

Early Warning Burkina Faso Pilot Project



Meeting 2 Report: Effective Conflict Prevention in Burkina Faso

On 16 and 17 September 2019, PAX convened a meeting in the Hague to discuss Early Warning in Burkina Faso with a mixed group of 30 representatives of military, governmental and non-governmental organisations. This report reflects on the participant selection process prior to the meeting; discusses the main outcomes of the meeting, assess to what extent the objectives set for the meeting are met; and looks at the next steps in the Pilot.

A PILOT PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Description of the selection process

The selection of participants started with an extensive scan of Dutch organisations working in, or on, Burkina Faso, conflict prevention and Early Warning. The result was unsatisfactory in the sense that less organisations were identified than expected that actively work on these issues specifically in Burkina Faso. Throwing the net wider, additional participants were identified in Germany, Belgium and Denmark.

In the meantime, contact persons at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 1GNC were asked to suggest diplomatic and military participants and facilitate first contact.

Quite early on in the process, we concluded that the participation of regional West African networks would be crucial for the success of meeting 1 and the entire Pilot, specifically the intergovernmental organisation ECOWAS and the non-governmental organisation WANEP.

The selection process resulted in a group of 26 participants (not counting PAX staff). See **Annex 1** for the full list of participants and their affiliations and see part C for assessment and appreciation of the diversity and comprehensiveness of the group of participants.

B OUTCOMES

The 2-day programme can be summarised as follows:

Day 1	
Morning	Participant presentations on programmes in Burkina Faso
Afternoon	Considerations for effective programming in Burkina Faso
Day 2	
Morning	Future Early Warning programming in Burkina Faso
Afternoon	Visualisation of Early Warning in Burkina Faso
	Next steps and evaluation

For the full program, see Annex 2

On day 1, participants presented their own current or planned activities in Burkina Faso and they spoke openly about their considerations for starting or continuing activities and programmes in Burkina Faso. First in their individual presentations and later on in group sessions, participants identified context specific considerations, considerations stemming from principles and widely adopted approaches, as well as a large number of observations from own experiences and lessons learned. See **Annex 3** for the entire set of harvested considerations.

Context specific considerations

Or: Opportunities, complexities and obstacles in the local context that stakeholders identified as having an impact on their choices for (continuation of) activities and programs in Burkina Faso

Participants commonly agreed on the analysis that the security situation in Burkina Faso is deteriorating rapidly. There is a broadly recognised sense that this is not an isolated problem only affecting Burkina Faso. Porous borders allow radical armed groups to acquire strongholds and control trading routes in parts of Burkina Faso and the general picture is that this influence is spreading towards neighbouring countries to the south, Benin, Togo and

Ghana. These armed groups are well organised, move quick and in some cases overwhelm existing traditional or national security and justice structures. Religious leaders, civil society representatives, members of self-defence groups – all have been targets of attacks in recent months. Remote areas, notably border areas tend to be the most fragile and in some areas government is struggling to maintain presence let alone control. In several places, security forces have fled altogether.

Many of the current tensions in Burkina Faso however are the result of indigenous, unresolved issues with trust. There is a profound lack of trust between communities and government; between pastoralist and farmers; between Fulani and other ethnic groups; between communities and security forces; between governing elites and youth. Clashed over land use between pastoralists, farmers and urbanised citizens result in larger numbers of victims than the much more publicised terrorist attacks. There is also tension between traditional, customary forms of security provision and justice and modern, post-colonial forms. This exacerbates the insecurity caused by unresolved land-use and land-ownership issues. In addition, fair representation in political processes as well as access to the justice system is not always apparent for all groups in society.

Several factors further amplify tensions in Burkina Faso. Climate change and resource depletion further undermines the resiliencies of local communities and Burkina Faso as a nation. Growing numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries and more than 300,000 IDPs as a result of internal conflict add to the complexity many communities face in their attempts to build or protect a safe and secure environment. Especially in the East, the influx of refugees and IDPs threatens to strain resources. The proliferation of small arms heightens the chance of conflicts turning violent.

