

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**GARISSA COUNTY ASSEMBLY**

**SECOND COUNTY ASSEMBLY – THIRD SESSION**

**REPORT**

**OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIROMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**ON THE VISIT TO DADAAB AND FAFI SUB-COUNTIES TO ASSESS  
THE EXTENT OF ENVIROMENTAL DEGRADATION.**

Clerk's Chambers,  
County Assembly Buildings,  
P.O.BOX 57-70100,  
**GARISSA.**  
November, 2019

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*County Assembly committee on Environment and Natural Resources, 2019*

*Prepared by Abdullahi Hassan Osman*

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMCA	Environmental Management and coordination act
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
KRCS	Kenya Red Cross Society
FAIDA	Fafi Integrated Development Association
RRDO	Relief Reconstruction Development Organization
ICU	Intensive Care Unit

## **COMMITTEE MANDATE**

### **Honorable Speaker,**

The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources was constituted on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 during the First Session of the Second County Assembly (2<sup>nd</sup>) pursuant to provisions of Standing Orders 191 (1). The Committee executes its mandate in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 191 from which it draws its mandate to do the following;

1. Investigate, inquire into and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned department.
2. Study the Programme and policy objectives of the department and the effectiveness of implementation;
3. Study, assess and analyze the relative success of the department as measured by the results obtained as compared with the stated objectives;
4. Investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned department as they may deem necessary, and as be referred to them by the County Assembly;
5. Make reports and recommendations to the County Assembly as often as possible, including recommendation of proposed legislation.

### **Hon speaker sir,**

The Committee on Environment and Energy comprises of the

1.) Hon.Abdirahman Idriss	Chairperson
2.) Hon.Halima Hussein Gure	Member
3.) Hon.Hussein Ahmed	Member
4.) Hon. Ali Abdullahi Gure	Member
5.) Hon., Rukia Mohamed	Member
6.) Hon.Osman Hussein	Member
7.) Hon.Quen Teresa	Member
8.) Hon.Gini Dagane	Member
9.) Hon.Hassan kuno Omar	Member
10.) Hon.Fatuma Horror	Member

- |                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| 11.) Hon. Mohamud Abass Bulale | Member |
| 12.) Hon. Hassan Ismail        | Member |
| 13.) Mohamed Siyat             | Member |

**Hon Speaker,**

The Committee takes this opportunity to thank the Offices of the Speaker and the Clerk of the County Assembly for the logistical support accorded to it during the visit to the Refugee Camps. The Committee is also grateful to the media for their coverage of the proceedings of the Committee, thus creating awareness on the dangers caused by degrading the environment experienced at the Refugee Camps.

Further, I wish to express my appreciation to the Honourable Members of the Committee who traded off their time to participate the visit undertaken by the Committee.

Special appreciation also goes to the secretariat to the Committee who on several occasions had to go beyond the normal call of duty.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Members and the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, its therefore my pleasure to present to this Assembly, the Committees report on the visit to Dadaab and Fafi Sub-Counties to assess the extent of environmental degradation.

Signed:

Hon: Abdirahman Mohamed Idriss

Chair: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

## **BAGROUND**

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

Kenya is home to an estimated 250,000 refugees who live in Dadaab refugee Camp. The role of providing basic services and protection to the refugees is shared by UNHCR, humanitarian NGO'S and the host Government. The vast Majority of refugees in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee complex, rely on the immediate surrounding environment to meet their everyday needs that range from firewood, shelter materials, water and waste disposal.

The Government's refugee encampment policy, coupled with the harsh climatic conditions, provide a daunting challenge in management of the environment in the Dadaab refugee camp complex and its environs.

These camps are located in an ecologically fragile area classified as arid, with a mean annual rainfall of 325 mm falling in a bimodal pattern, often in isolated heavy downpours. The climate is hot and dry with high rates of vapor-transpiration, interspersed with occasional flooding in poorly drained areas.

Dadaab is the area that has, since camp inception in 1991, been hosting an average population of 300,000 refugees and over 50,000 members of the host community.

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Potential for degradation of the environment is thus real and to forestall this, UNHCR has been operating an environmental management program since 1993.

There is an urgent need for safe and sustainable extraction of these natural resources that would allow refugees and host communities to coexist in harmony with the environment.

Further women and children foraging the bushes for firewood and shelter materials often find themselves at the mercy of marauding thugs hell-bent on raping them.

The refugee agency works closely with local environmental agencies namely Faida and RRDO who serve, restore and rebuild the environment. The support organizations are called the implementing agencies.

Dadaab is located in Garissa County and constitute the largest refugee camp complex. The increase of the refugees has increased the use of natural resources and hence raised concerns on environment management in dadaab, kambios and ifo 2 refugee camps.

