



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:  
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

## Pastoralism and Land Management in Niger - The Example of the PASEL Project

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### Abstract

Poor soils are a constant in the Sahel. Soil poverty is at the very core of the precariousness of pastoral resources and is exacerbated by the increasing frequency of cycles of drought. This is certainly one of the reasons why the FAO has declared 2015 the International year of soils. Together with an increasing population growth (eg Niger has one of the highest population growth rates in the world), poor soils induce an increasing pressure on rural land. This affects the potential conflictual relationship between livestock keepers and crop farmers and is a major concern for stakeholders at all levels, civil society organisations, development partners, etc. The phenomenon of land grabbing this already worrying situation and is depriving countries of essential factors of production and thus increasing food insecurity.

The management of sporadic conflicts between “users of the rural space” did not provide effective and definitive answers and conflicts have become increasingly violent. The need to establish a more comprehensive framework becomes more apparent.

In Niger the collaborative development of the “Land Development Scheme (LDS)” and its implementation has become mandatory after the adoption of the Rural Code texts. Despite inconsistencies (in particular in relation to the changing context with the new constitution and the General Code of Local Authorities in 2010), this provision is a valuable opportunity to harmonious and sustainable development and effective prevention of rural conflicts.

The PASEL project (funded by the Swiss Cooperation and implemented by a consortium VSF-B / SNV / CESAOPR-N) supports 3 regions (Dosso, Maradi and Tillabéri) in the development of LDS. The processes are still ongoing but important lessons can already be drawn from this innovative experience in Niger. As the LDS go together with the decentralisation and difficult transfer of power to local authorities, the action highlights such complex issues and challenges that sometimes cause tensions between the stakeholders involved and accompanying structures.

Accompanying regional actors has allowed to implement consensual roadmaps with success indicators but especially to identify the needs in terms of capacity development of the concerned stakeholders and in terms of empowerment throughout the LDS development.

**Keywords:** Decentralisation, devolution and transfer of skills, demography and pressure on rural land, land development scheme vocations of rural areas, land grabbing, land security, pastoralism, roadmap, rural issue, rural land