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## **CDG'S POSITION PAPER: ROLE OF SOMALILAND CSOs AND IMPACT ON DELIVERED SERVICES**

### **1. Background of Somaliland CSOs**

Somaliland is one of the countries in post conflict development that has achieved unprecedented development of CSOs space with a huge number of local NGOs taking a center space in the countries post conflict rehabilitation, democratization, consolidation of achievements initiatives of international development partners and implementation of humanitarian programs in six regions of Somaliland. The Ministry of Planning and National Development each year registers and renews licenses of NGOs and they are exempted from operational taxes. Since 1991 the CSOs fundamentally took a fundamental role as the non-state actors in ensuring supplementary role of delivery of services to the strained society, the hard to reach areas, on a multispectral frontline. Education, water, health and nutrition, livelihood protection, security, agriculture, small enterprises building, socio-economic infrastructure development, anchoring the rule of law, democracy and human rights.

Consolidation of peace, safeguarding marginalized groups from violence and violation of individual and group rights raising awareness and education are critical development blocks laid by the civic players. Despite the challenging civil society environment, Somaliland has performed exceptionally well on deepening the coverage of NGO activities and their grassroots presence in undisputed.

After the Ogaden war and the civil war<sup>1</sup> civil society provided welfare safety nets and by 1995 they were active in mobilization of support for rehabilitation, governance and security at the height of reconstruction campaign at regional and national level. A lot of international support was mobilized.<sup>2</sup> NGOs have been engaged in real development work as government institutions rebuilt or reorganized and therefore making it hard to shift the paradigm of NGO work and separation from government or state roles radically. The perception of local-NGOs in the midst of growing role and entanglement with the state breed mixed feelings over where the CSO space is utilized appropriately or the state has overwhelming control of the CSOs. What is witnessed as deeply rooted contribution is a result of the “Building Partnership for Participatory Development”<sup>3</sup>

By 2018 the London school of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine<sup>4</sup> after more than 12 year of existence of an umbrella of non-state actors’ forum the challenges loom high over the delivery of services by the LNGOs. The consortium management by LNGOs is blighted by service crisis, numbers have increased and resources meagre that some of the areas cannot be reached<sup>5</sup>. So the mega question is on how the crisis ridden CSOs can ably handle the humanitarian crises if order, sanity and responsibility are not build and consolidated with integrity of all civil society.

In 2005, it was such challenges including building a stronger voice that the SONSAF was initiated and has literary helped to popularize itself as the umbrella organization of CSO in Somaliland but it still is not broad-based and instead of behaving and working as a forum, it is slowly degenerating into an independent NGO than a forum serving interests of the consortium organizations. The NSAs are not supposed to be mouth piece of the government, but deliver the services for the common good in an impartial manner. LNGOs cannot serve to enhance democratization unless they streamline principles of impartiality in accounting for responsibility and service they are deemed to offer in the discretion of the people served and regularizing, organizing activities of member LNGOs. Apart from strengthening government services by supplementary roles, accountability, transparency and leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> The war over zone 5 between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977-78, and the Somalia against Somaliland 1987-1991 when the number of refugees and emergency assistance was critically required when government structure were still rebuilding.

<sup>2</sup> Women organization in particular between 1992 and 1993 mobilized logistics with tradition clan-based institutions.

<sup>3</sup> The professionals who were pioneers of the building partnership for participatory development laid out a plan on enhancing coordination, capacity building and apportioned roles and responsibility of LNGOS in each of the six regions and the government.

<sup>4</sup> Highlighted the depth of work from child to women health but also the aching challenges in amidst service delivery. <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/health-crises/0/steps/22921>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/775-the-role-of-civil-society-in-somaliaas-reconstruction-achievements-challenges-and-opportunities>

## 2. Compromised CSOs Space

Historically the pioneer LNGOs and the subsequently entry of INGOs demonstrated consensus on the harmonious construction of the CSO space in Somaliland based on strong principles.<sup>6</sup> The development approach of INGOs and the principles anchored on accountability are fundamental to creation of a movement to redress issues and redirecting resources to development work for increased return on investment, benefit of the people served and sustainable partnership both of local and international non-government organization.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are a significant step towards people participation in governance. This was demonstrated in the last election of parliamentary and local councilors. Despite, the challenges cited were common to some other low-middle developing countries, although certainly with different nuances on their respective cultural-political-socio-economic contexts building democracy in Somaliland with good governance principles only transparency and accountability of LNGOs can enable them overcome the challenges of fundraising and efficient resource.

