



# **Role of NGOs in the Somalia National Development Plan: A Strategic Review**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>ADRA</b>	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
<b>BRCiS</b>	Building Resilient Communities in Somalia
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>IPRSP</b>	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring & Evaluation
<b>MoPIC</b>	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
<b>NAPAD</b>	Nomadic Assistance for Peace and Development
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>PSGs</b>	Peace and State-building Goals
<b>ReDSS</b>	Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SHF</b>	Somalia Humanitarian Fund
<b>SoDMA</b>	Somalia Disaster Management Authority
<b>SomReP</b>	Somalia Resilience Programme
<b>STREAM</b>	Social Safety Net Programme
<b>SSWC</b>	Save Somali Women & Children
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UN OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report has been prepared as a discussion paper for the Somalia NGO Consortium to identify challenges and opportunities in its engagement with the FGS's NDP processes. The concerned issues range from NGO engagement, influence with the FGS and its intended impact on the NDP.

The review begins by considering the strengths and weaknesses of the Somali New Deal Compact and how its results will integrate and shape the NDP and provide lessons for NGO engagement in the NDP. Discussions on NGO engagement in the NDP process are also based on the interviews conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, which emphasised that NGO engagement in the NDP is linked to how well NGOs intend to adapt to rapid political, security, economic and social changes in Somalia.

Stakeholders also emphasised that there are clear roles for NGOs to play in the preparation of the NDP or in the processes which follow. Those roles must be built on their strengths including their participatory approaches, emphasis on inclusiveness, reach and operational expertise. NGO leadership in certain programmatic or sectoral areas is also highly valued. Moreover, they play an essential role in providing basic services, which will need to continue in the next three years.

These discussions also made it clear that the NGOs must bear in mind their relationship with all levels of Government if they wish to engage in the NDP process. The FGS expressed goodwill and optimism for their future collaborations with NGOs. They also made it clear that future collaboration is contingent to fundamental changes in the current NGO-Government relationship. Historically, the relationship between NGOs and Government or regional authorities has been a difficult one. The Government emphasised that working together on the NDP will require that NGOs recognise the sovereignty of the Government and are prepared to work within provided frameworks and standards. This is a decision for NGOs with enormous implications.

The NDP is a milestone of progress for Somalia after 25 years of conflict. It is a moment of great change and optimism for the Somali people. This paper lays out a range of discussion points both for NGOs themselves and for their discussions with the FGS. It finishes by offering a range of suggestions on issues on the NDP, NGO relations with the Government, and roles of NGOs in the changing context.

The Somalia NGO Consortium commissioned this report to assist and inform NGO participation in the NDP processes. The report was tasked to situate member's key priorities within the fluid political, operational and aid coordination context within Somalia. It was to identify key strategic issues which could serve as a common platform for members of the NGO Consortium to have constructive and meaningful discussions with the FGS on the NDP. In particular, the Consortium wished to focus on the Resilience Pillar (formerly the Humanitarian Pillar), which would address issues including humanitarian operations, disaster management, social protection and displacement.

The review used the challenges and lessons learned from the New Deal Compact as a reference. Specifically, the New Deal's coordination and funding mechanisms, advocacy and policy engagement were scrutinised. The New Deal's PSGs were also examined to understand how they would align to the NDP and how that might shape future NGO involvement with Government-led policy frameworks.

## 1.1

### METHODOLOGY

The report was based on a review of documents, studies, analysis and reports but principally on semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The FGS, NGOs (local and international; development, humanitarian and peace-building), Donors (humanitarian, development and peace-building), UN Agencies, Independent Experts and PSG Working Group members were interviewed. A bibliography summarising key documents used is included at the end of the report.

The NGO Consortium convened two NGO consultation meetings, one in Nairobi and one in Mogadishu. The meetings brought together international and local NGOs. It allowed for approximately 30 to 40 NGOs to get involved in the review and as a result, allow for their direct input. Briefings were also conducted with the NGO Consortium's Advocacy Working Group, the ReDSS and three large resilience programmes (SomRep, BRCiS and STREAM). Opportunities to have ad hoc discussions with NGO Consortium Staff were also exploited.

Aside from the NGOs, consultations focused on garnering the views of the FGS (in Mogadishu), Donors (in Nairobi and Mogadishu) and UN agencies. Moreover, during the preparation of this report, SomRep, BRCiS and STREAM supported the FGS to conduct State consultations for their Resilience Pillar. The process and the outcomes of the consultations provided additional insights into what the NDP means to: Somalis, their local Government and future roles for NGOs.

It is important to note that due to budget constraints the consultant was not able to go to the regions in Somalia. All in all, organizations that work in those regions were consulted.

The literature review and consultations produced a set of suggestions. The suggestions were produced before the final report, in order to inform a planned NGO meeting with MoPIC (the FGS body responsible for the NDP) in May 2016. The recommendations and report were both submitted to a steering group<sup>1</sup>. Their comments and guidance refined the recommendation and resulted in a final draft of the report.

<sup>1</sup> ADRA, Concern Worldwide, DRC, NAPAD, NRC, ReDSS, SomRep, SSWC, World Vision.

The New Deal was a broad framework to guide Donor coordination with the Somali Government and amongst Donors themselves, initiated in late 2012. The initiative developed from the Busan New Deal Principles for Donor commitments for aid effectiveness and engagement in fragile (conflict affected) states.

The Somalia Compact were agreed upon and prepared to run for three years, from 2014 through 2016 (Federal Government of Somalia, 2014). The engagement was framed around five PSGs which were endorsed by the FGS in 2013. The five PSGs are: inclusive politics, security, justice, economic foundations and revenues and services<sup>2</sup>. Approximately USD 2.4 billion was pledged to support the initiatives. The New Deal Compact has been a critical factor leading to the NDP.

