

## **Ahead of the Brussels Conference, national and international civil society reflect on progress towards a New Deal for Somalia – August 2013**

### **Recommendations**

- A. The Federal Government of Somalia, the EU and other donors should, by recommitting to the process and principles of the New Deal process, be explicit that the document to be presented in Brussels is not a finalised New Deal compact but rather a *starting point* for the development of a genuine compact for Somalia pending the findings of the fragility assessment and other processes.
- B. The Brussels meeting should establish a realistic and patient timetable for New Deal implementation to ensure sufficient buy-in across Somalia. This time-frame should be worked out with relevant stakeholders, and the implementation of each objective under the PSGs should be phased, starting with inclusive dialogue to refine the proposed plans.
- C. Processes of national awareness raising and mobilisation, agreement on participation between regional leaders, inclusive fragility assessment, endorsement of one vision and national plan, and the development of a final compact should be built into the timetable as well as a schedule for the development of detailed plans to implement these processes.
- D. Donors have a key role to play in encouraging inclusivity, participation and engagement and should provide support to the range of Somali actors, including civil society, to be able to achieve this. Donors should provide accountability towards this end.
- E. Ahead of the Brussels conference, the Federal Government should work with civil society and its donors to undertake outreach and information sharing with the broader Somali public on the New Deal process.
- F. Civil Society should be an integral part of the post-Brussels work, including engagement and active leadership as Co-Chairs in all committees that will be established after Brussels, taking into account relevant peer learning.

### **Background**

In July 2013, the Federal Government and the EU announced they would be co-hosting “The New Deal for Somalia Conference” in Brussels on 16 September 2013. The conference is intended to endorse a New Deal compact for Somalia which commits “the Somali people and their international partners to a set of key priorities” for the reconstruction of Somalia over the next three years.

The process begun well and we would like to commend the donors and the Federal government for some of the ground breaking work done. For instance the formation of the High level Task Force was the first of its kind in the New Deal Implementation process. The fact that the team included CSOs is itself commendable. The initial decision to have ten consultations, one per region was a step in the right direction. We also commend the government for timely response to concerns raised by CSOs during the HLTF meetings and for their assurance that CSOs would be engaged.

However, as the process moved on, civil-society has become increasingly concerned that there is an attempt to not only rush the process, but to replace meaningful engagement with society with token participation of CSOs and regions in New Deal events.

While we appreciate the participation of CSOs in key meetings including the Naivasha Dialogue in August, we have reservations in some of the core areas that are foundational to peacebuilding and statebuilding.

As the Brussels conference approaches, civil society at all levels is concerned about significant deviations from the spirit and requirements of the New Deal process, especially the apparent rush towards finalising a “compact” that is driven by external donor needs rather than the needs of Somali people, and which has so far failed in engaging the broadest range of Somali society. While these concerns are significant, the New Deal process still represents a great opportunity for Somali people to direct and control their own future and emergence from fragility. We believe there are three main concerns with the process; failure to adhere to the spirit and requirements of the New Deal process, a lack of regional participation and buy-in into the process, and a lack of public inclusion and consultation, and based on this, we are offering constructive recommendations ahead of the Brussels conference to address these concerns.

### **1. Adhere to the spirit and requirements of the New Deal process**

The inception of the New Deal in Somalia has been marked with confusion, inadequate transparency and very limited inclusion. Whilst there is an understandable and welcome desire to finalise a formal New Deal compact for Somalia, pressure to progress has outpaced the ability of the Federal Government to engage effectively with all actors, and to ensure that fundamental aspects of the process are properly conducted.

Of particular concern is that the compact to be presented in Brussels is being developed without the completion of the fragility assessment to underpin its content, and without the development of a context specific peacebuilding vision and plan, together with specific objectives, and indicators to uphold them – all of which should be based on an inclusive fragility assessment process. Fragility assessment is the foundation of the New Deal, allowing all social groups to participate in the identification of national priorities and the creation of one plan – or possibly a set of interconnected sub-national plans – to move the country towards peace, resilience and development. Inclusive processes are needed to foster shared understanding of the root causes of fragility and conflict and to articulate how the New Deal’s Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) can best be achieved in that context through legitimate processes that enjoy cross-societal buy-in. The lessons of past efforts within Somalia show all too clearly the crucial importance of inclusion in the Somali context. By ensuring the views and needs of all social groups are taken into account, a shared compact on Somalia can contribute to broadly and democratically owned peace. Overlooking the fragility assessment as an opportunity for dialogue and consensus building in the development of the compact undermines the purpose behind the New Deal itself and risks directly contradicting PSG 1 on legitimate politics which emphasises the inclusivity of political dialogue. In this light, participants in the Brussels conference should be aiming to agree on how they will work towards a compact that is responsive to the special importance of inclusion in Somalia, rather than predetermining the outcomes of the fragility assessment and other processes and thereby putting the success of the New Deal approach at risk.