CSOs are the sector of society with ground presence and contact effectively with the people served by the public sector. This puts them in a better position to account for power, responsibility and service delivery. However, the lack of coordination and willingness to rationalize partnership for better results has jeopardized creating impact and sustainability of services. Resources have been pooled by CSO but the question of mismanagement blamed on CSOs by the society at the cost of trust and service for common good. The definition of CSOs, vision and direction derails from service of the common good and as a matter of fact they are diverse in nature. Sometimes their activities are burly contoured to the extent that the framework colludes to what the expectations of community are. Thus trust dwindles.

## 3. The Authoritarianism and Implementation Role of Umbrella and Non-State Actors

Managerialism has been introduced by CSOs that are performing better in Somaliland and the international NGOs follow procedures that safeguard to risks in finances. Securitization of CSOs operations in relation to governance and development of Somaliland demands that the CSO eco system reviews regulations, and operational frameworks. CSOs can only work in partnership with each other for accountable and effective service delivery.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.progressio.org.uk/sites/progressio.org.uk/files/building-partnerships-for-participatory-development.pdf>

Umbrellas are presumed networks of subscribing organization which continuously improves their latter's capacity. Authoritarianisms is killing the civic space. Structures of administration in networks and umbrella organizations can equally share the blame of not following the footsteps of the 1995 building partnership agenda. 2284 LNGOs in 2021 were dismissed as inactive and failed to renew their operating licenses. While government puts enabling conditions for registered NGOs, the space is flooded by many LNGOs and activity is traceable in only 300 active NGOS according to MNPD data<sup>7</sup>.

Shared administrative strategy, streamlined process and mechanisms of delivery of services are critical building block. The number of different funding mechanisms available means it is important for CSOs to be well informed, to buy into donor strategies for funding CSOs, to be familiar with donor funding guidelines and adherence to shared principles of effectiveness and successful implementation in a participatory manner. A shared CSO strategy is a success factor in CSO-donor partnerships.

#### 4. Globalization and Networking in SL CSOs

Globally Civil society organisations (CSOs), a broad group that includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are recipients and channels of significant levels of official development assistance (ODA). The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), agreed at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra 2-4 September 2008, broke new ground in recognizing the importance of civil society in development. By adopting the AAA, donors and developing countries committed to deepen engagement with CSOs. Standardization of NGO work in Somaliland demands that CSO and Government deepen engagement on matters of mutual effectiveness. The importance of working together between government and CSOs or working together as CSOs is grounded in the challenges faced by CSOs. The way they provide funds and the multiplicity of other environmental and structural challenges. For example the bargaining capacity, lobbying and advocacy enhancement, require fresh pathways build by the CSO/NGOs to rejuvenate their potential role success, trust, commitment and motivation to work in a cooperative manner as partners not enemies. Use of the data and arising numbers makes it incumbent on the forum, the CSOs and state agencies to show clear-cut operation mechanisms, management procedures and policies.

CSOs as essential development partners in delivering services, stimulating public debate, encouraging democratic processes and accountability, and strengthening civil society. The

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Planning and National Development set guidelines, registered and coordinated activities of development partners in Somaliland. They are cooperative and ensure that the NGO law is applied. Number dismissed as of September 29, 2021 MPND press-release. <https://wargeyskadawan.com/2021/09/29/xukuumadda-somaliland-oo-ruqsadii-kala-nogotay-tiradii-ugu-badnayd-oo-urruro-maxaliya/>

proximity to beneficiaries and the ability to respond rapidly to humanitarian crises are important comparative advantages of CSOs.

NSA forum member policies and strategies for CSOs vary widely in their nature and focus. Most have some sort of policy or strategy. Nearly 1/3 the members understand the fit in a strategy or policy for working with NGOs forums or the country institutions to provide humanitarian assistance.

## 5. CSO Financing and competitiveness

The core support for NGOs is the funding by developed nations to developing country governments or NGOs in respective nations including fragile nations. Such aid and grants are at the center of envisaged development paths. Core support can be appropriate when NGOs have clear objectives which donors are willing to support and when they can deliver results effectively and efficiently in line with the aid effectiveness principles of the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles (2010).<sup>8</sup>

Core support is always welcomed by NGOs in Somaliland because it means the donor transfers the responsibility for managing funds and prioritizing activities to them. This gives them more flexibility. When provided under multi-year agreements and covering part of their administrative costs, core support also gives NGOs predictable funding. This enables them to plan and to give their staff a degree of job security. Ideally, NGOs based in under the NSA forum should pass on any such predictability to the organisations they support in Somaliland and the forum should be predictable enough to be entrusted with the intermediary role on behalf of the CSOs.

