



international
alert

Impact of COVID-19 in Turkana:

Oil host communities and local businesses



About International Alert

International Alert works with people directly affected by conflict to build lasting peace.

We focus on solving the root causes of conflict with people from across divides. From the grassroots to policy level, we bring people together to build sustainable peace.

www.international-alert.org

About the project

Since October 2018, International Alert has been implementing the Enabling Good Governance in Kenya's Oil Sector project, known locally as 'Utawala Bora Kwa Mafuta Bora'. The project is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The project's main goal is "to create an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder dialogue to take place on conflict-sensitive governance of the oil sector in Turkana County". The project addresses governance and conflict issues around the development of the oil sector through a process of multi-stakeholder engagement. This project works with a diverse range of stakeholders in Turkana county, using a blend of building capacity, raising community awareness, accompaniment and dialogue to increase trust.

© International Alert 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without full attribution.

Layout: D.R. ink

Cover: © International Alert



international
alert

Impact of COVID-19 in Turkana:

Oil host communities and
local businesses

September 2021

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted by Ultimate Management Solutions Ltd (UMS) on behalf of International Alert. International Alert would like to thank UMS and its consultants, namely Weru Mwangi and Risper Pete. International Alert would also like to thank Rabindra Gurung, Elizabeth Kariuki, George Grayson, Franklin Opuko, Geoffrey Chege, Miriam Wanjiru Muturi and Naomi Moraa who provided support in planning the study and reviewing and editing the report.

International Alert would like to thank all the field assistant data collectors and the respondents from Turkana East and South sub-counties who generously gave their time and knowledge to make this study possible, including representatives of community groups, peace committee members and members of civil society. Leaders from the national government, county assembly, county executive and the Turkana Chamber of Commerce also played a key role in making this study a success. We thank all of them, since without sharing their stories and insights, the study would not have been a success.

The views expressed in this report are solely those of International Alert and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of its partners or donors.

Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations	4
Definition of terms	4
Executive summary	5
1 Introduction	7
2 Methodology	10
2.1 Data collection	10
2.2 Limitations of the study	12
3 Findings	13
3.1 Overview	13
3.2 Impact of COVID-19 on conflict and gender relations	15
3.3 Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on oil operations and livelihoods	18
3.4 Oil host community and business response to COVID-19 pandemic	20
4 Conclusions	22
5 Recommendations	24
5.1 Short-term measures	24
5.2 Long-term measures	25

Acronyms and abbreviations

Alert	International Alert
CDC AFRICA	Centre for Disease Control, Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
FGD	Focus group discussions
GBV	Gender-based violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International non-governmental organisations'
KII	Key informant interviews
KNCCI	Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NRT	Northern Rangelands Trust
OCHA	UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
TKBV	Tullow Kenya Business Venture
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

Definition of terms

Biashara Fund	An affirmative action business finance fund operated by the State Department of Gender and Social Services of the Republic of Kenya
Civil society	Not-for-profit, non-governmental institutions involved in the promotion of social welfare
Conflict	A situation where the interests of two or more persons appear incompatible; it may or may not result into visible confrontation
Conflict dynamics	Factors that impact interaction of parties who are in a conflict situation
Livelihoods	A means of securing income and the necessities of life
Non-natives	Persons who are not indigenous residents of Turkana East and Turkana South sub-counties
Youth	A person aged 18-35 years of age
Oil host communities	Refers to communities who reside where oil and gas are being explored and who host oil and gas-related facilities and infrastructure

Executive summary

This study was conducted as part of the Enabling Good Governance in Kenya's Oil Sector project, known locally as 'Utawala Bora Kwa Mafuta Bora'. The project's main goal is to create an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder dialogue to take place about conflict-sensitive governance of the oil sector in Turkana county. The study aimed to measure the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on oil host communities, local businesses, oil operations, conflict dynamics and gender relations in Turkana South and East sub-counties, and to provide evidence-based recommendations to local stakeholders and policy-makers for designing and implementing appropriate interventions.

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in 2020 with governments imposing a number of restrictions to combat its spread.¹ Since then, the pandemic has had numerous negative consequences globally, including deaths, increased poverty levels, higher crime rates, a rise in the cost of living, disruption of peacebuilding initiatives, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), loss of employment, disruption to business, overstretched health systems, and the disruption of education and social activities.²

This study was conducted in May 2021 when Kenya was experiencing the peak of the third wave of COVID-19. The study was conducted in Turkana East and Turkana South sub-counties using qualitative data collection methods, which included focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The respondents included community and peace committee members, local businesses, the Turkana Chamber of Commerce, county and national government representatives, and civil society. Respondents were drawn from Lokichar, Katilu and Kalemngorok in Turkana South and Nakukulas and Lokori in Turkana East, as well as Lodwar.

The study found that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the oil host communities in Turkana South and East sub-counties. The suspension of Tullow Oil's operations due to the decline in global oil prices attributed to the shocks brought about by COVID-19, as well as the effect of COVID 19 on its operations, has had a negative impact on businesses that depend on the company for economic activities such as tenders to supply goods and services. There has also been an increase in general crime, SGBV, child abuse, forced early marriages and robberies targeting businesses. Factors that have the potential to generate conflict include perceived discrimination in the distribution of food relief, allegations of police brutality during the enforcement of curfews, and a perception that men were not being as well supported as women through government assistance for small enterprises and other COVID-19-related interventions.

International Alert (Alert) recommends both short and long-term interventions to help mitigate against the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resultant conflicts, and the socio-economic consequences. Some of the short-term measures that can be undertaken include:

- initiating public and community engagement to address the perception of unfair disarmament by the Government of Kenya targeting certain communities to voluntarily handover illegal arms during the COVID-19 curfew period; and
- increasing sensitisation, training and information regarding COVID-19, especially to business people and their employees.

1 Lone, SA & Ahamad, A, COVID-19 pandemic: An African perspective, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epub/10.1080/22221751.2020.1775132?needAccess=true>

2 M. Pawar, The global impact of and responses to COVID-19, *International Journal of Community and Social Development*, 2(2), 2020, pp.111–120. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2516602620938542>

Some long-term measures include:

- Both county and national government, as well as civil society organisations, should develop and implement strategies for the resumption of peacebuilding and social-cohesion activities during health and other emergency periods. Equally important are strategies on how to conduct a campaign against gender-based violence (GBV) during the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- County and national government need to come up with more support measures aimed at cushioning businesses, as well as vulnerable members of the community. Such supports could include economic stimulus and business capacity-building programmes, market and financial-access support initiatives through cooperatives including agricultural support initiatives, and poverty-reduction programmes. All this ought to be implemented after a proper needs assessment has been conducted to ascertain the right beneficiaries. The process should also be conducted in an environment that is consultative and transparent.