## **JUSTIFICATION OF THE VISIT**

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The Visit was triggered by the fact that the refugee camps in Kenya are getting swelling numbers of refugees from the neighboring countries particularly Somali. The realization that there is limited land for expansions hence competition for the scarce resources available, with the objectives of analyzing the impact of refugee settlements on the environment.

Establishing the extent of environmental degradation in settled areas, ascertain host community awareness on dangers posed on the environment by human settlement and suggesting the way forward on the management of natural resources in refugee hosting areas.

More so, the host communities' outcry on the depleted natural resources causing dangers to both their life's and that of their animals since the habitat host are pastoralist.

Additionally, lack of sufficient funds contributed to the closure of the two camps; Kambios and Ifo two. The status at which it was left immensely contributed negatively towards well-being of the environment at the said Camps.

The Visit found that natural resources around the refugee camps have been declining every year due to influx of the refugees in the area who compete for the meager resources with the locals without replacing them. This spells doom to the community due to depletion of the resources which mainly support their life.

Environmental deterioration of surrounding environment generates impacts on the refugees and local populations. In absence of mitigating measures, the economic, social, and public health impacts on these populations can be devastating.

The impact of environmental deterioration on the refugees themselves is intense. Low-quality water affects the health of large numbers of people, in a situation where there is a high risk of infectious diseases multiplying rapidly.

Deforestation gradually forces women and children to walk further for wood, putting women in particular in danger of physical assault. Children may have to miss school to help; cooking time is shortened, and drinking water not boiled. Refugees may have to sell part of their food rations in order to obtain the fuel needed to cook the remainder, contributing to increased levels of malnutrition.

Host populations also experience a similar deterioration in the quality of their environment, so that normally available materials and supplies for construction, consumption and fuel are short, and prices for fuel and food in local markets rise. Tensions inevitably result, since host populations are currently made to bear many of the costs of the arrival of refugees in their area without immediate compensation.

Mr. Speaker Sir,



The visit entailed; meeting with the UNHCR officials in order to ascertain the situation on the ground in respect to environment and what they did to rehabilitate, site visit to kambios, Ifo 2 and encountered the following as the most degraded resources experienced at the refugee camps;

The Committee in pursuit of protocol and norms of a Government entity first meet with the UNHCR officials in Dadaab before paying visit to the Camps and this is what the agency told the Committee in respect to the theme of the visit;



meeting with UNHCR officials in Dadaab

## **1. RESTORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

That, in a bid to Restore the degraded sites, UNHCR did clean-up of the Closed Camps and Land Scape rehabilitation where Jointly with the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), at Kambios (250 ha.) and Ifo 2 (1,000 ha.) as well as sanitary backfilling of 16,000 pit latrines.

Over the last two years, 90 hectares of land have been rehabilitated through establishment of green belts over the same period, 34 ha. Of orchards and demonstration farms, where both refugee and host communities have access to products, were established. A paradigm shift has already been adopted to link environmental restoration with livelihoods through establishment of orchards and introduction of bee-keeping in the mature green-belts.

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## **2. PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT**

Environment education, awareness raising, enforcement, Impact Assessments & Audits was done where School based Environmental clubs are supported through the KRCS (10); RRDO (3) and FaIDA (6) in Dagahaley, Ifo and Hagardera camps respectively. Environmental awareness is achieved through mobilization of communities to celebrate designated calendar days such as the International Day of Forests and World Environment Day.

Surveillance and enforcement measures to deter wanton destruction of vegetation and poor disposal of solid & liquid wastes are mounted regularly jointly by the government and humanitarian agencies.

Compliance with environmental regulations, such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Audits, as prescribed by the government, is a key hallmark of the Dadaab operation.

## **3. PROMOTION OF CLEAN, AFFORDABLE AND RENEWABLE SOURCE OF ENERGY**

Pilot initiatives in the continued search for affordable and sustainable sources of cooking energy are supported. Within this context, 1,182 house-holds have been introduced to bio-ethanol fuel while 1,100 ethanol stoves were distributed to households and are expected to procure the fuel from the commercial dealers in Dadaab town.

Similarly, 407 house-holds have been exposed to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Harnessing of solar energy for household & street lighting has also been undertaken with encouraging results.

## **4. PROMOTION OF FUELWOOD SAVING COOKING STOVES**

UNHCR supports a fuelwood saving stove fabrication facility with a production capacity of 9,000 units of the Ceramic Improved (Maendeleo) cooking stove per year.

The stove can be fired with all forms of dry biomass materials (firewood, animal dung, maize cobs and stalk, cotton stalk, grass, wood shavings, macadamia nut shells, briquettes etc.) and has a fuelwood efficiency of between 30% and 45%.

