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## The Role of Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Management of Water Related Disputes in Kenya

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#### Abstract

The rising pressure on existing water resources caused by such factors as population growth, climate change and industrialization, is likely to increase the frequency and intensity of water related disputes in coming days. Water governance and management involves various aspects including proper water dispute management. This paper recognizes the challenges and the prospects of utilizing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) for the resolution of water related disputes and proposes the strengthening of existing water dispute management frameworks through the inclusion of ADR mechanisms to complement existing formal mechanisms.

**Keywords:** water, water related disputes, water governance, ADR, water diplomacy

### 1.0 Introduction

Water is an important natural resource which is not only at the heart of sustainable development but is also at the core of human survival.<sup>1</sup> There has been a growing realization that water and water resource management constitute a rights issue whereby there is a need to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United Nations, 'Water' (*United Nations*) <a href="https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water">https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water</a> accessed 11 August 2023.

balance all competing demands on water resources globally and nationally. <sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding, the right to water not originally explicitly recognized as a self-standing human right in international treaties. <sup>3</sup> The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development presented the first real efforts to recognize water as a human right, following the International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development of 1992. <sup>4</sup> In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation, and water as essential to the realization of all human rights. <sup>5</sup> The right to safe and clean water is now recognized as a fundamental element of human dignity under international human rights law, <sup>6</sup> as an essential element for the full enjoyment of life as well as the enjoyment of other human rights. <sup>7</sup> It is also implied through other human rights such as the right to life, the right to adequate standards of living, and the right to health. <sup>8</sup> Goal 6 of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Daphina Misiedjan and Pedi Obani, 'The Human Rights to Water and Sanitation', *Elgar Encyclopedia of Environmental Law* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) which do not have specific provisions on the right to water.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.un-documents.net/h2o-dub.htm. The Dublin Statement has four guiding principles i.e. fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, water development and management should be based on participatory approach, women play a central role in provision, management and safeguarding of water, and water has economic value.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> A/RES/64/292.

<sup>6&#</sup>x27;FactSheet35en.Pdf'

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet35en">https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet35en</a>.pdf> accessed 16 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/KE/Assessment\_right\_water\_Kenya2020.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Kariuki Muigua, 'Fulfilling the Right to Water as a Socio-Economic Right for the People of Kenya' (2020).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2015, recognizes the need to ensure universal access to water and sanitation for all. Locally, the right to clean and safe drinking water in adequate quantities is recognized as a constitutional right and article 43 of the Kenyan Constitution articulates the Kenyan government's commitment to upholding this right. The Constitution similarly recognizes that the right to water is a fundamental element of human dignity which is intrinsically linked with the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the right to highest attainable standards of health. The right to clean and safe water is also recognized in the Water Act 2016.

Due to the importance of water for survival and development, there are similarly divergent interests and competing uses which result in water related disputes. Water related disputes or conflicts can be defined as disagreements resulting from differing interests of various water users. <sup>14</sup> Principles of good water governance include achieving fair allocation of water resources as well as proper water dispute management. <sup>15</sup> It is on this backdrop that this paper seeks to appraise the role of Alternative Dispute Resolution in the management of water related disputes in Kenya. While there is a general consensus that ADR can be utilized in management of environmental disputes,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> 'Goal 6 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs' <a href="https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6">https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6</a> accessed 19 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 43 (1)(d).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 43 (1)(a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Water Act, 2016, section 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Peter H Gleick and Morgan Shimabuku, 'Water-Related Conflicts: Definitions, Data, and Trends from the Water Conflict Chronology' (2023) 18 Environmental Research Letters 034022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> 'Water Governance' (*SIWI - Leading expert in water governance*) <a href="https://siwi.org/why-water/water-governance/">https://siwi.org/why-water/water-governance/</a> accessed 19 July 2023.

there are concerns about its efficacy in the management of water related disputes. The paper begins by briefly discussing the factors that cause water related disputes and also analyze why it is important to resolve water related disputes. The paper will then examine the ways in which water related disputes have traditionally been resolved, with this laying the groundwork for the discussion of the challenges and prospects of utilizing ADR in the management of water related disputes in Kenya.

