

**REPORT OF RESEARCH ON FARMER-HERDER RELATIONS IN PLATEAU AND  
ZAMFARA STATES, NIGERIA**

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(FHIPD)**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Meanings
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FHIDP	Farmers and Herders Initiative for Peace and Development
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LGA	Local Government Area
MACBAN	Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) is collaborating with the Farmers and Herders Initiative for Development and Peace (FHIDP) to carry out qualitative research between farmers and herders in Plateau and Zamfara States of Nigeria. These discussions aimed to provide the research team with a better understanding of the relationship farmers and herders even as they promote social cohesion and cooperation, even amid dwindling resources and other forms of development challenges. The farmer-herder context in Plateau State is slightly different from that of Zamfara State. In Plateau, the farmers are predominantly Christians and seen as the indigenes ethnic groups while the herders are predominantly seen as Muslim Fulani. However, in Zamfara State, both farmers (Hausa ethnic group) and herders (Fulani ethnic group) are of the same religion – Islam. While the indigene-settler dichotomy was a prominent issue in Plateau State, there were accusations and counter-accusations of abysmal marginalization and stereotype in both Plateau and Zamfara States. Plateau and Zamfara States – located in two distinct geo-political zones of North-Central and North-West respectively, have suffered huge loss of lives and wanton destruction of property which have affected community and social cohesion. Communities that hitherto lived together peacefully are now segregated with deep sense of mistrust and marginalization. Thousands of persons have been internally displaced from their ancestral homes. Although, the two state governments were reported to have carried out some interventions to cushion the effects of the farmer-herder violent conflicts, the participants interviewed felt that these interventions were either disproportionately sited or non-visible. In Plateau State, the farmers and herders felt that creation and sustenance of shared spaces like schools, healthcare facilities and sources of portable water could contribute to community and social cohesion. While the participants in Zamfara partially alluded to these spaces, they referred to common religious practices as a uniting factor that needs to be strengthened. Moreover, the participants in the two States proffered the following recommendations: The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) should, as a matter of urgency, checkmate and regulate the influx of alien herders to Nigeria; Government at all levels should improve on post-conflict peacebuilding activities towards rebuilding trust and facilitating reconciliation; Government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should sustain community dialogue and peace sensitization/awareness creation at the local levels; Government and CSOs should strengthen traditional institutions to enhance their skills in peacebuilding; Government and CSOs should facilitate and encourage shared spaces like schools, hospitals and market to enhance social cohesion; and CSOs need to improve their collaboration among them and with the government at all levels to enhance exit strategies that would contribute to sustainability of their interventions.

## **BACKGROUND**

The FHIPD is an international centre that supports and promotes non-violent approaches to conflict transformation through a combination of research, community dialogue and action. Basically, FHIPD works to solve disputes between farmers and herders; strengthen inter-faith cooperation and promote partnerships; and build peaceful co-existence by contributing to tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation. The core values of FHIPD include impartiality; accountability; coherence work at all levels; building on local knowledge; understanding the context; gender sensitivity; and local ownership and long-term prospect.

On the other hand, the UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP are on the ground in some 170 countries and territories, working with countries on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. UNDP develops local capacity and supports the Government and people of Nigeria in addressing development challenges, through strengthening and building institutions that promote inclusive sustainable development and democratic governance. UNDP works with an array of partners as they work together to support the Nigeria meet her Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promise.

As one of its initiatives, UNDP is supporting farmers and herders to improve their relationships. In line with this, UNDP is supporting FHIPD to carry out research towards supporting qualitative research discussions with a cross section of farmers and herders in Plateau and Zamfara States of Nigeria. These discussions intended to provide the research team with a better understanding of the relationship farmers and herders face and how they promote social cohesion and cooperation, even amid shrinking resources and other forms of development challenges. Specifically, the discussions intended to elicit practical, case study examples of cooperation and success and to analyze these examples to inform their wider application across multiple contexts.

As a country, Nigeria is divided into the Northern and Southern Regions with peculiar and cross-cutting conflict and security issues. The Northern Region is further divided into the North-Central (popularly called the Middle-Belt), North-East and North-West geo-political regions. In the Northern Region, the North-East is associated with insurgency while the North-Central and North-West geo-political zones are characterized with protracted farmer-herder clashes and more recently, banditry. Plateau State in the North-Central geo-political zone and Zamfara State in the North-West geo-political zone are States that have suffered a great deal of farmer-herder violent conflicts with associated huge loss of human lives, wanton destruction of property and internally displacement of persons from their original abodes. Aside having suffered a great