Principles and approaches

Or: Guiding principles and conceptual approaches that that stakeholders identified as having an impact on their choices for (continuation of) activities and programs in Burkina Faso

Participants emphasised that programming in Burkina Faso must start from a need or request formulated by local communities. Community led and community centred approached and existing local structures as starting points, **a people-centric** (as opposed to enemy centric) or Human Security (as opposed to State Security) approach. This was also recognised by participants warning not to base context analysis on generalisations but on local context specific and evidence based analysis..

The emphasis on using existing structures as a starting point was also reflected in considerations about how to work. Participants emphasised the need to work comprehensive¹, integrated², cooperative³, inclusive⁴ while recognising that in principle coordination and **first response are the prerogative of the local and state authorities**.

Many participants also stressed their intention not to reinvent the wheel or develop new, isolated projects and activities but to rather contribute to, scale-up or build on existing programs, institutions and initiatives.

⁴ Inclusive in this context is understood as: Fostering cooperation among the widest variation of stakeholders; Not excluding stakeholders



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¹ Comprehensive in this case is understood as: Involving military, civilian and diplomatic stakeholders

² Integrated is understood in this case as: Involving stakeholders working in different policy fields such as development cooperation, security, humanitarian aid, economic cooperation.

³ Cooperative in this case is understood as: Involving open sharing among stakeholders; Not involving competition among stakeholders

Participants stressed the importance of **conflict sensitivity** in all phases of work and several participants prioritised social cohesion and the (rebuilding of) social contract in descriptions of principles underpinning their own activities and programmes in Burkina Faso.

Participants from the region further stressed the importance of the **human security concept as leading in analysing local needs** and some local participants emphasised that an integrated approach to building (human) security also implies that the financing of development and security projects must be integrated rather than stove piped as it currently is.



Photo (PAX): Participant presentations

Experiences and lessons learned

Or: Experiences and lessons learned from past and current activities and programs in Burkina Faso that stakeholders identified as having an impact on their choices for (continuation of) activities and programs in Burkina Faso

Locals first

The need to **start from local context was** a returning topic in the meeting. Participants advocated for participation of local populations in designing, planning and implementation of projects as much as possible, while making use of already existing local mechanisms and institutions where possible, to maximise the chances of success. Local populations must see the effect and feel ownership of initiatives implemented in their communities to be able to support their implementation. Visibility of (foreign) troops can help to build a safe and secure environment but participants stressed that this is only the case if local populations perceive the presence of troops to benefit them and if incidents of abuse by military are addressed quickly, adequately with visible results for the local populations involved. In that light, the mandate for foreign military involvement must be explicit, publicly available and responding to local needs.

In discussions, participants noted that although local perspectives are a central component of understanding the security context, local perspectives are not in and of themselves a substitute for thorough political, conflict sensitive analysis. Local participants are not neutral all-knowing entities in any context, but rather crucial stakeholders in conflict sensitive planning of programs for the participants.

Early Warning specific

Participants shared several valuable lessons on Early warning specifically. First of all, many participants agreed that there is still a **tendency to focus primarily on tackling root causes of conflict**. Several participants concluded that this was noticeable when they tried to link their own activities to existing Early Warning indicators. In the case of Burkina Faso, attention is lacking for countering current, direct, and newly emerging threats to the security of populations. The speed with which violent extremist groups have been able to spread their presence and influence in Burkina Faso is seen as a case in point.

Furthermore, participants from the region stressed the point that Early Warning is not only important for preventing the start of conflict, but also for **prevention of escalation of already existing conflict**, including preventing not-yet-violent conflict turning violent.

"Early warning is nothing without early response" one of the participants stated, and systematic Early Warning as done through ECOWARN and NEWS is designed to inform decisions on early response. The use of Early warning indicators helps to spot trends and developments in local settings and as such they are useful for the formulation of integrated, fact based and local-specific recommendations.

Military participants argued that combining civilian and military behavioural research can help to formulate behavioural indicators. Other participants noticed that it can be difficult in practice to identify the nature of incidents using the existing EW indicators.

At the same time, some participants pointed out that there can be tension between early warning as a method of informing decision making and conflict sensitive analysis as formulated by many non-regional actors. In addition, regional participants noted that in general, **non-regional actors** working on early response tend to arrive **well-funded but act slow**, while **local actors** tend to be **underfunded but acting at a higher pace**.

