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**Traditional Conflict Early Warning Systems: A Case Study of  
Turkana among Karamoja Cluster Pastoral Communities.**

**By**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
of the Degree of Master of Arts in International studies at the  
Institute of Diplomacy and International studies (IDIS). University  
of Nairobi.**

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## DECLARATION

**This dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree to any other University.**

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**This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University supervisor.**

Sign  Date 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 03

**Dr. Josephine Odera**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my loving mother, Elizabeth Nyambura, for teaching me how to keep my head even when all those around me are losing theirs. You are the greatest woman, Mummy. And to Bob and Maina – you two little angels are the symbol of the present and the future.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>ASAL</b>	<b>Arid and Semi-Arid Lands</b>
<b>AU</b>	<b>Africa Union</b>
<b>CASs</b>	<b>Conflict Alert Systems</b>
<b>CECORE</b>	<b>Centre for Conflict Resolution</b>
<b>CEWARN</b>	<b>Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanisms</b>
<b>CEWERU</b>	<b>Conflict Early Warning Early Response Units</b>
<b>CPMR</b>	<b>Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution</b>
<b>DSC</b>	<b>Defense and Security Commission</b>
<b>ECOWAS</b>	<b>Economic Community of West Africa States</b>
<b>EW</b>	<b>Early Warning</b>
<b>EWM</b>	<b>Early Warning Model</b>
<b>FAO</b>	<b>Food and Agriculture Organization</b>
<b>FEWER</b>	<b>Forum on Early Warning and Early Response</b>
<b>HEW</b>	<b>“Hard Early” Warning model</b>
<b>IA</b>	<b>International Alert</b>
<b>IGAD</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</b>
<b>IGADD</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development</b>
<b>IK</b>	<b>Indigenous Knowledge</b>
<b>ISDSC</b>	<b>Inter-States Defense and Security Committee</b>

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<b>KC</b>	<b>Karamoja Cluster</b>
<b>NCKK</b>	<b>National Council of Churches in Kenya</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>
<b>NIK</b>	<b>Netherlands Institute of International Relations</b>
<b>NRI</b>	<b>National Research Institutions</b>
<b>OAU</b>	<b>Organization for African Unity</b>
<b>OAU/IBAR</b>	<b>Organization of African Unity’s Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources</b>
<b>OMC</b>	<b>Observation Monitoring Centre</b>
<b>OMZ</b>	<b>Observation Monitoring Zones</b>
<b>SADC</b>	<b>Southern Africa Development Community</b>
<b>SEW</b>	<b>“Soft” Early Warning Model</b>
<b>SROMS</b>	<b>Sub-Regional Peace and Security Observation System</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores conflict early warning systems. The case study of the Turkana pastoral community in Karamoja cluster within IGAD sub-region is taken to illustrate indigenous conflict early warning among the pastoral communities. The Turkana community is the largest within the Karamoja Cluster and shares international borders with all the other Karamoja Cluster groups in Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia.

The study looks at the conflicts among the pastoral communities within the Karamoja Cluster. Livestock raiding is identified as the major factor contributing to violent conflicts within the Karamoja Cluster communities. This study explores conflict early warning mechanisms. Regional framework in Africa for conflict prevention and specifically early warning are explored.

Indigenous conflict early warning mechanism among the Turkana community is explored. The study shows that there exists a well-structured, institutionalized and comprehensive indigenous conflict early warning mechanism among the Turkana community. However and unfortunately the mechanism is used as a tool to prepare to attack rather than as a tool for conflict prevention. The study calls for efforts to reverse this trend.

The study concludes by observing that conventional and indigenous conflict early warning mechanisms can enrich each other if integrated, and this is possible. The study recommends the need for enhancing indigenous conflict early warning into a tool for

conflict prevention through retraining the indigenous actors and incorporating indicators, which are sensitive to indigenous knowledge, in information gathering and analysis.

# **CHAPTER ONE – BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS**

## **Introduction**

Conflict prevention, management and resolution remain one of the major challenges facing the international community. Despite technological developments, the abundance of mechanisms and initiatives to address these conflicts, and the institutional capacity for this purpose remains weak. Most conflict prevention has ended up being fire fighting exercises rather than fire prevention. It is for this reason that conflict early warning has gained importance.

Throughout history, human beings have sought to warn and be warned of future calamities. The objective has been to accurately predict and anticipate impending dangers, usually in order to avoid them or at least to be better prepared for them.

Conflict early warning, while a fairly new and developing area, is gaining importance though it remains understudied and underutilized. This is despite the fact that it is a prerequisite for conflict prevention action, which is considered the ideal type of action because war and subsequent deaths would be avoided. It is important to note that even where prevention fails early warning serves a purpose.

The Rwanda genocide and protracted conflicts in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) among others has exposed the weakness of the international community to intervene in a conflict only after it has escalated and lives have been lost. It is from this

background that in current thinking more emphasis is being placed on conflict preventive actions, in which early warning takes greater importance. In response to this shift, regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), are/or have developed a framework for conflict early warning and response mechanisms. One of the segments of the society that IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Management target is the pastoral communities.

Pastoralists in all IGAD countries are becoming increasingly involved in violent clashes and armed struggles against each other, and fights with other social groups like farmers, government troops among others. Livestock rustling has become one of the most pressing problems in IGAD region. This has resulted to a state of insecurity in most parts of the IGAD sub-region.

### **Problem Statement**

The study has been informed by the following questions: What is the nature, type and dynamics of Conflict and Traditional/Indigenous Conflict Early Warning among the pastoral communities? Is the mechanism used to prevent conflict or prepare to attack? Is the mechanism well established or *ad hoc*? How can Traditional Conflict Early Warning be integrated in Conventional Conflict Early Warning and Response Framework?

Despite the recognition of the need to support local capacities for peace in order to secure sustainable and long term conflict prevention, the dominant discourses of conflict prevention focus very much in international capacities for preventive action. The little

focus given to research has been restricted to developing mechanisms for international actions. This is despite the knowledge that locally led initiatives, which are rooted on indigenous people's knowledge, are presumed to be more appropriate in terms of proximity to events and also implied greater understanding of issues within the locality.

Mwaura (1999:2) points out some weaknesses of regional structures and mechanisms in that they often adopt exclusive top-down methodologies and mechanisms, where decisions are made by a few elites without consulting the beneficiaries. They also fail to engage and support local and traditional alternatives and mechanism for conflict prevention. This has been largely as a result of lack of or inadequate understanding and research regarding the nature and manifestation of those local and indigenous capacities.

It is therefore vital that an integrated approach seeking to enhance the effectiveness of conventional mechanism, explore indigenous mechanisms and practices. It is clear, then, that there is a need for a process that seeks to promote and identify existing traditional or locally rooted mechanisms and initiatives. Mwaura, Schmeidl, and Adelman (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:170) are quick to add that articulating the existence of various traditional/indigenous or local mechanisms is a first step towards this goal.

Nomadic pastoralism as a traditional system is currently under pressure, primarily induced by modern development and related social changes. Consequently, pastoralists in all IGAD countries are becoming increasingly involved in violent clashes and armed

struggles against each other, and fights with other social groups like farmers or government troops.

In most cases, violent conflict takes the form of livestock rustling, which is a serious problem affecting all the countries in IGAD sub-region. The weakening and underutilization of traditional conflict prevention and resolution mechanism and the inefficiency of modern legal procedures have not helped the situation.

The Karamoja Cluster, which is the focus of this study, has in the past decade experienced violent conflicts. These have largely been related to political changes and competition over resources. Cattle's rustling among these pastoral communities is also a threat to peace and security.

The term "Karamoja Cluster" (KC) is in use and has been used to describe the pastoral and agro-pastoral ethnic groups, most of whom share a common language, culture, and land. They occupy the area encompassing North-Eastern Uganda, North-Western Kenya, South-Eastern Sudan and South-Western Ethiopia.

Conflict in the Karamoja Cluster revolves around many issues for example violent livestock raids, which is the most well-known and obvious form of conflict. For centuries, raiding other groups for livestock has been a traditional method of replenishing herds in the wake of drought and disease among the pastoral communities. In some way,



this raiding can be seen as a quasi-legitimate sharing of resources, permitting groups on the verge of economic ruin and management.

Conflict in the Karamoja Cluster is frequent, unpredictable and intermittent. It is not steady and unrelenting. It is characterized by periods of relative calm and sudden outbreaks of violence. The conflict can be described as recurrent rather than continuous. Conflict springs particularly from the necessity for groups to share and access sparse and patchy dry land resources.

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Ethnic groups in the cluster are heterogeneous and internal conflicts do arise. Fighting between Turkana clans for example is not uncommon. Territorial and political affiliations have long been fluid in this region. Cross border conflict is also very common among the groups within the cluster. In some cases this result in inter-states conflict threatening the stability within the IGAD sub-region. This is an understandable response to perpetual scarcity of resources and periodic drought. Alliances are political and expedient rather than deeply rooted in a singular cultural or ethnic tradition. This fluidity serves a vital economic function, because it allows pastoralists to avoid the harshest impacts of unpredictable weather patterns and accelerates recovery from catastrophic livestock losses by reducing uncertainty.

This study appreciates that effective early warning and indeed conflict prevention, management and resolutions requires the involvement and participation of local

communities. It calls for drawing from local and traditional knowledge and skills as well as initiatives. The study investigates traditional conflict early warning systems among the pastoral communities within the Karamoja cluster. The IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism draw heavily from the conventional conflict early warning and little if any consideration is given to indigenous conflict early warning. While the IGAD CEWARN identifies pastoral communities as one of its entry points, little has been done to explore and incorporate indigenous sensitive conflict early warning mechanism into the CEWARN.

### **Objectives**

1. To investigate Traditional/Indigenous Conflict Early Warning among the pastoral communities.
2. To investigate and recommend how the Traditional and the Conventional Conflict Early Warning models can be integrated.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Traditional conflict early warning among the pastoral communities serves as a mechanism for violent conflict.
2. Traditional conflict early warning among the pastoral communities serves as a mechanism for conflict prevention.
3. Integration of traditional and conventional conflict early warning will enhance conflict prevention and management among the pastoral communities.

## **Literature Review**

The literature relevant to the study is divided into two sections, that dealing with conflict early warning and that on conflicts in pastoral areas.

There exists rich and extensive literature on the type, nature and dynamics of conflicts, however there is scarcity of literature on conflict early warning. Zartman (1991:369) observes that conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interactions. Although conflicts may turn violent, violence is not an inherent aspect of conflict, but rather a potential form that conflict may take. Mwangiru (2000:9) argues that conflict is rarely abrupt. It develops over time and signs are there for sometime, but people fail to watch for signs of a conflict that is developing.

Bauwens and Reyckler (1994:2) argue that conflict prevention has become a key concept in the discussion of international system's security and peace concerns. The installation of conflict early warning systems stands high on the agenda of conflict prevention. Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:3) assert that conflict early warning systems are playing an even more crucial role in the international arena, in identifying areas at risk of violent conflicts. They add that the development of multi- methodological approaches has brought early warning analysis closer to anticipating rather than predicting crisis that could lead to large-scale humanitarian disaster.

Rupesinghe and Michiko (1992:11) observe that firmly established early warning is a solid management tool for preparedness, prevention and mitigation. Advanced

knowledge through systematic monitoring of root causes of developing situations would better prepare the concerned parties or agencies to take appropriate and timely action aimed at mitigation, negotiations or prevention.

Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:4) notes that early warning systems were first used for the purpose of predicting natural disasters and stock market clashes. In the 1980s with the introduction of models to predict famine and potential refugee flows, early warning was first introduced into humanitarian affairs. This was meant to alert the relief agencies of expanding humanitarian crisis and allow for contingency planning and ensure the timely provision of adequate food, shelter and medication.

