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## **Mogadishu: Strategic Analysis of the Post-disaster Urban Environmental Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

Since the collapse of the government of Siad Barre in 1991, the land and marine resources of Somalia have been systematically exploited by a multitude of local and foreign agencies with the single purpose of maximising profits regardless of the environmental consequences (Adam-Bradford, 2014). Such exploitation is also having profound impacts in urban areas, particularly the capital Mogadishu, once famed for its Islamic architectural heritage and home to the oldest mosques on the East African coastline (Adam-Bradford, 2012). More pressing is the fact that in Mogadishu you are never far from an AK47, which is a constant reminder of the volatile security situation that persists throughout the city (Adam-Bradford, 2012). Furthermore, Mogadishu faces multiple forms of environmental contamination and degradation across the city. Some cases warrant urgent further investigation and risk quantification, while in other cases there is need for the immediate development of appropriate urban policies along with local strategies for district interventions. During a UN-Habitat coordinated project, data was collected using qualitative methods including field observations, site assessments, group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. From this investigation the environmental challenges were grouped into land contamination (7x types) and land degradation (6 types) (Adam-Bradford, 2013).

In the context of the current environmental risks, a failure to act now will only result in further irreversible environmental damage along with more deadly outbreaks of communicable diseases, such as the 2013 polio outbreak. Over time the emergence of non-communicable disease such as upper respiratory tract infections and various environmentally-related cancers are likely to further exacerbate public health in Mogadishu (Adam-Bradford, 2013). Even current reconstruction and recovery are contributing to land degradation as large-scale sand extraction is

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taking place at unprecedented rates in the coastal and peri-urban areas to feed an unregulated reconstruction boom as entrepreneurs rebuild the urban centre after two-decades of urban destruction (Adam-Bradford, 2014). One clear and cross-cutting policy arena is that of urban disaster risk reduction which could already be used to tackle the immediate environmental and public health risks while also addressing issues of longer-term urban resilience that also include urban policies for climate change resilience and low-carbon urban development. Finally, it must be noted that in the current ministry structures what is lacking is an independent state institute with the task of environmental monitoring and regulation enforcement such as an 'Environmental Protection Agency', which overtime could also become the lead institute for urban risk reduction (Adam-Bradford, 2013).

**Abstract Reference Number: 47**

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