

AfDB commits US \$57.66m towards food security in Horn of Africa

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African Development Bank (AfDB)

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Four million pastoralists to benefit in the first five years

NAIROBI, Kenya, February 27, 2013/African Press Organization (APO)/ – The African Development Bank (<http://www.afdb.org>) today signed a US \$57.66-million loan agreement for the multinational Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Program (DRSLP) in the Horn of Africa (HoA) with the Government of Kenya, bringing to US \$3.04 billion the Bank's commitment in the country's various sectors.

The program will be carried out in phases, with the first phase beginning in 2013 in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. It will focus on about four million beneficiaries in the first five years.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, AfDB Regional Director for the East Africa Resource Centre (EARC) Gabriel Negatu explained that the entire program would cover eight countries in the Horn of Africa over the next 15 years, including Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, in addition to the three countries in the current phase.

"It is necessary to have all the countries in the program because if one country has better water, pasture and livestock services, the pastoralist will move there and this could lead to overgrazing, transmission of trans-boundary animal diseases and conflicts. The next phase is expected to start as soon as funds are available for the remaining countries. This could be as early as end of 2013," Negatu said.

In Kenya, the project will cover the counties of Baringo, Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana and West Pokot. It seeks to provide assistance to enhance drought resilience and improve sustainable livelihoods of the communities in the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya. In this regard, the project will contribute to the development of water supply and development and rehabilitation of irrigation schemes; improvement of livestock infrastructure and their management; and strengthening of both human and institutional capacity to improve operational capabilities in the project area.

Phase one will look at improving management of natural resources, livestock market infrastructure and agro-pastoralists' livelihoods. It will also include the enhancement of animal health system and regional cooperation for the management of trans-boundary natural resources.

The Horn of Africa (HoA) region is often affected by severe recurrent droughts and chronic food insecurity. In 2011, the region faced the worst drought in decades that decimated crops and livestock, and left over 12 million people, mainly the pastoralist communities, in total distress across the affected region.

Based on this analysis, during the African Union Summit in August 2011, the Bank reiterated its long-term commitment to provide support for a lasting solution to drought and to build resilience and improve sustainable livelihoods of the pastoral communities in the HoA region.

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