Schmeidl and Lopez add that due to human suffering resulting from violent conflicts and subsequent costly post-conflict emergency requirements, humanitarian early warning has developed knowledge based models to help decision makers formulate coherent strategy to prevent or limit destructive effects of violent conflicts. The emphasis in conflict early warning is less on forecasting, but rather on anticipating the potential for crisis. What separates early warning from peace building and conflict mitigation is its implied proactive and not reactive character, with a focus on early rather than late action.

Mwaura (1999:5) points out some weaknesses of regional structures and mechanisms in that they often adopt exclusive top-down methodologies and mechanisms. They also fail to engage and support local and traditional/indigenous alternatives and mechanism for conflicts prevention. This has been largely as a result of lack or inadequate understanding and research regarding the nature and manifestation of those local capacities.

Schmeidl, Adelman, Mwaura (Mwaura and Schmeidl, 2002:167-170) identify two models of conflict early warning. “Hard” Early warning (HEW), which treats early warning and development of conflicts, like a hard science with clear and unequivocal predictions. HEW is interventionist. “Soft” Early warning (SEW) anticipates rather than predicts probable outcomes. It is facilitative. For SEW identification of existing traditional/indigenous or locally rooted initiatives is the first step in developing scenarios for response. However Schmeidl, Adelman and Mwaura suggest that, this is continuously overlooked in favor of external frameworks and strategies. They add that the objectives should be to draw on and support the tools at hand within a particular local context. It is argued that in conflict early warning bottom-up approaches have the advantage of being context specific rather than applying more universal approaches and standard forms of response mechanism. While top-down approach fails, to engage and support local mechanism for conflict prevention that exists and functions at grass roots level.

There exists plenty of literature on the types and nature of conflicts among the pastoral communities in the IGAD sub-region. However, there is scarcity of literature on pastoral communities’ conflict early warning mechanisms. Conflicts in pastoral areas are usually resource centered, that is, struggle over livestock, water and pasture.

The IGAD sub-region has been experiencing recurrent pastoral conflict in quite a long period. Though the conflict takes different dimensions they are all interrelated and threaten peace, security and stability of the sub-region.

Mkutu (2001:7) argues that while pastoral conflicts are frequent, they are also unpredictable and intermittent. Kiplagat (2002:4) supports the argument and adds that, the conflicts are characterized by relative peaceful periods followed by sudden outbreaks of violence.

Nyaba and Otim (2000:11) observe that in spite of their linguistic difference, pastoral communities exhibit similar physical features and identical cultural practices. They intermarry with one another, raid each other in wars, practice livestock theft and even forge alliances with and against one another. However livestock rustling is the most obvious form of pastoral conflict.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has made the situation worse. It has exacerbated livestock rustling and increased criminal activities in the pastoralists' environs. Mkutu (2001:13) observes that pastoralists have long been neglected in government's development policies, which have tended to focus on agriculture and other resources. Vulnerability of environmental variability such as climatic changes is of major concern. Rainfall affects the availability of pasture, water and food. Lack of adequate mechanisms to cope with drought and other emergencies both at local and national level

have increased the tensions and violent conflicts as pastoral communities compete for scarce resources.

Scholars on pastoral conflicts like Mkutu, Nyaba, Otim among others argue that traditional conflict management mechanisms, such as council of elders, traditional courts and peer or age group supervision have been weakened. Mwaura (1999:4) notes that in the field of conflict early warning, definitions often ignore the capacities of local actors to obtain and analyze information while in actual sense they are the best equipped, in terms of local knowledge, language and analytical vigour. Mwaura, Baechler and Kiplagat (2002:61) call for documentation of traditional conflict prevention, management and resolution. This documentation should show the trends of decline of these mechanisms and explain and offer suggestions on how to halt this decline.

Schmeidl, Adelman and Mwaura (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:165-166) see a need to focus on preventing conflicts among the pastoral communities instead of the current focus which aims at retrieving stolen livestock. They also feel that decision making often takes place at the top without taking local perspectives into account. They argue that conflict early warning system depend on the availability of information, which should be gathered through local networks. Local communities are often aware of an impending raid before it occurs.

It is clear from the available literature that there is a need to explore indigenous best practices in the field of conflict early warning. This process of exploration should seek to identify existing traditional or locally rooted mechanisms and articulate them and integrate them into regional institutions and mechanisms.

### **Justification of the Study**

Conflict early warning is a fairly new and evolving area. Despite its importance as a prerequisite for conflict prevention it remains understudied and underutilized. The scarcity of literature in this area is a clear testimony that the field has been under researched.

The study explores traditional/indigenous conflict early warning among pastoral communities, an academic exercise about which little, if any, research has been done. Most of the regional conflict early warning initiatives fail to integrate local and indigenous knowledge. The study suggests and recommends on the importance of local or traditional/indigenous early warning mechanism and how it can be integrated into conventional model.

The study contributes to the theoretical knowledge on conflict early warning and management. The study make a contribution in informing policy makers in government and other actors on traditional/indigenous conflict early warning among the pastoral communities and how best to utilize the mechanisms.



This study intellectually adds value to the field of conflict early warning through articulation of traditional conflict early warning among the pastoral communities.

### **Conceptual Frame Work**

In contemporary conflict early Warning two frameworks are mirrored. That is “Hard” Early Warning (HEW) and “Soft” Early Warning (SEW).

Scholars of conflict early Warning like Adelman, Schmeidl, Mwaura argue that HEW is associated with traditional systems of intelligence gathering which are commonly oriented towards strategic security concern of states in order to safeguard national interest. SEW is based on information and analytical manner that puts more emphasis on human security rather than strategic security.

SEW stresses on the welfare of all stakeholders and advocates for information and its analysis to be developed in a transparent and open system rather than a closed one. However SEW does not object to information being classified and restricted to different levels of users. Schmeidl et al (2002:167) argue that the HEW model is highly centralized and depends on in-house information collection and analysis with emphasis on secrecy and limited levels of access. SEW on the other hand is highly decentralized and emphasizes the involvement of all stakeholders, of which the pastoral communities are part, as it is based on an open system.

Adelman et al. (in Mwaura and Schmeidl, 2002:167-170) assert that HEW presumes that structure and rhythms leading to conflict fit to a pattern of law-like propositions. To them these laws allow us to predict the possibility of a crisis and indicate the most suitable means of intervening in the pattern. This treats conflict early warning like a hard science with clear predictions; on the other hand SEW anticipates rather than predict probable outcome, as its preventive notion is founded on long term planning involving non-military initiatives and linked or managed by local actors. It is dynamic. They argue that in this field, SEW identification of existing traditional or locally rooted initiatives is the first step in developing scenarios for action, though in most situations it is overlooked in favor of conventional frameworks and strategies.

This study has been informed by SEW framework as it recognizes and aims to enhance synergies within local, indigenous and traditional conflict prevention initiative.

## **Methodology**

This study has utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through field visits in Turkana District and the neighboring communities where unstructured interviews were administered to pastoral communities within the Karamoja Cluster and more specifically the Turkana. The target here was the leaders and elders within the communities, as well as other relevant personalities in the NGOs and government.

Secondary data was sourced from a wide range of relevant sources both published and unpublished. Books, journals, periodicals, newspapers as well as the Internet were utilized to provide useful and latest information.

Chapter one gives an overview of the study. Issues addressed include:

- Introduction to the study
- Statement of the research study
- Objectives of the study
- Justification of the study
- Literature review
- Conceptual framework
- Hypothesis

Chapter two gives an overview of the conflicts in Pastoral communities with an emphasis on Karamoja Cluster. Issues addressed include:

- Nature and types of conflicts
- Actors in the conflicts
- Causes of the conflicts and managements of the conflicts

Chapter three explores the conventional conflict early warning; regional conflict warning and response mechanisms in Africa are investigated.

Chapter four investigates Traditional/Indigenous Conflict Early Warning Systems among the pastoral communities in Karamoja Cluster. Issues addressed include:

- How information is gathered
- Which indicators are used
- How information is verified
- How information is utilized
- Whether the system is *ad-hoc* or well established
- Whether the system changed or evolved
- An integration of the conventional and indigenous conflict early warning is attempted.

Chapter five outlines the study's summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO – CONFLICTS IN PASTORAL COMMUNITIES: OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This chapter attempts to give an overview of the conflicts in pastoral communities. Focus is given to pastoral communities in Karamoja cluster and in particular Turkana and the neighboring communities. The chapter outlines the types, nature, causes and actors in the conflict. Finally, some intervention mechanisms that have been attempted, and the results realized, are also discussed.

### **Pastoral Community**

For the purpose of this study the term pastoral community is used to refer to a group of people that belong to a cohesive demographic unit such as a tribe or clan whose dominant economic activity is the herding of domestic livestock. Njeru (1996:4) observes that pastoralists are those populations whose livelihood is based largely on animal products like milk, meat, hides, skins, fat and urine, among others. The animals that are kept include cattle, goats, camels, donkeys, sheep and many others. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (1988:64) estimated that there are up to 40 million pastoralists in the world's dry lands, with up to 15 million of them being found in the Horn of Africa region.

Netting (1977:42) notes that pastoral ecologies have inadequate and erratic rainfalls, with short, and at times no, grass. In such environments pastoralism is the most viable and sure way of survival. This is the situation that characterizes most of the pastoral areas in

the IGAD sub-region, which can be referred as Arid and Semi-Arid lands (ASAL). These areas exhibit extremely dry conditions, which limit their use to livestock keeping, which is commonly structured in the form of nomadic pastoralism. Kimani (2002:1) argues that pastoral areas are usually conflict prone as conflicts have traditional retaliation patterns, which is characterized by people being injured, killed or displaced; property being stolen, raided or destroyed; socio-cultural demands that dictated demonstration of bravely and courage for initiation purposes. This is complicated by prevalence of illegal firearms and the threat or use of them.

### **What Is Conflict?**

There are wide range definitions of conflict. Lund (1997:2) sees conflict as being present when two or more parties perceive that their interests are incompatible and express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. He views interests in terms of resources, power, identity and status among others. Blalock (1989:7) views conflict as the intentional mutual exchange of negative sanctions, or punitive behavior by two or more parties, which may be individuals, corporate actors, or more loosely knit quasi-groups.

Boulding (1962:5) sees conflict as a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other. Pruitt and Rubin (1986:4) view conflict as a perceived divergence of interests, or belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously.

Mail et al (1999:19-20) define conflict as the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. Mitchell (1981:15-17) view conflict as a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals, which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other but not both.

What is clear from these definitions is that for there to be a conflict there must be at least two parties, and each of the party is mobilizing its energy to achieve a certain goal and each of the party involved perceives the other party as an obstacle or threat to the achievement of the goal.

## **Study Area**

### **The Karamoja Cluster**

Minear (2001:7) and Halderman et al (2002:16) use the term Karamoja Cluster to refer to pastoral communities who share a common language, culture, and occupy the land area encompassing North-Eastern Uganda, North Eastern Kenya, South Eastern Sudan and South Western Ethiopia. There are 14 core tribes in the Karamoja cluster as shown below.

## The Karamoja Cluster



Source Halderman et al (2002:17)

### The Turkana

The Turkana community resides in Turkana District, which measures 77,000 square kilometers and occupies the northwestern part of Kenya. It is the largest District in Kenya, with seventeen divisions, which include Central, Kalokol, Turkwel, Katilu, Loima, Lokori, Lomelo, Lokitaung, Kaaling, Kakuma, Kabish and Oropoi. It shares international borders with Ethiopia to the Northeast, Sudan to the northwest and Uganda to the west. Therefore cross-border conflicts are common. Within Kenya, the District



borders Marsabit to the east, Samburu to the Southeast and Baringo and West Pokot Districts to the South.

