SOMALI RURAL COMMUNITY WATER MANAGEMENT MANUAL

“When the herdsmen are in agreement, is when-the livestock can drink water” - Somali Proverb

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ........................................................................................................... 3

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 4
   1.1 Purpose of the Manual ....................................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Who the Manual Is For? ................................................................................................... 5
   1.3 How the Manual Was Developed ...................................................................................... 5
   1.4 Challenges and Limitations ............................................................................................ 8

2. KEY WATER SOURCES IN SOMALIA .................................................................................. 9
   2.1 The Shared and Unshared Water Sources ........................................................................ 11
   2.2 How Rural Communities Access Water Sources .......................................................... 11
   2.3 An Overview of Water Availability and Challenges in Somalia .................................... 12
   2.4 Water Governance Structures, Regulations, and Policies ............................................. 13

3. AN OVERVIEW OF WATER CONFLICTS IN SOMALIA .................................................. 14
   3.1 Primary Causes of Water Conflicts .................................................................................. 15
   3.2 Impacts of Water Conflicts ............................................................................................ 19

4. GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTION AND MEDIATION OF RURAL COMMUNITY’S WATER DISPUTES ................................................................. 21
   4.1 The Process of Resolving Water Disputes ....................................................................... 21
   4.2 Who Is in Charge of Resolving Water Disputes? ............................................................ 22
   4.3 The Characteristics that the Mediator Needs to Have ..................................................... 23
   4.5 Different Approaches for Different Water Disputes ...................................................... 24
   4.6 Prevention of Water Disputes .......................................................................................... 25
   4.7 Adoption of Conflict-Sensitive Water Planning and Interventions ............................. 27

5. GUIDANCE FOR ESTABLISHING RURAL COMMUNITY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES .......................................................... 28
   5.1 Objectives and Preferences of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee ...................................................................................................... 28
5.2 Structure, Scope of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee ......................................................................................................................... 29
5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee ........................................................................................................................................................................ 29
5.4 Process for Establishing Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee ................................................................................................................................................................. 30
5.5 Ensuring Participatory, Representation and Inclusiveness of the Process and Committee ........................................................................................................................................................................ 31
5.6 Setting Bylaws for Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee .................................................................................................................................................................. 32
5.7 Arrangement for Water Sources Outside of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee .................................................................................................................................................. 32

6. THE ROLE OF WATER AUTHORITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER RESOURCES ................................................................................................................................. 33
   6.1 Devolving Water Management to Community Level ........................................................................................................................................................................ 34
   6.2 Connecting Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees to the Existing Water Management Structures ................................................................................................................. 34

ANNEXES .................................................................................................................................................................................. 35
   Annex 1: Sample of Agreement - Establishment of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee .................................................................................................................. 36
   Annex 2: Sample of Bylaws - Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee ........................................................................................................................................ 42
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to start by sincerely thanking Bertha Foundation, which supports activists, storytellers, and lawyers who are working to bring about social and economic justice and human rights for all, for providing me with the resources to produce this crucial manual for the management of rural water resources and the reduction of conflict over water resources among communities in the rural areas of Somalia.

The time I spent writing this manual for the rural communities in Somalia was well spent. At the time, they were dealing with one of the worst climate-related crises in the last 40 years. As a result, water is becoming a scarcer resource, which has led to competition and conflict among the rural communities in Somalia.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who assisted me throughout the entire process of developing this manual. In particular, I would like to thank the traditional clan elders in the rural communities of Magacley (Puntland), Bitaale (Galmudug), Xudur (Southwest), Kismayo (Jubaland), and Far-libaax (Hirshabelle), with whom I worked on the development of this manual. They gave me their time and energy despite being in the midst of the worst drought catastrophe. Without their input and ideas, this manual would not have been possible.

I also want to thank the Somali water stakeholders, whose names I can't list here, for their input and the data and information they gave me about the water sector in Somalia while I was writing this manual. Without the support of the Bertha Challenge Team—specifically, Pearlie Joubert, director of Bertha Challenge, and Catie Harvey, manager of Bertha Challenge—I would not have been able to complete this manual. I am also thankful to my Bertha Challenge 2022 fellows: Mustafah Adbulaziz from Germany, Shinji Yoshimoto from Brazil, Fumba Chama from Zambia, Tommy Greene from Northern Ireland, Maria May from Guam, Luisa Izuzquita from Belgium, Pascalinah Kabo from Lesotho, Fredrick Mugira from Uganda, Musuk Nolte from Peru, and Jelena Prtoric from Croatia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

More than 60 percent of the population in Somalia are nomadic pastoralists who typically breed cattle, camels, goats, and sheep. A small portion of the Somali community raises livestock in addition to farming, while others rely solely on agricultural crops for a living. For many years, Somalia has been ravaged by civil strife, insecurity, and instability, and the country is still recovering from the consequences of these prolonged full-scale and low-intensity warfare and challenges. In addition to this, Somalia is one of the most climate-affected countries in the Horn of Africa. People in rural areas have been severely impacted by long-term droughts, as well as by floods, cyclones, and other natural and man-made disasters that are caused by the climate crisis.

Somalia is a water-scarce country with approximately 411 cubic meters of renewable freshwater per capita as of 2017, according to a World Bank report from 2020. This is a staggering decline over time from 2,087 cubic meters in 1962 (ibid.). The current amount of freshwater is far below the UN's recommended threshold of 1000 cubic meters per capita per year per person. Somalia is currently facing the worst water scarcity in many decades as a result of successive droughts. Some 70% of the rural population has limited access to safe drinking water, according to the Save the Children report from February 2021. The persistent reduction of fresh water and repeated droughts, mainly attributed to climate crisis, have resulted in fierce competition for water resources that has caused fighting in rural communities, which often results in casualties and damage and sometimes transforms into a broader conflict when exploited by political groups, further endangering the fragile security situation of the country.

With a one-year fellowship from the Bertha Foundation in 2022, I worked with Somali rural communities, particularly clan elders and Somalia water stakeholders, to develop this handbook as a guideline for rural communities to use for equitable rural water resource management and conflict reduction.

1.1 Purpose of the Manual

The main purpose of this manual is to be a guideline or reference for Somali rural communities to use in establishing their own water management structures to ensure equitable access to water resources, mediating water-based conflicts, and

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addressing water scarcity in the face of a climate crisis and repeated droughts. The specific purposes of this manual are as follows:

a. To build Somali rural communities’ understanding of how to manage and use water resources in a fair and sustainable way;
b. To guide the process of prevention and mediation of rural communities' water disputes;
c. To guide the process of establishing a rural community’s water management structures;
d. To promote the collaboration of rural communities on addressing water scarcity challenges and climate threats;
e. To contribute to better decisions on the development of rural water-related policies and governance structures by offering practical solutions, tools and referenceable community-based consensus.

1.2 Who the Manual Is For?

This manual is intended primarily for the Somali rural community who breed livestock in rural areas, as well as stakeholders working in the rural water sector. This manual is primarily intended to help the following groups:

a. **Rural traditional elders:** This manual should be used by the traditional elders and leaders of Somali rural communities for establishing water management structures to share water resources peacefully and in the best interests of their communities and for resolving water-based conflicts.
b. **Peacebuilding groups:** The peacebuilding groups and stakeholders can use this manual for resolving water-related conflicts or strengthening peaceful coexistence and harmony among the rural communities.
c. **Water stakeholders:** The water stakeholders can use this manual when dealing with water-related programs in rural communities.

