



MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND

Newsletter Q1 2020

Dear Partners,



On behalf of the United Nations Family in Somalia, I am pleased to share with you the first quarterly newsletter of 2020 for the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN MPTF) for Somalia.

The world and the UN are facing an unprecedented crisis in the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Countries' economies have been devastated, their health systems overwhelmed, impacting the most vulnerable communities around the world who were already facing enormous challenges.

The UN applied quick thinking strategies to ensure a swift and coordinated response, both globally and in UN's expansive field locations around the world. We, in Somalia, have been working with the government, our donor partners and all relevant stakeholders to synchronise our response plans and ensure proper planning. We're looking to re-purpose the existing programmes to front-load the most urgent needs while we appeal to donors for additional funding. COVID-19 hit Somalia at a time that this country is facing a crossroads - politically and economically - with elections preparations underway and the recent reaching of the debt relief decision point, Somalia's gains are in danger of being unravelled because of the pandemic. In addition, the Somalia's recurring weather shocks and protracted conflict place it into an especially vulnerable category of countries that require urgent support.

You will find in this newsletter some of the ways Joint Programmes have adapted to the crisis, by adjusting their activities to respond to the pandemic and support the government of Somalia and its people.

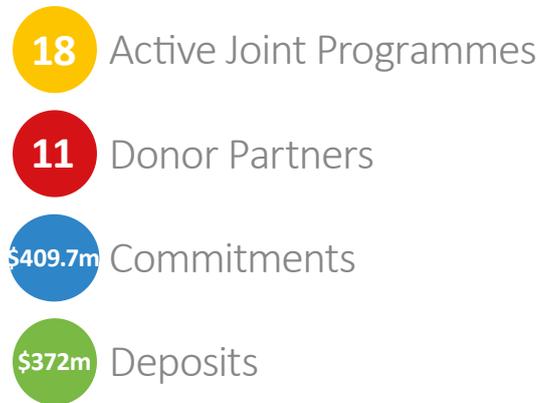
I am thankful to the very generous support donors have been providing to all UN MPTF Joint Programmes. I remain cognizant that countries' resources are stretched due to the pandemic but appeal to the donor partners to continue their support to Somalia. This is critical to ensure we don't lose the momentum of Somalia's progress we all fought so hard to attain. I look forward to a continued partnership and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Adam Abdelmoula

*Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General,
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia*

UN MPTF OVERVIEW



FUND CAPITALIZATION



RECONCILIATION & FEDERALISM

Peaceful reconciliation between two clans in Afbarwaqo and Towfiq villages in Galmudug State was achieved with the support of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) and Galmudug Administration. Rapid response interventions sought to resolve the four decade-long conflict between the Reer Nim'ale sub-group of Habargedir clan and Saleban Abdalle of Dir clan related to acts of revenge, and discord over limited pasture, water and other resources. Following cessation of the conflict by the Somali National Forces, MoIFAR deployed a mission which contributed to the parties reaching a peace agreement.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT

On 20 February, at a closing ceremony of the sixth session of the National Federal Parliament (NFP), President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" signed the Electoral Bill into law. This paves the way for the country to hold its first popular election in half a century, replacing the clan-based selection process. Following the signing of the Electoral Law, the leadership of the Parliament established a joint parliamentary ad hoc committee on its implementation. The committee is expected to prepare acts and resolutions that will help in the smooth implementation of the law, including on the allocation of seats, the election of the members of both Houses to represent "Somaliland", the representation of women, and the right of representation of Banadir region.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has forced the postponement of the opening of the seventh session of the NFP. In order to continue supporting the process and in compliance with social distancing requirements, the Joint Programme is providing the NFP with online video conferencing (VTC) tools and a revision of the rules of procedure to accommodate remote working arrangements. These measures will allow the NFP to continue to function and tend to priority issues, such as finalizing the constitutional review process and key legislations, including the amendment of the Political Party Law, the adoption of Joint Rules of Procedure for the NFP, and the approval of Special Rules of Procedure for the adoption of proposed constitutional amendments.