The 1999 National population census estimated the Turkana District population to be 450,860 reflecting an annual growth rate of 2.5% since 1989 when it had a population of 184,058. The Turkana District Development Plan, 1997-2001, shows that the population in the district is unevenly distributed, with some divisions like Kibish having a low population of 3,974 while division such as Central and Lokitaung having a population of 71,513 and 38,040 respectively. The distribution and settlement pattern in the district shows that places with good pastures and water ponds tend to have high population density. Such is the case with north west Turkana in urban centers like Lodwar, Lokichogio, Lokitaung, Katilu, Loriu and Kainuk.

The district is characterized by warm and hot climate. The temperature ranges between 24°C and 38°C with a mean of 30°C. Rainfall comes in two seasons, the long rains in April-July and the short rains in October-November. The rainfall pattern and distribution is unreliable. It ranges between 120 mm to 500mm.

The main economic activity in Turkana is livestock production. The main types of livestock reared include cattle, camels, donkeys, goats and sheep that provide products such as hides, skins, meat, milk and ghee. The highest numbers of livestock are found in Lokitaung and Lokori divisions.

Turkana land is a semi-desert plain consisting of sand, rock beds and scattered volcanic ranges. The vegetation varies from desert to dwarf shrubs with scattered thorn bush. Mburugu and Hussein, (2002:8) observes that in the Northwest Turkana, the vegetation consists of grasses such as *Cynodon Dactylon*. In the central area, the vegetation is very poor and the ground cover is less than five percent. Along the water courses, the vegetation consists of higher acacia trees, palms, and in some places quite thick thorn scrubs. This observation is supported by Soper, (1986:22-24), Mburugu and Hussein, (2002:7).

Information gathered from a field visit in Turkana indicates that the Turkana trace their origin from a myth of a heroine that says that Turkana originated from the Jie people in Uganda. They believe that they entered their cave-land (a turkan) through Trach River, near the hill called *Moru Anaycee* (hill of Nayece). Ever since breaking off from the Jie, the Turkana have further disintegrated into fifteen (15) clans namely; Ngikwatela, Ngisinger, Ngiyapakuno, Ngifukimong, Ngisir, Ngilikiokola, Ngiwoikwara, Ngibocoros, Nginyangataok, Ngimataperi, Ngikamatak, Ngimonia, Ngisonyoka, Ngikebokok and Ngibilae.

Turkana District just like other arid and semi-arid pastoralist districts within the IGAD-sub-region suffer from government neglect and marginalization. The area is so insecure that people have to get police escort in order to move from one area to another. Poor infrastructure like roads, water supply, health facilities, in most areas the lack of electricity characterizes the entire district.

## **Types and Causes of Conflict in the Karamoja Cluster**

Conflict in the Karamoja Cluster, just like in other pastoral communities, revolves around many issues. However violent livestock raiding is the most well known and obvious form of conflict.

Galaty (1981:5) and Halderman (2002:27) observe that raiding among the pastoralists for livestock has been a traditional method of replenishing herds in the wake of drought and disease. From a discussion with the Turkana community elders, it is clear that traditionally they distinguish stealing livestock from raiding livestock. In stealing livestock 2-5 individuals are involved and this takes place at night, this is an activity that the Turkana hold in contempt. The Turkana recognize and believe that they are professionals in livestock raiding which involves 20 to 500 young men, who are supposed to bring home thousands of heads of livestock. Therefore the size of the group of warriors is a clear indicator of the nature and type of livestock stealing or raiding to be carried out and the likely damage. Banditry is another form of violence that in recent times is being witnessed in pastoral areas. This is blamed on the young men who are unemployed and either have dropped out of school or have never been to school all together.

The Turkana engage in conflict with a good number of others tribes within the Karamoja Cluster, for example the Toposa, Nyangatom, Merille, Pokot and Dodoth. A good relationship exists between the Turkana and Matheniko as well as with Didinga. The Pokot engage in conflict with Turkana, Pian, Matheniko and Bokora all of whom they

describe as their traditional enemies. The Pokots have a good relationship with Sebei and Tepeth. This was confirmed during a field visit.

Certain tribes within the Karamoja Cluster forge alliance of conveniences in order to raid other tribes. Hence the alliance among the groups in the Karamoja Cluster changes frequently. This observation is supported by Nyaba and Otim (2000:4) and Halderman et al (200:8). Interestingly the Turkana and Matheniko have been able to sustain their good relationship since 1973. This was as a result of a sacrificial ceremony and dialogue that the two communities carried out to bring about peace. It is also argued that the two communities have with time realized that they mutually need each other and it is only through maintaining a peaceful relationship that maximum benefits can be gained.

The Turkana community in Kenya is the largest of the Karamoja Cluster. It neighbors most of the Karamoja Cluster communities. It, therefore, finds itself in conflict with most of the communities within the Karamoja Cluster for example, the Turkana engage in conflict with Toposa of Sudan. The two communities share a language, the Karamojong. Helderman et al. (2002:119) observe that the two groups are very well armed.

The Turkana of Kenya and Pokot in (Kenya and Uganda) consider one another as traditional enemies and are in conflict most of the times. Mburugu and Hussein (2002:33-34) and Halderman et al. (2002:110-113) argue that the enmity between the two community stems from colonial times when the Turkana were pacified by British colonial authorities in military expeditions in early 1920s. This was because it was perceived that

Turkana supported Ethiopia expansion effort. It is in this regard that the Turakana obtained modern firearms from Ethiopia, which helped them fight the British as well as raid their neighbors. In the same vein the Pokot got support from the British.

Another conflict that has its roots in the colonial period is between Pokot (in Kenya and Uganda) and the Karamonjong (Pian, Matheniko and Bokara) who consider themselves as traditional enemies.

Halderman et al. (2002:105) note that the British colonial authorities in the 1920s allowed the Pokot to settle on some part of Karamojong land; a situation that makes the Karomojong bitter to date.

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The use of resources can be cited as the major contributing factor to conflicts in pastoral areas. Kimani (2002:1-2) observes that conflicts based on natural resources emanate mainly from the struggle for access, control, use and ownership of the resources. Certain communities who assume entitlement to natural resources may feel that they are denied access and by extension control over the resources. It is in such circumstances that such community attempts by all means to seek or claim exclusive control of the resources, this results in conflict as it is against the nomadic spirit that requires access to resources wherever they are available.

Disputes over the use of and access to grazing areas do arise and in most cases result in violent conflict. Claims over drought reserves and the attitude that one can graze at any

place act as a catalyst to conflicts among pastoral communities. Struggle over ownership, access and right to use water resources is also common. Poor management of drought reserves and water reserves often leads to conflicts.

By their nature pastoral areas are prone to severe drought. Mkutu (2001:10) notes that drought in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia in recent times has resulted in the loss of lives and in the decline in livestock by 60 to 70 percent, in pastoral areas. Drought in the pastoral areas results in water and pasture scarcity leading to overcrowding of livestock around available water points and grazing drought reserves. This circumstance generates tension which may yield to violent conflict among different pastoral communities as they compete over scarce water and pasture.

It can be argued that conflicts in pastoral areas in most cases spring from the need to access and share drought resources and water points. The introduction of private land tenure in place of communal land tenure in some pastoral areas challenged the traditional practice of sharing resources. This has in most cases acted as a catalyst to violent conflicts as different groups attempt to control or access certain natural resources. Halderman et al. (2002:28-29) points out that maintaining the pastoralist way of life forces the groups involved to engage in constant negotiation over use and access of available drought reserves and water. The fact that you may need your neighbors' resources next time helps in facilitating consensus. However, it is important to note that some groups break or fail to honour agreements reached resulting in violent conflict.

Livestock rustling is a traditional activity among the pastoral communities. Mkutu (2001:7) notes that pastoral communities engage in livestock rustling by raiding neighboring communities and taking away their animals as a means of increasing, restocking and obtaining livestock. This view is supported by Nyaba and Otim, (2000:18-19) who argue that pastoralists' traditions, culture, songs, stories and dances highlight the existence of livestock rustling. In fact, warriors, on return from successful raids, have ululation and other songs of praise welcome them. Among those in hand to welcome them are potential brides.

However, Mkutu (2001:7) argues that traditional livestock rustling did not involve killing people. It was only meant to replenish lost herds following drought or diseases. A warrior (Moran) who killed during raids had to be cleansed before interacting with the rest of the community members. However, the situations have changed and present livestock raiding has become bloody and violent. The weapons used are more sophisticated when compared to the arrows and spears that were used in older days.

Halderman et al. (2002:52) observe that livestock raiding have of recent times taken a commercial angle, within the Karamoja Cluster. They argue that powerful, wealthy individuals, including livestock traders, arm dealers and others, sponsor the raids. Young men are hired to carry out raid and are provided with sophisticated weapons. The livestock stolen is transported even using trucks without official government permits for movement of livestock. This has clearly posed a dangerous challenge to the traditional raiding. It means that with the commercialization of livestock raids, the value of

livestock is no longer cultural but is subject to market forces. Therefore the control and limits on raiding cease to be governed by traditional rules resulting in the increase in violent raids, revenge killing and, hence, perpetual violent conflict.

Kimani (2002:2) argues that whereas, there are clear cut traditional procedures among pastoral communities on the movement of livestock during dry seasons, they are not comprehensive enough to reflect the changes that take one place in the community in contemporary times. Mkutu (2001:9) argues that institutions like the council of elders that helped in regulating the behavior of young people have been weakened, as wealth has replaced wisdom as a mark of one's status in the society. Those endowed with money and large herds of livestock are listened to and seen as role models by the young people. The question of how the wealth has been acquired is no longer important. In search for wealth some pastoral communities exploit what Kimani (2002:3) calls shared traits and values that encourage livestock raiding and killing an enemy in the battle field which, in most cases, earns one high respect in the society.

In recent times bride price that one has to pay in order to get married has gone very high among the pastoral communities. Discussions in the field indicated that one needs about 50-200 heads of cattle. This has made many prospective bridegrooms to engage in livestock raiding. The other cultural trait that encourages livestock raiding is the tauting by girls and women, using songs and dances. They encourage young men to prove that they are "men enough" by gaining wealth through livestock raiding. Tribal prophets and seers encourage the youth to raid and in most cases bless them.



This is because the seers and prophets get a share of livestock after a successful raid. The “*Ngimuron*” (fortune-tellers or fore seers) are very important in the lives of Karamoja Cluster groups. It is very unlikely that a raid will be carried out against any community without it being predicted by an “*Emuron*”. The warning from foreseers is therefore an indicator of an impending raid. Hence any conflict prevention mechanism targeting the groups in Karamoja Cluster must involve and ensure participation of the *ngimuron* for there to be tangible success.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in pastoral areas and more so among the Karamoja Cluster is a major factor contributing to exacerbation of violent conflicts among the pastoral communities. Kimani (2002:10) observes that most male youth of 15 years and above, among the pastoralists areas in IGAD sub-region, either own firearms or have easy access to them. During a field visit, it was common to find warriors, men and even women with highly sophisticated weapons like the AK47 casually hanging across their shoulders as they graze their livestock. Some were even very kind to teach this researcher how to handle and use the firearm. A study by Kamenju et al. (2003:68) indicates that there are approximately a total of 127,519 illegal arms in the North Rift region of Kenya. The study further shows that in terms of illegal arms there are 66,239 in Turkana, 36,937 in West Pokot, 16,478 in Samburu 7,773 in East Baringo and 92 in Marakwet. The demand for small arms can be said to be increasing among the pastoral communities. They argue that arms are necessary to enable them protect their people against aggression from neighboring communities.