1.3 How the Manual Was Developed

The methodology used to develop this manual includes desk research and stakeholder consultations to find the most appropriate solutions for water related conflicts in rural communities. The following three activities were carried out:

a) **Consultation with rural clan elders**

Consultation and mediation meetings were conducted with the rural communities, engaging different groups of the community, such as the traditional clan elders who are the primary decision-makers in the rural communities, and also women and minority groups. A total of five consultation meetings were held throughout
Somalia, one in each of the five Somali states (Puntland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Southwest, and Jubaland), below is the list of where and when each consultative meeting was held:

- Puntland  April 12, 2022
- Galmudug  May 18, 2022
- Southwest  June 11, 2022
- Hirshabelle  August 20, 2022
- Jubaland  September 30, 2022

A total of 150 persons from the rural clan elders, women, and minority groups participated in these five consultation meetings held for the rural communities in Magacle and Jariiban (Puntland), Bitaale (Galmudug), Xudur (Southwest), Kismayo (Jubaland), and Farelibaax (Hirshabelle). Even though the goal of these meetings was consultation, they also had mediation sessions to help solve long-standing water-related conflicts between rural tribal communities so that they could find consensus-based ways to share and manage water resources. The most notable mediation sessions included the followings:

   a. Mediation of a water-conflict between Bahrarsame and Omar Mohamud clans, who have been fighting over the construction of a water reservoir in Hawd’s Gumburka Agaare area from 2006 to 2018, killing 111 people. This ended with mutual agreement being reached by the two clans and the establishment of a water management committee among them to manage and solve water-related issues between the two clans. There is a short video clip that shows the mediation process and how the two clans reached a compromise³.

   b. Mediation of a decade-long water dispute between Reer Nimcaale and Reer Jalaf sub-clans of the Habargidir clan in the rural areas of Bitaale village. The dispute included disagreement and a lack of procedure for water donations to the most vulnerable families from these two sub-clans who are unable to buy water. This ended with both sub-clans agreeing on a set of principles to reduce their water conflict, including a procedure for the distribution of donated water among them. There is a short video clip that highlights the mediation process and how the two clans reached an agreement⁴.

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Zw-N7_Y7jo
⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlJSfHfHBM
The practical solutions, ideas, and inputs that came out of the above-mentioned consultation and mediation meetings and those held in other parts of the country are articulated thoroughly in this manual.

b) Consultation with water stakeholders in Somalia

In the same way that rural communities were engaged, a consultation meeting was held for water stakeholders in Somalia, and the meeting, held virtually, was attended by 29 people representing public water authorities, international, local, and UN organizations working in the Somali water sector, as well as research and academic institutions with a stake in water. The stakeholders were included The Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit - Somalia (FSNAU), Somalia Water and Land Information Management Project (SWALIM), Somalia Water Cluster, Somali Center for Climate Change, Information Management Center Puntland (IMC), Somalia Earth Volunteers, Somalia Agriculture Technical Group (SATG), ASAL, Deegaan Relief & Development Organization (DRDO), ADESO, Biyoole Project Team, HADO, Talo-wadaag, Water Authorities of Puntland, Galmudug, Jubaand, Hirshabelle and Southwest, Puntland State University, University of Bosaso, Kismayo University, Green Hope University, Biciid Magazine, journalists from Radio Ergo, VOA, Radio Garowe, Daljir, Universal TV among others.

In this consultative meeting, stakeholders added their inputs and recommendations to the manual. These inputs were mainly related to rural communities’ water management as well as the most effective approaches to curbing water-related conflicts in Somalia. The recommendations included devolving the governance and influence of the national water authorities to the community level and building water governance structures that are connected from the bottom up to the national level. The issue of conflict-sensitive planning and intervention in water-related projects was also another important issue raised by the stakeholders as one of the essential measures for preventing water conflict. The water stakeholders further recommended that the structure and contents of the manual be concise, simple, and understandable so that they can be easily adopted and practiced by the target groups. The most practical proposals and inputs that stakeholders brought up during the meeting were consolidated in this manual.

c) Desk review studies

Despite the fact that there are limited citable publications and studies about rural water management in Somalia, there are a few valuable references that contributed in some way with the preparation of this manual. Here are some of the most mentionable references:
1.4 Challenges and Limitations

It is important to highlight that there are some challenges and limitations, either specific to this manual or experienced during the preparation process. Here are some key challenges and limitations:

a. This manual can only be used by rural communities; agro-pastoral communities are not included. The agro-pastoral communities' water management and related challenges are well suited under the jurisdiction of urban water management systems.

b. It was challenging to gather rural communities for a single consultative meeting since they had left their habitual areas in search of pasture and water as a result of the worst drought in decades following the failure of...
three consecutive rainy seasons. As a result, the scope of the consultation sessions held for rural communities in relation with the preparation of this manual was not very broad.

c. It was difficult to settle some water-related conflicts that were caused by territorial disputes or interference from outside parties. For instance, Al-Shabaab uses these conflicts to divide and rule the rural communities in the areas under their control. Therefore, they won’t oppose their rule or lunch a coordinated attack on them.

d. It was difficult to visit and have consultation meetings with rural communities in all regions of Somalia due to the political and security difficulties the country faces. For instance, it is extremely risky and difficult to carry out such activities in the areas under the authority of Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group that governs a large part of Somalia.

e. The limited use of COVID-19 personal protective equipment by the rural attendees at consultative sessions has raised concerns about health and safety, despite the fact that they have the wrong attitudes and perceptions of using COVID-19 safety materials.

2. KEY WATER SOURCES IN SOMALIA

Most of Somalia’s population relies on groundwater for family use, livestock, and the irrigation of small farms. The communities living along the banks of the Juba and Shabelle rivers, are not so reliant on groundwater.

The water sources in Somalia that people and animals in rural and urban areas depend on are the following:

- **Rig wells/boreholes:** These are modern wells or boreholes that have been drilled with a rig or rely on motors or pumps that draw water. Water is usually stored in storage tanks. Most of these wells, which are built in towns and villages, are the most strategic water sources in Somalia, as the majority have water throughout the year and provide water when other sources dry out. The number of rig wells / boreholes throughout Somalia is estimated to be around 3,099, and the depth of most wells is in the range of 90 m to 250 m, although some locations can go to more than 400 m, according to the SWALIM Water Sources Live Map\(^\text{19}\). These water sources

\(^{19}\) [https://swims.faooswalim.org/dashboard/view](https://swims.faooswalim.org/dashboard/view)
are usually located in urban or semi-urban areas and managed by governmental water bodies or district authorities like those in Puntland and Somalia, and while these water sources are intended mostly for public use, rural people are charged depending on their usage. Rural people are charged high prices during the drought or dry season or find it difficult to access some of these sources, which are managed by individuals mainly in the south-central parts of Somalia.

b. **Hand dug wells and wind pumps:** These are wells that are dug deep into the ground, hand pump/wind pump is used to pump the water out. Most of these wells are very old and have been in use for centuries, while pumped or wind-driven water wells have been implemented in recent times, and the majority of them produce little water, producing between 2.5 and 10 m3/hr according to the SWALIM Report\(^{20}\). These water sources are mainly public, and everybody can drink from it freely, but in some cases, they are claimed by the clan groups that own the land where these wells are located.

c. **Dugouts and streams:** These are water that settle in hollow places. Rural people and their animals draw water from these places. There are also many streams in Somalia that rural communities heavily depend on during dry seasons. There are an estimated 555 sources spread across Somalia.

d. **Ponds, water catchments, and dams:** Ponds and water catchments are crucial water sources that are used by rural communities in many parts of Somalia. These include natural and man-made water catchments that hold water for a few months. While the dams are water catchments that hold water for a long time, these dams have been recently implemented in many parts of Somalia, including Puntland and Somaliland. The current water dams in Somalia are estimated to number around 634, according to the SWALIM Water Sources Live Map.

e. **Water holes:** These are shallow water sources that people use their hands or other objects to draw water from. These water holes are not privately owned, so people get water freely. However, they produce limited amounts of water and run out or dry up quickly after the rainy season.

f. **Water reservoirs (Berkads) and plastic water tanks:** A Berkad is a traditional underground water basin that collects surface water during the rainy season, whereas plastic water tanks are portable water storage that can be used to store water during both the rainy season and droughts. The

\(^{20}\) [http://www.faoswalim.org/water/water-resources/ground-water](http://www.faoswalim.org/water/water-resources/ground-water)
Berkads are estimated to be around 446 throughout Somalia, according to the SWALIM Water Sources Live Map. These water sources are normally privately owned by individuals or groups.

g. **Jubba and Shabelle:** The Juba and Shabelle rivers are the only perennial streams in Somalia. They originate in Ethiopia, where over 90 percent of the stream flow is generated. The two river basins cover an area of 174,600 km² within Somalia and mainly concentrate in the country’s southern regions. The majority of farmers and rural communities in southern Somalia heavily depend on the water of these two rivers, and the total current water demands amount to about 52.2 MCM annually, according to the SWALIM Water Demand Assessment February 2013.¹

### 2.1 The Shared and Unshared Water Sources

These are mostly natural and manmade water sources that mostly rural communities receive water freely. These sources are mostly shared by the rural people without caretaker-ship of any particular entity or group.