Key stakeholders were clear in the value and lessons of the New Deal Compact: it moved Somalia in a direction of stability and development; it built essential public administrative systems and strategies; it created a collaborative atmosphere between Government and Donors. Equally, stakeholders felt that it was an externally driven process. As well, they attributed the limited NGO participation in the New Deal Compact processes to a lack of strategic engagement and a common agenda by the NGO Community.

## Critique of the New Deal Compact

Feedback on the New Deal Compact from the Donors and FGS was consistent. It was considered an externally led and directed initiative. The New Deal centred on interests of international Donors and their cooperative arrangements. It represented an important shift out of the humanitarian focus on the country for the last 25 years. It was also premised on the sovereignty of the Government.

The New Deal was also considered over-ambitious in its goal setting and impossibly complex. It was said to be designed by a group of technical experts. While the approach may have resulted in technically strong elements of the New Deal, it proved not to be realistic in scope nor in time frame.

In spite of these criticisms, the New Deal had equally strong support by both Donors and FGS MoPIC – in particular for what was actually accomplished. There is widespread reported consensus that the New Deal Compact played a valuable role in:

- Shifting Donor investments and discourse out of the dominant “humanitarian mode” and into one which supports the emergence of essential and non-existent governance structures and institutions (and particularly the financial system);
- Creating good mechanisms for cooperation and strategy setting or basic sub-national Government functions.

<sup>2</sup> Drawn from: DRC & ReDSS. 2014. A New Deal of Somalia's Displaced: Exploring opportunities for engagement for durable solutions with the Somalia New Deal Compact. ReDSS. Nairobi.

*As most funds were spent on structures and systems, the progress of the Compact was intangible. It appeared to be valued more by those who work with governmental systems and processes. It was reported that that Compact achievements were less valued by Somali interests. Many NGO representatives in the Mogadishu Consultation were dismissive as the funds used did not deliver the progress they anticipated. It also undermined their confidence in the NDP process. Their dissatisfaction with the results of the Compact may be strongly linked to their exclusion from the NDP process. Their reaction may further indicate that their expectations may have been unrealistic. It was pointed out that it is difficult to deliver direct and tangible benefits by a Government being formed, and recognised, but not yet functional or resourced.*

The FGS, however, was very pleased with the progress made under the Compact. They appreciated the importance of the intangible investments in process and systems, particularly the financial system. They were frustrated though that the same international community who invested in the financial system, desisted from using it, reportedly out of a concern for corruption.



### NGOs in the New Deal Compact

Important lessons for NGO engagement on the NDP can be drawn from their experience with the New Deal Compact. There was a great deal of consensus from Donors and Government that during the design of the New Deal Compact, the NGOs did not have a common, strategic voice. Instead, their opinions were fragmented around their individual interests or mandate and or operational issues. Donors and Government also felt that technical issues discussed in the preparation of the Compact were outside of the strengths and skills sets of the NGOs. Nonetheless, they also felt that if NGOs had organised themselves; developed a common position; taken initiative and demanded a place at the table, they would have been able to actively participate in the Compact. While the NGOs tended to agree with these observations, they also pointed out that subsequent efforts by NGOs to engage in the PSGs and support the process were rebuffed.

The context for NGO engagement in the NDP process shares many similarities. If NGOs wish to participate in the NDP, then there are useful lessons to be drawn. Suggestions are found in the sections on technical credibility and speaking with one voice.



The overwhelming consensus across Government, Donors and NGOs is that NGOs in Somalia have made valuable contribution in the past and will continue to have a role in the post-NDP period. While there is broad consensus on where NGOs have strengths, Government and NGOs differ on what value it adds. Bridging differences in perception will provide a basis to define areas of impact for NGOs in the future and within the NDP.

Across all interviews, NGOs were recognised for the role they have played in providing humanitarian aid and basic services for the last 25 years. Specifically, interviewees considered core contributions made by NGOs to be:

- Providing basic services and commodities
- Having an ability to work across all regions (diversity of implementation)
- Providing humanitarian assistance
- Reaching into remote or marginalised communities (local presence)
- Operational experience working with communities
- Working with IDPs and developing durable solutions to displacement
- Inclusive operational modalities that ensure broad participation
- Attention to issues affecting women & gender relations

Beyond those roles, NGOs have also been supporting progressive, developmental issues, but which are less recognised:

- Supporting the development of sectoral strategies
- Supporting governance processes at the regional/district levels
- Innovative developmental approaches and work driven by “resilience” programmes

Given the changing context in Somalia, one may ask if the roles of NGOs over the past 25 years needs to evolve. This may be particularly salient where the process of establishing Government and public services overlaps with existing NGO roles. There is an awareness of this issue, but it is not openly discussed. Formal conversations with NGO staff often reflected a hesitancy to change relations between NGOs and Government. Hesitancy was linked to an uncertainty that peace would hold and that FGS would establish itself as a recognised and stable Federal Government. In informal conversations, however, the same staff suggested that it is now necessary to evolve their relationships with government. They were generally enthusiastic about the opportunities related to the emergence of a Government. They thought it was timely for NGOs to take on a more developmentally focused role. These two differing perspectives will need to be openly discussed. There were however some NGOs who had reconciled these differences and were already working with Government at different levels and some in fact, had been supporting the NDP process. The different views may reflect the range of interests, mandates and agendas of the NGO community.

## DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF NGOs AND THEIR WORK

## 3.1

Identifying different areas where NGOs can have an impact on the NDP and the process requires an appreciation of the different perceptions of NGOs and their work. These different perceptions are grounded in the changing context of the working environment in Somalia and they are contributing to new sets of issues. The NDP processes and decisions NGOs make to engage in

these processes will mean that it will be harder to overlook differences between Government and NGOs than it has been in the past. Different views exist on the impact of NGO work, roles and actions, sovereignty of Government, the pace of change and ability to work differently. These issues are either the source of or a reflection of a historically, caustic relationship between NGOs and the Government.

