DRAFT
REPORT OF
THE KARAMOJA WOMEN FOR PEACE BUILDING
NETWORKING MEETING

25-26 JUNE 2010

“Enhancing Women’s Role in Strengthening
the Conflict Early Warning and Response Network in the Karamoja Cluster!”
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS ........................................................................................................................................... iii

1.0 Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 Introduction of participants and meeting objectives ............................................................................ 2

1.2 Official Opening Session .................................................................................................................... 3

2.0 Analysis of Causes, Impact of Pastoralists and Related Conflict on Women: CEWARN presentation. ........................................................................................................................... 5

2.1 Women Perspectives on Pastoralist and related Conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster: Exploring the Role of Women in Peace Building .................................................................................................. 7

2.2 Plenary Session ................................................................................................................................... 8

3.0 Women’s Perspectives on Pastoralist and Related Conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster: Country Group Work Session ...................................................................................................................... 10

3.1 Uganda .............................................................................................................................................. 10

3.2 Sudan ............................................................................................................................................... 11

3.3 Kenya .............................................................................................................................................. 12

3.4 Ethiopia .......................................................................................................................................... 13

4.0 UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ............................................................................................ 13

4.1 Theory of Change and Women as Agents of Change ......................................................................... 14

5.0 Success Stories

5.1 The Samburu District Experience .................................................................................................... 14

5.2 Ugandan Story .................................................................................................................................. 15

5.4 Sudan Story ...................................................................................................................................... 17

5.5 Peace Caravan-Kenya ....................................................................................................................... 17

6.0 Action plans ..................................................................................................................................... 19

6.1 Closing Session: Statements and announcements ............................................................................. 22

6.2 List of Participants .............................................................................................................................. 24
ACRONYMS

ABEK  Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
AIDS  Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CBOs  Community Based Organizations
CEWARN Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism of IGAD
CEWERU Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit
DC    District Commissioner
DO    District Officer
DPCs  District Peace Committees
FGM   Female Genital Mutilation
HIV   Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT   Information Communication and Technology
IDPS  Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD  Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KWIPi Kapchorwa Women in Peace Initiative
LRA   Lord’s Resistance Army
NGOs  Non Governmental Organizations
PACT  Building Capacity Worldwide
SACCOS Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies
UN    United Nations
UPE   Universal Primary Education
USAID United States Agency for International Development
1.0 Introduction

The two-day Karamoja Women for Peace building Networking Meeting was organized by the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) of IGAD in collaboration with PACT/PEACE II Programme and USAID/EA. The meeting brought together close to 60 grass-roots women from the Karamoja Cluster, an area that covers the cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The meeting served as a forum to consult on enhancing the role of women in peace building efforts in the cluster.

Since its inception in 2002, CEWARN has been committed to a gender sensitive focus in its conflict prevention and mitigation efforts of cross-border pastoral and related conflicts in the IGAD sub-region. Accordingly, the forum brought together women members of parliament, representatives of national Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Units (CEWERU), civil society as well as women activists. This diverse combination of women from the four countries helped to better understand the plight of women in relation to violent conflicts within the Cluster.
1.1 Introduction of Participants and meeting objectives

In order of name, organization and expectations, participants introduced themselves. Participants represented a diverse group of institutions and included district commissioners, local peace development committee members, representatives of government organizations and CBOs, members of parliament, professionals from the marginalized communities, representatives of the international community, international NGOs and national women bodies such as the Maendeleo ya Wanawake as well as the media.

Co-facilitators summarized expectations of the delegates into the following themes:

i. Understanding conflict early warning systems;
ii. Role of women in conflict early warning systems;
iii. Sharing experiences and success stories;
iv. Actionable way forward; and
v. Informing policy.

Some of the delegates from Ethiopia during a session
Meeting objectives

The co-facilitators stated the following as key objectives of the meeting:

i. Analyze and understand pastoralist related conflicts and their impact on women from a gender perspective i.e. from women’s own words;

ii. Identify obstacles and best practices in women’s participation in peace building in the Karamoja Cluster;

iii. Understand and appreciate women’s involvement in the Karamoja Cluster’s peace processes;

iv. Make specific recommendations on enhancing role of women in peace processes in the cluster

Mrs. Mary Okumu, a co-facilitator, emphasized the fact that the purpose of the meeting is embedded on the UN Security Council resolution 1325 which covers issues related to respect for women’s rights and their welfare in conflict situations as well as their active role in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction. She challenged participants to regard this as a vision and contribute to its realization.