1 Introduction

Since the discovery of oil in Turkana county in 2012, the county has been characterised by divisive conflicts between the oil company, Tullow Kenya Business Venture (TKBV),³ the oil host communities, and national and county governments, exacerbated by a lack of transparency within the oil and gas agenda. These conflicts have been attributed to high expectations for employment, business opportunities and profits accruing from the sale of oil from host communities, lack of trust between the oil host communities and the other parties, a lack of access to oil-related information by the host communities, poor compensation for land acquisition and poor response to grievances. This has resulted in the host communities feeling betrayed, triggering vivid memories of the historical marginalisation that has plagued the region since independence.⁴ The oil host communities often resorted to violence, demonstrations, road barricading and boycotting of key services by TKBV to air their grievances.⁵ Protests were also staged to demand more opportunities for work and tenders.⁶

This situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The first case of COVID-19 in Turkana county was reported on 24 May 2020 in Turkana West's Kakuma Refugee Camp.⁷ The virus struck at the time when TKBV had scaled down its operations due to global challenges for Tullow Oil and the fall in the price of oil. Many businesses that depended on the company, its employees and programmes were already facing difficulties. The oil-drilling activities had been expected to contribute to the economic and livelihood development of the host communities, and this had been realised to a certain extent during the period when TKBV was in full operation – for example, through the creation of employment opportunities for local residents, construction of social amenities such as schools, health dispensaries and boreholes, and provision of water tanks for communities that were being supplied with water on a weekly basis. TKBV also contributed to a boom of small and medium businesses, the provision of scholarship opportunities and the improvement of security within the oil host communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on livelihoods around the world, causing many countries to invoke drastic measures.⁸ In Kenya, such measures have included nationwide curfews, national and international travel bans, a ban on public gatherings, and the closure of places of worship and educational institutions. These measures have had a negative impact on peoples' livelihoods around the South Lokichar Basin in Turkana county where oil exploration activities have been taking place. Gender relations deteriorated due to the social and economic constraints brought about by COVID-19 restrictions on movement, making trade and business for income difficult or impossible. Most of the respondents reported that, since many breadwinners could not fend for their families due to the disruption of their income streams, there had been a significant increase in conflict at the household level.

3 TKBV is a subsidiary of Tullow Oil PLC – an oil and gas exploration and production company with various licences in Kenya: <https://www.tulloil.com/about-us/our-story/>

4 Minority Rights Group, Kenya: For Turkana pastoralists, oil offers no easy solutions to poverty and drought, in *Minority and indigenous trends 2019*, 2019, <https://minorityrights.org/trends2019/kenya-3/>

5 Ibid.

6 Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and Saferworld, Research briefing: *Governing black gold: lessons from oil fields in Turkana*, 2017, <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1140-governing-black-gold-lessons-from-oil-finds-in-turkana-kenya>

7 The Seventh State of the County Address by His Excellency Hon. Joshat Koli Nanok, Governor of Turkana county, 26 November 2020, <https://www.turkana.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SOCA-2020.pdf>

8 T. Ide, COVID-19 and armed conflict, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7833329/>



© International Alert

Elders and Youths having a consultative session on the need to create safe space to engage with the key stakeholders in the extractive sector in Turkana.

Turkana county has been a conflict-prone area historically, having experienced armed and other forms of conflict between communities, as well as with neighbouring counties and cross-border communities. These revolve around resources, culture, disease caused by the influx of people from neighbouring communities due to oil exploration, and revenge.⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed peacebuilding initiatives and contributed to SGBV. The pandemic has changed the operating environment of peacebuilding initiatives because COVID-19 restrictions have kept peace committee members from their regular meetings. These will continue to be disrupted by long-term travel restrictions and social-distancing measures until the situation changes.

Regarding Turkana county and Kenya in general, there have been reports of increased violence against women, as well as a heightened vulnerability of youth to violence, crime and extremism.¹⁰ There were also reports of a 30% rise in crime rates and SGBV in Turkana county.¹¹ In addition, there have been reports of school-age boys being involved in cattle raids in Turkana and other parts of northern Kenya during the period when schools were closed due to COVID-19.¹² The closure of learning institutions led to an increase in inequalities and exclusion among the vulnerable and marginalised sections of the population,¹³ which could have a negative impact on conflicts in future.

As far as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local business is concerned, the government of Turkana reported an 8% drop in its revenue due to the closure of hotels, learning institutions, markets and other businesses coupled with tax relief measures meant to cushion businesses against the impact of COVID-19.¹⁴ This significant drop was experienced about eight months after the restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 were put in place in March 2020. The county government also reported that its response measures, which included market closures and the waiver of fees, had cost the county exchequer a total of KES40.7 million by April 2020.¹⁵ COVID-19

9 CAPE Unit, Conflict trends in the Pokot, Turkana, Karamojong and Sabiny region during the last twenty years, 2004

10 Feed the Future, Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on businesses in northern Kenya study report, 2020

11 UN Office for Coordination on Humanitarian Affairs, Kenya situation report, 2020

12 National Cohesion and Integration Commission Kenya, The impact of COVID-19 on Kenyan youth, Policy brief, 2020

13 D. Parsitau & E. Jepkemei, How school closures during COVID-19 further marginalize vulnerable children in Kenya, 2020

14 County Government of Turkana, State of County Address by the Governor, April 2020

15 Ibid.

response measures have also led to increased unemployment, reduced business activity and increased lack of access to food within Turkana and other neighbouring counties.¹⁶

In addition to public health measures, governments around the world responded with interventions intended to cushion households and businesses,¹⁷ including cash transfers, food relief, economic stimulus measures targeting the youth, government-backed credit guarantees, fast-tracking of VAT refunds, income tax relief, lowering of base-lending rate and reduction of mobile money transfer.¹⁸ The Turkana county government responded by reducing levies charged on businesses, as well as partnering with national government and civil society in food relief distribution and cash transfer programmes.¹⁹

This study aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the oil host communities, local businesses and oil operations, as well as conflict dynamics and gender relations. This piece of work will contribute to Alert Kenya's country strategy goal of strengthening peaceful economy and natural resource governance. This study was conducted in Turkana East and South sub-counties and targeted residents living in proximity to the oil exploration and drilling areas such as Ngamia 1 and Amosing oil wells, who are predominantly pastoralists.