### 2.0 Factors Causing Water Related Disputes and the Need for Resolution

Water related disputes result from numerous factors as will be discussed herein. One factor is the growing population which causes increased strain on water resources. <sup>16</sup> With increase in population, there is a related need for improved living standards and this includes an increased demand for water. <sup>17</sup> It is also quite common to have competing needs and disputes over water supply between rural and urban populations. <sup>18</sup> Further, climate change has upset the rainfall patterns and led to limited supply of freshwater resources on the back of the growing demand for water supplies. <sup>19</sup> It has been argued that the threat of climate change is likely complicate water resource interactions, intensify competition and raise the frequency of water related conflicts. <sup>20</sup> Variations in water supply resulting from climate change is therefore likely to fuel conflict among water sharing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> David Michel, Water Conflict Pathways and Peacebuilding Strategies (2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Stefano De Falco and Giulia Fiorentino, 'The GERD Dam in the Water Dispute between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. A Scenario Analysis in an Ecosystem Approach between Physical and Geopolitical Geography' (2022) 8 AIMS Geosciences 233.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Michel (n 15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 'Water and Conflicts' (*SIWI - Leading expert in water governance*) <a href="https://siwi.org/why-water/water-and-conflict/">https://siwi.org/why-water/water-and-conflict/</a> accessed 20 July 2023.

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communities and countries.<sup>21</sup> An example of this can be seen in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project and its contribution to geopolitical tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.<sup>22</sup> Various reports by the United Nations argue that there is limited access to water and water services as well as limited cooperative management of shared water resources which affects individual and community rights to water.23

At an international level, water disputes can be caused by perceived or real threat of excessive water pollution by countries as a result of increased industrialization, or disputes over rights to fishing resources or over water boundaries.<sup>24</sup> Another compounding factor is the increasing commodification of water which is in conflict with access equity among communities.<sup>25</sup> Water disputes take either of the following categorizations according to Gleick and Shimabuku: as a causality of conflicts, as a trigger for conflicts and as a weapon of conflicts.<sup>26</sup> Causality of conflicts refers to a situation where the water resources, systems or infrastructure become the target of violence.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ali Raza Kalair and others, 'Water, Energy and Food Nexus of Indus Water Treaty: Water Governance' (2019) 2 Water-Energy Nexus 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Wossenu Abtew, 'The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile and Water Conflict', World Environmental and Water Resources Congress 2022 (2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> United Nations, 'Water' (United Nations) <a href="https://www.un.org/en/global-">https://www.un.org/en/global-</a> issues/water> accessed 19 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Kyle Fields, 'A Survey of Alternative Dispute Resolution in Water Rights Disputes' (3 December 2013) <a href="https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2439332">https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2439332</a>> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Enamul Choudhury and Shafiqul Islam, 'Nature of Transboundary Water Conflicts: Issues of Complexity and the Enabling Conditions for Negotiated Cooperation' (2015) 155 Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Gleick and Shimabuku (n 13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Conversely, water can also be a trigger or root cause of conflicts such as in instances where access is limited.<sup>28</sup> Water can also be used as a weapon of conflict such as is instances where a dispute involves damaging water resources.<sup>29</sup>

The importance of water for life support and development might be the simplest motivation for resolving water related disputes.<sup>30</sup> Water scarcity and climate change have led to the securitization of water resources particularly in as far as it relates to trans boundary relations.<sup>31</sup> The realization that water is an essential element of human development as well as its limited availability should create a willingness to cooperate at community, national, regional and international level in water management. Moreover, the recognition of water as a major source of conflict coupled with the need to maintain good diplomatic relations at international level is also a main reason for seeking peaceful resolution.<sup>32</sup>

## 3.0 Mechanisms Utilized for the Resolution of Water Related Disputes in Kenya

Now that we have discussed the dangers of water related conflict and the need to resolve the same, we now turn to the discussion on management of water related disputes. Management of water related disputes can take numerous forms including the use of water

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ramaswamy R Iyer, 'Transboundary Water Conflicts: A Review' [2020] Water Conflicts in India 369.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Selina Ho, Qian Neng and Yan Yifei, 'The Role of Ideas in the China–India Water Dispute' (2019) 12 The Chinese Journal of International Politics 263.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Nelly Isigi Kadagi and others, 'Joint Management of Shared Resources as an Alternative Approach for Addressing Maritime Boundary Disputes: The Kenya-Somalia Maritime Boundary Dispute' (2020) 16 Journal of the Indian Ocean Region 348.