## Caustic Relations

Discussion of where NGOs can make an impact in the NDP process will first need to come to terms with the caustic relations between NGOs and Government. NGO, Donors and Government officials at least on a personal level, acknowledge the difficult state of relations between NGOs and Government. They also feel that this situation will not preclude NGO engagement in the NDP, but the situation may simply need addressing.

Government stakeholders are clear that there is goodwill and opportunity to improve the relations between NGOs and Government. A senior government official, during a multi-agency meeting in Nairobi in 2016, observed that, “You don’t trust us. We don’t trust you.” It was said in part to emphasise the current state of relations. More so, it was a request for honesty and frankness that would establish trust and a working relationship. He sent a clear message that the FGS expects to work with its development partners and that fundamental issues need to be addressed. MoPIC emphasised that NGOs, in particular, have an important role to play in the next three years. The success of the NDP will, in part, be measured by increasing access to basic services – many of which are currently provided by NGOs.

NGOs in contrast are concerned that the NDP and the NGO laws will be used by the Government to exclude or side-line them. MoPIC’s Permanent Secretary indicated that there are no plans to make drastic changes to the current role that NGOs play. However, in an implicit reference to the lack of trust between Government and NGOs, he rhetorically asked ‘*Why are there so many assumptions that the Government wants to make dramatic changes?*’ He also noted that the decision by the NGO Consortium to prepare a discussion paper on NGO engagement in the NDP demonstrates a commitment to engage constructively with the Government, address historical differences and to enhance relations between Government and NGOs.

## Two Very Different Perspectives of the Same Work

The caustic relationship is also linked to different views of NGO work in Somalia. According to the rhetoric of NGO literature and reports, NGOs feel they play a fundamental role in Somalia. Discussions with Government, some Somalis and some NGO personnel in Mogadishu provide another perspective.

The metaphor used by one government official to reflect Somali perception of the value of NGO work was “*unused latrines and mosques*”. Apparently, the metaphor refers to NGOs, who conduct “needs assessments” which determine a need for latrines. Those latrines are then painted with logos of the international NGO, the Donor and the local NGO. The NGO or Donor then hires third party M&E firms to prepare a report on the impact the latrines have made. He said that often Somalis do not actually use those latrines for their intended purpose. They may instead use them as a kiosk. Similarly, Arab countries have built Mosques across the country. Apparently, the Mosques, like the

latrines, are unused. While they maintained that there was truth to this anecdote, Government officials were emphatic in their support for latrines and the work of NGOs. They repeatedly emphasised the degree to which they value the reach and grass roots work of the NGOs. The purpose of the anecdote was to underscore the need to recognise different perspectives of the same work as a starting point for future discussion on the NDP and collaboration.

## Generalisations about “NGOs”

Caustic relations may also be in part related to generalisations made by Somalis about NGOs and the UN. Ensuring the Government appreciates the range of NGO work and mandates may not only dispel generalisations but also identify potential areas of impact of NGOs in the NDP processes.

NGOs themselves have a diverse view of their sector, roles and work. However, NGOs and UN are perceived

as a single entity in the eyes of many Somalis. Activities undertaken by one agency can be associated with the entire sector. This issue tends to centre on relief activities and their resources, political leverage and what those resources represent. While there is a clear value placed by Somalis for humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in their community, relief commodities prove to be a divisive flashpoint. There are many anecdotes from Somalis on how relief commodities can be re-directed, resold or used in ways different than intended. To many Somalis who were consulted, these issues and the fact that NGOs and UN agencies are viewed as a homogenous entity, result in negative perception of NGO or humanitarian work generally.

NGO perception of the sector is not surprisingly much more nuanced. They see a broad range of mandates, interests and operational norms. Rather than a homogenous NGO, they see diversity. They also recognise that it is this diversity which makes it difficult for them to come together to counter stereotypes held by Somalis of the NGO sector and its work. This also appears to be a dynamic process. Across the board, Government and NGO stakeholders have recognised the NGO Consortium as a force that helps counter these differences in perception.

### Actions Which Have Impact: The Somali View

Government interviewees provided two examples of external work that made a difference in Somalia. Firstly, the investments by the Turkish Government and business since 2011. They were said to have approached the Government to ask, “*What needs to be done?*” and were directed to investments in lighting (i.e. electricity), and infrastructure such as roads or airports. The Turkish people have completed these works to varying levels of quality - but to the Somali people this work has made an important difference practically as well as symbolically.

Secondly, the *success* of Islamic faith groups, it was said by one senior government official, that in the 25 years when NGOs were “developing communities”, Islamic faith groups had worked without fanfare, impact assessments or communications strategy and ultimately controlled business, education and religion. He felt that faith groups were an effective force of change.

In contrast to these visible or demonstrable pieces of progress, NGOs tend to measure their work with intangibly, abstract notions such as community development, risk reduction, climate change adaptation, or resilience - all of which can be notoriously difficult to prove or attribute (not just in Somalia).

## Coordination

While the humanitarian sector has a clear coordination mechanism under the cluster system, coordination for developmental actions will be more challenging. Some developmental coordination exists in Somalia, such as in the Health sector, but for the most part, coordination mechanisms have not yet evolved for other sectors. It will be critical for the government to have clear coordination structures in place for each NDP pillar and for the overall process to support coordination and engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

Practically, it is very difficult for NGOs themselves to aggregate or coordinate their work even through the cluster system (bearing in mind it is also difficult for the UN to coordinate their work). NGO coordination is not only hard in Somalia but elsewhere, even where Government assumes this role. In this period of transition, expectations or demands for coordination may need to be balanced with the practical challenges of the task.