The feeling among the pastoral communities in IGAD sub-region that the governments have neglected and marginalized them, complicates the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Halderman et al. (2002:44) observes that a strong anti-pastoralist bias exists in the dominant society who mostly are agriculturists and practice sedentary way of life. They argue that pastoral systems of natural resources use and management and the pastoral culture are not understood or accepted by the dominant culture which, in most cases practice sedentary way of life.

In some quarters they are seen as primitive and backward. This view informs the leaders of dominant cultures whose needs and aspirations are mirrored in government policies. This marginalization and neglect result to a culture of violence as there are no effective policing mechanisms. Discussions with pastoralist in Karamoja cluster indicate that, often they are cold-blooded murders occasioned by violent robbery or indiscriminate attacks among different communities. Such situations always lead to revenge and counter attacks. There is easy access to firearms and their misuse exacerbates a culture of violent conflicts and more so when people have no fear or faith in the government security machinery.

Limited access to education, health services, safe water and poverty in general compared to other communities makes pastoralists feel further marginalized and neglected. The failure by governments in the IGAD sub-region to address the human wildlife conflicts which are frequent in pastoralist areas makes them view the government negatively.

Mkutu, (2002:10) observes that access by pastoralists to water and pasture, especially during the dry seasons, has been greatly hindered by the excision of game reserves and national parks from pastoral areas. The pastoralist in most cases are viewed as a major threat to the ecosystem as their activities are seen as leading to over-grazing, degradation of soil, and a threat to wildlife.

Most of the pastoral communities in the IGAD sub-region extend across national, regional and international boundaries. Therefore politicization of conflict and the regional instability has direct effect on pastoral communities. A discussion with Turkana elders indicate that the Turkana believe that the former government in Kenya favored the Pokots and that was a major contributing factor to violent conflicts between the two communities.

Regional conflicts account for proliferation of firearms and the general insecurity in pastoral areas. The Sudan conflict pitting the Northern Sudanese Muslims and the mainly Christians Southerners is a serious problem within the IGAD-sub region. Halderman et al. (2002:47) observe that the Somalia inter-clan conflict has been blamed as the single largest source of small arms within the IGAD sub-region. The Uganda conflict between government forces and Lords Resistance Army (LRA) is also of major concern in the sub-region. It is hoped that IGAD will be able to resolve these conflicts.

## **Effects of the Conflicts**

The effects of violent conflict among the pastoral communities have been serious. Many people have lost their lives or been injured and property lost or destroyed. In general the result has been impoverishment of the people.

The existence of widespread conflict is a major obstacle to development activities in the IGAD sub-region. It reduces the willingness of development and humanitarian workers and government officials to work in the areas. This acts as an impediment to economic and social activities aimed at long-term self-sustenance of the people and the reduction of poverty in general.

In fact violent conflict retards development as schools and health centers are closed or destroyed and in some cases, causes displacement of people. Conflict forces pastoralists to remain in or move to safer areas hence interfering with the normal movements of livestock and people which are central to the pastoralists systems of natural resources management.

## **Interventions Strategies**

The intervention strategies in pastoralists' conflicts in IGAD sub-region have been in the past reactive and not proactive. The pastoral communities believe that the best intervention strategy for them is either offensive in revenge or as pre-emptive measures.

The governments within the region have not come up with a collective intervention strategy. Respective governments individually carry out military operations aiming at disarming the pastoralists, which only serve to alienate the government from the people. The governments within the sub-region also individually encourage the pastoralists within their respective countries to voluntarily hand in illegal arms with the aim of disarming the communities. However, this is only done when illegal arms in the hands of pastoralists threaten the internal security of a given country.

Church organizations and other humanitarian organizations like the National Council of churches in Kenya, Catholic Church, Oxfam, World Vision, POKATUSA and the Organization of African Unity's Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources (OAU/IBAR), Africa Peace Forum (APFO), Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) among others have initiated activities and programmes aimed at addressing conflicts in pastoral areas. However, there is a lack of proper co-ordination of the activities of these organizations and duplication is common.

## **CHAPTER THREE – CONFLICT EARLY WARNING**

### **Introduction**

This chapter gives an overview of conflict early warning, regional conflict early warning frameworks in Africa, and types and conceptual framework of conflict early warning. The OAU, SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD sub-region Conflict Prevention Mechanisms are explored. The IGAD CEWARN is looked at in more details as it identifies pastoral communities as one of its entry points. Keyserlingk, (2003) notes that IGAD sub region is home to more than fifteen million pastoralists which is about 38% of the total world population of pastoralists. CEWARN basis, actors, legal framework, information gathering, decision-making structure and process are outlined.

### **Conflict Early Warning**

Conflict early warning falls within the wider spectrum of conflict prevention. Indeed conflict early warning is a prerequisite for conflict prevention. The spirit of conflict prevention is mirrored in the much cited, *Agenda for Peace*, where the then United Nations Secretary General Boutros –Ghai, (1992:2), defines it as; “*Action to prevent dispute from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.*” Brecke, (Gurr and Davies 1998:122) sees conflict early warning as being a component of preventive diplomacy.

Mail et al. (1999:97-127) distinguish two general types of active measures to prevent conflict; light prevention and deep prevention. Light prevention generally means improving the international capacity to intervene in conflicts before they become violent,

through, for instant, preventive diplomacy. Deep prevention means enhancing and building domestic, regional or international capacity and frameworks to prevent and manage conflict. In both deep and light preventive measures, prudent decision making and effective conflict prevention measures require a capacity to anticipate and analyze possible conflicts and to be warned in time about development that threaten peace and security in a particular region which, is a key element of conflict early warning. In fact early warning of a potential escalation of tensions or threats is essential to be able to come up with preventive measures and strategies in the early stages of conflict development in order to achieve higher chances of success.

Harff (Gurr and Davies, 1998:71) observes that the ability to detect conflict before it occurs has the benefits of a possibility of saving lives and property. Ozcelik (2002:2) argues that preventive diplomacy as early as possible is the least complex, the most humane and the most cost effective path for international community to take in resolving conflicts. This means that the conflicts must be detected early enough.

Conflict early warning can be defined (FEWER, 1997:1) as the *“systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of; (a) anticipating the escalation of violent conflict (b) the development of strategic responses for these crises and (c) the presentation of options to critical actors for the purpose of decision-making”*. Schmeidl and Lopez (2003:4) observe that early warning systems were first used for the purpose of predicting natural disasters and stock market crashes.

This spreads to other fields like famine and other forms of disaster. Schmid (1998:37-38) argue, that historically, the concept of early warning was borrowed into conflict prevention discourses from the needs posed by cold war's nuclear deterrence policy. He further argues that, distance early warnings were positioned in Alaska and Canada by Americans to detect incoming Soviet aircraft and missiles. This task was later taken over by satellites monitoring the launching silos in which intercontinental ballistic missiles are stored. Diller (1997:7) argues that early warning systems are mechanisms or set of procedures designed to detect, process and communicate signals of potential or impending threat to allow early response to prevent or mitigate negative impact.

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations (NIIR) (1996:11) notes that, the broad definition of early warning used in conflict field is one indicating the period before a situation or tension generates into a conflict. The International Alert (1995:5) observes that conflict early warning is the backbone to conflict prevention, as it involves identification of tensions and potential crises that may escalate into conflict, and developing response mechanisms to prevent it.

McCarthy (1997:15) argues that in conflict early warning the threat to conflict must be communicated early enough to decision makers so that action can be taken to prevent conflict. Dorn (1997:162), indicates that threats must be brought to the attention of recognized authority like government in internal threats, or the United Nations security council in case of international threat. Jongman and Schmid (1994:3) argue that the



warning should be issued by a source that has authority with target groups, otherwise it might be ignored or the wrong action might be taken.

Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:4) advance that gathering or collection of information using specific indicators; analysis of that information attaching meaning to indicators, setting it into context, recognizing crisis development; formulation of best and worst case scenarios and response options and communicating all that to decision makers are the key components of conflict early warning. Leatherman et al. (1999:27), and Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:4) observe that conflict early warning is based on a proactive character rather than a reactive one.

All the above definitions are conventional, that is, Warren (1993:2-5) argues that the terms conventional knowledge is used to describe that knowledge by a given community from the international knowledge system sometimes also called “Western” systems, which is generated through research by institutions like universities, governments and research centers, among others. The conventional definition in conflict early warning fails to recognize the existence of indigenous or traditional conflict early warning. This fact is also appreciated by Mwaura (1999:4) who argues that in conflict early warning discourses, definitions fail and ignore the local actors capacity to gather and analyze information while in the real sense they are best placed in terms of local knowledge, language, proximity to events and analytical ability.

The question that arises from the definition of conflict early warning is what constitutes “early”? Dorn (2002:3) argues that “early” is good enough if it is in time for an effort at conflict prevention. Dorn further argues that, the character of an early warning can be measured on the scales of time, that is how early the warning is issued and intensity, that is, how strong the warning is. A balance point has to be reached in practice between these two, which will depend largely on the nature of the threat. There is a consensus among scholars of conflict early warning that a desirable early warning period for most conflict would be one to six months.

Gurr and Davies (1998:2) and Schmeidl (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:70), argue that the goal of conflict early warning is proactive engagement in the earliest stages of potential conflict or crises to prevent or at least alleviate their more destructive expressions.

Bakker (2000:45) borrowing from FEWER, provides criteria for a good early warning system: that it should enhance partnership and direct lines of communication between local, national, regional and international organization; promote partnership and co-operation between the non-governmental sector, academic, governments and inter-governmental agencies; regular monitoring, collection and analysis of information from open sources about the outbreak, resurgence or escalation of violent conflict; identifying and assessing potential opportunities for conflict prevention and peace making; providing realistic, impartial and feasible policy options to influential actors at the local, national, regional and international level that would help in supporting sustainable peace.

Conflict early warning requires ability to sniff tension or trouble in its early stage and subsequently take action to preempt it. Leatherman et al. (1999:36-39) argue that for conflict early warning systems to be effective, the initial information-gathering phase of early warning should cast a fairly wide net to gain a complete and comprehensive picture as much as possible. They further argue that the instrument of conflict early warning mechanism have to be streamlined and conceptualized according to relevant criteria and that information produced must be user-friendly and designed to specific decision needs and the early warning message must be continuous and consistent.

This has a basis as Carment and Garner (1998:5-6) advance that conflict early warning is a process and that the policy relevance of this process stems directly from the fact that conflict early warning mechanisms are not restricted to only analyzing a conflict, but also to assessing the capacities, needs and responses for dealing with a conflict. This makes the central purpose of conflict early warning not only the identification of potential problems, but also the creation of the necessary political will for preventive action to be taken. Odera et al. (2000:51-53) identify some steps for early warning in conflict situations and in the development of response mechanisms. They call for the need to understand the conflict context including the fundamental factors that contribute to conflict as well as peace, conflict indicators and more importantly they emphasize the need for evaluating the situation thoroughly.