The study developed evidence-based recommendations for local stakeholders in response to the findings and the county response to the pandemic. Specifically, it sought to:

- establish how the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures have influenced conflict dynamics and gender relations in Turkana East and Turkana South sub-counties;
- identify the oil host community and business responses and resilience to COVID-19 pandemic and related measures;
- evaluate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on oil operations and oil host communities' livelihoods; and
- make evidence-based recommendations to stakeholders on appropriate measures that will provide resilience and comprehensive coordinated emergency response and interventions.

16 Save the Children, Impact of COVID-19 on food, security and livelihoods in Mandera, Turkana and Wajir counties, 2020

17 International Monetary Fund, Policy responses to COVID-19, Policy tracker by country, 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

18 Ibid.

19 County Government of Turkana, 2020, Op. cit.

2 Methodology

The study was conducted in May 2021, when there were COVID-19-related restrictions of movement in place into and out of five counties in Kenya (Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Nakuru and Kiambu).²⁰ Although the rest of the country had no restrictions on movement (except for night curfews), social and business activities in Turkana and other counties were experiencing disruption because of lack of access to Kitale, Eldoret and Nairobi, which are major sources of supplies according to respondents. Another reason was high transport charges, which prevented businesses from accessing supplies for restocking.

The study targeted residents of Turkana East and South sub-counties who live in proximity to the oil exploration and drilling areas of Ngamia 1 and Amosing oil wells. Respondents were drawn from Kaputir, Lokichar and Katilu wards in Turkana South, as well as Lokori ward in Turkana East.

2.1 Data collection

Data collection was conducted through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in the main trading centres within the wards of Lokichar, Katilu and Kalemngorok in Turkana South and Lokori and Nakukulas in Turkana East.

FGDs were used to collect data from community members stratified into men, women, youth, and persons living with disabilities. In each trading centre, the enumerators conducted one FGD each for peace committee members and community members. Care was taken to ensure representation across gender and age groups.

KIIs were used to collect data from business people, as well as leaders from the Turkana Chamber of Commerce, civil society, county executive, county assembly and national government. Interviews were conducted with each respondent individually. Four business people were surveyed in each trading centre and a representative of civil society and the county and national governments were interviewed in each ward. Interviews with members of the county assembly, Turkana Chamber of Commerce and the two national government representatives were conducted in Lodwar Town.

The FGDs and KIIs were all conducted in strict compliance with Ministry of Health COVID-19 protocols on mask wearing and social distancing. The compiled data was validated with select participants during a validation workshop.

The total population of the two sub-counties is more than 292,200.²¹ To ensure accurate representation of the population, the number of respondents was calculated using Fisher's formula for populations exceeding 10,000 persons based on prevalence of 5%, desired precision of 10% and 90% confidence interval, which gave a sample size of 100 (96 rounded to the nearest 10). Respondents were stratified into youth (below 35 years of age), male, female, business community, civil society and county leadership.

In line with the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census figures, the study targeted strata percentages of 82% for persons below 35 years of age, 48.9% female and 51.1% male. The targeted strata percentages for age and

20 Health Policy Watch, Kenya goes into partial lockdown as COVID-19 cases spike, 2021, <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/kenya-goes-into-partial-lockdown/>

21 Kenya population and housing census, 2019, <https://www.knbs.or.ke>

gender were not met because peace committees were dominated by men over 40 years of age, thus reducing the targeted percentages for youth and female. 145 persons were surveyed using a stratified purposeful sampling method. This number exceeded the target of 100 set using the Fisher's formula and a prevalence of 5%, desired precision of 10% and 90% confidence interval. The respondent categories are outlined below in tables 1-4.

Table 1: Respondent characteristics by strata

Respondent category	No	%
National government representative	5	3.4
Civil society representative	4	2.76
County government representative	5	3.45
Community members	55	37.93
Peace committee	56	38.62
Business people	20	13.79
Persons living with disability	2	0.14
Total	145	100

Table 2: Respondent characteristics by gender

Gender	No	%
Male	84	57.93
Female	61	42.07
Total	145	100

Table 3: Respondent Characteristics by age

Age range (years)	No	%
<20	0	0
20-29	24	16.55
30-39	40	27.59
40-49	45	31.03
50-59	20	13.79
60 and above	4	2.76
Not stated	12	8.28
Total	145	100

Table 4: Business sector respondents by nature of business

Business type	No	%
Chamber of commerce representative	1	5
Retail shop and supermarkets	6	30
Grocery/fresh juice	2	10
Electronic accessories	2	10
Second-hand clothes	1	5
Hotel and restaurant	2	10
Bars and alcoholic beverages	4	20
Salon and beauty	1	5
Real estate/rental houses	1	5
Total	20	100



Elders engage in dialogue over grievances arising from oil operations in Turkana.

Being a qualitative survey, it was important to identify participants with a good depth of information about the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Turkana East and South sub-counties, as well as responses to COVID-19 by the oil host communities, businesses, and government. The respondents also needed to have in-depth knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 on gender relations, conflict and conflict dynamics in Turkana East and South sub-counties, as well as related responses. Consequently, purposive sampling was used to identify respondents within each sub-county who serve as opinion leaders, administrators, community mobilisers, and leaders in business and security matters, among others. Care was taken to compare responses from different FGD and KIIs to verify the findings.

Data collectors were trained on how to conduct the FGDs and KIIs. The respondent mobilisation began two days before the commencement of the study, with a view to organising participants into groups, while also making appointments with key informants such as county and national government leaders, business people and members of civil society.

2.2 Limitations of the study

Given that this analysis was conducted amidst the pandemic, it faced significant challenges:

- The number of participants for the FGDs was reduced to comply with COVID-19 social-distancing regulations.
- The lead consultant and assistant were not able to travel to Turkana due to travel restrictions from Nairobi, therefore data collection was led by local consultants and some interviews were conducted remotely using telephone. This means that some of the information may have lost its original meaning.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

Generally, COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of the residents of Turkana East and Turkana South sub-counties. The main impact has been on the social and economic fronts with the closure of schools and businesses, teenage pregnancies, job losses and a decline in rental income, among other factors resulting in reduced disposable income and increased vulnerability to poverty. Increases in crime and GBV resulting from joblessness and general pandemic induced inactivity have aggravated the situation.

