



# Key messages for COP 28 from the pastoralists: The MAA Economic Bloc



**SPRING OF THE ARID  
& SEMI ARID LANDS**  
*Towards Thriving Pastoral Communities*

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# WHO ARE WE?

SASAL is a non-governmental organization working with pastoral communities in Arid and semi-arid lands to build climate resilience. To achieve climate resilience, we have developed several programs on awareness/knowledge creation, mitigation, and adaptation. The idea for SASAL was born in the year 2015 but became a reality in September 2019. It was initially named "smile of a pastoralist" but then renamed.

Our story stems from an exciting point of view from our founder, who is also a meteorologist and from a pastoral community. She couldn't help but notice the continuous land degradation, recurrent droughts, and loss of livelihood in her home area in Magadi, Kajiado county. Studying meteorology led her to believe that the effects of droughts such as the loss of livelihoods could be evaded by proper preparedness by following weather forecasts issued by the Kenya Meteorological department. However, she realized some of the barriers hindering the farmers from consuming the weather forecasts and using them. That's when the idea was born of forming an organization that will be like a "spring" not only in Kajiado county but all of the Arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya and help people build climate resilience through creating awareness, adapting to climate change and some mitigation actions. Hence the name Spring of the ASAL's.

## OUR MISSION

To work with the Pastoral communities in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands(ASALs) of Kenya for their improved climate resilience.



## OUR VISION

Climate- resilient and thriving pastoral communities capable of anticipating, coping and recovering from the impacts of climate change.





Water is the solution to a majority of our problems. Research and innovation on matters concerning pastoralism should also be invested on and prioritized to enable communities build resilience”

***- Hon Martin Moshisho, Deputy Governor,  
Kajiado County.***

## INTRODUCTION

It is highly acknowledged that climate change is a global phenomenon that has continued to punish humanity for her deeds. However, climate change has emerged and evolved to become a major threat to livelihood and human life in arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya (ASAL). The ASAL regions are characterized with a background of extreme climatic conditions that have already exerted devastating effects to the environment and livelihoods of the communities within these regions. Moreover, the communities in the ASALs are often faced with the challenges of scarce resources in the setting of political and economic marginalization (1,2). Due to exacerbated climate change effects, the communities' continuity in the ASALs is at a breaking point as they can no longer endure the most extreme of these effects presented to them as a double-edged sword. Presently, the ASALs of Kenya experiences a two-fold worse drought and flood situation in a sequential occurrence compared to previous years. Who is coming to save us?

The impacts of climate change are already being felt globally. In 2022, countries in Asia, including China experienced prolonged drier-than-normal conditions and drought. Pakistan, by contrast, suffered disastrous flooding that affected at least 33 million people, 14% of the total population. Economic loss due to the prolonged drought in China was estimated at US\$7.6 billion (5). Cumulatively, in Asia, it is estimated that at least 5,000 deaths were directly associated with the prolonged drought situation. Additionally, over 50 million people experienced devastating outcomes with an associated total economic damage of more than US\$ 36 billion in 2022 alone (5).

In Kenya, the last decade has seen the country experience three severe drought seasons (2010–2011, 2016–2017 and 2020–2022). The 2020–2022 was by far the most extreme and longest with preponderate loss of livelihood and monumental population displacement. By the end of 2022, more than 24%, representing more than 4.2 million of the ASAL population in Kenya were faced with high levels of acute food insecurity (3). At the same time, about 2.7 million (12%) were in the Crisis phase and 785,000 people were in the Emergency state of food insecurity. Comparatively, the food insecurity situation in 2022 was worse than in 2021, where only an estimated 2.1 million people of the total ASAL population were categorized as in an emergency and crisis state (3). Besides, the drought situation extended to 2023 and the cumulative number was projected to rise to at least 6.4 million people, indicating a 35% increase compared to 2022. To add salt to the wound, the pastoral communities suffered a catastrophic hit as at least 2.6 million recorded livestock deaths were attributed to the drought (4). Currently, the country is facing heavy rains due to the progress of El Niño and Positive Indian Ocean Dipole events in the region. So far, the ASAL has again been hit by severe continuous floods leading to loss of human lives, displacement and loss of livestock and livelihood.

The consecutive occurrence of these extreme weather conditions has progressively suffocated communities globally, with the pastoral communities bearing the most burden in the setting of already depressed socioeconomic conditions. While these occur, the pastoral communities are in a “caught in the crossfire” situation in the war between industrialism vs global warming. While this is not a call for compensation, it highlights that there is a dire need to prioritize the civilian

casualties of the war. While the war mitigation strategies are urgent, saving the lives of the civilian casualties is an emergency. The 28th meeting of Conference of the Parties (**COP**) aims at mobilizing the most inclusive COP ever by prioritizing nature, people, lives, and livelihoods at the heart of climate action. There can never be another best time as now. The time for action is now as the ASAL is in danger, the pastoral community is at a breaking point, and pastoralism has become an endangered practice.

The establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund (L&DF) is indeed commendable. This is so as it aims to address challenges and priorities of the vulnerable and marginalized communities confronted by unimaginable loss and damage incurred from climate change effects.

More importantly, the recommendations to ensure equity, inclusivity, and the promotion of a learning environment within all the procedures in the L&DF is similarly crucial where the point of focus is the vulnerable and marginalized. More so, the recommendations to embed the financial instrument within the proven philanthropic and humanitarian support systems to ensure grassroots accessibility and penetration is imperative.

This will enable actualization of the benefits of this fund to communities at the grass root.

The Maa Economic Bloc in Kenya consisting of counties home to the indigenous Maasai community namely; Kajiado, Narok and Samburu counties was recently established (2023) to promote unity of the Maasai community across all counties in Kenya. The bloc will promote a more unified approach towards matters of common interest including the promotion & preservation of culture as well as joint voice in seeking reparation & restitution for the historical injustices meted

towards these communities. Spring of the Arid and Semi-arid Lands (**SASAL**) in association with the MAA economic Bloc in Kenya, acknowledges the importance of the loss and damage fund and its progress since the groundbreaking agreement at **COP27**. SASAL presents the pastoralists voice from this bloc that aims to contribute towards the actualization and operationalization of the loss and damage fund in order to benefit such vulnerable and marginalized communities at the grassroots level. Through rigorous consultations with key leaders & departments from the 3 counties constituting the bloc, the following demands & inputs were put forward for **COP28**.

#### Key messages from Pastoralists leaders for Cop28 Demand 1: Operationalize Now

Climate change continues to wreak havoc and the pastoral community bears the full force and are the worst hit by the adverse effects. Their existence is threatened. The L&DF is anchored on the principles of climate justice and where human lives are at stake, we cannot afford to delay help any longer. The L&DF should not follow the path of its peers such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) that took five years to finalize its institutional arrangements and still have a characteristic slow disbursement process thereafter. The L&DF should be timely operationalized so as to actualize timely benefits and abatement of socioeconomic and mental affliction from the adverse effects of climate change.

Besides, the fund should adopt an easy, efficient and a seamless systematic process for claims/proposal submission, assessment, approval and disbursement. Since loss from the adverse effects of climate change is continual a season after the other, a slow disbursement process may lead to pile up of claims/proposals. This will have a negative impact on financing, equity and monitoring

of the disbursed funds.

***There is no best time to operationalize L&DF as now.***

### **Demand 2: Accessibility**

Despite being a marginalized group, the pastoral community is a unique social group on its own that presents with unique challenges. While they move from place to place in search of pasture and water, they do not merely practice that as a livelihood but as a way of life in order to survive the harsh climatic conditions. They have integrated their culture into this practice, a factor that promotes resilience.

They exist in communalized settings and shared resources. In order to actualize benefits at the local level, there is a need to make use of local community stakeholders who are actually on the ground and understand the lived experiences of the local community.

The L&DF should be accessible to directly benefit the affected community with the most minimum operational/intermediary cost and maximum end beneficiary benefits. This will also improve timeliness. The L&DF should allow provision of state and non-state actors who include the national and sub national/devolved governments, local NGOs and community groups to have a direct access to the funds. This will actualize a bottom-up approach that is community-based at the national, sub-national and local levels. It will also reduce intermediary players thus maximum end-beneficiary benefits. More so, the L&DF should strive to provide an efficient stakeholders accreditation process based on the local context so as to promote gender and youths' inclusivity and wider reach.

The fund should seek to limit regional provisions due to poor success rates and lack of direct accessibility by the affected community, a lesson from previous funds. The L&DF should strive to make the funds directly available to the end-beneficiary. The most vulnerable, the most affected, and nature of the adverse effect should be considered for priority to enhance equity and promote human rights.

### **Demand 3: Awareness and Transparency**

Loss and damage in climate change is a broad context. There is need for the L&DF to clearly lay down its definition of loss and damage and their context. Moreover, criteria for funding, accreditation requirements and the specific types of loss and damages that qualify for funding needs to be made clear. This will reduce ambiguity in interpretation and ubiquitous submissions especially from the pastoral communities who operate in the context of severely scarce resources.

