

## **Abstract - IDS Pastoralism 2011 Conference Paper**

### **Economic empowerment for pastoralist women in the Horn of Africa: Comparative reflections on policy and practice.**

**By  
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This paper discusses PENHA's experience with women's economic empowerment projects in pastoral areas of Uganda, Somaliland and Sudan, and presents insights from baseline and value chain studies conducted in the three countries, with illuminating comparisons in the last three years.

It stresses the new opportunities for women that come with trends towards voluntary sedentarization and greater economic and social integration. Accepting the need for realism on politics, governance and participation, the paper discusses the possibility of a more enlightened "third way" in policy, that eschews the coercive, top-down approaches of the past and recognizes the rationality of mobile livestock keeping in (semi-)arid areas, but at the same time promotes economic diversification, quality of life improvements and social change.

Given that;

- nomadic pastoralism without alternative forms of livelihoods endangers women because it propagates women's dependence on men,
- nomadic pastoralism put a heavy burden on men to single handedly provide for their families

The above has resulted into exceptionally large gender disparities, on one hand for women but on the other hand for men.

It is argued that, women's economic empowerment is central to pastoral development.

Further, overdependence of women on men and overdependence of men on pastoralism encourages cattle rustling which results into violent conflicts and all the associated ills.

Notwithstanding, the transformational potential of new major investments in transport and telecommunications infrastructure is noted and the paper looks optimistically towards a “connected” future, listing some key interventions that could help women in pastoral communities to empower themselves.