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Strengthening mutual accountability and partnerships for WASH

Country brief Somalia

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January 2021



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Executive Summary

Somalia has suffered from protracted conflict and social unrest since the collapse of the central government in 1991. This has led to the destruction of much of the country's water and sanitation infrastructure. Access to a basic water supply or sanitation is very low at 52% and 38% respectively. Somalia lacks government-led institutions that report on WASH progress to achieving SDG6. The country is still in an emergency situation and the WASH cluster is the only platform that coordinates the WASH actors in the country through its monthly meetings. The government WASH institutions remain under resourced in terms of human, financial and logistics.

The WASH actors in Somalia suffer from serious gaps of human resource, management system and accountability. The roles are not clear among and often overlapping among different WASH government institutions. There is no harmonized and coordinated legal, regulatory and policy frameworks in place, and the policies and acts in place remain draft form and are inconsistent with implementation, monitoring and evaluation frameworks. There is an Inter-ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) but this still lacks legitimacy to govern and capacity to coordinate the WASH stakeholders in Somalia due to scarce funding and gaps in acts and regulations.

With most WASH activities being donors funded, implementing agencies do report to donors mostly using the donor requirement guideline. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the WASH cluster meetings were suspended from March, 2020 to August 2020 impacting on WASH program coordination and its accountability. COVID-19 has also impaired the quarterly meetings of Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) which since the pandemic, has not met whether physical or virtual. As revealed by the study survey, only 4 out of 15 respondents were partner with SWA. The participants of the validation workshop have recommended the followings:

- Strengthening the legitimacy of existing Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) to effectively coordinate WASH stakeholders in Somalia and develop contextualized mutual accountability mechanism.
- Establish inter-sectorial steering committee under the (IMWSC) so all stakeholders can benefit from the coordination of the IMWSC (The IMWSC representatives are only from government institutions so it is very important to create sector level committee that insures coordination and accountability among all stakeholders).
- Continue to develop WASH acts and regulations that will help shape accountability mechanisms among WASH stakeholders in Somalia.
- Define the role of different government WASH stakeholders to avoid overlapping in terms of roles and activities.
- Advocate through civil society organisations for increased and sustainable allocations of national funding for WASH.
- Support the government WASH institutions through building its human resource, management systems and financing.



- Build the capacity of urban municipalities to provide adequate and quality WASH services to the community.
- Increase the awareness of mutual accountability among government institutions.

Introduction

Due to the protracted civil war in Somalia since the collapse of central government in 1991, much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed, including water and sanitation systems (WASH) (1). Government institutions are being rebuilt but remain weak, and the country still depends on donor assistance and in an emergency mode seeking to mainly provide life-saving access.

As per the Population Estimation Survey that was conducted in 2014, the total population in Somalia is 12.3 million with half of them (42%) live in urban areas and almost a quarter (23%) lives in rural areas. The nomadic population constituted 26% and the internally displaced persons accounted for 9% of the population.

According to WHO-UNICEF joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) 2019 –SDG report, access to the basic and clean water supply in Somalia remains low with only 52%, 28% in rural areas and 83% in urban areas (2). Similarly, access to sanitation facilities is very poor in Somalia. As reported by JMP, only 38% of Somali people have access to basic sanitation facilities, 20% rural and 61% urban, with 28% people defecating in open, 49% in rural and 1% in urban (2). Similarly, access to the basic hygiene services in Somalia is extremely low with 10%, 8% in rural areas and 12% in urban areas.

WASH was a priority area in the Governments' National Development plan (NDP) 2017-2019 under the Social and Human Capital Development pillar. The NDP 2017-2019 aimed to increase coverage of safe drinking water supply and access to sanitation facilities to 63 and 70% respectively (4). Progress reports towards achieving these national WASH targets are not available yet. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has included WASH in the National Development Plan nine (NDP9) for 2020-2024 with the aim of providing safe drinking water and sanitation services to the vulnerable populations (5).

In 2015, the Federal Government of Somalia established an Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) chaired by the Ministry of Energy and Water Resource (MoEWR) and with membership of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water and Energy Resources, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Planning and UNICEF. It is the only government-led multi-stakeholder mechanism to coordinate the WASH program in Somalia, however, it remains un-resourced hampering its ability to manage the sector effectively.