1.2 Official Opening Session and Statement by the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Esther Murugi

The minister was introduced by the District Commissioner (DC) of Eldoret who thanked her for her commitment to participate in the occasion. Mr. Samuel K. Maina Head of the national CEWERU of Kenya also waved the famous greeting “amani Karamoja.” He too affirmed the importance of the meeting and the long wait by stakeholders for such a meeting. The USAID representative, Ms. Rosa Wanyagi affirmed that USAID is pleased by the role of CEWARN in facilitating the participation of women in regional peace building efforts. She noted that USAID had supported CEWARN since its establishment in 2002 with a goal to have a peaceful region. She added, USAID also supports the PEACE II programme implemented by PACT based in Nairobi, Kenya which is also a key partner in this event. “Investing in women is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing to do,” was a key message she delivered concluding her remarks.
The CEWARN Ag. Director, Mr. Raymond Kitevu on his part stated that CEWARN has been operational since 2002 and has, from the onset, been committed to a gender sensitive focus in its conflict prevention and peace building activities. He added, Women continue to play an active role in the mechanism at all levels – including local, national and cross-border.

Hon. Minister, Esther Murugi took the floor and began by stressing the importance of the meeting as women and children are the worst affected members of community in conflicts. She said, the Government of Kenya fully cognizant of this and continues to involve women in peace building efforts. She also expressed her hope that the UN Resolution 1325 recommendations on involvement of women in local committees will continue to be fully implemented to the letter.

She stated that conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster are often amongst pastoralist communities spurred by competition over scarce water resources and pasture. These conflicts also have cross-border dimensions with serious consequences on women and children including rape, orphans, forced marriages to the male heroes and related trauma. This situation hampers development and scares away investors – leaving communities in chronic poverty. The minister gave examples of some encouraging initiatives by women in Kenya such as that of Samburu women who have currently taken up farming e.g. use of green houses as opposed to keeping livestock only, in order to let go of what is causing conflict.

She also raised the issue of women as proponents of conflict. She challenged participants by asking “who in our communities gives the blessings when the warriors are going to war? Who ululates most when the raided livestock is brought home? These questions were posed as the speech came to an end.

Accordingly, the Minister challenged participants to examine their roles in conflict situations and concluded by citing a quote from the former UN Secretary General Kofi
Annan who said “women have a role as peace educators in their families and communities, they are known for building bridges and not wars.”

2.0 Analysis of Causes, Impact of Pastoralist and Related Conflicts on Women: CEWARN presentation

The CEWARN Ag. Director, Mr. Raymond Kitevu in his presentation stated that CEWARN is the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism for the IGAD Region. A brief background was presented as the need for the creation of CEWARN, how it came into existence after the “Khartoum Declaration” in 2000; the development of the CEWARN Protocol (2000-2002) as well as its methodology (2003). This was followed by opening of the CEWARN Unit in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia in July 2003, and the final entry into force of the CEWARN Protocol in August 2003.

CEWARN Response activities for June 2010 and gender mainstreaming efforts were shared with participants. Mr. Kitevu was quick to note that since its inception, CEWARN
has been committed to a gender-sensitive approach in its conflict prevention and mitigation efforts. This is based on an understanding by CEWARN about the importance of drawing sufficient attention to the plight of women and children in situations of violent conflict and the importance of incorporating women’s unique and significant contributions to its peace building efforts.

Below is one of the unique ways of reporting by CEWARN by capturing deaths of women and children as shown below.

The number of women and children is emphasized and shown in blue colour whereas the total number is in red.
2.1 Women Perspectives on Pastoralist and related Conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster: Exploring the Role of Women in Peace Building

This was presented by a panel of Members of Parliament drawn from Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The objective of the session was experience-sharing on the status of women’s involvement in peace building initiatives in countries of the Karamoja Cluster.

Hon. Betty Awor from Uganda reported that in Uganda there is a framework embedded in the Local Governments Act and gave an example of the Juba Peace Process between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) when women were observers until one woman was given an active role. She said the constitution of Uganda states that 1/3 of the membership of any established committees should constitute women. In spite of this framework, Ugandans continue to push for more representation as there remain gaps due to the patriarchal nature of Ugandan society.