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diplomacy, formal justice systems and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.33 Dialogue and de-escalation strategies have been a go to instrument for water conflict management at community and even country level. 34 While the Constitution of Kenya encourages the utilization of alternative dispute resolution in environmental conflicts,35 the framework for resolution of water related disputes in Kenya has mainly utilized the formal justice system. 36 First and foremost, the High Court has jurisdiction over determination on questions of violation of rights and freedoms under the Bill of Rights, which ordinarily includes the right to clean and safe water in adequate quantities.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, in line with Article 162 of the Constitution, there is also established the Environment and Land Court to determine disputes relating to the environment, as well as use, occupation and title to land.<sup>38</sup> The courts have specially played an important role in the interpretation of what constitutes the right to water which has been a source of tensions between the citizenry and the State. The courts have also been instrumental in providing remedies and compensation in water disputes submitted to judicial determination. In this regard, there is a general recognition that the right to water is subject to progressive realization and the Court in Isaac Kipyego Cherop vs State Ministry of Water and 142 others [2017]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> 'Water and Conflicts' (n 19).

<sup>34 &#</sup>x27;Water, Crises and Conflicts: How These Interrelate and the Need for Action Using the Middle East as an Example - World | ReliefWeb' (6 June <a href="https://reliefweb.int/report/world/water-crises-and-conflicts-how-these-">https://reliefweb.int/report/world/water-crises-and-conflicts-how-these-</a> interrelate-and-need-action-using-middle-east> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>35 &#</sup>x27;Grist to the Mill for Peacebuilding? Water, Peace and Security in Mali and International Kenva' (Wetlands Africa, 2022) <https://africa.wetlands.org/en/blog/grist-to-the-mill-for-peacebuilding-water-</p> peace-and-security-in-mali-and-kenya/> accessed 11 August 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Kariuki Muigua, 'Environmental Conflict Management Institutions and Approaches' (2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 165 (3)(b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Environment and Land Court Act 2012.

eKLR, appreciated that the constitutional right to water is not a final product for direct dispensation but is rather aspirational and subject to realization based on available state resources.<sup>39</sup> Further, the Court in Mitubell Welfare Society vs The Attorney General & 2 others argued that the state must be seen to be taking steps towards the realization of socio economic rights (such as the right to clean and safe water).<sup>40</sup> The Water Act also establishes the Water Tribunal to hear and determine appeals based on decisions and orders of the Cabinet Secretary responsible for matters relating to water, the Water Resources Authority, the Water Services Regulatory Authority (WASREB) as well as disputes concerning water resources or water services subject to existence of a business contract.<sup>41</sup> Appeals to the decision of the Water Tribunal lay in the Environment and Land Court (ELC) within twenty one (21) days on an issue of law.42 The provisions on dispute resolution in the Water Act effectively give credence to the Water Tribunal Rules which provide for the types of appeals to the Water Tribunal, the provisions on appeals to the ELC, form of appeals among other provisions.<sup>43</sup>

# 4.0 Challenges and Prospects of Utilizing ADR in Management of Water Related Disputes

The starting point for the discussion on the utilization of ADR in management of water related disputes in Kenya is Article 159 of the Constitution of Kenya which promotes the use of ADR in dispute resolution.<sup>44</sup> Further, the provision that the Water Tribunal shall hear

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Petition 348 of 2015 before the Environment and Land Court at Eldoret.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Mitubell Welfare Society v Kenya Airports Authority & 2 others; Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (Amicus Curiae) (Petition 3 of 2018) [2021] KESC 34 (KLR).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Water Act, 2016 section 119 and 121.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, section 124

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Water Tribunal Rules 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Constitution of Kenya 2010.

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disputes on water resources or water services where there is a business contract is qualified by the provision that this will be the case unless parties have otherwise agreed to an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.<sup>45</sup> This provision has also been replicated in the Water Tribunal Rules, 46 which goes to cement our growing national reverence to ADR mechanisms.<sup>47</sup>

One of the most widely used ADR mechanisms in management of water disputes is water diplomacy which involves establishment of a framework for water resource governance at a global scale with the same being used to further develop bilateral and multilateral agreements on water resource management. 48 Some of the main international water resource frameworks include the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (the "Water Convention"),49 and the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses. 50 These international water resource frameworks as well as the multilateral and bilateral treaties often times provide for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as the preferred modes of resolution. For instance, the Water Convention recognizes either of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Water Act 2016, section 121 (2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Water Tribunal Rules 2019, Rule 3(b).