deal from the farmer-herder clashes, the choice of these two States for the research was apt because of certain dynamics and contexts. In Plateau State, the farmers who are mainly Christians and of varied ethnic groups, are largely into crop farming and sparsely practice cattle rearing while the herders, who are mainly Muslims and of the Fulani ethnic group also practice crop farming. In Zamfara State, the farmers and herders are predominantly Muslims and occupy similar space. The farmers – who are largely of Hausa ethnic group practice both crop farming and cattle rearing while the herders – who are largely of Fulani ethnic group also practice crop farming. The perspectives of both farmers and herders in Plateau and Zamfara would largely contribute to learning and possibly inform future programming.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research was to support qualitative research discussions with a cross section of farmers and herders in Plateau and Zamfara States of Nigeria with the view to better understand their relationships and how they promote social cohesion and cooperation, even amid shrinking resources and other forms of development challenges. Specifically, the discussions intended to elicit practical, case study examples of cooperation and success and to analyze these examples to inform their wider application across multiple contexts.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted through field visits in Plateau and Zamfara States. Basically, the research obtained data from target stakeholders through the instruments of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) using the structured and drafted question guide by the UNDP in collaboration with FHIPD-Africa (*find the guide in annex 1*). Across board, during the KII and FGD, conscious was made to explain the purpose of discussion; the participants were commended for their time and assured of the confidentiality of the discussion. In addition, it was pinpointed that there was no right or wrong answers but their perspectives mattered and they were encouraged to skip any question that they did not feel comfortable to answer. Moreover, while appreciating the participants for their time and availability, they were spurred to highlight the key messages that should be reported by the research team. An experienced videographer was engaged to cover each of the sessions while few still photos were also taken.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

51 participants (46 males and 5 females) were drawn from the direct survivors/victims of farmer-herder violent conflicts in order to have a deeper and understanding of their issues and relationships. The categories of the participants chosen include traditional rulers (one each from the farmers and herders’

communities); government officials; security agencies; chairmen of All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN); women and youth groups from both farmers and herders' communities; religious leaders; and respected opinion leaders (*find the guide in annex 2*).

## **FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH**

For the purpose of clarity and logical flow, the discussion was clustered into introduction; farmer-herder relationship; and challenges.

### **1. Plateau State**

#### **a. Introduction**

The farmers and herders submitted that even though they live a life of frustration they enjoy living in their respective abodes even as both groups claimed to be originally from the areas they reside. They cited favorable weather, luster grassland and fertile agricultural land as most attractive factors that encourage their living in the area. In emphasizing their places of originality, particularly, the herders cited the communities established by their great grandparents in Barkin-Ladi LGA while at the same time there was this strong voice of the farmers claiming to be indigenes (original dwellers of the area). The farmers referred to the herders as settlers (non-original settlers/dwellers) in the area. Of course, the indigene-settler dichotomy has been one of the major yet-to-be-addressed conflict issues throughout Plateau State and indeed Nigeria as a whole. As noted by the herders, whom are considered as non-indigenes, the alleged indigenes are granted certain privileges such as access to government employments and political appointments; scholarships for state-owned schools and lower school fees. As it is the practice across board, to secure access to these privileges, individuals have to produce an 'indigene certificate' which is granted by the local government authorities. Invariably, 'non-indigenes' or 'settlers' are denied these certificates and the accompanying privileges. In fact, the majority of the herders are blatantly denied access to the 'indigene certificate' hence, they feel marginalized and discriminated against in all fronts. The herders cited instances where their wards completed higher institutions but never considered for any form of employment or appointment by the local and state governments.

Although the farmers tend to benefit from government presence, the children of herders and farmers attend separate schools. The herders complained of almost non-existence of government presence – in terms of basic amenities like schools, healthcare services, access roads, portable water for drinking by humans and their cattle and communication network. The available schools – primary and secondary schools are community initiative which perhaps explains why they schools are grossly and abysmally undermanned.

Both farmers and herders submitted that they have benefitted from the interventions of the Civil Society Organizations like Search for Common Ground, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Norwegian Refugee Council. However, they all yearned for visible presence of government in terms of provision of inorganic fertilizers at a subsidized rate (although the farmers seemed to be the only beneficiaries due to easy access to the government). On the other hand, the herders advocated for construction of dams to aid cattle rearing and irrigation, provision of access roads, establishment of new schools/manning of the existing schools and healthcare facilities. The herders, whom hitherto were known to be mainly herders are now coping with the present changes by engaging massively in both raining and dry season farming. One reason for this could be as a result of loss of their cattle to cattle rustlers. The herders complained of blockage of cattle routes by the farmers which has significantly made cattle rearing a nightmare experience. The farmers, who claimed to customarily rear cattle, also seemed to have lost their animals to cattle rustlers.

The participants articulated that they have observed mix changes in their communities. Previously, the herders and herders lived side-by-side in the communities and they co-depended socially, commercially and economically. Notably, the farmers used to welcome the herders to stay temporarily on their farmland in order to gain manure from the cattle dung and in return, the farmers allow the herders to graze on their farm after harvesting their crops. The farmers used to give out their children to learn how to graze and at the end, herders often compensated the farmers' kids with calves. However, things have changed. The farmers now buy the dung from the herders at a huge price. Another significant change is that the farmers and herders now live in a segregated and polarized communities with heightened level of suspicion. The segregated settlements were encouraged by total sacking and internal displacement of persons across their respective communities. It means that the herders had to forego their physical assets like farmlands and houses and vice-versa the farmers. This explains why the herders had to move their remaining cattle to neighboring LGAs and States that are relatively peaceful. The few herders that still rear their cattle in the area face harassment and molestation from the farmers.

