



**How can we better manage water for food and public health in
a changing world**

Case of Somaliland

Water in Somaliland

“Every society has the right to water, sanitation and a safe and clean environment”

Somaliland is located in a semi-desert area where it has always rained very little, but water shortages have worsened in recent years.

Only 52 % of the population in Somaliland have access to a basic water supply Limited regulation of private water suppliers often leads to expensive prices, forcing families to fetch water from far and from unsafe open wells.



Water management and public health

- Water has a profound influence on human health. At a very basic level, a minimum amount of water is required for consumption on a daily basis for survival and therefore access to some form of water is essential for life. However, water has much broader influences on health and wellbeing and issues such as the quantity and quality of the water supplied are important in determining the health of individuals and whole communities. The first priority must be to provide access for the whole population to some form of improved water supply.

However, access may be restricted by low coverage, poor continuity, insufficient quantity, poor quality and excessive cost relative to the ability and willingness to pay. Thus, in terms of drinking-water, all these issues must be addressed if public health is to improve. Water quality aspects, whilst important, are not the sole determinant of health impacts. The quality of water does, however, have a great influence on public health; in particular the microbiological quality of water is important in preventing ill-health. Poor microbiological quality is likely to lead to outbreaks of infectious water-related diseases and may cause serious epidemics to occur.

Water management and food production

At 70%, agriculture uses the majority of the world's freshwater. It's needed to produce food, so the more people there are, the more water is needed. Biofuel crops also use a good share of water, so good management is critical. The World Bank lists agricultural food production and water management as a global issue. If trends continue, water scarcity is inevitable in many parts of the world. Water, is a primary element in the diet and a necessary resource for the agriculture, can be considered a basic need for humans. Since human population is continuously growing at a rate that, in the last century Somaliland is facing water demand is increasing.

Agriculture looks set to remain the biggest user of water into the middle of this century. While the shift to biofuels is generally welcomed, their production could demand as much water as fossil fuels. In terms of food, the volume of demand is growing with population expansion, and we are seeing a significant global move away from a mainly starch-based diet to an increasing demand for more water-intensive meat and dairy as incomes grow in many countries.

HOW TO MANAGE WATER IN SOMALILAND

Worldwide, human activities and natural forces are reducing available water resources. Although public awareness of the need for better control and protection of water has increased over the past decade, economic criteria and political considerations still tend to use water policy at all levels. Science and best practices are rarely given adequate review. Pressures on water resources are increasing particularly as a result of human activities – urbanization, population growth, increasing living standards, increased competition for water, and pollution. These are exacerbated by climate change and changes in natural conditions.

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- planning (Basin Action and Management Plans etc.)
 - Effective and Binding Decisions Can Be Taken Between Institutions
 - Developing Coordination National Water Policy
 - Basin Based Water Allocation
 - Water Law and Legislation Development
 - Determining the Quality of Water Bodies

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- Modeling Water Resources
- Developing Water Quality Standards and Criteria
- Developing Recipient Water Quality Standards

Presenter: Hodo Ahmed Abdilahi

Title: MS Civil Engineering Student (Hydrology)

Thanks for your listening