

FAO and EU sign 47 million euro programme to enhance food security in Eastern Africa

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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Union (EU) have signed a four-year 47 million euro programme designed to strengthen the resilience of pastoralists in Eastern Africa.

The initiative, named “Pastoralism and Livestock Adaptation to Climate Change in Eastern Africa Programme (PLACE)”, is designed to address the challenges in developing sustainable, climate-resilient pastoral systems across the environmental, economic and social dimensions of pastoralism in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

“The EU has been a longstanding partner in Eastern Africa, especially in enhancing the resilience of pastoral livelihoods. We welcome this timely programme as the region's rangelands face increased incidence and severity of climate-related shocks and a gradual degradation of the natural resource base, which is further threatening the pastoral way of life,” said Rein Paulsen, FAO’s Director of the office of Emergencies and Resilience.

Livestock is a lifeline for over 250 million people in the region and is deeply embedded in the communities' social, cultural, and spiritual fabric. Pastoralists undertake livestock keeping not only as a commercial enterprise but also as a social investment. They have provided, over centuries, ecosystem services that are difficult to convert into commercial values, with these intangible values comprising many interrelated cultural and environmental benefits.

However, pastoralism is at a critical juncture. Societal shifts in the region mean fewer young people are interested in what is traditionally considered a pastoral lifestyle. In addition, severe and frequent droughts have devastated rangelands, resulting in the loss of over 13 million livestock between late 2020 and early 2024.