



Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development

Federal Republic of Somalia

SOMALI WOMEN'S CHARTER

Preamble:

We, the women of Somalia affirm that:

- The unity of Somali women is sacred. In this spirit, we represent diverse groups of women in the Federal Member States and the Benadir Region, including those living in rural and urban areas and diaspora, women living with disabilities, young women and girls and elder women;
- In unity, we call for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia to enshrine the unconditional commitment to gender equality, human rights and empowerment of women;
- We demand for non-discrimination, equality, equity, justice and fairness to form the cornerstones of inclusive peace and development;
- We are equal partners working for peace and political processes, leading us towards security, stability and sustainable development for all; and
- We will drive positive change if we are fully acknowledged as equal partners. The world is changing, the planet is changing, and minds are changing. Collectively we address our common challenges, using equal and complementary strengths to achieve peace and sustainable development for Somalia.

FULL INCLUSION IS THE FOUNDATION OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

We, the Somali women, resolve to realize equal participation in all political and peacebuilding processes and accountability from the highest officials of the state. Without women's political participation there can be no sustained peace and development.

In order to address structural and historical discrimination, a quota is required to reflect a 50/50 gender divide: not less than 50% of any sex to be represented across the three branches of government, all independent commissions, across all federal member states and all levels of governance, whether in elected or appointed positions. We demand that women are equally represented in the constitution review process, that the constitution, the electoral and political party law advance women's representation and participation in electoral and political party processes and enshrine the 50/50 quota, making women's full inclusion and leadership a reality.

During decades of conflict in Somalia, Somali women were a formidable force sustaining families and communities; we women continued to support our children, our young people, vulnerable members in our communities, and kept our family and community assets safe. We sustained livelihoods and governance when our men were fighting. By overcoming historical disadvantages and discrimination, together, we can achieve a peaceful society where development for all is the responsibility of all.

EQUALITY, EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION ARE ESSENTIAL

Somali women are resourceful, resilient and a bedrock of our society. Complementing the work of men, our equal participation is essential to the social, economic and political development of Somalia.

We commit to full participation in every sphere of public and private life. We will strive for affirmative actions and accountability measures to attain the goals of equality.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

The women of Somalia are committed to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Somali women and girls are impacted by both conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. This violence destroys societal cohesion and women's lives, undermining the capacity of women to meaningfully participate and contribute to societal development. Only with zero tolerance for GBV and harmful traditional practices will Somalia become a prosperous nation.

We demand that the Constitution makes explicit that the right to safety and security includes women's right to be protected from gender-based violence, both in and outside of the home. We call for the immediate passing and enforcement of the Sexual Offences Bill and anti-FGM legislation.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

Women's rights are routinely violated and adversely affected by prevailing insecurity and the absence of appropriate legal protection. We, the women of Somalia, demand holistic and specific sets of laws that effectively sanction and secure gender equality and women's rights, and which make discriminatory acts punishable. We further demand full participation, a minimum of 50% representation, in the development of the Rule of Law system reform and the justice sector to address historical discrimination against women.

Any customary practices contrary to the Shari `a and international, regional or national laws on human rights and women's rights must be outlawed. Formal officials and traditional leaders entrusted with the administration of security and justice must be empowered to apply gender equality and women's rights principles and standards, provided for in domestic laws and regional and international instruments.

RECONCILIATION AND PEACE FOR WOMEN AT THE CENTER OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Women play a crucial role in reconciliation. We demand that the justice and reconciliation commission remain in the constitution. It is essential that the members of the commission reflect a 50/50 gender divide. Women's active participation is essential to ensure differential experiences of conflict are addressed. Transitional justice that reflects women's concerns will lead to sustainable peace. As women we will put women's security and peace at the center of conflict resolution and transitional justice.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, FULL PARTICIPATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS ARE CORNERSTONES FOR EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We, the Somali women, demand for the Constitution to guarantee us equal access, ownership and control over property, natural resources, technology, financial services, and government tenders; that all foreign investment and development assistance is assessed through a gender lens; and for women to be given equal opportunities in and access to these investments. These steps are key to securing our socio-economic rights. Many Somali households are headed by women, yet women have inadequate or no ownership and control over their houses. Women are more often outside the formal labor force and working in the household. We demand for the State to further strengthen in practice our rights in education, health, housing, employment and food reserve by institutionalizing affirmative actions in these areas. These are also to be applied to all vulnerable people, including those living with disabilities, older people, minorities who have long suffered discrimination and internally displaced people. We also call on the private sector to increase the representation of women in their top management and leadership positions and provide opportunities and affirmative action for women, including younger women.

As the conflict has destroyed or seriously dilapidated the economic infrastructure, priority has been given to rebuild the essential and most profitable infrastructure in the country. Women have to be at the table of decision making so that their specific needs and experiences can be addressed. A minimum of 50% representation across all formal consultations is a prerequisite for meaningful reconstruction. Climate change poses distinct, enormous burdens for women and girls. Sustainable development and resilience can only be achieved if women and girls are empowered to equally contribute to the resolution of climate change problems and their differential experiences are fully addressed.

INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

To develop new solutions for society and seize opportunities provided by technology, women and men need to think and act together; elder and youth need to join forces for the betterment of Somalia. The Information Technology Revolution is changing the way we receive information, how we process it, how we work and what jobs we will do. It is happening at an unprecedented pace. Women and men, young and old, experience these technological changes differently and have distinct contributions to make in the technological revolution. Because of this, we simply cannot afford to have any less than our whole population engaged and contributing. Therefore, it is of great importance to empower women as innovators and

entrepreneurs and advance gender equality using innovative approaches which draw on new technologies and collective learning. To realize this, we Somali women demand to increase compulsory attainment of secondary education, access to tertiary education and skills training courses for women and girls and additional affirmative action in securing young girls' exposure to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

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