This has ensured coverage of 53% of households with the equipment.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

To the Contrary, this is what the Committee witnessed in the said Camps particularly, in Kambios where total environmental degradation was seen in terms of improper land cleaning after the closure of the Camp, back-filling of over ten thousand pit latrines which was not done as said, deforestation, bio-diversity loss, water degradation, improper waste disposals and population growth which immensely contributed to vast of activities crowned to degrade the Environment.

## **1). DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION**

The level of deforestation witnessed by the Committee was shocking and unless serious intervention is embarked on, the County is headed for serious environmental consequences which will affect not only the two Sub-Counties hosting the refugees, but the County at large.

The Committee witnessed huge amount of fire wood stored for long time purposely to sell to the one of the agencies under the program of buying fire wood for refugees as source of Energy for Cooking and this escalated the situation.

The Committee established that, the refugees cut down trees mainly for two reasons and these include;

a) **For constructing shelter,**

UNHCR provides the refugees with tents only for shelter which has short durability since the scorching sun and strong winds are very strong and within a very short time the tents become torn.



b) **Refugees are given only dry cereals.**

This forced them to search for compliments to make the food edible and hence cut down trees to make firewood which they sell to get money for vegetables and milk. Refugees are not provided with sources of power to cook or use for other purposes hence depend on firewood from nearby forests which are already over stretched leading to desertification.

## **2). BIODIVERSITY LOSS**

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

The loss of biodiversity has been attributed in particular to human overpopulation, continued human growth and overconsumption of natural resources as the case in Dadaab and its environs.

The implications of these losses for human livelihoods and wellbeing have raised serious concerns, soil organisms and wild food species, are in decline as a consequence of the destruction and degradation of habitats, overexploitation,

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pollution and other threats Caused as a result of refugee settlement and abandonment in the case of Kambios and Ifo 2 Camps.

### **3). WATER DEGRADATION.**

One major component of environmental degradation is the depletion of the resource of fresh water on Earth. Fresh water is an exceptionally important resource, since life on Earth is ultimately dependent on it.

Water transports nutrients, minerals and chemicals within the biosphere to all forms of life, sustains both plants and animals, and molds the surface of the Earth with transportation and deposition of materials.

Water scarcity is an increasing problem due to many foreseen issues in the future including population growth, increased urbanization, higher standards of living, climate change, and increased groundwater pumping due to the refugees use and this caused declines in the water table in these camps; Dadaab, Kambios, Hagardera and Ifo2 and its environs where the host Communities live.

The sudden increase in the demand for water in the refugee camps and settlements may create water shortages for both the refugees and the host communities that need to be quantified for adopting the most appropriate resilient measures. This will ultimately cause a latitudinal variation in water distribution.

Groundwater reserves will be depleted, and the remaining water has a greater chance of being of poor quality from saline or contaminants on the land surface.

### **4.) POPULATION GROWTH**

The human population in the Refugee Camps is expanding rapidly which goes hand in hand with the degradation of the environment at large measures. Humanity's appetite for needs is disarranging the environment's natural equilibrium.

An increased population means increased withdrawals from the water supply for domestic use by both the Refugees and the Host Communities. The largest of these being agriculture and is believed to be the major non-climate driver of environmental change and water deterioration.

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Population increase since the arrival of Refugees in these Camps has also been accompanied by a shift to an increase in urban areas from rural areas by the host communities.

This brought about serious demand and competition for the scarce resources as water and pasture and hence conflict between the Host Communities and the Refugees, while taking the environment to the utmost risks and degradation in terms of foliage cover, ground water depletion, spread of diseases and acute malnutrition among people living in and around the Camps.

This causes overcrowding and increasingly unsanitary living conditions, which in turn exposes an increasingly number of people to disease, lack of access to sanitary water and sewer systems, giving rises to disease and deaths from contaminated water and increased numbers of disease-carrying insects.

## **5.) WASTE MANAGEMENT AND SANITATION**

The Committee established that both the refugee Camps and Staff residential areas, UNHCR and partner organization dispose both solid and liquid waste haphazardly into the surroundings of the host Community.

In particular, the Committee established that the there was deposit of sewerage waste along the water ways which lead up to Egey dam posing dangers to both the pastoral host Communities and their livestock as this is the water point for both and causing air pollution to the residents adjacent to it.



The Committee was shocked with the level of irresponsibility portrayed by UNHCR and the implementing agencies operating in the two Sub-Counties which host the refugees and the department of Public Health.



Sewerage waste poured haphazardly in Dadaab

## **STATUS IN KAMBIOS**

The opening of Kambios Camp in Fafi Sub-County where environmental impact assessment was done under the environmental management and coordination act (EMCA) 1999 and the environment(EIA)regulation2013.