There has been an overall reduction in peacebuilding initiatives, which may eventually lead to an increase in conflict. In addition, grievances about unfairness in the allocation of resources such as food relief and *Biashara* Fund loans may also emerge as new conflict areas.

Table 5: Summary of findings

Theme	Impact
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long period of school closure exposed children to exploitation and SGBV • Increased school dropout due to early pregnancies resulting from lockdowns brought about by COVID-19 • Reduced income for people involved in the education value chain with resultant domestic conflicts • GBV affecting school-age children with some incidents being inflicted by other school-age children
Conflict and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased vulnerability to cattle rustling after disarmament of certain communities during the COVID-19 curfew period to remove illegal arms • Increasing incitement using social media, e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp • Spreading of information on social media about impending raids by the neighbouring community • Some aspects of crime reduced during the early phase of COVID-19 restrictions • Water-related conflicts, e.g. between Nakukulas Water Users Association and herders • Grabbing of community land by local elites remained a source of conflict, even though this has not been exacerbated by COVID-19 • Tension over rising debts owed by local community members to business persons • Stigmatisation of COVID-19 patients, as well as survivors and their close relations, became new frontiers for conflict

Theme	Impact
Loss of business and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lockdowns led to businesses experiencing a shortage of supplies from Nairobi, Eldoret, Kitale and other areas • Job losses resulted in reduced cash circulation, thereby negatively impacting the purchasing power of community members • Restricted movement resulted in increased cost of transport, as well as an inability of businesses to obtain supplies • Livestock markets were closed, disrupting livestock trade and reducing incomes • Many businesses that supplied to, or indirectly depended on, Tullow Oil Company, and those that drew clientele from the company's employees, have collapsed or run into losses, negatively impacting income levels and purchasing power • Women who burn and sell charcoal lost their livelihoods because they could not distribute charcoal to households due to fear of contracting or spreading COVID-19 • Decline in livestock prices, especially camels and goats • High prices of goods and commodities due to restricted movement and high transport costs led to reduced demand • Low demand for perishable goods, especially vegetables and fruit, led to business losses
Gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased cases of SGBV, including child abuse, resulting from restricted movement, economic hardships, and inactivity • Increase in early child pregnancies and early child marriages due to increased poverty; hunger has led to sexual exploitation of children in exchange for food and other basic needs • Intimate partner violence was reported to have increased when men could not provide for their families and women also could not continue with their businesses • Children were used as vendors of illicit brewed alcohol • Domestic conflicts where husbands blamed wives for daughters' early pregnancies
Peace initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced peacebuilding activities during the lockdowns since people were not allowed to gather following the Ministry of Health guidelines for protection against COVID-19 • Community members unaware about how budgetary allocation for peace initiatives was utilised
County Government of Turkana response and intervention on the impact of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The county government provided food relief in some areas • Claims of unfairness in food relief distribution • The county government also provided livestock vaccines and seeds to farmers, especially in Turkana East • The county government distributed face masks and hand sanitiser to people in towns through the county department for public health. • The county government did very little to respond to and curb the widespread SGBV that escalated during the pandemic • The county government installed handwashing water points in most public places
Support by local and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs supported the communities with COVID-19 relief in the form of food and non-food items such as seeds, sanitary towels and face masks • They informed the local communities about COVID-19 protocols and the rights of children and other vulnerable members of the community

3.2 Impact of COVID-19 on conflict and gender relations

3.2.1 Impact on resource-based conflicts

The Turkana community has experienced conflicts with neighbouring communities within and outside Kenya revolving around access to and use and control of resources (pasture and water), cultural influences (prestige, honour, dowry and wealth), restocking after drought, disease, revenge and economic hardship.²²

More than 50% of the respondents reported a surge in inter-ethnic conflict and participants in the validation workshop gave examples of three incidences of cattle rustling along the Turkana-West Pokot-Baringo border. Although this conflict existed before the onset of COVID-19 and related restrictions, it has taken on a new dimension. For example, respondents stated that the disarmament exercise conducted in 2020 – during curfew hours – took place in Turkana county and not in Baringo and West Pokot counties. Respondents claimed that this has rendered residents of Turkana county more vulnerable to attacks from neighbouring communities and strengthened their neighbours' position in inter-ethnic conflict while weakening theirs. This assertion is, however, not accurate because there are reports of forced disarmament in Baringo county in June 2020,²³ as well as ongoing disarmament in Baringo, West Pokot and Turkana counties since 2019.²⁴ Since conflict is both about facts and perceptions, however, there is need to address the underlying perception that the national government took advantage of COVID-19-related curfews to disarm the Turkana but did not do the same in Baringo and West Pokot.

Respondents also reported that, during the COVID-19 period, some residents of Baringo county encroached into parcels of land belonging to Turkana county, in areas bordering Turkana and Kapedo, with the County Government of Baringo financing construction of social amenities such as a school on the Turkana side of the border. They claimed that efforts to engage in the resolution of this grievance have been frustrated by the ban on public gatherings. Respondents suspected that this encroachment was motivated by existing water springs and suspected mineral deposits in the area, an assertion supported by existing literature.²⁵ Although the boundary conflict between Baringo and Turkana counties predates COVID-19, perceptions that one party to the conflict has been taking advantage of COVID-19 restrictions to entrench themselves across the disputed border line may exacerbate the conflict.

Intra-community confrontation over water resources has taken on a new dimension during COVID-19. For example, the Nakukulas Water Users Association has had confrontations with herders over water use. In addition, there have been illegal piped water connections in Lokichar and Katilu. Both issues were attributed to reduced water levels due to the termination of social responsibility programmes by TKBV after the onset of COVID-19 resulted in the removal of water pumping equipment from the area.

Residents reported cases of suspected land grabbing by local elites, as well as complaints over delayed and/or unfair remuneration of casual labourers by road contractors. They asserted that their attempts to meet and demonstrate in groups about these issues have been frustrated by law enforcement officers on the grounds of the COVID-19-related ban on public gatherings.

