

*The Horn of Africa:*

## ***Conflict prevention through regional mechanisms***

*The Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-prone areas of the world. It is also home to about 20 million pastoralists, which keep moving with their livestock in search for grazing land and water points. Pastoral conflicts are becoming more and more serious. CEWARN – a regional mechanism for preventing conflicts – tries to close the gap between ‘early warning’ and ‘early response’.*

Eighty-six human deaths and more than 3,800 livestock losses within a period of only three months – this is the alarming July to September 2007 record of CEWARN, the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism monitoring pastoral conflicts in the Horn of Africa. The figures have been reported by field monitors located in the so-called Karamoja Cluster, which includes the border areas of southern Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and northern Uganda. The Karamoja Cluster, one of CEWARN’s areas of reporting, covers an area almost twice the size of Bavaria, Germany’s largest federal state.

Around 20 million pastoralists live in the Horn of Africa region. This is one of the highest densities of pastoralist communities world-wide. Only very few of them are wandering nomads. Most of them move between



Photo: gtz

seasonal grazing areas, taking advantage of different forage and water sources. Mobile pastoralists, living in areas with poor infrastructure and high competition for scarce resources, depend on access to key resources at specific times. Their mobility makes pastoralists particularly vulnerable to conflict, which can cut off their access to key resources and block them from important markets.

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### *The spiral of violence – pastoralist conflicts*

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Today, many pastoralist conflicts are aggravated by the militarised pre-

*A Ugandan woman of the Pokot community carries a gun to secure the release of her husband who was arrested during a government operation against illegal guns.*

paredness of armed youth to make use of their sophisticated weaponry. Over the past decade, scope and intensity of pastoralist conflicts in the Horn of Africa have expanded tremendously. Livestock raids and counter-raids, battles between local communities over resources, and armed clashes between government and communities have spiralled into even more violence. There are reports on raids with more than 6,000 livestock sto-

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len. In the so-called Turbi massacre in July 2005, over 80 people including 25 school children of Marsabit District in Kenya were killed in a violent attack that was carried out by armed parties from both, Ethiopia and Kenya (see CEWARN Situation Brief, [www.cewarn.org](http://www.cewarn.org)). There are a number of factors that have contributed to this situation, such as the proliferation of automatic weapons and easy access to small arms. Further factors are the ongoing commercialisation of raiding, climate change, the high rate of youth unemployment and political marginalisation.

The focus on pastoral and related conflicts has been chosen as entry point for CEWARN in order to strengthen the co-operation in the field of peace and security in one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world. In 2000, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – a regional body composed by the states of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda – decided to establish a conflict early warning system, mandated to share information concerning potentially violent conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Instead of concentrating on high-profile conflicts, such as the Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict or the Darfur conflict in Sudan, CEWARN exclusively monitors and reports pastoral conflicts. With that focus, it aims to strengthen trust and co-operation by establishing a regional mechanism enabling governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from neighbouring countries to deal with highly sensitive conflict issues.

Supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the CEWARN Mechanism has, since its establishment in 2003, created a system of local infor-

mation collection networks. These networks are based on field monitors who document relevant data on cross-border and inter-communal pastoral conflicts. A set of carefully selected indicators is used to report about violent, as well as conflict mitigating events. Country coordinators in IGAD Member States use the “CEWARN Reporter”, a network software programme specifically designed for early warning purposes with the objective of analysing data from the field. Early warning reports, including policy recommendations and options for response, are communicated to the respective authorities and to affected communities in order to prevent or de-escalate the outbreak of violence.