The farmers also explained a seasonal migration pattern among the herders in the past. In particular, the farmers mentioned that the seasonal migration pattern of the herders in the past (the herders used to migrate to the other parts of the country during farming season and return during or after harvest) helped to curb the prevalence of farm encroachment/destruction seen today. They equally pointed out that in the past, the herders only built temporary residences but as of today, they have not only stopped the seasonal migration pattern but also have continually built permanent structures and harboring alien herders in the area. Interestingly, despite the deep-rooted pains and grievances by both groups, there are semblances of rekindled interactions among them as their wards meet at mining sites and market places. Periodically, the



farmers and herders meet at the local level to discuss existing and emerging conflict/security issues through the traditional institutions. The two groups seemed to trust and have unfettered access to the security institution – especially the joint taskforce known as Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) where they regularly report conflict/security issues.

**b. *Farmer-Herder Relationships***

At the moment, although the relationship between the farmers and herders is improving, there are still deep-rooted suspicion and uncertainties. It could be deduced that there is poor coordination among them at the community levels. Obviously, post-conflict peacebuilding activities around rebuilding, reparations and trauma-healing supports to the survivors of the protracted violent conflicts are below average. It was also clear that the underlying issues – especially indigene-settler issues, blockage of cattle routes - are still unresolved and at the slightest provocation, there could be escalation of conflict to mass atrocities. On this note, the participants appealed for support, in terms of skill acquisitions, building materials for the reconstruction of their destroyed homes. Even though the children of farmers and herders meet and interact at the mining site and market places, the relationship was far from what used to be obtainable when they cohabited side-by-side in the communities. The level of interaction was still poor as there are still perceived “no-go-areas” by the two groups. There exists non-structured platform of traditional rulers where issues are discussed and resolved. The peace structures like Community, Security Architectural Dialogue (CSAD) and Sustained Dialogue Team (SDT) established by Search for Common Ground and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue respectively have not been sustained, perhaps due to weak/poor exit strategies of these organizations.

Evidently, as repeatedly mentioned by some of the participants, these formal platforms have been useful in understanding the issues of both communities. They opined that these platforms have been useful by the farmers and herders in communicating their issues to the authorities – both local and state governments. From an economic point of view, as indicated above, the participants said that they enjoyed a degree of co-dependence between them in the past but this has now reduced drastically as a result of divergence of interests exacerbated by indigene-settler dichotomy. On the other hand, both groups emphasized that they could work together to mutually benefit from an economic standpoint if state and non-state actors create and strengthen shared spaces like markets, schools, water sources and health facilities. The herders in particular pointed out the need for farmers to be fair and just in claiming compensations for their crops damaged by herders’ cattle. They gave examples of annoying exploitation by the farmers during settlements (these settlements are usually done by the security outfits) which in turn tend to hamper the process of trust and confidence building between them.

Furthermore, the traditional rulers of farmers and herders mentioned instances in the past where farmers and herders worked together to resolve their conflict. In the past, whenever herders encroached on any farmland, the herders customarily took the step of finding the owners of such farmland and under the facilitation and supervision of community elders (usually, the traditional rulers), the conflict used to be resolved in a win-win situation. The farmers alluded to the customary grazing practices of the herders done by mere use of sticks and the departure from that to the use of sophisticated weapons. The farmers also believed that the influx of foreign or alien herders in their community contributed, in no small measure, to the breakdown of communal living between them and the herders. These alien herders were described as brutal and non-cooperative as they main, sexually abuse women and even kill farmers who dare resist them from encroaching their farmlands. On the other hand, the herders referred to a time in the past where cases of farm destruction/encroachment were reported to their leadership – ‘ArDOS’ (these are well-respected Fulani traditional rulers) – and issues resolved amicably and contradicted it with the era of harassment and killing of their children and cattle during grazing by the farmers.

As of today, things have fallen apart. Most cases of farm destruction/encroachment by herders and harassment by farmers are reported to security outfits who often resolve the issues in a win-loss outcomes. As a way forward, the farmers and herders have mutually agreed to be their brothers’ keepers by exposing the criminal elements or trouble-makers among them. For example, if any farm, owned by a farmer, is destroyed, the herders in that vicinity take responsibility for paying compensation. On the other hand, if any cattle, owned by a herder, is wounded or killed, the farmers in that vicinity take responsibility to pay compensation. Consequently, from the testimonies of both farmers and herders, this initiative – although by the OPSH – has drastically reduced the number of farmer-herder clashes in recent times.

The farmers and herders explained that cooperation among them was important because they grew up together as kids, attended the same primary schools and both their grandparents and parents cohabited peacefully without any element of mistrust or segregation. They posited that recent cooperation among them has made members of their communities to be accountable and responsible. This recent initiative or cooperation has also helped to curb impunity that characterized the area in the past. The participants buttressed that the lessons learned from this cooperation include the realization that they need each other; they ought to be their brothers’ keepers amidst diverging interests; and that they could harness their diversity for socio-economic advantages.

