

SOMALIA

Statement made by Somali delegation Abdullahi Mohamed Issa of capacity development ,workshop for the Arab States on National Biodiversity Strategic and Action plans and the main steaming of diversity in Cairo, Egypt, from **14-18 December 2008**.

Dear Colleagues from Biodiversity Secretariat, UNEP, liaison Officers and Arabic league technically group,

Honourable delegates,

Excellence

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

It is an honor and great pressure for me to be with you today in the occasion of the **NBSAP** as capacity building workshop for Arab states.

On behalf of my country and my name, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the government of Egypt and to the Egyptian people for the warm welcome and the hospitality. I also like to thank biodiversity secretariat, **UNEP** liaison Officers and Arab league technically group who made Excellency arrangement and facilities for us.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Somalia Covers an area of **637,657 sq.km** and has the longest coastline in Africa (**3,025 km**) with over **10 million people**. The Country is hot, arid and semi-arid with a rainfall of between **50-150 mm** along the coast and up to **500 mm** in the northern highlands as well as Southern part of the country. There are two permanent rivers –the Jubba and Shabelle which are shared with Ethiopia . The remaining water courses (well), and for the relatively richer vegetation.

Environment in Somalia has been severely degraded due to unsustainable natural resources, wastes Climate change (Flood and Drought), Lack of good Governors and prolonged civil Conflict .Subsequently, the livelihood of most Somalis have been heavily impacted.

There are many environmental problems and challenges including Desertification, sandune movement Deforestation, Ecosystem Degradation, and Environmental pollution. These have resulted in water scarcity, Climatic Change, Habitat Change, Biodiversity losses and invasive Species, over exploitation of Oceans and Nutrients, Overloading.

Somalia possesses important biodiversity, and ecosystem services but these biodiversity and ecosystem have been degraded by the Human activities and natural disasters

- Somalis have always depended on natural resources for most of their production and incomes. This continues to be the case.
- Nomadic pastoralism and crop-based production of livestock have always been a key activity and the source of most domestic and export income. Along with agriculture in the south which has always been the main food producing area and had in the late eighties started to produce a substantial value of export products such as fruit and sesame. Since the start of the civil war, lobster, Fish and charcoal emerged as important source of local private income and export revenue.
- There are a number of priority environmental issues that need to be addressed urgently.
- This will arise repeatedly throughout the report as it examines the use of Somalia's natural resources for the generation of employment and income in the productive sectors.

- Massive degradation of natural resources resulting from deforestation, over grazing, inadequate soil conservation, over fishing and destruction of wild life habitat have resulted in a serious threat to biodiversity as well as livelihoods and future development.

Forests and Rangelands under Sustained Attacks

- About 60 percent of the whole country was covered by very sparse savannah woodlands and since then the percentage has no doubt declined significantly. Forests and woodlands have always been important as sources of household energy and construction materials. Frankincense from *Boswellia* species growing in the north-east, commiphora, which produces myrrh, in the south-west and the north-east, gem Arabic from *Acacia* spp, and *Cordeauxia edulis* (yicib) which produces yicib nuts.

Charcoal Production



- The once majestic acacias and other trees that graced the rangelands have almost disappeared due to the ravages of charcoal production over the 18 years. As result the Country witnessed a massive deforestation and outflow of charcoal for export.

The destruction of the rangeland for charcoal production has naturally led to conflict since acacia trees provide important dry season forage for all animals, and their roots fix nitrogen which enriches the soil close to the trees, but relations between charcoal producers and local communities are complex. In many cases producers are members of the community and in other cases outsiders have taken control of forest resources, production and sale of charcoal . Many conflicts have arisen and casualties recorded over this business because of competition over both

- wood resources and markets.
- The destruction of mangroves and coral reefs have been reported due to the Tsunami and over fishing, Overall the generative capacity of the mangrove ecosystems may have declined in recent decades-a result that will almost certainly affect the capacity of these areas to function as breeding and nursery sites for near and offshores fish, crustaceans and mollusks, and which would now provide less protection to the coastline.

- About 60 percent of the whole country was covered by very sparse savannah woodlands and since then the percentage has no doubt declined significantly, forests and woodlands have always been important as resources of household energy and construction materials. Frankincense from *Boswellia* species growing in Putland, *Commiphora*, which produces myrrh, in the south-west and north-east, gum Arabic from *Acacia* spp and *Cordeauxia edulis* (thought to be endangered) which produces yicib nuts in central regions, are also important revenue producing wood products.

- Over fishing is a serious issue. It is an issue offshore where unlicensed trawlers from many nations carry out the waters within the EEZ unmonitored taking substantial amount of fish. It is also concern when unlicensed trawlers come close to shore catching lobster and shark and destroying reefs.
- A number of the once abundant shark species have allegedly disappeared in some areas; while the average sizes of some other shark species landed have decreased over the five years.