## Sovereignty

Perhaps the single greatest issue which NGOs will face in engagement in the NDP processes or discussions of where they can have impact will be around sovereignty. There are presently different perspectives by NGO Consortium members on this issue. However, discussions with the Government on its strategic plan, would be difficult if the sovereignty of that Government itself is not recognised. These discussions will have implications for the autonomy and accountability of NGOs. NGOs working within governmental frameworks, priorities and systems of accountability in and of itself, is not problematic. It is a process through which other countries and NGOs in the region have already passed. The issue seems to be more around a wariness of change and uncertainty for the future in Somalia itself. While NGOs are considering their engagement with the FGS or Regional States, the process which is formalising the Government, its laws and regulations continues at a rapid pace. It may be that soon, there will no longer be any question about working with Government. It may be a legal requirement, as in other countries. Compounding the difficulty of this decision, hesitancy by NGOs to recognise and work with the FGS is perceived as prevarication, effectively undermining future trust and good will.

The NGO perspective on the issue of sovereignty seems grounded in the Somali political experience of the last 25 years where it has either been impossible or impractical to work with Government. Working with the Government carried great political and operational risks. The role of NGOs has been one of navigating but not engaging with that political flux to deliver assistance to highly vulnerable populations. It is this same situation, which allowed NGOs to justify, prioritise, and define the value of their own work. Their experience of working in Somalia and with different levels of government has led NGOs to temper the optimism of the current political processes underpinning the NDP. Several interviewees felt that while the political processes of the FGS are making considerable advances, that change is limited to Mogadishu.

The Government recognises the risks NGOs face and share their concern that basic services and assistance should not be compromised by recognising the sovereignty of the Government. That recognition may be more symbolic with modest implications for operations in the coming three years. It would however be the starting point from which trust could be built and from which future work could follow. The Government was frank about their limitations and felt that

where there is trust, there is an enormous opportunity to find solutions to problems together. MoPIC, responsible for the NDP initiative, tabled basic questions for NGOs which they felt were preconditions for discussion or collaboration on the NDP. Those questions essentially were posed to see if NGOs are prepared to respect Somalia's sovereignty and to demystify Government expectations of what that recognition will mean to NGOs work:

- *“The Government is ready to work with NGOs, are the NGOs ready to work with Government?”*
- *“The door for a collaborative working relationship is open if NGOs are prepared recognise contributions and inputs of the government and will work:*
  - *In partnership with and under a Government provided framework;*
  - *With government, where relevant, to design programmes and establish boards to review work at inception, mid-term and end term*
  - *Within developmental approaches.*
  - *To link humanitarian aid into longer term development*
  - *With Government to track programme progress by aligning programme M&E to Government management information systems*

## Working Under Government Framework in the South West State

The resilience consortia of BRCiS & SomReP worked closely with FGS and the South West State in the development and implementation of the EU Resilience program. The process of scoping, assessment, design and inception for the EU funded program were undertaken with close Government consultation. The concept notes of the design were developed with Regional States and validated by federal cross ministry consultations. The design phase of the project engaged with MoPIC and line ministries on technical review and input to ensure alignment to ministries strategies and standards. Village selection undertaken by NGOs with the state Government endorsement based on an agreed criteria. The assessment phase of the project trained line ministry staff in the assessment methodology and engage them as part of analysis team for assessment data. The detailed design and planning of project is in the process and using the Government technical specialist at federal and state level. Government at federal and state level will take roles in project monitoring and evaluation as the program moves from inception into implementation. This program scoping process and inception phase is resulting in a food security and livelihood resilience program that is beneficiary needs focused, Government owned and NGO implemented.

## Incentives to Change

There are different perceptions of the costs of change. Both the Government and several Donors interviewed, questioned whether or not NGOs were prepared to relinquish their autonomy in order to collaborate with the Government. This is compounded by at least a perceived competition between NGOs and local Government for resources provided by international Donors.

The Government stakeholders recognised this issue but indicated that there is now a clearer distinction between roles and funding for Government versus NGOs. NGOs claim that their ability to change, is less a function of changing power dynamics, but one where Donors will determine the degree to which they will or will not work with the Government.

There are also few NGOs who may choose to work with certain levels of Government but not others. Ultimately, if the Donors decide to frame their funding decisions around the NDP and subsequent planning processes, this issue of shifting balances of power will be a moot point.

## Capacity

There are different views on the suitability or capacity of NGOs to manage or lead the transition into developmental modes of working, and by extension the role or impact they can make in the NDP. The skill set of NGO management and operations has been framed by conflict and the absence of Government. Government stakeholders have suggested that NGOs will need to examine managerial and operational capacities to assess if it is fit for purpose in the changing Somali context. Likewise, NGOs have reservations about the suitability or capacity of Government officials who can be appointed for reasons other than merit, and who are also deeply embedded in norms and attitudes of the last 25 years.

## Pace of and Commitment to Change

There are different views on the pace of change required, which leads Government stakeholders to question the commitment of NGOs to NDP processes. The view of most NGOs consulted, is that change may best occur at a more measured pace allowing for political and operational processes to be settled.

As well, there seems to be a very small proportion of NGOs, who do not wish to change even at that more measured pace. Their reluctance to engage with the Government appears to be driven by their organisational concerns that their neutrality and future access to populations in humanitarian need could be compromised.

Given the stereotyping of NGOs, an unarticulated NGO position or lack of NGO consensus on the pace of change is interpreted as a lack of commitment by Government stakeholders. The Government feels that NGOs have come to the realisation that there is a need to work with the Government and the NDP. One must nonetheless appreciate the difficulty that NGOs face to engage with these processes of change. They asked to participate in the PSGs and were rebuffed; the FGS for the last two years has been nascent and, outside of the PSGs, has not evolved strong coordination mechanisms. However, perhaps the most significant factor leading Government to believe there is a lack of commitment to change is that senior NGO management still predominantly reside and operate from Nairobi. While NGO operations may have been shifted to Mogadishu, it was commented that power and decision making have not.