22 CAPE Unit, 2004, Op. cit.

23 Kenya Digest, Police attempt to disarm bandits brings more pain, 2020, <https://kenyandigest.com/police-attempt-to-disarm-bandits-brings-more-pain-the-standard/>

24 Nation Media, West Pokot leaders fault the government against disarmament of locals, 2019, <https://nation.africa/kenya/videos/news/west-pokot-leaders-fault-the-government-against-disarmament-of-locals-1280958>

25 Institute for Security Studies, Battle for power and wealth fuels Kenya's Kapedo conflict, 2021

3.2.2 Impact on SGBV and gender relations

Respondents reported increased cases of child abuse and forced early marriages for school-age girls since COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, and they gave specific examples. Although the numbers could not be independently verified, local administrators admitted to being informed of such cases and forwarding them to the police for further action. They asserted that school-age girls were being married off due to poverty, including lack of food, attributed to loss of income resulting from the COVID-19-related restrictions. They also reported that teenage pregnancies were on the increase with resultant disputes between married couples. Several community group members and participants during the validation workshop agreed that, in general, fathers were blaming mothers over their teenage daughters' pregnancies.

Some focus group participants also reported knowledge of intimate partner violence and family break-ups emanating from the denial of perceived conjugal rights by women who interpreted the social-distancing requirements as also including their spouses. They also reported cases where young children were being used as vendors of illicit alcohol, while others stated that some parents were encouraging girls to engage in prostitution to earn a living. Loss of household income due to COVID-19 restrictions has led to a rise in child prostitution. It has also increased the risk of physical violence against women and girls, especially due to domestic conflicts due to lack of food and other necessities. Women and girls were also forced into becoming breadwinners, turning some of them into sex workers.

Extended family conflicts between neighbours due to teenage pregnancies and separation between married couples who were in salaried employment prior to the COVID-19 outbreak were also quoted as consequences of COVID-19 restrictions. Some respondents stated that family tensions had increased, especially after husbands' abilities to provide for their families were hampered due to loss of employment or business income. Inter-family feuds were also fuelled by suspicion that teenage boys were instigating sexual violence against school-age girls living in their neighbourhoods. FGD respondents claimed that the government had not done much to prevent GBV or SGBV; this claim was countered by local administrators who asserted that all reported cases were under investigation. Participants observed that social welfare and affirmative action support has in the past been directed towards women and girls because of their vulnerability, caused by societal norms and stereotypes. This trend has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic with food relief and other measures being channelled through women on the assumption that as primary caregivers they will ensure that food items and money benefit the whole family. This has led men and boys to feel discriminated against. One participant highlighted that school girls were getting pocket money and books from civil society operatives, while boys were receiving no support.

Participants during the validation workshop also observed that boys harboured grudges against women and girls, and that some would go as far as impregnating the girls with the aim of spoiling their futures. The adult males also claimed that their wives were becoming disrespectful having received affirmative action, social welfare and COVID-19-related funding and support. In addition, they noted the lack of an affirmative action fund for men – equivalent to the Women Enterprise Fund and the Youth Enterprise Fund – as discrimination against men, while also asserting that the *Biashara* Fund loans disbursed during COVID-19 favoured women over men. This feeling of discrimination by men and boys is fuelling tension at both the family and community level.

3.2.3 Effect on crime and related conflicts

Participants in the research reported an increase in robberies and break-ins targeting businesses where cash and stock were stolen. The respondents attributed this to inactivity due to job losses and lack of income among the youth, some of whom had lost jobs at Tullow Oil and others who had lost livelihoods from hawking in town and markets due to COVID-19 restrictions. In Lokori and Kelemngorok, both KII and FGD respondents claimed

that burglars had broken into several hotels and shops and stolen stock, valuables, and equipment at night. One of the KII participants in Lokori stated that these crimes were targeting businesses owned and operated by women, although this was disputed in the validation workshop. Katilu and Lokichar peace committee members claimed that crime had reduced due to the curfew and frequent police patrols, but it was confirmed by validation workshop participants that the decline was only witnessed during the early days of the curfew. The re-emergence of crime is supported by reports of banditry along the Lodwar-Kainuk road.²⁶

Respondents asserted that although there was an initial rise in the brewing of illegal liquor in 2020, the practice had reduced due to low demand resulting from lost income. Local leaders who had helped the police combat the rise in illicit brewing such as *Nyumba Kumi* leaders, chiefs and assistant chiefs reported hostility from residents because of the arrest and prosecution of liquor sellers and consumers.

3.2.4 Other conflicts

There is perceived discrimination – including nepotism – in the distribution of COVID-19-related support such as food relief and the distribution of face masks and hand sanitiser. Participants in more than one FGD claimed that chiefs and ward administrators were favouring their friends and relatives, although the chiefs and ward administrators who were interviewed denied this assertion. Participants during the validation workshop reported that the perceptions about discrimination in the distribution of food relief resulted from poor dissemination of information about the timing of the activities, leading to some target beneficiaries missing out on their rations.

There were also complaints about police brutality and harassment in the enforcement of COVID-19 regulations such as curfews and travel restrictions, an assertion supported by external reports.²⁷ Participants gave examples of cases of people being beaten up by police on their way home after work, arbitrary arrests targeting men and young people, as well as business people perceived not to be observing COVID-19 protocols. They also stated that traditional marriage ceremonies involving residents were stopped by law enforcers due to COVID-19 restrictions, while some ceremonies involving county government leaders were allowed to take place. This issue has led to an escalation of tensions between residents and the national and county governments.

3.2.5 Impact on peacebuilding

Peace committee members reported that peace dialogue sessions facilitated by various civil society organisations, including Alert, and the government had ceased due to COVID-19 restrictions on movement and public gatherings. In addition, sporting activities, which used to be conducted between Turkana and Pokot communities as a peacebuilding initiative to ease tensions between the two communities, could no longer take place due to the restrictions.

There were grievances that public gatherings were being held in other counties, but those involving peacebuilding in Turkana were not allowed to take place. For example, participants in the validation workshop referred to national *Madaraka Day*²⁸ celebrations that took place in Kisumu on 1 June 2021 despite a ban on public gatherings.

26 US Department of Trade, Kenya travel advisory, June 2021, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/kenya-travel-advisory.html>

27 Defenders Coalition, Situation of human rights defenders in Kenya in the wake of COVID -19: Violence, impunity and retrogress to police state, 2020, <https://defenderscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Report-on-COVID-19-impact-in-Kenya-.docx.pdf>

28 Madaraka Day is a national holiday observed in Kenya.

3.3 Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on oil operations and livelihoods

3.3.1 The general impact of COVID-19 on business and livelihoods

The impact of the pandemic on businesses was found to be high and will take time to remedy. For example, disruptions on transport due to COVID-19 restrictions disrupted supplies and increased the cost of transport.²⁹ Almost all KII business respondents asserted that they ran out of stock from time to time due to delays in delivery not experienced prior to COVID-19. Consequently, businesses experienced liquidity problems and financial losses.