- a. Hand dug wells;
- b. Streams;
- c. Ponds, water catchments, dams and reservoirs;
- d. Water holes;
- e. Jubba and Shabelle Rivers

The non-shared water sources are either private or public but managed or controlled by public entities or individuals, and rural people are usually charged for drinking from these sources:

- a. Rig wells/boreholes;
- b. Hand dug wells with wind turbines;
- c. Damns;
- d. Water reservoirs (Berkads) and plastic water tanks.

### 2.2 How Rural Communities Access Water Sources

Piped water may be available in cities, but most people in the rural areas in Somalia rely on water delivered by vendors on trucks or donkey carts, these are the ways that people in rural areas get water:

- a. Rural people travel long distances to draw water from a remote water source. If the sources are surface water, it is easy to draw water from them,

¹ [http://www.faoswalim.org/resources/site_files/W%20Water%20Demand%20Assessment_0.pdf](http://www.faoswalim.org/resources/site_files/W%20Water%20Demand%20Assessment_0.pdf)
but sometimes these are ground water sources, so they need to use certain objects to draw water from them.

b. Using pack animals like camels and donkeys, or sometimes people carry water on their backs or heads from their nearest place.

c. Rural people also receive water from water tank trucks that transport water from other places. Water tank trucks charge some amount of money for every barrel of water.

In rural areas, animals can receive water in these two ways:

a. Leading animals or herds to the water sources (surface water and ground water) in order to drink from them. Surface water sources are free, while ground water sources are mostly charged some amount of money.

b. Using water tank trucks to draw from wells and then supply the animals in their home. This case mostly happens when the water source is far away from the animals or when the animals are too weak to reach the water sources because of the impacts of the drought. This way is too costly for rural communities. For example, as of April 2022, a 200-liter barrel of water costs more than 7 USD for rural people in Jariiban district in the Mudug region of Puntland, Somalia.22

2.3 An Overview of Water Availability and Challenges in Somalia

Somalia is an arid and semi-arid country with little water; the World Bank estimates that each person in Somalia received 411 m3 of water in 2020. This shows a dramatic decrease in water since 1962, when it was estimated at 2 087 m3, and this is far below the water standard set by the United Nations of 1 000 m3 of water per person.

Following consecutive seasons of failed rainfall across the country, Somalia has been experiencing one of the most severe drought conditions in recent years. The current severe drought in Somalia affects more than 6.7 million people, while an estimated 6.4 million people are facing acute water shortages, according to the last Somalia Humanitarian Situation Report from October 202223. The looming climate crisis and successive droughts in the country have made access to water more scarce, and during droughts, water becomes even scarcer and more

23 https://www.unicef.org/somalia/media/3246/file/SitRep%20October%202022.pdf
expensive for rural people. In areas worst hit by drought, the cost of water has increased by up to 400 per cent according to UNICEF Report 2022\textsuperscript{24}.

Since less rain means less water on the surface and less water in groundwater aquifers, which are both important water sources for communities, boreholes and rig wells are the only strategic water sources in Somalia that have water all year and can provide water when other sources dry up.

Water wells are a matter of great value to the rural people who, during the democratic civilian government (1960–1969), gave their vote to whoever dug a well or promised to do so. It is obvious that digging a well for the community was a big election issue in Somalia and still remains same.

2.4 Water Governance Structures, Regulations, and Policies

There are water authorities that exist at the federal, regional, and district levels in some areas, including the big cities. The coverage of these water authorities is mostly limited to urban water management in general, and they don't have a role in resolving water conflicts between rural people.

a) Federal level
- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Federal Government
- Water Resources Act 2018
- National Strategy of Water 2021 – 2025

According to Article 8 of the Somalia Water Act, a National Committee for Water Resources has been created, which consists of all Ministers of Water Resources of the regional governments, the Mayor of Mogadishu, and the Federal Minister for Water Resources. The Act indicates that they will monitor the activities and plans of the agency and provide recommendations on the Water Resources Policy at the national level.

Apart from the federal or national level, there are water bodies at regional and sub-regional levels. These include:

b) Regional government level

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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Act / Policy / Manual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somaliland: Ministry of Water Development</td>
<td>→ Somaliland Water Act No. 49/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ Somaliland Water Policy, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) City/urban level

Most of the big cities have local water bodies that manage the water supply and distribution, and they also control the city’s water sources, which are mostly deep wells. These water agencies are government owned wells, public-private partnerships, and privately-owned wells.

d) Village / Rural level

There is no water management at the community level in rural and village areas, and this is what contributes to the water resource disputes and lack of connection between the rural community and the national water management level.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF WATER CONFLICTS IN SOMALIA

When the pasture declines and the surface water shrinks or becomes scarce, rural people look for the permanent waters that provide a lifeline for the nomadic people and their animals. People come to the shared water sources, which include dug wells, ponds, and streams, and this causes conflicts about who drinks first.

There has always been a struggle between different communities for access to water resources, which sometimes took the form of armed conflict. When you examine the history of Somali society, you will discover that it is a bloody one, with Somalis constantly fighting over resources and clan-related issues. Most of the Somalis’ wars started with camel rustling or water wells. On the other hand, it
seems that the Somali communities are now very aware of the value of peace, and you can understand that even in the speeches of communities, the word peace is the most commonly used in greeting. If two people greet each other, they say "Ma nabad baa?" which literally translates as "Is there peace?" The other person replies "Waa nabad," which translates as "There is peace."

Water-related conflicts remained widespread in Somalia as a result of the successive droughts and water scarcity. According to the Bareedo Platform report\textsuperscript{25}, there were over 191 water-related disputes and clashes in 2021 alone, which resulted in the displacement of 116,000 people, mainly women and children, and the deaths of about 300 people. Conflicts affect water accessibility and worsen the water crisis in the face frequent droughts. According to the UNICEF Report \textsuperscript{26}, there have been incidents of attacks on water infrastructure that have impeded access to water in recent years, whether they were intentionally directed against water infrastructure or incidentally.

3.1 Primary Causes of Water Conflicts

There are many direct causes of rural water disputes, some of which are old while others are more recent, linked to climate change and a lack of governance structures. The following are the primary causes of water disputes among rural communities in Somalia:

    a) Lack of water governance structures and communal arrangements

The absence of these mechanisms is followed by territorial ownership, in which each clan claims a specific territory with borders, and if another clan builds a water point, it means that another clan will take over their land. The same thing happens when one clan or group tries to build a water point on the communal grazing lands without the permission of other clans. Here are a few recent events that are related to this issue.

