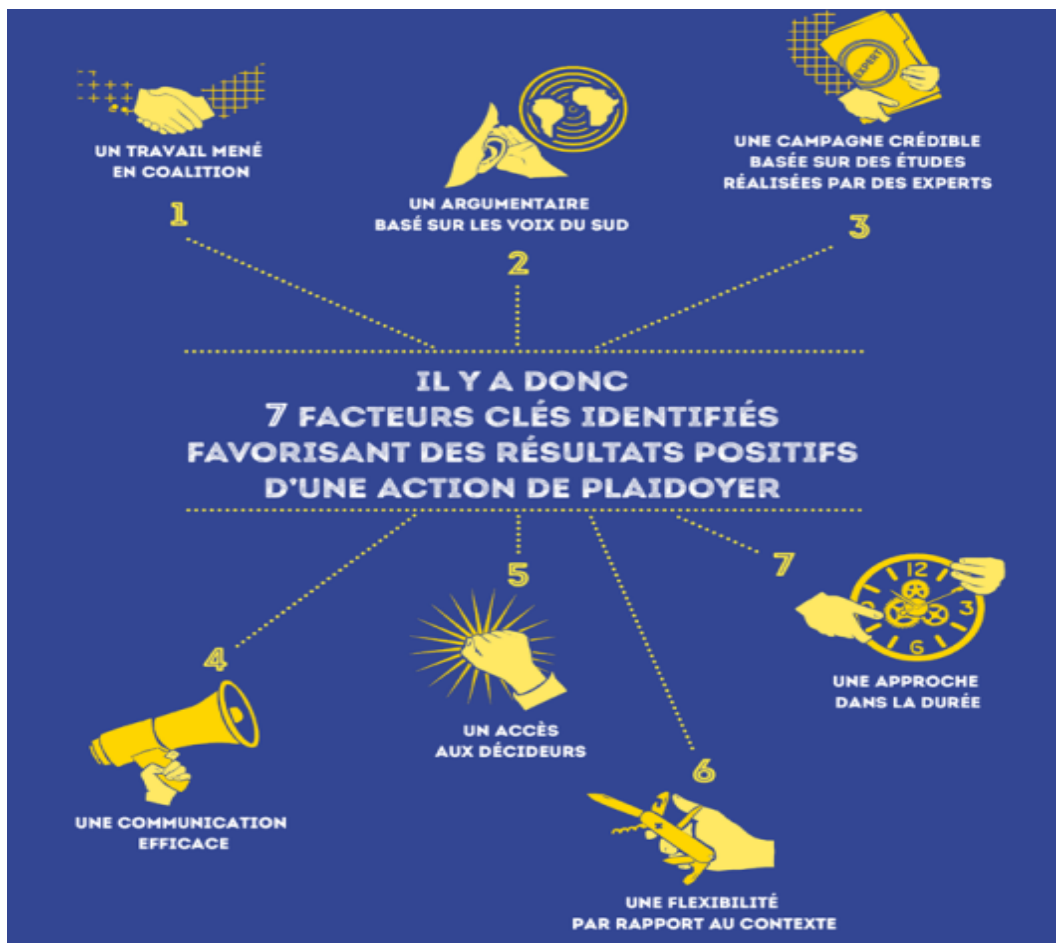


A brief look at Advocacy and Pastoralism

Prepared in June 2022 for the VSF-International General Assembly by Peter van der Jagt (VSF-Belgium), based on a draft document prepared by Koen van Troos for VSF-B (2020)

Note: this document should be considered as “food for thought” for the further possible development of a VSF-Int advocacy strategy on pastoralism. It shows the rationale for developing advocacy activities on pastoralism at VSF International level, and outlines possible targets and strategies to influence policies affecting pastoralists in Africa.



Why Advocacy on Pastoralism and agro-pastoralists?

The goal we (VSF International and CELEP) want to achieve through our advocacy, the change we want to see is related to the situation of (agro-)pastoralists since (i) the majority of our direct and indirect beneficiaries in the field are (agro-)pastoralists and (ii) the context in which they live/gain a livelihood touches upon many lobby/advocacy issues and (iii) in many countries they are amongst the most marginalised/vulnerable peoples.

In that sense, our vision of VSF regarding pastoralists is *“A world where (agro-)pastoralists can gain a decent livelihood from their production system/way of life and where their rights are upheld and realized”*.

