



# Energy transition mogadishu

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(SOGEA) is a not for-profit trade association, established in 2021 dedicated to facilitating the growth and development of renewable energy business in Somalia.

SOGEA is the Somalia's largest renewable energy and clean technology body, representing around 8 member companies. Join us to receive up-to-the-minute policy updates, grow your network at our industry-leading events and training courses, and influence the transition to a zero carbon economy.

The collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991 and the subsequent absence of law and order removed any restraints on tree cutting in the East African state. Businesses and individuals took their machetes to the forest and began chopping down trees indiscriminately, to use as firewood or to produce charcoal for sale and export.

According to the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, Somalia lost nearly 30% of its forest cover between 1990 and 2020, a disaster for environmentalists seeking to preserve wildlife, stem global warming and halt desertification. During much of the 2010s, says the U.N., an estimated 4.4 million trees were cut down annually in Somalia to produce some 250,000 tons of charcoal, most of it exported to Saudi Arabia and other states on the Arabian Peninsula.

The extent of the tree cutting was so alarming that in 2012, the U.N. Security Council banned the export of charcoal from Somalia. But sales by the militant group al-Shabab and individuals simply trying to make a living have continued.

According to the Somali government, traditional biomass fuels -- mainly firewood and charcoal -- account for 82% of Somalia's total energy consumption. The government acknowledges "overdependence on unsustainable energy sources" for the majority of the population.

However, in the past few years, attitudes toward deforestation have begun to change, leading some Somalis to embrace alternate sources of energy. Progress is slow, but advocates say it is being made.

"When we started importing gas, the entire city was using about 20 tons. Now we bring in 1,500 tons, so there is a marked increase," Ahmed said. He said his company now delivers gas to other towns, including Baidoa, Marka and Afgoye.

He says LPG, which is often used as a cooking fuel, has been embraced by many restaurants in the capital. The company estimates that 30 percent of restaurants now use LPG but among the general population, the use of LPG is small, no more than 8%.

Ahmed blames lack of awareness about LPG and its advantages as a clean burning, easy-to-use, cost-efficient fuel -- and one that does not strip Somalia of its tree cover.

"People who bring charcoal do that at no cost," he said. "They cut a tree that does not belong to them, they bring it to the market at \$3, and they sell it at \$10. We sell the can of gas at \$20. If people were to be shown that gas is healthier and quicker to cook, helps the climate, and prevents damage and erosion, the consumption would be greater," he said.

"We passed the awareness and training period. This time, people come to our office and they call us seeking gas service," he said. "Now a lot of trees have been spared. It could come to a stage when no trees are cut, and that benefits the environment and climate."

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