It was noted that one of the most significant achievements so far in Uganda is the fact that the First Lady Ms. Janet Museveni is currently Minister of State of Karamoja Affairs. She also stated that in Uganda, there are 105 women in parliament which is a big critical mass though men still dominate.

According to Hon. Nakiya Ankesa from Ethiopia, there are 170 women parliamentarians in Ethiopia. She said, the Ethiopian government continues to undertake various efforts to involve women in all aspects of its activities. She also shared with participants her experience as a local peace committee member in her constituency which is the Dassenech Woreda (located on the Ethiopian side of the Karamoja Cluster) before her election as a Member of Parliament.

It was also learnt that Sudan has over 100 women members of parliament up from 1 in 1964. During the negotiations for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, women were quite involved and these efforts gave an opportunity to get 25% representation of
women in the parliament. There, however, is still a need to involve grass-root women in peace processes and initiatives.

### 2.2 Plenary Session

Participants were concerned that presentations by Honorable Members of parliament from Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda were incomplete as they only looked at the positive roles women play towards peace. The fact that women can be spoilers and sometimes active in provoking conflicts was overlooked.

Other questions raised included the role of women in decision making in the region and the need for a strategy to be developed to address 50/50 representation by 2015.

In response to one of the questions, a member of parliament from Uganda asserted that a strategy is already developed and a workshop had already been held to among
women parliamentarians in the region to discuss 50/50 representation recently in Nairobi chaired by Hon. Minister Esther Murugi.

A young participant from Kenya gave her real story centered on the issue of tribalism. In 1992, she was only six years old when conflict centred on tribalism broke out in Kenya. She added, when another round of violence occurred in 2007, her age mates were active in it. She asked, “What are parliamentarians doing about teaching the younger generation about the threat of tribalism that is threatening peace among communities?”

A participant suggested the involvement of children in schools so that they can be influenced as early as possible and the need for incorporation of peace education in school curriculums. The idea is borrowed from HIV/AIDS management strategies which have worked well through schools. On the issue of disarmament, one participant questioned the effectiveness of such programmes so far, as the guns are not removed from communities. Another participant also raised the need for cooperation among Member States and in some cases the need for governments to plan simultaneous disarmament programmes along borders. She also stressed the need for the involvement of women to support these programmes.
3.0 Women’s Perspectives on Pastoralist and Related Conflict in Karamoja Cluster: Country Group Work Sessions

The session’s objectives were to explore women’s perspectives on the causes of pastoralist conflicts in the Karamoja cluster as well as roles women play in conflict situations (both positive and negative) and impacts of conflicts on women and children.

Participants broke out into country groups and discussed the following questions:

i. What are the causes of pastoralist conflicts in your region?
ii. What roles do women play in situations of conflict: both positive and negative?
iii. What is the impact of conflict on women and children?

3.1 Uganda – group presentation

**Causes:** Culture e.g. bride-price which can cost as high as 100 heads of cattle; poverty, greed; scarcity of resources; very dry and marginalized areas; underdevelopment ranging from illiteracy to lack of social services; climate change; availability of illegal guns; commercialization of cattle raiding (it has become a business); lawlessness; ineffective law and order systems; ethnic differences etc were listed as main causes of conflict.

**Roles Played by Women:**

**Positive:** community mobilization and sensitization for peace work; persuasion; influence of decision-making especially the parliamentarians, negotiation and mediation, peace educators/ peace loving, contribute a lot to the household welfare, known for transparency, passionate and committed, play a key role in upbringing the children so can impart some peace building virtues on the children.

**Negative:** Blessing the men /"Karacunas" to go for cattle rustling; praising the raiders through ululations; songs and dance; ridicule and insults incase of failure of raids.

**Impact of conflict on women:** Loss of lives and property, orphans and widows, rape and defilement, displacements, hunger and famine, trauma and stress, dysfunctional
society, migration, human trafficking, begging and street children, child labour, disruption of service delivery, diseases (HIV/AIDS), malnutrition, affects education of children, injuries/disability etc were cited as some of the impacts of conflicts on women on the Ugandan side of the Karamoja Cluster.