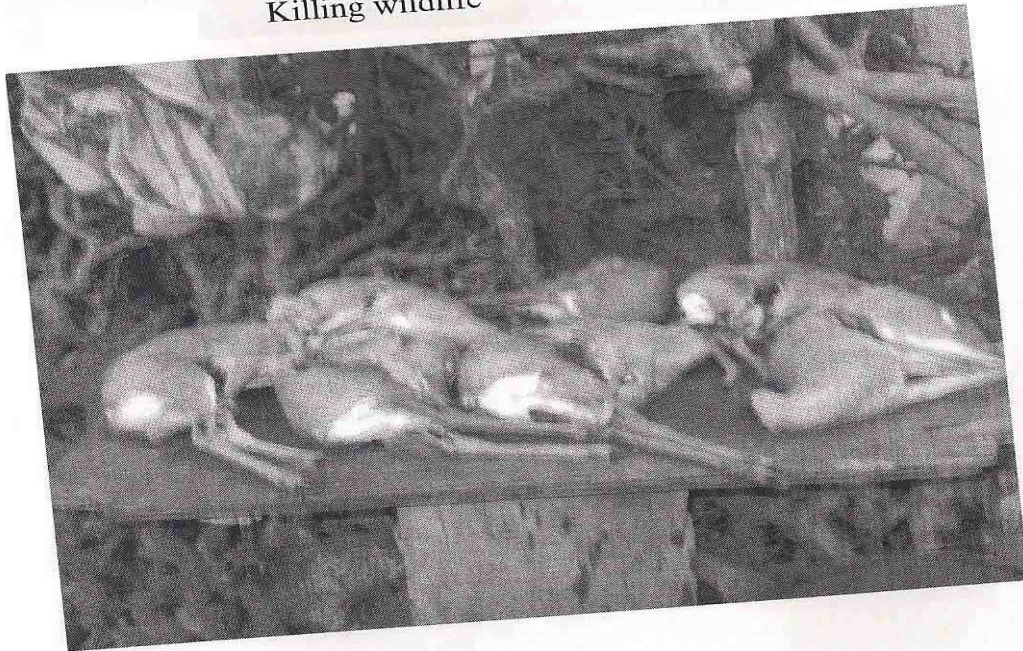
Biodiversity and Protected Areas

- Arid and semi-arid conditions have persisted in all Somali regions throughout the long-term climatic fluctuations that have affected much of the Africa continent. As a result, this region has been an evolutionary centre of fauna and flora adapted to these conditions. Early explorers, hunters and colonial officials traveling through Somali during the late 1800s reported on the astonishing abundance and diversity of wildlife. Ruthless over exploitation, however has meant that many of the country's.

Wildlife species are now endangered or rare, while key ecosystems have been seriously degraded.



Killing wildlife



Now only small remnant pockets of wildlife exist, with many species approaching extinction. Some. Such as the elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) lion (*Panthera Leo*) and Swayne's hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus swaynei*) have been wiped out from most of the country, while the

- wild ass (*Equus asinus somalicus*)- which once occurred here their thousands-have been reduced to just a few dozen (Sommerlatte and Umar, **2000**).
- Somalia has ratified the **CITES** Conventions on endangered species of wild fauna and flora, but few if any practical measures are being taken to ensure its implementation. Ten species of bird are threatened of which two are critically endangered. The country used to have one of the most extensive and least spoiled coastlines in Africa, but important coral reefs, seabird colonies and turtle nesting beaches are currently unprotected. At the end of the last century there were believed to be large dugong populations and extensive sea grass beds in near shore waters. Important seabird nesting sites include Mait Island, Zeila Island and the Bajun Island of Kismayu. Other less obvious species which are also endangered can expect to receive even less attention: two of the country's 223 reptile species and three of its 331 species of fish are known to be threatened.
- Despite its harsh physical environment, Somalia is home to some 3028 species of higher plants, of which 17 are known to be threatened (WRI,2003). Somalia is considered a centre of floral endemism and of the know species 700 (17 per cent) are endemic –a feature only surpassed by the South Africa floral region. At least 151 plants in Somalia have known medicinal values.

Recommendations

- Enforce the ban on charcoal exports (paragraph)
- Intensity reforestation pilot programs in different soils and climatic environments.
- Conduct a thorough field based state of the environment report to assess the status of the natural resources and to guide future resource management and development decisions.
- Investigate the alleged toxic waste sites on land, and dumping of toxic waste at sea.
- A broad-based Somali Environment Co-ordination Committee made up of the key stakeholders for a suitable environment should be established to support the Federal and region of Environment Disaster Management.

2. Institutional Strengthening

- Develop appropriate environmental policy and regulation to prevent and protect the natural resources.
- For effective and suitable environmental practices, the technical and managerial capacity of the ministry needs to be strengthened to enable it to achieve its mandate. This highly recommended restoring the activities of former National Range Management.
- Linkages between customary and district authorities need to be reinforced to create a stronger Natural resources management and regulatory system.
- Support to civil society organizations (**CSO**) networks will create a widespread awareness in environmental matters across the Country.