### *c. Challenges*

For both groups, one major challenge they face is loss of soil fertility/nutrients as they no longer practice shifting cultivation as a result of agelong mining activities and loss of farmland (many of them can no longer access their original farmlands due to internal displacement from crises) to violent conflicts. Poor road networks have contributed to the cost of agricultural produce in terms of access and proximity to the markets where the farm produce is sold. For the herders, the challenges they face include overpopulation (as they now live in clusters); loss of grazing land; loss of their herds; lack of government presence – healthcare facilities, portable water source, education facilities and access to government jobs. On the other hand, the farmers reiterated that lack of access to their farmlands have contributed to a large number of drop-out-of-school-children and social vices – kidnapping, prostitution, alcoholism and substance abuse – in the cities where they have largely been confined to. Most times, farmers mobilize themselves in a large number to go cultivate/harvest their crops for fear of being attacked by suspected herders. The farmers criticized “renaming” of their original places of dwelling by the herders. They alluded that this is psychologically disturbing. They postulated that blockage of cattle routes was largely due to urbanization (they alleged that the governments – especially the state and federal – never compensated them on their land that was approved for cattle route) and insecurity (as the herders could no longer access the cattle routes found mainly in the farming communities). The farmers also provided another narrative of possible intra-conflict that may worsen in the days ahead. The internally displaced farmers from the hinterlands are now largely in towns with their relatives or friends from the same ethnic group. The hosts would usually provide land for the internally displaced persons to farm but after a full farming season, the land is abruptly withdrawn, leading to frustration of the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Even though both farmers and herders have associations All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) respectively and do not face a major difficult approaching/accessing relevant authorities to discuss their challenges, but solutions and implementation of peace resolutions/agreements is an upheaval task. In the same vein, both farmers and herders submitted that they are experiencing changes in association with climatic conditions which have influenced their farming activities. They explained that a number of streams that used to outlive dry season of average five months now dry up even before the third month. Generally, the two groups described governance mechanisms in their communities as either non-existence or poor. The participants mentioned that they do not feel absolutely safe in their communities as a result of criminal activities and periodic attacks on both farmers or herders. This is actually a major challenge because there seemed to be a collaboration in crime between some farmers and herders. The farmers also elaborated that in spite of being customarily cattle rearers, all the cattle that they owned have either been rustled or willingly sold because the herders have repeatedly assumed to be the sole cattle rearers.

In summary, the participants referred to a time where they shared common spaces and mutually benefitted from each other. They believed that through good governance, equitable distribution of basic amenities is possible and could enhance social cohesion in the community. They equally believed that strengthening of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are not only central but very strategic and effective in gaining win-win situations. Even though the military, especially the OPSH, has contributed to peace and stability in the area, the participants were of the opinion that traditional and religious institutions should be relied upon for non-violent conflict resolution. They subscribed to non-violent conflict resolution which undermines the community taking lands into their hands, regardless of what has transpired between them. Moreover, the participants are still aggrieved and counting their losses, hence, state and non-state interventions that would facilitate their healing and reconciliation is a welcome development.

## **2. Zamfara State**

### ***a. Introduction***

The context of farmers and herders in Zamfara State is unique in many aspects. The inhabitants of Zamfara State are predominantly Muslims and principally a farming population. In fact, the State has the motto “farming is our pride”. Unlike the other States in Nigeria where farmers are tagged as the indigenous ethnic groups and herders as the Fulani ethnic group, Zamfara State has two large ethnic groups – the Hausas and the Fulanis – who both practice crop farming and cattle rearing in a larger scale. Even though there were no reported cases of religious intolerance and indigene-settler dichotomy, there is deep sense of frustration, injustice and marginalization from the herders. The herders said that although criminal elements are found across all communities, unfortunately they are labelled as criminals that should be discriminated against. The Hausa ethnic group, practice both crop farming and cattle rearing as well as the herders, who are mainly of Fulani ethnic group. Testimonials from the two groups showed that they have lived together – side-by-side – peacefully for eons. The two ethnic groups have intermarried, co-depended physically, socially and economically. They viewed themselves as one big family and proudly enjoyed the christening, Hausa-Fulani. The Hausas and the Fulani both fit into the term farmers/herders as they all enjoy the rich soil and topography of the State.