## 3.2

### **AREAS OF IMPACT FOR NGOs**

The process of preparing the NDP is a unique moment for NGOs in Somalia. They will have the opportunity to act and define their future role in the country. There are opportunities for NGOs to build on areas where they are recognised for their contribution and expertise. Some examples include:

- The provision of basic services (health, water, education, social protection) and the development of new modalities of service delivery
- Supporting the inclusion of all regions, communities and members of those communities to participate – as appropriate – in the NDP and subsequent sub-national planning processes
- Working with the National Disaster Management Service and state/regional administrations to transfer the “humanitarian caseload” and to develop local disaster management mechanisms
- Support local governance mechanisms (for basic service provision/management; natural resource management) and help to link into State/regional line ministries
- Working with state/regional Government and line ministries to move forward durable solutions for returnees and IDPs
- Support the role of women in local, state/regional administration and their growth in the business sector
- Using NGO experience in the productive and small business sectors to connect the grass roots to the goals, objectives and plans made for them
- Build on NGO relationships with State or regional Governments to help individuals or businesses participate in the NDP process
- Use learning from health, water, education, food security, or resilience to help translate strategic objectives from the NDP into inclusive and equitable actions by local and state/regional Government
- Help build continuity of service provision across Somalia, Puntland, and Non State armed groups held areas
- Support civil society – local NGOs and grass-roots stakeholders – to undertake their constitutionally provided roles in NDP related governance processes



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Possible roles of NGOs in the NDP can be informed by their core areas of strength and experience as well as how they might see those roles changing in the future. They may also wish to draw upon experience with the New Deal Compact and perceptions by the Government in order to maximise the potential contribution they can make to the NDP process.

Experience with the New Deal Compact emphasises a need for NGOs to develop a common voice and a strategic focus in these processes. NGO strengths can do much to broaden the ownership and engagement with the NDP.

FGS officials said the *door is open* for NGOs to play an active role in forthcoming planning and implementation processes. It will require that NGOs are willing to work with Somali Government provided leadership, coordination structures, objectives and priorities exist. It will also require that NGOs – whether humanitarian, development, peacebuilding etc. - adopt a more developmental approach and ensure complementarity between humanitarian-development programs and coordination systems. FGS officials feel that inclusive and participatory NGO approaches can be valuable to NDP, local and sub-national planning and resource allocation processes. Those approaches and support can also help ensure that developmental initiatives include marginalised or vulnerable populations (including returnees and IDPs) and progressive opportunities for women and youth.

## 4.1

### THE STATUS OF THE NDP

The NDP which is currently being developed will provide the strategic guidelines for development planning in the next three years from January 2017 till December 2019. According to MoPIC, its primary purpose is to consolidate peace and extend basic services as widely as possible. It will also *be compliant to an IPRSP and aligned with the newly adopted Global SDGs* (MoPIC, 2016). Compliance with IPRSP will position Somalia to receive funding from the International Monetary Fund.

It is likely that the content will be framed around five main sections: Introduction/Country Profile, Macro-economic situation, Poverty analysis, Strategy (five pillars), institutional arrangements. The five pillars will contain the content which will set developmental priorities for the next three years. These five pillars will be: Governance; Economic Development and Financial Governance; Infrastructure; Social Services; Resilience (MoPIC, Vision for NDP, 2016). The planning process began in 2014. Much of the document and most of the pillars were complete by April 2016. The first draft for comment was circulated in July 2016.

Some NGOs have participated in the development process of the NDP. Some have supported the preparation of sectoral strategies, referred to in the NDP, and others have provided logistical and financial support to the actual preparation of NDP components.

The current document will not contain detailed plans but will be limited to forming a coherent overall and sub-strategies, including milestones and priorities. It is likely that the more detailed planning elements will be addressed in federal, post-NDP coordination structures. These structures are expected to be similar to the PSGs structures and functions but framed around NDP pillars. It includes provision for international partners to continue providing basic services. The document will also recognise previous international commitments by the Government, i.e. IHL. The NDP has been designed to build on the New Deal Compact work and experience. In place of



an international Donor-led initiative to address a fragility agenda, is a Somali-led, comprehensive development planning process. The NDP is being structured in such a way as to ensure that work and initiatives development under the Compact's PSGs will feed directly into the NDP. It places a strong emphasis on relations with their current international development partners and Donors, but frames cooperation with developmental paradigms and premised on Somali sovereignty. The three-year time frame, is recognised as inadequate for a true developmental vision but also recognises the fluidity of the current situation. It is expected that the vision developed during the current process will continue to guide planning efforts after this three-year cycle.

Lastly, MoPIC emphasises that the objectives of the NDP is to entrench peace and to see basic services extended. The next order of priority, is that the NDP must move the country from a humanitarian & relief focus to one of development.

## ROLES FOR NGOs/CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE NDP PROCESS

## 4.2

In the event that the NDP is an opportunity to turn the page on a historically complex relationship between Somalia's authorities and NGOs, bearing in mind the fluidity of politics in Somalia, the growing willingness to build a federal Government by Somalis themselves and a recognition of the current Government by the international community, then this marks a starting point to create a new collaborative relationship. Engaging in the NDP should be considered as a much wider strategy by NGOs to engage in a rapidly changing context in Somalia.