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Regulatory-Impact-Statement-Water-Tribunal-Rules.Pdf'

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://aiap.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Regulatory-Impact-Statement-">https://aiap.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Regulatory-Impact-Statement-</a> Water-Tribunal-Rules.pdf> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> 'Mediation and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms. International Annual UN-Water Zaragoza Conference 2012/2013. Water Cooperation: Making It Happen! Preparing for the 2013 International <a href="https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/water\_cooperation\_2013/mediation\_and\_">https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/water\_cooperation\_2013/mediation\_and\_</a> dispute\_resolution.shtml> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>49 &#</sup>x27;Introduction | UNECE' <a href="https://unece.org/environment-policy/water/about-">https://unece.org/environment-policy/water/about-</a> the-convention/introduction> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>50 &#</sup>x27;UN Watercourses Convention | UNECE' <a href="https://unece.org/environment-">https://unece.org/environment-</a> policy/water/un-watercourses-convention> accessed 20 July 2023.

the following dispute settlement mechanisms as valid: negotiation, submission of the dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or arbitration.<sup>51</sup> Water diplomacy can be used to avoid adverse political and military confrontation over water resources by advocating for peaceful settlement.<sup>52</sup>

Other models in use for water conflict management include impartial fact finding, negotiation, conciliation mediation and arbitration/adjudication.<sup>53</sup> Fact finding involves the engagement of impartial third parties to investigate the factual or technical issues between disputing parties.<sup>54</sup> This mechanism was useful, for instance, during the negotiation of the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan by the World Bank Group, whereby the water needs of both disputants were subjected to fact finding conducted by engineers of both parties as well as the World Bank's own engineering team.<sup>55</sup> Negotiating water disputes on the other hand, involves engagements between two parties based on their corresponding interests in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Article 22 as read with Annex IV of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Saima Sabit Ali and Mansee Bal Bhargava, 'Hydro-Diplomacy Towards Peace Ecology: The Case of the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan', *Decolonising Conflicts, Security, Peace, Gender, Environment and Development in the Anthropocene* (Springer 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> E Woldemaryam, 'Making the Nile River a Point of Cooperation between Ethiopia and Egypt: Building Confidence through Water Diplomacy' (2020) 3 Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal) 2494.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> '33.1.7 Fact-Finding and Inquiry - UN Watercourses Convention' <a href="https://www.unwatercoursesconvention.org/the-convention/part-vi-miscellaneous-provisions/article-33-settlement-of-disputes/33-1-7-fact-finding-and-inquiry/">https://www.unwatercoursesconvention.org/the-convention/part-vi-miscellaneous-provisions/article-33-settlement-of-disputes/33-1-7-fact-finding-and-inquiry/</a> accessed 23 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Choudhury and Islam (n 24).

water resource.<sup>56</sup> There is need to maintain transparency and good faith while negotiating water conflicts.<sup>57</sup> Conciliation and mediation both involve third party engagement particularly in situations where there are extreme tensions between the disputing parties and there is need for neutral intervention to restore communication between warring parties.<sup>58</sup> Arbitration or adjudication usually involves the use of a third party (arbitrator or adjudicator) to make a binding decision on the parties.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, stakeholder engagement and public participation can also be considered as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms when it comes to water dispute resolution. <sup>60</sup> There is need to appreciate the significance of participatory approaches to water governance as a means of avoiding or resolving water related conflicts. <sup>61</sup> Stakeholder participation in water management creates the necessary balance between large scale economic inclinations to water use and the social and economic needs of local communities. <sup>62</sup> Similarly, traditional and customary conflict resolution can be

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Charlotte Grech-Madin and others, 'Negotiating Water across Levels: A Peace and Conflict "Toolbox" for Water Diplomacy' (2018) 559 Journal of Hydrology 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Alejandro Jiménez and others, 'Unpacking Water Governance: A Framework for Practitioners' (2020) 12 Water 827.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Michel (n 15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Woldemaryam (n 53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Alejandro Jiménez and others, 'The Enabling Environment for Participation in Water and Sanitation: A Conceptual Framework' (2019) 11 Water 308.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> 'The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development - UN Documents: Gathering a Body of Global Agreements' <a href="http://www.un-documents.net/h2o-dub.htm">http://www.un-documents.net/h2o-dub.htm</a> accessed 20 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Nidhi Nagabhatla and others, 'Water, Conflicts and Migration and the Role of Regional Diplomacy: Lake Chad, Congo Basin, and the Mbororo Pastoralist' (2021) 122 Environmental Science & Policy 35.

utilized particularly in community level water disputes owing to its tendency to foster reconciliation as well as encouraging wholesome community participation while respecting community values and customs.<sup>63</sup>