There are critical capacity gaps in terms of human resource, management structures and accountability in Somali WASH sector. The roles and responsibilities are not clear and often overlapping between different government actors in WASH. The responsible institutions of water resource management and water supply are not clearly defined due to the absence of national level water codes and laws. Similarly, the sanitation and hygiene services are not well structured at institutional level. The department of Public Health at the Federal Ministry of Health is often the designated government counterpart but has little means to coordinate and lead. Sanitation



services at urban level is the responsibility of the local municipal authorities but in practice these authorities believe that role is limited to mainly liquid waste management (and sewerage does not exist at all), and solid waste management. This leaves a gap in management of on-site sanitation which is the practice of around 99% of urban residents (4).

The key actors in the Somali WASH sector are (MoEWR), (MoH), humanitarian organisation such as the United Nation Organisations (UN), International Non-Government organisations (INGOs), Local Non-Government Organisations (LNGOs), private sector and civil society organisations. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), WASH ranks number 4 on top funded sector in Somalia with 31.6 million in 2020. The top 5 donors that contribute to the humanitarian response plan in Somalia are the United States of America, Germany, European Commission, and The United Kingdom, Central Emergency Response Fund with 450 million (55.5%), 75.5 million (9.1%), 71.1million (8.6%), 38 million (4.6%), 29.5% (3.6%) respectively (7). According to the 2020 approved government budget by the Federal Government of Somalia, 9,350,466 million was allocated to the Ministry of Health while 3,373,552 million was allocated to the ministry of water and energy (Previously ministry of energy and water resource management), the two most prominent WASH government institutions in Somalia (8). This clearly defines how the WASH sector is under resourced at government level.

Due to the emergency context and fragmented and weak government-led WASH institutions, the sector is coordinated by an emergency structure, the Somali WASH cluster. The coordination of WASH programs at national, state, regional and district level is managed and ensured by Somali WASH cluster. Although the capacity and engagement of government institutions is getting better, the cluster is mainly dominated by NGOs with funding from the Somalia Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF). As March 2020, The Federal Ministry of Health –Somalia has officially confirmed the first case of COVID-19. A total of 4726 cases were reported since the eruption of the pandemic with 3639 of recovery cases and 130 deaths. The pandemic reached its peak in May, 2020; however, the daily confirmed cases have declined in recent months, but over the risk of the pandemic remains high (9). COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to essential humanitarian WASH services nationwide. The impact of COVID-19 has also affected the capacity of WASH Cluster partners to maintain essential water, sanitation and hygiene service provision while these are essential to the prevention and control of the pandemic in communities and health facilities (10). As result, the immediate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has a disproportionate impacted on vulnerable populations in Somalia such as person with disabilities, internally displaced person (IDPs), the elderly and poor people (5). Thus, Covid-19 has increased the interruption in WASH response activities to Somali population who was already by pre-COVID-19 humanitarian situations.

Somalia became an SWA partner in 2019. The government is represented by the Ministry of Health in the partnership. The country has developed a national WASH Policy and a Strategy Plan to be open defecation free by 2030. Both the policy and plan have been translated into local languages for adoption at the local level. The commitments by the government are the following:

- Develop national WASH policy and finalize, then approve at cabinet level by 2019 (This policy was developed but not approved by the cabinet).
- Develop and finalize Somali WASH sector strategy plan with M&E Framework by 2020



(this document is still under review).

- Translate into local language for CLTS Protocol and adopt across the country by 2019
(This document has been translated into local language).

According to SWA engagement in Somalia, 4 (four) out of 15 surveyed organisations had formal partnership with SWA.

Methodology

This rapid study sought to engage as participants the key WASH actors in Somalia with potential to drive change and act on the results. The main data collection methods were literature review, mapping stakeholders, online survey, key informative interviews and a validation workshop.

The overall research questions are included in **Box 1**.

