including animal health in public policies is crucial to combat diseases that indirectly undermine herds and weaken the pastoral and agro-pastoral economy, as well as the food security of local populations. Strengthening veterinary services and access to quality animal health care are priorities.
20. Harmonized animal identification and traceability of animal-origin products are essential to sustainably support the pastoral economy and strengthen the resilience of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists.
21. As land pressure increases, the complementarities and synergies between farm, agro-pastoral, and pastoral activities at the territorial level should be valued, territory by territory, by highlighting the specific contributions of each production system to the local economy.
22. Initiatives that build stronger social and economic ties between farmers and herders should be promoted, territory by territory. Mechanisms and tools that protect their rights should be co-developed and made available enhancing social cohesion and significantly reducing conflicts over natural resource use.
23. Supporting the citizenship of herders (pastoralists and agro-pastoralists) by recognizing their profession, addressing their needs require inclusive and concrete measures of social protection, adapted education and training systems for pastoral children and youth.
24. Improving the functioning of political land governance bodies and implementing legal frameworks for land security in agro-pastoral areas are essential for peaceful natural resource management.
25. Developing and securing grazing lands and pastoral infrastructure should be a top priority in the territories and the result of territorial and cross-border concertation.
26. The value chains of pastoral and agro-pastoral systems are central to local economies and must be supported in their ability to create decent jobs and income for youth (both men and women) through targeted training, advisory services, and appropriate public and private financing.
27. There is a pressing need to continue the promotion and support to the emergence of a strong private sector that integrates agro-pastoral systems into sub-regional value chains. This includes structuring milk and meat production chains, modernizing distribution channels, and ensuring product safety to sustainably meet the growing demand in animal products as well as to reduce reliance on imports.

28. Cooperation between states, and between the states and intergovernmental organizations in Western and Central Africa must be strengthened to create greater synergy in actions, policies, and regulations across the livestock, agriculture, and environmental sectors.

**FURTHER, WE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE NOUAKCHOTT+10 FORUM, THEREFORE CALL FOR:**

29. To the states and their populations to unite in a spirit of cooperation, regional integration, solidarity, tolerance, and collaboration to jointly foster peace and development in rural, pastoral, and agro-pastoral areas by valuing the diverse livestock systems and enhancing the complementarity between agriculture and livestock, which together form the most solid foundation for inclusive and sustainable development of our economies and the reduction of poverty in our countries.
30. To all stakeholders (States, IGOs, RPOs, NGOs, CSOs, populations, development partners, etc.), to implement programs for operationalizing the regional strategy for the development of livestock and the securing of pastoral systems in West Africa and the Sahel, adopted in 2024.

**UNANIMOUSLY, WE COMMIT TO:**

31. Co-design and implement these ambitious, unifying, and inclusive regional and national programs to support pastoralism and agro-pastoralism. These programs should integrate the projects and initiatives of all engaged actors, covering Sahelian and coastal countries as well as some Central African countries, with an approach focused on managing transhumance, livestock trade, and developing associated value chains.
32. Work to ensure that these programs align with the essential axes:
- Valorize the economic potential and contribution to food sovereignty of livestock production systems and chains.
  - Improve the governance of territories and natural resources essential to the production and resilience of livestock systems.
  - Promote "One Health" to improve animal health and minimize the impact of animal diseases on animal productivity and public health.
  - Develop a conducive environment for public and private investments in livestock.

**SPECIFICALLY:**

33. The States of West Africa and the Sahel commit to: i) providing necessary political support and mobilizing substantial financial and human resources, both internal and external, to support the operationalization of this Declaration; ii) strengthening inclusive national and cross-border dialogues on improving the governance of agro-pastoral resources and strengthening complementarities between agriculture and livestock for the benefit of local economies, peace, and security in the territories.

34. The States of West Africa and the Sahel represented at the Forum affirm their determination to mobilize private investors to engage in the development of animal value chains, particularly in the areas of livestock feed supply, meat production, skins and hives, and local milk collection and processing.
35. The States of West Africa and the Sahel commit to encouraging technical and financial partners to provide substantial support for implementing national and regional priorities in a harmonized and aligned manner, complementing the national budgets of the affected countries.
36. West African and Sahelian States commit national and regional research structures and the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of the region to support the implementation of this Declaration by intensifying their investment in research and education on pastoralism, particularly in the production of innovations to be co-constructed with stakeholders, which will enable pastoralism to adapt and face increasing climate challenges.
37. Local authorities (Municipalities, Regions, Federal States, Provinces) commit to apply cross-border cooperation approaches and vigorously drive the implementation of their action plans by mobilizing various public, professional, and private actors in livestock and agriculture within these territories.
38. Livestock and farmer organizations and associations express their readiness to enhance their role in providing services to their members, facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue to rebuild the social pact between communities, in designing, implementing and monitoring public policies.
39. Regional professional organizations (RPOs) and their member organizations commit to actively participating in the preparation and implementation of this Declaration by leveraging their experience and network of grassroots organizations in the relevant territories.
40. Development partners commit to strengthening and aligning their technical and financial support to ensure the coordinated implementation of this new Declaration on livestock development and securing pastoral systems in West Africa and the Sahel.
41. As part of its reform project under the Evolution Roadmap, the World Bank is committed to leveraging its global mobilization capacity to promote this declaration, which aligns with its strategic priorities, particularly in food security, climate resilience, and mitigation and adaptation efforts. These actions will be pursued in partnership with other international stakeholders, including development banks, bilateral and multilateral partners, the United Nations, and regional and sub-regional organizations.
42. All stakeholders also commit to enhancing awareness among stakeholders at all levels to deconstruct erroneous perceptions about pastoralism.

43. All the stakeholders mentioned commit to collaborating to integrate the outlined actions into a unified approach aimed at strengthening resilience and adapting to climate change. They will also actively seek best practices and innovations to support pastoralism and livestock systems that contribute to carbon sequestration.

**THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE NOUAKCHOTT+10 FORUM REQUEST THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF CILSS TO PRESENT THIS DECLARATION TO HIS PEERS.**

Nouakchott, November 8, 2024