Respondents from the Turkana Chamber of Commerce stated that a survey they had conducted had established that more than 31 businesses had closed in Kanamkemer, a small trading centre in Lodwar town, between March and December 2020.³⁰ They also stated that cross-border trade with Uganda and South Sudan, and inter-county trade between Turkana and neighbouring communities, had significantly decreased due to COVID-19 restrictions and may have contributed to a spike in crimes targeting businesses, robberies and cattle rustling.

Traders recounted that they had experienced product expiry, shortage of working capital, low sales, inability to pay for salaries and expenses, loan default and inability to acquire new raw materials and stock to restart operations. They attributed this to low demand for goods and services emanating from increased unemployment. One participant stated that she had not received orders for catering services from Tullow Oil staff since March 2020. They also cited problems in identifying alternative sources of supply after Nairobi county was placed under containment. The resultant shortage and increased cost of transport led to an increase in prices. Some traders also cited difficulty in communication with customers and suppliers due to the unavailability of mobile phone airtime vouchers.

Business people reported reduced customer traffic because of people's fear of infection through physical contact. Limited opening times for business operations also contributed to declining sales revenues and profitability. The most affected businesses included bars, clothing boutiques, hotels and hair salons. Other businesses that experienced negative impact included fresh food produce shops, public transport, lodgings, and guest houses, as well as retail and wholesale shops. In addition, one business person who is also a landlord reported that his tenants were experiencing difficulties in paying their rent.

In line with the general decline in demand and prices of livestock and livestock products in Kenya,³¹ respondents reported that the livestock market had also suffered greatly with a decline in prices, market closure and delayed delivery of livestock-related services. Lack of transport to Nairobi and other markets, as well as the inability to distribute animal feed, were also frequently identified as disrupting livestock markets. Respondents stated that livestock prices had fallen from KES.70,000 to KES.30,000 per camel and from KES.7,000 to KES.3,000 per goat.

29 World Food Program Kenya Office, COVID-19: Supply chain and markets update, 2020

30 A survey conducted by International Finance Cooperation (IFC) in partnership with the Turkana County Government to assess the impact of COVID 19 on business in Turkana in September 2020. The findings of the survey have not been published.

31 Mercy Corps, COVID-19 and livestock market systems, 2020

3.3.2 Impact of COVID-19 on Tullow Oil and related businesses

Upon the onset of COVID-19, Tullow Oil downscaled its operations after submitting a '*force majeure*' notice to Kenya's petroleum ministry.³² Although the notice was withdrawn in August 2020, normal operations had not resumed by the time of the study because negotiations between the company and the government had not concluded.³³ The respondents confirmed that they had not noticed any signs that the company was about to resume full operations, an assertion supported by enumerators' observations.

Respondents stated that their local economy was heavily reliant on Tullow Oil Company's oil exploration and extraction activities. Several locals were employed by Tullow Oil and non-native employees rented houses owned by locals. In addition, a majority of business people interviewed either were a supplier to the company or knew at least one person who was a supplier. Employees of Tullow Oil were also clients of local businesses.

The downscaling of oil operations resulting from COVID-19 and other factors have contributed to business failure. Some business owners claimed to be owed money by Tullow Oil as well as their employees. An interviewee stated that some of the former Tullow Oil employees who owed her had already relocated, thereby reducing the probability of her being paid. She also stated that reduced business opportunities, low cash circulation and unpaid business debts had resulted in business failure and rising unemployment. Relocation of former Tullow Oil employees to their native rural areas, coupled with the closure of businesses, was reported as having led to a decline in demand for rental property, leading to a general decline in rental income.

Overall, lives and livelihoods have been negatively affected by the general increase in prices of both essential and non-essential commodities due to the disruption of transport and supply chains. This was compounded by a shortage of essential commodities, especially during periods when there was restriction of movement into and out of Nairobi county. Cancellation of contracts to suppliers of Tullow Oil and resultant losses in income have also had a negative impact on livelihoods. COVID-19 restrictions have also made livestock markets inaccessible leading to a fall in livestock prices. Disruption of social and business networks, and the inability to transport farm produce to markets – especially in Katilu – due to the lack of public transport, were also mentioned as major socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 restrictions.

Participants also asserted that the closure of learning institutions due to COVID-19 had led to both social and economic stress. Examples included how some families were struggling with food shortage due to the absence of the school feeding programme. In addition, suppliers in the school value chain – bookshops, stationery suppliers, transporters etc – have experienced decline in revenue, exposing them to economic stress. They also cited the emergence of domestic conflicts emanating from financial problems due to job losses or business closures. There was also an example of some secondary school boys who were suspected of being involved in cattle rustling, a phenomenon that might not have occurred if schools had remained open, since they would have been at boarding schools.

Respondents stated that corporate social responsibility programmes run by Tullow Oil, such as water borehole drilling and maintenance and the training of business people and livestock traders, had stalled, further aggravating socio-economic issues. The lack of borehole maintenance in particular could trigger future conflict over water resources. Many businesses have been unable to adapt after Tullow Oil's departure, with a number closing

32 World Oil, Tullow reviewing its Kenya plans as stake sale falls through, 2020, <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2020/9/22/tullow-reviewing-its-kenya-plans-as-stake-sale-falls-through>

33 Business Daily Africa, Kenya gives Tullow ultimatum over Turkana oil fields, 2021. <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/economy/kenya-gives-tullow-ultimatum-over-turkana-oil-fields-3344220#:~:text=Summary-,Kenya%20has%20set%20a%20December%20deadline%20for%20British%20firm%20Tullow,amid%20growing%20frustrations%20for%20Kenya>

after operating at a loss. Tullow Oil also owes wages to workers who were laid off upon the onset of COVID-19. Businesses also face the challenge of recovering debts from people laid off by bars, restaurants, and other local businesses. There was also no support provided to employees who lost their jobs, causing negative emotional and financial stress.

3.4 Oil host community and business response to COVID-19 pandemic

3.4.1 Business and community responses to COVID-19

Businesses adapted to the inaccessibility of supplies from Nairobi by ordering supplies – albeit at a higher cost – from wholesalers in Eldoret and Kitale. Both community members and business people claimed to be observing the World Health Organization and Government of Kenya’s COVID-19 guidelines such as wearing face masks, observing social distance, sanitising, and washing hands; however, only a handful of survey participants wore masks until prompted to do so by the enumerators. Many participants were not even carrying a mask, which casts doubt on the extent to which they have observed measures during the pandemic.