3.2 Sudan – group presentation

Causes: Causes of conflicts on the Sudan side of the Cluster largely are similar with that of the Ugandan side and include cultural aspects such as heroism associated with cattle rustling; competition over control of natural resources; limited water and pasture; poor infrastructure; low literacy rates; availability and affordability of illegal small arms, severe drought; political influences including supply of arms to affect electioneering and wealth related issues.

Role of Women:
Positive and Negative: Regarding cattle raiders as heroes and brave; the young girls want to be married to the brave men so mothers want their sons to be brave; women encourage men to have illegal small arms for protection as well as status of women in society and their power to influence their families. On the other hand, women are able to use their influence in families to also discourage their sons/fiancées/husbands from getting involved in conflicts.

Impact of conflict on women: Loss of lives; displacements; burden due to responsibilities after death of husband including doubling as bread-winners and mothers as well as generations caught in a cycle of violence. Conflicts also disrupt education of children and socio-economic indicators. Other impacts also include trauma; rape; defilement, child labor and child soldiers etc...
3.3 Kenya –group presentation

**Causes:** Scarcity of resources mainly water and pasture, restocking especially when there is rainfall and you need the cows to feed on the grass, revenge, poverty, availability of illegal arms, commercialization of conflict, political incitement, youth idleness/ unemployment, over-reliance on one means of livelihood, administrative boundaries, negative ethnicity/ communal stereotyping e.g. “you look so ugly like a so and so community”.

**Role of Women:**

**Positive:** Intermarriages, instilling positive values in children, participating in peace forums, development and trade e.g. interactions, mediation, send early warnings especially in gossips in water areas and markets, singing peace songs, counseling and comforters of victims, protection of friends perceived “enemies” and participating in socio economic activities.
**Negative:** Welcoming raiders and receiving raided livestock; incitement through songs / words; appraising warriors after raids; mocking those who do not go for raids; discouraging intermarriages; women blessing the warriors; concealing of illegal small arms and weapons.

**Impact of conflict on women:** Death of spouses and members of family; rape; defilement; trauma; diseases; unwanted pregnancies; family breakdown; absentee husbands; poverty; IDPS; Refugees; nursing victims; disabilities and deformities etc.

**Impact of conflict on Children:** High rate of school dropout; trauma; unwanted pregnancies; orphaned; early marriages; displacement; children stolen; poor health; malnutrition and deaths at prime age among others.

**3.4 Ethiopia – group presentation**

**Causes:** competition over natural resources - like water points and pasture; socialization of enmity and hatred leading to a cycle of violence; debts and influence by family from an early age for example children are told, “so and so killed your father.” So, when the children grow up they feel they have to revenge or kill a member of that family.

**Roles of women:**
**Positive and negative** – These were mostly similar with other.

**4.0 UN Security Council Resolution 1325**

Mrs. Okumu explained the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on October 31, 2000 that talks about respect for women’s rights and their welfare in conflict situations as well as their active role in peace building initiatives. The participants were taken through the 18 articles contained therein and their content.
4.1 Theory of Change and Women as Agents of Change

Mrs. Mary Okumu took participants through the theory of change which she described as “becoming the change you want to see.” The theory states that people are largely responsible for the change they want to see /become. She said, external forces or people can only facilitate this change.

Theory of Change also defines the building blocks required to bring about that necessary change. In the context of enhancing the role of women in peace building, “what is the change that we want to see?” The following questions were posed by the facilitator for reflection:

i. As women, what is our vision of peace?
ii. What will be the features of the change?
iii. What do we need in order to achieve this change?

In conclusion, participants were challenged to think about what it takes for a larva to change and transform into a beautiful butterfly. Hence, what are the ingredients needed as women? (Values, principles, Norms, Structures, Attitudes, Skills) etc.

5.0 Success Stories

5.1 The Samburu District Experience

In Samburu District of Kenya, after cattle rustling women are left carrying a big burden of nursing the victims (the injured); taking care of the children and reconstructing the shelters. Women from the district were eager to contribute to peace building initiatives and went for an exchange program in Wajir District to learn more on way forward. Whey they returned, they formed peace committees which had significant women representation. The peace committees are made of 10 members and key among them are the warriors. In open forums, those gathered were entertained with songs carrying messages of peace and praising the children in school than praising the ones going to “die in raids”.


Through these forums women from different communities have interacted and built relationships. After an incident of raid one woman was heard crying “I wish my cows went to so and so’s home.” This is because she believed she will be able to recover them. A story of how Samburu women who at one time learnt about a planned attack against the Pokot in the market were able to prevent the raid was also shared.

