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**Challenges and Options in
Governing Common Property**

Customary Institutions among (Agro-) Pastoralists
in Ethiopia

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The failure in formulating relevant rangeland policies calls for the need to understand traditional resource governance, mechanisms of defining and enforcing rights to resources and the role of social norms in collective decisions. Fekadu Beyene makes a critical assessment on the role of customary institutions in governing common property resources among (agro-) pastoral communities in Ethiopia. He undertakes the assessment by analyzing the processes through which collective action is organized in common property resource management, the causes (and outcomes) of property rights conflict on the commons with emphasis to the conflict management institutions, the reciprocal resource sharing arrangements between different clans and the motives and consequences of enclosure expansion. The analysis of these four interrelated issues requires a review of property rights, collective action and distributive bargaining theories and involves the use of Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework.

Challenges and Options in Governing Common Property examines the mechanisms and processes through which customary institutions and authorities establish and maintain rights to grazing resources in different conditions that would ultimately ensure income and food security. It exposes the multiple challenges to customary systems of resource governance that evolved through time. These challenges emanate from various social, economic and political forces in place. Using different cases from the actual field setting, the author underlines the limited role of social norms in enforcing collective rules in common property resource governance when market forces and population pressure create new economic incentives. Overall, the study points out an important role for the state in protecting group rights where power asymmetry and social identities restrain enforcement of informal agreements on rights to resources.