This summarizes the core-issue of why advocacy on (agro-)pastoralism continues to be a necessity. This also coherent with the VSF mission which is to empower disadvantaged livestock dependent communities in the South to improve their well-being.

Rationale:

Pastoralists face many challenges including conflicts related to the access to grazing grounds and water points, issues involving market access, access to basic services including (animal) health and education, access to infrastructure,



competition with imported food products (dairy), etc. Many of these issues are being tackled by VSF through its operations. In countries, programs and projects are designed to improve the lives of many pastoralist communities. However, many of these challenges require **changes in policies**. For instance, if as VSF we want to provide quality animal health services to pastoralists in Africa where there are very few veterinarians, we need to count on Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to work with us. This means that CAHWs need to be able to do their work in good conditions. In many countries however, legislation does not recognize their profession. Therefore they work in illegality and cannot provide the quality services they are supposed to provide. Local governments therefore need to be lobbied in favour of their recognition. Another example concerns pastoral mobility. In West-Africa for instance, the International Certificate for Transhumance allows for cross-border mobility of pastoralists and their herders. However, from time to time, governments decide to close their borders for many reasons including suspicion of terrorist activities by pastoralists. Lobby actions are therefore due to influence national governments in favour of opening their border for pastoralists. In summary, pastoralism is composed of three essential elements: the herds (livestock), the herders (and their communities and institutions) and the land (and by extension natural resources including water). They are all connected in symbiotic way (One Health) and at the level of each element and also of each connection, policy challenges can be identified.

Advocacy goals: how will we add to this vision?

If we define our advocacy vision as ***“A world where (agro-)pastoralists can gain a decent livelihood from their production system/way of life and where their rights are upheld and realized”***, we should also be able to make this more specific. As this would be our general goal, we can define a few more **specific goals** to which we, as VSF INTERNATIONAL, can add through our advocacy.

1. Goal 1: “Pastoral customary arrangements regarding ownership and tenure of natural resources (such as water and rangeland) are recognized”.

At the core of the pastoralist system are the herds and the land the rangeland and water needed to feed the herd. In order for pastoralist herds to be productive, they need to have access to waterpoints and rangelands as they are the two most important production factors of their system. This access is actually one of the main challenges faced by pastoralists today. The traditional/costumary ways in which pastoralists own/manage natural resources should therefore be recognized in order to deal with this challenge. This very often involves communal land tenure which goes against a private conception of land. This is crucial as land grabbing occurs at a massive scale in pastoralist areas and pastoralist land is often up for grabs for companies looking to exploit the vast mineral wealth which can often be found in pastoralist areas.

2. Goal 2: “Pastoral mobility is acknowledged as an asset for overall sustainable development”

Another element that seems to be at the core of creating favourable conditions for pastoralists to gain *a decent livelihood from their production system/way of life*, is **mobility**. In order to have a decent livelihood pastoralists need to be mobile. Their herds need to be in good health and they need to be fed properly. Both things require mobility: in order to access veterinary services, pastoralists need



to move and in order to access pasture and water (main production factors), they need to be mobile. In addition, to access markets, pastoralists also need to be mobile and head to the market which can either be far away or very nearby. Mobility is therefore a crucial condition for pastoralists to gain a decent livelihood. Mobility can either be in-country or between countries. Either way it requires adapted legal frameworks (and their implementation) in which pastoralist movements are recognized and pastoral mobility is upheld. Therefore, in terms of specific objectives, this becomes: ***“Pastoral mobility is acknowledged as an asset for overall sustainable development”***. This refers not only to the socio-economic importance of mobility (to access production factors and services as stated in the above), but also its environmental importance such as its contribution to biodiversity, its’ ecosystem services and its’ potential to alleviate climate change. Today, pastoral mobility is becoming increasingly difficult, in country as well as between countries. Therefore it also a major challenge for pastoralists.

3. Goal 3: “Pastoral Civil Society Organisations actively add to policy design, implementation and evaluation”

If *the rights of (agro-)pastoralists should be upheld and realized*, then this can only be done if pastoralist civil society organisations themselves add to policies that affect them. This means they should be involved in designing, implementing and evaluation policies affecting pastoralist livelihood and way of life. This means being involved in land policies, agriculture policies, etc. This also means being involved in trade policies. For instance, the campaign designed to defend local milk in West Africa (“Mon lait est local”) is mainly pushed by associations of local, agro-pastoralist dairy producers. As pastoralists continue to be marginalised in many African countries, making this a specific goal will add to the attainment of the overall goal.

