

## NGO STATEMENT TO THE SOMALIA PARTNERSHIP FORUM IN BRUSSELS 11 JULY 2018

The Somalia Partnership Forum in Brussels provides us with an opportunity to help ensure that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in partnership with donors, humanitarian and development actors, is able deliberate on issues that will catapult Somalia into peace, security, growth and development and sustainability.

The conference will deliberate Somalia's economic recovery, Durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, the Recovery and Resilience Framework (RFF) and the role of women in peace, and security.

This conference is a follow up meeting of the Somalia partnership forum hosted in Mogadishu, Somalia on the 5th of December 2017 where representatives from 25 countries and 6 multilateral organizations, as well as representatives from all of Somalia's Federal Member States and the Benadir Regional Administration have attended. The Somalia NGO Consortium and its members anticipate that the upcoming Brussels conference will uphold the promises and pledges made during the London Conference on Somalia in May 2017 and the Somalia Partnership Forum held in Mogadishu in December 2017.

**The Humanitarian situation** of Somalia and its people has been through tough phases in the recent past. The situation in Somalia is among the most complex and longstanding emergencies. While large-scale famine has been averted in 2017, the humanitarian impact of natural disasters such as drought, floods and more recently cyclones have been devastating. The humanitarian situation remains challenging in 2018 with more than 5.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

**Security** in some parts of Somalia is still in a delicate state even as violence by non-state armed groups, sporadic internal clashes and conflicts persist. This has inherently led to several spates of violence that has led to displacements of communities in search of safe spaces.

Developing and strengthening the **humanitarian, development and peace nexus** is taking shape in Somalia. Joint coordination meetings by the humanitarian and development partners has boosted complementarity in planning and funding in Somalia within the framework of the National Development Plan. A record 2.6 million people are displaced in Somalia. 75% of IDPs in Somalia are in urban centers, with the vast majority being youth and women. Women and children continue to be amongst the most vulnerable victims in conflict situations, and they are also often the ones that trigger peace mechanisms.

NGOs in Somalia applaud the step taken by the Brussels conference on having a side event on Women, Peace and security and underlining the key role played by Women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Women play vital roles in ending conflict. Since the World Humanitarian Summit, substantial political and institutional momentum has helped shape the localization agenda and the broader reforms within the Grand Bargain.

Among its neighboring countries, Somalia continues to lead in advocating for systemic change in humanitarian aid delivery and financing strategies. Partnering and financing local and national actors requires continued political will and support from donors and implementing agencies.

As the FGS started to build on domestic resources and strengthen the financial systems as part of the Staff Monitored Programmes by International Monetary Fund (IMF), it has also started to work towards

the cancellation of debt. With the assistance of African Development Bank (AfDB), Somalia's Debt Management Unit has reconstructed the external debt database. Somalia has a debt of \$5.1 billion which includes \$1.46 billion to multilateral creditors and \$3.68 billion to bilateral creditors (including Paris Club Creditors \$2.39 billion + Non Paris Club Creditor \$1.29). According to IMF, the arrears amount to \$319 million to IMF, \$484 million to the World Bank (WB), \$133 million to the AfDB as of December 2016. External public debt is currently at 81% of GDP, remains large and virtually in arrears. These arrears mean that the country is missing out on significant long-term funding resources.

### **Recommendations:**

In light of the above and in anticipation of the valuable discussions set to take place in Brussels, Somalia NGO Consortium and its members put forward the following recommendations;

