

Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN)

Summary of Activities Report 2025

1. Institutional Development and Registration

In December 2024, ESAPN was formally registered as a non-governmental organisation in Uganda. The registration certificate was received in 2025. This milestone enabled the Network to fully participate in regional and international initiatives, notably under the EU–FAO funded PLACE Project. Through Activity 3.1.4 of the project—supporting regional pastoralist associations’ advocacy with national and regional parliamentary groups—ESAPN contributes to strengthening pro-pastoral advocacy, policy implementation, cross-border peace, and security. The work emphasizes inclusive pastoral policies, gender-sensitive peacebuilding, secure land tenure, climate adaptation, disability inclusion, and strengthened conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms at national and regional levels.

2. Participation in Key Regional and Global Forums

2.1 The Regional Technical Meeting on the Harmonization of Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) Manuals and Toolkits

(Entebbe, Uganda 23–25 April 2025)

The meeting brought together technical experts, development partners, researchers, and practitioners working on rangelands and pastoral systems in the IGAD region and beyond. The civil society was represented by ESAPN as well as the Tanzania Natural Resources Forum (TNRF). The meeting aimed to review existing PRM manuals and toolkits, identify areas of convergence and divergence, and agree on a harmonized framework that can guide consistent and effective PRM implementation across countries.

Participants shared experiences from ongoing PRM initiatives, highlighting good practices, implementation challenges, and lessons learned from community-level rangeland governance, planning, and monitoring. Particular attention was given to ensuring that PRM approaches are inclusive, participatory, and responsive to pastoralists’ livelihoods, customary institutions, gender dynamics, and climate variability. The discussions underscored the importance of aligning PRM tools with national policies, regional frameworks, and global commitments related to land governance, climate resilience, and sustainable natural resource management.

The meeting concluded with agreement on key principles and core components to be reflected in a harmonized PRM manual, as well as recommendations for next steps, including technical drafting, validation with communities and governments, and capacity-building for practitioners. Participants emphasized that a harmonized PRM approach will strengthen rangeland governance, enhance pastoralists' resilience, and support sustainable and peaceful use of rangeland resources across the region.



Participants in the Technical Validation Workshop: PRM Toolkits for Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) 23 – 25th April 2025, Entebbe, Uganda

2.2 International Year of Camelids and Sustainable Livestock Transformation *(Nairobi, June 2025)*

ESAPN participated in the FAO–AU-IBAR convened regional conference focusing on the role of camelids in climate-resilient livestock systems. Discussions highlighted camelids' growing importance in arid and semi-arid lands, particularly in the Horn of Africa, while identifying systemic challenges such as weak veterinary services, limited value addition, underdeveloped markets, and inadequate policy recognition of indigenous knowledge.

The forum reinforced alignment with continental frameworks including the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Livestock

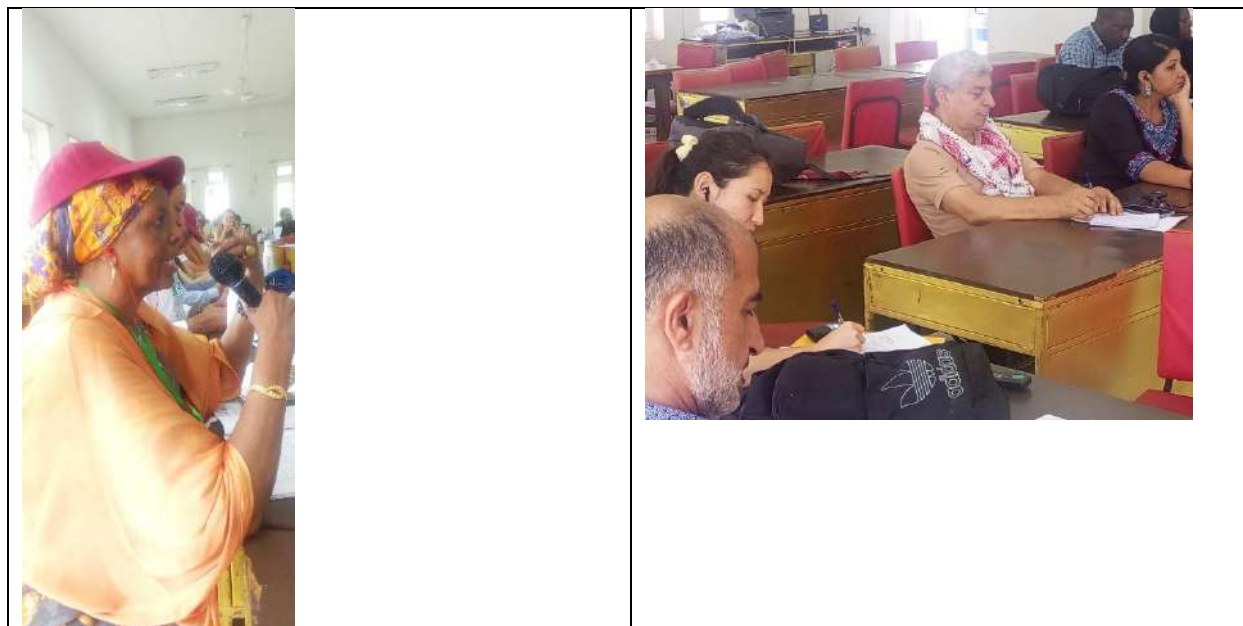
Development Strategy for Africa 2015–2035 (LiDeSA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Camel Resources Management Strategy, and called for increased investment, policy coherence, and knowledge sharing for inclusive livestock transformation.