The main motivations for utilizing ADR in dispute resolution include the perceptions of fairness, relationship building, cost and time efficiency as well as a sense of party autonomy.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, courts have experienced numerous challenges in the pursuit environmental justice including case backlogs, limited number of judicial officers and limited competence on technical environmental issues.65 However, while there is a general consensus that ADR can be utilized in management of environmental disputes, there are concerns about its efficacy in the management of water related disputes. One of the challenges of utilization of ADR in water related disputes is the issue of politicization particularly in as far as transboundary water disputes. It is difficult to achieve much progress in the use of ADR mechanisms to address water disputes owing to the protectionist stances applied by individual States as well as exploitation of real issues for internal political gain at country level.66 Another drawback to the effective utilization of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in water related disputes is that ADR practitioners might not necessarily be water experts and this may water down the quality of the determination available in a water

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Dr Francis Kariuki and Vianney Sebayiga, 'Evaluating the Role of ADR Mechanisms in Resolving Climate Change Disputes' (3 August 2022) <a href="https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4257643">https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4257643</a> accessed 23 July 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Abdul-Salam Ibrahim and others, 'Resolving Land Conflicts through Alternative Dispute Resolution: Exploring the Motivations and Challenges in Ghana' (2022) 120 Land Use Policy 106272.

<sup>65</sup> Kariuki and Sebayiga (n 63).

<sup>66</sup> Woldemaryam (n 53).

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dispute. 67 Additionally, there is perceived discrimination against minority groups in water related dispute resolution such as women, the young and members of ethnic minorities, which suggests that the resolution arrived at may not necessarily be participatory or beneficial for all the aggrieved parties.68

### 5.0 Way Forward

In order to best utilize the advantages of ADR to resolve water related disputes, various measures need to be adopted. To begin with, existing water management regulation and enforcement mechanisms need to be strengthened through the inclusion of specific requirements for use of ADR mechanisms as a viable alternative to existing formal mechanisms such as the Water Tribunal and ELC so as to ensure that there is a wider array of judicial and quasi-judicial options for those seeking water justice. 69 Water related legislation such as the Water Act 2016 can also be amended to include an elaborate ADR framework for water related disputes.

To cure the challenge of politicization of ADR processes, parties to high level water disputes such as transboundary water disputes, are likely to benefit more from ADR mechanisms which include third party neutrals such as adjudication and arbitration as opposed to models like bipartisan negotiations which may not always be effective in diffusing tensions between disputants. To best utilize the benefits of ADR in water dispute resolution, there is also a need to

<sup>67</sup> Aaron Worthen, 'Resolving International Water Disputes: Lessons from American and Canadian Federalism' 11 INTERNATIONAL LAW.

<sup>68</sup> Fatine Ezbakhe, Ricard Giné-Garriga and Agustí Pérez-Foguet, 'Leaving No One behind: Evaluating Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups' (2019) 683 Science of the total environment 537.

<sup>69</sup> Muigua (n 36).

appreciate and emphasize the participation of marginalized groups in order to have inclusive water justice.<sup>70</sup>

Additionally, the challenge of limited expertise in water governance among ADR practitioners may be offset by engaging the services of water experts to conduct impartial fact finding duties on behalf of the ADR practitioners. Further, there is need for enhanced public awareness on environmental issues in general and water governance specifically. This includes training of the public on their role in protection of water resources as well as the role of ADR in water governance. This will improve the public uptake of ADR solutions in water related disputes as a viable and practical alternative to judicial measures.

### 6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, with the increasing severity of water scarcity and water related conflict, there is a need to adopt effective dispute resolution mechanisms. The discussion above has highlighted the available options for the resolution of water disputes which include an array of formal, quasi-judicial and community based approaches. In particular, we have observed the growing importance of ADR mechanisms in resolution of water disputes at international, national and community level and discussed some of the challenges and proposed solutions in the effective utilization of ADR to solve water disputes. In the wake of climate change, growing population and increased industrialization, effective water governance will involve an appreciation of the most effective, speedy and permanent

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Lynette de Silva, Jennifer C Veilleux and Marian J Neal, 'The Role of Women in Transboundary Water Dispute Resolution' in Christiane Fröhlich and others (eds), *Water Security Across the Gender Divide* (Springer International Publishing 2018) <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64046-4\_11">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64046-4\_11</a> accessed 30 July 2023.

mechanisms to prevent as well as deal with water related disputes when they arise.

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