ELECTORAL SUPPORT

The draft Electoral Bill signed into law by President Farmajo on

20 February contains gaps and provisions that inhibit its implementation by the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC). To overcome these challenges, on 28 February, the Speakers of both houses of the NFP appointed a 17-member Joint Ad-Hoc Committee to draft recommendations to complement the Electoral Law. The Committee first met on 22 March to review four key legislative issues in the Electoral Law, namely: 1) Allocation of seats allocation per constituency for both houses of Parliament); 2) The women's quota; 3) Election of members of the two Houses from the northern regions ("Somaliland"); and 4) Representation rights of Banadir region. The Committee will cooperate with the NIEC and consult with Federal Member States (FMSs) and other stakeholders to inform its recommendations.

The Joint Programme supported a three-day consultation between the NIEC and the Joint Ad Hoc Committee to discuss various electoral issues. The Committee took note of the options and recommendations provided by the NIEC on the various issues. The NIEC outlined technical issues that require harmonization in the Political Parties Law, including necessary amendments to the Political Parties Law, which have yet to be tabled before the NFP. The Committee is to present its report to the NFP by mid-April. However, there is uncertainty about the date of resumption of the Parliament, as many members of parliament (MPs) are either in their home states or out of the country and cannot travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

From 5 – 18 February, the Ministry of the Constitutional Affairs (MoCA) and MoIFAR co-organized a series of inter-ministerial working sessions in Mogadishu attended by officials from various FGS institutions to build consensus and a common understanding on key issues in the Constitution related to the allocation of powers, natural resources, system and structure of government, fiscal federalism, the status of Mogadishu, and the federal justice model. Other topics covered included health, education, security, gender and human rights issues. The UN brought international experts to facilitate and contribute to the discussions with participants on the various topics, particularly on issues of fiscal federalism and the justice model.

From 4 – 10 March, the three mandated constitutional review institutions - the Parliamentary Oversight Committee (OC), MoCA and Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC) - completed the first round of public

consultations held in three FMSs (South West, Galmudug and Hirshabelle States) on the constitutional review process. Consultations engaged various groups including women, youth, religious and state authorities, to solicit their views on the reviewed articles of the Constitution. The three institutions are also planning similar consultations in Puntland, Jubaland and Banadir Region. However, due to challenges posed by COVID-19 regarding travel and large gatherings, the second round of the consultations will be delayed.

The outbreak has also delayed the start of the parliamentary session, which impedes the OC plan to present its report on the revised Constitution, and related activities leading to the adoption of the Constitution. In response, the Joint Programme is helping to establish a virtual parliament system for the NFP and on preparing rules to manage the use of VTC and electronic voting.

UNFPA COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Fay Osman Gabow, a senior midwife with over 35 years of experience assisting women with delivering babies, is worried that fears caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may stop pregnant women from visiting hospitals for antenatal care. Even with the pandemic worries, not many women are seeking antenatal care in Somalia.

“Clear and tailored messages should be shared, directed at pregnant mothers and health care workers. Pregnant women should be aware of the availability and accessibility of important services and measures that can be taken to protect them from infection,” said Ms. Gabow.

Laboratories across Somalia do not have the capacity to test for COVID-19, which will inevitably lead to missed opportunities for the early detection of cases and exacerbate further spread by undiagnosed cases. Even if they did have tests, most Somalis find it difficult to access laboratories due to limited and poor quality of public transportation.

Somalia scored 6 out of 100 in 2016 on the Health Emergency Preparedness Index, a global report card on a country’s capacities to prevent, detect and respond to any global health security threat.

The country already has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world and an estimated one out of every 22 women is likely to die due to pregnancy or childbirth-related causes. The maternal mortality ratio stood at 732 deaths per 100,000

live births in 2018. Access to both information and services about maternal health is low, with only around two out of ten women delivering being assisted by any skilled personnel, according to the Population Estimation Survey for Somalia (2014).

There is limited data on the effects of COVID-19, but recommendations that any febrile respiratory illness in pregnancy should be treated seriously with immediate diagnosis, appropriate care and precautions to avert infections.