Things started falling apart when the State Government established a vigilante group called ‘Yan-Sakai’ to respond to the rampant cases of farm destruction as well as emerging conflict and security issues, especially rural banditry. As the human and animal population kept increasing in the State, there was a burden on the farmers to expand their farmlands for enhanced food to feed the human population and at the same time, there was also a problem of accessing grazing lands by the herders. It was reported that the judiciary and

the conventional security apparatus in the State seemed to have seemed not to have given proper attention to the associated early warning signs of violent eruption. Repeatedly cases of farmer-herder clashes in the hinterlands became the order of the day. At the same time, the established vigilante group by the government, acclaimed for its lopsided membership (for its members were mainly the Hausas) embarked on selective operations that seemed to target only the Fulani ethnic group. The activities of the ‘Yan-Sakai’ further divided the Hausas and the Fulanis along ethnic lines. This heralded an era of suspicion and stereotyping that manifested in rampant killings, maiming, kidnapping, raping, vandalism, attacks and counterattacks. From 2011, the violent conflicts began to worsen day-by-day through waves of attacks against each other and a series of revenge continued unabated. With the hostilities between the Fulanis and the Yan-Sakai, each decided to form a formidable group and structure, leading to the drawing of a battle line between them with increasing waves of attacks and counter-attacks, killing scores of innocent people, destruction of valuables and burning down of houses and foodstuffs. Due to untimely attention and poor necessary intervention, the situation further worsened with attendant consequences of mayhem being unleashed on innocent people across Zamfara State in particular, and the neighboring States. This unfortunate violence has affected internally generated revenue of the State, social cohesion and deepened mistrust among stakeholders. According to Mrs. Suwaiba Abubakar Yalli, Fulani Women Leader said that:

*“Intermarriages that used to be a regular and age-long social function of the State has reduced drastically. In fact, Fulani women that have been married by the Hausas are now seen as spies. This development has created a major gap in social cohesion and cooperation. Despite concerns raised by many stakeholders and sensitization at the religious spaces, things have not returned to the normal status quo. However, things are improving gradually.*

Consequently, the ugly situation has resulted to segregated settlements across the State. From 2013, the State government has continued to explore means to address the ugly situation. The previous administration initiated an amnesty programme that sought to disarm different armed groups. The present administration, with the support from the Federal Government of Nigeria, reportedly put some drastic measures in place to control the situation. One of such measures is peace and reconciliation process which allegedly has yielded positive result. Aside the state intervention in collaboration with the security agencies, there appears to be non-presence of activities of CSOs in the State.

The Fulani ethnic group (whom we would refer to as herders for the purpose of wider identity) complained of extreme marginalization and discrimination. They opined that infrastructural developments in the State were selective while their people have suffered extreme marginalization in terms of employments and

political appointments. On the other hand, it was reported that when it was established that the ‘Yan-Sakai’ were escalating the conflict, the Zamfara State government came up with some initiatives. One of such initiatives towards mitigating the carnage in the State was the withdrawal of support and proscribing of ‘Yan-Sakai’. Unfortunately, some private individuals decided to form their vigilante groups with the aim of fighting the rampaging Fulani militia groups. The State government set-up a Relief Committee who provided relief materials for the victims of the violent conflict with the view to cushioning the negative effects of the conflict situation in the State. The State government initiated a reconciliation process aimed at disarming all the armed groups in the State. The first 3 months was a huge success but later on, conflict merchants renewed hostilities among different militia groups. Porous borders encouraged the influx of sophisticated weapons from Libya and other surrounding countries. Furthermore, the Zamfara State is establishing of ‘Ruga’ settlements in the three senatorial districts of the State. Hon. Ibrahim Magyi Dosara, the Hon. Commissioner for Information stated that:

*” Zamfara Government is constructing three Ruga settlements in the three senatorial districts of the State to provide permanent residents for the herders. The Ruga settlement in the outskirts of Maradun town, Maradun Local Government Area, has reached 85 per cent completion stage. This one is for the Western senatorial district, while others would also be constructed in the Northern and Central zones. It is a capital-intensive project and upon completion, the settlement will have everything the Fulani herdsman need. The settlement will also provide employment opportunities through the provision of meat and milk. The project in the other two senatorial districts has not started yet due to the dwindling of the State’ resources. This will promote harmonious living between the Fulani herdsman and farmers, hence bolster peace. In the interim, Government initiatives have included paying of hospital bills of the victims of violence and provision of building materials as well as cash donations for the reconstruction of destroyed houses.”*

*“For us, we are the most affected by the protracted violence as our husbands and children have been killed. We do not have access to basic healthcare facilities and have to travel a very long distance to receive healthcare. Our children have become vulnerable to all forms of social vices as they can no longer attend schools and those that have attended higher institutions are either unemployed or non-gainfully employed”, said Umma Salisu, a Hausa Women Leader.*

#### ***b. Farmer-Herder Relationship***

At the moment, even though the farmers and herders reported that there is cessation of hostilities among them, the level of mistrust is still high. At the local levels, traditional rulers have been instrumental in resolving farmer-herder and other related issues. Gradually, the farmer and herder communities have started

mingling with each other and socio-economic activities have started improving. On this, Mrs. Sadiya Yahaya said that:

*“Honestly, both sides were at the receiving ends of the violent conflicts which have claimed many lives and disrupted community and social cohesion. However, the relationship between us (farmers) and the herders (Fulani) is improving. At the moment, we attend social functions in their areas and they too visit us. We are gradually returning to the good old days when we viewed each other as one big family”.*

Similarly, Mr. Abdullahi Saeed said that:

*“It is heartwarming to see us (the farmers) and herders (the Fulani) reuniting. We believed that what happened in the past was the will of God and we are now working assiduously at the community level to resolve our conflict issues without reporting to or interference of the security apparatus. Initially, you remember that I mentioned that we would need arms to protect ourselves against the bandits but as you (the Lead Researcher) aptly postulated, we would continue to advocate for non-violent to our issues”.*

On the other hand, Umar Abubakar, an Opinion Leader from the herders’ community observed that:

*“We have been totally displaced from our ancestral homes and our means of livelihood have been affected. In truth, life is difficult for us. We have lost our customary occupation of cattle rearing as our livestock has been rustled. In fact, even when we lost our loved ones and livestock, no one has ever privately or publicly commiserated with us. We have not received any form of support from any one, not even from the local and state governments. Our people (Fulani) do not benefit from the dividend of democracy even when we all belong here. We are indigenes of Zamfara State and by extension citizens of Nigeria. We are treated as second-class citizens”.*

It suffices to say that at the State level, there seems to be some interactions between the farmers and herders whereas there are huge gaps in stepping down peace discussions in the grassroots. This could be deduced from the following statements:

*“For us, we seem to have been left to our fate. We barely know or benefit from any major interventions by the State and Local governments. Our children are uneducated as they cannot access educational facilities like others. Even our nomadic schools have become grossly dilapidated and undermanned. We have lost our cattle and can no longer access our farmlands. We only rally around and support ourselves in the best*

*possible ways. But we believe that what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. In terms of conflict resolution, it is only our traditional rulers that meet periodically to discuss and address any emerging security and conflict issues, said Ardo Muhammed Mande”.*

### ***c. Challenges***

The participants mentioned that conflict entrepreneurs and merchants have not relented in their heinous activities of supporting the militia groups to cause mayhem in the State. The lost cordial relationship between the farmers and herders would take time to be rebuilt and gaining total normalcy would require all forms of support from both state and non-state actors. The herders mentioned that the slow in reconciliation is as a result of inability of local and state government to be fair and just in addressing the underlying issues. Social media was said to be one of the major triggers of the violent situations in the State as fake news and misinformation are being disseminated regularly. Particularly, the farmers and herders in the rural areas complained of difficulty in accessing government/relevant authorities in addressing their challenges. In fact, it was reported that some personnel of conventional security agents were complicit in aiding and abetting rural banditry and this has led to vote-of-no-confidence in the security apparatus. Obviously too, there seemed to be a disconnect between the State government and the people living in the rural areas, especially, in the aspect of information sharing. This was deduced from the feedback from some participants that they had not received any form of support from both state and non-state actors. As such, they appealed to the governments at all levels to consider even distribution of basic amenities like schools, hospitals/clinics, access roads, portable water and establishment of Forward Operation Base (FOB) and police outposts in most volatile rural areas. The participants echoed the need for the government to improve security presence at the local levels. This is because they did not feel safe as the activities of the bandits are far from being over.

Furthermore, the participants mentioned that changes in climatic conditions have influenced their work negatively. In specific terms, they underlined the fact that available sources of water usually dry up earlier than expected, thereby making irrigation an upheaval task. Similarly, the participants highlighted changes in social cohesion and socio-economic development which have influenced their life and work negatively. Unequivocally, both farmers and herders described the governance mechanisms in their communities as charade. Notably, the herders reiterated that as indigenes, even though they obey the laws of the land, pay taxes, perform civic responsibilities, yet they are abysmally sidelined and marginalized in terms of siting of government projects. The herders emphasized that all government projects are selectively sited to favor the farmers who are predominantly of Hausa ethnic group. Therefore, as a way forward, they elaborated that the governments at all levels should be fair and just in dealing with both farmers and herders. They also



added that Islam, as a common podium for worship, should be used as a uniting platform for social and community cohesion.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

These were the recommendations captured during the discussions with the participants in the two States:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should, as a matter of urgency, checkmate and regulate the influx of alien herders to Nigeria.
2. Government at all levels should improve on post-conflict peacebuilding activities towards rebuilding trust and facilitating reconciliation.
3. Government and CSOs should sustain community dialogue and peace sensitization/awareness creation at the local levels.
4. Government and CSOs should strengthen traditional institutions to enhance their skills in peacebuilding.
5. Government and CSOs should facilitate and encourage shared spaces like schools, hospitals and market to enhance social cohesion.
6. CSOs need to improve their collaboration among them and with the government at all levels to enhance exit strategies that would contribute to sustainability of their interventions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The qualitative research between farmers and herders in Plateau and Zamfara States of Nigeria was not only apt but has provided broader insight to the relationships in the pre, during post farmer-herder violent conflicts. Ultimately, the discussions with the participants provided the research team with a better understanding of the relationship farmers and herders as they promote social cohesion and cooperation, even amid dwindling resources and other forms of development challenges. Although the Plateau and Zamfara farmer-herder conflicts differ in context, there are cross-cutting lessons to learn from the two States. The research clearly showed that despite the States' interventions and some CSOs' interventions, there are still gaps in the post-conflict peacebuilding activities to sustain the gains of the concluded interventions.