Consolidating Data

Several of the participants actively collect, store, or share Early Warning Data in Burkina Faso. They noted that the wide application of data is complicated by tendencies to classify, bureaucratise or monetise data. **Limitations on sharing data** because of classification is most commonly seen – but not exclusively – by military actors who tend to overclassify to the point that they sometimes even classify data they have obtained from other, non-classified sources. Bureaucratisation is an obstacle more commonly seen in large organisations, while monetisation of early warning data is mostly encountered with commercial or specialised organisations.

Coordination

Participants spoke to their experiences with a **(lack of) good coordination**. One went as far as to state that in Burkina Faso there is no lack of means but a lack of good coordination. Specific point of concern for participants was the lack of balance between on the one hand counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism and on the other hand general conflict prevention, with a tendency by non-local actors to overemphasise the importance of counter terrorism. One participant argued that coordination also means better sequencing of priorities – notably, it was argued, that providing security in many local contexts must precede strengthening rule of Law. Better coordination can prevent confusion but also overambition according to some participants.



Accountability

The distinction between pollical objectives and security objectives is often hard to make in a deteriorating context like Burkina Faso and with that, participants shared concern about accountability of local, but also non-local entities. A concern addressed by several participants was the **lack of accountability for military abuse**. Several training initiatives are deployed but training alone is not enough to address grievances of local populations.

The Dutch

Participants from the West African Region shared some of their views on the Dutch entities they encounter in the field. They know the **Dutch** to be strongly focussed on **supporting CSOs and on empowerment of local civilians**. In addition, they had noticed that Dutch – like many non-local entities, can be **overly careful in their approach**.

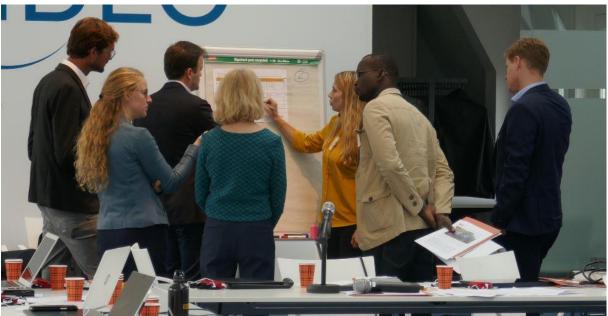


Photo (PAX): Break-out group

Capabilities and Limitations

Or: Capabilities and practical limitations that stakeholders identified as having an impact on their choices for (continuation of) activities and programs in Burkina Faso

In general terms, participants acknowledged the need to **manage expectations** and be clear about limitations to resources. In some cases it was argued, organisations should be more open to the conclusion that others are better positioned to do a certain job in Burkina Faso. Coordination among civil society organisations was mentioned as a measure to enhance effectiveness with limited resources. In that sense too, the notion not to reinvent the wheel but rather add to existing initiatives was mentioned several times.

Specifically related to early warning, participants confirmed the notion that there is a lack of flexible funding that can be made available at short notice. Too much funding is earmarked for long term goals addressing root causes. In addition, there is a need for more capacity for documenting, mapping and analysing incidents.

Specific to the Burkina Faso context, **lack of funding for humanitarian assistance** was mentioned as a grave concern. By estimation, only 30% of actual humanitarian needs are currently financed. The near future strain of resources in the East, as a consequence of the arrival of large numbers of IDPs and refugees is predictable, but as of yet not prepared for.

Adequate funding for police was mentioned as a priority. Currently police lack material necessities leading to closure of police stations and police officers leaving their jobs. Similarly border security is underfunded.

Government has been struggling to keep up with the fast rate of deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso as a whole and with balancing the competing demands of tackling root causes of conflict while responding to early warning. In relation to the mentioned insecurities stemming from a lack of trust, some participants argued that **customary leaders** may play a larger role in reconciliation efforts, especially in tackling specific concerns of pastoralists.

Gaps Analysis and recommendations

On the 2nd day, the group took a step back from discussing current and planned activities and turned its focus to identifying conflict prevention needs that are not addressed in Burkina Faso and formulating corresponding recommendations.

