

4 Quarters of Success in the Water Sector in the Fragile State of Somaliland



Water is a scarce resource in Somaliland affecting especially the urban & peri-urban areas, with population growth rate of 4.1% (urban – 2014). The rainy seasons are *Gu* (April-June) and *Deyr* (September-October). Somaliland could be characterised as arid or semi-arid and is a drought prone country, the average precipitation is 300mm, but the evapotranspiration is over 2,000mm. Recently, climate variations and El Nino effects have resulted in below average rainfall and the country is now experiencing severe drought.

In June 2013, the president of Somaliland, Honourable Ahmed M. Mahmoud (Siilaanyo), acknowledged the need to have a dedicated state entity responsible for water resources and the Ministry of Water Resources was separated from the former Ministry of Mining, Energy and Water Resources (M,E &WR). In terms of regulatory framework, the current government enacted the Somaliland National Water Act.

Since its inception, the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) roles and responsibilities have grown significantly. MoWR has increased the capacity of the water sector, become more focused, better structured and has built the capacity of the employees at the headquarters, regional & district levels. The mandate of the relatively infant ministry is setting water policy, planning, budgeting, regulatory framework, enforcement and providing oversight for PPP arrangements and public sector service delivery. Below are four quarters of success in the Somaliland water sector:

1st Quarter 2016

Early in the year, the MoWR has participated in the International Water Summit (IWS) that was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE on January 18-21, 2016. IWS brought together government leaders, policy makers, academics, entrepreneurs and technological companies to rise to the challenges faced by water scarce countries, including Somaliland. For the first time, in February, Ground Water Resource Assessment was completed in the town of Las Anod under the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF). The ground water is very brackish in Las Anod.

Last year, on March 22nd, 2016, MoWR celebrated and acknowledged the commemoration of World Water Day. The theme was ‘*Water and Jobs*’ where both commodities are scarce resources. Research indicates nearly 1.5 billion employees work at water related jobs, which translates into half of the world’s workers. It is unclear how much employees work at the water sector in Somaliland due to lack of data collection. In Somaliland, the private sector is the lead in terms of job creation as the public sector is relatively *weak* in absorbing fresh and young graduates.

2nd Quarter in 2016

The Master Plan for Borama City was completed in late April, by Terre Solidali, an Italian consulting firm that operates in Somaliland. Severe drought has plagued the western regions of the country in particular Awdal, Salal and Gebiley. In May of 2016, 15 young graduates were trained at the Ministry of Water Resources’ vocational institute. That marked the 4th batch of students who graduated from the vocational training institute. The idea behind the institute was to train technically competitive candidates and create employment for the youth. Unemployment is very high among the youth in Somaliland. In June, the African Development Bank (AfDB) Board of Directors approved the “***Water Infrastructure Development for Resilience in Somaliland***”. This is the first time, AfDB has offered financial support funding in the water sector in Somaliland.

3rd Quarter in 2016

From July 11th- 15th, 2016, MoWR presented a paper regarding the Public Water Utility versus the Public, Private & Partnership (PPP) model in fragile states for the first time at Loughborough University sponsored conference in Kumasi, Ghana. The paper compared and contrasted the benefits and challenges for each model. UNICEF has facilitated the sponsorship of the conference.

In early August, the Master Plan for Wajaale town, which is a cross border town, was completed under European Union (EU), and UNICEF co-funded it. Ironically, this is the first time the town of Wajaale will receive potable water. Residents receive their drinking water from unprotected sources. A Municipal water tank, which can hold 500cum & 18KM pipe line has been completed for the town of Wajaale. In addition, two boreholes have been drilled, pump tested and the water quality meets WHO as well as local standards.

In late August, Automatic Under Ground Monitoring Data Logger was applied to some of the major towns in Somaliland, such as, Berbera, Borama and Hargeisa, the capital city. The new technology will monitor the ground water depletion of the above mentioned towns, which is very critical to sustaining the water table.

In mid-September, the Master Plan for Erigavo town was completed under the EU & UNICEF managed water project “*Improving Urban Water Service Delivery in Somaliland*”. 230 meter deep water borehole has been drilled, pump tested and water quality is potable standards. MoWR has executed the 3 year long water project.

4th Quarter in 2016

In early October, the Master Plan for Berbera town, the main port of Somaliland was completed under the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF), which is a trust fund that has been established for the medium-long term development of the country including the water sector. Dubai Ports World has signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Somaliland to invest \$440 at the Port City of Berbera. MoWR and UNICEF the water sector lead in Somaliland have agreed to a new Country Program for the Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) for 2018-2023.

NIRAS, *the* consulting firm that has won the African Water Facility tender for Somaliland, was awarded the contract for “*Preparation of Water Resources Management & Investment Plan.*” NIRAS has conducted a fact finding mission in early December for the upcoming project. The construction of the new MoWR state of the art office complex is nearly complete.

Currently, there is a severe drought plaguing the fragile state and the President of Somaliland has appealed to the international community for assistance. The hardest hit regions are **Togdheer, Sahil, Sool & Sanaag** in the western part of the country. The drought is reported to have negative impact on the pastoral communities and their livelihood – livestock. Livestock is the lifeline of Somaliland economy, which accounts for more than 65% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Finally, in early December, Honourable **Hussien Abdi Boos** was appointed as the Minister of Water Resources for Somaliland. Mr. Boos is the 3rd Minister to hold office since the MoWR was established in mid-June, 2013. Welcome Mr. Minister.