## ANNEXES

### Annex One:

#### **Social Cohesion and Development pathways for cooperation: Learning from Farmers and Herders**

#### **Topic Guide: Daft 4 (9-March)**

The purpose of this topic guide is to support qualitative research discussions with a cross section of farmers and herders in two countries in West-Africa. The discussions are intended to provide the research team with a better understanding of the relationship these groups face and how they promote social cohesion and cooperation, even amid shrinking resources and other forms of development challenges. Specifically, the discussions are intended to elicit practical, case study examples of cooperation and success and to analyse these examples to inform their wider application across multiple contexts.

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#### Identification

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Researcher:

Date:

Duration of the interview:

- Start time:
- End time:

Code respondent:

Name of the respondent (confidential):

Region:

Commune:

Locality:

Gender:

Age:

Profession/occupation:

Place where the ITW was conducted:

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#### Introduction

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- Introduce yourself and purpose of discussion
- Thank the participant for their time
- Confirm confidentiality, and nothing will be attributed to identify participant
- Highlight no right or wrong answers, interested in your perspectives
- Don't have to answer a question if feel uncomfortable, etc

*The respondent has declared that he/she has been sufficiently informed about the study and has been given the opportunity to ask any questions that he/she felt were necessary for her/his understanding. The respondent agrees to participate in the study and understands how her/his data will be processed.*

- First of all, I'd like to ask about your life and how you live. How would you describe your life, work and family life?
- Have you observed any recent/ongoing changes in their (farmers-herders\_ communities? If changes observed, are they positive (opportunities) or negative (problems) or mixed?
- If changes have been observed, how do you think farmers and herders are adjusting or coping with the changes? Coping well or struggling? What activities, people, organisation and resources etc. are providing assistance to farmers and herders as they adjust to the changes?
- What are the things you like most about living here?
- (If the respondent is a herder and farmer)
  - Do you describe yourself as a farmer or a herder? Or both?
  - And what about your family? Are you all farmers or herders, or is there a mix?
- Do you regularly interact with the other (group) farmers/herders?

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#### Farmer – herder relationships

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- We are particularly interested to better understand the relationships between farmers and herders in this area. How would you describe the relationship between them?
- Have you monitored any specific changes in the relationship between farmers and herders? and if yes, can you explain.
- How do you see the evolution of the relationship between farmers and herders?
- Can you describe how your livelihood and relationship with (farmers or herders) has changed over time?
- Would you describe as relations improving or worsening? Ask for specific examples.
- Is there a platform to discuss issues which affect the herders and farmer communities? Do the communities create such platforms, or have they been set up by the local authorities/government?
- Have such formal/informal platforms been useful in understanding the issues of both communities?
- Have farmers/herders been able to communicate their issues to the authorities? Has there been any response to such communication?
- From an economic point of view, has there been a degree of co-dependence between farmers and herders in the past? If so, does it still continue, or has there been a divergence of interests? If there has been a divergence, what has caused such a divergence of interests?

- Could herders and farmers work together to mutually benefit from the economic standpoint, or are the interests too contradictory for mutual benefit?
- If there is a possibility to work together – who do you think is best suited to create such a platform?
- Are there instances in the past where herders and farmers have worked together to resolve conflict? Could you tell us of your experience of such endeavours?
- This project is looking to collect examples of farmers and herders working together to overcome either shared challenges or to address conflict between them. What examples do you have of this happening with you or within your community?
- FOR EACH ONE ASK:
  - a. Why was it important that farmers and herders cooperated on this?
  - b. What encouraged cooperation?
  - c. Were there problems or obstacles you had to overcome?
  - d. What lessons do you draw from this cooperation? What can others learn from it?

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Challenges (we suggest to add general questions to get an overview of the local context as it can explain some variations)

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- (For all) What are the challenges the communities face living here?
  - Can you describe some of them and explain
  - If yes, do you have access to the government/relevant authorities in addressing these challenges?
  - Does your professional group find it difficult to approach relevant authorities to discuss challenges?
- Have you experienced any changes in climatic conditions which have influenced your life/work?
- Have you experienced any changes in social cohesion which have influenced your life/work?
- Have you experienced any changes in terms of socio-economic development which have influenced your life/work?
- How would you describe the governance mechanisms in your communities?
- Do you feel safe? If yes why? If no, why
- FOR EACH ONE ASK:
  - Why is this a challenge? What's making it difficult?
  - How do you respond or adapt to this challenge?
  - What help do you get from others?
  - What extra help do you need from others?

- Do you have an example of how you, your family or community have overcome a recent challenge? ASK FOR DETAILS

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### Summary

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- Thank you for your time today. I really appreciate it.
- In summary, thinking about everything we have discussed and especially about what we can learn about co-operation between farmers and herders, what are the key messages we should be reporting?

