



## **Somaliland: Is African Development Bank's (AfDB) Drought Resilience Program Solution to the Recurrent Drought Issue?**

Somaliland is a drought prone country due to its geographical location. The geographic characteristics could be characterized as arid or semi-arid and the average precipitation is estimated between 200-250mm, but the evapotranspiration is over 2,000mm. The rainy seasons are *Gu* (April-June) and *Deyr* (September-October).

Currently, there is a severe drought plaguing the self-declared republic of Somaliland, in particular the eastern part of the country, ie, Sahil, Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer & pockets of Maroodijeeh regions.

Due to El Nino and the pattern of the climate change has resulted into two years of *below* average rain fails in Somaliland. Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) and its partner, Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations along with Somalia Water & Land Information Management (FAO/SWALIM) have predicted long ago, the fragile country will experience near or below normal *Deyr* rain fail. The prediction has pushed many pastoral and agro-pastoral communities into the category of needing urgent humanitarian assistance, especially water & grazing land.

Droughts have negative effects on Somali pastoral communities. Historically, severe droughts have occurred in Somalia since 1964, 1969, 1974, 1987, 1988, 2000, 20001, 2004, 2008, 2011 & 2016. The table below will shed some light on the severe droughts that has hit hard Somalia since 1910.

| <b>Table 11jk</b> |                 |                                       |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Year</b>       | <b>Events</b>   | <b>Somali Translation of Droughts</b> |
| 1910              | Floods in March |                                       |
| 1914              | Major drought   | (Jahweyn)                             |
| 1925              | Major drought   | (Duryanleh)                           |
| 1928              | Major drought   | (Baha)                                |
| 1933              | Major drought   | (Gubato)                              |
| 1938              | Drought         |                                       |
| 1950              | Drought         |                                       |
| 1951              | Major drought   | (Sigo casse)                          |
| 1964              | Major drought   | (Gaadhi Gaadhi saar)                  |
| 1969              | Major drought   | (Dibi Jaale?)                         |
| 1974              | Major drought   | (Dabadheer)                           |
| 1994              | Major drought   |                                       |
| 2011 & 2016       | Major Droughts  |                                       |

Source: A.M.Bihi, presented "Conference on Scientific Research Outlook in the Arab World and the New Millennium: Science & Technology", held at Sharjah University, April 24-26, 2000.

Recently, rain fall has been diminishing, causing devastating droughts to both humans and livestock. Pastoral communities' livelihoods are disrupted whenever there is drought. Migrating from place to place in the hope of securing water and green pasture/grazing land. Sometimes, the

migration causes resource based conflicts, such as, the recently reported Kalshaale & Eil-Afwey clashes.

Due to pastoral community needs and competition for water and pasture, occasionally access to water in Somaliland can be a source of conflicts. For example, in the Kalshaale area, it has been reported in the past that there was some bloodshed in early 2011 stemming from attempts by overstretched pastoralists in gaining access to water for livestock and human consumption. Recently, there is reports of conflict in the Eil-Afweyn area due to water accessibility. Unfortunately, both conflicts have resulted in the death of some pastoral community members. The scarce resource conflicts are not limited to Somaliland or the region. They are continental in nature.

At the recently, held Convention on Climate (COP) conference at Marrakech, Morocco delegates acknowledged the link between water scarcity inflicted by climate change and geopolitical conflicts resulting the disagreements over managing water scarcity in shared water points. Ministers of Water for Burkina Faso and Chad has shed some light on the issue of climate change and water scarcity. Chad's minister of water Sidlick Hagggar had warned Lake Chad was shrinking as a result of severe droughts threatening 30 million who depend on its water.

The table below is an excellent example of the diminishing rain fall since 1982 in Somaliland. Professor A. Behi who is an economic geologist and has spent many years working in Somalia as result presented a research paper at Sharjah University in early 2000. The table below has been extracted from his presentation paper.

| Station    | Lat.    | Long    | Elevation.<br>(m) | MA1<br>(mm) |
|------------|---------|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Zeila      | 11° 21' | 43° 29' | 1                 | 93          |
| Berbera    | 10° 26' | 45° 02' | 8                 | 57          |
| Las Anod   | 8° 28'  | 45° 02' | 8                 | 57          |
| Silil      | 10° 59' | 43° 27' | 70                | 93          |
| Buhoodle   | 8° 15'  | 46° 20' | 650               | 157         |
| Ainabo     | 8° 57'  | 46° 26' | 770               | 146         |
| Beer       | 9° 22'  | 45° 47' | 930               | 157         |
| Eel Afwein | 9° 55'  | 47° 13' | 1010              | 136         |
| Burao      | 9° 31'  | 45° 34' | 1040              | 186         |
| Odweine    | 9° 24'  | 45° 05' | 1050              | 206         |
| Bawn       | 10° 12' | 43° 05' | 1310              | 322         |
| Hargeisa   | 9° 31'  | 47° 06' | 1370              | 429         |
| Sheikh     | 9° 57'  | 45° 12' | 1430              | 552         |
| Borama     | 9° 56'  | 43° 11' | 1450              | 508         |
| Gabilay    | 9° 47'  | 43° 37' | 1450              | 432         |
| Tug Wajale | 9° 37'  | 43° 17' | 1550              | 551         |
| Erigavo    | 10° 57' | 47° 22' | 1740              | 314         |
| Daloo      | 10° 47' | 47° 17' | 2060              | 725         |

Source: A.M.Bihi, presented “Conference on Scientific Research Outlook in the Arab World and the New Millennium: Science & Technology”, held at Sharjah University, April 24-26, 2000.