Stakeholder analysis

1. Which stakeholders are involved in achieving this goal?

After having defined the vision and specific goals to attain, it is important to think about **which institutions and which individuals are involved or should included in achieving this goal?** This includes those with the official authority to make changes (such as political decision-makers or private companies) and those with the capacity to influence these official authorities (organisations that work on the same theme, for example).

In terms of stakeholders, we can distinguish between **beneficiaries, targets, opponents and allies**.

- The beneficiaries have already been defined, they are the agro-pastoralists. They could be defined more precisely. Since most VSFs are working only on Sub-Saharan Africa, advocacy activities could benefit the 268 million African pastoralists (AU framework on pastoralism).
- The following direct targets can be distinguished:
 - At the *global* scale, VSF INTERNATIONAL targets UN institutions and global platforms who have a particular influence on the attainment of the general and specific goals. These include the UN conventions on desertification and climate change (UNCCD and UNFCCC), FAO, the International Land Coalition, the Global Landscapes Forum, the Global



- Agenda on Sustainable Livestock (GASL), etc. next to global platforms and UN institutions, global companies are also clear targets of VSF INTERNATIONAL advocacy. Companies investing in pastoral areas through the extraction of minerals or the import of milk powder for instance, should be directly considered in VSF INTERNATIONAL advocacy activities. They could also be targeted indirectly through intermediate targets such as the European Parliament.
- After the global scale, comes the *continental scale*. Since most VSFs are working in Africa, legal processes at the African Union level are important. At the level of the African Union, there is the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), in charge of most matters related to livestock and animal health but here is also the African Union Commission and possible other entities to target. The African Union published the AU framework on pastoralism back in 2010 which is up until today an important document providing a legal framework for pastoralists, recognizing their customary arrangements and institutions, pastoral mobility and the role of pastoralist civil society in policy making.
 - Below the continental scale is *the regional scale*. Since most VSFs are working in Eastern and Western Africa, the regional governing bodies of these regions are the most important targets to attain the general and specific objective. In Eastern Africa, the regional authority to be targeted is the InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which is in charge of food security and environmental protection, peace and security, and economic cooperation and integration in the region. IGAD recently worked on a Transhumance Protocol (2020), which is supposed to regulate transhumance in the IGAD region. IGAD is furthermore important since it regulates transboundary transhumance between Uganda and its neighboring countries. In West-Africa, it is first and foremost the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which should be considered. ECOWAS developed an International Transhumance Certificate about 30 years ago. This certificate is supposed to allow free movement of pastoralists with their herds
 - After the regional scale, there is the *national level*. This means that national governments are also important actors influencing the general and specific objectives of VSF INTERNATIONAL advocacy. The governments and parliaments of the countries of VSF INTERNATIONAL field activities are therefore also important actors.
 - Finally Local governing authorities of VSF INTERNATIONAL field countries should not be forgotten.
- Next to the direct targets, it is also important to define the *intermediate targets*. Intermediate targets, are targets who, at their turn, will target the final advocacy targets. The intermediate targets for VSF INTERNATIONAL are at two levels:
 - At the European Union level. The European Union has a big influence on overall pastoral development in Africa. Through its development, agricultural and trade policies; the EU has a direct impact on pastoralists but also on African governments and policy formulating bodies. Therefore, by influencing certain policy processes at the Euro-



pean level, VSF INTERNATIONAL is certain to also have an impact on policies formulated at the African level. Furthermore, since VSF INTERNATIONAL is a Belgian/European based organisation, it can be considered a legitimate actor to influence its' policies. A clear entry point at the European level is the EU Parliament, which can be used to influence the EU Commission.