— On January 9, 2021, Ugar Saleeban clan and Bahdir sub-clan fought over the construction of a Berkad, or a water reservoir, in the rural area under Iskushuban district in Bari region. The fight began when Ugar Saleeban clan built a Berkad in grazing land that was claimed by Bahdir sub-clan, and perceived this as a threat on their territory. There have reportedly been 15 deaths as a result of the violence\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{25} https://bareedo.org/publications/
\textsuperscript{27} https://puntlandpost.net/2021/01/09/dagaal-beeleed-culus-oo-qalabta-dib-uga-qarxay-miyoqa-deqmada-isku-shuban/
On January 14, 2020, Mareexaan and Habargidir clans fought over the construction of a water reservoir in Mirxeyley, a rural area between the towns of Cadaado and Cabudwaaq in Galgaduud region. They also fought on the same issue on August 28, 2022, in Labagelle, a rural area under Cabudwaaq district. Hundreds of people were killed in these clashes, which also caused devastation and displacement.

From 2006 to 2018, Bahrarsame clan and Omar Mohamud clan have been fighting in the Gumburka Agaare area of the Hawd zone, which is grazing land, after Bahrarsame built a water reservoir or sub-surface water reservoir called a Berkad in this grazing land shared by the two communities without the consent of Omar Mohamud. They perceived this as a move by Bahrarsame to seize control of this land. As a result, there were frequent clashes between the two clans, which resulted in 111 deaths.

The main reason that rural communities often fight is when one clan or group builds a new water source or other construction on the grazing lands between the two communities or on land claimed by a particular clan. The fact that there aren't any water management structures or ways for communities to agree on how to share water peacefully has led to a lot of disputes and conflicts over water resources, which have been common in recent years.

b) Climate change impacts

Somalia is ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change by the ND-GAIN Country Index when it comes to its ability to improve resilience. The frequency of climate-related crises in Somalia is increasing. More than 30 climate-related hazards, including droughts and floods, have hit the country since 1990 – a threefold increase compared to similar events between 1970 and 1990 (OCHA). Droughts were seen on average once every 10 springs in the past. However, in the past 30 years, it can be seen that their recurrence is very fast, and the resulting problems are much faster than their counterparts in the past.

While most of Somalia is arid and semi-arid land with little water and vegetation, now these recurring and prolonged droughts have had a direct impact on the availability of water, and this has become a major cause of water scarcity and congestion on water resources, which usually leads to water disputes. For example, an estimate conducted in 2017 (World Bank, 2020) shows that each

31 https://gain-new.crc.nd.edu/country/somalia
person in Somalia received 411 m3. This figure is below the 2,087 m3 per person estimated in 1962. The 2017 estimate is below the water standard set by the United Nations, which is 1,000 m3 of water per person.

**c) Interference and involvement of third party**

It is a fact that the political groups that are competing in Somalia today have been involved in water related conflicts. Their policies are based on the possession of areas with abundant water resources, like the lands between the two rivers of Jubba and Shabelle. This is a clear testimony to the prolonged conflicts that are going on in that area, while most of the other areas are less inhabited or sparsely populated. The land between the two rivers also has agricultural land that can increase production without using large amounts of fertilizers. Political factions in Somalia often influence individuals or groups to instigate water conflicts in Somalia.

a. Somaliland, a self-declared independent state that unilaterally broke away from Somalia, and Puntland, an autonomous state in Somalia, have been contesting over control of the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions since 1998. Both administrations have always been involved in the inter-clan conflicts in these disputed regions to gain power and influence over these regions. For example, they were accused of being involved in a violent inter-clan conflict that broke out in Dhabar Dalool in April 2021, a remote village in the arid plains of northern Puntland’s Sool region, after one clan in the area claimed control of a shallow well. This infuriated other clan groups, resulting in a conflict that killed more than 30 people. More and more people say that these two rival regional governments are to blame for this conflict and others that have taken place in this region for the last two decades.

b. Al-Shabaab, a terrorist organization of Al-Qaeda that controls large parts of southern and central Somalia, is also one of the sides fueling tribal conflicts in order to gain influence and create safe havens in some places. This militant group has also banned the establishment of settlements, wells, and other water sites. For example, in the year 2022, Al-Shabaab destroyed water sources and drilling equipment as shown below:

— On September 30, 2022, Al-Shabaab burned a rig that was drilling for water in the Geriley area of the Gedo region, which is one of the

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32 [https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-various-layers-to-the-somaliland-puntland-discord](https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-various-layers-to-the-somaliland-puntland-discord)

regions that has been severely affected by droughts, where there was a water shortage. They also killed the rig well crew34.

— On September 1, 2022, Al-Shabaab blew up a water well, a reservoir, and communication centers in the towns of Maarsamage and Adokibir under Bahdo district in Galgudud region35.

— On September 18, 2022, Al-Shabaab burned down all the houses and water wells in the El Jiqow area, one of the areas under the Maxaas district in the Hiiran region36.

d) Other issues that cause water conflicts

Competition over land and related issues is also a primary driver of conflict in Somalia, and mostly affects water sharing and coexistence between rural communities. The findings of the SSF Land Conflict Report in Somalia37 show that environmental factors are at the center of pastoral land conflicts. The growth of both human and livestock populations (and changes in herd and species composition) and socio-economic changes have increased pressure on rangelands, including through enclosures and the introduction of unsuitable land uses. Land conflicts in Somalia can be classified by reference to their location, i.e., rural and urban land conflicts, with the former driven largely by competition for access to resources, and the latter driven largely by large-scale and rapid urbanization underpinned by weak legal and institutional frameworks and limited economic opportunities.

Population growth also drives burgeoning demand for water for all uses: households, agriculture, industry, and energy. According to the UNHABITAT Report 202538, Somalia’s urban population is growing at a 4% annual rate, owing to rural conflict and insecurity, climate change, population growth, and a desire for economic security. Somalia has the largest population growth in the region, and the return of people who fled from Somalia during the civil war has also contributed to the population increase and settlements, which have further increased the land conflicts.

Groups and individuals grabbing pasture lands under the pretext of agricultural purposes have been common in recent decades after the collapse of Somalia’s central government. Urbanization of the grazing lands by either constructing...

38 https://unhabitat.org/somalia
buildings or water sources, has also been another common factor that instigates violence and conflict in Somalia. In recent years, most of the clan conflicts that took place in Puntland and Somaliland were mainly land-related. For example, the rural people in the two neighboring areas of Sool and Nugaal regions, namely Boocame and Garowe, who used to share grazing and water sources, have disputed over the ownership of grazing land between them. This happened when the two communities each started urbanization on the grazing land, which caused a confrontation that led to 30 deaths and other losses in the beginning of 2022. The conflict has led to the fact that they cannot share water and graze together anymore because of the loss of trust.

In peri-urban areas, land-use conflicts frequently derive from competition between pastoralism and urbanization, as in Somaliland, Puntland, and Jubaland, where interactions between pastoralists and urban dwellers have led to disputes relating to both land ownership and land use. Mr. Said Abdullahi Deni, President of the Puntland Government issued Decree No. 03 on July 6, 2020, regarding the suspension of construction and the establishment of settlement on all grazing lands in Puntland. The president said that they will develop specific procedures and laws for the new settlements in Puntland.

For example, the city of Garowe, which is the capital of the Puntland regional government, has expanded in recent years and encroached into a pastureland in the north, which is land claimed by a clan other than that of Garowe. This expansion has led to a dispute that lasted from 2015 to 2020, when it was finally resolved by the President of the Puntland Government, Mr. Said Abdullahi Deni, who issued Presidential Decree No. 3, dated July 17, 2019 which bans the establishment of settlements on the grazing land in the Waw and Bixin valleys between Garowe and Buro-Wadal village. In the same way, Somaliland and Jubaland have taken similar measures to curb the land grabbing and urbanization in the grazing lands, but these issues are still most prevalent in Somalia.