Residents generally avoided non-residents within their community for fear of contracting the disease. Some also avoided large gathering with some participants claiming to have avoided burial ceremonies in their neighbourhoods. People who engaged with non-residents either socially or in business were also avoided by neighbours.

To compensate for loss of income from employment and business, some business people and community members resorted to farming activities along the River Turkwel, as well as fishing along the River Malimalite. People also diversified into other businesses, with charcoal trading being mentioned frequently. There were also claims that some female residents – especially single women and girls – resorted to sex work as a means of survival, an assertion confirmed during the validation workshop.

Businesses were reported to have restructured and maintained only critical parts of the business as well as merging some staff roles. Wholesalers survived by venturing into retail business and some diversified into grocery and dry grains trade. Hotels and restaurants adapted through restructuring, laying off employees, price reduction and cooking only to order. Some retailers have allowed debtors to pay in instalments.

Businesses used technology, especially text messaging, Facebook, and WhatsApp, for marketing, supplier communication, generating new ideas and placing orders. Mobile money payments were used to reduce physical contact. Work-from-home arrangements were also quoted as another form of adaptation. Lack of electricity and poor mobile network were highlighted as barriers to the use of technology, especially in Nakukulas and Katilu. In Lokori, low literacy level was quoted as the main barrier to technology use.

3.4.2 Support during COVID-19 pandemic

The majority of FGD respondents (75%) claimed that the county government had not given any assistance to businesses, especially livestock traders, while the remaining 25% reported that support measures such as free masks and sanitisers from the national and county governments were insufficient. Business people acknowledged county and national government support measures such as permission on the trading and transport of essential goods (during the COVID-19 travel restrictions) and sensitisation of the public about COVID-19 through radio

announcements. They noted the installation of handwashing stations at the county offices and the training of livestock traders on prevention and containment measures as the most visible responses.

The main government support and response measures identified included the distribution of food relief, cash transfers of KES600 to people with disabilities, hunger safety-net cash transfers to orphans and vulnerable children, people with disabilities and the elderly, and the county governments' training of Community Health Workers on COVID-19 sensitisation. The construction of classrooms through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) offered limited temporary employment to a few residents.

4 Conclusions

This study clearly indicates that COVID-19 and related restrictions have had negative consequences for residents of Turkana East and South sub-counties. Residents highlighted the closure of businesses, reduced business income and rising unemployment emanating from COVID-19-related disruptions as some of the major consequences of the pandemic. This may have long-term impacts on community welfare, especially regarding poverty levels, education and healthcare. A decline in income and rising unemployment levels may lead to reduced ability to raise capital for business or to afford quality education and healthcare. Since poverty can generate conflict, with conflict also fuelling poverty, there exists a risk that in the future the community may find itself suffering from recurring poverty and conflict cycles.

Conflict, SGBV and crime existed in Turkana South and East before the pandemic; however, there are COVID-19-related factors that could fuel new conflict. Reduced peace committee meetings and initiatives, including reduced civil society activity, may aggravate armed conflicts such as cattle rustling, while reduced income and food insecurity may lead to increased domestic SGBV and intimate partner violence. Poverty and hunger have also led to an increase in crimes such as robberies, thefts and break-ins.

The perception that neighbouring communities were not disarmed during the COVID-19 pandemic, although mistaken, may raise tensions between residents and the national government/law enforcers. It may also lead to the reacquisition of illegal arms by residents, which may negate the objectives of disarmament. In the long term, illegal acquisition of arms may lead to an escalation of armed conflict.

Although not attributable to COVID-19 and related restrictions, accusations about land grabbing by local elites and the blocking of pastoralist migration paths by private landowners and Tullow Oil may aggravate the conflict situation. Underlying perceptions that the private landowners are rich people intent on oppressing the poor pastoralists may fuel economic class conflicts. Claims of land grabbing in Turkana have persisted since the initiation of the Lake Turkana Wind Power project and have continued upon the discovery of oil.³⁴ This issue may need to be addressed through a land tenure system such as the Community Land Act 2016, which addresses land ownership and change of use to avert future land-based conflicts. Despite the legislative frameworks around land (Land Act, 2012; Land Registration Act, 2012; Land Laws (Amendment) Act, 2016; Community Land Act, 2016), which provide guidelines for the recognition, protection, registration and management of community land rights, land-related conflicts in Turkana remain complex, politicised, and are compounded by the community's lack of understanding of existing land laws and frameworks. There is need for community-level advocacy and sensitisation to address community land-related conflicts in the county.

Having invoked the *force majeure* clause once COVID-19 response measures had been implemented, Tullow Oil reduced or terminated its corporate social responsibility programmes focusing on water resources such as borehole drilling and maintenance. Since Tullow's suspension of activities, the community has not come together to plan for the maintenance of the water facilities established by the company. This matter may further aggravate conflict over water resources, since the local community places a high value on water resources. It is also worth noting that respondents reported simmering conflicts between the Nakukulas Water Users Association and herders due to declining water levels, as well as the blocking of water pipes by residents.

34 Food & Agricultural Organization, Triggering the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure in the context of oil extraction in Kenya's Turkana county, 2018

Before COVID-19, Turkana county was already facing challenges from many years of structural marginalisation. The county has a high level of unemployment and poverty.³⁵ The downscaling of Tullow Oil Company's operations – one of the economic lifelines of the community – and the resultant social problems are of great magnitude. Examples include violent robbery and other forms of theft targeting anyone who is deemed to be of means. Female vegetable vendors and shop owners have been reported as major victims, negatively impacting gender relations as well as social cohesion.

COVID-19 has aggravated SGBV as well as child abuse. The existence of child abuse already had prompted civil society actors to initiate child protection activities in the area.³⁶ Restrictions of movement have hampered such initiatives with perpetrators taking advantage of the prevailing situation to sexually abuse children and also promote early marriages. These developments have eroded trust and social cohesion within families and clans because abuse is generally perpetrated by people known to the survivor such as close family members.

The county has also had a long history of food relief and the discrimination that is always associated with it. During the pandemic, vulnerable families continued to suffer because the people charged with the responsibility to distribute food did not always distribute the rations fairly. This has the potential to further fuel conflicts between residents and the national and county governments.

