



Somaliland Non State Actors Forum

Location: Jigjga-yar, Badda As, Behind WHO Office

Tel: +252-(0)-63-570536, +252-(0)-63-4414335

Website: www.sonsaf.org

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Civil Society Position Paper on the Implementation of the New Deal- Somaliland Special Arrangement

Preamble

This position paper was prepared following discussions during the Somaliland National Forum on the New Deal held in Hargeisa on the 14th December 2015 and prior civil society consultative meetings held during the months of October and November 2015, in particular the Aid Effectiveness Thematic Working Group hosted under the auspices of SONSAF.

Somaliland civil society and non-state actors (NSAs) have carried out extensive policy dialogue activities aimed at promoting civic engagement and improving the accessibility of grass-root communities to decision making on national policy. It is with this purpose that SONSAF hosted this consultative event, with the forum being a continuation of the multiple national and localized consultations conducted on the New Deal and the Somaliland Special Arrangement (SSA) from 2012 onwards.

This paper hopes to reflect the breadth of perspectives from participants and promote the inclusivity of all those who attended, bringing forward suggestions and recommendations from civil society representatives and non-state actors more broadly.

Forum Discussions

In December 2015, SONSAF conducted a National Forum on the New Deal that was attended by the Minister of National Planning and Development, the UN Adviser to the Resident Coordinator, university students, intellectuals and civil society representatives. During the forum, the Minister of National Planning and Development, Mr. Ali Hussein Jirde and UN Adviser to the Resident Coordinator, Mr Gavin Roy, made presentations about the current status of Somaliland's aid flow and overall development framework. Civil society representatives took this opportunity to raise questions on the progress of the New Deal- Somaliland Special Arrangement to date and future direction of travel.

The Forum saw the Mr Jirde addressed of his concerns that Somaliland had not been given its portion of the development aid that donors provided to Somalia and Somaliland stating that: “The international community gave Somalia more than 700million [USD] but Somaliland only obtained less than 80million.” On the other hand, Mr Gavin Roy spent time in the forum responding to civil society questions around the UN’s post-2016 plans for Somaliland, how the UN multi-trust fund works and its contribution to the development of Somaliland and clarification on the exact portion that Somaliland receives from this UN funding mechanism. Questions were asked how the international community themselves comply with the aid partnership principles of alignment, transparency, accountability, predictability and do no harm with CSOs raising concerns that aid to Somaliland does not appear to be predictable apart from the Somaliland Development Fund.

Participants at the meeting further presented questions to Mr Jirde about what will take place following 2016 given that the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Somaliland Special Arrangement (SSA) will be expiring and how the Ministry of Planning can make sure that the new NDP should be the product of citizen dialogue and consultation to ensure it reflects the needs of the population. In particular, participants were keen to understand why such a large proportion of the national budget is allocated to security given Somaliland’s peace and stability over recent decades.

Representatives from civil society commended the international community for the continued support to Somaliland; in particular those countries contributing funds to the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF), namely the UK, Denmark, Norway and Netherlands. Recognition was further acknowledged for the support from multilateral institutions including the European Union World Bank, UN, and Africa Development Bank. The Somaliland government and development partners are urged to re-commit to the partnership principles agreed at the High Level Aid Coordination Forum, the CSOs commend that all development partners pledge to respect the full ownership of development priorities and needs by the people of Somaliland and reaffirm adherence to do no harm principles in delivering development assistance.

Members from CSOs widely acknowledged the importance of public roads and highways and pointed to the quick positive impacts from SDF’s contribution to the Lafarug road between Hargeisa and Berbera, the Berbera -Sheikh Road including the reparation of the Xayramadle Bridge and the Kalabaydh- Dilla road now under construction. NSAs encouraged the pursuit of similar projects with quick impacts that are valuable to the public at large.

Somaliland, despite the challenges it faces in an unstable region, is committed to democratic principles and building political stability and ensuring peace for its people. Having demonstrated success that joint international-Somaliland partnership can bring, as seen through the SDF and international support to the NDP and the SSA, it is believed that continued partnership and investment by the international community beyond 2016 can reap rewards for all.

Where the NDP and SSA are anticipated to conclude at the end of 2016, NSAs urge the international community to be vigilant in ensuring that subsequent aid distribution is non-politicized in its distribution between Somalia and Somaliland. Participants furthermore highlighted the importance of talks between Somalia and Somaliland as reiterated during the London Communiqué¹ and the importance of the international community's adherence to principles of non-coercive and neutral persuasion for this end.