In order to begin a process of *turning the page*, a starting point will be for the NGOs to establish their credibility as a development partner to the Government (Federal Government of Somalia, 2012). Comments on the NDP for example, require an understanding of different developmental processes such as the distinction between the NDP, subsequent planning processes and the constitutional issues<sup>3</sup>. The NDP will be a high-level, strategic, document. It establishes broad socio-economic directions to achieve peace and prosperity in the coming years. It does not determine how those priorities will be interpreted or funded at the sub-national level. It does not affect issues of participation or transparency, which are determined by the constitution and law. It will not address how NGOs will be able to operate in the future, which will be determined by other forms of legislation such as the NGO Act, labour laws and registration requirements. These distinctions were not widely understood even though they affect NGO credibility in the eyes of the Government.

FGS officials had the impression that in general terms, some NGOs do not clearly understand what a NDP is nor what the document is meant to do. With respect to the Somalia NDP, they felt the NGO community had only a vague notion of its purpose and content. With few, recognized exceptions, they commented that NGOs had hardly participated in the NDP process. NGOs participating in the consultation meeting in Mogadishu were not aware of the Somalia NDP website <http://ndp.mopic.gov.so/en/>. In fact, many of the concerns NGOs have highlighted for this report cannot be addressed in the NDP process.

<sup>3</sup> Concerns flagged by NGOs such as participation or accountability are in fact addressed in the constitution. Those issues will be articulated by legal provisions and processes distinct from the NDP itself, but which will be tested in the subsequent planning and resource allocation processes.

Building credibility, however, not only requires technical capacity, it is also grounded in the quality of relationship that NGOs wish to have with the Government. The fact that the Government asked the NGO Consortium to prepare a discussion paper rather than a position paper reflects a desire to share ideas and collaborate. It is a new process for the Government as well. They value colleagues with whom they can learn how to turn this new process into an opportunity for peace and well-being for Somalia. It is an important distinction and the suggestion is well worth considering in defining how NGOs should approach their engagement with the NDP.

Below is a summary to key areas where within this context, strategic actions can be taken now and in the coming months to engage with the broader NDP preparation and planning process.

## 4.2.1

### Highlight Issues of Shared Concern

NGOs, Donors and the FGS feel that the sections of the NDP document which are most relevant to NGO work are found in Chapters 7, 9 & 11 of the draft document<sup>4</sup>. The productive sectors (agriculture, livestock, and fisheries) in addition to business development are located in Chapter 7. Chapter 9 includes basic services (health, education – and local, small-scale level water supply). Chapter 11 will guide on how investments in other Pillars can be focused on specific populations (IDPs, returnees, youth, the most vulnerable) and issues such as risk management (climate change, disaster management).

Rather than expecting to influence the drafting of the document, which is largely already written, NGOs can instead highlight elements of the NDP for which they have a shared value. They can use the discussion to reinforce their value. Discussions should also cover how these issues could constructively be addressed in the future, essentially using the NDP discussions to frame collaboration in months to come. Working with the Federal or State Governments in subsequent planning processes will continue over the next three years. Below are three areas in which NGOs could voice supportive, constructive views:

### Basic Service Provision – Collaboration – Ending Competition

- Recognise that NGOs and private sector actors are providing basic services which can be gradually brought within national frameworks as in other countries (i.e. national health, water or agricultural strategies) and quality control (which will likely be proscribed across a number of different pieces of legislation but also in the NGO Bill). It also presents an opportunity to develop an innovative a collaborative model for future basic service provision.

### Move from Relief to Development

- The inclusion of Pillar 5 in the NDP is strongly supported by NGO partners. It provides an excellent platform from which to transition “humanitarian thinking, language and programming” into developmental actions. It also recognises current extreme vulnerability and humanitarian caseload that exists.

<sup>4</sup> These chapters are alternately referred to as Pillars. Previously, they were Pillars 2, 4 and 5.

- NGOs share the Government's commitment under Pillar 5 to shift the chronic and extremely vulnerable populations – including IDPs - onto more rational and valuable forms of social protection and hopefully developmental trajectories to ensure their protection from crisis, and that their daily basic needs can be met with dignity. The inclusion of displacement as a development issue and of durable solutions is a critical achievement that NGOs have been advocating for over the past years.
- NGOs commitment in this period of transition, as they work with large segments of the extremely impoverished population, must be vigilant to the probability of catastrophe and prepared to employ all available resources to mitigate and manage those eventualities. NGOs are prepared to work towards that end with the SoDMA and State/Regional Governments.

## Future Operational Roles for NGOs

Over the next three years, the FGS expects to work with all of Somalia's development and private sector partners in the NDP and sub-national planning processes. Participating in these processes can be an opportunity for NGOs to address a multitude of operational problems. Working together on the NDP and State/National planning can help identify modes of collaboration and roles for NGO, which can be reflected in the forthcoming NGO Act.

The recommendations reflect the comments received during discussions with stakeholders identified by the Somalia NGO Consortium.



© MERCY CORPS: Children in class at a school in Mogadishu

An overarching recommendation is to approach the discussion on the NDP in its broader context. It is important to consider that the role of the NDP is to set the stage for subsequent efforts to establish devolved Government institutions, processes and services. NGO discussions on the NDP should bear in mind processes that will follow its implementation. In essence, the planning and consultation process which will follow the drafting of the document will be more important for NGOs.

The preparation of NDP is a milestone in itself of a Government taking its place and a transition from civil conflict towards peace and prosperity. This change can be an opportunity to structure a future role for NGOs in Federal and sub-national Government framed and directed work. While this process will occur over years to come, it immediately demands recognition of the sovereignty of Government (in its current varied forms). It may soon demand that NGOs not only work within Government frameworks and priorities for service provision, but that they must simultaneously identify ways to actually help create those public institutions and governance structures.

