



Land Governance in an Interconnected World

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FORMALIZING PASTORAL LAND RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA: A BREAKTHROUGH IN OROMIA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE

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Abstract

Rangeland ecosystems in Ethiopia, occupied and used by pastoralists, are under threat from several causes - conversion to irrigated commercial farms; encroachment by highland farmers; climate change; and growing pastoral human and livestock population. Ethiopian Pastoralists have been demanding that their land use rights granted to them under the Constitution be secured so that they can prevent illegal encroachment and appropriation of pastoral land for other uses without their consent. The Land Administration to Nurture Development Project, financed by USAID, was requested by the Ethiopian government to assist in formalizing pastoralists' land rights in the Oromia National Regional State (NRS). Several obstacles arose that needed resolving, including lack of appropriate legislation, reluctance of local administrators to cede control of land to pastoralists, unwillingness of government authorities to register large landscape as a single landholding and empower customary institutions to manage rangelands. This paper highlights the lessons learnt in formalizing pastoral land rights with the breakthrough achieved in the Oromia NRS.



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