



# MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND

Newsletter Q3 2020

Dear Partners,



On behalf of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), I am delighted to introduce the 2020 third quarterly newsletter for the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN-MPTF) for Somalia.

It is a testimony to the efforts of the people of Somalia and its development partners that Somalia is gradually moving from being a recipient of relief and humanitarian aid, to the resumption of economic growth and development. It is our hope that, despite the challenges, Somalia becomes an example of successful graduation from relief to rehabilitation and economic growth.

UNIDO is committed to achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development called for in the National Development Plan 9. The recently approved UN Cooperation Framework for Somalia in its Pillar 3 on Economic Development sets the direction of the work of the UN family in Somalia in this aspect.

Thanks to the generous contribution by the Government of Italy, UNIDO has partnered with the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry, FAO and ILO and respective counterpart line ministries to design and implement the “Productive Sectors Development Joint-Programme” (PSDP). The PSDP aims at promoting interventions at the macro, meso and micro levels to support the development of the private sector and of domestic value chains of the Somali economy. It will support the institutional infrastructure and capital investment required for private sector growth, stimulate sustainable production, limit post-harvest losses and enable market access necessary for inclusive economic growth and the creation of job opportunities for all. Through the PSDP, UNIDO, FAO and ILO will leverage their core area of expertise in a coordinated manner to support an enabling environment for the inclusive and suitable development of the productive sectors in Somalia.

We look forward to sharing the results with all stakeholders supporting Somalia.

Sincerely,

**Ygor Scarcia**

*UNIDO Representative for Somalia*

## UN MPTF OVERVIEW



## FUND CAPITALIZATION



## RECONCILIATION & FEDERALISM

Dhusamareb, the capital of Galmudug State of Somalia, emerged as an icon of reconciliation and a center of political dialogue enlightening the future of Somalia. Amidst heightened conflicts, three rounds of crucial dialogues have been held in July and August in Dhusamareb paving a way for consensus on Electoral Constituency Caucuses Model, contributing to the processes of peaceful transition of power in the country. It was the first time since May 2019 that Federal and State leaders met and ironed out contentious issues surrounding the future of transitional democracy.

The Dhusamareb Summit Dialogue was convened in three phases. The Dhusamareb-I was initiated and hosted by the President of Galmudug on 9-12 July with comprehensive consultative sessions between heads of the Federal Member States (FMSs). The FMS Presidents agreed to enhance the incorporation of FMSs in politics, security, economy and strengthening Somali's state building process.

Dhusamareb – II was held on 19-22 July which was attended by the President and Prime Minister of Somalia agreeing to the formation of a Technical Committee representing Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and FMSs, with a mandate to analyze and advise mechanism and way forward of Somalia election. Subsequently, a 17-member Technical Committee was formed which had rigorous consultations with different stakeholders between 5-15 August.

Dhusamareb – III was held on 15-19 August wherein the Technical Committee proposed three models for the consideration of leadership. In the absence of representatives of Puntland and Jubaland, the remaining leaders resolved to proceed with the discussions and unanimously settled for a hybrid electoral model. A number of discussions were held on the recommendations of Technical Committee and finally on 17 September, the President of Somalia and five FMS leaders agreed on a revised electoral model. The Electoral Constituency Caucus will replace the model contained in the recently passed electoral law which proposed universal suffrage as required under the Constitution. The new model is similar to the 2016 electoral process of clan-based indirect voting with minor changes including: 1) an increase in delegates from 51 to 101; 2) electoral constituencies increase from one to two locations in each FMS; and 3) a 30% quota for women's seats in Parliament. Elections for representatives of the Upper House will be indirectly elected through the FMS Parliaments. The Federal Parliament approved the agreement on 26 September and clarified that the current Parliament

will remain in office until the new Parliament is sworn in. There is no role for the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), and political parties are excluded from the process. It is expected that an electoral taskforce will be established both at national and state level to manage the electoral process.

## CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

The constitutional review bodies, Joint Parliamentary Oversight Committee (OC), Independent Constitution Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC) and Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (MoCA) held a meeting with the new Prime Minister (PM) Mohamed Hussein Roble and informed him about the achievements, challenges and way forward on the constitutional review process. The three entities briefed the PM on the consultations held in the FMSs and the completion of the technical review of the 80% of the Constitution which refers to potentially non-contentious issues, while the remaining 20% are those that require further attention and political agreements between the FGS and the FMSs, specifically: allocation of powers between the different levels of government, fiscal federalism and resource sharing, security architecture, the status of Mogadishu, the structure of the executive and legislative, and a justice and corrections model.

The PM commended the achievements of the constitutional review bodies, re-affirmed the government's commitment to prioritize and support the efforts to finalize the constitutional review process and urged MOCA, OC and ICRIC to expedite and complete the remaining tasks.

## PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT

In September, the Members of the House of the People gave a vote of confidence to the appointed PM of the FGS Mr. Mohamed Hussein Roble. The sitting of the House that was held on 23 September was attended by 215 MPs who unanimously gave the vote of confidence to the new PM. The PM stressed that he will work on priorities including: security, elections, economic and social services development, good governance and the fight against corruption, justice and Judiciary, constitutional review, reconciliation and international cooperation.

Also in September, the Committees of Economy & Anti-corruption and Security & Internal Affairs of the Somaliland House of Elders conducted an oversight mission to assess the overall situation in Togdheer and Marodijeh focusing on service delivery referring to security, education, health and other. The members

of the Committees met representatives of local institutions and communities and prepared the report. They also visited the Seaport in Berbera and observed the operations of the Port. The members of the Committees witnessed expansion of operation of the Port, from 4,500 received containers to 17,000 per month. Also, the committees' members reported decrease in export of livestock due to COVID-19 and cancelation of shipments to Gulf states.

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

Women's participation in Somali politics has traditionally been a controversial topic. In Puntland the governance structure was grounded on a clan and kinship system and women continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often because of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, and low levels of education. However, individual women have overcome these obstacles with great acclaim, and often to the benefit of society at large.

In this regard, Puntland Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs (MoWDAFA) conducted a high level advocacy meeting to inform strategic networking gathering of 60 participants (25W) from the Parliament, Cabinet, Electoral Commission, civil society, gender advocacy committee, office of human rights defender and political parties. The primary purpose of the meeting was to sensitize parliamentarians on legalizing and realizing 30 per cent women Quota in Puntland, and more specifically to ensure nominations of women candidates to guarantee better representation of women in parliament, districts councils and local government bodies.

The Puntland Gender, Social and Legislative Affairs committee adopted the recommendation to draft a historic legally binding gender quota bill, specifying that at least 30 per cent of elected or appointed officials are women.

Civil society groups joined forces with the MoWDAFA and MPs to harmonize their advocacy approach. Together, they organized a national workshop in which women and men from civil society, political parties and government, reached a common ground on the key provisions of the bill.

## ELECTORAL SUPPORT

NIEC's efforts to strengthen its relations with different national

and international stakeholders were supported through the Joint Programme. On the national front, political parties are one of the main national electoral stakeholders that NIEC views as the only channel to compete politically. As of the end of September, 100 political parties have received provisional registration. Additionally, the NIEC and OPFR, with the assistance of the Joint Programme, conducted a workshop from 5 to 7 September for the OPFR members to meet NIEC field staff from the FMSs and to explain how the different phases of the political parties official registration process could be implemented. It is worth noting that amendments to the political parties law were passed by the House of the People in July and are awaiting the assent of the President to become law. This will enable political parties to obtain official registration if they meet the necessary requirements including a registration fee of US\$ 30,000 and 10,000 registered voters.

NIEC Chairperson, Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, participated in a webinar held on 11 July titled "The Impact of Covid-19 on Electoral Assistance" with the participation of international partners. In addition to Ms. Ibrahim, the panelists were Mr. Craig Jenness, Director of UN Electoral Assistance Division and Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi, Regional Hub Manager, Deputy Director a.i. of the UNDP Bureau for Arab States.

NIEC received technical support to prepare their business continuity policy, plan and checklist, coronavirus policy and protocol, sexual harassment policy and procedures, and options for the NIEC's discussions at the conference on elections in Dhusamareb in July.

## AID MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

After its endorsement by the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) Steering Committee the refined aid architecture was reactivated in the third quarter. However, changes in the Government, including the resignation of the PM after a vote of non-confidence of the Parliament, and subsequent changes in key positions with responsibility in the management of the aid architecture, slowed down the reactivation of meetings of some of the structures. However, Pillar Working Groups appointed FGS and donor co-chairs as well as UN focal points and meetings of the Economic and Social Pillar Working Groups were organized. These and other groups advanced in the development of Terms of Reference. Progress was recorded also under the framework of the Comprehensive Approach to Security through the establishment of a secretariat in the Office

of the Prime Minister.

Transversal issues as identified in the National Development Plan are being discussed. A Durable Solutions sub-working group was established under the Social Development Pillar Working Group, while a Task Force was established to tackle issues around environment and climate action, including water management and floods. The Task Force brings together Federal Government representatives, humanitarian and development partners from the United Nations, World Bank, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donor community.

There was marked activity in the resumption of activities in the Mutual Accountability Framework monitoring process. Significant progress was done in reporting progress of implementation of economic development milestones and partnership principles, including on key issues such as the national ownership and alignment, use of country systems and the framework governing NGOs, gender and human rights, inclusion and environment and climate change. Progress in monitoring of MAF milestones was presented at a SDRF Steering Committee meeting held on 16 September.

