



TAKE ACTION, SAVE THE SOMALI ENVIRONMENT

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Alexandria, VA (March 2013) – Together with the Somali Community in the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area, [Somali Environment](#) Protection Alliance Network (SEPAN) is holding its first “Show Support” one-day conference to raise awareness of the environmental degradation in the Greater Horn of Africa with focus on areas inhabited by ethnic Somalis. The event will be held on Saturday, March 23, 2013, at 5pm at the Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus.

Deforestation in Somalia has accelerated at an alarming rate since the collapse of the central government. Because of the lack of government control and regulation of industries and exports, charcoal export to oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman has become the number one export commodity.

A 2007 case study indicated that in the year 2000 total charcoal production was approximately 112,000 metric tons and was estimated to rise to 150,000 metric tons by 2005. Current estimates indicate that production has risen to more than 1,650,000 metric tons per year. Approximately 80% of this charcoal is destined for the stoves in the Gulf States, while only 20% is for domestic consumption. Saudi Arabia accounts for 80% of the charcoal exported to the Gulf countries. This relatively large-scale deforestation has led to increased soil erosion, decreased amount of land useable for agriculture and grazing, and has displaced farmers and pastoralists out of their lands as they become uninhabitable.

SEPAN was founded in 2010 to raise awareness and advocate for the protection of the Somali environment in order to foster an understanding of the consequences of the environment degradation and to promote economic development.

Read more information www.sepan.org

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