5.2 Ugandan Story by UJCC

The Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) is an active collaborator with CEWARN’s activities on the Ugandan side of the Karamoja Cluster.

The UJCC representative shared how the creation of CEWARN District Peace Committees in Uganda has greatly reduced cattle rustling incidences as well as thefts. Border meetings have also achieved encouraging results in terms of resolving the cross-border aspects of pastoral conflicts. For example, the conflict assessment and
proposed response to the Sironko/ Kapchorwa land conflict will further contribute to peace efforts in Uganda.

Women have also been part of spearheading these peace building efforts and have been actively involved in mobilizing and educating of change agents for peace and development beginning with their homes. For example, the Kapchorwa Women in Peace Initiative (KWIP) which has had several peace programmes to reduce conflict by recognizing and enhancing the role of women in peace processes. Women have also been central in the disarmament programme through encouraging the voluntary surrender of guns as well as providing information on the arms whereabouts.

The provision of schools that benefit warring communities has reduced tensions and encouraged good neighborliness. One good example in this regard is the building of schools in Giriki, on the border between Kapchorwa and Nakapiripit Districts in Karamoja where both the Sabiny and Pokot communities’ children study. The
construction of the health centre in Girk where both Sabiny and Karamajong women share the same clinic has also reduced tensions in the area. Water sources are currently being shared by the Sabiny and the Pokot, and because of increased interaction, there are inter-marriages taking place among these communities that are fostering unity and reducing conflict.

5.4 Sudan Story

Sudanese women have played an important role in organizing workshops, mobilizing communities and sensitization during the peace process in southern Sudan. Secondly, they are involved as both agents of conflicts and victims. Illiteracy has hindered the women from being fully involved in peace building processes.

However, there have been success stories of women led interventions to prevent conflict. Accordingly, a story was shared regarding a planned attack along the border between Sudan and Uganda. An elderly Sudanese woman overheard warriors talking of their plan to raid the Ugandan Dodoth community. She overheard everything including the tactics they were going to use and woke up so early in the morning and went to wait for the warriors and dared them “why do you talk about peace and now you want to go and attack the Ugandans?” “Kill me first before you go and kill them,” she insisted. Because of the courageous act of one woman the warriors abandoned their plan to attack.

5.5 Peace Caravan-Kenya

Three professional young women Faith Akiru, Naisula Lesuuda and Bridgit Teko are based in Nairobi and pursuing their careers in different fields. They also represent the Turkana, Samburu and Pokot Communities that have for long been engaged in bitter conflict. There have also at times been incidents of massacre-proportions among these communities. However, according to Naisula, who narrated their experience as peace agents, loss of lives among these communities were not regarded beyond mere statistics.
The young women shared how they decided to come together to work towards peaceful co-existence among these communities through organizing peace caravans. They used their time off-work to travel to these communities and preach peace. They also recounted how the peace caravans have proven to be an effective tool in educating communities –especially youth warriors or “morans” that are the main perpetrators of violence- on the impacts of conflicts. They informed the meeting that they have witnessed a significant decrease in violent incidents among these communities since they have started the peace caravan in 2008/9.

Other points raised by the young women were:

- Markets are good points of communal interaction so the need to encourage more markets to be opened up;
- Youth going to school is very important; it will free the next generation from being caught in a cycle of violence. Boarding schools would be strategic in keeping the “morans” in school.
6.0 STRATEGIES ON CONCRETE ACTIONABLE PLANS

In-country groups participants went into groups and discussed based on the themes below;

i. Based on the gaps identified in the two days, what are the actions you will undertake in each country to increase role of women in peace building in the mechanism?

ii. What specific activities at the cross-border do you suggest and how can CEWARN support you using its existing early warning and response systems?