2.3 Nyéléni Global Forum on Systemic Transformation

(Kandy Sri Lanka, September 2025)

At the 3rd Nyéléni Global Forum, ESAPN engaged with global social movements and civil society actors advancing systemic alternatives to inequality, environmental degradation, and social injustice. Deliberations covered food sovereignty, climate justice, land and territories, people's economies, and peace. The forum adopted the Kandy Declaration, which provides a people-centred roadmap for just and resilient societies, and reaffirmed collective action against land grabbing, corporate impunity, and marginalisation of indigenous peoples, pastoralists and peasants.

ESAPN was represented by the Chairperson and the Coordinator. The delegate from South Africa was not able to participate due to logistical challenges.



Left: Ms. Sadia Musse Ahmed the ESAPN Chairperson making a submission in one of the sessions of the Nyeleni Global Forum 2025 and **right:** Some WAMIP delegates at the Forum

2.4 COPACSO–FAO TAPE Consultative Meeting (Uganda)

(Moroto, March 2025)

ESAPN participated in a consultative meeting under a COPACSO-led project on biodiversity and gender in sustainable livestock transformation. (COPACSO is the

Uganda member of ESAPN). The meeting focused on adapting FAO's Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) to Uganda's pastoral systems. Discussions emphasised the interconnectedness of people, livestock, and natural resources and the need to generate robust evidence on biodiversity, gender dynamics, and land tenure. The meeting agreed on participatory data collection approaches, community engagement, and policy-oriented outputs to inform pastoralist-sensitive and gender-responsive policies.



Participants in the COPACSO–FAO TAPE Consultative Meeting in Moroto, Uganda

2.5 African Food Systems and the Digital Economy

(Addis Ababa, 2-4 October 2025)

ESAPN participated in a Pan-African gathering convened by AFSA and AfriTAP examining digitalisation in African food systems from a food sovereignty perspective. The meeting critically assessed corporate-driven digital agriculture models while promoting community-led, participatory, and open-source alternatives. Indigenous knowledge systems and grassroots innovations were highlighted as key to strengthening agroecology, accountability, and people's sovereignty over food systems.

Participants engaged in dialogue on the political, social, and ecological implications of digitalisation in agriculture, contrasting corporate-driven technological models with community-led, emancipatory alternatives. Capacity-building sessions and experience sharing strengthened participants' ability to assess digital technologies through bottom-up, participatory methodologies rooted in lived realities.

The meeting showcased grassroots innovations, indigenous knowledge systems, and community-driven technologies, emphasizing their role in strengthening agroecology and people's sovereignty. Discussions also explored opportunities for open-source partnerships and transparent, accountable digital tools aligned with public interest.

The gathering contributed to the development and testing of a participatory technology assessment methodology and helped build a continent-wide network of actors committed to shaping alternative narratives and influencing policy debates on digitalisation and African food systems.



Participants in the Science–Policy Lab on Agrosilvopastoralism (ASP) Meeting.

2.6 Meeting Report: Science–Policy Lab on Agrosilvopastoralism (ASP)

(14–15 October, Addis Ababa)

The Science–Policy Lab was held under the Sustainable Agrifood System Intelligence – Science Policy Interface (SASi-SPi) initiative to share preliminary findings and promote dialogue on how agrosilvopastoralism (ASP) can better contribute to food system performance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. The meeting aimed to inform evidence-based recommendations for policies, interventions, and investments targeting ASP systems.

Participants who included a number of civil society organisations from Eastern Africa with ESAPN, for Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative and Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia among others were briefed on the SASi-SPi ASP project (October 2024–December 2025), implemented by

Wageningen University and CIRAD, under an EU assignment to Agrinatura and coordinated by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). The project synthesizes literature, compares case studies, and draws on stakeholder interviews and science–policy dialogues to analyse key drivers of change.