## **2. Ensure the participation of all regions of Somalia**

The New Deal offers a framework for an inclusive peace process. This means that the different regions and regional authorities must be involved in the process, embracing the New Deal as a forum in which inclusive discussions can take place.

However, to date, the process has been dominated by the Federal Government and its interests. While civil society has set out an ambitious agenda to involve counterparts from across the country, it has not been equipped with the time or resources necessary to do this, nor has international civil society had sufficient time and information to offer the right assistance. The Federal Government has attempted to reach out to some authorities, including Puntland and Galmudug. However, these outreach efforts have been largely centred on the fragility assessment and bear little relation to the compact development process. Inclusive participation is mandated for every stage of the New Deal, not just the fragility assessment. Furthermore, there has been no regional representation in the groups developing the compact text, nor any regional participation in key meetings including the August 2013 retreat in Naivasha organised by the EU.

As a result, the reaction of some regions has been to reject participation, risking the legitimacy of the entire process. Such rejection at the political level is likely to be echoed in society at large. The Federal Government, with the support of the EU as the lead donor in the New Deal process, should therefore step up its engagement with regional authorities- including de facto authorities - in order to foster broader buy-in to jointly developed national and sub-national priorities. The New Deal offers a crucial opportunity for the Federal Government and regional authorities to discuss their relationships and further political reconciliation and agreement. Deepening dialogue and engagement can only strengthen the New Deal process - investing in its success by ensuring buy-in across Somalia as a whole. Without this, the New Deal could risk undermining national reconciliation efforts.

## **3. Plan for genuinely inclusive social/societal participation**

Public confidence is crucial in transitioning out of fragility and the strength of a New Deal compact is in its commitment to build states which meet the needs and fulfil the rights of their people. The New Deal recognizes that long term peace depends on the level to which the society views the government to be legitimate and representative of their aspirations and needs. The failure to genuinely and continually include people in the rush to develop a compact in Somalia undermines the very purpose of the New Deal. Most importantly it undermines the Monrovia Road Map and its related PSG Number 1 (inclusive and legitimate Political processes), the foundations on which the New Deal Agreement was built.

By progressing towards a compact in Brussels based on existing strategies and plans, primarily owned by a set of Federal Government actors and with limited input from the broader Somali public; Somalia's New Deal process risks failure. There must be genuine outreach to and participation of the widest possible range of Somali people, including urban and rural populations, the internally displaced, diaspora and refugees and asylum seekers, as well as men and women, the youth and across Somalia's clans.

A comparative advantage of civil society is its capacity to reach out across the social spectrum to engage people in the process. Consulting *with* civil society is not enough.

Neither is engagement. Civil Society must be given an opportunity to mobilize and engage broader society, not just having their opinions expressed in meetings. This is the only way to allow them as CSOs to work with and consult Somalia's people. People need to understand what the New Deal is, what the process offers and have a chance to input into what their priorities and needs are.

They need to understand the difficulty of the journey ahead and the need to manage their expectations. Without this vital information, Somalia's New Deal process risks replicating the failure of repeated state and peacebuilding efforts in the country which have engaged limited stakeholders, are relevant only to the limited areas of the country, and ultimately fail.

#### 4. Conclusion

The New Deal process offers the chance of significant and sustainable progress towards stability in Somalia. But national and international civil society remain concerned that the process has been substantially flawed and rushed, compromising the legitimacy and content of any announcements in Brussels. This threatens the implementation of the New Deal as the process may not enjoy full acceptance by the local population, regional authorities, and civil society organisations operational in Somalia or donors.

Despite these challenges, civil society organisations in Somalia remain confident that the New Deal presents great opportunities for the Somali people, and are willing and ready to work with the Federal government and international donors to ensure the vision of the New Deal is translated into reality for all people in Somalia.

Action Africa Help International (AAH-I).

CARE International

Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP)

Civil Society Coalition

HANDICAP INITIATIVE SUPPORT AND NETWORK (HISAN)

Integrated Development Focus (IDF)

INTERSOS

KAALO Aid and Development

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

OXAM

Saferworld

Save the Children Somalia programme

Somali Green Initiatives and Technology (SOMGIT)

WASDA

World Vision International-Somalia Program