

Summary paper to

In what way can the government and community leaders in Kismayo work together for effective water governance?

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Context

Over the last two decades, Somalia has undergone major political and societal rollercoasters, including but not limited to civil war, terrorism, famine and drought. The Siad Barre totalitarian regime was overthrown in 1991 which caused chaos and uncertainty to ensue within the country for years to come. This led to a trend of regions within Somalia such as Jubaland, Puntland and so forth, declaring themselves autonomous states, further fragmenting the fragile political sphere. Instability and loss of state services bourgeoned underlying issues, and with no central government to address these issues, they grew worse. However, the last few years has seen a progression in political and economic stability in Somalia, with two successful and peaceful elections, the fledgling nation is slowly receiving its bearings. This paper focuses on the issue of water governance and the role and sphere of influence of the government, clan elders and religious leaders in the development of effective water systems in Kismayo. Kismayo was historically a small fishing settlement but grew to an urban hub that attracted pastoral herders, naturally increasing the amount of water point in the vicinity. However, due to the scarcity of water, activity quickly dwindled causing a local economic crisis. Around 77% of Kismayo's population do not have access to potable water (Kismayo District Survey, 2003) and with an increasing population; this number is expected to increase so there is an urgent need to govern water better and more effectively.

Aims

The objectives of this research are:

- To illustrate that water governance can be made more effective if the government works with local community leaders (clan elders and religious leaders)
- To look into the influence of the government, religious leaders and clan elders in the development of sustainable water governance programmes
- Uncover the causes of ineffective water governance and what the main actors can do to make it more efficient.

Findings

- This paper identifies the lack of a full and comprehensive community participation in the formulation of water governance policy due to the lack of capacity and resources of the local Kismayo government. By promoting community participation and involving the ultimate stakeholders in water governance, it will make the tackling the issue of water scarcity much more feasible and the people of Kismayo can work with the government to formulate an effective water governance system
- Clan elders and Religious leaders have been identified as adequate representations of the larger community; this is mainly due to the significance of these two figures in Somali culture as they invoke respect and loyalty.
- An effective water governance system for Kismayo will also aid in post-conflict transformation. Politically it will be important as it increase the legitimacy of the government within the community. Economically, it will mean that water will be used efficiently for livestock, agriculture and domestic use, thereby increasing economic and social development. Socially, it will mean better quality of life for Somalis.
- This paper points to land degradation as one of the main causes of water scarcity, pastoralism is a significant part of Somali culture and the effects of overgrazing has been pointedly ruthless on the environment and made drought and famine more prevalent.
- Finally, this paper proposes that effective water governance will aid in post conflict transformation, politically it will solidify the legitimacy of the government, economically it will mean that water will be used efficiently for agricultural, livestock and domestic use, socially, effective water governance will result in a significantly better quality of life for Somalis.

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