Overdependence of the community on livestock and livestock trade exposes the community to poverty, exploitation and conflict. This is because a decline in livestock prices could easily lead to loss of a large percentage of the local gross domestic product. In addition, it makes the community prone to cattle rustling activities either as perpetrators or victims.

35 Kenya population and household census, 2019

36 Oxfam, Protection assessment report Kenya emergency drought response, 2017

5 Recommendations

COVID-19 and related measures have led to increased fragility in the conflict situation in Turkana East and South sub-counties. The recommendations made by this study are aimed at helping arrest further deterioration in the conflict situation and socio-economic wellbeing of the residents. They are also aimed at ensuring a reduction in future inter-ethnic conflict between residents of Turkana county and neighbouring communities. In addition, if implemented, the recommendations will go a long way towards improving relationships between residents and the national and county governments.

These recommendations were developed by International Alert with input from respondents. They are grouped into short-term and long-term measures. Short-term measures are aimed at mitigating the immediate impact of COVID-19, while long-term measures aim to address conflict and economic recovery.

5.1 Short-term measures

Government of Kenya and related agencies

- 1. Initiate public and community engagement initiatives** to ensure that the perception on unfair disarmament during COVID-19 is addressed. This should include information on disarmament in Baringo and West Pokot counties during the COVID-19 pandemic period.
- 2. Establish procedures for the identification of relief fund and food beneficiaries.** This can be done in conjunction with local community leaders, chiefs and assistant chiefs. This will help ease tensions regarding perceived unfairness in the distribution of COVID-19 relief.
- 3. Take measures to combat SGBV.** This can be done through the investigation of reported cases and prosecution of all perpetrators. The government should also provide necessary financial and social security support to the survivors of SGBV to enable them to live safely and with dignity. Furthermore, the government should invest in raising community awareness about all forms of violence against women and girls and transforming harmful social norms.

County Government of Turkana

- 1. Increase sensitisation, training and information regarding COVID-19** especially to business people and their employees. The county government should lead the process of collecting and analysing data on the impact of COVID-19 on the community and local businesses to inform their policies on entrepreneurship, trade, and public-private partnerships.
- 2. Lower or suspend local government business licensing fees and taxes.** This will improve short-term liquidity of businesses that are struggling as a result of COVID-19 restrictions such as shortened operating hours (e.g. bars) and reduced demand due to social distancing requirements (e.g. transport, restaurants etc).

Civil society and religious leaders

- 1. Take measures to ensure prompt resumption of peacebuilding initiatives** while still observing COVID-19 protocols. They can use COVID-19 sensitisation programmes as a platform to bring together all parties to the conflict. They should work closely with national and county government leadership in this regard.

5.2 Long-term measures

National government

- 1. Come up with strategies for the resumption of peacebuilding and social cohesion activities.** Equally important are strategies on how to conduct campaigns on GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2. Support local peacebuilding initiatives** by ensuring involvement of national government administrators in the area as well as facilitating observance of COVID-19 protocols during peace meetings.
- 3. Restructure national government affirmative action funds to ensure that they are gender and conflict sensitive.** Men from vulnerable economic and social backgrounds should be included in affirmative action programmes, taking into consideration the fact that men's livelihoods were negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- 4. Introduce more support measures aimed at cushioning businesses** as well as vulnerable members of the community, such as economic stimulus and business capacity-building programmes, and market and financial access support initiatives through cooperatives. This should be preceded by a thorough needs assessment to ascertain the right beneficiaries. The process should also be conducted in an environment that is consultative and transparent.
- 5. Put measures in place to address the strained relationship between the security forces and local community and business owners.** This relationship has become strained following the brutal manner in which the security forces enforced curfew rules during the COVID-19 pandemic.

County Government of Turkana

- 1. Mobilise livestock farmers and traders** to form producer and marketing cooperatives to assist in the exploration of new markets, negotiate with buyers and increase value addition. This will cushion both the farmers and traders against future price and market shocks similar to the ones witnessed upon the onset of COVID-19.
- 2. Establish a business support scheme/fund** to supplement the national government's *Biashara*, Youth Enterprise and Women Enterprise Funds. Soft loans provided under this scheme would provide working capital to businesses struggling from the impact of COVID-19, as well as start-ups. The loans should not be seen to favour women over men because this could exacerbate domestic gender-based conflict as witnessed in relation to COVID-19 relief.
- 3. Initiate an agricultural support initiative** targeting residents who have already ventured into or are interested in moving into agro-pastoralism, who should first be integrated within the existing irrigation scheme. This would create employment and reduce over-reliance on livestock farming and business, reducing conflicts emanating from poverty and cattle rustling, as well as building resilience against future shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4. Come up with strategies to resume peacebuilding and social cohesion activities.** Equally important are strategies on how to conduct campaigns on GBV under the current COVID-19 restrictions.

Turkana Chamber of Commerce

- 1. Initiate value-chain restructuring.** Work closely with businesses to help in value chain restructuring with a view to helping businesses get alternative sources of supply and reduce over-reliance on Nairobi. This will help build business resilience against the ongoing impact of COVID-19 as well as other similar future shocks.
- 2. Initiate capacity-building programmes** focusing on financial management, marketing, business continuity planning and use of technology with a view to helping businesses build resilience against COVID-19 and other future disruptions.
- 3. Initiate business promotion initiatives for residents of Turkana county.** This could involve collection and publication of data and information on business opportunities in Turkana county with a view to attracting external investors. In addition, the data and information could also seek to market goods and services produced within Turkana with a view to increasing sales for local businesses. The foregoing could build business resilience as well as create employment. This will help build business resilience against the ongoing impact of COVID-19 as well as other similar future shocks.

Civil society organisations

- 1. Continue with poverty reduction efforts to spur recovery of community livelihoods.** These efforts should include enhanced school feeding programmes, and the establishment of business capacity-building programmes and agricultural support initiatives, among others. These initiatives should be conflict sensitive with appropriate perception management put in place.
- 2. Closely collaborate with local leaders and the national government** in this regard as well as ensure that COVID-19 protocols are followed during peacebuilding events.
- 3. Take measures to combat SGBV.** This can be done through education, sensitisation and counselling for men, women, and youth. The interventions should focus on mental health issues occasioned by joblessness and business closure as a result of COVID-19. They should also address cultural practices that reinforce SGBV. The initiatives must focus on men and women equally.

International Alert

346 Clapham Road, London, SW9 9AP, United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)20 7627 6800 **Fax** +44 (0)20 7627 6900

info@international-alert.org

www.international-alert.org

Registered charity no. 327553