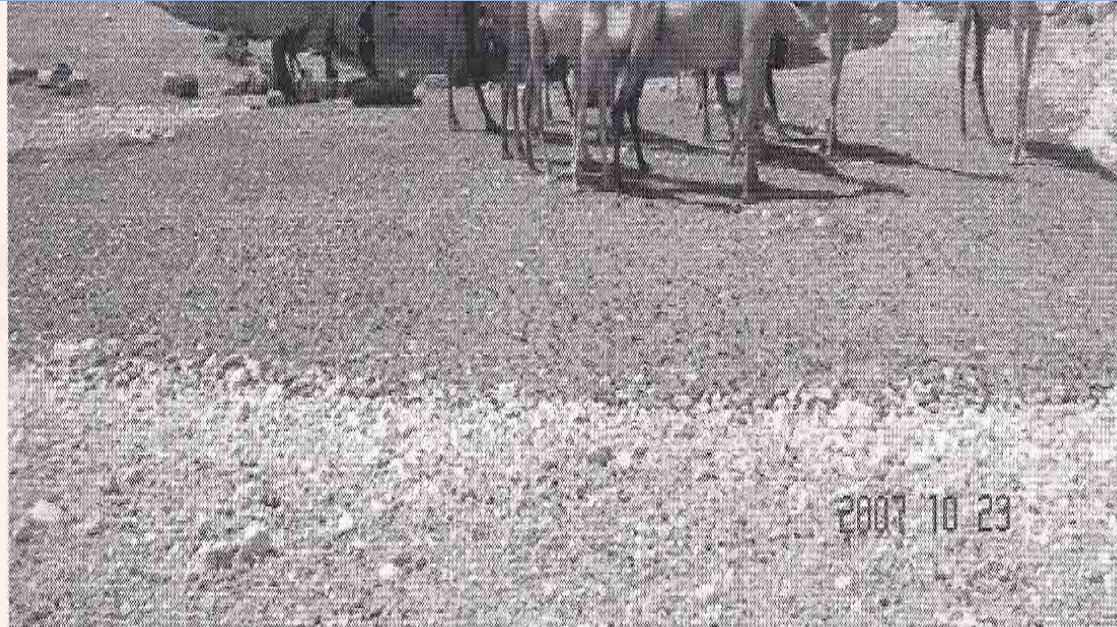
1. **Environmental Education and Awareness**

1. Establishment of District Environment (**DEC**), which could be empowered with the task of environmental planning.
2. Environmental awareness and education campaign at district and village levels and creation of linkages between village and district authorities
3. Environmental education in the school curricula to enhance their understanding and involvement in environmental conservation and management.
4. Restoration of former training centres of Buraan and Bocame Schools.
5. Radio and poster campaign programs aimed at local communities to improve their understanding and awareness of the environment.
6. Adopt and enforce a ban on domestic production and imports of non biodegradable plastic bags.

1. **Environmental Conservation and Management**

- Regenerative programs with the aim of reclaiming degraded lands in Somalia are a priority. The former government used grazing reserves to regulate dry season and wet season grazing. In this arrangement, pastoralists were allowed to make use of distant range resources after the rains while certain parts were reserved for grazing in the dry areas. This practice allowed regeneration of vegetation and resting of the land. The practice was abandoned after the collapse of the government.
- The village developed Committees should be assisted to start tree nurseries which should be distributed to barkad owners, to be planted in various sites within the village localities.

- Land degradation should be assessed and dealt with holistically and in a multidisciplinary way in order to establish links between the driving forces, causes and the state land degradation and its impact on the people and the environment.
- Availability of waters is the main determinant to optimal use of communal rangelands. The development of appropriate water points in consultation with communities will improve the use of range resources



Constructed shallow wells in Duhiyo and Xolob rivers



1.Support to Livelihoods

- Livestock production is the economic of the communities within the study areas. Programmes for the improvement of animal's health, production and marketing are crucial for post-crisis pastoral recovery and livelihood protection.

Improvement of local incomes and living standards –through sustainable alternatives and improvements of the existing practices of production. Providing training at the local level to cope with main constraints to livestock trade sector and exploring possible alternatives will contribute to enlarge opportunities for Development

Fishing is increasingly becoming a viable production system among the coastal communities. Support to the sector will enhance the available options for pastoralist drop-out and also create employment.

Women have been implicated in environmental degradation through financing of charcoal production. Income generating activities will assist women to have alternatives and discourage them from the practice.

1. Disaster Management and Training

1. The formation and strengthening of the National Disaster Management Committee (**NDMC**) comprising of government representatives, civil society organizations (**CSOs**) and Local International **NGOs** among other stake holders to coordinate and manage disasters will improve preparedness and help minimize vulnerability to future tragedies.

Thank you