- At the **Belgian (replace by the name of your country...)** level. Belgium is a massive donor for development and humanitarian aid. Either through bilateral or multilateral support, Belgian policies can influence the general and specific advocacy goals for VSF INTERNATIONAL. This is therefore also an important level to take into account. The same observation can be made for the European Union level: VSF INTERNATIONAL, due to its' nature, is a legitimate actor to influence this policy level.
 - To influence policies at the **European/Belgian citizens**, it is important to influence the public opinion and to encourage people to act in favour of the change we want. People in Europe and Belgium should be informed and be aware of the challenges facing pastoralists in Africa and how they can act to support VSF INTERNATIONAL advocacy efforts. They can act through donations but also through signing petitions, through participating in contests and conferences, through joining climate marches, etc. Within European/Belgian citizens, certain categories of people should be prioritized because they are supposed to have a clear interest/stake in regards to pastoralism in Africa. These include mainly current and future animal health professionals and professionals in agronomy and livestock related activities. There is big gain in terms of efficiency in working with these as they are considered to be natural allies of VSF INTERNATIONAL vision and mission. Previously they were considered as final targets of DEAR activities. Now they are considered as vectors to influence policy making at the Belgian/EU-level.
- To influence these final and intermediate targets, VSF INTERNATIONAL has several important allies which it should consider. Significant gains in terms of efficiency can be made when going through these allies to influence specific targets. In some cases working through these allies is also a necessity. VSF INTERNATIONAL has to work with local partners to influence African decision making for instance. The following important allies should be considered:
 - **African civil society organisations.** Due to the beneficiaries of the advocacy actions of VSF INTERNATIONAL and due to its focus in terms of targets, VSF INTERNATIONAL will work with African partner organisations to achieve its general and specific goals. African organisations are legitimate actors to influence their governing bodies at the local (municipality, county, etc.), national, regional and continental level. VSF INTERNATIONAL will provide support to those organisations who represent pastoralist interests at these different levels. Some of these partner organisations will also be involved in more technical activities VSF INTERNATIONAL is working on, for instance in dairy chain development. African civil society organisa-

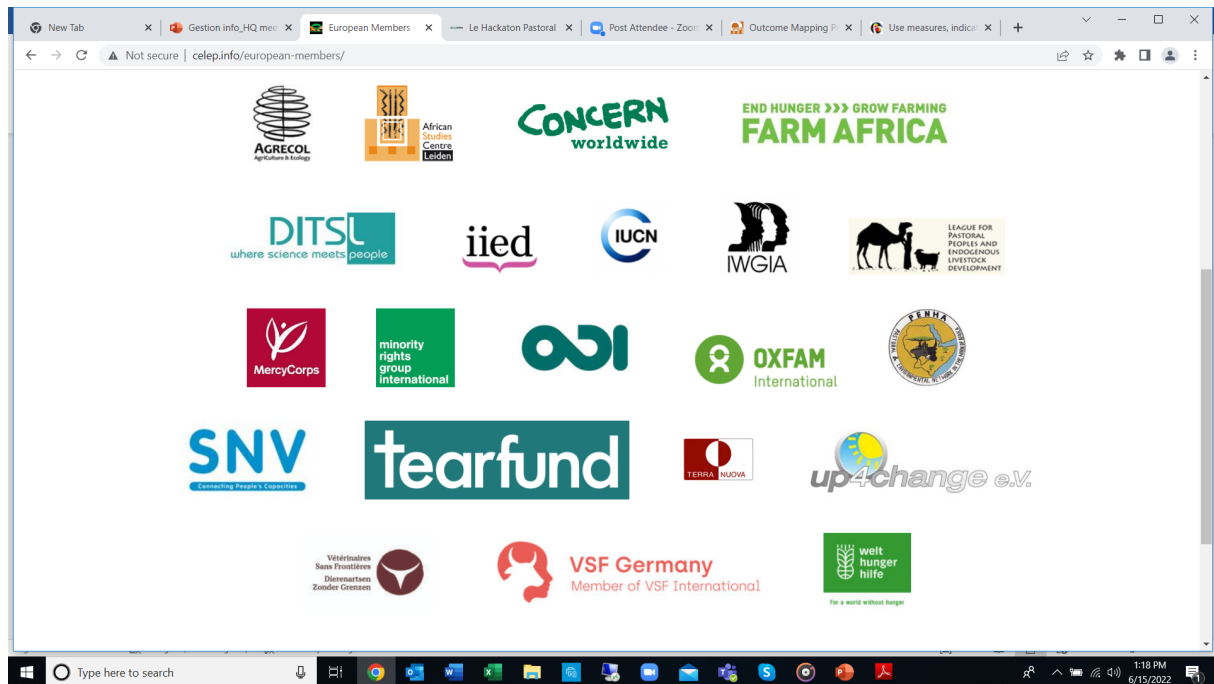


tions exist at the local level (for instance Karamoja Development Forum – KDF works mostly at the level of Karamoja in Uganda), at the national level (for instance the Association pour la Redynamisation de l’Elevage au Niger works mainly at the national level in Niger), at the regional level (APESS and RBM are the two biggest networks at the regional level in West Africa) and at the continental level. Working together with these actors is not only useful but also a necessity.