- Involve the private sector. Mining companies in particular, as these are often part of the problem but can be part of the solution.
- Work on youth employment in rural areas, to provide alternatives, to joining armed groups.
- Review current strict divisions between investments in security and development, to facilitate more integrated early response.
- Review effects of own behaviour in training sessions, so that it is ensured that 'we
 practice what we preach'. And, stimulate partner countries such as France and US to
 do the same.
- Invest in coordination of and training of local security providers, using specifically local trainers to make sure local perspective is part of curriculum.
- Enhance critical self-reflection. Be critical of what we can do, whether we have the right resources, and consider others that may be more effective.
- A "Good Donorship Initiative" with regard to EWEA in BF, to facilitate informed discussion about knowledge, know-how, resources. The Dutch government could play a leading role in this. What 'good donorship' means in a particular case needs to be decided by the participants/stakeholders in that case.
- The Netherlands government has a long tradition in supporting CSOs, focusing on empowerment, in the region and in Burkina Faso before they left. Would be good to work from that particular strength and expertise again.
- Future programming should allow more than now for taking risks and allowing partial failure, as a method of learning by doing.

Visualisation of data

On the 2nd day, participating organisation Elva Community Engagement presented a first version of a visualisation of ECOWARN incident data. The group then discussed and recommended particular features of the visualisation. As part of this Pilot Project, Elva will further develop this tool to be made public via the PAX and Elva websites.





Photo (PAX): Elva Presentation of visualisation of EW data

Next steps

The group briefly discussed the planning of next steps of the pilot.

In October there was be a special workshop during the Common Effort Conference in Berlin. In this meeting we will discussed the outcomes of the two meetings with a group of primarily Dutch and German participants.

In November we originally planned a validation event in Burkina Faso, with a small group of participants from Europe, to present and discuss our findings and ideas with local stakeholders. After the 2nd meeting, we took a step back and with the Ministry of Foreign affairs assessed what the next step should be for this Pilot. After several rounds of proposals and consultations, the Ministry has asked us to wrap the project up and not organise a third meeting as originally planned in Burkina Faso.

While we regret the early end of the Pilot, we do understand the reasoning of the Ministry – that the purpose of bringing together a mixed group of experts and practitioners was sufficiently served by the first two meetings and that the context in Burkina Faso currently does not logically warrant a third meeting in Burkina Faso. We nevertheless encourage all stakeholders to use the best practices and lessons learned presented in this report as a basis for future Early Warning and Early Response activities in Burkina Faso.

We will focus our efforts now on writing two final reports. One will reflect on the topics discussed in the two meetings. The other will reflect on the process. Since this is a Pilot project, we would like to point out that all feedback -before or after publishing the two final reports- is more than welcome. Both reports will be made available to participants of the two meetings and are scheduled to be released around 31 January.

Feedback and evaluation

In the final session on day 2, we used Menti questions and open conversation to capture feedback from participants on the meeting itself. The results can be found in **Annex 4.**

In general, participants appreciated the two day meeting. When asked how people felt in one word, the answers given most were: Good, Fine, Challenged and Confused.

When asked what people liked most, mentioned were the break-out sessions. Participants highly appreciated the open atmosphere and specifically noted the contributions by Burkinabe and regional participants and the diversity and comprehensiveness of the group.

Asked what people had missed, answers showed that in general people felt that a more structured approach and more focus would have improved the meeting. In addition, several participants would have appreciated the participation of more local or regional participants.

Asked to formulate key take-aways, participants gave very diverse answers, many of which fit in three broad clusters: The urgency of the problems in Burkina Faso; the need to not reinvent the wheel but rather support or scale-up existing initiatives; The need for more sharing of information, analysis as well as initiative.

C OWN ASSESSMENT AND APPRECIATION

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Assessment of objectives

Objective 1: In the given timeframe, select a group of 15-20 participants for the pilot. With 26 participants (not counting PAX, IDLO staff and translators), the meeting was somewhat bigger than originally planned.

Objective 2: Compose a comprehensive group including representatives of governmental, military and non-governmental organisations

The group of participants for Meeting 2 consisted of eleven representatives of NGO's, seven governmental and diplomatic participants and eight military. Twenty-one participants were Dutch, two from other European countries and three from the West African region. We consider this a fair mix of participants for the purposes of Meeting 2.

Objective 3: Prioritise participants on the basis of their added value to the pilot and their commitment to the entire pilot project

Generally speaking, we were able to keep the lead in selection of participants. Selection of NGO participants was entirely in our control. Selection of governmental and military participants was done through contacts with sufficient communication back and forth. Across the board, we believe the level of expertise of participants was sufficient for the purposes of Meeting 2.