## **Information Gathering**

Collection of information is a crucial and a very vital step in any early warning system. This process holds the key to the outcome of the analysis, risk assessment and the eventual development of the nature and type of response mechanisms to be put in place. Walker (1989:144-145) identifies some attributes that should be used to judge information gathered for an early warning system, which include; clarity, the information gathered must be unambiguous, giving the precise nature and type of threat. The information must be accurate. For a conflict situation it must accurately indicate where the threat is from. The information must have significance to the target group, for example if the threat has any bearing in their lines. The information must be timely; information is of little value if it arrives late, for preventive action cannot be taken, as the damage is likely to have been caused. The information must be adequate by providing all the necessary facts to enable a decision to be made promptly. The information must be valid for it to be useful. Cost consideration must be put in place when designing or embarking on information gathering. The person(s) being asked to gather information must be in a position to understand the inner workings of the community and to be in a position to recognize fundamental early warning and causes of the conflict.

## **Indicators of Conflict Early Warning**

Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:9) observe that in conflict early warning there exist different types of indicators ranging from long, medium and short-term. The indicators focus on root or structural, proximate, and triggering factors. They argue that root or structural cause as indicators refer to general structure and deep-rooted background conditions; and

that there are underlying events and conditions that have existed for many years which, are mostly static or only change slowly over time. They tend to be embedded in historical or cultural contexts. Proximate cause reflects medium term conditions and emerging socio-political and economic trends. Triggering causes are short term in nature.

Recent catastrophes in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Sudan, Yugoslavia among others have awoken the international community to realization that it may be easier to deal with conflicts at the earliest stage; hence the growing consensus on the importance of conflict early warning and response mechanisms. In favor of conflict early warning Brecke, (Gurr and Davies 1998:122-125) champions the development and use of computerized Conflict Alert Systems (CASs) to provide information. Brecke argues that CASs will generate conflict alerts sufficiently far in advance of the conflict outbreaks or escalation to help initiate actions to prevent the conflict or deal with its consequences. CASs must be able to provide their users with a probability or confidence assessment of the alert and be able say for example when we have seen a situation like this in the past, 90 percent of the time a conflict has erupted within 12 months. CASs would also specify what type of conflict is likely to erupt or what is likely to be the nature of a conflict escalation.

Brecke further argues that CASs needs to provide a time varying probability assessment of when a conflict is likely to erupt or escalate. Such a probability assessment requires a CAS that generates its alert on the basis of how the current situation in any particular

locality country, region or month compares to situations in the past that subsequently become conflicts.

The CASs must be firmly grounded in historical cases, yet be generalized from those cases so that new pre-conflicts situations can be recognized. CASs should be able to provide background information about the situations and the alert, such as the current and past economic, demographic and political circumstances in the region of interest. It is however, important that the CASs gain confidence of analysts as well as decision-makers. It must be easy to use and understand.

### **Open and Closed Conflict Early Warning**

Adelman, Schmeidl and Mwaura (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:169-174) distinguish two types of conflict early warning. That is, “closed”, also called Hard Early Warning (HEW), and “open”, also called Soft Early Warning (SEW). HEW they argue is associated with “traditional” systems of intelligence gathering of information commonly geared towards states strategic security concerns and protection of their national human security and interests. On the other hand SEW, has as its concern the welfare of all stakeholders. In SEW, the gathering and analysis of information is done in a transparent manner that is all-inclusive. HEW relies on secrecy, it is highly centralized institutions wise, uses quantitative methods, its goals are prediction, its formulation is based on universal laws and the results follow a universal pattern. SEW in terms of institutions is highly decentralized, its goals are anticipation of conflicts, it uses qualitative methods, its formulation is based on context-dependant and its results follow a dynamic pattern.

SEW is bottom-up in approach while HEW is top-down. The advantage of SEW is that it emphasizes the identification of existing indigenous or traditional or locally rooted initiatives and knowledge as the first step in developing scenarios for response. The use of the bottom-up approach is relevant to this study as it has the advantage of being context-specific rather than applying more universal approaches and standardized forms of response mechanism. The context-specific approach is ideal when dealing with indigenous conflict early warning, as it is dynamic, regionally and culturally specific.

### **Regional Conflict Early Warning Frameworks in Africa**

One of the most distinguishing features of the African continent is its many violent conflicts. This has been an embarrassment not only to the leaders of African states but to the populace in general. The realization by African people that they hold the key to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the continent is appreciable. This is evident in the efforts to develop conflict early warning and response frameworks that can anticipate conflict and devise the most effective response mechanisms on the basis of the nature of the conflict, its context and dynamics. Mwaura (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:99) observe that African frameworks for conflict prevention and resolution have been marked by a stress on formal and intergovernmental structures with formal commitments. This has tended to alienate the non-state actors who are crucial to any conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts.

### **The Organization of African Unity (OAU)**

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU) of which most African states are members, in its efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in Africa created the Division of Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution within the General Secretariat of the OAU in March 1992. This was followed by the establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution by the Heads of states and Governments, in Cairo in June 1993. This was seen by many observers as a good departure from the *ad hoc* arrangements hitherto employed by the OAU to tackle conflicts. Mwaura notes that despite all the efforts to establish and operationalize a conflict early warning and response mechanism within OAU little was achieved. AU has inherited the OAU problems, but it has started on a good footing and there is optimism that such a mechanism will be put in place.

### **The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)**

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is composed of fourteen member states namely, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Malawi, Seychelles, Lesotho, Angola, Mauritius, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Botswana and Mozambique. The SADC started attempting to come up with a peace and security mechanism in 1994. In 1996 members proposed the establishment of the organ for Politics, Defense and Security. However disagreements between South Africa, that wanted the organ under SADC and Zimbabwe that argued for the organ to be independent made SADC members result to the Inter-State Defense and Security Committee (ISDSC). The ISDSC is made up of the Ministry of Defense, Home Affairs and Security, within the member states, and may call upon ministries of foreign affairs if



need arises. The ISDCS mostly involves defense and intelligence departments. Within the SADC sub-region no clear and operational conflict early warning and response mechanism has been established.

### **The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS)**

The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) has sixteen members drawn from West Africa, these are; Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Niger, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Liberia, Mali, Benin, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ghana, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. On December 10, 1999, in Lome, Togo, ECOWAS heads of state signed a protocol establishing a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which remain theoretical and not practical, as it has not been fully established. The ECOWAS conflict early warning system is known as the Sub-Regional Peace and Security Observation System (SROMS) and draws its mandate from chapter V of the protocol, it is important to note that the system is not yet operational. However a structure exists. There is an Observation Monitoring Center (OMC) located at the ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria. There are four zones that are known as Observation and Monitoring Zones (OMZ) each with its own headquarters. The four zones are:

- Zone 1: Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal, the headquarters are in Banjul, Gambia.
- Zone 2: Ivory cost, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, headquarters in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
- Zone 3: Liberia, Guinea, Ghana and Sierra Leone, headquarters in Monrovia Liberia.

**Zone 4: Algeria, Benin and Togo, headquarters in Cotonou in Benin.**

The Defense and Security Commission (DSC) is the most immediate end-user of the early warning reports produced at the SROMS. The DSC is made up of the Chiefs of defense staff, officers responsible for internal affairs and security, experts to the ministries of foreign affairs, heads of the immigration, customs, drug and narcotic agencies. Border guards and civil protection may also be invited. The DSC meets every three months and examines reports from the OMCs and makes recommendation to Mediation and Security Council (MSC); which consists of nine member states who serve for two-years renewable term and meets twice a year, which then decides what action to take. It is clear then that ECOWAS conflict prevention is military orientated in character.

The OAU, SADC and ECOWAS conflict prevention can be described as being state actors centered. These mechanisms fail to appreciate the role of non-state actors in conflict early warning systems. The mechanisms are a good example of Hard Early Warning where more emphasis is placed on the military.

#### **The IGAD Sub-Region Conflict Early Warning And Response Mechanism (CEWARN)**

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is made up of seven countries namely. Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somali. IGAD was originally known as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), which was created to coordinate member states efforts in preventing drought and desertification. However, members felt that IGADD would provide a forum to

address socio-economic issues within the sub-region and in April 18, 1995 in an extraordinary summit of heads of state and government, member states with exceptional of Somalia met and resolved to expand its mandate.

IGAD added as its aim the desire to promote peace and security in the sub-region and create a mechanism within the sub-region for the prevention, management and resolution of intra and inter-state conflicts through dialogue.

Keyserlingk Niels (2003) observes that within the Horn of Africa there are about 5,000,000 small arms, about 50% of civil wars and about 57% inter-state conflicts in Africa are in Horn of Africa. The Eastern Africa region has the highest percentage, 79.4% (189 million people) of population affected by conflicts in the world. In the IGAD region there are currently approximately thirty potentially threatening inter-communal conflicts and a collapsed state (Somalia), due to internal conflicts.

This is compounded by a great number of endemic pastoral conflicts and continued threat of inter-state wars due to cross-border inter-communal and inter-clan conflicts. It is from this background that a mechanism to prevent conflicts within IGAD, Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), attempts to offer this needed framework for conflict prevention.

Mwagiru (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:119), observe that CEWARN was conceived as a mechanism that would enable the IGAD sub-region to systematically anticipate and

respond to various conflicts currently affecting the sub-region .The IGAD member states approved the protocol establishing CEWARN on January 2002 in Khartoum during their ninth (9) summit. Keyserling (2003) notes that the aims of CEWARN are:

- To enable member states to prevent conflicts in border areas from developing into violent conflicts on a greater scale.
- To enable local communities to play an important part in preventing violent conflicts.
- To enable IGAD secretariat to pursue conflict prevention in the sub-region.
- To provide technical and financial support.

To achieve its objectives IGAD CEWARN hopes to promote the exchange of information and collaboration among member states on early warning and response on the basis of the timeliness, transparency, cooperation and free flow of information principles; gather, verify, process, and analyze information about conflicts and communicate all such information and analysis to decision makers of IGAD policy organs.

Specifically, the early warning functions of CEWARN include receiving information and reports from National Research Institutions (NRIs) and Conflict Early Warning Early Response Units (CEWERUs), process and analyze such information, bring that analyzed information to the attention of the secretarial, provide the necessary feedback to the NRI and CEWERUs, disseminate such information as it is authorized, update and synthesize information, , set standards, monitor and coordinate information collection and reporting,

promote dialogue on information and analysis, network among information gathering organizations and verify information received from NRIs and CEWERUs.

### **How CEWARN Works**

IGAD (2003) indicates that CEWARN has five steps in its working process.