Box 1: Research questions for the study

1. What coordination mechanisms are in place to coordinate between stakeholders in the WASH sector(s) and encourage joint progress to achieve SDG 6 and national plans?
2. What are the most important accountability mechanisms in the country that influence WASH actors at national level?
3. What has changed with respect to coordination and accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Is participation in the SWA MAM – as one of those accountability mechanisms - contributing to mutual accountability in the country?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, the study teams has followed the following phase:

- Phase 1: Document review

The country study team reviewed key documents on the WASH sector in Somalia. The study team reviewed key WASH documents to find information about status of WASH sector in Somalia, existence of multi-stakeholder collaboration in WASH sector, existence of accountability mechanisms and the impact of COVID-19 on WASH sector.



- **Phase 2: Mapping stakeholders**
The study team identified 25 key WASH stakeholders that have potential impact on making WASH decisions in Somalia. The mapping of these stakeholders was facilitated by the focal point of WASH section at the Federal Ministry of Health and Co-lead of WASH cluster in Somalia. The stakeholders were mainly International and local organisation, government institutions, learning and research institutions and civil society organisations.
- **Phase 3: Survey**
The study team shared an online survey with the focal points of mapped stakeholders and received 15 responses. The survey questions included General information on the organisation responding to the survey, monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms in WASH in the country, engagement with the Sanitation and Water for all partnership and the Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM).
- **Phase 4: Key informative interview**
The study team conducted seven key informant interviews (KII). Including government institutions, consultancy firm, Somali WASH cluster, International Non-Government organisation and civil society organisation. The KII interviews sought to obtain more in-depth information on the functioning and effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder mechanism relevant for WASH, how (mutual) accountability works in WASH (meaning mainly accountability between national actors), the impact of COVID on accountability and the stakeholders experience with the country's involvement in the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership, particularly the SWA Mutual Accountability Mechanisms (MAM).
- **Validated workshop**
The study team has organized validated workshop on December 5, 2020 at 4 to 5.30 PM and invited it to WASH actor in Somalia. The workshop was conducted virtually through Zoom with 8 participants. The purpose of the workshop was to present the preliminary finding of the study to be valid and seek more recommendations to strengthen the accountability in the sector.

Findings

Multi-stakeholder collaboration in WASH

- The two national government institutions that govern the WASH sector in Somalia are the Federal Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) and the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH). There is overlap on responsibilities of the two institutions and weak coordination between them. The MoWE mainly focus on water accessibility to all Somali Population and the MoH focus on delivering safe drinking water and promotion of hygiene and sanitation.
- The country now has Inter-ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) chaired by Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) with membership of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Planning and UNICEF. It is ministerial level platform that coordinate the WASH activities through quarterly meetings. As a ministerial government platform, the IMWSC has no representatives from other stakeholders such



as INGOs, LNGOS, civil society organisations and R&L institutions. Apart from UNICEF support, however, it has no government allocated budget, so it lacks the legitimacy, and relies on UNICEF funding.

- As introduced, the country's WASH sector is still operating under an emergency situation. As result, the cluster is only platform that practically coordinates WASH activities in Somalia. The cluster is not funding agency rather it is advocacy and coordination agency. It is a platform that raises the WASH needs to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
- The National WASH cluster is chaired by UNICEF and it has co-chair which has to be Somali National working with one of member organisations to facilitate the coordination between actors. Currently the co-chair of national WASH cluster is working with Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH). That means PAH co-leads UNICEF with national WASH cluster. The National WASH cluster has also 13 regional WASH cluster organisations with focal point per each. Moreover, it has district lead agency. Through that that structure, the cluster ensures the coordination and the communication among the stakeholders.
- The organisations in the National WASH cluster are mainly humanitarian organisations such as UN organisations, INGOS, LNGOs and the private sector. Civil Society and research and learning organisations have very limited role and involvement on decision regarding with WASH sector in Somalia; national research and learning institutions such as universities has no or less representative in the WASH cluster, similarly, the civil society organisations are also not active in the WASH sector in Somalia. In contrast, the private water supply has active role in WASH cluster; they disclosure their challenges in proving adequately and safe drinking water at the cluster monthly meetings.
- The water supply in urban areas of Somalia such Mogadishu which is the capital and the populated city in Somalia is ensured and granted by the private water supply companies.
- The cluster is a platform that ensures the coordination of WASH response to avoid duplication of response in terms of services and location. If the organisation changes its plan due to overlapping of its activities with their peers in the cluster then it has to report to the cluster in the next meeting for further guiding.
- Its coordination happens through monthly meeting of its regional focal points. The minute of the monthly meeting is published publicly by the national cluster through its website or OCHA website.
- The cluster topics of the monthly meeting include but no limited to, country WASH needs, updates of ongoing activities per organisation, if there are challenges regarding with program implementation, update about any disaster and conflicts in a particularly region. The agenda of the monthly meetings are always jointly developed by regional clusters and the national cluster.
- The national cluster meeting is chaired by UNICEF, but the regional cluster meetings are organized by the focal point organisations. The monthly meetings are a regional level and the minute of each regional meeting is shared with the National WASH cluster. The regional cluster are the ones who always circulate the agenda of the meeting and then