### 3.2 Impacts of Water Conflicts

Water conflicts cause destruction, the loss of lives, and many other damages. Some of these impacts are summarized below:

**a. Death, injury, and destruction of property:** Water conflicts or other conflicts affecting the sharing of water resources can result in death, injury, disability, and destruction of property. For example, in Dhabar-Dol, nearly

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39 https://www.caasimada.net/madaxweynaha-maamulka-puntland-oo-amaro-culus-soo-saaray/
30 people were killed, and hundreds were injured and maimed. Some of these people are non-combatants. In addition to this, many children are orphaned and women widowed, so it has created a lot of resentment and anger. For example, a conflict over the construction of a water reservoir, or Berkad, in the Gumburka Agaare area that started in 2006 and ended in 2018 has resulted in the deaths of 111 people. As of 2022, clan conflicts that have been going on for a long time in Galgadud, which is in the middle of Somalia, have killed almost a thousand people, destroyed settlements and water catchments, and hurt too many people to count.

b. Displacement: Somalia has one of the highest numbers of displacement globally. The humanitarian community estimates that there are 2.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the country. Conflict over water is one of the key drivers of displacement. For example, the United Nations Humanitarian News program "Radio Ergo" reported that more than 280 families were displaced in a war between two communities in the Dhabar-Dalol area over the management of the Dhabar-Dalol water well in April 2021.41

c. Water scarcity, price hikes, and unequal access to water: When rural people fight over shared water resources, it leads to unequal access to water, and one-party drinks from that well while other groups, including the vulnerable such as women, children, minorities, and the elderly, face a lack of water and thirst or opt for expensive water trucked in from faraway water sources. According to the UNICEF Report 2022, human dependence on water is intentionally exploited during armed conflict, with water resources and the systems required to deliver drinking water coming under direct attack.

d. Vulnerability to the effects of climate change: Problems arising from water conflicts make rural communities more vulnerable to the effects of climate change as droughts and floods have become more frequent in recent years. Conflicts disrupt the ability of rural communities to live in peaceful coexistence, share water resources, and graze animals together.

e. An increase of violence against women and girls: Women and girls, who mostly have the responsibility of collecting water, face physical or sexual assault risks at water points in many areas. Somalia is already at the forefront of the places where violence against women prevails in the world.

According to the Plan International Report 2022\textsuperscript{43}, a third (34\%) of people surveyed by the NGO in the Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer regions of Somaliland believe security risks to girls and women have increased as a result of the drought.

f. Impact on general stability: These conflicts often cause insecurity and protracted conflicts in Somalia. Sometimes, the conflict in rural areas quickly spreads into urban areas. The recent ones were some deadly conflicts that have taken place in Ceel-Afwayn, Caabudwaq, and Galkacyo towns in Somalia, where conflicts that took place in the rural areas spilled into these towns.

4. GUIDANCE FOR PREVENTION AND MEDIATION OF RURAL COMMUNITY’S WATER DISPUTES

There is a well-known phrase that says "Prevention is better than cure," which means that it is easier to stop something from happening in the first place than to repair the damage after it has happened. In similar way, there are tons of Somali proverbs encouraging peace, such as "The best bed that a man can sleep on is peace," "In war, a boy dies, not borns", "When the herdsmen are in agreement, is when the livestock can drink water," and also "Let us talk, which means let us agree." All these Somali sayings denote the importance of peace and the need for strengthening it by resolving all conflicts in a peaceful manner.

So, this chapter is a summary of the process of preventing and resolving water disputes in rural areas. It is based on the practical experience of mediating water disputes between rural communities and on traditional ways of resolving conflicts.

4.1 The Process of Resolving Water Disputes

If a water dispute occurs, whether it is a new one or a previous one, it is important to resolve it quickly to prevent it from reaching a point where nothing can be done. Somalis have a proverb that says, "If milk gets spilled, the remaining milk in the back of the container should be saved," which means that if something happens, it should be resolved immediately to prevent more casualties. So, the process of mediation and peacemaking can be done in two ways:

a. A community-led process in which warring parties who share water resources and grazing lands come together to resolve their conflict using

\textsuperscript{43} \url{https://plan-international.org/news/2022/05/18/drought-leaves-girls-and-women-in-somalia-facing-hunger-and-violence/}
mutually agreed-upon customary laws and traditions. Usually, a group of peacemakers and traditional elders from both sides organize a peace process to end the conflict. The joint committee makes decisions and ultimately resolves the conflict.

b. Mediation and peacemaking are sometimes led by a third-party process. The third party should be trusted by both sides of the conflict, and it is necessary that mediators are informative people who are familiar with the people and the disputed area. They also must be neutral people, so that no party doubts their justice. The mediator must be knowledgeable about the culture, customary laws, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

4.2 Who Is in Charge of Resolving Water Disputes?

Water conflict resolution is a role that can be played by different actors who have an influence on the community and are mutually trusted. They could be the following parties:

a. Traditional clan leaders: As usual, Somalis have traditional leaders, who are appointed by the clans to resolve any problems with other neighboring clans and make agreements with them. Traditional clan elders use customary laws to resolve conflicts between communities. Therefore, traditional elders have the primary role in resolving the water dispute, just as they resolve other disputes.

b. Alternative Dispute Resolution Centers ADR44: The second role can be played by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Centers that have been implemented in recent years by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) based in Italy. There are nine centers in Somalia: two in Puntland, two in Jubaland, two in the Southwest, two in Galmudug, and one in Hirshabelle. These centers use traditional Somali law to solve different kinds of problems, and they can help solve the water dispute in the same way they solve other problems.

c. Government institutions: There are government institutions or departments that are tasked with and mandated for conflict resolution and peacebuilding at the federal and state levels. Though some have capacity challenges, they can play a role in resolving water conflicts and maintaining peace among rural communities. They have to take care of water-related disputes at the beginning before they get out of control. In particular, Puntland and Somaliland, where these institutions and departments are well established, have to play a key role in the prevention and mediation of water disputes.

conflicts or any conflict that can affect the peace and harmony among the rural communities.

d. Religious figures and leaders: Islamic religion plays an important role in both preventing and resolving conflict and building peace in Somali society. Therefore, religious leaders who have a wide reputation in Somali society can also play an important role in solving the water conflicts. Religious leaders have had a good role in resolving clan disputes for a long time, and they often use Islamic law or Islamic Sharia to mediate between many clans that dispute over various issues.

4.3 The Characteristics that the Mediator Needs to Have

The mediator, whether a person or a committee, must have and meet the following two requirements:

a. Knowledge and neutrality: Every person who makes arbitration or mediation decisions must have knowledge, neutrality, and integrity. The mediators must know what they are judging and do it fairly and impartially. For example, Somalis have a proverb that says, "Make a good judgment for your son and the son of a non-believer." This urges you to make a fair decision when solving a conflict between two parties, even if your son is one of the parties to the conflict.

b. Knowledge of customary and traditional laws: Every person who arbitrates or mediates between people must have good knowledge related to the culture and the different customary laws used in solving disputes, as mentioned in Article 4.4 of this Manual.

4.4 Methods Used for Resolving Water Disputes

There are different types of arbitration in Somalia. Different methods must be followed in each litigation or case, as well as different approaches. So, at this time when the dispute is about to be resolved, the three methods below are generally or specifically used depending on the type of case.

a) Customary law (Xeer Soomaali)

Somali customary law, known as "Xeer Soomaali," is comprised of a set of unwritten conventions and procedures that are passed down orally through generations and is a traditional legal system in which all common problems and issues are resolved. The traditional form of mediation based on customary law is the best tool to use for Somali conflict resolution. In Somali tradition, when an incident happens, it is asked if it is an old or new one. That means if it is old, there
are some laws available for its remedy, but if it is a new issue, basically there will be a proposed remedy that is normally incorporated into the customary law for future purposes.

b) Government laws and religious law

There are several water regulations that are either endorsed or in the process of being endorsed by regional authorities in Somalia. Although these laws do not concentrate on water conflicts or rural water issues, they can still be useful legal references for resolving water disputes between rural people. For example, the Somaliland Water Law, especially Article 41, says the following about how to settle disputes between people who live in rural areas:

a. If there is a dispute over the use of rural water resources, the dispute will be resolved according to the traditional water regulations of the area.
b. If an amicable agreement cannot be reached on the dispute, it will be referred to a court of competent jurisdiction to adjudicate the case.