In Somaliland most NGOs compete for the limited resources and focus on the accumulation of the funds to deliver the resources with many hit hard when they turn to co-funding. The diversity breeds competition than quality services by learning good practices of each other CSOs. Building synergies is the magic in a lot of developed nations and developing nations that have built better welfare safety nets for NGOs and people served. Process, policies and good financial management practice, implementation framework enhance effective and efficient use of core resources like finances, information and people.

## 6. Recommendations

It's an unfortunate experience that international development partners, local partners and government would experience draconian, humiliating and unscrupulous acts in management of CSOs. Thus CSOs come together and come up with a shared definition of who and what they are and their shared vision; work towards organizing themselves

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<sup>8</sup> The OECD countries emphasized how CSOs and donors work effectively to deliver services to the people and make aid work effectively. This remain a significant setback for both the Somaliland state and the NGO sector. It should be made better. To build better.

into networks/umbrella organization (by sectors or themes etc.) for coordination & complementation of activities. Clearly defining and embracing the governance of the umbrella or NGO forum demand structures that are representative, uphold the integrity and independence of each NGO with the benefit of growth, strengthening their capacity than an umbrella that that serves personalized interest, cannot distribute responsibility and optimize the outcome and impact with tangible change in civic services. A corrupt CSO space cannot hold power accountable.

An NGO secretariat must be composed separated from the directors who should be co-opted from member organizations fully subscribed with the view and passion to build democratic, transparent and accountable forum. CSOs future depends on restructuring, set procedures and understand the shared mandate held in trust of the good of all Somaliland society.

It is legitimate work towards formal institutionalization of the CSOs, some process of accreditation/ formal registration for legitimacy specially to access resources (international & local) that could support wider beneficiaries/partners' activities.

A network/umbrella of CSOs would provide greater leverage in accessing/mobilizing resources & activities toward their shared vision. Built on the most paramount feature is the NSA forum must provide opportunity for efficient use and allocation of mobilized resources than taking advantage of the members. A forum cannot be an implementer at the same time and provide impartial oversight roles and responsibilities. The eminent example is the 2021 May, 31<sup>st</sup><sup>9</sup> double election when decision making was quaffed, election resources in their millions could not translate into what the election community desired to feel or see regarding well targeted, well directed awareness information and election material for the grass root electorate in rural areas.

Regardless of the sources of assistance, CSOs can maintain their integrity and independence through transparency and internal structures & systems of accountability. This fell short in 2021 when the Intermediary CSO forum became an implementer than advocate and lobbyist entity, acting as a quasi-state agent than an independent election fund intermediary to better organize CSOs for effective implementation. Resources of a forum must be distributed to well selected and qualified LNGO to implement in respective geographical locations where the elected organization has a comparative advantage. "You cannot put all eggs in one basket" this increases risk when inefficiency manifests, failure of accountability and transparency.

CSOs need to engage internally and externally in the spirit of solidarity, as domestic challenges to inclusive growth and development are not endemic nor unique but global,

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<sup>9</sup> The non-state actors' forum was the implementing agent of election funds and 10 days to election is when potential voters received the election information despite funds being release 2 months ahead of the election. This is a decision making failure on the CSO side not the funders' inefficiency.

cutting across the international community. Achieving stability among CSOs is also a continuing challenge of organizational growth and maturity. That must be address by frequently working in tandem with the requirements of the Somaliland NGO law, supported by the Forum that empower the member organizations.

## 7. Conclusions

Foe effective roles, significance and strengthening the CSOs in Somaliland it is fundamental that CSOs, government and ODA development partners endeavor to; Strike a balance between respecting CSO autonomy and steering CSOs to deliver development co-operation objectives, current and future programs. When the objectives for donor-CSO partnerships and funding are clear, the balance will be easier to strike. Identify and emphasize the good practices for encouraging an enabling environment for civil society in Somaliland and working with local civil society including academia, opposition political parties, media, the traditional leaders and religious leaders. Collaborate with CSOs to identify achievable objectives, indicators for measuring achievements and realistic outcomes for ODA channeled through CSOs or their forums. Make sure reports developed and supplied respond to the need to be fully accountable to donor governments, INGOs, Somaliland Government and subscribing member LNGOs. Simplify and harmonize contracting, funding and reporting requirements to reduce transaction costs. Consider accepting and using CSO systems for monitoring and reporting. Each year the forum should rotate management teams and strategic teams and pool together a formidable team to stir the mandated LNGOs to stronger capacity, accountability and transparency. Engage systematically in meaningful dialogue with member CSOs when preparing development policy, strategies and interventions and it is important to tap into their knowledge of beneficiary needs and expertise in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance.

**THANK YOU**

**THE END**