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EACON

Conference Theme:
Strengthening Regional
Cooperation In East
African Community

Strengthening Somalia's Environmental Resilience Through the East African Community (EAC)

Mohamed Okash
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Policy Brief

Executive Summary

This policy brief examines the opportunities and challenges for Somalia following its recent accession to the East African Community (EAC) on March 4, 2024. It highlights the importance of regional collaboration in climate resilience and environmental policy integration. Key recommendations include

harmonizing environmental policies, fostering green investments, and encouraging community-driven adaptation strategies. As Somalia joins the EAC, these actions will be crucial in aligning with regional goals, leveraging shared resources, and supporting climate-resilient development across the region.





Introduction

Context:

Somalia's accession to the East African Community presents a significant opportunity to enhance its climate resilience and environmental policies through regional collaboration. The EAC region is experiencing increasing environmental challenges, including severe droughts, floods, and extreme weather events, all of which cross national borders and affect multiple countries. Somalia's entry into the EAC provides a platform for addressing these challenges collectively, allowing

for shared resources, coordinated disaster response, and mutual support in building environmental resilience.

As Somalia grapples with the devastating impacts of climate change, the country has the chance to strengthen its capacity to adapt to climate-related risks by learning from regional best practices and aligning its policies with those of the EAC member states.

Purpose:

This policy brief outlines Somalia's role and responsibilities in fostering environmental resilience within the EAC framework. By integrating Somalia's unique environmental needs with regional strategies, the

brief provides actionable recommendations to support Somalia's alignment with EAC climate policies, strengthen adaptation efforts, and facilitate sustainable growth.

Audience and Structure of the Paper:

This brief is intended for EAC policymakers, Somali government officials, environmental agencies, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. It provides an overview of the integration process, key insights

from the recent EAC conference hosted in Somalia, and strategic recommendations to help Somalia enhance climate resilience while aligning with EAC environmental goals.

Literature Review

Background on the Issue:

Environmental resilience is a focal point for the EAC, considering the diverse ecosystems and climate challenges across member states. Somalia, highly vulnerable to climate change—manifested through droughts, desertification, and coastal erosion—faces an urgent need for coordinated regional responses. Somalia's integration into the EAC presents an opportunity to address these issues by tapping into shared resources, expertise, and collective

policy alignment.

The urgency of this issue was underscored by the extreme climate events of 2023, where Somalia faced one of its worst droughts in decades, contributing to widespread food insecurity and famine risks. Additionally, the floods brought on by the Dayr rains and the El Niño phenomenon caused extensive damage, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

Importance of the Issue:

Somalia's alignment with EAC environmental strategies is critical not only for the country's climate resilience but also for strengthening regional stability. By adopting common environmental frameworks and sharing resources and knowledge,

Somalia can contribute to and benefit from a collective approach to tackling climate risks. This collective action will help improve Somalia's environmental security while supporting the economic and social development goals of the entire region.



Methodology

Certainly! Here's a revised version incorporating the panel topic and panelists:

Research Design:

This policy brief is informed by insights gathered from the recent EAC Conference held in Somalia, which included a panel discussion on "Leveraging the East African Community (EAC) for Stronger Environmental Policies and Regional Resilience," moderated by Mr. Mohamed Okash, from the ICE Institute, SIMAD University. The panel featured a range of experts, including Mr. Ahmed Yusuf from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Dr.

Ulrike from the ICE Institute, Mr. Abass Kassim from Laasfort Consulting, Abdilatif Omar, Senior Lecturer at SNU, and Mr. Hassan Abdirizak from UNDP Somalia. This conference served as a platform to identify the key opportunities and challenges that Somalia faces as it seeks to align with EAC's regional climate and environmental policies. It also highlighted Somalia's role in advancing regional resilience through collaboration and policy integration.

Data Collection Methods:

Data was collected through a series of moderated discussions and panel sessions, with contributions from Somali officials, EAC representatives, and environmental experts. These discussions focused on shared regional environmental challenges, the need for harmonized policies, and the importance of resource

mobilization. The panelists emphasized the significance of integrating indigenous knowledge, community-driven solutions, and local expertise into Somalia's climate strategies, while exploring ways to strengthen collaboration with EAC member states.