- First is the collection of raw data by the National Research Institutions (NRIs) and CEWERUs of member states.
- Second is the processing of collected data in a conflict database.
- Third is the data analysis by Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (CPMR) experts.
- Fourth is the development of appropriate scenarios and recommending early response policies.
- Fifth is the early response by member countries in order to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

### **IGAD CEWARN Structure**

The IGAD CEWARN structure can be described as having four arms namely:

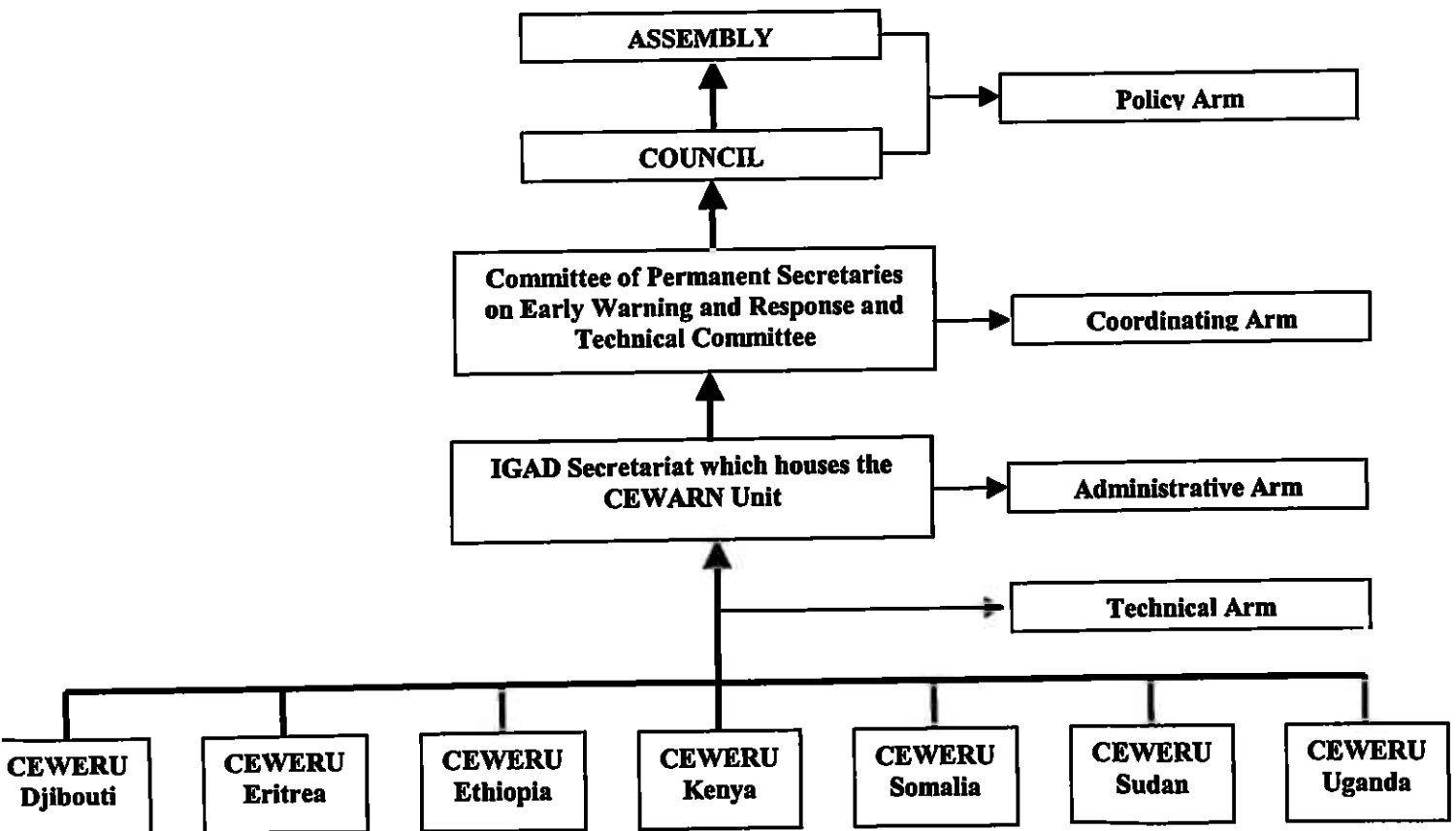
- Technical – which consists of member states conflict Early Warning Early Response units and National Research Institutions which mainly gathers the information.
- Administrative – consisting of the IGAD secretariat that houses the CEWARN unit.

- **Coordinating** – which includes the technical committee on early warning and response and the committee of permanent secretaries where the information is analyzed and scenarios developed.
- **Policy** – consisting of the council and assembly whose work is to make policy and take action on mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve the conflicts.

The below diagram illustrates the CEWARN structure.

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### Illustration Of CEWARN Structure



Source Keyserlingk (2003)

## **The Legal Framework for CEWARN**

Mwagiru (Mwaura and Schmeidl, 2002:198-205) argues that the legal basis for IGAD CEWARN is the agreement among the member states to establish IGAD. The 8<sup>th</sup> summit, November 2000, also referred as the Khartoum Declaration of the IGAD heads of state and governments approved the formation of CEWARN. The 9<sup>th</sup> summit of the IGAD heads of states and governments on January 2002 in Khartoum saw the signing of CEWARN protocol hence giving CEWARN a legal foundation.

Article Three of the CEWARN protocol calls for member states to promote exchange of information and collaboration on conflict early warning and response; collecting and analyzing information about conflicts in the region; establishing networks of cooperation in these areas; creating, managing and disseminating information data bases on conflict early warning in the region; and developing cooperation between CEWERUs.

Article Five of the CEWARN protocol gives room for CEWARN to rely on information available in the public domain and information to be gathered through open means. This article also gives states a big role to play in the whole process by determining where and how information can be disseminated.

Article Eight also gives the member states the right to access CEWARN documentation facilities. CEWARN protocol also calls for full cooperation among the CEWERUs. The CEWARN protocol paves ways for institutionalization of the framework for conflict



prevention within the IGAD sub-region. What makes IGAD-CEWARN unique in comparison with other regional frameworks in Africa is its recognition of the role non-state actors can play in conflict early warning. However, this must go a step further and integrate indigenous knowledge and indigenous sensitive indicators and analysis in the CEWARN in order to yield an all-inclusive mechanism.

Schmeidl, Howard and Mwaura (Mwaura and Schmeidl 2002:174-175) argue that IGAD sub-region suffer from lack of capabilities in terms of resources and power like the European Union to be able to use coercive power, formal authority, economic inducements and sanctions to help in conflict prevention, management and resolution. They call for a Soft Early Warning in IGAD sub-region based on a quality control or dialogue model.

This model relies on others to collect information, introduces and emphasizes quality control, engages independent institutions to undertake information analyses, initiates investigation in very specific areas but only when authorized and sets standards for documenting, formatting, communicating and reporting information received. The IGAD CEWARN has taken this path. Though other early warning mechanisms like the famine within the IGAD sub-region has not been duly concerned on conflict, there is a paramount importance to ensure cooperation and collaboration among all the early warning mechanism within the IGAD sub-region.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – TRADITIONAL OR INDIGENOUS CONFLICT EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AMONG THE TURKANA PASTORAL COMMUNITIES IN KARAMOJA CLUSTER**

### **Indigenous Conflict Early Warning**

This chapter attempts to give a definition of indigenous or traditional knowledge as related to conflict early warning. The case of Turkana is given to reflect the nature of indigenous or traditional conflict early warning among the pastoral communities in Karamoja Cluster in IGAD sub-region. Finally a comparison between conventional and indigenous conflict early warning is attempted.

The Turkana Community is the largest within the Karamoja Cluster. It however, can be described as being at the centre of violent conflicts with most of the members of the Karamoja Cluster within the IGAD sub-region. The Turkana are involved in conflicts with the Dodoth, Pokot and Karamajong (Pain and Bokora) of Uganda, Toposa and Nyangatom of Sudan, Nyangatom and Merille of Ethiopia, Pokot and Samburu of Kenya. It can hence, be argued that the conflict involving Turkana and its neighbors is of international nature. What makes the conflict complicated within the Karamoja Cluster is that most if not all the tribes have acquired small arms and light weapons which are used to attack their neighbors or for livestock raiding.

Warren (1993:2-5) argues that the term “indigenous knowledge” is used synonymously with “traditional and local knowledge” to differentiate it from the knowledge by a given community from the international knowledge system sometimes also called “Western

knowledge systems”, which is generated through research by institutions like universities, governments and research centres among others which in essence is referred to as conventional knowledge. Grenier (1998:5) advances that indigenous or traditional knowledge exists within and is developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographical area.

Broumer (1998:13) provides us with a broader definition as he argues that indigenous or traditional knowledge is the sum total of the knowledge and skills which people in a particular geographical area possess, and which enables them to get the most out of their environment. He adds that most of the indigenous knowledge and skills have been passed down from earlier generations, but individual men and women in each new generation adapt and add to this body of knowledge as circumstances change. This is then passed intact to the next generation, in effect, to provide them with survival strategies.

Indigenous or traditional conflict early warning is used in this study to refer to a body of technical knowledge that has been generated over time by indigenous people to enable them collect and analyse information and develop appropriate response in anticipation of conflict. Conflict and the threat of conflict have been, and continue to be, a recurrent feature of pastoralists’ lives. Most communities in pastoral areas suffer from conflict and have done so for a long time in history. They have, therefore, accumulated knowledge on the possible consequences of violent conflict. Pastoralists perceive conflict in a

qualitatively different manner than outsiders and they react to it in a qualitatively different way.

Pastoralists and more so those within the Karamoja Cluster, especially the Turkana, have developed and utilise an indigenous or traditional conflict early warning mechanism. This mechanism concerns itself not only with the well being of the people but also with the livestock and the environment in general. The mechanism is crucial in helping the communities anticipate conflict and begin mapping out appropriate response strategies.

The pastoral communities in the IGAD sub-region more so within the Karamoja Cluster specifically the Turkana have several indigenous ways of gathering information for a conflict early warning. The Turkana use spies (*Ngirototin*) whose main purpose is to visit the neighbouring communities in Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and within Kenya to find out if they are planning to attack them, or how the Turkana can amount an effective raid or an attack. The *Ngirototin* may be sent in a group of two to three or as one (*Erotot*). Any *Erotot* sent must understand the language(s) and culture of the communities to be spied. The *Erotot* is meant to behave like the people being spied and if possible can become a member of that community and even is allowed to marry within that community.

The *Ngirototin* go through training on the language and culture of the community on which to spy, the general behaviour when confronted and how to conceal their identity. Any person chosen as *Erotot* must be intelligent by the community's standards and must

be a person of high integrity and of high moral standing. His loyalty to the well being of the community must be unquestionable. No woman is recruited as *Erotot* as the community perceives women as people who cannot be trusted with secrets. The Somali community has also an elaborate system of spies similar to that of the Turkana, which they call *Saffa*. Most pastoral communities if not all employ the services of local spies to gather information from neighbouring communities. Despite the knowledge that each community sends spies, the communities interviewed indicated how difficult it is to detect a spy, as some even go to the extent of marrying, from the community.

The Turkana also gather information by use of foreseers (*Ngimurok*) and when one (*Emuron*). The use of dreamers (*Ekemjan*) is also employed. These traditional mystics or spirit men foresee the possibility of an attack or potential for a successful raid. Each clan within the Turkana in a pastoral settlement (*Adakar*) has an *Emuron*. The *Emuron* and *Ekemjan* play a very important role in the presence or absence of conflict among the Karamoja Cluster groups. Each group within the Karamoja Cluster has its set of foreseers, fortune-tellers and dreamers.

Most of the raids that are carried out must receive blessings from foreseers who also predict the possibility of a successive attack or of being attacked. The information gathered by the *Ngivototin* or what is predicted by the fore-seers, fortune-tellers or dreamers is communicated to the council of elders (*Ekitoe Ngathukou*) who convenes a council of elders meeting (*Ekitoe a Kingiliok*) which plays the role of analysing the

information and deliberating on the best response action. In all these processes women are not involved and do not participate in the gathering of information.

The members of the Turkana community are also sensitised to watch out for any strange footsteps showing a movement of a person or persons from the neighbouring community entering into their community. If such a situation arises it is reported to the council of elders, which investigates if one of their own had visited the neighbouring community. If not, then they conclude that a spy is around and the community has to be careful, with its activities.

In pastoral areas known conflict early warning indicators include competition for scarce resources more so grazing land and water. The changes in terms of land tenure system from communal to private have made pastoralists lose access to key dry season grazing areas. Most of the pastoral areas being Arid and Semi-arid, there is intense competition among pastoral communities for the available dry season grazing areas.

The traditional pastoral cultural values and traits that encourage livestock raiding, bravery and courage, are demonstrated by killing enemies. High bride price is payable using animals; one, therefore, has to raid, in most cases, in order to raise the required bride price.