The changing situation with non-state armed actors, continued relative, political stability across the regions and the continued international financial, political and technical support, indicate conditions conducive to processes of national and regional governance building. It is against this complex and dynamic context which NGOs will engage with the NDP. There is much to discuss amongst the FGS regarding the NDP, but amongst NGOs as well. Below are suggestions for those discussions, framed around four aspects of the NDP:

- Changing Perceptions and Working Relationships
- The NDP Document Itself
- The NDP and the Process of Transition
- The Transitioning Role for NGOs

Perhaps the most important of these four aspects would be to use this opportunity to establish a new relationship between Government and NGOs, one where NGOs are perceived as a force for peace and development by being a pro-active contributor towards governance and institution building and the provider of quality, equitable basic services within a Government framework and with Government providing quality assurance.

## 5.1

### CHANGE PERCEPTIONS AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

These recommendations are framed around the idea of turning the page on past NGO-Government relations. They focus on actions which can be the starting point of building trust. These suggestions are considered priorities as they form a pre-condition to substantive discussion with the Government on the NDP.

Recommendation	Possible Actions
Send clear and positive messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a statement of clear support for the aims of the NDP (aims, in case supporting the NDP outrightly would be perceived as a political act)</li> <li>• Underline NGO support for Somali-led processes for peace and development</li> <li>• Recognise past differences between NGOs and Government. Commit to a new phase of collaboration</li> <li>• If High-Level representatives of MoPIC hold consultation meetings in Somalia, heads of agencies should attend. Similarly, if regional meetings are called, NGOs should participate with the appropriate level of representation.</li> </ul>
Highlight NGO support to sub-national institutions, NDP and sectoral policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how NGOs have supported the NDP process and also the strategic plans which are referred to in the NDP (agriculture, health, IDPs, among other)</li> <li>• Show where NGOs have supported sub-national Government work in the different Regional States</li> </ul>
Reinforce the value of current NGO work, staff to the aims of NDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise the extent to which basic services – water, health, education – are currently supported by NGOs – in all regions, including areas that are not under Government control. And how they can be affirmed in their support of the communities</li> <li>• NGOs, as providers of many of basic services and particularly in conflict areas – recognise the role they can play to contribute to peace and success of the NDP in the next three years</li> <li>• Proudly assert the personal commitment shown by NGO field staff and management – many of whom have worked in remote, dangerous locations for years</li> <li>• Ask Government to recognise the many NGO staff and management who contribute far beyond their salary or duty to provide what they believe are valuable services to some of the most vulnerable in the country</li> <li>• Ask that the Government recognises that many NGOs have stood by Somalis for many years</li> </ul>
Recognise the contribution of current Government colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that the changes since 2011 have been through the efforts of Federal and Regional Government staff who often receive meagre pay, work in poor conditions, and brave great personal danger</li> <li>• Highlight how their efforts have made the possibility of discussion on a NDP possible</li> </ul>
Support the NDP process as a means to improve basic service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline how the NDP and subsequent planning processes can provide a rational framework and quality of service guidelines for current ad hoc service provision</li> <li>• Support the process as a solution to current fragmented controls and punitive taxation</li> </ul>

**Recommendation****Possible Actions**

Take the initiative

- Make concerted efforts – as a whole – to meet with MoPIC, and back up the words of “good intention” with demonstrable actions

## 5.2

**THE NDP DOCUMENT ITSELF**

The NDP drafting process is very advanced and the space or opportunity to influence may be through the upcoming second round of consultations planned by the FGS. Nonetheless, in the framework of the NDP in wider developmental processes, there are still opportunities to engage with the NDP that can be important to subsequent work. Learning from the NGO experience with the Compact, and very practically for the NDP itself, any discussion points should be strategic and cut across the fragmented interests of the NGO community. Those comments should be relevant to the broad, strategic intent of the NDP and provide constructive commentary.

**Recommendation****Possible Actions**

Voice support to specific elements which are in the draft NDP document

- Peace: Promoting peace through equitable and inclusive development
- IHL: References to continuing existing international commitments and in particular, IHL
- Service Provision – Small Government: Continuing to provide basic services in partnership with private sector and non-Government partners, but under a Somali-led guiding framework and quality assurance. Also, that access to basic services, should be equitable, particularly for the most vulnerable in society.
- Devolved Government: Efforts to entrench the role of regional and district Government in planning, priority setting, and strategy for that administrative unit
- Inclusion: Efforts to ensure the planning and provision of basic services at appropriate levels allows for the voice of those who will use them to inform those processes.
- Youth: Emphasis on youth – and ensuring progressive opportunities for them
- Relief to Development: Pillar 5’s recognition of the extremely vulnerable and its commitment to better support them through developmental instruments (equitable development/social protection)

Provide opinions of attributes of the document that can make for a “good” NDP

- One that provides a vision of a better and peaceful future
- One that uses clear language and simple descriptions of what is to be achieved and why
- One that promotes inclusion and equity
- One that offers measurable and meaningful targets – which above all else are realistic in a three-year time

Recommendation	Possible Actions
Consider providing constructive feedback on NGO perspectives of the content of the draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The five pillars capture the breadth of economic, social and political issues important for Somalia at this point in time</li> <li>• Pillar 2: Economic Development; Pillar 4: Social Services; and Pillar 5: resilience and durable solutions are the pillars of particular importance to the NGOs and their work.</li> <li>• The broad outlines of Pillar 2 and 4 are consistent with and will provide future strategic direction to NGO work</li> <li>• The strong prominence given to issues of health and the displaced is strongly supported by NGO partners</li> <li>• The potential of a resilience and durable solutions pillar can be extended to shape work in other pillars (mainstream resilience and durable solutions)</li> <li>• The private sector is essential to Somalia in the next 3 years through driving economic growth or through the provision of basic services.</li> <li>• Clarify the role of humanitarian aid work: many NGOs feel it will continue to play an important role in the coming three years and should have a place in the NDP. Some in the Government feel that the international humanitarian aid community must learn to diminish its role and find their place under the Disaster Management Authority. The topic will require more robust discussions.</li> </ul>
Address issues specific to an NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on specific – strategic elements of a Pillar section is still possible but it would need to be initiated by the NGO concerned who would need to identify the pillar lead, and discuss directly with him/her. It would be difficult and unlikely to expect a wider consultation process at this point.</li> </ul>
Demonstrate Credibility to Discuss NDP issues with the Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO discussion points should reflect that a basic understanding of the purpose and function of an NDP and understand its role within future processes of public planning, resource allocation and service provision</li> <li>• Discussion points should be able to distinguish constitutional issues with those of the NDP and subsequent sub-national planning and resource allocation processes. The reference point is the draft 2012 Constitution. This is also very important to frame NGO discussions of “accountability”, which is often framed by the participation of citizens in their local level Government. Vague definitions in the constitution can still be used as opportunities to open the door to participative, accountable governance in line with other countries in East Africa.</li> <li>• Language and content of NGO discussion points should reflect an honest appraisal of their understanding and technical credibility to engage with NDP level issues. A measured level of engagement would not only be honest, but can build relationships through an attitude of mutual respect, concern and learning.</li> <li>• NGOs advocate for a wider civil society inclusion in NDP consultation</li> </ul>