Data Analysis:

The insights from the panel sessions were categorized into several thematic areas: policy alignment, resource mobilization, community engagement, and regional cooperation. These areas were identified as critical for enhancing Somalia's environmental resilience and positioning the country to

contribute effectively to EAC climate goals. The recommendations provided in this brief are based on these themes, aimed at supporting Somalia's integration into EAC frameworks and advancing regional climate action.





Findings and Analysis

Evidence-Based Findings:

Opportunities in Shared Climate and Environmental Goals:

Somalia's entry into the EAC presents a valuable opportunity to address its climate vulnerabilities through regional cooperation. Harmonized climate policies across the EAC will allow for a coordinated response to common challenges such as droughts, floods, and food insecurity. Somalia's Ministry of Environment highlighted

the importance of a regional climate data repository, which would facilitate joint responses to climate events. Collaborative programs and joint training initiatives in disaster management and resource conservation will further enhance Somalia's capacity to manage environmental risks.

Resource Mobilization and Green Investments:

Somalia can leverage its membership in the EAC to access regional and international green financing mechanisms. Investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and climate-resilient infrastructure are vital for Somalia's

sustainable growth. The EAC's green financing frameworks, including green bonds and public-private partnerships, offer significant opportunities for Somalia to secure funding for projects that align with both national and regional

Knowledge Sharing and Best Practices:

EAC member states possess valuable experiences in climate adaptation strategies, such as climate-smart agriculture and resilient infrastructure. Somalia can benefit from this shared knowledge by collaborating with other members, regional universities, and

civil society organizations to develop evidence-based policies. The EAC's knowledge-sharing platforms can facilitate the exchange of best practices and provide Somalia with the tools needed to implement effective climate action strategies.

Community-Centered and Indigenous Solutions:

Incorporating indigenous knowledge and community-driven solutions is essential for Somalia to create effective, locally relevant climate policies. Somali experts and regional stakeholders emphasized the importance of integrating traditional practices—such as indigenous land

management, reforestation, and sustainable grazing—into the broader EAC environmental strategies. This approach will not only improve policy relevance but also increase public buy-in and ensure long-term sustainability.

Discussion

The insights from the EAC conference demonstrate that Somalia has a unique opportunity to contribute to and benefit from regional climate initiatives. Key factors for success include policy harmonization, sustainable investments, community engagement, and robust political

commitment to climate action. As Somalia strengthens its climate resilience, the country's active participation in the EAC will not only enhance its own environmental security but also contribute to the region's collective climate efforts.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Summary of Key Points:

Somalia's EAC membership offers significant opportunities to improve climate resilience through policy alignment, resource mobilization, and sustainable development. By harmonizing its climate policies with EAC frameworks, investing in green projects, and engaging local

communities in climate action, Somalia can build a more climate-resilient future. These actions will facilitate Somalia's integration into the EAC while contributing to regional climate goals.

Policy Options:

1. Harmonize Somalia's Climate Policies with EAC Standards:

Align national policies with EAC frameworks and international standards, including Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA). This should include developing regulations and guidelines that reflect

both regional and global environmental objectives.

2. Develop a Regional Climate Database and Joint Training Programs:

Establish a regional climate data repository for all EAC member states, enabling real-time data sharing for

coordinated responses. Additionally, joint training programs will build local capacities for disaster management, sustainable resource use, and climate adaptation.

3. Foster Community-Driven Environmental Solutions:

Encourage policies that integrate indigenous knowledge and promote community-based solutions to climate change. Somalia's grassroots leaders and local communities must be engaged in the design and implementation of climate policies to

ensure their relevance and sustainability.

4. Invest in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Green Projects:

Prioritize investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, particularly in water management, agriculture, and renewable energy. Establish green financing mechanisms, such as green bonds, and leverage public-private partnerships to fund climate-smart projects.

Implementation Strategies:

- **Capacity Building and Collaborative Research:** Facilitate knowledge exchange programs between Somali and EAC environmental agencies, universities, and civil society to foster innovative solutions.

- **Green Financing Initiatives:** Encourage Somali businesses and international donors to invest in green projects through EAC's financing frameworks.

- **Public Awareness and Education:** Launch awareness campaigns and integrate climate change education

into school curricula to build a climate-conscious generation.

- **Regional and International Engagement:** Strengthen Somalia's engagement with regional and international partners on transboundary environmental issues, ensuring that its policies contribute to a coordinated regional climate action framework.



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