- **Relevant networks and coalitions.** Several of these networks are vital in achieving the advocacy goals. They involve the Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism (CELEP - www.celep.info), the International Land Coalition (ILC - www.landcoalition.org), the FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub (<http://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>) and VSF-international (www.vsf-international.org). At the Belgian level there is also the Coalition Contre la Faim (CCF) which can also be considered.
- Finally, there is also an entire category of opponents that should be considered when doing advocacy. In our case these can be companies involved in land grabbing in pastoralist areas, big dairy companies exporting milk powder to Western Africa, etc. They can also be targets so there is no need to explicitly include them.

2. Stakeholder mapping and prioritisation

- Over the years, VSF (Belgium and Germany) has invested a lot in networking, leading to **a strong platform** to conduct advocacy activities at the European level, **CELEP**. Hence, VSF has some clear advantages in advocating for pastoralism through this platform to influence EU decision making so it would influence decision making at the global level and at the African level (continental, regional and national).



- In addition, the European level as a target has proven to be a good entry point to influence decision making at the African level, which is already being done by African partner CSOs. Better efforts will need to be put in place to connect the lobbying at these different levels and VSF INTERNATIONAL will need to find out how to better reinforce the advocacy strategy of regional pastoralist CSOs in West Africa in particular.
- Finally, VSF INTERNATIONAL has worked with pastoralist CSOs in the past few years through different programs. Increasingly, connections are also made with these CSOs not just to implement technical projects but also to conduct advocacy activities. These pastoralist CSOs – who are unified at the regional level, particularly in West Africa – should also be considered for targeted lobbying at the national level. VSF INTERNATIONAL can assist them in building their capacities in terms of lobbying/advocacy and can relate their messages to policy makers at other levels and inform the European public opinion about their importance.

Projects and programs focusing on making this strategy operational should therefore build upon these assets and clarify how VSF INTERNATIONAL can build on them to add to the final goal.

Messages: what should we say?

Pastoralism relates to many things and in order to influence lobby targets, messages can be formulated differently and be adapted to the context. The *core-message* in VSF INTERNATIONAL pastoralism advocacy should state it's overall importance in terms of providing a livelihood for millions of Africans, in terms of providing food security for vulnerable and malnourished people, in terms of



economic importance in terms of contribution to GDP, etc. Next to its socio-economic value and value in terms of food security and nutrition, its environmental value should also be stressed, in particular in relation to climate change. Overall, the contribution of pastoralism to the SDGs should be considered a guide for further advocacy¹.

Importance of (agro-)pastoralism²

According to the AU Policy Framework on Pastoralism, the pastoralist population in Africa is estimated at 268 million (over a quarter of the total population), living on about 43% of the continent's total land mass. Pastoralism contributes significantly to the African economies. In Kenya, for instance, the pastoralist sector has an overall estimated value of €750 million and an annual marketed value of €50–80 million. In Uganda, the livestock sector contributes 7.5% to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 17% to agricultural GDP. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, even in conflict-affected countries like South Sudan, livestock contribution to GDP is as high as 60%, while in Somalia agricultural contribution to GDP is also 60%. Pastoralism also provides employment as well as subsistence and livelihood values for up to 20 million people in Eastern Africa. In Kenya, for instance, pastoralism provides 90% of the employment opportunities and 95% of the family income in the arid and semi-arid lands, and its subsistence and livelihood values are estimated to be the equivalent of €224 million. Pastoralism provides milk and meat and therefore improves food security and nutrition. It is estimated that pastoralists contribute about 90% of the meat consumed in East Africa and close to 60% of the meat and milk products consumed in West Africa. In addition, crop farming is a key beneficiary of pastoralism, which helps raise crop productivity by providing manure, animals for draught and transport, seasonal labour and technical knowledge for the rising number of farmers now investing in livestock. Animal draught power in Ethiopia, for instance, is estimated to be worth about €870 million and manure production about €430 million. In addition to its socio-economic values, pastoralism also has an important environmental value. Grazing animals eat dead grass and other biomass at the dry season's end, paving the way for new growth in the rains and preventing bushfires and the spread of unpalatable grasses and shrubs. Grazing livestock disperse plant seeds that stick to the animals' bodies, and aid the germination of other seeds by eating and excreting them. Herds break up hard soil crusts, allowing water to filter through and seeds to sprout. In addition, pastoralists are in a better position to accommodate climate change than are livestock keepers tied to sedentary land uses. Through mobility and the maintenance of reciprocal and negotiated forms of access to natural resources, pastoralists are able to exploit increasing variability in the condition of natural resources.

