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Pastoralism: a high-level meeting to discuss the establishment of a regional transhumance observatory

On the joint initiative of the ECOWAS, CILSS and the African Union Border Programme, funded by GIZ, pastoral stakeholders and partners in West Africa and the Sahel will meet from 2 to 4 September 2021 in Abuja to reflect on and lay the foundations for a regional transhumance observatory in West Africa. The observatory is seen as an instrument to help decision-making in order to effectively regulate mobile livestock farming systems. This meeting is being held within the framework of the implementation of the Integrated and Secure Livestock Farming and Pastoralism in West Africa Project (PEPISAO) financed by the AFD and coordinated by ECOWAS, in collaboration with CILSS.

Based on Paragraph 2 of the preamble of Decision ADEC/05/10/98 of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on transhumance regulation in ECOWAS area, all ECOWAS Member States recognise that transhumance is useful for maintaining and increasing livestock production. Despite this recognition, many actors' views on transhumance have deteriorated considerably in recent years. The amalgamations and stigmatisations of the activity have been amplified by the occurrence of certain factors such as insecurity against a backdrop of exacerbated conflicts of all kinds. This situation is partly due to the fact that decision-makers at territorial, national and regional levels do not have quality data and information to define and implement appropriate policies and strategies (number of animals involved in both intra-national and cross-border transhumance; departure points, corridors used and host areas; quantities of milk produced, collected and processed in the livestock production basins; contribution to the local economy, contribution to the budget of local communities, to the GDP of States, to job creation; investments made to secure the activity; frequency and extent of farmer-herder conflicts; etc.).

In view of this situation, and to meet the need for information and data, ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS and their partners have jointly decided to bring together mobile livestock stakeholders to lay a solid foundation for the establishment of a regional observatory. This tool will provide the region with a single, robust and integrated mechanism for collecting data and generating information on the spillovers and other impacts of mobile livestock herding systems, so that the net gain to stakeholders from this livestock production system can be assessed.

This three-day meeting will: (i) analyse the strengths and weaknesses of regional pastoral information systems that produce data and information supported by technical institutions, NGOs and RPO networks; (ii) define the orientations for the regional transhumance observatory in West Africa and the Sahel; (iii) brainstorm on the potential data and

information to be collected to launch a pilot phase of the observatory and (iv) define precise and simple monitoring indicators to assess the situation of transhumance based on the potential data and information collected.

The forty participants expected from regional and national entities and countries will exchange ideas to lay the foundations for a transhumance observatory (local and cross-border transhumance), in the form of an information system or an information platform on mobile livestock farming systems in West Africa and the Sahel.

This meeting will be held in two sequences: an experts meeting, with presentations followed by discussions in plenary and group work; and a policy meeting, chaired by the Secretary General of the Ghanaian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, whose country is holding the current Chairmanship of ECOWAS.

More information on the PEPISAO project: <https://bit.ly/3DiRDHN>

More information on the African Union Border Programme:
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