The unreliable rainfall within the pastoral areas results in long spells of drought and scarcity of pasture and water coupled by food insecurity. The general poverty among the

pastoralists, particularly those within the Karamoja Cluster, is disturbing. This is compounded by limited access to education and health services, among others.

The systematic government neglect of pastoral areas is also a key indicator to conflict early warning. Very few, if any, national policies within the IGAD sub-region states have a direct emphasis on investments in the pastoral areas. This makes the pastoralists feel marginalized, alienated and detached from their respective governments. This situation is complicated by the general insecurity in pastoral areas in all the states of the IGAD sub-region. Crime and a culture of violence are common in these areas and are compounded by lack of effective policing. Poor infrastructures like roads make most of the areas inaccessible. The art of commercial livestock raiding is prevalent in pastoral areas. This is worsened by availability of illegal arms.

A government military operation to disarm a pastoralist group as it happened in Kenya in the month of July 2003 in Turkana District may result to violent conflict as the community resists the operation. Politicisation of conflict through inflammatory public utterances, speeches and irresponsible reporting by the media triggers outbreaks of violent conflict.

The Turkana community has elaborate indigenous or traditional conflict early warning-indicators, as shown in the below table.

INDICATION	MEANING (INTERPRETATION)
Intestines of a goat ( <i>Akistemene Ng'amalteny</i> )	<p>A special goat, one with a pure colour, is slaughtered. Its intestines are displayed in a flat place like a basin, where a spiritual man faces east, reads and interprets.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the duodenum is halved and has four to five bright red spots (blooding clotting) then the enemy is at an advance stage planning to attack</li> <li>2. If the blood clotting spots are faint and in a series then the enemy was planning to attack or raid but has shelved the idea, so no attack or raid is expected at that time.</li> </ol>
<i>Ekaicerkent</i> (special birds)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the bird(s) makes a crying noise for five consecutive days, then an enemy will attack or raid coming from the direction the bird(s) is facing.</li> <li>2. If the bird flies ahead of the Turkana warriors going to raid and cries once and disappears then the attack or raid to be executed will be very successful.</li> <li>3. If the bird flies a head of the warriors going to raid or attack and cries continuously as it disappears then if the warriors go ahead and execute the raid the enemy will overpower them.</li> </ol>
Moon ( <i>Alap</i> )	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the open side of the moon crescent faces the sites of the Turkana community then they will be attacked or raided and be overpowered.</li> <li>2. If the open site of the moon crescent faces the side of Turkana community enemies then if Turkana community made an attack or a raid it would be very successful.</li> </ol>
Dreamers ( <i>Ekerujan</i> ) and fore-seers ( <i>Ngimurok</i> )	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The dreamers dream if a bad or good raid or an attack will take place and advice the community accordingly.</li> <li>2. The fore-seers or spiritual men spin their shoes made of hide or skin in a sort of gambling and are able to tell if the enemies are planning to attack or if the Turkana execute a or raid or attack will be successful or not.</li> </ol>
Smoke ( <i>Apuru</i> )	Thick smoke is used by pastoralists in Karamoja cluster to alert their tribesmen and women of an



	impending attack.
Drums ( <i>Ngiburahi</i> )	Continuous beating of drum warns of danger of being attacked.
Whistling ( <i>Elii</i> )	Continuous whistling warns the community of danger.
Messengers ( <i>Ampara</i> )	Messengers are sent to warn their community of any impending attacks

The pastoral communities within the Karamoja Cluster have also other indicators; for example, if a given community moves most, if not all, of their livestock to a given location then they may be planning to attack or raid the community neighbouring the location from where the animals have been moved.

Increased demand for tobacco snuff is an indicator of an impending raid. The tobacco snuff is used by warriors to keep them awake and alert when they go for a long distance without water and food. They sniff pinches of the snuff to boost their energy to enable them to run for long miles.

Among the Turkana community if the cows give birth to female calves only, then they will be attacked or raided by a very powerful enemy. The Turkana community also observes the children and women. If the children when playing fight a lot then that community is planning to attack or raid. If women talk a lot about war and the heroes they admire then an attack or raid is being planned. The Turkana community believes that children and women talk from what they have heard from the elders.

## **Analysis and Development of Response Mechanisms**

In indigenous or traditional conflict early warning analysis of information and development of response mechanisms is done using qualitative strategies. The *Ekitoe a Kingiliok* (Council of elders), *Ngimurok* (fore-seers) and *Ekerujan* (dreamers), among the Turkana community within Karamoja Cluster are responsible for analysis, verification of information and development of response mechanisms.

The *Ekitoe a Kingiliok* receives information from those responsible for its gathering. They in turn invite the gatherer of information to a seating. They present the information a fresh. The nature of threat is assessed. In case of doubt another *Erotot* (spy) is sent to verify the information. In the case of *Ngimurok* or *Ekerujan* another set is consulted. This aims at verifying the information.

Once satisfied with the information, the *Ekitoe a Kingiliok*, *Ngimurok* and *Ekerujan* strategise on the best response actions. The maximum interests of the community are the guiding principle. If the scenario is such that if the community attacks it will win then the *Ekitoe a Kingiliok*, *Ngimurok* and *Ekerujan* summon the warriors and bless them to go and execute the attack or raid.

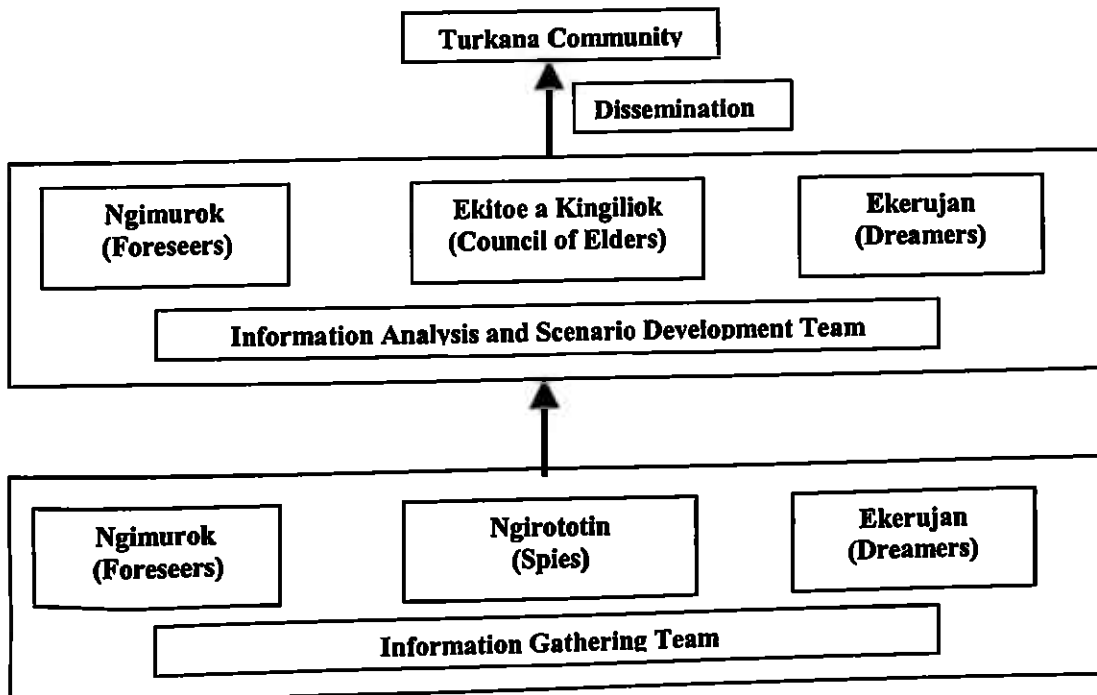
If the scenario is such that the enemy is very powerful and depending on who is the enemy a group of *Ekitoe a Kingiliok* is sent to the enemy with a message of peace. Meanwhile the warriors are prepared well in readiness for an attack or raid.

The Turkana do not believe in negotiating with some communities within the Karamoja cluster like Pokot, Merrile and Dodoth who they regard as their traditional enemies. This makes it difficult to manage conflicts among these groups. Regardless of the nature of the scenario that is developed for action the council of elders disseminates the findings and informs the community in order to seek approval.

Pastoral communities' early warning indigenous or traditional conflict is well established and the final decision on the appropriate response action rests on the community as a whole.

## Illustration Of Turkana Community Indigenous Conflict Early Warning

In case of Turkana the following diagram illustrates the channel followed in gathering information for an appropriate response mechanism as discussed above.



The *Ngimurok*, *Ngirototin* and *Ekerujan* are responsible for the gathering of information. The information gathered is presented to the *Ekitoe a Kingiliok* (Council of Elders) seating to which the *Ngimurok* and *Ekerujan* are invited. It is in this seating that information analysis takes place and scenarios are developed. It is at this stage of information analysis and scenario development that any conflict prevention strategies can be employed. As soon as the information has been disseminated to the community the attack follows.

It is clear that the traditional mechanism just like the conventional mechanism has a clear structure, institutions and processes in which information is gathered and analysed. Therefore, the possibility of integration exists as such integration would make the conventional mechanism more effective as it would draw from the traditional wisdom and practice and conventional tools resulting in a more comprehensive mechanism.

The indigenous conflict early warning model among the pastoral communities falls within the soft Early Warning (SEW) conceptual framework. The emphasis in the SEW approach is on the welfare of all community members. The information gatherers, analysts and those responsible of developing response action are part and parcel of the community. The members of the Turkana community elect the council of elders.

It is clear that the indigenous conflict early warning has structures for conflict early warning. There exist information gatherers, information analysts as well as those who develop response strategies. However, what poses a big challenge is the fact that most of the indicators are based on myth rather than reality. The myths on the other hand form an integral part of the indigenous people and cannot be wished away. There is a need to developing statistical methods of information analysis that are sensitive to indigenous indicators.

## **Integration Of Conventional And Indigenous Conflict Early Warning**

In most if not all the regional conflict early warning framework, there has been a tendency to emphasis conventional conflict early warning and response mechanisms in expense of the indigenous mechanisms. The emphasis in conventional conflict early warning is in quantitative methods of information collection and statistical analysis, bureaucracy, and results that can be generalised and fall within a universal pattern. On the other hand indigenous conflict early warning emphasises qualitative methods of information gathering and results that are situational-specific.

Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:8) observe that in spite of recent development in conflict early warning indigenous conflict early warning remains largely absent in conflict prevention and early warning exercise, including development of response options. Walker (1989:40-43), note that there has been very little research done on indigenous conflict early warning, hence there is no mass data in which to build theories on. This is compounded by failure to acknowledge that indigenous response to conflict is a process determined by pre-existing social structure, like the council of elders or spiritual men.

Conventional conflict early warning places so much faith in states in terms of information gathering and response actions. It fails to fully acknowledge non-state actors as equal players and partners in the entire early warning and response mechanism process. Indigenous conflict early warning tends to be holistic and contextual while the conventional conflict early warning attempts to identify generalisation principles. The advantage in conventional conflict early warning is that it adopts a multi-disciplinary

approach while indigenous knowledge is based entirely on indigenous and traditional wisdom.

Appreciation of indigenous conflict early warning and response action in conflict prevention discourse holds a practical value for mounting cost effective, sustainable and socio-culturally acceptable and workable options for finding innovative and effective solution to pastoral conflicts prevention. This calls for conflict early warning and response mechanism that is based on local understanding of conflict early warning. Such a mechanism should be people-centred, as people are capable of directing their own conflict prevention process that is consistent with their aspirations. For this to succeed individuals, communities and indigenous structures must be empowered in a locally rooted knowledge that reinforces their existing conflict prevention skills, initiatives and structures.