The meeting clarified ASP as an umbrella term covering pastoralism, agropastoralism, and agrosilvopastoralism, emphasizing the importance of mobility, crop–livestock integration, and the role of trees and shrubs in sustaining rangelands and livelihoods.

Discussions highlighted persistent challenges, including colonial and post-independence policies that disrupted access to land, water, and markets, and ongoing misconceptions reflected in land policies, relocations, and uneven development support. Participants stressed the need for more enabling and inclusive policies that recognise ASP’s contribution to food security, resilience, and sustainable land management in the two regions.



Tezera of Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia an ESAPN member (in the background) moderating one of sessions photo by Dave studio, Addis Ababa

2.7 Participation in the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) activities

As part of its commitment to advancing the objectives of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), the Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN) actively participated in a range of global, continental, and regional IYRP-related events. In November 2025, ESAPN supported the participation of two delegates at the Global IYRP Launch held at FAO Headquarters in Rome. This engagement provided a critical platform for ESAPN and its members to highlight regional pastoralist challenges and opportunities, while benefiting from global knowledge exchange on sustainable rangeland management, climate resilience, and food

security. The global launch strengthened ESAPN's advocacy strategies through exposure to science-based policy discussions, innovative practices, and partnerships with national, regional, and international stakeholders.

At the regional and continental levels, ESAPN with its members has remained actively engaged in mobilizing pastoralist constituencies and amplifying IYRP messages. The Network was directly involved in the African Pastoralist Youth Gathering held in Uganda in October 2025, the planned African Pastoralist Gathering in Nairobi in January 2026, and the African Women and Youth Gathering scheduled for March 2026 in Kampala. In collaboration with the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), ESAPN will also facilitate the participation of two youth representatives in the Global Pastoralist Youth Gathering planned for April 2026 in Madrid, Spain. These engagements ensure meaningful inclusion of youth and women in pastoralist advocacy spaces.



ESAPN delegates at the African Pastoralist Gathering in Nairobi



Youth pastoralists sponsored by WAMIP at the African Pastoralist Gathering in Nairobi. Left to right: Venomukona Tjiseua (Namibia), Joyce Ncube (Zimbabwe) and Angol John Mark (Uganda). The three are headed for Madrid in May for the Global Pastoralism Youth Gathering.

Through its collaboration with the IYRP Regional Coordination Committee, ESAPN is contributing to enhanced coordination, visibility, and messaging on pastoralism in Eastern Africa. As a result of the IYRP, ESAPN expects improved coordination among pastoralist civil society actors, increased recognition of pastoralist contributions to ecosystems and economies, strengthened policy engagement on pastoralism and rangeland governance, and sustained momentum for post-IYRP advocacy—particularly for women and youth.

2.8 ESAPN Advocacy Strategy Development

(Nairobi, 12th to 13th December 2025)

In December 2025, ESAPN led the development of a regional advocacy strategy to strengthen pastoralists' access to and sustainable use of cross-border rangeland resources in Eastern and Southern Africa, under the FAO–EU PLACE Programme. The process involved literature and policy reviews, member consultations, stakeholder and power mapping, and analysis of legal and institutional frameworks including AU, IGAD, EAC instruments, VGGTs, UNDRIP, and ILO Convention 169.

The final output was a comprehensive advocacy strategy document outlining the full advocacy cycle—from planning to monitoring and evaluation. The activity strengthened ESAPN's institutional capacity, enhanced coherence among member organisations, and provided a practical tool to support coordinated lobbying for pro-pastoral legal and policy reforms across the region.



Participants in the Advocacy Strategy Development, Nairobi, Kenya. They were drawn from ESAPN member organisations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania.

2.9 Inaugural AU Conference on Digital Agriculture

(Addis Ababa, December 2025)

The African Union Conference on Digital Agriculture provided a continental platform to discuss digital transformation of agrifood systems in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the AU Digital Agriculture Strategy. ESAPN engaged in discussions on digital extension, climate-smart agriculture, data governance and inclusive innovation. The conference underscored the importance of digital solutions that empower smallholders, women, youth and pastoralists, while supporting sustainable and resilient agricultural development.



2.10 Validation Workshop on the Continental Pastoralism Data Management System – CPDMS

(Dakar, Senegal December 2025)

ESAPN participated in the multi-stakeholder validation of the CPDMS, aimed at addressing fragmentation and weak interoperability of pastoralism data in Africa. Stakeholders including civil society organisations across the continent reviewed the system's technical architecture, data governance, and institutional arrangements. Consensus was reached on core design principles, governance frameworks, and a roadmap for piloting and resource mobilisation, strengthening collective ownership of pastoralism data at continental level.