1. We encourage all the key stakeholders to continue with the great work that they are currently doing on gender inclusion in politics, peace and security and request you to support the structural and policy changes to ensure the promises made actually reflect the change taking place on the ground.
2. We applaud the Council of Ministers of the Federal Government of Somalia for approving the Bill criminalizing Sexual Offences. We urge the members of the Federal Parliament to give priority to the adoption of the **Sexual Offences Bill** and ensure that the Bill results in clear changes in behavior and attitudes on how this Law will be enforced, particularly in the judiciary and security sector.
3. The **harmonization of a legal framework for Non-Governmental Organizations** in Somalia has made some real progress in its development through consultations with NGOs, Federal Member States and other key actors. We recognize its importance and recommend the finalization of the NGO Act to ensure an enabling working environment for all humanitarian, development and peacebuilding NGOs in Somalia.
4. We welcome the progress made on the search for durable solutions for the millions of displaced and the communities hosting them. A participatory approach is key to support return and reintegration processes in order to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and supportive of social cohesion. We must collectively invest into capacities to sustain solutions locally and nationally through inclusive '**whole society and whole of government**' approaches supporting integrated access to services, economic opportunities and infrastructure for all - displaced and host communities alike.
5. The Federal Government of Somalia in collaboration with the Federal Members States and with support from the United Nations, World Bank, and the European Union has developed **the Disaster Needs assessment (DINA) and the Recovery and resilience framework (RRF)**, which endeavors to develop a strategy for immediate recovery and longer-term resilience building. The Somalia NGO Consortium and its members remain confident that this momentum will be upheld and that development partners will support the Government of Somalia and its implementing partners through adequate financial resources and commitment to actualize the implementation of the Resilience and Recovery Framework.
6. We urge all actors to adopt joint approaches in the **humanitarian, development and peace nexus** that will guarantee shared analysis and vision based on long term planning and programming for better results for Somalia and its people. Collective Outcomes will need to be identified from the onset of a crisis, and systems needs to be put in place to track short, medium, and long term outcomes. Resilience building actions must be sustainable, multi-sectoral, multi-level, multi- partners and include the participation of the people affected or at risk, of communities, governments and civil society.

7. **Long-term emergency preparedness and planning** for protracted crisis should be factored in for Somalia which will ensure that mechanisms and systems are put in place in advance to enable an effective and timely response to any emerging humanitarian crisis. The continuous analysis of the risks in a particular context while taking into account existing capacities is an approach that needs to be taken by all active actors in Somalia. The preparedness will also ensure that humanitarian response to the places affected by the emergency are at the center of the response. Prevention and preparedness projects such as early warning systems or disaster risk reduction can also build resilience.

8. The support and involvement of **women and gender inclusion** in the peacebuilding, humanitarian, development and political fronts is a lauded approach. This will affirm the rights of women in participation and ensure that there is increased attention to women in conflict and humanitarian situations. NGOs thereby urge the introducing a large number of resolutions on women peace and security in Somalia, policies to support structural setting of this programs within the Government as well as and, programs and initiatives to empower the women.

9. **Protection of children should be a priority:** Wide spread displacements presents significant protection challenges, particularly for women and children, due to family separation, loss of socio-economic safety nets, extremely poor living conditions and lack of strong protection mechanisms. Latest studies (REACH April 2018) indicate that the prolonged drought has resulted in an increased proportion of children engaging in paid work in order to support household income, increased school drop-out as well as increased rates of early child marriages. There is therefore need to ensure children education is prioritized as a basic need so as to maximize their future well-being

10. **Access to Education must be taken into account:** Extensive displacement, flooding and cyclones that hit parts of Somalia have had a devastating impact on learning and learners. Schools and infrastructure were destroyed, children dropped out of school and displaced to areas with no or very little learning opportunities. Despite all this, the education sector is the least funded. In 2017, Education constituted only one per cent of funding received for the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan. There should be more resource allocation for the access to education for children in Somalia since keeping children out of school for another year will have a devastating impact on the lives of the children and the country at large.

11. As an international momentum gathers around Somalia for a sustained change, it is imperative that it gets all the support it is needed to speed up the **debt cancelation process**. External public debt is currently at 81% of GDP, remains large and virtually in arrears. These arrears mean that the country is missing out on significant long-term funding resources. The way Somalia's external debt is being treated by donors' means it is potentially a barrier to accessing new grants and loans from the WB, AfDB, IMF and Arab Monetary Fund. To ensure that the relief comes soon enough for Somalia, all the international actors must turn up the pressure all on key stakeholders and institutions to ensure Somalia's debt is cancelled and new path has been paved for it to rebuild the country.

12. To meet the commitments of the Grand Bargain and localization agenda, donors and international community must shift away from supply driven models where priorities, interventions and financing strategies are set without local leadership to models based on shared priorities, inclusive financing, and equal partnerships.

#### **Additional Resource Material.**

[\*\*Drought, Displacement and Livelihoods in Somalia/Somaliland: Time for gender-sensitive and protection-focused approaches\*\*](#)

*These NGO statement has been endorsed by the following organizations;*



**End notes**

- The Somalia NGO Consortium is a network of over 80 Local and International NGOs working in Somalia and Somaliland.
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