



UN-HABITAT

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE SOMALI REGION

BERBERA

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING



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HS/942/07E

ISBN: 978-92-113-1918-7

United Nations Human Settlements Programme publications can be obtained from UN-HABITAT Regional and Information Offices or directly from:

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Printed at UNON/Publishing Services Section/Nairobi



BERBERA

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INTRODUCTION

first steps

The city of Berbera has been undertaking, in collaboration with UN-HABITAT, a series of steps towards effective and integrated urban development:

- **a city profile**, undertaken by a team of local experts, prepared the necessary database for the Berbera City Consultation and gave the opportunity to identify and mobilize key stakeholders for the participatory planning process.
- **a city consultation** (1) built a common vision for the desired future of the city, (2) identified priority needs and related areas of strategic intervention, and (3) reached an agreement on the action plans to be implemented and on the roles of the different stakeholders concerned. This process is reflected in the Berbera Urban Pact.
>>> *more on this on page 46–48.*
- **an urban spatial analysis**, carried out by UN-HABITAT experts, gives a basic spatial understanding of the city and highlights concrete challenges and priority areas of intervention in a proposed strategic development plan.
>>> *more on this on page 44.*
- **an action plan**, agreed by the local stakeholders during the city consultation, aimed at testing and demonstrating the validity of the applied principles of strategic development planning. The projects selected involved the rehabilitation of Bursade playground.
>>> *more on this on page 50.*

objectives of the report

This document illustrates the first steps to city planning through a participatory strategic approach. It combines the results of the participatory planning process undertaken by the city of Berbera through city profiling and the city consultation, with the spatial analysis of the city developed by UN-HABITAT. The main objectives of this publication:

- **documenting the process** undertaken by Berbera Municipality using city profiling and the city consultation.
>>> *more on this on page 46*
- **recording the outcomes** of the first broad consensus on urban issues, priority urban interventions, action plans, and the urban pact.
>>> *see the 'planning strategies' section on pages 12–20*
- **introducing spatial analysis** as a tool for strategic planning.
>>> *see the 'spatial analysis' section on pages 22–33*
- **providing a comprehensive methodological tool for strategic urban planning.**
- **complementing the documentation of the process** undertaken with **teaching-learning techniques** and didactic tips for local authorities and technical persons involved in the urban development of the city.

structure of the report

- **background – the present:** general information about Berbera, the main port city of Somaliland.
- **vision – the future:** the slogan for Berbera's development, chosen by the participants of the city consultation.
- **planning strategies (for action) – building the future:** during the Berbera City Consultation, local actors highlighted basic services, urban governance, economic development, the environment, strategic planning, and urban poor and displaced population settlements as priorities to be addressed; precise operational strategies and action plans were identified in line with these priorities.
- **spatial framework – putting actions in place(s):** a spatial analysis of the city, which puts the required priority interventions into a spatial perspective.
- **desired structure – turning vision into reality:** a proposed strategic development plan for Berbera, to serve as an example and basis for discussion in the urban planning process.
- **towards implementation:** an idea of an indicative road map for the implementation of the strategies proposed by the participants of the Berbera City Consultation.
- **tables:** methodological information and further details on the urban spatial analysis, city consultation, urban pact, action plans, and additional projects implemented in Berbera.

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BACKGROUND

the present

CHRONOLOGY

1286

Berbera is mentioned for the first time by Ibn Sa'id and other Arab geographers and travellers.

around 1600

Berbera replaces Saylac as the foremost commercial and cultural centre of Islamic influence in the Horn of Africa. Known as the capital of the medieval Muslim state of Adal, Berbera remains under the authority of the sharifs of Mocha and the Ottoman Turks until 1875.

1875-1884

The city is ruled as an Egyptian protectorate. The British explorer Richard Burton describes the city as the 'true key [to] the Red Sea [and] the centre of East African traffic'.

1891-1941

After the British occupation of the north-eastern Somali region, Berbera serves as the colonial capital and the main seaport of British Somaliland until 1941, when the capital is moved to Hargeisa.

1945-1970

Soviet influence leads to improved port facilities and increases in trade.

1970-1991

Warfare destroys much of the port and the wider infrastructure of the city. Both the cement factory and the water distribution system become unusable.

from 1991 onwards

With growing political stability in Somaliland, the port of Berbera remains a key source of income for the region. Exports include sheep, goats, camels, hides, ghee, frankincense, myrrh, and gum Arabic.



Strategically located on the Gulf of Aden, Berbera is the major port of Somaliland, and one of the most important entry points for goods heading to Hargeisa and Ethiopia.

Economic recovery is inhibited by widespread destruction of the urban and industrial infrastructure and by weak governance.

Insufficient provision of basic services is one of the main problems for the local population.



population

A recent UN-HABITAT survey estimates a population of 30,000 people, including a difficult-to-verify number of displaced people. Other sources estimate a total of 70,000.

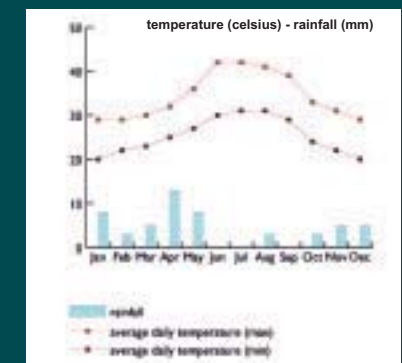
The city has seen a decrease in population over the past years, accentuated by seasonal migrations to the cooler inland cities during the hot season.

topography

Situated on the southern shores of the Gulf of Aden, Berbera sits at an average elevation of three metres above sea level. The landscape around the town is semi-desert.

climate

Berbera's climate is very hot and humid, and temperatures in the summer can approach 50° C.







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