2.11 African Union Workshop on Transhumance, Climate Change and Conflict

(Nairobi, December 28 -30 2025)

At the AU workshop held in Nairobi in December 2025, ESAPN engaged in discussions on the growing impacts of climate change, rangeland fragmentation, mobility restrictions, and conflict affecting transhumant pastoralism. The Coordinator made a presentation titled: "Conflict Dynamics in Pastoral Regions of Africa."

Participants reviewed gaps in existing AU policy instruments and proposed priorities for revising the AU Policy Framework on Pastoralism, including protection of transhumance corridors, inclusive land governance, conflict prevention, access to services and strengthened regional cooperation, with gender and youth as cross-cutting priorities.



Left: Participants in the African Union Workshop on Transhumance, Climate Change and Conflict Meeting and **Right:** The ESAPN Coordinator addressing the African Union Workshop on Transhumance, Climate Change and Conflict on Conflict Dynamics in Pastoral Regions of Africa.

3.0 ESAPN Affiliations

3.1 World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples and Pastoralists (WAMIP)

Despite visa-related constraints limiting physical participation, ESAPN remained active in

WAMIP processes through member representation. ESAPN nominated youth representatives for international pastoralist youth engagements and mobilised members for online training on UNDROP, reinforcing rights-based advocacy for pastoralists and other rural communities.

3.2 International Land Coalition (ILC)

Admitted to ILC in late 2024, ESAPN collaborated widely with ILC in preparations for the upcoming African Pastoralist Women Gathering (March 2026), review of the Uganda National Land Policy and planning for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026.

4. Other Key Engagements

ESAPN supported Uganda national policy processes, including collaboration with FAO, COPACSO, and Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) on reviving the stalled Uganda Rangelands Management Policy process. The Network also actively engaged in advocacy for the restoration of Batwa land rights in western Uganda, contributing to national dialogues involving government and civil society to advance land justice for the Batwa community.

5. Challenges

Apart from financing (we now have only one funder the FAO), the other challenge has been the increasingly difficulty in getting Visas. In 2025, the Coordinator was unable to participate in meetings in Brazil, Colombia and Italy due to Visa limitations.

We lost contact with Hope Restore Peace our hitherto member in South Sudan. The organisation stopped responding to all contacts which was very unfortunate. Therefore, the new members is Peace Corps South Sudan. The key personnel are Mr. Ayaba Mustafa Kenyi, Mr. Paul Aguyo and Ms. Vivian Muciri. The institutional emails are peacecorpssouthsudan@gmail.com, peacecorps@pcosouthsudan.org We welcome them to our family.

6. Opportunities

ESAPN is increasingly being viewed as a reliable partner for the African Union and apart from the various interventions in 2025 (Addis, Dakar and Nairobi) it is clear that we shall play a big role in the planned AU IYRP events as well as the review of the African Union Pastoralism Policy Framework. We are also working closely with WAMIP for supporting participation of our members in the different regional IYRP meetings. Already, slots have

been made available for our members in the African Pastoralists Gathering in Nairobi, January 2026 and the African Pastoralist Women's Gathering due in Kampala, Uganda in March 2026.

7. Acknowledgement

ESAPN takes this opportunity to thank the European Union and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) for the support extended through the PLACE project. This has enabled the development of the Advocacy Strategy and the Advocacy Training Manual.

The long standing relationship with the African Union especially the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) has provided opportunities for participation in activities and events of relevancy to the AU Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa and most especially in the ongoing review process.

Similarly, thanks go to WAMIP for not only sponsoring participants to the African Pastoralist Gathering but also for nominating ESAPN to represent the region in the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which platform has helped to push regional pastoralist issues on the global agenda.

The other partners: AFSA and ILC have also greatly provided opportunities in the different fora for articulation of pastoralist issues in matters related to food sovereignty and land. These two aspects are crucial for sustainable pastoralism.

Finally, the Secretariat is grateful for the support received from the members for timely responses look forward to even more collaboration as the network moves to the next stage of consultations with the different Parliamentary Pastoralist Groups.

8. Conclusion

2025 marked a year of institutional consolidation, expanded advocacy, strengthened partnerships, and meaningful engagement in regional, continental, and global policy spaces, reinforcing ESAPN's role as a key voice for pastoralists in Eastern and Southern Africa. It set an atmosphere of optimism for the years ahead.