The original idea to work with a relatively small group of primarily Dutch and German participants with one or two Burkinabe participants that form a core group for the duration of the pilot, was stretched during the selection phase, when we realised that (1) there were less Dutch and German organisations than expected with immediately relevant programming on EW working specifically in Burkina Faso and (2) there was more locally and regionally owned programming already in place upon which the pilot can build its analysis and intervention logic.



THE MEETING

Assessment of objectives

Objective 1: Establish group with joint understanding of ambitions and products Largely Achieved. This objective was achieved by presenting and discussing the programme logistics, objectives and the role of this meeting in the larger pilot planning. However, feedback from participants shows that for some more efforts to achieve joint formulation of ambitions and products would have been appreciated.

Objective 2: Share participant information on current and planned activities and programmes in Burkina Faso

Achieved. Participants presented their current and planned activities in Burkina Faso in detail on day 1.

Objective 3: Achieve collective mapping of considerations for effective programming in Burkina Faso

Partially achieved. Both in their individual presentations and in a group exercise, participants discussed their main consideration for starting, continuing or stopping particular activities. What the meeting did not achieve, is a systematised mapping of these considerations. This was done later by revisiting all the notes and teasing out the mentioned considerations, and clustering them in four clusters:

- Context specific considerations
- Principles and approaches
- Experiences and lessons learned
- Capabilities and limitations

Objective 4: Show first version of visualisation of EW data

Achieved. On day two, Participants of ELVA presented a first version of visualisation of ECOWARN incident data and discussed with the participants the wishes and recommendations for the definitive version, which will be finalised in October and November.

Objective 5: Share ideas for future activities and programming in Burkina Faso Partially achieved. In one break-out session and one plenary session, gaps in current programming in Brukina Faso and subsequent recommendations were discussed. But participants reported they had difficulty in formulating clear and practicable recommendations. Lack of clarity on the scope and limited participation of local institutions may have been complicating factors.

Objective 8: Assess progress and plan ahead

Achieved. We ended the meeting with an short session assessing the success of the meeting, using Menti and open debate to address strong and weak points, as well as potential steps ahead.

ANNEX 1: Participants Meeting 2

Participant	Affiliation
Abdoulaye Maiga	ECOWAS
Albert van Daalen	Dutch Ministry of Defence
Boris Some	WANEP
Ellen Regeling	Dutch Ministry of Defence
Frank Huisingh	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gwenda Nielen	Dutch Ministry of Defence
Hans Rouw	PAX
Hayo Raaphorst	Dutch Ministry of Defence
Hendrik Schwarze	1GNC
Ine Cottyn	Institute Clingendael
Jonne Catshoek	ELVA
Jos Hoenen	Dutch Ministry of Defence
Kars Gerrits	RVO
Koos Dijkstra	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Line Brylle	DRC / DDG
Maarten van den Bosch	1GNC
Mahamadou Badiel	SNV
Marco Landhorst	IDLO
Mariko Peters	EEAS
Mark van Embden	ELVA
Meinke Lignac	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Monique de Groot	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Peter Knoope	Human Security Collective
Sabine Luning	Africa Study Centre - Leiden University
Selma van Oostwaard	PAX
Violet Benneker	NIMD
Wiesje Elfferich	Dutch Embassy in Ouagadougou
Wilbert van der Zeijden	PAX



ANNEX 2: Program Meeting 2

DAY 1	
08:30	Coffee and welcome
09:00	Welcome and introductions
09:20	Ambitions and methods of work
09:40	Conflict Prevention in Burkina Faso: Dutch and European priorities
10:15	Break
10:45	Conflict Prevention in Burkina Faso: WANEP and ECOWAS
11.30	Tour de Table I - Participant presentations
12.30	Lunch
14:00	Tour de Table II - Participant presentations
14:45	Break
15:00	Group work on Considerations for Effective Programming
17:15	Wrap-up
18:15	Informal hosted dinner

DAY 2	
08:30	Coffee and welcome
09:00	Orientation Day 2
09:15	Presentations of the groups
10:15	Break
10:45	Group work on Future Early Warning programming in Burkina Faso
12:15	Visualising Early Warning in Burkina Faso
12:45	Lunch
13:45	Group presentations on Future Early Warning programming
15:15	Break
15:30	Reflections; Next steps
15:50	Wrap-up
16:00	Drinks