## 5.3

## THE NDP IN A PROCESS OF TRANSITION

Despite the optimism and opportunity which the NDP represents, all parties recognise the current political and security situation as well as capabilities and resources of the Federal and sub-national Government. NGO engagement can be conducted with optimism and in support of these processes during this period of transition. Engagement with a peace building and developmental process premised on equity as well as devolved small-Government and citizen participation in local level planning and resource allocation can allow meaningful engagement and support, while respecting political and contextual issues. It will necessitate continuing current roles as service providers, as well as additional tasks to support the NDP and subsequent sub-national planning processes.

**Suggestion****Possible Actions**

Develop a common NGO Approach for all Regions of Somalia that works towards the roles NGOs should play post-NDP

- Identifying common developmental objectives and approaches across the different regions of the county can help to transcend the politics surrounding the NDP and allow NGOs to evolve relations with sub-national Government in all regions
- Develop a position on how to address support for the developmental and peace objectives of the NDP that will not compromise activities in areas held by Non State Armed Groups
- Identify processes that NGOs can engage with (i.e. modifications to current sectors working groups) to build the Government and basic institutions which will provide the future frameworks and quality control over service provision
- Identify processes that NGOs can engage with to build linkages between local interests (i.e. community) served by the NGO and their engagement to the Regional / District planning processes
- Engage with national sectoral policies and their application (planning/resource allocation) at the sub-national level

Collaborate with different levels of Government to improve operational environment

- Engage with and catalyse inter-Governmental discussions to coordinate and structure NGO work with different levels of Government – district commissioners, mayors, regional authorities and central Government authorities – as an interim measures pending final legislation or regulation

Support the process work to make it work

- Offer to support the immediate process of preparing the NDP draft
- Offer to support the subsequent state/regional or district planning/alignment processes late in 2016

Ask the Government to work with NGOs to help identify good technical staff

- Help the transition toward competent region or state Government staff by discussing and working with those line ministries on how constraints can be overcome
- Request support from federal line ministries for regional or state solutions to begin attracting, contracting and retaining competent staff



## Suggestion

## Possible Actions

Shape the role in which humanitarian issues will be addressed

- Consider preparing what part of the current “humanitarian case load” can begin to be classified as developmental, and which would be better addressed through instruments of social protection, reintegration or basic services (health, education, water, or labour) – help develop the instruments to address those needs i.e. Durable Solutions for IDPs

## THE TRANSITIONING ROLE FOR NGOs

## 5.4

The Government has said, “the door is open, it is now up to the NGOs to enter”. NGOs are at a transition point. Moving forward requires commitment, leadership and incremental but valuable changes in how NGOs operate in Somalia. Alternately, NGO inaction, borne out of scepticism, may risk marginalising NGOs in three years. If the FGS and NDP do in fact make progress, and attract IMF funding at the end of the three-year period, there may be little political-will and much less necessity to engage with NGOs who in 2016 were not prepared to take a chance and invest in peace and development. Expectations of FGS at this point are by and large reasonable, collaborative and are premised on NGOs acting in good faith.

## Suggestion

## Possible Actions

Ensure the Agencies management has the skill set to operate in a developmental context i.e. Ethiopia

- NGO management that has not worked with Government should recognise their limitations, and as a response, develop strategies to understand and work within developmental structures and norms
- Make the Government aware of these efforts – and where possible turn it into an opportunity to learn together

Develop a strategic, long-term approach to engage Government

- Prepare a discussion paper to share with MoPIC and the federal and regional line ministries that can open the door to conversation with the Government
- Understand how positioning the NGOs in the NDP process will serve future discussions MoPIC will have on the NGO laws/regulations.
- Consider asking the NGO Consortium to schedule regular meetings (i.e. bi-monthly) with key federal ministries?
- NGO Directors could consider scheduling more regular courtesy visits to offices of key federal ministries & senior staff could do the same at regional level

Continue shifting operations, meetings etc. inside Somalia commensurate with security improvements

- Increase the amount of time senior management spends in Somalia
- Shift coordination meetings into Somalia and include Government stakeholders where appropriate
- Continue to build the capacity of Somali management staff and demonstrate commitment to have diversity amongst management teams
- Gradually decrease expenditures in Nairobi and reallocate them to operations inside the country as security considerations and cost differences allow

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The Somalia NGO Consortium was first established in 1999 as a network of NGOs working together to improve international aid coordination and raise the presence and profile of NGO representation within the aid coordination structure for Somalia. It is the primary NGO coordination mechanism in the country with a membership of over 80 national and international NGOs working in all areas of Somalia. The NGO Consortium represents its members to Governments, UN agencies, Donor groups, and multilateral organisations at local, national, and international level.



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