Similar to that of Somaliland, all the water laws in Somalia indicate the way of solving the water dispute and also the methods of water management in general, so this can be a good reference point for rural water conflicts.

Sharia law is the ultimate source of law and the guiding principle of governance, and it is practiced as a norm in Somali courts and society, so Sharia law can be used to solve water conflicts where it is considered appropriate. Somalis are conservative Muslims who adhere to Islamic laws and have faith in their decisions.

4.5 Different Approaches for Different Water Disputes

According to the lessons and experiences learned from the mediation meetings held for the rural communities, water disputes are different and have different faces and natures, so they need to be approached carefully.

A water dispute between the clans should not be overemphasized, but more attention should be paid to how to find a solution for the shared drinking water and come up with agreed-upon arrangements. This will pave the way for mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in rural communities. Since some disputes are not directly related to water sharing and there may be other issues outside of water, more concentration should be put on convincing the rural people to set aside other disputes or factors that contributed to the exacerbation of their water disputes.
Rural people in the Gumburka Agaare area, for example, who fought over a water reservoir built on grazing land shared by two communities, have agreed that no water source or settlement should be built on that land. They also have agreed to share the water resources on both sides of the area, which does not mean ownership of the land by any community.

When there is a third party or someone else behind the conflict between the two communities, you should start the negotiation process with that third party. If this is not possible, for example, in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab, another method for resolving disputes and bringing the two communities together should be devised.

4.6 Prevention of Water Disputes

It is important to prevent anything that could cause a water-related dispute in rural areas. A Somali proverb says, "A disaster has prevention, not remedy" which means that the best way to tackle a problem is prevention. If there is a dispute, it should be resolved before it gets out of hand. We have seen many conflicts that started with small incidents and were very easy to resolve at the beginning but unfortunately were underestimated and then escalated to the point where resolution is difficult, time-consuming, and costly.

There is also another Somali proverb that says, "War and drought should be run away by your feet," which means avoiding conflict is important. As a result, it is advised to prevent a dispute from escalating into violence and a fight that results in death and destruction. So, in order to avoid water disputes in rural areas, the following two steps must be taken:

   a) Prevention through communal principles

The rural communities that live together or share grasslands and water resources must reach an agreement and understanding about the things that can cause water disputes or affect the sharing of water that are mentioned in Chapter 3 of this Manual. The main issues that must be agreed upon by the rural communities are the following:

   a. Equitable and fair sharing: Every community that lives together in rural areas should share pasture and water resources in an equitable and fair manner. No one should be barred from accessing the water and pasture.

   b. Protection of water resources: Every community that lives together in an area or shares water and pasture must protect the water resources and
not overuse, spill, poison, or cause any kind of harm to the quality, purity, and health of the water.

c. **Joint management of water resources:** Every community that shares water and pasture must establish a joint committee that manages water and pasture through the process described in Chapter 6 of this Manual.

d. **Protecting the marginalized groups:** Every community that lives together in rural areas must protect the marginalized and vulnerable groups, and restore the old tradition that the first priority for drinking water should always be given to the vulnerable people, as mentioned below:
   - Families and animals that have less manpower or depend on females
   - Families and animals of the orphans and young people who lack enough manpower
   - People who have been discriminated against or are new to the area.

e. **Cooperation and collaboration on common water challenges:** Every community that shares water and pasture must understand that they are equally facing water challenges and the effects of climate change, so they must work together in solving water challenges and tackling climate problems. They should remember the Somali proverbs that literally say "Hands work together" and "A finger alone does not wash a face," which mean that only togetherness and cooperation can achieve progress or solve a common problem.

b) **Prevention through communal agreements**

Every community that shares water and pasture must have agreements and compromises that are at least based on the principles outlined below to avoid the causes of water disputes discussed in Chapter 3 of this Manual:

a. No new water point should be built or established in the shared grazing lands without agreement.

b. Water wells shouldn't be built on grazing lands, in places that aren't good for cities, in places that are in dispute, or in places that are set aside as general reserves.

c. When rural communities want to build a water well in areas where law enforcement is not present, it is necessary that the well-established traditional laws of the communities in the area be followed. As stated in the Puntland Government Rules and Regulations, any water site that is built or set up must be approved by the Water Management Committee of that
community. In some cases, the Environmental Protection Committee, the Local Government Authority, and other interested parties may also need to give their approval.

d. While every rural community or clan has a specific territory, it’s also imperative that all the members of the community agree to the establishment of a water well in that area in order to avoid a conflict. A permission request should be made to the Water Management Committee of the rural community.

e. Local peacemakers, traditional clan elders, intellectuals, and religious leaders of the communities should jointly issue an order or edict prohibiting the construction of any water well that is not agreed upon and consented to by all sides of the rural communities because the construction of water wells in shared water sources and territories can cause a conflict that can result in a bloody war. The communities must also sign and approve set of rules to punish those who break such communal agreements or compromises.

4.7 Adoption of Conflict-Sensitive Water Planning and Interventions

It should be noted that some water interventions can create resistance, divisions, tensions, and even conflicts among rural communities if they are not planned carefully. There have been documented conflicts in several rural areas of Somalia due to disputes and quarrels over the ownership or management of water projects implemented by international organizations. To make sure that the donated water projects don't cause divisions and fights in the communities or create inequalities that keep minorities or certain groups from using the water projects, the following two things must be taken into account when planning or building a water well in rural areas:

a. When planning water interventions in rural areas, it is important to conduct a conflict-sensitive assessment to ensure that there have been no previous conflicts or potential disputes in the area. It is important to think about setting up a system that is owned and run by the community to manage water and make sure that everyone gets a fair share of resources. Also, it should be ensured that voices of minority groups are given special priority.

b. It is critical that the water management structures and communal agreements are followed when distributing water donations or building water wells to avoid creating conflict or rifts between these communities.
5. GUIDANCE FOR ESTABLISHING RURAL COMMUNITY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

While there are governmental water authorities that distribute water to the people in urban centers, rural areas do not have water management structures or committees that can manage and distribute the water among rural communities equally. The absence of rural water management structures and water-sharing communal arrangements is one of the reasons behind water-related conflicts in rural areas of Somalia. In consultation and mediation meetings held for rural communities in Somalia, the establishment of water management structures that can manage water resources in rural areas is underscored as one of the most sustainable solutions to overcome water conflicts and unequal access to water resources.

Rural communities saw how important it is to have a governance structure in charge of water resources and agreed on the need for rural water management committees. A Somali proverb says, "Dherigii gacmo bata fuudkiisu waa xumaadaa," which is similar to "Too many cooks spoil the broth." This denotes that if everyone does what he or she wishes and there is no governance structure, then that will create conflict and disputes over the use of water resources among rural communities.

Consequently, the process of establishing the Rural Water Resources Management structures, which is detailed below, is based on an experiment or practical process used for the establishment of several water management committees during the mediation meetings held for rural communities.

5.1 Objectives and Preferences of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee is a group that needs to be set up by all rural communities that share water resources and pasture. This is to make sure that everyone has equal and fair access to water resources and to keep water-related conflicts from happening.

The establishment of a committee that includes all the local people can lead to fair distribution of water and pasture as well as lasting peaceful coexistence in rural communities. It reduces the possibility of conflict between the rural communities and also promotes cooperation.
This can make it easier for rural communities, which are affected by climate change and water scarcity, to work together to find solutions to common water challenges and tackle climate change problems.

5.2 Structure, Scope of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee consists of members representing all the different communities that live in an area or share water and pasture. It is proposed and recommended that the rural communities elect a management committee that has an executive consisting of a chairman, deputy chairman, and secretary, who can also have special subordinates or assistants. The mandate and the process of their election are mentioned in Article 5.6 of this Manual.

The scope of work of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee is limited to the area where a certain community lives together and shares water resources and grazing land. The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee should also keep doing its job if the communities move to a place where there is no structure for water management.