The assessment results were made public to all stakeholders and to UNHCR and stated that, the potential environmental impact of the proposed new Camp was considered high and yet the Camp was opened. This contributed the extent of environmental degradation currently experienced in the Camp even after the closure of the said Camp.

The Committee visited Kambios and Ifo 2 Refugee Camps, where the voluntary repatriation of the refugees leads the closure of these Camps and left the area with raft of environmental concerns leading to serious degradation.

The committee established the presence of over 10,000 pit latrines which was not back-filled posing dangers to the animals and host communities, more so, during these rainy seasons, water from the rain may carry the human waste in these latrines and cause serious outbreak of diseases such as Cholera.





## PIT LATRINES NOT BACK-FILLED



It was prudent enough for the agencies to do through land cleaning after the closer of the camp. The remains of the shanties and the clothing's including all the concretes which were used to lay foundation for the toilets and the metallic fittings were left open posing dangers to the locals.

The committee established that buildings which were un attended to such as Schools, Hospitals leading to cracks and eventual fall resulting wastage of resources if not taken care of well.

There were nineteen (19) watchmen guarding the handed over camp, seven employed by the Kenya red cross while 12 by the County Government but with all these personnel, the schools did not have single desk and most of the classes had no gates a sign of vandalized equipment's and instructional materials.

Likewise, the Hospitals and the water boreholes were showing total signs of neglect and wastage of resources was rampant if intervention measures are not put in place by the County Government.



Kambios primary

kambios hospital



### **STATUS IN IFO 2 CAMP**

In this Camp the situation was slightly different from that of Kambios, in that, it only had quite number of pit latrines which were not properly back filled.

The Committee established that quite commendable actions have being undertaken in this Camp among them being;

Environmental restorative measure being done such as by use of drip irrigation the Kenya Red Cross as implementing agency planted fruits in the abandoned area of settlement by the refugees.

Program by the name ORCHRAD, meaning farming purposely for fruit trees was done. This acts as a restorative measure and empowerment to locals and the remaining refugee's economy.



MANGOES



GUAVA





Banana trees

Additionally, PIVOT farming was witnessed by the Committee which was exclusively made for grass planting and this is used for feeding the livestock and to compensate for the foliage cover which was lost during the establishment of this camp a good gesture to reckon.



PIVOT FARMING IN IFO2



PIVOT FARMING IN IFO2

The Committee established the existence of GREEN BELTS which is enclosed fenced area which is purely for planting indigenous trees.



A unique technique of conserving the forest cover was also witnessed by the Committee which is known as fencing off technique just to protect the cover.

Similarly, this Camp had many abandoned structures such as two story building school and one an equivalent to level five hospital in the camp.



Ifo2 secondary school

The Hospital was well equipped with one laboratory, modern operating theater, Male ward, Female ward, pediatric section, Maternity, ICU and out-patient wing this facility was mannered by Kenya Red Cross Society.



ifo2 hospital



ifo2 ward (female)



The Visit therefore concluded that refugee influx i.e. high population density, new arrivals and existing population, extent of environmental degradation i.e. soil erosion, waste disposal, overgrazing, cutting of indigenous trees for fire wood and for construction of shelter for the refugees, haphazard settlement and level of community awareness through training and information session are impacts of refugee settlement on the environment.

## Committee findings

1. The committee established that there was serious deforestation and this could lead to desertification.

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2. The committee found that there was over ten thousand pit latrines which was not properly back filled posing dangers to both the grazing animals and the human beings residing around the closed camps.
3. Proper land cleaning was not done after the closure of the Camps and especially the one of Kambios and this is recipe for environmental hazards.
4. The committee found that there were institutions such as Schools, Hospitals and water projects which were left un attended and not used at all since the closure of the camps.eg in ifo two camp, there was an equivalent to level 5 hospital which was fully equipped handed over to the Government but staying idle without being used by any one.
5. The committee found that the waste from the camps and the UNHCR staff quarters is haphazardly poured in to an adjacent water way in Dadaab leading to one Egey Dam which is a source of water for animals and people around that locality posing dangers of water borne diseases and spread of cholera.

### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Proper back-filling of the pit latrines be done to curb spread of diseases and avoid death of animals drowning into the holes.
2. Afforestation be done by empowering the local NGO'S such as FAIDA and RRDO to act as restorative measures for the depleted forest cover.
3. Proper Land cleaning of the abandoned Camps especially, Kambios to avoid environmental hazards.
4. The County Government through the relevant departments should make Proper utilization of abandoned structures such as Schools and Hospitals by putting in place policies to fully operationalize for the maximum usage by the host Communities and this reduces the burden to the already existing over-stretched hospitals and schools.
5. Proper waste disposal mechanisms be put in place by UNHCR to avoid haphazard pouring of the waste.