There are different kinds of droughts. For example, *meteorological, hydrological, agricultural and socioeconomic* according to Wilhite and Glantz in their definition of droughts. Also, there are many definitions of droughts and the definition varies from region to region. In our case, we will utilize FAO Swalmim’s definition of drought, since the agency was established to gather data on water for Somalia. Below is the definition of drought according to SWALIM:

Drought is an extended period during which fresh water availability and accessibility in a given ecosystem at a given time and place is below normal, due to unfavorable spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall, temperature, soil moisture and wind characteristics. It is important to note that besides shortage of rainfall amounts, other natural factors too can contribute to the development of drought. These are:

- Uneven temporal distribution of rainfall with long, below-average periods
- High temperatures and prolonged, above-average hot periods
- Low soil moisture content and uneven temporal distribution of soil moisture
- High velocity wind with extended duration

In the Horn of Africa at present, it is only possible to monitor rainfall, air temperature and soil moisture. Wind data are not available in adequate lengths of observation periods. Unfortunately, due to the legal and sovereignty of the country, there are limitations in tapping into the International Community for drought mitigations/preparedness assistance. Somaliland is not member of the United Nations, African Union, Arab League and IGAD. This places the self-declared republic in very disadvantaged position in order to plan properly for the recurrent droughts. Somaliland has long way to go in managing natural disasters. It is necessary to adopt risk management into the discussions of drought mitigation. For example, at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey in May of 2016 several initiatives were agreed upon, such as, the adaptation of being proactive as supposed to being reactive.

Moreover, Care International who is an implementing agency for the AfDB Water Resilience Project has recently completed rapid drought assessment in Sanaag region covering the districts of Erigavo, Eil-Afweyn, Dhahar & Hiingalool locations. MoWR is the executing agency for the above mentioned water project. According to Care International the price of water sky rocketed and some locations rely on water trucking. Current price is nearly peaking \$6-10 per barrel (200 Litres) and some locations experiencing 400% price hike. The nearest water point is estimated to be 50 Kms compared to less than 2 kms on wet season.

According to OCHA & NERAD the recent needs assessment report in Oct-Nov. indicated there is more than one million (or 31% of the population) in Somaliland will be needing urgent humanitarian assistance until early next year 2017. Majority of the people who have been interviewed indicated water availability is a major challenge facing their families. Pastoral communities have migrated to long distance in search of water & pasture.

The President of Somaliland Honourable Mohamed A. Mohamoud (Siilaanyo) has declared drought and extended appeal for urgent humanitarian assistance. The president started touring the drought affected areas of eastern regions.

Furthermore; there is an interesting phenomenon cropping up in Somaliland whereby the private sector chips in when there is natural disaster. But the long term solution is to connect the business sector into the planning stages of risk-reduction, mitigation and preparedness. In other words, the business community such as, Dahabshil Group and Telesom should be part and parcel of the drought mitigation plans.

High emphasis should be placed on the capacity of the Central Government of Somaliland in spearheading the preparation and mitigation aspects of the droughts. There is plenty of research that supports early warning systems & good preparation will avert in communities ending up in crisis mode.

Finally, the **African Development Bank's** (AfDB) resilience program may alleviate the water scarcity of Somaliland in particular the *Hawd & Sool Plateau* regions. The project will address drought mitigation aspect and will assist the MoWR in reaching Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs). Recently, AfDB has committed to invest over \$10 million in Somaliland in support of the water development sector. Furthermore; AfDB will invest in Somaliland over \$25 million in total in the next three years. This is the first time AfDB has identified investment priorities & opportunities in Somaliland due to its stability, potentiality and economic growth.

## Recommendations

The Government of Somaliland has a dedicated agency named National Environmental & Disaster Relief Agency (NERAD), which is *very* weak in spearheading drought management programs. NERAD should be modernized, overhauled and empowered to deal with predicting natural disasters. There are several UN agencies that are on the ground and is in the business of early warning systems, food & water security and so on that assist various line ministries including NERAD. The UN agencies should build the capacity of the agency - NERAD. Likewise, The Central Government of Somaliland initiatives should include empowering NERAD.

United Nations Agencies that directly deal with the disaster preparedness, mitigation and planning should work closely with the Central Government of Somaliland including NERAD. Often UN agencies deal with LNGOs who are not capable of foreseeing the early warning systems. UN agencies support arrives little too late. UN agencies spend their time assessing the situation on the ground and raising funds for the particular drought. By then, assistance arrives little too late.

Business communities should be integrated and be at the forefront in planning stages for such natural disasters.

National Drought Committee should be year round business instead of *Ad hoc* basis. As a result, calling when there is severe drought. Theoretically, there is the National Drought Committee which is assigned in dealing with the natural disasters, but when there is no drought the committee go about taking care of other business. The committee is often disbanded.

*The article is intended for an upcoming research presentation that will be presented at the American University in Sharjah, UAE in late February, 2017.*

*Faisal Hashi, MBA, is an independent consultant who writes on issues about development, Water, Hygiene & Sanitation (WASH) and is the founder and managing director of Adam Financial Consulting Services and is currently based in Hargeisa, Somaliland. He has worked for National City Bank, Bank One, J.P, Morgan Chase & City of Toronto as financial analyst in the US & Canada.*

*Hargeisa, Somaliland*

*He can be reached at: Hashi44@hotmail.com*