share the validated minutes by the partners with the national wash cluster and they send it to the OCHA.

The national WASH cluster publishes the minutes in OCHA website: (<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/water-sanitation-hygiene>), so everyone can look at it.

- The civil society organisations in Somalia are not more humanitarian affiliated instead they are more political affiliated. They attend the cluster meetings; however, their contribution is not visible among WASH stakeholders. The civil society organisations are busier to address the conflicts and challenges between Somali Clans so they have or no times to participate in WASH cluster.
- The role of government in the WASH cluster is limited to attending the meetings.

Accountability mechanisms in WASH sector

- The country has no government-led institution that leads the monitoring and reporting the progress of SDG6 and defined WASH targets defined by the National Development Plan Nine (NDP92020-2024) led by the government nor National Development plan of 2017-2020. Therefore, the source of data that government use its decision regarding with WASH is assessment and reports conducted by International none-government organisations (INGOs), UN organisation and humanitarian response organisations.
- The accountability mechanism used by WASH clusters– the main operational platform engaging a mix of stakeholders across the sector and country - is monthly meetings. Usually, the minute meeting of National WASH cluster produces action points to be applied by each concerned organisation. If the action points are not implemented by the respective organisation, then they report back why they don't implement it in the next meeting minutes. If the reason why the organisation did not implement the action points is over its control then it will be justified, however, if the reason is another thing or something cannot be understood by the cluster then the organisation will be accountable to the funding donor.
- The role of WASH cluster is just to raise any problem with donor. The role of cluster includes ensuring there are no overlapping activities in the implementation sites. The donor is the only one who can ensure accountable of the implementer if they don't deliver results.
- The reach of government in ensuring the accountability of WASH implementing organisations a limited supervisory role. When an implementing organisation receives any project financing from a donor, they have to meet the relevant government institution and discuss with them on their project to get it approved for implementation of their programs. Once they get approved their projects then they have to report the progress of their activities to the government. So, the role of the government is to monitor whether the agreed activities are implemented or not. However, the drawback is that this process is not something written in paper in a transparent way.
- In terms of WASH implemented activities by WASH government institutions such as



Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water and Energy, the Audit General office at the Federal Government Requires clear statements about any implemented project with detail on project donor, contract, allocated budget, and timeframe. This procedure now active in all government institutions.

COVID and its impacts on collaboration and accountability in WASH

- COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to essential humanitarian WASH services nationwide. The impact of COVID-19 has also affected the capacity of WASH Cluster partners to maintain essential water, sanitation and hygiene service provision while these are essential to the prevention and control of the pandemic in communities and health facilities (10). As result, the immediate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has a disproportionate impacted on vulnerable populations in Somalia such as person with disabilities, internally displaced person (IDPs), and the elderly and poor people. On other hand, COVID-19 was an opportunity to introduce the importance of hand washing and hygiene practices. Hand wash kits were distributed at the public institutions, public streets, schools, universities. Awareness message on hand washing as preventive measure against COVID-19 was released in all Somali media.
- The Hormuud telecommunication - The most population mobile telecommunication in Somalia- has freely set up a voice about COVID-19 preventive measure including hand washing practice awareness on the cell phone of every person so if you call someone you will hear that voice until the person picks up the phone. This has increased the importance of hygiene and hand washing.
- COVID-19 has also impaired the quarterly meetings of Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC). According to the KII, since the pandemic, IMWSC has not held any meeting whether physical or virtual.