**Uganda** committed to carry out the following actions to increase the role of women in peace building:

i. Carry out capacity building for the women to identify and articulate women’s issues;

ii. Provision of viable sustainable livelihoods;

iii. Create a women’s grass roots peace network / movement for peace building;

iv. Cross-border advocacy on implementation of the Mifugo project run by East African Peace Chief’s Cooperation Organization (EAPPCO) and Institute of Security Studies (ISS) which deals with aspects of cattle rustling in conflicts;

v. Joint planning of advocacy strategies, exchange visits, joint festivals and monitoring of local CEWERU District Peace Committees

vi. Carry out activities including dialogue meetings and report

vii. Documentation of experiences and research on peace building

**Ethiopia** committed to carry out the following action plans

i. Feedback to the networks of social women groups and CSOs;

ii. Ensure sustainability of the peace processes in their Clusters;

iii. Exchange visits in cross-border areas especially with Kenya.
**Sudan** committed to carry out the following actions:

i. Support women groups from national and regional level and peace forums. This will involve networking;

ii. Facilitate sessions for the members of parliament to increase women involvement in peace building forum as per the UN 1325 Resolution;

iii. Support development of infrastructure i.e. education, health, roads, water and communications among others in the pastoralist/cross-border areas;

iv. MPs and other policy and decision makers to advocate for the roles of women in peace building;

v. Capacity building of the local peace committees i.e. by trainings, provision of transport, incentives for Field Monitors, provision of means of communication etc;

vi. Community mobilization and sensitization on roles of women in peace building; and

vii. Situational analysis on the role of women.

**Kenya** identified the following gaps and actionable recommendations:

**Gaps:**

- Lack of involvement of young and grass-roots women in peace building work;
- Holding of peace meetings far from the affected areas e.g. hotels/ dissemination barriers;
- Message not reaching people with disabilities;
- High illiteracy levels among women; and
- Few women in all levels especially in the decision making levels

**Actionable recommendations:**

- Field monitors to identify young and grass-root women who can be used as change agents
- Let the communities choose their own women representatives whom they respect;
➢ Holding meetings on the ground in order to increase awareness and get the real
issues from those affected by conflicts;
➢ Integrating district officers working with people with disabilities in the peace
processes;
➢ Adult education;
➢ Lobbying for women involvement and ensuring affirmative actions are
implemented;
➢ Improve networking, cooperation inclusiveness etc to work in a complementing
manner in order to gain most in peace efforts like;
   i. Cross-border communal networking forums/ interactions;
   ii. Tightening cross-border security;
   iii. neighboring governments conducting joint disarmament;
   iv. Cross-border tournaments and other social activities e.g. establishing
      markets;
   v. Cross-border capacity building for peace building work;
   vi. Income generating activities; and
   vii. Research and documentation.

CEWARN to;
   a) Continue coordinating cross-border peace activities;
   b) Facilitate cross-border meetings at the grass roots levels;
   c) Negotiate with governments to provide security to these communities and
      facilitate coordination of disarmament programme across borders;
   d) Supporting cross-border peace activities;
   e) Training cross-border communities on other alternative sources of livelihoods
      and income generating activities
   f) Research and documentation activities that can act as guidelines for future
      peace activities especially along the borders.
6.1 Closing Session: Statements and Announcements

The meeting came to an end ceremoniously and very emotionally as the women were involved in dance and ululations all centered on messages of peace. The PR and Communications Officer of CEWARN, Ms Tigist Hailu took the floor and thanked all delegates for their active participation and contributions.

The Ag. Director of CEWARN Mr. Raymond Kitevu on his part acknowledged that the process had to be women driven thus CEWARN had to bring Mrs. Mary Okumu who represents the United National Capital Development Fund, all the way from South Africa to co-facilitate the event. Mr. Kitevu stated that CEWARN is in the process of establishing a community radio in the Karamoja Cluster through the ICT 4 Peace project. He said, he anticipates the project to be fully rolled out in the cluster by June 2011. He also informed participants about CEWARN’s plan to make the women’s networking meeting an annual event and hold it in the cluster areas for wider local level
participation as well as awareness.

Mrs. Mary Okumu also said “we came in as delegates and we were leaving as a network.” She was keen to remind participants that the unique values brought by each participant will be taken on board in formulation of follow up activities. She also asked the partners to support an initiative of documentation and sharing of best practices of women’s role in peace building.

Ms. Jebiwot Subeiwo of PACT Kenya, also a co-facilitator of the meeting, thanked all participants and brought the ceremony to a closure by acknowledging the wonderful deliberations and immense support from the partners of the event - CEWARN/IGAD and USAID/EA. **END**

**Rapporteur – Ms. Monica Nthumbi**
## List of Participants

### Ethiopia

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hon. Nakiya Ankesia</td>
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<td>Gnakogne Moroto</td>
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### Kenya

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