This is putting in consideration time and finances taken to develop proposal and carry out loss and damage assessment before making a submission. The L&DF should lay down a transparent process for proposals/claims submission, approval and disbursement. The fund should also aim to revise proposal development processes and requirements to favor the already vulnerable communities.

### **Demand 4: Financial Instruments**

The developing countries where the majority of the pastoralist's communities exist already suffer from the burden of international debts that arise from developmental loans. Thus, it is key for the L&DF to define the financial mechanism in which it is embedded. However, since developing countries are less emitters of GHG emissions but the worst

affected by the adverse effects, the fund should adopt a purely grant-based financial mechanism. This will ensure maximization of the fund's benefits without any additional burden. This approach will allow the decentralization of the funds and promote local stakeholder's accreditation.

### Quotes from Pastoralists leaders in Kenya



*Ms Mana Omar*

"There has never been a more critical time to platform the voices of our communities like now when a historical & one of a kind fund is being discussed, potentially to be operationalized. I urge parties & governments to ensure the funds are flexible enough to actually reach individual communities, in my case, the pastoralists from all over the world who've found themselves caught in a crossfire they are not responsible for".

*– Mana Omar, (Daughter of a Pastoralist) Spring of the Arid and Semi-arid Lands (SASAL)*

restocked hence get the justice they deserve.

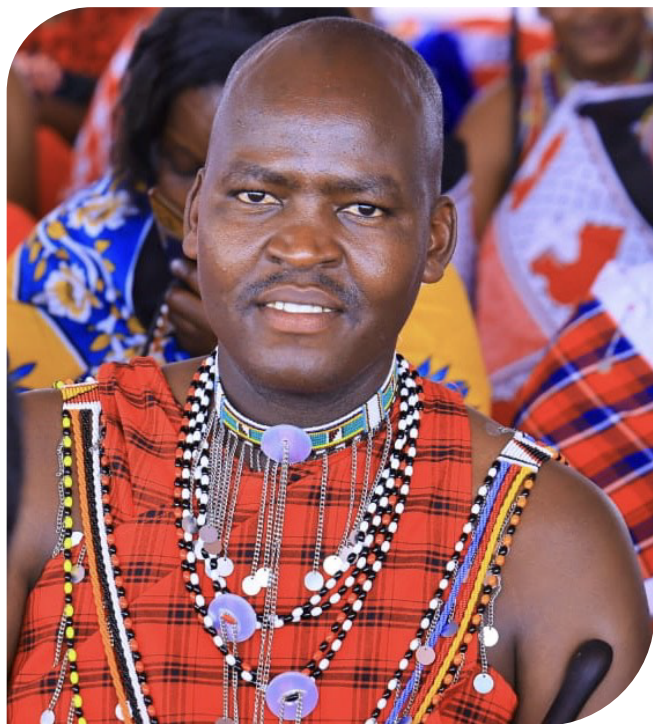
As leaders of these communities, we are also asking governments around the world for solutions to water without depending on rains that have already been affected by the changes in climate.



*Mr. Tom Lesarge*

"In all these conversations, let's not forget Men are also affected, we've witnessed an increase in the rise of suicide cases & murder concerning men in the line of providing for their families and fighting for the diminishing natural resources"

*- Mr. Tom Lesarge, Director, Environment & Climate Change, Samburu County.*



*-Mr Meing'ati*

“Apart from the loss and damage fund, the adaptation fund should also be available to the pastoralists. We are in need of a more adaptive/climate-resilient way of life and with the limited resources & vastness of our counties, this is seemingly impossible” .

*-Mr Meing'ati, County Attorney, Narok county.*



*-John Kamanga*

“Indigenous pastoralists communities have been on the forefront of conserving our natural environment. Their management style has allowed for open landscapes enabling coexistence between people and nature. It is unfortunate that they are bearing a disproportionate brunt of climate change which has created major seasonal variations leading to major droughts that have continued to impoverish them. The 2018/2019 drought saw pastoralists in Kajiado only losing livestock worth 9 Billion shillings without considering other social losses. It is therefore only ethical that these communities are given first priority in the share of the funds from the L&DF which should be channeled directly to the affected counties” .

*-John Kamanga, Executive Director, SORALO.*



*-Mercy Moinan Nyerere*

“Pastoralists women face the disproportionate brunt of climate change. We ought to in turn ensure their voices are amplified and that they are prioritized in adaptation/loss and damage funding”

*-Mercy Moinan Nyerere, Village Administrator, Gender Advocate, Kajiado County*



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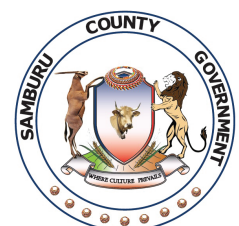
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### OUR PARTNERS

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