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### *Local Peace Committees in border areas*

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The biggest challenge for CEWARN, as for any existing early warning system, is to close the gap between ‘early warning’ and ‘early response’. CEWARN aims to provide timely and effective response actions on very dif-

ferent levels. The key principle for any response activity to be implemented is “as local as possible”. In this regard, CEWARN has to strengthen the role of Local Peace Committees, bringing together local administration, police and security forces, as well as representatives of elders or community based organisations. Most of the territories covered by CEWARN are highly inaccessible and offer only poor infrastructure and transport facilities. The first steps are to improve means of communication and the establishment of fora for inter-communal cooperation. In Marsabit District, for example, the Local Peace Committee has been initiating a series of dialogues in a number of villages along the Kenyan/Ethiopian border that have had a positive impact on the situation. Response activities are supposed to be implemented by CEWARN’s national focal points, including governmental and non-governmental actors of IGAD Member States. A regional Rapid Response Fund will provide the necessary capacity and flexibility for immediate action.



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## Zusammenfassung

Das Horn von Afrika ist eine der konfliktrichtigsten Regionen der Welt. Konfliktherde innerhalb eines Landes wie das Darfur-Problem im Sudan, aber auch zwischen Staaten wie etwa der ungelöste Grenzkonflikt zwischen Äthiopien und Eritrea machen deutlich, wie schwierig hier regionale Integration zu erreichen ist. Die Regionalorganisation IGAD, ein Verbund von sieben Staaten am Horn von Afrika, hat beschlossen, einen Konfliktfrühwarnmechanismus aufzubauen, um Vertrauen und Kooperation zu stärken. Dieser beschäftigt sich ausschließlich mit pastoralen Konflikten.

CEWARN ist ein Kooperationsmechanismus, um pastorale Konflikte vermeiden oder frühzeitig geeignete

Maßnahmen zur Deeskalation initiieren zu können.

Mit CEWARN hat IGAD gegenüber anderen afrikanischen Regionalorganisationen bereits Erfahrungen gesammelt, die auch beim Aufbau des kontinentalen Frühwarnsystems der Afrikanischen Union von Nutzen sind.

## Resumen

El cuerno de África es una de las regiones del mundo más asoladas por conflictos. Los focos de conflicto surgen al interior de un país, como en el caso del problema de Darfur en Sudán, pero también entre los estados, como sucede con el conflicto fronterizo aún no solucionado entre Etiopía y Eritrea. Ello ilustra cuán difícil es lograr la integración regional. La organización regional IGAD (Autoridad

Intergubernamental para el Desarrollo), que reúne a siete estados del cuerno de África, ha decidido poner en marcha un mecanismo de alerta temprana y respuesta frente a conflictos llamado CEWARN, dirigido a fortalecer la confianza y la cooperación. Dicho mecanismo se ocupa exclusivamente de conflictos pastorales. En efecto, CEWARN representa un mecanismo de cooperación destinado a prevenir conflictos pastorales o iniciar tempranamente las medidas adecuadas para mitigarlos.

Al establecer CEWARN, IGAD ha logrado ya acumular experiencias frente a otras organizaciones regionales africanas, que también resultan de utilidad para la institución del sistema de alerta temprana de la Unión Africana a nivel continental.

## CEWARN's pioneering role

Despite the major gaps and challenges CEWARN faces, it is the most advanced data-based early warning system in Africa and probably worldwide. It is an important instrument in the realisation of one of IGAD's core

mandates: strengthening peace, stability and human security in the Horn of Africa. Capacity development in this field is therefore also GTZ's focus for support. IGAD is one out of eight recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and, as such, a building block for the African Union (AU).

The AU, gradually replacing the principle of *non-interference* with the principle of *non-indifference*, recognises the role of regional mechanisms such as CEWARN. As a framework to find African solutions to African problems, the new Peace and Security Architecture is supposed to provide the capacity to prevent, manage and resolve African conflicts. Besides military interventions by an African Standby Force, an enhanced mediation capacity and the prevention of conflicts are key elements of this architecture. The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is designed to monitor and analyse the situation of the whole continent, thereby cooperating closely with existing regional early warning systems. Along with the other regional early warning systems, CEWARN will feed into the CEWS by providing essential information from the Horn of Africa.



Photo: gtz

A group of Pokot women register their husband's guns with UPDF officers at Amudat/Uganda.