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ANNEX 3: Harvested Considerations for effective programming in Burkina Faso

Harve	Harvested considerations for effective programming in Burkina Faso	
Α	Context specific considerations	
	Connection between lack of security, food shortages and IDPs	
	Difficult to identify nature of EW incidents	
	Need to work in BF to avoid spill-over to coastal	
	Humanitarian funding currently only covers 30% of actual needs	
	Border areas are particularly fragile	
	The specific risks posed by small arms proliferation	
	Extension of radical armed groups	
	Near future strain on resources in East, because of increase in IDPs and refugees	
	Climate of distrust between communities and government	
	Tensions between local, customary forms of justice and modern, post-colonial	
	Marginalisation of pastoralists; lifestyle threatened	
	Marginalisation of Fulani	
	Land appropriation issues	
	BF conflict has regional character	
	Spill-over from BF to coastal countries must be stopped	
	Tensions between communities and security forces; distrust	
	Gap between governing elite and marginalised groups	
	Lack of real representation in political system	
	Armed groups act fast, well organised	

	Trust between security providers and communities lacking	
	Influx of displaced people in certain areas is perceived to undermine security in some communities	
В	Considerations from Principles / Approaches	
	Innovation	
	Regional approach	
	Regional goals must be contextualised per country / location	
	Cooperative	
	Conflict sensitivity applied to all phases	
	Comprehensive approach	
	Integrated Approach	
	Prioritise Social Cohesion	
	Inclusivity	
	Inclusive approach also means adapted to specific concerns of pastoralists	
	Start from community-led and -centered security approaches up	
	Start with local context	
	Local structures must be our starting point	
	From enemy-centric to people-centric	
	Merge Top-down and bottom-up	
	Human Security focus	
	Broadened understanding of security	
	The need to start community perspective before coming as an external actor	
	Don't re-invent - scale up	
	Comprehensive approach needed on local level, not only strategic	
	Evidence based approach to underline outsider initiatives	
	Don't generalise: important to understand each context specifically	
	Coordination and first response must be in hands of local authorities	
	Social contract must be redefined / strengthened	
	Mandate for foreign military must be explicit	
	Development-security nexus implies integrated financing	

С	Considerations informed by experience / lessons learned
	Don't re-invent, scale up
	Start with local context
	Balance Counterterrorism and Conflict Prevention
	Start with Security, then Rule of Law
	Local population must see a positive effect of your involvement
	More (mil/civ) behavioural research can lead to behavioural indicators
	EW is to prevent conflict but also to prevent spread of conflict.
	Visibility of foreign troops CAN help, but
	Abuse by military must be addressed, training is not enough
	Activities focus too much on root causes, therefore difficult to link to EW indicators
	EW without ER is nothing
	EW leads to broader formulated recommendations
	You must combine EW indicators to get picture and trends
	Overambitious
	Specific on Early Response: external actors turned to be well funded, willing, but slow. Internal actors tend to be underfunded but quick
	Conflict sensitivity and prevention can contradict
	Distinction between political and security objectives can be hard to identify
	Problem in BF is not a lack of means but a lack of coordination
	Tendency to put 'the local perspective' above political analysis, must be balanced
	Build on existing mechanisms and connect local to national
	Balance between importance of conflict sensitive analysis and ER
	Specific on consolidating data: Classification, bureaucratisation and monetisation of data prevents wide application of data
	Dutch can be too timid; calculating too much what effects may be
	Dutch have a long tradition in supporting CSOs - empowerment
D	Considerations relating to capabilities and limitations
	Limited resources, manage expectations; be honoust about limitations;
	Link to existing rather than start new
	Need for better coordination between civsoc



Be honoust about limitations and aware that others may be better positioned
Lack of flexible funding slows us down
Police lack materials to do job, leading to them leaving areas
Border security must be addressed
Lack of documentation, mapping and analysis
Civil society not involved enough in tackling specific concerns of pastoralists
Government fails to deal with fast rate of deterioration
King in Ouagadougou may be able to play constructive role
Customary leaders meet regularly and may play role in reconciliation
Regional character means there must be (more) coordination between countries



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ANNEX 4: Mentimeter Evaluation Results