For example, the rural communities in Qoriley and Magacley rural areas of Hawd zone in Puntland that share the grazing land in Gumburka Agaare, have agreed to establish a Water Management Committee whose scope of work is limited to their area where the two communities live together.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

In general, the functions of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee are as follows:

- Management, maintenance, and supervision of all water resources among the rural communities, such as boreholes, streams, valleys, water catchments, Berkads/reservoirs, etc.
- Management and facilitation of equal access to water resources.
- Water distribution planning, management, and supervision, as well as donated water to needy and vulnerable families.
- Ensuring that water resources are used in a fair and equal way, and stopping disputes or fights over water resources.
✓ Approval of new water sources and the construction of water wells or water sites that are to be constructed in the shared grazing lands to avoid conflict between the communities.
✓ Putting together plans, making suggestions, and making decisions about any changes or repairs to water facilities, like maintenance, expansion, etc.
✓ Representing communities in that area at all water-related meetings, plans, interventions, or anything else that is usually organized by other stakeholder groups like government authorities, donors, or charitable organizations.
✓ Any other water-related issues that may arise.

It has to be noted that the aforementioned responsibilities can be changed depending on what those communities see as necessary.

5.4 Process for Establishing Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

When establishing a Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee, it should be done through an open and transparent process in which all the people are allowed to participate in the discussions and finally consent to the outcome. If possible, the process should be monitored or supervised by the water authorities and government officials in that area or by a neutral person from outside. The process of establishing the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee should be conducted according to the following steps:

Step 1

The traditional clan elders representing all the rural communities in that area should come together to have a dialogue on water management. No one should be left out. The following points should be thoroughly discussed and agreed upon by the clan elders:

a. Whether there have been any water-related conflicts between their communities in the past, and if there have, to solve them right away.

b. A common understanding of the principles for sharing water equally and peacefully, or the principles detailed in Article 4.6 of this Manual.

c. How to share water resources and how to manage them equally.

d. Punishment for those who violate the community water agreements.

Step 2
The traditional clan elders should agree to establish a Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee in their respective areas and agree on the following issues:

a. Responsibilities and scope of work of the Committee.

b. The number of Committee members and their allocation among the communities in the area.

c. How to ensure the inclusivity of the committee and make sure that all groups, like women and minorities, are represented.

**Step 3**

The traditional clan elders should write down the terms of their agreement so it can be a written legal document that has to be abided by all clans in the area. Annex 2 of this Manual is a standard template that can be used for the establishment of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee.

**5.5 Ensuring Participatory, Representation and Inclusiveness of the Process and Committee**

The people running the meeting and putting it together should make sure that minorities and people who are vulnerable are included in the process and have a voice in the committee. It has to be clear that a lack of inclusivity reduces the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Committee.

Women's participation is often challenged because there is long-standing gender discrimination against women in Somalia. Women must be part of the process and the Committee to avoid a lack of representation and inequality between men and women. It should be taken into account that only full participation and representation of all communities can bring a good and sustainable solution to rural communities.

It is also commendable if some members of the Committee be allocated to the non-permanent communities that can immigrate to the area looking for water and pasture. For example, the Water Management Committee of the Bitaale area in Galmudug has agreed to give temporary membership to any community that migrates to their area. This membership will cease automatically when these communities return to their original territories.
5.6 Setting Bylaws for Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

When the members of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee are established, they should come together in their first meeting and agree on the bylaws and other operational documents that are necessary for the operationalization of the committee. They must agree to the provisions of the bylaws, such as:

- a. Reasons for losing membership, filling vacancies, and discipline;
- b. Ways of holding meetings and making decisions;
- c. Administrative powers;
- d. Election of the executive and their tenure;
- e. Other matters related to the administration and work of the committee.

Annex 2 of this Manual is a standard template that can be used for establishing bylaws for the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee. It is a simple template that can be modified as deemed fit and can make the process a lot easier.

The by-laws and provisions that are agreed upon by the members of the Committee should be issued in a document and signed by all the members of the Committee to become a binding document that all members should comply with. This binding document and the initial agreement of the traditional elders should be attached together and be part of the existing communal agreements, and copies should be provided to the traditional elders of the communities and also the relevant government authorities in the area.

5.7 Arrangement for Water Sources Outside of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

There are water sources that lie beyond the jurisdiction of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee, on which the rural communities heavily depend. The issues detailed below need to be separately addressed.

a. Village rig wells/boreholes: Rigg wells or boreholes in urban or rural villages are key water sources that are heavily used by the rural communities, but at the same time, they have their own management or caretakers that the rural communities have no stake in. In such a situation, there must be collaboration and coordination between the management of these water sources and that of rural communities.
b. Water dams: There are dams and water-catchments that have recently been implemented in many parts of Somalia, and these dams are mainly intended for rural communities that are facing water scarcity as a result of successive droughts. The dams are managed by individuals or groups assigned by the closest village administrators or water authorities, and rural communities are not given a role in their management. In this case, the water authorities, urban/village authorities, or funding agencies should adopt conflict sensitive approaches and ensure a joint or inclusive management structure that can manage dam water among the communities. They must also consider the primary users of dams, which are rural communities, to have a stake in the management of these water sources. There must be a written arrangement that clarifies the management and usage of the dam waters to avoid any conflict or challenge that comes out of these important water sources. A good example is the Community Agreement on the Establishment of a Management Committee for Rabaable Water Dam⁴⁵, which is a dam funded by the World Bank in 2022 and located at Rabaable Village, on the outskirts of Garowe, the capital city of Puntland State in Somalia.

6. THE ROLE OF WATER AUTHORITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER RESOURCES

Somalia's water authorities, from the central government to the regional governments, are only limited to cities and do not play a significant role or manage water in rural areas. The only time these authorities are seen in rural areas is when they are implementing activities funded by charity organizations. Apart from the Puntland and Somaliland regional administrations, where water authorities are present in districts, all of Somalia's other regional administrations' water authorities do not operate outside of the urban centers. Because of this, all of Somalia's water authorities must understand and acknowledge their role in water management at the community level and also commit to the implementation of the following recommendations:

⁴⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pi2Es2zzpPAfTVqexOKwYbkxSpT3T57P/view?usp=sharing
6.1 Devolving Water Management to Community Level

Water authorities in Somalia must focus on expanding their management structures to rural communities and devolving water governance to the grassroots level. Also, they should take the lead in managing and maintaining water resources in rural areas to avoid conflicts that often happen when there aren't any structures for managing water in those areas.

a. Setting up structures for water governance at the local level: Water authorities should focus on setting up local water management structures in rural communities and linking them to the national structures for water governance.

b. Engaging rural communities in decision-making: Water authorities should engage with Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees or rural communities' leaders in the planning and decision-making processes as well as the plans for establishing water resources in their respective areas and other water-related plans and policies. Rural communities should have a say in decisions that affect them. The significance and immediacy of this matter must be recognized by the government and water authorities.

6.2 Connecting Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees to the Existing Water Management Structures

In Somalia, some areas have structures at the regional state level or regional level, for example, the administrations of Somaliland and Puntland, which enjoyed relative peace and stability for nearly three decades as war plagued the rest of the country, are more advanced in terms of administration and devolution when compared to the other regional states that were established after 2010. These two administrations have well established water authorities and water-related committees that operate up to the district level. These water authorities can bolster the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees. Therefore, the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees in these two administrations and even other administrations should be connected to water authorities at district, regional, and regional state government levels.

For example, Article 32 of the Somaliland Water Act defines the responsibilities of local governments when it comes to water supply in rural areas. It says the following:
1. The responsibility for mobilization and supervision of the water supply in rural areas is delegated to the local authorities.

2. Local government authorities have the following responsibilities:
   a. Prioritizing rural people's water needs
   b. Implementing the planned investments
   c. Advocating for funds
   d. Mobilizing and managing water services

It should be ensured that a connection and working relationship are established between the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees and the relevant water authorities that exist at the village, district, and regional state levels. Environmental authorities that are responsible for the tackling of the impacts of climate change should also work with the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committees.