The Project carried out an assessment of the communication needs of the aid architecture in light of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the third quarter. The assessment was conducted to ascertain how the digitization of communications, information management and sharing would enhance efficiencies in the aid management system in Somalia through interviews with stakeholders.

## JOINT JUSTICE PROGRAMME

A highlight in the Programme has been how the mobile court system in Puntland has adapted to the challenges of COVID-19. The mobile court system was initially developed as a response to the neglect in the Somali legal system due to decades of conflict which resulted in a lack of court infrastructure and justice services in remote areas and, increased unaddressed cases, and lengthy periods of detention of suspects. The mobile court system enables judges and prosecutors to travel to remote areas where there are no courts and ensures communities do not have to travel long distances to access justice systems.

Before COVID-19, Judges and prosecutors in Puntland would regularly travel to different districts and villages and cases would be attended by a large audience. Since COVID-19 the mobile court system in Puntland has been reorganised and made into a 'conference-style' meeting. The large audiences are no longer

permitted to attend, and instead, they organise small group sessions with only the relevant parties attending. The system also observes other COVID-19 mitigating measures including hand washing, wearing masks and practising social distancing.

A highlight of the mobile court system in Puntland has been enhanced access to justice during the COVID-19 period. For a time, the Puntland Government suspended the court system as a mitigation measure. However, the mobile court system continued to operate, which helped contribute to a reduction in conflicts in the community and relieve the backlog of cases. In particular, the system saw an increase in family law cases, including family separation. As observed by participants, a contributing factor to disputes has been the economic consequences of the pandemic, such as the loss of incomes and limited access to resources.

## PCVE

As COVID-19 arrived in Somalia, one Twitter user shared that while wearing a face mask in Mogadishu, he was told: "1) To take it off; 2) Questioned my belief in God; 3) To not jinx it; 4) Threatened."

Along with the spread of COVID-19, false information accompanied the virus which carried with it the potential to endanger the Somali society. The violent extremist group al-Shabaab capitalized on this misinformation and disseminated false rumors about the virus. Through an information campaign, the group spread inaccurate information, such as the idea that Muslims cannot catch the disease. As more anecdotal accounts emerged with the same false information, including propaganda issued by al-Shabaab's media accounts, it was clear that responding to this misinformation would be key to community implementation of health guidelines. In response to this harmful narrative, the government PCVE Coordination Office with the FMS focal persons worked to counter this false perspective and provided accurate information about the virus.

The main challenge was how to provide this information in a way that would be accepted by skeptical community members who had already been exposed to false information about the virus' spread.

Religious leaders, who carry high levels of trust in the community, were engaged to provide their communities accurate religious information about preventative measures. This helped link health information to religious guidance which could then debunk superstitious and harmful narratives. One imam who engaged in the campaign noted: "The public didn't accept automatically but rather saw the awareness campaign as a project

which aims to spread the virus.” This is because “there was a myth that the virus affects only non-Muslims.” Another imam stated that in his district there “was a challenge that people did not believe that this disease didn’t exist and they considered it to be a flu.” He concluded that in the eight weeks of the campaign, they were able to change the community’s way of thinking about the virus.

In addition to providing accurate information about the virus, religious leaders also handed out masks, assisted those most vulnerable and developed social distancing measures in public places. Religious leaders also recorded guidance which was played over loudspeakers at mosques. Imams engaged in the activities noted that they “changed social knowledge”, that “people have changed their way of thinking about COVID-19” and the campaign was able to “change social behavior.”

Meanwhile, al-Shabaab began acknowledging the dangers of COVID-19, with their volte-face mirroring the government’s response to the pandemic, including by establishing a committee of doctors and religious leaders. By successfully debunk-

ing these harmful rumors, particularly with clarification by the Somali ulema contradicting the al-Shabaab’s narrative, consequently applying pressure to al-Shabaab to take the rapid spreading of the virus seriously. The religious leaders engaged actively and saw the campaign as successful as it “defeated that distorted ideology”, highlighting how they were able to persuade the community by offering an alternative and successful explanation of the virus and protection measures.

Al-Shabaab’s reversal is further exemplified by a new narrative on digital media, with images circulated, usually found on Google Images, of treatment centers as a direct attempt to compete with the government’s response.

When explaining the success of the government and religious leaders COVID-19 response, one of the advocate imams expressed on what “worked to save human lives, especially the people of the district.” Going forward, the campaign is now expanding to the other Federal Member States (FMS), as well as utilizing the network of religious leaders developed to further work on counter misinformation.

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