National engagement in the Sanitation and Water for All partnership

- SWA partnered with the Federal Ministry of Health only in April 2019 so there is only a short period of time in the collaboration. Since then, its engagement was very active. The country has SWA national focal point. Moreover, SWA has also partnered with School of Public Health and Research at Somali National University on December 2019 so it also has focal point for Academia in Somalia. This partnership has allowed increasing the understanding of MAM in WASH in Somalia. As revealed by the study survey, only 4 (four) out of 15 respondents were partner with SWA.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Somali WASH infrastructure is very weak due to the prolonged civil erupted in 1991 and destroyed the country's WASH system including its regulation and acts. Currently, the country has no government multi-stakeholders' mechanism the reports the progress toward SDG6. There is Inter-Ministerial WASH steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Water and Energy, but it lacks the legitimacy and funding to effective coordinate the WASH stakeholders. The only



government level institutions that active works in the WASH sector are the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water and Energy (previously Ministry Energy and Water Resource Management). Both have very small budget from the federal government with 9million and 3 million respectively and that hampers their capacity to provide coordination and accountability among WASH stakeholders. As result, WASH coordination is ensured by WASH cluster which is humanitarian based coordination. The participants of the validation workshop of this study have recommended:

- Strengthening the legitimacy of existing Inter-Ministerial WASH Steering Committee (IMWSC) to effectively coordinate WASH stakeholders in Somalia and develop contextualized mutual accountability mechanism.
- Establish inter-sectorial steering committee under the (IMWSC) so all stakeholders can benefit from the coordination of the IMWSC (The IMWSC representatives are only from government institutions so it is very import to create sector level committee that insures coordination and accountability among all stakeholders).
- Continue to develop WASH acts and regulations that will help shape accountability mechanisms among WASH stakeholders in Somalia.
- Define the role of different government WASH stakeholders to avoid overlapping in terms of roles and activities.
- Advocate through civil society organisations for increased and sustainable allocations of national funding for WASH.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I thank to Allah (god) for allowing me to implement the commitment that I had with the IRC -WASH organisation and Sanitation and Water For all organisation (SWA). After that, I would like to thank IRC and SWA for choosing the Somali National University School of Public Health and Research as an implementing partners for this important research project. I am really honored to lead and coordinate such a project. My deep gratitude goes to my study team; **Dr. Liban Hassan** and **Mr. Anas Abdulkadir** for their flexibility and hardworking during the study period. I also thank to both Focal Points of WASH at the Federal Ministry of Health **Mr. Abdirizak Mohamed Yusuf** and the focal point of Water at the Federal Ministry of Water and Energy **Mr. Ali Gure** for their support and linking up me with the key WASH actors in Somalia. My gratitude also goes to Co-lead of WASH cluster for providing me rich information about the sector. Special thanks go to my sweet wife **Dr. Nawal Abdulkadir** and to my two babies for their psychological support and encouragement during the study.

Finally, I would like to thank Mrs. Erma Uytewaal and Mr. John Butterworth for their proper guidance, supervisory, encouragement, flexibility, and kindness during the study period.

Thank you all.



Annexes

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Overview of organisations involved

1. Federal Ministry of Health and Human Services
2. Federal Ministry of Energy and Water Resource
3. Polish Humanitarian action
4. Somali WASH cluster
5. Medair
6. UNICEF
7. IOM
8. Concern World Wide
9. WARDI organization
10. DRC



11. Save the Children
12. ARC
13. SOPHPA
14. ACF
15. IMC
16. NRC
17. Hijra
18. CESVI
19. Farjano Company
20. Somali Community Concern
21. International Medical Corpse
22. Women and Child Care
23. Empowering Vulnerable Society Org. EVSO
24. Faculty of agriculture, Somalia National University
25. Somali Water partnership