ANNEXES
Annex 1:

SAMPLE OF AGREEMENT
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITY WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Date: ..............................................................

Place: .........................................................

District: ..........................................................

Region: ..........................................................

State: .........................................................

1.0 Details of the Agreement

We the traditional clan elders of the following communities: -

a) .................................................................

b) .................................................................

c) .................................................................

d) .................................................................

e) .................................................................

Residing: -

a) Locality: ..............................................

b) District: ...............................................  

c) Region: ............................................... 

d) State: ............................................... 

Today of ........................................ held meeting in the locality of .................................., fully agreed upon the fair and equitable sharing of the water resources, and
established the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee. The details of the establishment of the Management Committee are stated below.

2.0 General Principles of the Agreement

We have agreed on the following principles to be the basis of the agreement:

a) ..............................................................................................................
b) ..............................................................................................................
c) ..............................................................................................................
d) ..............................................................................................................
e) ..............................................................................................................
f) ..............................................................................................................
g) ..............................................................................................................
h) ..............................................................................................................
i) ..............................................................................................................
j) ..............................................................................................................
k) ..............................................................................................................
l) ..............................................................................................................
m) ..............................................................................................................
n) ..............................................................................................................
o) ..............................................................................................................

3.0 The Establishment of Rural Community Water Management Committee

We have agreed on the establishment of a Rural Community Water Management Committee for the area of ....................... to manage, coordinate, and supervise equal access to water resources. We have also agreed on the number of permanent members of the committee, which is ............... representing the following communities:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
4.0 Scope of Work of the Committee

We have agreed that committee’s work scope will be on ..................... to be limited to the locality of .......................... which is the permanent territory for the communities that have signed this agreement.

5.0 Working Responsibilities of the Committee

We have agreed that the working responsibilities of the Rural Community Water Management Committee of .......................... to be as follows:

  a) ........................................................................................................
  b) ........................................................................................................
  c) ........................................................................................................
  d) ........................................................................................................
  e) ........................................................................................................
  f) ........................................................................................................
  g) ........................................................................................................
  h) ........................................................................................................
  i) ........................................................................................................
  j) ........................................................................................................
  k) ........................................................................................................
  l) ........................................................................................................
  m) ........................................................................................................
  n) ........................................................................................................
  o) ........................................................................................................

6.0 Operationalizing the Committee

We agree that the members of the Committee allocated to each community as mentioned in Article 3.0 of this Agreement shall be submitted before the date of........................., and the committee should hold its first session on the date of ......................... at the same time begin the first functions before the date of .........................
7.0 Violation of the Agreement and Conflict Resolution

We have agreed that anyone who violates the provisions of this Agreement will be punished with the following measures:

a) .................................................................................................

b) .................................................................................................

c) .................................................................................................

d) .................................................................................................

e) .................................................................................................

f) .................................................................................................

g) .................................................................................................

We have agreed that any conflict shall be resolved through negotiation and in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement:

a) .................................................................................................

b) .................................................................................................

c) .................................................................................................

d) .................................................................................................

As well as in accordance with the customary laws and government regulations:

a) .................................................................................................

b) .................................................................................................

c) .................................................................................................

d) .................................................................................................

and Islamic Sharia.

8.0 Signatures

a) Signatures of the traditional elders

We, the traditional elders of the communities mentioned below, signed this Agreement, and will fully comply with all the provisions of this Agreement.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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</table>
b) The signatures of the witnesses/mediators

We witnesses/ arbitrators of this Agreement, bear witness to this Agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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</table>
SAMPLE OF BYLAW
RURAL COMMUNITY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Date: ..........................................................

Locality: .............................................. District: ................................................ Region: ..............................................

........................................................................ State: ................................................

**********************

1.0 The purpose of the bylaw

The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality ................................ of district ................................., of region ......................... of .............................................. State of Somalia, which has held its first meeting in ...................... has agreed upon the following bylaws to be the legal guiding document of the work of the committee.

2.0 The Establishment of Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee

The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality of ......................... was established following the agreement attached below which was reached by the traditional elders of the locality of ...................... In a meeting that was held in ...................... at ...................... In order to regulate the water resources shared by the communities of the locality of ......................... of district ........................., of region ......................... of the ......................... state of Somalia.

3.0 Work Responsibilities of the Committee

In accordance with Article 5.0 of the Agreement reached by the traditional elders attached here, the work responsibilities of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality.................. are as mentioned below:

p) ........................................................................................................
4.0 Work Scope of the Committee

In accordance with Article 4.0 of the Agreement reached by the traditional elders attached here, the scope of work of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality ............... is limited to the area of ................. of district .............., of region ................. of .............. state of Somalia.

5.0 Members of the Committee

In accordance with Article 3.0 of the Agreement reached by the traditional elders attached here, the members of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality ............... comprises .............. members representing the following communities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
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6.0 Losing Membership and Filling the Vacancy

a. A member of the Rural Water Resources Management Committee of locality ………….. may lose membership for the following reasons:
   — Resignation, death and mental incapacity;
   — Violating the bylaws and other rules of the rural community;
   — Unwarranted absence from the meetings of the committee for ………….. consecutive meetings.

b. The vacancy must be filled within ………….. By the former member’s community.

7.0 Meetings, Quorum and Decisions of the Committee

a. The Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee of the locality ………….. holds its meetings ………….. times in every year/ month.

b. They can also hold unextraordinary meetings when necessary if agreed by the members of the Committee as mentioned in Article 7.0 "d".

c. The quorum for committee meetings is ………….. of the members.

d. The decisions of the committee will be valid when voted and agreed upon by ………….. of the members.

8.0 Governance Structure of the Committee

The Governance structure of the Rural Community Water Resource Management Committee of the locality ………….. shall be as follows:

   a) Chairperson: is the highest person of the Committee, presiding over the meetings and work of the Committee;
   b) Deputy chairperson: is the second highest person of the committee who assists the chairperson;
   c) Secretary: is the third highest person of the committee who is responsible for coordinating the activities and keeping documents as well as monitoring the decisions made.
   d) Subordinate: is one of the members of the Committee who has been assigned for specific tasks.

9.0 The Election of the Committee
a. The management of the Committee consists of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary who are elected from the members of the Committee.
b. All committee members can openly compete for the managerial positions of the committee. Only the provisions of the bylaws can bar some members from election.
c. All communities of the area should be fairly represented in the committee and special consideration should be given to minorities and women.
d. The oldest person will be an acting chairperson who organizes the election of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson and the secretary.

10.0 The Term of the Management of the Committee

a. The term of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary is .......... they can seek reelection for .......... times.
b. When the term is about to end, a timely election shall be organized in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaw.

11.0 Amendment of the bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended by members of the committee if consented unanimously..........................

12.0 Coming into Effect

The bylaws will come into effect immediately after the signing of the members of the Rural Community Water Resources Management Committee.

12.0 The Signature of the Committee

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name of the Member</th>
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Abdikhayr Mohamed Hussein was born in Somalia in 1989. He is a young peace activist, a Bertha Fellow 2022, a Bertha Challenge Alumni, a peace ambassador, and a Rotary Positive Peace Activator.

He is also a blogger who writes about a wide range of topics, mostly peace, conflict, climate change, and other social and economic issues in Somalia and the Horn of Africa in general.

Hussein is a senior member of Bareedo Platform, a Somalia-based youth-led organization. For the past ten years, he has worked with the Somali government and local and international organizations to help displaced and rural communities in Somalia with humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, and development.

Hussein is very interested in improving the social and economic conditions, peace, and long-term development of the people in Somalia who have been affected by the long-lasting conflicts and climate-related crises. He sees this as an important step toward making Somalia a more peaceful and prosperous place to live.

Visit his website at: www.abdikhayr.com