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The Effects of State Land Policies, Reforms and Practices on Pastoralist Customary Land Tenure in Kotido District.

The study was conducted in Kotido district from 2013 to 2014 to establish the effects of state land policies, reforms and practices introduced in Uganda particularly by the 1995 constitution and Land Act of 1995 on customary land tenure system of the pastoralists focusing on Kotido district. The study was mainly qualitative and involved 155 respondents. Much data was collected through 10 focus group discussions and 5 key informant interviews.

The study established that customary land tenure is predominant in Kotido. But while it is predominant, it is undermined by the state land reforms. It challenges the government of Uganda for creating a state of dilemma for people in Kotido – in one part the government recognises the customary system and on the other hand undermines it by creating other structures which overwrites the customary structures such as the '*akiriket*' or parliament of elders. This study challenges that the land reform was influenced by colonial position that aimed at abolishing customary tenure. This context is worsened by governments' negative position on pastoralism. It further warns of a costly mistake which the government shall have to address as a result of undermining customary tenure together with its associated pastoralism in Kotido. The study attempted to avoid the common mistakes of other studies in pastoral areas that were not based on deepening of the understanding of complexity in the pastoral system by ensuring the intricate relationship between customary tenure and pastoralism is consistently established throughout the study. It introduced a simple framework of approach based on four principles referred to as the *4D* approach.

Key Words: State Land Policies, Reforms, Pastoralist, Customary Land Tenure, Kotido District