

The Role of National Park Development in 'Recovery from Disaster'

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Key words: Access to land; Cadastre; Capacity building; Cartography; Education; Engineering survey; History; Implementation of plans; Land distribution; Land management; Legislation; Low cost technology; Professional practice; Risk management; Security of tenure; Standards

SUMMARY

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Key Words: national park, park management, biodiversity, ecotourism, capacity development, sustainable development

ABSTRACT

Eritrea is a part of the Horn of Africa and the East African Highland's global biodiversity hotspots. It benefits from a range of globally unique and significant ecosystems. Hundred years ago about 30% of Eritrean land was covered by forests. The Semienawi and Debubawi Bahri Green Belt area, located in the eastern sub-humid escarpment houses some of the remaining tropical coniferous and broad-leaved forest. In addition, it is home to many mammal and bird species.

During the last 100 years, and in particular during the 30 years of Ethiopian colonial rule, Eritrea heavily suffered from habitat loss, depletion of forests and wild animals, environmental degradation, as well as reduction in ecosystem resilience. Climate change, directly or indirectly attributed to human activities, resulted in habitat loss and has become the greatest threat to wildlife. This alarming trend of high environmental disruption has to be reversed or at least checked.

After the independence of the country (1991), the Government of Eritrea gave high priority for the development of a national park in the Semienawi and Debubawi Bahri Green Belt area. And as a continuation of its efforts, in October 2013, it embarked upon a 'Project of Integrated Protected

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Area System for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Mitigation of Land Degradation'. With this initiative in mind, this paper will discuss the role of sustainable national park development in the Green Belt region, as an intervention for 'recovery from disaster'. The discussion will include introductory background, sustainable biodiversity of the national park, mitigation of land degradation, ecotourism development, capacity development and concluding remarks.

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