The emphasis on any conflict early warning and response mechanism should be on the important of enhancing such a framework and indeed conflict prevention programmes in indigenous and local knowledge, skills and initiatives as well as structures.

Building on indigenous and local knowledge and resources empowers people by increasing their self-reliance, and by reducing the likelihood that conventional or outside mechanisms or interventions will de-skill people or increase their dependence on external experts. However the challenge in building an indigenous conflict early warning and



response mechanism base lies in understanding and reasoning with the aid of largely abstract qualitative observations of the local environment.

In contrast to early warning systems in other fields like agriculture and meteorology, among others, early warning models in conflict differ in that the phenomenon to be warned about involves human decisions, thoughts and behaviour. Therefore, a conflict early warning would be best if it incorporates as many actors as possible, especially at the local level, as such an approach would help in ensuring sustainability and cultivate a culture of conflict prevention. A strong linkage between diverse actors and stakeholders holds the comparative advantage of drawing and learning from different capacities and resources and having different viewpoints.

Schmeidl and Lopez (2002:3-5) argue that the modelling and analysis of conflict early warning practices would be improved if indigenous based perspectives were included. An indigenous conflict early warning enriches our understanding of factors that lead to violent conflict in pastoral areas and thus can improve early analysis and the formation of response options. Integration of conventional and indigenous conflict early warning would empower existing approaches of information collection, analysis and response formation.

It would lead to a more practical, accurate and realistic approaches. While becoming more comprehensive, such integration would also become more effective by providing

both truly early warning, and in offering a wide range of response options to address violent conflict.

It is, hence, important to incorporate indicators, sensitive to indigenous knowledge, into collection and analysis processes of conflict early warning. This calls for the utilisation of the untapped potential of indigenous structures. Indigenous lens have the ultimate goal of enriching conflict early warning. In the field of conflict early warning it is important to appreciate that indigenous practices are often excellent sources of information on situations and development on the ground as many of the indigenous people are involved in conflict areas and potential conflict zones.

They also play an important role in achieving early warning of growing tensions that have the potential to escalate into violent conflicts. It must be appreciated that indigenous people are often the first to notice increasing tension and that they are sometimes even the only source of information from which to learn what is developing. Conventional and indigenous conflict early warning should not work in opposition rather they should compliment each other. Cooperation is hence vital.

It is clear then that an integrated approach that seeks to enhance the effectiveness of conventional methodologies and mechanism by exploring indigenous best practices is lacking in conflict early warning and response mechanism. The best process is that which seeks to promote the identification and appreciation of existing indigenous, and locally rooted initiatives to compliment the conventional conflict prevention activities.

In conclusion, ideas on conflict early warning, prevention and management are never easy to implement. Bakker (2000:5-6) argues that achieving conflict early warning remains a difficult and delicate exercise as it requires overcoming the problem of obtaining information that is both necessary quantitatively and qualitatively and that which is reliable and timely. The other challenge is overcoming the analytical problem in order to avoid misrepresentation or misperception. This view is supported by Leatherman et al. (1999:49), who see many obstacles in making conflict early warning a regular practice in the prevention of conflicts.

States have to make a commitment to address the cause and not just the consequences of violent conflict. The appreciation that conflict early warning is a dynamic process is vital. For both analytical and practical reasons, the conflict early warning needs a wide network of on-going information gathering. It should cover both the historical evolution and present circumstances of the targeted region.

Critics of conflict early warning argue that early warning rarely succeeds, but the evidence they cite to support their argument are situations where actions are taken to treat symptoms rather than the underlying causes of conflicts. Moreover they don't suggest another appropriate mechanism to replace early warning as a preventive strategy. They also fail to appreciate that effective conflict preventive strategies rest on early action to signs of trouble, coupled with a comprehensive and balanced approach of early warning.

While lack of political will is often blamed for failure to react early enough, also lack of effective mechanisms to warn early is also a major factor. Any conflict early warning system has to be designed and institutionalised in such a way as to commit and involve all the stakeholders. There is insufficient appreciation of how indigenous mechanisms can fit into in-state mechanisms and eventually into the regional mechanisms being designed. Conventional conflict early warning, for example the IGAD CEWARN, ignores some of the traditional conflict early warning elements. The current tools of analysis, being utilised in the IGAD CEWARN, which were developed by the Swiss Peace Foundation, pay little attention if any to traditional conflict early warning. However, it is important to note that it is difficult to prove the scientific value of myths as this will remain of value largely to the particular community. It is, therefore, difficult to integrate myths with conventional mechanisms such as the IGAD CEWARN. However, besides myths there are other verifiable indicators in traditional conflict early warning, as mentioned in this chapter, which can be integrated.

The main challenge especially for regional frameworks is how to integrate indigenous conflict early warning systems. This would ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive mechanisms. There is need to appreciate that information collection and indeed having a practical and operational conventional conflict early warning requires huge resources and proper coordination two aspects that indigenous communities are not endowed with.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary**

This study has investigated the indigenous conflict early warning mechanism among the pastoral communities in Karamoja Cluster within the IGAD sub-region and specifically the Turkana Community. The study shows that, violent conflict is a common and ever present phenomenon among the pastoral communities within IGAD sub-region. The study appreciates that livestock raiding, which is the most common cause of violent conflict in pastoral areas is a traditional method that is culturally accepted among all the pastoralists.

However, in recent times, this cultural practice has taken a commercial angle, where livestock raiding is taken as an easy way of getting rich. The proliferation of small arm and light weapons in pastoral areas and more so among the Karamoja cluster communities within IGAD sub-region has greatly contributed to high levels of violent conflict witnessed in recent times. The study also notes that there is lack of a proper mechanism to help in ensuring sustainable peace. Most of the intervention strategies are reactive rather than proactive.

It is evident from this study that pastoralists have a mechanism for conflict early warning. The mechanism is well established with clear structure and duties defined for example among the Turkana community there are spies (*Ngivototin*), fore-seers (*Ngimurok*), dreamers (*Ekerujan*) who help in gathering information. The council of elders (*Ekitoe*

*Ngathukou*), fore-seers, and dreamers are crucial in the analysis of the information received and the development of response options. The community approves or disapproves the response action to be taken. This shows that the mechanism is bottom up in approach.

The study shows that conflict early warning among the pastoralists is used as a mechanism to prepare for attacking neighbours rather than as a mechanism for conflict prevention. It is also clear that pastoralists have comprehensive and clear indicators for conflict early warning.

The study attempts a comparison between conventional and indigenous conflict early warning. Though there exist some differences in terms of methodology, approach, interests and institutions the two can compliment each other and hence integration is of necessity. The study shows that conflict early warning is of paramount importance for conflict prevention and management.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the escalation and changing nature of conflicts among the pastoralists within the Karamoja Cluster is disturbing. The traditional rules that governed raiding and warfare have been eroded and replaced by bloody killings. Traditionally, non-combatants were spared. Children, women and the elderly were not injured or killed. While children, particularly girls and women, were kidnapped to be assimilated in the

raiding community, today they are raped and killed. The proliferations of small arms and light weapons have worsened the situation.

The journey to investigate indigenous conflict early warning has not been easy. The efforts must continue in attempts to find practical and operational framework for conflict prevention, in which conflict early warning is a prerequisite. In a field like conflict early warning and response mechanism where there is insufficient data on which to build theory on; this study has achieved its objectives, more importantly the study has shown that there exist indigenous conflict early warnings, which can be integrated into conventional conflict early warning.

It is clear that the pastoralists have an indigenous conflict early warning mechanism that is elaborated and well established. The Turkana community has people who gather, analyze and create scenarios for response action. The role of the council of elders (*Ekitoe a Kingiliok*), fore-seers (*ngimurok*) and dreamers (*Ekerujan*) as key institutions of conflict prevention and management cannot be over emphasized. The community depends on their guidance and wisdom.

Warriors cannot dare go for a raid or an attack without the blessings of the *Ekitoe a Kingiliok* or *Ngimurok*, as the community believes that the effect would be disastrous. In most cases however, the indigenous conflict early warning among the pastoralists is used as a mechanism to prepare to launch an attack or raid instead of conflict preventive action.

## **Recommendations**

There is need to turn indigenous conflict early warning among the pastoralists to become a tool for preventive action, for as it stands presently it is used as a tool to prepare to attack or raid.

It is important to strengthen by retraining indigenous institutions or persons involved in gathering information, analyzing and developing response mechanisms.

There is need for integration of conventional and indigenous conflict early warning and response mechanism in order to achieve an all-inclusive and participatory conflict prevention framework.

There is need to recognize, appreciate and incorporate indigenous and local knowledge and initiative in conflict prevention and management. There is need to strengthen local capacities in conflict prevention, management and resolution. This should involve drawing from local and indigenous knowledge, initiatives and institutions like council elders, which are useful for conflict prevention and management, among pastoral communities.

There is need for continued dialogue within and outside the pastoral communities to help in resolving the already existing conflicts.



There is need for actors like NGOs and governments involved in attempting to resolve conflicts in pastoral areas to have their activities coordinated to avoid duplication and contradictions. This should go hand in hand in developing a common framework to approach conflict prone areas, in IGAD sub-region pastoral areas. The involvement of all stakeholders, particularly women and youth, is crucial in the search for peace.

There is need for the IGAD sub-region government to develop common policy guidelines on natural resources use and management among the pastoral communities within the region. This would help in preventing natural resources based conflicts.

There is need to develop a more proactive mechanism for conflict prevention as most of the current initiatives are fire fighting exercises. This will help in pre-empting conflicts before they occur. Local people must be involved in development of such mechanisms.

There is need to address the issue of land tenure among the pastoralists. This should involve developing practical alternatives to pastoralism.

The issue of proliferation of small arms and light weapons need to be addressed more seriously. The Nairobi Declaration on small arms presents the best framework and IGAD states need to make it operational.

A lasting solution to the already existing regional conflicts in Somalia, Sudan and Uganda need to be found. The IGAD-facilitated negotiations for Sudan and Somalia should be supported.

For there to be comprehensive, practical and operational conflict early warning and response mechanisms, there is need to consider all existing mechanisms among local people. There is need to explore further how conventional and indigenous conflict early warning and response mechanisms can be fully and comprehensively integrated.

There is a need to come up with a methodology that acknowledges indigenous conflict early warning indicators. This calls for appreciation and acknowledgement of indigenous conflict early warning indicators, within the conventional conflict early warning discourses.

There is need to study indigenous conflicts early warning and response mechanisms of all the pastoral communities in the IGAD sub-region in order to identify issues, methodologies or indicators that cut across them. The involvement of indigenous structures like the councils of elders, foreseers, dreamers, warriors and women, among others, is vital in order to establish a comprehensive mechanism. Training on information gathering and analysis is vital. This should go hand in hand with the development of mechanisms that help in prevention of conflict.

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## APPENDIX – KARAMOJA CLUSTER TRIBES

Group Name	Country	District
Pain	Uganda	Moroto
Matheniko	Uganda	Moroto
Bokora	Uganda	Moroto
Jie	Uganda	Kotido
Tepeth	Uganda, Kenya	Moroto, Turkana
Dodoth	Uganda	Kotido
Pokot (called Upe in Uganda)	Uganda, Kenya	Nakipiriti, West Pokot and Baringo
Labwor	Uganda	Moroto
Jiye	Sudan	Eastern Equatoria
Toposa	Sudan	Eastern Equatoria
Nyangatom	Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia	Eastern Equatoria, Turkana, Gama Gofa
Didinga	Sudan	Eastern Equatoria
Merille	Ethiopia and Kenya	Marsabit, Gama Gofa
Turkana	Kenya	Turkana

Source Halderman et al (2002:17)