Even before the news of the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Somalia, UNFPA sprang into action, developing internal plans to respond to the pandemic and continuing to develop the capacity of national institutions. UNFPA works closely with governments, UN agencies, community-based organizations and other partners, to ensure that reproductive health is integrated into common COVID-19 responses. The Agency also supports the procurement and supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), sanitizers, N95 masks, soap, and gowns/goggles for health professionals, including midwives for both infection prevention and control (IPC) at Emergency Obstetric Care and Neonatal Care (EmONCs) facilities. UNFPA also supports the training of health care workers on IPC and risk communication and supports facilities with obstetric and family planning supplies. Support is provided to vulnerable populations and to address the needs of women and young people, both at emergency and reconstruction phases.

SUPPORT TO AID MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

During the first months of the year, the FGS held consultations with the UN and the donor community to discuss a proposed version of a refined aid architecture. It was agreed that the profile of human rights, gender should be raised through their inclusion as a dedicated working group. There was also agreement to enhance information sharing and coordination between security, justice and development actors, and to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration in the management of the aid architecture through the establishment of an Integrated Coordinated Team.

In January, the FGS presented progress achieved in the implementation of government commitments of the Mutual Accountability Framework in the areas of inclusive politics, economic development, social development, and security and justice.

The Aid Information Management System was completed. How-

ever, its launch was held virtually due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the onset of the crisis in March, Joint Programme activities have mostly focused on addressing the mitigating the spread of the disease. The Aid Coordination Unit (ACU) has been fully engaged in the FGS's response to the crisis, particularly in mobilizing resources and managing logistics related to procurement and transport of assets and personnel. The ACU has also provided FGS and the COVID-19 Response Team technical lead members with communications materials for public appeals and other fundraising activities, and is engaged in monitoring fundraising targets and strategies on behalf of the Government.

JOINT PROGRAMME ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Joint Programme for Local Governance and Decentralised Service Delivery (JPLG), together with Somali partner governments with support from DANIDA, launched US\$ 2.2 million in emergency response funds to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds are designed to support the response capacities of local governments, which are the largest institutions (combined) and the first point of contact for most citizens. The contribution will benefit health, water, sanitation, and community level responses, as well as coordination. Local governments are proving essential to the fight against COVID-19, particularly in cities where they have deployed early strategic responses around the world, thereby reducing transmission rates.

Across the country, Somali local governments are proactively responding with their own resources. Management of public spaces is essential to controlling the epidemic and protecting health, businesses, and livelihoods. Hand washing facilities have been installed in major markets across the country and social distancing rules have been disseminated. However, the needs are high. The funds from Denmark will be used for public sanitation, awareness raising and provision of primary health services. In total, 27 local governments across Somalia are anticipated to be empowered with this support which will boost

their operational and financial resilience to enhanced social service provision to their citizens.

SUSTAINABLE CHARCOAL REDUCTION AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

The Joint Programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Climate Change, continued to promote the production and use of fuel-efficient stoves. This has generated a positive triple benefit: 1) reducing charcoal consumption, 2) reducing deforestation, 3) and creating employment opportunities. The Programme supported the production 4,850 stoves which were distributed to households and women retailers in Bossaso, Garowe, Qardo, Galkayo, Badan, Dargoroyo and Burtinle districts.

Faduma Yusuf was among 100 small-scale female traders who were given a total of 2,100 of the stoves to sell at discounted prices. "With efficient stoves we consume one and half bags of charcoal instead of three bags in a month. The stoves cook food quickly, and the children get their food on time and are not late to school," she said. Fatuma made US\$ 165 from the sale of the stoves.

The Puntland Ministry for Environment, with the support of the Programme, carried out various initiatives to promote more sustainable alternative energy sources and to diversify income for communities. The Ministry's director, Mr. Abdiaziz Nur Elmi, told Radio Ergo that the project aims to promote alternative sources of energy to reduce local charcoal consumption and to diversify income for communities. He said the trade in charcoal had already reduced significantly with the number of trucks delivering charcoal to towns declining from about 100 truckloads per month to around just 50.

"Many things have changed, for instance, in many streets in major towns, there used to be vehicles parked loaded with charcoal and firewood. But now we believe that the number is down by 60 per cent," he said.

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