NSAs encourage the international community to recognize and appreciate the Somaliland's hybrid political order that has been adopted, bringing together modern state institutions alongside traditional governance methods through the Guurti and networks of traditional elders, to ensure development is driven by the communities. Ensuring public consultations and community determined needs are integrated into any new national development plan both by the international community and by the Somaliland government will be essential to ensuring future success and that the public needs are ultimately met.

Policy recommendations:

The Somaliland authorities should:

- Review the National Development Plan with a view to drafting and developing a new post-2016 NDP that can direct Somaliland Development for the post-2016 period. It is both crucial and timely that the Ministry of National Planning and Development conduct policy discussions; civil society dialogue and community consultations to assess the performance of the existing five year plan and draw recommendations for a subsequent national development framework.
- Recognize the shared commitment by non-state actors to Somaliland's national development plan and engage with NSAs as partners with the government in this endeavor. To this end, NSAs should be actively included in the review of the NDP to date and the development of a new NDP given the technical expertise and community linkages that NSAs can bring.
- Ensure that reflections on the performance of the current NDP and lessons learnt from its implementation are integrated into any new NDP and associated plans for implementation.
- Review its policies towards the allocation of national budget with increased prioritization of social services. The growing national revenue and government budget should be distributed in a way beneficial to society at large especially for basic social services and the productive sectors.

¹ See Provision 6 of London Conference Communiqué February 2012.

- Institute strong public financial management systems to ensure transparent revenue generation and distribution to avoid potential mis-use of public funds, efficiency and effectiveness of aid distribution in Somaliland and the associated with development of the nation will be strengthened through such systems. Strong public financial management systems will furthermore strengthen state-society relations by building confidence in the government use of public funds.
- Recognize the importance of democratization to Somaliland's development and sustain momentum and timelines for the voter registration and subsequent elections. The achievement of timely, free and fair elections serves as a benchmark of national solidarity, peace and stability and strengthens relations with both the Somaliland and international community.

The international community should:

- Learn from the successes the Somaliland Development Fund can provide efficient and effective of aid distribution and encourage future initiatives to utilize this model or models which support the same values. The model has been cognizant of Do No Harm principles and responsive to community needs. Tangible results have been achieved through this model and increased aid as such continued and expanded international aid through similar approaches or other funding mechanisms would bring about greater future successes.
- Recommend to the international community to support drafting new National Development Plan in which can pave the way Somaliland to have one comprehensive development framework which may reduce current confusion of the parallel development modalities of NDP and SSA.
- Continue to invest development assistance into Somaliland both given the tangible successes that can be achieved and to reward the continued developmental growth, politically, democratically and in relation to peace and security Somaliland has achieved.
- Not conflate the development assistance to Somaliland with that to Somalia, both in terms of its quantity, priorities and mechanism of disbursement. Where Somaliland continues to pursue a political course of development distinct from Somalia, the international community should correspondingly ensure development assistance is similarly distinct and responsive to the needs and dynamics of Somaliland alone.

- Recognize the continued funding gaps that have hindered the full realization of the existing Somaliland National Development Plan, and continue to invest into Somaliland with a view to achieving its development goals.
- Provide technical support and investment into both government and civil society to realize institutional reforms to implement appropriate systems for public financial management and judicial reforms that will strengthen Somaliland's national development and protection of citizen rights.
- Continue and expand its support to civil society policy dialogues to ensure their effectiveness and inclusivity. Given the multiple tasks civil society is currently performing around elections observation, state- building and peace- building, service delivery and enhancing accountability measures for the state institutions, extending this support will enhance the performance and impact of the work civil society is currently undertaking for a shared national and international ends.

*These policy dialogues amongst non- state actors and other relevant stakeholders are regularly held with a view to addressing a variety of issues of national concern, in this particular instance, the New Deal /SSA through the work of the **Aid Effectiveness Thematic Working Group** which was established in 2013. Conducting policy advocacy initiatives and promoting civic engagement are all instrumental to civil society to maximize their space of policy influence and guiding policy makers at both domestic and international levels. SONSAF would like to extend appreciation to the European Union and Saferworld for providing support to this initiative.*