



## **Unlocking the Development Potential of Drylands: Lessons from Ethiopia and Uganda**





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The UNDP Drylands Development Centre is a unique global thematic centre that provides technical expertise, practical policy advice and programme support for poverty reduction and development in the drylands of the world. The Centre's work bridges between global policy issues and on-the-ground activities, and helps governments to establish and institutionalize the link between grassroots development activities and pro-poor policy reform. The main areas of focus are mainstreaming of drylands issues into national development frameworks; land governance; making markets work for the poor; decentralized governance of natural resources; and drought risk management.

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# I. Acknowledgments

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## II. List of Acronyms

<b>AIDMP</b>	Afar Integrated Dryland Management Project (Ethiopia)
<b>ANRS</b>	Afar National Region State
<b>BoFED</b>	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
<b>CA</b>	Conservation Agriculture
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CRGE</b>	Climate Resilient Green Economy
<b>DA</b>	Development Agent
<b>DDP</b>	District Development Plans
<b>DEAP</b>	District Environment Action Plans
<b>EPLUA</b>	Afar Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Agency
<b>EWS</b>	Early Warning Systems
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
<b>IDDP</b>	Integrated Drylands Development Programme
<b>IPS</b>	Integrated Package of Services
<b>KM</b>	Knowledge Management
<b>MAAIF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (Uganda)
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MoFED</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (Ethiopia)
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plans to Combat Desertification
<b>NARL</b>	National Agricultural Research Laboratories (Uganda)
<b>NARO</b>	National Agricultural Research Organization (Uganda)
<b>NEMA</b>	National Environment Management Authority (Uganda)
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan (Uganda)
<b>PARDB</b>	Pastoral Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau (Afar Regional State, Ethiopia)
<b>PARDO</b>	Pastoral Agricultural and Rural Development Offices (Ethiopia)

<b>PMU</b>	Project Management Unit
<b>SLM</b>	Sustainable Land Management
<b>SWC</b>	Soil and Water Conservation
<b>TBFA</b>	Twali Banafu Farmers Association
<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDP-DDC</b>	UNDP Drylands Development Centre
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WACIDI</b>	Walwawo Community Integrated Development Initiative
<b>WDCD</b>	World Day to Combat Desertification



### III. Executive Summary

Drylands are challenging environments where human ingenuity, knowledge systems, and the careful use of natural resources are essential for survival. Over the years, communities and farmers in the drylands have developed strategies to maintain the quality and quantity of these scarce resources in the face of rapidly changing socioeconomic and environmental conditions. But an increasingly variable climate coupled with unprecedented population growth, particularly of young people, is sure to intensify the problems of limited access to natural resources.

Drylands include arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid lands and cover more than 41 percent of the earth's land surface. They are home to 2 billion people, many of whom depend on the natural resources, biodiversity and agro-biodiversity of these lands for all aspects of their livelihood including food, water, fuel and building materials.

In the drylands, there is more livestock in arid areas and more cropland in dry, sub-humid areas. Pastoralism, however, remains the most widespread land-use system in the drylands. Mobile pastoralism in the drylands provides a highly efficient way of managing the sparse vegetation, relatively low fertility of drylands soils and extremely high seasonal variability of rainfall. It is estimated that drylands rangelands support about 50 percent of the world's livestock. Beyond pastoralism, drylands have great economic and ecological potential, including products such as gum Arabic, gum talha, frankincense and myrrh, medicinal plants such as aloe vera, biofuels such as *Jatropha*, and more.

Even though most agricultural production in the drylands is seasonal and subject to the challenges posed by land degradation, highly volatile climatic variability and water scarcity, these areas also offer opportunities. According to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the drylands of sub-Saharan Africa harbour great cultural and biological diversity, which are valuable resources for building sustainable rural livelihoods. Indeed, some 44 percent of the world's cultivated systems are in the drylands. Furthermore, high-yielding agricultural production has been linked to improved access to farming inputs including certified seeds, knowledge, appropriate technology, access to markets and the adoption of improved agricultural practices.

Both Ethiopia and Uganda have a large percentage of drylands so their development is highly dependent upon the efficient and effective use of these areas.

In Ethiopia, the drylands are situated in the regions of Somali, Afar, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella. This accounts for nearly 70 percent of Ethiopia's total land mass, which is primarily inhabited by agro-pastoralists and pastoralists who occupy 46 percent of the country's total arable land. The climate in the Ethiopian drylands is

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