## Annex Two

### FARMERS AND HERDERS INITIATIVE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT – AFRICA



#### GENERAL ATTENDANCE LIST RESEARCH ON IMPROVING FARMER-HERDER RELATION IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA 12<sup>TH</sup> TO AND 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023 SUPPORTED BY UNDP

S/N	Name	Gender	Designation /Position	Phone Number	Signature
1	IMR ABUBAKAR	MALE	Gada - Bui leader	07883995512	<i>[Signature]</i>
2	ABDULLAHI MADAWAKI	»	Barakan hau	0910286347	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	MUSA MATGARI	MALE	Gada - Bui	09043227266	<i>[Signature]</i>
4	ABDULLAHI AHAMGA	MALE	»	07024043039	<i>[Signature]</i>
5	ABUBAKAR DANFARI	MALE	Baraka Lau	08084835090	<i>[Signature]</i>
6	SULEIMAN MUHAMMAD	»	Gada - Bui	09032908244	<i>[Signature]</i>
7	ARAO SHEHU MAMBI	»	ARAO Gada - Bui	08020978540	<i>[Signature]</i>
8	ABUBAKAR ABUBAKAR	»	Gada Bui	07085187417	<i>[Signature]</i>
9	ARAO MUHAMMAD MAMBI	»	ARAO MADAWAKI	07066823055	<i>[Signature]</i>
10	MUHAMMAD USMAN	MALE	Gada	08083548858	<i>[Signature]</i>
11	Dahiru Hassan		Halkimin medici	0706666695	<i>[Signature]</i>
12	Aliyu Selisu		medici	07035445719	<i>[Signature]</i>
13	Mohammed BELLO		medici	07064701271	<i>[Signature]</i>
14	ASOLISU MUSA		»	07063736832	<i>[Signature]</i>
15	Zubairu muhamed		»	08038809694	<i>[Signature]</i>
16	Yusuf Selisu		»	09061328828	<i>[Signature]</i>
17	Sadaye Yakalye		»	08085178819	<i>[Signature]</i>
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**GENERAL ATTENDANCE LIST**  
**RESEARCH ON IMPROVING FARMER-HERDER RELATION IN BARKIN-LADI LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
**AREA OF PLATEAU STATE**  
**9<sup>TH</sup> AND 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

18.	Alh. Tukur Abdulamin	MA	Herder	09025306792	SL
19.	Alh. Kikili Abdellahi	M	Traditional Leader	07031871471	MR
20.	Alh. Yahaya Saced	M	Herder	08068609854	
21.	Mal. Sulaiman Mogana	M	Chief Servant	08066745984	AK
22.	Alh. Hassan Saidu	M	Herder	09033713908	AS
23.	Alh. Inuwa Abdellahi	MA	Herder	09023131825	IB
24.	Mal. Zakariya Mogana	M	Herder	07038629547	IB
25.	Alh. Mahmud Saidu	MA	Herder	08065572466	BS
26.	Mal. Sulaiman Abdulamin	M	Chief Man	07039602610	IB
27.	Mal. Alhassan Adamu	MA	Traditional Leader	07029879517	IB
28.	Servato Adamu	MA	Herder	08161393538	IB
29.	Abdellahi Adamu	MA	Traditional Leader	08144565809	IB
30.	Adamu Haruna	MA	Herder	08084494445	Ch
31	Adamu Aliyu	MA	Herder	—	
32	Shuribu Abdulamin	M	Herder	07066145141	IB

FARMERS AND HERDERS INITIATIVE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT – AFRICA



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S/N	Name	Gender	Designation /Position	Phone Number	Signature
1	IMAR ABUBAKAR	MALE	Gada - Bin head	07083995512	
2	ABDULLAH MADAWAKI	»	Barakan Lau	0910286347	
3	MUSA MARI GARI	MALE	Gada - Bin	09043227268	
4	ABDULLAH AHMED	MALE	»	07024043039	
5	ABUBAKAR DANFARI	MALE	Baraka Lau	08084835090	
6	SULEMAN MUHAMMAD	»	Gada - Bin	09032908244	
7	ARJO SHETU MAMBI	»	ARJO Gada - Bin	08020978840	
8	ABUBAKAR ABUBAKAR	»	Gada Bin	07085187417	
9	ARJO MUHAMMAD MAMBI	»	ARJO MADAWAKI	07066823055	
10	MUHAMMAD USMAN	MALE	Gada	08083546858	
11	Dahiru Hassan		HAKIMIN MADI	0706666675	
12	Aliyu Sulisu		Madi	07035445710	
13	Mohammed Bello		Madi	07064704271	
14	Abdul Salam Musa		»	07063736532	
15	Zubairu Muhammed		»	08038809694	
16	Yusuf Sulisu		»	09061398828	
17	Sadaye Yakubu		»	08085179619	
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19					



FARMERS AND HERDERS INITIATIVE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT – AFRICA



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 RESEARCH ON IMPROVING FARMER-HERDER RELATION IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA  
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20	Ibrahim Magaji Dosara	male	comm of Informatu	08097270308	<i>[Signature]</i>
21	Tukur Shelu	✓	PLS	min of info 08032880341	<i>[Signature]</i>
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