Therefore, depending on the entry point, pastoralism can and should be first of all related to the topics of:

- Food security and nutrition
- Extractives and land grabbing

¹ With CELEP, VSF made two interesting documents that could help to finetune the messages including a document on the value of pastoralism and the relation of pastoralism to the SDGs <https://www.celep.info/pastoralism-and-the-sdgs/>.

² This comes from a CELEP position paper on EU-Africa strategy <https://www.celep.info/celep-position-paper-on-new-eu-africa-strategy/>

- Climate change
- Consumption of animal products
- Agricultural production

Activities: what types of activities and approaches are to be planned/foreseen?

The activities that can be developed to add to the different goals are quite numerous and below is a series of ideas of activities and approaches that can be used for future projects/programs design.

- The VSF INTERNATIONAL ambassador approach

VSF INTERNATIONAL wants to inform, raise awareness and mobilise European citizens in favour of pastoralism in Africa. In future advocacy activities, the ambassador approach could be included to make sure VSF has many different ambassadors making sure to create support for policy change whilst making sure the network is known and receives the necessary private funding to conduct its' activities. Students should be considered in the same way, as VSF INTERNATIONAL ambassadors who create the necessary conditions in the European public opinion to bring about policy change.

- Campaigning

VSF INTERNATIONAL should consider designing campaigns. Campaigns have the possibility to explicitly connect policy change with the public opinion. Regarding pastoralism, demands can be finetuned according to the target audience and then citizens can be asked to show their support by signing a declaration with the demands or taking a picture with a cow or what not. Mobilising people through the campaign should not only be done online but at certain moments during the campaign, events such as filmprojections, marches, etc. can also be organised. Ideally these should then be organized by VSF INTERNATIONAL ambassadors. Central to the campaign there should be a file, explaining the demands - in relation to the advocacy objectives outlined in the above - and how policy makers or other targets should act to change things around. Campaigning tools can include video's, activities on social media, online games, etc. Campaigns could be thematic (for instance focusing on any of the themes in connection to pastoralism as outlined in the messages part) or geographic (focus on Uganda or Niger) or both.

- Collaboration with pastoralist CSOs

As outlined in the above, pastoralist CSOs are key-actors to influence the different policy levels and as such are crucial to attaining our advocacy objectives. In addition, VSF INTERNATIONAL needs them to be credible and legitimate and it is of course part and parcel of the VSF INTERNATIONAL values to work with them. VSF INTERNATIONAL has worked in the past with pastoralist CSOs but should now consider how it can truly support them and bring their preoccupations to relevant decision making arena's and should consider its advocacy as reinforcing advocacy done by pastoralist CSOs. The collaboration and partnership with pastoralist CSOs is therefore a first step to implement the strategy.



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- Actual lobbying

VSF-B has a good tradition in lobbying with members of the European Parliament for pastoralism in Eastern Africa through CELEP and for local dairy in West Africa. In addition, the organisation has good contacts at DG DEVCO in Brussels. Consequently, VSF International could capitalize on (i) lobbying the EU delegations in Africa as they have increased power to influence DG DEVCO/INTPA decision making and (ii) creating a coalition similar to CELEP for West Africa as the overall focus of the organisation has shifted in its' operations. Lobbying activities include: organizing exchanges between pastoralist CSOs and members of parliament, organizing meetings at the Commission, making positioning documents, writing opinions, etc.