



Somaliland Non State Actors Forum (SONSAF)

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PRESS RELEASE

Somaliland Non state Actors Forum urges the government to widen consultations on Somaliland's engagement with Somalia over the future of the two States.

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Hargeisa – Since the conclusion of the London Conference on Somalia in February, 2012, the **Somaliland Non state Actors Forum (SONSAF)** has organized a number of meetings for Somaliland Non State Actors including civil society organizations, business community, professionals organizations, Elders and religious leader to discuss and debate issues of national concern including the outcome of the Conference and propose recommendations for the way forward.

Firstly, the participants of the meetings wish to congratulate the government and people of Somaliland on the positive outcomes of the Conference and commend the government for its constructive strategy both during the public consultations to generate support (both internal and Diaspora) in preparation for the conference and the skilful negotiations for Somaliland's terms of participation in the Conference.

The London conference provided a unique opportunity for Somaliland to present its case in front of an international forum and the final outcome was the unprecedented distinction between Somalia and Somaliland. It was clearly acknowledged that Somaliland is not part of the Somalia chaos and the road map intended to solve it. Besides other important issues, Item 6 of the Conference Communiqué underscores the need for international community stewardship and support for any discussions on the future relationship between the two entities.

(6. The Conference recognized the need for the international community to support any dialogue that Somaliland and the TFG or its replacement may agree to establish in order to clarify their future relations.)

The participants of the meetings believe that the outcome of the London Conferences has presented an opportunity that eluded Somaliland for past two decades by creating an



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acceptable forum for negotiation between Somaliland and Somalia over their future relationship.

The participants further propose the following strategies and recommendations in order for Somaliland to benefit from this unique opportunity.

- Somaliland had a long tradition of popular public participation, negotiations and consensus building in all important national issues. In line with this tradition, the Somaliland government should establish a mechanism for popular national consultations that would allow the participation of all sectors of the Somaliland society, particularly, the Non State Actors that include Civil Society Organizations, historians, lawyers, traditional and religious leaders, intellectuals with relevant expertise and other sections of the society.
- In order to achieve this important national aspiration there is a need to create a national consensus and pro-actively avoid internal division.
- We suggest for Somaliland President to nominate the inclusive and broad-based national committee which he mentioned during his speech in the opening ceremony of ruling party Assembly. The task of the committee will be; to prepare the important points which Somaliland negotiator team will need in the upcoming negotiation meetings between Somaliland and Somalia.
- The participants advise close consultation with the International friends of Somaliland in order to seek guidance and advice on these sensitive negotiations with Somalia.
- The participants also raised concern about the legitimacy, representation and objectives of the potential negotiating partners in Somalia. Somaliland needs to avoid negotiating with a small fraction of Somalia politicians, who may have self-serving political agenda and interests and whose legitimacy as leaders and representation is questionable.
- The participants recommend strengthening the relationship between the Non State Actors and Somaliland government, as well as, other national institutions. The Non state Actors, who are one of the main pillars of the Somaliland society, should be part and parcel of any undertaking and negotiations of national significance.

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